

A Polish Olympic story in the Eternal City “ROME 1960”



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Contents

1.	THE POLISH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE FUND FOR SQUAW VALLEY AND ROME 1960	4
1.1.	The Olympic Fund memorabilia	4
1.2.	The POC Fund Vignette 1960.....	4
1.3.	Vignettes of the State Enterprise "SPORTS LOTTO"	5
1.4.	Vignette of the State Tourist Enterprise "SPORTS TOURIST"	5
2.	STAMP ISSUE OF THE POCZTA POLSKA "ROME 1960"	6
2.1.	Design and concept of the Olympic postage stamps.....	6
2.2.	Printing sheets and issue numbers.....	7
2.3.	Misprinting.....	8
2.4.	First Day of Issue – 15 June 1960	9
3.	THE POLISH GLADIATORS WROTE A GOLDEN STORY OF THE OLYMPIC ROME	9
3.1.	A Polish dream became the true.....	9
3.2.	The Polish athletic "WUNDERTEAM" - a philatelic chronicle	10
3.3.	The schoolboys of "papa" Feliks Stamm	13
3.4.	The Polish weights on the Olympic podium	14
4.	PHILATELIC PROMOTION ROME 1960 OLYMPIC GAMES IN POLAND.....	15
4.1.	The Games Opening Day, 25 th August 1960	15
4.2.	Raising Olympic funds by the Polish Philatelists Union	16
4.3.	The Olympic Year and 100 anniversary of the stamp POLSKA 1	16
5.	THE ROME'S PHILATELIC FINAL.....	18
6.	THE PROLOGUE - THE GOLDEN FESTIVITY IN WARSAW	18

THROUGH A MIST OF MY MEMORY ...

When thinking of 50th anniversary of any event one should raise a question – what was that a time 50 years ago? and what is left in my memory if I was witnessing this great event of the Games of XVII Olympiad in Rome? The 1960 was a year of very high tension in the Cold War between giants of this world - USA and USSR (for younger readers to remind: USSR = Union of Soviet Socialist Republics = a communist country with one of the most inhuman regimes in a history of the human being). Shortly after the Rome's friendly Olympic atmosphere, a US navy started invasion (April 1961) and blockade of the Pig's Bay after installation of Soviet ballistic missiles at a territory of Cuba and, in answer, Soviets erected the Berlin Wall (August 1961). The both conflicts were like sparks in a factory of explosives and a new global war was hanging in air. This was also time when Beatles has opened a new history of music.

In a time of the Games in Rome, August 25 – September 11, 1960, I was a teenager and I was on my summer holiday as a scout in a deep forest at the Mazurian Lakes, the North-Eastern Poland. In fact it was my Olympic lesson "number one". Only way of information for us was a loudspeaker hanging high on the tree called by Polish people "barker". Information, mostly about successes of a socialist Poland, was broadcasted from local radio centre from early morning till an evening silence. But one day..., suddenly, we heard a strange, sounding from far away, broadcasting of a sports event. It was from the Olympic Games in Rome. Next days we were obligatory gathered by our instructors together and seated around tree with the "barker". In the same time I was a member of a youth philatelic circle in a basic school, very popular activity in those miserable times in Poland. After holiday, I went to my philatelic guardian and told him that I would like to collect Olympic and sports stamps. With his help I prepared my first exhibit titled "THE PEACE RACE WARSAW-PRAGUE-BERLIN" and displayed at the European Sports Stamp Exhibition "WROCŁAW 1963" organised on an occasion of the European Championships in Men's Basketball. Now, I could say that for more than 50 years I have devoted my philatelic collecting to OLYMPICS and SPORT, and nothing else, as a stamp exhibitor. So, in this way the Olympic Games in Rome have influenced my philatelic life.

For an Olympic and Sports Philately beginnings of sixties of the past century were very significant and important. Very positive Olympic atmosphere after Rome's Games resulted in grounding of several national and international clubs/organizations of Sports and Olympic Philately. On the March 12, 1962, the Polish Club of Olympic and Sports Philately "THE OLYMPIAN" was founded as one of the first clubs in the world, after Gruppo Sport CIFT – Italy (1957). Next, appeared OLYMPSPORT in ex-Czechoslovakia, Sports Philatelists International – USA, , IMOS – in the Federal Republic of Germany (1965).

In Poland, directly after difficult years of recovering from loses of the World War II, there were great expectations from the Polish Olympic team going to Rome, mostly from the athletic and boxing teams. All eyes of a Polish public were turned on the Polish "wunderteam" and the boxers from school of "papa" Stamm. Some of athletes, like Zdzisław Krzyszkowiak - 4.place in Melbourne and Gold in Rome, achieved in Rome their best life Olympic result in a sports career, others like Józef Szmidt began fantastic career with Gold in Rome and next Gold in Tokyo. Some finished career in the Olympic Games like E. Krzesińska after winning Gold in Melbourne and Silver in Rome.

In 1960, Poczta Polska for the second time in a history issued stamps with the Olympic theme.

This article, Chapters 1-5, is a philatelic story about the participation of the Polish Olympians in the Olympic Games of XVII Olympiad in Rome in 1960, was originally written for, translated into Italian and published in the Journal of the UICOS, Unione Italiana Collezionisti Olimpici e Sportivi. The article is dedicated also to a historical FRIENDSHIP between Poland and Italy confirmed not only in the Polish national anthem, but also in human and Olympic collectors, day to day, relationships. The Chapter 6 is just a report on the Olympic festivities in Warsaw and is an example how Olympic philately can also be present in a life of the Olympic Family.

1. THE POLISH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE FUND FOR SQUAW VALLEY AND ROME 1960

1.1. The Olympic Fund memorabilia

Experiences with collecting of funds for participation of the Polish Olympic Team have a long tradition since 1921 since a first "OLYMPIC WEEK" was organized in Poland. As very first Polish Olympic memorabilia were vignettes issued in 1923 to gather funds for the first ever participation of the Olympic team under a White-Red flag in Chamonix and Paris 1924. Year 1960 was a last year of direct collecting of funds by the Polish Olympic Committee. This task was transferred to sports business organisation and later also to the Poczta Polska (read: Polish philatelists). Again, main action was addressing Poles living abroad to collect hard currency (US dollars, Deutsche Marks, French or Suisse Francs, and other limited in Poland currency). A porcelain medal was sent in return to thank for a financial contribution over 200 US dollars. This medal is a first one which opens a collection of official medals of the Polish Olympic Committee. A quantity of distributed medal is unknown but not too many donators paid 200 dollars. Today, the medal is very rare and desirable item for Olympic collectors.



