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The Umrevinsky Hoard of Silver Wire Kopecks from the Reign of Peter I*

The Umrevinsky hoard, comprising 107 silver wire kopecks, was found in 2008 outside the walls of Fort (Ostrog) Umrevinsky, founded in 1703 on the right bank of the Ob River, 100 km north of Novosibirsk. This is the first time such a hoard has been discovered in the Novosibirsk stretch of the Ob. Its composition is assessed with reference to archaeological findings relating to Fort Umrevinsky. The chronology of the coins and of their deposition is evaluated. The location is near a dwelling within a manor, in an ash-layer. The coins are relatively poorly preserved. We were able to identify the minting-years of 34 coins. All specimens with legible stamp-impressions were minted between 1696 and 1717. On the basis of the results, it is concluded that this was a hoard of coin-silver. Firstly, most kopecks bear no discernible images that would guarantee specific weight and silver content; secondly, the hoard was deposited no earlier than 1735, i.e., 20 years after the coins had gone out of use. This conclusion is supported by the fact that some coins were apparently used as ornaments that were sewn on clothes by the natives. All these findings enrich our knowledge of the history of Fort Umrevinsky.

Keywords: *Ostrog Umrevinsky, hoards, silver wire coins, Peter I.*

Introduction

In 2008, an accumulation of silver wire coins with a total weight of 28 g, which is classified as a hoard (Fig. 1), was discovered in a white ash-layer on the roadside in the course of surveying the road south of Fort Umrevinsky, leading along the Ob River to the Sennoy Vzvoz area. The depth of occurrence was 15–20 cm. The hoard represented several groups of coins that had stuck together (the largest group had a weight of 14 g), and 26 separate specimens. This is the first time such a hoard has been discovered in the Novosibirsk region of the Ob.

At the time of hoard's final formation, the coins were placed into a birch-bark container or wrapped in birch-bark, which has remained in the form of scraps. Placement of money into birch-bark boxes is typical of Russian coin-hoards (Spassky, 1962: 16). Rim-fragments of three vessels (two pots and a flat bowl), probably pertaining to the time that the trading quarter (posad) to the south of the Fort functioned, were found in the immediate vicinity of the hoard.

Analysis of the hoard

After the cleaning of the hoard (performed by M.V. Moroz, Art Restorer of the IAE SO RAN), the total number of

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coins (107 silver wire kopecks) was determined. Among these, three coins, which stuck together, form a single group; 16 stuck coins form eight groups (two pieces in each); and 88 coins are separate. In the subsequent discussion, these “stuck” coins will not be considered, since almost nothing can be said about them with certainty except for two coins that have a legible reverse side. Thus, the total number of coins suitable for analysis in the hoard is 90. They were classified using catalogues prepared by V.N. Kleshchinov and I.V. Grishin (1992, 2005).

Only 7 coins have discernible stamp impressions on the obverse (an image of a horseman with a spear) and on the reverse (a legend containing the title and name of the ruler) sides. Legible stamp-impressions are represented on 8 coins, while the reverse stamps can be seen on 34 (Fig. 2). Traces of stamp-impressions that cannot be identified were found on a considerable proportion of the coins: 12 impressions on the obverse side and 22 on the reverse side (Fig. 2). The most abundant group includes kopecks with missing images on both sides (34 pieces) or on one side (70 pieces have no images on the obverse, and 34 on the reverse) (Fig. 2).

The main task of this study is to determine the minting-years of the coins. Identification of the mint and stamps used has an ancillary character, since each monetary yard employed its own stamps at certain times.

The monetary yard in the Kitay-gorod near the Kremlin was the first to start minting kopecks with dates on, them in 1696. After 1700, such kopecks were minted by the monetary yard in the building of former Zemsky Prikaz at Red Square, and after 1701, by the mint in the palace situated over Naberezhny garden in the Kremlin. In the catalogue by Kleshchinov and Grishin, all of these are referred to as the “Old Mint” (1992: 6). In Moscow in 1701, one more monetary yard was opened which is known under various names, such as Khamovny, Kadashevsky, Zamoskvoretzky, Admiralty, or Naval. In the above catalogue, it is featured as “Kadashevsky Mint” (Ibid.: 7). In the subsequent discussion we will adhere to that name.

