

NBP

Money Centre
in memory of Sławomir S. Skrzypek

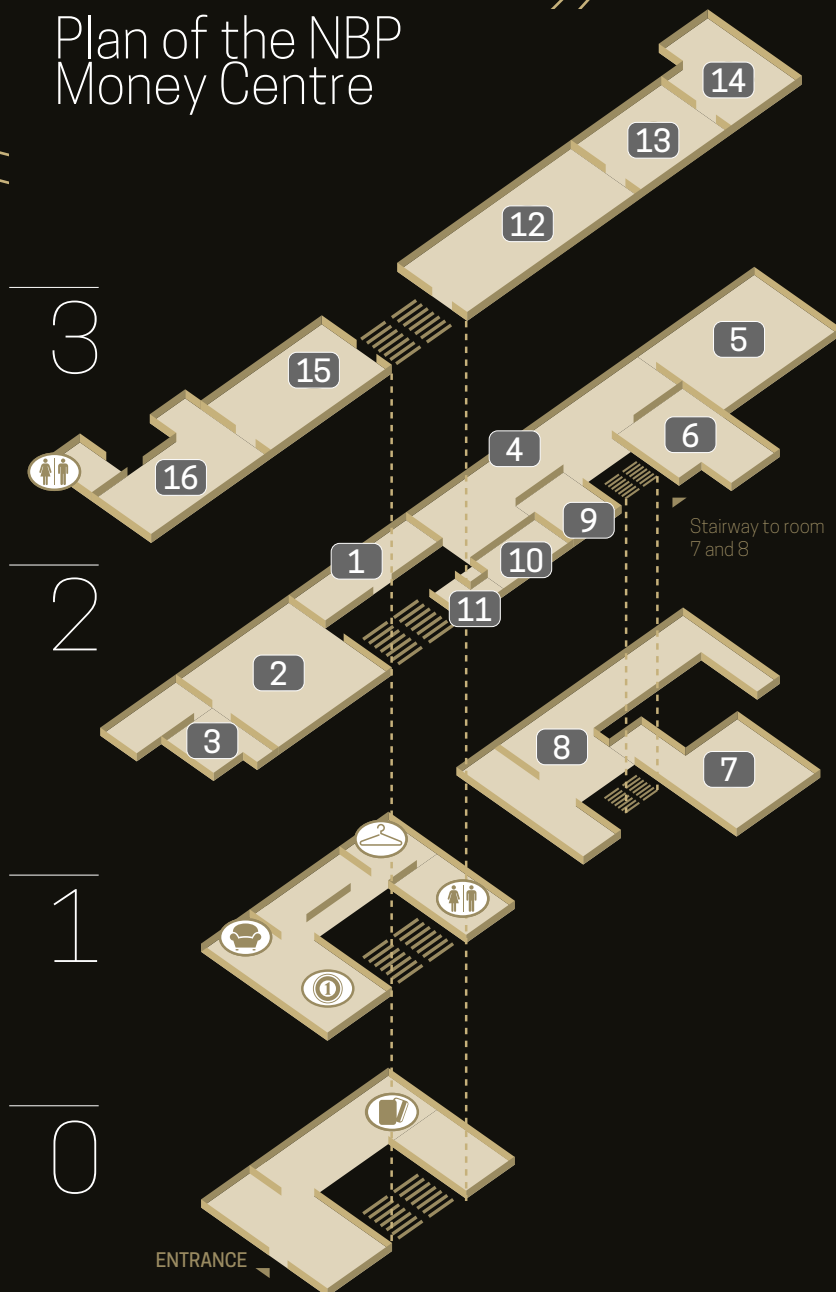
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Bankoteka


HISTORY • ECONOMY • EDUCATION



Plan of the NBP Money Centre







LEVEL 3

- 12** The Stock Exchange and Financial Markets
- 13** Modern Payment Systems
- 14** Monetary and Economic Unions
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LEVEL 2

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- 9** Wars
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LEVEL 1

- 7** Laboratory of Authenticity
- 8** The Vault
-  Cloakroom
-  Relaxation area
-  Toilets
-  Sale of numismatic items

LEVEL 0

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Dear readers

Narodowy Bank Polski has commemorated the important anniversaries falling on the second quarter of 2021 with the issue of collector coins.

On the cover of this issue of the magazine, we present the images of two coins minted on the occasion of the 230th anniversary of the Constitution of 3 May: a silver coin with a face value of 50 zł, and a gold coin with a face value of 100 zł. Shown on the background of Jan Matejko's famous painting, they reflect the importance and the spirit of the Polish Government Statute, which became a symbol of the reborn Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The parliamentary struggles associated with the adoption of the Constitution of 3 May, the course of the vote on the adoption of this law, as well as its historical significance and reception in European countries, are all described in the article entitled "About the 3rd of May 1791 and what happened in Warsaw on that day" in the "Discovering multimedia... Let's open the showcases" section. The starting point for these reflections is the silver medal struck in the year of the constitution's adoption in recognition of King Stanisław August Poniatowski and the Great Sejm – it is presented at the entrance to the "Numismatist's Study" room and attracts the attention of guests with its exceptional craftsmanship and the rich symbolism on the reverse side.

In the "Education" section we offer articles referring to the issue of coins commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Third Silesian Uprising. We present not only this year's anniversary coins – with face values of 10 zł and 200 zł – but also

recall all the banknotes and coins issued by NBP in commemoration of the previously celebrated anniversaries of the Silesian uprisings. We also present the second part of the article describing the economic importance of Upper Silesia in the Second Polish Republic.

Our magazine often features the descriptions of extremely rare exhibits found at the NBP Money Centre. This time, in the "Exhibits" section, it is worth taking a close look at the obverse of an Aureus coin from the turn of the 2nd and 3rd century. Our readers have the opportunity to learn about the history of the Roman ruler whose image appears on this numismatic item.

In the section "From the Calendar of the NBP Money Centre" we discuss the first publication in the series entitled "Educational Library of the NBP Money Centre". This is dedicated to Nicolaus Copernicus. The story of his life and discoveries – including both those in the sphere of astronomy, as well as the no less important discoveries in the area of economics – launches a publishing series presenting the leading representatives of domestic economic thought, exceptional scientists, researchers, and politicians, who contributed to the development of the Polish economy over the centuries.

This issue of the magazine is concluded with a list of lectures on the socio-economic history of Poland, which are held every month at the NBP Money Centre. You can listen to these lectures – unfortunately, at present only online – at the www.cpnbp.pl website.

Enjoy your reading!
The editorial team of "Bankoteka"

Education

**The economic importance of Upper Silesia in the Second Polish Republic
- Part 2** pp. 5-8

**Collector coins and banknotes on the anniversaries
of the Silesian uprisings** pp. 9-13



The economic importance of Upper Silesia in the Second Polish Republic – Part 2

“After centuries, after so many diplomatic efforts and bloody battles, the reunification of a part of Upper Silesia with the Motherland has finally materialized. (...) Conquered by the neighbouring nations, it passed from the hands of one country into the hands of another. This shouldn't be surprising, as this land is truly unique, as beautiful and rich as few others on the planet. Endowed with all the natural resources, it can satisfy all the needs of contemporary man”. This is how Józef Piwnik-Karczyk wrote about Silesia in his book entitled “Ilustrowana księga pamiątkowa Górnego Śląska” (“Illustrated memorial book of Upper Silesia”). At the dawn of Poland's independence, the Silesian region was in fact seen as a Polish El Dorado – a land of coal and chimneys, pulsating with the ceaseless work of the people and machines. In other words, it was “a part of Europe, almost turned into a paradise by the brave, hardworking Polish people of Silesia, whose qualities are well-known throughout the world”.

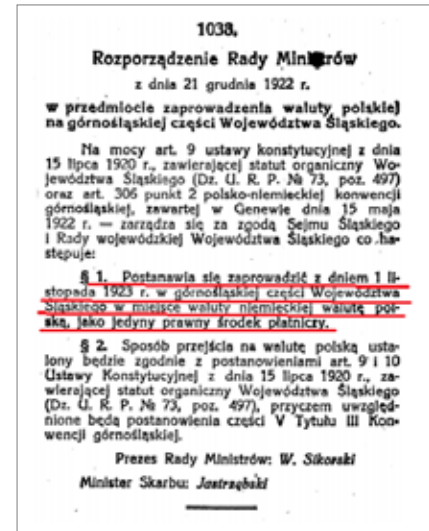
The development of Silesia marked a certain threshold level of development for other regions and was supposed to serve the construction of a strong, revived Polish state. The Silesian voivodeship was a domestic leader in terms of technical, economic and civilization achievements. There was a reason why Stefan Żeromski described Silesia as “a seat of modernity, a truly futuristic picture”.

