

JERZY PINIŃSKI

## POMERANIAN COINS FROM THE 16th – 18th CENTURIES STATE OF INVESTIGATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

West Pomerania is a specific territory at the point of contact of several cultures. That is why it is totally different, from the point of view of minting history as well, from other territories of Polish country. Initially, having been settled by the Slavic tribes, Pomerania was the aim of expansion from various sides. Having been not powerful enough to protect itself against that expansion, the country resorted the policy of maintaining the balance in relations with its neighbours and Pomeranian dukes often had to recognize the sovereignty of foreign rulers paying homage to them. Pomerania was subdued by Denmark, the Empire, Brandenburg and Poland. In this way, west Pomeranian dukes managed to maintain a relative independence for half a thousand years though it was not an absolute independence.

This specific political situation of the discussed Duchy brought about the increased interest in the history of minting of West Pomerania manifested by researchers from various countries to which this territory was related in different historical periods. First of all, there were German, Swedish and Polish scientists. On the other hand, being situated peripherally to all these countries Pomerania evoked rather scanty interest, also peripheral. Hence, papers devoted to mintage of this region were not numerous with more unsolved than precisely elaborated subjects and many issues remaining a white spot till this day.

For the mediaeval period we have a synthesis,<sup>1</sup> though almost 100 years old still providing a reference for further studies which were not very numerous yet conducted both before and after the II<sup>nd</sup> World War, in case of modern times the situation is much worse. We do not possess a total synthesis and separate problems are very seldom undertaken to be discussed.

Moreover, the source basis is also very limited. The only Polish collection which may provide some information for studies is the collection of coins in National

Museum in Szczecin. However, even this collection is not complete. In other Polish museums modern West Pomeranian coins are represented in more than inconspicuous way. One can only mention here a small number of West Pomeranian coins in Regional Museum in Słupsk, few treasures preserved in Regional Museum in Koszalin and a very modest collection in National Museum in Warsaw which possesses several interesting specimens yet no research basis.

There is no significant private collection of West Pomeranian coins in Poland. The best example illustrating this paucity is the number of gold west Pomeranian coins preserved in collections which comes up to 2 specimens and any Polish museum does not possess a single gold coin from the ducal period. What is more, the supply of West Pomeranian coins is also very inconspicuous which does not seem to be of great hope for the development of source basis in the nearest future. A little more promising are collections of these coins abroad. The most significant are collections of Pomeranian coins in Hermitage in Leningrad, in Numismatic Department of State Museum in Berlin, in Museum in Stralsund, in Historical Museum of Frankfurt am Main and in State Historical Museum in Stockholm.

The number of papers dealing with West Pomeranian mintage and circulation of the currency in this territory is less than inconspicuous. The same concerns the amount of coin catalogues and other works. We have at our disposal no single catalogue which would contain the total material concerning Pomeranian coinage. The only more complete catalogue is the 7<sup>th</sup> volume of E. Kopicki's works.<sup>2</sup> It includes the coinage of Pomeranian dukes beginning with Bogusław X till the decline of Gryfit dynasty in 1637, coins struck by the Swedish rulers for West Pomerania in the period of 1640–1809 and Brandenburgian coins mint-edited to

<sup>1</sup>H. D a n n e n b e r g, *Münzgeschichte Pommerns in Mittelalter*, Berlin 1893, Nachtrag 1896.

<sup>2</sup>E. K o p i c k i, *Katalog podstawowych typów monet i banknotów Polski oraz ziem historycznie z Polską związanych*, 7, *Monety pomorskie XVI–XIX w.*, Warszawa 1981.



celebrate the capture of Szczecin in 1677. However, in this work there are omitted the mint-editions of the town of Strzałów and coins struck by Brandenburgian elector in 1689–1695 and by the Prussian king in 1753–1754 in the territory of West Pomerania. Moreover, Kopicki's catalogue comprises only basic types of West Pomeranian coins, which has been indicated in the title, and the author has not seen many coins in original basing himself on the literature of the subject which he used indeed in full.

Duke's mintage as a whole is presented, though in a very delusive way, by J. Szwagrzyk in his survey of money in Poland.<sup>3</sup> Further catalogues have dealt only with some parts of the subject. Among them are P. Bratring's study on coins of West Pomeranian dukes from the 16<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>4</sup> not fully elaborated paper by the same author devoted to coins of the town of Strzałów,<sup>5</sup> and first of all recently published catalogue of J. Hildisch dealing with coinage of West Pomeranian dukes coming from modern times.<sup>6</sup> It is an excellent catalogue, critically elaborated, richly illustrated with photographs of coins and beautifully issued. However, it cannot be considered as the last word in this respect since it contains exclusively the basic types and variants of coins in West Pomerania.

