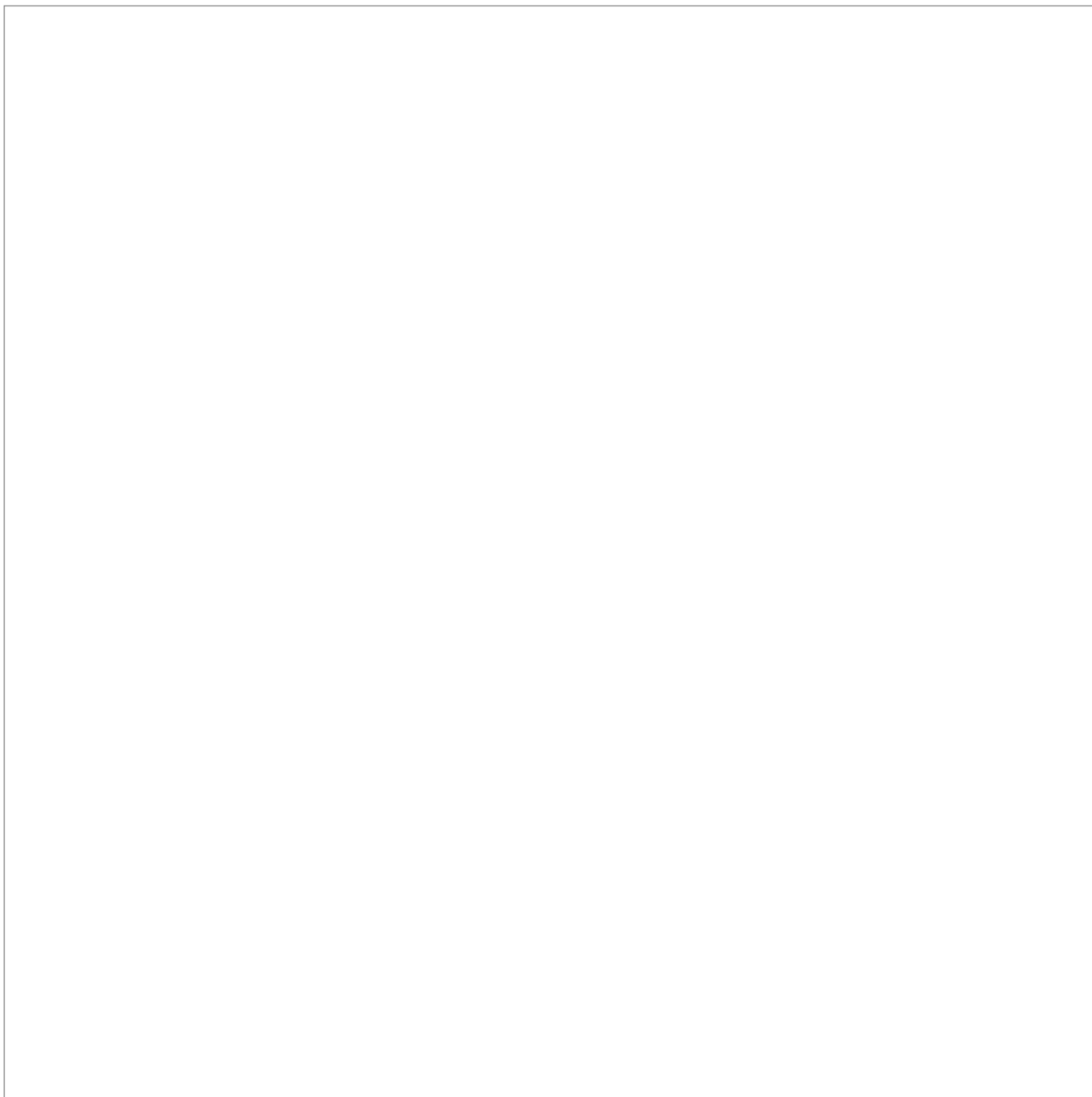


Set of twelve spoons with busts of the Apostles and the Szeliga and Przeginia coats of arms



- Date of production 1st quarter of the 17th century
- Place of creation Poland
- Dimensions height: 5.8 cm, length: 22 cm, weight: from 91.36 g to 95.14 g
- ID no. MNK-IV-Z-1105-1116
- Museum [The National Museum in Kraków](#)
- Oddział Main Building
- Subjects [religion](#), [at the table](#), [written](#)
- Technique [struck](#), [chiselling](#), [gilding](#), [casting](#)
- Material [silver](#)
- Acquired date donated by Henryk Stecki in 1911
- Object copyright The National Museum in Kraków
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- Digitalisation RDW MIC, Małopolska's Virtual Museums project
- Tags [techniki zdobnicze](#), [herb](#), [złotnictwo](#), [3D](#), [łyżki](#), [święci](#), [zastawa stołowa](#), [domena publiczna](#)

The preserved Polish inventories dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries inform of a rather high number of silver and gold spoons being the property of the royal court, the Polish aristocracy, the nobility and the bourgeoisie. Spoons made of precious metal, mainly of gilded silver, were richly decorated and were a capital investment. They emphasised the splendour and affluence of the house and also the high position of their owner.

In the 2nd half of the 16th century and in the 17th century, spoons composed of a many-sided handle joined with a wide and deep bowl by means of a plate gained popularity. The decoration of bowls was limited to an engraved adornment from below: there were the owner's coat of arms and initials or a geometric and plant ornament. The surface of the plate was decorated with a semi-artistic figural or plant decoration. Despite the fact that Latin was commonly used at that time, inscriptions in Polish appeared on the handles of the spoons. The ends of the handles were finished with a knob, a cone, a finial, or a stylised head.

The custom of "describing" spoons, that is, placing short rhymes or sayings on their handles, was popular in Central Europe, as well as outside the Republic of Poland, in Germany and Hungary, among others. A special polygonal form of a handle, which allowed longer sayings to be put on them, was also important. Inscriptions concerned three issues: general morality, health, or the exhortation or forewarning of theft and its aftermath.

The set of twelve spoons was cast from silver and partly gilded; it is an outstanding example of the realisation of this type. Every spoon consists of a semicircular bowl joined with a handle by means of a plate with a cast bust of an apostle. On the reverse of the plate, there is a Szeliga coat of arms with the letters *IS* and the Przeginia coat of arms with the letters *AG*. The handle is polygonal, with struck sayings in Polish, crowned with a woman's head.

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