

NBP

Money Centre
in memory of Sławomir S. Skrzypek

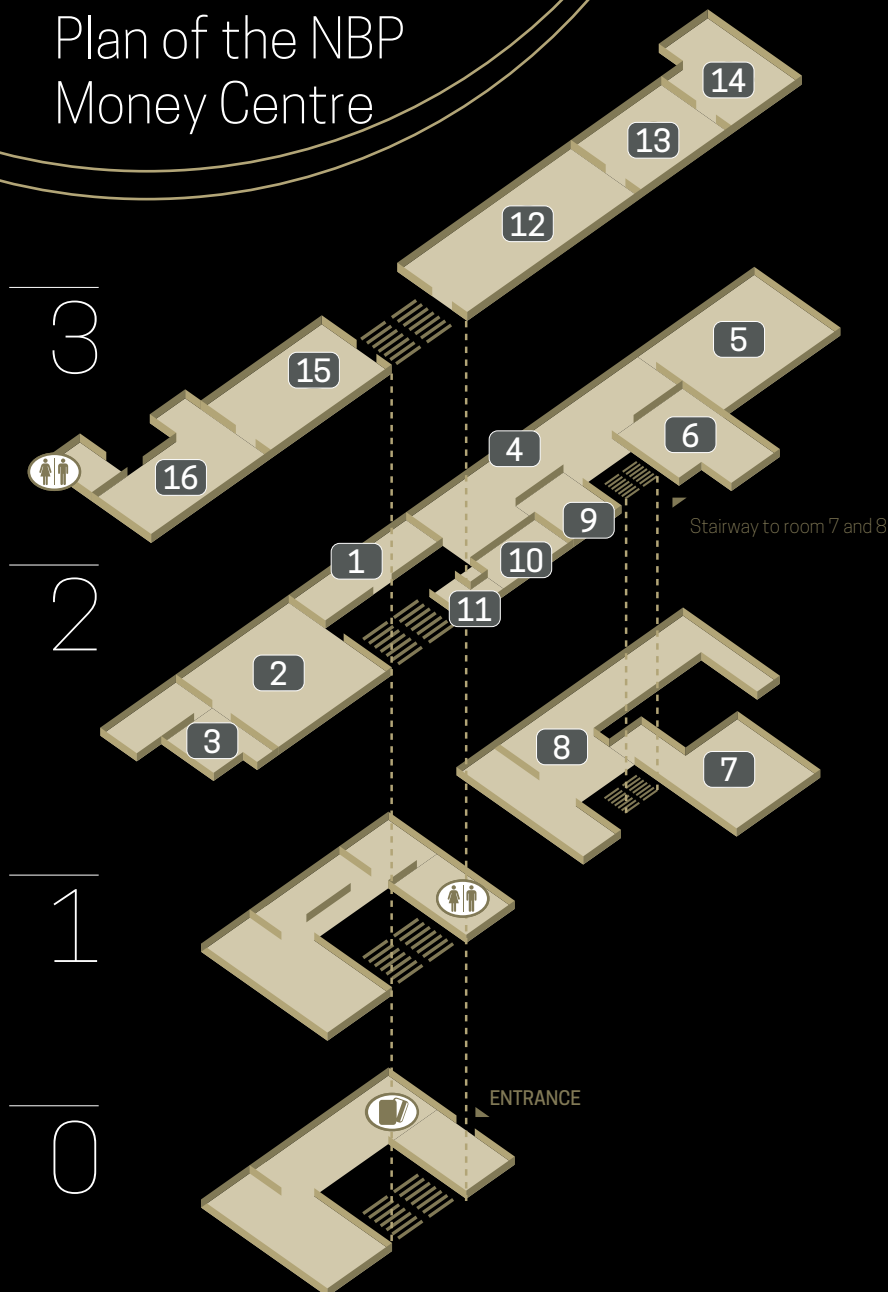
No 18
2019 Q2

Banknoteka

HISTORY • ECONOMY • EDUCATION



Plan of the NBP Money Centre




LEVEL 3

- 12** Stock Exchange and Financial Markets
- 13** Modern Payment Systems
- 14** Monetary and Economic Unions
- 15** Creator of Money and Money Production
- 16** Money in Art
-  Toilets

LEVEL 2

- 1** Encounters with Money
- 2** Antiquity-Middle Ages-Modernity
- 3** Monetary Systems
- 4** Bank Street
- 5** Central Bank
- 6** Numismatist's Study
- 9** World Wars I and II
- 10** Polish People's Republic
- 11** Fall of Communism

LEVEL 1

- 7** Laboratory of Authenticity
- 8** Vault
-  Toilets

LEVEL 0

-  Reception desk

Visit our website: www.nbp.pl/centrumpieniadza

Dear readers

The 100th anniversary of the rebirth of the Polish złoty, which is celebrated this year, is a good opportunity to recall the origins of this currency, which date back to the minting regulations of 1528. For the readers of "Bankoteka", we have prepared an article about the history of our Polish złoty (p. 8).

The year 1919 is an important date in the history of the Polish currency. After Poland regained independence in 1918, the country's political life gained momentum, which was followed by economic transformations. The restoration of a single Polish currency was the subject of a lively debate at the Legislative Sejm. In the article entitled "The Birth of the Polish złoty" in the *Education* section (p. 6) you can read why the name "złoty" was chosen for the monetary unit of independent Poland (instead of "lech", "piast", "pol" or "sarmata").

The history of the Polish złoty banknotes (1919–1924) – from their issue to their introduction into circulation – is both interesting and surprising. Some of the printed banknotes never actually became legal tender. Sometimes it was for a good reason, and sometimes it was due to... spelling errors (p. 23).

The banknotes printed in 1919 are presented on the front cover of this edition of "Bankoteka". Meanwhile, on the back cover we present a shiny silver 10 złoty coin issued by Narodowy Bank Polski in connection with this year's 100th anniversary of the recognition of the Polish złoty as the national currency.

On this occasion, the Collection Management Team of the NBP Money Centre prepared an exhibition of collector coins from the years 1995–2019. In the article, we present the most interesting numismatic series of Narodowy Bank Polski and we reveal some of our secrets about the artistic techniques and the materials thanks to which these coins are genuine works of art.

We would like to invite all those interested in exploring the history of the Polish currency with the Education Team to visit the NBP Money Centre. Starting from this year, during the tour of the exhibition our guests will be able to use audiobooks in Polish and English language versions, and to take advantage of new educational programmes which include elements of games that are especially attractive to younger visitors.

Enjoy your reading!

The editorial team of "Bankoteka"

Education

The rebirth of the Polish złoty

pp. 5-7

The Polish złoty

- a guide to the exhibition

pp. 8-11

**New educational programmes
at the NBP Money Centre**

pp. 12-13



The rebirth of the Polish złoty

On 5 February 1919, the Chief of State Józef Piłsudski issued a decree which stated that the monetary unit of the newly reborn Polish Republic would be called “lech”. Why, then, was the Polish mark ultimately replaced by the Polish złoty, and why were Polish złoty banknotes, with a date of issue of 28 February 1919, only put into circulation in April 1924? Were these banknotes actually issued by Bank Polski SA (the Bank of Poland)? And finally, who were the people whose signatures are found on these banknotes?

Along with the rebirth of the Polish State it became necessary to introduce a single currency on the entire territory of the Republic of Poland. This issue was the subject of a lively debate. The submitted proposals included names such as “piast”, “pol” and “sarmata”. The aforementioned decree of the Chief of State determined that the new Polish currency would be named “lech”. The initiative to name the Polish currency “lech” came from a Poznań-based banker, Józef English, who served as the minister of the State Treasury in the cabinet of Ignacy Paderewski. But before English became the minister of the State Treasury in the government of the independent Polish Republic, he held this position in the crucial period between October and November of 1918, in the cabinet appointed by the Regency Council. On 11 November, together with Stanisław Karpiński, he took over the management of

the Polish Loan Bank (Polska Krajowa Kasa Pożyczkowa) on behalf of the Polish authorities. That institution was the bank of issue that introduced Polish marks into circulation in April 1917.

