

COINS DEDICATED TO  
VILNIUS – EUROPEAN CAPITAL  
OF CULTURE 2009



Denomination 50 litas  
Silver Ag 925  
Quality proof  
Diameter 38.61 mm  
Weight 28.28 g  
On the edge:  
VILNIUS – METROPOLIS CULTURAE EUROPAENSIS  
Mintage 10,000 pcs



Denomination 1 litas  
Alloy of copper and nickel (Cu 75%, Ni 25%)  
Diameter 22.30 mm  
Weight 6.25 g  
The edge of the coin rimmed at intervals  
Mintage 1,000,000 pcs

Designed by Vytautas Narutis

Issued 2009

During the speech made on the occasion of awarding the Noble Prize in Literature in 1980, the famous poet and writer Czesław Miłosz very warmly mentioned his native roots – Lithuania and Vilnius, the city of his studies:

“It is good to be born in a small country where Nature was on a human scale, where various languages and religions cohabited for centuries. I have in mind Lithuania, a country of myths and of poetry... It is a blessing if one receives from fate school and university studies in such a city as Vilno. A bizarre city of baroque architecture transplanted to northern forests and of history fixed in every stone, a city of forty Roman Catholic churches and of numerous synagogues. In those days the Jews called it a Jerusalem of the North.”

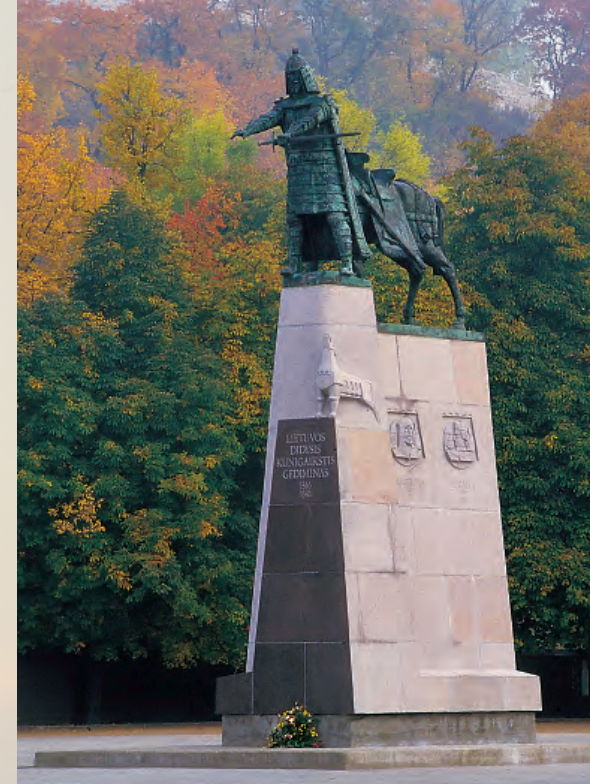
These words about Lithuania and Vilnius may be used as an original motto for the presentation of Vilnius – European Capital of Culture 2009. When in 2004



an official application was submitted to the European Union institutions on awarding the status of the European Capital of Culture, an important argument was exactly the cultural heritage of Vilnius that emerged over several centuries, its multicultural legacy. The highest recognition of its value and uniqueness was the decision made by UNESCO in 1994 to include the Old Town of Vilnius into the World Heritage List.

The presented programme of Vilnius was evaluated as compliant with the requirement raised by the European Commission – to present exceptional values and to show creativity. Meanwhile, the city’s past, its history and cultural treasures should serve new links between European cultures, engage citizens of other countries and involve as many as possible of the country’s citizens. The objective of receiving the title of the European Capital of Culture was also supported by the fact that Lithuania was preparing to celebrate the Millennium Anniversary of its name in 2009. On the decision of the Council of the European Union in 2005, Vilnius was officially awarded the status of the European Capital of Culture together with Linz, the city of Austria and the partner in this programme. Thus, Vilnius, the capital of the state that just entered the European Union, became the first capital of Eastern European and Baltic states that received this prestigious status of the European Capital of Culture.