There are several methods for determining the minting-time of silver wire kopecks attributed to the reign of Peter I: 1) by the date, which is preserved on the coin’s obverse side; 2) by the obverse stamp depicting a horseman with a spear and containing the minting-date; 3) by the reverse stamp containing a legend with the ruler’s title; 4) by the kopeck’s weight; 5) by the occurrence (or nonoccurrence) in the coin’s legend of the letter “r”, which points to the name Peter.

Determination of the coin’s minting-time by the date indicated on its obverse is most accurate and simple. But the date is fully preserved only on three coins: No. 32 (1703), No. 35 (1713), and No. 43 (1709)* (see the Table;

*Hereinafter, the numbers of coins are given in accordance with the Table.



Fig. 1. Place of discovery of the Umrevinsky hoard.
1 – Fort Umrevinsky and its neighborhood (view from the south-west);
2 – road to the south from the Fort.

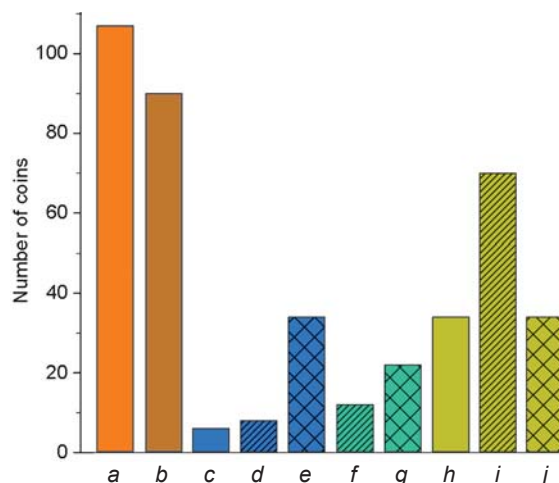


Fig. 2. Preservation of coins.
a – all hoard-coins; b – coins considered in analysis; c – coins with legible obverse and reverse sides; d – coins with legible obverse side; e – coins with legible reverse side; f – coins with illegible obverse side; g – coins with illegible reverse side; h – coins without images on both sides; i – coins with missing image on the obverse side; j – coins with missing image on the reverse side.

Coins from the Umrevinsky hoard with a determined date of minting

No. of coin	Obverse stamp	Date according to the obverse, years	Reverse stamp	Date according to the reverse, years	Monetary yard	Weight, g	Catalogue
1	Illegible	–	18	1709–1717	Kadashevsky	0.21	1992
2	Absent	–	12	1701–1709	"	0.22	Same
8	"	–	6	1696–1704	Old	0.41	"
11	"	–	7	1696–1704	"	0.27	"
12, 13	"	–	11	1701–1709	Kadashevsky	0.23	"
14	"	–	8	1696–1704	Old	0.32	"
15	"	–	7	1696–1704	"	0.24	"
17	"	–	5, 6 or 7	1696–1704	"	0.21	"
18	"	–	7 or 8	1696–1704	"	0.26	"
19	"	–	Group 3, stamp 97	1707–1709	Kadashevsky	0.19	2005
20	Illegible	–	8	1696–1704	Old	0.24	1992
21	"	–	7	1696–1704	"	0.22	Same
22	Absent	–	Group 4, stamp 14	1709 or 1711	Kadashevsky	0.20	2005
25	Group 1, stamp 12	1700	6 or 7	1696–1704	Old	0.24	1992
26	Illegible	–	13	1701–1709	Kadashevsky	0.27	Same
29	Absent	–	7 or 8	1696–1704	Old	0.22	"
32	Group 3, stamp 21	1703	12	1701–1709	Kadashevsky	0.21	1992
33	Absent	–	11	1701–1709	"	0.27	Same
34	Illegible	–	6 or 8	1696–1704	Old	0.21	"
35	Group 4, stamp 6	1713	19	1709–1717	Kadashevsky	0.24	"
36	Group 1, stamp 22	1702	7	1696–1704	Old	0.24	"
37	Illegible	–	7 or 8	1696–1704	"	0.23	"
38	"	–	7 or 8	1696–1704	"	0.20	"
40	Group 1, stamp 15	1701	7	1696–1704	"	0.26	"
41	Absent	–	8	1696–1704	"	0.25	"
42	Illegible	–	13	1701–1709	Kadashevsky	0.26	"
43	Group 4, stamp 2	1709	16	1709–1717	"	0.21	2005
44, 45	Absent	–	7 or 8	1696–1704	Old	0.29	1992
46	Group 1, stamp 8	1700	Group 1, stamp 13	1700	"	0.20	2005
47	Absent	–	Group 3, stamp 40	1701–1709	Kadashevsky	0.24	Same
48	"	–	13	1701–1709	"	0.12	1992
49	Group 1, stamp 8	1700	Absent	–	Old	0.16	Same
53	Absent	–	19	1709–1717	Kadashevsky	0.21	"
55	"	–	19	1709–1717	"	0.24	"
82	"	–	11	1701–1709	"	0.35	"

