

The first time I saw an ancient coin I was a schoolboy in Zelenchuk, a Cossak village in Stavropol Area. It was beautiful but mysterious with a bust of a man wearing strange clothes showing through its greenish patina. Much later I learnt that it was a coin of Byzantine emperor Justinian I, who ruled from A. D. 525 to 565. But then it seemed to me it was about the most ancient coin on earth. My interest in history, archaeology and geography began precisely with that coin.

When living in Kislovodsk I took part in archaeological expeditions. Later, I entered Tashkent State University, where I studied history at the Chair of Archaeology. At that time the Chair was headed by the prominent Soviet archaeologist professor M. E. Masson, who became my teacher, and it is, first of all, to him I owe my passion for numismatics of Central Asia.

Michail E. Masson was the first lecturer to set up a special course on numismatics of Central Asia which he led for more than a quarter of a century from 1939 to 1965. Unfortunately, those lectures remained unpublished, but it was through them that several generations of Central Asian scholars came to know numismatics.

Scientific numismatics is an exceptionally difficult division of history. To properly evaluate a numismatic object and to provide its historical interpretation one must know such special social sciences as archaeology, anthropology, history of art and religions and even mathematics. Here is an example to prove the point. Sassanid coins with countermarks were widespread in a number of regions of Central Asia during the fifth and sixth centuries A. D. The coins had legends in Middle Persian (Pehlvi), the countermarks bore Bactrian and Sogdian legends. A study of these coins requires knowledge of those languages. Nevertheless, that is only one aspect of research. For comprehensive research one has to know the economic essence of coins, to accurately determine the weight of each coin, draw up the most complicated weight-fluctuation graphs, carry out chemical analyses, determine precisely how much of one or another metal is contained in the coins. On the basis of these data and comparisons with available information another complicated analysis is carried out, which provides grounds to infer to what historical period the coin is related, whether it corresponds to weight standards or not, and what caused the change — unfavourable political situation, socio-economic crisis or debasement? Weight graphs are then drawn up and the number of mint dies is counted (especially in hoards).

Numismatics is called upon to study the history of commodity-money relations and, simultaneously, it contributes to the development of historical science. Since there are no written records of many historical periods or the information is scarce and conflicting, many chapters in the history of ancient and medieval Central Asia fully rely on numismatical data. It follows that a coin is an objective summary-in-miniature, though incomplete as compared with written sources. The latter had a tendency to be altered in the course of centuries: they were re-written and the meaning

of some words, phrases and even whole sentences has changed. But the legends on coins remain the same as on the day they were minted.

Many articles and books have been devoted to numismatics of Central Asia. However, there hasn't been a single publication with illustrations of the coins themselves for the benefit of the public. To some extent this gap may be filled with the exposition presented in this album. In this Preface we aimed at giving the reader an idea of the complexity and diversity of the early and medieval numismatics of Central Asia. If this book induces the reader to look upon the early coins as specific monuments of a nation's history of art we shall consider our aim achieved.

I have availed myself of the materials and conclusions of many Soviet and foreign researchers in numismatics of Central Asia: their names are given in the list of books further reading.

This album illustrates coins from the collections of the State Hermitage in Leningrad, the Museum of History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan, the Khamza Arts Research Institute, the Ministry of Culture of the Uzbek SSR and numismatist V. Kucherov (Tashkent). Some coins are unique. The reproductions of the coins in this album were made by archaeologist M. Kh. Iskhakov (Tashkent). The well-known Soviet numismatist E. K. Zeimal has contributed some valuable remarks. The author expresses profound gratitude to all those who assisted in making the publication of this album possible.

«Lydians... were the first among people, as far as we know, to mint coins and introduce gold and silver coins...»

Herodotus

A Denary ornated with a graceful female head and bearing the legend «Moneta» («Adviser» – Courtious) on the obverse was coined in the Temple of the goddess Juno during the reign of Titus about 45 B. C. Initially the name Moneta was merely one of the epithets of the Goddess. Later, Juno Moneta became an independent goddess – patron of minting, while the former epithet secured the name of coins and is in current usage to this day.

Coinage had had a many-centuries-long history by the time the Roman Denary was struck. The invention of coins was considered an act of mythical heroes and gods. Greek sources give three versions of the origin of minted coins. One version has it that coins originated in Lydia – a Ionian state in Asia Minor; another – attributes the invention of silver coins to King Thedon of Argos; the third version links the idea of stamping metal pellets with the name of Queen Hermodica, wife to Phri-jian King Midach of Kima in Aeolida.