Minister English appointed Stanisław Karpiński, an experienced banker from the Russian partition, as the managing director of the Polish Loan Bank. Together with Zygmunt Chamiec, who was employed at the Polish Loan Bank from the beginning, they were to manage the bank during the transition period, until its liquidation. Pursuant to the decree of the Chief of State of 7 December 1918, the Polish Loan Bank was granted the status of the only institution entitled to issue the Polish currency until the Sejm passed the Act on Bank Polski SA. In the meantime, new banknotes, which had been printed before



Stanisław Karpiński
Photo: Wikipedia Commons



Zygmunt Chamiec
Photo: Wikipedia Commons



Józef English
Photo: Wikipedia Commons

11 November 1918, were being successfully introduced into circulation, until their stocks accumulated in the vault at Bielańska Street were depleted. The first issue of “new” Polish marks, for the amount of 500 million, went into circulation in March 1919. They differed from the previous issue of the banknotes, as they included the following declaration: “The Polish State assumes the responsibility for exchanging this note for the future Polish currency”. These banknotes carry the signatures of Stanisław Karpiński and Zygmunt Chamiec.

The elections to the Legislative Sejm were held in late January of 1919. The first meeting of the parliament was convened on 10 February and also in February the budget and fiscal committee chaired by Antoni Rząd addressed the issue of the Polish currency. The preparation and printing of banknotes that would replace the Polish marks was deemed to be an urgent task. On this occasion, the issue of the official name of the currency was brought up. The parliamentary committee determined that the decree issued two weeks earlier, “in a hurry”, had to be changed. The chairman of the committee, who presented the committee’s position during a plenary session of the Sejm, referred to the tradition and the “preferences” concerning the name of the Polish currency prevailing among the public. Minister English had no choice but to accept the voice of the majority. Given the fact that the traditions and preferences brought up during the parliamentary debate – which were invoked by Antoni Rząd, who came from the Russian partition – only applied to the residents of the territories of the former Congress Kingdom of Poland (the złoty was withdrawn from circulation in 1851), the decision of the parliamentary majority could be seen as a sign of political upheaval, which led to a change in the position of the Minister of the State Treasury.

English became the Minister of the State Treasury because he had been a director of the Bank of the Association of Commercial Companies (Bank Związku Spółek Zarobkowych) since 1911. He represented the financial circles of the Wielkopolska region, which was relatively

the least affected by war damage. In exchange for the loans granted to the “centrist” government of Paderewski, Poznań-based banks secured some influence over the selection of the personnel for the economic ministries. However, the balance of power changed with the creation of the Legislative Sejm. The chairmanship of the budgetary and fiscal committee was taken over by Dr Antoni Rząd, a member of the strongest parliamentary group – the People’s National Union, a cooperative activist and the President of the Main Management Board of the Bank of Cooperative Societies (Bank Towarzystw Spółdzielczych). Like Stanisław Karpiński, he had been a member of the Council of the Capital City of Warsaw starting from 1916. On his initiative, on 28 February 1919 the Polish Sejm adopted a law changing the name of the Polish currency. The draft legislation did not spark controversy. The adoption of the law made it possible for the government to commission the preparation of designs and the printing of the Polish złoty banknotes.

The banknotes were printed at printing houses in France and England. In the next stage of the preparations for the replacement of the Polish marks with the Polish złoty, the Act on Bank Polski SA was to be submitted to the Polish Sejm. However, before that happened, in April Stanisław Karpiński replaced minister Józef English. The Minister of Internal Affairs Stanisław Wojciechowski (Poland’s subsequent president), who headed the government’s work in the absence of Prime Minister Paderewski, offered the position of the minister of the State Treasury to Karpiński. Karpiński pledged that he would quickly submit a draft Act on Bank Polski SA to the Polish Sejm and that he would carry out the replacement of the Polish marks with the Polish złoty. However, the fundamental problem that Paderewski’s government



Chief of State Józef Piłsudski and Prime Minister Ignacy Jan Paderewski on the way to a meeting of the Legislative Sejm (January 1919).
Photo: Wikipedia Commons



Meeting of the cabinet of Ignacy Jan Paderewski (February 1919).
Photo: Wikipedia Commons

had to face was securing the funds for the ongoing functioning of the Polish state. The needs resulting from the ongoing military struggle for the borders, but also the necessity of financing the urgent and unplanned expenditure adopted by the Sejm, forced the government to take out subsequent loans at the Polish Loan Bank.

In spring 1919, there was neither a unified fiscal apparatus nor a uniform tax system in Poland. Three different currencies remained in circulation in the Polish territories. The Sejm was involved in discussions concerning an agricultural reform, and the costs arising from the military activities and the reconstruction of the country from the wartime damage were growing rapidly. In May minister Karpiński discussed the draft Act on Bank Polski SA at the Polish Sejm. According to that plan, only 30% of the Polish marks in circulation would be exchanged for the Polish złoty. The remaining 70% would constitute a loan granted to the State Treasury – which the government would repay in the subsequent years. In accordance with the presented draft, Bank Polski SA would be a state bank. Karpiński initially planned to base the new Polish monetary unit on the Swiss franc. As it was impossible to obtain an external loan, Karpiński assumed that the new currency would be backed by the metallic ore reserves successively gathered as a result of donations to the State Treasury. Unfortunately, these donations were not growing at a satisfactory rate. In mid-July Karpiński concluded that it would not be possible to peg the value of the Polish złoty to the Swiss franc. Therefore, when discussing the situation of the national budget at the Sejm, he announced the exchange of Polish marks for Polish złoty at the ratio of 1:1. He noted in his diary that for some time to come the budget deficit would have to be financed with the issue of money, which would lead to the depreciation of the Polish złoty. Meanwhile, the budgetary expenditure was growing rapidly. It was only in June that the government submitted to the Sejm a provisional budget plan for the second half of the year. The MPs claimed that the government did not care enough about ensuring budget revenue, but minister

Karpiński responded that higher revenue would only be guaranteed by economic growth. During the debate on the budget, both the opposition groups and the coalition supporting Paderewski's government fiercely criticized the government's economic policy. The initiatives submitted by the minister of the State Treasury were dropped from the agenda.

Karpiński resigned on 30 July, as it became impossible to continue work on the prepared drafts in the Sejm. His successor, and the last minister of the State Treasury in the cabinet of Ignacy Paderewski, was Leon Biliński, an experienced politician from the region of Galicia, who prioritized the unification of the currency situation throughout Polish territory. For this purpose, the new minister commissioned the printing of Polish mark banknotes in Vienna, while the government abandoned the plans to replace the Polish marks with Polish złoty. Stanisław Karpiński was once again appointed as director of the Bank of Cooperative Societies, and in February 1920 he became the president of the Association of Banks in Poland. In 1922, he became a senator as a candidate of the People's National Union in the Łódź region. During his work in parliament he also supported the projects prepared by Władysław Grabski, going against the position held by his party. In 1923 he participated in meetings organized by President Wojciechowski, whose objective was to prepare the fiscal and currency reforms. Prime Minister Grabski appointed Karpiński as the chairman of the Organizing Committee of Bank Polski SA and the president of the Supervisory Board of the Polish Loan Bank. On 29 March 1924, the President of the Republic of Poland Stanisław Wojciechowski appointed Stanisław Karpiński as the president of Bank Polski SA. On 28 April 1924, Bank Polski SA commenced the exchange of Polish marks for Polish złotys at the rate of 1,800,000 marks per 1 złoty. Banknotes printed in 1919 and 1920 were introduced into circulation. On these banknotes, alongside the signature of Stanisław Karpiński, there is also the signature of Zygmunt Chamiec, who was no longer involved in banking at that time (1924).

From the perspective of the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining its independence, the disputes and discussions concerning the Polish currency that took place in the first months of the existence of the state may seem surprising. In the government of Ignacy Jan Paderewski, the position of the Minister of the State Treasury was subsequently occupied by the representatives of the financial and economic circles of the Wielkopolska region (English), the former Russian partition (Karpiński) and the former Austrian partition (Biliński). Over time, as the economic crisis deepened, the differences in the views held by the representatives of the individual partitions had become blurred. One of Stanisław Karpiński's achievements was undoubtedly the fact that he brought back the institutions of the Polish złoty and Bank Polski SA, which obtained a new, contemporary shape in 1924, over time becoming a symbol of the success of the reborn Polish Republic.