The literature devoted to coins dating back to the Swedish, Brandenburgian and Prussian reigns in West Pomerania after the decline of Gryfit dynasty in 1637 is very scanty. The catalogue of J. F. H. Oldenburg's<sup>7</sup> collection printed 100 years ago was for a long time the only representative for coins of the Swedish part of West Pomerania. In 1967, coins of Pomerania and of the town of Strzałów dating back to the period of Swedish rule were gathered in B. Ahlström's catalogue, reissued successively and devoted to coins struck in the territory occupied by Sweden in modern times.<sup>8</sup> Being, first of all, of commercial character the very catalogue cannot be satisfactory for it is limited to presentation of basic types and annuals of the struck

coins not including any further information about them.

Brandenburgian and Prussian coins struck in West Pomerania were presented in E. Bahrfeldt's paper devoted to Brandenburgian minting,<sup>9</sup> in the catalogue to Malbork collection by the same author<sup>10</sup> and also in a survey of Prussian mintage in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by F. Schrötter.<sup>11</sup>

Catalogues mentioned above give a certain, through incomplete, picture of effects of mint production in West Pomerania, yet the state of studies on organization of modern minting in this area is much less advanced. Hildisch<sup>12</sup> devoted a little but very significant article to the ducal period. The beginnings of copper minting were studied by Piniński.<sup>13</sup> F. Behrens wrote about a mint in Franzburg.<sup>14</sup> A mint in Strzałów in the period of the Swedish reign was a subject of R. Marsson's article.<sup>15</sup> Szczecin mint under the reigns of Charles XI and Charles XII was presented in a short paper by F. Schrötter.<sup>16</sup> A mint in Stargard Szczeciński in Brandenburgian times was described by Bahrfeldt<sup>17</sup> and recently by Piniński<sup>18</sup> who also devoted a short article to Szczecin mint in times of Prussian reign.<sup>19</sup> West Pomeranian coinage in modern times was a subject of one of the chapters of Z. Żabiński's paper devoted to the coinage on the Polish territories.<sup>20</sup> West Pomeranian minting of modern period was also included in the popular work of Piniński dealing with minting in this territory.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>9</sup>E. Bahrfeldt, *Das Münzwesen der Mark Brandenburg*, 3, Berlin 1913.

<sup>10</sup>E. Bahrfeldt, *Die Münzen- und Medaillensammlung in der Marienburg*, Danzig, without the date of publication.

<sup>11</sup>F. Schrötter, *Das preussische Münzwesen im 18. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1902–1913.

<sup>12</sup>J. Hildisch, *Studie über das nachmittelalterliche Münzwesen der Herzöge von Pommern*, "Der Münzen- und Medaillensammler Berichte aus allen Gebieten der Geld-, Münzen und Medaillenkunde" 1970, 10.

<sup>13</sup>J. Piniński, *Najstarsze monety miedziane Pomorza Zachodniego*, "Wiadomości Numizmatyczne" 1981, 25, 3–4.

<sup>14</sup>L. Behrens, *Die Münzstätte Franzburg*, "Berliner Münzblätter", 1909.

<sup>15</sup>R. Marsson, *Stralsund als königlich schwedische Münzstätte 1715–1815*, "Zeitschrift für Numismatik" 1930, 11.

<sup>16</sup>F. Schrötter, *Die Münzstätte in Stettin unter den Königen Karl XI und Karl XII von Schweden 1660–1710*, "Zeitschrift für Numismatik", 1910, 28.

<sup>17</sup>E. Bahrfeldt, *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup>J. Piniński, *Monety brandenbursko-pomorskie*, "Biuletyn Numizmatyczny" 1975, 8.

<sup>19</sup>J. Piniński, *Monety prusko-pomorskie*, "Biuletyn Numizmatyczny" 1977, 6.

<sup>20</sup>Z. Żabiński, *Systemy pieniężne na ziemiach polskich*, Wrocław 1981, pp. 171–184.

<sup>21</sup>J. Piniński, *Dzieje pieniądza zachodniopomorskiego*, Szczecin 1976.

<sup>3</sup>J. A. Szwagrzyk, *Pieniądz na ziemiach polskich X–XX w.*, Wrocław 1973.

