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## CLASSIFICATION OF COINS OF THE INDEPENDENCE ERA OF THE PSKOV STATE 1424/5-1510

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**Abstract.** The author tells about the history of Pskov's coinage during its independent administration from 1424/25 to 1510. He provides a detailed classification of these coins accepted in numismatic science with images of each group and type, tells about the technique of their manufacture, about the prototypes of the images on these coins and the features of paleography.

**Key words:** Pskov Principality coins, wire coins, Pskov Denga, Pskov Chetvertsa, Pskov Pulo, Grivna, Novgorod Ruble, Moscow Ruble, Novgorod Denga, Artig of the Bishopric of Dorpat, Pieniądz, Poltina.

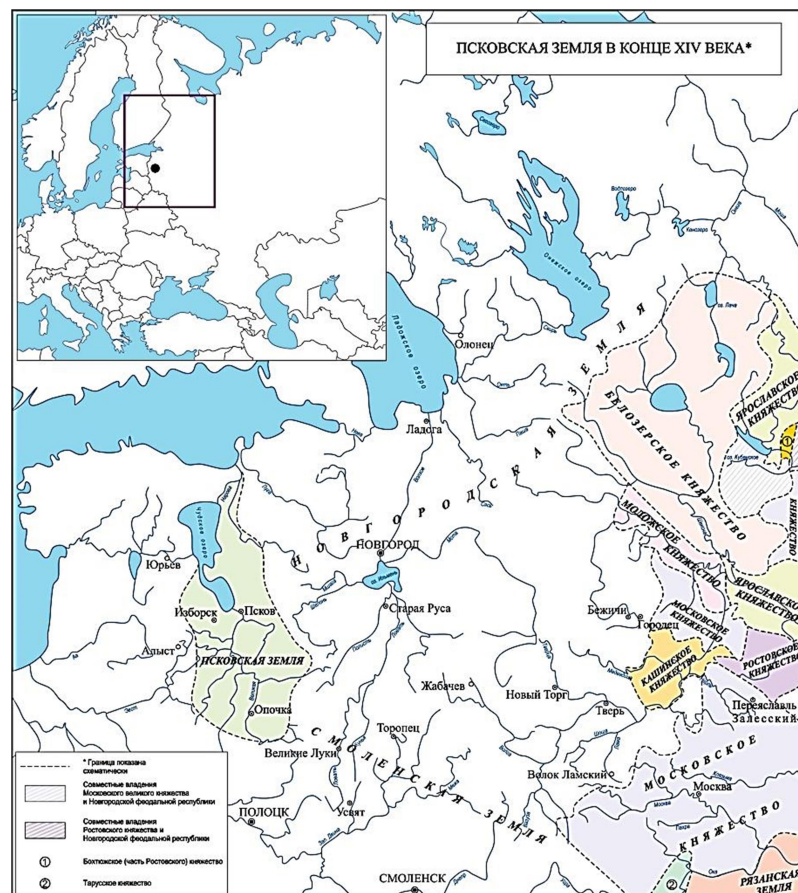


Fig. 1a. Map of the medieval Pskov state (in gray to the left of the center of the map)

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For the first time in the chronicles, Pskov was mentioned under the year 903 under its ancient name Pleskov. In this year, Prince Oleg brought Prince Igor a wife named Olga from Pleskov<sup>1</sup>, later a right-believing Princess, who left a deep mark on Russian history. She was the first Russian monarch to convert to Christianity. Initially, Pskov had the status of one of the suburbs of Veliky Novgorod. He received an independent prince at the end of the reign of Olga's grandson Vladimir Svyatoslavich (978 – 1015), when he distributed Russian cities to his sons. Pleskov went to the youngest son Sudislav. However, his elder brother Yaroslav, who came to power in Ancient Russia, in 1036 was "angry" with Sudislav and put him in a "porub" (dungeon)<sup>2</sup>, and Pskov was again turned into a suburb of Novgorod. To govern Pskov, the Novgorod prince sent there a prince and a posadnik, often only a posadnik. In the following years, the Pskovites were invited to the Novgorod veche, took part in the struggle of the Novgorod warring parties in order to create an advantage for one of the parties, being as if equal citizens of Novgorod itself, helped Novgorod in its wars and received help from it in their own. The location of the Pskov land on the westernmost border of the Novgorod possessions and convenient river and lake communication routes, on the one hand, contributed to the development of trade and the transformation of Pskov into a major trading center, and on the other hand, exposed it to the constant danger of attack by external enemies. As Ancient Rus disintegrated into separate states in the 11th-14th centuries and Novgorod weakened due to the lack of a firm, stable state structure, Pskov began to summon princes without notifying the Novgorod authorities, to conclude defensive and offensive alliances, international treaties, and, finally, in 1348, it received complete independence from its overlord (Bolotov Charter<sup>3</sup>). Only in ecclesiastical matters did Pskov remain subordinate to the bishop of Novgorod.

The prince was called to Pskov primarily in order to lead the Pskov army in wars with external enemies, especially with the continuous raids of the knights of the Livonian Order. The most beloved and revered among the princes was Dovmont, who fled to Pskov from Lithuania in 1266. He converted to Orthodoxy, receiving the Christian name Timotheus, was elected prince at the Pskov veche and ruled Pskov for 33 years. During his reign, Dovmont effectively repelled enemy raids and made a number of successful campaigns against Lithuania and the Livonian Order, including participating in the defeat of the Germans in the Battle of Rakovor on February 18, 1268. After his death in 1299, Dovmont-Timotheus began to be revered by the Pskovians as the right-believing patron saint of the city.

In 1341, the Pskov veche "beat the forehead" of the Grand Prince of Lithuania Olgerd. From that time until the end of the XIV century, Lithuania sent its princes and governors to Pskov. Sometimes there were two princes in Pskov at the same time. In the winter of 1399, the Grand Prince of Lithuania Vitovt broke the peace with Novgorod and Pskov. In the same spring, the last prince from the

<sup>1</sup> Sofia First Chronicle. In the year 6411. PSRL, vol. V, ed. 2. Leningrad, 1925, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Sofia First Chronicle. In the year 6544. PSRL, vol. V, ed. 1. St. Petersburg, 1851, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> The Novgorod Fourth Chronicle. In the year 6856. PSRL, vol. IV, part 1, iss. 1. Petrograd, 1915. P. 278. Novgorod Third Chronicle. PSRL, vol. III, p. 227.