According to contemporary scientific data stamped coins originated sometime at the turn of the eighth century B. C. almost simultaneously in several Ionian Greek towns in Asia Minor, then under the rule of Lydian kings, and on Aegina Island.

The origin of money, this «ware of wares» is a natural outcome of socio-economic development of advanced civilizations of antiquity.

The long and complex process of commodity exchange and development of retail trade went through the stages of commodity-money and metallic ingots circulation and, in the long run, resulted in the appearance of coins. Early coins differed from metallic ingots in that they had representation marks on one or either sides to certify their full-weight. Initially these marks were a combination of various geometric patterns, pictorial representations of animals, birds and fish – lion, turtle, seal, owl, tunny-fish. Legends and images of deities appeared some time later, and portraits and busts of kings – by the middle of the fourth century B. C. and during the reign of Alexander the Great.

In Lydia the first coins were stamped on electra, a natural alloy of silver and gold («white gold» as the Greeks called it) and later on silver. Coinage based on bimetallism (simultaneous use of gold and silver) widely spread only under the famous King Croesus (561–546 B. C.), whose name became a symbol of fabulous wealth. This system gained particular dominance in ancient Persia during the subsequent period.

Coins of different denominations were in currency already in the earliest coinage systems: Millet, Phokey, Aegian, Eubian – and struck differently for each weight standard. A new weight standard called Attic (based on tetradrachm of 17.44 grammes and drachm of 4.36 grammes respectively) was introduced by Alexander the Great throughout his Empire. Since then on for several centuries the attic weight standard dominated the countries of the Hellenistic world, including the southern regions of Central Asia.

Central Asia was not among the regions where coins originated, the main reason being insufficient level of socio-economic development. For centuries, preceeding the introduction of coins various forms of barter trade and, possibly, of ingot circulation were characteristic of this area. But it should not be taken that the peoples of Central Asia had no idea of coins prior to their appearance in this region in the course of three hundred years of the first millennium B. C. In the sixth to the fourth centuries B. C. Central Asia was part of the ancient Persian state of the Achaemenids, where gold (Doric) and silver (Shekel) coins were struck beginning from the second half of the sixth century B. C. up to the thirties of the fourth century B. C. It is also known that the Central Asian peoples furnished considerable contingents of troops to the Achaemenid army: Sogdians, Bactrians, Khoresmians and Sakae took part in campaigns waged by Persian Kings against Greece. Central Asian soldiers performed garrison duties in various cities of the Achaemenid Kingdom. There is no doubt that the Central Asian peoples, although not all of them, had an idea of coins, but due to certain conditions of socio-economic development coins had not become a means of circulation. So far there has not been a single authentic finding on the territory of Central Asia of a coin dating back to that period. There was the questionable discovery of a gold Achaemenid Doric last century outside Kerki, a town in the Turkmen SSR. These coins were called «archers» because they depicted a kneeling king/or soldier shooting a bow. According to researchers, gold Achaemenid coins took their name Doric from the name of King Darius Hystaspes (522–486 B. C.), who was the first to issue them for circulation.

The powerful Achaemenid Kingdom fell under the crushing blows of the Macedonian army at the end of the fourth century B. C. For three full years, from 330 to 327 B. C., the greatest warrior of antiquity was busy conquering Central Asia, whose peoples rendered heroic resistance to the most powerful army of the day. Tremendous

damage was inflicted to the towns and settlements of the region. The fact that the southern regions of Central Asia became part of Alexander's Empire and Later were incorporated into the Kingdom set up by his commander Seleucid had an overall favourable effect: Central Asia was drawn into the orbit of Hellenistic influence, Greek culture penetrated far into the East; the exchange of commodities and cultural values between the countries of Central Asia and the Hellenistic world received fresh impetus.

There is little doubt that Alexander's soldiers brought with them coins, which they had become accustomed to, but whether coins became a means of circulation among the local population is not supported by scientific evidence. No coins of Alexander the Great have been found on the territory of Central Asia. The tetradrachm of Alexander from the collection of the Museum of History shown in this album is one of the best specimens of Hellenistic numismatics — its obverse bears Hercules with features of Alexander the Great, wearing a lion skin; reverse portrays Zeus enthroned holding a bird in right hand.

