

E. SKOBTCHENKO

**1825 CONSTANTINE I ROUBLE
FROM
ARSLAN'S COLLECTION**



82 14/25 ДОЛ. СЕР. 83 1/3 ПРОБЫ 4 ЗОЛ. 82 14/25

MELBOURNE 2020

IN MEMORY OF HAGOP ASLANIAN (YOUPE ARSLAN)



HAGOP ASLANIAN

10TH OF JUNE 1942 - 15TH OF MARCH 2020

Foreword

My special thanks go to Mr. Armen Aslanian (son of Mr. Yu. Arslan) for granting access to materials from his family archives and for his support with coin assessment. They also go to one modest Moscow collector and researcher who refers to himself simply as Gunter, who shared some ideas and helped with identifying the coin, finding additional information in literature and provided copies of some prints that were not known or accessible to me when I started researching this subject. I further thank Konstantin Chertov from Rostov-on-Don who gave a hint on which year the edge of coin may belong to, and to another helpful soul for sharing Zander's print from his library. My additional thanks go to administration of coinpeople.com and staraya-moneta.ru, for making it easy for us to discuss some aspects concerning this coin on their respective forums and to all who contributed to healthy discussion. My views and conclusions may not necessary be fully in tune with opinions of the above mentioned fine people, as they reflect my own impartial opinion of the coin in focus that I formed with everyone's collective assistance after researching and studying available materials and the significance of the coin. I hope this little research will assist to place this coin in its rightful place in Russian numismatics.

E. Skobtchenko



Description

Russia

Pattern Constantine I 1825 rouble with СПб letters for St. Petersburg mint. Silver 900, 20.73 g., 35 mm. Edge inscription «СЕР. 83 1/3 ПРОБЫ 4 ЗОЛ. 82 14/25 ДОЛИ». ↑↓ die axis. Antiquarian forgery or more likely an unauthorised novodel made at St. Petersburg mint, pressed with newly cut dies. This UNC specimen, copy of the original pattern Constantine I rouble, was struck in a ring on one of a blank silver pieces used for 1845 roubles, presumably at that time. Bit-H3 (R4), Uzd-1491/1492(!!).



This beautiful antiquarian copy (possible novodel) of the No Reign Emperor Constantine pattern rouble is from Mr. Youpe Arslan's (Hagop Aslanian) collection (North Hollywood in Los Angeles, California, USA).

It has an attractive old patina and a flawless strike with reflective fields. Only light evidence of handling and it is well described in the literature by such fine numismatists and researchers in Russian numismatics as Prof. Spasski, Mr. Fuchs, Mr. Zander and it was also known to Mr. Uzdrenikov, who valued its realistic presentation higher than Troubetzkoy's forgery. (see p. 6; extract 5)

Fuchs and early Spasski believed that it was possibly produced at a St. Petersburg mint by a medallist who tried to prove that he could make better dies than original; if there was such a thing as a novodel pattern Constantine I rouble produced with newly cut dies, this coin would be the best possible suitor. Fuchs also believed that this type of Constantine 1825 rouble forgery or possible novodel (with real rouble physical parameters, in silver and with edge-inscription) was rarer than original coins and thus was a significant coin in Russian numismatics! (see p. 5 and 9; extract 3 and 5)

It is important to note, that twenty two years ago, a sister coin of this same type (slightly lighter) was auctioned off by MiM (Монеты и Медали) Auction House in Russia, with an estimated price of USD15,000-USD18,000 (1998), yet there are reasons to believe the coin from Arslan's collection is a superior collectors' item. There are only two such coins known, made on original silver pieces with edge inscription and at the mint's highest technological level, which makes them extremely rare. The Arslan and MiM collectable specimens are at the top of the technological pyramid. Lower grade copies of these two coins (pressed with their dies, made at a poorer level of technology or not on original silver blanks) were reported by Prof. Spasski, Zander and Fuchs in their works. (see extracts 1, 3 and 6)

The Arslan coin is described in numismatic literature as a New Hollywood or Beirut Constantine Rouble. The diagram on the next page demonstrates how close the Arslan coin has come to the original pattern rouble of Constantine I, made in 1825. It is truly the best antiquarian forgery, the image of which comes closer to the original than any other, displaying a real medallist's skill and a level of technological sophistication of top mints, making it the best candidate for being considered a novodel. As Randolph Zander put it, Arslan's collection copy is "a bit too bold (*portrait-wise*), but there are barely perceptible surface inadequacies" (see extract 6).

Pattern Rouble of Constantine I and Two Best Known Antiquarian Forgeries

- comparison by image-overlapping -



Troubetskoi Rouble
(Markov 2004 sale)

Authentic Pattern Rouble from Collection of Grand Duke
Georgii Mikhailovich (Smithsonian Museum, Washington)

New Hollywood Rouble
(Arslan collection)



Analysis, history and traces in numismatic literature

The purpose of this work is to demonstrate why **Uzdenikov, Fuchs and early Spasski believed that Arslan's coin was of the highest class of antiquarian forgeries of the Constantine pattern rouble, and that it has an extreme prospect of being the rarest of them all – an unauthorized novodel, made at St. Petersburg mint.** An attempt will be made to provide supportive materials in favor of its novodel nature, deciphering a possible year for when this coin could have been made and at which mint: Warsaw or St. Petersburg.

This beautiful copy of the pattern rouble of the Constantine I came to Youpe Arslan from his brother in Argentina. Professor Spasski had been in touch with Mr. Arslan in the 1980s, who also happened to be able to communicate in Russian with him. Their correspondence resulted in Mr. Arslan sending Prof. Spasski professionally taken pictures of the coin and later the coin itself, which Prof. Spasski returned to Mr. Arslan after studying and taking pictures of the edge. He also returned the originally supplied pictures that Prof. Spasski had taken copies of, and later used them for his own publication.

At the end of this article you can find all the extracts of the original materials used.

