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## NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE TYKOCIN MINT<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** This article begins with a review of the current state of research on the history of the Tykocin mint. This serves as a starting point for reflections on the reasons for the mint's opening, the period of its operations, and its scope. The work is based on the interpretation of archaeological finds from the Tykocin Castle grounds and archival documents from the 1560s and 1570s. These findings convincingly demonstrate that the countersigning of Neapolitan coins in 1564, previously attributed to the Vilnius mint, actually took place in Tykocin. This finding dispels doubts about the previously unexplored beginnings of the Tykocin mint and allows for the division of its short history into two stages. In relation to the second stage, which began in 1566, the article criticizes the recently popular tendency to expand the range of coin types attributed to the Tykocin mint.

**ABSTRAKT:** Artykuł zaczyna się przeglądem stanu badań nad dziejami mennicy tykocińskiej. Jest on punktem wyjścia do rozważań nad przyczynami otwarcia mennicy, okresem prowadzenia przez nią działalności i zakresem tejże. Podstawą źródłową pracy są znaleziska archeologiczne z terenu zamku tykocińskiego i dokumenty archiwalne z lat 60. i 70. XVI w. Dzięki nim udało się przekonująco wykazać, że prowadzona w 1564 r. akcja kontrasygnowania monet neapolitańskich, przypisywana dotychczas mennicy wileńskiej, odbyła się w Tykocinie. Konstatacja ta rozwiewa wątpliwości względem zupełnie dotychczas nierozpoznanych początków mennicy tykocińskiej i umożliwia podzielenie jej krótkich dziejów na dwa etapy. W odniesieniu do etapu drugiego, którego początek datuje się na 1566 r., podjęto próbę krytyki popularnych w ostatnich latach tendencji poszerzania asortymentu gatunków monet przypisywanych warsztatowi tykocińskiemu.

**KEYWORDS:** Tykocin, Sigismund Augustus, mint, the Northern Seven Years' War, neapolitan sums, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Podlachia

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<sup>1</sup> This article is an elaboration on the topic of a paper presented in 2022 at the doctoral seminar of professor Borys Paszkiewicz.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Tykocin, Zygmunt August, mennica, I wojna północna, sumy neapolitańskie, Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie, Podlasie

Over the last couple of decades, a large group of Crown, Lithuanian and municipal mints operating in the Old Polish period within the borders of the Polish and Lithuanian states – first connected by a personal union and from 1569 by a real union – have been the subject of extensive monographic studies.<sup>2</sup> the Tykocin mint remains an exception in this regard. The reason for this gap in knowledge is a very slim base of sources, which only gets expanded very rarely and rather incidentally.

#### STATE OF RESEARCH

Ignacy Zagórski was the first researcher to write about the Tykocin mint in 1845. He did not identify specific denominations or types of coins produced by that workshop, nor did he specify the dates of its operations. The information he provided was actually one comment: “the mint in Tykocin was mostly leased to Jews, which was the reason for numerous complaints at the Sejms”.<sup>3</sup> He also published *Mandatum universale de moneta Lituanica* [Universal Mandate of Lithuanian Currency] from 27 March 1572, proving his excellent historical skill, which was ahead of his time.<sup>4</sup> Seven years later, while doing research on the Gdańsk coinage, Friedrich August Vossberg also mentioned the minting activity in Tykocin. He cited the protest of the Prussian estates filed in Malbork in 1567 against the inferior value of the Tykocin coin, which was reprinted in 1723 by Gottfried Lengnich.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps I. Zagórski referred to the same document earlier,<sup>6</sup> because further on we can read: “whereas His Royal Majesty could tolerate the fact that the Jews, to whom the [manufacturing of] coins had been leased in Lithuania, were causing irreparable damage to the entire country by counterfeiting the money”.<sup>7</sup> In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Józef Tyszkiewicz<sup>8</sup> and Kazimierz Stron-

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<sup>2</sup> Gumowski 1921; Gumowski 1955; Gumowski 1961; Terlecki 1970; Opozda 1975; Reyman 1975; Mrowiński 1986; Gumowski 1990; Bonczkowska 2011, among others.

<sup>3</sup> Zagórski 1845, p. 15. This and the following citations translated to English by the author.

<sup>4</sup> This fact is noteworthy. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was common to interfere with published sources by shortening, or even “correcting” them – a habit from which I. Zagórski was free. Cf. *Mandatum universale de moneta*, fols 364–365 and the printed edition of *Mandatum universale de moneta Lituanica*, [in:] Zagórski 1845, p. 124.

<sup>5</sup> Vossberg 1852, p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> Zagórski 1845, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> “da hergegen *Königliche* Majest[ät] es leyden konten, daß die Juden denen man in Litthauen die Münzen verpachtet, dem ganzen Lande, mit der Verfälschung des Geldes einen unersetzlichen Schaden beybrächten”; Lengnich 1723, p. 344.

<sup>8</sup> Tyszkiewicz 1875, pp. 36–37.

czyński<sup>9</sup> were still dealing with the problem of the Tykocin mint. Lacking new archival discoveries, they tried to reconstruct the activities of the Tykocin mint based on the analysis of the numismatic material. J. Tyszkiewicz's work, written under the supervision of Karol Beyer, a distinguished expert in Polish numismatics, was published in 1875. However, *Przyczynki do historii mennicy litewskiej* [Contribution to the History of the Lithuanian Mint], which was part of the publication, is a collection of loose notes rather than an attempt to summarize the state of research.<sup>10</sup> The author pointed to the Jastrzębiec coat of arms as a distinguishing feature of the Tykocin coins, but had doubts as to whom that symbol should be attributed. He suggested it was either Jan Lutomirski, the Crown Court Treasurer, or Piotr Myszkowski, the Crown Vice-Chancellor. He indicated the year 1555 as the opening date of the Tykocin mint, citing a letter from Sigismund Augustus to Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Black, but put a question mark over that information.<sup>11</sup>

The criticism expressed by K. Stronczyński in the third volume of *Dawne monety Polskie dynastii Piastów i Jagiellonów* [The Old Polish Coins of the Piast and Jagiellonian Dynasties] against the findings published by I. Zagórski, who claimed that "King Sigismund Augustus's coins, both Polish, and Lithuanian, were minted only at the Vilnius mint", is either imprecisely formulated, or completely inaccurate.<sup>12</sup> It has been already mentioned that I. Zagórski did not separate the products of the Vilnius mint from those of the Tykocin mint, so perhaps this is indeed a matter of imprecision, making it impossible to accurately decipher the author's intentions. K. Stronczyński's argumentation seems to be leaning towards the conclusion that the coins meeting the Polish standard were struck in Tykocin, and those meeting the Lithuanian standard in Vilnius. This is evidenced by the passage in which he made an argument that "[considering] the great difference between the two in both the die design, and the technical striking process, it is hard to assume that in the same mint the same coin was simultaneously struck in two different standards".<sup>13</sup> If we consider this explanation accurate,<sup>14</sup> it must be said that the author lacked consistency, as the wide range of denominations that he attributed to the Tykocin mint also included a group of coins produced in the Lithuanian standard (deniers from 1546–1548, half-groschen from 1545–1566, a unique groschen in the Lithuanian standard with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms from 1566<sup>15</sup>). Coin production in Tykocin was also mentioned at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Max Kirmis in his work *Handbuch der polnischen Münzkunde* [Handbook of Polish Numismatics].

<sup>9</sup> Stronczyński 1885, pp. 141–171.

<sup>10</sup> Tyszkiewicz 1875, pp. 27–47.

<sup>11</sup> Tyszkiewicz 1875, pp. 36–37.

<sup>12</sup> Stronczyński 1885, p. 142, fn 2.

<sup>13</sup> Stronczyński 1885, p. 142, fn 2.

<sup>14</sup> This is also how K. Stronczyński's argument was interpreted by M. Grażyński, who was critical of his work (Grażyński 1913, pp. 23, 37).

<sup>15</sup> Stronczyński 1885, pp. 143, 146–148, 152.

He repeated the findings of K. Stronczyński, but attributed the minting of all Lithuanian groschen in the Polish standard to the Vilnius mint.<sup>16</sup>

In 1909, Walter Schwinkowski's research on the monetary system of the Duchy of Prussia under the rule of Albert of Hohenzollern was published. In that research, he also made some valuable discoveries regarding Sigismund Augustus's Lithuanian currency. Based on archival materials, which unfortunately I have not been able to verify, he noted, *inter alia*, that it was Stanisław Myszkowski of Mirów who was responsible for the coins bearing the Jastrzębiec coat of arms. At the behest of the Polish monarch, Myszkowski received 24,000 grzywnas of pure silver for that issue.<sup>17</sup> In 1913, in a series of articles in *Wiadomości Numizmatyczno-Archaeologiczne* [The Numismatic and Archaeological News], Michał Grażyński criticised the earlier investigations. Based on the accounting records of the Vilnius mint, he unequivocally rejected the possibility that the Tykocin mint could have operated in the years 1545–1548.<sup>18</sup> That finding put an end to the belief that there were two separate workshops – in Tykocin and Vilnius – which issued coins in two different standards – Polish and Lithuanian, respectively.