Alexander's death sparked off a bitter struggle for power among his commanders — diadochs, who set up several major Hellenistic kingdoms on the ruins of the Macedonian Empire. The southern regions of Central Asia became part of the Seleucid Kingdom formed in 312 B. C. by Seleucus I Nikatorus. With Seleucus' son (born to Apama, daughter of the celebrated Spitamenes) Antiochos I, who was a satrap in the eastern provinces of the Seleucid state and later its King, is linked the emission of the first coins of Bactrian mint (now Balkh in Northern Afghanistan). Initially, Seleucid I and Antiochos I had silver coins struck jointly, but later coins were issued by Antiochos I, as an autocratic ruler. There were coins of big denominations: staters, tetradrachms and drachms. The drachm of Antiochos I, illustrated in this album, has on its obverse the effigy of a king, the reverse bears the head of a horned horse. Coins of this type series were a precursor of the widespread and diverse coin series of Sogdian mint, struck during the last two centuries B. C. The Seleucid period was one during which the local population familiarized themselves with coins. Possibly, coins were introduced into economic life of southern Central Asia. The possibility that early coins were a means of circulation solely among the Greek population cannot be ruled out, while the inhabitants of Central Asia, according to E. V. Zeimal were not yet involved into the sphere of commodity-money relations. This process apparently commenced in the second half of the third century B. C., when the Parthian and Graeco-Bactrian kingdoms acquired independence in South Central Asia. The Parna tribe, inhabiting South Turkenistan, held key positions in the Parthian kingdom, in which the Greeks constituted the governing elite.

For the most part coins of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, which endured for slightly more than a hundred years (third century B. C. to the end of the second century B. C.) are masterpieces of the art of medal.

Coinage in the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom was based on the attic weight standard: and mostly silver and copper coins were struck. Among the rarely stamped gold coins are Eucratides' gold coins of 20 staters (more than 160 grammes) – the largest gold coins of antiquity: only two coins of this series are known today: according to A. A. Semyonov one was kept in the treasury of the Emir of Bukhara, the other is now in Paris.

For standard Graeco-Bactrian silver coins the obverse type is a ruling sovereign, the reverse depicts patronising Greek deity: Zeus, Hercules, Poseidon, Apollo, Dioscuri. Greek legends in circumferential or vertical columns bear royal title, name and epithet in genitive case, for example, «Of Lord King Antiochos».

The reverse also had a monogram consisting of several Greek letters. Specialists disagree in their view whether these monograms identify abbreviated name of the mint, names of mint officials in charge of issuing coins or date of mint.

Cases of deviation from standard features of Graeco-Bactrian coins include coins of King Eucratides depicting on the obverse the portrait of the King himself and the legend «Great King Eucratides» and the reverse bearing double profile of a youth or man and woman wearing a diadem and the legend «Heliocles and Laodica». Very attractive is a series of commemorative coin-medals issued in honour of Alexander, Antiochos, Diodotus and Eutidemos. One such coin-medal issued by Antimachos in honour of Eutidemos was excavated in the Central Asian town of Panjikent; another three, issued by Agathokles dedicated to Diodotus and Eucratides were found in a Bukhara hoard.

Karosthi legends and figures of animals such as elephant, zebu-bull, panther appeared on coins of some Graeco-Bactrian rulers after annexation of North-West India. Images on Graeco-Bactrian copper coins provide greater diversity in this respect; some emanate from early Gandhar square type series.

The Graeco-Bactrian coinage, chiefly, the extraordinary artistic merit of engravers in depicting monarchs are far superior to the best species of Hellenistic coins. Along with Sicilian decadrachms they constitute the summit of antique coinage, which was considered in ancient Greece as an independent branch of art, guided by its specific principles and requirements.

Portraits of Graeco-Bactrian kings on coins were not simply idealized images of monarchs but portraits endowed with profoundly realistic features. It is not merely the outward appearance that distinguishes portraits of those kings, but the artist's desire to express the inner world of the portrayed ruler, which is revealed in either wrinkles/or screw-up of eyes or expression of lips.