Lithuanian family of Gediminids, Olgerd's grandson Ivan Andreevich, resigned the kiss of the cross and left Pskov. The Pskovites sent an embassy to the Grand Prince of Moscow, Vasily Dmitrievich, "to ask the prince." Since then, the princes-governors were sent to Pskov from Moscow. From 1468/1469, the city began to be called "the patrimony of the Grand Prince Ivan Vasilyevich" of Moscow and all Russia on the Pskov seals (Fig. 1b).



Fig. 1b. Drawing of the Pskov hanging seals of Ivan III (1697 from the creation of the world - 1468/1469)

Obverse: in the center is Prince Dovmont. The circular inscription reads:

ВЪЛѢ(ТО) С.Ц.О.З (1697) ДОСПЕ(ТЫ) БЫ(ША) КЛѢЩИ СИ(И)

"These walls were built in 1697"

Inscription on the reverse:

ПЕЧАТЬ ПСКОВСКАЯ ВОДЪЧНЫИ ВЕЛИКОГО КНЯЗЯ ИВАНА ВАСИЛЬЕВИЧА

" The seal of Pskov is the domain of Grand Prince Ivan Vasilyevich "

The self-names of Pskov were "Pskovskoye Gospodarstvo" ("Pskov State"), "Pskov Land" and "Lord Pskov". The word "principality" (which became the most popular designation of Russian medieval state formations in historiography) in authentic sources was first encountered only at the end of the 14th century in the form "princedom". At first, it was used only in the south-west of the Old Russian territory, in the Russian Galician-Volyn lands, occupied first by Lithuanian princes, then by the Hungarian and Polish monarchs. The first known case of the use of the term "principality" in relation to north-eastern Russia dates back to 1494: in the treaty of Grand Prince Ivan III of Moscow and All Russia with the Grand Prince Alexander of Lithuania, in the text of the charter sent from the Lithuanian prince to Moscow, Novgorod, Pskov and Tver belonging to Ivan were called "grand principalities"<sup>4</sup>. In modern Russian historiography, it is customary to call Pskov and Novgorod "republics".

Like Novgorod, Pskov was divided into ends and suburbs. The ends were not just administrative-territorial units, as in Novgorod, but represented communities of citizens. Within the communities, citizens were divided into hundreds, each of which had its own representative – the sotsky. In rural areas ("gubas"), the same function was performed by the guba headmen.

From the beginning of the XIV century, the chronicles mention the people's assembly of Pskov - *Veche*. The *Veche* had the highest legislative power. This body was more functional than a similar meeting in Novgorod. There were no irreconcilable hostile parties fighting for power, as in Novgorod, issues were not solved by shouting over each other, physical violence was not used, there were no bloody massacres and murders. The *Veche* gathered to decide on the most

<sup>4</sup> Gorsky A.A. 2018. "Beshchislenye rati i velikie trudy...": problemy russkoi istorii X - XV vv. Pp. 7-8.

important issues: the adoption of laws, the invitation or expulsion of the prince, the conclusion of peace or the declaration of war, etc. There was a certain qualification for those who could come to the *Veche*. They were men - the owners of the courtyards located in the city. Villagers did not have such a right. The executive and judicial powers were exercised by the prince, posadniks and sotskies. All together they made up a collegial body, which was called "gospodá" (a feminine noun, singular, with an emphasis on the last syllable). The posadniks directed the foreign and domestic policy of the Pskov land, concluded treaties, acted as ambassadors to neighboring states, and made judicial decisions as part of the "gospodá" as the highest panel of judges. During the period of independence of Pskov, there were at least two posadniks. Their exact number, election procedure and term of office are unknown. Sotsky represented the city administration. On January 13, 1510, the Grand Prince of Moscow Vasily III abolished the autonomy of Pskov, the institution of posadniks and *Veche* were abolished, and Pskov became part of the unified Russian state.

As in a large international trade center, Pskov had a permanent trading post of merchants of the largest German trade union - the Hanseatic League, and trade with the Hanseatic cities was regulated by treaties (for the first time Pskov was independently mentioned in the Novgorod-Hanseatic Treaty of January 6, 1342).

The monetary system of Pskov before 1409 is beyond the scope of this article. Nevertheless, I will focus on two important monetary units that connect it with the coins that were subsequently minted. Written sources and archaeological finds convincingly prove that the Pskov monetary system in the Middle Ages was tied to the monetary system of Veliky Novgorod. Neither Novgorod nor Pskov minted their own coins until the 1420s. But they produced heavy cast silver payment bars to settle large transactions. The presence of ingots in monetary circulation was common, both for Europe (where they were called "marks") and for Asia (saixi, yuanbao, som). In Russia, they were called "**grivnas**", and starting from the last quarter of the XII century, such ingots in birch bark letters began to be called **rubles**, and ingots of half a ruble – **poltinas** (Fig. 1d). In 1316, the ruble was first mentioned in an official document - in the treaty of Novgorod and the Tver prince Mikhail Yaroslavich. Novgorod ingots are known in two types. The first of them, the so-called "**long**", have the shape of an elongated stick with a trapezoidal section 14-20 cm long (Fig. 1c). Other ingots are called "**humpback**". They are much shorter: 11 - 14 cm, but thicker and have a kind of humped back. Both long and humped ingots had the same weight norm. Until the end of the XIV century, the "original" weight of the Novgorod silver grivna-ruble was equal to 197 grams, but around 1389 it was reduced to 184 g<sup>5</sup>. And this weight norm was preserved throughout the first half of the XV century. Humpback ingots appeared a little later than long ones, their appearance is explained by a more compact shape for storage and transportation.

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<sup>5</sup> Bauer N. P. 2014. History of Old Russian Monetary Systems of the IX Century - 1535, Moscow, "Russian Word". Pp. 344-345.



Another version believes that the grivna began to be called the ruble, since this name reminded that the whole ingot could be *cut* into fifty and smaller fractions. An alternative opinion was expressed by the curator of the numismatics department of the State Hermitage, V. A. Kalinin. As early as in the 50s of the last century, M. P. Sotnikova in her dissertation on silver payment ingots of Veliky Novgorod noted that some of the humpbacked ingots usually have a clearly visible seam, which is explained by the technique of "double casting". The technique of double casting of silver ingots involves the production of an ingot in two stages: first, an alloy of silver (high-grade or with impurities) is poured, and then molten high-quality silver is added on top. V. A. Kalinin suggested that the etymology of the word ruble does not necessarily have to be associated with the verb "chop", and the explanation may lie in the technique of making a ruble ingot: the edge of the "humpback" ingots was probably processed, smoothed with a hammer, while the root *rub* means the edge, the border. It seems that the solution to the problem is even simpler: *rub* ... In Serbo-Croatian it is a *seam*, a border, in Polish it is *a scare*. To the same group of words we should also include the Russian rube. Thus, the term ruble should probably be understood as "an ingot with a seam".<sup>7</sup> I do not know how valid this assumption is. In the same dissertation by M. P. Sotnikova, the data of a study of 425 ingots stored in the State Hermitage (St. Petersburg) and the State Historical Museum (Moscow) are cited. of these, 222 ingots were made by the monolithic casting technique, and only 203 were made by double casting. Of these 203, only about 70 ingots showed a difference in the quality of the silver of the lower and upper castings and had a scar visible to the eye<sup>8</sup>.