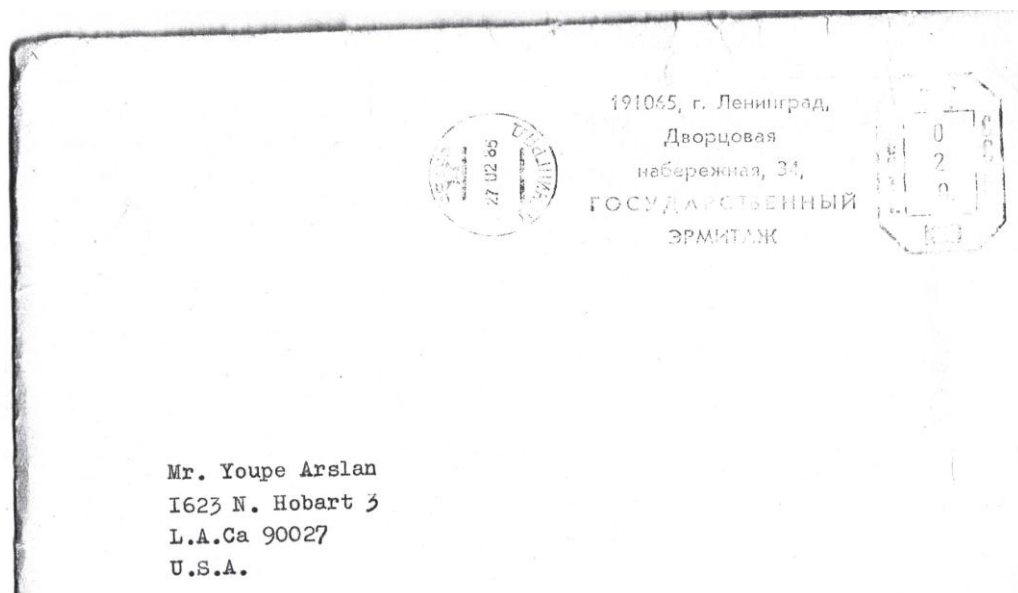
Here is how Prof. Spasski described the story (*see extract 1*):

"Throughout 1981, we continued corresponding actively with Yu. Arslan, who lives in New Hollywood (USA). The starting point was his request to confirm the authenticity of one coin: the silver (900) rouble of Constantine, weighing 20.71 g, that was minted at a high technological level, with opposing sides like on a genuine coin ↑↓, there is an inscription pressed inwards into the edge: "СЕР. 83 1/3 ПРОБЫ 4 ЗОЛ. 82 14/25 ДОЛИ". In essence it matches the rouble types of 1810-1885, but its outline just proves forgery. Instead of the old-fashioned, relatively shallow and not very thin inward pressed letters of the first half of the century, we see, as it were, applied with a thin pen, the composed letters of the inscription replacing the previous one in 1850.

According to the owner, the coin was received from his brother living in Argentina, where he'd moved in 1928 from Lebanon, where their parents lived after fleeing in 1914 from Turkish Armenia. Mr. Arslan wrote that this coin has been in their family for a long time..."

According to Arslan family recollections, Spasski's story is correct, they add that the coin was bought by Mr. Arslan from their cousin, who he paid for the coin \$25,000 USD in or around 1973.

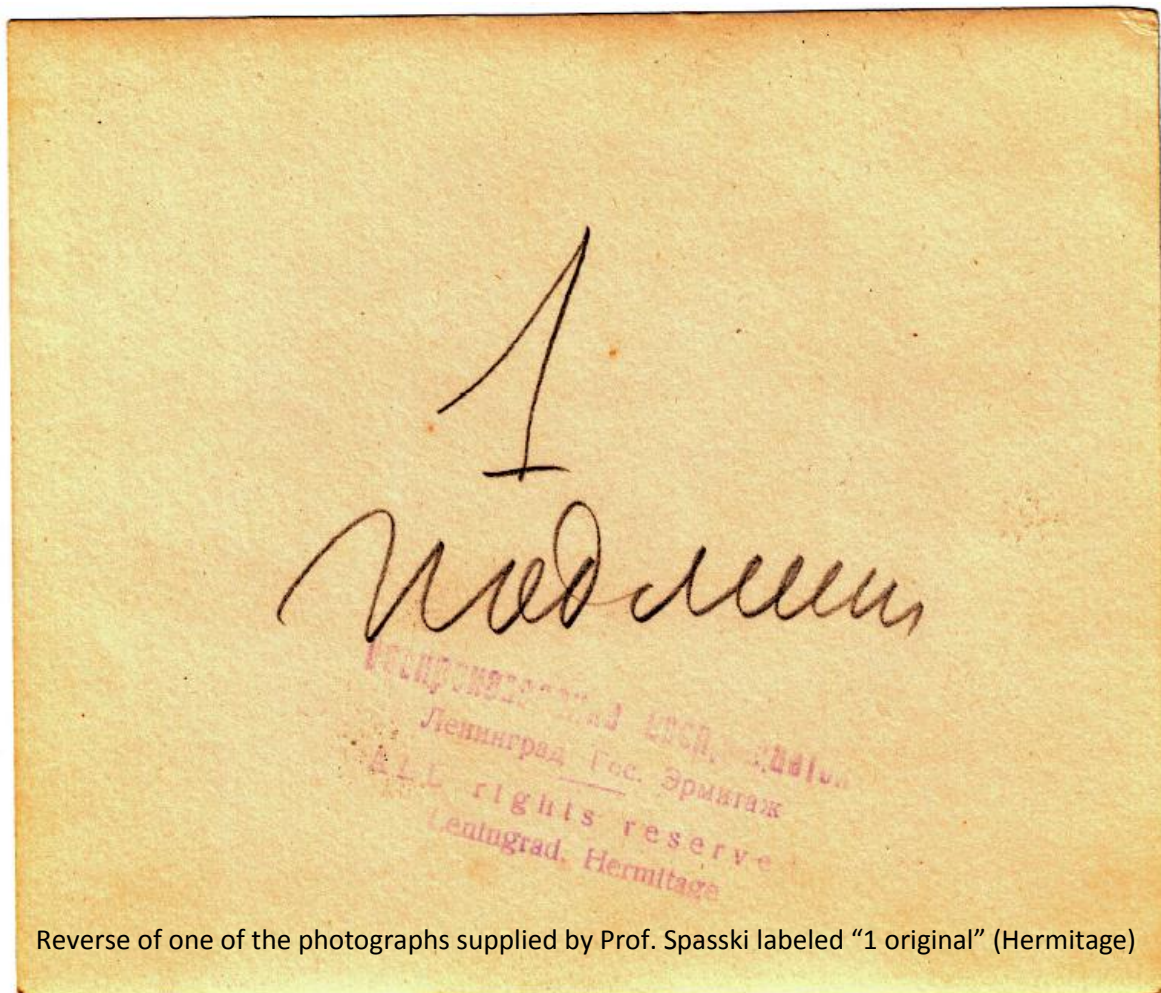
Mr. Arslan's communication with Prof. Spasski runs over the course of 4- 5 years. In that time they exchanged the pictures and thoughts. Presented below are the envelope from Prof. Spasski, pictures that he returned in 1985 and photographs of the original Hermitage coin he supplied for comparison, plus his visual analysis (from Arslan's family archive).





