

Decorative glass - modelled on the Hungarian Royal Crown

Ceramics and Glass Collection

Accession Nr.:	60.188.1.1-2 
Manufacturer:	Ajka Glass Factory
Materials:	lead glass
Techniques:	engraved decoration; etched; grinded; mould-blown
Dimensions:	height: 20,5 cm diameter: 22 cm

This lead glass crown is a real masterpiece - almost a copy of the original crown. The so-called *corona graeca* crown jewels, the string of pearls and precious stones are imitated by faceted glass insets. The various *cloisonné* and *a jour* enamelled pictures are created by carving and etching. The middle, biggest arch is especially successful it is the glass version of the Pantocrator picture, painted originally in *cloisonné* enamel. Following the original illustration on the crown, Christ is depicted with a book in his left, his right raised in blessing. The throne is flanked by two cypresses, surmounted by a medallion of the Greek initials of Christ. The copies of the rectangular enamel pictures on the band also follow the original ones: the heavenly escort and court of Christ, the two archangels: Gabriel and Michael, the leaders of the heavenly armies, St. Demetrius and St. George, the highly popular and respected soldier saints of eastern Christianity, and also St. Cosmo and St. Damien, the two doctor saints. The pictures on the back of the glass-band are placed slightly slid to the left from the back cresting, depicting the Byzantine emperor, Michael Duchas. On his right, in the square-shaped field of the band, Constantinus, his co-regent appears. On his left, in a similar field, there is Géza I, King of Hungary, depicted in the same way as he is presented on the original crown: with a golden diadem around his head, enriched with precious stones, holding a crossed sceptre in his right and a sword in his left. The inscription *Geobitzasz pisztosz kralesz Turkiasz* (Géza, King of Turkia) also appears in the picture. The sliding of the illustrations on the glass crown band does not interfere with the faithful imitation of the iconographic program: at the front, there is Christ, as the lord of the world, with his heavenly servants, while the back shows the head of the worldly hierarchy, the Byzantine emperor with his court and servants. They represent the rule over heavenly and earthly worlds. The copies of the precious stones decorating the glass crown are exact, except for a faceted sapphire-copy. The glass copy of the square-shaped field in the centre of the *corona latina* shows Christ on his throne, enclosed by a halo and a cross, holding a book in his left while his right is raised in blessing. Beside his throne there are two cypresses, surmounted by round medallions with the Sun and the Moon. The apostles' pictures of the glass crown lack the figures of Bartholomew and Thomas the others are identical with those on the original one, just like the cross on the top. On the Ajka crown, the surface between the bands is etched, imitating leather, like on the surface of the bottom. The crown and the illustrations are faithful copies of the original, which suggests a more or less exact, though not perfect, knowledge of the royal crown. This object is an outstanding technical masterpiece, made for the 1896 Millennial exhibition.

Literature

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