The general concept of "money" in the XIV – XV centuries was denoted by the words "kuns" or "silver". "Kuns" got their name from the denomination of the coin common in Russia in the Middle Ages. And "silver" - because silver was the standard precious monetary metal in Russia. Foreign European money, because of the Polish denarii or pfennigs (in Russian "penyazi") widespread in Lithuania since the second half of the 14th century, was generally called "penyazi".

In 1409, according to the chronicles, "in Pskov they put aside kunas to trade, and from then on they began to trade in penyazi",<sup>9</sup> that is, they legalized the circulation of foreign currency on the domestic market. The next year, the same thing happened in Novgorod: "In the same year, the Novgorodians began to trade between themselves with lobtsy and Lithuanian groschen and penyazi and German artugs, and put aside kunas"<sup>10</sup>. The word "lobtsy" referred to the Lübeck (German: lübische) pfennigs minted in Reval, which were issued according to the coin standard of the capital of the Hanseatic League - the city of Lübeck. "Lithuanian

<sup>7</sup> Potin V.M. 1993. Coins, treasures, collections. St. Petersburg: Iskustvo, p.153.

<sup>8</sup> Sotnikova M.P. From the History of the Circulation of Russian Silver Plating Ingots. The Case of Fyodor Zhrebets // Soviet Archaeology. – 1957. – No 3, pp. 54-59; Sotnikova M.P. Serebryanye platnye slitki Veliky Novgoroda i problemy proiskhozhdenie novgorodnoy denezhnoy sistemy XV v. [Silver payment ingots of Veliky Novgorod and the problems of the origin of the Novgorod monetary system of the XV century]. – T. 12. Leningrad, Nauka Publ., 1981.

<sup>9</sup> Pskov 1st Chronicle. Tikhonov's list. PSRL, vol. V, iss. 1. Moscow, 2003. P. 32.

<sup>10</sup> The Novgorod First Chronicle of the Elder and Junior Editions. Ed. by A. N. Nasonov. Moscow-Leningrad, 1950. P. 402.

groschen" are the Krakow groschen and their factions circulating in the Grand Principality of Lithuania. The "German artugs" meant the artigs of the Livonian Order and the Bishopric of Dorpat.

The reasons why Pskov and Novgorod allowed the intervention of foreign coins in the domestic money market are for some reason passed over in complete silence in numismatic literature. The only researcher who touched upon this topic, N. A. Khan, on the basis of indirect data, suggests the following. According to the Pskov chronicles, in 1407-1409 there was a large harvest of grain in Pskov, the surplus of which was exported. The money received for grain could be used in different ways - up to the formation of a foreign exchange reserve, not to mention the beginning of the issuance of its own coin. In Pskov and Novgorod, they chose not the best option - a mass of Western European and Baltic low-grade silver was thrown to serve retail trade<sup>11</sup>. Another reason for the admission of foreign currency into circulation, according to N. A. Khan, was the mitigation of the silver deficit resulting from the decline in silver production in Europe<sup>12</sup>. Be that as it may, as a result, the economies of Pskov and Novgorod suffered heavy losses. Firstly, by introducing foreign currency into circulation, the state lost income from its emission. Secondly, Western issuers carried out constant deterioration of coins by systematically reducing the silver content in it. Inflation income again went into the pocket of the issuer, and the consumer constantly suffered losses.

Novgorod was the first to abandon foreign currency and switch to minting its own. In 1420, "the Novgorodians began to trade in silver dengas, and sold the artugs to the Germans, and traded for 9 years"<sup>13</sup>, which means "the Novgorodians began to use silver dengas in trade, and the Artugs sold it to the Germans, and used it in trade for 9 years." In this case, the word "dengas" means the denomination of new coins.

Pskov began minting its own coins between September 1424 and February 1425, such a conclusion was made by V. L. Yanin on the basis of a chronicle record of the handwritten service Menaion XV kept in the State Historical Museum, discovered in 1929 by A. N. Oreshnikov<sup>14</sup>. In terms of money circulation, this entry is as follows<sup>15</sup>:

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<sup>11</sup> Khan N. A. Monetary Systems of Ancient Russia and the Golden Horde at the End of the XIII - the First Half of the XV Century: Mutual Influence and Confrontation. Chapters from the monograph on Nikolai Khan's website. Electronic resource:

<https://nkhan.ru/glava-iz-monografii-denezhnyie-sistemyi-drevney-rusi-i-zolotoy-ordyi-v-kontse-xiii-pervoy-polovine-xv-vv-vzaimovliyanie-i-protivostoyanie/>

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>13</sup> The Novgorod First Chronicle of the Elder and Junior Editions. Ed. by A. N. Nasonov. Moscow-Leningrad, 1950. P. 412.

<sup>14</sup> A. N. Oreshnikov, apparently, was the first to draw attention to the fact that the said entry in the Menaion contains information related to the beginning of the Pskov coinage. It was published in 1909: Record of the Menaion of the Synodal Library No 173. Karinsky, N. M. Yazyk Pskova i ego oblasti v XV veke [The language of Pskov and its region in the XV century]. St. Petersburg. Type. M. A. Aleksandrova, 1909. (Notes of the Faculty of History and Philology of the Imperial St. Petersburg University; Part 93). Pp. 142-143.

<sup>15</sup> Yanin V. L. 1955. On the beginning of the Pskov coin coinage. Numismatic Collection of the State Historical Museum, Part 1. Moscow, p. 23.

Въ лѣтѣ 6932. (...) при великомъ кнѣзи. васильи дмитріевѣ.  
(...) того лѣтѣ свершени быхъ перси оу Кромѣ. (...) того  
лѣтѣ. Федосъ посадникъ. и вси псковѣи оуставили денги.

Translation: "In the year 6933 from the Creation of the world (1424/1425)... Under Grand Prince Vasily Dmitrievich... In this year the walls in the Pskov Kremlin ("Krom") were completed. This year, the posadnik Fedos and all the people of Pskov decided to put dengas into circulation." In this context, the word "dengas" also refers to the name of coins. Where did such an exact interval come from: September 1424 – February 1425? The Menaion, according to V. L. Yanin, uses the September style, according to which the year 6933 from the Creation of the world begins on September 1, 1424. On the other hand, the entry could not have been made later than February 28, 1425, on which day the Grand Prince Vasily Dmitrievich, under whom the Menaion was written, died<sup>16</sup>.

