

## COINS OF KOBADIAN AND THEIR COUNTERMARKS

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In the Northern Tokharistan territory there were numerous states, principalities and tribes which emerged and disappeared in various historical eras; this region is well known by permanent warfare and trade, periods of prosperity gave way to periods of decline, therefore a restoration of the proper timing of events is an extraordinary task which historians, linguists and, in particular, numismatists face.

This paper covers a set of imitation coins found within Kobadian territory (Northern Tokharistan) which bear unique countermarks. A full description of the coins of the type and their countermarks (zoomorphic countermark displaying «camel-clephant», portraits of rulers) is provided. The dates of mints have been specified and assumptions have been made about the emitters of the coins of the set on the basis of historical data and comparative analysis of imitation coins and their elements (Bactrian word, tamgha, form of atash-dan, appearance of guards) and the most probable sources of imitation (prototypes) - Sasanians\* drachmas of various periods. Earlier researchers referred this coinage to the 6<sup>th</sup> century imitation die of the Hephthalites who used the coins minted by the Sasanian shahinshah Peroz I (457 - 484 A.D.).

The paper proves that the coins of the type should rather be referred to the autonomous die of the union of Iranian nomadic tribes which were subject to the Hephthalites and participated in the trade and carriage of goods along the Great Silk Way. The Bactrian word can be transcribed as b(p) n t b(p), though an absence of vowel marks and vowels makes it impossible to restore the word as it was, probably, read - its encoding is a matter for the future.

The ways how tamghas appeared on the coins have been traced and the assumptions were made as to the movements of the tribes which carried these tamghas. Based on the analysis of the reverse side elements, the chronology limits of the mint of these coins have been specified. Described and presented are all types of portrait countermarks; taking their combinability as the basis, the coins were divided into three groups and their chronology was established.

The elements of the reverse side which copy the new prototype - shahinshah Valkash (Balash) drachmas (484-488 A.D.) were identified which specifies the dates of the imitations referred to the third group. It can be considered that the 80-90-ies of the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D., when the Hephthalites' power in Tokharistan was weakening fast and the tribal union which minted these coins was most likely destroyed or assimilated in the course of the ensuing Turkomen invasion made the upper chronological limit of the imitation coin mint.