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### NEW COINS OF BOLESŁAW THE BRAVE

**ABSTRACT:** The article presents new coins and die-chains of Bolesław the Brave's coins. A mule of the PRINCES POLONIE type and an Otto-Adelheid imitation, kept in the State Historical Museum in Moscow, connected two previously known die-chains, enlarging the number of Bolesław the Brave's coin types. New coins from the antiquarian market also expanded the DVX INCLITVS die chain. All these new coins and die chains show that despite the chaotic and incidental character of Bolesław the Brave's coinage, in most cases the dies were produced in stylistically homogenous pairs, which were mixed afterwards during the minting process. Analysis of the quantity and chronology of Bolesław's coins might also suggest that the heir to the throne, Mieszko II, was responsible for a relative 'ordering' of the oldest Polish coinage.

In recent years, many new sources have appeared to aid our knowledge of the oldest Polish coinage.<sup>1</sup> And although certainly, as which we will try to demonstrate in this work, new sources are still being revealed, the current state of knowledge makes it possible to present some new, or only previously signalled conclusions, which allows us to display the oldest Polish coinage in a new light and to understand its character, size and importance better for the economy of the state of the first Piasts.

The oldest Polish coins were minted under the reign of Bolesław the Brave, at the very end of the tenth century, probably around 995. The coinage of this ruler is greatly diversified. Altogether about 25 various types of coins produced in mints controlled by Bolesław the Brave can be singled out (the exact number depends on the interpretation of die chains). Several of them are represented by unique or very few specimens. Deniers of this ruler are divided into two groups:

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<sup>1</sup> Ilisch and Suchodolski 2003, pp. 97–104; Jonsson and Suchodolski 2009, pp. 29–40; Bogucki 2006, pp. 181–194, 2008, pp. 77–89; 2010, pp. 172–192; 2011, pp. 1382–1391.

coins with certificate data (the ruler's name, titles and names of mints) and coins deprived of such data, which are classified as Polish coinage due to die links and the analysis of images, chronology and find distribution.

In new research, a particularly important role is played by die chains of which three can be currently identified, named after the most characteristic coins belonging to them. Therefore, we have the PRINCES POLONIE, DVX INCLITVS and AREAHLAT die chains. In this paper, we shall concentrate on the first two.

### THE PRINCES POLONIE DIE CHAIN

One of the most recognisable and attractive coins of Bolesław the Brave is a denier with a bird on one side and a cross on the other and with the double-sided legend PRINCES POLONIE. The image on its obverse has been even placed on the Polish 20 zloty banknote issued by the National Bank of Poland since 1994. Several years ago, it was discovered that the two previously known variants of this coin type had been in fact struck with one pair of dies – some of the coins (less numerous) was struck from original dies, and some (more numerous) with the use of the same dies, however after their repair, namely, the regrinding and then the deepening and correcting of the design.<sup>2</sup>

The obverse with the image of a bird in its original version is linked with the obverse of coins with the name of the Czech Prince Vladivoj,<sup>3</sup> while the repaired reverse with a cross is linked with an anonymous imitation of Otto-Adelheid pfennigs.<sup>4</sup>

As expected, it was recently discovered that the PRINCES POLONIE chain has a further extension. Many early medieval coins stored in the Coin Room of the Historical Museum in Moscow may have come from hoards discovered in Poland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Among them, a denier was identified (Fig. 1), one side of which was struck with an original die of the PRINCES POLONIE type, while the other side was struck with a die imitating the obverse of Otto-Adelheid pfennigs. Its diameter is 19.5 mm and its weight is 1.417 g (Coin Cabinet, State Historical Museum in Moscow, inventory No. 633.373).

The reverse die was recorded as part of a die chain published in 2005 by Peter Iisch.<sup>5</sup> This chain is composed of seven dies, following the model of Saxon (Otto-Adelheid), Cologne and Bavarian coins. The reverse die of the Bavarian type, imitating the coins dated 948–1009, is linked with the Cologne-type obverse, and

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<sup>2</sup> Bogucki 2010, pp. 172–192, 2011, pp. 1382–1391.

