



Leopold I.

Present day Slovakia was part of the Hungarian Kingdom from the 10th century until the end of World War I. In the early 1500s, Hungary was threatened by the plundering raids of the Turks, who defeated the Christian army at the battle of Mohacs in 1526. Luis II. the Hungarian and Czech king also died there. This opened the way into the Hungarian lowland and the Turks swept into the country. After the Turkish occupation of the capital Buda in 1536, the Hungarian nobility, church and secular dignitaries were forced to look for a new shelter. Bratislava's advantageous location and firm fortification

made it an excellent choice as the new capital of Hungary. This decision was formally approved by the Hungarian Parliament in 1536. And so Bratislava became the new parliamentary city of the country, the coronation city of Hungarian kings and the seat of the king and the most significant institutions of the country. However, the ruler permanently resided in nearby Vienna. From 1563 to 1830, a total of 11 rulers and 8 royal wives were crowned with St. Stephen's Crown in the Gothic St. Martin's Cathedral.

Every coronation ceremony was preceded by a session of the Estate Diet (assembly). Before the coronation the king-elect had to agree to the Points of the Inauguration Diploma to which he was supposed to adhere to during his reign. The Archbishop of Esztergom, the supreme church dignitary



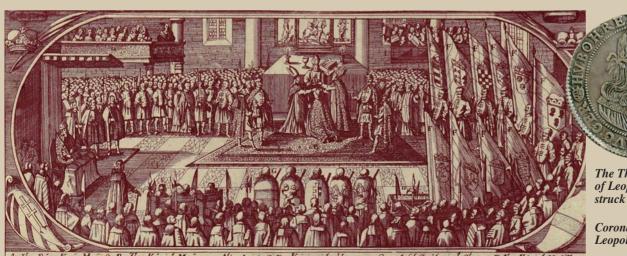
The Bratislava Royal Castle

of the country, assisted by other church and secular dignitaries, usually crowned the King. The act of coronation took place during the ceremonial mass. After the mass. the king dressed in historical garments interlaced with gold, and with the royal crown on his head. walked through the city streets to the Church of the Virgin

Mary next to the Franciscan Monastery where he dubbed selected aristocrats as knights of Order of the Golden Spur. He then rode his horse beyond the city walls where he took an oath read by the Archbishop. The next act of the coronation ceremony took place near the Danube River where a hill was made of dirt brought from all parts of the kingdom. By flourishing his sword in all directions the mounted king demonstrated that he was ready to protect the kingdom from all enemies. A feast followed the ceremony.

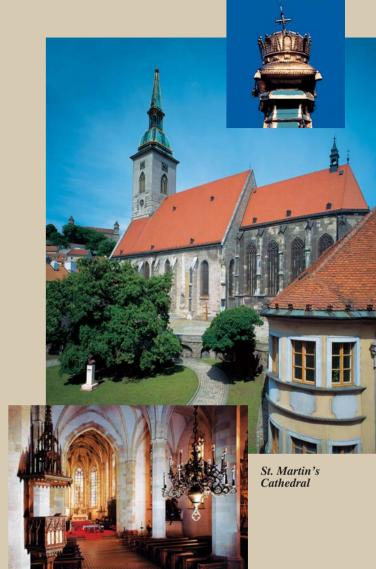
Many attended the coronation ceremony, however only the chosen few were allowed into the cathedral. The others were left to follow the outdoors scenes. Oxen were roasted and the theater, magicians and circus offered entertainment to the spectators after the conclusion of the ceremony. Coins were thrown into the crowds and the city fountains bubbled with red and white wine.

Leopold I, son of Ferdinand III and the younger brother of Ferdinand IV, who died before his time, was crowned



The Thaler of Leopold I struck in Kremnica

Coronation of Leopold I



in Bratislava as the sixth of the Hungarian kings, on June 27, 1655. His father had him crowned when he was barely 15 years old. More than 5,000 aristocrats and church dignitaries participated in the magnificent coronation which was organized according to tradition. Leopold I, ascended to the throne after his father's death in 1657 and remained there till his own death in 1705. During his reign the Turks were chased from Hungary, thus marking the definitive end of the dominion of the Ottoman Empire. Leopold I was also instrumental in stabilizing the Habsburg's monarchy foundations. Under his leadership this monarchy became the leading and recognized European power.