<sup>4</sup>P. Bratring, *Von den Münzen der pommerschen Herzöge von Bogislaus X. bis zum Ende des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, [in:] *Festschrift zur Feier des fünfzigjährigen Bestehens der Numismatischen Gessellschaft zu Berlin*, Berlin 1893.

<sup>5</sup>P. Bratring, *Über das Münzwesen der Stadt Stralsund in neueren Zeiten*, "Berliner Münzblätter" 1907.

<sup>6</sup>J. Hildisch, *Die Münzen der pommerschen Herzöge von 1569 bis zum Erlöschen des Greifengeschlechtes*, Köln–Wien 1980, cf review of J. Piniński "Wiadomości Numizmatyczne" 1982, 27, 1–2, pp. 108–109.

<sup>7</sup>J. F. H. Oldenburg, *Beskrifning over J. F. H. Oldenburgs samling*, Stockholm 1883.

<sup>8</sup>B. Ahlström, *Sveriges besittningsmynt 1561–1878*, Stockholm 1967.



The studies on the currency circulation in West Pomerania seem to be most unsatisfactory. However, a group of hoards from the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginnings of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries among which some finds were discovered in the last few decades has been published. The catalogue of modern times hoards prepared by E. Męcłewska and A. Mikołajczyk<sup>22</sup> collects all material from finds yet information included here has not been used so far either by German or by Polish researchers and numismatists.

Summing up, the results of investigations mentioned above are the following. The date beginning the modern epoch in the history of West Pomeranian mintage was most often said to be 1580 according to numismatic literature. In that year, the Duke of Szczecin, Jan Fryderyk and the Duke of Wołogosz, Ernest Ludwik began their minting production. The reason for such a late date of beginning the period of modern coinage was to be over fifty years break in minting production which started in 1524 when West Pomeranian dukes Jerzy I and Barnim IX released together the last mint-edition of coins regarded as representatives of Middle Ages. Though as regards the style these coins are Renaissance, similarly to Bogusław's X coins struck at the end of his reign but according to the monetary system they still continued the tradition of mediaeval minting.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the political conditions in West Pomerania underwent various changes. Jerzy I and Barnim X had been catholic dukes but West Pomerania ruled by Jerzy Fryderyk and Ernest Ludwik had been protestant for a few decades. Therefore, Dannenberg finishes his survey of mediaeval coins with Jerzy's I and Barnim's IX mint-editions, while Hildisch begins his catalogue of coins of Pomeranian dukes in modern times with coins struck by Jan Fryderyk and Ernest Ludwik.

However, Bratring considered the possibility of the existence of minting production in 1524 – 1580 in West Pomerania, yet reaching negative conclusions. If of course not to take into account the well-known mint edition of Strzałów from 1538. However, that period was not totally fruitless as regards the mintage. In an article based on the report for the 7<sup>th</sup> numismatic session in Nowa Sól<sup>23</sup> Piniński proved that both in 1538 and 1558 copper scherfs had been struck in West Pomerania.

However, as late as in 1580 Pomeranian dukes

started to strike coins more regularly. That minting had nothing in common with monetary systems which were obligatory in the Polish state. At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century those two state organisms dispersed for some centuries. After the period of trimming among neighbours to achieve the best status for his duchy and after unsuccessful attempts to consolidate the union with Poland Bogusław X, called the Great by the historians of West Pomerania, finally paid homage to the Emperor gaining the status of the Duke of the Reich in 1521.

Having close analogies to mintage of other North German countries, West Pomeranian mintage was linked to the monetary system of the Reich. Initially, only one central mint in Szczecin was at work, producing coins both with the name of the Duke of Szczecin, Jan Fryderyk, and the Duke of Wołogoszcz, Ernest Ludwik, and also small copper scherfs having only the name of the country and being probably the common mint emissions of Pomeranian dukes. Thick, silver coins had not been struck so far and the monetary units of the highest value were equal to 1/4 taler.

Since 1587, Ernest Ludwik continued to strike coins in his own mint. Mint editions of Bogusław XIII who did not rule any of the duchies of divided Pomerania being satisfied with Bard and Neuenkamp regions sufficient for a living, were known from those times. That practice was commonly applied by West Pomeranian dukes also in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Franciszek in 1615 – 1618 and Ulrik in 1618 – 1622 struck coins as titular bishops of Kamień. Their brother, Bogusław the last duke of Pomerania having Darłowo region as his dowry, struck coins there in 1618 – 1620.