Fig. 1 The medal of the Polish Olympic Committee, made of porcelain (95 mm diameter), commemorating the Winter Olympic Games in Squaw Valley and the Games of the XVII Olympic Games in Rome 1960. On the reverse text: "CITIUS, ALTIUS, FORTIUS * THE POLISH OLYMPIC FUND"

1.2. The POC Fund Vignette 1960

A history of official POC's vignettes starts in 1923 during an "OLYMPIC WEEK" when first participation of the Polish Olympic Team was promoted and funds gathered among the Polish society. A motto of the vignettes with three denominations was: "POLAND FOR THE OLYMPIAD". In 1960 the Committee issued the last official vignette for the Olympic Fund with a new logo of the POC.



Fig. 2 The vignette of the Polish Olympic Fund 1960, mint and used on a formulaire of an order for the POC's Medal, sent to the Polish Olympic Committee on 25.8.1960 – the opening day of the Games in Rome.

1.3. Vignettes of the State Enterprise "SPORTS LOTTO"

Due to changes in financing of sport and its institutions in Poland, since 1959, two new institutions (regardless a state budget) were responsible for gathering of funding for the POC, namely a national lottery "SPORTS LOTTO" and a tourist organisation "SPORTS TOURIST".

In 1959 "Sports Lotto" used two vignettes which were obligatory to buy when placing a numerical or football lotto coupon in collecting points. A basic single game was charged 2 złoty but players who send multiplication of 5 coupons could get triangle-shaped vignettes of 10 zł. It was quite popular to use later the vignettes as a postage stamps in order "to recover" money.



Fig.3 The vignettes with denomination 2 złoty and 10 złoty issued by "Sports Lotto".

A misuse of vignettes against the Poczta Polska on a domestic letter



An extremely interesting story is related to the 2 złoty miniature vignette designed by the famous Polish engraver Czesław Ślania which presents a ferro-net concrete structured sculpture "THE RUNNERS" designed by prof. Andrzej Roman. The sculpture was placed in a front of the entrance to the 100,000 visitors stadium named "Xth Anniversary Stadium" (anniversary of establishing the communist regime in Poland) and built of brick rubbles and waste collected from ruins of Warsaw after withdrawal of Nazi German "engineers" and bloody military troops which bombed, blow up with dynamite and fired out 90 percent of buildings in Warsaw in the end of 1944 and beginning of 1945.

In 2009, the stadium was completely demolished and rubbles removed. Today, the place is a largest construction site in Europe – a new "NATIONAL STADIUM" is under construction for the European Championships in Football EURO 2012. To my surprise, when heavy bulldoggers disappeared from the site I saw the sculpture of runners standing on its place (well protected) and will again decorate the main entrance on the opening day of the EURO 2012.

1.4. Vignette of the State Tourist Enterprise "SPORTS TOURIST"

In beginnings of sixties the communist regime soften passport restrictions on travelling abroad and established an enterprise "SPORTS TOURIST" which was an organizer of group travels abroad (usually only a part of participants returned from travels to democratic countries). In 1960 the office organised excursions to Rome with tickets to the Olympic events. A "voluntary" donation of 100 złoty for the Olympic Fund was charged additionally. For this purpose, the 1956 POC's vignettes "The boxers" of denomination 10 zł were overprinted with a violet cachet stamp "100 zł".



Fig.4 The vignette of the Olympic Fund 1956 (10 zł) overprinted with a new value 100 zł (złoty) for needs of the "Sports Tourist" in 1960

2. STAMP ISSUE OF THE POCZTA POLSKA “ROME 1960”

2.1. Design and concept of the Olympic postage stamps

Before the Olympic Games in Rome 1960, the Polish Olympic Team participated seven times in Olympics since 1924. After a great success of the first Olympic set of stamps for Melbourne 1956, after suggestions of the Polish Olympic Committee and renowned Polish philatelist the POCZTA POLSKA issued eight stamps constituting symbolically two stadiums, the pre-war stadium with denomination 60 groszy each stamp and recent one, after the WW II with the face value 2 zloty 50 groszy. The five white stadium tracks symbolise five Olympic rings. The Olympic flame represents hope of Poland for great successes in Rome which really came true. To underline the sports discipline, the silhouettes of athletes (in white colour) are dry embossed making the 3D impression.



Fig.5 The basic form of the stamp issue of POCZTA POLSKA for the Olympic Games of XVII Olympiad in Rome 1960

Probably, unintentionally the 60 groszy block allows describing a tragic history of the Polish sport during the WWII. On 21 June 1940, Tomasz Stankiewicz a member of the Silver cycling team Paris 1924 and Janusz Kusociński Gold medallist from Los Angeles 1932, adversary of Pavlo Nurmi, were shot down by the German Gestapo butchers in the Kampinos Forest, about 25 km far from Warsaw. J.Kusociński was a homeland defender during the 1939 September's Campaign against IIIrd Reich aggression on Poland and a member of the underground Polish Army. He was captured and tortured by the Gestapo in the prison named "PAWIAK" in Warsaw. T.Stankiewicz was captured directly on a Warsaw's street and brought directly in the same transport together with Kusociński to the place of murder in the Kampinos Forest.

The single stamps of the series depict a history of the Polish Olympic successes before 1960.



Paris 1924, July 27 – the **Silver Medal for the bicycle race 4000 meter team pursuit** – the team Tomasz Stankiewicz, Jan Łazarski, Franciszek Szymczyk and Józef Lange. First, ever medal for the Olympic team of Poland.

On the same day, the closing day of the Games, a rider Adam Królikiewicz with a horse Picadore won the Bronze Medal in the individual horse jumping.

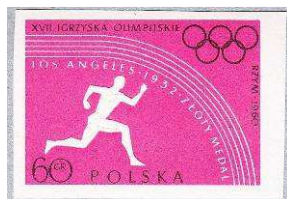
Fig.6-a



Amsterdam 1928, July 31 – the **Gold Medal for Halina Konopacka** in discus throwing for the first time held in the Olympic Games since 1896. She set the Olympic record 39.62 meters.

This was the first women's track&field event to be decided in the history of the Olympics.

Fig. 6 - b



Los Angeles 1932, July 31 – the **Gold Medal for Janusz Kusociński** on 10,000 meters track with a new Olympic record 30:11.42.