■ Mateusz Sora

100 years ago the Polish złoty once again became the official currency of independent Poland

The NBP Money Centre is an inexhaustible, constantly supplemented source of information about the Polish złoty. The most interesting exhibits are located in the rooms presented below.

Room: Antiquity – Middle Ages – Modernity

The “grosz” coins

For us the złoty and the grosz are inextricably linked. But it's worth knowing that **grosz coins** were known throughout Europe before the Polish złoty ever appeared. They were initially used in the 12th century in Italy. The so-called “Prague groschen” were particularly popular in Poland, and in the 14th century **King Casimir the Great** became the first Polish king to mint grosz coins – as well as smaller coins worth half or a quarter of a grosz – at the mint in Kraków.



The “half-grosz” coin of King Casimir the Great, struck at the mint in Kraków, silver
NBP collections

The “półkopek” coins (half-threescore coins) of King Sigismund Augustus

The monetary unit known as the **Polish złoty** was originally defined during the reign of King **Sigismund the Elder**, in the minting regulations of 1528. One złoty was equivalent to 30 grosz. However, it only served as a unit of account –



The “półkopek” coin (half-threescore coin) of King Sigismund Augustus, struck at the mint in Wilno, silver
NBP collections

there were no coins of such value. The złoty was used as a “common denominator”, for example, in calculations of the amounts of due taxes or the salaries due to the soldiers, which were then paid in other coins. Coins with a value of **30 grosz** were first struck by King Sigismund Augustus, but they were produced at the Lithuanian mint, which is why

historians are still debating whether they could be considered the first Polish złoty coins. These coins were known as the “półkopek” coins (half-threescore coins) – a threescore means 60, and the coin corresponded to the value of half a threescore – 30 grosz coins.

The “tymf” coins of King John Casimir Vasa

Another example of coins with a face value of 30 groszy are the infamous tymf coins – minted during the reign of King John Casimir Vasa, from 1663 to 1666. They emerged in a period that was very difficult for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The country had been ravaged by the wars with Russia, Turkey and Sweden, and by the Khmelnytsky Uprising.



The “tymf” coin of King John Casimir, struck at the mint in Bydgoszcz, silver
NBP collections

At the time, there was a shortage of metallic ore, and because of that, despite the face value of 30 grosz, the **tymf** coins contained little silver – equivalent to just 12 grosz. Their emergence in circulation deepened the country's economic problems. Their name was derived from the surname of Andrzej Tymf, who was leasing the crown mints and was responsible for producing these coins.

Room: Numismatist's Study

The Polish złotych of King Stanisław August Poniatowski

King Stanisław August Poniatowski reformed the coin minting system in Poland. The new system was based on the Polish złoty, which was a silver coin and was divided into 30 copper grosz or 4 silver grosz. For the first time in history, the coins carried the abbreviation “**zł**” denoting their name, and the grosz coins made of bronze were the first ones in history to only carry inscriptions in Polish.



Thaler of King Stanisław August with a value of 6 złotych
NBP collections

The golden Polish złotych

Despite the fact that Poland lost its independence, the Polish złoty was still issued for several decades, up until 1841. One interesting historical artefact associated with this are the gold coins from the first half of the 19th century, with face values of 25 and 50 złotych, carrying the image of the Russian Tsar Alexander, who was also the king of Poland at

that time. They were known as the single and double royal złotych. These were the first Polish złoty coins made of gold. Another example of unique numismatic items from this period are the silver coins with the face value expressed in two currencies, the ruble and the złoty.



Coins with a face value of 25 and 50 złotych,
struck in gold
NBP collections

Room: Central Bank

The first Polish paper złotych

For Poland, the late 18th century was a period of gradual loss of independence. The Kościuszko Uprising was the last effort that was supposed to prevent this outcome. The insurrection also played a role in the history of the Polish złoty, because the insurrectionary authorities decided to issue **Polish złotych in paper form** for the first time in history. These were not banknotes, but Treasury notes, as they were not issued by a bank, but by the Board of Treasury Notes established specifically for this purpose. It was planned that after the uprising the notes



Treasury notes from the days of the Kościuszko Uprising
NBP collections

would be exchanged for silver coins obtained due to the sale of state property.

The insurrectionary złotych

During the November Uprising (in 1831), Bank Polski SA (the Bank of Poland), i.e. the first Polish central bank and the issuer of Polish złotych, joined the struggle for independence. At that time it issued coins and banknotes with the coats-of-arms of Poland and Lithuania, referring to the traditions of coins of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. A characteristic green-coloured **banknote with a face value of 1 złotych** was then put into circulation. In theory each banknote could be exchanged for bullion



Banknote with a face value of 1 zł, with a signature of the director of Bank Polski SA H. Łubieński
NBP collections

coins, but in reality Bank Polski SA did not have enough metallic ore to do that. These banknotes were withdrawn from circulation in December 1832 and are currently seen as rare collector's items.

The Polish złoty – rebirth

The Polish złoty disappeared from circulation in 1841. Its reappearance was associated with the regaining of independence by Poland. Along with the rebirth of the Polish state in 1918 and the integration of the previously partitioned lands, which had been a part of three different state organisms, it was necessary to introduce a single currency on the entire territory of the Republic of Poland. Already on 28 February of 1919 the Legislative Sejm adopted a law pursuant to which the future Polish currency was named “złoty” (golden).

The Polish złoty enters into circulation

In January 1924 the government of Władysław Gąbiski carried out monetary and fiscal reforms

which defined, among others, the principles of the monetary system and the framework of functioning of the central bank. The most noticeable symbol of the introduced changes was the replacement of the Polish mark with the Polish złoty. The currency was issued by the newly established central bank – **Bank Polski SA**. The Polish banknotes and coins were designed by prominent artists: Józef Mehoffer, Wacław Borowski, Edward Witting and Tadeusz Breyer.

The Polish złoty on the Polish National Register of the UNESCO Memory Of The World Programme

The authorities of the reborn Polish Republic pursued a consistent policy. On the new money they depicted figures symbolizing the struggle for independence (Tadeusz Kościuszko, Prince Józef Poniatowski, Emilia Plater) and recalled important events from Polish history (the coronation of King Boleslaus the Brave, the adoption of the Constitution of the 3rd of May). In 2018 the Polish monetary unit ZŁOTY – a set of coins, coin patterns and banknote designs – was entered on the list of the UNESCO Memory Of The World Programme.

Room: Laboratory of Authenticity

Protecting banknotes against counterfeiting

At present, there are 2.2 million pieces of Polish złoty banknotes in circulation, with a total value of PLN 214.4 million (NBP data for the fourth quarter of 2018). Counterfeit banknotes are very rare among them – as the issuer of Polish złoty, NBP makes sure that the banknotes are properly protected against counterfeiting. Some of the security features can be seen with the naked eye, such as cotton fibres in the paper, the watermark, the security thread, special ink, and the security thread. There are also ones that are only visible under UV light or in infrared light. In this room visitors can learn about all the security features, view examples of counterfeit banknotes, and become acquainted with the methods used to determine the authenticity of banknotes.



Banknote designed by Józef Mehoffer
NBP collections



Set of coins and banknotes entered on the list of the UNESCO Memory Of The World Programme.
NBP collections



Laboratory of Authenticity at the NBP Money Centre
Photo: Krzysztof Słomka

Room: Fall of Communism

Redenomination

The second half of the 1980s and the early 1990s were a time of rising inflation, growing faces values of the banknotes, and the withdrawal of coins from use. The 2,000,000

zł banknote with Ignacy Jan Paderewski had the highest face value in the “Great Poles” series of banknotes which was in circulation at that time. Once the excessive inflation was brought under control, a decision was made to **redenominate** the currency – at the time people used to say that the złoty lost four zeros. On 1 January 1995 new banknotes from the “Polish rulers” series went into circulation. Until 2016, the 200 złoty banknote with King Sigismund the Elder had the highest face value in that series. In 2017 the series was expanded to include the 500 zł banknote with King John III Sobieski.



Collector coins commemorating the regaining of Polish independence and the rebirth of the Polish złoty
NBP collections



Pre-redomination banknotes and the corresponding new coins and banknotes
Photo: Krzysztof Słomka

Room: Creators and the production of money

Collector Coins

Narodowy Bank Polski holds the exclusive rights to issue the currency of the Republic of Poland – **the złoty and the grosz**, including collector coins and banknotes.