In the first half of the 1920s, however, the biggest challenge lay in ensuring the full economic integration of the region with the remainder of the country. This objective was hampered by the lack of political stabilization in Poland, the frequent government changes, and the new political programmes, which frequently placed emphasis on the development of agriculture and not on the country's industrialization. Regardless of these difficulties, Silesia was gradually and consistently reintegrated into the Polish economic system. In accordance with the Geneva Convention of May 1922, the German mark was supposed to be used in the Polish part of Upper Silesia for 15 more years, but in the face of the rapidly rising inflation of the German currency, in December 1922 the Polish government issued a regulation on the introduction of the Polish mark on the entire territory of the Silesian voivodeship. Starting from 1 November 1923, it was supposed to be the only legal tender in this area, which also marked the completion of the process of unification of monetary circulation in the whole territory of Poland. Thanks to the mobilization and the personal interventions of Wojciech Korfanty,

the representatives of Upper Silesian industry supported the economic reforms of Władysław Grabski. They voluntarily replenished the foreign exchange reserves of the State Treasury, provided the greatest advance payments on behalf of property tax, and – together with entrepreneurs from the Poznań region – they acquired the largest stakes in Bank Polski SA, which was established in 1924. Three branches of the bank were later created in the Silesian voivodeship – in Katowice, Królewska Huta (later renamed as Chorzów) and Bielsko.

The economic potential of the region wasn't only limited to the industrial realm, but also played an important role in the development of the national defence system of the Second Polish Republic. Based on an analysis of the situation carried out in 1927, the authorities identified the

plants and centres of heavy industry in Upper Silesia that were of crucial importance for the purposes of national defence. This list included, among others, 39 coal mines, 1 iron ore mine, 6 zinc and lead ore mines, 9 coking plants, 12 ironworks, 20 zinc and lead rolling mills, and 9 other industrial plants (these were engine factories, chemical plants, power plants, and electrical equipment factories). Most



Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 21 December 1922 on the introduction of the Polish currency on the Upper Silesian part of the Silesian Voivodeship.
Journal of Laws of 1922, No. 115 item 1038



Upper Silesia, "Wspólnota Interesów" plants, Florian Ironworks, 1930s.
National Library (polona.pl)



Królewska Huta, ca. 1934.
National Library (polona.pl)

plants had production capacities that could be used for the needs of the defence industry. One additional advantage of Upper Silesia was also the demographic potential of the region and the high level of professionalism of the workers employed in heavy industry. This region had no shortage of skilled workers as well as highly specialized technicians and engineers.



Miners in a coal mine in Upper Silesia, 1930s.
NAC

The industrial nature of the Silesian voivodeship was reflected in the social and professional structure of the region's population, which differed from the population structure in the country as a whole. As of 1931, almost 55 per cent of the total population in Silesia worked in mining and in industry, while in Poland as a whole only approximately 19 per cent of all people worked in these sectors. Nearly 71 per cent of the region's population obtained their income from gainful employment.

Over 40 per cent of Silesian workers were employed in large and medium-sized industrial companies. Due to

the well-developed structure of economic life, a large group of white-collar workers was also able to find employment in Silesia. This group accounted for approximately 15 per cent of the voivodeship's total population, which was the second highest share after Warsaw.

Upper Silesia held a dominant position in Poland in terms of the standard of living and the relatively high level of technical civilization. This was confirmed, among other things, by the well-developed infrastructure and communications systems, including numerous convenient bus routes, the biggest network of paved roads and railways lines in Poland, the fast-paced expansion of the tram lines, the best postal system, the highest consumption of electricity and gas per inhabitant, as well as the best street lighting. Already in 1927, the Silesian voivodeship had 2078.5 km of paved roads, which meant that the density of the road network in the region was higher than in Germany or in Austria. Particularly important railway investments included the connection between Upper Silesia and the Polish coast via the Herby Nowe-Gdynia line. In addition, starting from 1929, thanks to the Silesian Aviation Company (Śląska Spółka Lotnicza) an airplane connection was established between Katowice and Warsaw. In 1937, the voivodeship had more than 15,000 telephone subscribers, which was one of the highest rates in Poland. The voivodeship was also a leader in terms of the number of registered cars, completed high-rise buildings (the contemporary equivalent of skyscrapers) and the number of cities with extensive municipal sewage systems. All of this placed the Silesian voivodeship among the most developed regions of the Second Polish Republic.

Even temporary economic downturns, directly affecting Upper Silesia, ended up providing stimulus for the development of the region and



Gdynia, The coal port, 1930s.
National Library (polona.pl)



Gdynia, The coal port, 1935.
National Library (polona.pl)

the exploration of new markets in the long term. One such example is the outbreak of the Polish-German economic warfare (the so-called German-Polish customs war), which was started by the Germans after Germany's obligation to maintain duty-free imports of Upper Silesia's mining industry products (in accordance with the Geneva Convention of 1922) expired in mid-1925. Germany initially announced a ban on the purchases of coal from Poland, and over time the list of goods charged with very high customs duties was extended. The Polish side responded with identical measures. The drastic restrictions in mutual trade relations constituted a heavy blow especially for the Polish economy, as nearly half of the Silesian coal exports were headed to the German market. However, the long-term effects of the customs war also had a positive side. The temporary economic downturn contributed to the gradual emancipation of the Polish part of Upper Silesia from its dependence on Germany and strengthened the links between local exports and the international trade policies of the Polish Republic. As a result, Poland developed alternative directions of foreign economic cooperation along with the possibilities of obtaining new buyers for Polish products. For example, coal was sold to the Scandinavian countries, while wood and wooden products were exported to England, Scandinavia, and even to the countries of South America.

The need to find new markets for Upper Silesian industrial goods additionally influenced the development of Gdańsk and justified the expansion of the port in Gdynia. Many Upper Silesian companies were involved in the development of the port in Gdynia. The coal companies leased land there, they had their own cargo handling equipment, and even their own ships. The people of Silesia felt like the port's hosts, and

Gdynia was treated almost like a part of the Silesian industrial district. The popular slogan proclaiming that Gdynia and Gdańsk are the "lungs of Silesia" took on a new meaning. Indeed, in the interwar period products derived from Upper Silesia accounted for 80 to 90 per cent of the overall exports of goods from Gdynia. The close relations between Silesia and Pomerania were a special manifestation of the integration between the country's major economic centres – these two regions, situated on Poland's two geographical extremes, pursued strong cooperation, and complemented each other. The development of the coal industry was an additional driving force for the development of the port. In 1928, over 4.1 million tonnes of coal were exported through the port of Gdańsk and approximately 1.7 million tonnes were exported through the newly built port of Gdynia. Coal from Upper Silesia was exported to a total of 36 countries in the world.

German efforts to hinder the exports of products from Upper Silesia forced Poland to seek not only new markets, but also new routes for the transportation of goods. A railway line connecting Upper Silesia with Gdynia (known as the "coal line"), with a total length of 540km, was built in the years 1926-1930. This was the biggest and the most technologically advanced transportation investment in the period of the Second Polish Republic. The expansion of the line's second track and its side networks was continued in the 1930s. The railway line served not only the integration of Pomerania with Silesia and other regions of central Poland, but was also conducive to the economic development of the areas it passed through. Moreover, this route played an important transit role, as it constituted the shortest connection to the Baltic sea for the countries of central and southern Europe (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, Romania, and Yugoslavia).

