

Obverse

The obverse depicts a medieval cavalry battle, above which is a wooden palisade with a central watchtower. The year of issuance '2023' appears on the upper left side, between the battle scene and palisade. The Slovak coat of arms is positioned in the lower right of the design, and the name of the issuing country 'SLOVENSKO' is inscribed along the bottom edge. To the lower left of the main image are the mint mark of the Kremnica Mint (Mincovňa Kremnica), consisting of the letters 'MK' placed between two dies, and the stylised letters 'KL', referring to the coin's designer Karol Ličko.

Reverse

The reverse features an imagined depiction of Samo galloping on horseback and holding a spear. Along the upper left edge is the inscription 'SAMOVA RÍŠA' (Samo's Empire). To the right of the horse is the year '623', and below it are the coin's denomination '100' and currency 'EURO', one above the other.

Coin details

Denomination:	€100
Composition:	.900 gold, .75 silver, .25 copper
Weight:	9.5 g
Diameter:	26 mm
Edge:	milled
Issuing volume:	limited to a maximum of 5,000 coins in proof quality
Designer:	Karol Ličko
Engraver:	Dalibor Schmidt
Producer:	Kremnica Mint (Slovakia)



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1400 anniversary
of the establishment of
Samo's Empire

GOLD COLLECTOR EURO COIN

Reconstruction of a Slavic dwelling at the Archaeological Museum of the Slovak National Museum

In 567 and 568 the Avars conquered the Upper Tisa and Pannonian Basin regions and established an empire there. The Slavs living in the Avar Khaganate found it hard to endure their subjugation – having the Avars winter in their settlements every year, paying taxes to the Avars, and fighting in Avar wars in the toughest places. For these Slavic warriors, war was a regular occupation but without the advantages that Avar warriors enjoyed. In this context, there emerged within Slavic peasant society a militarily proficient class of men far removed from traditional agricultural life. Just like the peasants, however, they suffered under Avar oppression.



A rare Byzantine hexadrachm minted during the reign of Emperor Heraclius II (610–641); it was part of a unique treasure trove found in Zemiansky Vrbovok village in Krupina District in 1937



A type of Slavic vessel dating from between the 6th and 8th centuries AD, from a burial site at the Bratislava borough of Devínska Nová Ves

Tensions between Slavs and Avars within the Khaganate grew to the point that the Slavs rose up against their rulers, with their revolt plotted and launched by experienced military veterans. The uprising swept through the western part of the Khaganate and set in motion the rebellious Slavic tribes, who soon had a transformative effect on central Europe and the northern Balkans.

In 623 the war was in full flow and the related arms trade promised great profits. This attracted a large merchant caravan led by Samo, a Frank. Samo was from the 'Senonian country' on the eastern edge of Neustria, the western part of the Kingdom of the Franks. There he gathered together a group of merchants and left with them for heart of the Slavic revolt. Well versed in military craft, Samo joined with the Slavs and distinguished himself in the war against the Avars. When the Slavic principalities that had emerged around the middle Danube joined together to form a larger polity, they needed someone to rule their empire. Since the elevation of any native tribal prince above the other princes would pro-

voke jealousy and disputes among the tribes, the able foreigner Samo was well cut out for the role. Under Samo's leadership, the Slavs won several victories over the Avars. Samo's Empire extended over an area now covered by Moravia, Lower Austria and Slovakia, and it was allied with the Czech tribes.

In 631 Samo fell out with the Frankish king Dagobert, and then quarrelled with the king's envoy Sycharius. Dagobert subsequently led his army against Samo, only to suffer a crushing defeat in a three-day battle near a place referred to as Wogastisburg, where Samo's Slavic forces were fortified. Dagobert's army returned home in disgrace. Samo's Slavs went on to invade Frankish Thuringia several times, proceeding there through the territory of their Czech allies. Samo's attacks against Thuringia and other parts of the Frankish Empire helped the Sorbs that bordered Bohemia and Thuringia. The duke of the Sorbs, Dervan, was thus able to break free from dependence on Dagobert and became allied with Samo.

Samo reigned for 35 years, from 623 until his death in 658. He had twelve Slavic wives with whom he fathered twenty-two sons and fifteen daughters.



Slavic spearheads from a burial site near the Bratislava borough of Záhorská Bystrica