<sup>3</sup> Zakrzewski 1939 (1948), pp. 370–377.

<sup>4</sup> Bogucki 2006, pp. 181–194, 2008, pp. 77–89.

<sup>5</sup> Iisch 2005, pp. 191–196.



Fig. 1. A mule of the PRINCES POLONIE type and the Otto-Adelheid type reverse.  
Scale 2:1 (photo J. Magiera).

this is further linked with other Saxon types. Ilisch surmises that the coins from these dies were created in Greater Poland or in Pomerania. Coins that were part of this die chain were discovered in the following hoards: Stary Dworek (*tpq* 1019),<sup>6</sup> an uncertain locality in Greater Poland (*tpq* 1018),<sup>7</sup> Dobrzyków near Płock (*tpq* 1018),<sup>8</sup> another uncertain locality in Greater Poland (*c.* 1025),<sup>9</sup> Kraków–Nowa Huta (*tpq* 1035),<sup>10</sup> Vossberg in Rügen (*tpq* 1084),<sup>11</sup> Łupawa in Pomerania (turn of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries)<sup>12</sup> and Łążyn (*tpq* 1135) in Prussia.<sup>13</sup> Some other specimens can be found in public systematic collections and private ones. We have obtained, therefore, during the last ten years, a considerable extension of the PRINCES POLONIE chain (Fig. 2). It is worth remembering that until 2006 only the link between the original version and the Vladivoj die was known.

Peter Ilisch, based on the chronology of the finds and the originals, dates these coins to around 1020–1030, which seems, however, to be too late. Firstly, most of the originals (Cologne type, Regensburg type, and Otto-Adelheid pfennigs) are from the tenth century or, at the latest, from the early eleventh century. Secondly, as many as three coins were discovered in hoards hidden after 1018 and it is difficult to assume that, in all three cases, they constitute the youngest elements. Finally, as the denier from Moscow shows, we are dealing with deniers of Bolesław the Brave, dated to around 1005–1010. In this case, it is important to link the chain in question to the original (the oldest) version of the PRINCES

<sup>6</sup> PSW I, No. 125; Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, No. 556/1872/2814.

<sup>7</sup> Klinger 1966, pp. 246–247, No. 17, Tf. VI:17.

<sup>8</sup> Scherer 1912, p. 370, No. 10; PSW III, No. 73.

<sup>9</sup> Warszawskie Centrum Numizmatyczne, Auction 57 (7 June 2014), No. 70.

<sup>10</sup> FMP IV.A, pp. 62–77; No. 46.

<sup>11</sup> Dannenberg 1884, pp. 264–330.

<sup>12</sup> Fiala 1916, p. 102, No. 712, Tf. V:11.

<sup>13</sup> Hävernick 1935, No. 175; PSW IV.C, No. 8.