The economic importance of Upper Silesia in the interwar period was not limited to the coal and metallurgical industries, although in this area the region had no competition in Poland. Silesia provided as much as 75 per cent of domestic hard coal, 100 per cent of coke, 75 per cent of iron and steel, 100 per cent of zinc and lead. The entities involved in the processing of coal played an equally important role: coking plants, tar distilleries, and briquette factories. The machine industry and the explosives industry were also developing quickly. Another important economic branch was the chemical industry, which was producing fertilizers for agriculture, including superphosphates, nitrogen fertilizers, and ammonium sulphate. The leading plant in this sector was the Nitrogen Works in Chorzów (Zakłady Azotowe w Chorzowie), which operated as the State Nitrogen Compounds Factory in Chorzów (Państwowa Fabryka Związków Azotowych w Chorzowie) starting from 1924. This plant was one of the flagship industrial factories of the Second Polish Republic. It was established in 1916 and initially produced, among other things, poisonous gases for the needs of the German and Austrian armies. In July 1922, the plant was officially taken over by the Polish government. The factory's management was then assumed by a famous chemist and technologist – Professor Ignacy Mościcki, who served as the President of Poland in the years 1926–1939. The position of the technical director and head of the factory's economic department was assumed by Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, who later became Deputy Prime Minister, as well as Minister of the State Treasury, Industry, and Trade. In the interwar period the Nitrogen Works earned the title of the cradle of the Polish nitrogen industry and controlled state-of-the-art technologies.¹

After a part of Upper Silesia was reintegrated into Poland, the authorities launched the process of gradual Polonization of the local industry, which was almost exclusively German at the time when the Silesian voivodeship was established. The process of weakening German ownership involved the participation of Polish capital, as well as foreign capital, mainly including Belgian and French companies, as evidenced by the Polish-French company Polish Treasury Mines in Upper Silesia (Polskie Kopalnie Skarbowe na Górnym Śląsku, also known as Skarboferm). However, most of the plants could only be taken over by Poland 15 years after the expiry of the Geneva Convention, which occurred on 15 May 1937.

At about the same time, the Polish authorities launched the implementation of Poland's great economic and military project – the construction of the Central Industrial District (Centralny Okręg Przemysłowy). Just like Gdynia, it was supposed to play an important role in the economic integration of the country. Although the people in Silesia initially distanced themselves from the idea of a competing industrial centre, these fears quickly gave way to interest in the giant state investment, which

could become a significant market for the raw materials and products supplied by the Upper Silesian mines or factories. Upper Silesia began to function as a kind of bridge between Western and Eastern Europe, and the Silesian people assumed the role of teachers of the Western work ethic for Poland as a whole. Upper Silesia played a significant part in the construction of the Central Industrial District. It provided the raw materials, the prefabricated components, and supplied well-qualified workers who shared their expertise and experience.

As the largest industrial region in Poland, Upper Silesia became the centre of the country's economic integration. Katowice, the voivodeship capital, stood out when compared to other regions. The city had the second highest concentration of representative offices of foreign countries after Warsaw and was a major destination for international capital. The headquarters of numerous banks and national economic and professional organizations were located here. Many buildings housing the headquarters of companies and the consulates of countries maintaining trade relations with Poland were located in Katowice. Among the approximately 80 banks operating in Upper Silesia there were many branches of the largest and most important Polish state-owned banks and private banks. The Katowice stock exchange was created in 1934, pursuant to the act of 1921, which was extended to the area of the Silesian voivodeship. It was a commercial institution operating nationwide. The role of inter-regional integration institutions was also played by the Silesian Association of Exhibitions and Economic Propaganda (Śląskie Towarzystwo Wystaw i Propagandy Gospodarczej). Its objectives included facilitating the exchange of information about the economic achievements of all the regions in the country (including Silesia) and the organization of exhibitions and trade fairs dedicated to industrial products. It also had branches in Warsaw, Poznań, Kraków and Łwów.

The reunification of a part of Upper Silesia with Poland played a huge role in the economic life of the newly reborn Polish state. This region was setting the threshold that other regions needed to reach in order for Poland to be able to shake off the stigma of an economically backward country. The funds coming from the Silesian voivodeship (and the Silesian Treasury) helped the Polish authorities, among other things, in carrying out the currency reforms in 1924, building the port in Gdynia, and establishing the Central Industrial District, that is, in the implementation of the most important economic projects of the independent Polish state. The industrial, demographic, material and cultural potential of Upper Silesia provided Poland with numerous political and economic successes and strengthened the country both internally and internationally. This provided a solid foundation for Poland's development in the future.

■ Anna Brzyska

¹ In 1929 a decision was made to build a sister factory of nitrogen compounds in Świerczków-Mościce near Tarnów. In 1933 both plants were merged and from that point – until the Second World War – operated as the United Nitrogen Compounds Factories in Chorzów and Mościce.

The Silesian uprisings in numismatic items

The 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the Third Silesian Uprising, which is celebrated in 2021, was commemorated by Narodowy Bank Polski with the issue of two types of collector coins – a silver coin with a face value of 10 zł and a gold coin with a face value of 200 zł. The coins were introduced on 15 April 2021.



The insurrectionary banner "For you, Poland!" (Tobie Polsko) from the times of the Silesian struggles for independence is held in the collections of the Museum of the Insurrectionary Act at the Mount of St. Anne <https://katowice.ipn.gov.pl>



10 złoty, 2021, Ag 925, designed by Sebastian Mikołajczak

Obverse: on the left side, the image of the Eagle established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland; above the Eagle the year of issue: 2021; below the Eagle, the inscription: 10 Zł, on the bottom the inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA / POLSKA [REPUBLIC OF POLAND]. On the right side, against the background of a separate plane formed by triangles of different sizes, there are the contours of the territory covered by the Third Silesian Uprising.

Reverse: a separated plane in the centre is formed by triangles of different sizes; on its background, at the top on the right side there is an image of the eagle from the insurrectionary banner "For you, Poland!", and on the left side of the Eagle, there is the inscription: 100. ROCZNICA / III POWSTANIA / ŚLĄSKIEGO [100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE THIRD SILESIAN UPRISING]. Below, on the right side, there are images of two insurgents operating a machine gun.



200 złoty, 2021, Au 900, designed by Sebastian Mikołajczak

Obverse: on the left side, a separated plane with the image of the Eagle established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland and the year of issue: 2021, referring to the insurrectionary banner "For you, Poland!". On the right side, against the background of the contours of the territory covered by the Third Silesian Uprising, there is an image of the official seal of the Polish Plebiscite Office. At the bottom, there is the following inscription: "RZECZPOSPOLITA / POLSKA / 200 Zł" [REPUBLIC OF POLAND / 200zł].

Reverse: on the left side, there are images of two insurgents operating a machine gun. On the right side, there is an image of the insurrectionary banner "For you, Poland!" with the inscription: Tobie Polsko [For you, Poland!] and the image of the eagle. At the bottom there is the following inscription: 100. ROCZNICA / III POWSTANIA / ŚLĄSKIEGO [100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE THIRD SILESIAN UPRISING].

The introduction into circulation of coins commemorating the outbreak of the Third Silesian Uprising is a good opportunity to recall the previous coins issued by Narodowy Bank Polski as well as the designs of banknotes related to the theme of the Silesian events, which were not put into circulation.



Silesian Uprising Cross

– a Polish military decoration established pursuant to a decree of the Council of Ministers approved by the State National Council of 8 October 1946 in order to “commemorate the heroic struggle of the people of Silesia against the German violence, which over the course of 600 years of captivity failed to break the Polish spirit of this ancient district of the Piast dynasty (...) and awarded to people, who made exceptional contributions to the struggle to reunite Silesia with the Motherland”. By Nowis – own work, public domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5186198>



10 złoty, 1971, Ni, trial coin, designed by Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz

Obverse: A stylized image of a Silesian eagle. On its breast, there is a shield with the image of an eagle symbolizing the national emblem of Poland. On the sides, under the wings of the Silesian eagle there is the date 19-71. In the rim there is an inscription: POLSKA RZECZPOSPOLITA LUDOWA 10 ZŁ [POLISH PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC 10 zł]

Reverse: The image of the Silesian Uprising Cross suspended on a ribbon, in the background there is an inscription placed in between lines: PIĘĆ-DZIE/ SIĄTA-ROCZ/ NICA-TRZE/ CIEGO-POWSTA/ NIA-ŚLĄ-SKIEGO / 1921-1971 [50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE THIRD SILESIAN UPRISING / 1921-1971]. At the bottom there is the following inscription: PRÓBA [TRIAL]



10 złoty, 1971, CuNi, designed by Wacław Kowalik

Obverse: A stylized image of an eagle symbolizing the Polish national emblem. On the sides, under the eagle’s wings, there is the date 19-71. In the rim there is an inscription: POLSKA RZECZPOSPOLITA LUDOWA ZŁ 10 ZŁ [POLISH PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC 10 zł]

Reverse: The Silesian Insurgents’ Monument, on the left side there is an image of the cross, on the right side the dates 1921/1971. Under the monument, there is the following inscription in four lines: 50 / ROCZNICA III / POWSTANIA / ŚLĄSKIEGO [50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE THIRD SILESIAN UPRISING]. At the bottom there are the initials “W K”



100,000 złoty, 1992, Ag 750, designed by Ewa Tyc-Karpińska

Obverse: The image of the Eagle established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland, on the eagle’s sides the date of issue 19-92, under the eagle an inscription: ZŁ 100000 ZŁ. In the rim there is an inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA [REPUBLIC OF POLAND]. Below the inscription, in a circle, there is an ornament in the shape of small squares.

