

THE HEPHTHALITES:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

AND

HISTORICAL

ANALYSIS

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TO MY PARENTS

“The information coming from remote countries and foreign languages are subject to corruption and misunderstanding and, moreover, concerning very ancient time. So we do not know what is certain. (Thus) it is impossible to decide (the origin of the Hephthalites)”

Wei Jie (7th century AD)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Central Asia and the neighbouring countries have a very old and rich history. A poorly studied and complex period of this region is the early medieval one (4th – 6th century AD). During this time, “The great movement of peoples”, the migration of nomadic peoples (Huns) from Asia to Europe, took place. In South and Central Asia, great empires existed, including Sasanian Iran, Gupta India and several smaller states. Across Central Asia, mysterious new peoples appeared: the Hephthalites, the Kidarites and the Chionites, among others. Their origins are still debated. Some scholars suppose that they were part of a Hun confederation, while others suppose they each had different origins.

Among the new peoples on the historical stage of Central Asia the biggest impact was made by the Hephthalites (also known as *White Huns* in Byzantine sources - the name they used themselves is unknown). They are important in the development of the Turkic and later Islamic character of Central Asia – though primary sources are lacking. In the 5th - 6th centuries AD the Hephthalites founded a great empire on the later territory of the modern states of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and China. For two centuries they dominated this region and the political history. Sasanian Iran, most powerful empire of the period, was repeatedly defeated by the Hephthalites. Besides that, they overthrew the Gupta Empire in India and conquered a large part of that area. A true study of the Hephthalites must include both archaeological data and historical analyses of written sources. Such a study, integrating modern data on the archaeology of Hephthalite sites from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and the Central Asian republics with the historical data from written sources, has not been done. This thesis is intended as a major contribution in the historical understanding of this aspect of the special character of modern Central Asia.

2. RESEARCH HISTORY AND METHODIC PROBLEMS

2.1. Research History

Generally, the early research on the Hephthalites was based only on written sources. They were mentioned for the first time in AD 361 at the siege of Edessa (modern Urfa in south-eastern Turkey).¹

The Hephthalites are mentioned in the sources under different names, depending on one or another issue of their name in different languages:

- Armenian - *Hephthal*, *Hep't'al*, *Tetal* but Armenian sources also identify them with the *Kushans*.
- Greek - *Εφθαλιται* (Hephthalites), *Αβδελαι* (Abdel/Avdel), or *White Huns*.
- Syriac - *Ephthalita*, *Tedal*.
- Middle Persian – *Hephtal* and *Hephtel*; the Zoroastrian source “Bundahišn” calls them - *Hēvntāls*.
- Indian - *Hūna*.
- Bactrian – *ηβοδαλο* (*ebodalo*).
- In Chinese sources the Hephthalites appear as *Ye-da*, *Ye-dien*, *Idi*, *Ye-ta-i-lito*.
- Arabic - *Haital*, *Hetal*, *Heithal*, *Haiethal*, *Heyâthelites*. In Arabic sources the Hephthalites, though they are mentioned as *Haitals*, are sometimes also referred to as *Turks*.

In the 4th - 6th centuries AD the territory of Central Asia included at least four major political entities, among them Kushans, Chionites, Kidarites, and Hephthalites. Discussions about the origins of these peoples still continue. Ideas vary from the Hephthalites considered as part of the Hun confederation to different other origins. It is also uncertain whether the Hephthalites, the Kidarites and the Chionites had a

¹ Altheim 1960-II, 258; Other researchers give another date - AD 384: Гумилев 1959, 129; Ртвеладзе 1999, 271.

common or different origins – that is, are they three branches of the same ethnic group or are they culturally, linguistically, and genetically distinct from one another?

This is explained by the fact that the written sources referring to this period are very scanty and fragmentary in nature. The archaeological material is also very limited and the dating is often approximate and inexact. The numismatic discoveries in some measure reveal interesting aspects of history, particularly as to monetary circulation. But, in spite of the aforesaid, the collection of available facts allows the reconstruction of a more or less clear picture of the political and socio-economic life of this region. This is primarily due to the limited number of sources, which are sometimes too contradictory to be harmonized. The literary evidence is not decisive, since reports by Chinese pilgrims and records by Indian authors are at times ambiguous; and the statements of the Roman and Greek historians, who hardly knew how to deal with the various Hunnic people of the remote eastern lands, are vague. In the absence of authentic evidence, the coins issued by the leaders of those people constitute one of the most reliable primary sources for the history of the Hephthalites. It must be emphasized that our knowledge of these Central Asian nomads is, to a certain extent, still vague; and the research on their history remains controversial.

All above named medieval sources have served as the main base for multiple judgments on the ethnic history of the Hephthalites. Some researchers see descendants of the Yuezhi in the Hephthalites (V. de Saint-Martin, V. Bartold, N. Veselovsky, G. Grum-Grzhimailo),² others derive them from ancient Mongols (J. Marquart, R. Grousset)³ or Huns assimilated by Central Asian people (S. Tolstov, A. Bernshtam).⁴ Yet another theory considers an Iranian language of the Hephthalites and their Iranian origin (A. Mandelshtam, M. Dyakonov, B. Gafurov).⁵ Bartold, K. Enoki, L. Gumilev and Gafurov⁶ think the Hephthalites were quite different peoples than the Chionites; others (R. Ghirshman, Tolstov, Bernshtam, Mandelshtam, V.

² Saint-Martin 1849; Бартольд 1963; Веселовский 1877; Грум-Гржимайло 1926.

³ Marquart 1901; Grousset 1970.

⁴ Толстов 1948а; Толстов 1948b; Толстов 1962; Бернштам 1947b; Бернштам 1951а.

⁵ Мандельштам 1958а; Мандельштам 1958b; Дьяконов/Мандельштам 1958; Гафуров 1972.

⁶ Бартольд 1963; Епокі 1955; Епокі 1959; Гумилев 1959; Гумилев 1967b; Гафуров 1972.

Masson)⁷ try to prove their identity or consider that the Hephthalites were the name of the dominating class of the Chionites. The various authors presented above are only the more important who have grappled with the question of who the Hephthalites were. Many others have argued that the Hephthalites were Mongols or Turks or Huns or any number of other ethnicities. This shows how fragmentary and confused the historical sources are, and that they must be combined with other lines of evidence in order to understand the history of the Hephthalites.

For the first time in European historiography the Hephthalites were mentioned in the “Bibliothèque Orientale” of D’Herbelot in 1697, under the name *Haïetelah* and then in the work of Assemani (“Bibliotheca Orientalis”) in 1719 as *Haithal*, where extracts from medieval Syrian sources are given. Later J. Deguignes dedicated one of the chapters in his multivolume work “Histoire générale des Huns”, to the Hephthalites, where he explained their name from the Persian word *ab* (water) plus *Tie-lé* or *Telite* (according to Deguignes one of the names of the Huns who moved to Transoxiana) - *Abtelite* (water Huns) because they had a residency near the Amudarya river.⁸

V. de Saint-Martin was among the first to suppose that the Hephthalites were descendants of the Yuezhi and had a Tibetan origin.⁹ Ed. Specht and E. Parker, who think that they were different tribes, argued against this theory.¹⁰ Gumilev also gives a number of arguments against the theory of Saint-Martin. First, Gumilev notes that the version of identity between the Yuezhi and the Hephthalites is unconvincing, because the “Beishi”, along with Yeda also referred to Da Yuezhi. Secondly, the author of the “Suishu” mentions only the ruling dynasty of the Hephthalites from the Yuezhi, but not all the people. Thus, according to Gumilev, Saint-Martin’s hypothesis is unproven.¹¹ He put forward his own hypothesis, suggesting that the Kidarites, the Chionites and the Hephthalites were different peoples: the Kidarites

⁷ Ghirshman 1948; Толстов 1948a; Толстов 1948b; Толстов 1962; Бернштам 1947b; Бернштам 1951a; Мандельштам 1958a; Мандельштам 1958b; Массон 1964.

⁸ Deguignes 1756, 326.

⁹ Saint-Martin 1849, 56-58, 66-67.

¹⁰ Specht 1883, 319; Parker 1902, 153.

¹¹ Гумилев 1959, 130.

were Yuezhi; the Chionites (or Huni) were residents of “Marsh sites”, living on the northern shore of the Aral Sea and were descendants of the Saka tribe “*Huaona*”; the Hephthalites were mountain people, tribal descendants of light-hair Baidi people, who in the 7th century BC came to the mountainous area of the Pamir and Hindukush from northwestern China. For eight hundred years, Baidi might have mixed with the local Aryan tribes of Indo-Iranian group and in the Kushan time (1st – 2nd centuries AD), one of the branches of the tribe Hua, settled in the valley Eftal, received a new name “Hephthalites” (Greek) or “Yeda” (Chinese) from the name of the valley or perhaps on behalf of the first leader. At the end of 4th century AD the Hephthalites were already an organized tribe, and at the beginning of the 5th century AD their state claimed hegemony in Central Asia and India. This expansion, according to Gumilev, occurred through a union of all the mountain tribes of the Pamir and the Hindukush, which involved the expansion of the concept *Eftal*. Thus, according to the hypotheses of Gumilev, the Hephthalites were the people of the mountainous areas of the Pamir and the Hindukush.¹²

Before Gumilev, Enoki had come to a similar opinion by exploring Chinese sources. After his analysis, he indicated that Chinese authors had only approximate knowledge of the origin of the Hephthalites. Enoki agrees with Ghirshman in the question if the Hephthalites were people speaking an Iranian language, but he distinguishes them from the Chionites, who, in his opinion, were Huns. Kingdom of the Chionites in Sogd were conquered by the Hephthalites under the royal family Jauvla or Chao-wu. Enoki based his theory on the information from Chinese chronicle “Suishu” where recorded that royal family of Sogd was known earlier as Wen (Huns – on Enoki) and later as Chao-wu.¹³

Enoki suggests that two centres of the Hephthalite Empire were on the Upper Amudarya. One was in western Badakhshan and is identical to the country Hsi-mo-ta-lo in Xuanzang’s description of the western countries. This name, which means “foot of the snow mountain” can be a sanskritized form of the ethnonym

¹² Гумилев 1959, 140.

¹³ Enoki 1955, 233.

Hephthalites.¹⁴ It would have been situated high in Tokharistan and is isolated. The Hephthalites had lived in an isolated form from others and practiced polyandry. Another centre was in Ghur (south of Kunduz) and is the Hua of Chinese sources and Gorgo of Procopius. According to Enoki, this argument also supports the theory that the origin of the Hephthalites was eastern Tokharistan on the upper Amudarya or in the Hindukush mountains and therefore it could explain why the Hephthalites did not establish their centre near the Altai mountains as noted in Chinese sources as their place of origin.¹⁵

Another argument for the local origin of the Hephthalites is that Sogd was conquered almost 20 years later, after they had settled in Tokharistan and north-western India. On the base of an analysis of the “Weishu” embassies sent from Sogd (Su-te), Enoki supposes Sogd was conquered by the Hephthalites between AD 467 – 473 and 480 because the last fixed embassy from there was in AD 479.¹⁶

According to the Chinese sources the Hephthalites established their state 80 or 90 years prior to the reign of the emperor Wen-ch’eng (452-465). The first embassy of the Hephthalites to China was in AD 456 and calculating back from this date their state foundation would be in AD 366 or 376. Enoki does not agree with these dates and he thought that it was impossible for the Hephthalites to start extending their power in the middle of the 4th century AD and establish their state between 437 and 456.¹⁷

The Hephthalites sent the second embassy to Northern (Toba) Wei in AD 507, fifty years after the first one. From AD 507 to 531 they dispatched 13 embassies to the same court. The Hephthalites conquered Gandhara between AD 477 and 520. In AD 477 the Kidarites in Gandhara sent a last embassy to the court of Northern Wei and in AD 520 Song Yun saw Gandhara under Hephthalite control.¹⁸

The origin of polyandry, as has been indicated by E. Nerazik, is explained by

¹⁴ Enoki 1959, 35-36.

¹⁵ Enoki 1955, 235; Enoki in his later work (1959, 27-37) adds another two centres: Balkh and Warwaliz (to the north of Kunduz).

¹⁶ Enoki 1955, 234.

¹⁷ Enoki 1955, 236-237.

¹⁸ Enoki 1959, 27.

the fact that the Hephthalites made ancient Bactria the centre of their state and, according to numismatic data, considered themselves direct successors of the Kushans. Thereby, their rule was perceived as direct continuation of the Kushans. Starting from this idea, in the opinion of Nerazik, historical science follows to elaborate who was the first ruler in Hsi-mo-ta-lo and, in this tradition, can go back to traditions about the Yuezhi conquest. However, if this is so, then it is impossible to use it as proof of the spreading of the Hephthalites from Badakhshan.¹⁹

Having deciphered legends on Hephthalite coins, Ghirshman came to the conclusion that their language belonged to the Eastern Iranian group. He read an inscription as “*Eptla Shaho Hio(no)*”, which means - Hephtal is king of Chions and thus came to the conclusion that the Chionites and the Hephthalites were one folk; the Hephthalites were a name of the ruling class, but Chionites was the name of the common people.²⁰ Ghirshman writes that the Chionites were a population which appeared on the territory of Bactria already in the mid of 4th century AD. Several Chionite kings carried the name “Heftal”, and their dynastic name was extended by neighbours of the Chionites to the whole people. The similar sounds of “Hion” and “Hun” explains, according to him, why Byzantine sources named these tribes “White Huns”. He supposed that the Hephthalites came from Eastern Turkestan and conquered Bactria in AD 371.²¹

Before they arrived in the territory of Central Asia and consolidated south of the Oxus (Amudarya), the Chionites passed Karashar, Kucha, Hotan and Kashgar.²² The Kidarites, for Ghirshman, were the late Kushans: “fourth dynasty of Kushans”.²³ He also thought that the Hephthalites were the northern group of the Chionites, a branch of the Da Yuezhi and the Sakas. The southern branch were the Zabulites, ruled by Mihirakula in AD 515-544. The Hindukush separated the two groups and

¹⁹ Неразик 1963, 554.

²⁰ Ghirshman 1948; Kyzlasov draws attention to an interesting fact: the Kyrgyz of the 6th - 12th centuries were an ethnic group consisting of ancient Khakas. They held leadership positions among the Khakas, and the Khans and Beks were Kyrgyz as well. Some sources, therefore named them Khakas Kyrgyz: Кызласов 1969, 189.

²¹ Ghirshman 1948, 82, 116-120.

²² Ghirshman 1948, 120.

²³ Ghirshman 1946, 41.

gave each a separate history. They were Iranians, and Ghirshman is inclined to agree with al-Masudi, who stated that the Hephthalites were Sogdians who lived between Bukhara and Samarqand.²⁴

V. Livshits supported the theory of Ghirshman, noting “the basic conclusion of Ghirshman that the Hephthalites were one of the branches of the Chionites and that the own name of the Hephthalites was “Hyon” in Middle Persian sources (*OIONO* on coins)”. But Livshits does not agree with the reconstruction of the Hephthalite dynasty’s rulers, based on readings of coin legends which he believes inspires serious doubt.²⁵

The reading of the Hephthalite coins by Ghirshman was in fact drawn into question by several scholars. Some of them were opposed to the identity of the Chionites and the Hephthalites. For example, V.Masson has written: “The epigraphic reading of legends by R. Ghirshman is not justified”.²⁶ M. Dyakonov and A. Mandelshtam suppose, that the reading of the legends on the Hephthalite coins by Ghirshman “Represents only a working hypothesis that allows well to agree on many controversial figures, but did not remove all questions”.²⁷ In their opinion, the identity of the Chionites and the Hephthalites can not be proved, since reading the legends on coins “raises many doubts”.²⁸

Nevertheless one of these authors (Mandelshtam) in his other work wrote quite differently: “identification of the Chionites and the Hephthalites is offered by Ghirshman and is reasonable with the reading of the legends of a large numbers of the Hephthalite coins”.²⁹

V. Masson considers the Hephthalites as coming from the Transsyrdarya steppes, regarding them as nomads, speaking languages of the Iranian group. In one aspect V. Masson agrees with Ghirshman: that the Chionites and the Hephthalites

²⁴ Ghirshman 1948, 104, 119; Scaglia 1958, 25.

²⁵ Лившиц 1969, 68.

²⁶ Массон 1964, 169.

²⁷ Дьяконов/Мандельштам 1958, 339.

²⁸ Дьяконов/Мандельштам 1958, 339.

²⁹ Мандельштам 1954, 61.

were one people. The Kidarites, according to V. Masson, were the Kushans. Kidara was one of the small Kushan rulers and conquered Bactria from the Sasanians, creating his own state, which is sometimes named in the historical literature as the state of the Small Kushans.³⁰

H. Bailey suggests that in the Pehlevi texts, in particular in the “Jamasp-name”, there is information on fighting between Iran and the “White Khyōn”, and that the “Zand-i Vohuman Yasn” (The Pehlevi Zandi Vōhūman Yasht) (“Interpretation Vohuman Yasn” Bakhman Yasht) reported the defeat of the Sasanians: “Kingdom and Sovereignty will pass to slaves who are not Iranians, such as Khyōn, Turk, Heftal, and Tibetans who are among mountain-dwellers, and the Chinese and Kabūlis and Sogdians and Byzantines and *Red Khyōn* and *White Khyōn*. They will become Kings in my country of Eran. Their commandments and desires will prevail in the world”.³¹

Regarding the *Red Khyōn* the commentator of the “Bakhman-Yasht” stated that their name is linked to their red hats, red armour and red banners. In the Indian sources, especially in the text of Varahamihira, there is reference to the *Sveta Huna* and *Hara(Hala) Huna*. *Hara Huna* is identified with *Red Hiona*, i.e. with the people whose name is deciphered, as red-caped, mentioned in a poem in the Khotan-Saka language of the 7th century AD.³²

As we see in the texts Hions (Khyōn), the Hephthalites (Heftal) and the so-called Red Hions (Khyōn) and White Hions (Khyōn) appear. The list of people named as the same ethnic group with different ethnonyms can be explained by mistakes. Such cases were not uncommon. Thus, in particular, the “Chronicle” of Zacharias Rhetor (5th - 6th century AD), in the list of peoples having a nomadic life, present both the Abdels and the Hephthalites.³³ According to P. Pelliot and S. Levi, the word “Hara” means “black” in the translation from Turkish.³⁴ We may also note

³⁰ Массон 1964, 168.

³¹ Bailey 1932, 945-946; Амбарцумян 2002, 64-65.

³² Bailey 1954, 13-19.

³³ Zachariah of Mitylene 1899, 328.

³⁴ Macartney 1944, 266-275; Biswas 1973, 28.

that among the Khazars a separation into “White” and “Black” also existed.³⁵

F. Grenet proposes that there are “good reasons to take *αλχοννο* as originally designating a people or a confederation, just as later on the Hephthalites put their abridged name *ηβ* on Bactrian coins imitating those of Peroz ... one may perhaps add the “Red Huns” (Middle Persian Karmīr Hyōn), bearing in mind that *āl* means “red” in Turkish. If the possibility that some of these Huns spoke an Altaic language may be entertained, such a derivation of *Hala-/Hāra* would appear more likely than that from Turkish *qara* “black”, as there is no other reference to “Black Huns” in this historical context”.³⁶

The “Bahman-Yasht” makes a clear distinction between the Huns – both Red and White - and the Hephthalites, a distinction which is perpetuated by the Bactrian coin legends *αλχοννο* and *ηβ*, the latter being an abbreviation of *ηβοδαλο* (*ēvdal*).³⁷

Attention is drawn to another point in Byzantine sources: except for references to the White Huns there is also information about *Κερμυχιώνες* (Kermihions). In particular, Theophanes Byzantine said that east of Tanais there are Turks, who in ancient times were called Massaghetes, and in the Persian language are named Kermihions. According to Bailey, they are the same people who Pehlevi sources know as Karmir Hion. Ed. Chavannes saw in the Kermihions - the Rourans or Ruanruans (in Chinese Wade-Giles – Jou-jan or Juan Juan - A.K.).³⁸ His version is close to the view of J. Marquart that Kermihion consists of two words: *Kerm* - the worm and *Hion* - the name of the Rourans, known in the east in the 5th - 6th centuries.³⁹ The Chinese contemptuously called these people Rourans, which is the name of an insect, but perhaps this name remained in the west in the Iranian form

³⁵ Sinor 1994, 301.

³⁶ Grenet 2002, 206-207.

³⁷ Errington/Curtis 2007, 98; Harmatta (2001, 116) supposes that Abdels, the name of the Hephthalites in the work of Theophilaktos Simocattes, can be explained from Sogdian where “the Old Iranian consonant clusters *-ft-* and *-xt-* became voiced *-βd-* and *-yd-*, moreover the Old Iranian initial *h-* disappeared (as in Old Iranian *hafta-*, ‘seven’>Sogdian *βt*, read *βd*). In accordance with this phonetic law, the form *haftal* developed into *abdal* ~ *abdel* regularly”.

³⁸ Chavannes 1969, 232.

³⁹ Marquart 1901, 50, 54-55.

Kerm + *Hion*.⁴⁰ M. Artamonov thought that under the name “*Kermihions*” the Chionites we should see: “*worms-Chionites*”.⁴¹

O. Maenchen-Helfen thinks that ethnic name *Hara-huna* of the Indian inscriptions proves that at least those Hephthalites who invaded northwestern India were Iranians. Iranian *hara* - “red” or “dark” corresponds to *kearmir* “red” in the Zoroastrian Pahlavi (*karmir hyoan*) and to *kerm* - in the Greek *Kermihions*. *Hara-huna* is not the name which the Indians gave to the invaders. It was their own. They spoke an Iranian language. Possibly *Heptal* may contain Iranian *hapta* and mean “seven”. In the Ossetic language *avd* means “seven”⁴².

On the wall paintings (south wall) in Afrasiab (Samarqand) (**fig. 45**) the figures of two ambassadors are depicted, different by color of face - red-faced and pale. Livshits supposed that the images are associated with White and Red Hions.⁴³ This idea is supported by some other authors as well.⁴⁴ But L. Albaum notes that the faces on the images of other ambassadors on the other three walls have different colours as well.⁴⁵ Mandelshtam and Dyakonov thought that the division of the Chionites into the Red and the White was associated with dividing them into two “wings”, which is typical for many nomadic tribes in both early as well as more recent periods.⁴⁶

Furthermore, these authors believe that the Chionites and the Hephthalites should be distinguished from each other; the Kidarites were Kushans, the Chionites were Iranian speaking nomadic tribes, the Hephthalites were also nomadic tribes, and the language of the legends of coins and documents of the Hephthalite time, found in eastern Turkestan, with known names of kings and rulers, suggest with considerable

⁴⁰ Бернштам 1951а, 171.

⁴¹ Артамонов 1962, 107; Harmatta (2001, 112-113) thinks the Persians called the Turks *Kirmirxūn* – Red Hun, and the Sogdians - *Varhūn*, where *xūn* in Sogdian is *xyūn*, may be equivalent to Middle Persian *Kirmirxūn* and can be interpreted as Red Hun.

⁴² Maenchen-Helfen 1959, 297.

⁴³ Лившиц 1965, 6.

⁴⁴ Литвинский 1985, 145.

⁴⁵ Альбаум 1975, 50-51.

⁴⁶ Дьяконов/Мандельштам 1958, 341.

certainty that the Hephthalites were Iranian speaking people.⁴⁷ They also consider that the Kidarites and the Hephthalites had such a name on behalf of their own generic or the personal names of the kings and leaders and played a greater role in events of the considered time.

According to E. Zeimal, there were two groups of tribes: the Kidarites and the Hephthalites. The Kidarites were a group that were named in the sources as the Chionites, Hunas, Da Yuezhi, Hon and the reason for this is the fact that they are called Kidarite Huns (or “Huns who are Kidarites”) by Priskus of Panium. Therefore it was the Chionites (actually meaning Kidarites) who fought with Shapur II against Byzantium in the second part of the 4th century AD.⁴⁸ The Hephthalites were Abdel, Eftal, Ye-ta, Tetal in those sources. The Huns were the collective ethnic name of the Kidarites, and the term “Kidarites” appeared from the name of their ruler Kidara. Zeimal, based on the data of Enoki, believed that by establishing a state in the late 4th or in the first decade of the 5th century AD, certainly by the first half of the 5th century, the Kidarites (Chionites) started moving into the Hindukush and during the second half of the century, fought with the Gupta during the reign of king Skandagupta (455-467/68). The Hephthalites appeared in the first 50 years of the 5th century AD and helped the Sasanians in their fight against the Kidarites. In AD 467 they were involved in taking the capital of the Kidarites - Baalam (according to Zeimal - Balkh). Then the Hephthalites defeated the Kidarites, firstly in Tokharistan and at the end of 5th or the beginning of the 6th century AD also south of the Hindukush, in Gandhara and Punjab.⁴⁹

A. Bivar notes that the Kidarites were a dominant confederacy of Hunnish tribes and designating a political, rather than an ethnic grouping. In AD 380 Kidara, who was the Chionite chief, succeeded to control the Sasanian Kushan province and took the Sasanian title of “*Kušanšāh*” (King over the Kushans), his name appearing in Bactrian script on Kushano-Sasanian type gold coins as *Kidaro* and later on Indian

⁴⁷ Дьяконов/Мандельштам 1958, 343.

⁴⁸ Zeimal 1996, 120.

⁴⁹ Зеймаль 1995, 24-27.

drachms, as *Kidara* in Brahmi script.⁵⁰ The Hephthalites were the second Hunnish wave who entered Bactria early in the 5th century AD, and they pushed the Kidarites into Gandhara.⁵¹

In the opinion of Bartold, the Hephthalites were descendants of the Yuezhi. In this question his opinion is close to the version of Saint Marten, however, Bartold identifies the Hephthalites with the Kidarites, but the Chionites are supposed to have come from Kazakh steppes, which the Chinese referred to as the Yuebans. According to Bartold, the Yuebans were Huns living in the 4th century - 5th centuries AD in the Kazakh steppe northward from the Wusuns. The Yuebans were displaced to the south by their enemy, the Rourans; under pressure of this folk they also began to advance southwards on the Hephthalites, coming from the Yuezhi, and their king Kidara was leader of the Yuezhi, so the Byzantine historian of 5th century, Priskus of Panium, refers to the Hephthalites as “Huns-Kidarites”.⁵² The Yueban possession was located in the valley of the river Ili and the Yuebans were a branch of the Hephthalites.⁵³

P. Lerkh and N. Veselovsky identify the Hephthalites with the Yuezhi and indicated that the core of the Hephthalite state was in Khorezm. Veselovsky uses the report of the Byzantine ambassador Zemarhos from Kilikia, who was sent by emperor Justinian II (565-578) to the kaghan of the Turks, Dizavul (Sinjubu), in AD 568 already after the fall of the Hephthalite state. Zemarhos reported on the country of the Khoalits, a fact to which Veselovsky calls attention. He supposes that the Khoalits were the Hephthalites.⁵⁴ He relies on the version of Lerkh, who explains the origin of the name of Khoalits as follows: in the word *Χοαλίται* “*Khoalitoi*” – “*toi*”- is a Greek attachment, but “*Khoali*” is a small change of the first half of the name of the country “*Khoari*” without the second part “*zm*”, consequently, Khoalits are nothing other than Khorezmians. Lerkh found the monument of an ancient sovereign of the Kidarites here in the name of the city in Khorezm, Kerder (Kurder), the king

⁵⁰ Bivar 1979, 330-331; Bivar 2003, 199.

⁵¹ Bivar 2003, 199.

⁵² Бартольд 1963, 180 – 181.

⁵³ Грум-Гржимайло 1926, 138.

⁵⁴ Веселовский 1877, 19.

having given his name to this city. Veselovsky, complying with the opinion of Lerkh, adds that the name of Kidarites was preserved before our days by the Kazakhs of the smaller horde (Small Juz), who were divided into three generations, and in one of them, Semirodsky, one of the groups carries the name “Kerderi”.⁵⁵

G. Grum-Grzhimailo considers the Hephthalites were a branch of the Yuezhi, of whom a part left the Altai, was united with the Dinglings and in the 5th century AD, destroyed the Yuebans and moved into Tokharistan. According to Grum-Grzhimailo, the native lands of the Hephthalites were the Altai mountains and they were named by the name of their king Akhshunwar Eftalan.⁵⁶

F. Altheim assumes a Turkish origin for the Hephthalites. In his own studies he affirms, that the Hephthalites were Turkish speaking Altaic tribes. The ethnonym “Hephtal” is drawn from the Turkic root: *yap*, meaning *to do, to make* plus verbal – nominal suffixes *t* and *l*. The reconstructed word is *yap-t-il* which means “creator, active one” (“*Schaffender, Tätiger*”).⁵⁷ The language of the Hephthalites was Turkic and the presence of the Iranian words is explained by elements that penetrated to the Hephthalites language from the subordinated Iranian speaking population. Altheim identifies the Chionites and the Hephthalites, supposing that the Hephthalites were the members of the royalty, but the Chionites were a common name.⁵⁸ A similar version is held by E. Pulleyblank. “That there should be Iranian elements in their empire is only to be expected since the subject population must have been a predominantly Iranian one. Much more significant is the evidence of Altaic connections in the ruling Hephthalites themselves”.⁵⁹

W. McGovern thought that the Kushans (the Yuezhi) and the Hephthalites were related people and at the same time, he supposed that the Hephthalites were from Turfan and speaking a Tokhar language. In AD 126 the Hephthalites helped the

⁵⁵ Веселовский 1877, 13; Following Harmatta (2001, 113) *Χοαλίται* is *Xvalič* and was the name of the Turkicized Hephthalites. The final *-č* in the word *Xvalič* is an adjectival suffix, while the word *Xval* is of eastern Iranian origin and means “lord”.

⁵⁶ Грум-Гржимайло 1926, 197–198.

⁵⁷ Altheim / Stiehl 1954, 276-277; Altheim 1959, 44.

⁵⁸ Altheim 1959, 31-56.

⁵⁹ Pulleyblank 1962, 258; He also thought that the Chionites had Hunnic origin and were close to the Hephthalites: Pulleyblank 1962, 260.

Chinese General Ban Yung in his war against the northern Huns and settled in Jungaria. The people of Turfan had blue eyes and light hair, which is consistent with McGovern's data from the Byzantine source on the Hephthalites, as distinct from the rest of the Huns, while their similarity is explained by the fact that the Hephthalites and the Huns lived together in Jungaria and mixed there.⁶⁰ According to him there was also some connection of the Hephthalites with the Tibetans as evidenced by the practice of polyandry, but nevertheless he does not say that the Hephthalites were Tibetans. There were also close contacts between the Hephthalites and the Avars (Rourans), although they had different languages and cultures, and the Hephthalites borrowed much of their political organization from them. In particular the title "Khan", which was original to the Rourans according to McGovern, was borrowed by the Hephthalite rulers. The reason for the migration of the Hephthalites southeast was to avoid the pressure of the Rourans. Further, the Hephthalites defeated the Yuezhi in Bactria and their leader Kidara led the Yuezhi to the south.⁶¹

In the work of O. Wesendonk, about the Kushans, Chionites and the Hephthalites, their ethnonyms are matched, mentioned in Pehlevi text (Kushans, Hiyona, Hetal) and in Indian source (Kushans, Huna, Saka). As we see, the first names practically coincide, but the name of the third nationality "*Hetal*" in Pehlevi text corresponds to "*Saka*" in the Indian sources. In the opinion of K. Trever, this gives one more base to consider the Hephthalites were the Sakas, entered into the confederation of the Massaghetes, the "great Saka horde", although Wesendonk did not put importance to this.⁶²

J. Marquart supposed the Hephthalites were ancient Mongols on the grounds of the resemblance of their names, mentioned in Indian sources, with names of Mongolian ethnic groups. According to him, under the name of "Hephthal" we should understand only a kind of ruling political entity, while the main ethnic mass of the Hephthalite state consisted of diverse elements: the Kidarites, the Kushans, the Chionites, and the Huns. He also thought that the name of the Hephthalites was

⁶⁰ McGovern 1939, 405-406.

⁶¹ McGovern 1939, 407-408.

⁶² Тревер 1954, 144.

restored as self-name of these people: “*Wār*”. Marquart located the capital of Tokharistan as *Wārwaliz* or *Pat-ti-yen* in Chinese sources and sought it near modern Kunduz in north-eastern Afghanistan. He also thought it reflected the ethnic name of the Hephthalites.⁶³ This theory was criticised by Tolstov, who considered that if the reading of hieroglyphic data by Marquart is correct, then this name must be seen in relationship with the name of one of two divisions the “Pseudo-Avars” of Theophilaktos Simocattes “*War*”.⁶⁴

Marquart put forward another suggestion: that since the middle of 4th century AD the White Huns, under the name of Hion, became mercenaries in the Kushan troops, then took the leading positions. Seeing in the Hephthalites ancient Mongols, he proposed the hypothesis that the Oghuz tribe Kayi did not have a Turkic but rather a Mongol origin, and the Hephthalites were the ancestors of the Kayi.⁶⁵ According to Marquart the two names *Alxon* and *Walxon*, found in medieval Armenian sources, were a wordplay for just one people.⁶⁶

Pulleyblank supposed that “*wālīz*” was rather the Altaic word for “city”. In his interpretation *War-wālīz* is the “city of the Awar”, like the Chinese *A-huan ch’eng*. In some of the Arabic forms it would appear that the ethnic is omitted and there remained only *Wālīg* or *al-Wālīgā* “the city”.⁶⁷

Harmatta proposed that the legend in Bactrian script *Alxon* or *Alxan(n)* is the same name as Alakhana, the name of a Gurjara king mentioned in Kalhana’s “*Rajatarangini*”.⁶⁸ Against this theory R. Frye noted that *Alxon* or *Alxan* appears on a coin with the name Khingila and refutes Harmatta’s suggestion that it is the same as the name Lakhana.⁶⁹ According to Harmatta the Kidarites were identical with the Chionites (Xyōns). In his opinion this can be proved by one of the remarks of Joshua

⁶³ Marquart 1938, 45, 147-148.

⁶⁴ Толстов 1947, 74.

⁶⁵ Толстов 1947, 81.

⁶⁶ Marquart 1901, 141, 157.

⁶⁷ Pulleyblank 1962, 259; Harmatta (2001, 113) explains *War-wālīz* (in Harmatta’s work written as *Varvaliz*) as the Bactrian word *varva* – meaning “upper, high” and *liz* – “fortress”. So it would mean “Upper fortress”.

⁶⁸ Harmatta 1969, 431.

⁶⁹ Frye 1986, 515.

Stylite relating to the successful fights of Peroz against the Kidarites, in that the rivals of the Sasanian king were “xiyon-s, that is hun-s”.⁷⁰ R. Grousset has the same opinion and believed that the Hephthalites, at the beginning of 5th century AD, were vassals of the Rourans, from the Turkic-Mongolian environment and that they were more Mongols than Turks.⁷¹

According to K.Czeglédý the name of the Hephthalites was *uar* and the name of their capital Warwaliz can be explained as “*uar+waliz*” which means “city of uar (i.e. the Hephthalites)”.⁷²

Following M.Tezcan the Hephthalites were not the Akhuns (“*White Huns*”) because the two dynasties were completely different from one another, and the first replaced the second. The Hephthalites descended from a Rouran tribe called *Hua* in the Qeshi region (Turfan area). This tribe came to Tokharistan and soon also settled in the eastern regions of Khorasan at the beginning of the 5th century AD. Tezcan supposes that the Hephthalites took over the whole of Tokharistan in the course of time, and began to struggle with the Sasanians for Khorasan, earlier *Aparshahr*, where in earlier times the Kidarite Huns were in possession. After the Kidarite Huns, or from the arrival of the Hephthalites, the country was named after them (“*Aparshar*”, that is, *the country of the Apar*). The names *Apar* or *Aparshahr* appear in neither Iranian nor Armenian texts, and nor do the Sasanian coins have it, at least before the first half of the 4th century AD, because *Aparshahr* (Nishapur) was founded in ca. 350-360, that is, when the Chionitae (Huns) in the east were subdued by the Sasanians. According to Islamic sources, the Sasanians renamed the region as *Khorasan* after they reconquered the area, and one ruler (Khusrow II) himself assumed the title “*Aparve:z*” claiming that he had taken possession of the earlier “*Apar*” land. When the Sasanians conquered the lands of the Kushans in the time of Shapur I, they renamed it as “*Kushanshahr*” and gave its administrators the title “*Kushanshah*”. Therefore the conquered lands of the Huns / Khionitae or Hephthalites in Khorasan were renamed by the Sasanians as “*Aparshahr*” and their

⁷⁰ Harmatta 1969, 391.

⁷¹ Grousset 1970, 67.

⁷² Czeglédý 1984, 213-217.

Sasanian rulers were later titled as “*Aparshah*”.⁷³

Ed. Specht supposed that the Hephthalites were from Northern China and they appeared in the second half of 5th century AD,⁷⁴ while M.A. Stein thought the Hephthalites were closely related to the Yuezhi and the Huns who were of Turkic origin.⁷⁵

Frye presumes that the Hephthalites were Iranian speaking people, and that the Hephthalites were the leading tribe of the Chionites. But he does not exclude that the Huns might have been their first rulers: “... You can suggest the presence of the Altay, that is Hunnic, element among the Chionites and the Hephthalites, but there is more reason to consider them Iranians”.⁷⁶ In other studies he equates the Chionites and the Kidarites, considering that one of the rulers of the Chionites named Kidara began to mint coins declaring himself as king of the Kushans⁷⁷ and the Hephthalites were tribes of Altaic languages and came from Altai-Mongolia, through Central Asia to India under pressure from the Rourans. Here they displaced the Kidarites from Bactria to India before the beginning of 5th century AD.⁷⁸ The Kidarites were competitors of the Sasanians from the middle of 4th century AD to the middle of 5th century AD.⁷⁹ S. Gömeç also supposes that the origin of the Hephthalites was in the southern part of the Altai mountains, and they were part of the Rourans in the Jungarian steppe when retreating to Khorasan.⁸⁰

Tolstov gave much room to the Hephthalite question in his works. He supposed that the name of the Hephthalites presents itself as a distortion of Turkic forms of the name of the Massaghet (“*Gweta-ali*”- where “*Gweta*” presents the root of the Massaghet name, but “*el*” is from Turkic “*folk*”, “*tribe*” i.e. – “*Gweta folk*”).

⁷³ Tezcan 2006, 613-615.

⁷⁴ Specht 1883, 349.

⁷⁵ Stein 1905, 84.

⁷⁶ Frye 1991b, 49; Фрай 1972, 311.

⁷⁷ Frye 2001, 173.

⁷⁸ Frye 2001, 175; In another study, he (and his co-author A. Sayili) writes that the Hephthalites were Turks by origin. “The available evidence indicates that the Hephthalites were Turks”: Frye/Sayili 1943, 207.

⁷⁹ Frye 1986, 514.

⁸⁰ Gömeç 1997, 20.

