

David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl, Poland
by GREG BALAGIAN

The 1000th stamp created by the Polish master engraver Czeslaw Slania, depicts a fragment of the ceiling fresco titled *The Great Deeds of The Swedish Kings* created by the Swedish artist David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl (1628-1698). It was painted on the ceiling of the great hall of the Swedish House of Knights between 1670 and 1675, and is considered to be his greatest work.

A second version was painted during 1695 on the ceiling of the Ehrenstrahl studio at Drottningholm Palace, the private residence of the Swedish royal family and can be seen in the selvage of the 2000 souvenir sheet with the fresco detail (Scott 2374).

The fierce lion at the bottom of the fresco is an important symbol of Swedish royalty and it features on the coat of arms, paper money and coins, as well as many stamps issued by Sweden. The female personification of Sweden and a patriotic emblem—Mother Svea—in the center is always portrayed accompanied by a lion.

Ehrenstrahl was born in Hamburg. He studied in Amsterdam, Italy, and Sweden. After his return to Sweden in 1661, he was appointed court painter, and in 1674 he was raised to the nobility taking the surname Ehrenstrahl. ❁



A detail from *Great Deeds by Swedish Kings*, by David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl, is on a recent souvenir sheet honoring Polish engraver, Czeslaw Slania, on the centenary of his birth. The painting is also on the 1000th stamp he engraved. A lion is in the foreground.