The turning point in the history of research on the activities of the Tykocin mint was Marian Gumowski's extensive commentary, published as part of his monograph on the Vilnius mint.<sup>19</sup> He systematized the previous findings and narrowed the range of coins that he believed had been minted in Tykocin only to the coins bearing the Jastrzębiec coat of arms. Those were the groschen minted in the Polish standard and the extremely rare groschen and half-groschen minted in the Lithuanian standard.

The following decades brought a number of comprehensive publications on the history of coins from the Old Polish period. However, they did not provide any new information on the activity of the Tykocin mint. They simply repeated and summarized the opinions expressed by M. Gumowski.<sup>20</sup>

In 1983, Krzysztof Filipow drew attention to a piece of information on the Tykocin mint, cited by Aleksander Jabłonowski in his *Źródła dziejowe*<sup>21</sup> [Historical Sources]. Together with the inventory of the Tykocin starostwo, it quite precisely pointed to the topographic location of the property that had been acquired by the king for the purpose of minting. That publication introduced the topic of the Tykocin mint into the orbit of the regional scholars' interests. Unfortunately, the author made an error. He believed the location of the property was on the low escarp-

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<sup>16</sup> Kirmis 1892, pp. 50–55.

<sup>17</sup> Schwinkowski 1909, p. 166.

<sup>18</sup> Grażyński 1913, pp. 7–9, 22–24, 36–37, 56–58, 69–71; cf. Grażyński 1912, pp. 65–68, 65–68, 81–83, 103–105, 119–122, 135–136, 150–153, 163–167, 183–186.

<sup>19</sup> Gumowski 1921, pp. 83–85.

<sup>20</sup> Kiersnowski 1964, p. 133; Białkowski, Szweycer 1975, pp. 92–93; Żabiński 1981, p. 100; Filipow 1982, pp. 181–185; Filipow 1987, p. 9; Szwagrzyk 1990, p. 220; Kopicki 1995, p. 149.

<sup>21</sup> Filipow 1983, pp. 9–11; Jabłonowski 1909, p. 134.

ment of the Narew River. The error was corrected only in 1991 by Józef Maroszek, an expert in the Old Polish period in the history of Podlasie.<sup>22</sup> K. Filipow's publications on the Tykocin mint require a brief commentary here. On the one hand, the author provided a valuable summary of the previous research and initiated a discussion about the mint's location within the boundaries of Tykocin. On the other hand, in each of his five articles, he essentially repeated the same information – with the exception of a short commentary from 1998. In that publication, K. Filipow supported the proposal presented by Eugenius Ivanauskas a year earlier to extend the range of denominations that in the existing historiography were assigned to the Tykocin mint (see Table 1).<sup>23</sup> the same had been proposed by J. Maroszek,<sup>24</sup> whom he also referred to in order to verify his view on the location of the Tykocin mint.<sup>25</sup>

In 2006, Wiktor Kakareko published a paper that he had earlier presented at the 7<sup>th</sup> International Numismatic Conference. The topic of the conference was the corruption of currency in Central and Eastern Europe. W. Kakareko's article is a veritable kaleidoscope of conjectures and questionable (often incoherent) revelations. I realize, of course, that this expressed criticism requires further argumentation. For the sake of clarity, I will look into the work in question more closely here, instead of referencing it later in the article. So as not to slide into a polemic, I will focus only on a few selected issues.

According to W. Kakareko, the Tykocin mint began operations in 1562 and continued until the early 1570s, that is until the death of Sigismund Augustus. It allegedly minted half-groschen and three-groschen coins without the abbreviation D[ei] G[ratia] around the obverse. In the author's opinion that characteristic distinguished the mintage from Vilnius coins, featuring DG. He further interpreted that feature as a manifestation of the religious and political differences between Protestant Lithuania, for which the king was God's anointed, and the Catholic Crown, where the election of the king was the right of the nobility. Citing the findings of Stasys Sajauskas and Domininkas Kaubrys,<sup>26</sup> he attributed most of the half-groschen coins with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms to the Vilnius mint and only one of the known coins – with a remarkably low weight (0.97 g) and a low silver fineness (though not indicated in the text) – to the Tykocin mint. According to W. Kakareko, in Tykocin, there were minted: all the groschen coins in the Polish standard, the trial groschen with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms in the Lithuanian standard (unless it was not a 19<sup>th</sup>-century forgery), the deniers from 1563, the double-deniers from 1566–1567, the two-groschen from 1565, the six-groschen coins from 1562, and the half-kopa coins from 1564–1565. He also claimed Tykocin was the place where the Neapolitan coins would be countersigned.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Maroszek 1991, pp. 40–41.

<sup>23</sup> Ivanauskas 1997, pp. 105–107.

<sup>24</sup> Maroszek 1991, p. 41.

<sup>25</sup> Filipow 1998, pp. 119–120.

<sup>26</sup> Sajauskas, Kaubrys 1993, p. 456; Sajauskas, Kaubrys 2006, p. 248.

<sup>27</sup> Kakareko 2006, pp. 120–124.

The view that the presence of the abbreviation D[ei] G[ratia] on a coin indicates the workshop where it was produced is untenable. Suffice it to say that since 1545,<sup>28</sup> i.e., the beginning of the minting under Sigismund Augustus's name, those letters had not appeared on half-groschen, groschen (in neither Polish, nor Lithuanian standard), three-groschen, or ducats. Mind that in the opinion of W. Kakareko, there had been no minting operations in Tykocin before 1562. Drawing such a conclusion from religious differences between the Crown and Lithuania should also be considered completely flawed. The subsequent elected rulers, who were much more dependent on the nobility than Sigismund Augustus, did place the letters DG on their Crown, Lithuanian and city coins. There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the use of this phrase raised any doubts among the politically active Roman Catholic, Reformed, or Orthodox circles. It also should be noted that Jan Lutomirski, to whom W. Kakareko attributed the Jastrzębiec coat of arms and authority over the minting in Tykocin,<sup>29</sup> was an Evangelical Christian and, in his later years, a member of the Polish Brethren community.<sup>30</sup>

Pointing to the wide range of denominations allegedly minted in Tykocin, the author cites analogies in the images. Unfortunately, he does not specify his observations, stating only that he relied on research "applying the results of a previously unused analysis of the iconography of Lithuanian coins from that period, their production technology, and, of course, one's own intuition".<sup>31</sup>

The author further makes an argument that the large three- and six-groschen coins dated 1562 were actually minted in the early 1570s out of withdrawn half-groschen and groschen coins with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms. He believes the new coins were antedated – they bore, in his opinion, the "legal" date of issue. However, it is not clear what he means by that, as he provides no explanation and does not refer to any legal acts.<sup>32</sup> If he is pointing to the moment when the mint standard of Lithuanian coins was reduced to 5.5 lots, it did not occur in 1562, but in 1558.<sup>33</sup> In my opinion, there is no reason to believe that a significantly earlier date was placed on either Lithuanian, or Polish coins. Such a practice should be considered highly unlikely: it had no precedent, there are no valid sources and it lacks logical foundation.

W. Kakareko connects the issue of the groschen and half-groschen with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms to the difficult relationship between Sigismund Augustus and his third wife, Catherine of Austria. He believes those coins were produced at the mints in Vilnius and Tykocin, under the supervision of the starost of Radom,

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<sup>28</sup> Half-groschen and groschen in the Lithuanian standard were minted from 1545, groschen in the Polish standard – from 1546, ducats – from 1547.

<sup>29</sup> Kakareko 2006, p. 123.

<sup>30</sup> Merczyng 1904, p. 130.

<sup>31</sup> Kakareko 2006, p. 122.

<sup>32</sup> Kakareko 2006, p. 123.

<sup>33</sup> Żabiński 1981, pp. 97–99; Gumowski 1921, pp. 67, 70.

Jan Lutomirski, to meet the needs of a journey taken by the queen and her court through Silesia to Vienna. The coin, with its reduced value, was supposed to reflect the condition of the Habsburg monetary market, and spread throughout the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth somewhat by accident.<sup>34</sup>

Although the perspective of a divorce and the possibility that Catherine would be sent away stirred heated emotions among both the senators, and the nobility, who were still proceeding as the Sejm in 1566,<sup>35</sup> the idea of linking the issue of a special currency to that dramatic event is simply bizarre. Neither the denominations, nor the appearance, or the alloy of the coins bearing the Jastrzębiec coat of arms indicate any connection with the monetary market of the Habsburg domain. It is impossible to discern such connections even through the prism of the archaeological finds. Producing a special coin for a relatively short journey would require additional expenditure and thus made no economic sense. It is hard to imagine the queen's retinue using petty coinage en route. In short, there is no evidence, even the slightest, to support this theory.