The Hephthalites remained on their ancient native lands of the Aral-foreland, and were a product of the mixture of Massaghet-Alans with Huns according to Tolstov.⁸¹ The centre of the Hephthalites was the north-eastern fringe of Khorezm in the period when a joint delta of Amudarya and Syrdarya existed. Tolstov identifies the Kidarites, the Hephthalites and the Chionites: “under the names of the Kidarites and, as is well known, for the first time performing on the historical arena the Hephthalites, moreover the first of these names is closely linked with the name Kerder”.⁸² The “White Huns”, or the Hephthalites, conquered Central Asia, apparently, as an association closely related to the founders of the Kushan Empire, Massaghet tribes ...”, - says Tolstov in his earlier work.⁸³

Tolstov reports that Kerder was identified, as far back as the 10th century AD (and as late as the 13th century AD) as the north-eastern Aral-foreland fringe of Khorezm. Based on the findings of Lerkh and Veselovsky, linking the name of one tribe of the Hephthalites (the Kidarites of Priscus of Panium) with the name of the city Kerder (the Arabic historian of the 10th century AD, Makdisi, actually names two Kerder) and Kerderanhas, located in lower Khorezm (the Amudarya), and with the name of the group Kerderi of the Kazakh tribe Jetyru (the Small Horde), as well as the report of the Arabic geographer of the 13th century, Yakut al-Khamawi, (“Kerder - terrain, in the field of Khorezmia or on its border with the Turks, the language is not Khorezmian and not Turkic; in the field of the ensemble of villages; beside they herd animals”), Tolstov concludes that there is a link between the Hephthalites and Khorezm.⁸⁴ Using the statements of Yakut al-Khamawi, Tolstov suggests the preservation in the given region up to the 13th century AD of the Hunnish-Kidarite (Hephthalite) language. He draws attention to the following fact: The “Beishi” report about the embassy, which was sent in AD 440 by the Huni ruler, the state Su-te or Yancai (according to Tolstov in the north-eastern Aral foreland) to the Chinese court. Here he sees the Kidarite king Kunghas, who was defeated in

⁸¹ Толстов 1948, 211.

⁸² Толстов 1948, 213.

⁸³ Толстов 1938, 187.

⁸⁴ Толстов 1948, 277.

AD 468 by the Sasanian shahinshah Peroz.⁸⁵

Another factor in the relationship of the Hephthalites with the Huns, following Tolstov, is the scheme of the division into 24 tribes with groups on the right and left wings of 12 tribes in each, which was a result of the military-administrative reform of the Xiongnu shanyu Mode (BC 209/206-174), mentioned in the “Shiji” (“Historical Records”) of Sima Qian. This scheme, writes Tolstov, “was preserved by the Aral foreland Huns, the Kidarites-Hephthalites, and was inherited by their descendants, the tribes of the Oghuz alliance in the 10th – 11th centuries AD and, finally, by the Turkmens of the 19th century AD – beginning of the 20th century AD”.⁸⁶ Thus, according to Tolstov, the Hephthalites took part in the ethnogenesis of the eastern group of the Oghuzs. This was then a result of a Massagheto-Hunnish mixture, where not least the role in the process of their final consolidation was played by the movement of the Hephthalites in the Orient at the beginning of the 6th century AD, when their power reached Khotan. Or, as he writes in his other studies, “Syrdaryan Oghuzs were an ethnic redrafting of the Hephthalites, mixed with Turkic elements, introduced here from Semirechye in the 6th – 8th centuries AD”.⁸⁷

The view of N. Pigulevskaya is again different. On the grounds of her analysis of different Syrian and Byzantine sources, she came to the conclusion that the Chionites, the Kidarites, and the Hephthalites belonged to one ethnic type, but formed a miscellaneous horde with different tribes by names. Changes of the dominating hordes were accompanied by corresponding changes of the state name. The masses of semi-nomadic tribes partly complied with each new dominating horde, or dynasty, but sometimes a part left, as this was the case with the Kidarites. We see that Pigulevskaya, naming these three closely-related peoples, nowhere mixes them between each other. She considers that there was a relationship of these peoples with the Huns. Specifically, she wrote: “The name of Huns, given to tribes and horde, at the end of the 4th century and in the 5th century AD alarmed Iran and Byzantium. The horde, long before this was known in China as Xiongnu pertained to

⁸⁵ Толстов 1947, 76.

⁸⁶ Толстов 1947, 80.

⁸⁷ Толстов 1948, 245.

tribes and different language peoples, united in casual and easily disintegrating state-like structures. A part of them were called White Huns, which name was preserved through separate groups and their state became known under new names, such as the Hephthalites, and the Kidarites”.⁸⁸

She considers that the Chionites were related not only to the Huns, but also with the Yuezhi state (Kushans). Concerning the Yuezhi, she writes that: “In the composition of the Kushan state entered the Sakas (Scythians), Tokharians, Turks”.⁸⁹ In her opinion, the presence of the Turkic element is proved because five princes of the Kushans carried the Turkic title “Yabghu”.

B. Marshak agrees with the theory of Gumilev mentioned above. He wrote that the states of the Kidarites and the Hephthalites were “comparable not with Central Asian steppe empires, but with states, founded by relatively small mountain folks, which led the cruel fight against nearby monarchies with varying success”. The Hephthalites, at the end of the 5th century AD, conquered Tokharistan and only in AD 509 reached Samarqand and conquered it.⁹⁰

Enoki and Gumilev accepted the Badakhshan (the Pamir) theory of Bernshtam, who in 1951 considered that Badakhshan could be one of the possible places where the process of ethnogenesis of the Hephthalites began: their first centre was on the middle and lower Syrdarya, the second was on the upper Amudarya. Further, he identified the Chionites and the Hephthalites, complying with the opinion of Ghirshman and supposed that the movement of Huns in the first centuries AD, to Gaoguy in the 4th century and in the 5th century AD, are two stages of one and the same motion of “Central Asian and Altaic tribes to Middle Asian territory and they came into contact with local population and, probably, formed a conglomerate association - the Hephthalites, one of the ancestors of the Turkmens”.⁹¹ In other studies Bernshtam wrote: “The turkisation of Middle Asian tribes, from which the Oghuz-Turkmens originated, begins from the Huns of Middle Asia. These Huns,

⁸⁸ Пигулевская 1941, 49.

⁸⁹ Пигулевская 1941, 32.

⁹⁰ Маршак 1971, 65.

⁹¹ Бернштам 1951b, 200.

roaming westwards, formed the base of the Middle Asian Huns, later the Hephthalites”.⁹²

The Hephthalites were part of the Kushan (Yuezhi) tribes, in accordance with a Massagheto-Alan alliance and came into contact with Hunnish tribes of Central Asia according to Bernshtam. As a result of this mixture the Hephthalite state formed, “appearing first as a “barbarous” prefeudal state of Central Asian nomads, inheriting the culture of the Kushan state and playing an important role in the ethnogenesis of peoples of Asia, first of all the Oghuzs and in some degree of the Afghans”.⁹³ Bernshtam also connected the political ascent of the Hephthalites with the Hunnic tribes of Irnah (the son of Attila - A.K.) roaming in Transcaspia from the west. This thesis was subject to critique from Gumilev, who considered that the Hephthalites came in the first half of the 5th century AD. However, retreating Huns from Europe existed in Central Asia, according to Bernshtam, in the second half of the 5th century AD.⁹⁴ Concerning the Kidarites, Bernshtam indicates that Huns moved to the Orient, where they divided into two branches, more exactly alliances of tribes: Huns-Akatirs, who played the greater role in the forming of the Khazars, and Huns-Kidarites who were an association of Eastern-European Huns with Middle Asian nomads forming the Hephthalites.⁹⁵

A. Cunningham supposed that the self-name of the Hephthalites was Jabula. Song Yun noted that Gandhara was formerly called the “country of Ye-po-lo”. In the Kura inscription, found in the Salt Range, Toramana is called Maharaja Toramana Shaha Jauvla. On silver coins we also find the name Jabula. Cunningham assigned the country of Zabulistan to these people.⁹⁶

B. Gafurov also touched this problem in his studies and supposed that the Hephthalites formed on the basis of some “Middle Asian, eastern-Iranian language tribes” with a certain admixture of the Turkic ethnic element. However, he did not

⁹² Бернштам 1951b, 201.

⁹³ Бернштам 1951a, 214.

⁹⁴ Гумилев 1959, 133.

⁹⁵ Бернштам 1951a, 164–165.

⁹⁶ Cunningham 1893, 258-259.

indicate who these “Middle Asian” tribes were, on the basis of which the Hephthalites formed. In the question of the origin of the Chionites, Gafurov comes to the conclusion that they were Iranian speaking tribes of “Middle Asian” origin. About the ethnogenesis of the Kidarites he does not give any essential explanations, though he rejects the relationships of the Kidarites with the Kushans, citing those Chinese sources which are not supported by other sources. He also wrote nothing on the language of the Kidarites.⁹⁷

K. Trever states that the Kidarites, the Chionites and the Hephthalites were related among each other and were descendants of tribes, who entered the confederation of the White Huns, the “Great Saka horde” - Massaghets. The name of the Hephthalites, in the form “Heptal” of the Armenian historian Lazar Parpetsi, in the opinion of Trever, enables us to derive “the Hephthalites” from “Haft or Hapt” in translation from Iranian meaning “seven”, that is to say one of the names of the leading tribes of the Massaghet alliance, which consisted of seven groups.⁹⁸ She writes as follows about the language of the Hephthalites: “Insofar as it is possible to judge on the few data, there were Turkic and Iranian elements, as well as elements, neither Turkic, nor Iranian. This entire mixture is indicative, probably, of the extreme mix of the Hephthalite language”.⁹⁹

Trever considered that the Chionites, after disintegration of the Kushan state, being originate from the extensive Massaghet alliance, were able to unite the disembodied Massaghet horde and then were subjected to the assimilations on the part of Huns. However, they did not forfeit their physical and cultural traditions, since Greek sources named them “White Huns”, noting the white colour of their skin, settled way of life and higher culture than the other nomadic Huns. Later on Trever wrote that, at the beginning of the 5th century AD, the Kidarites stood out from the composition of the former Massaghet alliance, occupied Tokharistan, but then were faced with Sasanian Iran. They were defeated by the Sasanians and lost their king, Kidara, leaving through the Hindukush to Gandhara (Peshawar) headed by the son of

⁹⁷ Гафуров 1972, 195, 205, 210.

⁹⁸ Тревер et al. 1950, 126.

⁹⁹ Тревер et al. 1950, 133.

Kidara, Kunkhas. However, a part remained in Central Asia and was integrated in the composite state of the Hephthalites subsequently; the part which left subordinated itself to the Gupta state in India and controlled it for 75 years. Trever supposes that the Kushans were also related to the Chionites: "... the tribal alliance of Chionites, originated from the same big Massaghet alliance, as the Kushans" while the Hephthalites were an alliance related to the Kushan-Saka tribes and advanced to seize supreme power.¹⁰⁰

The Hūnas and the Hephthalites (according to Yamada: Hephthals) were independent and separate tribes who invaded and displaced native leaders and established hegemonies in two distinct parts of India according to M. Yamada. The Hephthalite king Toramana, who had the title *Shāhi jaūwla*, is different from *śrī Toramāna*, the Hūna king. The name Toramana mentioned in central Indian inscriptions refers to the Hūna king, while the name Toramana found on coins unearthed in Taxila refers to a Hephthalite king. Mihirakula, the son of Toramana, was an Hūna king; he was not the Hephthalite king that Song Yun, met in Gandhara in AD 520. The Hūnas controlled an area that extended from Malwa in central India to Kashmir. The Hephthalites, a nomadic tribe unrelated to the Hūnas, possibly passed through the Kabul valley and invaded northwestern India sometime after AD 477. Their power did not extend as far as Gandhara in northwestern India. The Hephthalites invaded India from the north and moved into Gandhara and Taxila, but they did not move any further into central India.¹⁰¹

According to E. Rtveladze, the Hephthalites were an indigenous population of Bactria-Tokharistan, and their own name was Alkhon (according to the legends on the Hephthalite coins, written in Bactrian letters). In his opinion, the initial place of their exact location is not known: Altai, Eastern Turkestan, lower Syrdarya and Amudarya or Badakhshan being possibilities. Rtveladze notes that the Hephthalite language is also unknown, although it probably belonged to the eastern-Iranian group.¹⁰² Contrarily, E. Medvedev thinks that the Hephthalites were people who

¹⁰⁰ Тревер 1954, 135, 137.

¹⁰¹ Yamada 1989, 79-113.

¹⁰² Ртвеладзе 1999, 270-271; Ильясов 2004b, 118; Humbach (1996, 210) proposes that the reading of this name should be "Alkhan".

spoke a language of the Indo-European group, and had no relations to the Huns.¹⁰³

E. Nerazik supposed that the Chionites were descendants of a local Aral foreland Massaghet-Sarmat population, gradually assimilated with Huns, who emerged in the middle of the 5th century AD under the name of the Kidarites, which is indicative of long and strong connections to the Yuezhi Kidara.¹⁰⁴ Based on information about the anthropological features and the language of the Hephthalites, she believes that they were mixed people, and in the Hephthalite associations Hun-Turkic ethnic elements participated, integrated in the Iranian speaking mass. They were called the Hephthalites on behalf of the king Heftal (*Ye-da* of Chinese sources) as confirmed in the Chinese chronicles “Tangshu” and “Liangshu”, which reported that “Ye-ta-i-li-to” was the name of king “Hua”, who sent an embassy in AD 516 to China, and according to the Byzantine historian Theophanous Byzantine stating that the Hephthalites were named after their king.¹⁰⁵

In her other studies Nerazik, allowing an ethnic kinship of the Hephthalites and the Chionites, supposed that the area of Su-te was likely located in the Aral Sea region (ancient Yantsai, then Alanya) and that the conquest of the tribes, which the Chinese chronicles call Huns, occurred sometime in the 4th century AD. The emergence of “Huns” in Su-te, a new-ethnic population in Kunya-Uaz and Kanga-qala and the Chionites in the south-western Caspian region can be understood as parts of one movement. Against this background, a comparison of the population, whose burials lie at Kunya-Uaz and Kanga-qala, with the Chionites made by Tolstov seems convincing. If the Hephthalites and the Chionites were related tribes, and there is reason for such an assumption, the above considerations on the involvement of Hunnic-Uighur ethnic groups in the ethnic population of the Aral Sea region forces us to recall the report in the “Beishi” that Yeda are a branch of Qangui and more carefully to consider the theories about the Gaoguy-Uighur origin of the Hephthalites.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Медведев 1990, 128.

¹⁰⁴ Неразик 1963, 414–415.

¹⁰⁵ Неразик 1963, 420.

¹⁰⁶ Неразик 1968, 202.

Nerazik is against the version of a Pamir origin of the Hephthalites. Criticizing the version of Enoki (not referring to the work of Gumilev, who is also an adherent of the Pamir origins of the Hephthalites), she indicates that the main argument of the Japanese historian is chronological calculation, according to which the Hephthalites, under the name Huns, became known earlier in northern India, due to their fight with Skandagupta, than they could have conquered Bactria after taking Sogdiana.¹⁰⁷

The date of the conquest given by Enoki causes the doubt, since the break of the diplomatic relations with Su-te (if we acknowledge it means Sogdiana, as in the opinion of Enoki) could not be connected with the Hephthalite invasion; it is also unknown, when the area of Eastern Turkestan - Khotan and Kashgar - complied with the Hephthalites, though according to Enoki this was at the end of the 5th century AD. Therefore he draws conclusion that the Hephthalites must have proceeded from the mountain region to the upper reaches of the Amudarya. But, as Nerazik notes, in historical science it is firmly known only that in AD 457 Balkh, Badakhshan and Garchistan were in the hands of the Hephthalite king Kushnavaz, while the fights of Huna with Skandagupta are completely unclear as to their chronological position.¹⁰⁸

Enoki considers that the presence of polyandry among the Hephthalites is indicative of life in conditions of geographical and cultural isolation which also indicates that their original homeland was in the mountain region of the Hindukush.¹⁰⁹ Nerazik answers this argument by remarking that the list of people practicing polyandry given by Enoki disagrees with the conclusions and in her opinion the preservation of this custom could be caused by a complex of different reasons. Therefore it is impossible to reduce it to only geographical and cultural isolation.¹¹⁰

There was also critique against the theory of Enoki from A. Ray, who stressed that “Enoki has completely disregarded the statement, in the Liang-shu, that the Hua,

¹⁰⁷ Enoki 1955, 231-237.

¹⁰⁸ Неразик 1963, 553.

¹⁰⁹ Enoki 1955, 236; Enoki 1959, 55.

¹¹⁰ Неразик 1963, 554.

before their rise to political eminence, were a minor power subject to the Jouan-Jouan. This definitely challenges the theory of Enoki that the Ephthalites were first heard of in Central Asia and must have originated there”.¹¹¹ Ray also notes that the hypothesis that polyandry originated from their having lived in an isolated region like Hsi-mo-ta-lo is insufficient. Geographical reasons could not be the only cause of this system.¹¹²

According to F. Grenet a polyandric marriage contract from the kingdom of Rob predates the earliest historical appearance of the Hephthalites by more than a century.¹¹³ Possibly the Hephthalites came from the mountain fringes of Bactria of which the Rob kingdom formed part. Whatever the ethno-linguistic connections of the ruling clan may have been, it seems clear that the original power-base of the Hephthalites, who unified various ethnic elements with different military traditions, was in the Hindukush or in eastern Bactria. From their coins we know that the Hephthalites abandoned the title Kushanshah and that on their coins we see a non Sasanian physical type with deformed skull. The name of the Hephthalites has also been connected linguistically to such variants as Khotanese *hītala* – *strong* or a postulated Middle Persian *haft āl* – *the Seven*.¹¹⁴

Sh. Kuwayama also thinks that there is no written source to show that the Hephthalites had occupied Badakhshan and Huo before the Turkic invasion. It is possible that the Hephthalites kept the western half, Hsi-mo-ta-lo, while the powerful invaders took the better eastern half, Badakhshan.¹¹⁵

The great Hunnic migration reached the Volga in the middle of 4th century AD, according to E. de la Vaissière, and had originated in the Altai. These Huns were the political, and partly cultural, heirs of the Xiongnu. Some of these migrations reached Central Asia and the Hephthalites were among the tribes that arrived then. “In other words, the Hephthalites were in Bactria a century before gaining control

¹¹¹ Ray 1965, 502.

¹¹² Ray 1965, 502.

¹¹³ Sims-Williams 1997, 13-21.

¹¹⁴ Grenet 2002, 210.

¹¹⁵ Kuwayama 1989, 130; Kuwayama 2002, 138.

there, and were under the leadership of others. The last nomadic dynasty did not arrive in Bactria later than any of the other ones but was there from the beginning of the nomadic period. This probably means that all nomadic kingdoms flourishing in Bactria between the middle of the fourth century and the middle of the sixth century can trace their origin back to a single episode of massive migration in the second half of the fourth century (circa 350-370), and not to a whole set of successive migrations”. Later the Hephthalites during their life in Bactria, lost their original language and adopted Bactrian.¹¹⁶

The Kidarites, predecessors of the Hephthalite, were the first creators of the new urban network in the middle of the 5th century AD in Central Asia and had chosen a Kushan titlature that might be in agreement with this urban policy. But the Hephthalites differentiated themselves from the Kushan past. The Hephthalites, as all the tribal groupings of that period, were a mixture of political and clan relationships, not mainly an ethnic or linguistic entity, so Vaissière supposes that it is very difficult to differentiate all these dynasties on a linguistic or ethnic basis.¹¹⁷

In the opinion of V. Solovyov, the Hephthalites were descendants of Pamir Sakas, who were resettled in Badakhshan after defeat in 2nd century BC by the Yuezhi, and lived, not only in the Pamir, but also in the neighbouring regions (in particular Karateghin), where there are graves attributed to the Hephthalites. Their name, possibly, was derived from the name of the ruler. The Kidarites were descendants of the Yuezhi, and their new ethnonym was taken from king Kidara. The Chionites were descendants of Massagets from the Aral foreland, who abandoned their initial place of habitation under pressure of the Huns and moved into the limits of the Kushan kingdom, but were later subordinated to the Hephthalites.¹¹⁸ The anthropologist L. Oshanin referred to the Hephthalites as a western branch of the Yuezhi - Tokhars.¹¹⁹

J. Pyasov complies with the version of Rtveladze insofar that the self-name

¹¹⁶ Vaissière 2003, 122.

¹¹⁷ Vaissière 2003, 124.

¹¹⁸ Соловьев 1997, 30-36.

¹¹⁹ Ошанин 1928, 95.

of the Hephthalites was Alkhon, but considers that they were highlanders of Badakhshan, ethnically close to the population of Tokharistan but not indigenous in Bactria-Tokharistan.¹²⁰ According to Ilyasov one of the main reasons that the Hephthalites were not an indigenous population of Bactria-Tokharistan is that the capital of Chaganian was moved from Dalverzin-tepe to the new place Budrach in the 5th century AD. If the Hephthalites had been an indigenous population they did not need to change the centre of their region after the Sasanians gained control and it would have been better to rebuild Dalverzin-tepe. The Chionites, in the 4th century AD under pressure from the Huns, left their places in K'ang-chú and moved to the south. They attacked southern Central Asia and Afghanistan, which resulted in a socio-economic crisis during the 4th and 5th centuries AD. The Chionites were subordinated by the Hephthalites and were later integrated in their composition (Chionite-Alchons) as is reflected by the reports from different sources about White and Red Hions.¹²¹

Some scholars (E. Smagulov, Yu. Pavlenko) think that the Hephthalites were originally the Huns who left catacomb graves beneath kurgans in the valley of the river Talas and the piedmont of the Tian-Shian. The Hephthalites, after the collapse of Qangui, became a political power in the modern region of southern Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and then spread their power to the Kidarites and the Chionites, who were then to be called Huns as well.¹²²

The unusual theory of G. Maitdinova may also be mentioned here. She supposes that in the Pamir region a state Kirpand existed from the 1st – 2nd century AD to the 5th – 6th century AD, where Kushan, Kidarite, Chionite and Hephthalite dynasties (!) ruled replacing each other. Buddhism was the main religion in this state and a capital was Tashkurgan in eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang). Kirpand, from old Iranian (?), may have meant *mountainous road* where *kir* – is mountain and *pand* – the road. This name may be constructed because Kirpand (*state on mountainous road*) played a major role in Silk Road trade. According to Maitdinova the Kidarites

¹²⁰ Ильясов 2004б, 118-120; Here we may note that Ilyasov on another page of his article states that Badakhshan is the eastern mountainous part of Tokharistan (!): Ильясов 2004б, 118.

¹²¹ Ilyasov 2003; 139; Ильясов 2004б, 119-122.

¹²² Смагулов/Павленко 1992, 200-201.

and the Hephthalites were related and were descendants of Sakas.¹²³

G. Karpov considered that the Hephthalites were people of Iranian origin, who later carried the name “Kushans”, and the main region of this folk was found in Badakhshan (modern Afghanistan).¹²⁴ He has also noted that the modern Abdel group, certainly, are remains of those Huns-Hephthalites.¹²⁵

One of the chapters of the two volume “History of the Turkmen SSR” was dedicated to the Hephthalites. The author of the section, S. Vyazigin, identifies the Chionites and the Hephthalites, supposing that the “name of “the Hephthalites” originated from the ruling dynasty in the state formation of the Chionites”. In his opinion, the Chionito-Hephthalite association presented itself as a conglomerate of tribes, different by their origin, including both Turkic speaking, and Iranian speaking ones. The Kidarites, Vyazigin considers, were the Kushans, not mixing them with the Chionites and the Hephthalites.¹²⁶ Similarly, exploring the early medieval (Sasanian) period in the history of Turkmenistan, A. Gubaev, supposes that a conglomerate of tribes existed, including the Kidarites and the Chionite-Hephthalites, documenting a mixture of Turkic speaking tribes and Iranian speaking origins in their ethnic aspect.¹²⁷

Contrary to this, Kh.Yusupov considers that the Chionites, Kidarites and Hephthalites were miscellaneous folk. The Chionites were Iranian speaking, with a certain Mongol admixture from the part of the Huns. Concerning the origin of the Hephthalites, Yusupov agrees with the theory of Gumilev that they were Iranian speaking mountain folk of European type, living in a settled way and coming from the Eftali valley.¹²⁸

M. Durdyev again supposed that the name of the Hephthalites was that of the ruling dynasty in the state of the Chionites; that is to say, he identified Chionites

¹²³ Майтдинова 1999, 84-87; Майтдинова 2003, 79-88.

¹²⁴ Карпов 1940, 6.

¹²⁵ Карпов 1939.

¹²⁶ Вязигин 1957, 141.

¹²⁷ Губаев 1981, 130.

¹²⁸ Юсупов 1997, 145–146.

and Hephthalites. About the origin of the Hephthalites, he wrote that “the Hephthalites presented themselves as an association of local tribes (not stating which exactly - A.K.), who formed their own independent state after overthrowing the Parthian state and who led war against Sasanian Iran”.¹²⁹ The language of the Hephthalites was identified as the Iranian group by him.

The philologist S. Ataniyazov notes that the Hephthalites were Turkic speaking, coming from the steppes of Mongolia as a result of pressure from the Rourans, who settled in the steppes of Kazakhstan in the middle of 5th century AD. There they divided into two parts: one went to the Volga, the others toward the Amudarya, where they founded a capital in Badakhshan.¹³⁰ In his analysis of the ethnonym “Abdal” Ataniyazov brings three versions of its possible origin:

1. From the name of the king of the Hephthalites, Akhshunwar Hephthalan, who fought with the Sasanian shahinshah Peroz and vanquished him in 484;
2. The version of turkologist N. Baskakov, who considered that the name of the ancient Bulgarian tribe Abdal may be traced back to Chuvash “*avat*” (dig, plow) + completion “*al*” - an affix of the instrument (the person) of the action, which as a whole means “*tiller*”;
3. The version of Balami, historian of the middle Ages (10th century AD), who reported that the “name “*Haitila*” is a plural number from “*Haital*” which in the language of Bukhara means “*strong person*”. The Bukhara word of “*power*”- *haital* and is changed into *Haital* in the Arabic language ”.¹³¹

With this version the ancient Uighur word *Aptal*, meaning *hero, strong person* would also be conform. Ataniyazov himself supports the third version. The name of the people was *Abdals*, meaning *strong person*, since in the names of people and tribes we often encounter the idea which means *strong, brave* and this already has tradition. He also mentioned the interesting fact of the relationship of early medieval Hephthalites with present-day Abdals. Specifically, he notes that the Hephthalite

¹²⁹ Дурдыев 1991, 38.

¹³⁰ Атаниязов 1992, 18.

¹³¹ Tabari 1869, 128; Livshits (1969, 67) cited the example of the Khotan-Saka language “*hitalatsai*”, “*hivalatsa*” - brave, valiant; See also: Bailey 1979, 208.

princes wore tetragonal and hexagonal hats (tahya) on their head, and similar headdresses are carried at present by the children of Turkmen-Abdals.¹³²

In a suggestion by O.Gundogdyev, the Kidarites, Chionites and Hephthalites were ethnically one people. Chionites were Huns, who at some time left the Orient, but then returned and entered the confederation of their former relatives. Gundogdyev mentions the deforming of the skull practiced by the Huns and the Chionites as one of the proofs of his theories.¹³³ He considers that in the 4th century AD the Kidarites, separated from Chionites, became independent. Kidara stood at their head and seized power in the weak Kushan state. In the attempt to conquer the Chionites the Kidarites were defeated. After this the Chionites had a chieftain named Hephtal (Abdal) and in consequence the Chionites received the name of the Hephthalites. This idea is based on two independent sources: the 6th century AD author Theophanous Byzantine (from the name of king Hephtal) and the Chinese chronicle (from the name of ruler Ye-da or Ye-ta-i-li-to). Eftal defeated the Kidarites and displaced them from Kushania, from where they then left to northern India. The Hephthalites became the legal successors of the Kushan Empire.¹³⁴

Clearly many opinions compete on various aspects of the early medieval history of Central Asia, not general agreement being possible at the moment. Most of these theories are based mainly on the often contradictory written sources, sometimes also take into account the numismatic evidence. The archaeological materials are hardly regarded and even when this is the case only a reduced selection is used to support one view or another.

¹³² Атаниязов 1992, 19.

¹³³ Гундогдыев 1998, 544–545.

¹³⁴ Гундогдыев 1998, 545.

2.2. Methodic Problems

The various authors presented above are researchers who have grappled with the question of who were the Hephthalites: were they Mongols or Turks or Huns or any number of other ethnicities. This shows how fragmentary and confused the historical sources are, and that they must be combined with other lines of evidence in order to understand the history of the Hephthalites.

The brief review already shows that most discussions took place in the period from the 1950's to the 1970's. Even during that period, most studies centered on the written sources, some on numismatics and only very few were concerned with archaeological monuments of the Hephthalites.

When we take this aspect some problems emerge. How we can determine the Hephthalite monuments? Which are the parameters, characteristic objects, and burial customs? Which ethnic features can be considered distinguishing them from their neighbours? This presented a particular problem in the search for the history of the Hephthalites. The reason for this is that the culture of the peoples moving into the new places changed under the influence of the ethnic elements found on new lands in every period compared with their earlier culture.

Most sources were written by outsiders and reflect the authors' views, not the self-identification of the ethnic groups which he described. Even when written by 'insiders', such sources rarely describe the artifacts archaeologists usually find in excavations.¹³⁵

One of the problems in the history, not only the Hephthalites but of other people of Central Asia in early medieval time is the defining of ethnicity. To understand ethnicity it is necessary to have a historical perspective, because only then can we see how it comes into existence, what resources it uses, what role it plays in the process of social reproduction, and why it might have been mobilized.¹³⁶ It can be presumed that different nomadic tribes of various language groups united to

¹³⁵ Curta 2007, 178.

¹³⁶ Shennan 2003, 16.

one main horde. This horde, forming the dominant layer, gave the ruling circle, and spoke a specific language, perhaps alien to the subordinated peoples. Thence some of the confusion about the proper names of people, princes, language, and the difficulty of understanding the description on the appearance of tribes.

Usually ethnicity is defined by a set of features like language, customs and costume. But W. Pohl notes that all these features can be changed without any perceivable crisis of identity.¹³⁷ P. Geary thinks that early medieval ethnicity should be viewed as a subjective process by which individuals and groups identified themselves or others within specific situations and for specific purposes. One concludes that ethnicity did not exist as an objective category but rather as a subjective and malleable category by which various preexisting likenesses could be manipulated symbolically to mold an identity and a community.¹³⁸

As several archaeological examples show, medieval ethnicity was a form of social mobilization used in order to reach certain political goals. Ethnic identity was built upon some pre-existing cultural identity, in a prototypic manner.¹³⁹

According to F. Curta, for ethnic identity to be visible (literally), the very process of ethnic formation must involve the manipulation of material culture, be that dress, food, house architecture, or pottery decoration. The self-conscious use of specific cultural features as diacritical markers distinguished an ethnic group from others. Ethnic boundaries are therefore created in specific social and political configurations by means of material culture styles.¹⁴⁰ Ethnicity is subjective and the boundaries of ethnic groups are marked with symbols. As a consequence, ethnic identity in the past is beyond the reach of archaeology, because the meaning initially attached to the material culture symbols used for building ethnic boundaries will forever remain unknown.¹⁴¹ Curta also notes ethnicity is constituted at the intersection of the habitual dispositions of the agents concerned and the social

¹³⁷ Pohl 1998, 9.

¹³⁸ Geary 1983, 16; Shennan 2003, 12.

¹³⁹ Curta 2007, 159.

¹⁴⁰ Curta 2008, 162.

¹⁴¹ Curta 2007, 162.

conditions existing in a particular historical context.¹⁴²

S. Brather supposes that the archaeological material represents social, but not ethnic identity; it is difficult to know what made a Frank or an Aleman by the simple deposition of a glass beaker or a handmade pot, respectively, into his or her grave.¹⁴³ Brather notes that archaeologists abandon any research on ethnicity, as long as no independent, written sources exist, to decipher the meaning of those symbols for them. They should focus on what they can really do, research on economic and social structures, social rank, religious behaviour. In the opinion of Brather social identities (including also ethnic ones) are not a direct reflection of social reality, even though they are themselves nothing less than real.¹⁴⁴

First criticism against the idea that archaeological cultures represent ethnic groups came from within the framework of culture history, but critiques usually consisted of cautionary tales and attributed difficulties to the complexity and incompleteness of the artefactual record, without calling into question the assumption of an intrinsic link between artifacts and groups. The general response to such problems was a retreat into the study of chronology and typology as ends in themselves, and the emergence of debates concerning the meaning of archaeological types, in particular whether such types represent ethnic categories imposed by the archaeologist or emic categories of their producers.¹⁴⁵

Brather supposes that elements which represent ethnicity such as dress elements, speech forms, lifestyles, and food ways are the result of speculation - should the selection turn out to be wrong, the very identity and therefore existence of the group is threatened. Once the symbols are gone, the ethnic group disappears.¹⁴⁶ Brather supposes that archaeologists are not even capable of identifying the boundaries of social groups. Without independent sources, such as written accounts, archaeologists cannot entertain any hopes of describing the meaning of symbols or

¹⁴² Curta 2007, 168.

¹⁴³ Brather 2004, 295-298.

¹⁴⁴ Brather 2004, 100, 106

¹⁴⁵ Curta 2007, 163-164.

¹⁴⁶ Brather 2004, 108.

the particular situations in which they were created and used.¹⁴⁷

Curta writes “Ethnicity was a form of social identity, often combined with, rather than in opposition to, gender. However, archaeologists normally treat these two forms of social identity separately and often favour ethnicity over gender. This is especially true for rich female burials with bow brooches, in the analysis of which gender has often been neglected in favour of interpretations overemphasizing the role of brooches as markers of ethnic identity”.¹⁴⁸

The gap between the communicative and cultural memory of any social group supposedly prevents archaeologists from reconstructing the meanings initially attached to symbols manipulated to mark the boundaries of the group. It needs written sources to decide which symbols were used in any particular society for building ethnic boundaries.¹⁴⁹

It will only be new discoveries which can tell us about ancient homelands and migrations of the Hephthalites, who conquered a large part of Central Asia in the 5th – 6th centuries AD. At present it has been attempted here to collect the material known so far, being aware of the difficulties, to connect archaeological material, information from coins and written sources in order to outline the history of the Hephthalites. Lastly no specific monument, arms, jewelry or pottery can be securely attributed to them. However, we know of their existence in a specific region of Central Asia, even as a state formation, and at a given time, and thus archaeological research needs to take account of this data too. After all, archaeology too is only a method used to reconstruct history. Therefore I have here tried to interpret the available data from various sources on the Hephthalites, even if several major questions continue to be open for discussion and will probably remain so for some time in the future.

¹⁴⁷ Brather 2004, 337, 369.

¹⁴⁸ Curta 2007, 175.

¹⁴⁹ Brather 2004, 570, 577; Curta 2007, 177-178.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MATERIALS

3.1. Archaeological sites

As could be shown, a major problem in the study of the Hephthalites is their archaeological identification. So far there are no monuments which can be directly connect with them. The material is very limited and even the dating is often approximate and inexact. Nevertheless in this chapter those sites and finds are collected and discussed which might be connected with the Hephthalites, both in accordance with their chronological date and their regional placement. The sites (**fig. 1-8**) and finds are simply given in alphabetical order.

Ākra

Cribb writes that in Ākra (Bannu district of Pakistan) two Huna coins and one Hephthalite coin were found for which there are no further details. They date to the end of the 4th century AD and to the 5th century AD. Both are inscribed in late Kushana-period Brahmi script. These coins are now preserved in the Ashmolean Museum.¹⁵⁰

Baitudasht

The Baitudasht kurgans (**fig. 9; 10**) are situated 13 km south-east from the town Panj in Tajikistan. They are characteristically catacombs and podboi with high vaulted ceiling. The chambers have diameters of 10-35 m and heights of 2-7 m.¹⁵¹ Some of the kurgans have a ring of stones. In the centre a dromos is situated with a depth of 2-6,5 m and a width of 1-2 m. Most graves have catacomb shape. In graves collective robbed burials were found. The heads lay on reed mats towards the north or west.

¹⁵⁰ Cribb 2002, 73, 75, 80.

¹⁵¹ Абдуллаев 1983, 69-79; According to Solovyov (1987, 159, 162) the diameters are 15-40 m and the chambers are 1.5-4 m high; According to Stark (2008, 271) the dimensions are 12- 40 m and 1.8-6.5 m.

Bandian

The archaeological site of Bandian (2 km west from Dargaz, Northern Khorasan and 20 km from the border of Turkmenistan) was discovered in 1990 and has since been excavated by Iranian archaeologists. Bandian is a large area with three small mounds, A, B, and C, with a maximum height of 4.5 m, as well as the ancient site of Yarim-tepe. Three mounds were seriously damaged by agricultural activity.¹⁵²

In mound A a fire-temple (?) (**fig. 11**) was discovered. The building consists of a room (10.25 x 8.60 m) surrounded by a series of smaller rooms on three sides. The walls of the rooms are decorated with stucco reliefs which are preserved up to heights of 0.70 – 0.80 m. They show various subjects: hunting and fighting scenes, perhaps against the Hephthalites, while on the opposite wall there are court and maybe investiture scenes. Five inscriptions in Pehlevi (2 horizontal and 3 vertical) (**fig. 12**) have also been identified on the walls of niche in the hall with columns. According to R. Bashshash Kanzaq's first reading, the building has to be dated from Warahran V's period in the 5th century AD.¹⁵³

The Pehlevi inscription on the plaster walls inside the fire temple records that the temple belonged to a *dastgird*, which was controlled by the military commander of Merv. M. Dyakonov describes a *dastgird* as fertile land belonging to the king and royalty. The inscription carved on plaster inside the niche indicates that the site had not only religious function but also one for teaching: "This is the figure of Vid-Mihr-Shahpur, the son of Vid-Shahpur-Ardashiran, who was appointed by Yazdan as commander (*dizhban*) at Merv and commander of this *dastgird*."¹⁵⁴

Later, excavation was continued and several rooms behind a four-columned hall were uncovered. The date of the building in the 5th century AD is based mainly on the stucco reliefs which depict a victory of the Sasanians over the Hephthalites.¹⁵⁵

This temple includes a hall with columns, offering room, a room of fire (*atashkade*) and a room containing the ostotheques (*ostodan*), as well as an iwan and

¹⁵² Rahbar 2007, 455.

¹⁵³ Rahbar 1998, 213-250.

¹⁵⁴ Rahbar 2007, 456.

¹⁵⁵ Rahbar 2004, 7-21.

a round room. All together they cover a rectangle of 21 x 20 m.¹⁵⁶

On the western wall of the niche in the hall with columns there is an image of a sitting cross-legged person on an oval carpet with uplifted right hand.¹⁵⁷ There is also an inscription (according to M. Rahbar, who excavated this site – Inscription E) on the right side, between a leg and an uplifted hand, of this personage which was read by Bashshash Kanzaq as: “moi Hephtalite, fils...Hephthalite, digne de confiance” (I am Hephthalite, son ... the Hephthalite is trustworthy – A.K.).¹⁵⁸

Rahbar identifies this image as an Hephthalite prince after the defeat by Warahran V and the death of the previous king during the battle. Warahran V accepted a treaty with the Hephthalites and, to show that he trusts them, ordered to write these words near the Hephthalite prince or may be a new Hephthalite king.

A feast was probably organized in his honor - the scene shown on the north wall of the room is the scene after the surrender of the crown. The person sitting cross-legged on carpet with ornaments must be a same personage the new Hephthalite king. In this case, the next person who wears a suit resting on a sofa would be Warahran V.¹⁵⁹ The author believes that the temple in Bandian was built by Warahran V in honour of his victory over the Hephthalites in AD 425 and was destroyed by them later in AD 484, when the Hephthalites were able to defeat the forces of Peroz.¹⁶⁰

According to P. Gignoux the monument excavated in Bandian is not a temple of fire as supposed by M. Rahbar but was a sumptuous house, maybe, of the *marzban* Weh-Mihr-Šabuhr, who lived in the 5th century AD. Gignoux also criticises the reading of inscriptions made by Bashshash Kanzaq, especially, inscription E where the Hephthalites are given as [*wp*] *tlyt*, considering this mistaken. In Middle-Persian the Hephthalites were named *hywn=Hyon*, the Hunns.¹⁶¹ He notes that this name was

¹⁵⁶ Rahbar 2004, 8.