The localization of mints at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was not very clear. Only the workshop of Jan Fryderyk in Szczecin is obvious. As regards other mints, it can be only supposed that Ernest Ludwik localized his mint in Wołogoszcz and Bolesław XIII in a newly built castle in Franzburg. At the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century coin striking by West Pomeranian dukes was not continuous. Only scherfs were almost continually struck and only at the end of edition of those coins in the middle of nineties of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Jan Fryderyk struck the whole group of denominations together with bigger types – talers and ducats.

However, that activity was not continued. Another break in West Pomeranian minting lasted for a dozen years or so but afterwards the mint production was begun with new initiative. In 1609 Filip Juliusz, the Duke of Wołogoszcz, began the mint production in Franzburg. Philip II, the Duke of Szczecin, started to strike coins three years later. The Kipper and Wipper period, the period of great decline of coin value was begun. During meetings of Upper-Saxon minting

<sup>22</sup>M. Męcłewska, A. Mikołajczyk, *Skarby monet z lat 1500–1649 na obszarze Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej*. Inwentarz, Warszawa 1983.

<sup>23</sup>J. Piniński, *Najstarsze monety miedziane Pomorza Zachodniego: VII Sesja Numizmatyczna w Nowej Soli 3–4 X 1980 r. Moneta miedziana w Polsce*, Zielona Góra 1983.



region, to which West Pomerania was prescribed by the Emperor, protests against the production of Franzburg mint together with demands to close it were put forward. The duke, however, did not pay any attention to those objections striking coins continually. Coins began to depreciate yet new types of coins, even worse, were being introduced. Apart from workshops in Szczecin and Franzburg, new mints in Koszalin and Darłowo were open.

The year 1623 brought a significant change. The striking of depreciated coins was ceased, coins of higher denominations were struck and Franzburg mint significantly limited its production. The end of twenties and the beginning of thirties of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by especially intensive editions of talers, which concerned not only West Pomerania. Old, depreciated coins were, at those times, countersigned by towns of Pomerania situated behind the Odra river.

West Pomeranian mintage of the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century had a certain characteristic feature typical for those times. It is a great number of commemorative coins. Most often they were struck because of grand funerals of dead dukes or their wives, though other occasions were celebrated in this way as well. One of them, for example, was the centenary of reformation. Especially under the reign of Filip II, a lover of science and art, the minting was characterized by a high artistic level and careful handwork.

Commemorative coins were the following: silver talers and their multiplications and fractions, more-over gold guldens and double-guldens. A certain specificity of this region was ducal devices placed on coins. Such examples are also known from other countries but this procedure was very constant in West Pomerania. Those devices appeared already together with initiation of modern minting in 1580 and lasted till the end of coin striking by West Pomeranian dukes i.e. till 1637, which is the date of the death of the last duke, Bogusław XIV.

Last decades of ducal ruling in West Pomerania were tragic. In 1618 the Thirty Year War broke out. Pomeranian dukes attempted to lead the neutral policy which, however, did not protect the Duchy from participating in tragic events. In 1627, the Swedes marched into West Pomerania, Lębork and Bytów were occupied by the Poles. In spite of the Duke's objections the Swedes conducted a military levy in West Pomerania.

Later, the imperial troops under the command of Wallenstein marched into that territory. The period of marching and quartering of foreign armies and encounters among them devastated West Pomerania. In 1630 the whole region was occupied by the Swedes and the helpless duke had to accept the treaty with their king,

Gustaw Adolph. After the death of childless Bogusław XIV it was obvious that West Pomeranian Duchy ceased to exist. According to treaties sealed before, the successor of the local dukes was Brandenburgian elector, George Wilhelm. In fact, West Pomerania was in hands of the Swedish monarch. As a result of Westfald peace treaty from 1648, the country was divided between Brandenburgia which occupied the eastern part and Sweden which captured the western part of the duchy.

Ironically, in 1654 the new rulers organized a grand funeral of the last duke, Bogusław XIV, and his sister-in-law, Jadwiga. Those celebrations were used for the sake of propaganda. Numerous commemorative coins were struck then and the basic symbol placed on them was a tree trunk cut down, an allegory of the dead dynasty, with two young branches sprouting out of the tree, symbolizing the two lines of new sovereigns, Brandenburgian and Swedish.