Deity iconography on Graeco-Bactrian coins depicts in miniature statuary types going back to works by Lysippos and his pupils. The portraits of kings engraved on Parthian coins are quite different; they can be distinguished also by the form of the tiara which is specific

for every king. The long thick and curly beard of the so-called Assyrian type clearly distinguishes the images of Parthian kings from other rulers. For almost five hundred years the obverse retained the same king type series depicting monarch enthroned or on an omphalos holding a bow in the right hand with Greek legends around (Parthian legends commencing from the first century A. D.). Coins provide identical legends — more often various epithets of a ruling sovereign and the name of Araracos — the founder of the Parthian Kingdom, and rarely — the name of a king. There often appear monograms — mint marks indicating the date of issue and the Parthian Mints. Silver drachms of Mythridates II, Sinatruces, Phrataphernos IV and V, Vonones, Volohez II, Artaban and tetradrachms of Volohez I, shown in this album, all belong to the best specimens of Parthian coinage. Copper coins of Sanabar, King, of Margiana, too are attributed to the Parthian coin type series.

The second half of the second century B. C. was a period of dramatic changes in the ethnic and political life of the Central Asian peoples. Nomadic Persian tribes — Tochari, Assii, Pasiani, Sakarauli, Yueh-Chi — living formerly in the boundless steppes to the North and North-West of Central Asia, induced to migrate by pressure from other tribes, invaded Graeco-Bactria and completely destroyed the last Hellenistic Kingdom in the East. By the end of the first century B. C. one group of these nomads occupied Sogdiana and the other firmly established itself in Bactria. It was a period, when simultaneously in both regions occurred debasement — coining of the so-called «barbarous» or rude imitations, which shortly after was practiced elsewhere. These imitations can apparently be taken for an initial form of antochthonous coinage, since all previous coin issuers were Greek rulers of Bactria. The economic and juridical nature of debasement as well as some other aspects of their study remains one of the most complicated fields of early numismatics of Central Asia.

Debasement, at least at its initial stage, is actually an imitation of an original coin, which differs from the prototype series by the structure of metal, weight standard, mint quality and corrupt legends. Each successive issue added greater corruptions and errors, degrading partially or completely the images and legends. Rude imitations were struck and circulated in those regions of Central Asia where the money system was highly advanced or, on the contrary, at almost «zero» point. Imitations of tetradrachms of Eutidemos and Heliocles and obols of Eucratides were widespread in Bactria and Sogdiana. In most instances rude imitations display a common feature: on a certain stage of socio-economic development local princes commenced striking original or slightly modified coins. Among them are imitations of tetradrachms of Eutidemos apparently struck in the Bukhara oasis. The portrait of King Eutidemos is superseded with the portrait of a local ruler wearing a tiara, and the Greek legends — with legends in the Sogdian language. Similar evolutions

occurred with imitations of tetradrachms of Heliocles in Bactria and Eucratides in Khoresmia.

Of exceptional interest is numismatics of Sogdiana of the first century B. C. to the first century A. D. The numerous and diverse Sogdian coins of that period can be classified into the following type series:

1. Silver and copper coins of Antiochos I of the Seleucid type depicting a horse head on the reverse (second-first centuries B. C. — first century A. D.).

2. Silver coins bearing images of Hercules and Zeus and Sogdian legends (first centuries A. D.) emanated from Seleucid coins or drachms of Alexander.

3. Silver coins of Hyrcodus depicting a galloping horse and standing deity (two independent type series).

4. Silver coins bearing Sogdian legends and an archer (first century to the beginning of the fourth century A. D.).

5. Imitations of tetradrachms of Eutidemos with corrupt Greek legends and Sogdian legends.

Most of the Sogdian coins, except imitations of Eutidemos are small silver coins with regular shape and flat fabric. A specific series of coins bearing an archer is noted for its convex obverse surface and concave reverse. To this day few copper Sogdian coins have been found and it is highly probable that Sogdian monometallic coinage was based on silver. The range of images on Sogdian coins is limited to profiled busts of rulers on the obverse, archer/deity standing holding spear, horse galloping or head of horned horse on the reverse.

Hyrcodus-type Sogdian coins were obviously issued by rulers of nomadic tribes, who had occupied Sogdiana in the second half of the second century B. C. — first century A. D. The first issues of this series bear Greek legends, later appear combined Greek and Sogdian legends, followed by solely Sogdian legends. Their obverse bear the portrait of a King with a low retreating forehead, prominent nose and big almond-shaped eyes, plump lips surmounted by moustaches with drooping ends. Interestingly enough the beard consists of two or three strands of hair carefully combed backwards and tied with a double headband. The reverse of early coins depicts standing deity holding spear in right hand, with flames above head. Later there appear galloping horse. The anthropological type of rulers on coins of Hyrcodus, the style of hair-cut, moustache and beard are very much identical it is indicative that those same features are characteristic of coins of other nomadic tribe rulers who conquered Bactria and Sogdiana in the first century B. C. — first century A. D. Their common ethnic origin is highly probable.

