The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
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16th Century Chess Piece Discovered During Moscow Roadworks

May 10, 2017



Moscow City Hall

A chess piece filled with silver coins dating back to the reign of Ivan the Terrible has been uncovered during ongoing roadworks in Moscow.

The horse-shaped figurine carved from bone was unearthed during work on the city's gas lines on Prechistenka Street, Moscow City Hall announced Wednesday.

Archeologists discovered that the chess piece was hollow and that ten silver coins had been placed inside.

Experts believe that the coins were minted between 1530 to 1540, during the reign of Russia's infamous ruler, Ivan the Terrible.

Related article: Underground Spy Room Uncovered in Moscow City Center

The coins would have held significant value, providing the owner with enough money to buy at least ten geese, according to Alexei Yemelyanov, head of Moscow's Cultural Heritage department.

Similar amounts of cash could also have been stashed in the chess set's remaining 31 pieces, but none have been found so far.

More than 150 historical artefacts have been unearthed in Moscow during this year's renovation program.

Finds include an underground "spy room" in Moscow's city center, dating back to the 16th century.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/05/10/16th-century-chess-piece-filled-with-silver-discovered-during-moscow-roadworks-a57949