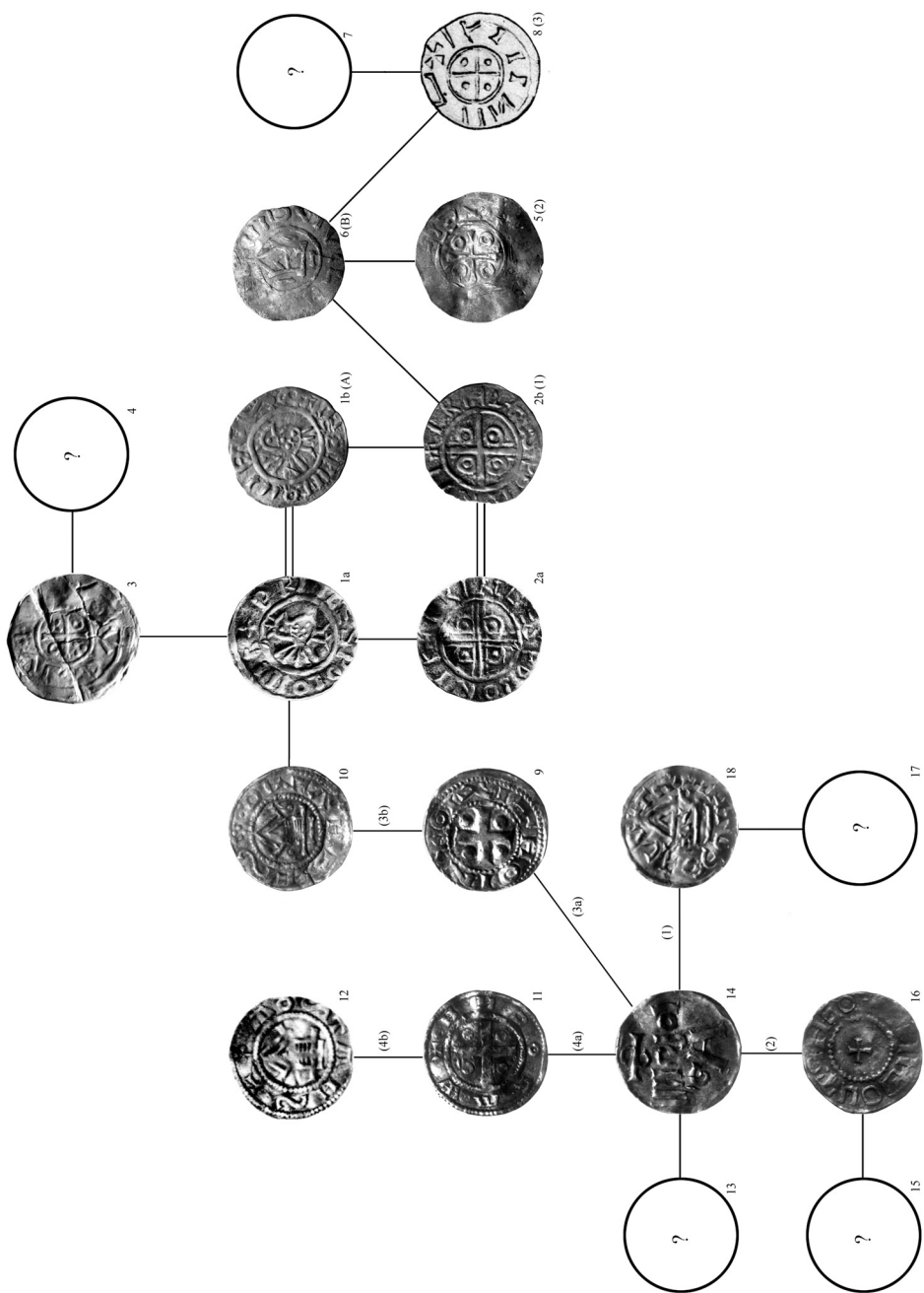


Fig. 2. PRINCES POLONIE die chain of Bolesław the Brave's coins.  
The formerly used numbering of coins and dies is given in brackets.

POLONIE type. The available data does not make it possible to establish precisely the relative chronology of the striking of particular types as part of this die chain. It seems that the oldest may be the correct specimens of PRINCES POLONIE with the direct adjacent elements – the Vladivoj and deniers of the Otto-Adelheid type, No. 3b. Concurrent is probably a stylistically very similar imitation of the Otto-Adelheid type, No. 4b. The repaired version of PRINCES POLONIE and the imitation of the Otto-Adelheid type with lines on the sides of the church are certainly later. However, it is difficult to determine the chronology of the Cologne and Regensburg types. Theoretically, considering the early chronology of the originals, it cannot be excluded that they were produced in parallel with the first PRINCES POLONIE version, or even a little earlier, though there is no direct evidence for this. It must be said, however, that the Cologne monogram is more reminiscent of those from the Soest mint<sup>14</sup> than from Cologne itself, which would rather place the coin at the turn of the centuries, and most probably in the first decades of the eleventh century. Considering this, it seems that the imitation of the Bavarian pfennig with ENC (originals from 948–1009) also took place in the early eleventh century.