¹⁵⁷ Rahbar 1998, 221.

¹⁵⁸ Rahbar 2004, 18.

¹⁵⁹ Rahbar 2004, 18-19.

¹⁶⁰ Rahbar 2004, 19-20.

¹⁶¹ Gignoux 2008, 163-174.

also mentioned in Armenian sources, in particular, in the work of Moses Khorenatsi.¹⁶²

Barak-tam

According to Tolstov Barak-tam (**fig. 13**), one of the sites in Khorezm, was left by the tribes of the Chionite-Hephthalite group. The monument, which consisted of three castles, is especially interesting. Among them the better preserved castle Barak-tam I consists of a two-story building. On the second floor, in the ceremonial hall, traces of a carpet were discovered, and in a nearby room more fragments of wool carpets. Noting that the monument is undoubtedly the prototype of Afrigid castles Tolstov wrote: “This structure does not follow Khorezmian ancient traditions, perhaps, it is closer to domestic and aesthetic demands of the castle’s owners – the Chionite chiefs, who built it on the north-eastern outskirts of Khorezm in the period of the 4th - 5th century AD”.¹⁶³

Begram

Around 10 km north of Kabul not far from Begram a hoard of 447 copper coins was found in the late 1970’s, all of the uniface type and with Brahmi legend, probably attributed to Narana /Narendra (c. AD 540-580), a successor to Mihirakula.

Beshkent valley

Among the burial mounds in the Beshkent valley (southern Tajikistan) there are four (two of which are pit type) from the end of the 4th - beginning of the 5th century AD, which are characterized by unity of rite: cremations outside the tomb, followed by burial of calcinated bones in a small, oval pit, elongated from the south to the north; the same size of pits, lack of ceramics. It should be noted that in one of the burials an iron dagger without top was found. Mandelshtam, who explored

¹⁶² Gignoux 1998, 254-256.

¹⁶³ Толстов 1962, 239.

these burials, considers them to the Chionites.¹⁶⁴

Bezmyannyi (Nameless) burials near Pirmat-Baba-tepe

S. Kabanov supposes that the burial dating from the 5th century AD in Bezmyannyi (Nameless) mound - 4 near Pirmat-Baba-tepe could relate to the Hephthalites. These two-row burials (depth 40-50 cm without any gaps between the rows) contained several individuals. On top of five people lay the burial of a man. Kabanov reminds of the reference of Procopius of Caesarea about collective burials of the Hephthalites. Another indicator for the possibility that the burials belong to Hephthalites is that of the seven skulls, four have artificial deformation of ring-type. The anthropological type is Caucasian.¹⁶⁵

Bezmyannyi (Nameless) city-site in Kobadian

A lapis lazuli gem was found near a *bezmyannyi* (Nameless) city-site in Kobadian. On the gem a sign had been engraved, consisting of a crescent moon resting on a base, which the author of the publication compares with a symbol found on a copper seal from the Kurkat vault. The sign on the Kobadian gem, according to R. Göbl, is well known from coins of issues 287 and 287A, 288 and 289, which Göbl links with the real Hephthalites (*sichere Hephthaliten*).¹⁶⁶

Chilek

A bowl (**fig. 14**) was found in 1961 in the village Chilek, 31 km north-north-west from Samarqand, which is dated to the 5th centuries AD. The bowl (weight: 1003 g, diameter: 18,5 cm) has a smooth inside part and an exterior richly decorated by repoussé. The images on the edge of the outer bowl represent six women standing under arcades, in between which there are also bust images of winged geniuses. On

¹⁶⁴ Мандельштам 1963, 89-93; Мандельштам 1964, 25.

¹⁶⁵ Кабанов 1977, 127-130.

¹⁶⁶ Пугасов 2003, 143.

the base of the bowl there is the picture bust of a beardless man facing left, wearing an oval cap on his head and holding a lotus in his hand. Based on the similarity of the images with profiles of the Hephthalite rulers on coins, the cup was defined as Hephthalite.¹⁶⁷

According to G. Pugachenkova the bowl should be connected with the Punjab school and has no relevance to Bactria.¹⁶⁸ Solovyov does not agree with this opinion, noting that in spite of the presence of Indian features on the Chilek bowl, this does not afford enough grounds to separate it from Bactrian art, typical for some monumental art found in recently in Central Asia. First of all, in this context it is necessary to mention the Lyahsh bowl, on which women are depicted, whose images are almost identical to the women in Indian art.¹⁶⁹

Dalverzin-tepe

In early medieval time burials were introduced into the walls of the Kushan site Dalverzin-tepe (**fig. 15**). In the eastern part 17 vaults have been studied which consist of 26 groups of bones, lying on their back. Earlier ones were oriented with the head to the north-east and later ones to the south-west. The dimensions of the vaults are 1.8-2.6 x 0.6-1 m. The buried people lie on kamysh (reeds) and in their mouth and under the head coins were found. There are vaults dated to the 7th - 8th centuries AD. On southern part of the site graves in khums (storage jars) and podboi were also found, dated to the same period. In other parts of the site isolated graves were discovered, one was buried in a Kushan ceramic kiln, others in semi-destroyed living rooms. This kind of graves are dated to the end of 4th – 5th centuries AD.¹⁷⁰

In a kiln in the potter's quarter (Excavation DT-9) in Dalverzin-tepe, a burial with a deformed skull was found. According to Pugachenkova and Ilyasov the

¹⁶⁷ Brentjes 1971, 77-78; Пугаченкова 1986, 273-275; Пугаченкова 1990, 29; Lerner 1996, 24-25.

¹⁶⁸ Пугаченкова 1990, 29.

¹⁶⁹ Соловьев 1997, 68.

¹⁷⁰ Соловьев 1987, 160-162.

individual may have been a Hephthalite and dates from the 5th century AD. The inventory includes a hand made one-handed small vessel at the head and triangle-shaped hole for hanging to one side.¹⁷¹ Ilyasov thinks that a statue of a horse with tamgha on the right shoulder, found in kiln 11 in the ceramist residential area (DT-9) of Dalverzin-tepe, should be a Hephthalite one. This tamgha has analogies among tamghas of the Hephthalites on coins and on gems.¹⁷²

A silver Hephthalite coin, an imitation of Peroz's coins, was also found during the excavations of Dalverzin-tepe. The coin was dated to the end of the 5th or the beginning of the 6th centuries AD.¹⁷³

Dehistan

Several Sasanian rulers used Hyrcania as a place from where to launch military expeditions against the nomads. This situation could have contributed to the creation of a sort of no man's land in the south of Dehistan, pushing populations either to move to the north-west of the plains, or to keep away from the border to the south. Among the peoples who motivated these defensive measures were the Chionites, who were established in the territory of Hyrcania, including the plain of Gorgan. It is against the resistance of probable descendants of the Chionites, known in the 5th century AD as Chols, that Arab warriors were to conquer the region in the 8th century AD. A typical settlement of that period in Dehistan is Geokjik-tepe, a fortified farm occupying 4.5 ha. The enclosure was constructed to the east of the largest, Iron Age tepe, probably in the 8th century AD. It measures 223 m in length by 206 m in width with walls up to 2.60 m thick, constructed from square mud bricks (0.46x0.48 m). The enclosure is protected by circular towers on the corners and by semicircular towers regularly spaced along the walls. The enclosure of Geokjik-tepe illustrates a plan which is unusual, but widespread in Dehistan.¹⁷⁴

In Dehistan the so called Central Mound was excavated by a joint Turkmen-

¹⁷¹ Пугаченкова/Ртвеладзе 1978, 125; Ильясов 2006, 140.

¹⁷² И'yasov 2001, 196.

¹⁷³ Пугаченкова/Ртвеладзе 1978, 22-23.

¹⁷⁴ Lecomte 2007, 308.

French archaeological expedition. It is the largest mound (1.50 m high) in the centre of an enclosed area and revealed a large dwelling place. The type of fortified structure, for agricultural as well as defensive purposes (it would serve as a refuge-enclosure in times of danger, explaining the limited surface area occupied by the buildings), represents the synthesis of the occupation of Dehistan in this period, an agricultural region with a sedentary population, but also a nomadic one. This fortified farm, where pottery was also produced as indicated by numerous kiln fragments visible on the surface, most certainly characterized the settlement of the Chols, descendants of the Chionites, themselves related to the Hephthalites. The open space in the interior of the enclosure wall could accommodate yurts and herds in time of danger, as well being a place of exchange.¹⁷⁵

Dzhetyasar culture

Now around 50 major sites of the Dzhetyasar culture (**fig. 16**) are known, mostly in the Kzylorda region of Kazakhstan.¹⁷⁶ In the 1960's a periodization of the Dzhetyasar culture was proposed: Dzhetyasar I – 7th / 6th centuries BC - 3rd / 4th centuries AD; Dzhetyasar II – 4th - 6th centuries AD; Dzhetyasar III – 7th - 9th centuries.¹⁷⁷

The cemeteries are situated near the fortresses. More than 1000 graves have been excavated.¹⁷⁸ The necropoles included graves (**fig. 17**) of four types and three types of brick funerary structures. Studying thousands of burials allowed the conclusion of the extraordinary stability for both the funerary equipment and the uniform types of funeral rites, within a given territory without any changes throughout the existence of the culture. To a large extent the same can be said about the funerary structures themselves. Thus, crypts operate at least in the 6th – 5th centuries BC, and change their layout, types of floors, the interior, only in the 4th - 5th centuries AD. At least a thousand years were completely dominated by one of the

¹⁷⁵ Lecomte 2007, 308-309.

¹⁷⁶ Левина 1993, 33.

¹⁷⁷ Левина 1996, 10; Левина 2000, 142.

¹⁷⁸ Левина 1993, 34; Левина 2000, 147.

four types of ground burial barrows; only at the end of the 4th - 5th centuries AD were they replaced by another type, but of the same funeral rite. Other types of ground burials could be used, perhaps belonging to a different culture. Anthropological studies suggest a single population, although in some mounds and burial sites differing racial types can be recognized.¹⁷⁹

The anthropological type had affinities to the Altaic group. T. Trofimova pointed out that the Mongoloid type, which entered the composition of the Dzhetyasar population, most likely originating from the Altai, as one of the female skulls found in a mound may be close to the skulls from the Shibin archaeological phase in the piedmont of the Altai, as well as the skulls of the Tashtyk culture in the Minusinsk area. At the same time the Mongoloid type buried in the mounds of Altynasyr are close, according to some experts, to the population buried at Kunya-Uaz and Kanga-qala. The features of the material culture (**fig. 18; 19; 20**) of the Dzhetyasar group of the 6th - 8th centuries AD, and their hand made dishes, are similar to Oghuz sites of the Syrdarya in the 9th -11th centuries. This confirms the information in the “Tanshu”, that in this time the terrain to the north-east of Khorezm was populated by “Ghesa” tribes. Maybe these tribes came to Khorezm and mixed with its inhabitants. In fact, in Khorezm the Afrigid culture shows many elements that have no local traditions, and are more related to the semi-nomad world of the north-eastern part of the Aral Sea region.¹⁸⁰

The Dzhetyasar settlements are well defended fortresses situated in groups of 7-8 settlements each (sometimes 10). The distance between fortresses is not more than 2-8 km. At present 9 such groups are known.¹⁸¹ Every Dzhetyasar settlement was surrounded by a kurgan type necropolis and was situated not far from a canal or river. When water disappeared the settlement was also given up. In each Dzhetyasar settlement group (5-9 fortresses in each) one of them was of bigger size.¹⁸²

In the 5th century in Dzhetyasar some changes in fortification took place and

¹⁷⁹ Левина 1996, 370.

¹⁸⁰ Неразик 1968, 204.

¹⁸¹ Левина/Галиева 1995, 5; Левина 1996, 11.

¹⁸² Левина 1996, 369.

new fortresses were built, possibly because a new population came. The area of agriculturally used surface also increased.¹⁸³

In the 3rd - 4th century AD some Dzhetyasar sites were destroyed and left because of military collisions with nomadic tribes from the east. People from Dzhetyasar sites moved to areas of the northern Caucasus and further to the west, while other parts moved along the right bank of the Syrdarya to the south and south-east up to Ferghana. The migration processes continued later at the end of 5th -6th centuries AD and at the end of 6th – 7th centuries AD.¹⁸⁴

This is also supported by V. Yagodin who notes that the third type of burials, dated to the 3rd - 4th century AD at the Duana archaeological complex (situated on the eastern cliff of the Ustyurt Plateau in the area of Cape Duana), has similarity with the Dzhetyasar culture.¹⁸⁵

Erkurgan

The very large site of Erkurgan (10 kilometers northwest of Karshi in Uzbekistan) is identified, by Kabanov, as a residence of the Kidarites (**fig. 21; 22**). Erkurgan had a surface of 150 hectares.¹⁸⁶ Several layers and structures from the extensively excavated site date to the 4th – 5th centuries AD.¹⁸⁷ In the middle or at the end of the 6th century AD life in Erkurgan ended. The real reason is unknown. Maybe it was because of war, since in all rooms of Erkurgan traces of fire were observed.¹⁸⁸ New conquerors of the region, probably the Turks moved to a new centre in the Kashkadarya oasis, to Shulluk-tepa (5-6 km to south from Erkurgan), medieval Neseф.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸³ Левина / Галиева 1995, 23.

¹⁸⁴ Левина 1996, 375; Левина 1998, 55.

¹⁸⁵ Yagodin 2007, 73-75.

¹⁸⁶ Кабанов 1977, 24.

¹⁸⁷ Кабанов 1977, 125-127.

¹⁸⁸ Исамиддинов / Хасанов 2000, 179-180; According to Suleimanov (2000, 315) this can be connected to the wars of the Hephthalites against the Turks.

¹⁸⁹ Сулейманов 2000, 7, 28-29.

Ferghana

In early medieval time the population of Ferghana was under the suzerainty of the Hephthalites and the region was a part of their state according to S. Baratov. Nevertheless, the graves in Ferghana do not have any connection to the Hephthalites, and there are no proofs about their role in the ethnogenesis of the people of this region from archaeological and numismatic material.¹⁹⁰

An indicator against the theory of connections between the Ferghana graves (**fig. 23**) and the Hephthalites is the fact that there are no joint finds of underground and surface graves. Kurums and underground graves are situated in different places and they are separate cemeteries.¹⁹¹

An interesting aspect in the Ferghana graves are anthropomorphic plaster figures. In the Turatash graves lay a figurine instead of a human, as also in the Voruh and Tashrvat female graves. In Khorezm similar anthropomorphic figures were found in the graves in Kunya-Uaz and Kanga-qala, which some researchers think relate to the Chionites.¹⁹²

Matbabaev reports that on the territory of the Ferghana valley, in Munchak-tepe 2 (300-400 meters west from the highway Pap-Kokand, on the right bank of the Syrdarya) lie the ruins of the ancient city of Pap (**fig. 24**). It lies at the site of three townships: Baland-tepe, Temirkosmok-tepe and Munchak-tepe. The last one represents the ruin of an urban necropolis and during its excavations unique burial facilities were revealed in the form of underground vaults, made in sandy-loess sediments and placed in a chain through the natural hill in west-eastern direction. Eight vaults were studied, the area of which can be divided into two groups: small (5 m²), which contained from 1 to 4 people, and large (more than 6 m²), with up to 50 graves. The vaults consist of a pre-entrance site, corridor and burial chamber. Burials in the vault were carried out in three types:

¹⁹⁰ Баратов 1991, 21-22.

¹⁹¹ Брыкина/Горбунова 1999, 93-94; This point of view is supported by Baratov also. Another argument for his theory is that in the kurum cemeteries in Varzik, Shah, Chimbisay, Gavasay and Kuchkarata there are rich and poor graves. So it does not mean that only rich people were buried here: Баратов 1997, 94.

¹⁹² Брыкина/Горбунова 1999, 93.

1. without a coffin on a special litter;
2. in wicker basket;
3. in reed coffins.

In the Ferghana valley cemeteries with 10 wooden coffins are also known with burial items: bow, knives, woven baskets, toilet items, ceramics (**fig. 26**).¹⁹³

The burial construction, the mode of burial and the range of grave goods permit us to divide the burials into four types. A characteristic, common to all these types, is the complete absence of any sepulchral mounds. The first two types are pit and podboi, excavated in Munchak-tepe 1. It should be noted, that in all the podboi burials there were beddings made of reed (**fig. 25**) or sand, and in one case (burial 8) the deceased was buried in a reed coffin. The second type was discovered in the neighbouring hill – Munchak-tepe 2. The third type is a vault burial and can be divided into two groups: large and small vaults. The investigation showed that the large vaults were family tombs where the deceased were buried in reed coffins over a period of at least 100-150 years. In the small vaults there are from one to four skeletons.¹⁹⁴

All these above-mentioned underground mausoleums have the following shared characteristics: they were made in natural hills or rocks; they were group burial chamber. In these burials there is no precise orientation to cardinal points. In the Astana burial ground the dead are lying either in wooden coffins or simply on wooden bedding. The fourth type of burials is an ossuary-khum type, which appeared later, i.e. after the completion of the vault burials. Preliminarily the necropolis is dated to the 5th to 8th centuries AD. The vault burials can be dated to the 5th and 7th centuries AD. This is testified, first of all, by the ceramic complex, which is presented by bowls with scalloped edges and engobe stripes below the rim, round jugs with and without a spout. The handles of all jugs rise above the rim. The surfaces of most of the vessels are rifled. These are all characteristic features of

¹⁹³ Матбабаев 1994, 58–65; It should be mentioned that in his other study Matbabaev (2004, 136) attributes the underground vaults and burials in reed coffins to the local Ferghana traditions, with some influence from neighbouring Chach, as early as the first centuries AD.

¹⁹⁴ Аһарбаев/Матбабаев 1998, 77-95.

Ferghana ceramics of the medieval period. According to the stratigraphy, the small vaults appeared comparatively later than the large ones. They can be dated not earlier than the second half of the 6th to the 7th centuries AD. As for single burials, this problem is very complex. They have mainly one, sometimes two hand-made ceramic vessels of bad quality and firing. Due to this we should mark them (at the given stage) as belonging to the 5th - 7th centuries AD. The ossuary and khum burials are dated from the 8th century, i.e. this new burial tradition appeared here during the active conquest of Central Asia by the Arabs.

The coffins were made as follows: first selected cleaned reeds were prepared and then braids with a round shape were woven using 10-12 reeds each. 20-30 braids were used for making one rectangular coffin with a cover. The coffin was strengthened using wooden sticks which served as a framework. The skeletons were found lying in a stretched out position on their back. The sizes of the coffins: length from 70 to 125 cm, width from 35 to 55, height of 18 to 25 cm.¹⁹⁵

Gardez

Gardez is situated 120 km south of Kabul. Some Hephthalite coins have been found in and around the site in 1962.¹⁹⁶ A marble statue of a standing Ganesha (height 91 cm) also originated here (**fig. 72**). The statue has an inscription commemorating “mahārājadhīrāja” Khingala. It was dated according to the proto-Sharada inscription to the 7th century AD.¹⁹⁷

Igdy-qala

The site Igdy-qala situated at the mouth of the Upper Uzboi, about 200 kilometers north-east of Balkhan mountains could, according to Kh. Yusupov, be the town Balkhan or Bolo-Balaam, capital of the Kidarites. Igdy-qala had stone fortifications in an irregular trapezoidal shape. The walls were defended by

¹⁹⁵ Анарбаев/Матбабаев 1990, 46; Анарбаев/Матбабаев 1993/94, 229-230; There does not seem to have been any special order: Анарбаев/Матбабаев 1990, 47.

¹⁹⁶ Göbl 1967-II, 36; Ball/Gardin 1982, 101-102.

¹⁹⁷ Stadtner 2000, 42.

rectangular towers and swallowtail towers at the corners. Along the walls and towers there were shooting galleries with arrow shaped slits.¹⁹⁸ The fortress was built in Parthian time to control the trade route on the Uzboi. The fortress and open settlement in the surrounding area are quite significant in desert conditions. Based on such factors as the position of fortress, in the center of a vast region inhabited by nomads during the functioning of the Uzboi, its strength, archaeological material from different periods, the repeated restructuring within the fortress and traces of fire, it is assumed that it was directly and indirectly related to major events taking place in the eastern Caspian lands in the 4th - 5th centuries AD.¹⁹⁹

Ittifok

In Ittifok (Hissar valley) 8 graves were excavated. Some of the buried people lay on their back oriented towards the north-west and had coins in their mouth or at their hands. Small pits filled with ashes were near the heads. According to A. Abdullaev these graves might be dated to the 3rd - 4th centuries AD on the ground of the coins.²⁰⁰ In the opinion of Solovyov the graves dated to the 5th – 6th centuries AD.²⁰¹

Julsai

In Julsai (Panj region of Tajikistan) three burials were found close to each other. The graves date from the 5th century AD. Among the materials there are bronze mirrors, coins, rings. Although the graves are dated to the 5th century AD, Solovyov connects these graves with the Kushan time.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ Yagodin 2007, 51.

¹⁹⁹ Юсупов 1975, 69.

²⁰⁰ Абдуллаев 1983, 56-57.

²⁰¹ Соловьев 1987, 157-158.

²⁰² Соловьев 1987, 161-162.

Kabul

The only extant remains of possible Hephthalite origins are the Bala Hisar and the city walls on Shir Darvaza hill, a series of stone and mud fortifications with extensive later re-buildings.²⁰³

In the regions of Kabul and Gazni mints for Alchon coins existed. The Nezak coins divide into two clearly distinguishable groups, separated typologically. Göbl assigned them to two different mints, which he provisionally localized in Gazni and Kabul. This conclusion is based on the provenance of the coins; the broad mass of the Nezak coins found south of the Hindukush circulated in the area that included these two cities. The attribution can be proven only with more definitive evidence, through the discovery of new hoards or the minting sites themselves.

Kafyr-qala (in Tajikistan)

Kafyr-qala (**fig. 27**) is situated in southern Tajikistan, on the western outskirts of the present-day regional center of Kolkhozabad. The settlement is divided into four parts: citadel, city, suburb, and cemetery. It was a center of the Vakhsh valley and in early medieval time this site included a town of 360 x 360 m size with citadel. The citadel (70 x 70 m), with two walls, is situated in the north-eastern corner of the town. The southern part of the palace contained a Buddhist sanctuary. The walls of the sanctuary were decorated with polychrome murals depicting the Buddha and other Buddhist figures.²⁰⁴ The town existed from the 6th century AD up to the middle of the 8th century AD. The history of town has been divided into three periods. The phase KF-II in Kafyr-qala dates from the mid-6th to the mid-7th century AD. It started in the second half of the Hephthalite-Sasanian era in the history of Tokharistan.

Links of the city with the Hephthalites are demonstrated not only by the discovery of a silver Hephthalite coin,²⁰⁵ but also by the Hephthalite inscription on

²⁰³ Ball/Gardin 1982, 136-137.

²⁰⁴ Litvinsky 1996, 150; Litvinsky/Zamir Safi 1996, 182.

²⁰⁵ Litvinskij/Solovjev 1985, 16.

the wall of a Buddhist sanctuary.²⁰⁶

During the excavation of residential homes in Kafyr-qala in 1957 in a KF-II layer a coin was found, which belongs to a very large group of coins of Nezak type. Based on this coin layer KF-II is dated to the middle of the 7th century AD.²⁰⁷

Kafyr-qala (in Uzbekistan)

During excavations in the site of Kafyr-qala (**fig. 96, 4**) (11.7 km south of modern Samarqand) by the Italian archaeological mission a large number (more than 400) of sealings was found (**fig. 28**). Among them one shows a beardless man, with long face. Cazzoli and Cereti suppose that person on the sealing has facial features: long straight nose and large prominent eyes, close to ‘Hunnic’ type and can be dated around the 5th century AD.²⁰⁸ There is another sealing which may belong to the ‘Hunnic’ type (bust frontal) but it is difficult to determine because of bad preservation.²⁰⁹

Kanga-qala and Kunya -Uaz

The burial mounds Kanga-qala and Kunya-Uaz are situated in left-bank Khorezm on the territory of northern Turkmenistan. Here, around the structures with powerful traces of fire, skulls and parts of skeletons were located. Near the ruins clay colored images of a human face were found (Kanga-qala) and parts of a human figure (life-sized, hand-made by winding cloth soaked on an iron skeleton, discovered in the funeral room of Kunya-Uaz). Also on the territory of Khorezm, in the kurgans of Chash-tepe, the remains of large fires were found.

²⁰⁶ Соловьев 1983, 80-81.

²⁰⁷ Литвинский/Соловьев 1985, 46.

²⁰⁸ Cazzoli/Cereti 2005, 143.

²⁰⁹ Cazzoli/Cereti 2005, 159.

Kanpirak

The construction of the wall of Kanpirak, which protects the Zarafshan valley from the north, may have been by the Hephthalites to protect themselves from the Turks.²¹⁰

Kara-tepe

In 1973, during excavations in Kara-tepe (north-western part of Old Termez in Uzbekistan), (**fig. 29**) one of the early silver coins with Hephthalite stamp was found, which has an over coinage, showing an heart with trefoil inwards.²¹¹ Besides this, graffiti-inscriptions and a graffiti drawing (a bust of a man, dated 4th - 5th centuries AD) related to the Hephthalites were discovered.²¹²

Karnab-Abdurahman Kyr A403

11 km to north-east from Karnab (Navoi region of Uzbekistan) a kurgan with burial was found (**fig. 30**). The grave is catacomb (3,80 x 3,20 m) with two skeletons and groups of bones on the north and east sides and on a podium on the western side. It is interesting that the heads of the skeletons all have deformation. In the grave two silver Sogdian coins were found. They were dated to the 4th - 5th centuries AD.²¹³ In accordance with the finds (coins, ceramics, fragment of rings, iron arrowheads, knife) the grave is dated to the 4th - 5th centuries AD.²¹⁴ Corresponding settlement layers were also found in the tell settlement in the centre of modern Karnab, and it may be remarked that the pottery changes from predominantly wheel thrown to hand made in the 4th or 5th century. Direct imports from Erkurgan may also be mentioned.

²¹⁰ Grenet 2002, 213.

²¹¹ Вайнберг/Раевская 1982, 66-67.

²¹² Ставиский 1969а, 22-23; Литвинский /Соловьев 1985, 144.

²¹³ Atachodžayev 2003, 232-233.

²¹⁴ Alimov et al. 2003, 206-209.

Kashmir Smast

Kashmir Smast (meaning Kashmir cave) is a composite site of several different complexes such as Safari, Khar Darwaza, Bare Ubah, Bakhai (**fig. 31**).²¹⁵ It is situated 85 km northeast of Peshawar in the Babozai mountains in the Mardan valley of northern Pakistan. Several Hindustic temples and one of them inside of the Great cave which is on the top of the mountain range. This site declined in the time of Muslim conquerors of this region AD 750 according to the coins found.

The cave is 200 m long, up to 30 m wide and 60 m high. The main goddess of the temple was Bhima.²¹⁶ The cave consists of three main halls and one side cave at the beginning of the last hall and there are also several religious buildings of the post-Kushan period also below the entrance.²¹⁷

Information about Kashmir Smast is given by a copper plate inscription which was found in the cave 3 m below the surface and has the dimensions 17 x 23 cm and 1 mm thickness.²¹⁸ Due to this copper plate this site was identified as a Shivaite temple. Kashmir Smast (consisting of Bare Uba, Kasai and Bakhai areas) was mentioned in the inscription as Sita Maha Kandara which means “the Great Sita valley”. The great cave is named “Mahā Guha” meaning “the great secret chamber”. From the inscription we know that the name of mountain was “Śrī Miñja”.²¹⁹ H. Falk dates this inscription to the beginning of the 5th century AD.²²⁰

Besides the inscription, in the area of Kashmir Smast various objects were found, such as statuettes, plaques, seals, most of them on Hinduistic themes and dated to early medieval time.²²¹

Besides all this, in Kashmir Smast several Hephthalite coins were also

²¹⁵ Nasim Khan 2006, 5-23.

²¹⁶ Falk 2003, 1; Falk 2008, 137-138.

²¹⁷ Falk 2003, 1.

²¹⁸ Falk 2003, 4.

²¹⁹ Nasim Khan 2001, 221; Nasim Khan 2006, 11.

²²⁰ Falk 2003, 11.

²²¹ Falk 2003, 6-14; Nasim Khan 2006, 45-68.

found.²²² Nasim Khan remarked that on one of the Alchon coins from Kashmir Smast bears an inscription *Śri Varna* on the reverse and is considered, according to him, the earliest indicator for the Hephthalite dynasty in Gandhara. He notes that same name also appears on a Kidara coin from that region. Therefore he suggests that after the Hephthalite occupation of Gandhara a person under the name *Śri Varna*, who was last Kidarite ruler in Gandhara, remained as vassal of the Hephthalites. Coins with the names *Kidara* and *Kirada* belong to the early group of the Kidarite dynasty.²²³

A bronze bowl (**fig. 64**) with depictions, in the opinion of Nasim Khan, of the Hephthalites may be specially noted.²²⁴ Gandhara may have been a region where the cult of Shiva began in the 2nd century AD. Later this cult spread from there to southern India.²²⁵ However, as noted by H. Falk, Xuangzang visited this site not only because of a Hindu temple but because Buddhists were active there.²²⁶

Khairabad-tepe

In Khairabad-tepe, located 3 km north of Zar-tepe, during the cleaning of a floor, a Hephthalite coin dating to the second half of the 5th or the beginning 6th century AD was found. This is an imitation of Peroz's coins.²²⁷

Khair Khaneh

During excavations in Khair Khaneh (in 15 km north of Kabul) two marble Suryas ("the Supreme Light", in Hinduism the chief solar deity) were discovered, which date to the late 4th or first half of the 5th century AD. These Suryas (**fig. 32**) were formerly in the Kabul museum. One Surya is seated with horses and another one is standing with moustache and without his steeds, but he has two of his

²²² Nasim Khan 2006, 162-181.

²²³ Nasim Khan 2006, 221-222.

²²⁴ Nasim Khan 2006, 76-85.

²²⁵ Nasim Khan 2001, 243.

²²⁶ Falk 2008, 141.

²²⁷ Альбаум 1960, 45-47.

attendants – Pingala (on right side) and Dandi (left side).²²⁸

As noted by D. Stadtner: “The garments, boots, jewellery, and the sword scabbard and its strap are depicted in such rich minutiae to suggest that artists modeled their work on contemporary dress and fittings.”²²⁹

Kharkush

In Kharkush (**fig. 33**) (southern foothills of Hissar, up-stream of the Shirkent river in the Tursunzade region of Tajikistan) 32 early medieval burials and 1 late medieval burial were excavated.²³⁰ The individuals were lain to rest in flat graves where the walls of the grave were faced by sandstone and stones and covered by similar stones. The buried lay with their heads towards the west or north-west. On the floors of the graves there were ashes. In one of the graves the fragment of a ceramic vessel full of ashes was found. Pieces of ceramic vessels, copper mirrors, rings, earrings, copper and iron bracelets, glass beads, spearhead and arrows and iron key were discovered.²³¹

In the grave of a young girl lay a key. In her mouth a Kushan-Sasanian coin was found. This tradition comes from the Greeks to pay an obol for Haron. A vessel with ashes again belonged to the inventory. Dated to the 5th century AD other ceramic vessels stood on the floor. Copper and iron rings were also discovered.²³² According to Solovyov these graves can be associated with the local population of Tokharistan and dated to Kushan time.²³³ In his later work Solovyov redated the graves to the 5th century AD, as he also dates a settlement not far from the graves.²³⁴

²²⁸ Stadtner 2000, 37-40; On the dating these figures Bivar writes: “we need not press so early a date as the fourth-fifth century AD for the Khair Khaneh Suryas, yet at the same time should not bring them down so late as the period of the Hindu-Shahs”: Bivar 2005, 323-324.

²²⁹ Stadtner 2000, 41.

²³⁰ Соловьев 1991, 214–218.

²³¹ Соловьев 1990, 283-290.

²³² Соловьев 1988, 363–373.

²³³ Соловьев 1987, 160, 162.

²³⁴ Соловьев 1991, 214–218.

Kurkat

In a rock tomb near the site Shirin (4 kilometers north-west of the village Kurkat in the Sogdiana region of Tajikistan) three vaults have been discovered and excavated. One was in a thick steep eastern slope of the mountain 300-350 m south of the town Shirin. Vault I is in the form of artificially carved caves. The width is 3.7 m and the length is 6.26 m with a height of 2.14 m. 58 human skulls and numerous bones lay in the vault. Most skulls were deformed. Vault II is located 10 meters north of the first and also cut in the rock. The width is 3.52 meters, height is 2.2 m. In contrast to the first it consists of two parts - the entrance chamber and the burial niche. About 172 human skulls lay in this vault. Vault III is located between the two other vaults and has a size of 6, 50x3, 55 m and height of 2.20 m. Vault III is separated from the second by a small stone wall. Burials occur in three layers. The first layer has 74 skulls with circular deformation, in the second layer there were 47 and in the third 61. In addition, there were many randomly located bones. The chaotic location of the bones is explained by robbery of vaults, committed after the termination of use of the hill. 11 small bronze coins were discovered but are not identifiable. The coins were usually put in the deceased individuals mouth, under the head near the mouth, but were also found a little distance from skulls, so the ritual designation of these coins is difficult to determine. A large quantities of small artifacts were also discovered: amulets, beads, pins, bronze mirrors. Among the finds from vault 3 two bracteates of thin gold plate with portrait prints of images of late Kushan-Hephthalite origin are of great interest. 500-600 meters south of these vaults another 14 vaults of a similar nature were discovered. All of them are located in the high mountain cliff of Shirin with the facade facing south-east. The vaults stand alone or in groups of 2.5 or more. Two more were discovered close to Shirin. From all 16 vaults, only 4 showed signs of burials, and the remaining 12 were empty. The area of the chambers ranges from 6 to 11 m² each. The materials from vaults are diverse and from different time. Items of jewelry are earrings, rings, rings, beads, gold bracteates and some others attributed to the 3rd – 7th centuries AD.²³⁵

²³⁵ Мирбабаев 1980, 295, 297, 299-302; Baratov (1997, 95) attributed these graves to the Hephthalites.

Loilagan

The site is situated 35 km to the north from Sherabad in the Surkhandariya region of Uzbekistan. Here 7 graves were excavated, dated to the early Turkic period (6th – 7th centuries AD), but some researchers think that they have parallels (ceramics, arrowheads) with the graves in Priaralye and can be dated earlier.²³⁶

Lyahsh I and Lyahsh II

The burials Lyahsh I and Lyahsh II (upstream of the river Vakhsh, Jergetal region of Tajikistan) of the 5th – 6th centuries AD have surface constructions consisting of square or ring-shaped stone fences located around a large mound.²³⁷ The graves themselves are of pit and podboi type oriented along a line east-west. Skeletons were found lying on their back with heads to the west or north-west. Inventory includes arms, adornments and domestic utensils.²³⁸ The depth of the graves is 1-3 m. The surface of the burial pits was covered by stones. In one grave from 1 to 4 people could be interred. Unfortunately many graves were robbed. In the opinion of T. Kiyatkina by anthropological characteristics the individuals were of Caucasian type.²³⁹ According to Solovyov these graves should be dated to 6th - 7th century AD and are related to the Hephthalites.²⁴⁰

Merv

In the National Museum of Turkmenistan a statuette-plaque of a woman playing a musical instrument (harp) which was found in the excavation of a Buddhist complex in Merv (Gyaur-qala, south-eastern Turkmenistan) is preserved (**fig. 34, 1**).

²³⁶ Болелов 1994, 98; Stark 2008, 274-275.

²³⁷ The placing of a coin in the mouth or hand of the deceased, attested at many sites in both western and eastern Iran, was probably a continuation of the Greek custom of supplying the deceased with “Charon’s obol,” a coin given the dead man to pay his passage across the river Styx in Hades: Соловьев 1987, 162; Grenet, <http://www.iranica.com/newsite/articlenavigation/index.isc>

²³⁸ Якубов 1983, 86-87; Якубов 1983, 56.

²³⁹ Якубов 1990, 24-25.

²⁴⁰ Соловьев 1987, 159, 161-162.

The player, three-quarters to the left, sits cross-legged on a stool under a tree, holding a harp, plucking the strings with the left hand; she wears a garland on the head, large circular ear-rings, a shawl falling down from the upper arms, a long *dhotī* and a necklace over the bare breast. On the reverse is the representation of a tree.²⁴¹ It is very similar in artistic style to examples from Peshawar, and can refer to the Hephthalites. The statuette is dated to the 6th century AD.²⁴²

A ceramic fragment found in the Buddhist temple in Merv bears a similar tamgha as the horse from Dalverzin-tepe, which Ilyasov considered as Hephthalite.²⁴³

The well-known Merv vase (**fig. 34, 2**) (height 46 cm), found in excavation of the Buddhist temple near the broken head of a Buddha in ancient Merv contained a Sanskrit manuscript and is dated to the 5th - 6th centuries AD. It is a wide-necked container with two oval handles, with small knobs on the upper part. The entire body is painted and shows the life of an aristocrat. The scene can be divided into four parts: the first scene of the funeral, the second scene of the hunt, the third scene disease and the last, - a scene of burial of the personage.²⁴⁴

Pendzhikent

On the basis of the excavations in Pendzhikent (**fig. 35; 96, 1**) (near the present-day city under the same name in north-western Tajikistan), one can conclude that each living building in the early medieval town had a plan determined by the desires and capacities of the owner. The housing in design and decor somehow reminds of the rulers palace. The technical level of construction works was in fact similar to the representation of different social strata. In the 5th - 8th centuries AD mud-brick and pakhsa masonry increased and in Tokharistan, Sogd, Ferghana, and Ustrushana there was a shift to mud-bricks with rectangular shape.²⁴⁵ A building with

²⁴¹ Callieri 1996, 391.

²⁴² Callieri 1996, 391, 397

²⁴³ И'yasov 2001, 192, 196.

²⁴⁴ Кошеленко 1966, 92–105; Пугаченкова 1967, 91- 95; Пугаченкова/Ремпель 1982, 114-115.

²⁴⁵ Нильсен 1975, 401.

three floors of the 6th century AD, intended for a permanent garrison which is situated in eastern wall of fortress, is related to the time of the Hephthalites in Pendzhikent.²⁴⁶

The wall paintings of Pendzhikent (**fig. 37; 38**) are considered as depicting realistic characters and are the source of opinions on the ethnic composition of the population. According to A. Belenitsky, representatives of three ethnic groups are shown in these paintings - Sogdians, Turks and Kushan-Hephthalites.²⁴⁷ Пыасов discussing the tamgha of the Pendzhikent ruler's coins of the second half of 7th century, Gamaukyan (or Hamaukyan), notes that these are most likely of Chionite-Hephthalite origin.²⁴⁸ Based on the material from Pendzhikent a ceramic sequence was established covering the 5th century to the first half of the 8th century AD (**fig. 36**). The defined periods are: 5th century; end of 5th century – beginning of 6th century; 6th – beginning of 7th century; middle of 7th century; end of 7th - 8th century; and first quarter of 8th century AD.²⁴⁹

Ranigat

Ranigat is the monastery closest to the main Peshawar Valley crossing point over the Indus river at Ohind. Here a large number of Kidarite and a smaller number of Alchon silver and bronze coins have been found.²⁵⁰

Sadiqadad

The site is situated on the left bank of the Panjshir river opposite Shotorak in Afghanistan. It is a small cemetery which might be associated with the Hephthalites. The excavated graves contained an inventory of simple jewelry and pots.²⁵¹

²⁴⁶ Маршак/Распопова 1989, 423.

