Born in the Caucasus and a scion of Russia’s first family, Grand Duke Georgi Mikhailovich first began collecting coins in Tbilisi’s Armenian bazaar at the early age of fourteen. During the following year he was taken to St. Petersburg, where he became acquainted with Russia’s two best collections of that time, those of the Hermitage and the Counts Tolstoy. Under the expert guidance of the numismatist C.C. Giel, the Grand Duke’s collection grew rapidly in both size and quality, from 689 pieces [all copper] in 1879 to 3,600 pieces [gold, platinum silver, and copper] in 1882.

Starting in 1880 he began to purchase whole collections, and by 1884 had acquired those of the following collectors. Davydov [all pre-Petrine coinage], Savel’ev, Smirnov, Brykin, Plakhov, Kozlov, Chebarov and Count Czapski [the most note-worthy of these]. The Czapski collection included 900 medals, bringing the total in the Grand Duke’s collection up to 2,000 in 1886. This was in addition to 6,000 coins, 2,000 of which were pre-Petrine. In 1885, at the tender age of twenty-two and only eight years after he had begun his hobby, the Grand Duke embarked upon the arduous task of compiling a fully documented catalogue of post-Petrine coinage. This resulted in a series of eleven ornate folio volumes covering the years 1725 to 1894, with the first volume appearing in 1888. Filling the gap of Peter’s reign from 1689 to 1725, a twelfth and final volume, more modest in appearance and lacking plates, appeared in 1914. This magnum opus remains without peer and serves as the standard numismatic reference catalogue for this period. The Mikhailovich collection, which also grew to be the greatest collection of imperial Russian coins and medals ever amassed, has also remained, to the good fortune of Russian numismatic scholars, largely intact, having eventually come to rest as part of the Smithsonian numismatic collection.

Originally housed in the Emperor Alexander III Russian Museum in St. Petersburg, of which the Grand Duke was director from its founding in 1895, the collection was taken to Kiev and then to the Caucasus by the White Army after the 1917 revolution. Although the Grand Duke perished in 1918, his wife and two daughters were able to flee with the collection to Yugoslavia until the outbreak of World War II, when the collection was taken to Switzerland via Italy. The platinum and gold portions of the collection were catalogued by Adolf Hess for auction during 1939 in Lucerne, Switzerland, but the auction was cancelled due to the war’s spreading turmoil. After the war, The Grand Duchess, then living in London, again consigned the platinum and gold for auction, this time with Christie’s in 1950. A total of 477 lots were sold to various buyers, a decrease from the 687 lots listed in the 1939 Hess catalogue. The 210 missing lots had been sold off as single pieces by the Grand Duchess for living expenses during the intervening years.

With this sale the platinum and gold portion of the Mikhailovich Collection was widely dispersed. Apparently a fair number of pieces [70 gold and platinum coins and 143 gold medals] made their way into the private collection of Ossip Pernikoff in Paris, where an exhibition of Russian medals was organized by the Cabinet des Médailles in December 1950. An additional 23 gold medals were purchased by other members of the White Russian emigre community, giving them a total of 165 medals or 82 percent of those sold at the auction.

In the early 1950s the bulk of the collection, consisting of some 15,000 silver and copper coins and medals and weighing half a ton, was purchased from the Grand Duke’s heirs by Edward Gans of Berkeley, California. Gans cataloged the collection and then sold it to Willis H. duPont in 1957. Over a ten year period from 1959 to 1969 duPont donated the total collection to the Smithsonian, where it has now found a permanent home. He also commissioned two coin dealers Solomon Kaplan of Ohio and Abraham Kosoff of California, to reconstruct the gold and platinum portion of the collection. Although they had made some good headway in this venture by 1967, duPont was robbed of the recovered pieces and the project was abandoned.

THE COINS FROM THIS COLLECTION, of course, were exhaustively described by the Grand Duke himself almost a century ago. The medals, however, are another matter. Numbering more than 3,900 pieces, they are yet to be catalogued. This is not to say that they are all unique, but simply that there is no published listing of this portion of the collection, which is unique outside the Soviet Union.

