

WARSAW CONGRESS

In 2021 numismatists from all over the globe will gather in Poland.

You have to attend the International Numismatic Congress (INC) at least once in your lifetime. And not just for the lectures—after all, there are talks at plenty of other congresses! Watching a city get taken over by numismatists—for a little while, at least—is an incredible experience. I, for one, will never forget my first INC in Berlin. Name tags entitled attendees to free admission to Berlin’s museums, and suddenly, the entire city center was full of numismatists!

The International Numismatic Council

The International Numismatic Council, founded in 1927, is the association that brings many different institutions together. It currently has around 160 members from 38 countries. Membership is not limited to museums and academic institutions—on the contrary, mints and numismatic societies also can join.



PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES/MATTJEACOCK (POLAND), FOURLEAFLOVER (BACKGROUND) & TORNADO DESIGN

ference was held in New York City and Washington, D.C. The last congress took place in 2015, when about 700 numismatists traveled to the Sicilian town of Taormina to listen to more than 400 talks.

Next year’s session will be held from September 19 to 24, 2021. For the very first time, the INC will be coming to a location in the former Eastern Bloc—Warsaw, Poland.

Numismatic Warsaw

Traditionally, INC host cities have some numismatic attractions to offer. And you can count on two hands the capital cities of the world in which the hobby plays a greater role than it does in Warsaw, where 25 numismatists manage the city’s various holdings.

The largest collection is owned by the National Museum of Poland. Because of considerable losses during the Second World War (more than 50 percent of its artifacts were plundered at that time) and other conflicts, however, this comprises “only” a

quarter-million items.

The three Partitions of Poland were a lot worse than the losses sustained during World War II. Poland actually vanished entirely from the map for well over a century. Russia, one of the three profiteers of the Partitions, got the coin collection. Now—such is the irony of history—it no longer resides in Russia but now Kiev, Ukraine. And so, when Ukraine declared independence, the collection became that nation’s property.

Just a 15-minute walk away from the National Museum of Poland at the entrance to the Old Town is Warsaw’s Royal Castle, another site that reflects Poland’s history. After the failed Warsaw Uprising, the Germans completely tore down the castle to make an example of the Polish underground resistance. When the war was over, it was a matter of national importance for Poland to rebuild this major landmark. And then came reconciliation: Polish manual laborers used the expertise they gained



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◀ THE INC
takes place every five years. Poland will host the event in 2021.

Dealer groups, like the International Association of Professional Numismatists, are managed as affiliated bodies.

Every six years, representatives of the member organizations gather in a different town or city for the congress. Until now, most host locations have been in Western Europe, with the only exception being in 1973, when the con-

IMAGE: INTERNATIONAL NUMISMATIC COUNCIL



PHOTO: URSULA KAMPMANN



◀ **THE ROYAL CASTLE**
in Warsaw is home to a fascinating numismatic collection that will be sure to impress INC attendees in 2021.

from rebuilding their cities to help reconstruct devastated city centers in Germany.

What makes this site more important from a hobby perspective is that it also is home to a major and extensive numismatic collection. These holdings were compiled over decades, mainly through private donations and significant purchases on the free market. As a result, the cabinets now are full of spectacular coins and medals.

If you're interested in modern currency and economics, the NBP Money Centre is an absolute must-see. It uses state-of-the-art technology to present the history of money in a fun way and therefore has become a favorite destination among tourists. But that shouldn't stop any numismatist from going to see it! It's worth a visit just for the great exhibition ideas it could inspire.

I can't discuss Warsaw's cultural institutions without mentioning the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, which—in the broadest sense possible, of course—also is a museum of economics. It covers Poland's Jewish history from the Middle Ages to the present. If you want to understand this terrible past, you definitely should pay it a visit.

And those are just Warsaw's top attractions relating to numismatics. I haven't even mentioned the others, which are just a short train ride away from the city. For instance, two hours on an express train will take you to Krakow, where, in 2016, a museum was set up to house the major coin collection of Polish count and numismatist Emeryk Hutten-Czapski.

Why Warsaw?

Although the congress' organization

committee research committee consists of more than 20 Polish scholars, there's one man who is chiefly responsible for bringing the event to Warsaw. For decades, Professor Aleksander Bursche has been an honored guest at events around the world. He is a classic cosmopolitan who speaks English, French, German and Russian. He believes it is very important to facilitate a more intensive exchange of ideas and information between Eastern and Western researchers.

Warsaw is the perfect location to strengthen these academic links. Although Poland has been part of the European Union since 2004, it traditionally has had close ties with Russian numismatics. Polish people often speak both English and Russian.

Contributions Welcome

The subjects discussed at a congress usually are decided by the host, but things work a little differently at the International Numismatic Congress. Here, it is the attendees who choose. You can suggest an important topic by submitting a proposal on its website, <https://inc2021.pl>. However, if yours is selected, you also must be prepared to organize the session or talk yourself.

For decades, the INC has focused on antique numismatics, especially hoards. Modern and United States issues are never discussed. So, wouldn't the INC be a wonderful event to incorporate American numismatics more effectively into academic discussion in Europe? And wouldn't it be fantastic if the ANA assembled a group of speakers who could talk to a broad, international audience about their research? Oh well, I can dream!

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»» **Ulla Westermark Has Died**

On February 22, Swedish numismatist Ulla Westermark died at the age of 93. She worked at the coin cabinet in Stockholm from 1961 to 1983, in the end as its director. Westermark was considered one of the world's leading experts on Greek numismatics.

»» **Last-Minute Cancellation of Munich Numismata**

Numismata, Europe's most important event for classical numismatics, was canceled only hours before it was slated to begin. The reason was a tightening of travel restrictions by the German foreign ministry. South Tyrol—only a three-hour drive from Munich—suddenly was regarded as a coronavirus risk area.

»» **Hong Kong and Singapore Coin Shows Postponed**

Two of the most important coin fairs in Asia have rescheduled their events because of the coronavirus outbreak. The Hong Kong Coin Show will now take place on May 9 and 10, and the Singapore Coin Fair will be held from August 14 to 16.

»» **Brazen Burglary in the Berlin Memorial Church**

The Berlin Memorial Church was the victim of thieves who specialize in churches and the sacred objects stored there. Orders of historical importance from the House of Hohenzollern were stolen.

»» **Numismatic Exhibition in Abu Dhabi**

Swiss coin dealer Alain Baron is responsible for the numismatic exhibition "Coins of Islam: History Revealed," which currently is on display in the Sheikh Zayed Mosque.

»» **The Numismatic World in the Long 19th Century**

On April 15-17, a conference dedicated to the history of numismatics in the long 19th century (1789-1914) will take place in Tübingen, Germany. This event will not focus on scholars but on collectors and the general public. Academics from all over the world and renowned speakers from 16 countries will attend the conference.

—Ursula Kampmann