



face value	200 zł
metal	900/1000Au
finish	proof
diameter	27.00 mm
weight	15.50 g
mintage	3 600 pcs

Obverse: Stylised goose quill pen located diagonally in the centre. Image of the Eagle, established as the state Emblem of the Republic of Poland, and the circumscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA and notation of the year of issue, 2005, above and left. Inscription, 200/ ZŁ, on the right-hand side. Facsimile of Mikolaj Rej's signature, below. The Mint's mark, $\frac{m}{w}$, under the Eagle's left leg.

Reverse: Bust of Mikolaj Rej with fragments of architecture in the background. Circumscription: 1505 on the left, 1569 on the right. Inscription: 500. ROCZNICA/ URODZIN/ MIKOŁAJA/REJA underneath the bust.

Coin designer: Ewa Olszewska-Borys



face value	10 zł
metal	925/1000 Ag
finish	proof
diameter	32.00 mm
weight	14.14 g
mintage	60 000 pcs

Obverse: In an oval: an image of the Eagle, established as the state Emblem of the Republic of Poland and an inscription: 10, underneath the Eagle. Inscription in the rim: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA, and notation of the year of issue: 2005, preceded and followed by a dot, and an inscription: ZŁOTYCH. The Mint's mark, $\frac{m}{w}$, under the Eagle's left leg.

Reverse: Portrait of Mikolaj Rej in an oval. Inscription surrounding the portrait: 500. ROCZNICA URODZIN MIKOŁAJA REJA 1505–1569, separated by dots.

Coin designer: Ewa Olszewska-Borys



face value	2 zł
metal	CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy
finish	standard
diameter	27.00 mm
weight	8.15 g
mintage	850 000 pcs

Obverse: Image of the Eagle, established as the state Emblem of the Republic of Poland, the notation of the year of issue: 20–05 on either side of the Eagle, the inscription: ZŁ 2 ZŁ, below, inscription in the rim: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA, preceded and followed by six pearls. The Mint's mark, $\frac{m}{w}$, under the Eagle's left leg.

Reverse: Bust of Mikolaj Rej. Inscription: 1505/ 1569, on the right hand side. Circumscription: 500–LECIE URODZIN MIKOŁAJA REJA, above.

On the edge: The inscription, NBP, repeated eight times, every second one inverted 180°, separated by stars.

Obverse designer: Ewa Tyc-Karpińska
Reverse designer: Ewa Olszewska-Borys

Collector Coins



Coins struck by the State Mint in Warsaw.

Printed by NBP Printing Office

Design: DECORUM

– Mikolaj Rej –

On January 20 2005, the National Bank of Poland puts into circulation collector coins to mark the 500th anniversary of birth of Mikołaj Rej, of the following face values:

- 200 zł – struck in proof finish in gold,
- 10 zł – struck in proof finish in silver,
- 2 zł – struck in standard finish in CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy (Nordic Gold).

Contemporary Poles associate Mikołaj Rej most of all with the two famous verses:

*May all the nations in the world know this:
Poles have a language of their own, and not that of geese.
(A niechaj to narodowie wzdzy postronni znają,
Iż Polacy nie gęsi, iż swój język mają.)*

This 16th century Polish writer, who battled for the place of the Polish language in literature, opposing the domination of Latin, is also known as the author of "A Short Conversation Between Three Persons, a Squire, a Bailiff and a Parson" ("Krótka rozprawa między trzema osobami, Panem, Wójtem a Plebanem"), which is a part of the school reading curriculum. Theatre audiences from the 50s and 60s of the 20th century are also familiar with his drama "The Life of Joseph" ("Żywot Józefa z pokolenia żydowskiego, syna Jakubowego, rozdzielony w rozmowach person, który w sobie wiele cnót i dobrych obyczajów zamyka"), staged successfully by Kazimierz Dejmek first in Łódź (1958), then in Warsaw (1965), also presented in many European countries.

Mikołaj Rej was born on February 4, 1505 in Żurawno near Halicz on the river Dniestr. A biography published during his lifetime gave rise to many misunderstandings concerning his education. The biography was signed by Andrzej Trzecieski, but it is possible that it was written by Rej himself. It describes the education of the author—to-be of the "Short Conversation", mentioning schools in Skalmierz, Lvov and Cracow, emphasizes in particular his strong contact with nature. This resulted in strengthening an image of Rej as an uneducated writer, with an aversion to books. However, this image changes if one looks at Rej's literary achievements. Without thorough school knowledge he undertook a great effort of self studying later, encouraged by a favourable atmosphere at the court of Andrzej Tęczyński, the voivode of Sandomierz. The Tęczyński court prepared him also for public activity, and his abilities and connections expanded further under the influence of voivode Mikołaj Sieniawski and the people around him.

After his father's death, Mikołaj Rej inherited considerable wealth, which consisted of assets in Małopolska in the south of Poland (including his ancestral Nagłowice) as well as in Ruś, to which his wife's dowry was added. Thanks to his energy and bestowals, such as the village of Temerowce which he received from the king for translating the Psalter, Rej managed to increase his wealth and founded the towns of Rejowiec and Oksza.

