

COMMEMORATIVE GOLD COIN BRATISLAVA CORONATIONS THE 350TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CORONATION OF LEOPOLD I



The National Bank of Slovakia is preparing to issue a gold coin at the end of 2005 to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the coronation of Leopold I in Bratislava. The gold coin follows a commemorative silver coin with the same theme issued in July 2005. In future years, the NBS is planning to issue commemorative coins for the anniversaries of other Bratislava coronations.

In the first third of the 16th century, Turkish invasions threatened the Kingdom of Hungary. After the occupation of the capital Budapest, the Hungarian Parliament decided in 1536 that Pressburg, today called Bratislava, would be the capital and coronation city. From 1563 to 1830 eleven monarchs and eight of their wives were crowned in the Gothic church of St Martin.

The sixth King of Hungary to be crowned in Pressburg was Leopold I son of Ferdinand III. The coronation of the scarcely 15-year-old prince happened on 27th June 1655. He began to rule after his father's death in 1657 and continued until he died in 1705. During his reign, the Turks suffered their greatest defeats and were driven out of Hungary. The Habsburg Monarchy, previously a loose union of Central European countries, gained firm foundations and became a leading and recognized European power.

The National Bank of Slovakia declared an anonymous public competition for the artistic design of the commemorative coin. Seven artists submitted ten designs for it. The commission of the governor of the NBS for the assessment of the designs of Slovak coins judged the competition and decided that a combination of two designs: the obverse by Karol Ličko and the reverse by the academic sculptor

Michal Gavula, best captured the required theme. The designs of the both artists were awarded second prize in the competition. On the winning obverse, the commission positively evaluated the historic depiction of the dominant architectural features of Bratislava – the castle and the coronation church of St Martin, with a mounted figure of a traditional participant in the coronation ceremony – a herald with the Hungarian shield. The reverse side depicts the coronation of the monarch. The winning reverse bears a precisely produced portrait of Leopold I. On the basis of the recommendation of the commission, the artist has added the Hungarian crown to the version to be produced. For the obverse side he chose a depiction of the coronation of the monarch, which he incorporated in a depiction of the architecture of Bratislava with the Church of St Martin placed in the centre.

The third prize was awarded to the academic sculptor Ľudmila Cvengrošová. The commission appreciated the balanced composition and good presentation of the given theme. The coronation insignia – the Hungarian crown, sceptre, coronation sword and orb – are placed around the state shield on the obverse. They are supplemented with Bratislava Castle. The coronation of the young king is the central motif on the reverse.

The commemorative coin with a value of 5000 Sk, diameter of 26 mm and weight of 9.5 g is struck from gold with a fineness of 900/1000 in the Kremnica Mint, in the number of 5000 pieces of proof quality. The edge of the coin is milled.

Ing. Dagmar Flaché, Photo: Ing. Štefan Fröhlich