

The shock runs deep

NUMISMATA Munich cancelled because of Coronavirus

by R.Albert/MünzenRevue

It should have been a celebration of numismatics: 50 years of NUMISMATA Munich. The first NUMISMATA took place in Munich in 1970, and 2020 was supposed to be the anniversary year. Yet the Coronavirus shattered all the numismatists' dreams; just 12 hours before the opening of the exhibition hall, the classic coin fair was stopped in its tracks.

How did it happen?

Many dealers and exhibitors were already in bed after stand construction, in order to be fit for the next day. They were relatively sure that NUMISMATA Munich would take place as planned, despite a number of rumours. Philatelia Munich, which is associated with NUMISMATA Munich, had opened as planned on 6th March. Why not NUMISMATA in the adjacent hall on 7th March?

However, the telephone announcement – initially received with incredulity – went out shortly before 11 pm: NUMISMATA Munich will not take place in 2020. The reason: official requirements.

Is there anything more precise?

It went through everyone's mind at lightning speed: Coronavirus. However, the astonishment came equally in a flash: Why not the adjacent stamp fair?

However, that was not what happened and, after a successful start, Philatelia was also closed the next day along with NUMISMATA.

The Robert Koch Institute, which is responsible for disease monitoring and prevention in Germany, intensified its warnings about Coronavirus and, early in the night, declared South Tyrol a risk area. The regional administrative office (KVR) responsible for implementation of this warning in Munich then wanted to allow NUMISMATA only under special conditions but these were organisationally and technically unachievable (health certificates a maximum of 2 days old for stand staff, written declarations from all visitors about stays in potential risk areas etc.). Otherwise, there was a threat of severe penalties. This was effectively the end for the exhibition.

What happened next?

Frau Modes, who runs the exhibition organisation together with her father and was awoken at night by this development, immediately began informing the exhibitors by telephone. Depending on their contactability, however, it might be that some found out about it only two or three hours before the now shattered opening.

Nonetheless, there were some people who had it even worse than the numismatists. The staff of Munich regional administrative office arrived on the Saturday morning to check compliance with the shutdown. They found an almost empty hall and then moved on to Vinessio, the Munich wine fair that was also scheduled to take place. The organisers there had finished their preparations and the starting shot was to be at 12.00. They received the event ban out of the blue at 9.16.

Reactions

There was great shock in the NUMISMATA team, which makes them all the more pleased to have received comfort and encouragement from all sides. Ms Modes emphasises that almost without exception there was a calm and rational response to the news, which indeed represents a great loss to all. She quotes one dealer, who told her: "now we really know how important NUMISMATA is to us." Many collectors also stood in groups and talked outside the hall. The main criticism was the late decision to cancel the trade fair. However, it was clear to everyone that the organisers are only the last link in a decision-making chain and have to implement what has been decided elsewhere. In defiance, you could then often hear: "We'll be back for our NUMISMATA."

What now?

NUMISMATA Munich has gone for 2020. Nobody knows how long the epidemic will last. On 10th March, the Bavarian government decided to suspend all trade fairs, exhibitions etc. at least until the start of May. In the 2nd half of the year, the trade fairs are already set – and can hopefully take place. The Modes team in Munich is in the process of investigating how dealers affected by the cancellation of NUMISMATA can be helped. However, the shock is still fresh and the uncertainty great.

Nonetheless, one thing is true for all: NUMISMATA goes on!