Khoresmian coins — large silver imitations of tetradrachms of Eucratides — differ from their prototype series by very blundered legends and Khoresmian symbol (tamgha) countermarked on the obverse. The early period coins of the Khoresmian kingdom bear profile busts of local sovereigns and, along with corrupt Greek legends, have Khoresmian Aramaic, which provides the name and

title of the king, and horseman on the reverse. Some specialists share the view of al-Beruni that the horseman is God Shinwash, the founder of the Khoresmian royal dynasty. Others take him for an unidentified deity king. Horseman type series together with the Khoresmian countermark symbol, although slightly modified, persisted on all silver coins of this region during seven centuries up to the middle of the eighth century A. D., when the end of the Khoresmian series can be dated with reasonable accuracy. This unique phenomenon in numismatics of Central Asia is proof of firmly established traditions and continuity of the Khoresmian royal dynasty. Khoresmian coins shown in this album are related to the mint of the later period. These include silver coins of hmw/ysy, Bravika and Shawashphan, kings of Khoresmia. From earlier coins they differ in the form and thickness of coins, king bust, slight modification of the Aramaic script and higher mint quality. The obverse of coins of Shawashphan bear expressive profiled bust of beardless king wearing elaborate head-dress with crown at front, two-rowed necklace on neck and flaps hanging down from back of head. Sogdian legend with the name of king Shawash means «possessing «the Glory of Shawash». On the reverse there is the traditional Khoresmian horseman and Khoresmian Aramaic legend «Lord King Shawashphan».

Arabic legends appear on the last issues struck by Khoresmian kings. This was connected with the growing influence of the Arab Caliphs in Khoresmia and with the fact that one of the last Khoresm-Shahs adopted Islam. Mintage of traditional coins of bust/horseman type series was discontinued in the late eighth century A. D.

Let us turn again from the northern regions of Central Asia back to the south — to Bactria, «the land of a thousand cities», as it was called by the Greeks. If there is any exaggeration in this definition it is not too far from the truth. Bactria — what is today the territory of north Afghanistan and south Uzbekistan and Tajikistan — was indeed a great and wonderful land, the birthplace of ancient agricultural civilization, the cradle of powerful Greco-Bactrian and Kushan states, a centre of outstanding art and great cities, among them the Bactrian city of Balkh, which the Arabs called «Madina al-Umma», i. e. «Mother of Cities». Coinage commenced in Bactria earlier than in any other region of Central Asia and commodity-money relations reached a high plane of development. As the previous chronology of Bactrian coins has already been discussed in some detail, only the period when Bactria was part of the Great Kushan Empire will be discussed here. But first, here is some background history.

By the middle of the second century B. C., the Persian tribe of Yueh Chi which was forced to migrate to south Central Asia by advancing Hunn tribes, conquered part of Bactria to the North of the Oxus (Amu-Darya) and thereafter, the rest of the country. Later the Yueh Chi union broke up into five principalities authorized to be ruled by tribal princes — Yavugs. By the middle of the first century A. D. the Kushan rule gained considerable

strength, particularly following the capture of Kabulistan and Gandhara by the Yavug ruler Kujula Kadphises and subsequent unification of Kushan territories into the Kushan Kingdom – one of the most powerful empires of antiquity, which in its grandeur and significance rivaled the Khan empire, the Parthian kingdom and the Roman empire. It endured from the middle of the first to the middle of the third centuries A. D. and reached the peak of its might under the great Kushan King Kanishka. He ruled in the first half of the second century A. D., when his empire embraced vast territories of India, Afghanistan and the Southern regions of Central Asia.

The Kushan mint commenced from coins of a ruler whose name some specialists transliterate as «Heraios» and others as «Sanab» on silver coins of two denominations – tetradrachms and obols.