Reverse: The bust of Wojciech Korfanty. Below there is a facsimile of Korfanty’s handwritten signature. On the left side of the image there is a perpendicular inscription: 70-LECIE / ZJEDNOCZENIA / CZĘŚCI GÓRNEGO / ŚLĄSKA Z POLSKĄ [70TH ANNIVERSARY / OF THE REUNIFICATION / OF A PART OF UPPER SILESIA WITH POLAND]



2 złoty, 2011, NG,
obverse designed by Ewa Tyc-Karpińska;
reverse designed by Grzegorz Pfeifer

Obverse: The image of the Eagle established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland. On the sides of the Eagle the indication of the year of issue: 20-11, below the Eagle, an inscription: Zł 2 Zł. In the rim there is an inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA [REPUBLIC OF POLAND], preceded and followed by six pearls. Under the Eagle, on the right side there is the mint mark: M / W.

Reverse: Stylized images of Silesian insurgents. At the top, there are the following inscriptions: 1919 1920 1921. At the bottom there is the following inscription: POWSTANIA / ŚLĄSKIE [SILESIA UPRISINGS]. On the edge there is an inscription "NBP" repeated eight times, with every other one inverted by 180 degrees, and separated by stars.



10 złoty, 2011, Ag 925,
designed by Grzegorz Pfeifer

Obverse: In the centre there is a stylized fragment of a map of Silesia within the borders according to the territorial demands submitted after the plebiscite in Upper Silesia in 1921. On the background of the map there is a stylized fragment of the Silesian landscape. On the right side, the image of the Eagle established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland. Below the Eagle, on the right side, an inscription: 10 Zł. At the bottom, on the background of the map, there is an indication of the year of issue: 2011. On the left and right side of the map there is a semicircular inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA [REPUBLIC OF POLAND]. Under the Eagle, on the right side, there is a mint mark: M / W.

Reverse: In the centre there are stylized images of three Silesian insurgents placed within the contour map of a section of Silesia. Diagonal inscriptions starting from the top: 1921 / 1920 / 1919. In the rim there is an inscription: POWSTANIA ŚLĄSKIE [SILESIA UPRISINGS].



The Silesian Insurgents' Monument depicts three eagle wings, which symbolize the three Silesian uprisings in the years 1919-1921.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org>



Design of the banknote with a face value of 500 złoty, 02.01.1970, prepared by Andrzej Heidrich

Front side: A stylized image of the sports and entertainment arena known as "Spodek" (Flying Saucer) and an inscription: KATOWICE. At the top there is a shield with the image of an eagle and the inscription: POLSKA RZECZPOSPOLITA LUDOWA [POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC], and below there is the place and date of issue: WARSZAWA / 2 STYCZNIA 1970 [WARSAW / 2 JANUARY 1970]. At the bottom there is the following inscription: 500 - PIĘCSET ZŁOTYCH [500 - five hundred złoty]

Back side: In the centre there is a stylized image of the Silesian Insurgents' Monument and the inscription: POWSTAŃCOM ŚLĄSKIM [DEDICATED TO THE SILESIA INSURGENTS]. At the top there is an inscription: NARODOWY BANK POLSKI and the face value 500. On the left side there is the following legal clause: BANKNOTY / NARODOWEGO / BANKU / POLSKIEGO / SA PRAWNYM / ŚRODKIEM / PŁATNICZYM / W POLSCE [BANKNOTES / OF NARODOWY / BANK / POLSKI / ARE LEGAL / TENDER / IN / POLAND]. Below there is the following inscription: PIĘCSET / ZŁOTYCH / 500 [FIVE HUNDRED ZŁOTY / 500]. On the right side, at the bottom, there is an inscription: NBP.



Design of the banknote with a face value of 100 złoty, 02.01.1966, prepared by Andrzej Heidrich

Front side: On the right side, there is a stylized bust of a miner. On the top there is an inscription: NARODOWY BANK POLSKI. Below it, there is the number 100, and underneath it there is the inscription: STO ZŁOTYCH [ONE HUNDRED ZŁOTY]. Under the inscription, there is an image of an eagle in a circle (the emblem of the Polish People's Republic), and under the circle there are two hammers in a floral ornament. Between the bust of the miner and the image of the eagle there is an inscription: NBP / 100, and the place and date of issue: WARSZAWA 2 STYCZNIA 1966 [WARSAW 2 JANUARY 1966] on the background of the reverse side of a Silesian kwartnik coin (most likely from the Duchy of Jawor during the reign of the brothers Bernard, Bolek II and Henry, in the years 1301-1312).

Back side: In the centre, there is a stylized image of the panoramic view of Katowice showing the Silesian Insurgents' Monument, the Spodek sports and entertainment arena, and a mine shaft winding tower. On the left there is the coat of arms of Katowice. At the top there is an inscription: NARODOWY BANK POLSKI. At the bottom there is the following inscription: 100 STO ZŁOTYCH 100.



Design of the banknote with a face value of 500 złoty, 02.01.1970, prepared by Andrzej Heidrich

Front side: A stylized image of coal mine buildings and a mine shaft with a winding tower, on the right side at the bottom there is the inscription: KATOWICE. At the top there is a shield with the image of an eagle and the inscription: POLSKA RZECZPOSPOLITA LUDOWA [POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC], and below there is the place and date of issue: WARSZAWA / 2 STYCZNIA 1970 [WARSAW / 2 JANUARY 1970]. At the bottom there is the following inscription: 500. On the right side, at the top, there is the inscription: 500 / PIĘCSET ZŁOTYCH [500 / FIVE HUNDRED ZŁOTY].

Back side: In the centre there is a stylized image of the Silesian Insurgents' Monument and the inscription: POWSTAŃCOM ŚLĄSKIM [DEDICATED TO THE SILESIA INSURGENTS]. On the top there is an inscription: NARODOWY BANK POLSKI and the face value 500. On the left side there is the following legal clause: BANKNOTY / EMITOWANE / PRZEZ / NARODOWY / BANK / POLSKI / SA PRAWNYM / ŚRODKIEM / PŁATNICZYM / W POLSCE [BANKNOTES / ISSUED / BY / NARODOWY / BANK / POLSKI / ARE LEGAL / TENDER / IN / POLAND]. Below there is the following inscription: PIĘCSET / ZŁOTYCH / 500 [FIVE HUNDRED ZŁOTY / 500]. On the right side, at the bottom, there is an inscription: NBP.



Design of the banknote with a face value of 500 złoty, 10.10.1980, prepared by Waldemar Andrzejewski

Front side: A stylized image of a mining road header operated by a miner. On the left side, at the top, there is an inscription: 500 PIĘĆSET / ZŁOTYCH [500 FIVE HUNDRED ZŁOTY] and below there is an image of an eagle (the emblem of the Polish People's Republic). At the bottom there is the following inscription: POLSKA RZECZPOSPOLITA LUDOWA [POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC]. Above the word RZECZPOSPOLITA there is the place and date of issue: WARSZAWA / 10 PAŹDZIERNIK 1980 [WARSAW / 10 OCTOBER 1980]

Back side: Image of the Silesian Insurgents' Monument. At the top, on the right-hand side, there is an inscription: 500 / PIĘĆSET / ZŁOTYCH [500 / FIVE HUNDRED ZŁOTY]. Below there is an inscription in stylized letters: NBP. At the bottom there is the following inscription: NARODOWY BANK POLSKI. On the left side there is the number 500.