The earliest medals are those of Peter the Great, dating from the first quarter of the 18th century, and it is these that will be described below. Cataloguing these medals is even more difficult than cataloguing coins from the same era. First of all, they are not dated in the sense that coins are dated, i.e., in the year of issue. When the medals are dated [sometimes erroneously!], the date is that of the event commemorated, which always occurs before the time of striking. Second, there are many retrospective medals, official new issues modeled on earlier medals. Finally there is the question of
mainly because of the extraordinary care that was taken in the assembling and maintenance of this collection. I have attempted to limit the following listing to those medals whose original dies were cut during Peter’s lifetime.8

There are two excellent catalogues of the medals of Peter the Great: Iversen’s Medail len Pet ra der Grossen [Medals for the Deeds of Peter the Great], St. Petersburg, 1872, and E. S. Shchukina’s Katalog medal’ pervoichetverti XVIII veka [A Catalogue of Medals from the First Quarter of the 18th Century], Leningrad-Moscow, 1966.10 All of the following will be classified according to the systems of Iversen and of Shchukina, who herself incorporates Iversen’s classification system in her descriptions. Iversen’s work is well illustrated, but Shchukina’s has no plates. These she supplies in her Medal’ermoe iskusstvo Rossi XVIII veka [Medallic Art in Russia of the 18th Century], Leningrad, 1962, in Medals and Coins of the Age of Peter the Great, Leningrad, 1974, on which she collaborated with I.G. Spassky, and in her “O Rossi zee predelami” [About Russia Beyond Her Borders], in Pracoeho nashej rodiny v pamjatnikakh numizmatiki, Leningrad, 1977.

In the inventory listing that follows, number designations represent separate medals. Superscript numbers indicate copies of the same medal and stars denote medals that may be partial (one side) or full copies of earlier medals. Bracketed numbers denote medals struck abroad by foreign mints on their own initiative to commemorate visits by Peter. The retrospective medals, of which there are more than one hundred in the Mikhailovich Collection plus a few more from other sources, will be listed at a later time. They have been excluded on the basis of engravers’ initials, representing engravers who began their work after Peter’s death. Peter’s death medals, however, have been included.

Each entry begins with the Arabic numeral designation from Shchukina’s catalogue separated by a slash from Iversen’s Roman numeral designation. Next a short descriptive title is followed by the metallic content, diameter, and weight. Following are any observations concerning the obverse, especially engraver’s initials and counterstamps, similar observations concerning the reverse and comments about the edge.

The presence of an edge inscription is noted only in those cases when Iversen has stated that the given medal may occur either with or without one. Finally, any general comments or observations are given. For the sake of brevity the thorough general descriptions of each medal are not repeated here.11

1. 799/VI.1

Capture of Azov, silver, 51mm, 53.87g.  Obv.: Two identical owner counterstamps, at 8 o’clock (C = Hutten-Czapski), die crack and multiple marks. II for B in several spellings.  Rev.: II for B again.  Note: The Grand Duke bought a portion of Hutten-Czapski’s collection, which accounts for the frequent occurrence of his counterstamp.12 Since all of these medals were engraved by non-Russians, this could account for the misspellings.

2. 801/VI.1

Peter’s First Visit to Europe, silver, 62mm, 110.57g.  Obv.: Engraver’s name, C. Wermuth, F.G. [cut Gotthic]. C counterstamp at 8 o’clock. No C.W. as mentioned by Shchukina.  Note: Medals with Latin inscriptions were intended for presentation to foreign dignitaries and for export.

3. 803/VI.2

Peter’s First Visit to Europe, silver, 21mm, 5.67g.  Obv.: Engraver’s initials, C.W. [Christian Wermuth]. C counterstamp at 8 o’clock, die crack. Inscription error: Mimoscow.  Note: Lustre.

Figure 1: Grand Duke Georgij Mikhailovich’s Numismatic Medal

On the obverse St. George, the Grand Duke’s patron saint, is featured. On the reverse a seated female figure representing numismatics inspects a hammered coin being presented by a corner. The legend at top reads: “for the visitor,” to the left: “numismatica.” Engraver’s name is “A. Scharff.” The inscription along the edge is: velkij kniaz’ Georgij Mikhailovich”. 1896. The Grand Duke presented this medal as a memento of a visit to his collection.

‘novodely’ [new = make] restrikes from original dies or the exact replicas of original dies. They were minted on special order for collections from the late 1730s until 1890, when Grand Duke Georgij Mikhailovich induced his cousin Alexander III to forbid the practice.8

The main clues for dating are the engraver’s initials, when they occur and when they can be identified. Less tangible, but no less useful, is the general appearance of the medal. Mint lustre on a silver or especially a copper medal purportedly from the beginning of the 18th century is an almost certain indication that the medal is either retrospective or a novodel. Sorting based on this procedure is possible.
3. Peter's First Visit to Europe, silver, 21mm, 5.67g.
Note: Same as 3 except no counterstamp. Lustre.

