

Coins

– the 350th Anniversary of the Jasna Góra Defence –



face value	20 zł
metal	925/1000 Ag
finish	proof
diameter	38.61 mm
weight	28.28 g
mintage	69,000 pcs

Obverse: On the right-hand side, an image of the Eagle established as the state Emblem of the Republic of Poland; on the left-hand side, a semicircular inscription: RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA and the notation of the year of issue, 2005.

On the right-hand side of the Eagle, an inscription, 20/Zł. An inscription, "Tutaj zawsze byliśmy wolni" [We have always been free here] / JAN PAWEŁ II, against the background of the stylized section of the Pauline monastery at Jasna Góra in Częstochowa. The Mint's mark, $\frac{m}{w}$, under the Eagle's left leg.

Reverse: Against the background of the stylized section of Johannes Bensheimer's etching entitled "Oblężenie Jasnej Góry przez Szwedów w 1655 r." (The Jasna Góra siege by the Swedes in 1655), on the right-hand side, a stylized portrait of Father Augustyn Kordecki from a late 17th century painting. At the top, a semicircular inscription, 350-LECIE OBRONY JASNEJ GÓRY.

On the edge: The inscription, CZĘSTOCHOWA 2005, repeated three times, separated by stars.



face value	2 zł
metal	CuAl5Zn5Sn1 alloy
finish	standard
diameter	27.00 mm
weight	8.15 g
mintage	1,000,000 pcs

Obverse: An image of the Eagle established as the state Emblem of the Republic of Poland; on both sides of the Eagle, the notation of the year of issue, 20-05; an inscription, Zł 2 Zł, below the Eagle; a circumscription, RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA, on the rim, preceded and ended by six pearls. The Mint's mark, $\frac{m}{w}$, under the Eagle's left leg.

Reverse: Against the background of the stylized section of Johannes Bensheimer's etching entitled: "Oblężenie Jasnej Góry przez Szwedów w 1655 r." [The Jasna Góra siege by the Swedes in 1655] on the right-hand side, a stylized portrait of Father Augustyn Kordecki from a late 17th century painting. At the top, a semicircular inscription, 350-LECIE OBRONY JASNEJ GÓRY, and a notation of the year, 1655, below.

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



Coins designer: *Ewa Tyc-Karpińska*

Coins struck by the Mint of Poland plc. in Warsaw.

Printed by NBP Printing Office

Design: DECORUM

On August 24, 2005, the National Bank of Poland is putting into circulation coins to mark the 350th anniversary of the Jasna Góra [Bright Hill] defence, with the following face values:

- 20 zł – struck in proof finish in silver;
- 2 zł - struck in standard finish in Nordic Gold.

The defence of Jasna Góra in Częstochowa against the Swedish

troops besieging the sanctuary in November and December 1655 comes as one of the most momentous events in the Polish history. The siege was one of the most important events of the war that was declared on Poland in July 1655 by the King of Sweden, Charles X Gustav.

The Polish-Swedish war of 1655-1656 – known in the Polish tradition as the "Deluge" – commenced when three Swedish armies (approximately 55,000 soldiers) entered Poland and

Lithuania in July 1655. Poland was weakened by armed conflicts with Cossaks and Russia, whereas the morale of the Polish gentry was low. Swedes soon gained a military advantage as the majority of the gentry volunteered to swear allegiance to King Charles Gustav. Poznań was occupied as early as in July, Warsaw was invaded in early September and Cracow — in October. King Jan Kazimierz [John Casimir] of Poland fled to Silesia and it seemed that the war was settled to the advantage of Sweden.

Jasna Góra was one of the fortresses on the Polish and Silesian border that was not immediately occupied by the Swedish army.

Since the Middle Ages, the Jasna Góra sanctuary was a place of a national significance under a special protection of the Polish monarchs who used to make pilgrimages there. After 1620, as ordered by Zygmunt III Waza [Sigismund III Vasa], the sanctuary buildings were comprised within a regular fortress with four corner bastions. The location, along with the troops deployed there, a number of good cannons and systematic supplies to its arsenal, contributed to the fact that Jasna Góra was well prepared for defence. Father Augustyn Kordecki (1609-1673), an excellent clergyman, a perfect organizer, and a deft diplomat was the Prior and the commander of the fortress at that time. The authorities of the Pauline Order diligently prepared the monastery for the defence. They also decided to make a diplomatic move and approached the Swedish Field Marshall Arvid Wittenberg in late October 1655, asking him for the guarantee of the monastery's security. They also resolved to transport the miraculous portrait of the Holy Mother to Silesia to protect it from profanation. However, the monks' efforts did not avert the Swedish military attempt to take over the monastery.