Authentic coin from Hermitage supplied to Mr. Arslan by Prof. Spasski





Reverse of one of the photographs supplied by Prof. Spasski labeled "1 original" (Hermitage)



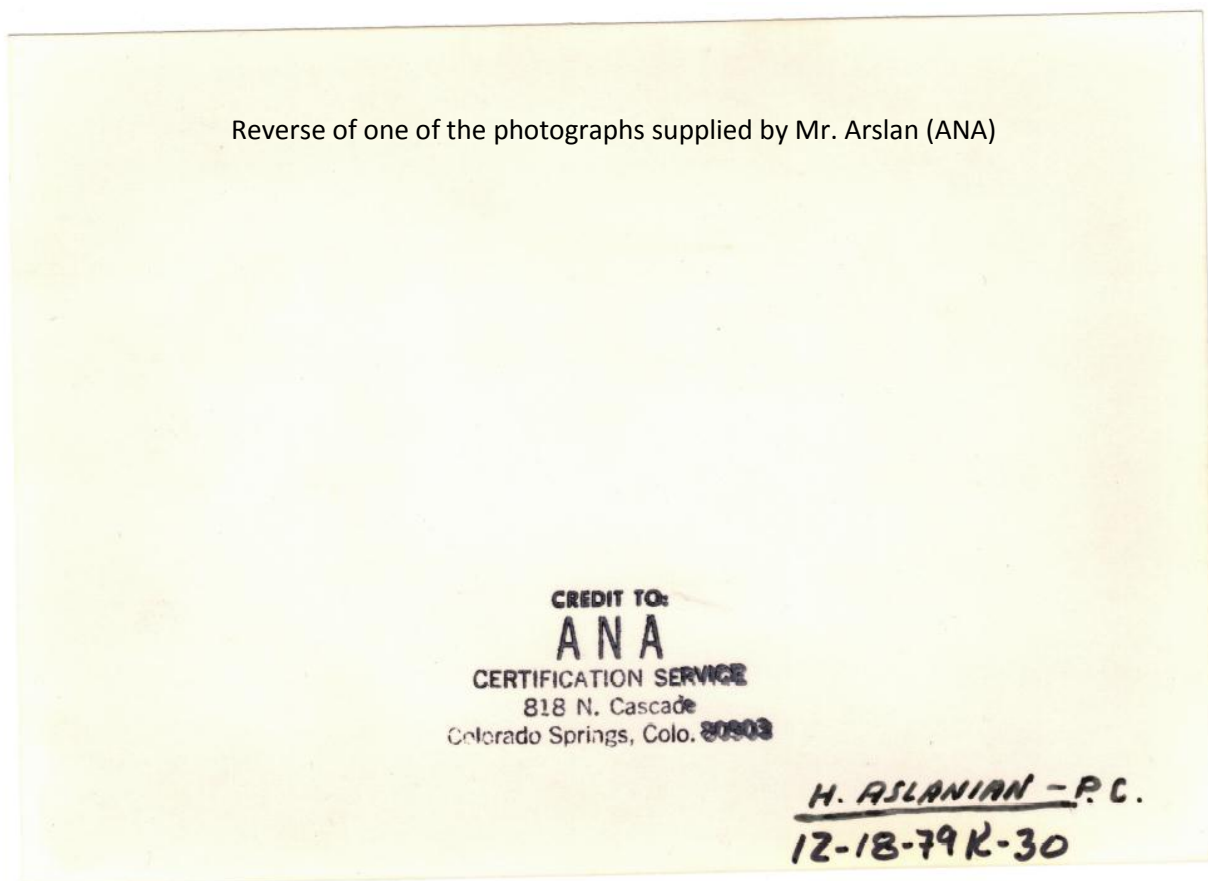
Working out the differences and nuances of two portraits
(the Hermitage coin and the copy made by Spasski from the Arslan coin)



Photographs supplied to Prof. Spasski by Mr. Arslan (taken by ANA in 1979)



Reverse of one of the photographs supplied by Mr. Arslan (ANA)



Additional close up shots of the Arslan coin (ANA)





Prof. Spasski's reasoning continues in his publication (see extract 1):

"... however, the presence of the edge inscription that has become known on the roubles of Constantine only in 1879, and an extremely rare for Russian numismatics die axis, convinced me that the forgery could not be made earlier than 1880, when the "secret" of the original pattern coin became common knowledge. Back in 1976, I found out that Fuchs became the owner of the Constantine rouble, brought to Frankfurt from Leningrad by a certain "Israeli". It turned out that this was not the authentic rouble mentioned above (*in a part of the article concerning original coins*) without an edge inscription, and not the problematic sixth, edged specimen. When I already had photos and casts of a Hollywood coin, Fuchs, who was preparing an article for the magazine of his society, on counterfeiting Constantine roubles, sent me a cast of his coin (*#4 in Fuchs's article*) that conveyed very well the edge inscription, photographs, and also the galvanic copy of his rouble. After that, I was convinced that both forgeries were identical!"

And in conclusion, Prof. Spasski writes this: **"... So, in front of us is a forgery of the highest class that was made using a compressed ordinary rouble coin of the 19th century."**

Now, we may agree with the first part of his conclusion, as it is well supported by Arslan's coin examination, however we have no choice but to challenge the second part and the statement: that the forgery could not be made earlier than 1880 (before the secret of $\uparrow\downarrow$ die axis and edge inscription came out in 1879). **There are reasons to believe that this coin was made in 1845.**

It's hard to confirm the same for the MiM's 1998 specimen, as its edge is not available for examination, but the statement above is highly likely to be true for it as well, if it comes from the same dies, and matches the technological level of the Arslan collection coin, which is the focus of this article.

Presently, it can be presumed that there were only two extremely well made New Hollywood antiquarian forgeries, or novodels, in silver, with the edge inscription: one in Arslan's collection and one auctioned by MiM in 1998 (shown to Spasski in 1955). There are numerous substandard copies in different materials, made at a lower technological level, with different diameter, weight and usually plain edge. Prof. Spasski mentioned them further down in his article. One of these was Fuchs's coin #4 (white metal, 14.71 g and no edge inscription), that was incorrectly described by Prof. Spasski. (see extract 1 and 3)

The attention to detail demonstrated by the medalist who made the dies for Arslan's and MiM's roubles is pretty remarkable. It can be seen on the diagram on page 2. Further supporting evidence can be found in an article written by V. Nazarov and A. Chebotarev in 2006, where they described a tin copy of Arslan's and MiM's (1998) coins' type, rather than the sister coins themselves, as they were not available for examination (see extract 2):

"What is so interesting about this variant of the Constantine rouble copy? First of all, the fact that the dies' engraver turned out to be much more attentive and meticulous than the authors of other well-known "authoritative" (*Troubetskoy*) copies.

