

# France: Birth and Death of Louis Napoléon, Prince Imperial.

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**Form:** Circular with attached loop

**By:** ?

**Date:** 1879

**Ref:** Laidlaw: 1243;

**Variations:**

Size	Metal	Mass	Value
29.5 mm	Brass		\$25

**Edge:** Plain.

**Obverse:** Bareheaded bust of the Prince in uniform, left. Legend: "PRINCE IMPERIAL (left) LOUIS NAPOLEON (right)".

**Reverse:** Within a continuous wreath of foliage, across: "NÉ A PARIS / LE 16 MARS 1856 / MORT AU CAP / LE 1ER. JUIN / 1879".

**Notes:** Louis Napoléon, Prince Imperial (1856-1879) was the only child of Emperor Napoleon III of France. Born in Paris, he was baptized on 14 June 1856, at Notre Dame Cathedral. His godmother was Queen Victoria.

His father was dethroned in 1870 and the Prince move to England with his family. He was proclaimed Napoleon IV in exile after the death of his father in 1873.

In England he trained as a soldier and, at the outbreak of the Anglo-Zulu war in 1879, was sent to South Africa as a lieutenant in the British Army. While on a scouting expedition he was killed in a skirmish with a party of Zulu warriors.

His death, at the age of 23, was a shock to Europe and ended any hopes for the restoration of the Bonapartes to the throne of France. Queen Victoria was greatly distressed and the Zulu King Cetshwayo is said to have personally apologised to the British, claiming that the Prince would not have been killed had his impi known who he was. The Prince's body was transported to Britain (reportedly preserved in a barrel of rum) and finally buried there next to his father. Queen Victoria ordered and paid for a memorial cross to be erected where he was killed about 30 km east of Dundee towards Ulundi.