



## ***Exhibit of the Month***

### **REICHSPFENNIG**

*Museologist Simona Gustaitytė*

In the 1960s-1970s, during the archeological excavations in the field of mass murder of Kaunas Ninth Fort Museum, a 10 Reichspfennig coin was found. It is a currency that circulated in Nazi Germany. In the center of the obverse, there is an eagle holding a swastika in an oak wreath with the inscription "Deutsches Reich 1939" at the bottom. In the reverse, an inscription in Gothic font "Reichspfennig" can be seen with the number "10" in the center. The coin is made of copper, tin and aluminum alloy and subject to corrosion. The diameter is 21 mm.

After WWI and the hyperinflation that caused the change in currency, in 1924 the new currency, the Reichsmark, and its one hundredth part, Reichspfennig, were introduced in Germany. They were used for more than twenty years. The obverse of the first 1 and 2 Reichspfennig denominations depicted a wheat sheaf, and the obverse of 5, 10 and 50 (in 1924–1925) Reichspfennigs depicted crossed wheat, forming a stylised pattern. When the National Socialists came to power in Germany, the agricultural images were replaced by the symbolism of Nazi ideology. Since 1936, an eagle carrying a swastika in an oak leaf wreath was depicted on Reichspfennig coins. The last coins with the swastika were made in 1945 on 1 and 10 Reichspfennig denominations. Not only the symbolism, but also

the coin metal eventually changed: the copper, bronze and bronze-aluminum alloy used at the beginning was replaced by zinc and aluminum during WWII.

It should be noted that a separate Third Reich currency was introduced in the countries occupied by Nazi Germany, which primarily aimed at supplying the armed forces. It was approved by the Chief Reich Credit Office Board. The occupation money (Reichsmark) differed from that issued by the Reichsbank (German Central Bank) and used in Germany. It was prohibited to import the "war money" intended for the occupied territories to Germany. In Lithuania, Reichsmarks circulated together with rubles (ratio 1:10) and small denomination coins, Reichspfennigs and kopecks, used in Germany and the Soviet Union. At the end of 1941, in Lithuania, Reichspfennigs made of bronze-aluminum and copper were withdrawn from circulation and replaced by zinc coins.





© KDFM / Sergej Orlov