In 2018, in connection with the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining its independence, NBP issued commemorative

silver and gold spherical coins. They carry a quote from the national anthem of Poland: “Jeszcze Polska Nie Zginęła, Kiedy My Żyjemy” (Poland Has Not Yet Perished, So Long As We Still Live) and the images of the reverse sides of three coins: the 5 zł coin from 1928 with the figure of the Greek goddess of victory Nike, a trial coin with a face value of 100 zł from 1966 with the image of Mieszko I and Dąbrówka, and a contemporary circulation coin with a face value of 1 zł.

In 2019 Narodowy Bank Polski commemorated the 100th anniversary of the rebirth of the Polish złoty with the exceptional issues of sets of coins with face values of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 grosz and 1, 2, 5 złoty, minted in silver and gold.

Collector banknotes

Collector banknotes are issued on the occasion of important events or to commemorate exceptional persons, authority figures, and their role in the history of Poland and the Polish people. Narodowy Bank Polski has so far issued **10 collector banknotes**. You can see all of them at the NBP Money Centre. The latest collector banknote, which commemorates the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining its independence, is especially worthy of attention.

The first Polish collector banknote was a 50 złoty banknote with the image of John Paul II, issued in 2006, on the 28th anniversary of the election of Karol Wojtyła as Pope. In 2011 Narodowy Bank Polski issued a collector banknote with the face value of 20 złoty commemorating the 100th anniversary of the awarding of the Nobel Prize to Marie Skłodowska-Curie. Meanwhile, in 2016, on the 1050th anniversary of the baptism of Poland, NBP issued a banknote with the image of the first historical ruler of Poland – Prince Mieszko I and his wife, the Czech princess Dobrawa

■ Marta Dulinić



Collector banknotes issued by Narodowy Bank Polski
NBP collections

Educational novelties

We are constantly expanding the educational programme of the NBP Money Centre with new elements and methods of animation, intended for various groups of recipients.

At the beginning of 2019, we prepared two new offers for individual visitors. We are also introducing two new topics of classes for school groups.

1. Audio tours – permanent offer for individual visitors

A visit at the NBP Money Centre is a great way to spend your free time. In order to meet the expectations of our guests, we have prepared audio tours of the exhibition. One tour path is dedicated to adults who are visiting the exhibition on their own, while the other is intended for a special category of guests – families with children. Both of the audio tours are based on good navigation. The visitor does not feel lost even though they are in a given place for the first time. The recorded voice of the reader leads them just as well as a real guide.

Meanwhile, the family path resembles a radio play, with the participation of various characters: a numismatist, a guard, an archaeologist. Thanks to a perfectly prepared recording and an accessible script, even the difficult issues presented at the exhibition are easy to understand.

The individual interests of our guests play an important role during the tour of the exhibition. For this reason, the audio tour for adults not only follows a fixed route, but also allows the guests to take a detour in accordance with their own interests, and to then return to the main touring route. The narration has been synchronized with the videos and the multimedia presentations – as a result the audio guide becomes a comprehensive tool for individual touring. The reader speaks in a plain and intelligible

language. This is a fragment of the narration in the “Central Bank” room:

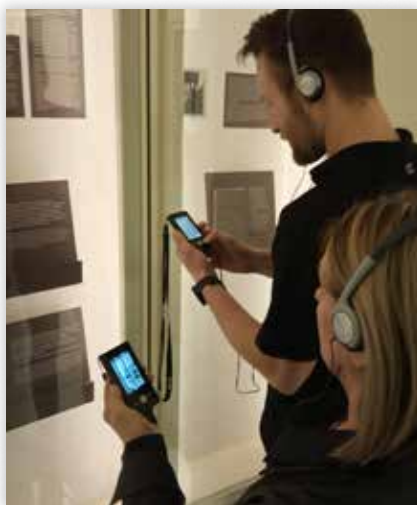
And here let's stop by the showcase with a large photograph of a man on a horse. This gentleman is Władysław Grabski, who is referred to as the father of the Polish złoty. In 1924, as the prime minister and minister of the State Treasury, he carried out a currency reform which saved Poland from bankruptcy. How did that happen?

This is the explanation that can be heard from the audio guide recording:

In 1918, after regaining independence, Poland was in a very difficult economic condition for

several years. The currency that still remained in circulation was the so-called Polish mark, inherited from Germany, one of the former partitioning powers. However, it was losing value with each passing year, which ultimately led to hyperinflation.

Grabski turned out to be a real saviour in this situation. He started improving the state finances by balancing the budget. The next step was the introduction of the Polish złoty, which was issued by the newly established central bank, known as Bank Polski SA (the Bank of Poland). The value of the Polish złoty was equal to the Swiss franc and corresponded to 290.32 milligrams of pure gold. One dollar was worth 5 złoty and 18 groszy.



The audio guides allow the visitors to explore the exhibition independently, according to their own interests
Photo: NBP

2. Educational game – a special offer for individual visitors

The educational game is yet another element of our offer that could make the tour of the NBP Money Centre more attractive for adults. The game is intended for individual visitors – combined into small groups of 2 to 5 people. We will be organizing the game on special days, for example, during the Night of the Museums, during the winter holidays, and during the summer holidays. Information on this topic will be made available at the NBP Money Centre website.

The game allows our guests to tour the NBP Money Centre in a completely new way, and guarantees a lot of emotions. During the course of the game, five “agents” appear at the exhibition (these roles will be played by our animators). Each team has to find them and solve the task that they prepared – arrange the path



The “półkopek” coin, the tymf coin and the klippe coin – the participants of the educational “three cups” game acquire information about all of these coins
Photo: NBP

to the central bank’s tasks, identify a slump on the stock market, or beat the animator in a “three cups” game. The participants must remain vigilant, searching for the answers to the tricky questions in the exhibition. And all that takes place under the pressure of time. At the end, the participants have to calculate the collected points, check how many “stars” they earned and collect their prize.

3. “The central bank” – a permanent offer of classes for school groups

“The central bank” consists of lessons conducted by animators in selected rooms of the NBP Money Centre. They are intended for organized groups – students of secondary schools.

Thanks to these classes, the students are able to learn about the basic functions of the central bank and the origins of this institution in the world. They become acquainted with Narodowy Bank Polski and learn the meaning of its most important motto “We protect the value of money”. During the classes, we put a lot of emphasis on explaining the role of the NBP bodies and the tasks performed by the bank’s individual departments.

During the classes we utilize the information gathered in rooms such as “Antiquity - Middle Ages - Modernity”, “Monetary Systems”, “Central Bank” and “Vault”. The students not only listen to the animator, they also have to independently search for information by analysing the exhibits and the multimedia content. They are aided in their efforts by the worksheets prepared specifically for this purpose. The scenario of the classes was prepared by an experienced teacher and animator of the NBP Money Centre, Iwona Szymańska-Jasińska (in cooperation with the NBP Money Centre Education Team).

4. The history of the Polish złoty – classes for school groups, recommended on the 100th anniversary of the rebirth of the Polish złoty

“The history of the Polish złoty” consists of classes conducted by animators in selected rooms of the NBP Money Centre. They are intended for organized groups – students of secondary schools.

The classes allow the students to travel back in time, following in the footsteps of

the Polish currency, from the time of its birth to the redenomination of 1995. This is a good opportunity to broaden the knowledge acquired at school during history lessons and to notice, that the condition of the money can say a lot about the political and economic condition of Poland in various historical periods.