J.Kusociński was a home defender against Hitler's Germany in the September's Campaign 1939. After capitulation of Poland, following the Nazi German occupation of Poland, he was a restaurant serviceman, working secretly for anti-Nazi resistance. Arrested by the Gestapo March 26, 1940 he was imprisoned, beaten and tortured. When it was clear that he would not reveal the names of compatriots, he was executed on June 21, 1940.

Fig. 6 - c



Berlin 1936, August 16 – **the Silver Medal for the Equestrian Team in the Three-Day Event:** Seweryn Kulesza (horse, Tosca), Zdzisław Kawecki-Gozdawa (horse, Bambino) and Henryk Leliwa-Rojcewicz (horse, Arlekin III).

Z. Kawecki-Gozdawa was captured by the Red Army troops after aggression on Poland September 17, 1939 and murdered by the Soviet NKWD in forest of Katyń in 1940.

Fig. 6 - d



London 1948, **the Gold Medal for Zbigniew Turski in the Olympic Art** competition – the music category, the composer of the Olympic Symphony. The golden Olympic Symphony was performed by the BBC Symphonic Orchestra and broadcasted on radio on 18 and 23 September, 1948.

The Olympic Art in London was a last event in this real in the history of the Olympic Games.

Fig. 6 - e



Helsinki 1952, August 2 – **the Gold Medal for Zygmunt Chychła** in the welterweight. The first Gold medal in boxing for Poland. Z.Chychła was twice a European Champion - Milano 1951 and Warsaw 1953, and the Champion of Poland – 1948, 1949, 1950 and 1952.

Until mid of fifties of the passed century, the Polish authorities recognised the boxer as the Polish citizen. When he moved to Hamburg in the Germany to join entire family of his wife (who was German in origin), he was accused of betraying Poland and his name has been removed from official sports publications and Olympic records until 1989.

Fig. 6 - f



Melbourne 1956, November 26 - **the Gold Medal for Elżbieta Krzesińska** in long jump with the result 6,35 meter.

Fig. 6 – g

2.2. Printing sheets and issue numbers

The ROME 1960 stamps were designed by Stefan Małecki and printed in two-colour offset technology. The printing sheet of each denomination consists of 60 stamps (6x10), i.e. allowing separation of 15 “stadiums”. Such a sheet arrangement allows forming various combinations of pairs, strips and blocks of four.



Fig.7 The basic issue of stamps in imperforate version – the top margin with a title of the issue, printing markers and number of stamps

The stamps were produced perforated (1.200.000 stamps of each denomination) and imperforated (60 gr - 10.092.000 stamps, 2,50 zł – 10.650.000 stamps).

At a top margin of each printing sheet the title of the issue “XVII OLYMPIC GAMES – ROME 1960” appeared for the first time on issues of the Poczta Polska. On few sheets printing markings were found which were usually cut off from other sheets in production process of stamps.

For practical purposes first sheet in the package was stamped with the text in green: “NAME. Stamps “OLYMPIAD ROME 1960” on the right vertical margin. Probably only single complete vertical strip with this stamp has survived.



Fig.8 The name of series printed on the right margin of the first sheet in a postal distribution package

2.3. Misprinting

The first Olympic issue 1956 is known of many regular printing errors, spoilage and simply maculature (the most famous maculature: 20 groszy inverted boxers). The Olympic issue 1960 was printed (at least quality control was very high) that no regular errors have been registered or many printing imperfections have been known and presented at a philatelic market until today.

Due to unfinished process of the stamp production, no relief on a sheet of 60 gr stamps was found. The sheet was imperforated and ungummed.



Fig.9 A fragment of the spoiled printing sheet of 60 groszy stamps without the relief

There is also known a full printing sheet of the 60 gr stamps with missing relief of the single – position stamp No. 29.

Colour variety



Fig.10 Variety of the colour shade – dark and light green colours of 2,50 zł stamp



Colour displacement



Fig.11 The block of four of the 60 groszy stamps with a displacement of the blue colour (1,1 mm down) – the discus thrower - the upper left fragment of the stadium (unique known item until today), and the proper sample (regular white cross).

2.4. First Day of Issue – 15 June 1960

The Olympic series was launched on 15 June 1960. The Main Post Office WARSZAWA 1 used a commemorative cancellation in a circle form with a motive of the Olympic laurels.



Fig.12 First Day Covers and cancellation used at the Post Office WARSZAWA 1 on a day of issuance of the Olympic set, 15th June 1960

3. THE POLISH GLADIATORS WROTE A GOLDEN STORY OF THE OLYMPIC ROME

3.1. A Polish dream became the true

A history of each game is written by Olympians. When looking final results it is important to look and remember who was the Gold medal winner, who was the second and the third place. Who was defending a position of the hero from previous Olympic Games, whose carrier was finished and who started a road of Olympic glory? Who was a one day star or lucky winner?

The Olympic Games in Rome were very successful for the Polish Olympic Team, more than dreams. The Polish Olympians won 21 medals: 4 Gold, 11 Silver and 6 Bronze and place on a 6th place in general medal and point classification. This historical success was commemorated by POCZTA POLSKA in 1983 by issuing the postal stationery within a series titled "THE POLISH OLYMPIC HALL OF FAME" initiated in 1974. Since this year POCZTA POLSKA documented achievements of the Polish Olympians in consecutive Olympic Games since their first start in Paris 1924. The series was an initiative of the Club of Sports and Olympic Philately "THE OLYMPIAN" in co-operation with the Polish Olympic Committee. Usually, the stationeries were issued in connection to inauguration of the Olympian's Days, celebrated in March each year, until today. During each

inauguration the POC proclaimed an Olympic Appeal which was printed officially by Poczta Polska at the back side of the stationery. Out of 100.000 regular issues, 2.000 items were overprinted in the State Printing House.



Fig.13 The POCZTA POLSKA postal stationery, 5 zł, issued March 1983, commemorating successes of the Polish Olympians in Rome – 4 Gold Medals, 11 Silver and 7 Bronze



Fig.14 Reverse side with the Olympic Appeal of the Polish Olympic Committee for the OLYMPIAN's Day 1983

For the Olympian Days 1983 the text was following: *“THE POLISH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE greets and wishes a lot of successes in activities for the Polish Olympic sport and in a personal life. We are convinced, that the pre-Olympic year 1983 will deepen our co-operation in preparation of the Polish athletes to their start in the Games of XXIII Olympiad in Los Angeles and Sarajevo, and that the 1983 will be used to promote widely Olympic ideals”*. The appeal was signed every time by a famous Polish Olympian. In 1983, on behalf of the Olympians, Władysław KOMAR the Gold medallist from Munich (put shot) signed the appeal together with Janusz PAWLAK Secretary General POC. As everybody knows, the Polish communist government upon the order of the Red Kremlin Regime requested the boycott of the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games by the Polish Olympic Committee and Olympians.