If we discard a lot of other details, the genuine rouble of Constantine I has two characteristic features that went unnoticed by the die cutters of the previously described (*Troubetskoy*) copies, but which the engravers who cut the 'best copy' (*MiM's sister coin to Arslan's rouble*) and 'Budnikovsky' rouble (*tin copy of Arslan's and MiM's coins' type*) noticed and repeated in finer points.

The first is a small dot under the left talon of an eagle, which is present on Troubetskoy rouble and is absent on the original. The second is hidden in the trefoil decoration clinging alongside the rim of the coin. The genuine die engravers possibly have made a mistake in calculating spacing between the trefoils, and the one trefoil decoration over the number '1' (in '... 21 ДОЛИ...') has a 'lonely' leaf instead of the full trefoil decoration."

Here are the markers, as described above, that make the authentic pattern roubles and Arslan's collection rouble similar, and at the same time different from the famous Troubetskoy copy (*you may need to zoom in, to see the points better*):

Troubetskoi Rouble
(Markov 2004 sale)

Authentic Pattern Rouble
(Smithsonian Museum, Washington)

New Hollywood Rouble
(Arslan collection)



To support the opinion that Arslan's collection rouble is better than Troubetskoy's forgery, here is a presentation of the sister coin to the Arslan rouble, which was mentioned above several times. This is the only known auction of one of two Constantine I roubles of the New Hollywood type. Here is an extract from 1998 MiM (Монеты и Медали) catalog, auction 9, lot 123 (see extract 4):



123

Николай I (1825-1855)

123 *

1 рубль 1825 г. СПб. Портрет Константина.
Антикварная подделка (копия). Гурт: надпись.
Серебро, 20,43 гр. Состояние XF. См. Узд#1490
(!!).
Великолепная копия знаменитого рубля
Императора Константина, превосходит по
качеству известный «Рубль Трубецкого».
\$15000-18000 90000-100000

It translates as follows: “1 rouble 1825. СПб. Portrait of Constantine. Antiquarian forgery (copy). Edge: inscription. Silver. 20.43 g. Condition XF. See Uzd#1490 (!!). Magnificent copy of the famous rouble of Emperor Constantine, in quality it is superior to “Troubetskoy's rouble”. Estimated price: \$15,000-\$18,000 / 90000-100000 roubles (at that time)”

This same coin was later described in the 3rd issue of 2004 “Coins and Medals” catalog of the Ekaterina Antiquarian Salon in Moscow. There is the following image and description of a New Hollywood Constantine rouble (see extract 5):



“This is one of the best currently know copies of the legendary Constantine rouble 1825, according to the official verdict of State Historical Museum (by V.V. Uzdenikov). The consistency between the reproduction and the authentic coin in this copy surpasses the rouble of Troubetskoy – the forgery that was minted in XIX c. at the Paris mint... In 1955 this coin was shown to I.G Spasski, and in his opinion, if it was known that novodel coins were produced at the mint with newly cut dies, this copy of Constantine rouble could be considered as such.”

It is possible that Prof. Spasski forgot his 1955 assessment of the coin above, as he wrote the work published in 1991, or he may not have realised that this coin was a sister coin to Arslan's rouble, when he referred to it as a New Hollywood rouble, giving the type a name. Obviously, the connection that this coin and Arslan's coin come from the same dies was not picked up by the authors of the last two shown publications as well. This link was suggested only this year by Gunter, in the topic where Arslan's coin was presented by E. Skobtchenko, to the Russian numismatic community.

A close assessment of Arslan's and MiM's images concluded that they matched 100% and must have originated from the same pair of dies.

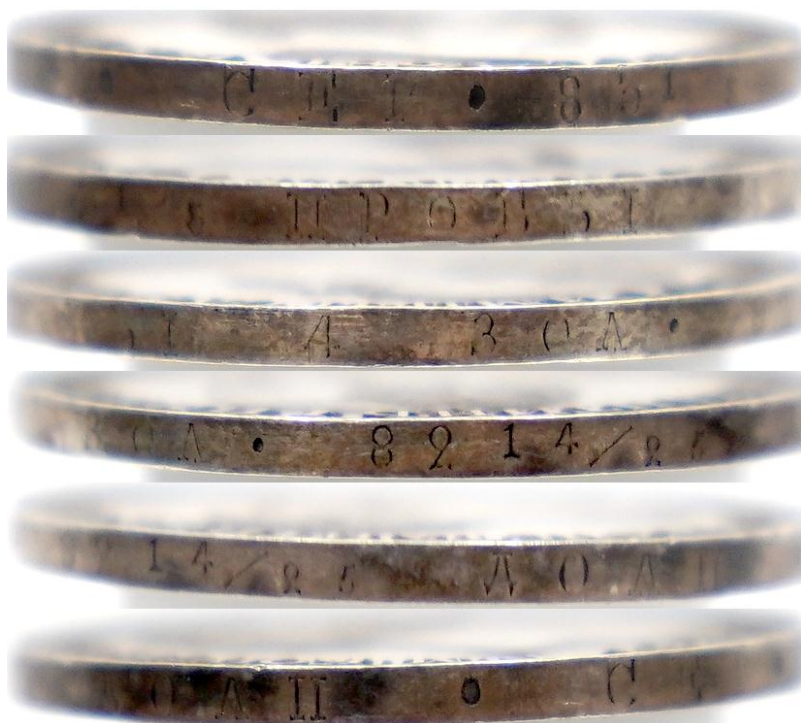
Here are the physical parameters of Arslan's collection rouble: silver 900, 20.73 g., 35 mm. Edge inscription «СЕР. 83 1/3 ПРОБЫ 4 ЗОЛ. 82 14/25 ДОЛИ». ↑↓ die axis.

Mr. Youpe Arslan's son, Armen Aslanian, has kindly measured his father's coin on my request.



It was very pleasing to get a confirmation that his coin's diameter was 35.5 mm and its thickness was within the expected thickness of an UNC rouble of that time.

Next, I hunted to find a regular strike rouble with an edge that matched in form and style the one found on Arslan's collection coin. I already had a hint from Mr. Chertov, who examined the edge images, to look for similar edges among 1844-1845 coins. I started with examining 1825 coins and finished with 1880s, as was suggested by Prof. Spasski in his article, including Warsaw mint coin edges, just to make sure I didn't miss a thing. Mr. Chertov happened to be correct in his assessment.



