



NUMISMATIC MATERIALS OF THE UPPER AMU DARYA REGION

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Abstract

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of numismatic materials from the Upper Amu Darya basin and Tokharistan during the Early Middle Ages, particularly from the 5th to 8th centuries. The study covers the historical periods of the Hephthalite state and the Turkic Khaganate, focusing on the coinage of both major political entities and local principalities such as Termez, Chaghaniyan, Khuttal, Kubadian, Vakhsh, and other subordinate regions under the Tokharistan Yabghu administration. Special attention is given to coins discovered at archaeological sites such as the Budrach urban ruin and the Surkhandarya oasis, as well as materials from southern Tajikistan. The study examines coins bearing Bactrian, Sogdian, and early Turkic inscriptions, along with imitations of Sasanian coinage, highlighting their typological and epigraphic features. The article also reviews the contributions of prominent scholars including R. Göbl, H. Humbach, J. Harmatta, B.A. Litvinsky, E.V. Rtveladze, V.A. Livshits, L.S. Baratova, G. Boboyorov, and A. Kubatin, who have significantly advanced the study of Tokharistan numismatics. The findings demonstrate that the coinage of the Upper Amu Darya region reflects complex political, economic, and cultural interactions and plays an important role in reconstructing the historical development of Early Medieval Central Asia.

Keywords: Upper Amu Darya, Tokharistan, Hephthalite state, Turkic Khaganate, numismatics, coinage, Budrach, Chaghaniyan, Termez, Khuttal, Kubadian, Vakhsh, Bactrian script, Sogdian script, early Turkic coins, Sasanian imitations, Tokharistan Yabghu, Early Middle Ages, Central Asia archaeology.