Note: The numbers of stamps are given after the catalogues published in 1992 and 2005 (Kleshchinov, Grishin, 1992, 2005).



Fig. 3. Example stamps of the Umrevinsky hoard-coins (names of stamps are given after catalogues prepared by V.N. Kleshchinov and I.V. Grishin (1992, 2005); the numbers of coins are given in accordance with the Table).

1–7 – stamp-impressions of coin's obverse sides; 8–19 – stamp impressions of coin's reverse sides.

1 – No. 49, group 1, stamp 8; 2 – No. 25, group 1, stamp 12; 3 – No. 40, group 1, stamp 15; 4 – No. 36, group 1, stamp 22; 5 – No. 32, group 3, stamp 21; 6 – No. 35, group 4, stamp 6; 7 – No. 43, group 4, stamp 2; 8 – No. 8, stamp 6; 9 – No. 36, stamp 7; 10 – No. 20, stamp 8; 11 – No. 33, stamp 11; 12 – No. 2, stamp 12; 13 – No. 42, stamp 13; 14 – No. 43, stamp 16; 15 – No. 1, stamp 18; 16 – No. 35, stamp 19; 17 – No. 22, group 4, stamp 14; 18 – No. 46, group 1, stamp 13; 19 – No. 47, group 3, stamp 40.

Fig. 3, 5–7; 4, 4). Eight coins (including three previous ones) can be dated by their obverse stamp with accuracy up to one year: three coins are dated 1700, and five are dated 1701, 1702, 1703, 1709, and 1713, respectively. Seven different obverse stamps are represented in the Umrevinsky hoard (see the Table; Fig. 3, 1–7; 4, 1–4), one of which is encountered twice (coins No. 46, 49). Owing to the work done by the authors of catalogues, 34 coins can be dated by stamps of the reverse side, which is better preserved in general. 13 or 14 stamps are represented in the Umrevinsky hoard (some stamps are similar, while the remaining parts of impressions on the coins do not allow for their unambiguous attribution to a certain type) (Fig. 5). Comparison of the results of dating of the coins with both sides legible (7 pieces) has shown that the dates determined by the obverse and reverse stamps fully correspond to each other (see the Table).

Identifying the minting-time of kopecks by their weight is a rather crude method, which ranks well below the above approaches in accuracy. Before 1610, the weight of silver wire kopeck was 0.68 g. Then, the invaders introduced coins weighing from 0.48 to 0.56 g during several years. In 1612–1613, kopecks of 0.48 g were minted by the people's volunteer army in Yaroslavl. Such coins were in circulation up to the beginning of the reign of Feodor III Alekseyevich (1676). In 1613–1676, quarter-kopeck pieces weighing from 0.11 to 0.14 g were

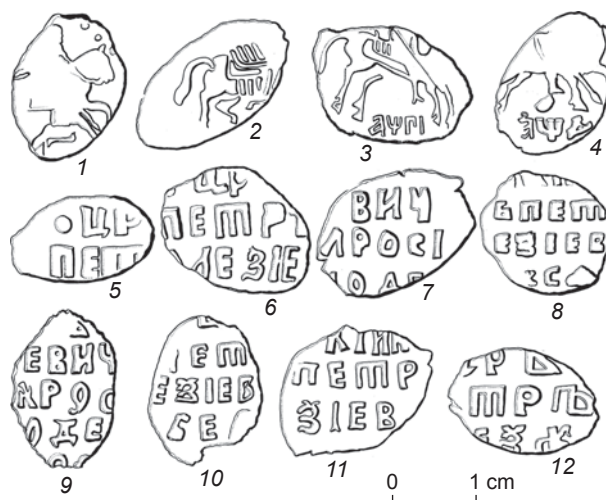


Fig. 4. Drawings of silver wire kopecks.