During the classes, the participants visit the following rooms: “Antiquity - Middle Ages - Modernity”, “Numismatist’s Study”, “Central Bank”, “Creator of Money and Money Production”. The students have the opportunity to learn about the most interesting exhibits related to the topic of the lesson and to solve tasks on special worksheets. Has the Polish złoty always been divided into 100 grosz? Which coin marked the “the beginning of the calamities upon the kingdom”? When did paper money appear in Poland? How did people deal with the lack of raw materials for the production of coins? Students can find the answers to these and other questions by participating in “The history of the Polish złoty” classes. The scenario of the classes was prepared by the NBP Money Centre Education Team

■ *Marta Dulinicz,
Katarzyna M. Rokosz,
Adam Skręta*



Worksheet for the classes: The history of the Polish złoty
Photo: NBP

Exhibits

NBP collector coins on the 100th anniversary of the Polish złoty

A cross-sectional exhibition **pp. 15-19**



New permanent exhibition of coins Collector coins issued by NBP in the years 1995–2019

So far, the achievements of Narodowy Bank Polski in the issuance of collector coins have only been presented in catalogues. Now the Collection Management Team of the NBP Money Centre decided to present the majority of the collector coins from the years 1995–2019 at an exhibition which can be viewed at the NBP head office. The occasion for this was the 100th anniversary of the rebirth of the Polish złoty, falling on 28 February 2019.

The exhibition includes collector coins issued by Narodowy Bank Polski in the years 1995–2019. It provides a great opportunity to become acquainted with the richness of the designs, forms and themes of contemporary Polish collector coins, the total number of which is now close to 500. Out of the series of coins issued in the indicated period, the following series were selected for the exhibition: “John Paul II”, “Polish kings and princes”, “Culture and art”, “People”, “Institutions”, “Heroes and anniversaries”, “Events”, “Animals of the World”. The exhibition also includes unique coins with unusual face values or mintage, such as:

- the gold coin from 2009, issued on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the death of Fr. Jerzy Popiełuszko, with a unique face



value of 37 zł, indicating the age of Father Jerzy at the time of his death;

- a coin commemorating the beatification of Pope John Paul II, with a face value of 1000 zł;
- coins issued in 2018 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining its independence, including:

– a commemorative coin executed in the standard of circulation coins, with the face value of 5 zł, carrying the inscription: “The 100th anniversary of Poland regaining its independence”, with total mintage of 38,424,000 pieces – a symbolic figure corresponding to the number of Polish citizens;





- a gold spherical coin with a face value of 2018 zł, with a total mintage of 100 pieces;
- a silver spherical coin with a face value of 100 zł, with a total mintage of 1918 pieces.

The exhibition also presents the outstanding sets of gold and silver coins with the face values 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 grosz and 1, 2, 5 złoty. These coins were issued by Narodowy Bank Polski in 2019 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Polish złoty as the national currency of Poland.

The series of commemorative coins issued by NBP:

■ Concluded:

- The History of the Polish złoty (2004-2007)
- History of the Polish Cavalry (2006-2011)
- Coats-of-arms of the Polish voivodeships (2004-2005)

- Historical Cities in Poland (2005-2008)
- Cities and towns in Poland (2009-2011)
- Polish Kings and Princes (1979-2005)
- The Polish Calendar of Traditional Customs and Rituals (2001-2006)
- Polish ships (2012-2013)
- Environmental protection (1977-1986)
- Polish Soldiers on the Fronts of the Second World War (1989-1995)



- Commanders of the Home Army (1990-1998)

■ Commenced:

- History of Polish Coin (in 2013)
- History of Polish Popular Music (in 2009)
- Discover Poland (in 2014)
- Polish Road to Freedom (in 1996)
- Polish Painters of the 19th and 20th Centuries (in 2002)
- Polish Travelers and Explorers (in 1997)

- Polish Football Clubs (in 2011)
- The Polish Thermopylae (in 2017)
- Treasures of King Stanislaw August (in 2013)
- 100th Anniversary of Regaining Independence by Poland (in 2015)
- The Great Polish Economists (in 2017)
- Great battles (in 2010)
- The Enduring Soldiers Accursed by the Communists (in 2017)

- Monuments of Material Culture in Poland (formerly: Castles and Palaces in Poland) (in 1975)
- Animals of the World (in 1993)
- Narodowy Bank Polski issues commemorative coins to honour important events, figures and historical anniversaries associated, among other things, with the world of culture, science, art, sports and nature. Collector coins currently issued include:





10 zł coin

Topic: The Legislative Sejm of 1919-1922

The latest exhibit at the exhibition of collector coins is a silver 10 zł coin issued by NBP on the 100th anniversary of the restoration of the Polish złoty.

In 2019 we celebrate the 100th anniversary of creation of the Legislative Sejm, the first parliament of independent Poland. It consolidated the lands previously controlled by the partitioning powers and created the foundations of the political system of the newly reborn Polish Republic – a modern democracy based on the principle of the tripartite separation of powers. The Legislative Sejm also adopted the constitution of 17 March 1921.

The obverse of the coin depicts two emblems on the background of the Polish flag – the emblem of the Republic of Poland from the years 1919-1927 and Poland's contemporary emblem. In the central part of the coin, between the images of the eagles, there is the Latin inscription: *Salus Rei Publicae Suprema Lex* ("the Good of the Republic is the Supreme Law"), which was the motto of the Polish Sejm of the Second Republic.

On the reverse the coin carries a portrait of the speaker of the Legislative Sejm, Wojciech Trąpczyński, and the image of his speaker's staff, funded by the members of the parliament. The head of the staff depicts a ship on rough sea waves (the symbol of the state). Its mast is topped with a crowned eagle sitting in an oak wreath – the symbol of victory

■ NBP/Cash and Issue Department

- **collector coins** made of precious metals – gold or silver,
- **circulation coins** with a face value of 5 zł, whose ring is made of the MN 25 alloy and whose core is made of the CuAl6Ni2 alloy.

Narodowy Bank Polski no longer issues commemorative coins with a face value of 2 zł, made of the Nordic Gold alloy. The last coin of this kind was put into circulation in April 2014.

Often, in order to make the coins more attractive, they are subjected to additional processes, decorated with various materials, or minted in an unusual shape. For example, amber was first used on a 20 zł coin entitled "The Amber Road", zirconium was used on a 20 zł coin entitled "Carolers", glass was used on a 10 zł coin entitled "400th Anniversary of Polish Settlement in North America", ceramics were used on a 20 zł coin entitled "Malbork Castle", and flint was used on a 20 zł coin entitled "The Flint Mine of Krzemionki Opatowskie". Collector coins may also be adorned with prints executed in the pad printing technique, like in the case of the 20 zł coins from the series entitled "Polish Painters of the 19th and 20th Centuries", as well as enamel paintings, like the 10 and 20 zł coins issued on the 20th anniversary of the "Solidarity" Trade Union. Some coins also carry printed hologram images, like the 20 zł coins entitled "St. John's Night".





The visual attractiveness of the coins is also enhanced with the use of special effects:

- latent image, used for the first time on a 2 zł coin “The Year 2000” (depending on the viewing angle, we see the moon and stars and the indication of the year 2000, or the sun and the indication of the year 2001)
- oxidation, used in the minting of the 20 zł coin entitled “The Amber Road” (the coin is covered by a thin layer of oxides, thanks to which it obtained a matte, dark grey colour)
- the use of unusual coin shapes:
 - square-shaped 20 zł coin “John Paul II – 25th anniversary of pontificate” from 2002;
 - lens-shaped 10 zł coin issued on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Warsaw University of Technology;
- a round hole in the central part of the coin (2 zł coin – “10 Years of The Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity”);
- plating, used on a 10 zł coin “XXVIII Olympic Games – Athens 2004” (the core of the obverse side and the ring of the reverse side are covered with a thin layer of gold)

- polishing of fragments of the coin – 10 zł coins “Great Battles – Grunwald, Kłuszyn”
- microprint, used for the first time used on a 10zł coin “100th anniversary of the birth of Jan Karłowicz”, issued in 2014 (microscopic print, often illegible and indiscernible to the naked eye, only visible at high magnification).

Due to the value of the materials used in the production of collector coins, their issue price is higher than their face value. On the other hand the 5 zł coins are exchanged at par value, which means that one commemorative coin with a face value of 5 zł can be bought for 5 zł. Please note that all commemorative coins issued by Narodowy Bank Polski are legal tender in Poland. Their purchasing power is determined by the denomination placed on the obverse. However, regardless of the denomination, these coins have their collectible value, which is determined by the numismatic market.

■ Marlena Koter

Source:
www.nbp.pl
 NBP’s numismatic collections

The history of one coin, or the unusual denarius of Mieszko.

