THE SERBIAN WHITE EAGLE ORDER

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MANUFACTURE AND MARKS - (PART III)

MANUFACTURERS:

The Austrian aristocrat Elder von Mullersheim testifies in his book on Serbian Orders *1 (the first work of its kind and one of the most readable that has been written) "... the first dies for the new Order of the White Eagle were made by Rothe & Neffe Vienna." The photogravure illustrations in his book are said to have been made "by permission of Rothe & Neffe." *2

Thus, the firm of C.F. Rothe & Neffe was the first to manufacture the White Eagle Order insignia for the Crown and did so until the change of dynasty in June 1903.

The founder of the business, Christian Friedrich Rothe, born in Altenberg (Saxony), came to Vienna at the age of 17 and joined the goldsmiths studio of Waldschneppfenhaus, located on Gumpendorferstrasse, which he soon managed and whose ownership he took over in 1844.

In 1849 he moved the business to Hollauer-Haus, located on Kohlmarkt Number 7, and applied his wealth of knowledge and ability to the artistic and technical development of the company. His intense interest in the status of the capital city is best demonstrated by Anton von Fernkorn's "Hoard of the Nibelungs" which Rothe executed according to instructions of von Fernkorn and which came to be a particular attraction of the Kohlmarkt in the Rothe showcase.

Plate 33. Class II badge and star. Type I. Marked AF. Obverse.

*1 Die Königlich Serbischen Orden und Ehrenzeichen (Vienna, 1897)
*2 This has been confirmed by C.F. Rothe, who still retain the original dies.
Plate 34. Class II badge and star with swords. Type IIIa. Arthus Bertrand, Beranger & Magdelaine. Obverse.

About 1850 Rothe accepted his nephew, Anton Otto Gerbitz, into the firm, which since that time has borne the name C. F. Rothe & Nephew. In 1867 Rothe's second nephew, Heinrich Emil Rothe, joined the firm. The three succeeded, particularly in the field of insignia manufacture and maintained a leading position in the orders field, not only in Europe, but in the entire world.

For the coronation of Empress Elizabeth, Christian Friedrich Rothe executed the diamond crown, which can be seen at the Hofburg Treasury in Vienna. Numerous precious gem designs of the company can also be seen in the treasury chamber of the Convent Melk and in other private collections. The large pontifical cross in the Cathedral of Aja Sofia, in Sofia, was also created by the firm.

After a full life of work and success, Christian Friedrich Rothe, who had been named Court Jeweller and purveyor by Emperor Franz Josef I, and had been awarded numerous European court appointments which, incidentally, were passed