4. 803/VI.2.
Peter's First Visit to Europe, silver, 21mm, 5.67g.
Note: Shchukina's 821 is struck in lead.

5. X.1.
Place of Carlowitz, silver, 41mm, 29.67g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials H [Hausch], and G.F.N. [George Friedrich Nürnberg].
Rev.: Engraver's initial H [Hausch].
Note: 806 does not list 'victa' on reverse. X.1 is wider.

6. 807/XL1.
Peter and August II, silver, 35mm, 20.56g.
Edge: Punch hole.

7. 811/XIII1.
Capture of Schlüsselburg, silver, 52.5mm, 33.71g.

8. 812/XIII.2.
Capture of Schlüsselburg, silver, 70mm, 74.29g.

9. 817/XIII.3a.
Capture of Schlüsselburg, silver, 46mm, 47.63g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials O.K.
Note: Based on evidence presently unobtainable. Iversen suggests that O.K. may refer to Ottfried König. Shchukina rightfully questions this assertion. Lustre.

10. 819/XIV.
Capture of Nyenschant, silver, 46mm, 40.45g.
Obr.: Counterstamp at 8 o'clock.
Note: Müller engraved dies in Nürnberg for a series of 28 medals commemorating Peter's victories in the Northern War. It is thought that these dies were used through use at the Moscow mint, a new series of similar dies were cut at the mint by an unknown foreign engraver with the initials O.K. [see #11].

11. XIV.
Capture of Nyenschant, silver, 47mm, 49.08g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials, O.K.
Note: Shchukina's 821 is struck in lead.

12. 826/XV.1c.
Capture of 2 Swedish Ships, silver, 53.5mm, 58.98g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials O.K. The O is larger than the K.

13. 827/XVI.1a.
Founding of St. Petersburg, silver, 47mm, 45.49g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials O.K.

14. XVII.1a.
Opening of the Baltic Sea Lanes, silver, 47mm, 43.89g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials, O.K.

15. 831/XVII.
Building of Cronstadt, silver, 46mm, 52.98g.
Edge: Inscription, ????? ????? MOLES ?INCE MARI IAM TERRA TUA EST. ?????

16. Building of Cronstadt, silver, 47mm, 45.35g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials, O.K. Bust of Peter is O.K. Type 2, according to Iversen's system, with the usual inscription at the border.
Rev.: Same as XVII in an uninitialed copy engraved by Timofej Ivanov [1729-1802].
Note: Although this medal is post-Peter, it has been included because it is not listed in Iversen, who, unlike Shchukina, lists post-Peter medals. A.A. Stakhovitch lists a similar medal in white metal.

17. XVIII.1d.
Conquest of Dorpat, silver, 45.5mm, 44.75g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials, O.K.
Note: This may also be an original XVIII.a and not a copy. Lustre.

18. XIX.1.d.
Capture of Narva, silver, 50.5mm, 65.46g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials, O.K. (K is double struck.)
Note: A copy of O.K. Type 1.

19. XIX.2.d.
Capture of Narva, silver, 46mm, 47.27g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials, O.K.
Note: Iversen lists only a copy of O.K.'s Type 1 bust and no original. Lustre.

20. 838 XIX.2.
 Capture of Narva, silver, 47.5mm, 57.69g.
Obr.: Engraver's initial M [Philipp Heinrich Müller].
Note: Lustre.

Capture of Narva, silver, 46mm, 50.28g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials, O.K.

22. XX.
Conquest of Livland, white metal, 32mm, 16.14g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials, C.W. [Christian Wernmuth].
Note: Same as Shchukina's copper 847.

23. 853 XXI.a.
Capture of Mitau, silver, 47mm, 45.98g.
Obr.: Counterstamp at 8 o'clock.
Note: Lustre.

24. 854/XXII.1.
Battle of Kalish, silver?, 43 x 35.5mm, 46.77g.
Obr.: Engraver's initial H [Haupt].
Rev.: Counterstamp at 5 o'clock.
Note: May be silver plated.

25. 854/XXII.1.
Battle of Kalish, yellow metal, 42 x 37.5mm, 3.92g.
Obr.: None.
Rev.: Uniface reverse with hole at top.
Note: Same as XXII.1.

26. Admiral F.M. Apraksin, white metal (tin?), 53.5mm, 50.92g.
Obr.: Engraver's name, GOUIN F [fecit]. A faint 1708 at 7 o'clock. A blob in front of mouth.
Note: Similar to Shchukina's 861. But in white metal and no 'haupt' on reverse. Iversen lists the medal in his Medali v chest' russkikh gosudarstvennykh deiatelei i chastnykh [St. Petersburg, 1880], vol. 1, pp. 7-8.