The 1983 stationery depicted Zdzisław KRZYSZKOWIAK, a member of the Polish “athletic wunderteam”, finishing 3000-meter steeplechase and winning the Gold Olympic medal with the Olympic Record 8:34,2. The postage stamp of the stationery presents the POC’s porcelain medal from 1960.

Out of the 21 medallists the most successful were the athletes – 7 medals and the boxers – 7 medals. A share of other disciplines was as follows:

- 🇵🇱 weightlifting: men’s light heavyweight (82.5. kg) – **Gold medal**, Jan Bochenek – Bronze medal
- 🇵🇱 fencing: men’s sabre team – Silver medal
- 🇵🇱 rowing: men’s single sculls – Bronze medal
- 🇵🇱 wrestling: men’s bantamweight – Bronze medal
- 🇵🇱 canoeing: women’s k1 500 m. and men’s k2 1000 m. – Bronze medals.

There are not much philatelic items which could refer directly to results and medals won by the Polish Olympians in Rome. However, looking at individual heroes of the Rome’s Games one can use many items depicting their silhouettes and write a philatelic story.

3.2. The Polish athletic “WUNDERTEAM” - a philatelic chronicle

The “Wunderteam” – this was a popular name of the Polish athletic team starting in years 1956-1966. For the first time the name was used by German sports journalists after winning by Poland the interstate track&field match versus Germany, 117:103.

Greatest successes were achieved by the Polish athletes during the European Championships in Stockholm 1958 – 8 Gold medals and in Budapest 1966 – 7 Gold medals. Among the greatest stars of the “wunderteam” were the Gold and multiply Olympic medalists Elżbieta Krzesińska (long jump), Zdzisław Krzyszkowiak (3000-meter steeplechase), Józef Szmidt (triple jump), Irena Szewińska (sprint), world and European record holders Edmund Piątkowski (discus thrower, 59,91), Jerzy Chromik (3000-meter steeplechase), Janusz Sidło (javelin throw), Tadeusz Rut (hammer throw), Barbara Janiszewska (200 m.) and others. The “godfather” of the WUNDERTEAM was Jan Mulak (1914-2005) the coach of the athletic team.

In Rome following medals were won by the Polish athletic “wunderteam”:

Gold – 3000-meter steeplechase, triple jump men

Silver: high jump women, long jump women,

Bronze: 4x100 m. women, 5000 m. men, hammer throw men.

Zdzisław Krzyszkowiak (1929-2003)

Was one of the best Polish long distance runners after Janusz Kusociński. He was 13-times the Champion of Poland in 5000 m., 10.000 m. and 3000-meter steeplechase. The double European Champion from Stockholm 1958 in runs 5000 m. and 10.000 m. The 3000-meter steeplechase world record holder from 1961 with the result 8.30,4. He was the Poland’s great hope for the Gold in Melbourne (depicted on the stamp Melbourne 1956 by the Poczta Polska,) but finishing just behind the podium, only the 4. place in 10.000 meters run.



Fig.15 September 3, 1960 – **Zdzisław Krzyszkowiak**, the Gold Medal 3000-meter steeplechase and the Olympic Record: 8:34,2

A Polish kangaroo - Józef Szmidt (1935)

The twofold Olympic Champion and Gold medalist in triple jump – Rome 1960 (result 16,81 m.) and Tokyo 1964 (16,85 m.). In the both cases the final results were the Olympic Records. At his third Olympic Games in Mexico 1968 he improved his result from Tokyo but it was enough to take only the 7th place with the result 16,89. Except of the Olympic triumphs he won the titles of the European Champion in Stockholm 1958 and Belgrade 1962.



Fig.16 September 6, 1960 – **Józef SZMIDT**, the Gold Medal in triple jump and the Olympic Record: 16,81 m.

In 1971, he was the first ever human to jump over seventeen meters, 17.03 m., what happened during a meeting in Olsztyn. He dominated the world’s and European triple jump for many years. In the country, he won 13-time champion’s titles in triple jump, long jump and 4x100 m. relay. In sports life he was assisted by his brother Edward (German: Eberhard) who was also the Olympian.

In 1975 J.Schmidt, who was born in a German speaking family in Silesia (Southern part of Poland), decided to move with family to the Federal Republic of Germany and returned to Poland in 1992 after democratic breach in 1989.

“Golden Ela” – Elżbieta Krzesińska (1934-)

The threefold Olympian – Helsinki 1952, Melbourne 1956 and Rome 1960, the world record holder, a multitasking sports woman. In the long jump class she was by herself. But her “trade mark” was a 60 cm long blond tress which in Helsinki Games 1952 was an unusual case. In the long jump finals she (under a maiden name Duńska) jumped the second result however the tress made a trace on sand. The referees interrupted the competition and after discussion decided to measure the distance from an edge of the beam to the end of the tress. Consequently, at a “green table” she landed only at the 12th place. In Rome she was defending Gold Medal from Melbourne where she proved her primacy with the Olympic and World Records, 6,35 m.

E. Krzesińska was bronze medalist in Bern 1954 and Silver in Belgrade 1962. She was the champion of Poland in long jump from 1952 until 1963, 80 meters hurdles – 1957 and in athletic pentathlon 1953, 1962.

She was graduated as a dentist doctor. In 1981, due to Marshal Law in Poland, she left the country joining her husband in United Kingdom and later they moved to USA. They returned to Warsaw in 2000.