Table 1. Views on the basic issues related to the activities of the Tykocin mint in the literature of the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries

Tabela 1. Poglądy na podstawowe zagadnienia związane z działalnością mennicy tykocińskiej w literaturze XIX, XX i początku XXI w.

Author	Time of operation	Coins minted	Attribution of the Jastrzębiec coat of arms
I. Zagórski (1845)	unspecified	unspecified	Jan Lutomirski (died 1567)
J. Tyszkiewicz (1875)	from 1555 r.?	groschen in the Polish standard (1566–1568)	Jan Lutomirski (died 1567) lub Piotr Myszkowski (born 1505, died 1591)
K. Stronczyński (1885)	1545–1548, 1566–1568	1. deniers (1546–1548, maybe longer); 2. half-groschen (1545–1566); 3. all groschen in the Polish standard (1545–1548, 1566–1568); 4. the unique groschen in the Lithuanian standard with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms (1566); 5. three-groschen (1546–1547); 6. six-groschen (1547)	Jan Lutomirski (died 1567)
M. Grażyński (1913)	1566–1568	groschen in the Polish standard (1566–1568)	Stanisław Myszkowski (died 1570)

<sup>34</sup> Kakareko 2006, pp. 122–123.

<sup>35</sup> the issue dominated over the proceedings of the Lublin Sejm in 1566 – see *Diariusz Sejmu Lubelskiego 1566* [Diary of the Lublin Sejm 1566], pp. 10–12, 14–16, 19–22, and the following pages; Górnicki 2003, p. 162.

<b>Author</b>	<b>Time of operation</b>	<b>Coins minted</b>	<b>Attribution of the Jastrzębiec coat of arms</b>
M. Gumowski (1921)	1566	1. half-groschen with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms (1566); 2. groschen with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms (1566)	Stanisław Myszkowski (died 1570)
A. Białkowski, T. Szweyca (1975)	1566	1. half-groschen with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms (1566); 2. groschen with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms (1566)	Stanisław Myszkowski (died 1570)
K. Filipow (1982, 1983, 1987, 1991, 1993)	1566	1. half-groschen with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms (1566); 2. groschen with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms (1566)	Stanisław Myszkowski (died 1570)
J. Maroszek (1991)	1564–1572	unspecified	Stanisław Myszkowski (died 1570)
E. Ivanauskas (1997, 2009)	1564–1568	1. half-groschen with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms (1566); 2. groschen in the Polish standard with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms and with the Pillars of Gediminas (1566–1568); 3. three-groschen (1565–1566); 4. quarter-kopa (1564); 5. half-kopa (1564)	Stanisław Myszkowski (died 1570)
K. Filipow (1998)	1564–1572	1. half-groschen with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms (1566); 2. groschen in the Polish standard with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms and with the Pillars of Gediminas (1566–1568); 3. three groschen (1565–1566); 4. quarter-kopa (1564); 5. half-kopa (1564–1565)	Stanisław Myszkowski (died 1570)



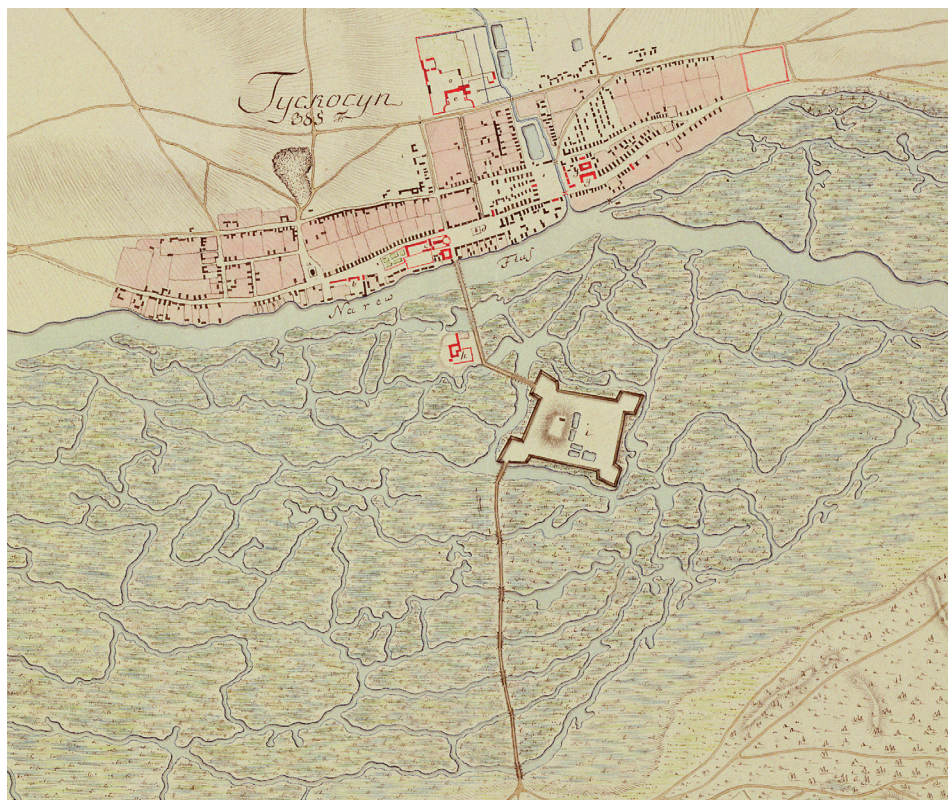


Fig. 1. The town of Tykocin and the nearby castle on a section of the so-called Kruszewski's plan, *Grundriss von der Stadt Tykocyn und der umliegenden Gegend in der Woywodschaft Bielsk in Podlachien*, 1790–1795, from the collection of the Staatsbibliothek Berlin, file no. S.X. 49.993

Ryc. 1. Miasto Tykocin i zamek na wycinku tzw. planu Kruszewskiego, *Grundriss von der Stadt Tykocyn und der umliegenden Gegend in der Woywodschaft Bielsk in Podlachien*, l. 1790–1795, w zbiorach Staatsbibliothek Berlin, sygn. S.X. 49.993

#### PATACA FROM TYKOCIN

The activities of Sigismund Augustus's Tykocin mint remain largely a mystery due to the paucity of written sources. That might have been the result of the monarch's deliberate actions, as he surrounded his venture in Podlasie with great secrecy. The secrecy served well the king's immediate purposes. Today, it poses a number of research challenges. However, sometimes a small discovery may shed a new light on the long-exploited sources.

One such discovery is a single coin that was found during excavations carried out at the Tykocin Castle by Magdalena and Wojciech Bis. It is a Neapolitan pat-

aca of Philip II, commonly known as a half-thaler. It was found in the filling of the moat on the western side of the castle.<sup>36</sup> The coin is in an uncirculated state. Its obverse features the right-facing bust of the ruler in an armour, with two monograms behind his head. Above: IBR – referring to Giovan Battista Ravaschieri, the mintmaster of the Naples Mint from 1548 to 1567, and below: VP – the mark of Vincenzo Porzio, the hallmarker of that mint from 1561 (to 1591?).<sup>37</sup> The legend PHILIPP•REX ARAGON•VTRI• is divided at the bottom by the bust. The reverse depicts a crowned, multi-field coat of arms, dividing the legend at the top: SICIL•ET HIERSAL. This find should undoubtedly be connected with the so-called Neapolitan sums. It was a war loan granted by Bona Sforza to the King of Spain in 1556, in response to the threat of invasion of the Kingdom of Naples by the French and papal troops. The sum covered by the agreement was enormous – amounting to 430,000 ducats. The queen was to receive 10% of that sum annually, paid from the revenues of the customs house in Foggia. Less than a year later, Bona died, most probably from poisoning. After her death, a dispute arose over the succession of the duchies of Bari and Rossano between Sigismund Augustus and Philip II. It undoubtedly contributed to the delay in returning the movable property and financial assets that the queen left to her son. The Polish monarch, with a varying degree of success, also sought payment of the Neapolitan debt and the accrued interest. The first significant Polish diplomatic success in that regard came in 1560, when some of the movable property and financial assets from Bona's treasury were recovered. Beginning in 1562, Adam Konarski, for whom – in gratitude for his faithful service – the king had procured a bishop's mitre, was quite effective in recovering the remaining, though still not all, movable property and financial assets. The value of which exceeded 200,000 ducats by the end of 1564.<sup>38</sup>



Fig. 2. A Neapolitan pataca of Philip II from 1561, found in the moat of the Tykocin castle, from the collection of the Podlasie Museum in Białystok, photo by H. Lepionka

Ryc. 2. Pataka neapolitańska Filipa II z 1561 r. znaleziona w fosie zamku w Tykocinie, ze zbiorów Muzeum Podlaskiego w Białymstoku, fot. H. Lepionka

<sup>36</sup> Bis 2015, pp. 313, 316.

