

Emperor Alexander II Memorial Jetton, 1898.

In copper with silver plating; measures 26.8 mm wide; weighs 6.0 g (without connecting link.) The obverse features a memorial complex to the late tsar built inside the Moscow Kremlin with the date of its official opening, 16 August 1898. The inscription along the upper edge is "To the Tsar - Liberator of the People." The reverse shows major dates of Alexander II's life: "Born on 17 April 1818; Assumed the Throne on 19 February 1855; Crowned Tsar on 26 August 1856; Rested in God on 1 March 1881."

In very fine to excellent condition. The jetton is free of significant wear of any kind. The fine details of the artwork and lettering are exceptionally well-preserved, essentially pristine. A good amount of the fragile original silver finish is clearly visible in recessed areas, especially on the reverse. Comes with a copper connecting link that appears to be original to the jetton.

This very interesting and uncommon piece is a veritable history lesson. Perhaps the most reform-minded and liberal Tsar in all of Romanov dynasty, Alexander II must be credited for a number of seminal reforms and accomplishments: liberating the serfs, scoring major military victories, introducing electoral system for local governments and making major improvements in national education - to name just a few. His reward was being assassinated by the Narodnaya Volya ("People's Will") terrorists in St. Petersburg - an event that set Russia back on the far more traditional path under his successor Alexander III. The memorial complex depicted on the obverse was gradually demolished by the Bolsheviks from 1918 - 28 on personal orders by Lenin. In 1968, the empty space was used to build yet another Lenin monument that was in turn removed after the collapse of the USSR.

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