Design of the banknote with a face value of 2 złoty, 20.11.1990, prepared by Waldemar Andrzejewski

Front side: A stylized image of the sports and entertainment arena in Katowice, the so-called "Spodek" (Flying Saucer), and below, an inscription: KATOWICE. At the top, on the left, there is the number "2" and the inscription: DWA ZŁOTE [TWO ZŁOTY]. Below the number, in a circle decorated with geometric patterns, there is an image of an eagle (the emblem – still! – of the Polish People's Republic). At the bottom, there is the following inscription: NARODOWY BANK POLSKI. At the bottom, on the left side, there is the place and date of issue: WARSZAWA / 20 LISTOPAD 1990 (WARSAW / 20 NOVEMBER 1990). On the right side, there is the Arabic numeral 2 above the Roman numeral I.

Back side: Image of the Silesian Insurgents' Monument. At the top, on the right-hand side, there is an inscription: DWA / 2 / ZŁOTE [TWO ZŁOTY]. Below there is an inscription in stylized letters: NBP. At the bottom, there is the following inscription: NARODOWY BANK POLSKI. On the left there is the number 2.



Design of the banknote with a face value of 500 złoty, 01.11.1980, prepared by Waldemar Andrzejewski

Front side: A stylized image of the Katowice Steel Mill. On the left side, at the top, there is an inscription: 500 / PIĘĆSET / ZŁOTYCH [500 / FIVE HUNDRED ZŁOTY], and below there is an eagle (the emblem of the Polish People's Republic). At the bottom, there is the following inscription: POLSKA RZECZPOSPOLITA LUDOWA [POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC]. Above the word RZECZPOSPOLITA there is the place and date of issue: WARSZAWA 1 LISTOPAD 1980 [WARSAW 1 NOVEMBER 1980].

Back side: Image of the Silesian Insurgents' Monument. At the top, on the right-hand side, there is an inscription: 500 / PIĘĆSET / ZŁOTYCH [500 / FIVE HUNDRED ZŁOTY]. Below there is an inscription in stylized letters: NBP. At the bottom there is the following inscription: NARODOWY BANK POLSKI. On the left side there is the number 500.



Banknote with a face value of 2 złoty, which was not put into circulation, 01.03.1990, prepared by Waldemar Andrzejewski

Front side: Stylized view of the top of a mine shaft winding tower. At the bottom, on the left side of the image, there is an inscription: KATOWICE. At the top, on the left, there is the number 2 and the inscription: DWA ZŁOTE [TWO ZŁOTY]. Below the number, in a circle decorated with geometric patterns, there is an image of an eagle (the emblem of the Polish People's Republic). At the bottom there is the following inscription: NARODOWY BANK POLSKI. At the bottom, on the left side, there is the place and date of issue: WARSZAWA / 1 MARCA 1990 (WARSAW / 1 MARCH 1990). On the right side there is the Arabic numeral 2 over the Roman numeral II.

Back side: Image of the Silesian Insurgents' Monument. At the top, on the right-hand side, there is an inscription: DWA / 2 / ZŁOTE [TWO ZŁOTY]. Below there is an inscription in stylized letters: NBP. At the bottom there is the following inscription: NARODOWY BANK POLSKI. On the left there is the number 2.

■ Marcin Madejski

Discovering multimedia... Let's open the showcases

The 230th anniversary of the Constitution of 3 May pp. 15-19



About the 3rd of May 1791 and what happened in Warsaw on that day

The sessions of the Sejm, which went down in history as the Great Sejm, began in 1789. In order to prevent the use of the liberum veto rule and the termination of the works, the Members of the Sejm formed a confederation already at the beginning of the sessions. This allowed for the adoption of resolutions with a majority vote, and not in accordance with the principle of unanimity. A commission tasked with the preparation of political reforms soon emerged – the Deputation for an Improvement of the Form of Government. The Sejm accepted its report and began discussing the proposals for specific legal provisions. The debates continued, time passed and there was nothing to indicate that new laws would be enacted before the end of the two-year term. Because of that, a decision was made to extend the term of the Sejm for two more years and to hold elections as a result of which the number of deputies doubled in December 1790

Also in the autumn, taking advantage of the changes in the international situation and the loosening of Russian control, King Stanisław August Poniatowski became personally involved in the preparation of the draft provisions of constitutional reforms. He reached an agreement with the oppositional Patriotic Party (Stronnictwo Patriotyczne), which was seeking to limit the king's power. A small group of politicians started working on the future constitution in secrecy. Today historians believe that the king was the author of the initial draft, which at the turn of 1790 and 1791 was subjected to discussions with the activists of the Patriotic Party: Ignacy Potocki, Stanisław Małachowski and Hugo Kołłątaj.

The final draft of the Government Statute (Ustawa Rządowa) is attributed to Kołłątaj. The adopted provisions were influenced by lively debates among the political journalists, which began before the Great Sejm and accompanied its sessions. During their works, the reformers undoubtedly took into consideration the political models functioning in England (most favoured by the king) and in revolutionary France (the closest to the left-wing Patriotic Party), as well as the American constitutional experience. The draft of the reforms ultimately provided for a strengthening of the king's powers and abolished the "free election".

The draft text of the Government Statute, which was being prepared without the necessary legal authorization and outside of the Sejm, was finally agreed upon in March. The only thing left to be decided was the way in which the draft was supposed to be brought up for deliberations at the Sejm, and how it was supposed to be subjected to a vote. The draft version of any proposed law had to be published and distributed to the Members of the Sejm three days before the session. However, in order to reduce the potential discussions to a minimum, the reformers

decided that the draft should be introduced for consideration by the Sejm without prior announcement. The planned date of the Sejm session was moved to an earlier date. In this way the supporters of the reform took advantage of the fact that not all Members of the Sejm had returned to Warsaw after the Easter break. This undoubtedly constituted a violation of parliamentary customs and the rules of procedure.

On 3 May there were 182 members of the Sejm and Senators in attendance (out of the total number of about 500), including 110 supporters of the Government Statute. The session of the Sejm was held at the Royal Castle, which was surrounded by the army, and took place in a very heated atmosphere, additionally aggravated by the audience, gathered in large numbers in the galleries, as well as the crowds on the streets. The session, which lasted seven hours, was carefully staged. At the outset, a series of dispatches was read out. They informed about the growing external threat to the country. After that, the King introduced the draft act, whose adoption supposedly constituted the only possible salvation for the country, which found itself in a critical position. Of course, such an organization of the session resulted in protests. The Member of the Sejm from the Kalisz region, Jan Suchorzewski, threw himself at the king's feet and threatened to kill his six-year-old son in order to ensure that he "wouldn't have to live in the enslavement imposed by the new constitution". After a discussion that lasted many hours, the vote on the whole act was taken en bloc. It was adopted by the combined estates in the Senators' Chamber. The law was passed by acclamation and the King swore in the new constitution. Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz described these events in the following way: "[...] when impatience became widespread after several hours of idle discussions, Michał Zabiełło, a Member of the Sejm from Livonia, who hadn't spoken even once during the entire session of the Sejm, stood up and exclaimed:



Medal from 1791 commemorating the adoption of the Constitution of 3 May, Johann Georg Holtzhey, the "Numismatist's Study" room. The medal presented in the "Numismatist's Study" room at the NBP Money Centre is one of the expressions of the appreciation for the achievements of King Stanisław August Poniatowski and the Great Sejm. It was executed by the renowned Dutch medallist Johann Georg Holtzhey. It was gifted to the king in August 1791. On the obverse side the coin features a portrait of the ruler with a prominently displayed Order of the White Eagle. The king's head is adorned with an oak wreath, and the following inscription is placed in the rim: STANISLAUS · AUGUST · D[omi]ni · G[ra]tia · REX POLON[iae] · M[agn]us · D[omi]ni · L[it]uan[iae] · PATRIAE PARENS – Stanislaw August, by the grace of God the King of Poland, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, and the Father of the Homeland. The reverse side of the coin executed by Holtzhey is very interesting. Under the eye of Providence there is a winged genius, symbolizing the spirit of freedom, who is trampling his broken shackles. In his right hand he raises a Phrygian cap towards the sky, and in the left hand he holds a laurel branch and a caduceus. At his side, the artist placed a globe covered by the coat of arms of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, topped with a mural crown – a symbol of the political rights of the bourgeoisie. Over the crown there is a Christogram – a sign common to all Christians. On the image there are additional items leaning against the globe: the lictor's fasces (in revolutionary France they became the symbol of the Republican idea), as well as a sword and scales, which traditionally represent the judiciary and the executive authorities. In the rim, there is a Latin maxim: TERRORRE LIBERA – free from fear. Below there is the following inscription: EX PERHONORIFICO COMITIORUM / DECRETO D[omi]ni. III MAY / MDCCXCI – by the noble Decree of the Sejm of 3 May 1791. The symbols of revolution (the Phrygian cap, the fasces) will later be included on the Polish monetary units during the Kościuszko Insurrection, that is, in 1794. NBP collections.