In the light of the thesis about the original production of stylistically coherent die pairs (see below), a part of the die chain published by P. Ilisch may be interpreted in various ways. Undoubtedly, the Bavarian type obverse is missing, while P. Ilisch interpreted the imitation of the Cologne type (no. 2a – Dbg 1782) as patterned upon the coins of Otto II or III.<sup>15</sup> It should be highlighted that the obverse with a small cross considerably differs from Cologne-type coins. A most probable model were some Saxon coins from the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries, *e.g.* common deniers of Bernard I or II of Lüneburg (*e.g.* Dbg. 585–587; Kilger Lün A, B).<sup>16</sup> If we accept such an assumption, it should be stated that, in the future, one should expect the discovery of still unknown obverses of the Bavarian, Saxon and Cologne types (Fig. 2).

The question should be posed as to whether, in this case, we are dealing with an official production of the Polish prince's mint or a product from a workshop outside his control. The latter possibility is not groundless, as we know cases in early medieval coinage when official dies went outside the mint and were used for imitative coinage. Such a situation is best evidenced in Scandinavian coinage where English dies, most probably transported from England, were used. Some die chains link Ipswich, York, Exeter and Dover dies with Scandinavian ones.<sup>17</sup> A similar phenomenon was observed in eleventh century Pomeranian coinage, where, apart from imitative dies of the so-called Łupawa (Lupow) group, original

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<sup>14</sup> Dannenberg 1876–1905, No. 342; Hävernicks 1935, No. 849–850.

<sup>15</sup> Ilisch 2005, p. 191.

<sup>16</sup> Kilger 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Blackburn 1985, pp. 101–124; Malmer 1989, p. 17, 1997, p. 15.

Danish dies were used.<sup>18</sup> If we do not reject *a priori* such a possibility in relation to the coins described above, it must be stated that such a circumstance is very unlikely since the use of foreign dies took place in the event of mass coinage production characteristic for Scandinavia, while in the case of Pomerania it was an effect of a specific geopolitical situation. In reference to the oldest Polish coinage such a hypothesis does not seem to be particularly probable because the movement of official dies from English mints was not the consequence of invasions or plunder committed by Scandinavian rulers (Swedish, in particular) in the territories of East Anglia and Northumberland. A more probable reason for the migration of dies or the entire workshop of a given moneyer was for economic reasons and the growth of demand for the services of a skilled moneyer on a less monetised – but already suffering from the shortage of monetary silver in circulation – Scandinavian market. In the case of Northern Europe, the movement of dies has been evidenced generally from the West to the East *i.e.* in turn from Ireland to the Isle of Man, from England to Scandinavia and from Denmark to Pomerania. It seems that the scale of the described phenomenon in Northern Europe and the fact that the adjacent elements in the Scandinavian die chains to the original English die are clearly of a much better quality than the remaining part of the imitative issues (or are even termed as issues under a strong English influence), may support a thesis about an economic reason for die migration and should rather constitute evidence of peaceful contacts and commercial cooperation between particular regions and markets.<sup>19</sup>

The case of the Polish chains under analysis seems to point, however, to a different circumstance *i.e.* the fact that the chain group described by P. Ilisch constituted an official product of the princely mint. The anonymity, the stylistic difference of dies and the exceptionally small number of specimens preserved until the present day is another condition for accepting the thesis of the incidental character of mint production of the workshop of Prince Bolesław the Brave at the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries.

#### THE DVX INCLITVS DIE CHAIN

In the die links of the second group of the so-called mules, apart from two pairs of dies imitating Anglo-Saxon coins, such as BOLIZLAVS DVX INCLITVS and +ÆÐIEL RED REX ATGO, there are three dies of the Bavarian type.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Elfver 2008, pp. 20–25; 2011, pp. 65–72; Bogucki and Magiera 2015, pp. 119–128.

<sup>19</sup> Blackburn 1985, pp. 101–124; Malmer 1997, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> Suchodolski 1967, pp. 99–103; Jonsson and Suchodolski 2009, pp. 29–40.

