

### The Ducal Griffin in the Coinage of West Pomerania

The Griffin of Pomerania, the symbol of the ducal dynasty of West Pomerania, had its first depictions in coinage in c. 1250, about twenty years later than the emblems on the ducal seals that represented either standing or equestrian images. The contemporary coins (*denar*) feature depictions of a Griffin, no crown, usually passant, sometimes segreant (rampant), most often facing dexter. The Griffin image was sketchy and simplified, far from the requirements of the heraldic accuracy. In almost each case, the medieval issues would feature depictions of a solitary Griffin in the coin field. *Denar* coins with two rampant Griffins addorsed (facing away from each other), perhaps symbolic of the partition of West Pomerania during the reign of Barnim I (mid-13<sup>th</sup> c.) into the Duchies of Stettin and Demmin, are very rare.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, more than twenty municipal mints had been active in West Pomerania for various periods of time. As part of the minting privileges granted or sold to the municipalities, the dukes specified types and face values of individual issues, and ensured the continual presence of the Griffin (as the coat of arms representing the ruling dynasty and the territory of West Pomerania) on the dies. In these circumstances, the civic coinage (*denar*, *vitena*, *vierchen*, *Grosspfennig*) issued in the 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries bear the emblem of the city on the obverse and the Griffin on the reverse. Compared with the large volumes of the civic issues in the 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, indicative of the economic dominance of the Pomeranian cities, the ducal coinage is very poorly represented. In the Middle Ages, the dukes of West Pomerania used a one-field coat of arms representing a rampant (sometimes passant) Griffin, no crown. It was only in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century that the first multi-field ducal coat of arms of West Pomerania came into use. It comprised the five individual coats of arms of the Pomeranian lands. Duke Bogislaw X introduced the multi-field coat of arms composed of the emblems representing all the lands of his duchy, which reflected the new trends in heraldry and symbolized the unity of West Pomerania. The introduction of the grand nine-field coat of arms would not spell the complete disappearance of the four- and five-field coats of arms.

In spite of the partition of West Pomerania into the Duchies of Wolgast and Stettin (1532), no separate emblems of the two states had come into existence. The grand nine-field coat of arms continued on as the emblem of West Pomerania and the entire House of Griffin. In consequence, as the numismatic evidence attests, the individual rulers would continue to use the common heraldic emblems regardless their particular duchy. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, 179 coins depicted the multi-field coats of arms as well as the Griffin holding a sword and the Bible - the defender of West Pomerania and Protestantism in the turbulent decades of the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.