27. Admiral F.M. Apraksin, white metal, 53.5mm, 49.77g.
Note: Like 26 but no blob on reverse.

28. Admiral F.M. Apraksin, copper, 53.5mm, 87.34g.
Obr.: Counterstamp at 8 o'clock.
Note: Similar to 864, but no 'haupt' on reverse.

29. Battle of Lesnoo, silver, 46mm, 50.93g.
Obr.: Counterstamp at 8 o'clock.
Note: Attributed by Iversen to P.H. Müller.

30. Battle of Lesnoo, silver, 46mm, 50.93g.
Obr.: Counterstamp at 7 o'clock.
Rev.: Engraver's initial K [unknown].

31. Battle of Lesnoo, silver, 46mm, 47.11g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials, O.K.
Note: Lustre.

32. Battle of Lesnoo, silver, 46mm, 46.61g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials, O.K.
Note: Lustre.

33. Battle of Lesnoo, copper, 49mm, 52.68g.
Obr.: Engraver's initials, O.K.
Rev.: Lesnoo as on XXIII.6.b.
Edge: 176 stamped on edge.
Note: Novodel. Lustre.

34. Battle of Lesnoo, silver, 46mm, 76.06g.
Obr.: Engraver's name, GOUIN F [fecit].
Rev.: Counterstamp at 7 o'clock.
Note: Lustre.
32. 879/XXIV.2. Battle of Poltava, silver, 43 mm, 40.99 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's name, GOVIN. F (fictit.).
   Rev.: Engraver's name, Haupt.

33. 881/XXIV.3. Battle of Poltava, silver, 64.5 mm, 115.36 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initials, P.H.M
   (Philippe Heinrich Müller).

34. 884/XXIV.4. Battle of Poltava, silver, 42.5 mm, 40.37 g.
   Obv.: G counterstamp at 8 o'clock.

35. XXIV.8. Battle of Poltava, silver, 44.4 mm, 29.62 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initial H (Hautsch).
   G counterstamp at 8 o'clock.
   Note: Similar to narrower 886. Lustre.

36. XXIV.6. Battle of Poltava, white metal, 21.1 mm, 4.19 g.

37. 891 Battle of Poltava, copper, 32.5 mm, 14.05 g.
   Rev.: Date shown is 29 and not 20 as in 891.
   Note: Similar to XXIV.7 but reverse inscription differs.

38. 894/XXV.a. Capture of Löwenaupt at Perekolochka, silver, 47 mm, 50.21 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initials, O.K.
   Rev.: Date is 63 not 30 as in XXV.a.

39.1 XXVI
   Captain M. Simontov for Taganrog Canal, copper, 42.5 x 37.5 mm, 32.66 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's name, GOVIN F (fictit.).
   Note: Similar to 896 but in copper.

39.2 XXVI
   Captain M. Simontov for Taganrog Canal, white metal, 42.5 x 37.5 mm, 32.66 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's name, GOVIN F (fictit.).
   Note: May be lead 897, not from Mikhailovich collection.

40. XXVI.b.
   Captain M. Simontov for Taganrog Canal, copper, 43 x 37.5 mm, 35.44 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's markings, I II
   (Unknown).
   Rev.: Engraver's markings, I II
   (unknown).
   Note: Probably retrospective, not from the Mikhailovich Collection.

41. XXVII
   Capture of Elbing, white metal, 45 mm, 35.08 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initial M (Müller).
   Rev.: In mouth at 2 o'clock.
   Note: Like 898/899 1064

42.1 903/XXVII.a.
   Capture of Elbing, silver, 46 mm, 47.34 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initials, O.K. (double struck).
   Note: Some Lustre. 1062

42.2 XIXII.a.
   Capture of Elbing, copper, 48 mm, 53.9 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initials, O.K.
   Edge: 185 stamped.
   Note: Novodel. Lustre. 1063

43.1 909/XXVIII.a.
   Capture of Viburg, silver, 46.5 mm, 47.56 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initials, O.K.
   Rev.: Die cracks.
   Note: Lustre.

43.2. Capture of Viburg, copper, 48 mm, 51 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initials, O.K.
   Rev.: Engraver's initials, F.G. (F. Gass, active at the end of the 18th century.)
   Edge: 186 stamped.
   Note: Novodel not listed in Iversen and whose reverse die was cut after Peter's death.

44. 912/XXIX.1. Capture of Riga, silver, 45.5 mm, 48.77 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initials, M (Müller).