Elżbieta Krzesińska – defender in Rome of the Gold medal in long jump from Melbourne 1956

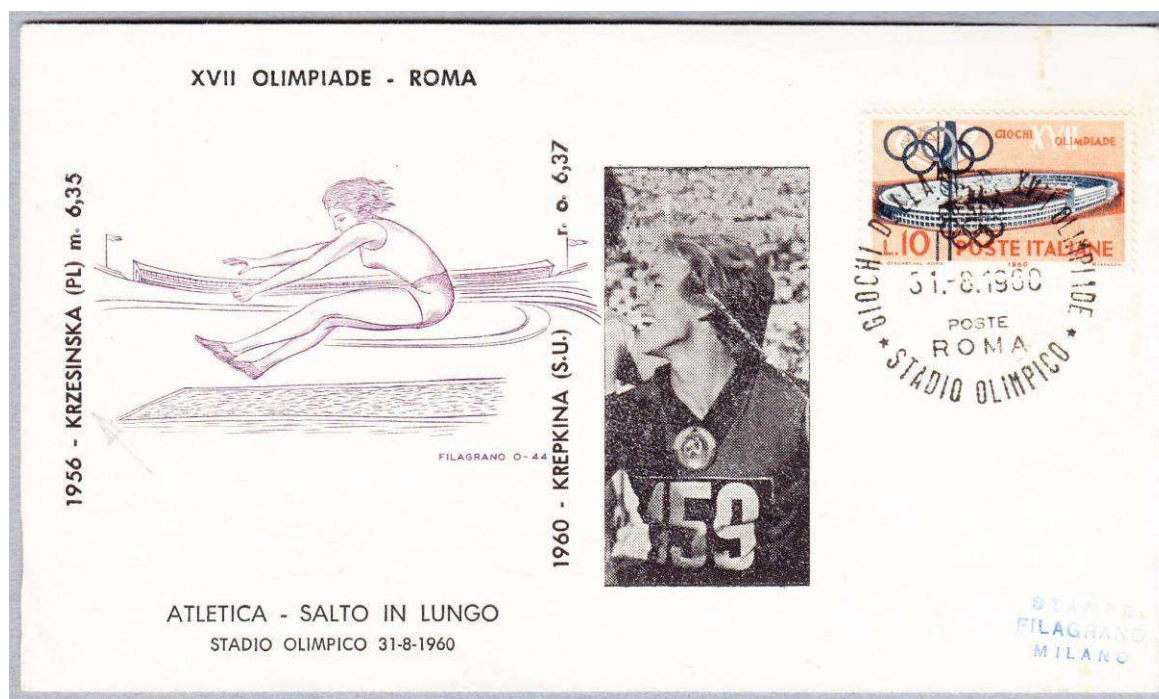


Fig.17 August 31, 1960 – Elżbieta KRZESIŃSKA, the Silver Medal in long jump: 6.27 m.

3.3. The schoolboys of “papa” Feliks Stamm

In Rome the Poles participated very successfully in seven boxing finals winning 1 Gold medal, 3 Silver and 3 Bronze medals. To understand such a phenomena one should return to a history of the European Championships in Warsaw in 1953 when the Polish representants won 7 Gold Medals. From this moment we talk about the school of Filiks Stamm (1901-1976) called “papa Stamm”. Stamm started trainer’s career in 1926. Seven times he assisted Polish boxers in corners of the Olympic rings, from Berlin 1936 to Mexico 1968 and more than 130 times during official interstate matches. He was a tutor and trainer of tens of champions and Olympic medallists like: *Aleksy Antkiewicz* (Bronze: London 1948; Silver: Helsinki 1952), *Zygmunt Chychła* (Gold: Helsinki 1952), *Kazimierz Paździor* (Gold: Rome 1960), *Jerzy Kulej* (Gold: Tokyo 1964 and Mexico 1968), *Jan Szczepański* (Gold: Munich 1972), *Józef Grudzień* (Gold: Tokyo 1964 and Silver: Mexico 1968), *Marian Kasprzyk* (Bronze: Rome 1960 and Gold: Tokyo 1964), *Zigniew Pietrzykowski* (Silver: Rome 1960; Bronze: Melbourne 1956 and Tokyo 1964) , *Leszek Drogosz* (Bronze: Rome 1960), *Tadeusz Walasek* (Silver: Rome 1960; Bronze: Tokyo 1964, *Jerzy Adamski* (Silver: Rome 1960), *Artur Olech* (Silver: Tokyo 1964 and Mexico 1968) and others.

Since 1983, the Polish Boxing Federation organises the Feliks Stamm Memorial Tournament which is recognized internationally.



Fig.18 The *Feliks Stamm Memorial Boxing Tournament* on an occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Polish Boxing Federation

Masters of gloves

In Rome, the national anthem of Poland was played only once during the boxing finals to **Kazimierz Paździor (1935-2010)**, *lightweight (60 kg)*, who defeated S.Lopopolo of Italy and also “crazy” Italian public. Before the Rome’s tournament he fought 194 times (lost 12, only) since 1951 until 1961 and stood twice at podiums of the European Championships in Prague 1957 (Gold medal) and Luzern 1959 (Silver medal). A twofold champion of Poland 1958 and 1960.

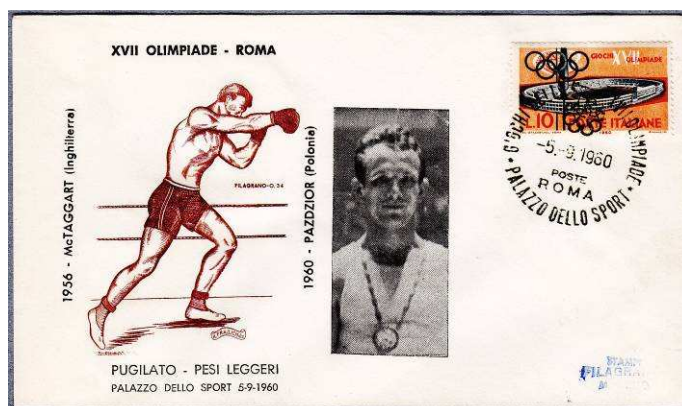


Fig.19 September 5, 1960 – Palazzo dello Sport, Rome – **Kazimierz PAZDZIOR**, the Gold Medal in boxing, *lightweight*

Other Polish medalists in boxing were:

Silver medal: Adamski Jerzy, *featherweight (57 kg)*
Pietrzykowski Zbigniew, *light heavyweight (81 kg)*
Walasek Tadeusz, *middleweight (75 kg)*

Bronze medal: Bendig Brunon, *bantamweight (54 kg)*
Kasprzyk Marian, *light welterweight (63.5 kg)*
Drogosz Leszek, *welterweight (67 kg)*

Unfortunately there are no philatelic documents of this historical success of the Polish boxers. The only philatelic evidence of the Silver medal in boxing (light heavyweight) won by the Pole Zbigniew Pietrzykowski could be a stamp/miniature sheet of AJMAN Post presenting the Gold medallist Cassius Clay. Z.Pietrzykowski was the opponent to Clay in the Rome's finals.