²⁴⁷ Брыкина 1982, 127.

²⁴⁸ Пыасов 2003, 141-143; Ильясов 2004а, 54-59.

²⁴⁹ Распопова/Шишкина 1999, 52.

²⁵⁰ Errington/Curtis 2007, 95-96.

²⁵¹ Ball/Gardin 1982, 229.

Saidqala-tepe

The cemetery of Saidqala-tepe (25 km west of Kandahar in south-eastern Afghanistan) is located in place of an abandoned prehistoric village. The cemetery (**fig. 40**) was dated to the 300-700 AD due to finds from burials (pottery and bronze-and-glass earrings) (**fig. 41**) and determined as Kushano-Sasanian. 36 burials in Trench A were divided into 3 groups according to their dimensions and depth. The grave types consist of three types: simple pit, slit pit and slit pit with ledge. There are also 2 variations of grave structure: 1. clay-capped and 2. mudbrick- and/or stone-capped. The majority of buried individuals (90 %) (**fig. 42**) were oriented to the north with over 85 % facing west. 23 burials were on their right side, 8 were on their back, 2 on their stomach. Only 4 out of all graves had any funerary goods. All were adults (one man and three women). Among artifacts there are a bronze ring with 6 pieces of shell coated with gilded paint, two bronze earrings, cylindrical green-stone and small glass beads, and in the male grave an iron knife blade.²⁵²

Samarqand

The “Weishu” describes that Hephthalites subjugated Samarqand, Khotan, Kashgar, Margiana (Anxi) and another thirty smaller countries in the Western Region.²⁵³ The Hephthalites probably conquered Samarqand (**fig. 43**) in AD 509 because from this time envoys from Samarqand present themselves under the name the Hephthalites.²⁵⁴ Under the rule of the Hephthalites a revival of Samarqand began.²⁵⁵ We may note that the residence of the Hephthalite bishop would be in Samarqand, where later there was also a Mitropolit.²⁵⁶

²⁵² Shaffer/Hoffman 1976, 133-152; Grenet attributes this cemetery to the Hephthalites: <http://www.iranica.com/newsite/articlenavigation/index.isc>

²⁵³ Kuwayama 1989, 114-115; Kuwayama 2002, 127.

²⁵⁴ Маршак 1971, 65. Grenet 2002, 211.

²⁵⁵ Тереножкин 1950, 161.

²⁵⁶ Негматов 1968, 30.

Shahji-ki Dheri

In 1911 during excavations by the Archaeological Department of India at Shahji-ki Dheri, a Buddhist site near Peshawar 16 coins of the Hephthalites (or White Huns) were found. Among the coins a good specimen of the very rare silver coins of Mihirakula should be noted. The legend in Brahmi reads quite clearly Jayatu Mihirakula. Other specimens of a silver coins exhibit the bust of a king in front of which there is a sun-standard. Over it, in Brahmi, are the word Jayatu and the name of the king which has been read as Balasara, Bagamsara, or Baysara.²⁵⁷

Salt Range

In the Salt Range (south of Taxila between the Jhelum and Indus rivers) an inscription written in Sanskrit with the name of Toramana (“rājā mahārājā toramāna-shā (hi) jaū”) was found. G. Bühler supposes that it, may be connected with a ruler of the Hephthalites.²⁵⁸

Shor-tepe

Kabanov investigated a number of monuments in the Kashkadarya valley and, judging from the ceramics found, attributed the settlement of Shor-tepe (3 km east of Karshi) to the Kidarites. The pottery from the settlement is mostly hand made rough material, characterized by vessels with zoomorphic handles in the shape of rams. This, according to Kabanov, places Shor-tepe close to monuments of the Syrdarya basin (Kaunchi-tepe and monuments along the Tashkent canal), which are ascribed to nomads. Following the retreat of most of the Kidarites with their ruler Kunkhas in AD 468, some groups may have stayed in Central Asia and accepted the Hephthalite dominance. The material from the upper layers of Shor-tepe may belong to these Kidarites.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ Whitehead 1913, 481- 482.

²⁵⁸ Bühler 1892 (Reprint New Delhi, 1971), 238-242.

²⁵⁹ Кабанов 1963, 226-229.

Also at Shor-tepe in the layer full of Nakhsheb coins (5th – 6th centuries AD) a terracotta image of a crowned person was found in two copies. According to Kabanov, it can not be the ruler of oasis, since his image on coins is without the crown. It is therefore possible that the terracotta depicted a supreme Hephthalite ruler or one of the Kidarites.²⁶⁰

Shurob-Kurgan

Shurob-Kurgan is situated on the fringe of an ancient terrace of the Amudarya, adjoining Kampyr-tepe to the west. In 1982 an early medieval building (5th – middle of 8th century AD) was excavated. During the excavations two Hephthalite coins were found, imitations of Peroz's coins (in Göbl's classification, Em. 287). In this region such coins circulated in the 5th – 7th centuries AD.²⁶¹

Swat

A bowl (**fig. 47**) kept in the British Museum was found in Swat at the beginning of the 20th century. It shows, in the central medallion, a man in profile, surrounded by four hunters, of whom the one to the left is clearly the man in the medallion.²⁶² The bowl is dated to the 460's or 470's, between the first Hephthalite conquests in Gandhara and the last embassy sent to China by the Indian Kidarites.²⁶³

Taxila

In the Buddhist sites of Taxila a total of 32 silver coins of the Alchons was found.²⁶⁴ During the excavations in Dharmarajika monastery a group of human skeletons were also found. One of these skeletons might belong to a Hephthalite.

²⁶⁰ Кабанов 1961, 144.

²⁶¹ Болелов 2001, 70-71.

²⁶² Grenet 2002, 211.

²⁶³ Grenet 2002, 212.

²⁶⁴ Errington/Curtis 2007, 98, 133.

J. Marshall thinks that skull is distinctively brachycephalic with a high cranial vault, short, squarish face and long prominent nose, outstanding features of the Hephthalite rulers on their coins.²⁶⁵

Tepe-i Marenjan

Important evidence for the chronological and local setting of coinage is provided by a hoard from Tepe-i Marenjan (near Kabul), which contained eleven scyphate dinars of Kidara as well as a number of Sasanian drachms, the latest of which were those of Shapur III (383-388). The hoard thus establishes that the beginning of the Kidarite rule was in the AD 380's. However, Grenet has questioned the reading of the Bactrian legend on the golden scyphate dinars from the hoard. He attributes the coins to Warahran Kushanshah, one of the last Kushano-Sasanian rulers.²⁶⁶

Termez "Kurgan" burials

Solovyov supposes that 26 graves found in the so-called Termez "Kurgan" in the north-eastern part of Old Termez, dating from the 5th - 6th centuries AD belong to the Hephthalites.²⁶⁷ These graves were found in chambers of Kushan time. One was buried in a khum (storage jar), the others in pits or lying on mats. The orientations of the individuals varied. S. Mustafakulov, based on the analysis of the skulls, notes that among the people of Old Termez at this time front temporal-occipital deformation completely disappears, increasing the proportion of people practicing circular deformation, which is considered to be one of the ethnic attributes of the Hephthalites.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ Marshall 1960, 122-123.

²⁶⁶ Grenet 2002, 206-207.

²⁶⁷ Соловьев 1987, 161; Соловьев 1997, 146-148.

²⁶⁸ Мустафакулов 2002, 303-304; According to Mustafakulov there were 13 male, 10 female and 3 children's skulls. Overall, 26 of the individuals were resting on their back in stretched position and were covered by mud bricks. There are also scattered lower jaws, two males, five female and four children's. The medium age is given as: men -38.1 years, women - 38 years: Мустафакулов 2002, 303-304.

Tope Kelan

The relic deposit of Tope Kelan, the principal Buddhist stupa at Hadda (**fig. 50**) near Jelalabad excavated by Ch. Masson, provides a mid or late 5th century chronological context for the Kidarites and the Alchons. It contained over two hundred coins, mostly Sasanian issues. Besides, 14 Alchon silver drachms of 6 different types were also discovered, all bearing the cranially deformed portraits of rulers.²⁶⁹

Uruzgan

In Uruzgan (north-west from Kandahar) a rock inscription was found which refers to the Hephthalites.²⁷⁰ A. Bivar suggests that in the inscriptions from Uruzgan there is the name of Mihira(kula) as ruler of Zabul and that the Uruzgan valley was a major part of the kingdom of Zabul, and would be the ideal place to find the supreme site of the Hephthalite nomads.²⁷¹

Vakhan

According to Bernshtam the 5th century AD red and rough ceramics in Vakhan as well as gray pottery in Ferghana, can be attributed to the “Hephthalite” pottery type.²⁷²

Vakhsh valley

An anthropomorphous stick from a ceramic container was found in the Vakhsh valley. It shows a male head with crown, on which there are the symbols of sun and moon. This stick may be considered as a Hephthalite product, since the Hephthalite king had on his crown the allegory of the moon and sun. Afterwards modeled figures disappear in pottery and pressed ornaments appear, changing the appearance. The fixed assets of decor become direct concentric lines, matched with

²⁶⁹ Errington/Curtis 2007, 93.

²⁷⁰ Humbach 1967, 26; Habibi 1974, 323; Mac Dowall 1978, 244.

²⁷¹ Bivar 1954, 116-117.

²⁷² Бернштам 1949, 57-58; Бернштам 1998, 54.

wavy lines. It was applied by painting engobe.²⁷³

Yakke-Parsan

In the Khorezmian oasis there is another monument at Yakke-Parsan (5th century AD) (**fig. 51**) representing a typical castle of that period. Yakke-Parsan's courtyard center is surrounded by three rows of walls, and located in a square (24 x 24 m) rises the stilobat of the castle on a mud platform. The entrance was protected by a wide moat filled with water, with spillover through the bridge of a tower. In the castle and the first solid wall (about 20 meters from the tower) lay the rooms of the owners. Near the second wall, 10 meters from the first, the homes of servants were placed, while inside the third wall, 40-45 meters from the second, the economic zone was identified. The facades of the castle were decorated by semi-pillars, so-called gofr.²⁷⁴

Zang-tepe

Zang-tepe (located 30 kilometers north of Termez) (**fig. 52, 1**) was a castle and was constructed at the end of the 5th century AD.²⁷⁵ In this site an inscribed vessel was discovered (**fig. 52, 2**). There are six (incomplete) lines which relate to the Hephthalites.²⁷⁶

Zar-tepe

Zar-tepe is situated 4 km to south from Angor and 26 km north-west from Termez. Ceramic utensils from Zar-tepe, dated to the 5th - 6th centuries AD, have stamped ornaments and engobe remains, but on pottery without engobe there are comb ornaments. Some vessels are equipped with a flush spout, depicting the head of animals such as deer with elongated face. For that time are related small remnants of some constructions from mud-brick with sizes of 50 x 30 x 10 cm.²⁷⁷

²⁷³ Соловьев 1997, 45.

²⁷⁴ Мамедов/Мурадов 1998, 16.

²⁷⁵ Альбаум 1963, 77.

²⁷⁶ Литвинский /Соловьев 1985, 144.

²⁷⁷ Альбаум 1960, 19.

3.2. Other archaeological material

The original art of Central Asia in the Hephthalite time begins at the end of eastern Antiquity and gives the premises for early medieval art.²⁷⁸ Albaum notes that, regarding the material culture of the time, it should also be considered not as the Hephthalite but as local culture, subdued by the Hephthalites population, which by the 5th century AD was already established and had its long history.²⁷⁹ Belenitsky supposes that the 5th – 6th centuries AD were related to the so-called Hephthalite stage in the art of Central Asia. This assumption is based on coins, the bowls from Chilek, and the wall paintings of Pendzhikent.²⁸⁰

Seizing large areas, the Hephthalites met with various kinds of art and of course, to some extent, acted as intermediary in the transfer of artistic traditions of one nation to another. It is here, in the opinion of Albaum, that the similarity of some of the figures in paintings from Balalyk-tepe and those from Bamiyan must be sought, which then was part of the Hephthalite state. Such similarities are exemplified by the right side triangular lapel, hair accessories and some ornamental motifs.²⁸¹

In Tokharistan and Sogd “the Hephthalite” school of art appeared, taking elements of Shivaism and local public cults. The Hephthalite portraits, alongside with Iranian-Sasanian elements, had original contents. “Enormous peculiarity of the persons - notes Rempel, - is expressed in the cloaks corresponding to their position and rank. The etiquette and moral of this time excluded in portrait the spiritual sufferings of personality”.²⁸²

The study of coin circulation in Merv has shown that the Sasanians lost control of that province between the defeat of Peroz and the last years of Kavad. The

²⁷⁸ Пугаченкова/Ремпель 1982, 223.

²⁷⁹ Альбаум 1960, 209.

²⁸⁰ Беленицкий 1971, 36-37.

²⁸¹ Альбаум 1960, 214.

²⁸² Ремпель 1986, 92-93.

archaeological evidence from the two Buddhist stupas at Merv, recently re-examined by Callieri, makes it probable that they were first built during that period. Manuscripts found in Merv belong to the Sarvastivada school, which at that time flourished in Kashmir. In the 6th century Sogd was a complete re-working of the local religious iconography according to Hindu models. It can be observed in Pendzhikent, where the image of Anahita in the temple chapel was replaced at that time by a new one with two additional arms. The new iconographic style of Vaishnavana standing on the Earth goddess, probably elaborated in 6th century Kashmir, quickly reached the northern limits of the Hephthalite empire, being found both in Khotan (at the Rawak monastery) and in Sogd, where he fulfilled the role of guardian of the Zoroastrian hell. However, Kuwayama supposes that the Indian influence in Hephthalite time is attributable less to imperial unity than to a diaspora from over-exploited Gandhara.²⁸³

Seals and sealings

Examining the collection of seals from the Peshawar and the British Museums, Callieri notes that some of the images are very close to the Hephthalites (**fig. 53, 1-4**). According to his study 11 stamps can relate to the Hephthalites, of which 8 represent a bust man with beard and moustache, two busts of a woman with diadem and one of a couple. In the images the body is turned into three-quarters (all have head in full and upper body in three-quarters view). All seals have inscriptions. Most of them are in the Brahmi (Kumara, Rostama, Devada, Jivila, Vaśvasaka, Dharmadāsa, Patmaśrī), one is printed and there are inscriptions in Bactrian and Brahmi (Sāni - Brāhmī, Šanēo - Bactrian), two in Bactrian (Mozdako, Tiroado). The stamp depicting a pair does not contain any inscriptions. The seals are made of garnet, lapis lazuli and rock crystal and are dated to the 5th–7th centuries AD.²⁸⁴ Callieri writes: “The prevalence of Brāhmī inscriptions, if not statistically completely fortuitous, perhaps indicates a North Indian provenance, and Indian names in the

²⁸³ Grenet 2002, 212-213.

²⁸⁴ Callieri 1999, 282-284.

inscriptions, if they refer to Hūna rather than local individuals, provide an interesting indication of cultural assimilation”.²⁸⁵

Callieri also notes a seal of Khingila (**fig. 53, 1**) from the private collection of Mr. A. Saeedi (London). The garnet cabochon gem has oval shape with convex engraved surface, is 22.8 mm high, 19.4 mm wide, 5.9 mm thick. A Bactrian inscription (**fig. 54**) runs round the circumference of the seal, attributing the seal to a sovereign by the name of Khingila. It is dated to the first half of the 5th century AD. The Khingila in this seal is first known person to bear the name or title Khingila.²⁸⁶ The legend on the sealing was read by N. Sims-Williams as *eškiggilo (r) ōkano xoēo* – Eškingil rōkān xudēw (lord). The full reading was possibly “Eshkingil, lord of (the people) such-and-such” or “Eshkingil, son of so-and-so, the lord”.²⁸⁷

A garnet seal in the Peshawar museum is similar, where a Bactrian inscription *Bando* is associated with a Hephthalite tamgha; and 3 more seals in the British museum include two garnet seals showing a male bust, and another from the collection of A. Cunningham may be added, showing the bust of a female personage (deity or queen) to whom a genuflecting devotee is offering a flower. Lastly an amethyst seal in the same museum with the frontal busts of crowned male and female couple also belongs to this group. There are also a number of other seals, which seem to be closely linked with this class:

1. A cornelian in the British museum, showing two facing busts with an inscription written in Ancient Sogdian of the period AD 300-350 and which was the seal of Indamīč, Queen of Začanta;
2. A garnet displaying a male bust in the British museum, acquired by M. Stein in Xinjiang;
3. An amethyst in the Hermitage showing the bust of a crowned male figure with a Bactrian inscription;
4. A seal in the Kevorkian Foundation, New York with a similar crowned bust with Bactrian inscription;

²⁸⁵ Callieri 1999, 285.

²⁸⁶ Callieri 2002, 121, 131.

²⁸⁷ Sims-Williams 2002, 143-144; The name Eshkingil is explained by Vaissière that *Eš* - can be the Turkic prefix and means “comrade, companion of” and *kenglu* has a link to the name of the sacred sword worshipped by the Xiongnu, compared with Turkish *qijjiraq* “double-blade knife”. So Eškingil is a Hunnic name or title – “companion of the sword”: Vaissière 2003, 129.

5. A chalcedony in the British museum, also showing a crowned male bust with Bactrian inscription;
6. A seal in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris, with a crowned bust of a (Kidarite?) prince or princess;
7. A seal in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, showing a diademed male bust with Bactrian inscription;
8. An impression with a diademed frontal bust and Bactrian (?) inscription from the collection of Prof. R. Frye.

These entire busts are almost frontal, and although they belong to different iconographic types, they all display the same characteristic treatment of the facial features with long straight noses and large prominent eyes with lids in reliefs, the shoulders and chest have soft rounded outlines.²⁸⁸

Beside the Sasanian influence, an important chronological clue is provided by archaeology: three impressions of a single seal with a frontal bust, which, judging from the published illustrations presumably belongs to the same Class V (according to Callieri, the seals representing “Hunnish” busts) as the seals of Bando and of Khingila, are found on a ceramic jar from Shahr-e Zahak, belonging to a ceramic ware which has been dated to the 5th century. The iconographic affinity is close with some types of Kidarite coins.²⁸⁹

Another new samples which can be added to Class V are three clay sealings from collection of Aman ur Rahman which was found in the territory of the Kashmir Smast range. One of the sealing (30 mm thick and 60 mm in diameter) has depiction of bust of ruler with crown who is turned in three-quarter to left. The face has not beard and moustache. There are earring with attached pearl in right ear (may be in left ear also because one side is shown) and pearl necklace on neck. The sealing has also Bactrian inscription: “...Lord Ularg, the king of the Huns, the great Kushan-shah, the Samarkandian, of the Afrigan (?) family” and it is related to the Kidarites. Other two sealings have the same portrait and inscription.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Callieri 2002, 122-123; Seal with name of Toramana was found in Kaushimbi: Melzer 2006, 260; In Göbl’s catalogue gems from G 18 to G 65 in accordance with its characteristics are related to “Hunnisch” group: Göbl 1967-I, 232-255.

²⁸⁹ Callieri 2002, 122-123.

²⁹⁰ Aman ur Rahman et al. 2006, 125-131.

As Lerner has remarked, the Rosen Collection (New York) has a stamp (**fig. 53, 5**) belonging to the 5th centuries AD, showing a profile bust of a male with a moustache and curly hair. Above the bust there is an ornamental spray of leaves. He also has a torque or garment secured at the neck by ribbons. On the right side there is a Bactrian inscription *alxono*. So the owner could have belonged to the Hephthalites, specifically to the group described as Alxon and Khingila.²⁹¹

During excavations in the site Kafir-qala (near Samarqand) more than 400 sealings were recovered (**fig. 28**). Among them one shows a beardless man, with long face, which “due to the particular rendering of the facial features in an almost frontal view, with long straight nose and large prominent eyes, the seal resembles those which represent ‘Hunnic’ busts and can be dated around the 5th century AD”.²⁹²

In 2004 three fire clay ‘Huna’ bullae were found in Pakistan and are now in a private collection. Two of them show the typical male bust representing a hunnic nobleman, while the third depicts a sun wheel (chakra). The inscriptions in Brahmi tells us the name of the owners of seals:

1. *śri bha-gumdih* (Lord Bhagundi) - dated to the 5th – early 6th century AD. Dimensions: 49 x 38, th. 20 mm. Bust of a man facing right, plain hairstyle, combed outwards from the crown with an encircling braid of hair, moustache, recognisable remains of an earring, round raised tunic neckline. Below the bust the remains of an ornamental spray of leaves or pair of wings. As noted by Alram, the ornamental spray of leaves or pair of wings remains a characteristic component of ‘Huna’ coin typology in northwest India and was used by Toramana, Mihirakula and Nezak kings in the area of Gazni and Kabul.
2. *śri sudāsa* (Lord Sudāsa) – dated to the middle of 5th century / first half of the 6th century. Dimensions: 24 x 18, th. 21 mm. Bust of a man, plain, short hairstyle combed outwards from crown, moustache, earrings. Tunic with low, circular neckline, draped in linear folds. According to Alram this type of portrait is close to images on coins of Sahi Javukha/Jaukha, dated to the time

²⁹¹ Lerner 1999, 268.

²⁹² Cazzoli/Cereti 2005, 143.

of Khingila (430/440-490).

3. *jihah* (Jina) dated to the end of the 5th/6th century. Dimensions: 21 x 23, th.16 mm. Sun wheel with eleven curving spokes, surrounded by 15 spheres. On its own the name would be quite unusual, possible it was the abbreviation for the formula *jitam bhagavata*. The sun wheel is first attested on drachmas of Khingila. It was found also on copper coins of Toramana. Narana-Narendra (ca. 540 – ca. 580), one of the last ‘Huna’ kings in India, also used this symbol on the reverse of his copper coins.²⁹³

In Jumalyk-tepe clay reliefs and carved trees were also discovered. A scenes of the people, holding a flower or bouquet in the bent hand are also interesting. They are found on Gandhara reliefs and exactly such scenes are often met on carved gem-seals connected to the Hephthalites.²⁹⁴

In the Eastern Department of the State Hermitage a gem-seal (**fig. 53, 6**) is preserved. It is oval and made from almandine, with a flat bottom and a convex top. At the top, there is the bust of a man, the Bactrian inscription and a peculiar tribal mark – a tamgha (according to Göbl tamgha S 1). At the centre of the stamp is placed a portrait of a middle-aged man. His head is presented in profile, rotated by three-quarters. The face is elongated, beardless with long pendulous mustache, forked at the end. The nose is long and straight lines stress the nostrils. On the head there is a small cap with a sheaf of three feathers. From left to right are italic words read as *Aspurabah*, probably the name of the owner of the stamp. The tamgha placed behind the man’s head represents, according to Stavisky, “the Hephthalite character”.²⁹⁵ However, Stavisky supposes this seal is related to the Chionites. not to the Hephthalites, because the mark is not found at all on Hephthalite coins, but only on those where we find the word “Hion”, the self-name of the Chionites, which dates to the 4th century AD.²⁹⁶ Marshak thought that the date should be somewhat later and

²⁹³ Alram 2003, 177-182.

²⁹⁴ Ставиский 1969 b, 149; Callieri, 1997.

²⁹⁵ Ставиский 1961, 55; In his later work Stavisky (1974, 160-162) gives an explanation for *Aspurabah* (or new reading *Asparobido*) as a chief of the cavalry.

²⁹⁶ Ставиский 1961, 56.

according to him the sign is found on the late coins as well.²⁹⁷

The gem from Hermitage has an analogy with lapis lazuli gem with Bactrian inscription *Yozino* from E.T. Newell's collection. Göbl dates it the middle of the 5th century AD.²⁹⁸

A lapis lazuli gem was found near the Bezymyannyi (Nameless) city-site in Kobadian. On the lapis a sign had been engraved, consisting of a crescent moon resting on a base, which the authors compare with a symbol found on a copper seal from the Kurkat vault. The sign on the Kobadian gem look likes from coin issues 287, 287A, 288 and 289, which Göbl links with the Hephthalites.²⁹⁹

Wall paintings

We know some wall paintings from the early medieval period, which in the opinion of Gulyamov reached their highest degree of development in the 6th – 8th centuries AD as far as mural size, wealth of scenes, realistic and rich colors of images are concerned.³⁰⁰

Such paintings were discovered in Dilberjin (near Balkh), Balalyk-tepe (**fig. 55**), Adzhina-tepe (a Buddhist monastery of the 7th century AD, 12.5 kilometers east of Kurgan-Tube) (**fig. 46**), Kafyr-qala (Kurgan-Tube district in Tajikistan), Kalai Kafirnigan (80 km to the south-west of Dushanbe) (**fig. 39**), Kalai Shodmon and several others. The subjects of the images are essentially religious in nature, excluding the image of Balalyk-tepe, where there are secular topics.

Art historians have identified a number of painter's schools for the period. The Tokharistan school was represented by Balalyk-tepe, Adzhina-tepe, Kafyr-qala; the northern Tokharistan school in the Buddhist Temples of Kuva and in Semirechye; the School of the "western edge" with monuments in Sogd, Khorezm,

²⁹⁷ Маршак 1969, 79; Göbl (1967-I, 235-236) dates this gem first half of 5th century AD.

²⁹⁸ Göbl 1967-I, 237.

²⁹⁹ Пугасов 2003, 143.

³⁰⁰ Альбаум 1975, 3.

castles in Varakhsha, Afrasiab (Samarqand) (**fig. 44**), the palace Ihshids in Kalai Kakhkakh I (Ustrushana), as well as paintings on ossuaria from Tok-qala.³⁰¹

As Albaum noted, the paintings of Balalyk-tepe belong to the 6th century AD and portray a scene of feasting.³⁰² Solovyov, after analysis of ceramics from the site, thinks that Balalyk-tepe's paintings should be dated to the end of the 6th – first half of the 7th century AD.³⁰³ In another his studies Solovyov dates the paintings from Balalyk-tepe to the middle or the second half of the 7th century AD.³⁰⁴ Marshak dates them broadly to the 5th - 7th century AD and the paintings of Kalai Kafirnigan the end of the 7th century AD.³⁰⁵

In another study Albaum added the feast to a wedding scene. This is reflected on the south wall, where a man gives a woman a cup with drink, the woman put her right hand to her chest. These figures represent the pair. The complete scenes of Balalyk-tepe produce a wedding scene of feasting.³⁰⁶ This point of view was supported by Solovyov.³⁰⁷ The paintings of Afrasiab are from the end of the 7th century - the first quarter of the 8th century AD and show the arrival in the palace of embassies of various countries and their reception by the governor of Samarqand.³⁰⁸

The paintings of Bamiyan and most early paintings of Pendzhikent date from the 5th – 6th centuries AD.³⁰⁹ Penetrations of the Indian culture and its reflection in the paintings of Varakhsha and Pendzhikent, become specifically observable in this period, which is also characterized by the Hephthalites.³¹⁰ We may presume that the wall paintings of Pendzhikent, due to their realistic character, can be used as source for the ethnic composition of the population (**fig. 37; 38**). Belenitsky, in these

³⁰¹ Пугаченкова 1982, 108.

³⁰² Альбаум 1960, 174, 196.

³⁰³ Соловьев 1997, 120.

³⁰⁴ Соловьев 2004, 91.

³⁰⁵ Маршак 1979, 35

³⁰⁶ Альбаум 1975, 95.

³⁰⁷ Соловьев 2006, 153.

³⁰⁸ Альбаум 1975, 19; Stavisky and Yatsenko (2002, 313) date the paintings of Afrasiab to the 7th century AD.

³⁰⁹ Альбаум 1975, 93.

³¹⁰ Толстов 1964, 140.

paintings, sees depictions of representatives of three ethnic groups - Sogdian, Turkic and Kushan-Hephthalite.³¹¹

It is possible that the Sogdian aristocratic culture of that time preserved some memory of the glorious days of Khingila, the first Hephthalite conqueror of India. The profile of Rustam (**fig. 38**), shown on several cycles of paintings at Pendzhikent, is completely distinct from the others in Sogdian art and look likes the Hephthalite prototypes. The persons feature narrow skulls, V-shaped eyebrows, a hooked nose and heavy jaw, and thus has close identity with some portraits of Khingila on coins.³¹²

Several murals at Dilberjin date from the 5th to the 7th century. A comparison between some of the Dilberjin paintings and those at Kyzyl (“the cave of the 16 swordsmen” and “the cave with picture of Maya”) demonstrates the link between them.³¹³

A bust of a man (in a graffiti drawing) on one of the walls of the Buddhistic monument of Kara-tepe is dated to the 4th - 5th centuries AD and, in the opinion of researchers, looks like scenes, which are on the Hephthalite gems and coins.³¹⁴

According to Kageyama in a painting of ambassadors attributed to the fourth Liang emperor Xiao Yi, an ambassador of the Hephthalite kingdom is represented. But at same time Kageyama supposes that the Hephthalite ambassador is not necessarily of Hephthalite origin, because nomadic tribes often sent foreigners, like Sogdians, as their emissaries.³¹⁵

In the opinion of Bivar the painting of the former smaller Buddha (37 m) from Bamiyan illustrated a conference between Shapur II (AD 309-379), together with his prince-governor of the Kushan province Warahran I Kushanshah, and a Chionite king (probably predecessor of Grumbat) with whom they had been engaged in internecine warfare. Bivar writes: “At such a meeting, attested by Ammianus, an

³¹¹ Брыкина 1982, 127.

³¹² Grenet 2002, 218-219.

³¹³ Litvinsky 1996, 151.

³¹⁴ Ставиский 1969а, 22-23.

³¹⁵ Kageyama 2007, 14, 16.

armistice was made between the Persians and the Chionite Huns on the understanding that they should make peace, cease mutual hostilities, and turn their combined forces against the Romans. Such a conference could well have been held at the Bamiyan monastery, situated probably near the *de facto* border at the time, and in a community naturally predisposed to favour a peaceful settlement. This event I am inclined to place around AD 358, or at any rate not long before the siege of Amida in AD 361. A similar date would thus be ascribed to the paintings. Their Sasanianizing style would be in accordance with such a conclusion".³¹⁶

Towards the north-east, and north-west corners of the niche of the former greater, 53 m Buddha (**fig. 56, 1**), there are relatively well-preserved areas of paintings. These have more Gupta style than Sasanian and are later than those of the smaller Buddha. The paintings show human figures, some of them wearing brown monastic robes, in canonical terms typical of a Buddha, seated within large coloured haloes. Others, adorned with jewelry, have torsos bare, and may be supporters of the community, conceived as Bodhisattvas. In the opinion of Bivar some figures of supporters can be real people, for example, one of these figure is partly damaged, wearing a dress with roundel decoration, a long necklace of pearls, and a regal crown of gold with three crescents, each surmounted by a central bud, above a diadem decorated with golden pellets. The canonical crowns of the Hephthalite kings are less well known than those of their Sasanian predecessors, but some indication of their identities can be derived by a comparison with the coins.³¹⁷ Bivar gives a hypothesis that the mural paintings of the 53 m Buddha originate from the reign of the Hephthalite king Khingila, and that he is depicted there.³¹⁸

Images on the funeral couches and sarcophaguses from China

Further information about the Hephthalites can be gathered from the reliefs of funerary monuments of Central Asians, mostly Sogdians, which were found in

³¹⁶ Bivar 2005, 320.

³¹⁷ Bivar 2005, 320; According to Pugachenkova (1963, 75-76) to the Hephthalites can be related image of donator in the niche of the greater Buddha. The donator is depicted on knees, in a caftan, with a dagger on belt and holding a dish with donations above the head. His profile looks like to the profile of the Hephthalite kings on coins.

³¹⁸ Bivar 2005, 324.

northern China.

The Northern Ch'i gate shrine founded near Anyang in Henan province was distributed in various museums (in Washington, Boston, Paris and Cologne) which have individual parts of this monument and dated to the 6th century AD. The Anyang reliefs are carved in dark gray limestone. According to Scaglia it was made under the influence of Central Asia, presumably of the Hephthalites, who were in power in that period.³¹⁹

A stone funerary couch which consists eleven separate white marble panels and two gateposts is preserved in the Miho Museum in Shiga, Japan (**fig. 57**). The range of imaginary depicted on these stones shows life of the Sogdians: a marriage feast with dancers and musicians, hunts and processions, and a Zoroastrian ritual, all populated by Central Asian.³²⁰

It should be noted also another stone funeral monuments of the Sogdians which were found during excavations in North-Western China. A white marble sarcophagus was found near Taiyuan (Shanxi province) in 1999. Another find was made in the northern suburbs of Xi'an, formerly Chang'an, capital of the Northern Zhou dynasty (557-581) in Shaanxi (2,2 km west from An Qie's couch found earlier in 2000) in 2003 where a tomb was excavated with the dark limestone sarcophagus, covered with gilded and painted reliefs. An interesting detail is that the sarcophagus bore a slate with bilingual Sino-Sogdian inscription. The text was an epitaph dedicated to the buried person – Shi Jun (AD 493-579).³²¹ It is noted that all these tombs (**fig. 58**) contain Sogdian-style stone funeral items with relief carvings, paintings, and gildings.³²²

The Taiyuan sarcophagus contained the remains of Yu Hong and his wife. Yu Hong died in AD 593 at the age of fifty-eight. He served as a *sabao*, an official Chinese title given to the administrators of foreign communities, inherited from

³¹⁹ Scaglia 1958, 9-28.

³²⁰ Juliano 2006, 296.

³²¹ Fuxi 2005, 47, 53-54.

³²² Junkai 2005, 34.

Sogdian *s'rtpt'w* (*sartpāw*) meaning “caravan leader”³²³ during the Northern Zhou, Northern Qi and Sui dynasties. Yu Hong had served also as an ambassador to Persia and the Tuyuhun Kingdom in Qinghai.³²⁴ His tomb contained a funerary bed in the shape of a Chinese house, adorned by fifty-three carved panels of marble, originally painted and gilded. From the funerary epitaphs we know that he became *sabao* in AD 580. On the panels Yu Hong is depicted hunting with nomads on horses, also on an Indian elephant or banqueting with his wife. Zoroastrian symbols are clearly displayed: two priests half-bird, half-human wearing the traditional *padam* and Mithra and his sacrificial horse facing each other on each side of the entry.

The second sarcophagus belongs to a Sogdian, Shi Jun, (**fig. 59; 60**) and his wife. According to an epitaph carved in Chinese and Sogdian, Shi Jun, was buried in AD 580 and served as a *sabao* of the Liangzhou Prefecture (the modern-day area of Wuwei to Pingliang) in Gansu during the Northern Zhou dynasty. The stone reliefs were decorated with color paintings. The four walls of the outer coffin are constructed of 12 pieces of stone and have reliefs with themes of four-armed protector gods, Zoroastrian gods, hunts, banquets, travel scenes, caravans, ceremonies, and the ascension to the heavens.³²⁵

His genuine name, given in the Sogdian version, was Wirkak. He passed away at the age 86 in the year AD 579 and was married to Kang. Shi and Kang were names indicating a Central Asian origin, since these Chinese characters imply that their owner's family originated, respectively, from Kesh and from Samarqand. As an influent member of the foreign aristocracy, he was promoted *sabao* by the Northern Zhou ruler.³²⁶ These panels form a continuous narrative pertaining to Shi Jun's life and social ascent, and indicate that his travels took place during the last decades of Hephthalite rule in Central Asia.³²⁷ The walls of the sarcophagus are decorated with painted and gilded reliefs depicting scenes of banquets, hunting, travels, caravans, as

³²³ Grenet et al. 2004, 274; According to S. Fuxi (2005, 52) title *sabao* also referred to Sogdian religious leader.

³²⁴ Juliano 2006, 295.

³²⁵ Junkai 2005, 21-22.

³²⁶ Grenet et al. 2004, 274.

³²⁷ Grenet/Riboud 2003, 134.

well as various deities, all of which show close contact with the Central Asian world. These images have similarities with the paintings of Afrasiab and Pendzhikent.³²⁸ On the lintel above the door of the southern side of the sarcophagus, two inscriptions were written, one in Sogdian and the other in Chinese.

The Xi'an funerary couch, dated by its epitaph to AD 579 (time of the Northern Zhou dynasty), belonged to An Qie (**fig. 62**), a Sogdian aristocrat, who came from the city Guzang (present-day Wuwei in Gansu) and settled in Xi'an, serving also as a *sabao*.³²⁹

These funeral monuments are very interesting for us. According to some opinions, on Yu Hong's sarcophagus there is a figure on an elephant, who may be a Hephthalite, as well as two figures on an elephant on the Miho Museum's couch.³³⁰ It is supposed that one of the figures on the right scene where Shi Jun with his caravan visits a king seated in a domed tent (or yurt) of the northern wall is Hephthalite ruler.³³¹

The ruler in the yurt has a winged crown instead of long hair, which shows a Turkic origin as image of sitting ruler with long hair down his back in the yurt on the funerary couches of An Qie and in the Miho Museum. In the same time he is not a Sasanian king, because he should not be represented in the nomad's yurt. Yoshida identifies the figure as a ruler of the nomadic Hephthalites, who had close contacts with the Sogdians.³³² This crown type is close to the late crown of Peroz with two wings and a central astral element. It is known that Peroz's crown served as a model for the winged crown of the Hephthalite kings.³³³

After Peroz, the winged crown was not used for over 100 years by any Sasanian kings until Khusrow II in AD 590, about ten years after Shi Jun's burial. Kageyama supposes that the triple-crescent crown, together with the winged crown,

³²⁸ Аржанцева/Иневаткина 2005, 120.

³²⁹ Juliano 2006, 295.

³³⁰ Kageyama 2007, 14.

³³¹ Grenet/Riboud 2003, 136-138; Junkai 2005, 29-30.

³³² Yoshida 2005, 63.

³³³ Kageyama 2007, 12.

was introduced into Sogd in the Hephthalite period, and it continued to be used until the 8th century AD, though less frequently than the winged crown. So, the Hephthalite influence is responsible for the prevalence of the winged crown and the triple-crescent crown in China.³³⁴

Grenet and Riboud note that both on the Miho and the An Qie couches the Turks dominate the stage and were obviously the people with whom the tomb owners were in closest contact. On one of the An Qie reliefs is suggested the Hephthalites, a person outside the qaghan's yurt. On the Miho reliefs they are presented at least on four panels, but in one case they have clearly submitted to the Turkic qaghan. For example, a Hephthalite ruler is shown hunting, he has royal ribbons but no crown. On another panel a ruler physically similar to the Hephthalites but with an elaborate turban-like headdress rides an elephant - as Marshak suggests, he could be one of the Hephthalite epigones who ruled Gandhara (or Kashmir?) in this period. All this refers clearly to the post-imperial period of the Hephthalites.³³⁵

The theme of the seated aristocratic couple sharing a drink is clearly attested in the 7th century at Balalyk-tepe, in a Northern Tokharistan context still strongly influenced by the Hephthalite culture, while at the same time it disappears from the art of Sogd. There are two couples (**fig. 61**) depicted on the northern wall of the Shi Jun's sarcophagus. On man's head is a winged crown with a solar symbol and the woman's crown wrapped in a large cloak. According to Grenet and Riboud these couples belong to the Hephthalites. This suggestion is supported also by description one of the customs of the Hephthalite land in "Liangshu" that rulers received their guests with their wives. This depiction has an analogy from the image of seated couples on "Stroganov" silver bowl in Hermitage museum (5th century AD).³³⁶

³³⁴ Kageyama 2007, 13-14; Ilyasov (2001, 196) offers the idea that the diffusion of winged crowns in Tokharistan and especially in Sogd is associated not so much with Sasanian influence, as with the Hephthalite expansion.

³³⁵ Grenet/Riboud 2003, 141.

³³⁶ Grenet/Riboud 2003, 134-141; Although Kageyama (2007, 12-13) thinks this person is Shi Jun.