The obverse of the tetradrachm depicts a male laureled bust with an expressive manly face and elaborate hair style. The reverse is most interesting – a king on horseback with flying Nike holding wreath behind the ruler. Greek legend on the reverse reads as «of Ruling Heraios Sanab Kushan». These coin series have been studied for more than a hundred years, nevertheless they still hold a mystery. New numismatic data and the discovery of sculptural portraits of the Heraios bust series at Khalchayan site during the last two decades provided evidence to infer a number of curious observations concerning this Kushan ruler's reign. The prominent Soviet specialist on Iran V. A. Lishits assumes in part that «Heraios» is not a name but an epithet translated from Persian as «Aryan (Hero) Nobleman», while «Sanab» is an incomplete form of «Sanabar» – «Repulsing the Enemy». But much remains uncertain about these coins. Still more enigmatic are the Kushan copper coins bearing Greek legends indicating the epithet and title of a king but not the name – «King of Kings, the Great Saviour». The coins of the «Uncertain Ruler/«Soter Megas» series have been found in great numbers during archaeological excavations in south Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. To this day opinions differ as to which Kushan king struck them. We share M. E. Masson's opinion that they can be attributed to the mint of Kujula Kadphises, others consider Vima Kadphises as the issuer. The «Soter Megas» type series bear on the obverse an idealized bust of king holding javeline. However, some specialists assume it is deity Mitra, not a ruler. The reverse bears king on horseback holding a battle axe (tabar-zagnul) at front.

The Kushan king Kadphises II introduced major reforms in currency. A new coin system was based on gold of different denominations, among which stater weighed 8.3 grammes. Others included 16.07 and 2.01 grammes denomination coins. Large copper coins with a diameter of 23–25 mm weighing 16–17 grammes also appeared then. They were noted for unified iconography on the obverse; figure of a king/profiled bust – king at the altar. This latter king-priest type series are engraved on coins of other Kushan rulers Kanishka, Vasu Deva,

Kanishka III (except coins of Huvishka). Very interesting are the patron-deities on the reverse of Kushan coins. Coins of Kadphises II and Vasu Deva depict Indian deity Siva standing in front of Nandi-bull. A whole pantheon of deities is represented on coins of Kanishka and Huvishka; Avestian Ates, Mihr, Oragn, Pharr, goddesses Nana and Ardoksh; Greek Helios; Indian Buddha; Egyptian Sarapises. Thorough study of deities on Kushan coins provides extremely important evidence on the history of religions professed by the peoples of the multinational Kushan Empire. They are all of no less significance for the comprehension of stylistic peculiarities in the development of Kushan fine arts. So, contrary to concrete portraits of kings on Graeco-Bactrian coins, the Kushan coiners engraved the abstract image of a king.

It is highly probable that deities followed the pattern of monumental statues erected in temples. Long before the discovery of ancient Bactrian characters, the study of Kushan coins enabled to reveal a significant reform carried out in Kushan Empire. Bactrian characters supersede Greek legends on coins of King Kanishka. The Bactrian language, as it is known, is related to the Eastern Iranian family of languages. Bactrian characters were derived from the Greek alphabet with an additional «san» for a hushing sound added to the current 24 letters.

The third and fourth centuries A. D. were a period of drastic changes in the history of Central Asia. The last great kingdoms of antiquity – Kushan and Parthian Empires came to a decline; their domain was devastated by and annexed to a new powerful Sassanid kingdom. Its kings appointed Governors – Kushan Shahs – who issued gold and silver coins in the former Kushan possessions. Coins of Sassanid Kushan Shahs can be divided into two groups: Sassanid-Kushan and Kushan-Sassanid.

A ruling Kushan Shah's profiled bust was engraved on the obverse of the first group of coins; and the reverse depicted an altar and an investiture scene – a waist-deep deity crowning the king with a diadem; or deity enthroned under a temple arcade. The coins of the second group followed the coin type series of the Kushan King Vasu Deva. These coins are shown in this album.

Various imitations of Kushan coins of Huvishka, Vasu Deva and Kanishka III were widely spread in the former Kushan domains. These differed from original coins not only in rude style imitation but also in weight, size and mint quality. Small thick coins of irregular shape were also frequent.

Oddly enough, flat flan type coins struck from hammered out copper wire were issued in Khoresm during the same period.

Degraded coinage was apparently not incidental in mint centres of antiquity. It is a reflection of the general crisis of the social system of antiquity that also enveloped many fields of Central Asian material culture.

Nevertheless the third and fourth centuries A. D. are noted by the territorial extension of money circulation and appearance of new mint centres in Central Asia. The first

copper coins of local mint were struck in Kesh (present day Karshi and Sharhrisabz), Chach (Tashkent region) and in Bukhara. Coins of Kesh mint deserve particular attention in terms of iconography. Their obverse depicts bust of ruler with elaborate hair style with long curly locks and headband tied on top. The reverse bears combat scene: man killing lion standing on its hind legs. This coin series has no analogues in Central Asian coinage, nonetheless this subject emanates from precursor silver coins of Kilikia struck in the fourth century B. C. and the combat scene is characteristic of monuments of Persian art beginning with the Achaemenid period. How this subject appeared on the coins of Kesh rulers remains unknown. However, attention is drawn by the effigy of a ruler which differs from a whole series of images peculiar of kings on other Central Asian coins.