45. 915/XXIX.1.d.
   Capture of Riga, silver, 46.5 mm, 46.82 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initials, O.K.

46. 922/XXX.d.
   Capture of Dünamünd, silver, 46.5 mm, 47.57 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initials, O.K.

47. 928/XXXI.d.
   Capture of Pernau, silver, 45.5 mm, 50.1 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initials, O.K.

48. 941/XXXII.a.
   Capture of Arensburg, silver, 46.5 mm, 43.92 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initials, O.K.
   Rev.: Some Lustre.

49. 932/XXXIII
   Capture of Kekholm, silver, 46 mm, 51.20 g.
   Obv.: Engraver's initial, M (Müller).
   G counterstamp at 8 o'clock.
   Rev.: Some Lustre.
50. XXXIII.a.
Capture of Kexholm, silver, 46mm, 49.58g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K. Type 1 bust.
Note: Lustre.

50.3 XXXIII.a.
Capture of Kexholm, copper, 48mm, 49.78g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K. Type 1 bust.
Edge: 191 stamped.
Note: Novodel. Lustre.

51. XXXII.b.
Capture of Kexholm, silver, 46.5mm, 51.39g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, IK. [Unknown, but some claim Johann Kittel, 1654-1739. Iversen rejects this. There are several retrospective Peter medals with IK on one side and CIO for Samuel Judin, born 1730, or TI for Timofei Ivanov, born 1729, on the other. It is highly likely that IK was active during the second half of the 18th century.]
Obv: Engraver’s initials, CIO. [Unknown, may be OK.]
Note: Lustre.

52. 943/XXXIV.
Capture of Reval, silver, 46mm, 50.69g.
 Obv.: Engraver’s initial M (Müller).

53. 945/XXXIV.d.
Capture of Reval, silver, 46.5mm, 41.18g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K. Type 1 bust.
Note: Lustre. Iversen does not list an original O.K. type 1 bust.

54. XXXV.d.
Capture of Livland, silver, 47mm, 52.79g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K., with a second O above the K. Eye of the bust is double struck.
Note: Lustre. Like 951, but no edge inscription.

55. 954/XXXVI.
Success of 1710, silver, 46mm, 50.51g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initial M (Müller).

56. 959/XXXVI.a.
Success of 1710, silver, 45.5mm, 53.11g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K.
Note: Lustre.

57. 960/XXXVII.
Fleets in Four Seas, silver, 39 x 34mm, 30.16g.
Obv.: Engraver’s name, GOUIN.
Rev.: Counterstamp at 8 o’clock.

58. 962
Fleets in Four Seas, silver, 40x35mm, 29.76g.
Obv.: Engraver’s name, HAUPT.
Rev.: Some lustre.

59.3 XXXVIII.
Peter I in Hamburg, copper, 35.5mm, 13.41g.
Obv.: The name of Jehovah which occurs here in Hebrew letters also occurs in Scandinavian and German coinage of the late 17th century.
Note: This medal was struck in Hamburg in honor of Peter’s visit. Lustre.

59.3 XXXVIII.
Peter I in Hamburg, white metal, 35.5mm, 14.47g.
Obv.: Counterstamp at 8 o’clock.
Note: Lustre.

59. Second Expedition to Finland, silver, 69mm, 128-lg.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K. over K.O.
Rev.: Counterstamp at 8 o’clock.
Note: Same as XXXIX.b. except Iversen sees O.K. over TH

60. 975/XL.d.
Landing in Åbo, silver, 46mm, 48.64g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K.
Note: Lustre.

61. 986/XLIII.a.
Battle of Hangö-Udd, silver, 41mm, 28g.
Obv.: Hole at 12 o’clock.

63.1 XLIII.4.b.
Battle of Hangö-Udd, silver, 44mm, 28.88g.
Obv.: Counterstamp at 8 o’clock.
Note: Lustre.

63.2 XLIII.4.b.
Battle of Hangö-Udd, silver, 42mm, 28.4g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K.
Note: Lustre.

64. 947/XLIII.6.a.
Battle of Hangö-Udd, silver, 44mm, 28.89g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K.
Note: Lustre.

64.3 XLIII.6.a.
Battle of Hangö-Udd, copper, 48mm, 51.76g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K.
Edge: 200 stamped.
Note: Lustre.

65. Capture of Nyschlot, gilt base metal, 48.5mm diameter of medal, 97mm total length, 44.76g.
Note: Same as XLIV and 999, but suspended by a loop from a jeweled crest with one red and two purple stones. No engraver’s initials.