Bowls

Toreutics are mainly represented by bowls, amongst which special interest must be directed to two examples found in Pakistan (in British museum) and Uzbekistan. The bowl from the British museum (**fig. 47**) is semi-spherical with raised scenes on the outer face, showing four riders, hunting wild boars, lions, tiger and wild goats or ibex. On the base of the bowl there is the bust of a beardless man, much reminding those on gem-seals.

In 1961 a bowl was found in the village Chilek (**fig. 14**), 31 kilometers north-north-west from Samarqand. It is dated to the 5th century AD, weighs 1003 g. and has a diameter of 18.5 cm.³³⁷ It is smooth inside and the exterior is richly decorated by beating. The images represent six women, standing under arcades, in between which are also bust images of winged geniuses. On the base of this bowl there is the bust of a beardless men facing left, with an oval cap on his head and a lotus in his hand. Based on the similarity of the images with profiles of the Hephthalite rulers on coins, the cup was defined as the Hephthalite.³³⁸ The portrait on the Chilek bowl may defined as of a sovereign, as the cone with the rounded-top hairstyle and the ribbons behind are only attributes in the costume of rulers for a number of coins. This portrait may reflect the Hephthalite ideal of beauty.³³⁹ The Hephthalites, under the influence of the Sasanian official portrait style, created their own iconography, which had according to coins, stamps and vessels, well established and standardized in nature. In the opinion of Marshak and Krikis, the Chilek bowl's layout can be understood as a scene of the king's feast.³⁴⁰

The Chilek silver bowl has an analogy in the silver bowl from the British Museum, which was found at the beginning of the 20th century in Swat (Pakistan). It shows, in the central medallion, a man in profile, surrounded by four hunters, of whom the one to the left clearly is the man in the medallion.

Form of bowl from British Museum and the subject of its ornamentation are

³³⁷ Brentjes 1971, 77

³³⁸ Brentjes 1971, 77-78; Пугаченкова 1986, 273-275; Lerner 1996, 24-25.

³³⁹ Маршак/Крикис 1969, 67-68.

³⁴⁰ Маршак/Крикис 1969, 69.

associated with Sasanian art. It has 16,8 cm in diameter, 5,7 cm high and weight is 190 g.³⁴¹ The central medallion is obviously of no relevance to the whole scene. Therefore, a character with a naked head is shown, not only in the center of the bottom of the cup, but also in the basic composition as the hunter shooting at the two tigers. The portrait might be of the owner of the dish - some Hephthalite nobility. Beside the heads of one horseman there are five characters of Brahmi, which are difficult to read. The other riders (**fig. 48; 49**), with three different hats, are portraits of rulers, who may have been involved with the owner of the cup. The image of one of the characters - the king killing a lion with a sword has a crown, differently from the rest. This rider, according to the crown and the typical hairstyle around the forehead, can be identified as a Kidarite. However, the ball in the crown has not survived. The rider is shown with a spear, the crown is different from the Kidarite one only in the form of the side wings. The horseman with a spear is probably also Kidarite, though unknown to us from coins. Characteristically, the Hephthalite is shown in profile, and the Kidarites frontally, that is, in accordance with the monetary iconography of the Hephthalites and late period of Kidara. The swords of riders are closer to the swords of the Hun empire of the 4th - 5th centuries AD.³⁴²

In the image of the women on the Chilek bowl we feel the impact of Gupta tradition. The Chilek bowl is thus closer to the art of India. Lush heavy hair pieces in the tympanum of arches let us recall the monuments developed in Gupta style. The bowl of the British Museum is dated to the 450's - 460's and the Chilek bowl should be synchronous, or a little later, but the bowls are so close that the date of the two hardly goes beyond the 3rd quarter of the 5th century AD.³⁴³ The final conquest of Samarqandian Sogd dates AD 510, which date is accounted for by the cessation of presents from Samarqand embassies to China and the beginning of regular embassies in China on behalf of the Hephthalites.³⁴⁴ According to Pugachenkova the bowl

³⁴¹ Göbl 1967-II, 262.

³⁴² Marschak 1986, 32-33.

³⁴³ Маршак/Крикис 1969, 70-71; Marschak 1986, 34; Grenet (2002, 211-212) dates this bowl slightly later, to the 460's or 470's, between the first Hephthalite conquest in Gandhara and the last embassy sent to China by the Indian Kidarites.

³⁴⁴ Маршак/Крикис 1969, 77, 80.

should be connected to the Punjab school and has no tradition in Bactria.³⁴⁵ Solovyov does not agree with this opinion, noting that, in spite of Indian features present on the Chilek bowl, this is not enough to separate it from Bactrian tradition, because Indian features were typical for some finds in Central Asia too. For example, the Lyakhsh bowl, on which we again find the image of women, is identical to scenes of women in Indian art.³⁴⁶

The “Stroganov” silver bowl in the State Hermitage museum (St. Petersburg), (**fig. 63**) which is supposed to have been found in the Perm region of Russia, shows a couple in Central Asian dress seated cross-legged. In shape and composition the bowl is similar to the bowls from Chilek and Punjab. The “Stroganov” silver bowl is dated to the 5th century AD.³⁴⁷ Some researchers suppose that the depicted couples belong to the Hephthalites. They refer to the description one of the customs of the Hephthalite land in “Liangshu” that rulers received their guests with their wives. This depiction has an analogy from the image of seated couples on the northern wall of the Shi Jun’s funerary coach.³⁴⁸

Another bronze bowl was recovered in Kashmir Smast (**fig. 64**). Its size is 8 cm in diameter. The outer surface of the bowl is decorated with incised human and bird figures, floral and geometrical designs. In six circles we see depicted heads, one inside each circle. The space between the circles has images made in geometrical and floral style. At the base of the bowl we find a duck or goose with opened wings facing to the right. On her back there is a solar symbol. According to Nasim Khan, in two circles the shaven heads are depicted in a style close to the heads of the Hephthalite rulers on their coins: elongated heads, long narrow, hooked moustaches, almond shaped eyes and solar symbols. Nasim Khan thinks that the bowl is a royal object made in the Hephthalite time of the 4th / 5th centuries AD.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁵ Пугаченкова 1987, 81-82; Пугаченкова 1990, 29.

³⁴⁶ Соловьев 1997, 68.

³⁴⁷ Callieri 2002, 126-127.

³⁴⁸ Grenet/Riboud 2003, 134-141.

³⁴⁹ Nasim Khan 2006, 76-85.

Terracotta

The term “the Hephthalite terracotta” defines a small group of terracottas dated to the 5th - 7th century AD and found on the territory of Chaganian (**fig. 65**). These terracotta statuettes express a personage, probably a Bodhisattva with headdresses in the manner of a crown with three crescents. Such crescents are also encountered on a ceramic bar found in the Buddhist temple in Merv, where Bodhisattva with similar headdresses is shown, and in the Buddhist paintings of Bamiyan, Kakrak in Afghanistan.³⁵⁰ Later Ilyasov has changed his opinion and has not identified the crown with three crescents with Bodhisattvas. He writes: “However, presently we think this attempt was unsuccessful, though we have no doubts about the fact that it was the Hephthalites whose influence generated image with crowns with three crescents through using and developing Sasanian iconographic patterns of rulers.”³⁵¹

Above mentioned group of the figurines are included some found in the citadel of Dalverzin-tepe, in Budrach (**fig. 66**), in one from an unknown archaeological site in the Surkhandarya province (Uzbekistan) and a terracotta figurine from the Hissar valley (Tajikistan). According to Ilyasov, the figure wearing a crown with three crescents and a garment with a right hand side triangular flap is Hephthalite. Similar garments are depicted on the murals of Balalyk-tepe, Kyzyl and on the Kucha reliquary. All these artifacts are dated within the period from the 5th to the 7th centuries AD. The clothes with a right hand side flap, dated to the 7th century AD and earlier times, can be linked either to the Hephthalites themselves, or to the Hephthalite clothing style.³⁵²

Terracotta plaquettes with images, usually of warriors and goddesses, were found in the citadel of Dalverzin-tepe and dated to the 6th – 8th centuries AD. The warriors wear a short coat with plates, hold a spear in the right hand and a sword in the left one. The goddesses, who are identified as “Athena-Rishto” has a helmet, there is a shield in her left hand and a spear in the right one. They were possibly used

³⁵⁰ Ильясов 1997, 30-32.

³⁵¹ И'yasov 2001, 192.

³⁵² И'yasov 2001, 188, 190.

as individual icons. Mkrtychev and Ilyasov note that similar plaquettes were found in Sogd. In 6th century AD these territories were united by the Hephthalite empire. These researchers suppose that the terracotta plaquettes represent gods of the unknown Hephthalite pantheon.³⁵³ Meshkeris also notes that there are some similarities between the terracotta figures from Sogd and the images of the Hephthalite kings on coins. In particular, elements of the crowns (wings from both sides and crescent in front) are seen on some terracotta figures of the 5th – 8th centuries AD and have good analogies in the crowns of the Hephthalite kings on their coins. But at the same time she notes that this kind of the crown was also that on the coins of Sasanian kings, in particular of Peroz.³⁵⁴

Orlat bone plates

The finds from Orlat (50 km north-east of Samarqand) need to be mentioned, which come from a burial (or rather the burial mound number 2) (**fig. 67; 68**). The bone plates (2 large size: 13.5 x 11 cm (**fig. 69**), and three small: 6 x 5 cm (**fig. 70**) show images on the big ones: a battle scene on one, and a hunting scene on the other. The smaller ones depict a battle between two warriors, between two Bactrian camels and at last the image of a griffin. On the basis of iconographic comparisons they are dated broadly to the time between the 2nd century BC and the 5th century AD. Thus, on these plates Yuezhi, Sakas, or if dated later Huns could be depicted.

One of the first scholars to give a chronological frame for the plates was Pugachenkova, who dated them to the 2nd – 1st century BC on the basis of the inventory of the burial mounds and connected with Qanguï people.³⁵⁵ Ilyasov and Rusanov place them in the 1st - 2nd centuries AD on the basis of the burial structure and the finds.³⁵⁶ Litvinsky thought they were from the 3rd century AD,³⁵⁷ while Marshak dated the plates to the 3rd - 4th centuries AD and thought that they reflected

³⁵³ Мкртычев/Ильясов 2005, 497-523.

³⁵⁴ Мешкерис 1977, 86-88; Мешкерис 1989, 184-193, 293-296.

³⁵⁵ Пугаченкова 1987, 62-64; Пугаченкова 1989, 146-148, 153.

³⁵⁶ Ильясов/Rusanov 1997/98, 124, 130.

³⁵⁷ Litvinsky 2001, 144-155.

the invasion of Huns in Sogd. In support of his hypothesis Marshak stated that the battle scenes reflect more nomadic Central Asian artistic traditions rather than anything local.³⁵⁸ The same chronology is proposed by Mode.³⁵⁹ Azbelev dates the Orlat plates even later, to the 4th – 5th centuries AD, and he thinks that there are analogies to South Siberian materials, especially among the petroglyphs.³⁶⁰

Cosmetic lids

We may agree with Ghose that some cosmetic lids, by decoration and stylistic features, from the Gandharan region of Pakistan could be linked with the Hephthalites or at least to the time when the Hephthalites ruled in this region. All of them date from the 4th – early 6th centuries AD and come from unexcavated contexts.

1. Oval lid depicting a loving couple. Polsky collection (**fig. 71, 1**).
2. Circular box lid with hunting scene. Kronos collection (**fig. 71, 2**).
3. Fragment of a lid with a hunting scene. Metropolitan Museum of Art (**fig. 71, 3**).
4. Elliptical lid depicting a man drinking while listening to a woman playing the lyre. Private collection (**fig. 71, 4**).
5. Hunting plaque. Private collection. It shows a mounted rider leaning forward to shoot an arrow at a roaring lion. The plumed helmet headgear of the horseman is typical of the Alchon Huns (**fig. 71, 5**).
6. Box lid with a Phoenix. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. It has some close parallels to the bowl from the British Museum with 4 hunting noblemen.
7. Lid with combat between a man and a lion. Cleveland Museum of Art.³⁶¹

³⁵⁸ Маршак 1987, 235-236.

³⁵⁹ Mode 2006, 424.

³⁶⁰ Азбелев 1992, 212-214.

³⁶¹ Ghose 2003, 145-158; Bopparachchi et al. (eds.) 2003, 355.

Stone statuettes

A dark-green potstone statuette-plaque of a sitting woman playing a harp, in the Peshawar Museum is assigned by a number of iconographic features to the Hephthalites.³⁶² While some iconographic features, particularly the peculiar, huge ear-rings, recall the terracotta tiles from the Kashmiri monastery of Harvan, attributed to the Huna period at the end of the 5th century AD, style and material of the Peshawar statuette, as well as technical features such as the use of shallow engraved lines for the rendering of decorative details, are common to the other sculptures of the group and seem to provide strong evidence for dating the statuette to the early 6th century AD.³⁶³

A marble image of the Hindu deity Ganesha (7th century AD) from the Kabul Museum (found in Gardez) (**fig. 72**) is interesting in this connection. On the base there is mention of the name Shahi Khingila written in the north-Indian alphabet.³⁶⁴

According to Bivar this marble image links to the painting of a Hephthalite king at the cave of the 53-meter Buddha in Bamiyan. In the painting the adjoining figure of a prince wears a jewel in the form of a bull's head, seen also on marble sculptures related to the Ganesha image.³⁶⁵

Tamghas

Further information about the Hephthalites is given by tamghas (signs denoting ownership). Göbl notes two main tamghas which were made on the Alchon coins: S 1 and S 2 (**fig. 73**).

Thus, according to Ilyasov on the fragment of a terracotta statuette of a horse found in the potters quarter (DT-9) in Dalverzin-tepe there is a tamgha, which corresponds to similar tamghas among the graffiti on the walls of a corridor in

³⁶² Callieri 1996, 391.

³⁶³ Callieri 1996, 391.

³⁶⁴ Sircar 1963, 44-46, Stadtner (2000, 42) names this inscription proto-Sharada.

³⁶⁵ Bivar 2003, 200.

building DT-6. These tamgha likes are similar to those on Hephthalite coins.³⁶⁶ In Sogd, in particular, in Afrasiab many statuettes of horsemen with maces in their hands, dated to the 6th – 7th centuries AD, were found.³⁶⁷ Yatsenko is against the attribution of these tamgha to the Hephthalites, since he believes the graffiti is very different in the forms at the top and bottom, and who states that the version of Ilyasov contains some mistakes.³⁶⁸

According to Ilyasov, the Chionites (not the Xiongnu, but steppe-dwellers from Central Asia speaking an Iranian language) with tamgha S 2 occupied Bactria-Tokharistan in the 4th century AD and wiped out the borders between Sogd and Tokharistan. In the 5th century AD the Hephthalites subdued them: Chionite clans were integrated into the Hephthalite “horde” keeping their symbols or transferring them to the Hephthalites by virtue of dynastic relations, so that after the submission of Sogd to the Hephthalites tamgha S 2 became the “Samarqand sign”.³⁶⁹

Ceramics

Based on archaeological research of the sites in northern Afghanistan, J.-C. Gardin, notes that in Hephthalite time in this territory there were no significant changes in comparison with the previous Kushan period.³⁷⁰

However, ceramics of the early Middle Ages in Central Asia were decorated by polishing on engobe with plastic applications of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic shape. They were also ornamented by wavy and straight lines or their combinations, and stamped motifs. In the Vakhsh valley an anthropomorphic stick from pottery was found, showing a male head with crown, on which there are the symbols of sun and moon. This can be considered as a Hephthalite product, since the Hephthalite king had on his crown the allegory of the moon and sun. In later pottery figured polishing and the stamped ornament disappears and the general character

³⁶⁶ Ильясов 1999, 33.

³⁶⁷ Альбаум 1960, 33.

³⁶⁸ Яценко 2001, 99.

³⁶⁹ Ильясов 2003, 140, 153.

³⁷⁰ Gardin 1998, 164.

changes. The fixed motifs of decor become concentric lines, together with wavy ones. Painting engobe was used.³⁷¹

According to Bernshtam the “Hephthalite” ceramics include the gray pottery of Ferghana in the 5th century AD and in Vakhana the rough, red ware.³⁷²

The Khorezmian pottery of the 6th - 8th centuries AD differed from the dishes of the first centuries AD by new technology - light engobe began to be used instead of red, polishing appeared, and painting was absent (**fig. 74**). The shape of many vessel types also changed. Bowls and tureens were produced in small amounts, the fabrication of cups stopped, while one handled pots were spread widely.³⁷³ In the later formation of Afrighid ceramics and architecture a considerable role is attributed to the Chionite-Hephthalite elements.³⁷⁴

Vessels of this period from Merv were made from well prepared clays, with even baking and with a sulphur and cream colour.³⁷⁵ According to Tarzi, part of the pottery found during excavations in Bamiyan can be related to the Hephthalites, although he does not say clearly which.³⁷⁶

In the middle of the 4th century AD on the territory of southern Sogd, as well as in Erkurgan, ceramics changed (**fig. 22**). The proportion of handmade ceramics increased. The pottery has close analogies to those from the Dzhetyasar and Kaunchi cultures. It can possibly be linked to the coming of new people: the Chionites, the Hephthalites (?).³⁷⁷ Suleimanov thinks that the people of the Dzhetyasar culture moved to Sogd along Syrdarya in this time and the people of the Kaunchi culture could establish themselves in the eastern Samarqand oasis with some influence to Kesh.³⁷⁸ He adds that the people who moved to Sogd were the Chionites because of pressure by the Huns, leaving their land in the northern part of the Aral Sea to Sogd.

³⁷¹ Соловьев 1997, 45.

³⁷² Бернштам 1949, 57-58; Бернштам 1998, 54.

³⁷³ Неразик 1959, 258-260; Неразик 1986, 37

³⁷⁴ Толстов 1962, 236.

³⁷⁵ Кошеленко et al. 1999, 25.

³⁷⁶ Tarzi 2007, 119-121

³⁷⁷ Исамиддинов/Сулейманов 1984, 126-127,151-152; Исамиддинов/Хасанов 2000, 53, 173.

³⁷⁸ Сулейманов 2000, 181-182, 187-188.

This is supported by new type of ceramics appearing in the Nakhshab region in the 4th – 5th century AD.³⁷⁹

V. Masson, describing the ceramics of Dehistan, which had become part of the Hephthalite state according to him, notes that it was basically red-fired although products of light-brown colour were also present. The vessels are represented by large pitchers with high direct spout and with one handle. On the shoulders they had crested ornaments. There were also bowl-shaped vessels with low neck, phials with flat bottom, and bottle-shaped vessels with narrow throat, and hand-made spherical cauldrons with flat bottom and handle.³⁸⁰ In the opinion of Pilipko, during the second half of the 4th century AD the Chionite and the Hephthalite tribes penetrated into the Amudarya basin. The material reflection of their presence are rough and badly fired ceramics, discovered on rather an extensive territory. The same materials is known from Termez, Zar-tepe, Ak-Kurgan, Dilberjin and other settlements of Bactria. Such pottery spread not only in Bactria in this period. It can also be found on the whole middle course of the Amudarya, in Khorezm, as well as in southern Turkmenistan.³⁸¹

³⁷⁹ Сулейманов 2000, 61, 313-314.

³⁸⁰ Массон 1961, 39.

³⁸¹ Пилипко 1985, 115.

4. NUMISMATICS

The Hephthalites are well represented in their coins. In fact the numismatic evidence can be considered as the most important source on their history, or rather the most clearly ethnically identifiable source.

Controlling the Silk Road in its Central Asian part, the Hephthalites took part in world trade, with Iran, Byzantium, India and China. Either as during the previous period, the go-betweens in trade between China and Byzantium were mainly Sogdians in the Hephthalite Empire; but the role of the intermediary to this trade was also pretended to by Sasanian Iran. In that period the Sogdians continued the colonization of Semirechye and Eastern Turkestan which had begun under the Kushans. According to the reports from Byzantine, Syrian and Chinese sources, the main trade goods between China and Byzantium were silk, glass, spices, jewels and paints.

The Hephthalites had several types of the coins.³⁸² There were three types of inscriptions on their coins: Bactrian used in the territory of Bactria, Pehlevi in the territory of the Kabul valley and Brahmi on coins minted in northern Pakistan.³⁸³

The Bactrian inscriptions in script were often added to the coins, either by the Hephthalites for trade with Iran or by the Sasanians for tribute. The Hephthalites especially in Central Asia adopted the Sasanian style on their silver coins, e.g. crown and fire altars.

Also a number of areas that were part of the Hephthalite Empire continued to mint their own coins, so there are no unified coins. Thus, since the end of 5th century until the second half of 7th century AD drachmas of Peroz were widely spread. But it is unknown whether they were minted here or came from other areas.³⁸⁴

In Chaganian, the Termez-imitation coinage of Sasanian kings Peroz and Khusrow I Anushirvan. In Sogd the Chinese type circulated - a round coin with a

³⁸² Массон 1974, 154.

³⁸³ Mitchiner 1975, 167.

³⁸⁴ Ртвеладзе 2002, 21.

square hole in the center.

The Sogdian silver imitation coins of Warahran V are of certain interest: profile of the shahinshah with toothed crown and facing a fire altar in the centre, on the edge of which figure the guards of the sacred fire, while on the altar there is also the head of a deity. The main difference is the inscription. On Sogdian coins the Pehlevi inscriptions with the name of the shahinshah was changed to local Sogdian. These coins were given the name “coins of Bukhar-Khudats” and were produced in Bukhara during the second quarter of the 5th century AD up to the 7th century AD. In this territory copper coins with a scene on one of the parts of a Bactrian (two-humped) camel, being the zoomorphic transformation of the Zoroastrian god of the war, Veretragna, were also wide-spread.

In the mintage of the coins from western Sogd and Chach there are many parallels: tamgha, traces of head deforming of the ruler, crescent in front. All are adopted in these areas as composit parts in the state of the Hephthalites.³⁸⁵ The symbols of moon and sun on the coins of the Hephthalites in the opinion of Solovyov indicated that the kings wish to show he was were supported by the gods Mithra and Anahita.³⁸⁶

Sometimes, in Sogd, Chach and Chaganian coins were produced after Byzantine type with images of the king and queen. In the second half of the 7th century in Kobadian coins in circulation were made of copper and had an Hephthalite italic text. This type has been conditionally named “Munchak”, after the site Munchak-tepe.³⁸⁷

In general, the differences in the composition of the monetary mass indicates the political separateness of holdings during the reign of the Hephthalites and after them.³⁸⁸

In the studying the Hephthalite coinage the following specialists are of outstanding importance: A. Cunningham, V. Smith, H. Junker and M. Alram. A very

³⁸⁵ Мусакаева 1994, 46-47.

³⁸⁶ Соловьев 1997, 160.

³⁸⁷ Соловьев 1997, 69.

³⁸⁸ Ртвеладзе 1983, 75.

great role in early medieval Central Asian numismatics is taken by R. Göbl. In 1967 he published the multivolume work “*Dokumente zur Geschichte der iranischen Hunnen in Baktrien und Indien*” which is still basic and where he reconstructed the typological sequences of the coins determining four groups of nomads – Kidarites, Alchons, Hephthalites and Nezaks. In contradistinction to the European Huns he created the term “Iranian Huns”, based on the fact that the Huns in Central Asia adopted the language and cultural habits of the Iranian world, especially in coinage. This system does not include the Chionites because of the lack of numismatic evidence, despite the fact that there is written evidence for their existence from the 4th century AD. Here we would like to show the main points of R. Göbl’s classification.³⁸⁹

R. Göbl’s classification of “Iranian Huns” coinage

Following Göbl’s classification, based primarily on coins, there were four different migrations of the “Iranian Huns”: the Kidarites, the Alchons, the Nezak (Nspk) kings, and the Hephthalites. Göbl has shown that Ghirshman’s readings of the coin inscriptions, on which all the preceding arguments were based, to be incorrect. He has interpreted this word as Bactrian *alxono* and identified it with the Alchons who migrated into Iran at the end of the 4th century AD and invaded India in the middle of 5th century AD.³⁹⁰

He also corrected the reading *HIITLA HIONO* to *XITTILO OXONO*, referring to the Alchon ruler Khingila (ca. 430 - 490)³⁹¹ and thus eliminated the grounds for linking the Hephthalites with the Chionites, besides showing that there is no numismatic evidence for the latter.

As Alram notes, studying of the coinage of the “Iranian Huns” has some particular problems: “The relative chronological sequence of the individual coin

³⁸⁹ It must be mentioned that after the copper scroll inscription in Schøyen collection (see Melzer 2007, 251-314), which give us a new view to the early medieval history of this region. The classification of Göbl, should be revised in some aspects: see below.

³⁹⁰ Göbl 1967-I, 56-57, 70-72, 218-219; Göbl 1967-II, 59- 66, 149, 165, 237.

³⁹¹ Göbl 1967-I, 72.

types within the four coinage groups is established in its broad outlines, but the absolute chronology is far from settled. The same is true of the mints. Although many interrelated ensembles bearing the mark of a common mint can be discerned as being connected, too many links are missing in the chain to give a clear picture. The place names attributed to the mints are to be understood as hypothetical; thus a region or province is cited more often than a specific town... Finally, the legends written in Middle Persian, Bactrian, or Indian are problematic, as their reading and philological interpretations remain controversial”.³⁹²

Kidarites: The first wave of the “Iranian Huns”, according to Göbl’s reconstruction, were the Kidarites (in Göbl - emission, further Em. 11-18) (**fig. 75**). They began minting coins following the late Kushan, the Kushano-Sasanian, and the Sasanian examples in the Kapisa-Kabul area and in Gandhara during ca. 385 – ca. 440.³⁹³ The Kidarites came into the legacy of the Kushano-Sasanian governors and used their mints. In the area of Kapisa (present-day Begram) and Kabul they struck gold scyphate dinars after the Kushano-Sasanian models. The obverse represents the king sacrificing at an altar accompanied by the Bactrian legend *bago kidoro oazorko košano šao* “Lord Kidāra, great king of the Kushans.” The reverse depicts Shiva in front of his bull Nandi. Finding of the hoard from Tepe-i Marenjan (near Kabul) gives us more information about the Kidarites and their coinage. This hoard contains eleven scyphate dinars of Kidara as well as a number of Sasanian drachms, the latest were of Shapur III (383-388). Due to the hoard it is supposed the beginning of the Kidarite rule was in the AD 380’s.³⁹⁴

The Kidarites in their coins minted in Gandhara, imitated Sasanian type of drachms. Kidara assumed a new crown copied from his Sasanian adversary Yazdegerd II (438-457), with five crenels surmounted by a half-moon. Some coins have legend in Brahmi *kidāra kusāna sāhi* “Kidāra king of the Kushans”.³⁹⁵ The

³⁹² Alram 2004, 571.

³⁹³ Göbl 1967-I, 24.

³⁹⁴ Alram 2004, 572.

³⁹⁵ Grenet 2002, 207.

Kidarites used only elements of Sasanian crowns on their coins and there are no typological links between them and those of the Alchon Huns.³⁹⁶

The Kidarite golden dinars have the late Kushan type with enthroned deity Ardokhsho on the reverse and are localized in Punjab. It is supposed that the name “Kidāra” was originally a personal name and later became as dynastic. The coin legends describe Kidara not as a Kushan but as the ruler over the Kushans.³⁹⁷

The Kidarite rule in Gandhara probably ended before AD 450 according to numismatic data, although the last Kidarite embassy to China was sent after AD 477. Grenet has argued the reading of the Bactrian legends on the golden scyphate dinars from the hoard of Tepe-i Marenjan, and he has interpreted the first part of the legend as *bago kioooooo* “Lord Kay Wahram” rather than as “Lord Kidara”. Thus he attributes the coins to Kay Wahram, one of the last Kushano-Sasanian rulers.³⁹⁸

The Kidarite presence in Sogd is indicated by the existence of seven rare silver coins minted in Samarqand, which continue the portrait/standing archer design of earlier coins from this region, but carry the name Kidara (κιδρα) on the reverse.³⁹⁹

In general, coin series of Kidara (following Chattopadhyay) can be divided into three groups:

1. Gold coins of Kushan type with an inscription in Brahmi;
2. Silver coins of Sasanian type with an inscription in Brahmi and sometimes in the Pehlevi;
3. Copper coins of Kushan and Sasanian type with an inscription in Brahmi.⁴⁰⁰

Other researchers note the Kidarites after c. AD 370 supplanted the Kushano-Sasanians in Bactria, Kabul, Gandhara and last Kushan in Punjab, they started to mint:

³⁹⁶ Vondrovec (forthcoming), 33.

³⁹⁷ Göbl 1967-II, 52-55; Alram 2004, 572.

³⁹⁸ Grenet 2002, 206-207.

³⁹⁹ Zeimal 1996, 120, 129.

⁴⁰⁰ Chattopadhyay 1967, 115.

1. gold coins of the Kushano-Sasanian style with names *Kidara* and *Warahran* (last Kushano-Sasanian ruler);
2. silver coins of Sasanian style with names *Peroz*, *Kidara* and *Warahran*;
3. copper Bactrian style coins with name *Warahran*.⁴⁰¹

J. Cribb writes: “When Kidara is named on the coins he is given the same title as the Kushano-Sasanian kings Kushanshah. This could be understood in three ways: Kidara was a direct successor of the Kushano-Sasanians, he was not Sasanian but borrowed the title they used, or he was a Kushan and had the right to adopt it. There is nothing implicit in the form of inscription on the coins or in the coins themselves to confirm or even point to any of these explanations. The only possible hint at their origin lies in the apparent earlier appearance of the names of these rulers on their coins of the Punjab series”.⁴⁰²

Alchons: The second wave of “Iranian Huns”, following Göbl, was that of the so-called “Alkhon”, Em. 33-176⁴⁰³ and 177-193 (unknown but could be related to the Alchons) (**fig. 76; 77**).⁴⁰⁴ Their name is almost exclusively known from inscriptions on coins, which Göbl interprets as *alxono*,⁴⁰⁵ and in which the component *-xon* represents a Hun name. The Alchons pushed out the Kidarites and finally occupied the whole of north-western India. They represented the group of Huns who were called “Hūnas” in the Indian sources. In the anonymous coin group (Em. 33-39) (**fig. 76, 1-4**), the first personal name appearing on the Alchon coins is Khingila (Em. 40-

⁴⁰¹ Errington/Curtis 2007, 86.

⁴⁰² Cribb 1990, 181.

⁴⁰³ Göbl 1967-I, 54-125.

⁴⁰⁴ Göbl 1967-I, 126-132.

⁴⁰⁵ Göbl 1967-I, 56-57, 70-72, 218-219; Göbl 1967-II, 59-66; Although H. Humbach (1966-I, 29) suggested *alxonno* and G. Davary (1982, 46, 154) – *alxanno* where *alxanno* is similar to *rājālakḥāna* and Lalliya Sāhi, founder of the Hindu Sāhi dynasty; Alram writes: “It is not clear whether the Bactrian *alxanno* is a personal name that was subsequently used as a dynasty name, or whether it is the name of a tribe or a title. However, certainty exists, that the name Alchon links a whole range of coins. To these can be related to further issues which do not attest the name but show typological criteria attributed to the Alchon group. However, by no means can it be ruled out that Alchons are to be understood as a clan of the Hephthalites”: Alram 2004, 572; According to Vaissière (2005, 16; 2006, <http://www.iranica.com/newsite/search/index.isc>) the reading of some coins should be *alchanno*, and linked with the Indian legend *rājālakḥāna* (rājā alakḥāna).

89, 91-107, 112, 117-118) (**fig. 76, 5-7**), then Toramana (Em. 90, 108-111, 113-116, 119-133, 146, 146A) (**fig. 77, 10-14**), Mihirakula (Em. 134-137, 152-165) (**fig. 77, 15**), Em. 139-145 is unclear either related to Mihirakula or his successors and Narana /Narendra (Em. 138, 147-151, 171-176) (**fig. 77, 17-18**). Their coinage forms a group of more than 150 different types which are related to one another primarily in terms of typological criteria.⁴⁰⁶ But this model Khingila-Toramana-Mihirakula contradicts the copper scroll inscription in the Schøyen collection.⁴⁰⁷

The earliest type coins of Khingila (according to Göbl ruled in AD 430/440-ca. 490) is related to the anonymous issues Em. 40-43. Em. 44, 66 and 66A are bilingual: the Bactrian *alchonno* and Brahmi *Khingila*. Em. 81 is the latest type bearing Khingila's name and was issued at the end of the 5th century, although Göbl supposed that Em. 82-89, 91-107, 112, 117-118 were related to this king. The legends are in Bactrian, Indian (Brahmi), or in both languages and mention various titles and sometimes also the name of the king (in Brahmi *Khigi*, *Khigila*, or *Khingila*). There is an influence, which belongs to the Indian religious tradition, but at the same time the Sasanian fire altar remains on the reverse.⁴⁰⁸ Alram notes that coins of king Khingila provide the first prototypes for the coins in the Kabul hoard. During Khingila's reign, the king began to wear a crown which, at first, consisted of a simple crescent placed above the forehead.⁴⁰⁹

The coins with the name of Khingila in Brahmi geographically should be placed in eastern Afghanistan or present north-western Pakistan and temporally they should fit generally into the Hephthalite period of the 6th century AD, probably towards the end rather than the beginning.⁴¹⁰

After Göbl Khingila was succeeded by Toramana (490 – ca.515), called in Brahmi: *Tora*, *Toramāna*. Under his leadership the Alchons in c. AD 500 got Malwa (Central India). Coins with name of Toramana were found in large quantities in

⁴⁰⁶ Göbl 1967-II, 58, 70.

⁴⁰⁷ Vondrovec (forthcoming), 27.

⁴⁰⁸ Göbl 1967-II, 59-66.

⁴⁰⁹ Alram 1999/2000, 131-132.

⁴¹⁰ Frye 1986, 515.

Malwa, in Punjab and in Kashmir.⁴¹¹

Then was Mihirakula (ca.515 - 542), called in Brahmi *Jayatu Mihirakula*⁴¹² or *Shri Mihirakula*. An increasing deterioration of the silver content of the drachms is observed in the coins issued during his reign. After his death, about AD 542, some of the Alchons moved back westwards into the Kapisa-Kabul-Gazni area and clashed there with the Nezak kings.⁴¹³

Toramana and Mihirakula mainly minted silver and copper coins. The silver coins of Toramana are known in three versions, those of Mihirakula coins in two.⁴¹⁴

On the obverse of Mihirakula's silver coins we see the king's head and on the reverse the legend "*Jayatu Mihirakula*" or "*Mihirakula*" in Brahmi.⁴¹⁵ With regard to the copper coins, they were of two types. Mihirakula's coins bear the following inscription "*Shri Mihirakula*" or "*Jayatu Mihirakula*". On the reverse there is usually the image of the bull Nandi, a symbol of the god Shiva, which show a commitment of Mihirakula to Shivaism.⁴¹⁶ The large copper coins of Mihirakula show the king riding on a horse with the legend Mihirakula in Indian characters, and on the reverse the goddess Lakshmi. This is an imitation of the Gupta horse rider type of coins. A few coins of Toramana were restruck by Mihirakula.⁴¹⁷

The three groups of copper coins of Mihirakula are:

1. Small coins which were found in Eastern Punjab and in Rajputana have a Sasanian type. On the obverse we see the king's head with the legend in Indian characters "*Shri Mihirakula*"; on the reverse a humped bull with the Indian legend "*Jayatu Vrisha*";
2. The middle-sized copper coins are copies of Kushan types. The king standing

⁴¹¹ Melzer 2006, 260.

⁴¹² The title (in Brahmi) *jayatu* which had Mihirakula and one of his successors Narendra on coins can be explained as *let him be victorious*: Errington/Curtis 2007, 97.

⁴¹³ Alram 2004, 571-573.

⁴¹⁴ Shankar 1998, 190-191.

⁴¹⁵ Banerji 1962, 60.

⁴¹⁶ Stein 1905, 83.

⁴¹⁷ Banerji 1962, 60.

with a spear in left hand, and with the right hand held downwards over a small altar. The legend in Brahmi reads “*Shri Mihirakula*”; on the reverse the goddess Lakshmi is seated with cornucopiae;

3. The large copper coins present the Raja on horseback with the legend in Brahmi “*Mihirakula*”; on the reverse we find the goddess Lakshmi.⁴¹⁸

During the excavations in Buddhist monastery at Hadda (Jelalabad) was found along with drachma of Kidara, 16 Alchon drachmas, among them 2 coins are imitation of Shapur II’s drachmas.⁴¹⁹

In the Buddhist monasteries of Taxila (Bhamala, Lalchak and Dharmarajika) was found in total 32 silver coins, issues of Khingila and Javukha.⁴²⁰

Small hoard of 16 Alchon coins, earliest type with crescent behind the head, was found during excavation at monastery in Shahji-ki Dheri at Peshawar in 1911.⁴²¹

Among the coins from Shahji-ki Dheri a good specimen of the very rare silver coinage of the Mihirakula should be noted. The legend in Brahmi reads “*Jayatu Mihirakula*”. There are specimens of a silver coin exhibiting the bust of a king in front of which is the sun-standard. Over it in Brahmi “*Jayatu*”, and the name of the king which has been read as *Balasara*, *Bagamsara*, or *Baysara*, which appears to be a new name.⁴²²

After Mihirakula, only known name from coins is Narana/Narendra, in Brahmi *Na*, *Nara*, *Narana* or *Narendra* (ca. 570/80 – 600 (?)). The leader of the Alchons, assumed the bull’s-head crown of the Nezakhs on his own drachms minted

⁴¹⁸ Cunningham 1893, 256; Harmatta (1984, 187) writes: “The type of coins minted by Toramāna, Pravarasena, Narendrātitya and Gokarna exactly reproduce the gold coins of Kidara, which again follow the type of coins struck by the Late Kushana kings of north-western India. The Hephthalite kings of Kaśmīr had maintained even the legend “Kidara” on the reverse of their coins. This fact can only be explained by the assumption that the Hephthalite dynasty of Kaśmīr was the immediate successor of the Kidarite Hun kings who ruled there. As it is proved by the legend of their coins, the Hephthalite kings of Kaśmīr wanted to be regarded as the legitimate descendants and heirs of Kidara and this claim is only comprehensible if Kidara also ruled over Kaśmīr”.

⁴¹⁹ Errington/Curtis 2007, 93.

⁴²⁰ Marshall 1960, 176-180; Errington/Curtis 2007, 98, 133.

⁴²¹ Errington/Curtis 2007, 99.

⁴²² Whitehead 1913, 481-482.

in Gandhara. Further evidence for the Alchons' remigration from India is offered by overstrikes between Alchons and Nezaks, found in a hoard near Kabul, dateable to the second half of the 6th century AD. This is supported by the further typological development of the Nezak coinage from the Kabul-Gazni area, which unexpectedly shows elements of the Indian Alchon coinage.⁴²³

Aram also supports the theory of Göbl that after the defeat of Mihirakula in India (AD 528) the group of Alchons re-emigrated from Gandhara, westward across the Khyber Pass, to the Kapisa-Kabul area where they clashed with the local Nezak kings. This can also be demonstrated by Nezak coinage which was parallel to the Indian Alchon coinage and assigned to Afghanistan south of the Hindukush. The conflict between Alchon and Nezak is also visible in the coinage of the Alchon king Narana/Narendra, who wears a bull's-head crown on some of his Gandharan issues. He was the victorious leader of the Alchon forces who fought against the Nezak in the Kapisa-Kabul region and he issued Em.150 of the Kabul hoard.⁴²⁴

This ruler was Pravarasena II, probably the son of Toramana, who ruled for about 60 years in the opinion of other researches. He minted coins with legends in Brahmi reading "*Shri Pravarasena*" on the avers and "*Kidara*" on the reverse.⁴²⁵ Different data indicates that he was Khingila or Narendraditya, not Pravarasena II, and perhaps this was his Indian title or the translation of his name from the Hephthalite language.⁴²⁶ Bivar supposes that Narana can be identified with Narendraditya.⁴²⁷

⁴²³ Göbl 1967-II, 70-71.