The period of the early Middle Ages is noted for cardinal changes in the history of Central Asia: the making and development of feudalism with numerous small states divided into still smaller independent principalities. During that period Central Asia was successively ruled by the powerful kingdoms of the East: Hephthalite (late fifth century A. D. early sixth century A. D.), Sassanid (sixth and seventh centuries A. D.), Turkic Kaganate (late sixth century – middle eighth century A. D.), and, finally in middle of the eighth century A. D. Central Asia was conquered by the Arabs (first by the Omayyad and later the Abassid Caliphates). Also significant were changes in the ethnosphere of Central Asia in the early Middle Ages, which started with the invasion of Persian tribes of nomads and highlanders: Hionites, Cidarites, Hephthalites and, thereafter in the second half of the seventh century A. D., continued with the migration of Turkic tribes.

All this could not but have deep impact on many aspects of material and artistic culture, including coinage. An unprecedentedly great number of mints appeared in the region – coins were struck by rulers of comparatively large kingdoms (Sogdiana, Khorasm), princes of small principalities (Penjikent) and even by towns (Paikend in Bukhara oasis). Depending on the political and other relations many Central Asian domains struck coins imitating the coins of their powerful neighbours. Thus, the Sogdian iskhids and some Turkic rulers issued coins of Chinese pattern – round coins with a square hole in the middle; imitations of Sassanid king Varahran V were struck in Bukhara and in the southern regions of Uzbekistan (Chaganian and Termez); imitations emanated from coin series of other Sassanid kings – Perozes (459–484 A. D.) and Khorsu I Anushirvan (531–579 A. D.). Some Sogdian, Chach and Chaganian rulers' effigies on coins followed the patterns of Byzantine coins. Chach and Chaganian coins shown in this album depict on the obverse busts of the King and the Queen. This was earlier unknown in Central Asian coinage, but spread widely on Byzantine coins beginning with Emperor Justin II (565–578 A. D.), where he is portrayed together with the Empress Sophia.

Only Khoresm maintained its centuries-old traditions. The iconographic pattern: ruler on the obverse, king on horseback on the reverse – firmly established during the first centuries of our era remained unchanged in the early Middle Ages. This apparently is linked with political and economic isolation of horesm and certain degree of conservatism.

Coinage of different regions of Central Asia during the early Middle Ages was based on silver and copper, gold coins were not struck. Only copper coins were issued in Sogdiana, Chach, Ustrushana and the Valley of Seven Rivers which was induced by a scarcity of silver, obviously imported from Sassanid kingdom. Khoresm, Bukhara and Chaganian issued both silver and copper coins. Gold Byzantine solids penetrated into Central Asia, but whether they were in circulation or not we cannot say for sure. Nevertheless, they laid the beginning to the coinage of the so-called indications – issues from identical dies on both sides, used as abornments. Findings of indications from Byzantine mint coins, as well as the coins themselves are not few in burial grounds and excavation sites of Central Asia.

The coins of the early Middle Ages differ in significant features from antique coins. Images appear to be flat and contoured, with dies engraved shallow. There also appear coins with legends and regnal control marks (tamgha), representations of rulers and deities or even sometimes legends being dispensed with, which had no precedent at that time.

From the iconographic point of view coins of Central Asia can be characterised in the following way:

CHACH. Coins struck in different parts of this region are most varied: depicting on the obverse bust of king or king and queen facing, or facing three fourth. Very often they are devoid of any concrete features and can be conceived as a generalized type, sometimes presented in sketchy form. Image of a beast, unsaddled horse and camel apparently was a totem of the ruling clan. The reverse of the coin is the same – control mark on centre with Sogdian legends around, indicating the name and title of the ruler, as well as the names of principalities.

Iconography on the coins of Cabarna principality stand out of the coin series of the region. One of them is given in our album and depicts on the obverse the portrait of a cross-legged ruler seated on zoomorphous throne with two heads of beasts looking in diametrically opposite directions. The ruler is seated en face, while the face is profiled, left hand raised in blessing and a short sword in his right hand. To the left is a star and crescent – solar and lunar representation of religious-cosmic symbolism. Such a combination of religious and secular symbols, an apparent reflection of theocratism, secured the sovereign priestly and royal functions.