66. 1002/XLIV.a.
Capture of Nyschlot, silver, 46mm, 45.05g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K.
Note: Lustre.

67. * Capture of Nyschlot, copper, 49mm, 52.78g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K.
Rev.: Engraver’s initials [F. Gass, end of 18th century]
Edge: 202 stamped.
Note: Lustre.

68. 1003/XL.
Commander of 4 Navies at Bornholm, silver, 54mm, 65.26g.
Note: Lustre.

69. 1004/XLVI.1.
Peter’s Visit to Paris, silver (blasted), 42mm, 39.49g.
Obv.: Engraver’s name, Du Vivier [1687-1761].
Rev.: 19th century mint master mark and ‘argent’.
Note: A 19th century Paris restrike.

70. * 1007/XLIV.
Visit of Peter I at Paris Mint, silver (blasted), 60mm, 114.05g.
Obv.: Engraver’s name Du Vivier F. [fecit].
Edge: Same as 69.
Note: A 19th century Paris restrike.

71. 1010/XLVIII.d.
Establishment of the Colleges, silver, 46mm, 52.13g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K.
Note: Lustre.

72. XLVIII.h.
Establishment of the Colleges, copper, 48mm, 56.50g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K.
Note: Lustre.

73. 1013/L.I.
Peace in the Empire, silver, 45.5mm, 45.58g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K.
Note: Lustre.

74. Peace in the Empire, white metal (tin?), 45.5mm, 33.3g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, O.K. Type 2 bust.
Note: Like 1014, but in white metal.

75. L.2.
Capture of Three Swedish Frigates, silver, 45mm, 37.61g.
Obv.: Engraver’s initials, KO [unknown, may be OK].
Rev.: Counterstamp at 7 o’clock.

76. L.3.
Capture of Three Swedish Frigates, silver, 41mm, 27.1g.
Obv.: Counterstamp at 8 o’clock.
Revision: Traces of former loop at 12 o’clock.

77. L I.1.
Capture of Four Swedish Frigates at Grönhann, silver, 60mm, 94.95g.

78. L I.2.
Capture of Four Swedish Frigates at Grönhann, gilt base metal, 40.5mm, 29.92g.
Obv.: Loop at 12 o’clock.

79. 1026/LII.3.
Capture of Four Swedish Frigates at Grönhann, gold, 36mm, 16.05g.
Obv.: Bent convex, evidence of mounting at 12 o’clock.
Rev.: Evidence of mounting at 12, 3, 6, 9 o’clock.

80. 1032 Peace of Nystadt, silver, 47mm, 43.42g.
Rev.: Four overstruck letters in inscription, most interesting is C over 3 in word for silver. Probably intended to stamp 3AA (gold), which occurs on similar medals.
Edge: Braid Design.
Note: Lustre.

81. Peace of Nystadt, silver, 60mm, 97.12g.
Rev.: Like 1033/LI.1b. [later copy] but dotts missing in 4th and 5th lines. Says H33 3LAATA (gold), but is struck in silver.
Note: Lustre.
86. * Peace of Nytsd, silver, 43.5mm, 33.36g.
    Obv.: Like 85, but no spiral waves. Two
cyrillic hard signs missing in the
inscription.
    Rev.: Like 85, but with dots in the
inscription.

87. 1059/L.II.8.
    Peace of Nytsd, silver, 50mm, 52.19g.
    Obv.: Counterstamp at 8 o'clock
    Rev.: Engraver's name. A. Schultze fec
    (fecit) Hafn. (Copenhagen).
    Medallist in Copenhagen, 1716-1724.
    Note: Some lustre.

88. * LV.I.1.a.
    Crowning of Empress Catherine I, silver,
    43.5 mm, 29.9g.
    Obv.: Engraver's initials, θM
    Rev.: Engraver's initials, 1805 (J. Leefken).
    From 1739 an engraver at the St.
    Petersburg mint.

89. LV.I.1.b.
    Crowning of Empress Catherine I, silver,
    43mm, 45.65g.
    Obv.: Engraver's initials, O.K.
    Note: Lustre.

90. 1074/L.V.3.
    Crowning of Empress Catherine I, silver,
    44mm, 53.24g.
    Obv.: Engraver's initials, A.S.F. [A.
    Schultze fecit].
    Note: Some lustre.

    Crowning of Empress Catherine I, silver,
    21mm, 2.69g.
    Edge: Braid design.
    Note: Coronation jeton.

    Crowning of Empress Catherine I, silver,
    20.5mm, 2.67g.
    Edge: Braid design.
    Note: Coronation jeton.

