



New banknote and coin series

Themes and motifs

Report from the General Council of the Riksbank's
Drafting Committee for the Design of Banknotes and
Coins

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Background

The Riksbank has decided to renew the Swedish banknote and coin series. At the same time a new denomination, 200 krona, will be introduced, and the 2-krona coin will be reintroduced. The coin series will consist of the denominations 1, 2, 5, 10 and 20 kronor and the banknote series of the denominations 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1,000 kronor.

Decisions regarding the design of banknotes and coins are taken by the General Council of the Riksbank. The General Council has appointed a committee to prepare these questions, consisting of four members of the Council and four experts. The members are Peter Egardt, Anders Karlsson, Sonia Karlsson and Ebba Lindsö. The experts are Eva-Lena Bengtsson, curator at the Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts, Henrik Klackenborg, State Herald of Sweden, Magnus Olausson, Head of the Conservation Department at the National Museum of Fine Arts and Ian Wiséhn, Director of the Royal Coin Cabinet at the National Museum of Economy. During the period of office 2006-2010 General Council members Kjell Nordström and Susanne Eberstein were also in this committee.

This report describes the committee's proposals for themes and motifs for the new banknote and coin series.

Stockholm, March 2011

Peter Egardt
Chairman of the drafting committee

The banknote series

Starting points

The motifs on the banknotes are important in expressing national values and symbols. They also serve a function as protection against forgery in that the general public learns to recognise the distinguishing features of the banknotes and as a detailed motif is difficult to copy.

The current banknote series from the 1980s is based on portraits of well-known persons, with a mixture of royal figures and Swedes famous in the fields of culture and science. The 1,000-krona note depicts Gustav Vasa, the 500-krona note Karl XI and Christopher Polhem, the 100-krona note shows Carl von Linné, the 5-krona note Jenny Lind and the 20-krona note Selma Lagerlöf. The portraits are combined with motifs from the person's field and era.

Portraits are a common theme on banknotes in other countries, too. However, there are also other themes, such as architectural styles, buildings, plants and animals. Quite often, several themes are combined.

Inventory

In September 2009, the drafting committee invited a number of authorities and organisation to draw up an inventory of possible themes for the new banknote series. Those who took part included representatives of the Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts, the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, the Royal Coin Cabinet, the Swedish National Archives, the Swedish Institute, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, as well as employees of the Riksbank. Five possible themes were proposed: culture/world heritage, persons in the field of culture, Nobel prizes, Swedish nature and prominent persons in the field of science. One conclusion was that the banknote series can contain several themes, but that each banknote should have a motif that is held together by a common denominator. Moreover, there should be a national symbol on all banknotes.

The general public has been given the opportunity to present suggestions regarding the design of the banknote series. Around 500 proposals for motifs have been received. Most of these suggestions refer to persons. Astrid Lindgren is the most common suggestion, followed by Alfred Nobel and Dag Hammarskjöld.

Themes

The drafting committee considers that the theme for the banknote series should continue to be based on portraits of famous Swedes in the new series. The reasons for this are that it is easy to relate to people and that it has proved difficult to counterfeit portraits in a convincing manner. There is also a tradition of having portraits on Swedish banknotes.

Among the other themes proposed the committee felt that the nature theme was attractive, as nature and environmental values are strongly linked to Sweden. It was therefore proposed that a further theme, Swedish nature and environment, be included in the banknote series.

It was also proposed that the lesser coat of arms “three crowns” should be a heraldic symbol recurring on all banknotes.

Motifs

The choice of persons should be based on certain criteria to bind the themes together. Examples of such criteria could be their field of work and/or the age they lived in. There should be an equal number of men and women. There should be some historical distance to these people.

The committee considers that the common denominator should be cultural achievements in a broad sense. The people chosen should have been active in modern times and most of their active life in the 20th century. They should be popular with the general public and preferably also be well-known internationally.

The nature and environment motifs should have some connection with the persons on the banknotes, so that each note consists of a portrait of a famous person and a nature/environment motif that can be connected with the person concerned. A further criterion is thus that the persons chosen should be linked with different parts of Sweden, so that the nature and environment themes can represent different parts of the country.

Based on these criteria, the committee has decided to propose the following persons:

- Ingmar Bergman
- Greta Garbo
- Dag Hammarskjöld
- Astrid Lindgren
- Birgit Nilsson
- Evert Taube

It is proposed that the nature and environment themes be gathered from Bohuslän, Gotland, Lappland, Skåne, Småland and Stockholm.

These regions have a known link to the persons chosen. Evert Taube grew up in Vinga and many of his songs are inspired by the Bohuslän archipelago. Ingmar Bergman lived on Fårö, an island off Gotland, during the later part of his life. Dag Hammarskjöld was very fond of Lappland and the Swedish mountains. Birgit Nilsson grew up in Västra Karup in Skåne. Astrid Lindgren grew up in Vimmerby in Småland and gained much of her literary inspiration from this region. Greta Garbo grew up in the Södermalm region of Stockholm.

Denominations

Astrid Lindgren appears to be the person most popular as a motif among the general public. The committee therefore suggests that she should be on the banknote that is used most in the retail trade, which is the 20-krona note. This is also the banknote most likely to be used by children. Furthermore, it seems appropriate to alternate men and women on the different denominations. The committee therefore proposes that the motifs be distributed over the denominations as follows:

Denomination	Person motif	Nature/environment motif
20 krona	Astrid Lindgren	Småland
50 krona	Evert Taube	Bohuslän
100 krona	Greta Garbo	Stockholm
200 krona	Ingmar Bergman	Gotland
500 krona	Birgit Nilsson	Skåne
1,000 krona	Dag Hammarskjöld	Lappland

Coin series

A portrait of the king or queen and his or her monogram and motto have been used on Swedish coins for many years now. The drafting committee sees good reason to continue with this tradition. It is therefore proposed that “Sweden’s head of state” will remain the theme for Swedish coins.

In addition to their denomination, the coins will contain the text “Sverige” (Sweden) and the year they were minted. It is also proposed that the current practice of having the designer’s and the Governor of the Riksbank’s initials, as well as the first letter of the name of the place where the coin is issued will continue. The lesser coat of arms may also be used on the coins.