However, in the Pskov 1st Chronicle, according to the Tikhanov list, it is said that the construction of the walls in Except was completed in 6932, and even the exact date is indicated - July 7, 1424;

"В лето 6932. Свършени быша перси у Крома мѣсяца июля в 7 день, а делаша двести муж пол четверта года и взя оу Пскова делѣ мзды 1000 рублев, а котории плиту жгли взяша двести рублев."

Translation: "In the year 6932. The walls at Krom were finished on the 7th day of the month of July, and they were made by two hundred men for three and a half years, and they took a fee of 1000 rubles from Pskov, and those who fired bricks took two hundred rubles." This entry is followed by the following:

"Того лета псковичи отложиша пенязми артугы торговати и приставиша мастеров денги ковати в чистом сребре."<sup>17</sup>

("In that year, the Pskovians stopped paying with foreign money - artugs - and appointed masters to mint dengas from pure silver"). V. L. Yanin believes that there was a mistake in the chronicle, and the construction of the walls was completed in November 1424, that is, already in 6933. To prove this, he cites the inscription on the hanging seal mentioned by I. I. Tolstoy in the 1886 monograph "Pskov Coins", which also bears the date 6933<sup>18</sup>. I give a photograph of this seal (Fig. 3). Drawing is given according to A. S. Melnikova<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>17</sup> Pskov 1st Chronicle. Tikhanov's list. Pskov Chronicles. Issue 1. Moscow-Leningrad, 1941. P. 35.

<sup>18</sup> Tolstoy I.I. 1886. Russian pre-Petrine numismatics. Issue 2. Pskov coins. St. Petersburg. Pp. 14-15.

<sup>19</sup> Melnikova A. S. 1963. Pskov Coins of the XV Century // Numismatics and Epigraphy. Volume IV. 1963, p. 233.



Fig. 3. Pskov Hanging Seal of 6933.

Obverse: in the center is the head of Dovmont in a circle of beads. Circular inscription (according to V. L. Yanin):

**В ЛѢТ. 6933 С(О)ЛН(ЦА) (КРУГ) 17 М(ЕСЯЦА) 17 ИНД(ИКА) 3**

" Year 6933 17th circle of the sun 17th month of 3rd indication"

The reverse: an inscription in 6 lines (after V. L. Yanin):

**ПЕЧАТЬ ПСКОВСКОГО. ТОГДА И ПЕРСИ СВЕРШЕНЫ КАМЕНЬ**

" The Pskov seal. Stone walls were built then "<sup>20</sup>

The coin introduced in Pskov was called " **denga** " (Russian «**деньга**»). The name "denga" was a common name for the denomination of coins in the states of northeastern Russia. "Dengas" began to be minted in the Ryazan and Suzdal - Nizhny Novgorod lands in the 1370s-1380s, in Moscow in the early 1380s, in Tver in 1413, in Veliky Novgorod in 1420, etc. The weight and design of " dengas " in different states were different. It was from the name of these coins that the modern Russian word «**деньги**» ("**money**") was born. Pskov began to issue " dengas " in 1424/25, one of the last.

The process of making coins was as follows. The image of the obverse and reverse of the coin was carved on the mother cells of hard metal. Queen cells could serve for years, from time to time the image on them was corrected. Stamps were made from the mother cells on coin stamps, and a negative image was obtained on them: all convex elements of the pattern became depressed and vice versa. The stamps obtained by this method were hardened and used in work. The prepared metal in the form of silver ingots, European coins or silver scrap was melted and poured into special oblong molds. During remelting, the metal was cleaned of impurities and ligature, which made it possible to obtain silver of a very high standard. The resulting rods were dragged into silver wire of the desired diameter, which was cut into pieces of equal weight. These blanks were flattened, then money masters minted coins from them. Such a technology for making coin blanks led to the fact that the circle turned out to be uneven, usually on the two opposite sides of the scales two protrusions are clearly visible, remaining on the blank after its separation from the wire. Because of their shape resembling fish scales, these wire coins are called "*cheshuiki*" or "*scales*".

I. I. Tolstoy was the first to try to systematize Pskov coins in the monograph "Pskov Coins", published in 1886<sup>21</sup>. He studied about 800 coins, did serious work on their description, but could not find criteria for their chronological and metrological classification. Only in 1963 the systematization of Pskov coins appeared. It was published by A. S. Melnikova in her work "Pskov Coins of the

<sup>20</sup> Yanin V. L. 1955. On the beginning of the Pskov coin coinage. Numismatic Collection of the State Historical Museum, Part 1. Moscow, p. 22.

<sup>21</sup> Tolstoy I.I. 1886. Russian pre-Petrine numismatics. Issue 2. Pskov coins. St. Petersburg.

XV Century."<sup>22</sup>. This work appeared on the basis of a scrupulous study of about 3000 copies stored in the collections of the Hermitage, the Pushkin Museum and the State Historical Museum. Melnikova analyzed the stamp connections of the obverse and reverse sides of various types of coins, bringing them together in 7 impressive tables with drawings of several hundred copies. Melnikova's systematization, although, of course, is not devoid of "blank spots", but it makes it possible to distinguish the groups and types of coins proposed by Melnikova from each other by the appearance and weight of the money and to establish the approximate time of their minting. To date, it is the only justified classification of money of independent Pskov according to any criteria.

The Pskov silver coin was minted in two denominations: *denga* and *chetvertsa*. The chetvertsa was a ¼ of the denga. Coins were minted from high-grade silver. In addition to the silver coin, small copper coins – *pulos* were minted in Pskov, but the images on them (a double-headed eagle and a siren), characteristic of the coins of the Moscow and Tver mintage, testify to the fact that they were minted after the annexation of Pskov to Moscow.

On the obverse of the coins of both denominations, during the 85 years of minting (1424/5 – 1510), there was a rather primitive image of a man's head in full face; on the head there is a wavy headdress divided by a vertical line into two halves - a hat or a crown, from under which semicircular pendants hang on both sides of the face, resembling ears in shape. Chest and neck are absent. From below, semicircular lines depicting shoulders and arms protrude directly from this head to the sides (Fig. 4a). Often two triangles appear under the chin, depicting a collar (Fig. 4b), between the hands - dots or beads (Fig. 4b, 4c) or a placket (Fig. 4d), depicting buttons or a clasp. In the right hand there is a sword with a characteristic blade in the form of an elongated triangle, the left hand seems to be pressed to the chest. In rare cases, the sword is in the left hand. Along the edge of the coin there is a rim of dots. The coin field can contain dots and letters.