Pietrzykowski Zbigniew (1934) participated in the Olympic tournaments three times – in Melbourne winning the Bronze medal (lost to Laszlo Papp), in Rome – the Silver medal (lost to C.Clay) and in Tokyo – the Bronze Medal. The European Champion from West Berlin 1955, Prague 1957, Luzern 1959 and Moscow 1963. He won 11 titles of the Champion of Poland.

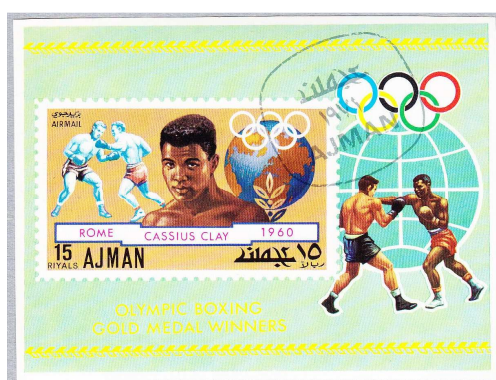


Fig.19 Cassius Clay, future Muhammad Ali, won the Gold Medal in Light Heavyweight by defeating Zbigniew Pietrzykowski in the final fight on 5 September 1960 in Rome



Fig. 20 The Olympic boxing tournament in Rome was only a prelude to next tournament in Tokyo where the Polish boxing team won also 7 medals but **3 Golds**, 1 Silver and 3 Bronzes. The boxers were the second national team very popular in Poland.

3.4. The Polish weights on the Olympic podium

In the Olympic weightlifting tournament – light heavy weight (82,5 kg) two Poles stood on the podium together winning the Gold medal by **Ireneusz Paliński** with the result 442,5 kg (press: 130 kg, snatch: 132,5 EOR, jerk: 180 kg WR) and the Bronze medal by **Jan Bochenek**, 420 kg.

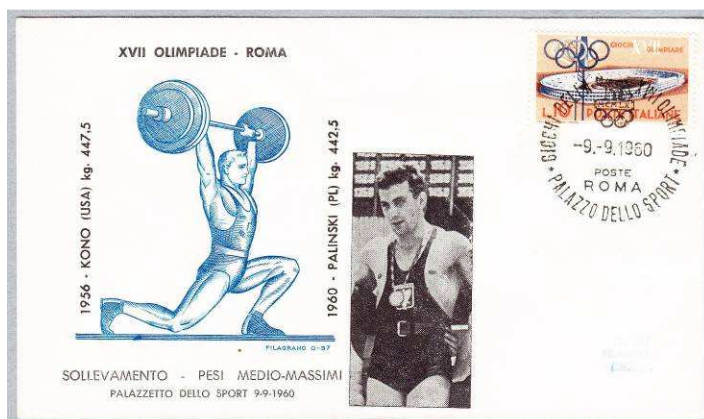


Fig.21 September 9, 1960 – **Ireneusz PALIŃSKI**, the Gold Medal weightlifting

Ireneusz Paliński (1932-2006) won also the Bronze medal in Tokyo. In his time he was one of the best European weightlifters participating in the European championships in period 1957-1966 winning 1 Gold, 6 Silver and 1 Bronze medal. In world championships he won Gold medal in 1961 and four times Silver medals – 1959, 1962, 1963 and 1966, improving world records seven times. In Poland, he won the title of the champion in his weight for nine times.

4. PHILATELIC PROMOTION ROME 1960 OLYMPIC GAMES IN POLAND

4.1. The Games Opening Day, 25th August 1960

On the Opening Day of the Olympic Games in Rome, August, 25 at the Main Post Office WARSAW 1 a rubber cachet was used in violet or black colour with a symbolic Olympic torch and the text “XVII Olympic Games – Rome 1960”.



Fig.22 Air mail letter sent to Rome on 25 August 1960 from the Main P.O. WARSAW 1, receiving cancellation ROMA. Stadio Olimpico, 31-8-1960

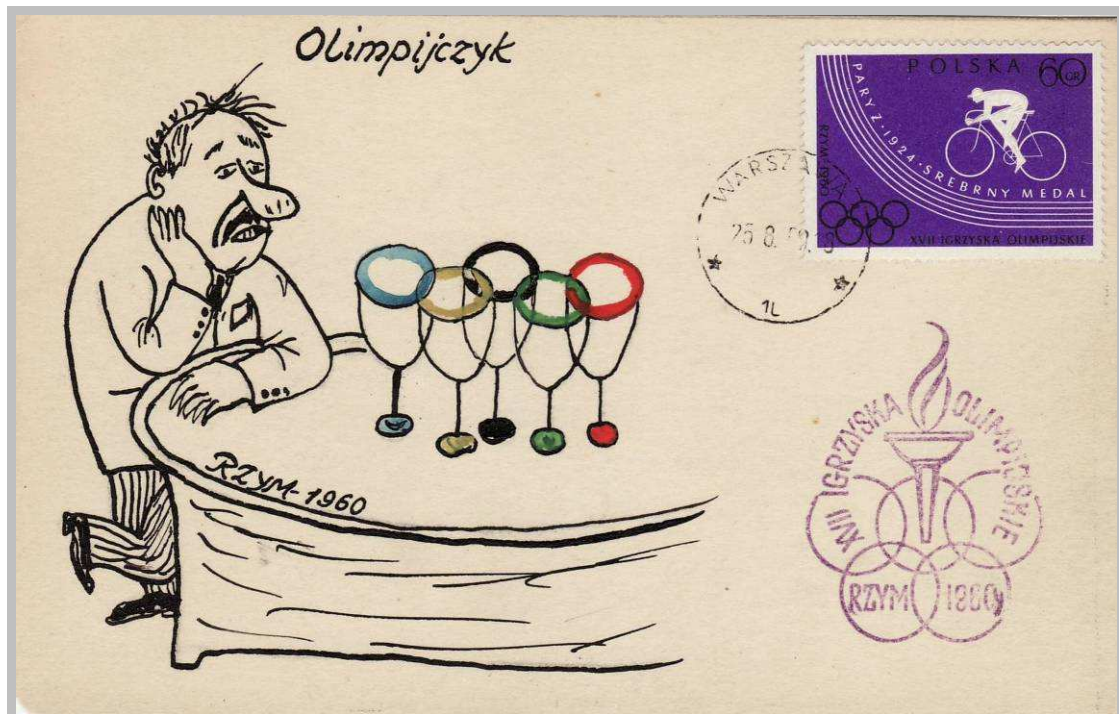


Fig.23 A humoristic graphic card presenting “The Olympian” at the Games Rome 1960, hopefully not addressing Olympic collectors - cancelled by the post date stamp and cacheted on 25 Aug.1960

4.2. Raising Olympic funds by the Polish Philatelists Union

The Olympic Games in Rome have caused a great enthusiasm through Polish society, including philatelists. The Polish Philatelists Union (PZF) in co-operation with the Polish Olympic Committee (PKOl) issued a vignette in two colors – brown and blue with a purpose to support the Polish Olympic Fund. The vignettes were sold at price of 3 zloty (not indicated). A number of printed and sold labels are unknown.