<sup>37</sup> Cook *et al.* (eds) 2020, p. 308.

<sup>38</sup> Skowron 2022, pp. 201–202.

It seems that despite the snail's pace of progress in the repayment of the Neapolitan sums (deliberately delayed by the Habsburgs), Sigismund Augustus was increasingly hopeful about the potential source of steady income, especially the interest payments on the loan. On 8 February 1564, he granted an annual salary of 300 Neapolitan ducats (originally *moneta Ducati Neapolitani* – here meaning a sum of money rather than a type of coin) to the royal physician Giovanni Francesco Nascimbeni, secured by the revenues of the customs house in Foggia (the regularity of which was still uncertain).<sup>39</sup>

The paid sums did not always reach the royal treasury in the form of Italian coin. For example, *Metryka Koronna* [The Crown Metrica] contains a proof of payment of 30,000 “silver thalers” to the Polish king by the merchant house of Bernard Soderini of Kraków, in exchange for the same number of “Neapolitan ducats in carlins” (originally: *Ducatorum Neapolitanorum de Carlinis*), paid by the royal agent Paweł Stempowski at their Naples branch.<sup>40</sup> We can assume that the said amount was paid, either in part, or in full, in the coin commonly circulating in Poland, i.e., in smaller national currency or, for example, in German thalers.

The loan was partially repaid in thicker silver coins, referred to in earlier historical works as Neapolitan thalers and half-thalers,<sup>41</sup> which were transported in barrels overland, first to Kraków, and then to Tykocin. In the Polish sources from that period, however, they were known as Neapolitan ducats (Polish: *dukaty neapolitańskie*, Latin: *ducati neapolitani*), referring to their Italian name: *ducato corrente* or *ducato de moneta*. The Neapolitan monetary system was described by Borys Paszkiewicz in his work on queen Bona's treasure. According to his findings. The proper name for the half-thaler is pataca (Italian: *patache* or *pathache*), while the thaler is called patacon (Italian: *pataccone*).<sup>42</sup> These are the names I will use in the remainder of this article.

The coin found in the moat of the castle, located on the Narew River, most probably comes from one of the tranches of money sent back to Sigismund Augustus by Adam Konarski. The Bishop of Poznań, in 1562. The aforementioned monogram of Vincenzo Porzio, who performed assay duties from 1561, confirms that it could not have happened earlier. Based on the excellent state of preservation of the coin, one may assume that it had never entered into regular circulation. It must have been placed at the disposal of the Polish king's agents immediately after minting, and then transported to Tykocin.

However, the coin does not bear Sigismund Augustus's countersignature, making it unique among the other finds from the territories of the former Polish-Lith-

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<sup>39</sup> *Pensio annua 300 ducatorum*, fols 288v.–289.

<sup>40</sup> *Acceptio summae 30 000 tallerorum*, fols 279–279v.

<sup>41</sup> Waga 1850, p. 102; Gloger 1896, p. 264.

<sup>42</sup> Paszkiewicz 2002, pp. 145, 150–151.

uanian Commonwealth.<sup>43</sup> in the context of the legal regulations of the monetary market of that period, it can be considered a semi-finished product.

#### NEAPOLITAN SUMS AND THE FIRST STAGE OF THE TYKOCIN MINT'S ACTIVITY

The urgent need for funds to fight the Livonian War, which had been ongoing since 1557, forced Sigismund Augustus to adopt unconventional measures. In this context, it should be noted that the funds arriving from Italy appeared just in time, perhaps even at the last minute, since instead of melting down the foreign currency into state coin, the decision was made to issue it with the monarch's countersignature. Here, I would like to point out a technical detail of that action: all specimens known to me are stamped with the royal monogram SA and the flanking date: 15 – 64 on the reverse. This indicates the purposefulness of the action. It was probably intended to avoid showing unnecessary disrespect to the Spanish monarch, with whom delicate negotiations were still underway regarding the repayment of the remaining debts and claims to Bona's inheritance.

Previous literature on the subject has almost unanimously located the process of the countersigning of the Neapolitan coins in Vilnius.<sup>44</sup> However, the find described above should be considered the evidence that the process actually took place in Tykocin. This would also be the first case of minting in the city on the Narew River. Indirect evidence also comes from the coincidence of dates between the announcement of the compulsory exchange rate for the countersigned Neapolitan coins (*Aestimatio ducatorum Neapolitanorum*, 16 May 1564)<sup>45</sup> and the acquisition of the real estate for the mint's needs in Tykocin (18 May 1564).<sup>46</sup>

The partial transfer of minting operations from Vilnius to Tykocin, a city located in the heart of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, was undoubtedly influenced by the situation in the theatre of war with Ivan the Terrible. On 15 February 1563, after a short siege, "Moscow captured Polotsk, in the Duchy of Lithuania, a castle and province, by great force and fire".<sup>47</sup> Such a rapid loss of the seemingly powerful fortress shocked both Poles, and Lithuanians, and gave the Muscovites confidence

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<sup>43</sup> Aleksiejunas 2000, pp. 61–63.

<sup>44</sup> Stronczyński 1885, pp. 164–165; Gumowski 1921, pp. 80–82; Białkowski, Szweycer 1975 p. 88; Kurpiewski 1994, p. 143; Ivanauskas 2009, pp. 178–182. With the exception of W. Kakareko, who, similarly to his other revelations, made a new attribution of countersigned Neapolitan coins without any support from historical or archaeological sources or logical reasoning; Kakareko 2006, p. 124.

<sup>45</sup> *Aestimatio ducatorum Neapolitanorum*, fols 375–376.

<sup>46</sup> Zbiór Ignacego Kapicy Milewskiego, pp. 212–214.

<sup>47</sup> "Moskwa wzięła Połocko, w Xięstwie Litewskiem, zamek i prowincyą wielką, mocą a ogniem". The news of the fall of Polotsk reached the king on 25 February 1563, during the session of the Piotrków Sejm. The diary of the session vividly shows how shocking it was for the king, the senators, "et totus populus"; *Źródłopisma do dziejów* 1861, p. 102.





Fig. 3. A Neapolitan pataca of Philip II with the countersignature of Sigismund Augustus, coin sold at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Auction of the Warsaw Numismatic Centre, 11 June 2005, item 138

Ryc. 3. Pataka neapolitańska Filipa II z kontrasygnaturą Zygmunta Augusta, egzemplarz sprzedany na 32. Aukcji Warszawskiego Centrum Numizmatycznego, 11 czerwca 2005 r., poz. 138



Fig. 4. A Neapolitan patacon of Philip II with the countersignature of Sigismund Augustus, coin sold at the 17<sup>th</sup> Auction of Damian Marciniak's Numismatic Cabinet, 2 June 2022, item 2127

Ryc. 4. Patakon neapolitański Filipa II z kontrasygnaturą Zygmunta Augusta, egzemplarz sprzedany na 17. Aukcji Gabinetu Numizmatycznego Damian Marciniak, 2 czerwca 2022 r., poz. 2127

in the possibility of a decisive victory in the war. That belief was the main reason for the failure of the peace talks conducted in Moscow by the Lithuanian envoys, led by Jerzy Chodkiewicz. Both sides realized that after the fall of the city, the road to Vilnius lay wide open for Ivan the Terrible's forces. The fear quickly became reality – armies led by two princes, Pyotr Shuysky and Pyotr Serebryany Obolensky, advanced from Polotsk and Smolensk to the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. They intended to join forces near Orsha. The situation was saved by the excellent knowledge of the enemy's movements and the well-prepared actions of the Lithuanian commanders – Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Red and Grzegorz Chodkiewicz – who quickly deployed their forces, which were considerably smaller than the Muscovites. Thanks to their skillful maneuvering, the Muscovite armies were defeated before the merger. Pyotr Shuysky's forces were defeated on 26 January 1564, at

Chasniki, and Pyotr Serebryany's on 7 February, at Orsha. However, those victories did not result in the recapture of Polotsk, and the initiative soon fell back to the Muscovites, leading to the loss of another city – Jezierzyszcz. <sup>48</sup> the threat to Vilnius did not weaken and was treated with due seriousness.