1 – No. 36, group 1, stamp 22; 2 – No. 40, group 1, stamp 15; 3 – No. 35, group 4, stamp 6; 4 – No. 43, group 4, stamp 2; 5 – No. 33, stamp 11; 6 – No. 42, stamp 13; 7 – No. 43, stamp 16; 8 – No. 20, stamp 8; 9 – No. 22, group 4, stamp 14; 10 – No. 46, group 1, stamp 13; 11 – No. 35, stamp 19; 12 – No. 47, group 3, stamp 40.

introduced. In 1620–1630, silver wire kopecks of 0.52 to 0.53 g were minted in Denmark for trading with the Karelians; in 1676–1682, the kopeck's weight went down to 0.46 g, in 1682–1698—to 0.38 g, and it was reduced to

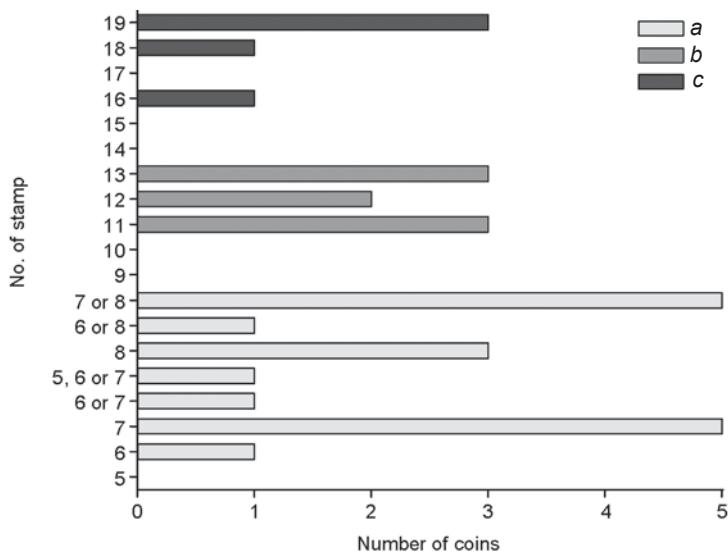


Fig. 5. The relation between the number of coins with reverse stamps of the first (a), third (b), and fourth (c) groups after the catalogue of 1992 (Kleshchinov, Grishin, 1992).

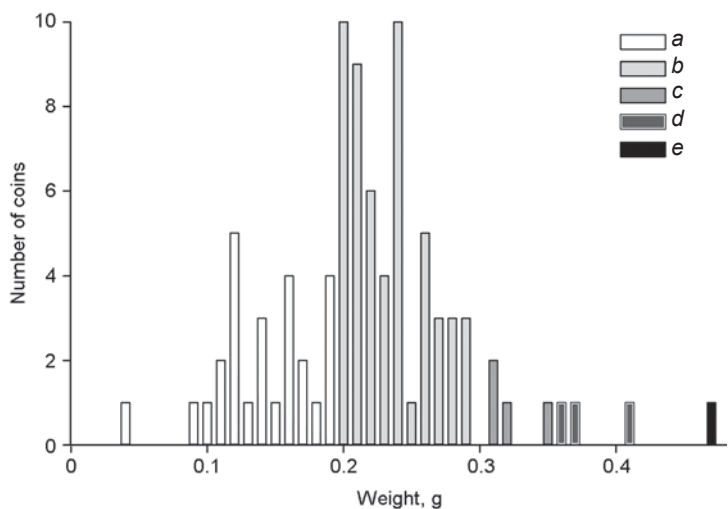


Fig. 6. Distribution of coins by weight.

a – coins that have lost a considerable part of their initial weight; b – average weight of dated coins; c – coins from the reign of Peter I with a weight exceeding the established value; d – coins minted in 1682–1698; e – coins minted before 1682.