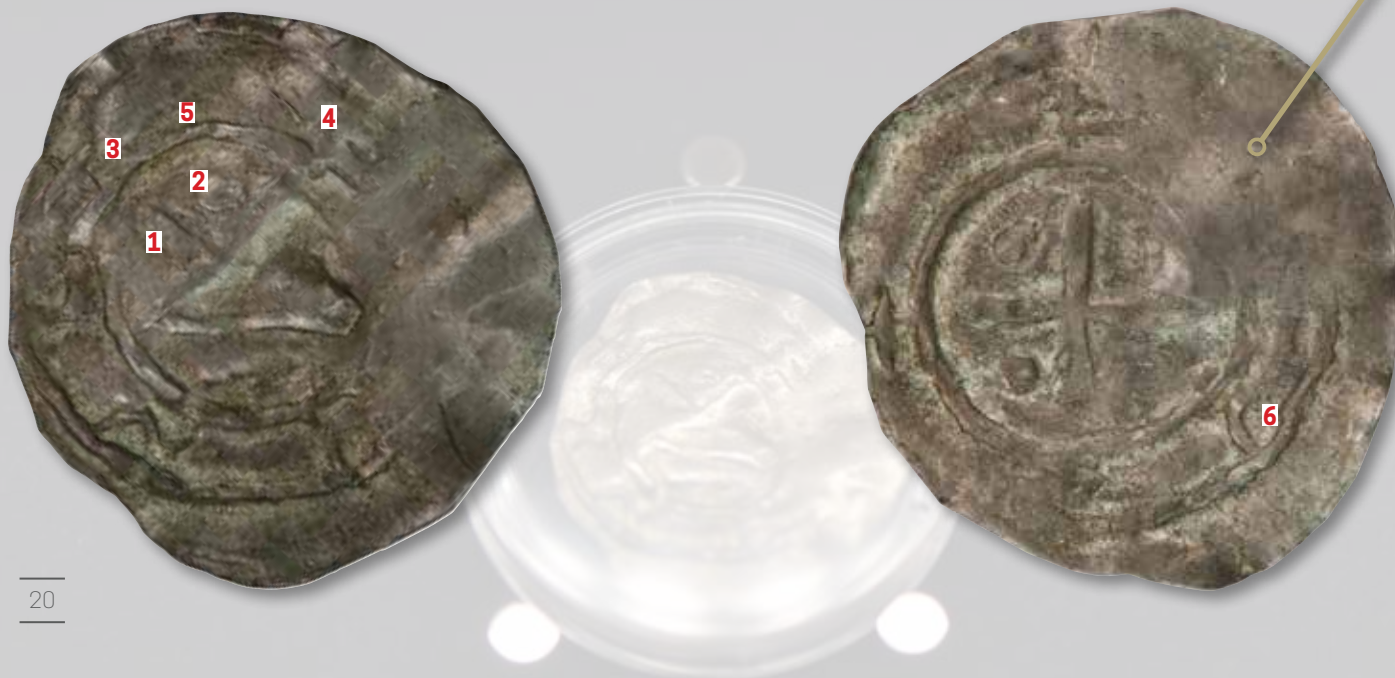
The origins of Polish coins

In the numismatist's box presented at the exhibition of the NBP Money Centre, in a small showcase containing the oldest Polish coins, we can find a certain very interesting denarius coin. Researchers studying the Middle Ages are still not sure about the issuer and the date of production of this seemingly unimpressive coin.

The denarius was once considered to be the oldest Polish coin, minted by the first ruler of the Polish state, Mieszko I (ca. 960–992). Right now, however, most researchers, including the author of the earlier concept, attribute this coin to the grandson of Mieszko I and the subsequent king, who bore the same name as him – Mieszko II Lambert (1025–1034). Along with the discovery of new treasures of early medieval coins and the changes in the attributions (that is, the determination of the place and date of minting and the issuer) of other coins, there were also indications, that the coin may have been minted during the reign of Boleslaus the Brave (992–1025), by his son Mieszko,

the heir to the throne. As if the situation wasn't complicated enough, some of the numismatists are still opting for an earlier attribution, citing the general appearance of the denarius, its iconography and its average weight. Moreover, in the public consciousness, this coin still functions as the oldest Polish coin, especially considering the fact that an image of the obverse side of the denarius is still presented on the 10 złoty banknote, next to the bust of Mieszko I.

In the newer literature on the subject, just like in the auction catalogues based on them, there are three types of coins attributed





to prince Mieszko. Two of them carry a peculiar image on the obverse, whose interpretation remains unclear. It is usually described as a semi-circle, hill or a dome crowned with a cross. This element is sometimes interpreted as a princely hat or a crown. In the rim of the coin, within a double pearly band, there is a more or less barbarized Latin inscription reading "MISICO", "MIDICO", or – when read backwards – "MTLSEC", indicating the name of the issuer, that is, Mieszko. In the later type, created through a correction of the used die of the first type, on both sides of the cross on the obverse there are also two arches of unknown purpose. There are no such arches on the first type of the coin. On the reverse of both types there is a square cross (in the second type, it

additionally has crossbars at the ends). In the corners of the cross there are four balls. In a double pearly rim, there are two letters "E" and two crosses in the case of the first type, and four swastikas (solar symbols, also known as *crux gammata*) in the case of the second type.

The denarius from the NBP collections belongs to the older type, based on the classification of Professor Stanisław Suchodolski. Accordingly, on the obverse of the coin there is a hill with a cross without arches, and in the rim there is a barbarized inscription [M]TLSE[C], which is written backwards. Meanwhile, on the reverse there is the aforementioned square cross, and around it there are only partially visible signs E[E +]+. There would be nothing unusual about this coin, if not for the fact that on both sides, and especially on the obverse, there are some additional elements, which are not found on the 40 or so other pieces that are known thus far.

Following a deeper analysis of the denarius, it turned out that it was struck twice. That wouldn't be anything unusual either, because double strikes with a working die do appear on coins and this is a natural side effect of the minting technique used in the Middle Ages and in the early modernity, when the metal from which the upper working die was made would spring back following the impact of the hammer, and would punch out an additional image, sometimes slightly shifted, which is manifested in a distinctive "shadow" on one or both sides of the coin.

However, it seems that in this case the situation was more complicated. According to the suggestions of Professor Stanisław Suchodolski (to whom the author would like to express her deepest gratitude), perhaps the upper die was slightly inclined during the impact and the first strike did not press the image hard enough. In such a case, the image would not be visible on a significant part of the disc. Regardless of the reason for the illegibility of the initial minting, the minter decided to strike the same disc with the dies once again. However, he did it by turning the coin over, so that after the second strike the obverse image was pressed on the initial reverse side and vice versa. Therefore, on the current obverse side of the denarius, next to the hill, we can also see a fragment of a square cross (1) and a characteristic dot between its arms (2), while the cross topping the hill was not pressed out at all. On the other hand, in the rim (5) there is still a cross (3) and a less visible letter "E" (4), located above the arms of the square cross (1). On the reverse side, little can be identified from the first strike – only in the inscription in the rim there is a visible inverted letter "L" (6), as a leftover from the original inscription [MT]L[SEC]. The idea that the coin was struck twice is also confirmed by its diameter, which is slightly larger than the standard denarii issued by prince Mieszko, as well as the shape of the disc – it does not have a mostly round shape, as is usual, but is more stretched out from one side.

The denarius coin from the NBP collections deserves the special attention of the visitors touring the NBP Money Centre. For the time being, it is the first example of such double striking on Polish early-Medieval coins from the first stage of coinage of the Polish state – at least when it comes to coins described in the numismatic literature, remaining in museum and private collections or sold at Polish auctions.

More information about the numismatic disputes regarding the attribution and the iconography of medieval coins, the improvement of working dies and the double striking of images, as well as the early Medieval treasures, can be found in the latest publications of Professor Stanisław Suchodolski and Dr Mateusz Bogucki, which also contain references to the previous literature on the subject

■ Eliza Walczak

Discovering multimedia... Let's open the showcases

The history of the Polish złoty banknotes 1919-1924
- from issue to introduction into circulation **pp. 23-26**



The history of the Polish złoty banknotes 1919–1924 – from issue to introduction into circulation

“The Act on State Treasury Repair was passed almost unanimously by both chambers of the parliament! (...) Apparently, everyone is already sufficiently convinced that things cannot go on like this, that life requires an immediate, thorough fiscal and currency reform, which cannot be carried out normally, in accordance with the prolonged legislative procedure, but requires quick, bold and simplified proceedings that would enable the immediate execution of the adopted decisions.”