Fig.24 Fund raising vignettes of the Polish Philatelists Union for ROME 1960



Fig.25 Vignettes of the PPU overprinted for the special balloon and glider flights (new price: 4 zł)



Fig.26 Vignettes overprinted for the football match Poland vs. ex-Yugoslavia in 1961 (price: 3 zł)

Remaining part of the vignettes was overprinted in 1961 to commemorate a match Poland vs. ex-Yugoslavia played in Chorzów in Poland under qualifications to the Football World Championships CHILE 1962 (Fig.27).

4.3. The Olympic Year and 100 anniversary of the stamp POLSKA 1

The 1960 was also a year of 100 anniversary of issuance of the first Polish postage stamp "POLSKA 1" (1 January 1860). On this accession, in parallel to the Olympic Games in Rome, in Warsaw was held the World Philatelic Exhibition "Polska 60". On the occasion and for the promotion of the Olympic games and the exhibition, two special aviation flights were organized by the Poczta Polska, PPU and the Aeroclub of Poland – the IXth Glider Flight and the Balloon Flight. Postal mails for the both events were collected at the exhibition in Warsaw under a condition to pay extra flight fee 4 zł which was documented by the overprinted vignettes (Fig. 25). On 7 Sept. 1960, the glider "Bocian" took off with postal mails (Fig. 27) from the aerodrome in Leszno – the famous place for world glider championships and other aviation contests. After flying the distance of 247 km and landing, the mails received at the P.O. Aleksandrów Kujawski a stamp with the date 9.9.60.



Fig.27 The letter mail of the IX Glider Flight on the occasion of the Games of XVII Olympiad in Rome 1960



Fig.28 The letter mail of the Balloon Flight on the occasion of the Games of XVII Olympiad in Rome 1960

A special Olympic balloon flight was planned to start in Łódź on 11 Sept., the last day of games in Rome. Due to technical problems the mails were carried by the balloon "WARSZAWA" on 14 Sept. 1960 within the 1st National Balloon Contest for col. Franciszek Hynek held in Warsaw. Balloon with special mails landed in Sierakowice on 15.9.60, flying over 480 km.

Many activities promoting the Olympic Games in Rome were organized by youth philatelic circles in Poland and documented philatelic. There were several Olympic and sports philately shows as well as special Youth Post was organized in the town of Gostyń. The Youth Post Gostyń issued three vignettes with sports and Olympic motives which were used for special mails. On the closing day of the Olympic Games, the triangle vignette was overprinted on along sides number of Gold, Silver and Bronze medals won by the White-Red Olympic Team was recorded. In the middle, the Gold Medal won by Zdzisław Krzesiński and the Olympic Record 8:34,2 was stated.



Fig.29 Cancellation and commemorative cover of the Sports Philately Exhibition in the OLYMPIC YEAR 1960 held by the Youth Culture Centre in Szczecin, 7-11 Nov. 1960



Fig.30 Cancellations and commemorative cover of the 2nd Youth Philatelic Show in Wrocław commemorating the Games of XVII OLYMPIAD ROME 1960 and 5th Anniversary of the Philatelic Circle



Fig.31 Vignettes of the special Youth Post in the town of Gostyn commemorating the Olympic Games ROME 1960

Fig.32 Vignette of the Youth Post in Gostyn with overprint presenting successes of the Polish Olympic Team in Rome

Another example of Olympic initiatives of young philatelist in Poland was organization of a Scout's Post in the town of Rzeszów in June 1960. During a philatelic show commemorating the stamp "POLSKA 1", the Scout's Post distributed 3 vignettes and funds collected in this action were used for organizing summer camps.



Fig.33 Occasional mail carried by the Youth Post in Gostyn on the closing day of the Olympic Games in Rome



Fig.34 Vignettes of the Scout Post in Rzeszów commemorating the Olympiad in Rome 1960

In Poland, there was a small hamlet named "RZYM" (Polish for Rome) nearby town of Żnin. Today, this hamlet is named Rogowo. A local daily evening journal organized a sports event with idea of participating in the "Olympic Games" without money (in these times hard currency like US dollars or Italian lire were hardly available under communist system and travelling very limited). Using a tricky name the Polish "OLIMPIADA" was played in Rzym.



Fig.35 Cancellation commemorating a sports event "OLIMPIADA" organized by the "Evening News" in Rzym on 21 Aug. 1960

5. THE ROME'S PHILATELIC FINAL

As the result of the Olympic Games in Rome two philatelic “babies” were born. Myself, I became a young enthusiast of the Olympic and sport philately. Since those times I entirely devoted my philatelic collecting to the achievements of the Polish sport and Olympians, Olympics in general. As, I was also in a swimming club and loved sailing and rowing, thus in next years I devoted my collecting to aquatic sports. Today, after fifty years my general interest is strongly related to the POLISH SPORT issues and achievements of the POLISH OLYMPIC movement.

Soon, after the Games in Rome were closed renowned philatelists Fabian Bura (1913-1996) and Kazimierz Gryżewski (1898-1979) - the both from Warsaw and Henryk Brancewicz (1904-1980) from Cracow started preparations for organising a club of Olympic philately in Poland. After announcement in Warsaw daily “Kurier” more than 500 declarations arrived to the Polish Philatelist Union. After organizational preparations, the 1st Founder’s Congress of the Polish Olympic Philatelists took place on 18 March 1962 in Warsaw. The Polish Club of Olympic and Sports Philately named “THE OLYMPIAN” was established and Fabian Bura was elected the first President for next 30 years.