In extract 1 you can see a scan of the edge of Arslan's rouble as it was presented in 1991 Prof. Spasski's article.

On the left is a set of modern pictures of Arslan's rouble with the inscription fully legible: «СЕР. 83 1/3 ПРОБЫ 4 ЗОЛ. 82 14/25 ДОЛИ» (20.73g, 35.5 mm).

Below it presented the edge of 1 rouble 1845 С.П.Б. К.Б. (also 20,73 g., 35.5 mm).

One may call it an indirect proof that **the Arslan Coin was struck on a silver blank, from stock prepared for the minting of roubles from that period, and was possibly minted in 1845**, when this type of edge inscription was in use at St. Petersburg mint on silver rouble blanks. But proof it is!



The best markers are the shapes of the letters and numbers as well as the combination of the "closed 2" in "82" and the "closed 4" in "4 ЗОЛ.". I found that a shape of Russian letter "3" in «ЗОЛ.» was somewhat different on 1844 coin's edges and the best fit was found in 1845, though 1844 coin edges were also very similar.

Evidence supporting my 'edge hypothesis' comes from 1845 С.П.Б. К.Б. (St. Petersburg mint) rubles as pictured below. The weight, the edge description, the diameter and the production technology for striking the same 35.5 mm ring – match in both coins. That contradicts the statement made by Prof. Spasski that Arslan's collection coin was made on a flattened rouble and no earlier than in 1880. It appears that **Arslan's collection antiquarian forgery or a possible novodel rouble was made on a new, edged blank silver piece prepared for 1845 С.П.Б. К.Б. rouble**. And it can be reasonably assumed that it was in fact struck in 1845 at St. Petersburg mint by one of the medallists, who made dies for it 20 years later, after the original pattern rubles were made, **the common nomenclature for such coins: 'novodels'.**



This supports early Spasski and Fuchs predictions that Arslan's collection rouble is the best candidate to be elected as a novodel coin, made with newly cut dies, and probably in strict secret. The history, the technological level and silver piece employed to make Arslan's coin all point to this fact. It is no surprise, then, that in this time the rim trefoil decoration issue over the number "1" (in «21 ДОЛИ») has not been forgotten by the old engravers, and it was pedantically replicated on the dies used to produce Arslan's rouble, which in turn makes it a realistic, unauthorised, novodel. A very rare novodel at that, as Nicholas I was still the ruler of all Russia and his sense of humour in such matters was not great, after the tragic events of his acceding to the throne in December 1825. Even though Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich of Russia had passed away in 1831, it was still daring to make dies and a couple of realistically looking coins where Constantine was portrayed as a tsar. This could have cost the 'prankster' more than just his position.

In light of these findings the description of the New Hollywood copy of Constantine I rouble by Willy Fuchs, from his 1984 publication, is the most peculiar.



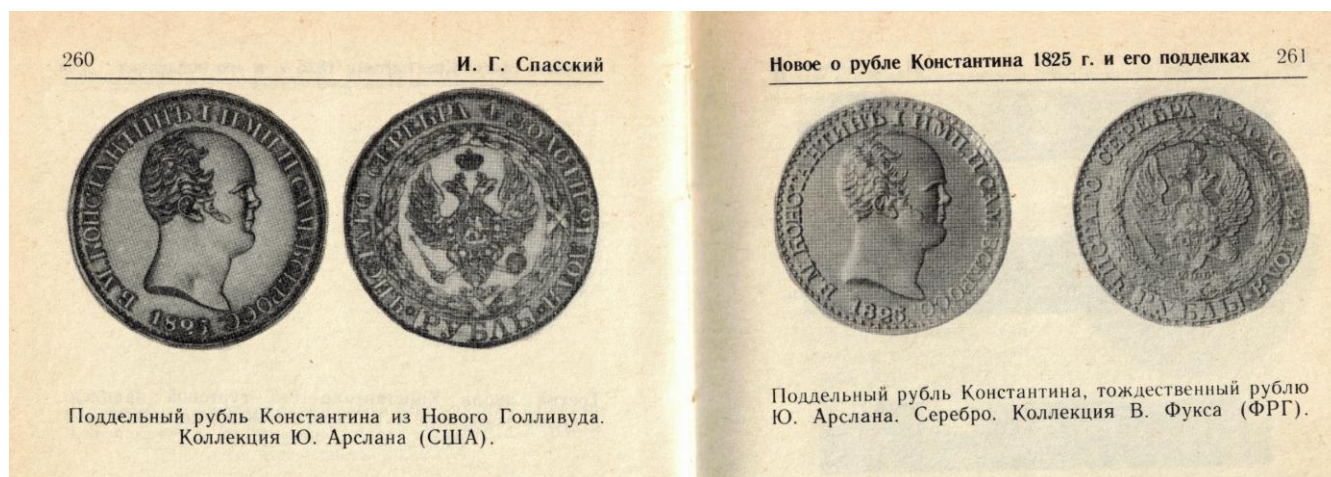
*Sog. Hollywooder Konstantin-Rubel in Weißmetall.
Richtige Stempelstellung ↑↓. 14,71 g.*

On the picture he presented what appears his own (*inferior*) copy of New Hollywood Constantine I rouble in white metal with correct ↑↓ die axis positioning, 14.71g. and without the edge inscription. Here is what Fuchs writes about this coin (*see extract 3*):

“4. During my visit to Moscow and Leningrad from 12th to 16th of November 1983, I've learnt some interesting details about the so-called Hollywood Constantine rouble. Prof. Spasski informed me that one Armenian man, Arslan from Beirut, now living in New Hollywood, sent him an 1825 Constantine rouble with the edge inscription. Mr. Arslan firmly believed that he owned

one of the 5 roubles minted in 1825. However, **a check in the Hermitage showed that it was a copy made in St. Petersburg in 1880s**. A medalist from the mint has cut two dies for it. He was probably trying to prove that he was able to produce dies that were finer than the originals. On close examination, one can say that he actually succeeded. As far as it can be determined, one copy was struck in silver and two copies in white metal (tin alloy) by this pair of dies. The silver one was minted in a ring, and as it was released during the 1880s it has an edge inscription as on other roubles of that time. The two white metal copies, on the other hand, have smooth edges. One of these two pieces was bought by a man named Savinov in the city of Ufa, USSR, and presented to the Hermitage, where it is still today. The other specimen was owned by a young man named Smirnov. When he returned to his hometown of Arsamas (USSR) after his military service, he discovered that his piece had been stolen. It is probably the sample shown above. **The "Hollywood" rouble is considered the most beautiful of all Constantine roubles and is rarer than the original.**”

In Prof. Spasski's article he pictured Arslan's rouble alongside with Fuchs's roubles as two best forgery examples, failing to notice that Fuchs's coin is an inferior copy (*see extract 1*):



However, as mentioned above, Fuchs's rouble was made of a tin alloy and had a plain edge.