The real threat of a siege and plundering raids on the city outskirts suddenly descended upon the Lithuanian capital and did not diminish in the months and years of conflict that followed. At the same time, the urgent need for cash to pay the army was becoming more and more critical. Those must have been the factors that led to the organization of the countersigning operation for Neapolitan coins in the safety of Tykocin, where the then most modern royal fortress was being built in close vicinity. Since 1561, a significant portion of the royal estate, including money and movable property recovered from Philip II, had been secured within its walls. by 1563, the fortifications were sufficiently completed to allow the transfer of artillery, and the following year, the royal library and treasury. <sup>49</sup>

The countersigning process itself, however, was organized outside the fortress walls, in a house purchased from Florian Łobeski, the vice starost of Tykocin. in return, the king granted him hereditary possession of two voloks of municipal land in Tykocin (approximately 36 hectares) and six voloks in the village of Siekiutki (approximately 108 hectares), together with the subjects. in exchange for such a substantial acreage, the king acquired a building of undoubtedly representative character – spacious, with a basement, and situated in the very heart of the city. Thanks to Józef Maroszek, we know that the property was located on the southern side of the market square, in the corner diagonally opposite the Narew River crossing, at the exit of the present-day Bernardyńska Street, approximately 600 meters from the fortress's inner courtyard. <sup>50</sup>

The idea of moving coin minting from the castle to the city may seem surprising at first glance, as it is hard to imagine a safer place for such an activity than the cellars or basements of a fortress surrounded by moats and thick walls. Even more so, given that it was within those walls that the silver and gold coins were stored. It should be remembered, however, that in Vilnius, the royal mint was also located in a tenement house, amidst dense urban development. For that purpose, Ivan Hornostaj, the Lithuanian land treasurer, purchased in 1545 a plot of land with a house on Niemiecka Street for 500 kopas (kopa = 60 groschen) of Lithuanian groschen. <sup>51</sup> the decision must have been made for practical reasons – for example, to avoid the risk of fire in the residence, or to remove noisy production from the immediate vicinity of the royal and court chambers. In contrast to Vilnius, however, Tykocin lacked fortifications. It was com-

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<sup>48</sup> Nagielski 2013, pp. 95–96.

<sup>49</sup> *Inwentarz starostwa tykocińskiego z 1571 roku*, p. 112.

<sup>50</sup> Maroszek 1991, pp. 40–41; Maroszek 2000, pp. 392–393; Zbiór Ignacego Kapicy Milewskiego, pp. 212–214; compare *Inwentarz starostwa tykocińskiego z 1571 roku*, pp. 222, 398–399.

<sup>51</sup> Grażyński 1913, p. 9.

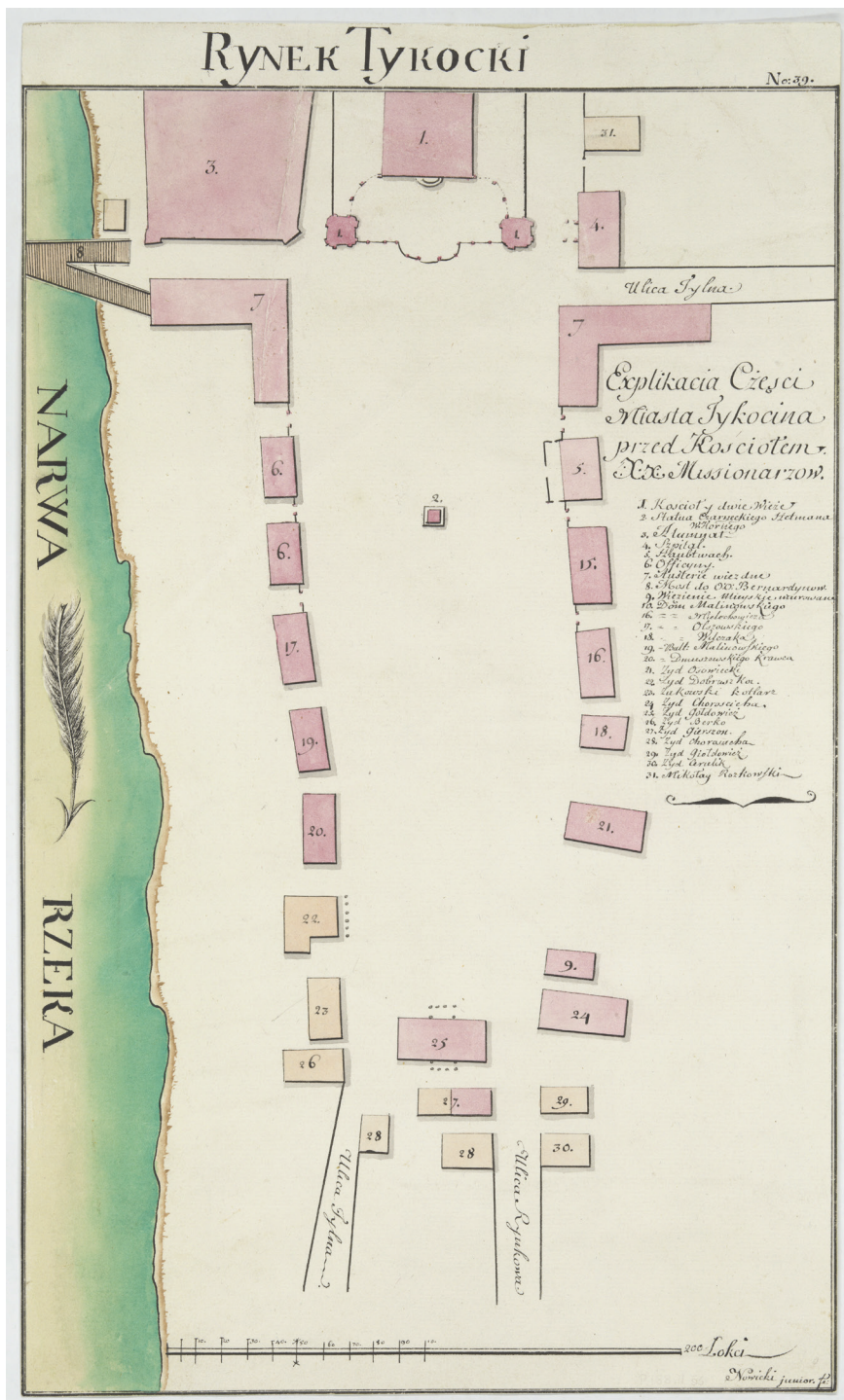


Fig. 5. The market square in Tykocin in the so-called Kazimierz Nowicki Plan, 1769, University of Warsaw Library, Print Room, inv. no. 8338

Ryc. 5. Rynek w Tykocinie na tzw. Planie Kazimierza Nowickiego, 1769 r., Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Warszawie, Gabinet Rycin, Inw.zb.d. 8338

pensated, though, first, by the favourable course of the Narew River, which, along with its wide floodplains, blocked approaches from the North and the East, and, second, by the location of the castle guarding the nearest crossing.<sup>52</sup> We can also assume that each day a fixed number of coins left the fortress, got countermarked at the mint, and then returned to the castle.

It has been already mentioned that the introduction of the countersigned Neapolitan coins into circulation was regulated by the document issued by Sigismund Augustus in Knyszyn, on 16 May 1564. The document explains that the undertaking was essentially at a loss for the crown, citing the public good as the primary motivation. The coins were subject to a mandatory exchange rate of 60 Polish groschen per patacon, or implicitly, 30 groschen per pataca. They were to be used to pay the outstanding wages to the army. Together with the obligation to accept the coins in all types of transactions, the ruler guaranteed that the state apparatus would also accept them at the fixed rate, and that at the end of the war with Moscow, the Neapolitan coin would be redeemed without loss to the owners.<sup>53</sup>

According to the calculations done by M. Gumowski, who assumed the average weight of a patacon at 29.5 g and a pataca at 15.0 g, and determined the amount of silver they contained at 25.79 g and 12.9 g, respectively, the profit resulting from the enforced exchange rate was 26.5 groschen per patacon.<sup>54</sup>

The war was not yet over when, at the Vilnius Sejm of 1565–1566, the Chamber of Deputies submitted a request to Sigismund Augustus to set a deadline and procedure for the withdrawal of the countersigned Neapolitan coins. The quick reaction of the Sejm members must have been prompted by the disruptions in monetary circulation and by the fear of a financial loss in case the ruler failed to keep his promises or died suddenly. Both the request and the response were recorded in *Metryka Litewska* [The Lithuanian Metrica], among other royal replies, and hence provide us with crucial information. The time span of circulation of the countersigned patacons and patacas (originally *filipki*, Ruthenian: *филіпки*) was initially (?) set at 30 Sundays, i.e., 210 days, and the ruler was asked to keep to those dates: “philipki are not to circulate among people any longer, only until the time announced by His Royal Majesty, up to thirty Sundays, as it was originally announced by His Royal Majesty”.<sup>55</sup> After that period, they were expected to be redeemed at a price of 48 Lithuanian groschen, or a kopa of Polish groschen (1 Polish groschen = 1.25 Lithuanian groschen) per patacon (in Polish *duży filipek* – a large philipek), or 24 Lithuanian groschen, or half

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<sup>52</sup> Taranta 2014, pp. 119–126.

