

MATEUSZ BOGUCKI

## Are there coins of Miećław, a rebellious cup-bearer of King Mieszko II?

In 1994, Ilisch published an article in which he outlined a group of coins struck with one pair of dies (Figs. 1 and 2), known mainly but not exclusively from a hoard discovered in Stryjowo Wielkie, district Ciechanów (t.p.q. 1042, c. 1060). Only one specimen comes from the hoard of Żukowo, district Płock (t.p.q. 1024?, c. 1050). These pennies are characterized by a specific striking technique, by their very thick flans and their unusual weight structure. The lightest specimen weighs 1.14 g and the heaviest 2.58 g. The arithmetic average weight of 45 specimens is 2.00 g, while the median is 2.01 g. The problem is that the weight distribution is not completely random, as we can separate three dominant groups (Fig. 3). In the first half of the 11th century coins of this weight are unusual. It seems that the reasons for such a weight structure should be looked for beyond the weighed silver economic mechanisms. Mazovia is the only region of origin of these specific imitations. The most probable period of production of these coins are the 40s of the 11th century. A large number of preserved specimens indicates that the production of these pennies was not incidental, but initiated by a wealthy person who had the resources and capabilities for organizing coin production. Considering the potential initiator of this coinage, we should take the political situation of that time into account. It is well known that after the death of Mieszko II, the Mazovia province became independent under the authority of Miećław, ruling from c. 1038 to 1047. I think that a former official of Mieszko II had all the necessary capacities to start his own coinage, but it is difficult to judge what were the reasons for his coinage. Taking into account the high political aspirations of Miećław (proclaiming himself a duke), his alliances with the Pomeranians and the unusual weight structure of the coins in question, we can guess that these extremely heavy coins were meant as donations for political allies – that is, that their function was mainly demonstrative. The place in which such a short-term production could be organized was probably the capital of the Mazovian province, i.e., Płock. Of course, the hypothesis of a coinage by Miećław in Płock in the 40s of the 11th century brought forward here is extremely difficult to prove, though not improbable.