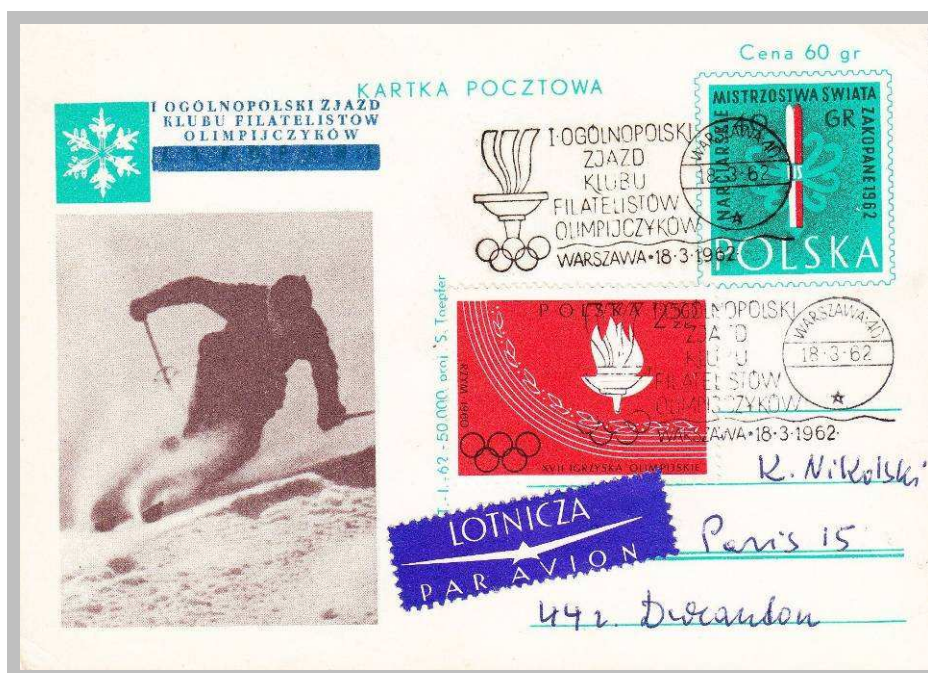


Fig.36 Postal stationery and cancellation commemorating the 1st Congress of the Polish Olympic Philatelists on 18 March 1962 in Warsaw.

6. THE PROLOGUE - THE GOLDEN FESTIVITY IN WARSAW

On 6 September 2010, the walls of the Museum of Sport and Tourism In Warsaw, covered with the Olympic medals and historical photos, were listening real stories from the owners of the medals and heroes of these photos – the heroes of the Games of the XVII Olympiad in Rome. More as twenty Polish Olympians from Rome participated in the Golden Festivity with the only one Golden medalist alive today, Józef Schmidt. But the Hall of Fame was full with other fantastic sportsmen and sportswomen. After, the museum presented a short movie from the Games in Rome, some tear drops were observed and each of Rome’s participants recalled some original remembrances from stadiums, competitions, and stories after the events and trips from Poland to Italy. Some of the stories were exciting, even today, as we can now travel freely all over the world. But in 1960, it was for the Poles an extreme performance ... we were we really listening and laughing to the stories, today ...



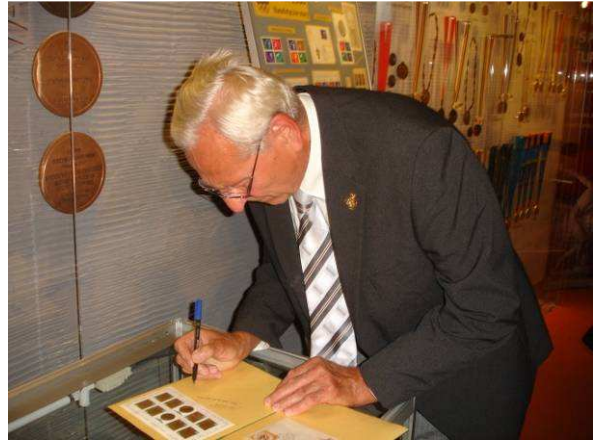
The Polish Olympians and medalist during the Golden Festivity ROME 1960 (in the first row from left: B.Janiszevska (bronze, 4x100 relay), J.Schmidt – double Gold medalist ROME 1960 and Tokyo 1964, Irena Szewińska-Kirszenstein - multiplied 7-times Olympic medalist and the IOC member, Adam Krześciński, silver medalist 1996 and the Secretary General of the Polish Olympic Committee , Marek Kuszewski, silver medalist sabre, Elżbieta Duńska-Krześcińska, the Silver medal long jump (Gold in Melbourne) and Barbara Janiszewska, Silver – women’s high jump.

I have tried to look through my personal memories and story. In the audience, there was a gentleman who was a radio journalist who was broadcasting from Rome and I heard his voice in the deep forest fifty years ago (I wrote in my previous article about the radio broadcast to Poland through so called “the barkers”). In 1960 I could only hear this man, but finally we could shake hands and I told him my philatelic story. He was really surprised.

The Gold medalist, Józef Schmidt told a story about his Olympic gold medals which have been lost during his move from the communist Poland to the Western Germany. Maybe the medals will appear somewhere.

Madame Krześcińska, Gold in Melbourne and Silver in Rome, told a story about the famous press and radio journalist who was absent at the Golden festivities. She joked that he could not appear at the meeting as in 1960, shortly before the Games in Rome, called her “a descending star”, but she proved her Olympic class and won the Silver medal after the Gold in Melbourne. A reason for the journalist to write so was that she lost a gold medal in the European championships, before the games. But she was really very ill, before.

Irena Szewińska-Kirszenstein (multi Olympic medalist – 3 Gold, 2 silver and 2 bronze) told us very personal story. When the Games in Rome started she was already 14 years old. After the Games she went to a trainer and said that she wanted to be an Olympic champion. So, she did ...



The Polish heroes of the Games of XVII Olympiad in Rome, Elżbieta Duńska-Krześcińska and Józef Schmidt, in a front of a philatelic display ROME 1960-2010. In a deeper perspective (right photo), original medals of the Polish Olympians donated to the Museum of Sport and Tourism in Warsaw

The Golden Festivities were assisted by small shows of memorabilia and philately. All visitors were handed out a CD-ROM with recorded philatelic article in Italian and English languages which I presented in the UICOS's bulletin. The famous Polish Olympians signed souvenir sheets for the Polish Olympic philatelist and looked at a small display of the Rome's philatelic memorabilia.



*Elżbieta Krześcińska wrote a dedication:
"for the fan of truck&field – yesterday GOLD, today - GREY ... ELA".*