0.28 g as a result of monetary reform in 1698 (Spassky, 1962: 105–107, 124, 129).

The weight of the Umrevinsky hoard's coins varies from 0.04 to 0.47 g. No accurate data are available for 19 pieces that stuck together, forming groups of two or three coins. The weight of kopecks with a legible obverse or reverse side (i.e. full-bodied ones) is in the range of 0.20 to 0.29 g (see the *Table*) and amounts to 0.23 g on average. Coin No. 8 (the reverse stamp is No. 6, minted in 1696–1704) has a maximum weight of 0.41 g. Its weight is greater by 0.13 g than the one established in 1698, and

exceeds the value established in 1682–1698 by only 0.03 g; that is, most probably, this kopeck was minted in 1696–1698. Coin No. 82, minted in 1701–1709, has a weight of 0.35 g; while coin No. 14, minted in 1696–1704, weighs 0.32 g. Taking this into consideration, all coins having a weight less than or equal to 0.35 g can be assigned to the kopecks of 1698–1717. Three coins in the hoard (apart from coin No. 8) have a weight that exceeds this figure (0.36, 0.37, and 0.47 g). They cannot be identified by their stamps. The first two coins are similar in weight to those minted in 1682–1698 (0.38 g), while the third is close to various types of kopecks produced from 1610 to 1682, i.e. this is the only coin in the hoard that can be reasonably attributed to the pre-Peter epoch (Fig. 6).

The coin's weight of less than 0.20 g can be explained by several factors. The first one is that a considerable part of the coin has been lost in the course of circulation. As this takes place, the coin images are fully erased (kopeck No. 48 is the only coin with a legible side that weighs less than 0.20 g). A second possible factor is loss of weight due to staying in a cultural layer for 250–300 years. The significance of this factor should not be overestimated. In addition to the hoard, the collection of silver wire kopecks from Fort Umrevinsky includes one more coin (reverse stamp No. 23, minted in 1716 or 1717 (Kleshchinov, Grishin, 2005)) discovered in the trading quarter territory (Fig. 7). The condition of its reverse side can be characterized as excellent. Among 107 coins of the hoard, only kopecks No. 35 and 47 (see Fig. 3, 16, 19; 4, 11, 12) can be compared with this coin in degree of preservation. Lying, like the hoard, in the topsoil, it has preserved the initial image on the reverse side. This suggests that loss of discernible stamp-impressions by hoard-coins was not the result of a long stay in

soil: they were in poor condition originally, at the time of deposition in the cultural layer. The third possible factor lies in special features of the circulation of silver wire kopecks that were subjected to separation into several equal parts, and used as fractional currency. Five pieces (four halves and one quarter of kopeck) from the Umrevinsky hoard show signs suggesting that they were used in this way. Besides, we cannot rule out the possibility that several quarter-kopeck pieces minted in 1613–1676 and weighing from 0.11 to 0.14 g could be included in the hoard.

Dating kopecks by the presence of the letter “r” in the legend, which points to the name “Peter”, is the crudest method, since it only allows attribution of a coin to the time of the coregency of Peter I with Ivan V Alekseyevich, or to the time of his sole reign, i.e. to the period from 1682 to 1717. The “r” letter is preserved on 22 coins.

Once obverse and reverse stamps are identified, it is not difficult to determine the place of a coin’s minting. 19 coins were manufactured at the Old Mint, which is actually represented by three monetary yards in Moscow; and 16 coins were produced at the Kadashevsky Mint. The minting-places of other coins cannot be determined.

Discussion of results

The majority of coins with a determined date of minting (29 out of 35) were minted in 1696–1709 (2.1 coins per year on the average), and 6 of them in 1709–1717 (0.7 coins per year on the average). I.G. Spassky points out that the volume of minting of silver wire kopecks considerably decreased, and was symbolical during the last years (1962: 131). On the basis of these data, it can be assumed that the coin hoard was ultimately formed no earlier than the very end of the circulation-period of silver wire kopecks. Consequently, it couldn’t have been deposited in the cultural layer of Fort Umrevinsky (founded in 1703) earlier than the second half of the 1720s.