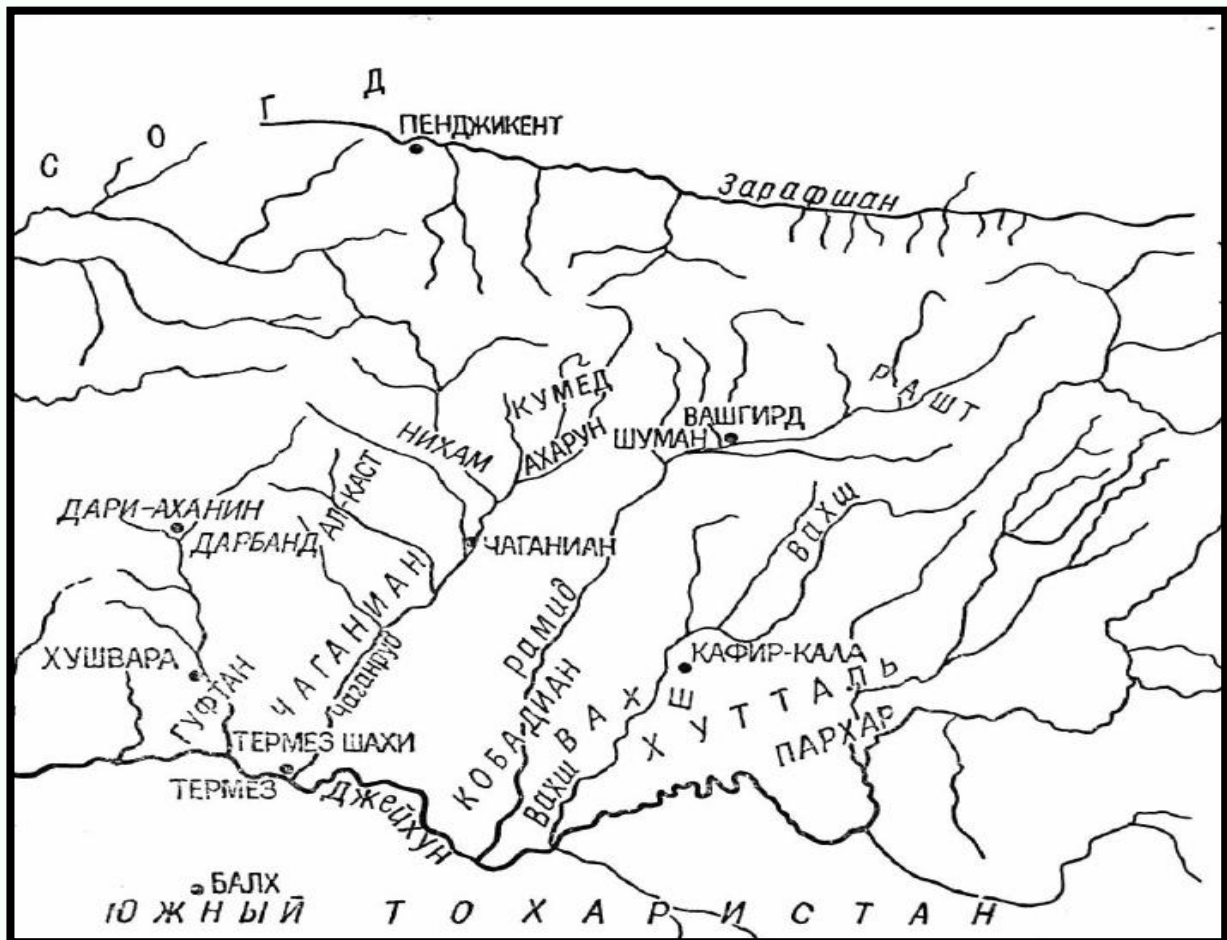
Introduction

In the 5th–6th centuries of the early medieval period, the Upper Amu Darya basin, which was part of the Hephthalite state (450–565), and later, in the 6th–8th centuries, incorporated into the Turkic Khaganate, consisted of several oasis-based principalities (mulklik). This region was collectively known as Tokharistan [1]. The

central principalities of Tokharistan were located on the left bank of the Amu Darya and included Varvaliz (Kunduz), Balkh, Guzgan, and Garchistan, while on the right bank were situated the principalities of Kumad (Qarategin), Rasht, Vakhsh, Panj, Khuttal, Kabadian, Termez, and Chaghaniyan. During the Hephthalite period, Tokharistan functioned as a key territorial base of the empire, and Hephthalite rulers minted their coins precisely within these regions [2]. During the period of the Turkic Khaganate, this historical-geographical region was administered by a branch of the khaganate known as the “Tokharistan Yabghu.” In this era, coin minting experienced significant development. A considerable portion of the coins from this period were directly associated with the khaganate, while another portion consisted of issues attributed to the Tokharistan Yabghus as well as to dozens of large and small local principalities within the region.

Figure 1. Tokharistan in the Early Medieval Period

(Pugachenkova, Rtveladze 1990: 124)





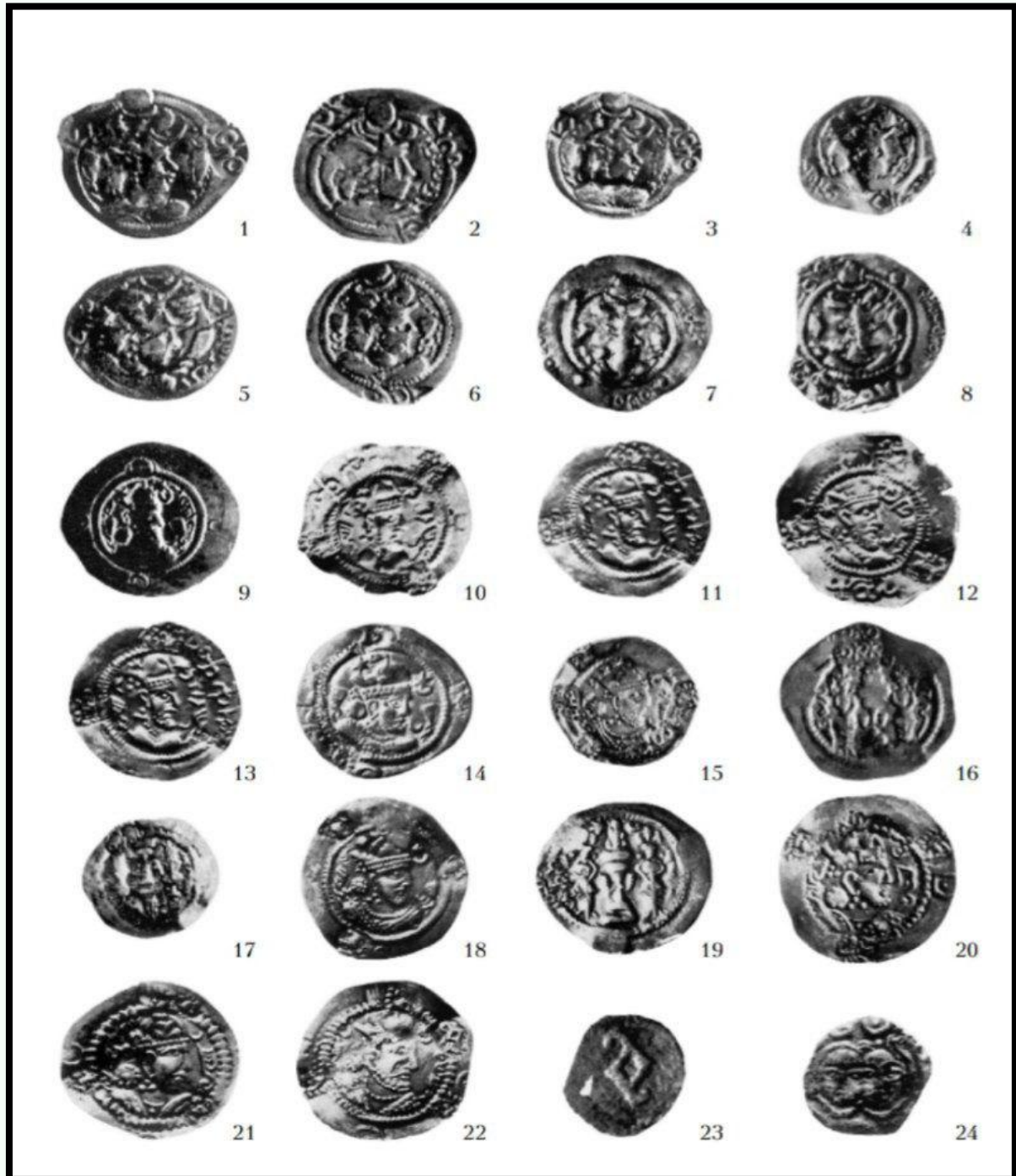
A number of studies have been conducted on the pre-Islamic coinage of Tokharistan, particularly on coins bearing Bactrian inscriptions. Among these, the works of R. Göbl, H. Humbach, J. Harmatta, B.A. Litvinsky, E.V. Rtveladze, V.A. Livshits, L.S. Baratova, G. Babayarov, and A. Kubatin stand out prominently [3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10]. Some of these scholars based their research on numismatic materials obtained through archaeological excavations, while others conducted their studies using coins preserved in museums and private collections or derived from accidental finds. In particular, E.V. Rtveladze and L.S. Baratova carried out long-term investigations of coins discovered at early medieval archaeological sites in the Surkhandarya region, such as Old Termez, Kattatepa (Sherabad district), and Budrach (Denov district) [7,8,11]. As a result of their research, coins belonging to the principalities of historical Northern Tokharistan—namely Termez, Guftan (Kuhitang), and Chaghaniyan (Denov)—were introduced into scholarly circulation.