⁴²⁴ Aram 1999/2000, 131-134; Aram 2002, 25; Aram 2004, 572-573; Aram 2006, 5; Vondrovec (2003, 160) thinks that the mint of the Nezak Shah, which produced Em.198, was captured by the Alchons, who immediately started minting their own coins.

⁴²⁵ Smith 1907, 93-95; Dani et al. 1996, 169,176.

⁴²⁶ Cunningham 1967, 26.

⁴²⁷ Bivar 2005, 320-321; In general, Bivar does not agree with Göbl's classification. Following Bivar Mihirakula was succeeded by Alkhana (or Lakhana) with *biruda* (title of honour) Udayaditya, and then he was followed by Khingila with *biruda* Narendraditya, the last ruler being a person (his name is unknown) who had *biruda* Purvaditya. Bivar suggests that it would be correct to separate the coinage of Narendraditya from that attributed to Khingila, or to ascribe to Khingila coins with the legend *Sahi Purvvaditya*, and place them before Mihirakula at the beginning, rather than towards the end of the series: Bivar 2005, 321.

Based on numismatic materials, Alram suggests that in the last decade of the 4th century AD the Alchons crossed the western passes of the Hindukush to the Kapisa-Kabul area, and pushed the Kidarites from there. Mint of the first coins have started in the area around Kapisa and Kabul during the last decade of the 4th century (c. AD 390). During the first phase of their coinage the Alchons used the original dies of Shapur II (**fig. 76, 1-2**). They re-engraved a Bactrian word *alxanno* instead of the original Pehlevi legend, on these obverse dies. In the second phase a tamga was added in front of the bust, in the third phase of the coinage a crescent appeared behind the crown. The fourth phase of the Alchon coinage has the same two symbols (tamgha and crescent) noted above, but for the first time, the obverse bears the typical bust of a king, which is placed on top of a floral motif. In front of the bust is the same legend in Bactrian and behind the bust, the name *Khingila*, written in Brahmi letters. This is the first bilingual coin type, and the use of Brahmi demonstrates that this type was probably struck in Gandhara. This is supported by the hoard of sixteen drachms of these early types, which was found in Gandhara at Shahji-ki Dheri.⁴²⁸

A recently discovered copper scroll shows that Javukha (**fig. 76, 8-11**) was a real royal person. In the Göbl's classification Em. 49-51 and 82 have this name but are attributed to Khingila because he supposed that Javukha was title of this king. Em. 117 and 118 have the Bactrian legend ζαβοχο (*Zaboho*) (**fig. 77, 1-5**) on the obverse together with a horseman, probably a king. Davary suggested that coins with the Bactrian legend *Zaboxo* are the same name as the Brahmi *Javukha*.⁴²⁹ According to Vondrovec, in the light of typological and and numismatic evidence, these rulers had close economic contact with the Guptas, probably in Gandhara, because their coins (coins of Javukha and coins with the name *Zaboho*) show great influence from the Gupta coins.⁴³⁰

The copper scroll inscription suggests that Mehama (**fig. 77, 6-9**) was one of

⁴²⁸ Alram 1996, 520-524; Alram 1999/2000, 131; Verardi and Paparatti (2004, 101) suppose that the clashes between Nezak (Buddhist) and Alchon (Hinduist) were on religious grounds.

⁴²⁹ Davary 1982, 296.

⁴³⁰ Vondrovec (forthcoming), 28.

the Alchon kings in Bactria.⁴³¹ To the coins of Mehama in Brahmi are related Em. 71, 73, and 74, and the unpublished Em. 316. A Bactrian version of his name *μηαμοι* (*meiano*) is attested in Bactrian documents and in some seals from the collection of Aman ur Rahman. Em. 62 and 63 display *μηο*, although mostly not clearly legible, probably a short version of his name.⁴³²

All coins of Khingila and Javukha were discovered south of the Hindukush, in the area between Sadiqadad (near Begram) and Taxila. There are no any Alchon coin finds north of the Hindukush was reported. But the copper scroll inscription shows that their influence also extended to north (Talaqan). Vondrovec supposes that the Hephthalites possibly belonged to the same tribe.⁴³³ A branch of the Alchon Huns remained in Bactria and thus must have come under the control of the Hephthalites, either after their first major victory over the Sasanians in AD 474 or after the death of the Peroz in AD 484. This is a major amplification of the theory that the Alchons moved south into Gandhara, whence they were driven out in the late 6th century into the Kabul region, where they mixed their coin types with those of the Nezak kings.⁴³⁴

After the copper scroll inscription we can say about simultaneous reigning of Khingila, Toramana, Javukha and Mehama in different region and there was some kind of co-existence between them.

Nezaks: A third group of coins of the “Iranian Huns” can be attributed to the so-called Nezak (Nspk) kings (Em.198-254, 256-271) (**fig. 78**), who settled in Afghanistan south of the Hindukush in the Gazni and Kabul area from ca. 460 onwards.

According to Göbl this group consists: Nspk from Kabul (Em. 198-199), Nspk from Gazni (Em. 217-222), Şāhi Tigin (Em. 200-216A, 236-246, 252-254, 256-259, 265-271), Phromo Kēsoro (Em. 247-251) to this he adds also Zābulit –

⁴³¹ The area of Talaqan was part of lands where ruled Mehama with title “mahāşāhi”: Melzer 2006, 262.

⁴³² Vondrovec (forthcoming), 29;

⁴³³ Vondrovec (forthcoming), 30

⁴³⁴ Vondrovec (forthcoming), 32.

viceroys of Šāhi Tigin in Khorasan (Em. 260-264) and Alchons returned from India (Em. 225-235).⁴³⁵

The Nezak kings minted drachms that are completely unmistakable and follow the Sasanian examples. Like all the other “Iranian Huns,” they became acquainted with money first through Sasanian currency, which they received as payment for military service rendered for Persia; they minted it themselves only when these payments stopped.⁴³⁶

The important characteristic of the Nezak coinage is the bull’s-head crown of the kings, which is unmistakably encountered throughout the series. Coins have the Pehlevi legend *nycky MLK* ‘Nezak Shah’. On the obverse was placed the Sasanian fire altar with attendants, over whose heads are two small wheels or sun rosettes, a feature which is a typical element of the Nezak coinage.

Legend had formerly been interpreted as *Napki* (*npky*) and which was re-interpreted by Göbl as *Nspk* were the third wave (after AD 450). The correct reading, which was accepted by Göbl, is *Nezak*, which probably represents the title of a ruler.⁴³⁷

According to Göbl Nezak coinage is divided by style and typological details into two groups. Group I started to mint at the middle of the 5th century with a characteristic feature of the obverse - the bull’s head crown. The legend is written in Pehlevi and was read as *nycky MLK*. The floral motif under the bust has a close parallel among Alchon issues. On the reverse is the Sasanian fire-altar flanked by two standing figures, each of whom holds a long scepter. Above each figure, there is a small rosette or sun wheel, which is also a characteristic feature of this Nezak coinage.⁴³⁸

Group II appears during the later phase of Group I. The two groups are distinguished by stylistic variations, letter forms in their obverse legends and the sun

⁴³⁵ Göbl 1967-I, 25.

⁴³⁶ Alram 2004, 573.

⁴³⁷ Schottky 2004, 576.

⁴³⁸ Göbl 1967-II, 72-73.

wheels on the reverses of Group II are much larger than in Group I. Probably coins were minted in two different mints: group I in Ghazni and group II in Kabul, as indicated by many single coins purchased in the Kabul bazaar and the Gardez hoard, which appeared on the Kabul market in 1962 and contains only Nezak coins from Group II, when Nezak took it from the Alchon shortly after the death of Toramana in AD 515. The purity of the drachms changed and finally become a pure copper. This phase of inflation runs partly parallel to that of the Indian Alchon coinage of Mihirakula.⁴³⁹

The Nezak kings, according to Alram, were presumably local rulers of Kapisa-Kabul-Zabul region, as also proposed by Kuwayama, and not Huns as Göbl thought.⁴⁴⁰ Vondrovec thinks that the identification of the Nezak Shahs is still unclear concerning their material culture or their absolute chronology. They are only known from their coins and Chinese stating that they established their hegemony in the area of Ghazni and Kabul-Kapisa in the second part of 5th century AD. The Alchons took Gandhara from their control in the middle of the 5th century AD.⁴⁴¹

Hephthalites: The fourth group of coins of the “Iranian Huns” is that of the *proper* or *genuine* Hephthalites (Em. 282 – 289) (**fig. 79**). According to the coins it is supposed that they did not cross the Hindukush southwards, but kept their main seats in eastern Khorasan. Although Göbl believed that there is no evidence that Bamiyan could mint the Hephthalite coins, it is noted that two coins represented in the catalogue related to the “Iranian Huns” have been found here.⁴⁴²

In general, the Hephthalite coinage is placed between AD 476/77, when Peroz was captured and received freedom for a ransom of 30 mule-loads with silver drachmas and AD 563/565 when they were defeated.

The episode of Peroz’s ransom was confirmed by numerous finds of drachmas of this king in northern Tokharistan, where the coins and their later

⁴³⁹ Göbl 1967-II, 71-89; Alram 1999/2000, 132-133.

⁴⁴⁰ Alram 1999/2000, 134-135.

⁴⁴¹ Vondrovec 2008, 276.

⁴⁴² Baker/Allchin 1991, 11.

imitations took precedence over all other Sasanian issues.⁴⁴³ The multiple discoveries of Hephthalite low-grade drachmas in the 5th century AD in ruins of settlements in Transoxiana speak of the broad circulation in this territory. On the obverse these monetary units there is depicted the head of a king with crown (similar to the Sasanian headdress), while on the reverse we find an altar of fire and two protecting guards.⁴⁴⁴ In Tokharistan the Peroz silver drachms circulated with countermarks in Bactrian and with tamghas identifying the local rulers.⁴⁴⁵ Thereafter, the third coin type of Peroz determined the monetary system of the Hephthalites in Tokharistan, and they eventually minted imitations of it.⁴⁴⁶

One of the largest imitation groups attributed to the Hephthalites in Göbl's work is Em. 287. On the obverse an imitation of the bust of Peroz is shown with his third crown, on which, over the crown cap, there are outspread wings, perhaps symbolizing the *vārəγna*, the bird of Verethragna (Middle Persian Bahrām), the Iranian god of victory. In front of the bust are written the Bactrian letters *ēb*. Outside the circle four big dots are engraved on the dies. The reverse imitates the third type of Peroz's coinage with the characteristic monogram M-P (*MLK' Peroz* - "King Peroz") in the left field. In the right field the name of the mint *baxlo* "Balkh" is written in Bactrian letters, which confirms that the place of issue was north of the Hindukush. The letters *ēb* were interpreted by Humbach as an abbreviation of *ēbodalo* "Hephthalite"⁴⁴⁷ and they have since been read on another new Hephthalite issue (287A) (**fig. 80, 1**) that shows the bust of a Hunnish prince holding a drinking cup in his right hand. This type of the Hephthalite coins has a close analogy with the image on "Stroganov" silver bowl from State Hermitage museum in Russia.⁴⁴⁸

Several Hephthalite coins were found in Central Asian sites:

1. In Kara-tepe, silver coin with Hephthalite stamp, which has an over-

⁴⁴³ Zeimal 1994, 253.

⁴⁴⁴ Неразик 1963, 422 - 423.

⁴⁴⁵ Cribb 2007, 370.

⁴⁴⁶ Göbl 1967-I, 24-26; Göbl 1967-II, 89.

⁴⁴⁷ Humbach 1996, 209-212.

⁴⁴⁸ Alram 2002a, 149-153; Alram 2004, 573.

strike, showing an heart with trefoil.⁴⁴⁹

2. In Khairabad-tepe, imitation of Peroz's coin dates to the second half of the 5th or the beginning of the 6th centuries AD.⁴⁵⁰
3. In excavations of a settlement located on the road Termez-Angor, not far from the Angor a further similar coin was discovered.⁴⁵¹
4. A silver coin, also Peroz imitation, dated to the end of the 5th or the beginning of the 6th centuries AD, was found in Dalverzin-tepe.⁴⁵²
5. In Budrach, situated in 10 km to north from Dalverzin-tepe, two coins were found which are imitations of Peroz's coins (Göbl's Em. 287).⁴⁵³

The Hephthalite imitations of Peroz's coins carrying the mint *baxlo* can be distinguished into two groups:

1. The larger group carries the Bactrian letters *ēb* or *ēbo* (for *ēbodalo*, "Hephtal") on the obverse and the king's head in front;
2. This group, instead of the Bactrian legend, shows a crescent in the right field above the diadem ribbon and a star in the left field.

A characteristic feature of both types are four big dots outside the ridged border. A minor typological variation only occurs in group one where between crown cap and crescent either a simple dot is engraved, as is case on the Sasanian prototype, or a triplet (three little dots arranged in a triangle) is depicted.⁴⁵⁴ Lerner notes that on some coins of the Hephthalites a lion's head was used on the crowns.⁴⁵⁵

According to Kabanov many copper coins found during excavations of Shor-tepe (3 km south from Karshi) can relate to the Hephthalite governor of Nakhshab.

⁴⁴⁹ Вайнберг/Раевская 1982, 66-67.

⁴⁵⁰ Альбаум 1960, 45-46.

⁴⁵¹ Альбаум 1960, 57.

⁴⁵² Пугаченкова/Ртвеладзе 1978, 22-23.

⁴⁵³ Ртвеладзе 1987b, 120-121; He notes that among the coins imitating Peroz's coins with countermarks there are samples with Bactrian inscription – *αλχονοχδηο*: Ртвеладзе 1987a, 144; Ртвеладзе 1987b, 122.

⁴⁵⁴ Alram/Lo Muzio 2006, 134.

⁴⁵⁵ Lerner 2009, 222.

The coins show the head of the governor on the front side, without crown, turned left, beardless, with a long straight nose, while on the reverse a man is killing a lion with a sword. On avers, in front of the person's face, there is an Aramaic legend. The picture of a ruler with elongated head is similar to the images on the Hephthalite coins minted in India. The coins are dated between AD 480 and 563/567 during the time when the Hephthalites set up their own authority and became rulers of Nakhshab. The fact that the governor is depicted without crown was explained by Kabanov in the sense that they did not belong to the dynasty of the supreme rulers of the Hephthalite state.⁴⁵⁶

Around the middle of the 6th century AD the first western Turks appear as a new power to the north and the east of the Hephthalites in Khorasan. The Sasanian king Khusrow I Anushirvan (531–579) made an alliance with them against the Hephthalites, and in about AD 563/65 they defeated the latter and divided their kingdom among themselves. Even in this late phase, which continued up to the middle of the 8th century AD, the issuing of drachms according to Sasanian models continued. Above all, the vast quantity of coins minted by Khusrow II Parviz (591–628) were imitated with additional local elements. The legends are often in three languages: Middle Persian, Bactrian, and Indian. From the 6th century AD on, diverse countermarks are used in the Central Asian monetary system, on both locally issued and foreign (Sasanian and Arab-Sasanian) drachms. These were intended to restrict circulation within specific political domains.⁴⁵⁷

According to Rtveldze, in coins minted in Chaganian there are drachmas of Peroz with over coinage of Bactrian or Sogdian legends – $\chi\delta\eta\theta\omicron$ and $\chi\omega\beta$ which show a title of ruler and the Bactrian inscription on imitation of the drachmas of Peroz over coinage, which are read as “*Hono*”, “*Hionso*” and “*Alkhon*”.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁶ Кабанов 1961, 137-144; M. Masson opposes this theory. He thinks that these coins do not belong to the Hephthalites, because they have no stylistic similarities. These coins were minted by Parthian rulers from the Arsakid dynasty who survived in different regions of Central Asia after the collapse of their empire in AD 224/226. One of them could establish his power in the Kashkadarya region and minted this type of coins in the 3rd - 4th century AD: Массон 1977, 135-137.

⁴⁵⁷ Alram 2004, 573.

⁴⁵⁸ Ртвеладзе 1983, 75.

Images of the ruler's head, facing to the left, are placed in the ancient period only on coins of the dynasty Urkod (Girkod) (1st century BC – 3rd century AD), and then on coins of Kesh (3rd – 6th centuries AD) and the Hephthalite coins of India, mainly the Hephthalite examples of Sasanian coins of the 5th - 6th centuries AD.⁴⁵⁹

Rtveladze supposes that the Hephthalites terminated the local dynasty in Chach at the end of the 5th century, replacing it with their own, and here produced copper coins with their tamgha.⁴⁶⁰

In the National History Museum in Tashkent there are two copper coins (similar to 5 coins in the collection of the State Hermitage in St. Petersburg), depicting a ruler on the front side and horses on the back. These coins in the opinion of Rtveladze, found in the region of Bukhara, perhaps belonged to the Hephthalite king Gatfar.⁴⁶¹ However, according to M. Fedorov the assignment of these coins to Gatfar is due to a wrong reading of the inscriptions by Rtveladze. These coins, according to his own reading, bear the name Kavad, not Gatfar.⁴⁶²

Plyasov, based on an analysis of the tamgha of the ruler of Pendzhikent, Gamaukyan (or Hamaukyan), on coins of the second half of the 7th century AD, notes that he was most likely of Chionite-Hephthalite origin.⁴⁶³

Goboziko / Tobazin(i/o) coins

In the opinion of Vainberg the Sasanian Empire, allied with the Chionite nomads who lived near the eastern borders of the Empire, conducted a military campaign against the Kushans in the late 70's of 4th century AD. However, in the late 80's, the situation changed and the Chionites, together with the Kidarites, launched a war against the Sasanians and drove them from the former Kushan lands. As a result, in the south of the Hindukush, the kingdom of Kidara appeared. The Chionites

⁴⁵⁹ Ртвеладзе 2006, 17.

⁴⁶⁰ Ртвеладзе 2006, 114.

⁴⁶¹ Ртвеладзе 2004, 106-109.

⁴⁶² Fedorov 2005, 196-197.

⁴⁶³ Пыасов 2003, 141-143; Ильясов 2004 а, 54-59.

moved into the area of Kabul and later northern India. This group of tribes was part of the Chionites, creating an independent principality in the territory of Tokharistan and beginning to mint coins bearing the inscription *Goboziko* (**fig. 80, 2**) (end of the 4th - first half of the 5th century).⁴⁶⁴ At the same time, in eastern Tokharistan and Badakhshan, the Hephthalite state formed. Later, in the 40s of the 5th century, the mint of the Kidarites and the Chionites (*Goboziko*) in Tokharistan broke down as a result of the conquest of the territory by Yazdegerd II.⁴⁶⁵

Ghirshman reads the legend as “Shaho Zabula”.⁴⁶⁶ Humbach proposes two readings of this name: *Gobozini* and *Gobozoko*, presuming that the latter should be more correct.⁴⁶⁷ According to Alram a new reading of this name should be *T/Gobazin(i/o)*,⁴⁶⁸ while Rtveldze reads the legend as *Gobozona/Goboz(a)* and translates it as *ruler of Gobzon*. He supposes that *Goboz* was the territory between southern Sogd and the Amudarya.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁴ According to Göbl’s classification this type of coins belong to Em. 32: Göbl, 1967-I, 53-54; Göbl, 1967-II, 56; Göbl 1967-III, Pl. 14.

⁴⁶⁵ Вайнберг 1972, 136-138.

⁴⁶⁶ Ghirshman 1948, 34-35.

⁴⁶⁷ Хумбах 1975, 61-62.

⁴⁶⁸ Alram 2008, 259.

⁴⁶⁹ Ртвеладзе 1999, 109.

5. WRITTEN SOURCES

From the works of early medieval historians there is some information about the Hephthalites. Procopius of Caesarea, a Byzantine historian of the 6th century AD, wrote: “The Ephthalitai are of the stock of the Huns in fact as well as in name; however, they do not mingle with any of the Huns known to us, for they occupy a land neither adjoining nor even very near to them; but their territory lies immediately to the north of Persia; indeed their city, called Gorgo, is located over against the Persian frontier, and is consequently the centre of frequent contests concerning boundary lines between the two peoples. For they are not nomads like the other Hunnic peoples, but for a long time have been established in a goodly land. As a result of this they have never made any incursion into the Roman territory except in company with the Median army. They are the only ones among the Huns who have white bodies and countenances which are not ugly. It is also true that their manner of living is unlike that of their kinsmen, nor do they live a savage life as they do; but they are ruled by one king, and since they possess a lawful constitution, they observe right and justice in their dealings both with one another and with their neighbours, in no degree less than the Romans and the Persians.”⁴⁷⁰

Thus, Procopius reports that the Hephthalites were a Hunnish people, but they did not mix with the other known Huns; that they differed from them in their looks and lifestyle, and that they lived away from the others north of the Persians. A Byzantine contemporary of Procopius, Agaphius of Myrinae simply states: “The Hephthalites are a Hunnish people”.⁴⁷¹

Other Byzantine authors who give information relevant to the Hephthalites deserve to be mentioned: Priscus of Panium (5th century), Menander Protector (6th century), Cosmas Indicopleustes (6th century) and Theophilaktos Simocattes (7th century). Theophanous Byzantios (6th century) reports that a ruler of the Hephthalites named Wakhshunvar was also called Eftalan (*Εφθαλάνοϛ*), and from his name the

⁴⁷⁰ Procopius 1914 - I, 12-15.

⁴⁷¹ Γαφύροβ 1972, 206.

whole people came to this name (*Εφθαλιται*).⁴⁷² Theophilaktos Simocattes noted: “The ruler of Abdels who also named the Hephthalites”.⁴⁷³

Cosmas Indicopleustes (Indian navigator) was a merchant from Alexandria who visited India and Sri Lanka between AD 525 and 547, later became a monk and wrote the work “Christian topography” where we find some data about the Hephthalites. In particular, the number of troops and the king, whom he calls Gollas.⁴⁷⁴

Further information, mainly about the war of the Sasanian emperor Peroz with the Hephthalites, can be found in Syrian sources, such as the work of Joshua the Stylite (6th century), whose “Chronicle” was written around AD 517, and covers the history of northern Mesopotamia in the years between AD 497 and 506/07. The “Chronicle” of Zacharias Rhetor (5th - 6th century) contains the report of people “*living in tents*”, interestingly mentioning 13 nations, and naming the Abdel and the Hephthalites,⁴⁷⁵ similarly in a fragmentary, anonymous chronicle of the town of Karka de Beth Selok (5th – 6th centuries). Michael Syrian, an author of the 9th century, mentioned the Hephthalites as Thedal, Thedalatzi.

The relations between the Sasanians and their north-eastern neighbours, in particular, the Chionites, and their appearance and funeral rites are discussed in the “Roman History”, the major work of Ammianus Marcellinus (330-400).

More information about the Hephthalites comes from eastern sources, particularly Chinese documents. The name “Hephthalites” appeared for first time in Chinese chronicles in AD 456 when they sent a first embassy to China to the court of Northern (or Toba) Wei Empire (386-534) and there is no evidence of the existence of the Hephthalites prior to AD 456.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷² Тревеп 1950, 126; Moravcsik 1983-II, 127.

⁴⁷³ Droin 1895, 74; Moravcsik 1983-II, 54.

⁴⁷⁴ Cosmas 1967; Cosmas Indicopleustes 1973; Mohay 1990, 99-110; Some researchers take into consideration that the name *Gollas* of Cosmas’s account refers to Mihirakula. It is possible to explain this, since inscriptions on some Kashmiri coins of Mihirakula end Mihiragula or – *ghola*: Errington/Curtis 2007, 98.

⁴⁷⁵ Zachariah of Mitylene 1899, 328.

⁴⁷⁶ Enoki 1955, 233.

The Chinese sources give a number of accounts of the origins of the Hephthalites. One links them with the Kao-ch'e (a branch of the Turkic tribes), another with the descendants of Pa-hua, a general of Ch'e-shih people who lived in Turfan. A third considers them as belonging to the same race as the Great Yuezhi or Ta-yüeh-shih (the Kushans), the fourth supposes them to be the successors of the K'ang-chü of the former Han.⁴⁷⁷

Understanding the difficulty of determining the exact origin of the Hephthalites, the 7th century Chinese author Wei Jie, who traveled as head of an official Sui dynasty mission to the western countries, in his work "Xi-fan-ji" ("Record of the Western Barbarians") noted: "The informations coming from remote countries and foreign languages are subject to corruption and misunderstanding and, moreover, concern very ancient time. So we do not know what is certain. (Thus) it is impossible to decide (the origin of the Ephthalites)".⁴⁷⁸

In the Chinese "Beishi" ("History of the Northern Kingdoms"), written by Li Yanshou in 644, we find (book 97): "Country of the Yada. A kind of Da Yuezhi, they are also said to be a division of the Gaoju". Regarding their native land, the "Beishi" states: "They originated from the north of the Chinese frontier and came down south from the Jinshan mountain. They are located to the west of Khotan".⁴⁷⁹

The "Suishu" ("History of the Sui Dynasty"), which was written by Wei Zheng in 636 during the period of the Tang dynasty (618-907), reports (in book 83) that "The country of Yida has its capital 200 li (one *li* is equivalent to 500 m. – A.K.) or more to the south of the river Wuhu. The people are of Greater Yuezhi stock. They have an army of five to six thousand men. They are reputed to be good warriors".⁴⁸⁰

In another history, the "Tangshu" ("History of the Tang Dynasty", 10th century), in book 221b we receive information that "The country of I-ta is of the race

⁴⁷⁷ Enoki 1959, 1; Enoki notes that the connection of the Hephthalites with general Pa-hua is based upon arbitrary identification of one of the Hephthalite names in Chinese sources – Hua - with the name of general Pa-hua: Enoki 1959, 1.

⁴⁷⁸ Enoki 1959, 6-7.

⁴⁷⁹ Бичурин Н.Я. (Иакинф) 1950, 205; Vaissière 2003, 125.

⁴⁸⁰ Бичурин 1950, 206; Chavannes 1969, 223; Vaissière 2003, 126.

of Ta-yüeh-shih in the time of Han...Yen-ta is their king's family name. The descendants made the family name (the name of) the country, which corrupted into I-ta".⁴⁸¹

In the "Liangshu" (History of dynasty Liang, 502-556/7, written in 629) Book 54, the Hephthalites are mentioned under the name *Hua*, but one of their king carried the name *Yen-tai-i-li-t'o*: "The Kingdom Hua. This nation is a special branch of the Ku-chi ... During the Wei dynasty (220-265) and Tsin (265-420) the Hua had no relations with the Middle Kingdom. In the 15th T'ien-Kien year (510) began their king Yen-ti-li-i-to send envoys who brought products of their country. In the first year p'ut'ung (520), he also sent envoys ... In the 7th Year (526), they came with gifts... When the Yüan-Wei still resided in Sang-kan (east of Ta-t'ung-fu) (386-494), the Hua were small nation under the rule of Jui-jui".⁴⁸²

Interesting data is preserved in later copies of the "Liang chih-kung-t'u" or "Liang Zhigongtu" (6th century), a scroll painting depicting the envoys of the thirty-five countries who were sent to the court of Liang to pay tribute in the reign of the Emperor Wu. In this source we can also find information about the Hephthalites (Hua). There are names of the Hephthalites envoys P'u-to-ta in AD 516 and Fu-ho-liao-liao and K'ang-fu-chen-t'ung in AD 520.⁴⁸³

There is information about the Hephthalites in another chronicle, the "Zhoushu" or "Choushu" in Book 50 (History of the Northern Zhou dynasty 557-581, written in AD 636): "The country of Ya-ta is of Greater Yüeh-chih stock. It is west of Yü-t'ien, and 10,000 li west of Ch'ang-an. It is king his capital in the walled city of Pa-ti-yen, which means something like "the walled city in which the king resides". This walled city is some 10 li square. Its penal law and customs are about the same as those of the T'u-chüeh. They also have a custom by which elder and younger brother both marry one wife. If one has no elder or younger brother, his wife wears a one-horned hat. If one has brothers, horns are added to the hat, according to

⁴⁸¹ Enoki 1959, 14.

⁴⁸² Herrmann 1925, 568-569; In the opinion of Bernshtam (1951, 183-184), the name Eftal used by the Byzantine authors, is formed by joining the term Hua with the name of their leader Yen-tai-i-li-t'o or Ye-da (a shortened version of the name in Chinese sources).

⁴⁸³ Enoki 1970, 37-45; Enoki 1984, 116-122.

their number. Its people are fierce and violent, and make mighty warriors. Yü-t'ien, Anxi, and other countries, large and small, altogether more than twenty, are all subject to it. In the twelfth year of the period Ta-t'ung (546), it sent an envoy who presented its characteristic products. In the second year of the reign of Wei Fei-ti (553), and in the second year of the reign of Ming-ti [of our Chou dynasty] (558), it also sent envoys, who came with tribute. Later, it was smashed by the T'u-chüeh".⁴⁸⁴

The "Weishu" (386-556, written in 11th century), Book 102, noted that the capital of the Hephthalites was in Pa-ti-yen, which was the king's residence, and there were many temples and Stupas, decorated with gold. "The number of inhabitants is approximately 100000. They have no cities; they migrate with their herds to water and pasture to look for... In the summer they go in cool, in winter in warm areas. They distribute their wives to various places, sometimes separated 200 or 300 li away. Their king is changing his seat; he makes a round trip, every month he takes another residence. Only during the winter cold, he remains for three months at the same place".⁴⁸⁵

We may remark that the Chinese texts copy each other. Some parts of "Beishi" and the "Weishu" are copied from the "Zhoushu" and the "Suishu". Since the "Weishu" had lost many paragraphs because the compilers of the "Beishi" tried to use it as a source for their own *Western Regions chapter*, they filled in the gaps in the "Weishu" with the descriptions from the "Zhoushu" and the "Suishu" and therefore the *Western Regions chapter* of the original "Weishu" was completed with the newly compiled chapter of the "Beishi". The *Western Region chapter* of the existing "Weishu" is an exact copy of that from the "Beishi". That chapter of the "Weishu" therefore consists of mixed information derived from different sources of different dates. It is known, however, some of original paragraphs because the paragraphs quoted from the "Zhoushu" and the "Suishu" are deleted from the "Weishu". So, in the existing "Weishu" information about the Hephthalites is authentic and contemporary.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁴ Herrmann 1925, 569; Miller 1959, 11-12.

⁴⁸⁵ Herrmann 1925, 570-571.

⁴⁸⁶ Kuwayama 2002, 279.

The Chinese source “Tongdian” was published at the beginning of the 9th century AD and has information on the Hephthalites which was collected from the “Liangshu”, “Suishu” and from the original “Weishu”: “Yada country, Yidatong: Yada country is said to either be a division of the Gaoju or of Da Yuezhi stock. They originated from the north of the Chinese frontier and came down south from the Jinshan mountain. They are located to the west of Khotan. To Chang’an, to the east, there are 10,000 li. To the reign of Wen(cheng) of the Late Wei (452-466), eighty or ninety years have elapsed”. The Hephthalites had migrated from the Altai to the south in the middle of the 4th century AD and were of the same stock as the Gaoju as these are noted in the “Weishu”. The Hephthalites were a Turkish tribe and, more precisely, an Oghuric one, since the Gaoju had a origin from the various Oghuric tribes.⁴⁸⁷

In later Chinese source “Tang Huiyao” (Collection of state documents of Tang), which was written by Wang Pu in 10th century AD we find repeated information from previous Chinese sources. In chapter 99 a description is given of the country Tuhuluo, where population is mixed with Yida. There is also a report that several brothers have one woman as wife and the woman had a cap with horn or horns according to how many husbands she had.⁴⁸⁸

Information about the Hephthalites can also be found in the work of the Chinese traveller Song Yun (6th century), an ambassador to the Hephthalite king in AD 518, and Xuanzang (602/603? - 664), a Buddhist priest, who made a pilgrimage in AD 629-645 to the Buddhist shrines of India.

Song Yun was sent by the Northern Wei emperor as ambassador to the Hephthalites. He traveled with the party of Hui Sheng, who was on an imperial mission, and soon after his return to China in AD 523, Song Yun gathered together his travel notes and had them included in the fifth volume of the “Records of Monasteries in Lo-yang” (Lo-yang-kia-lan-ki, Books 5 and 6) which was completed in AD 547.⁴⁸⁹ He has left us a description of the Hephthalites, after his visit to the

⁴⁸⁷ Vaissière 2003, 120-121.

⁴⁸⁸ Stark 2009, 5-6.

⁴⁸⁹ Yamada 1989, 82.

Hephthalite ruler at his summer residence in Badakhshan and later in Gandhara: “there were no walled cities for residence; [the area] was kept in good order. The people lived in felt [tents], moving from one place to another in pursuit of water and pasture lands: they moved to cooler areas in summer and warm regions in winter. The natives were simple rustic folk, unversed in writing the rites or moral precepts.”⁴⁹⁰

Xuanzang in the second quarter of the 7th century AD travelled the north-western regions of Turkestan, north-east Central Asia and finally through Afghanistan to India. Although the main purpose of Xuanzang was a pilgrimage to the holy places, he was also a competent geographer. After his return to China he wrote his “*Datang xiyu ji*” (“Notes about the Western regions in the Great Tang period”), in which a group of ten states is described. Fragmentary information about Central Asia of this period can also be found in the notes of the travelers mentioned above, Wei Jie (7th century), and Hyecho (or Hui Chao) (704-787), a Korean monk who travelled in northern India from AD 727. Short notes are given in Hyecho’s work on some Central Asian states, their geographical position and the characteristics of the people of these countries. In particular he reports on the country of the *Hu* (Sogd), which was under Arabic rule. Hyecho also described other countries, such as Zabulistan, and Huttal, where Hu and Turks lived simultaneously, although in Zabulistan not equally; the king and army were Turks, but the general population was Hu.

Some basic materials is also found on the biographies of Jinagupta and Dharmagupta in the “*Tang Gaosengzhuan*” (Tang biographies of eminent monks) edited by Daoxuan in the middle of the 7th century AD. Jinagupta, who was in Central Asia, especially in the Hephthalite centre Tokharistan on his way from India to China in the second part of 6th century AD, saw the decline of the Hephthalites.⁴⁹¹

Data about the Hephthalites and historical events relevant to them are contained in early medieval Armenian sources, in which, however, the authors do not distinguish the Kushans and the Hephthalites but use the terms interchangeably.

⁴⁹⁰ Litvinsky 1996, 145.

⁴⁹¹ Kuwayama 1989, 97-99; Kuwayama 2002, 113-116.

Fawstos Buzand (or Faustus of Byzantium, end of the 4th - beginning of the 5th century), the author of the “History of Armenia”, writes about the eastern wars of the Sasanian Shapur II. The battles of the Sasanians under Yazdegerd II with their northeastern neighbours, including the Hephthalites, in the 5th century were described by Eghishe Vardapet (or Elishe), who himself took part in these events. There are similar materials in the works of Lazar Parpetsi (or Ghazar, 5th century) in his “History of Armenia” and Moses Khorenatsi (or Movses, end of the 5th century - beginning of the 6th century). The Hephthalites (in the form *Heptalk*) are mentioned in the “Geography” of Anania Shirakatsi (7th century) and in the “History of the emperor Heraclius” by the bishop Sebeos (7th century). It may be noted that in works even of the late Armenian authors can find information about battles between Peroz and the Hephthalites: Moses Kaghankatvatsi (10th century), Kirakos Gandzaketsi (13th century) and Vardan Barzberdatsi (13th century).

In Indian sources the Hephthalites are mentioned under the name “Huna”. The major part of the data is from stone pillars (5th – 6th century AD) erected in:

1. Eran, Madhya Pradesh state, India: stone pillar inscription of Budhagupta, stone boar inscription of Toramana, posthumous pillar inscription of Goparaja;
2. Salt Range region, Punjab, Pakistan: Kura sandstone inscription of Toramana;
3. Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh state, India: stone inscription of Mihirakula;
4. Mandsaur, Madhya Pradesh state, India: stone pillar inscription of Yaśodharman, stone inscription of Kumaragupta, Risthal stone slab inscription of Prakashadharma Aulikara;
5. Kahaum, Uttar Pradesh, India: stone pillar inscription of Skandagupta;
6. Junagadh, Gujarat, India: rock inscription of Skandagupta;
7. Bhitari, Uttar Pradesh, India: stone inscription of Skandagupta.

Usually these inscriptions are mention Toramana. On the Varaha image inscription from Eran (**fig. 82**) Toramana is recorded as controlling the Malwa region of Central India. His name was also found in the stone inscriptions from Kura and

Risthal (Mandsaur, India), where there is information that the local ruler Prakashadharman defeated Toramana in battle, and on one of three copper plates from Sanjeli (Gujarat, India).⁴⁹²

The Gwalior inscription, dated to the regnal year 15 of Mihirakula (AD 515-540), mentions, along with Mihirakula, also Toramana as: “glorious Tôramâna; by whom, through (*his*) heroism that was specially characterised by truthfulness, the earth was governed with justice”.⁴⁹³ The Bhitari pillar inscription reports that Skandagupta carried out wars c. AD 456/57 against Hunas.⁴⁹⁴

In Indian epics of the 5th century AD, the “Mahabharata” and the “Ramayana”, and the “Brhat-samhita” of the 6th century AD, and by the Indian astronomer Varahamihira, both White (Speta) and Dark (Hara) Huna are mentioned. Many facts, particularly about the Hephthalite kings, are contained in the “Rajatarangini” compiled in the middle of the 12th century by Kalhana, a historical chronicle of Kashmir, in the Prakrit “Kupalayamala”, in the “Purana” related to the 4th – 6th centuries AD, and in the Jain author Udyotana Sûri “Kupalayamala”, written in the second half of 8th century AD.

Different information on the Hephthalites and their military confrontations with the Sasanians, in particular with Peroz (Arabo-Persian Firuz), is found in Arab and Persian literature, of which one may note in particular the works of Abu Hanifah Ahmad ibn Dawud ad-Dinawari (9th century), “Kitab al-akhbar al-tiwal” (“Book of liaison tales”); Abu Jafar Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (839-923), “Tarikh ar-rusul va-l-muluk” (“History of the prophets and kings”); a fragmentary translation of this work into Persian by the Samanid vizier Abu Ali Muhammad Balami (10th century), which is provided with comments and complementary material; the work of Ibn al-Fakih (10th century); Abu Reihan al-Biruni (973-1051), “Al-athar al-baqiya an al-qurun al-khaliya” (“Monuments of past generations”); Abulkasim Firdausi (10th - 11th centuries), “Shahname” (“Legends of the kings”); Mirkhond (1433-1498), “Rauzat al-Safa” (“Garden of purity”) and a number of others, which essentially repeated the

⁴⁹² Melzer 2006, 260.

⁴⁹³ Fleet 1888a: http://projectsouthasia.sdstate.edu/docs/history/primarydocs/Epigraphy/Gupta-Era/gwalior_stone.htm

⁴⁹⁴ Errington/Curtis 2007, 96, 134.

data available in the above authors.