<sup>53</sup> *Aestimatio ducatorum Neapolitanorum*, fols 375–376; Zagórski 1845, pp. 127–128.

<sup>54</sup> Gumowski 1921, p. 80.

<sup>55</sup> “Філіпки далей іти межі людмі не маюць, одно до часу, отъ его королевское милости зложеного до тридцати недель, такъ, яко естъ то перво сего отъ его королевское милости оповедано”; *Litovskaia Metrika* 1914, p. 356.



a kopa of Polish groschen per pataca (in Polish *mały filipek* – a small philipek). Sigismund Augustus agreed to that request.<sup>56</sup>

The answer was given on 21 December 1565. Considering that the said 30 weeks, counted from the date on the document that had introduced the countersigned Neapolitan coin into circulation (16 May 1564), passed on 12 December 1564 (i.e., more than a year earlier), we must assume that in the meantime Sigismund Augustus issued another document, unknown to us, specifying the exact date of the withdrawal. We can also assume with a great degree of probability that it was issued in May or June 1565, in response to a protest by the Lithuanian nobility, as initially the countersigned coin was to remain in circulation until the war with Muscovy ended: “And furthermore, having successfully concluded, by the grace of God, this war with Muscovy, which we are now waging, then whatever of those coins, brought into our treasury from anywhere by anyone, and traded in, each one will be set at the same price by us”.<sup>57</sup> However, the conflict was dragging on and the circulation of patacons and patacas had to be prolonged, which raised concerns.



Fig. 6. A Neapolitan pataca of Charles V with the countersignature of Sigismund Augustus, coin sold by the Antiquarian Numismatic Shop Michał Niemczyk, 15 March 2025

Ryc. 6. Pataka neapolitańska Karola V z kontrasygnatą Zygmunta Augusta, egzemplarz sprzedany przez Antykwariat Numizmatyczny Michał Niemczyk, 15 marca 2025 r.

It cannot be ruled out that the process of countersigning Neapolitan patacas and pacacons extended into early 1565, due to the systematic influx of those coins into the country. The demand for funds also continued to grow, generated, as before, by the need to pay the troops fighting against Muscovy. No document known to me indicates any upper limit for the issue of the countersigned coins. Hence,

<sup>56</sup> *Litovskaia Metrika* 1914, p. 356; Aleksiejunas 2000, p. 61.

<sup>57</sup> “et praeterea confecto per Dei gratiam feliciter Moschovitico hoc bello, quod nunc gerimus, tum quicquid eorum numorum, aliunde in thesaurum nostrum illatum per quempiam, ac importatum fuerit, singulos eodem precio a nobis constituto”; *Aestimatio ducatorum Neapolitanorum*, fol. 376; Zagórski 1845, p. 128.

in the situation of a growing debt, such a step would have been logically justified. This is suggested by a receipt for 11 zlotys, discovered in the Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych [The Central Archives of Historical Records] by Michał Sierba, issued to “Michalo Knipel, companion of the Tykocin mint”, on 11 February 1565.<sup>58</sup>

The remote location of the Tykocin mint, in the monarch’s private estate, helped to conceal the scale of the undertaking, even as the nobility’s interest in the matter grew. Unfortunately, due to the lack of sources, we are unable to determine even the approximate scale of that operation, whose effects were felt more strongly in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania than in the Crown. It seems that the Polish nobility were completely indifferent to the matter, as we find no trace of any debates at the regional assemblies or Crown Sejms of the period. The locations of the finds also indicate that these coins circulated more widely in Lithuania.<sup>59</sup>

#### THE SECOND STAGE OF THE TYKOCIN MINT’S ACTIVITY

The continued use of the Tykocin mint, albeit with a modified production profile, was driven by the same factor as its initial opening: the lack of funds for the ongoing war. In April 1564, at the Parczew Sejm, it was decided a loan of 300,000 zlotys of “Polish coinage” would be taken for that purpose, mortgaged on royal lands. However, early in the following year, the Piotrków Sejm cancelled the Parczew decision and increased the loan to 500,000 Polish zlotys,<sup>60</sup> while the king was already requesting 700,000 zlotys.<sup>61</sup> This illustrates the pace of growth in demand for money – a truly *nervus belli pecunia*. At the Piotrków Sejm, the ruler also pointed out that the revenue from the already small taxation that the nobility agreed to at the Warsaw Sejm (1563–1564) was less than expected, mostly due to payment evasion and other delays. Therefore, he had to reach into his own pocket once again.<sup>62</sup>

At the end of 1565, the Lithuanians forced Sigismund Augustus to withdraw the countersigned coins of Charles V and Philip II, which did not happen until the first months of the following year. That deepened the already serious financial problems that the monarch was facing. At the Lublin Sejm, which proceeded between 8 May and 21 August 1566, the issue of military payments was a key topic.<sup>63</sup> Faced with an empty state treasury, on 23 May the senators voluntarily took on the obligation to make a one-time contribution covering the arrears of soldier’s pay.

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<sup>58</sup> “Michalo Knipel towarzys[z]owi mincze tykockiej”; *Inwentarz starostwa tykocińskiego z 1571 roku*, p. 151.

<sup>59</sup> Aleksiejunas 2000, pp. 61–63.

<sup>60</sup> *Konstytucje Seymu Piotrkowskiego, 1565*, pp. 55–56.

<sup>61</sup> *Dyaryusz Sejmu Piotrkowskiego R.P. 1565*, pp. 312–313.

<sup>62</sup> *Dyaryusz Sejmu Piotrkowskiego R.P. 1565*, pp. 279–280.

<sup>63</sup> *Diaryusz Sejmu Lubelskiego 1566*, pp. 66–68.

They were followed by the largest cities and abbeys.<sup>64</sup> That move reveals the gravity of the situation, or perhaps even a certain degree of desperation. Ultimately, nearly 64,000 florins were collected,<sup>65</sup> but at the same time, the Sejm refused to introduce a new tax.

As Józef Jasnowski wrote, Sigismund Augustus “needed two things to keep the Livonian castles: money, and more money”.<sup>66</sup> These apt words can be applied to the entire military effort of the time. The payment of the outstanding soldier’s wages, scheduled for 24 August 1565, in Grodno, was not made. Instead, it was postponed to Easter, that is 14 April 1566. Unfortunately, then the ruler announced that “we cannot do enough at this time to pay them for their meritorious service, because of the great losses and expenses we incurred in this war”, and postponed the settlement of the debt to 24 August 1566.<sup>67</sup> However, the aforementioned generosity of senators, cities and abbeys, shown at the Lublin Sejm, was insufficient, and the payment was postponed once again, to 7 November 1566. That was when Sigismund Augustus paid half of the debt, while postponing the other half to St. James’s Day, that is 25 July 1567. The ruler’s success of a kind was the army’s agreement to reduce the second part of the payment by 45 Polish groschen per a quarter of a year served by the rider, to cover the costs of provisions.<sup>68</sup> the later history of the debt is not important here, though it is worth noting that the matter dragged on in the following years.<sup>69</sup> It must also be remembered that the cost of a soldier is not the only war expense. Even so, according to Ludwik Kolankowski, in the years 1561–1570, 2,133,635 zlotys were spent solely for that purpose.<sup>70</sup>

The above description of the economic situation, mitigated by the perspective of the official state documents, is merely a small fragment of the history of the financial problems of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Livonian War. In fact, it was a time rife not only with crimes and destruction caused by enemy armies and marauders, but also with the tumult and lawlessness of the unpaid soldiers who fought under the banner of Sigismund Augustus. Deprived of financial resources, they sometimes turned their frustration against the population of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The purpose of this brief sketch is to depict the background against which one can better understand the significance and meaning of the Tykocin mint.

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<sup>64</sup> *Diariusz Sejmu Lubelskiego 1566*, p. 19.

<sup>65</sup> Januszek-Sieradzka 2012, p. 24.

<sup>66</sup> Jasnowski 1939, pp. 269–271.

<sup>67</sup> “nie mogąc na ten czas dosyć uczynić, abyśmy jem byli służbę zasłużoną zapłacić mogli, prze[z] wielkie utraty i nakłady, któreśmy i na tej wojnie uczynili”; *Zygmunt August odkłada termin*, pp. 66–67.

<sup>68</sup> *[Zygmunt August wypłaca]*, pp. 73–75.

<sup>69</sup> Pułaski 1906, pp. 197–228.

<sup>70</sup> Kolankowski 1936, p. 324; on the finances during the Livonian War: Guzowski, Łopatecki, Poniat 2022, pp. 108–133.