Yet, some dozen or so years earlier in 1640, queen Christine began to strike coins in Szczecin. Swedish mintage in Pomerania remained to be based on local monetary system obligatory so far. Apart from effigies and names of Swedish rulers, coins bore coats of arms and signs indicating to their Pomeranian origin. At the beginning of the seventies of the 17<sup>th</sup> century a monetary reform based on a silver gulden equal to 2/3 of a taler was introduced. As regards mintage Swedish Pomerania was not closely connected to Sweden, bearing some resemblance to other countries of the Reich.

At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the period of depreciation was back and the low-valued coins of 1/48 of a taler were countersigned again by the towns of Pomerania. That situation changed at the beginnings of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Sweden lost Szczecin on behalf of Prussia. The mint was transferred to Strzałów but apart from the episode from 1715 when siege coins were struck, Swedish minting in West Pomerania ceased to exist till 1758.

In that year, division coins according to a mintfoot of Lipsk from 1690 began to be struck. In 1768, the mint stopped producing again and only three times it started to work sporadically: in 1776, 1792 and during Napoleonic Wars in 1806 and 1808. However, this production was not very rich, being limited only to striking small change coins – copper 3 pfennigs.

The town of Strzałów struck coins according to the mintfoot identical to that of the state mint, placing on them the name of the Reich emperor, however. That town mint stopped its production earlier than the Swedish one, because in 1708. In 1763 Strzałów emitted exceptionally small silver coins which were made in a royal work-shop.

The history of mintage in Pomeranian territories



occupied by Brandenburgia and later by Prussia is not rich. After some projects which had not been realized the mint in Stargard Szczeciński was opened in 1689, yet it worked only for five years. Coins produced here had the features of Brandenburgian coins exclusively. Similarly, Prussian coins struck for a short time in Szczecin in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, did not differ in mintfoot and the external appearance from products of other Prussian mint workshops.

As it can be seen, we have a certain amount of information about the procedure of coin striking, coin types and about increased and decreased volume of mint production in West Pomerania in modern times. However, we know very little about the mintage itself and its organization and functioning. So far, there have not been completely determined the time of producing of particular mints and types of coins struck there. A few mintmasters are known by name but also in that aspect our knowledge is very limited.

The studies on monetary circulation and the circulation of Pomeranian coins in modern times in West Pomerania seems to be a troublesome task.

Hoards known to us indicate that a foreign coin appeared in West Pomerania in different historical periods and to various degrees. The differences can also be seen in various regions of West Pomerania. On the other hand, West Pomeranian coins were exported several times abroad appearing in great quantities in the neighbouring countries and even, in a small amount, penetrated relatively distant lands.

In order to determine more precise data more systematic studies are required. This task seems to be beyond the reach of a small group of numismatists working in West Pomerania. Numismatists from other parts of the country, deprived of the free access to collections, may be unwilling to undertake the investigations in this region. Only the cooperation of Polish, German and Swedish researchers, with greater possibilities of using materials in possession of another country, may lead to satisfactory results.

*Translated by  
Elżbieta Lubińska*

## DISCUSSION

**Andrzej Mikołajczyk**

The subject is exotic though West Pomerania is not so far from Great Poland or the middle part of our country. The lack of volunteers to discuss the thesis presented by the lecturer proves that this is an unfamiliar subject in Polish numismatic studies in contrast to minting issues or coins in Pomerania in the Middle Ages. In fact, it may result from relatively small source basis. Mr. Piniński has indicated many weak points and I would like to add that the use of modern finds in Pomerania in studies on monetary circulation in this region of Europe may not appear so bad. I mean here the articles by Gerard Steffke who described monetary circulation in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with special regard to countermarks from territories lying behind the Odra river. This work was published in the last decade. The influx of finds is now carefully being observed and used by our West-German colleagues. As regards the Polish researchers, some

years ago I myself wrote an article devoted to coin circulation in Pomerania in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, some printing difficulties have caused that this work is still in the press. Very interesting discoveries in West and Mid-Pomerania encouraged me to prepare this article. These facts change somewhat the picture presented by the lecturer. Undoubtedly, the development of cooperation of all numismatic circles interested in the subject would be very much required. Among Polish researchers numismatists from Szczecin and Koszalin would be the first ones eager to cooperate. The development of West Pomeranian modern numismatics on a proper scientific level is undoubtedly possible.

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As it can be seen, we have a certain amount of  
 information about the production of coins in the  
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 the production in West Pomerania in the 17th  
 century. However, we know very little about the minting  
 and the organization and functioning of the minting  
 and how completely determined the time of production  
 of the coins and types of coins. It is a  
 very important question by a way but it is not  
 a part of the knowledge is very limited.

### Discussion

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The history of mintage in Pomeranian territories