Two obverses constitute a pair imitating coins of Duke Henry IV from 995–1002 of the Hahn<sup>21</sup> type 25c or King Henry II from the first period of his reign (1002–1009), Hahn type 27. The obverse follows the denier of King Henry II from the first period of the reign, Hahn I–IV type. These Bavarian imitations were called types VI.10 and VI.11 of Bolesław the Brave by S. Suchodolski.<sup>22</sup> On neither of the Bavarian type dies is there the name of the Polish prince. There are blundered legends, which are distantly reminiscent of the original inscriptions. In the obverse margin one can see, therefore, a characteristic cross with four pellets in angles and the letter H that is reminiscent of the name *Henricus*. While on the reverses, among a series of chaotically set letters one can decipher CIT and CIV, which shows that the die-cutter saw the coins with the inscription REGINA or PRAGA CIVITAS.<sup>23</sup> The ‘Bavarian’ dies are combined with the obverse of the Anglo-Saxon type inscribed with +ÆDIEL·RED REX ATGO that, in turn, is linked with the obverse with the legend BOLIZLAVS [DVX INCLITVS] that evidences the whole chain belonging to Polish coinage. In the discussed die chain, a large stylistic variety demands attention. It is evident that the dies for BOLIZLAVS DVX INCLITVS, +ÆDIEL·RED REX ATGO and the Bavarian types were made by different people. Undoubtedly, it is a result of the different skills and the origin of the authors of particular die pairs. It cannot be stated, however, if these different die-cutters worked in one workshop or in several. Regardless of this, at a certain stage of coin production dies were mixed up and as a result, hybrids were created, which today means we can assign the Anglo-Saxon and Bavarian types to the coinage of Bolesław the Brave.

Recent years have brought a further extension of this die chain. Above all, one denier was found in a private collection, struck on one side with the aforementioned Bavarian type die with the letters CNE under the roof of a temple (Suchodolski type VI. 11), while on the obverse die on the other side, also of the Bavarian type, there is a plain cross and two pellets, a wedge and an annulet in angles and an inscription XCS///CIM///U (Fig. 3). So the missing obverse to the previously known type has been found. The model for this pair of dies was the Bavarian coins of Duke Henry IV (995–1002).<sup>24</sup> It is, at the same time, the oldest element of this die link. Slightly younger is type VI.10, the model for which were also Bavarian deniers, but of King Henry II (1002–1009). The Anglo-Saxon set, in turn, is not typologically uniform – since the obverse imitates the *Last Small Cross* pennies of Æthelred II from 1009–1017, while the reverse follows the older CRVX type from 991–997. In this arrangement, the denier with the

<sup>21</sup> Hahn 1976.

<sup>22</sup> Suchodolski 1967, pp. 100–101.

<sup>23</sup> Suchodolski 1967, p. 100.

<sup>24</sup> Hahn 1976, No. 25.



Fig. 3. Denier of Bolesław the Brave with the newly discovered obverse of the Bavarian type. Scale 2:1 (photo J. Magiera).

BOLIZLAVS DVX INCLITVS legends appears to be the youngest element, as late as from around 1015–1020.

In an early medieval hoard, hidden around 1025, most probably in Greater Poland, two deniers were found,<sup>25</sup> struck with the same pair of dies (Fig. 4). One side was struck with the reverse die of the DVX INCLITVS type (Suchodolski XI, 17), while the other one with an unrecorded die to-date that has a cross potent with four pellets in angles. In the margin, there is no legend imitation, but there are large points and crosses. Generally, the design of the die is very similar to the reverses of deniers with the name of Mieszko (Suchodolski II, 2–3). The newly discovered deniers not only extend the catalogue of the types of coins of Bolesław the Brave, but also strongly support the thesis that deniers with the name of Mieszko were struck during the reign of Bolesław the Brave, and it was the name of his son, as the successor to the throne, and not of his father, which is written on them.

Due to new discoveries, the missing reverse of the Bavarian type was supplemented, and a new coin type was attached, which, to-date, remains known from one side only. The entire link is composed now of nine dies (Fig. 5), but a discovery of at least one more die should be expected, originally constituting a pair of the ‘Mieszko’ type.

<sup>25</sup> Warszawskie Centrum Numizmatyczne, Auction 52 (10 November 2012), No. 102; Auction 56 (1 March 2014), No. 112.