The siege of Jasna Góra began on November 18, 1655. The Swedish corps included 2,250 soldiers in total, but their cannons were not very powerful. The monastery stronghold was defended by 160 infantrymen, 70 monks, 20 noble families with servants and 50 artillerymen. The besieged had at least 24 cannons, including 12 heavy ones. Moreover, the monastery was located on a solid rock, which made it virtually impossible to dig a tunnel. The history of the siege includes short periods of the Swedish attacks alternating with negotiations. At first, the invaders tried to convince the defenders of their good intentions and suggested honorary capitulation. Fortunately, the monks knew that the Swedes' entry to the monastery would entail profanation and robbery. Thus, Father Kordecki kept sending numerous declarations and letters, playing for time and delaying the decision about the surrender. Later, he started rejecting the Swedish demands more openly. The attacks on the monastery were initially little dangerous. Only later, after heavy cannons had been brought, they became really onerous. The Swedes commenced mine deployment. The monastery defenders not only repulsed the assaults and attacked the Swedish camp with their cannons, but also

conducted offensive military operations. The monastery crew had their times of despair. However, the steadfastness of Prior Augustyn Kordecki helped them overcome the moments of weakness. The Christmas of 1655 – the last days of the siege – caused the greatest hardship for the defenders. However, soon afterwards, in the face of heavy losses incurred by the Swedish troops, General Burchard Müller decided to discontinue the siege, which happened at the night from December 26 to 27, 1655. Jasna Góra was saved.

The defence of the Jasna Góra monastery against the Swedes was one of the turning points of the war – if not from a military point of view, definitely in psychological terms. The Poles construed the attack on Jasna Góra as an attack on the Holy Mother, the Catholic religion and thus on the essence of the Polish identity. The defenders' success was a clear sign of the God's protection over the Polish nation. The war continued for a long time and was finally terminated with the signing of a peace treaty in Oliwa in 1660; however, the courageous defence of the national sanctuary proved to be decisive.

The Pauline monastery at Jasna Góra in Częstochowa was founded by Duke Władysław Opolczyk [Ladislaus of Opole] in 1382. The miraculous painting of the Holy Mother with the Child, presented as a gift by the Prince who brought it from Bełz in Halich Ruthenia in 1382, attracted crowds of pilgrims. The painting is in tempera on three limewood planks wrapped in canvas. Its dimensions are 121.5 x 81.5 cm.

The time of origin of the painting and its author remain unknown. The latest research has indicated to the painting dating back to the 13th century and was originally part of the Balkan iconostasis. Under the current top layer of the painting there are traces of an earlier icon made in line with the canon of the eastern art.

In 1430, sacrilege was committed during a robbery. Some slashes were left to commemorate the incident during the 15th century renovation. In 1717, during the pontificate of Pope Clement XI, the painting was adorned with a crown. From time immemorial the painting of the Holy Mother has been adorned with jewels – votive offerings, golden plates, the royal insignia: crowns, dresses. The oldest records come from the 15th century manuscript copy of "*Translacio tabulae*"; Jan Długosz, the famous Polish chronicler, mentions the painting on three occasions.

The effective defence of Jasna Góra directly contributed to the unique development of the Marian cult in Poland and connected it for good with the Polish state identity. On April 1, 1656, King Jan Kazimierz recognized the Holy Mother as his patroness and the Queen of the Crown of Poland in the Cathedral of Lvov. Soon, the title became associated with the Holy Mother of Jasna Góra, whose painting was the first one to be adorned with the papal crowns outside of Italy, in 1717. For Poles, the prayers to

the Blessed Virgin Mary and the treatment of Jasna Góra as the national sanctuary have until now remained some of the most important elements of the national identity.

The Polish nation worships the Holy Virgin Mary in the Jasna Góra painting as the Mother and the Queen. Pope John Paul II adorned it with the highest Vatican distinction, the Golden Rose (1979) and golden crowns (2005). In 1982, he said: "O, Lady of Jasna Góra! You have been part of our history for six centuries and you help us create it and maintain our continuity and identity".

The defence of Jasna Góra in 1655 quickly became a part of the Polish tradition. One of the contributing factors was the publication of "*Nova Gigantomachia*", a description of the siege by Father Augustin Kordecki in 1657. Later, the history of that great deed became a source of inspiration for many literary and visual works of art. The current 350th anniversary of the Jasna Góra defence is an opportunity to have a true lesson of patriotism, the virtue we all need.

*Father Jan Golonka OSPPE (Ordo Sancti Pauli Primi Eremitae)
Curator of Votive Art Collection at Jasna Góra*

Numerous artistic and scientific initiatives have been taken up in Częstochowa to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Jasna Góra defence against the Swedish deluge, celebrated in 2005. They aim at the promotion of national and patriotic values. Students of Częstochowa-based schools, cultural institutions and artists are especially involved in the initiatives. The project is addressed mainly to young people who learn the history of Poland and Sweden through various exhibitions, competitions, presentations, movies, and the Internet. The appointed honorary committee of the Anniversary includes the representatives of the highest church authorities, state authorities, Polish and Swedish diplomats, scientists, and media representatives.

In the period from November 2004 to the end of 2005, on every 18th day of each month, the celebrated vespers and the Eucharistic procession at Jasna Góra include the presentation of a historic monstrance – a gift brought by King Zygmunt Stary [Sigismund the Old] in 1542. The monstrance was used by Father Augustin Kordecki to bless the defenders of the monastery. Concerts of traditional music take place in the Jasna Góra Basilica. Polish scientific symposia are also held there.

On September 11, 2005, a large-scale music and theatre performance, featuring renowned actors and musicians, will be held on Jasna Góra embankments.

*President of the City of Częstochowa, Tadeusz Wrona
Prior of the Monastery of the Order of Pauline Fathers at Jasna Góra,
Fr Bogdan Waliczek*

All coins issued by the NBP are legal tender in Poland.