Fig. 7. A groschen minted in Tykocin “in the shape” of the Polish groschen in 1566, from the collection of the Podlasie Museum in Białystok, item MB/N/6459

Ryc. 7. Grosz bity w Tykocinie „na kształt” groszy polskich w 1566 r., Zbiory Muzeum Podlaskiego w Białymstoku, MB/N/6459



Fig. 8. A Lithuanian half-groschen minted in Tykocin in 1566, coin sold at the 21<sup>st</sup> Auction of Damian Marciniak’s Numismatic Cabinet, 13 October 2025, item 3044

Ryc. 8. Półgrosz litewski bity w Tykocinie w 1566 r., egzemplarz sprzedany na 21. Aukcji Gabinetu Numizmatycznego Damian Marciniak, 13 października 2025 r., poz. 3044

According to W. Schwinkowski, the Tykocin mint was launched in 1566 (today, we know it was for the second time) to – under the supervision of Stanisław Myszkowski – strike 24,000 grzywnas of pure silver at the rate of 291 groschen per grzywna.<sup>71</sup> M. Gumowski calculated that it would amount to 6,984,000 “poor groschen” and thought that the amount of silver could have referred to all the coins (of all denominations) minted at that workshop.<sup>72</sup>

We do not know whether the amount of the precious metal reported by W. Schwinkowski was actually struck, and until the source base expands, we will not be able to answer this question. However, the trend towards expanding the range of denominations attributed to the Tykocin mint should be viewed with skepticism. The major proponent of this trend is E. Ivanauskas.<sup>73</sup> In his catalogues of Lithuanian coins and communiqués, he expressed the opinion that “in terms of style, the Polish gro-

<sup>71</sup> Schwinkowski 1909, p. 166.

<sup>72</sup> Gumowski 1921, p. 85.

<sup>73</sup> Ivanauskas 1997, pp. 105–107; Ivanauskas 2000, pp. 59–60, Ivanauskas 2004, pp. 111–112; Ivanauskas 2009; Ivanauskas, Česnulis 2016.

schen from 1566, with the S. Myszkowski's coat of arms, do not differ from the Polish groschen from 1566–1568, with the Column coat of arms [the Pillars of Gediminas]. These coins form a uniform stylistic group. The lettering also shows no differences, and the technical aspects of the issue are the same. Therefore, the opinion that the Tykocin mint operated for only one year and minted only coins with S. Myszkowski's coat of arms can be considered a misunderstanding".<sup>74</sup> E. Ivanauskas considered the possibility of two engravers being employed at the Vilnius mint simultaneously improbable. In his opinion, Albrecht Kerlein, who worked in Vilnius from 1562, was responsible for the dies used for the countersigning of the Neapolitan coins and for striking half-kopas (1565), four-groschen (1565–1568), three-groschen (1564), two-groschen (1565), half-groschen (1564–1565), and double-deniers (1566–1567). Here, it seems necessary to refer to the insights of M. Grażyński and his just criticism of the "fallibility of building on the external features", that is drawing conclusions from visual similarities, "or of drawing too far-reaching conclusions from them".<sup>75</sup> Those insights were published over a century ago, which suggests a cyclical recurrence of similar scientific observations. First, if A. Kerlein used two stylistically different designs for the Lithuanian Pogonia coat of arms,<sup>76</sup> we could well attribute a third, or perhaps even a fourth, to him. The Lithuanian coat of arms on the groschen with the Pillars of Gediminas differs from that found on the mocking three-groschen coins and S. Myszkowski's groschen and half-groschen coins. Second, the knowledge about A. Kerlein's employment at the Vilnius mint does not rule out the possibility of other craftsmen being simultaneously employed at the same workshop, performing the same tasks, taking either parallel, or subordinate positions. The conclusion may thus be the result of a gap in sources.

E. Ivanauskas also drew erroneous conclusions from the royal universal of 27 March 1572. He stated that "[the document – P.N.] did not distinguish between the Polish groschen minted in Tykocin and Vilnius".<sup>77</sup> Whereas, the aforementioned document reads: "And the groschen minted in Tykocin in the likeness of Polish groschen, we also order that both in Poland, and Lithuania, they be taken according to the price of the Polish groschen".<sup>78</sup> One can thus see that the evidently deficient groschen, minted in Tykocin, visually imitated other, full-value groschen, minted in the Polish standard, in an unspecified location, presumably Vilnius. The products of the Vilnius mint are not "clearly indicated" here, as they were not the problematic ones, and therefore were not the subject of that part of the document. The ruler

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<sup>74</sup> Ivanauskas 1997, p. 105.

<sup>75</sup> Grażyński 1913, p. 37.

<sup>76</sup> Ivanauskas 1997, p. 106.

<sup>77</sup> Ivanauskas 1997, p. 105.

<sup>78</sup> "A grosse w Thykoczinie na xtalt polskich grossy wykowane, roskazuiemy tesz, aby tak w polscze, iako w Litwie, wedlie czeny groszy polskich były brane"; *Mandatum universale de moneta*, fol. 364v; Zagórski 1845, p. 124.



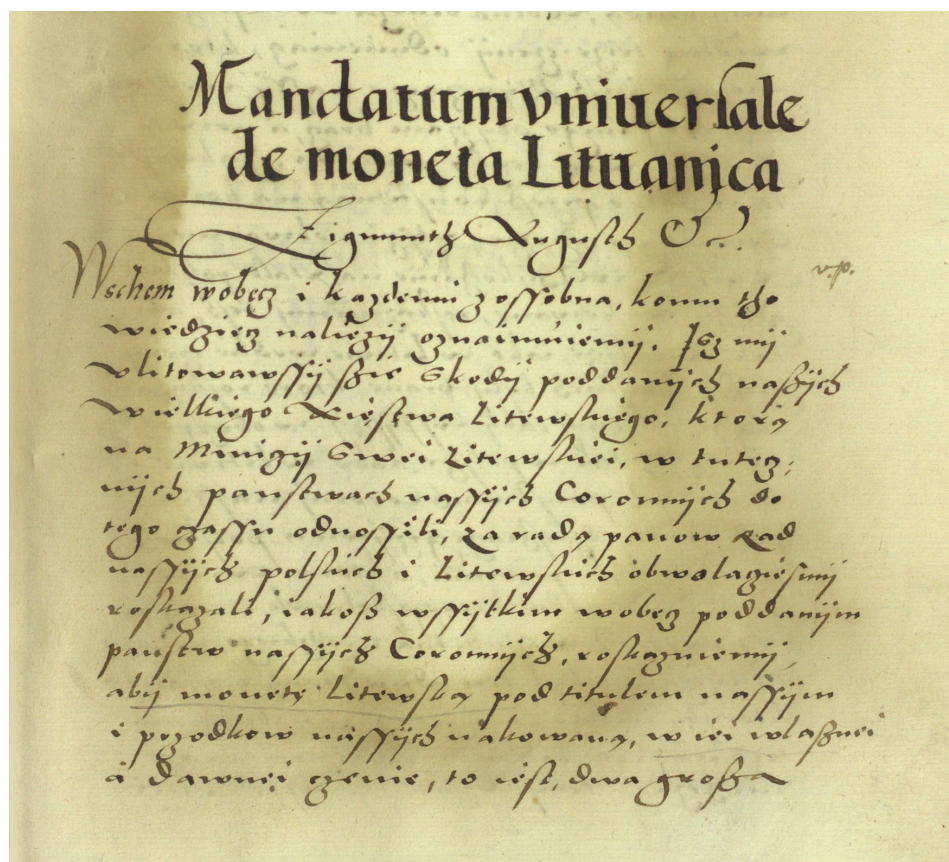


Fig. 9. A fragment of the first page of the entry *Mandatum universale de moneta Lituanica* from 27 March 1572, in the *Metryka Koronna*, the Central Archives of Historical Records, unit 110, fol. 364

Ryc. 9. Wycinek pierwszej strony wpisu *Mandatum universale de moneta Lituanica* z 27 marca 1572 r. w *Metryce Koronnej*, Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, jednostka 110, k. 364

regulated the problem of the substandard coins. Apparently, they were not accepted at the nominal rate, and they were identifiable by the place of origin – Tykocin.

