

BRATISLAVA CORONATIONS ON COMMEMORATIVE COINS



The National Bank of Slovakia is preparing to issue a commemorative silver coin for the 350th anniversary of the coronation of Leopold I in Bratislava in July 2005. A commemorative gold coin with the same theme is planned for November of this year. The NBS intends to issue commemorative coins for the anniversaries of other Bratislava coronations in future years.

Turkish attacks threatened the Kingdom of Hungary in the first third of the 16th century. The defeat of a Christian army at the Battle of Mohács in 1526 opened the way to the interior of the country. After the Turks occupied the capital, Buda, the Hungarian Parliament decided in 1536, that the capital and coronation town of Hungary would be Prešporok (Pressburg, now Bratislava). Prešporok became the meeting place of parliament, the scene of coronations of the kings of Hungary and the seat of the most important state institutions. From 1563 to 1830, 11 monarchs and 8 of their wives were crowned in the Gothic Church of St. Martin. The king was usually crowned by the highest ecclesiastical dignitary in the country – the Archbishop of Esztergom. He was assisted by other ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries.

On 27th June 1655, the scarcely 15 year old Prince Leopold I, son of Ferdinand III, became the sixth King of Hungary to be crowned in Prešporok. During his long reign, which lasted until 1705, the Turks were driven out of Hungary and the overlordship of the Ottoman Empire definitively ended.

The NBS held an anonymous public competition to find a design for the commemorative coin. The Commission of the governor of the NBS for assessing the designs of Slovak coins judged the competition and recommended production of the design by the successful designer of Slovak commemorative coins, the Kremnica artist Mária Poldaufová. The design, which won the first prize, attracted attention with its appropriate expression of the theme and the purity of the sculptural work.

The commission appreciated the appropriately chosen and well depicted historical view of Bratislava with St. Martin's Church and Bratislava Castle as the dominant features on the obverse, and the high quality portrait of Leopold I on the reverse. The portrait is placed in a circle evoking a coronation medal and the monarch is depicted with a laurel wreath on his head. The portrait is surrounded by the Latin text of the coronation slogan of Leopold I „CONSILIO ET INDVSTRIA“ (With judgement and industry) and the name and title of the King of Hungary: „LEOPOLDVS D G REX HVNGARIAE“. Interestingly designed writing supplements the composition.

Pavel Károly, another Kremnica artist, and author of another Slovak commemorative coins also succeeded in the competition. He won second prize for his design. The detailed depiction of a view of the city on the obverse and the fine portrait of Leopold I on the reverse attracted the commission.

Third prize in the competition was awarded to academic sculptor Michal Gavula, another successful designer of Slovak commemorative coins. For the obverse, he chose the motif of the coronation Church of St. Martin and the tower of Bratislava town-hall, and for the reverse a portrait of the monarch in ceremonial armour. A part of the coronation insignia – the royal crown of the Kingdom of Hungary – is depicted with the monarch.

The commemorative coin with a value of 200 Sk, diameter of 34 mm and weight of 18 g was struck from silver with a fineness of 900/1000 at the Polish State Mint, in the number of 8,900 standard pieces and 4,800 proof coins. The number of coins is limited to a maximum of 10,000 standard and 5,000 proof coins. The edge bears the inscription: „BRATISLAVSKÉ KORUNOVÁCIE“. A mark depicting the royal crown is placed between the beginning and end of the text.

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