Similar investigations can also be observed in the studies of B.A. Litvinsky, who conducted excavations at dozens of archaeological sites in southern Tajikistan. Based on the numismatic materials obtained from these excavations, a number of numismatists have identified coins of the principalities located in Northern Tokharistan—namely Khuttal (Khatlon), Kabadian, and Vakhsh [12].

Coins attributed to these principalities have been discovered at early medieval urban remains situated in the Vakhsh Valley of southern Tajikistan, including sites such as Munchok-tepa, Takhti Qubad, and Takhti Sangin (Vakhsh district), as well as Ajina-tepa, Kafir-kala, and Chorgul-tepa (Kabadian district), and the sites of Sari-kopruk and Sang-tuda in the Kulob region [12].

If the coins minted in the Upper Amu Darya basin during the early medieval period are considered within the framework of the Hephthalite and Turkic Khaganate periods, it becomes evident that several distinct types of coinage were produced. Based on the numismatic materials on Chaghaniyan coins analyzed by E.V.

Rtveladze, the coinage of Tokharistan during the Hephthalite and Turkic Khaganate periods can be presented as follows [6, 205]:



Coins of Chaghaniyan dating to the late 5th – early 8th centuries AD, discovered at the ruins of the Budrach city site. 1–6. Coins of Peroz (459–481) with overstruck inscriptions in Bactrian and Sogdian scripts. 7–8. Imitative coins of Peroz (459–481)



with overstruck inscriptions in Bactrian and Sogdian scripts. Silver. 9. Silver coin of Khosrow I Anushirvan (531–579). 10–22. Coins of the rulers of Chaghaniyan, struck in imitation of Khosrow I Anushirvan's coinage, with overstruck inscriptions: Bactrian texts, tamgha (dynastic symbol), and ruler's portrait. 23–24. Coins with double portraits. Copper [6]

In Tokharistan, particularly its northern part—the right-bank region of the Amu Darya—the coinage consists partly of issues of the Tokharistan Yabghu dynasty (620–750), and partly of coins issued by smaller principalities subordinate to this dynasty, such as Vakhsh, Kubadiyan, Khuttal, Termez, Chaghaniyan, and others. Research conducted on these coins remains relatively limited.

As briefly mentioned above, E.V. Rtveladze studied the coins of the Surkhan oasis, including those of Termez, Gufkhan, and Chaghaniyan, while V.A. Livshits and L.S. Baratova examined coins bearing Sogdian overstruck inscriptions on Sasanian coins. G. Boboyorov analyzed early Turkic coins of Tokharistan with Sogdian inscriptions [7, 8, 9, 10, 13]. The coinage of the northern Tokharistan principalities—Khuttal (Khatlon), Kubadiyan, and Vakhsh—has been studied to some extent by D. Davudov [12].

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