We may note the twelfth century Persian treatise “Fārsnāma” which shows the neighbours of the Sasanian empire in the time of Khusrow I Anushirvan. Thus, F. Grenet notes: “The Sasanian king is said to have, in his solemn courts, set an empty throne to his left for the emperor of China, another one behind him for the king of the Hephthalites (or of the Khazars, in anachronical variant); the third one, to his right belonged to the Cesar of Rome (i.e. the Byzantine emperor).”⁴⁹⁵

New data comes from handwritten documents in Bactrian language, the so-called “archive of the ruler of Rob” (an area in present-day northern Afghanistan) which contains material from the Kushano-Sasanian period up to the middle of the 8th century AD (**fig. 83**). This archive, which belongs to Dr. Khalili, consists mostly of legal documents and letters, is being translated and published by N. Sims-Williams. Amongst the material there are four documents and three letters are written on leather where the Hephthalites are mentioned. The contents of these documents and letters usually mention taxes payable to the Hephthalite rulers.

Documents:

1. Document **I** (here and below according to N. Sims-Williams classification) – year 260 = AD 483. Contract for the purchase or lease of an estate.
2. Document **Ii** – year 260 = AD 483. Contract for the purchase (or lease?) of an estate.
3. Document **J** – year 295 = AD 517. Contract for the purchase of an estate.
4. Document **al** – ca AD 600 (?). Account of expenditure.⁴⁹⁶

Letters:

1. Document **eh** – ca AD 470 (?).
2. Document **ja** – ca AD 470 (?).
3. Document **jb** – ?⁴⁹⁷

The last letter (**jb**) is an undated letter, which has special interest because of

⁴⁹⁵ Grenet 2005, 129-130; It was noted earlier by A. Christensen (1944, 411-412) as well.

⁴⁹⁶ Sims-Williams 2000, 50-57, 162-163.

⁴⁹⁷ Sims-Williams 2007, 122-127. I would like to thank N. Sims-Williams for providing information on the probable dating of the letters.

its contents: “To Sart son of Khwadewbandan, the glorious *yabghu* of the Hephthal, the ruler of Rob, the scribe of the Hephthalite lords, the judge of Tukharistan (and Gharchistan...”⁴⁹⁸

The most recently founded information is a copper scroll inscription from the Schøyen collection and which was inscribed to mark the consecration of a stupa, a Buddhist sanctuary. The inscription is written in Sanskrit and the place of origin is possibly northern Afghanistan. It was broken into two parts and the complete size is 58 x 28 cm. It bore 54 incised lines, 52 of which are preserved. The occasion for which it was ordered was the erection and consecration of a stupa in the village or town called Śārdīyasa in the realm of Mehama. The scroll mentions 13 royal donors. Finally, the inscription reveals that the donors of the stupa were believers of Buddhism.⁴⁹⁹

This inscription gives us a new view on the early medieval history of the region. Here, for the first time, the names of Hephthalite (Alchon) kings are given, some of them otherwise known only from coins. Another important fact is that it dates all these kings in the same time. For example, if before it was considered that Toramana was the king after Khingila, now due to this inscription we have information that they both ruled at the end of the 5th century AD. G. Melzer supposes that the stupa was built in the region around modern Talaqan, situated east of Kunduz (north-eastern Afghanistan) and dated to the Laukika era, which corresponds to AD 492/493.⁵⁰⁰

The most interesting part of the inscription reads:

“(33-39) In the sixty-eighth year on the seventh day of the bright half of the month Kārttika [corresponding to October-November]: On this day this caitya of the Realized One containing relics (dhātugarbha) was established by...

8. together with the great Śāhi (*mahāśāhi*) Khīngīla,
9. together with the god-king (*devarāja*) Toramāna,

⁴⁹⁸ Sims-Williams 1999, 255; Sims-Williams 2007, 126-127; Sims-Williams 2008, 94.

⁴⁹⁹ Melzer 2006, 251-252.

⁵⁰⁰ Melzer 2006, 256, 264.

10. together with the mistress of a great monastery Sāsā,
11. together with the great Ṣāhi Mehama,
12. together with Sādavīkha,
13. together with the great king (*mahārāja*) Javūkha, the son of Sādavīkha; during the reign of Mehama”.⁵⁰¹

In this list we can see 4 kings whom we know from coins – Khingila, Toramana, Mehama and Javukha. Melzer notes that the difference between *ṣāhi* and *rāja* might have a connection with geographical regions over which the kings ruled, one being closer to India and the other referring to countries further to the north of India (Pakistan, Afghanistan).⁵⁰² According to the inscription Khingila was ruling at same time as Toramana and if Khingila was actually Toramana’s father it would be mentioned in the inscription as in the case of Javukha. Khingila is not a dynastic title but a person’s name. The name of Javukha’s father Sādavīkha is recorded here for the first time.⁵⁰³

Melzer also remarks that it is very unlikely that all these kings gathered to participate in the endowment of the stupa, or that they were somehow personally involved with it. It is much more likely that the donors intended, with the enumeration of so many royal names from the surrounding regions, to raise the position of the endowment or to ensure the benevolence of these rulers. It also appears unlikely that the names of the rulers who are already deceased would be included without this being clearly mentioned. There are some uncertainties because it cannot be settled what kind of rank these rulers held. It is possible that some of them only had the status of local rulers or even governors.⁵⁰⁴

Mēyam – “king of Kadagān” (area to the east of the kingdom of Rob, in the valley of the Qunduz-ab) in the Bactrian documents from the time of Peroz may be

⁵⁰¹ Melzer 2006, 274.

⁵⁰² Melzer 2006, 258.

⁵⁰³ Melzer 2006, 258, 260, 262.

⁵⁰⁴ Melzer 2006, 262.

the same person as Mehama (in Brahmi script) from the coins and the copper scroll inscription according to Sims-Williams, dated tentatively to AD 492/493.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰⁵ Sims-Williams 2007, 108-109, 114-115; Sims-Williams 2008, 98-99.

6. A HISTORY OF THE HEPHTHALITES

6.1. Origins

Burials of the early medieval time in Central Asia and Afghanistan may provide some information on the Hephthalites. The Chinese chronicles report that the bodies of simple Hephthalite people were placed in earth burials, while the rich buried in specially built stone vaults. Along with the dead, objects used in the life of the deceased were buried. According to archaeological data, these customs were widely known in very different times in a very wide area. The Chinese chronicle “Liangshu” reports that Hephthalites were buried in the coffins, and when parents died, the sons cut off an ear, which was counted lucky after the funeral.⁵⁰⁶ There are also reports that the Hephthalites lead around a dead dog, so that the animal would take away evil spirits.⁵⁰⁷

An interesting phenomenon among the Hephthalites was a custom described by Procopius of Caesarea. He pointed out that “Moreover, the wealthy citizens are in the habit of attaching to themselves friends to the number of twenty or more, as the case may be, and these become permanently their banquet-companions, and have a share in all their property, enjoying some kind of a common right in this matter. Then, when man who has gathered such a company together comes to die, it is the custom that all these men be borne alive into the tomb with him”.⁵⁰⁸ This reference to the custom of putting “his friends” in the coffin at the death of an aristocrat was, probably, drawn from the tradition of burying slaves with their owner, already found in earlier Scythian time.

According to Ammianus Marcellinus, during the funeral of the Chionite prince, younger son of the king Grumbat, killed at Amida, his corpse was burned in the area with artificially produced figures of his friends, who in this way

⁵⁰⁶ Parker 1902, 157; Неразник 1963, 417; Grenet (1984, 275) supposes that such practice existed at Saks and Western Turks.

⁵⁰⁷ Литвинский 1968, 48.

⁵⁰⁸ Procopius 1914-I, 15.

symbolically accompanied him to the other world. Ammianus Marcellinus describes this as follows: “He was carried out in the arms he was wont to wear, and placed on a spacious and lofty pile; around him ten couches were dressed, bearing effigies of dead men, so carefully laid out, that they resembled corpses already buried; and for seven days all the men in the companies and battalions celebrated a funeral feast, dancing, and singing melancholy kinds of dirges in lamentation for the royal youth...And the women, with pitiable wailing, deplored with their customary weepings the hope of their nation thus cut off in the early bloom of youth...When the body was burnt and the bones collected in a silver urn, which his father had ordered to be carried back to his native land, to be there buried beneath the earth, Sapor, after taking counsel, determined to propitiate the shade of the deceased prince by making the destroyed city of Amida his monument. Nor indeed was Grumbates willing to move onward while the shade of his only son remained unavenged.”⁵⁰⁹

An interesting parallel can be found among the funeral customs of the Chionites from the description Ammianus Marcellinus and among the ancient Turks as shown by Kyzlasov. Specifically, he writes that on one of the statues of soldiers from western Tuva was depicted a memorial scene. Below the waist of the main figure there are schematically depicted two participants of feasts, sitting in front of the sculpture. Turning to him, one of them holds in his hand a vessel, and the other lowered his hand, apparently in to leather jar with drink, to scoop up another cup. Another monument of two statues of people involved in the scene of funeral feast is also known. They are shown seated with crossed legs in steppe tradition. According to Kyzlasov, images of warriors with vessels in their hands were necessary to ensure that during the feast organised by close relatives of the buried person in his honor, he could “drink” with them. All this was intended to appease the dead.⁵¹⁰

Elements of such rites, as described by Ammianus Marcellinus, are seen in the excavations at the burial mounds Kanga-qala and Kunya-Uaz in left-bank Khorezm in the territory of northern Turkmenistan. Here, around the structures with powerful traces of fire the skull and parts of skeletons were located. We may also

⁵⁰⁹ Ammianus Marcellinius 1894, 186-187; Аммиан Марцеллин 1996, 166.

⁵¹⁰ Кызласов 1969, 32-33.

note that the vessels from Chash-tepe, dated to the 4th century AD, have analogies with the ones from Kunya-Uaz, mostly in technological features.⁵¹¹ According to Nerazik, cremation is performed here with the burial of ashes away from the burial pyre.⁵¹² Trofimova remarked that the admixture of Mongoloid elements close to a mixed north Chinese type in Kunya-Uaz and Kanga-qala can be explained by ties of the Khorezmian people with the Chionites, ancestors of later Hun-Hephthalite population. In Khorezmian Kalaly-Kyr skulls of adults and children in several cases showed of annular deformation.⁵¹³

The question of the origin of people who were buried in Kunya-Uaz and Kanga-qala is of great interest. The similarity in the burial custom, the accompanying archaeological materials, circular deformation of skulls (**fig. 86**) and, finally, a single type of anthropology suggests the ethnic unity of the population of these fortresses in the 4th century AD. Comparison of the archaeological and historical data permits us to include these populations among the Chionites.⁵¹⁴

There are analogies in the material culture of Kanga-qala, Kunya-Uaz and Yasy-Kyr with the Dzhetyasar culture according to some researchers. This has been demonstrated in the pottery of both regions.⁵¹⁵ The Dzhetyasar monuments (4th - 5th centuries) can be related to the Hephthalites. Here a mixed mesocrane Caucasian oriental type with Mongoloid admixture was buried.⁵¹⁶ The theory has been put forward, based on the similar tradition of cremation of some graves in Central Asia with graves from South Siberia, that Hachy-Hovu in Tuva and late Tashtyk barrows excavated near Minusinsk, indicate close ethnical and cultural contacts between the populations of these regions in 3rd - 5th centuries AD. Groups of people (probably the Huns) from southern Siberia migrated to Central Asia at that time, first to left-bank

⁵¹¹ Неразик 1999, 35.

⁵¹² Неразик 1966, 124-125; Bolelov (1994, 102) notes that the tradition of cremation was known in southern Priaralye from the late Bronze and Iron Age (burials in Tagisken, Uygarak).

⁵¹³ Трофимова 1959, 8; Circular deformation of the head first appeared in southern Priaralye in the 3rd - 4th centuries AD: Яблонский/Болелов 1991, 23-24.

⁵¹⁴ Трофимова 1959, 9.

⁵¹⁵ Яблонский/Болелов 1991, 33-34.

⁵¹⁶ Гинзбург 1974, 222.

Khorezm and then to northern Bactria (burials in the Beshkent valley).⁵¹⁷

The Baitudasht graves (**fig. 9**) may also relate to the Hephthalites. During the excavations fragments of swords, arrows (**fig. 10**), golden coins of the Byzantine emperor Anastasius I (491-518) as well as Sogdian coins, and coins of Khusrow I and Khusrow II were found. Abdullaev thinks that nomads were buried in the kurgans because he found pieces of bows, as were used by the nomads of the 6th – 7th century AD. The crania were identified as bearing Mongoloid features and although the graves were robbed in ancient times, arrowheads were recovered. They date from the 3rd -7th centuries AD.⁵¹⁸ As Abdullaev remarked, in kurgan 2 pieces of iron armour plates and small fragments of human bones, as well as arrowheads were discovered. The Baitudasht kurgans were for rich people and the graves of Atchapar (**fig. 84**) for poor people of the 6th - 7th century AD. In Atchapar the graves were constructed as pit and podboi or transitional to catacomb. The Atchapar graves are different from the Baitudasht ones in size, shape and construction of the grave pit. Another possible reason was, however, that the ground in Atchapar is soft, making it difficult to construct deep pits or podboi. Abdullaev thinks both graves were of one ethnical group. The podboi kurgans of Baitudasht are large, with deep dromos – 2.5-3 m wide and of long rectangular shape; double podboi even have both walls (west and east) of the dromos up to 2 m high. Other podboi in Central Asia are usually not higher than 1 m.⁵¹⁹

The Baitudasht graves have not analogy or parallels among other graves in Central Asia and can be understood as a syntheses of local and Turkic types in the opinion of Abdullaev. In kurgan 13 a chisel type arrowhead was discovered, which is usually found in Turkic sites and can be dated to the 8th – 9th century AD. Three faceted arrowheads datable to the 7th century AD may also be connected with the appearance of Turkic people in Central Asia.⁵²⁰ Solovyov attributes these kurgans

⁵¹⁷ Bolelov 1994, 104-105.

⁵¹⁸ Абдуллаев 1988, 310-324; Абдуллаев 1990, 267-282.

⁵¹⁹ Абдуллаев 1993, 283-295.

⁵²⁰ Абдуллаев 1990, 267-282.

(graves) to early Turks in Central Asia.⁵²¹ In the opinion of Stark, however, the materials are very difficult connect with the Turks because they should be dated earlier and it is possible to relate them with the Hephthalites who lived in this territory in the 5th century AD.⁵²²

Sogd, which always had close ethno-genetic connection with northern Bactria, apparently as a result of a series of political events was somewhat isolated from the southern regions, and reoriented its relations to the north and north-easterly direction. Therefore the population of Sogd became more similar in anthropological features to the Ferghana valley and the ancient Tashkent oasis. In the Ferghana valley the morphological structure of the population also changed. The people of northern Ferghana valley were different from the rest of its population with more Mongoloid features, indicating a strengthening of ties of northern Ferghana with the nomadic tribes of the north-eastern areas. In the southern valley long headed Caucasian type population (Soh cemetery) concentrated, more like the people of Bactria-Tokharistan. The western part, according to material from the Isfara valley burials, was settled by same type population, and their representatives can later be traced to the medieval population of Sogd (materials of Frinket ossuaries near Samarqand).⁵²³

Those buried without inventory in graves with stone fence on the surface, as at Kukyalda in the Alai, Tuphona in Tajikistan and Tipturmae in Talas (Kazakhstan), according to Bernshtam, can be connected to the Hephthalite period and different racial types of the individuals (Caucasian, Pamir-Ferghana and Manju type) indicate an ethnic cconglomerates of Hephthalite entities.⁵²⁴ Among the “royal” monuments of the Hephthalites, Bernshtam, includes the “mughona” type, situated on the slopes of the Chatkal ridge.⁵²⁵ Regarding the stone vaults (kurums) of Ferghana Litvinsky dates them extensively from the 1st century AD till the 6th - 7th century AD, noting that the proportion of such graves in the 6th - 7th century AD is higher than that in

⁵²¹ Соловьев 1987, 159, 162.

⁵²² Stark 2008, 270-274.

⁵²³ Ходжайов/Мустафакулов 2007, 78.

⁵²⁴ Бернштам 1949, 60-61; Бернштам 1998, 56.

⁵²⁵ Бернштам 1997, 512.

podboi-catakomb graves.⁵²⁶

Brykina remarks the anthropomorphic figurines from the plaster found in the Ferghana kurgans. In the Turatash grave a small figurine was put in the mound instead of the buried. At Vorukh, in both cases, sculptures accompanied the buried people. The figures from the Ferghana graves are stylistically similar to those found in excavations in Kayragach. Comparing all the information, it can be assumed that Ferghana was an area where people had taken part in the ethnogenesis of the Hephthalites.⁵²⁷

The existence of coffins in burials is recorded among the Sarmatians and some other Central Asian tribes (e.g. Ferghana), as well as in Hunnic burials, indicated both by written sources and archaeological materials. It is in the Ferghana and in the adjacent areas of Chach, where we can observe a combination of these rituals: burial in the ground, stone vault, tombs (with mounds), sometimes with a wooden coffin, which could be attributed to the Hephthalites.⁵²⁸

In the opinion of Baratov Ferghana was not the region where the ethnogenesis of the Hephthalites occurred, but at the same time the territory of Ferghana valley could have come under the influence of the Hephthalite empire. He considers that one major aspect of disputing the connection between the Hephthalites and Ferghana is the lack of Sasanian drachmas, which are known to have been paid to the Hephthalites as a tribute.⁵²⁹ However, on the territory of Kuva a hoard of early medieval coins was discovered, which also included Sasanian coins of Peroz.⁵³⁰

Matbabaev notes that in the Ferghana valley the underground vaults with reed coffins (**fig. 24; 25**) are unknown in the 5th - 8th centuries AD, while they have similarity to the vaults from Bit-tepe (Surkhandarya valley, 4 km east from Budrach in the foothills of the Babatag, Uzbekistan). These vaults can be connected with the

⁵²⁶ Литвинский 1972, 213.

⁵²⁷ Брыкина 1982, 129.

⁵²⁸ Литвинский 1976, 56; Буряков 1986, 59.

⁵²⁹ Баратов 1997, 96.

⁵³⁰ Матбабаев 2004, 135.

Hephthalite-Turkic presence of that period and in this territory.⁵³¹

One of the interesting features of the burial tradition is the use of a silk face veil, which covered the face and head of the deceased. Its width was equal to the width of silk fabric – 22-23 cm; its length was 43 - 44.5 cm. The veils had no holes for eyes and mouth. The same veils were found at two sites in Eastern Turkestan (Astana and Karakhoja). Veils were used only for burial and not for everyday life. Another important aspect was also observed - the use of pillows under the head; in some of the burials there were pillows, made of bind-weed under the skull.⁵³² Litvinsky does presume that one part of the Hephthalites – the Red Hions living in this region, can be connected with Ferghana.⁵³³

Deformation of the head

It is interesting to note that coins found mostly in Pakistan, India with the head of the Hephthalite kings bore the marks of the same circular deformation, which spread in Europe and Asia in the mid 1st millennium AD and is linked to Central Asian tribes, including the Huns.

Ujfalvy stated that their image was fierce and savage. They have a big nose, lips less subtle than the mouth and a massive lower jaw. The enormous ears of the Shahi-Javulva and Mihirakula resemble the ears of the legendary Attila. The shape of the skull is not normal and reminds of the skulls of modern Kyrgyz, forming because of the peculiarities of the cradle, but perhaps also as a consequence of deliberate deformation.⁵³⁴

Brykina notes that this custom was introduced by the Huns. Although on the

⁵³¹ Матбабаев 1998, 70-76; Matbabaev 1998, 269-305; In Bit-tepe 8 vaults were found which were dug into a hill. Every vault had about 10-18 funerals. Mostly the buried lay on their back along the walls of the vault and some of them had coins in their mouth. According to Solovyov the vaults are dated to the 7th - 8th centuries AD and related to local people of Tokharistan: Соловьев 1987, 158-159; Fifteen silver and copper coins were discovered in the graves, among them coins of the Chaganian imitation of Peroz and Khusrow I and Sasanian coins of Khusrow I and Hormizd IV (590-628), as well as Sogdian coins from the end of the 7th century AD and a Turgesh coin from the second half of the 8th century AD: Зеймаль/Ртвеладзе 1999, 139.

⁵³² Анарбаев/Матбабаев 1990, 44-49; Анарбаев/Матбабаев 1993/94, 232-234.

⁵³³ Litvinskij 1986, 130.

⁵³⁴ Ujfalvy 1898, 395-397; Трофимова 1968, 180.

next page (125) she admits that it had not been distributed widely and everywhere, she writes that the “Custom of cranial deformation in Central Asia has a long tradition. Deformed skulls were found in Merv (5th - 4th centuries BC), Chirikrabad (4th – 3rd centuries BC) and in the Saka cemeteries in Kazakhstan. Skulls from Aktam are among the most ancient deformed skulls found in Central Asia. They date from the 5th century BC”.⁵³⁵ Trofimova notes that it is possible to meet deformed skulls in Sufan, Aktam and Kungai graves from Ferghana which are dated 5th – 3rd centuries BC. Therefore this custom could be brought by the Huns.⁵³⁶

Zezenkov thinks the Kushan anthropological type was close to the Hephthalites, which may be indicated by European images of the Kushan and Hephthalite rulers on coins and by craniological material - the skulls, all with a form of deformation, found in the Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya region of Kushan time can, in the context described by Kabanov, be attributed to the Hephthalites.⁵³⁷

The image on the Hephthalite coins with abnormally long heads of the kings may indicate that many Hephthalites felt the need to be physically different from other tribes and peoples neighbouring them according to Trever. Inostrantsev wrote that the “change in appearance arose from the desire to distinguish themselves from each other, as an anthropologically distinct tribe, mixture with which it is impossible to avoid”.⁵³⁸

Mustafakulov, based on the analysis of skulls from the 4th – 5th centuries AD from the north-eastern part of Old Termez, notes that among the people front temporal-occipital deformation, originally inherent, is gradually reduced and completely disappears, increasing the proportion of people practicing circular deformation, which in turn is considered to be one of the ethnic attributes of the Hephthalites.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁵ Брыкина 1982, 124-125.

⁵³⁶ Трофимова 1968, 183-184.

⁵³⁷ Зезенков 1974, 232-233.

⁵³⁸ Тревер 1950, 132-133.

⁵³⁹ Мустафакулов 2002, 303-304; According to Mustafakulov 13 male, 10 female and 3 children's skulls were found. Overall, 26 of the skeletons were resting on the back in a stretched position and were covered by mud bricks. There were also individual lower jaws, two from males,

The same phenomenon was noted by Xuanzang for the inhabitants of the city-oases Kucha and Karashar in eastern Turkestan.⁵⁴⁰ Tolstov, on the basis of the excavations in Kunya-Uaz (**fig. 86**), remarked that the features of skull deformation found there are close to those typically seen on the Hephthalite coins. Later, in the same territory, during excavations at Kalala-Gyr 1 and Kuba-Tau deformed skulls were also found. The deformation was achieved by:

1. binding the head of the child with a bandage;
- or
2. using a special cap which constrain the head.⁵⁴¹

The deformation of the head of the Hephthalite kings indicated their origin among the nomadic, non-sedentary, local population, which at that time did not have the custom to deform the head and practiced mass and catacomb burial as well as the “podboi” type tombs with a lateral niche following Ginzburg.⁵⁴²

Probably there is a relationship between early Afrighid coins from Khorezm and the Hephthalite coins (the coincidence of the headdresses, transfer to deforming the skull and the depiction of a tamgha) which confirms the thesis about a genetic relationship of the Hephthalites with the local population (the Khorezmians), but on the other hand, it is also pointed out that there was a political relationship in the 5th century AD.⁵⁴³ There is a report from China, that the Hephthalites had a skull deformation: “the Yeda male also squeeze the head to make it flat”.⁵⁴⁴

The custom of deforming the skull was widespread as noted earlier amongst the Huns, then passed on to the Hephthalites and the Oghuzs. Subsequently this custom of skull deformation was renewed only by the Turkmens among the peoples of Central Asia as a typical ethnographic feature. Thereby an ethnic relationship is traced from the Central Asian Huns moving to the west and using this custom as

five from women and four from children. The data on the medium age of these people is also interesting: men - 38.1 years and women - 38 years: Мустафакулов 2002, 303-304.

⁵⁴⁰ Si-Yu-Ki 1906-I, 19-20.

⁵⁴¹ Кияткина 1993, 224.

⁵⁴² Гинзбург 1974, 224; According to Kiyatkina (1993, 225) the deformation of the head was widely spread in the nomadic world.

⁵⁴³ Тревер et al. 1950, 132.

⁵⁴⁴ Бичурин 1950, 300.

identity marker of their tribe, later the Hephthalites, then the Oghuzs. The relationship of the Turkmens with the Oghuzs is now generally indisputed.⁵⁴⁵

Clothes in Hephthalite time

In the “Liangshu” we find reports about the rich aristocrats’ robes, decorated with gold and precious stones. The Chinese traveler Song Yun, who in AD 519 was a member of the Chinese embassy to the Hephthalites, visiting their country, wrote that these people have clothes from skins, rich people - lush and complex clothing. He also reports that the king of the Hephthalites, who received the Chinese embassy near the Vakhan lived in a large felt tent, hung inside by carpets. The king sat on a bed of gold that had four curly phoenix legs. Specifically, Song Yun noted that there was no orchestra. A principal wife of the king and representatives of the nobility with their families were also there.

The silk clothes of the king, according to the Chinese traveler, and his wife were richly decorated. The principal wife wore her special long tail; the headdress was decorated with a “horn”, bestrewn with various precious stones, from something like a long veil descending down; the “One horn” headdresses and components were of the suite of nobility’s wives. We see that among the Hephthalite nobility, was practicing polygamy and not polyandry. Song Yun also noted that the country of the Hephthalites had large carpets, in great abundance were horses and camels, and the people engaged in cattle breeding.

From the written sources we know that the Hephthalites usually cut all the hair on their heads and wore a long dress with short sleeves and had a “habits”, according to the “Beishi”, i.e. some similarities with the Turkic dress. In the wall paintings found in Eastern Turkestan and dated to the 5th - 6th centuries AD we see personages whose clothing (in particular, ornaments of kaftans and shoes, striped hats) can be linked to the Hephthalites.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁵ Бернштам 1951b, 200–201.

⁵⁴⁶ Бичурин 1950, 268; Яценко 2000, 360-361.

The Chinese source “Tongdian” states: “Their clothing is similar to that worn by other Hu barbarians, but with addition of tassels. They all cut their hair...Their troops number perhaps 100,000 men”.⁵⁴⁷

According to Albaum such a scene may be displayed in the painting on the northern wall of Balalyk-tepe. A rich variety of clothing and ornamental motifs in the tissues of the figures on the wall paintings of Balalyk-tepe show the high level of textile crafts.⁵⁴⁸

On the Hephthalite gems and paintings of Balalyk-tepe personages of both sexes have massive necks, a round head, fat cheeks and the lower part of the face shaved, elongated almond-shaped eyes, and thin, long, not connected eyebrows. We see the same appearance later in Kalai Kafirnigan. Judging by the number of coins, the ruling clan of the Hephthalites had distinguished itself, particularly by the deformed, elongated skull. In Balalyk-tepe the depicted people have a straight nose and miniature mouth. Men have dense and elongated figures, muscular hands, thin fingers. Women’s thighs and bust are not highlighted. Great importance was attached to expressive and elegant movements of the hands, paying particular attention to the situation of fingers. In addition, in Tokharistan reliable material on the Hephthalite clothing apparently continues ancient local Kushan traditions (predominance of closed clothes, many types of haircuts). It is possible that this speaks in favor of hypotheses about origin of the Hephthalites in Tokharistan or neighboring Badakhshan. However, this is the clothing provided for the nobility in paintings of the 5th – 6th centuries AD. Clearly there are visible innovations associated with western China and the nomadic world.⁵⁴⁹

On the wall paintings of Dilberjin, according to Maitdinova, we see depictions of Hephthalites (or, following Maitdinova, Chionito-Hephthalites), who were the indigenous population of Bactria-Tokharistan. Persons on the wall paintings have wide trousers with ends stuck into boots, tunic-like shirts narrowed at the wrists

⁵⁴⁷ Vaissière 2003, 124.

⁵⁴⁸ Альбаум 1960, 218.

⁵⁴⁹ Яценко 2006, 260-261.

and kaftans with right-side lapels. Headbands are decorated with lotus flowers. She thinks this kind of clothes have analogies in the images of the Hephthalite rulers on their coins.⁵⁵⁰

The wall paintings of Afrasiab, Pendzhikent and Varakhsha give us some idea about the armour in that period. In general, as noted by Raspopova, in the early Middle Ages in the vast territory similar, sometimes identical types of weapons were used.⁵⁵¹

Womens clothing during the early Middle Ages, particularly in Sogd and Tokharistan (based on the wall paintings and sculptures) had similar shape: the upper tunic of thrown-open clothes (cape, gown) and closed shirts, rain suits, dresses, pants, footwear, headgear. Important parts of the appearance were jewelry and hairstyles.⁵⁵²

Of the upper female dress we know short sleeved of upper shirts, beveled to the outsides, decorated with a line of square incrustated plaques. Probably, it was an influence of Hephthalite political domination in the region at that time (there is a witness of Chinese sources concerning short sleeves, decorated with gold and precious stones though in long clothes, not in short ones). A high-cuffed sleeve becomes a very characteristic feature in Sogd in the 6th century AD and, especially, later. This late Sasanian element was borrowed by the Turks from the Sogdians. Cuffs were made of bright fabrics (often with flower ornaments and red medallions of beads on white background), noble people wore them covered all over with gold brocade. Long sleeves of under-shirts both in male and female clothes in the 6th century were sometimes three-colored - made of horizontal parts of different colors (coming from top to bottom: black, yellow, gray). The manner to decorate clothes with a wide vertical stripe of bright fabric was widespread for both sexes, sometimes to the line of the waist only. In the 5th - 6th century AD there used to be a sewn-on hem on closed male clothing, decorated with two vertical stripes; for women

⁵⁵⁰ Майтдинова 2001, 88; Yatsenko (2006, 248) does not agree with her point of view and thinks that there are no parallels between the depictions on the wall paintings of Dilberjin and elements of the clothes on known Hephthalite coins and gems.

⁵⁵¹ Распопова 1980, 103.

⁵⁵² Майтдинова 1983, 52-53; Майтдинова 1987, 116.

(goddesses) the hem is marked with decor on gala-shirts. The hem attached at the waist can be seen in a priest's depiction. A wide hem often had side cuts of different length (sometimes with additional cut in the center). In Bukharian Sogd (Varakhsha) the male closed garment with an attached breast part is documented. A long dress having sewn-on breast parts and a hem widening a lot to the lower edge with the help of gores is known for girl-musicians. Male and female trousers were of similar cutting and rather narrow. The front seam of female trousers was never stitched in its lower part and had a triangle cut.⁵⁵³

Maitdinova believes that the garment innovations in the Peroz period (in her view, the "shirts", with deep side cuts, and boots with a triangular end in front) are borrowed from the captors of the Western Turkestan nomadic Hephthalites. However, both forms are known in Iran earlier in isolated cases - in late Parthian time when the Hephthalite ethnicity did not exist.⁵⁵⁴

There are actually very few paintings of Hephthalite time (5th – 6th centuries AD) and dating many terracotta back to that period is rather approximate, so, we can not seriously speak about a properly detailed characterizing of the clothes of that period, as has been pointed out by Yatsenko. In the paintings of Balalyk-tepe in northern Tokharistan the "Hephthalite" costum also dominated.⁵⁵⁵

The original samples of tissue from local production of Hephthalite time is from a variety of materials of quite low quality cotton with rhomb form pattern or wool; cotton and combinations of silk and raw white silk, sometimes decorated with embroidery are known in Old Termez, Bit-tepe and Balalyk-tepe.⁵⁵⁶

In contrast to the clothes of the Sogdians, Khorezmians and Persians, in Tokharistan we see mainly thrown-open clothes on the images for both sexes. It can be assumed that this relates to the domination of nomadic ethnic groups (the Hephthalites and the Turks). Among the Hephthalites (in Dilberjin and Balalyk-tepe, in the scene of the royal couple in Bamiyan) upper thrown-open clothes form

⁵⁵³ Yatsenko 2006, 666.

⁵⁵⁴ Яценко 2006, 231.

⁵⁵⁵ Яценко 2006, 234, 250.

⁵⁵⁶ Яценко 2006, 251.

dominated, while coins and gems reliably the Hephthalite rulers, by contrast, are dominated by non-thrown-open ones. In numismatic material they are usually combined with a raincoat. Usually the length of the dress reached the knees or slightly above. Men's pants in "Hephthalite" time were usually quite narrow.⁵⁵⁷

Men's shoes in the Kidarite and "Hephthalite" complexes are very diverse: shoes, half-boots, boots, where in "Hephthalite" complex all kinds of shoes had sharp noses, mostly boots. The high boots had an horizontal upper edge, but more often under the knee there was a triangular promontory as in the Sasanian way. The Hephthalite and later rulers' clothes were apparently sewed on the shoulders. Anyway, a band of the same decor it is highlighted on the coins of Nezak.⁵⁵⁸

The main color background shoulder dress in the "Hephthalite" complex for thrown-open clothes of both sexes had been white, red or yellow ... Both men and women wore overlaying tiny black or colored caps (men of the "Hephthalite" time sometimes only closed the top of the head).⁵⁵⁹

The balbals should be remarked. Albaum notes the similarities in clothing and some accessories of personages on the wall paintings in Balalyk-tepe with stone balbals of the ancient Turks in the region of Tokmak and Karabalty. Since the balbals were the enemies of the Turks, they were once killed by them. So basically the balbals are described as killed enemies. This similarity therefore can not indicate an impact of Sogdian art on the ancient Turks, but there is a possibility that this could be the image of the Hephthalites whom the Turks were at war with. According to Albaum, the balbals from the Tokmak district had been installed over the graves of Turkic military people who participated in the conquest of the Hephthalites and depicted their enemy. Thus these images are people of the Hephthalite state or the Hephthalites themselves.⁵⁶⁰

The lack of remains under the balbals indicates the Turkic custom to burn the remains, if the soldier was killed far from home. Secondary burial was done at home,

⁵⁵⁷ Яценко 2006, 252-255.

⁵⁵⁸ Яценко 2006, 256-257.

⁵⁵⁹ Яценко 2006, 276.

⁵⁶⁰ Альбаум 1960, 192-194.

where the ashes were brought to the ground. For secondary burial a place near the main road was chosen from where the soldier had gone on his march.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁶¹ Альбаум 1960, 196.

6.2. Military and political history

After the troops of the Ardashir Papakan (222-241), ruler of Fars in southern Iran, defeated the Parthian troops of king Artaban V in AD 224/226, a large part of the territory of the Parthian Empire came under the power of the new Sasanian state. Having strengthened and confirmed their territory, the Sasanians led several military campaigns into Central Asian lands.

New ethnic groups were appearing in Central Asia at this time. In AD 350 the Chionites occupied Sogd and were then confronted by Sasanian shahinshah Shapur II (309 - 379). This confrontation ended with a peace treaty in AD 358, after which Chionite troops fought on the Persian side at the siege of Amida (modern Diyarbakir in Turkey) in AD 360.⁵⁶²

Ammianus Marcellinus (330-400) reports that the Shapur II spent most of his power and facilities on bloody battles with the Chionites, Ghelans and Eusens (Ewsens). J. Marquart, supposing a slip of the pen in the first letter, has offered to read not “*Euseni*”, but “*Kuseni*” - that is to say Kushans. If such correction is considered faithful (many historians do agree with this) then with the Chionites we also see the Kushans.⁵⁶³

However, N. Pigulevskaya has argued against this idea. She writes that “such a correction can be interesting and seductive, but it is difficult to accept because in no other place, beside Ammianus Marcellinus, the Kushans are mentioned and this correction is, consequently, absolutely arbitrary”.⁵⁶⁴

Harmatta believes that not Kushans but Cadiseni are meant, an Eastern Iranian tribe which lived in Garchistan before the Chionites.⁵⁶⁵ He also notes that during the reign of Shapur II, under the Kushans the Chionites were already

⁵⁶² Sims-Williams 2008, 92.

⁵⁶³ Marquart 1901, 50.

⁵⁶⁴ Пигулевская 1941, 35.

⁵⁶⁵ Harmatta 1990, 96.

understood, whose governor Kidara minted coins of Kushan type, but with his name.⁵⁶⁶

He also remarks that Shapur II led three wars against the Chionites. The first Chionite War took place between 350 and 359. The Chionites had already won Kushanshahr, but under pressure from the Sasanians, the governor Grumbat declared himself a vassal of Shapur II and participated in the war against Byzantium. Next, between 367 and 370 there was a second war, and finally between 376 and 377 the third. According to Harmatta the Chionites had not been able to achieve full independence, although their ruler continued to mint coins of Sasanian rulers of Kushanshahr.⁵⁶⁷

In the winter of AD 356 Shapur II was on the north-eastern fringe of his state, fearing new attacks of the Chionites, who, according to Ammianus Marcellinus, lived to the south-east from the Caspian Sea. Shapur II returned home in 357/358 after he concluded a “union agreement with the Chionites and the Ghelans, tribes, differing especial militarily”.⁵⁶⁸

Shapur II fought the Chionites in south-eastern Pricaspia, that is to say on territory, which had become part of Sasanian Iran earlier. In the opinion of A. Gubaev it is indisputable fact that these land, in particular Dehistan, were occupied by the Chionites, but this indicates that part of the territory Sasanians belonged to the Chionite state. Thus there was a change of the political situation in southern Turkmenistan, where Merv was the extreme outpost of the Sasanians, but south-western Turkmenistan was included in the Chionite state.⁵⁶⁹

As mentioned above the Chionites took part in the siege of the city Amida, because of obligations as allies of the Sasanian, during the war of Shapur II with the Roman emperor Constansius II (337 - 361 years with break). This war is covered in detail by Ammianus Marcellinus, who was present in besieged Amida. The Chionites stormed the southern gates of the city under their head, king Grumbat. This was a

⁵⁶⁶ Harmatta 1990, 93.

⁵⁶⁷ Harmatta 1990, 97.

⁵⁶⁸ Луконин 1987, 228.

⁵⁶⁹ Губаев 1981, 31.

person of the medium years, who already had time to glorify his victories. His son perished under the walls of Amida as described by Ammianus Marcellinus: “Therefore, at daybreak, Grumbates, king of the Chionitae, went boldly up to the walls to effect that object, with a brave body of guards; and when a skilful reconnoitrer had noticed him coming within shot, he let fly his balista, and struck down his son in the flower of his youth, who was at his father's side, piercing through his breast-plate, breast and all; and he was a prince who in stature and beauty was superior to all his comrades. At his death all his countrymen took to flight, but presently returning in order to prevent his body from being carried off, and having roused with their dissonant clamours various tribes to their aid, a stern conflict arose, the arrows flying on both sides like hail... All the Persians were employed in surrounding the walls; that part which looked eastward, where that youth so fatal to us was slain, fell to the Chionitoe.”⁵⁷⁰

Among the Bactrian documents there are two letters dated between AD 420 and 460 where we can find the name Gurumbād Kērawān – Gurambād son of Kēraw. This personal name echoes that of Grumbates, the Chionite king at the siege of Amida, suggesting that by this time the local aristocracy had come to incorporate a Hunnish element.⁵⁷¹

Sims-Williams summarizes this: “Meanwhile, soon after the middle of the fourth century, Bactria had again been invaded by nomads from the north-east. This time the invaders were a people referred to as Chionites, apparently a variant form of the name of the Huns... The Chionites under their chief Grumbates came to a temporary understanding with the Sasanians and fought on the Persian side against the Romans at the siege of Amida in 360, but within twenty years they had taken control of Bactria and put an end to the rule of the Sasanian Kushānshāhs”.⁵⁷²

The rulers of Bactria after the Chionites were the Kidarites, who, according to Priscus, were Huns and he also thought that the Kidarites were the same as the Chionites. However, although on the Kidarite coins there is the title – Kushanshah,

⁵⁷⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus 1894, 185-187; Аммиан Марцеллин 1996, 166.