The universal was, of course, a response to the turn of events unfavourable to the ruler. Already in December 1566, long before the document was issued, the Archbishop of Gniezno and Primate of Poland, Jakub Uchański, wrote in a letter to the Bishop of Warmia, Stanisław Hozjusz, about the substandard groschen minted in Tykocin, which, in his opinion, were causing losses both to the people who used them, and the kingdom itself. Interestingly, the First Senator of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was clearly unaware of the purpose and scope of the Tykocin issue. He thought it was imitating the reduction in the grain and weight of coins that took place in some other countries. He also appealed to Hozjusz,

the president of the Prussian estates, for assistance in finding people who would have knowledge of monetary matters and suggested that the residents of Gdańsk might be the ones. Those specialists were expected to propose countermeasures to the outflow of the old good coins to the other countries and to their melting down within the state boundaries. The request was further extended to also finding a remedy to the rejection of Tykocin coins and to the reduction of their purchasing power in relation to their face value. This proves that already in December 1566, the issue had led to disturbances on the monetary market.<sup>79</sup>

In the light of the above correspondence, it is not surprising that as early as 1567, the estates of Royal Prussia, including the people of Gdańsk, whose knowledge of monetary matters was so highly valued by J. Uchański, correctly located the source of the bad groschen, pointing to the royal estate of Tykocin. However, the remedies the Primate had hoped for were not proposed. An appeal to the king was made, though, not to entrust the minting to the Jews, who were believed to be counterfeiting the coin.<sup>80</sup>

Overall, the available sources speak against the theory of E. Ivanauskas, later repeated by K. Filipow<sup>81</sup> and developed in unclear directions by W. Kakareko.<sup>82</sup> A logical distinction of the products of the Tykocin mint of that period was made by M. Gumowski, who claimed that only coins marked with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms were minted there.<sup>83</sup> This is where I must agree with him completely (see Table 1).

The groschen that imitated coins minted in the Polish standard attracted special attention, because they differed the most from the originals. However, the sources are silent about the half-groschen and Tykocin groschen minted in the Lithuanian standard. None of these coins are very common among present-day finds. Half-groschen are most common, the imitations of the groschen minted in the Crown standard are less frequent, and the groschen minted in the Lithuanian standard are extremely rare: only a couple (at least two) specimens are known.<sup>84</sup>

In the context of the payroll problems described above, which were particularly acute in 1566, it seems highly probable that the commencement of the Tykocin mint was strongly connected to the payment of the half of the royal debts to the soldiers, as planned for 7 November 1566. The entire operation bears the hallmarks of an *ad hoc* attempt to “supply more cash”. It can also be assumed that after the payment, a significant portion of that special issue returned with the army to the East. In consequence, larger quantities (compared to Poland) of these coins

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<sup>79</sup> Uchański do Hozjusza, p. 161.

<sup>80</sup> Lengnich 1723, p. 344.

<sup>81</sup> Filipow 1998, pp. 119–120.

<sup>82</sup> Kakareko 2006, pp. 120–124.

<sup>83</sup> Gumowski 1921, pp. 83–85.

<sup>84</sup> One is in the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, inv. no. MK\_024855a. Information about the second specimen, struck from the same set of dies, was published by E. Ivanauskas (2009, p. 153).

can be expected in hoards located in contemporary Belarus, Latvia, and Lithuania. It is possible that the issue marked with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms was made using prefabricated alloys in the form of older coins. At that time, it was a typical practice: one should mention the six-groschen and three-groschen coins, minted from Świdnica half-groschen (1546–1547),<sup>85</sup> and the four-groschen coins, minted in Vilnius (1565–1568). The 14 lot silver fineness<sup>86</sup> attributed to the latter indicates that they were forged from Neapolitan patacons and patakas, which, according to M. Gumowski, held the same fineness<sup>87</sup> and were subject to withdrawal during that period. In this context, the similarity in alloy of the entire Tykocin mint assortment (5.5 lot), as indicated by W. Schwinkowski, including the six-groschen and three-groschen coins,<sup>88</sup> and the Lithuanian half-groschen minted from 1562, cannot be a coincidence. It can be presumed that S. Myszkowski had at his disposal the coin stock kept in the king's private treasury in Tykocin. A trusted royal confidant must have brought from Vilnius the dies and, very likely, also the craftsmen, who melted and re-forged the Lithuanian coins found there, perhaps "diluting" the alloy with coins from abroad of similar, but slightly lower, fineness. The nature of this hastily organized operation to some extent explains the scarcity and conciseness of the sources concerning the Tykocin mint.



Fig. 10. A groschen minted in Tykocin in 1566 according to the Lithuanian mint rate, from the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, inv. no. MK\_024855a.

Source: © KHM-Museumsverband

Ryc. 10. Grosz na stopę litewską bity w Tykocinie w 1566 r., ze zbiorów Kunsthistorisches Museum w Wiedniu, nr inw. is MK\_024855a. Źródło: © KHM-Museumsverband

<sup>85</sup> Żabiński 1981, pp. 98–99.

<sup>86</sup> Żabiński 1981, pp. 98–99.

<sup>87</sup> Gumowski 1921, p. 82.

<sup>88</sup> Schwinkowski 1909, p. 166.



What was the purpose of marking the Tykocin issue with the Jastrzębiec coat of arms? Was it to easily distinguish the coins for the sake of their later withdrawal? in that case, the entire issue could be considered a substitute currency. This cannot be ruled out, as it is difficult to imagine that S. Myszkowski – a seasoned politician and loyal supporter of the king – would have acted arbitrarily under those circumstances and placed his coat of arms on the coins without the king's consent. That would be a serious abuse of trust and an affront. The scarcity of Tykocin coins in both collective and individual finds (the coins are currently also quite rare on the collectors' market) may suggest that such a withdrawal did take place. However, it was under the reign of Stephen Báthory (1575–1686), not Sigismund Augustus. The latter died a little over three months after the document, in which he ordered the acceptance of the Tykocin groschen minted “in the style of the Polish groschen”, had been issued. It cannot be ruled out that the initial plan was simply not fully implemented.

#### CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES

At present, it seems that the view of the distinguished regional scholar Zygmunt Gloger, who claimed that “Sigismund Augustus minted his exquisite coins (...) in (...) Tykocin”,<sup>89</sup> is more of a legend or a folk tale than the historical truth. At the same time, the activities of the Tykocin mint have not been fully explained. There are still a number of gaps in the story and the facts are often connected by way of speculation. It will be difficult to complete this story without new written or archaeological sources. Some answers could be provided by excavations at the site where the house acquired for the mint from Florian Łobeski was located. That was advocated for by J. Maroszek years ago<sup>90</sup> – unfortunately, without success. For the last century and a half, the most frequently used sources for the history of the Tykocin mint have been the coins themselves, or rather the images and inscriptions put on them. Yet, the potential offered by a careful comparative analysis of the dies should not be underestimated. It would be also worthwhile to conduct compositional studies of a larger number of coins from that period, in order to obtain statistically reliable data.

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<sup>89</sup> Gloger 1896, p. 295.

<sup>90</sup> Maroszek 1991, p. 41.

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## UWAGI DO DZIEJÓW MENNICY TYKOCIŃSKIEJ

(Streszczenie)

Artykuł składa się z czterech części. Pierwsza zawiera przegląd stanu badań nad dziejami mennicy tykocińskiej, począwszy od pierwszej publikowanej wzmianki (Zagórski 1845). Ukazuje ewolucję poglądów i problemy wynikające z nadinterpretacji źródeł numizmatycznych przy równoczesnym ignorowaniu źródeł archiwalnych. Jest ona punktem wyjścia do rozważań prowadzonych w dalszej części tekstu.

Część druga orbituje wokół znaleziska pataki neapolitańskiej Filipa II bez kontrasygnatury Zygmunta Augusta i jej znaczenia dla badań nad mennictwem tego okresu. Postawiono w niej tezę, że akcja kontrasygnowania monet włoskich przeprowadzona została właśnie w Tykocinie, co rozwiewa wątpliwości względem zupełnie dotychczas nierozpoznanych początków mennicy tykocińskiej, tj. jej działalności w latach 1564–1565. Zaprezentowano również szerszy kontekst obiegu tej monety kredytowej wskazując, że została wycofana w związku z protestami szlachty litewskiej, prawdopodobnie na początku 1565 r.

Trzecia część artykułu poświęcona jest drugiemu etapowi działalności mennicy tykocińskiej, którego początek datuje się na 1566 r. Została ona ukazana na szerszym tle zapaści finansowej

monarchii polsko-litewskiej doby wojny o Inflanty, a szczególnie problemu wypłaty żołdu rotom zaciężnym. Postawiono w niej tezę, że emisja monet znakowanych herbem Jastrzębiec miała posłużyć do uregulowania połowy zadłużenia względem wojska, co stało się w listopadzie 1566 r. Przeprowadzono również krytykę popularnych w ostatnich latach tendencji poszerzania asortymentu monet przypisywanych warsztatowi tykocińskiemu.

Kończącą część tekstu stanowi krótki szkic perspektyw badawczych, wskazujący na dalsze poszukiwania archiwalne, analizy fizykochemiczne numizmatów i prace archeologiczne na terenie Tykocina, jako podstawowe kierunki mogące rozjaśnić wciąż tajemniczą działalność mennicy w Tykocinie.

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