Mikołaj Rej was repeatedly elected Member of Parliament. During Parliament ("Sejm") sessions he represented the ideas of "executives", campaigning for reducing the rights of the aristocracy and the clergy, as well as for limiting king's power. After his encounter with the Reformation movement, Mikołaj Rej adopted its new ideas, since he was convinced that the Catholic church had abandoned its mission to lead people towards salvation. Sympathising with the Reformation had an impact on Rej's activity in the Parliament and led him to found Evangelic congregations and schools. But the main area of his apostolic work was writing and translating. The Reformativ dictate to popularise religious content in national languages may have also been an additional motivation to battle for the position of the Polish language in literature.

Rej's earliest works are dialogues known only in fragments, such as "Warwas" or "Kostyra and a Drunkard" ("Kostyra z Pijanicą"), "Conversation Between a Lion and a Cat" ("Rozmowa lwa z kotem") preserved only in transcription, and some others known only from their titles, as "Goose and Cock" ("Gęś z kurem"), as well as religious songs and translation of psalms. The first work of which the publishing date is known is the "Short Conversation Between Three Persons, a Squire, a Bailiff and a Parson", which appeared in 1543, in the publishing house of Maciej Szarffenberg, signed by the pen name of Ambroży Korczbok Rożek. A critical presentation of countryside attitudes, proving the author's good understanding of the topic, as well as linguistic values, place the "Short Conversation" among the most important works of the golden age in Polish culture.

The first half of the 1540s also brought translation in prose of the "Davids' Psalter" ("Psałterz Dawidów"), which was dedicated to king Sigismund I. Also dated as coming from this period is the rhymed "Catechism is a Knowledge Useful to Every Faithful Christian" ("Catechismus to jest nauka barzo pożyteczna każdemu wiernemu krześcijaninowi"), which is a rewritten version of the work by Campensis and has been dedicated to the queen Bona Sforza. In 1545, "The Life of Joseph", a drama based on the Biblical story of Joseph who was sold by his brothers, was published by the Ungler widow's house, while 1549 saw the publishing of the drama "The Merchant" ("Kupiec, to jest Kształt a podobieństwo Sądu Bożego Ostatecznego") in Królewiec (Konigsberg).

"Postylla" ("Świętych słów a spraw Pańskich kronika albo Postylla") appeared in 1557. It is a collection of homilies, containing also excerpts from the Bible translated by Rej himself. It was one the most often reprinted and translated of his writings. It met both with severe criticism, among others from the Jesuit priest Jakub Wujek (author of the most renowned translation of the Bible into Old Polish), as well as recognition, even among Catholics – the artistic value of "Postylla" was also appreciated. The same period brought "A Faithful Image of the Life of an Honest Man" ("Wizerunek własny żywota człowieka poczciwego") from 1558, which is an adaptation of the work by the Italian poet Palingenius, and the first attempt in Polish

literature to present a secular approach to life. Rej's last achievements include "Apocalypsis" ("Apocalypsis, to jest Dziwna sprawa zakrytych tajemnic Pańskich") from 1565, and "The Mirror" ("Żwierciadło"), published almost a year before the writer's death, containing "The Life of an Honest Man" ("Żywot człowieka poczciwego"), a didactic work presenting the model of a nobleman's life (1567/ 68).

Mikołaj Rej died between September 8, and October 4, 1569, presumably in Rejowiec.

25 years older than Jan Kochanowski, Rej was a highly valued predecessor for the "Master from Czarnolas" on his artistic path.

Rej's popularity in the 16th century is reflected in numerous reprints of his works. In the following centuries however, his writings were not published and he was scarcely ever mentioned by others. It was only when Antoni Gałęzowski published "The Life of an Honest Man" in 1828, and Adam Mickiewicz discussed it in the Collège de France, a new wave of interest in Rej's achievements arose. His life was described in books by such writers as Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, Adolf Nowaczyński, Ludwik Hieronim Morstin. Eminent literature historians, among them Aleksander Brückner, Julian Krzyżanowski, Konrad Górski and Tadeusz Witczak took up research examining his work. Recently, a thorough analysis of the relations between Rej and the Reformation has been carried out in the book by Janusz T. Maciuszko, under the telling title "Mikołaj Rej. The Forgiven Evangelic Theologist of the 16th Century" ("Mikołaj Rej. Zapomniany teolog ewangelicki z XVI w.").

Grand anniversaries associated with Mikołaj Rej: his 400th anniversary of birth in 1905, and 400th anniversary of death in 1969 have been celebrated with conferences, publications and important resolutions. During the first of these events a lower secondary school in Warsaw was established, named after Mikołaj Rej. The second event resulted in unveiling the writer's monument and opening the Mikołaj Rej Museum in Nagłowice. During a scientific session, organised in 1953 as a part of the Renaissance Year celebrations, participants called for continuation of the critical publishing of Rej's entire legacy. The first volume of his "Complete Works", which contained the "Short Conversation" compiled by Konrad Górski and Witold Taszycki, appeared in the same year. This was where the work stopped, however. Hopefully, the celebrations of the 500th anniversary of birth of Mikołaj Rej in 2005 will also bring significant events and, most of all, result in increasing interest in the work of the father of Polish literature.

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All collector coins are legal tender in Poland.