"Your Highness! We ask Your Royal Majesty to call on the estates to adopt the whole constitution."

This call was repeated in a common cry, not only of the Sejm participants, but also by the public. The Members of the Sejm and the Senate moved towards the throne. The king immediately called up the Bishop of Kraków, Turski, who approached the throne with a bible. The king and all of us then swore the constitution in with unspeakable fervour, raising our hands up. After the swearing in procedure, the king uttered the following words: 'Juravi et non me penitebit' [I have sworn it, and I shall not regret it]. Then the entire Sejm departed towards St. John's Cathedral. Everyone sung "Te Deum laudamus" amid the roar of guns and the joyful cheers of countless people."¹

The opponents of the constitution and legalists remained in the Royal Castle: 26 Members of the Sejm and one Senator took advantage of their right to protest the proceedings, which was recorded in the municipal court books in Warsaw.

The Government Statute, also known as the Constitution of 3 May from the date of its adoption, was a compromise between King Stanisław August Poniatowski, who was a supporter of a monarchic-constitutional model, and the politicians of the Patriotic Party, who were in favour of a republican model. In contemporary opinion, both the fundamental nature of the political changes introduced on 3 May, and the method in which they were adopted, deserved to be seen as revolutionary.

In a dispatch sent out one day later, i.e. on 4 May, the Austrian envoy in Warsaw, Benedict de Cache, wrote to Chancellor Kaunitz: "a new Polish revolution has taken place". This new revolution was bloodless, and took place in the Polish parliament, in spite of the deep political differences, as mentioned in the preamble: "despite the obstacles that may be caused by our passions" the Members of the Sejm adopted a Constitution, which frees the country from the "long-standing defects of our government". It was passed "for the common good, for the strengthening of freedom, and for the preservation of the Motherland". It became a symbol of the nation's regained sovereignty. On 5 May the Government Statute was signed by the Constitutional Deputation. On the same day it was entered into the records of the Warsaw court and became the applicable law.

In light of doubts regarding the method of introduction as well as the scope of the changes, a constitutional referendum of sorts took place just a few months later in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. All local assemblies (except for the Sejmik of the Wołyń region) adopted the Government Statute and swore it in.

¹ Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, *Pamiętniki czasów moich* [Memories of my times], Lipsk 1868, p. 117.



Stanisław August Poniatowski - Konstytucja

Gustav Taubert, who was present in the Senators' Chamber on 3 May, made a drawing, which documents the moment when the constitution was sworn in – we see the king with his right hand raised, surrounded by parliamentarians in Polish and French outfits, as well as the audience gathered in the gallery. Based on this drawing, Johann Bolt prepared an engraving that was then copied and distributed among the Members of the Sejm.
[Wikimedia Commons](#)

The events in Warsaw were closely watched not only by diplomats but also by the correspondents of European newspapers, which were presenting extensive reports about the ongoing “Polish revolution”. The constitution was almost immediately translated and published in France, England, and Germany, and was met with widespread sympathy and accolades.

These reactions were not used in the propaganda of the constitutional camp, whose goal was not a social revolution, but above all, the reform



France, 2 sols, 1791. Coin with the image of King Louis XVI; on the reverse side there is a bundle of rods (lictors' fasces) tied with a strap, along with a cane topped with a Phrygian cap. In ancient Rome, the lictors (guards) accompanied officials, carrying the fasces before them. Outside the city, an axe was inserted into the bundle of rods. The French revolutionaries employed this Roman tradition in order to highlight the differences between the Republic and the ancien régime. The rods symbolized the power of the people, while the Phrygian cap was a symbol of freedom, because in Rome it was given to freed slaves. Even today, the coat of arms of the French Republic includes a lictors' fasces.

[Wikimedia Commons](#)

of the political system. The supporters of the reform emphasized the solemn act of adoption and swearing in of the Government Statute, as well as the role played by the king. Opinion journalists pointed to the wisdom of the king, and his concern for the future of the nation. The king was also the main participant of the celebrations of the first anniversary of the constitution's adoption and laid the foundation stone for the Temple of Divine Providence.

The symbols present on the Dutch medal in 1791 also appeared on French coins and banknotes. There are slight differences in the presentation of



Drawing from 1792: The new Polish Constitution.

Author: Daniel Chodowiecki, an exceptional Berlin-based graphic artist born in Gdańsk.

Collection of The National Library.

The Constitution is presented as a young queen. Much like Our Lady of Protection, who is protecting the faithful under her cloak, the Constitution embraces the personifications of science, art, trade, and labour.

Emphasizing the importance of the constitution's adoption, Chodowiecki drew attention to an aspect that is also accentuated by many of today's historians – the birth of the community of Poles.



The commemorative version of the 5 zł coin was minted in 1925 in 100 pieces, in order to mark the anniversary of the Constitution of 3 May. On the obverse on both sides of the eagle, there are the initials SW (President Stanisław Wojciechowski) and WG (Prime Minister Władysław Grabski) and the date 3/V. NBP collections.



Silver 5 zł coin of 1925 (Ag 900) designed by Stanisław Lewandowski. The "Central bank" room – NBP Money Centre. NBP collections.

the genius (he is standing at a desk and writing the constitution), and the licitor's fasces. It is worth noting, however, that the initial objective of the French Revolution was the emancipation of the Third Estate (that is, the people remaining outside of the privileged classes of the aristocracy and clergy) and the introduction of limitations on the absolutist power of the French monarchs. In terms of social matters, the Polish constitution was conservative compared with the French constitution – it did not abolish the division of society into the three estates, and it did not establish a new political order.

■ Mateusz Sora

Narodowy Bank Polski commemorated the 230th anniversary of the Polish Constitution of 3 May – the magnum opus of the revived Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – by issuing a silver coin with the face value of 50 złoty and a gold coin with the face value of 100 złoty, which were put into circulation on 28 April 2021.



Face value: 50 zł
Metal: Ag 999/1000
Finish: standard (oxidized)
Diameter: 45.00 mm
Weight: 62.20 g

Edge (side): inscription: 1791
Mintage: up to 6,000 pcs
Designer: Dominika Karpińska-Kopiec

Front side (obverse): at the top, the image of the Eagle established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland, under the Eagle, on the right, the mint mark: m/w; above there is a semicircular inscription towards the right side: "RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA 2021 • 50 Zł" [REPUBLIC OF POLAND 2021 • 50 Zł]. On the left side, the image of the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Poland from the times of Stanisław Augustus: a five-field crowned shield with two fields representing the coat of arms of the Polish Crown – the White Eagle, two fields representing the coat of arms of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – the Vytis (Pursuit), and in the centre a single coat of arms representing the House of Poniatowski – Ciołek. The coat of arms is surrounded by a wreath of oak and palm leaves and wrapped in a ribbon with the maxim: PRO FIDE LEGE ET GREGE [FOR FAITH, LAW AND NATION], at the bottom there is the Cross of the Order of the White Eagle. In the bottom part of the coin, there is a fragment of the title page of one of the earliest editions of the Constitution of 3 May 1791.