Fig. 4. Obverses of Pskov dengas

The image on the obverse of the coins is similar to the image on the Pskov hanging seal dedicated to the completion of the construction of the Krom walls (Fig. 3). The only difference is that only the head is depicted on the seal, and on the coins - in addition to the head, there are also shoulders with arms. There is no doubt that the prototype for this image was the portrait of the "bishop in a mitre"

<sup>22</sup> Melnikova A. S. 1963. Pskov Coins of the XV Century // Numismatics and Epigraphy. Volume IV, pp. 222-244.

on the obverse of the artigs of the Dorpat bishopric – the very same "German artugs" who served the Pskov retail trade for 15 years from 1409 to 1424 (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Artigs of the Bishops of Dorpat

As we can see, on the obverse of the Dorpat coins there is a chest-length image of the bishop in a mitre. Both temples have poorly depicted mitre ribbons - a sign of episcopal dignity, which everyone mistakes for curly hair. I. I. Tolstoy, having carefully studied the images on the articles and compared them with the images on the Pskov coins, noticed that there were two dots on the articles at the bottom near the curls or ribbons of the bishop. Exactly the same two dots are found on the Pskov seal of 6933 and on the Pskov dengas, which he rightly considered to be the earliest (Fig. 6). According to I. I. Tolstoy, this is quite enough to recognize the fact of copying the image on Pskov coins from Dorpat<sup>23</sup>. Later, the drawing on Pskov dengas in small details began to gradually move away from the prototype.



Fig. 6. Obverse artillery: Bishop Henry I Felde's artig (left) and Pskov denga (right)  
I. I. Tolstoy (1886)

Forming the obverse side of the coins, the Pskov stamp carvers decided to abandon the circular inscription. They added hands to the image on the coin, which they needed in order to insert a sword into them. According to the general opinion of researchers, the portrait depicts the heavenly patron of the city - Prince Dovmont. The famous Dovmont's sword was a symbol of princely power. The chronicle mentions that this sword was "put into the hands" of the prince summoned to Pskov on the throne in the Trinity Cathedral: "In the year 6968 (1460)... The Grand Prince sent his son Prince Yuri to Pskov... and the Pskov people received him with great honor, and set him on a table in the church of the Holy Trinity, and gave the sword of their Prince Dovmont into his hands"<sup>24</sup>. Dovmont's sword is still on display at the Pskov Museum-Reserve. It has a 90-

<sup>23</sup> Tolstoy I.I. 1886. Russian pre-Petrine numismatics. Issue 2. Pskov coins. St. Petersburg. P. 23.

<sup>24</sup> Chronicle according to the Voskresensky list // PSRL, vol. VIII, St. Petersburg, 1859, p. 148.

centimeter blade of a characteristic elongated-triangular shape, evenly tapering towards the end, a round pommel on the handle and a transverse guard, the edges of which are bent towards the blade. This is the shape that the carvers tried to give to the sword on coins. On the field of the coin, next to the portrait of Dovmont, there are usually different letters or dots.

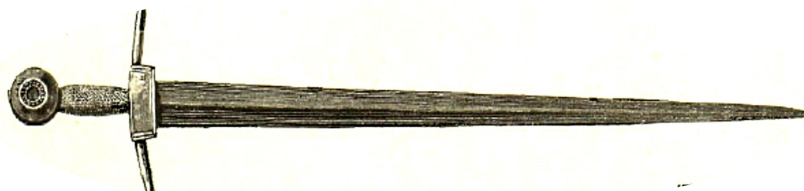


Fig. 7. Dovmont's sword (drawing from life by I. F. Barshchevsky from the monograph of I. I. Tolstoy)<sup>25</sup>

The reverse of Pskov silver money is of two types. The first of them contains an inscription in four lines: **ДЕНЬГА ПСКОВЪСКАЯ** (“the Pskov denga”). Along the edge of the coin there is a rim of dots (Fig. 8a). The second in the center of the coin depicts a four-legged animal with a mane and a long curved tail raised up, which for some reason is called a leopard in numismatic literature. Around the "leopard" in a circle clockwise there is an inscription **ДЕНЬГА ПСКОВЪСКАЯ** (“the Pskov denga”). As a rule, the "leopard" on the coin is turned to the right (Fig. 8b). On single specimens, it is depicted with its head to the left (Fig. 8c).



Fig. 8. Reverse of Pskov dengas

On the reverse of the coins of the chetvertsa denomination, due to their extremely small size, there is only an inscription in 3 or 4 lines **ПЪСКОВЪСКАЯ** (“Pskov’s”). Along the edge of the coin there is a rim of dots. On the obverse near the left ear of Dovmont there is usually some marker: a letter or a badge.

<sup>25</sup> Tolstoy I.I. 1886. Russian pre-Petrine numismatics. Issue 2. Pskov coins. St. Petersburg, p. 26.



Fig. 9. Pskov Chetvertsia. Silver, 0.18 g. No marker near the left ear  
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According to technical characteristics, chronologically, A. S. Melnikova divides the Pskov dengas into 4 groups.

### Group 1

The so-called archaic coins. This is the earliest Pskov money, which began to be minted first in 1424/5. On the obverse – Dovmont in full-face. On the reverse there is an inscription. In Russian numismatic jargon, this type of coin is called "*strochnik*" (Russian «*строчник*»). This name was born due to the fact that the inscription on the coin is not arranged in a circle, but in several *lines* (Russian «*строчки*»), as on a piece of paper. The distinctive features of archaic coins are, firstly, the more ancient spelling. The word "Pskov's" on the reverse is written according to an outdated form for the XIV century with two letters **Ь**: **ПЬСКОВЬСКАЯ**. Tolstoy also drew attention to this feature and explained this form of transition from an even more ancient one - **ПЛЬСКОВЬСКАЯ** ("Pleskov's"). In addition, I. I. Tolstoy came across a copy of a coin with a legend **а се денга пськовьская** ("and here is the denga of Pskov") (Fig. 9b), which reminded the researcher of the legends on even more ancient coins of the late 10th – early 11th centuries, on which the name of the Prince and the phrase **а се его серебро** ("and here is his silver"). According to the researcher, this was also an argument in favor of the fact that this coin belongs to the earliest. Of the 6 coins of the 1st group, studied by I. I. Tolstoy, and 150, studied by A. S. Melnikova, the inscription on the reverse in four lines exists in one of three versions:

ДЕНЬ|ГАПСЬК|ОВЬСК|АЯ (Fig. 9a)

ДЕНЬ|ГАПСЬК|ОВЬСКА|Я (Fig. 9b)

АСЕД|ЕНЬГАПС|КОВЬС|КААИ (Fig. 10)  
("the denga of Pskov")



Fig. 9. Dengas of the 1st group. "Archaic"

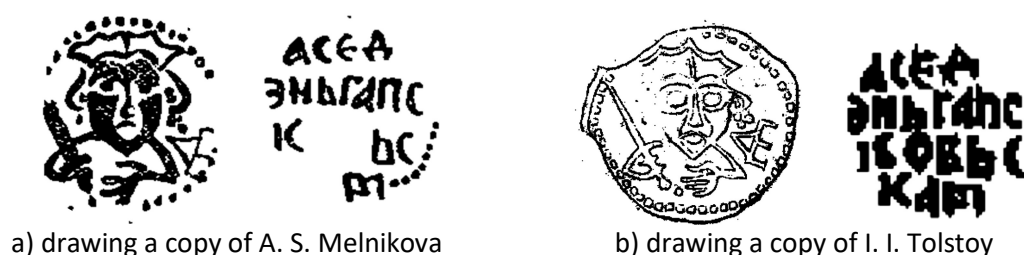


Fig. 10. "Archaic" dengas with the inscription " а се дѣньга псковьскааи "

The second important distinguishing feature of the coins of the first group is the obligatory presence of the sign  on the obverse of the coin. It is located above the left shoulder of Dovmont, directed with the "point" towards the face. Tolstoy mistakenly assumed that  this is some archaic form of the Old Russian letter **А** (jus small), which was not found anywhere else. Melnikova puts forward a more plausible version. She deciphers  it as a ligature consisting of the letters **Д** and **М**, denoting the name of the patron prince of Pskov «ДОВМОНТ-ПИМОФЕЙ» ("Dovmont-Timotheus"). Having compared the stamp connections of archaic coins, the researcher came to the conclusion that all of them were minted at a single mint, and suggested that the first mint in Pskov was located in the city adjacent to Krom of Dovmont, and the badge  was the emblem of this mint.

The two main features I have mentioned are quite enough to visually distinguish the dengas of the 1st "archaic" group from the rest of the mass of Pskov coins.

The weight norm of this dengas, according to Melnikova, was initially 0.79 g, then decreased to 0.76 g. The chronological framework of the decrease in the weight norm, the researcher, on the basis of chronicle evidence, refers to the period between 1434 and 1466. The first evidence speaks of the price of bread in 1434: "And in Pskov of the Holy Trinity God gave a lot of bread, 9 dengas for a zobnitsa<sup>26</sup> of rye".<sup>27</sup> Under the same year in another Pskov chronicle it says: " 13 rye zobnitsas in Pskov cost poltina ".<sup>28</sup> Based on the cost of one zobnitsa of 9 dengas and the cost of 13 zobnitsas of poltina, it is not difficult to calculate that the poltina included  $9 \times 13 = 117$  dengas. And since poltina was half a ruble, the ruble was equal to 234 dengas. The weight norm of a ruble silver bar in the first half of the 15th century, as calculated by N. P. Bauer and A. S. Melnikova independently of each other, was 184 g. Consequently, the weight norm of denga was  $184 : 234 = 0.786$  g, that is, a figure close to 0.79 g, which was confirmed by the weighing materials of the heavier part of the coins of the 1st group.

<sup>26</sup> Zobnitsa is a measure of bulk solids in Pskov, equal to 104.96 liters.

<sup>27</sup> Pskov 1st Chronicle. Tikhonov's list. Pskov Chronicles. Issue 1. Moscow-Leningrad, 1941. P. 42.

<sup>28</sup> Pskov 2nd Chronicle. Synodal List. Pskov Chronicles. Issue 2. Moscow, 1955. P. 44.

## Group 2

The group is more numerous than the previous one. In total, about 400 coins were examined. These coins-*strochniks* are minted on thinner and wider plates. The weight norm in comparison with the "archaic" ones is reduced to 0.76 g. The portrait on the obverse acquires various small details: the collar, patterns on the headdress, dots in the field of the coin. Monogram  it is no longer minted on the obverse; Letters appear instead: К, И, Є, С, ІЄ, Д, signs , points. Some coins are rough imitations of coins of the 1st group (Fig. 11a). A characteristic difference from archaic coins is the paleography of coins. From the word ПСКОВЪСКАЯ ("of Pskov") after П disappears Ъ, and the suffix ЪСК is replaced by the suffix ЪСК. A single legend type and location is set: ДЕН|ЪГАНСКО|Ъ•СК|•АЯ•. Judging by the lack of correlation between the stamps, the activities of a single monetary mint with an emblem , for some reason ceased, and the coinage was transferred to several independent moneymakers, who, according to A. S. Melnikova, put their initials on the coins. The researcher talks about six disparate types of coins of the 2nd group.



Fig. 11. Dengas of the 2nd group

A. S. Melnikova does not report on the period of time when these coins were minted. As for the metrological system of Pskov money, she reports that in the period between 1434 and 1466 the Münzfuß (coin foot) changed, and not 234 dengas, but 220 dengas was minted from the ruble. Citing chronicle evidence of hop prices in 1466 and 1467, Melnikova reports on the following ratios of the ruble, poltina and denga. In 1466, in Pskov, "hops were expensive, a zobnitsa of hops cost 100 and 20 dengas"<sup>29</sup>. In 1467, "hops were expensive in Pskov, I bought

<sup>29</sup> Pskov Chronicles. Issue 2. Moscow, 1955. P. 74.

a zobnitsa of hops for poltina and 10 dengas."<sup>30</sup> "Because hops were very expensive, 60 dengas was worth ½ zobnitsa of hops, but it wasn't for a long time."<sup>31</sup> When comparing this information, it turns out that 100 and 20 dengas correspond to poltina and 10 dengas. In 1467 - ½ a zobnitsa cost 60 dengas, a zobnitsa, respectively, cost 120 dengas, which confirms the equality of prices of 1466 and 1467. According to this information, the half-ruble corresponded to 110 dengas, and the ruble to 220 dengas. According to N. P. Bauer, in Novgorod since 1420, along with the ruble-bullion weighing 184 g, which I mentioned above, there existed an accounting monetary ruble equal to 216 Novgorod dengas weighing 0.80 g<sup>32</sup>. In 1446/47, silver bullion was no longer produced in Novgorod, they were withdrawn from circulation and melted down into coins: "In the same year, the Novgorodians abandoned monetary silver bars: old and new rubles due to the fact that the moneyers mixed impurities from base metals into silver. All the ingots were melted down into dengi, and the *Veche* sentenced the money makers to take away all the proceeds from the manufacture of counterfeit silver bars, and the counterfeiters themselves to drown in the river."<sup>33</sup> If in 1466 the ruble was equal to 220 Pskov dengas, the weight norm of the Pskov denga was  $172.80 : 220 = 0.7854$  g, that is, exactly the same as before. Metrological studies by A. S. Melnikova do not give an answer to the question of why the Pskov dengas of the 2nd group weighed 0.76 g, and then fell even more in weight.