SOGDIANA. The early Sogdian copper coins bear on the obverse an effigy of a goddess with straight hair. But already beginning from the middle of the seventh century A. D. the Sogdian sovereigns – iskhids – and princes

of principalities issue cast coins with square holes devoid of any images of rulers or deities. On the obverse is inscribed the Sogdian legend in italic type naming a king and his title, for example — «King Shishpur», and royal mark on the reverse. Similar coins with corresponding amendments of the names and titulature were struck in the Valley of Seven Rivers by the princes of the Turkic tribe of Turgesh, in the merchant town of Paikend in Bukhara oasis, in North Tocharistan and Chach.

Short Arabic inscriptions along with legends in the Sogdian language appeared on late Sogdian coins of this small principality situated in the location of present day Leninabad region, Tajik SSR and Jizzak region, Uzbek SSR, which struck its own copper coin depicting on the obverse bust of ruler wearing winged crown, derived from the Sassanid design. An elephant — Buddhist symbol — superseded the crowned bust on coins struck by Prince Sattachari.

BUKHARA. Scyphate copper coins of Bukhara struck in the fourth and fifth centuries A. D. bear crowned head of a ruler in dotted circle on the obverse and Sassanid type fire-altar or control mark on the reverse. Legend in Aramaic script names the ruler and his title — «King Aswar».

Coining of silver drachms (coins of Bukharhudats) by Sassanid coin type series of Varahran V started in the middle of the fifth century A. D. in Bukhara. The obverse bears the profiled bust of Shah-in-Shah wearing a scalloped crown, the reverse — fire-altar on centre surmounted by head of deity with the guards (mobeds) of sacred fire on either side. Bukharian version of Sogdian legend is deciphered as «Lord King of Bukhara». Widely spread were coins with an image of Bactrian camel, apparently as a zoomorphous embodiment of Avestian god of war Veretragna.

TOCHARISTAN. Coinage, especially mint of silver coins in this region during the early Middle Ages was under strong influence of the Sassanid coin type series. The appearance of diverse and original Sassanid coins in Tocharistan promoted the mint of local coins struck by Peroze and Khosru I Anushirvan. The most remarkable features of these coins are their countermarks in the form of brief Bactrian, rarely Sogdian legends profiled miniature-portraits of rulers wearing different headdress; and even images of animals.

Countermarks on silver coins of Chaganian — a region of the Surkhan-Darya basin — deserve particular mention. Study of these coin series provided evidence that the region remained under Bactrian rule and the written language, too, was Bactrian. Besides it helped to determine a whole dynasty of Chaganian kings of the sixth and eighth centuries A. D.

Flat copper coins bearing images of a king and queen, similar to coins of Sogdiana and Chach and differing in a number of iconographic features, were also struck in Chaganian. One of them, given in this album, is unique indeed. Not a single museum in the world can boast such

an item. They provide italic type Bactrian legends on the reverse, which have not so far been deciphered to the end.

Approximately during the same period, the rulers of a small principality of Termez Shahs, neighbouring on Chaganian, issued copper coins of original form. Some of them were of distinct Scyphate form, others—more flat—unepigraphic and with a generalized representation of a ruler wearing winged crown on the obverse and bearing control mark on the reverse.

In south-west Central Asia—in Margiana and Horassan, which were part of the Sassanid state, the mint of original coins was terminated by that time. The capital city of Margiana—Merv (outside present day Bairam-Ali) issued coins designed by Sassanid type series.

In 651 A. D. Merv was seized by the Arabs who turned it into their strong-point for further military raids on Maverannah. Almost a century had elapsed before the entire territory of Central Asia was finally conquered and annexed by the Abassid Caliphate. The Arabs introduced a new ideology—Islam, their language and literature. With the introduction of the new coinage system the outward appearance of coins changed completely. The early issues preserved traditional iconography, while innovations were limited to short Arabic legends (Arab-Sassanid and Bukharhudat coins). Soon after they were replaced by a standard Caliphate coin type series devoid of images with prevailing calligraphic legends inscribed in a variety of Cufic writing and ornamental motifs. The first Arab coins—fils and drachms were struck in the Central Asian towns of Akhsyke(n)t, Bukhara, Samarkand, Kesh in the middle and late eighth century A. D. There were numerous and most varied mints on the territory of Central Asia during the Middle Ages. But this is a subject to be discussed in another book.