The rest of Spasski's assessment in 1983, as it was presented by Fuchs, is really interesting and reasonable as it was in agreement with Arslan's coin examination; with one exception that Arslan's coin was not made in or after 1880s, but on an 1845 rouble silver blank, which eludes to its most probable year of production – 1845.

Regardless of how Arslan's collection Constantine I rouble has been described by Spasski and Fuchs in the literature in the past, as an antiquarian forgery or a most probable novodel, it is an extraordinary coin and an extremely rare and a highly collectable Russian numismatic specimen. I dearly hope that this research article will assist at placing this significant coin at its rightful place, on a map of Russian numismatics, gaining it the attention it surely deserves.

In the end, as an additional treat, a couple of extra unedited shots of this magnificent coin are presented below, taken under the same light conditions, on dark and light backgrounds:



Original Literature Extracts

Extract 1: И. Г. Спасский. Новое о рубле Константина 1825 г. и его подделках. Из сборника: Константиновский рубль. Новые материалы и исследования. — Москва, 1991.

копии которой есть и в Эрмитаже. Но это не все. Еще один, т. е. уже третий, экземпляр Фукс недавно приобрел в Дюссельдорфе!* Как же не узнать его «французскую» пятерку в дате и искаженное русское «П» в слове «ИМП.»! Та же лишняя точка под лапой орла со скипетром; на превосходном по сохранности экземпляре повторяется даже маленькая вмятина на фоне справа от короны. Однако есть здесь и новое: стороны противопоставлены, как у подлинной монеты. Следовательно, при чеканке этого экземпляра учитывалась новейшая информация, а чеканка не была одноразовой!

Сохранилась моя запись 1972 г. о беседе с ленинградцем О. А. Савиновым, рассказавшем о виденном им в Москве лет за 15 до того розовом футлярчике, в гнезде которого лежал серебряный рубль Константина, и на гладком его гурте, как бывает на французских медалях, было выбито «argent». Напомнив ему об этом разговоре, я выяснил, что монету показывал ему известный московский собиратель, ныне покойный М. Д. Неронов. Не может ли это быть «вторая жизнь» штемпелей Трубецкого? Москвичи говорят, что розовый футлярчик больше у них не показывается.

В течение всего 1981 г. длилась моя оживленная переписка с Ю. Арсланом,

* В брошюре В. Фукса — это № 3 из числа фальшивых константиновских рублей (с. 9—10). (Примеч. ред.)

живущим в Новом Голливуде (США). Начало положила его просьба подтвердить подлинность одной монеты: серебряный рубль Константина 900-й пробы, весом 20,21 г, выполнен чеканкой на высоком техническом уровне, стороны противопоставлены, как у подлинной монеты ($\uparrow \downarrow$), имеется отщипнутая вглубь гуртовая надпись: «СЕР. 83¹/₃ ПРОБЫ 4 ЗОЛ. 82¹⁴/₂₅ ДОЛИ». По содержанию она соответствует типу рублей 1810—1885 гг., но ее начертание как раз и доказывает подделку. Вместо старомодных, сравнительно неглубоких и не очень тонких углубленных букв первой половины века мы видим как бы нанесенные тонким пером, спокойные буквы надписи, заменившей прежнюю в 1850 г.

По словам владельца, монета получена им от брата, живущего в Аргентине, куда он переселился в 1928 г. из Ливана, где жили их родители, бежавшие в 1914 г. из турецкой Армении. Г. Арслан писал, что монета находилась в их семье издавна, но наличие гуртовой надписи, ставшей известной на рублях Константина лишь в 1879 г., и исключительно редкая для русской нумизматики противопоставленность сторон убеждают, что подделка не могла быть выполнена ранее 1880 г., когда открылась «тайна» этой пробной монеты.

Еще в 1976 г. я узнал, что Фукс стал обладателем константиновского рубля, привезенного во Франкфурт-на-Майне из Ленинграда неким «израильянином». Оказалось,

что это — не упоминавшийся выше подлинный рубль без гуртовой надписи, ни тем паче, не проблематический шестой гурченный. Когда у меня уже были фото и слепки голливудской монеты, Фукс, готовивший для журнала своего общества статью о подделках константиновских рублей [11], прислал мне слепок, хорошо передающий гуртовую надпись, фотографии, а также гальвано своего рубля. После этого я убедился, что оба фальсификата идентичны!* На подлинном рубле 1825 г. очевидно единство стиля портрета с его нарочитой, романтической «непричесанностью»; в повторении исчезло единство движения свободно лежащей массы волос, куафюра «уложена» прядь к пряди, а на месте свободно начесанных вперед висков оказывается будто приклеенная курчавая «котлетка». Итак, перед нами высший класс подделки, с использованием обжатых обыкновенных рублевиков XIX в.

Начиная с 1966 г. приходившие в Эрмитаж письма советских любителей постепенно познакомили меня с рядом образцов тиснения почти профессионально выполненными штемпелями, но преимущественно на податливом, мягком металле типа типографского гарта или какого-то белого, используемого зубными врачами. Эти оттиски ближайшим образом подобны по штемпелям рублям Арслана-Фук-

* В брошюре В. Фукса — это № 4 из числа фальшивых константиновских рублей (с. 10). (Примеч. ред.).

са. Протирки, с которых обычно начиналось знакомство, долго затрудняли и дразнили меня, пока О. А. Савинов, узнав о моей заинтересованности, не предложил в дар Эрмитажу свой экземпляр, случайно приобретенный им около 1970 г. у любителя с Урала. Этот экземпляр отлично сохранился, чеканен из темно-серого металла, вроде типографского гарта в кольце; подобная подделка есть и в Государственном Историческом музее, но последний чеканен из мягкого белого металла. Обе монеты ближе всего к протирке, полученной еще в 1966 г. из Уфы от Н. Н. Леонтьева. В таком же роде и вторая протирка 1979 г. с кружка «серого металла», за которым последовало и фото — из Арзамаса от С. А. Смирнова.