The reverse (reverse): in the centre there is a fragment of the painting "Constitution of 3 May 1791" by Jan Matejko depicting Stanisław Małachowski, the Marshal of the Four-Years Sejm, carried by the deputies and holding over the heads of the crowd the text of the Government Statute of 3 May 1791. Below, there is a fragment of the Preamble to the Constitution: "For the preservation of our Motherland / and its borders [...] / We hereby adopt / this constitution". In the rim there is an inscription: 230. ROCZNICA KONSTITUCJI 3 MAJA – DZIEŁA ODRODZONEJ RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ [230TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE POLISH CONSTITUTION OF 3 MAY – THE MAGNUM OPUS OF THE REVIVED POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH]



Face value: 100 zł
Metal: Au 900/1000
Finish: proof
Diameter: 21.00 mm
Weight: 8.00 g

Edge (side): plain
Mintage: up to 1,200 pcs
Designer: Dobrochna Surajewska

Front side (obverse): in the centre there is the image of the Eagle established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland, under the Eagle, on the right side, the mint mark: m/w. Along the rim there are semicircular inscriptions, on the left side from the bottom towards the top: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA [REPUBLIC OF POLAND], on the bottom: 100 Zł, and on the right side there is the indication of the year of issue: 2021.

Back side (reverse): in the centre, there is the image of the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Poland from the times of Stanisław August: a five-field crowned shield with two fields representing the coat of arms of the Polish Crown – the White Eagle, two fields representing the coat of arms of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania – the Vytis (Pursuit), and in the centre a single coat of arms representing the House of Poniatowski – Ciołek. The coat of arms is surrounded by a wreath of oak and palm leaves and wrapped in a ribbon with the maxim: PRO FIDE LEGE ET GREGE [FOR FAITH, LAW AND NATION], at the bottom there is the Cross of the Order of the White Eagle. In the rim there is an inscription: 230. ROCZNICA KONSTITUCJI 3 MAJA – DZIEŁA ODRODZONEJ RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ [230TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE POLISH CONSTITUTION OF 3 MAY – THE MAGNUM OPUS OF THE REVIVED POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH].

Exhibits

“The Invincible Sun” – the Aureus coin from the Roman Empire pp. 21-22



Il rilievo raffigura un personaggio seduto su una sedia, con un'aria di autorità. È probabilmente un'immagine di un imperatore romano o di un alto funzionario. La scultura è scolpita in un materiale compatto, con linee pulite e un'attenzione particolare ai dettagli della vestimenta e della postura.



Questo rilievo mostra una scena con tre figure principali. Una figura a sinistra sembra essere in un'azione di offerta o di dialogo con una figura centrale che si rivolge a una terza figura a destra. La scena è incorniciata da un elemento architettonico superiore e inferiore, suggerendo un contesto sacro o pubblico.



La nave rappresentata è un galione, tipico delle marine antiche, con una vela quadrata e una vela a lancia. La scultura cattura il movimento della nave e la presenza di numerosi marinai e rematori. È un'ottima testimonianza dell'arte navale romana.



The Invincible Sun

Among the various Roman coins presented in the exhibition of the NBP Money Centre, there is the Aureus, dated to the years 200-202 AD. It is seemingly ordinary, but the ruler depicted on the obverse has a surprisingly youthful, and possibly even childish appearance. This is Geta, the younger son of Septimius Severus, the emperor born in North Africa, who ruled in the years 193-211. Around the ruler's bust in a military outfit there is a traditional inscription along the rim: PSEPTGETA - CAESPONT. After expanding the abbreviations this inscription reads as follows: P[ublius] SEPT[imius] GETA - CAES[ar] PONT[icum], that is, "Publius Septimius Geta (almost the full name and family title), the Caesar of Pontus". During this period, the term Caesar meant a younger ruler. Septimius Severus gradually appointed his sons as his co-rulers. At first, the older son, Caracalla, became Caesar in 196, and then he became Augustus (co-ruler) in 198. In the same year, Geta became Caesar and was assigned an eastern province, which is why the inscription mentions Pontus, a land in Asia Minor, in present-day Turkey.

While the design of the obverse is unambiguous, the reverse side of the Aureus raises some doubts, despite the fact that its iconographic scheme is typical of Roman coins. It also carries the image of the bust of a young person. But who exactly is depicted here? In most auction sites or numismatic catalogues, the description of the reverse side includes the name "Caracalla" with a question mark. This would indicate that the coin was minted by Septimius Severus in order to celebrate the appointment of Geta as Caesar and of Caracalla as Augustus, which took place on 28 January 198 in Ctesiphon (currently known as Salman Pak, near Baghdad, in present-day Iraq). This interpretation would conveniently tie into Septimius Severus' dynastic politics and efforts to ensure the continuity of power in the Severan dynasty.

In the numismatic literature, however, there is also a second theory, formulated by Andreas Alföldi in 1970. It states that the second bust also depicts Geta and that the coin is dedicated exclusively to the younger son of the Roman Emperor. The inscription, which is often decisive for the correct attribution of a given image, is not particularly helpful in this case: SEVERI INVICTI AVG PII FIL. After expanding the abbreviations, this reads as: SEVERI INVICTI AVG[usti] PII FIL[ius], that is, "the son of invincible

Severus, the pious Augustus". This may be understood as a continuation of the inscription from the obverse side, and in that case, it relates to Geta, or as a separate inscription, and in that case, it may apply to both Geta and Caracalla.

The figure on the reverse thus represents one of the brothers as an incarnation of Sol Invictus – the Invincible Sun. This is clearly indicated by the attributes – the radiate crown and the tunic tied high up the waist. Sol Invictus is an example of syncretic deities, combining the features of gods from different cultural

areas, much like the Greco-Egyptian deities Sarapis (Serapis) and Hermanubis. In this case, it is a combination of the Greco-Roman god Apollo and the eastern Indo-Iranian god Mitra. Hence the radiant solar crown, which is an Apollonian symbol, and the tunic, which is typical of representations of Mitra. The greeting gesture is characteristic of Sol Invictus. The cult of the Invincible Sun was officially introduced by Emperor Aurelian, but it only became popularized, especially among Roman soldiers, in the times of Caracalla, who incidentally sometimes identified himself with the deity. In later times Sol also





Showcase in the Antiquity-Middle Ages-Modernity room where the Aureus coin is exhibited.
NBP collections

increasingly frequently appeared on coins, becoming one of the canonical images of the late-Roman bronze coins.

Unfortunately, the two brothers were in constant conflict and sincerely hatred each other, which was a source of concern for both parents – Septimius Severus and Julia Domna – as well as the later chroniclers, whose accounts are the source of knowledge about the fate of the Severan dynasty. One such account was provided by Herodian, who wrote about these developments in the “History of the Roman Empire”.

The subsequent attempts to resolve the conflict were unsuccessful, but until his father was alive, Caracalla had to somewhat restrain his ambitions and tone down his resentment. In his will, Septimius Severus bestowed equal power to both brothers, without any division of competencies or the territory of the empire. This fact further

hindered cooperation between them, while the personality differences and the growing popularity of Geta made it more difficult to reach any agreement. The above-mentioned Herodian wrote about the situation in the following way: “His sons, who were now young men, quarreled continually on the return journey to Rome with their mother. They did not use the same lodgings or even dine together, since they were extremely suspicious of all they ate and drank. Each feared that the other would secretly get prior access to the kitchens and bribe the servants to use poison. This fear led the youths to complete the journey with even greater haste; for they believed that they would be safer in Rome where, by dividing the palace between them, each could manage his own affairs as he pleased in the most spacious dwelling in the entire city.” (“History of the Roman Empire”, IV.1)

“But the hatred and dissension between them continued to grow. If it became necessary to appoint a governor or a magistrate, each wished to select a friend for the post. If they sat as judges, they handed down dissenting opinions, often to the ruin of those on trial; for rivalry counted more than justice to these two. Even at the shows the brothers took opposite sides. They tried every sort of intrigue; each, for example, attempted to persuade the other’s cooks and cupbearers to administer some deadly poison. It was not easy for either one to succeed in these attempts, however: both were exceedingly careful and took many precautions.” (“History of the Roman Empire”, IV.4)

Geta did not get to enjoy his rule for long. After a short period of joint rule, in 212 Caracalla ordered the murder of his younger brother and henceforth ruled the Roman Empire on his own as Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Severus Antoninus Pius Augustus. The unofficial nickname “Caracalla” came from the name of a Gallic hooded cloak (known as caracalla) that the emperor liked to wear during his trips on the Rhine and the Danube. However, this nickname was never used in documents or inscriptions, and it did not appear on coins.