    Crowning of Empress Catherine I, silver,
    23mm, 8.72g.
    Obv.: Like 92.
    Edge: Like 92.
    Note: Coronation jeton. Lustre. Twice as
    thick as 91.

94. L.VII.7.a.
    Death of Peter, silver, 55.5mm, 74.91g.
    Obv.: Engraver's initials, P.B.F. [Peter
    Berg fecit]. Engraver in
    Copenhagen, 1699-1730.
    Counterstamp at 9 o'clock.
    Note: Some lustre.

95. 1084/L.VII.2.
    Death of Peter, silver, 43.5mm, 43g.
    Obv.: Counterstamp at 8 o'clock.
    Note: Some lustre.

96. 1086/L.VII.2.a.
    Death of Peter, silver, 41mm, 26.32g.
    Obv.: Counterstamp at 8 o'clock.
    Note: Some lustre.

    Death of Peter, silver, 21.5mm, 2.7g.
    Obv.: Hole at top.
    Edge: Braid design.
    Note: Funeral jeton.

    Death of Peter, silver, 21.5mm, 2.65g.
    Obv.: Hole at top.
    Edge: Braid design.
    Note: Funeral jeton.

    Death of Peter, silver, 21.5mm, 2.59g.
    Edge: Braid design.
    Note: Funeral jeton.

Figure 5
Varieties Not Listed by Iversen and Shchukina

#16. Building of Cronshlot

#24. Battle of Kalish

#74. Peace in the Empire

#92. Crowning of Empress Catherine I

#65. Capture of Nyschlot

#26. Admiral F.M. Aptaksin

#81. Peace of Nystadt

#86. Peace of Nystadt

#93. Crowning of Empress Catherine I
In accord with the tradition the above medals are listed in sequence of the events commemorated. Though each of the medals commemorates a specific event, not every medal served the same purpose. Classified by function, they fall into four categories of usage: commemoratives, military awards, personal medals, and jetons.

So that he might chronicle Russia’s emerging triumph in the Northern War with Sweden, Peter I commissioned P.F. Müller, the noted Nürnberg medallist, to engrave a series of 28 reverse dies with three obverse bust types of the emperor, commemorating victories gained between the years 1702 and 1714. The production of medals began at the Moscow mint in 1716. Peter found inspiration for this series in the late 17th century medallistic history executed by Warin for France’s Louis XIV. In this series each medallion linked the monarch, with his bust on the obverse, to a glorious event, depicted on the reverse. Each die sketch emanated from the “Little Academy” and was then altered to suit the king’s wishes. Peter saw this vehicle as an excellent means for conveying state propaganda both at home and abroad. Medals in the Müller series, of which there are eight here (numbers 10, 20, 33, 41, 44, 49, 52, 55), reflect Peter’s dynastic aims and within Russia performed an instructive function, similar to icons in the religious sphere.

The series was popular and the dies were soon worn down through use. At some time after 1718 a new series of dies was then cut in Russia by an unknown engraver with the initials O.K. Shchukina’s claim that OK and KO were one and the same engraver has support in medal 60 on which KO is struck over OK. Of the OK series there are 32 silver medals listed above: Numbers 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 29, 30, 38, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 54, 56, 60, 61, 64, 66, 71, 73, 89. Number 74, struck in tin, also shows the initials OK. The only sample of KO is number 75. Many of the medals of the OK series have mint lustre, which suggests that they are novodels struck after Peter’s death, an event which elicited renewed interest in the Northern War series.

Although some of the Müller medals have Hüttenczapski’s counterstamp, the OK medals do not, nor do any have edge inscriptions, another novodel indicator.

It is possible that the Grand Duke Johann ordered a set of novodels from the mint, a practice he had stopped but not before availing himself of its advantages. It is even more likely that he ordered the copper series of novodels, which by appearance date from the 19th century. There are eight of these OK copper novodels listed here. The chronologically ordered ascending progression of edge numbers: Numbers 21, 30, 42, 43, 64, 72. Many of the missing numbers in this series are found in the Mikhailovich Collection but not included among the above.

Military award medals were an established Russian custom long before Peter’s ascent to the throne. Upon their return from a successful military campaign, Peter presented his soldiers with award medals which served a trinary purpose: military decorations for valor, monetary reward, and the spread of state propaganda. The veterans of twelve battles in the Northern War were rewarded with mintage of three to four thousand medals. Unlike commemorative medals, inscriptions were always in Russian and never in Latin. Coin-like in shape, content, and design, these medals were not provided with loops for suspension. They had to be added by the awardees. The medals for a given battle were struck in gold and silver of varying in weights the more valuable going to the higher in rank. Judging from the condition of some of the Müller medals (VF instead of the expected AU or UNC as in the silver and copper OK sets), they may well have served as coinage. This could account for the three medals of non-bullion content that had been adapted for wearing (compare these with numbers 24, 65, 78 illustrated in Figures 4 and 5). Perhaps the recipients retrieved the bullion value of the original medals and then purchased inexpensive substitutes for wearing.