Если бы не в меру острое и высокое «Л» в слове «золот.» на реверсе последней, я бы признал их все чеканенными одной парой штемпелей — той самой, которой чеканены рубль Арслана и Фукса. Во всех них доминирует некое «чуть-чуть»: чуть-чуть не совсем профессионально выглядят литеры; чуть-чуть лишнего в «наклеенных» бровях Константина; чуть-чуть больше, чем нужно, «провален» вздернутый нос; губы-щелочки; подбородку позавидовал бы и сам Муссолини, а угол между шеей и грудью приводит на память выражение «грудь колесом». На обороте очень жирная последняя точка у «С. П. Б.», а ободки из «городков» всюду одинаково далеки от оригинала, хотя, наверное, нанесены даже по счету. Соотно-

шение сторон у всех экземпляров, как у подлинного рубля.

И. В. Виктор из Челябинска прислал фото серебряной отливки подобного рубля: его оригинал отличается прямой постановкой сторон и большим «благообразием» портрета.

Большое количество оттисков в дешевом металле рассчитано на не очень взыскательного любителя. Но вся «стая» этой дешевки вспорхнула более или менее одновременно на довольно-таки определенной части территории СССР, по обе стороны Уральского хребта. Сравним помещаемые рядом пары снимков — серебряного экземпляра Фукса и монеты из «серого металла» О. А. Савинова: перед нами оттиски одной и той же пары штемпелей! Сомнительную честь первого толчка к созданию этих штемпелей, пожалуй, приходится отдать моей книге [1].

Приглашаю владельца штемпелей последовать примеру «раскаившегося разбойника», отдавшего в Эрмитаж свой штемпель для выделки фальшивых ефимков после моей разоблачительной публикации...

В заключение не миновать обращения к концепции В. В. Бартошевича, истолковавшего свою превосходную находку с позиций версии о шести, а не пяти «образцовых» монетах — вопреки наличию нашего материала. Без спору, не разделяя эту концепцию в целом, принял это прочтение и В. Л. Янин. Однако в любом случае шесть монет — лишь одно из возможных формально, но отнюдь не лучшее по конкретности прочтение

слов «к прежним двум еще четыре образцовых». Оно игнорирует специфику и неперенные условия производства, на котором разыгрывается история чеканки константиновских рублей, и несет в себе соблазн пойти слишком далеко в поисках «виновных».

Вардейн — хранитель ценностей Монетного двора, составляя адресуемый самому высокому начальству рапорт, непременно говорит о шести совершенно одинаковых монетах, конечном результате операции, скорее как заправский коллекционер, а не как ответственный за казенные ценности чиновник! Но хранимое им серебро на определенном этапе производства начинают учитывать в рабочем порядке штучно, в монетных кружках, а в данном случае — в рублевых. Обработанные в ходе контролируемой самим министром операции, все они еще не настоящие, законные рубли, а только пробы, разной степени готовности образцы предполагаемых монет, выполненные в серебре, а оно подлежит строжайшему учету при отпуске с Монетного двора. Уж тут вардейн маху не даст! А они еще идут прямо в руки министра! Проследим же, когда, в какой последовательности и с какими «образцовыми монетами» имел дело в интересующие нас дни января 1826 г. Еллерс, вдохновляемый служебным рвением и возможностью блеснуть перед начальством.

Документ В. В. Бартошевича открывает занимательную картину того, как в целях



Поддельный рубль Константина из Нового Голливуда.
Коллекция Ю. Арслана (США).



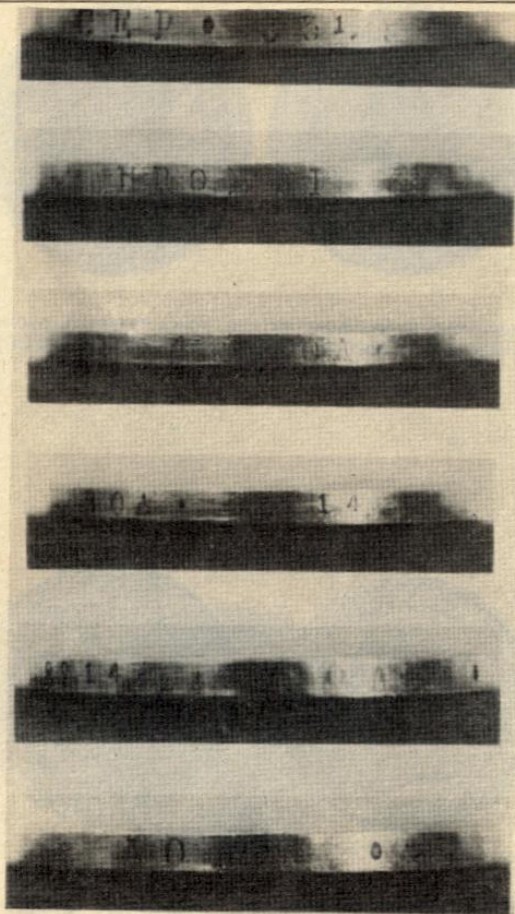
Поддельный рубль Константина, чеканный на обжатом, гурченом кружке. Коллекция В. Фукса (ФРГ).



Поддельный рубль Константина, тождественный рублю Ю. Арслана. Серебро. Коллекция В. Фукса (ФРГ).



Оттиск штемпелей того же поддельного рубля из серого металла. Собрание Эрмитажа, дар О. А. Савинова (СССР).



Гуртовая надпись поддельного рубля Константина, принадлежащего Ю. Арслану (США).

Новейшая подделка константиновского рубля, появившаяся в ФРГ. Коллекция В. Фукса (ФРГ). Пробный экземпляр, чеканенный на плохо сглаженном рубле 1820 г.

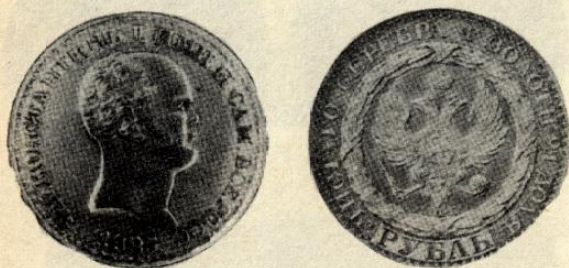


Новейшая подделка из ФРГ. Такой же поддельный рубль, чеканен на хорошо подготовленном рубле. Коллекция В. Фукса (ФРГ).

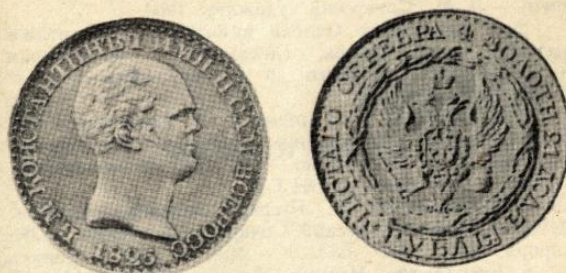
Новейшие подделки из СССР:



Рубль О. А. Савинова. Серый металл.