It wasn’t enough for Caracalla to remove his brother from among the living. He also issued a *damnatio memoriae* order against Geta – this “condemnation of memory” was the worst punishment used against the most hated emperors. It involved the removal or destruction of statues, images, and even the name of the ruler from all inscriptions and written documents. All evidence of his existence were erased and any displays of mourning after him were banned – this applied even to his mother. As a result, very few of his portraits survived to the present day. The remaining images include the coins dedicated to Geta by Septimius Severus or issued by Geta himself. It ultimately proved impossible to entirely withdraw them from circulation, or to destroy the face of the young ruler depicted on them.

■ *Eliza Walczak*

From the Calendar of the NBP Money Centre

“Educational Library of the NBP Money Centre”

- “Biographies”: “Nicolaus Copernicus” pp. 24-25

Online lectures pp. 26

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Biblioteka Edukacyjna
Centrum Pieniądza NBP

Biblioteka Edukacyjna
Centrum Pieniądza NBP
Biografie 1/2020

Mikołaj Kopernik



Copernicus in the “Educational Library of the NBP Money Centre”

The NBP Money Centre released the biography of Nicolaus Copernicus, thereby inaugurating a series of publications devoted to outstanding representatives of Polish economic thought, politicians, and entrepreneurs, who contributed to the development of the national economy.

We can become acquainted with the figure of Copernicus at the permanent exhibition of the NBP Money Centre in the “Antiquity-Middle Ages-Modernity” room, where we explain Copernicus law/Gresham’s law, and also on the Polish banknotes and coins as well as banknote designs, which ultimately did not enter into circulation. Because he went down in history as an astronomer – the author of the heliocentric theory – his images are accompanied by instruments used for the study of the sky, as well as sky maps, and the models of the solar system described by Copernicus.

However, Copernicus wasn’t just an astronomer and the author of treatises about money. He was also a poet, a physician, a lawyer, a diplomat, and especially a public official. We say of such people that they are “Renaissance men”, and such a characterization accurately describes the subject of the first book in the “Educational Library of the NBP Money Centre”.

The publication is divided into three parts: “Youth,” “Life’s Work” and “Life After Life”. In the third section we discuss the images of Nicolaus Copernicus developed by outstanding artists, which were included on Polish coins and banknotes. In the first two sections we present the figure of Nicolaus Copernicus against the background of the era in which he lived. He was born in Prussia, in the city of Toruń, after the conclusion of the Second Peace of Toruń, in a wealthy merchant family. Toruń was one of the cities

that formed the Union of Prussian Cities and revolted against the State of the Teutonic Order. Because of that, the publication includes information explaining the specific position of Prussia in the Kingdom of Poland.

The phenomenon of Copernicus would be impossible to comprehend without a mention of the role of universities in the Europe of the Middle Ages, also including the University of Kraków, which entered its prime at the turn of the 15th and 16th century. After graduating from the university, Copernicus returned to Warmia, where he became one of the closest collaborators of Bishop Watzenrode. He participated in the diets (local parliaments) of the Prussian estates, and in the sessions of the Sejm of the Polish Crown and the Lithuanian Sejm (as a representative of the province), and he also became an administrator of ecclesiastical land estates.

He was among the witnesses at the coronation of King Sigismund the Elder in 1507 and one year later, also in Kraków, he published his first book – the translations of poems by Theophylact Simocatta from Greek into Latin. However, Copernicus owes his place in history not to his talents in the area of philology, or his merits as an efficient administrator, but to his courage in the formulation and presentation of scientific views based on diligently conducted observations. Therefore, in the “Life’s Work” section, we discuss both the heliocentric theory, which changed humanity’s perception of the universe, as well as his contributions to the theory of money. Both theories were the result of many years of inquisitive research activities.

While preparing expert opinions for the Prussian parliament, including his most mature work “Treatise on Coin” (Tractatus de monetis), Copernicus based his considerations on the analysis of the economic situation of Prussia. In the above-mentioned work, he argued that one of the prerequisites for economic growth is maintaining the value of money, that is, maintaining an appropriate and unchanged content of silver and gold in the coins. He believed that a difference in the nominal value (that is, the one that is guaranteed by the issuer) and the real value (the value of the ore contained in the coin) is permissible only to the extent resulting from



100 złoty, silver, trial coin, 1925.
Designer: S. Szukalski.
NBP collections



1000 złoty, issued on 29.10.1965. Designers: H. Tomaszewski and J. Pałka. NBP collections



1000 złoty, issued on 2.07.1975. Designer: A. Heidrich. NBP collections

the cost of issuance. He opposed the form of taxation employed by rulers who introduced “debased” money into circulation. In his opinion, such a monetary policy leads to the collapse of crafts and trade, as it causes the outflow of ore and reduces trade – “after all, who amongst our merchants will be able to purchase goods in foreign countries using bad money?”

Copernicus opposed the view that “debased coin is more beneficial for social relations, as it helps the poorest members of the population, providing them with grains at a cheap price and facilitating them in fulfilling other life needs.” He believed that in reality bad coin deteriorates the livelihood of the poor people, while good coin actually improves it. Moreover, when “good” and “bad” coins of the same face value remain in circulation at the same time, then it makes no sense to pay using the “good” coins. “Good” coins are therefore withdrawn from the market. Copernicus’ treatise would not have been possible if not for his historical research and systematic observations. Moreover, it contains originally formulated principles and is free from moralizing admonishments typical of medieval works.

In order to introduce the reader to the times in which Copernicus lived, we have illustrated the text with materials from the era as well as photographs of objects related to his life which have survived to this day, such as the courtyard of the University of Kraków, where he studied, the castle in

Olsztyn, which he defended from the Teutonic Order, and the cathedral in Frombork, where he was buried. In addition to the first printed map of Prussia, we have included a copy of the original entry into the matriculation book of the Kraków Academy, and a reproduction of the manuscript of his work “On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres” (*De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*), as well as the reproduction of the title page of the book of translated poems of Theophylact Simocatta.

The presentation of the economic views of Nicolaus Copernicus is accompanied by exhibits from the collections of Narodowy Bank Polski – the coins that were in circulation during his lifetime. This includes both the “debased” or “bad” coins, which he criticized, and the “healthy” or “good” coins issued in Prussia after the reforms carried out by King Sigismund the Elder in the years 1528-1530. Not all of the recommendations contained in Nicolaus Copernicus’ treatise were implemented. The king ultimately leaned towards a programme of reforms presented by Jost Decius, who organized the royal mint in Toruń, equated the value of the Prussian and Polish coin (which was also proposed by Copernicus), and introduced into circulation a beautiful coin with a portrait of the ruler (thanks to the qualifications of the exceptional medallist Matthias Schilling). The coins minted at the mint of Toruń were in circulation throughout the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

■ Mateusz Sora

Online lectures in the first half of 2021

The NBP Money Centre, in collaboration with the editors of the historical magazine "Mówią Wieki" (the media patron), has scheduled the recording and online publication of the following lectures in the first half of the year:

- February – Professor Maciej Górny (Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences): "Polish delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. The economic issues", recording/broadcast on 25 February
- March – Dr Jerzy Łazor (Warsaw School of Economics): "The physicians of money", recording/broadcast on 25 March
- April – Professor Włodzimierz Mędrzecki (Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences): "The society of the Second Polish Republic on the path towards modernization", recording/broadcast on 29 April
- May – Professor Cecylia Leszczyńska (University of Warsaw): "Overall evaluation of the economic achievements of the Second Polish Republic", recording/broadcast on 27 May
- June – Professor Michał Kopczyński (University of Warsaw): "Standard of living in the Second Polish Republic", recording/broadcast on 24 June

The lectures are recorded at the exhibition of the NBP Money Centre and posted on the www.cpnbp.pl website on the last Thursday of the month at 5 p.m. (so-called streaming – direct online video transmission).

■ Mateusz Sora

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na drodze do modernizacji**

www.cpnbp.pl/wykłady
29 kwietnia 2021 r., godz. 17:00



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