Fig. 4. Mules of Bolesław the Brave of the DVX INCLITVS type and of the type imitating coins of Mieszko II. Scale 2:1 (WCN 56:112; 52:102).

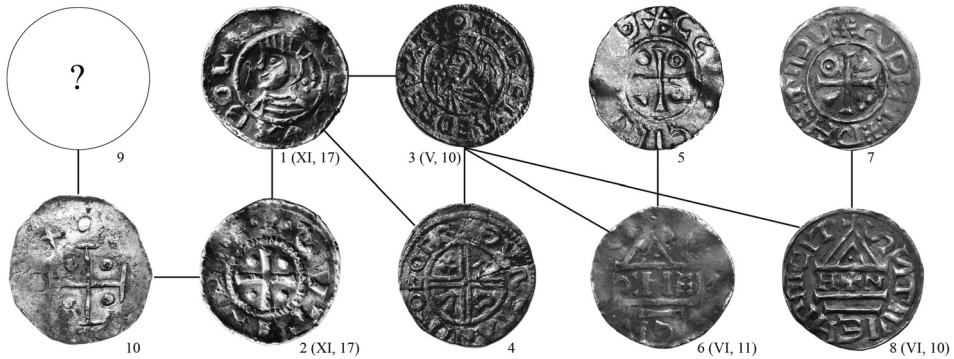


Fig. 5. The DVX INCLITVS die chain of Bolesław the Brave Coins. The formerly used numbering of coins and dies is given in brackets.

## CONCLUSIONS

The new discoveries presented above demonstrate how little is still known about the coinage of the first Piasts. It is quite possible that, in the near future, new discoveries may be made within the coinage of Bolesław the Brave, and maybe of Mieszko II too. Research conducted on the die links shows that type-

coherent sets of dies were made in the mints of Bolesław the Brave which were then mixed only at a later stage of production, the evidence of which are the numerous mules known to us. Thus, it is to be presumed that there is a good probability of discovering the reverses of the ‘imitation of Mieszko,’ ‘Vladivoj’ imitations, probably two churches of the Otto-Adelheid type,<sup>26</sup> the obverse for type IV of Otto-Adelheid, the missing obverses of Otto-Adelheid type III, and for the Cologne, Saxon and Bavarian imitative reverses from P. Ilisch’s die chain. A large group of anonymous imitations may be a suitable area to start searching.

A significant conclusion stemming from the discoveries made is that the coins being a part of one die chain may differ in chronology and maybe too in their mint provenance. It is noticeable that the PRINCES POLONIE and AREAHLAT chains have a linear character, which suggests that dies were mixed within one workshop and possibly transferred from one mint to another. Nevertheless, it may also result from a long, but not very intensive production process, which is clearly demonstrated by examples of the corrosion of unused dies and their subsequent correction. It can be concluded that the die links were not always a Sophoclean tragedy – they do not mean unity of action, time and place. The DVX INCLITVS die chain looks differently, in that at least three dies were mutually linked. Such links clearly show that these coins were created in one workshop.

The new finds place the character of the oldest Polish coinage in a new light. It was definitely different from that in neighbouring Bohemia or further away in Hungary, Denmark and Sweden. A short series of Polish coins, numerous mules linking coins of very different types, carelessly struck one-sided deniers and evident breaks in production show that coinage in the state of the first Piasts was not a well organized production on a large scale. On the one hand, coins of demonstrative character were made, which were supposed to support the aspirations of the rulers to civilization, but on the other hand, many deniers were struck which cannot be then distinguished from foreign coins, therefore, the reason for their striking was the profit coming from the difference between the scrap metal value and the coin.

It seems that the coinage of Bolesław the Brave was ephemeral and chaotic at the initial stage. A visible change was the introduction of the PRINCES POLONIE type, three pairs of dies for the INCLITVS type (few, but repeatable), a relatively numerous REX type, three pairs of dies of the ‘Cyrillic’ type, and finally, very numerous deniers of the VIDV and +JIVA types.<sup>27</sup> They were all coined as early as from around 1010–1015 and later. The moment of relative ‘ordering’ of the oldest Polish coinage coincides, therefore, with the return to Poland of the heir to the throne – Mieszko II. As is known, the young successor was familiar

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<sup>26</sup> Suchodolski 1967, pp. 95–99; Ilisch and Suchodolski 2003, pp. 97–104; Bogucki 2006, pp. 181–194.