Stanisław Karpiński, the first president of Bank Polski SA (the Bank of Poland), wrote these words in his memoirs under the date of 11 January 1924.¹ On that same day, the parliament passed, and the president signed into law, the Act on State Treasury Repair and Currency Reform. The formal foundations for the new monetary system were prepared at a rapid pace over the course of only a few months: On 20 January the government of Władysław Grabski issued a regulation on the monetary system and the establishment of the statute of a bank of issue, and on 14 April a regulation on changes in the monetary system was published. The latter document indicated, that from 1 July 1924, the Polish mark would cease to serve as the legal tender and that starting from 1 June 1924, the State Treasury would begin exchanging Polish marks for the banknotes of Bank Polski SA as well as coins and fractional notes. The period of obligatory replacement of the withdrawn currency would expire on 31 May 1925.²

The Ministry of the State Treasury had been preparing for the introduction of a new currency and the establishment of an issuing institution – Bank Polski SA – starting from early 1919. However, due to political and socio-economic difficulties, the reform of the monetary system was only carried out 5 years later.

On 28 February 1919 the Polish Sejm adopted a law determining the name of the Polish currency. Immediately after that, the representatives of the Ministry of the Treasury placed an order for the printing of Polish złoty banknotes in France and in England. At the beginning of 1919

the printing house of the Bank of France in Paris and the printing house in Clermont-Ferrand in central France were commissioned to produce banknotes with the face values of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 złoty. The printing of banknotes in that country was supposed to be overseen by Zygmunt Chamiec, a member of the management of the Polish Loan Bank, and by Aleksander Tupalski – the general director of the State Graphics Works in Warsaw. Tupalski then participated in the acceptance of the produced banknotes. The remaining face values of the banknotes – 100, 500, 1000 and 5000 złoty – were ordered from the Waterlow and Sons printing house in London. The decisions concerning the physical appearance of the Polish paper money was left in the hands of the graphic artists from the printing houses that were commissioned to print the banknotes. However, the order was accompanied by the photographs of the famous portraits of Tadeusz Kościuszko and Prince Józef Poniatowski – two heroes of the Polish national liberation struggle.

The prolonged production process of the banknotes hindered the quick implementation of the currency reform. The banknotes from the French issue were printed on thin paper using the letter press printing technique, while the banknotes made in England were printed on thicker paper using the technique of lithography. Face values from 10 to 5000 złoty were secured with a localized multi-tone watermark³ with the image of Tadeusz Kościuszko. The portrait of the leader of the Kościuszko Uprising (according to a graphic prototype by Antoni Oleszczyński) was also placed on the obverse side of almost all the banknotes from this series (with the exception of the face value of 5 złoty, which carried the image of Prince Józef Poniatowski). For this reason, this series is often referred to as the “Kościuszko

¹ Stanisław Karpiński, “Pamiętniki dziesięciolecia 1915–1924” (Memoirs of the decade 1915–1924), Warsaw 1931, pp. 314–315.

² Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland of 14 April 1924 on changes in the monetary system, Journal of Laws of 1924, No. 34, item 351.

³ A multi-tone watermark is a watermark with a smooth transition from light to dark; a localized watermark is one that is located in a specific area.

Discovering multimedia... Let's open the showcases



1000 zł banknote, 28 February 1919. This is a genuine numismatic rarity. Just like the 5000 zł banknote, it never entered into circulation. During the Second World War the 1000 zł banknotes were probably introduced into circulation as the payment of the soldiers' remuneration. One of them was found on the body of a Polish officer murdered in Katyń. The banknote was hidden in the double sole of his shoe.

NBP collections

issue". Interestingly enough, the highest face values of the Polish złoty banknotes from 1919 – i.e. 1000 and 5000 złoty – never entered into circulation. One of the reasons for this was that the nominal value of these banknotes was too high and did not correspond to the market demand at that time. Additionally, four thousand pieces of the 1000 złoty banknotes were destroyed during sea transport from London to Gdańsk in 1920. The crates with the banknotes were thrown off the ships by the English dockers who thought that the cargo heading to Poland contained weapons for Polish soldiers fighting against the Bolsheviks. The banknotes with the face values of 1000 and 5000 złoty that eventually arrived to Poland were kept at the vault of Bank Polski SA until September 1939 and were then evacuated – along with the entire Bank – to the castle in Dubno (in the Wołyń region). Only some of them have survived.

We do not know the names of the designers of the banknotes from the 1919 issue. They were probably the graphic designers working at the printing houses that carried out the order submitted by the Ministry of the Treasury. Only in the case of the face value of 10 złoty did the author of the design – Ad. Giralton – place his name on the banknote.⁴ The Polish złoty banknotes from 1919 are characterized by a fairly consistent graphic design. The historical symbolism is evoked by the portraits of Tadeusz Kościuszko and Prince Poniatowski, as well as the image of the White Eagle, modelled on its Renaissance-style depictions from

⁴ We also know the names of the artists who prepared the woodcuts for the production of the 10 zł banknote from 1919: the front side was executed by E. Deloche and Ch. Clément, while the reverse side was executed by Eugène Gaspé from Paris.



Examples of incorrectly written dates on the first issue of banknotes dated 28 February 1919 (1 zł, 5 zł, 500 zł).

NBP collections



The 10 zł banknote, 28 February 1919 – the only banknote from 1919 bearing the names of the designer and the engravers (lower margins on the right and left-hand sides). The banknote with a legal notice written on a purple background never entered into circulation. However, its second version, with an issue date of 28 February 1919, was ultimately introduced – the graphic design of the clause was redesigned and more legible due to the more contrasting background and larger fonts. This banknote, issued once again with the issue date of 15 July 1924 and carrying a revised legal notice (on a rusty-brown background), is considered to be one of the rarest banknotes from the interwar period.

NBP collections

the reign of King Sigismund Augustus. The iconography of the banknotes is complemented by numerous decorative floral motifs, rosettes, palmettes (stylized palm leaves) and shells, as well as symbols referring to contemporary economic development – agriculture (sheaves of grain with spikes, crops, fruits), industry (cogwheels) and trade (the caduceus).

However, if we take a closer look at the individual Polish złoty banknotes from 1919, we can also see various errors and inaccuracies. For example, the banknotes printed with the date of 28 February 1919 were signed by the directors of the Polish Loan Bank at that time, who were not among the management of Bank Polski SA in 1924. In order to resolve

the legal uncertainties, the Bank's Organizing Committee established a commission of experts who concluded that the signatures on the Polish złoty banknotes did not constitute an obstacle to their introduction into circulation, as long as Bank Polski SA accepted them as its own commitments. It was also decided that the issue of banknotes should be deemed completed upon the release of the banknotes into circulation.

The wording that appeared in the legal clause of the banknotes from 1919 also turned out to be unfortunate and stylistically incorrect. It stated, that "counterfeiting of banknotes and participating in their dissemination is punishable with heavy prison sentences", which may

Aresztowanie właścicielki 5 banknotów 1000 zł.

Do oddziału Komunalnej Kasy Oszczędności przy Górnej Widzie w Poznaniu zgłosiła się w ub. piątek 5 bm. pewna kobieta i przedkładając banknot 1000 zł., zapytała czy bilet posiada wartość. Banknot 1000 złotowy wywołał duże poruszenie netylko w oddziale K. K. O. na Wildzie, ale również i w centrali Kasy przy ul. Nowej. Tamże stwierdzono, że banknot pochodzi z szalsji biletów 1000 złotych, którą drukowała dla Banku Polskiego mennica londyńska. Banknoty te nosily datę 28 lutego 1919. Z przesłanych biletów do Polski skradziono część w Gdańsku wobec czego Bank Polski nie emitował zamówionej w Anglii przesyłki. W związku z powyższym najwyższą wartością polskich banknotów są emitowane przez Bank Polski 500 złotych.

Sprawą tysięczną zajęły się energicznie władze policyjne, które po przeprowadzeniu rewizji w mieszkaniu u kobiety zgłaszającej się z bezwartościowym banknotem znalazły u niej jeszcze 4 dalsze identyczne 1000 złotych. Właścicielkę 1000 złotych banknotów aresztowano.