The hoard was discovered in the trading quarter near the Fort. Analysis of the numismatic collection of Fort Umrevinsky suggests that formation of the trading quarter started in the middle of the fourth decade of the 18th century at the earliest. Therefore, the hoard could not have appeared there before that time, when silver wire kopecks had already been withdrawn from use (Gorokhov, 2011: 227). This conclusion is also supported by the fact that the hoard was discovered in an ash-layer (a sign of economic activity), and together with birch bark remains, i.e. it found itself in the ash-layer owing to purposeful deposition, rather than as a result of fire.

Thirty four kopecks from the hoard show signs of burning. Probably, the origin of the burnt coins is associated with fires in household, utility, and administrative buildings and (or) defensive constructions. Several such coins have been discovered in the numismatic collection of Fort Umrevinsky. All of them were minted in the 1740s. This suggests that the fire happened in the trading quarter of Fort Umrevinsky in the 1750s, which could have led to the burning of some hoard-coins. If they were damaged by precisely this fire, the time of the hoard’s deposition in the cultural layer should be attributed to the second half of the 18th century.

At least 10 coins have holes, or traces of their former presence (Fig. 8). This is indicative of the use of some



Fig. 7. The reverse side of the silver wire kopeck from the trading quarter road of Fort Umrevinsky.

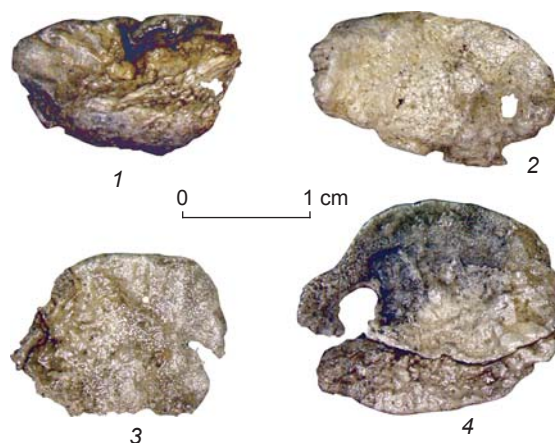


Fig. 8. Coins with holes.

wire kopecks as ornaments that were sewn on clothes. The vast majority of such coins show no signs of images. Probably, the ornaments were made from coins that had fully lost their stamp-impressions, i.e. could not be used as money. According to Spassky, artifacts of this kind can be found, for example, in Mordvinian hoards (1962: 125).

Conclusions

The Umrevinsky hoard of silver wire kopecks is, probably, a coin-silver hoard. This conclusion can be supported by a number of arguments. Firstly, the hoard contains a lot of silver plates with missing or illegible images on obverse and reverse sides. If a coin lost discernible stamp impressions, it probably could not be used as a means of payment, since it was precisely the image applied at the monetary yard which assured that a given small piece of metal contained its established share of silver. There are 34 kopecks with fully missing images on both sides in the hoard (38 % of the total number of coins suitable for analysis). It would probably be correct to assign the coins with hardly discernible though illegible stamp-

impressions to this group as well. In this case, the number of kopecks not constituting a statutory means of payment is 54 (60 %). The statistics provided by Kleshchinov and Grishin may serve as an additional argument: 25–30 % of silver wire coins produced in 1696–1717 have legible minting-dates (2005: 4). The Umrevinsky hoard contains only three such kopecks, i.e. 3.4 % of the number of separate coins (88 pieces), which is almost 7–10 times less than the average value for coins of this type.

Secondly, the hoard could not have been formed earlier than the second half of the 1720s. Taking into account the place and conditions of its discovery, the results of the analysis of the Fort Umrevinsky numismatic collection, and the data from archaeological study of the site, the hoard was most likely deposited in the cultural layer no earlier than 1735, when formation of the trading quarter started, i.e., a minimum of 20 years after the coins had been withdrawn from circulation, and only preserved their value because of their silver-content. Thirdly, at least 10 coins have holes located at the edge. Such holes were made by Siberian natives in order to use coins as ornaments for clothes.

In general, it may be noted that both separate numismatic finds and hoards have high informational potential. If the results of their analysis are considered in conjunction with the data from archaeological studies.

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