

● On **18 July 2012** the National Bank of Poland is putting into circulation coins commemorating Krzemionki Opatowskie, with the following face values:

**20 zł** struck in proof finish in silver  
(with striped flint),

**2 zł** struck in standard finish, in Nordic Gold.

## The National Bank of Poland

holds the exclusive right to issue the currency  
of the Republic of Poland.

In addition to **coins and notes for general circulation**,  
the NBP issues **collector coins and notes**.

Issuing collector items is an occasion to commemorate  
important historic figures and anniversaries, as well  
as to develop the interest of the public in Polish culture,  
science and tradition.

Since 1996, the NBP has also been issuing **occasional 2 złoty**  
coins, struck in **Nordic Gold**, for general circulation.

All coins and notes issued  
by the NBP are legal tender in Poland.

COINS ISSUED IN 2012 COINS ISSUED IN 2012

On **14 August 2012**, the National Bank of Poland  
will be putting into circulation a coin of the series  
“Polish ships” commemorating ORP “Orzeł”  
submarine, with the face value of **2 zł**.

Information on the issue schedule can be found at the  
[www.nbp.pl/monety](http://www.nbp.pl/monety)  
website.

Collector coins issued by the National Bank of Poland  
are sold in the Kolekcjoner service (Internet auction/Online shop)  
at the following website:  
[www.kolekcjoner.nbp.pl](http://www.kolekcjoner.nbp.pl)

 **KOLEKCJONER**

and at the NBP regional branches.

The coins were struck at the Mint of Poland in Warsaw.  
Edited and printed: NBP Printing Office

# NBP

National Bank of Poland

# COINS



MONUMENTS OF MATERIAL CULTURE IN POLAND

## Krzemionki Opatowskie





# Monuments of Material Culture in Poland: Krzemionki Opatowskie

● The prehistoric flint mine of Krzemionki Opatowskie is one of the most important historic sites in Poland, and without doubt the foremost Neolithic monument in Central Europe. It reveals a high level of technological achievement among the human communities that inhabited the Vistula Basin 5000 years ago, before the discovery of bronze and iron production. The landscape of the basin is altered by the visible traces of Neolithic mining activity.

● Krzemionki Opatowskie is located in the north eastern foreland of the Świętokrzyskie Mountains (the Holy Cross Mountains), near the town of Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski. The area's Jurassic limestone bedrock, hidden under later superficial deposits, contains nodules of striped flint, one of the most beautiful flint varieties to be found in Europe.

● Striped flint was mined in Krzemionki Opatowskie using various methods of extraction, the simplest being the sinking of regular pits 2 metres deep. The mine's unique historical value lies in the application of the most sophisticated Neolithic mining techniques. Shafts were dug through the Pleistocene formations and sunk through the limestone layers beneath. When the flint-bearing level was reached, low galleries about 60-90 cm in height were cut from the shaft base, usually at a depth of about 5 to 8 metres. The hard limestone enabled the rich striped flint seams to be followed by means of galleries expanding into low underground chambers. The subterranean workings could reach a distance of 20 metres from the shaft bottom and cover an area of several hundred square metres. The chambers

were filled with heaps of limestone rubble between which narrow passages were left to allow movement in and out of the workings.

● In the galleries were preserved some simple pictograms drawn on the walls using charcoal from the torches which gave light. The most outstanding of these is the so-called 'orante', a praying figure named from the Latin orare, to pray. Its meaning today is obscure, but it is likely that the image was related to the religious beliefs of the Neolithic miners.

● The underground chambers of Krzemionki Opatowskie represent the most advanced form of flint mining in prehistoric Europe. The hardness of the limestone enabled these to be hollowed out in order to extract the maximum amount of precious striped flint, for which there was a high demand. Their structure is a monument to the high level of technology employed in the European Neolithic.

● Each side of the 20 zł coin depicts part of one of the chambers with a standing limestone pillar. The obverse of the coin features the pillar in its present condition, while the reverse shows how it looked 30 years ago. The evident progressive erosion of the pillar emphasises the need for greater care of the site. Krzemionki Opatowskie deserves to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage list.

● The miners came to Krzemionki from nearby villages. They worked with picks of flint, stone and antler as well as hammers and levers. Wood and animal hide were also used in the making of mining tools.

● Striped flint extracted from Krzemionki Opatowskie was mainly used for making axe heads. These were the end product of workshops

within the mining area near the shafts, where the raw material was knapped. Part-finished axe heads were taken to villages located in the adjacent loess upland, where they were honed and provided with handles. Finished axes of striped flint were traded over an area stretching more than 600 km from the mine. They served as effective tools, weapons and powerful symbols of the social status of their owners. They were often buried in megalithic tombs as part of the equipment of men from communities belonging to the Globular Amphora culture.

● The Krzemionki mine was discovered on 19 July 1922 by a geologist, Jan Samsonowicz (1888-1959), in collaboration with the archaeologist Stefan Krukowski (1890-1982). Further research there has provided a picture of the practical knowledge, multiple skills, efficient organisation of labour and impressive scale of works undertaken by communities that lived 5000 years ago. Today, Krzemionki Opatowskie is the foremost monument of Central Europe's prehistoric heritage. Any archaeologist setting out to investigate it uncovers places that have barely changed since the last Neolithic miner left thousands of years ago.

**Professor Jacek Lech**  
**The Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology**  
**of the Polish Academy of Sciences**  
**Autonomous Unit for Prehistoric Flint Mining**

COINS ISSUED IN 2012 COINS ISSUED IN 2012 COINS ISSUED IN 2012 COINS ISSUED IN 2012 COINS ISSUED IN 2012 COINS ISSUED IN 2012 COINS ISSUED IN 2012



FACE VALUE **20** ZŁ

metal Ag 925/1000 and striped flint ■ finish proof ■ diameter 38.61 mm  
 weight 28.28 g ■ mintage up to 45,000 pcs

**OBVERSE:** On the left, an image of the Eagle, established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland against a stylised part of an extraction chamber in a Neolithic flint mine. Above the Eagle, the notation of the year of issue: 2012. To the right of the Eagle, the inscription: 20 ZŁ. At the bottom, an inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA/POLSKA [THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND]. The Mint mark, MW, below the Eagle, on the right.

**REVERSE:** At the bottom, an actual piece of striped flint, polished and set in a roundel, against a stylised fragment of an extraction chamber in a Neolithic flint mine. On the left, a stylised image of an antler pick. At the bottom, in a semicircle, the inscription: KRZEMIONKI OPATOWSKIE.

Coin designer: EWA TYC-KARPIŃSKA

FACE VALUE **2** ZŁ

metal CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy ■ finish standard ■ diameter 27.00 mm  
 weight 8.15 g ■ mintage up to 800,000 pcs

**OBVERSE:** An image of the Eagle, established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland. To either side of the Eagle, the notation of the year of issue: 20-12. Below the Eagle, an inscription: ZŁ 2 ZŁ. Following the rim, the inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA [THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND], preceded and followed by six pearls. The Mint mark, MW, below the Eagle, on the right.

**REVERSE:** Centrally a stylised image of an axe head of striped flint. Below, a range of stylised images of mining tools: a reconstructed pick with a striped flint head, an unhafted head of striped flint pick, an antler lever and a stone pick head. Below and to the left, the "orante": the schematic representation of a praying figure with arms outstretched, found in the mining workings. At the top, in a semicircle, the inscription: KRZEMIONKI OPATOWSKIE.

**ON THE EDGE:** The inscription NBP repeated eight times, every second one inverted by 180 degrees, separated by stars.

Coin designer: EWA TYC-KARPIŃSKA