### Group 3

In the third group, A. S. Melnikova included two seemingly completely different types of coins. The first type is "*strochniks*" - coins with an inscription on the reverse side **ДЕНЬГА ПСКОВЪ СКАЯ**, similar to coins of groups 1 and 2. Their weight norm has been reduced to 0.75 g. The second type has a new reverse: in the center of it, the so-called "leopard" appears, around which there is a circular inscription **ДЕНЬГА ПСКОВЪ СКАЯ**. Their weight norm is higher: 0.76 - 0.77 g. There are no stamp connections between these two types.

What made Alla Sergeevna Melnikova unite them into one group? On the obverse of these coins, the sign of the single mint again appears. This is no longer the same ligature **А**, but a sign that is close to it in meaning **А**. Vertical Lines Letters **П** are transformed into triangles, one of the angles directed downwards: **▼▼▼**. Melnikova believes that the significance of the ligature by that time had been lost due to the passage of time, so on the obverse of some coins with a leopard instead of a sign **А** Letters that are more understandable to ordinary people appear **Д** and **Л**. Melnikova considers the portrait on the obverse of the coins and the letters in the inscription on the reverse to be similar to the iconography and paleography of the Pskov hanging seals of 1468/69, which I have

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 163-164.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

<sup>32</sup> Bauer N. P. 2014. History of Old Russian Monetary Systems of the IX Century - 1535, Moscow, "Russian Word". Pp. 433 and 484.

<sup>33</sup> PSRL, vol. IV, part 4; Novgorod Fourth Chronicle, iss. 2, Leningrad, 1925, pp. 442, 443.

given in Figure 1. Therefore, Alla Sergeevna considers the 1460s to be the time of minting. The number of coins of the 3rd group exceeds the coins of the previous groups and is about 500.



Fig. 12. Dengas of the 3rd group of the 1st type

There are many versions of the appearance of the so-called "leopard" on coins. And I see no point in listing them. Judging by the fact that the animal has a mane on the coins, according to the artist's plan, it is not a leopard, but a lion, dragon or some other mythological creature (Fig. 13).



Fig. 13. Drawing of "leopards" on the reverses of the 3rd group of the 2nd type

Images of similar animals were widespread starting from the X-XII centuries on Novgorod hanging seals (Fig. 14).



Fig. 14. Drawing of Act Seals of Veliky Novgorod (after Yanin, Gaidukov, 1998)<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Yanin V.L., Gaidukov P.G. 1998. Aktovye pechaty Drevnei Rusi X-XII vv. T. III. P. 213.

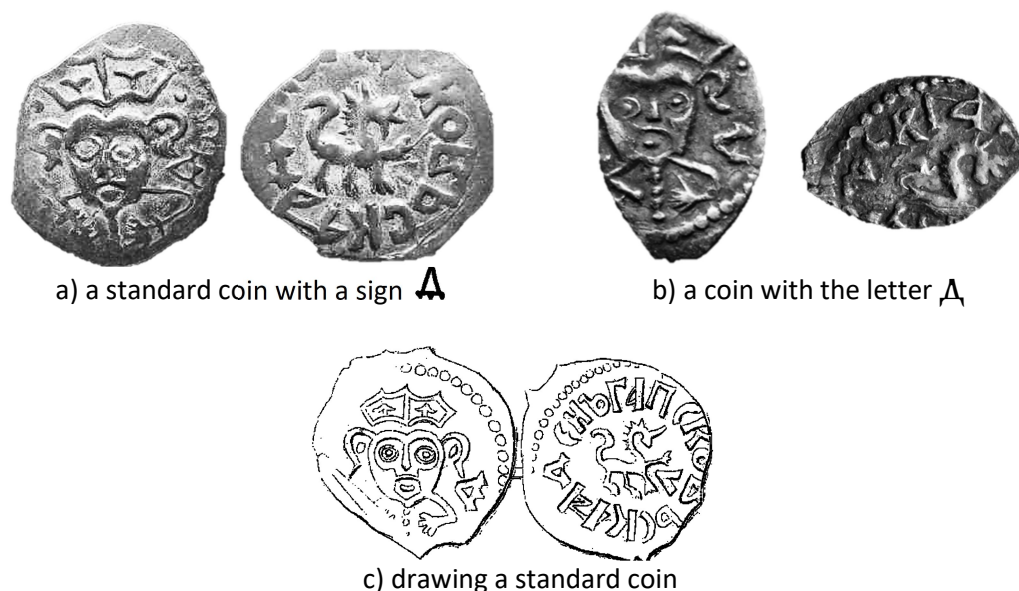


Fig. 15. Dengas of the 3rd group of the 2nd type

### Group 4

The fourth group includes money with a leopard on the reverse. This is the most diverse and the most numerous group, which includes about 700 coins. Coins of this group differ from the previous ones in that the sign **A**, as a symbol of a single mint, disappears from them and dots, icons, letters **A**, **З**, **Є**, **Э**, **Λ**, **М**, presumably belonging to different moneymakers or money masters, appear again. In addition, on some of the coins on the obverse there are no additional signs at all. Of all the letters, only the letter **М** is found on coins with the name of the Grand Prince, minted after Pskov lost its independence in 1510.

A. S. Melnikova divided the coins of the 4th group into 2 types. The first of them has a weight norm of 0.74 - 0.75 g (Fig. 16), the second type is "heavy" - a weight norm of 0.79 g. On the basis of written sources, Melnikova came to the conclusion that in the 1490s the Pskov monetary system was transferred to the all-Russian account and equated to the Novgorod denга weighing 0.79 g or two Moscow dengas with a weight norm of 0.395 g on the coin foot of 100 Novgorod dengas weighing 0.79 g or 200 Moscow dengas from one Moscow ruble. Consequently, the "heavy" dengas with the leopard, which replaced the lightweight dengas of the 1st type, was the last dengas of independent Pskov, minted before 1510.