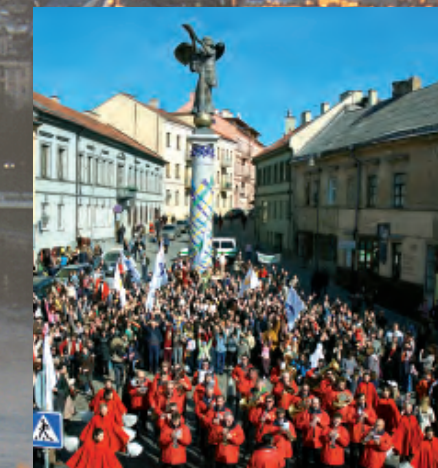
The poet Tomas Venclova has felicitously noted that the capital of Lithuania invites comparison to a palimpsest, an ancient manuscript that includes several texts one under another. In each text, one can find traces of multifaceted culture, mixed styles and epochs, combinations of cultures of different nations. “Bizarreness” of Vilnius mentioned by Czesław Miłosz is of several types: cultural, architectural, landscape, historical. Already the very network of streets of the Old Town, the dialogue of downs surrounding the city and the towering churches, the combination of the winding Neris river and the landscape, multi-centred spaces create an image of changing perspectives and a bustling city. Vilnius is also called a Baroque city – its most important architectural accents are religious buildings of this style, although nearby one can find both embossed Gothic, Renaissance, and dignified and lofty Classicism architecture. Again we can see the multi-layered pattern of the city’s culture that supports the conclusion of the Lithuanian art critic and art historian Mikalojus Vorobjovas: “When studying the art of Vilnius, we visually realize that the styles in the history of architecture do not walk one after another in Indian file, strictly separated by their characteristic features. Organically growing one from another, the styles intersect and intertwine in such a manner that we see two or more styles in parallel in each period”.



*In the shimmering dome of the royal cathedral  
Morning awakens already, already awakens the bells –  
The one-day old town trip  
Perhaps will be the most beautiful of my life.*

*Rays pierce the window and dazzle the eyes;  
Thus glisten towers, and crosses and sky.  
Thence will I not return home until evening falls,  
Forgetting beloved and land and friends.*

Kazys Bradūnas





The title of the European Capital of Culture obligates not only to present the cultural treasures of one's city, highlight their idiosyncrasies, interesting objects, urban environment and peculiarities of people's lifestyle. It is the promotion of a cultural dialogue of nations and countries, an impetus for exchanges and meetings with the representatives of unknown, original, traditional and provocative art phenomena. The mission of Vilnius – European Capital of Culture

2009 programme includes the following objective: "to create a new experience of the European culture, where culture is the asset of a modern life, and each man is the creator of culture." Thus, the objective is to make everyone become a creator and a participant of the cultural dialogue and live culture. By design, the logo of the programme includes an inscription "Culture live". Past and present art reflections, abundance of multinational art names, professional art and festivals of city inhabitants intertwine in each part of the programme.



A number of years ago, the scientists of the National Geographic Institute of France determined that the geographical centre of Europe is near Vilnius and thus as if foretold that Vilnius will shortly become the European cultural centre as well. When science and culture unite, then the city and all its inhabitants and visitors become surrounded by a special aura of uniqueness, freedom and creativity.

*Art critic Viktoras Liutkus*

*"After throwing the first glance at the city, it seems that you have already seen it all somewhere: a Baroque city, the same as many other cities surrounding the outskirts of Europe – from Vilnius through Poland, Slovakia, Austria to Zagreb in Croatia – constituting an odd cordon, not sanitary, but cultural, that protects that which was – and maybe still is – Europe and its values".*

*Algirdas Julius Greimas*

*"Vilnius is as if an open book, unveiling the history of European styles by lively images – from Gothic to Empire. Vilnius is a real art treasure-trove for all those who are minded to study art history not from the textbooks, but from the art masterpieces themselves"*

*Mikalojus Vorobjovas*



## LITHUANIAN COLLECTORS COINS



*Vilnius was created by the Whole Europe. People from all countries of Europe worked and created, designed, decorated it. Artists from various countries coming to Vilnius found the traditions of the true European art*

*Vladas Drėma*

Information is available at the Bank of Lithuania  
Tel. +370 5 268 0316  
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www.lb.lt



*The coins were minted at  
UAB Lithuanian Mint  
www.lithuanian-mint.lt*

**Lithuanian Collectors Coins**

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