Рубль С. А. Смирнова (Арзамас).



Рубль В. П. Викторова (Челябинск).

Extract 2: В. Назаров, А. Чеботарев. У лучшей серебряной копии есть оловянный собрат. Антиквариат, № 4, 2006 (article is available in [Южно-российский коллекционер](#))

“Чем интересен этот вариант копии константиновского рубля? В первую очередь, тем, что резчик ее штемпелей оказался гораздо более внимательным и дотошным, нежели авторы других известных «авторитетных» копий.

Если отбросить массу других деталей, у подлинного рубля Константина I есть две характерные особенности, которые остались незамеченными для резчиков штемпелей ранее описанных копий, но которые заметил и в тонкостях повторил резчик «самой лучшей копии» и «будниковского» рубля. А именно. Первая – небольшая точка под правой (для птицы) лапой орла, которая имеется у рубля Трубецкого и отсутствует у подлинника. Вторая сокрыта в начертании трилистникового ободка по-над бортиком монеты. Резчик подлинных штемпелей, вероятно, ошибся в расчетах и над цифрой «1» («...21 ДОЛЯ...») в круговой надписи гербовой стороны имеется вместо очередного трилистника – «одинокый» листик.”

Extract 3: Fuchs Willy. Der Konstantin-Rubel von 1825, seine Geschichte und seine Fälschungen. Geldgeschichtliche Nachrichten 102, 1984.



*Sog. Hollywooder Konstantin-Rubel in Weißmetall.
Richtige Stempelstellung ↑. 14,71 g.*

4. Bei meinem Besuch in Moskau und Leningrad vom 12. bis 16. November 1983 konnte ich über diesen sog. Hollywooder Konstantin-Rubel interessante Einzelheiten erfahren. Wie mir Prof. Spasski mitteilte, sandte ihm ein aus Beirut stammender, jetzt in Hollywood lebender Armenier namens Arslan einen Konstantin-Rubel 1825 mit Randschrift zu. Herr Arslan war der festen Überzeugung, einen der 5 im Jahre 1825 geprägten Rubel zu besitzen. Eine Überprüfung in der Eremitage ergab aber, daß es sich um ein Exemplar handelt, das im Jahre 1880 in St. Petersburg hergestellt worden ist. Ein Medailleur des Münzhofes schnitt die beiden Stempel dafür. Er wollte damit wohl beweisen, daß er in der Lage sei, Stempel herzustellen, die feiner als die Originale ausgearbeitet wären. Bei näherer Betrachtung kann man sagen, daß ihm dies tatsächlich gelungen ist. Soweit noch feststellbar, wurden von diesem Stempelpaar 1 Exemplar in Silber und 2 Exemplare in Weißmetall (Zinnlegierung) abgeschlagen. Der Silberrubel ist in einem Ring geprägt, wie er bei den Kursrubeln von 1880 Verwendung fand, hat also eine Randschrift. Die beiden Exemplare in Weißmetall besitzen dagegen einen glatten Rand. Eines dieser beiden Stücke kaufte ein Mann namens Sawinow in der Stadt Ufa/UdSSR und schenkte es der Eremitage, wo es sich noch heute befindet. Das andere Exemplar besaß ein junger Mann namens Smirnow. Als dieser nach der Ableistung seines Wehrdienstes in seine Heimatstadt Arsamas/UdSSR zurückkehrte, mußte er entdecken, daß sein Stück gestohlen worden war. Wahrscheinlich ist es das oben abgebildete Exemplar. Der „Hollywooder“ gilt als der schönste aller Konstantin-Rubel und ist seltener als das Original.



Фото 12. Лицевая и оборотная стороны одной из лучших, известных в настоящее время серебряных копий легендарного «константиновского» рубля 1825 года (по официальному заключению Государственного исторического музея (В.В. Уздеников), данная копия «по достоверности воспроизведения подлинной монеты... превосходит даже «рубль Трубецкого» — подделку, отчеканенную в XIX веке на Парижском монетном дворе»). Предположительно данная копия из коллекции Анатолия Минца. В 1955 году была показана И.Г. Спасскому, и, по его мнению, если бы было известно о чеканке новоделов на монетном дворе новорезанными штампами, то эту копию «константиновского» рубля можно было бы считать таковой.

collection was being prepared for auction in 1996 this piece came under exhaustive scrutiny but failed to give adequate assurance.

Numismatic forgers' favorite Russian targets are the 1725-1727 copper plates and the Constantine ruble. One reason is that there seems to be an enduring and credulous clientele for each. So shrewd a man as Howard Gibbs fell for Farouk's fake copper ruble and poltina. One of Russia's greatest numismatists, A A Ilyin, held to the view that the Trubetskoy ruble was a Petersburg Mint product.

The Trubetskoy ruble stands in a class by itself partly because of its refined workmanship, but chiefly on account of its gaudy history. Forgers have paid this classic the complement of faking it - sometimes with wrong die orientation, once with a tiny ARGENT punched into the edge, French Mint style. Since Trubetskoy's day there have been a good many forger-

ies of the Constantine ruble, often in base metal. Some are not intended particularly to deceive: they cater to those who accept willingly a well made copy since the genuine coin is out of reach. Such copies differ hardly in purpose from a good galvano (of which many were made from Schubert's specimen).

But many fakes were produced to deceive collectors. Both forgers and collectors have become increasingly sophisticated: some of the 19th century fakes are laughably amateurish, while some made during the last 10 or 15 years are dangerous. The so-called "Hollywood ruble," evidently a Beirut confection, is perhaps the best case in point. It is struck from spark-erosion dies, it carries a lettered edge - a bit too bold, and there are barely perceptible surface inadequacies.

The marriage of numismatic expertise and state-of-the-art technical facilities now more and more apparent in Russia regrettably gives promise of the introduction, one of these days, of an extremely presentable fake Constantine ruble.



THREE TIN SPLASHES TAKEN IN 1825 FROM UNFINISHED DIES IN THE COURSE OF ENGRAVING.
NOTE THE MARKED DIFFERENCES IN THE COIFFURE, SHAPE OF THE HEAD, EXPRESSION AND NECK



THREE MODERN FORGERIES, NONE OF THEM SERIOUSLY DANGEROUS. IN NO CASE DID THE FORGERS SOLVE THEIR PRINCIPAL CHALLENGE - TRYING TO PRODUCE A CONVINCING PORTRAIT

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