

Collector Coins



face value	10 zł
metal	925/1000 Ag
finish	proof
diameter	32.00 mm
weight	14.14 g
mintage	45,000 pcs

Obverse: Image of the Eagle, established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland; the notation of the year of issue: 2004, to the left; an inscription: 10 ZŁ, to the right. The inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA / POLSKA, above the Eagle. Above the inscription, the image of reindeer spans, against a Siberian landscape, with a flock of birds in flight at the top. The Mint mark: $\frac{m}{w}$, under the Eagle's left talon.

Reverse: Portrait of Aleksander Czekanowski, against a Siberian landscape. A reindeer to the left of the portrait; stylised: a profile, hands, a compass, compasses and a map, to the right. The inscription: ALEKSANDER / CZEKANOWSKI / 1833-1876, below.

Designer of the coin: Roussanka Nowakowska



face value	2 zł
metal	CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy
finish	standard
diameter	27.00 mm
weight	8.15 g
mintage	700,000 pcs

Obverse: Image of the Eagle, established as the state emblem of the Republic of Poland; the notation of the year of issue: 20-04, on either side of the Eagle; below the Eagle, an inscription: ZŁ 2 ZŁ; Circumscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA, preceded and followed by six pearls, in the rim. The Mint mark: $\frac{m}{w}$, under the Eagle's left talon.

Reverse: Portrait of Aleksander Czekanowski, against a Siberian landscape with a reindeer pulling a sledge. The semi-circumscription: ALEKSANDER CZEKANOWSKI 1833-1876, above and on the left-hand side.

On the edge: an inscription: NBP eight times repeated, every second one turned by 180°, separated by stars.

Designer of obverse: Ewa Tyc-Karpińska

Designer of reverse: Roussanka Nowakowska



Coins struck by the State Mint in Warsaw.

Printed by NBP Printing Office

Design: DECORUM

**– Polish Travellers and Explorers –
Aleksander Czekanowski**

On March 19, 2004 the National Bank of Poland puts into circulation collector coins depicting Aleksander Czekanowski, with face values of:

- 10 zł – struck in silver, in proof finish,
- 2 zł – struck in standard finish, in Nordic Gold (CuAl5Zn5Sn1) alloy.

The aim of this issue is to commemorate the work of the famous Polish geologist and ethnographer who had conducted research in Siberia.

Aleksander Piotr Czekanowski was born on February 12, 1833 in Krzemieniec, Volhynia. His father Wawrzyniec kept a boarding house in Krzemieniec and was a voluntary assistant in the zoology laboratory of the town's grammar school. In 1850 Czekanowski enrolled in medical studies at the University of Kiev. However, as he did not particularly care for medicine, he turned his attention to the natural sciences, especially geology. The fame of German lecturers there encouraged him in this decision as well as the possibility of specialising in any of the natural science fields. In 1855 he moved to Dorpat (now Tartu, Estonia) where there was a university. There he spent two years attending mineralogical lectures given at the faculty of geology. At the same time, he concentrated on the determination and systematisation of the university petrographic collection. In 1857, after finishing his studies, he returned to Kiev, where he worked on the collections at the local university.

Prior to the January Uprising of 1863-64 against the Russian occupation, the cream of the Polish youth would meet in his house. Suspected of having participated in the Uprising, Czekanowski was arrested in 1863 and exiled to Siberia, first to the Chita area of the Zabaikalye and then to an area west of Lake Baikal. Already on his way there, he would collect and sort specimens using a makeshift magnifying-glass made of a broken decanter. He spent several years living in poverty after being moved to the area of Bratski Ostrog on the River Angara. Notwithstanding the harsh climate and hard labour conditions with local peasants, Czekanowski did not give up his scientific work. He studied the geology of the so-called Angara Territory, performing meteorological observations using equipment he had designed himself. In 1866 he was rescued from this adverse situation by Fryderyk Schmidt, whom he had met in Dorpat and who

later became a member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. He purchased Czekanowski's collections, placed orders for further ones and kept him supplied with books. Two years later he managed to obtain Czekanowski's release from forced labour and transfer to Irkutsk.

In 1869-1871 Czekanowski conducted geological research on commission from the Russian Geographical Society in the south of the Gubernya of Irkutsk, in the area of Lake Baikal, on the Angara, and in the East Sayan Mountains on the Mongolian border. He systematised and arranged the collections of the Society's Siberian division. At Ust' Balei on the Angara he discovered rich deposits of Jurassic animal and plant fossils. His stratigraphic and palaeontological studies threw a new light on the geological structure of the Pribaikalye and for this he was awarded in 1870 the Geographical Society's gold medal. One of the results of his research was the first geological map of the Gubernya of Irkutsk, awarded a gold medal at the 1875 international geographical exhibition in Paris. The first of Czekanowski's significant publications was a monograph of the Gubernya of Irkutsk, published in 1874, which presented conclusions of his results. This became a basis for knowledge about the geology of this terrain. The excellent results encouraged Czekanowski to continue his research for the whole of the Central Siberian Plateau, from the Mongolian border to the Arctic Ocean, which he conducted along the great river valleys in the north, between the Yenisei and the Lena.

In the years 1873 to 1875 Czekanowski made three geological and geographical expeditions to northern and north-eastern Siberia, to the valleys of the Lower Tunguska, Olenyok and Lena, reaching the Laptiev Sea. His topographical and geological data changed the then held image of these regions. Czekanowski discoveries included numerous places where Palaeozoic and Mesozoic fauna and flora occurred and he documented the occurrence of extensive areas with lava traps and drew up maps. During his expeditions Czekanowski collected 4 thousand palaeontological specimens, 18 thousand zoological and 9 thousand botanical specimens, as well as a large amount of ethnographic material. His voyages became widely known and gained recognition in St. Petersburg. In 1875 the Geographical Society obtained an amnesty for the researcher and release from exile. The famous explorer was summoned to St. Petersburg so that he could write up the results of his three expeditions. He took up the work of a museum curator and began to live at the Mineralogical

Museum of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences where he was occupied with drawing maps and describing his own collection that had been accumulated for many years at the Academy. In 1876 he delivered a lecture at a Geographical Society meeting, which was a summary of the results of his voyages; his aim was to show the need for further expeditions into the valleys of the great Siberian rivers. His report was received with great recognition, however, it was not to be published until after his death.

Czekanowski died on October 18, 1876.

Isolated off from his native land, Czekanowski turned Siberia into a region of extremely extensive and diversified scientific research. Under the most adverse of conditions he worked on one of the greatest geological problems – the structure and history of one of the most ancient parts of the earth's crust. He was the author of many scientific papers that were published mainly in Russian. Many scientists went on to study his achievements. The maps he compiled brought significant changes and additions to the map of Asiatic Russia. Numerous cave and modern flora and fauna types were named after Czekanowski. One of the mountains beyond Baikal, a mountain range he examined, between the delta of the Lena and the Lower Olenyok in Yakutia, and a settlement near Bratsk on the Angara, all bear his name.

Compiled at the NBP on the basis of the "POLSKI SŁOWNIK BIOGRAFICZNY", published by the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, PAN, Warsaw and Cracow, as well as encyclopaedic sources

All collector coins are legal tender in Poland.