<sup>27</sup> Bogucki 2012, pp. 111–126.

with German politics, and from his marriage with Richeza in 1013, he could rule his separate land. Maybe, unlike his father, he appreciated the importance of coinage policy and ordered his father's coinage matters, and started his own coinage on a larger scale. In this context, it should be considered whether the production of PRINCES POLONIE deniers in the repaired version should not be attributed to Mieszko II, which are clearly younger than the original ones and much larger in volume. Yet it is only a hypothesis, impossible to prove at present. The character of the oldest Polish coinage outlined above shows that Bolesław the Brave did not attach great importance to the production of coins. Striking one's own coin was one of many attributes of a Christian ruler at the time, so coins were produced in Poland.<sup>28</sup> Maybe the fact of coinage itself was important, and not the designs and workmanship of coins as such. Hence the numerous imitations, coins not very advanced artistically and technologically<sup>29</sup> and the breaks in production. The mint undoubtedly generated a profit, but it was not large enough for the ruler to invest considerably in the development of his own coins.

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<sup>28</sup> S. Suchodolski (2005, pp. 47–48) expresses a similar opinion.

<sup>29</sup> For example, a denier of Bolesław the Brave with the proud title REX is a stylistically simple coin, made by a very unskilled engraver. Coins of Mieszko II, who was educated in Germany, are equally simple, and the legends on two of three types are blundered.

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## NOWE MONETY BOLESŁAWA CHROBREGO

(Streszczenie)

W artykule zaprezentowano nowe odkrycia monet oraz nowe połączenia stempli denarów Bolesława Chrobrego. W Muzeum Historycznym w Moskwie odnaleziono hybrydę wybitą pierwotnym stemplem awersu typu PRINCES POLONIE oraz stemplem rewersu w typie denarów Ottona i Adelajdy (ryc. 1). Łączy ona znane już wcześniej dwa łańcuchy połączeń stempli – PRINCES POLONIE oraz łańcucha składającego się z naśladownictw w typie saskim, kolońskim i bawarskim, opublikowanego przez P. Ilischa w 2005 r. (ryc. 2). W związku z odnalezieniem wspomnianej hybrydy zaproponowano nieco wcześniejsze datowanie monet wchodzących w skład tego łańcucha – na lata ok. 1005–1020. Rozważono również ewentualność, że wspomniane monety nie zostały wybite w mennicach książęcych, a do powstania hybrydy doszło w wyniku pozyskania tylko jednego stempla. Jednak w świetle dostępnych danych wydaje się, że wszystkie stemple, wchodzące w skład połączonych łańcuchów, używane były w mennicy podległej Bolesławowi Chrobremu.

Zaprezentowano też nowe stemple wchodzące w skład łańcucha połączeń stempli DVX INCLITVS – brakujący do tej pory awers w typie bawarskim (ryc. 3) oraz silnie zbarbaryzowane naśladownictwo, nawiązujące do typu II denarów Mieszka II (ryc. 4).

Analizując przedstawione łańcuchy połączeń stempli postawiono tezę o wytwarzaniu zgodnych stylistycznie kompletów stempli w mennicach Bolesława Chrobrego, które dopiero w trakcie produkcji monet ulegały przemieszaniu. W oparciu o takie założenie przedstawiono hipotetyczną listę nieznanych jeszcze stempli, które powinny zostać odnalezione w przyszłości (ryc. 2, 5).

Przedstawione odkrycia potwierdzają niestabilność i chaotyczność najstarszego mennictwa polskiego. Rozważając kwestie chronologii i liczebności monet Bolesława Chrobrego postawiono tezę, że być może za próbę jego względnego uporządkowania od około 1015 roku odpowiadał następca tronu – Mieszko II.

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