"Dziennik Poznański", No. 31, 9 February 1937, p. 4;

Source: polona.pl

have suggested the criminal liability of the management of Bank Polski SA and of all the cashiers issuing the banknotes (!). Due to the poor supervision of the Polish side over the production of the banknotes in the foreign printing houses, some face values also contained spelling errors, consisting in the improper use of capital letters.

The banknotes with the face values from 1 zł to 500 zł, with the date of issue of 28 February 1919 entered into circulation on the day when Bank Polski SA inaugurated its operations, that is, 28 April 1924. Polish marks were exchanged for Polish złotys at the rate of 1 złoty for 1.8 million marks. In practice, the banknotes with the face value of 1 złoty and 2 złoty served as fractional notes⁵, even though back in 1919 they were supposed to be introduced as full-value banknotes. In

⁵ A fractional note is a type of paper money that temporarily replaces coins which the mint was not yet able to produce. In 1924 fractional notes with denominations of 1, 5, 10, 20 and 50 groszy were put into circulation (with an issue date of 28 April 1924).

total, a supply of Polish złoty banknotes with a combined value of over 6 billion złoty was prepared. A description of their graphic design was published in the Monitor Polski (the Official Gazette of the Government of the Republic of Poland) on 23 April 1924, in a press release of Bank Polski SA.

Stanisław Karpiński recalled these events in his memoirs under the date of 16 February 1924: "Fortunately, we have completed the transport of the 1,347 crates with Polish złoty banknotes – originally delivered from London and Paris back in 1919 and 1920 – from the banking warehouses at Nowogrodzka Street to the vault at the Polish Loan Bank. The banknotes are currently being counted, sorted and banded in packages of 100 pieces. And there's plenty of them: 127 and a half million pieces!"⁶

The monetary circulation of the new currency quickly increased and already in July 1924 it turned out that there was a shortage of banknotes with lower face values – 5, 10 and 20 zł. In this situation, the authorities decided to introduce a second issue of these banknotes, with a date of issue of 15 July 1924. They were printed in Warsaw, using the French printing plates, on domestic paper and as well as paper imported from France along with the previous issue of banknotes. Their graphic design was not changed, but several elements were modified: a new date of issue was introduced, the signatures of the authorities of Bank Polski SA were updated, the banknote with a face value of 5 zł was secured with a watermark, and the content of the legal clause was changed. From that point it stated that, "counterfeiting of banknotes, attempts to counterfeit banknotes, circulating or attempting to introduce counterfeit banknotes into circulation, is subject to the penalties set out in Article 50 of the Bank's statute."

Most of the banknotes put into circulation on 28 April 1924 were withdrawn by the end of 1929. The banknotes with the face values of 100 and 500 złoty were only removed from circulation by the German occupation authorities in late January 1940.

■ Anna Brzyska

⁶ Stanisław Karpiński, "Pamiętniki dziesięciolecia 1915–1924" (Memoirs of the decade 1915–1924), Warsaw 1931, p. 326.

Bankoteka

Magazine of the Stawomir S. Skrzypek
NBP Money Centre

Publisher:

Education and Publishing Department

Address:

ul. Świętokrzyska 11/21,
00-919 Warsaw
phone 22 185 25 25
centrumpieniadza@nbp.pl

Editor: Stanisław Gorący

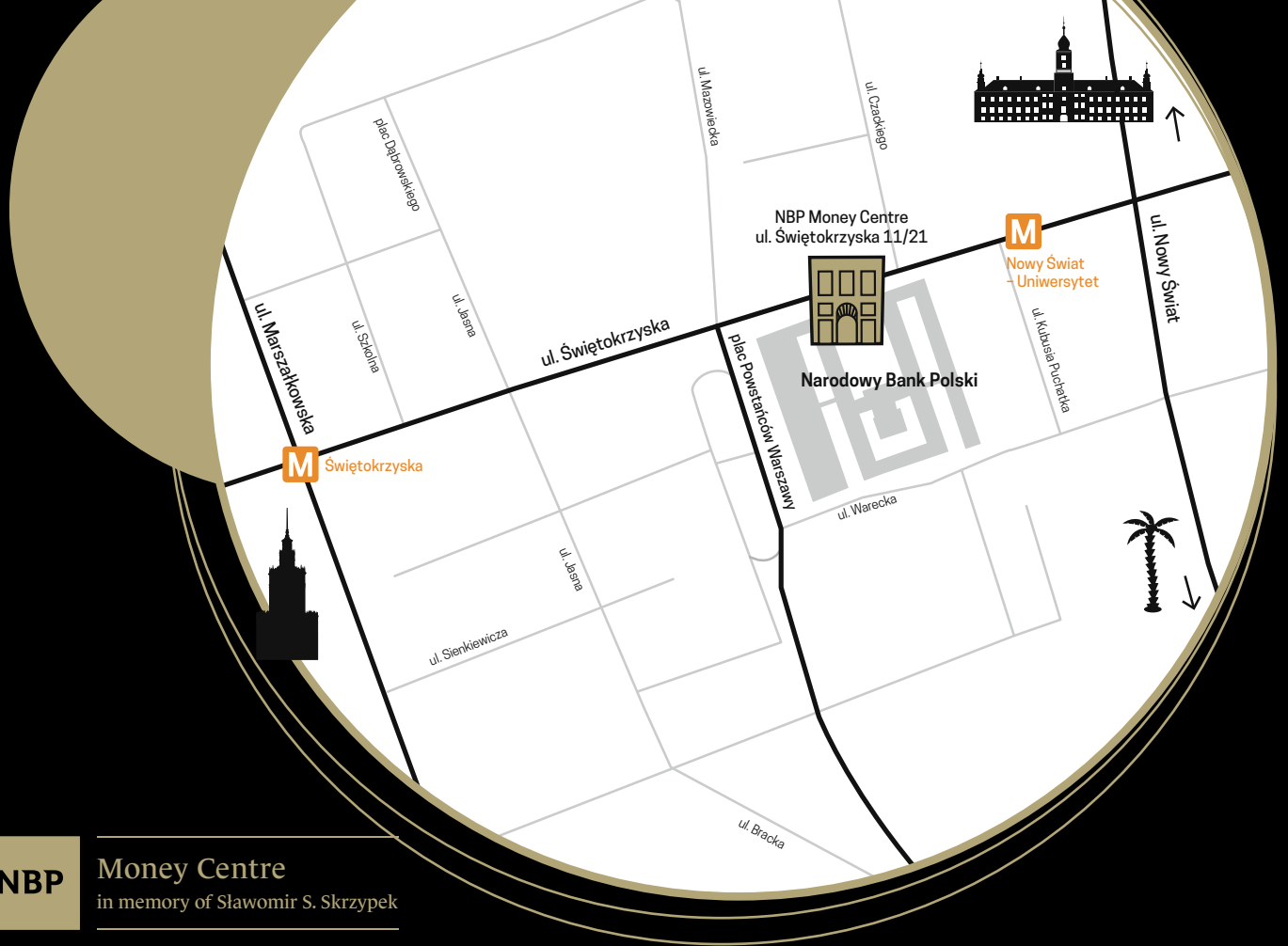
In cooperation with: Anna Brzyska, Marta Dulnicz,
Marlena Koter, Marcin Madejski, Antonina Marcic,
Katarzyna M. Rokosz, Adam Skrzęta, Mateusz Sora,
Iwona Stefaniak, Eliza Walczak

Photographs: W. Dąbkowski,

J. Wownysz – NBP, K. Stomka,
Zbiory NBP, Wikipedia Commons

Graphic design:

Piotr Kotela



NBP

Money Centre

in memory of Sławomir S. Skrzypek

We invite you

Monday – Wednesday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Thursday 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Friday – Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Monday – closed

ul. Świętokrzyska 11/21

00-919 Warsaw

Booking for organised group visits: (22) 185 25 25

Individual visits do not require prior booking

Free admission!

Visit our website: www.nbp.pl/centrumpieniadza

Discover the fascinating world of money!

HISTORY • ECONOMY • EDUCATION



Visit our website: www.nbp.pl/centrumpieniadza