There are only two examples of personal medals, those honoring Apraksin [numbers 26, 261, 262] and Simontov [numbers 39, 391, 40]. This was a type new for Russia, whose earlier award medals always depicted the ruler. Jetons were small tokens, distributed by the Czar to his subjects during ceremonial occasions. Found here are jetons for Catherine I’s coronation [numbers 91, 911, 914, 915, 92, 93] and Peter’s funeral [numbers 97, 971, 973, 974, 976].

Peter I, as Louis XIV before him, took an active, personal interest in the design and production of his medals. This interest extended even to the technical sphere, in which he delighted, and there are accounts of his visits to the mint, during which he participated in the striking of coins himself. With the introduction of foreign engravers and foreign minting technology, Peter gave direct and personal approval to the importation of Western influences, the total extent and impact of which are yet to be studied. The set of Petrov medals presented here provides an enduring iconographic representation of Russia’s opening window to the West.

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NOTES


2. For a short biographical sketch on the Grand Duke see Novyi enciklopedicheskii slovar’ [S.-Petersburg F.A. Brodgauz and I.A. Efron, 1911], Vol. 13, p. 111. His catalogue was published in St. Petersburg.

3. This abbreviation of the Grand Duke’s name is unfortunate for two reasons. The first is confusion with Yugoslavia’s World War II General Mihajlovic and the second the deprecatory connotation in Russian when someone is addressed by the patronymic alone.


6. Jean Babelon, “La Médailles Russe de Pierre la Grand à nos Jours,” [Paris: Bibliothèque national Cabinet des Médailles, December 1950 - January 1951]. In his 1971 article in The Medal Collector (Vol. 22 No. 7, pp. 2-5) Vladimir von Rychter describes two gold Russian medals in his possession, which were once in the Grand Duke’s collection. Isadore Schneiderman, a New York dealer, is also said to have acquired several lots from the Christie sale. For accounts of the dispersal of medals at the Christie’s auction see A.A. Stakhovich, Kommentarii k’ tradu ju. B. Iversena “Medali na dejantia Imperatora Petra Velikago” [Paris 1958], pp. 1-4 and A.F. Dolgopolov, “Kollektsia Velikago Kniazja,” Numismatic Notes [Sydney, Australia, J. 1 Bekish, 1960], pp. 22-25. According to Dolgopolov, Russian emigres were successful in acquiring medals even after the auction by offering the successful bidders higher prices.

7. A.A. Stakhovich of Paris tells us in his Kommentarii that he possesses 362 Peter I medals, of which 162 were struck during Peter’s lifetime or within 25 years of his death, 116 are later copies, 60 are retrospective, and 24 are Swedish medals commemorating the Northern War. In addition to the 251 types of Peter I medals, for which he has examples in his collection, he has data on 58 others, held in public and private collections outside of Russia. Of these 309 types 46 have not been described previously Mr. Stakhovich’s collection is a truly significant one. Even the huge Wurzbach-Tannenberg collection of medals has only 20 Peter I medals (6 contemporary, and 14 later copies); Wolfgang R. von Wurzbach-Tannenberg, Katalog Meiner Sammlung von Medaillen, Plaketten und Jettens, [Zürich-Leipzig-Wien, 1943], Part 2, pp. 1176-1179.


9. This is not an arbitrary limit. In a forthcoming article I will analyze the imported Western secular iconography on these medals.

10. Also useful is V.A. Durov’s “Russian Award Medals of the First Quarter of the XVIIIth Century,” appearing in a three part English translation in Numorum, starting with the fall 1980 issue.

11. Iversen’s catalogue was recently reprinted by Spink and Son of London and is still available. Excellent in most respects, Iversen’s work has one serious drawback. It does not specify metallic content of the medal varieties.

12. Hutten-Czapski employed one further counterfeit stamp, the word ‘FALSYS’ in very small letters. One example is found on a plate kopek of 1726, also part of the Mikhailovitch Collection.


17. In 1740 the St. Petersburg mint had prepared a catalogue of 58 medal die sets from which novodels could be struck. For a more detailed history of novodels see Spasskij’s “Novodely.”