Fig. 16. 4 type 1 group. Weight 0.74 g. Obverse: letter 3



Fig. 17. 4 type 2 group. Weight 0.84 g.



Fig. 18. "Heavyweight" denга of the 4th group of type 2 on the scales

## Chetvertsa

The most complete study of the chetvertsas belongs to P. G. Gaidukov<sup>35</sup>. In total, he managed to examine 331 coins. Chronologically, he divided them into three main types or groups.

In the 1st group, he singled out coins, which, like dengas, can be called "archaic", and their production Most likely, it took place simultaneously with the minting of early "archaic" dengas. He believes that they were minted for about 10 years: from 1425 to 1435. Unfortunately, I could not find an explanation from the researcher why he considers 1435 to be the date of the end of their minting. A total of 128 such coins are known. Stylistically and in appearance, they are noticeably different from all other quarters. The inscription on the reverse does not contain the denomination of the coin. It consists of one word "Pskov's", in three lines: ПЬ|КОВЬС|КАІА. The spelling is the same as that of the Pskov denга: the word ПЬС|КОВЬС|КАІА written with two Ъ. The coins are combined into 30 variants, connected to each other by common stamps. The number of coins in the variants ranges from 1 to 12 copies. The weight of most coins of this variant is approx. 0.18 g.



Fig. 19. Drawing the chetvertsa of the 1st group

The main difference between groups 2 and 3 from the first group is that the inscription on them is not in three, but in four lines: ПЬ|СКОВ|ЪСКА|ІА (Fig. 20, 21). The palaeography of these coins differs from the palaeography of both the chetvertsas of the 1st group and from the paleography of dengas. The word

<sup>35</sup> Gaidukov P. G. Pskov Coins of the XV Century // The Tenth All-Russian Numismatic Conference: Moscow, April 15-20, 2002: Tez. dokl. and messages. Moscow, 2002. P.169-173. Gaydukov P.G. 2006. Russian half-dengi, chetveriettsy, and polushkas of the XIV-XVII centuries. "Paleograph", Moscow.

"Pskov's" is written with two **Ъ**: **ПЪСКОВЪСКАЯ**. Coins of the 2nd and 3rd groups are larger and thinner than archaic chetvertsas. According to the ratio of stamps, P. G. Gaidukov divided them into 120 variants. There are stamp connections between the options, but they are insignificant. In group 2, the number of coins in the variants ranges from 1 to 12 copies, in group 3 - from 1 to 6. The difference between the 2nd and 3rd groups is that the image of the prince and the letters of the inscription on the coins of group 2 are slightly larger than on the coins of group 3. The weight diagram of the coins of groups 2-3 shows 0.17 g, which indicates a slight decrease in the weight of these coins compared to the "archaic" chetvertsas. As for the chronological framework of the minting of coins of these groups, P. G. Gaidukov says that it is impossible to establish them. He calls the year 1435 the beginning of the minting, but on what his assumptions are based, unfortunately, I could not find.



Fig. 20. Group 2 chetvertsas



Fig. 21. Group 3 chetvertsas  
(drawing)

Among the exceptions to the general classification, there are two coins weighing 0.14 and 0.17 g, on which the inscription "Pskov's" is written with **Ь** and **Ъ** (Fig. 22): **ПЬ|СКОВ|ЪСКА|Я**



Fig. 22. Chetvertsas of the 2nd group with the legend of **ПЬ|СКОВ|ЪСКА|Я**

Analyzing the weight of the coins under study, P. G. Gaidukov comes to the following conclusion. Based on the example of the Novgorod chetvertsas, the weight norm, or "statutory" weight, for different types of Pskov chetvertsas can be safely determined at 0.19 and 0.18 g. Judging by these figures, it turns out that the "statutory" weight of the Pskov denga in 1425 was 0.76 g, and a few years later it was reduced to 0.72 g. Since there is no proper equality between the real weight of denga and the chetvertsas when divided by 4: the weight of denga remains higher under all reasonable assumptions. This means that the chetvertsas in Pskov were treated at a slightly overvalued rate<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Gaidukov P. G. Pskov Coins of the XV Century // The Tenth All-Russian Numismatic Conference: Moscow, April 15-20, 2002: Tez. dokl. and messages. Moscow, 2002. Pp. 169-173.

## Pskov Pulo

Pskov coins with the denomination "pulo" were minted of copper. The method of their manufacture was exactly the same as that of silver coins. All coins were made of wire cut into pieces, which were flattened with smooth coinage to obtain coin blanks.

Pulos research was carried out by P. G. Gaidukov. He examined 162 specimens of these coins. Referring to the testimony of the German diplomat Sigismund Herberstein, who visited Russia as part of an embassy in 1517 and 1526, Gaidukov suggested that in the first quarter of the 16th century, the Novgorod denga, which at that time corresponded to the Pskov silver denga, was equal in value to 120 copper pulos<sup>37</sup>.

According to the image on the obverse, Pskov pulos can be divided into two types. The first of them depicts a winged figure, which is conventionally called a siren. On the reverse there is an inscription in three lines: "Pulo of Pskov" •πῦλο•|псковс|коє (Fig. 23). 33 specimens were examined. The average weight is 0.36 g. Gaidukov refers this type to the 1490s.



Fig. 23. Type 1. Pulo with a siren (photo and drawing)

The obverse of the second type depicts a double-headed eagle. On the reverse there is an inscription in three lines. Or πῦλο|псков|с|коє, or •πῦλο•|псков•с|коє• ("Pulo of Pskov"). Gaidukov divided the second type into two variants. He dates the 1st of them (116 specimens, average weight 0.39 g) to the 1490s. The 2nd version (200 specimens, 0.20 g) is attributed by the researcher to the Grand Prince's coinage after the liquidation of the independence of Pskov. The reason for this dating is not explained.



Fig. 24. Type 2. Option 1 (drawing)



Fig. 25. Type 2. Option 2 (drawing)

<sup>37</sup> A. Coins of Nezavisimogo Pskov (XV – nachalo XVI v.). Pskov No 25, 2006. P. 24.

## Conclusion

62 years have passed since the publication of A. S. Melnikova's work, and 26 years have passed since the publication of P. G. Gaidukov's works. Since then, the fund of Pskov coins has been significantly replenished and continues to be replenished, mainly due to the finds of new treasures. The number of these coins already significantly exceeds the number of coins that formed the basis of the classifications of these outstanding scientists. However, since then, not a single study has appeared that would continue their work. It is quite obvious that it is necessary to establish new metrological characteristics of Pskov coins, to draw up a unified scheme of the ratio of coin stamps and to establish an exact chronology of the production of all types of Pskov coins from 1424/5 to 1510.

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