⁵⁷¹ Sims-Williams 2008, 93.

⁵⁷² Sims-Williams 2002, 231-232.

“Weishu” distinguished the Kidarites from the Xiongnu.⁵⁷³

In the late 60's - mid 70's of the 4th century AD Shapur II twice fought with the “Kushans”, who had their capital in Balkh. We know the events from these wars from the work “History of Armenia” by the Armenian historian Fawstos Buzand (end of the 4th - beginning of the 5th century). The first war was begun by the “king of Kushans”. Shapur II personally led the Sasanian army, but it did not help the Persians: “...the K'ušan army defeated the Persian forces exceedingly. It killed many of them, took many prisoners, and drove part of them into flight”.⁵⁷⁴ The war of Shapur II in the east is dated by the last years life of the Armenian king Arsak, captured by the Persian shahinshah in AD 367.

The second war, in which Shapur II intended to take revenge, ended just as sadly for the Persians, as the first: “...the Persian army suffered defeat at the hands of the forces of the K'ušan and turned to flight under frightful blows. [The K'ušan] caught up with the Persian army and did not leave a single one from the Persian forces alive; no one survived to bring news”.⁵⁷⁵ This second war in the east took place in AD 374/375. In the opinion of Trever, persisting Kushans in the 70's of the 4th century AD were not capable of inflicting so terrible defeats Shapur II, as the “Kushans” had according to Fawstos Buzand. The Kushan kingdom at this time was already divided into two parts, but power of Sasanians was at its height. In the 70s of the 4th century AD only the Chionites could withstand Shapur II, since their rise to power occurred exactly during this period. In the view of Trever this part of Fawstos Buzand's work may concern the Chionites, whom he continued to name as Kushans, because contemporaries of Fawstos Buzand did not much distinguished the Kushans and the Chionites.⁵⁷⁶ Gubaev considers that as a result of the wars of Shapur II with

⁵⁷³ Sims-Williams 2002, 232; Felix (1992, 487) states the Chionites arrived in the mid-4th century, constituting one, though probably not the first, wave of immigration from Central Asia into Iran. They were followed successively by the Kidarites (ca. 371), Alchons (ca. 400), Hephthalites (ca. 420), and the Nezak kings (beginning ca. 460). The Chionites cannot be identified with any branch of the later Huns.

⁵⁷⁴ P'awstos Buzand 1989, 198; Тревер 1954, 133.

⁵⁷⁵ P'awstos Buzand 1989, 217-218; Тер-Мкртичян 1979, 48.

⁵⁷⁶ Тревер 1954, 135.

the Chionites, the latter became masters of Dehistan.⁵⁷⁷

Shapur II fought war with the Kushans, beginning in the late 60s of the 4th century AD according to Lukonin, and destroyed the Kushan kingdom, one of his allies being the Chionites.⁵⁷⁸ E. Zeimal, with a certain degree of doubt, accepts this version, considering that “the Aršakuni king of the K’ušan, who resided in the city of Balχ”⁵⁷⁹ mentioned at Fawstos Buzand was perhaps one of the last Kushan kings Vasudeva.⁵⁸⁰

In the opinion of some scientists Dyakonov, Mandelshtam and V. Masson Shapur II was at war with the Kidarites, who as ally helped the Chionites. Although V. Masson notes that “since Armenian historians used the term “Kushan” in very broad meaning, it is difficult with confidence to confirm which enemy Shapur II had in the second half of the 4th century. The suggestion that it was Kidara seems more probable”.⁵⁸¹

Shapur II may have entered into an agreement with the Chionites against the Kushans according to Albaum. Thus, the Sasanians attacked the Kushans from southwest, the Chionites from the east and north-east. Later, in the Chionite-Hephthalite union the Hephthalites began to play the greater role.⁵⁸²

E. Zeimal thinks that the Kidarites and the Chionites were one nation and thus Shapur II fought with the Chionites who also had another name: the Kidarites, on behalf of their ruler.⁵⁸³

In the opinion of Mitchiner the Hephthalites established their state around AD 355 and conquered most of the territory of the Kushan-Sasanian kingdom, vassal

⁵⁷⁷ Губаев 1989, 279.

⁵⁷⁸ Луконин 1989, 258.

⁵⁷⁹ P’awstos Buzand 1989, 197-198.

⁵⁸⁰ Зеймаль 1968, 106.

⁵⁸¹ Массон 1964, 168.

⁵⁸² Альбаум 1960, 207.

⁵⁸³ Зеймаль 1995, 24-27.

of the Sasanians. Hence, Shapur II had to organize his military campaign.⁵⁸⁴

Ter-Mkrtichyan sees only the Chionites as the enemy of Shapur II, since they ruled Central Asia in that period. According to Frye, the glory of the Kushans was so high, that their legal successors, the Hephthalites and kings of Kabul from the dynasty of the Shahis, even up to the Arabic conquest, raised their own family as Kushans.⁵⁸⁵

In the versions of Gumilev Shapur II waged war with his own deputy of the eastern fringes, who resided in Balkh with the title “Kushanshah”, coming from the Arsakid dynasty. An ally beside the deputy were the Chionites. He further notes that the eastern Arsakids by changing of their policy, joined the Sasanians to maintain their ownerships and privileges. It is therefore clear why the Arsakid, with the title “Kushanshah”, were in the Persian citadel of Balkh, but that they rebelled, is also not surprising.⁵⁸⁶ There are some problems with this idea: Firstly, even if we assume that the Eastern Arsakids submitted to the Sasanians to save their own land, why should they rebel against the Persians? Secondly, Gumilev notes that “the revolt subsided under an unknown circumstance, but immediately subsequent to suppression of the Arshakid”.⁵⁸⁷ However, according to the report of Fawstos Buzand we know (this is admitted by Gumilev himself) that the “Kushan” troops twice inflicted defeat on Shapur II, while there is nothing about any Persian victory.⁵⁸⁸ Therefore this version looks unconvincing.

Based mainly on numismatic material Stavisky and Vainberg conclude that minting of the Kidarite and Chionite coins began at the end of Shapur I (383-388) or Warahran (Bahram) IV (388-399) rule on the territory of former Kushan Bactria.⁵⁸⁹ This indicates the period when this territory became independent. We do not know of

⁵⁸⁴ Mitchiner 1975, 161, 163.

⁵⁸⁵ Фрай 1972, 279; Although the medieval Arab-Persian author as-Saalibi wrote “...as Padishah-i Nayatila in Balkh and Tokharistan. They respect the Arsakids and in letters put their names first. And in documents they were under their name”: Исоматов 2006, 82.

⁵⁸⁶ Гумилев 1959, 135.

⁵⁸⁷ Гумилев 1959, 135; In another study Gumilev (1974, 243) gives the date of suppression of the Arsakids' riot by the Hephthalites as AD 378.

⁵⁸⁸ Гумилев 1959, 135.

⁵⁸⁹ Ставиский/Вайнберг 1972, 188.

any later fights of the Persians at the border until the time of the king Warahran V (420-438), known in the epic tradition under the name Bahram Gor.

Following the texts of Tabari and ad-Dinawari, during the reign of Warahran V a huge army of “Turks” (250,000), led by a kaghan invaded Iran. In one version they devastated only part of Khorasan and stopped at Merv, in the other they reached Rei. Warahran V defeated the enemy applying a sophisticated techniques. He did not immediately enter battle against the “Turks”, but waited for a more favorable situation. Warahran V moved to the west of his state in the territory of present-day Azerbaijan, ostensibly to hunt and created the appearance that he was not concerned about the situation, although he must have been informed by his spies. The nobility controlling the destiny of the state (perhaps with the permission of the shahinshah), sent an embassy to the kaghan, asking him to accept tribute, so that he ordered the troops not to loot the region, also having in view that these areas would come under his authority. Meanwhile, through his spies Warahran V received the awaited information and moved his troops through Tabaristan and Gurgan to Merv. The sudden attack of the Persians had great success. The “Turks” had not expected such a rapid attack, and thus were defeated in battle. The head of the “Turks” was killed by Warahran V, and all their camp and treasures were captured by his soldiers. The crown of the killed kaghan, decorated with precious stones, his sword and all kinds of jewelry, were donated to one of the main Zoroastrian temples in Ganzak, south-east of Maragheh in Iranian Azerbaijan. The captured wife of kaghan of the “Turks” was also sent there as slave.

In the version of ad-Dinawari we find: “They say: - and now Bahram ordered to kill 7,000 bulls, took their skins and disguised his 7,000 horses. He moved at night and hid by day. He began with Tabaristan, into the coastal area, did not yet free Jurjan, then left Nisa, then the city of Merv, where Hakan stood in camp at Kushmeikhan (present site Kishman-tepe, 30 km from Bayramali – A.K.). When Bahram was only one day from the “Turks” (that is the Hephthalites), and Hakan knew nothing about his actions, he (Bahram) commanded these skins; he inflated them, and they were (good), dried, he put in stones and then tied them to the necks of the horses before approaching the kaghan’s camp. And they (“Turks”) stopped (camp) on the edge of the desert six farsah from Merv. So he drove the horses (at “Turks”) and came behind them; because of these skins and stones attached to them,

the trampling of the attacking horses made a terrible noise, stronger than thunder and (the roar of the) collapse in the mountains. The “Turks” heard this noise, and they were afraid of not knowing what it is ...”⁵⁹⁰ Further he reports on the pursuit of the “Turks” by the Sasanian shahinshah up to Amul and even across the Amudarya: “When he approached, the “Turks” asked him that installed a certain border between him and them, which they promised not to transgress. Bahram selected a place deep in the country and he ordered to build a tower there and it fixed the border”.⁵⁹¹

According to ad-Dinawari’s text, the battle occurred not far from Kushmeikhan. In one report the events occurred in AD 420, in the other in AD 427. Tabari writes that the stone border tower was erected between two possessions as sign in region of the modern city of Turkmenabat (eastern Turkmenistan). Firdausi adds that the after defeat the “Turks” from Balkh, Huttal, Bukhara and Chaganian had to pay Iran a tribute. Having ended the war, Warahran V returned to the west, leaving his brother Narse as deputy in Khorasan with residence in Balkh.

In another version, the invasion of the “Turks” caught the Persian guard, and Warahran V had to flee to the Armenian mountains, but success lulled the vigilance of the “Turks”, as Persian spies reported to the shahinshah. Warahran V used this occasion and split the “Turks” in night fighting.⁵⁹²

As it is well known, Tabari, ad-Dinawari and Firdausi gathered their information from an official Sasanian historiography, which tendentiously showed events. For example, the report of Tabari says that Warahran V defeated the “Turks”, with only 300 warriors and 7 grandees while the “Turks” numbered 250.000 people!⁵⁹³ Pigulevskaya presumes, more reliably that the border passed at Talaqan: “it is impossible to acknowledge conquests in Transoxiana”.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹⁰ Abou Mansour Al-Tha’alibi 1900, 557-560; Tabari 1869, 119-121; Булгаков 1963, 213–214.

⁵⁹¹ Гафуров 1972, 197.

⁵⁹² Гумилев 1967b, 95.

⁵⁹³ Tabari 1869, 119-121; Маршак 1971, 62.

⁵⁹⁴ Пигулевская 1941, 43; M. Masson thinks that the information given by the Arab-Persian authors of the payment of tribute to Warahran V does not correspond to reality. “Numismatic facts - he writes - in the circulation in Central Asia of dirhams of Warahran V and their impact on the cash economy in the southern regions of Maverannahr justify less doubt about the information given by medieval Muslim authors ... ”: Массон 1971, 228 – 229; Массон 1974, 148.

Based on ad-Dinawari's report that the troops of Warahran V moved only at night, Gubaev supposes that the enemy penetrated deep into the Sasanian territory and the Persians moved on well known land.⁵⁹⁵ Dyakonov and Mandelshtam also confirm that conquest of territory north of the Amudarya is not real. The border installed after the victory must have run on territory lying south of the Amudarya, and more likely the border lay near Talaqan and Merverud.⁵⁹⁶ Their point of view echoes the opinion of Pigulevskaya, who writes: "the report that Narse lived in Balkh as marzban, is not consistent with historical truth, but this was the title of Narse as marzban of Khorasan and he managed this, no doubt correctly".⁵⁹⁷

Now it is necessary to clear, who was the enemy of Warahran V, whom the medieval Arab-Persian tradition refers to as the "Turks". In this question modern researchers have no uniform opinion. Some suppose that the enemy of the shahinshah were the Chionites (Marquart, V. Masson, Nerazik, Vyazigin, Gafurov, Trever, Gubaev), others consider that these were the Hephthalites (Bernshtam, Dyakonov, Mandelshtam, Tolstov, Bulgakov), yet another presumes the Kidarites (Gumilev, Vaissière), but Pigulevskaya does not name a concrete people and simply states that Warahran V waged war with Hunnic tribes.

Marquart, who saw in the enemy of Warahran V the Chionites, has paid attention to fact that in the Pehlevi poem of the 6th century AD "Ayatkar-i Zareran" (the Memoirs of the Zarer family) the battle of the king of Iran Vishtasp with the king of the Chionites Arjasp is told.⁵⁹⁸ According to this poem king Vishtasp (in the Avestan tradition protector of Zaratushra) his acceptance of Zoroastrism disgruntled the king of the Chionites Arjasp, and he sent ambassadors to him. The ambassadors on behalf of Arjasp require Vishtasp and his people to abandoned Zoroastrism. Zarer, younger brother of Vishtasp answered the ambassadors, saying that they would remain under Zoroastrism. In this answer one part is interesting:

⁵⁹⁵ Губаев 1981, 22.

⁵⁹⁶ Дьяконов/Мандельштам 1958, 345.

⁵⁹⁷ Пигулевская 1941, 43.

⁵⁹⁸ Marquart 1901, 51-53.

“To White wood and Mazdeic Merv,
Country, where there are no mountains and lakes,
To this Hamuna valley we direct our horses.
You go from here, and here we go,
Prior to the place where you'll see us
And we'll see you.
Then we will show you,
What will be the end of Devas”.⁵⁹⁹

According to the fragment, the battle occurred not far from Merv. After victory Vishtasp returned to Balkh. The enemy of Vishtasp was named as the Chionites, however, more likely the whole is an anachronism, since epic folk legends about Zarēr already existed in the 4th century BC. The struggle between “the sown and the desert” was a dominating theme in West-Iranian materials throughout the history of Central Asia. Names change from Hyaona, Xyōn to the Turks.⁶⁰⁰ In Firdausi the enemy of the Persians is given as Turks, and the battle occurred near the Amudarya. In the opinion of Marquart this event close reminds of the war of Warahran V.⁶⁰¹

A very original version is proposed by Marshak, who supposes that the battle of Bahram Gor with the “Turks” reflects some real collisions, but not in the 5th century AD but, probably, in the 7th century AD. Thereby the battle of Warahran V with the “Turks” in the 5th century AD did not exist.⁶⁰² Although this historical event is reflected in numismatics. Thus, Loginov and Nikitin explain a huge amount of Warahran V's drachms from the Merv mint, as a result of the Sasanian kings war in this area, for which he needed coins for the military campaign.⁶⁰³

According to Hansen the original Iranian name of the “Turks” occurring in the story of Bahram Gor told by Tabari was not the Middle Persian *turk* (*twlk*) identical with the Turk people's name, but the Middle Persian people's name *turak*

⁵⁹⁹ Кошеленко et al. 1994, 14-16; Амбарцумян 2002, 35-72.

⁶⁰⁰ Утас 1979, 126-127.

⁶⁰¹ Marquart 1901, 52-53.

⁶⁰² Маршак 1971, 62.

⁶⁰³ Логинов/Никитин 1988, 38.

with similar spelling (*twlk*), but to be traced back to the form *tuyrak*, which served for the denomination of quite another people. Harmatta showed that the form *tuyrak* supposed by Hansen can be development from the name *taχvar* > *tuxar-ak* of the Kushans, and that an exact parallel of this presumed development *tuyrak* > *turak* is rendered by the country's name *Tuyrān* > *Turān*. The Kidarites could possibly also be denoted by the name *turak* of the Kushans in this period. The use of the denomination "Turk" in connection with the Hephthalites cannot be explained either on the part of Tabari or on the part of his source the "Xvaδāy-nāmay", because later on in the history of Peroz and in the events in the age of Khusrow I they use both the names "Turk" and "Hephthalite" correctly.⁶⁰⁴

The son of Warahran V, Yazdegerd II (438-457), had great conquering ambitions and conducted three military campaigns against the eastern neighbours. Practically his entire rule passed in endless war with Central Asians. In consequence, during the first years of Yazdegerd II the shahinshah's residence (before the 11th year of his rule, 448/449) was located in the north-eastern area of his state (from 438 to 449). On the orders of the shahinshah a huge army was gathered in Khorasan. The Armenian historian Eghishe Vardapet, who was a witness of these events, said that Yazdegerd II: "... marched immediately against the kingdom of the Huns, whom they call Kushans; but after fighting for two years he was unable to make any impressing on them. Then he dispatched the warriors to each one's place, and summoned to his presence others in their stead with the same equipage. And thus he established the habit from year to year and built there for himself a city to dwell in, beginning from the fourth year of his reign up to the eleventh".⁶⁰⁵

Thus, after he conducted the war during two years in vain, he changed the composition of the troops (having former troops sent back and having required fresh ones). The first military campaign of Yazdegerd II against the Chionites took place in AD 442 - 449 and finished with a victory of the Persians. In the chronicle of the Syrian town Karka de Beth Selok (6th century AD), in which the question is of the same march as in the report of Eghishe, Yazdegerd II won one of the rulers of the

⁶⁰⁴ Harmatta 1969, 392.

⁶⁰⁵ Elishē 1982, 66.

local tribe Chol, in the city with same name Chol (near modern town Turkmenbashi in Western Turkmenistan) and this tribe entered, what the majority of the researchers supposes, into the composition of the Chionite associations. In other reports this was not the chief of the tribe, but the Chionite king.⁶⁰⁶

Chol was perhaps not name of the city, but of the tribe living there, in the opinion of some authors, a name by which the region was then also identified, adjoining to Gorgo (Gurgan or Ghirkania) on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea (north of Etrek and Ghirkania) and occupying his south-eastern edge. The word “Chol” can be explained from Turkic languages following Vyazigin. In the modern Turkmen language it means a *desert*. The tribe Chol having been defeated, Yazdegerd II built a fortress there, named by him Shahrstan-i-Yazdegerd. In the opinion of Pigulevskaya, according to the Syrian chronicle, this event can be referred to a time after eighth year of Yazdegerd II (that is to say, after AD 446/447). The building of a fortresses in this region by Yazdegerd II had the purpose to hold the shore of the Caspian Sea.⁶⁰⁷

The second military campaign of Yazdegerd II is dated to AD 450. Eghishe writes: “Then at the beginning of the twelfth year of his reign, he gathered a force infinite in multitude and attacked the land of the T’etals. When the king of the Kushans saw this, unable to oppose him in battle he retreated to the regions of the impregnable desert and lived in hiding with all his troops. But (the Persian king) assailed his provinces, regions and lands, captured many fortresses and cities, amassed captives, booty, and plunder, and brought them to his own empire”.⁶⁰⁸

It is worth noting that Ter-Mkrtychyan remarked that Yazdegerd II with his army reached “Talaqan country”, but in a footnote he indicates: “Talaqan - a part of the territory of the Kushan state, later named Khorasan”.⁶⁰⁹ However, as it is well known, Khorasan was not referred to as Talaqan in the Armenian sources; in

⁶⁰⁶ Вязигин 1957, 148.

⁶⁰⁷ Пигулевская 1941, 44.

⁶⁰⁸ Elishē 1982, 72.

⁶⁰⁹ Тер-Мкртычян 1979, 51.

particular, this is noted by Ter-Mkrtichyan - Khorasan was identified as Apar.⁶¹⁰

This denomination “Apar” in Turkic inscriptions of the 8th century AD (Bilga Qaghan and Kul-Tegin) is not a geographical one, but political, just as some other names occurring in both Chinese and Turkish sources (Kibin, Kangju, Wuishanli, Anxi etc., and Tabgach, (A)Purum / Byzance, Kyrkyz, Uch-Kurykan, Otuz Tatar etc.) according to Tezcan. Even though, the name “Apar” and its component in Armenian sources seems to show a geographical area (Khorasan), which might also intimate a political formation once existing there.⁶¹¹

During the campaign in AD 450-451 Yazdegerd II came to the province of Eptagan, in which we can see probably the land of the Hephthalites, a new enemy of Sasanian Iran according to Nerazik.⁶¹²

Dyakonov supposes that Talaqan was situated between Merverud and Shibirghan, and should not be confused with another geographical point located to the east of Balkh.⁶¹³ As noted by Pigulevskaya Yazdegerd II reached “ergir italagan”. Here, according to her, “italaga” is close to the name of the Hephthalites “Italito”, and then should translate as “la terre des Ephthalite” (land of Hephthalites), and not as suggested by Langlois as “Terre Italienne”.⁶¹⁴

Eghishe names this region Itagakan (Italaqan) in the view of Marshak. He supposes that Itagakan is a town name or the neighborhood of Talaqan. Marshak also explains the existence of the letter “I” at the beginning of words so that the late scribe was, apparently, for some reason under the influence of similar names in Italy?⁶¹⁵

From then onwards the Persians looted and devastated the country, took a lot of cities, prisoners and rich treasure. According to Pigulevskaya this event could occur in areas where war was waged by the predecessor of Yazdegerd II, Warahran

⁶¹⁰ Тер-Мкртичян 1979, 26.

⁶¹¹ Tezcan 2006, 613.

⁶¹² Неразик 1963, 410.

⁶¹³ Дьяконов 1961, 404.

⁶¹⁴ Пигулевская 1941, 44-45.

⁶¹⁵ Маршак 1971, 63.

V, at Talaqan and Balkh, on the approaches to the Amudarya. Thus, if agree with the view of Trever and Pigulevskaya in the report of Eghishe we encounter a reference to the Hephthalites, or rather to the “land of the Hephthalites”, and this is the first presentation on the Hephthalites in Armenian sources.

In AD 453/454 Yazdegerd II undertook another great campaign against the Orient. From Eghishe’s report we know that troops were collected around Nishapur, whence the shahinshah moved to the border of “Kushan” possessions. Due to well-timed messages from the prince of the tribe Khailanturk (to Ter-Mkrtichyan, this was a tribe living northward and west of modern Baku) residing among the Persian troops, the king of “Kushan” was able to prepare meeting with the enemy in time. Having heard that the Persian army exceeded the number of his military power, he considered it reasonable not to enter into open battle. Thus, first the king of the “Kushan” retreated and then suddenly hit upon rear guard of the Persian army and completely destroyed it: “And he pressed and assailed them so hard that, overcoming them with a small number of troops, he turned them back. In hot pursuit, he plundered many royal provinces, and he himself returned safely to his own country”.⁶¹⁶

Nerazik considers that this battle took place on the border of Balkh in a more eastern region of Central Asia. In any case the war of Yazdegerd II against the Chionites - Hephthalites ended in defeat. The success of the two previous campaigns, where the Sasanians had gained a number of victories, was reduced to nothing by the great defeat in the course of the third campaign. By the “Kushans” in the report of Eghishe, according to most historians, the Hephthalites are meant, but Gumilev considers that Yazdegerd II fought with the Kidarites. He notes: “Yazdegerd II carried out many campaigns “against Huns, living in a country of Huns”, i.e. the Kidarites ... in 451-452 he forced the Kidarites king to flee into the desert. But in 454 or 456, at the next occasion, the Persians were beaten by the Kidarites”.⁶¹⁷

Gumilev further writes: “Balami clearly differentiates the Kidarite king, whom he calls “kaghan of Turks”, from the Hephthalite one called the “king of

⁶¹⁶ Elishē 1982, 193.

⁶¹⁷ Гумилев 1967b, 95.

China”. This gives grounds to conclude that the described events refer to two people, not one as previously assumed”.⁶¹⁸ Thus, for Gumilev first with the Persians fought the Kidarites, then their opponents were not only the Kidarites but also the Hephthalites. Additionally he proposes that the “kaghan of Turks” is the Kidarite ruler and the “king of China” is the Hephthalite one.

The constant wars which the Sasanians conducted on the north-eastern border of their state in the 5th - 6th centuries AD forced them, to raise a line of the fortresses and other defensive buildings on the Etrek, in the foothills of the Kopetdag and in the Murgab valley. One such defensive buildings is a wall, built from burnt brick, known as “Red rampart”, but the local population names this as Kyzyl Alan or Sadi-Sikender (the barrier of Alexander the Great). The wall is well traced over a length of 120 km from Kumush-tepe beside the Caspian coast to the ruins Kumbet-Kobus, north of Gurgan. In the sources we find information that this wall originally had a length of 300 km. It is considered that traces should be sought in the region of the north-west spurs of the Kopetdag, since the borders of the Sasanian empire in that period stretched along the northern crests of the Kopetdag on border of the Karakum desert and further in south-eastern direction to Nisa (south Turkmenistan). The ancient rampart - “merz” is also dated to this period. It extends around 200 km from the small town Babadurmaz to the village Meana in southern Turkmenistan. In places the rampart still has a height of 1.5-2 m and a width of 2.5 m. The rampart had defensive importance and barred the land of Sasanians from north-eastern neighbours.⁶¹⁹ In order to protect their north-east border the Sasanians in 5th century AD also created a line of military settlements with Armenian and Georgian troops in the Merv region.

By the middle of the 5th century AD another wave of invaders from the north-east had arrived in eastern Bactria - the Hephthalites.⁶²⁰ They formed a state on the territory of Bactria in AD 355, and at the beginning of 5th century AD extended their authority over the Kabul valley, and in AD 460 took northern Pakistan from the

⁶¹⁸ Гумилев 1967 б, 95.

⁶¹⁹ Губаев 1965, 76-78; Массон 1971, 221–222; Массон 1974, 141-142.

⁶²⁰ Sims-Williams 2008, 90.

Kidarites.⁶²¹

Attacks by the Hephthalites could have been the reason why Kidara penetrated into the territory of Kushanshahr in AD 370 according to Harmatta.⁶²² The Hephthalites were a second Hunnic wave who entered Bactria early in the 5th century AD and drove the Kidarites to Gandhara.⁶²³ From Tabari's report, we know that Garchistan, Tokharistan, Balkh, Badakhshan were under control of the Hephthalite king Akhshunwar (Vakhshunwar, in other sources named as Hushnavaz) in AD 457.⁶²⁴

In the "Beishi" we find that in AD 455/456 the first embassy of the Hephthalites appeared in the Wei empire. In the future the Hephthalites would send embassies more than once to China (up to 559). The source states that due to the fact that the Turks destroyed the territories of the Hephthalites "visits and the presentation of gifts ceased".⁶²⁵

The military collisions of the Sasanians with the Hephthalites were frequent during the time of shahinshah Peroz (Firuz - in medieval Arab-Persian transfer is translated as "Victorious"), who ruled in AD 459 – 484. After the death of Yazdegerd II in AD 457 a fight for throne began between his two sons. Hormizd became king by seniority, but his younger brother Peroz, who was Sakastan with the title "Sakanshah" at the time of his fathers rule, also pretended to the throne. He contacted the Hephthalites in the hope of being helped. According to Abu Ali Balami, "Then Firuz went from Sejistan to the country Hayatila (the Hephthalites) Garchistan, Tokharistan, and Balkh ... He asked the governor of the Hayatila for an army. He did not give troops, but gave him the possession Talaqan ..."⁶²⁶

Firdausi reports that the Hephthalite king Faganish helped Peroz, having

⁶²¹ Mitchiner 1975, 167-168.

⁶²² Harmatta 1969, 393.

⁶²³ Bivar 2003, 199.

⁶²⁴ Неразик 1963, 407.

⁶²⁵ Бичурин 1950, 169.

⁶²⁶ Исоматов 2006, 145; Schindel (2006, 680) notes that no coins of Hormizd III are known, so that this person never ruled as shahinshah and Peroz was in control of the major part of the empire after the death of his father in AD 457.

given him 30,000 soldiers, in exchange for Termez and Visegherd (or Vashgird, an area and town on the middle course of the Amudarya, between the rivers Vakhsh and Kafiringan).⁶²⁷ Using the Hephthalite troops, Peroz overthrew his brother after two years of fighting in AD 459, and then killed him, becoming himself shahinshah. In the same year Peroz concluded a treaty of alliance with the Hephthalite king Vakhshunwar. According to Tabari, the reign of Peroz was extremely unfortunate, because for several years there was severe famine in the country. But as soon as the power of Peroz strengthened in Iran and his country recovered from the years of severe famine, he began to pursue an active offensive policy against his allies. Details of his many wars, which are reported by different sources, are often sketchy and not always compatible with each other. It seems that in the first phase Peroz started a war with the Kidarites. In the western sources we find mentions only in the work of Priscus of Panium. He states that in AD 456 (or even under Yazdegerd II) the Persians were not able to help the Laz people, who fought with Byzantium, as they were busy fighting against Huns, meaning the Kidarites. Next, Priscus of Panium said, that ambassadors of Peroz demanded subsidy from Byzantium for fighting with the “Kidarite Huns” to prevent their invasion in AD 464, since victory over them also resulted in tranquillity of the Byzantine areas. In answer the Byzantines promised to send a representative for negotiations to Iran, but that a subsidy to the “wars against Huns” was unfair to require from them for their own protection. Dioceses Constantius was sent as Byzantine ambassador to Peroz, but he stayed for a long time in Edessa, at that time located close to the Byzantine border with Iran. Finally, he was asked to go to Peroz, who was at that time on the Persian border adjacent to the Kidarites, whom the Persians fought, because of their failure to pay them tribute. Approximately in AD 468 it appears that the Persians besieged a capital of the Kidarites, Balaam, located easternward from Turkmenbashi bay in Balkhan (Western Turkmenistan) according to some researchers.⁶²⁸ In this war of Peroz against the Kidarites, the Hephthalites were allies of the Sasanians. After their defeat the Kidarites moved to Gandhara, where the Hephthalites again caught up

⁶²⁷ Firdausi 1915, 157; Фирдоуси 1989, 6–7.

⁶²⁸ Пигулевская 1941, 53-54.

with them at the end of the 5th century AD.⁶²⁹

In the Chinese sources the Kidarite capital carries the name Bolo (or Po-lo). The “Weishu” says: “The Great Yüeh-shih Country, of whom the capital had been situated at Lu-chien-shih, lies to the west of Fu-ti-sha (Badakhshan), 14,500 li away from Tai (the capital of the Wei). In the north it touched the Juan-juan, who invaded (the Great Yüeh-shih) so many times that the Yüeh-shih had at last to remove the capital westwards as far as Po-lo City, 2,100 li away from Fu-ti-sha (Badakhshan).”⁶³⁰

Most scientists agree that Bolo and Balaam are one and the same geographical location. As for its location, the views diverge. Identification of Bolo with Balaam was proposed for the first time by Klaproth, but he located it in Balkh. Marshak and E. Zeimal also accept that Balaam corresponds to Balkh.⁶³¹ Strongly against such localization Veselovsky stated that Bolo could be Balaam, but not in Balkh. He placed Bolo in southern Khorezm, but did not give the any exact site, since he did not know any suitable archaeological monument in the region. Marquart opposed this hypothesis, noting that, firstly, there are different distances between Dai and Bolo, Dai and Balkh, secondly, in the “Beishi” there is a mention of Balkh as Bochzhi.⁶³² Even more significant facts arose, for Marquart, from the Byzantine and Islamic sources, since according to Barthold the fights between the Persians and the Kidarites occurred during this period not in Balkh, but in Ghirkania.⁶³³ So Marquart concluded that Balaam is identical to Bolo corresponds to Balkhan “östlich der Bucht von Krasnowodsk” (present day town of Turkmenbashi in Western Turkmenistan).⁶³⁴

Kabanov quite differently puts the residence of the Kidarites in the Karshi oasis (site of Erkurgan, 10 km northwest of Karshi, Uzbekistan), identifying Noshebolo (Chinese sources) with Nakhshab in Karshi. The site of Erkurgan does

⁶²⁹ Zeimal 1996, 126.

⁶³⁰ Enoki 1969, 8.

⁶³¹ Маршак 1971, 64; Zeimal 1996,122.

⁶³² Marquart 1901, 55-56.

⁶³³ Юсупов 1980, 39.

⁶³⁴ Marquart 1901, 55, 58.

have layers dating to the 4th – 5th centuries AD.⁶³⁵ In his argumentation, he uses the distance between Shi (Kesh, modern Shahrisyabz) and Noshebolo, given as 200 li, which corresponds to the geographical location of modern Shahrisyabz and Karshi, as well as to the southerly location of Noshebolo in relation to Nyumi (Bukhara).⁶³⁶ By locating Bolo in Balkh Mandelshtam had considered the distances given in the “Beishi”, from Fudishi to Bolo, and the direction as wrong.

M. Masson does not agree with Kabanov that Bolo can be associated with Erkurgan. He thinks that the site of Kala-i Zakhok-i Maron (7 km to south-west from ancient kurgans of Karshi) was the Bolo of Chinese sources and Nakhshab is the local (Sogdian) variant. This site has three well built fortification walls. In the centre there is a castle-palace (110-90 m) covering 16 hectares. In the 5th – 7th centuries AD life in Kala-i Zakhok-i Maron was active as indicated by ceramics dated to this period. M. Masson makes reference to the distance given in the Chinese sources from Kesh (according to M. Masson at that time Kitab) to Bolo as 200 li, considering that this corresponds to the position of Kala-i Zakhok-i Maron.⁶³⁷ Kabanov, as a contra-argument, wrote that the size of Kala-i Zakhok-i Maron is 16 hectares and he does not know about any outer (third) wall (given by M. Masson) around this site which might make it bigger.⁶³⁸

The town Balkhan or Bolo-Balaam, capital of the Kidarites, could be sought in the fortress Igdy-qala in the opinion of Yusupov. This fortress is situated at the mouth of the Upper Uzboi, about 200 km north-east of the Balkhan mountains. The fortress was built in Parthian time to control the trade route, which was on the Uzboi. The favorable strategic position of this site predestined it as border point. The fortress and the settlement in the surrounding area are quite significant in desert conditions. Based on such factors as the position of fortress in the center of a vast region inhabited by nomads during the activity of the Uzboi, its strength, the multi-

⁶³⁵ Кабанов 1977, 125-127.

⁶³⁶ Кабанов 1953, 201–205.

⁶³⁷ Массон 1973, 21-28; M. Masson later (1977, 137) has changed his opinion and thought that Bolo was situated in Badakhshan.

⁶³⁸ Кабанов 1977, 124; Existence of third wall was proved by later excavations: Сулейманов 2000, 26-27.

period important archaeological material, the repeated restructuring within the fortress and traces of fire, indicate that it was directly and indirectly related to major events taking place in the East Caspian lands during the 4th - 5th centuries AD. Perhaps, lack of water eventually forced the Kidarites to fight with the Sasanians.⁶³⁹

Vainberg supposes that the fortress Igdy-qala was established in the 2nd – 1st centuries BC and by the 4th century AD had stopped existing.⁶⁴⁰ However, if Balkhan, is to be identified with the ruins of Igdy-qala, this was an isolated stronghold, quite unlikely to have provided a surrogate capital for the Kidarite empire.⁶⁴¹

Kidara was in nature Kushan and ruled in the 4th century AD according to V. Masson. The attempts to date the period of his activity to the 5th century AD are considered unconvincing. He would accept the “Rourans” of the Chinese chronicle as Chionites. He thinks that the Kidarites (Kushans) were united with their former enemies (the reasons are not indicated), the Chionites, and fought against Shapur II together, also having won back Bactria. Later Kidara conquered Gandhara and was installed as ruler in Peshevar. Masson agrees with the localization of the capital of the proposed by Gutshmidt and Nöldeke in the sense that Bolo = Balkh, doubting the data of Marquart and Kabanov. Masson sees the state of the Kidarites (Kushans) ended definitively by the Hephthalites.⁶⁴²

Gumilev, based on the ideas of Kabanov, considers that the capital of the Kidarites was in the Karshi oasis and not in Balkh. He dates the time of their state to AD 418 - 468. Then under pressure from the Rourans who conquered the Kidarites (Yuezhi in Gumilev) in AD 418 - 419, the latter moving to Bolo (Karshi oasis), where they faced the Persians and the Hephthalites.⁶⁴³

Besides the differences in historical literature about the localization of the capital of the Kidarites, researchers can not even agree on the chronology of events.

⁶³⁹ Юсупов 1975, 69.

⁶⁴⁰ Вайнберг 1999, 257.

⁶⁴¹ Grenet 2002, 211.

⁶⁴² Массон 1964, 167-168.

⁶⁴³ Гумилев 1967а, 14; Гумилев 1967b, 94.

In the opinion of some (Martin, Ghirshman, Mandelshtam) Kidara ruled in the second half of the 4th century AD and was enemy to Shapur II, while others (Gumilev, Kabanov) support a date for the existence of the Kidarite state at the time of Kidara during the first half of 5th century AD.

The first information about Kidara in “Weishu”, probably reaching China as a result of Tong Wan’s embassy in AD 437 because the Chinese pilgrim Faxian who visited Gandhara at that time did not mention any such event. “Weishu” reports: “The king Chi-to-lo (Kidâra), who was brave warrior, at last organized troops and marched to the south to invade the Northern India, crossing the Great Mountains [Hindûkush] and completely subjugated five countries to the north of Ch’-ien-t’o-lo (Gandhâra).”⁶⁴⁴

Concerning the questions of where and when Kidara ruled the Kidarites the descriptions in the “Beishi” were repeatedly considered by different researchers. First Marquart analysed them in most detail and came to the conclusion that the state of Kidara was inherited from the Kushan empire, but that the movement from the old capital was caused by attacks of the Avars. The new capital Bolo-Balkhan in the Pricaspian area was presumed identical to Balaam of Priscus of Panium. From here the march to northern India and the conquest of the five former Yuezhi territories were organized. The events connected with Kidara took place in the 5th century AD, according to Marquart.⁶⁴⁵ He proposes that the son of Kidara founded the state in India about AD 470.⁶⁴⁶

After the taking of Balkhan by Peroz, the son of Kidara, Kunkhas (Κούγκας), left to Gandhara and founded the kingdom of the small Yuezhi there.⁶⁴⁷ Kunkhas, the name, or rather title, as transmitted by Priscus, can perhaps be explained as a Greek nominative of “*Xun-qan – qan of Huns*”, with initial *k* – by dissimilation.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁴ Enoki 1969, 8-9.

⁶⁴⁵ Marquart 1901, 54-55.

⁶⁴⁶ Marquart 1901, 59.

⁶⁴⁷ Манделъштам 1958b, 67.

⁶⁴⁸ Grenet 2002, 208; Another opinion is that Kunkhas (or Kungkhas) is not name but Greek adaption of the title “Khan of the Huns”, because the title “khan” in that time unfamiliar was taken as accusative and provided with the Greek nominative form “khas”. It is probably a rendering of

The identity of the Kidarites is quite difficult to understand. A later Greek text refers to them as Huns, but Chinese sources considered them to be a branch of the Da Yuezhi, while on their coins they simply use the Kushano-Sasanian title *Kushanshah*. The Kidarite kingdom, coming to power about AD 360, seems to have lasted about a hundred years, as the Sasanian portrait types that Kidarite rulers adopted and adapted for their coins are those from Shapur II until Yezdigerd II (438-457). It collapsed following new waves of nomads who named themselves as Alchons on their coins.⁶⁴⁹

Errington and Curtis propose AD 370-468 as the time of the Kidarites based on numismatic materials. However, they also note that the Kidarites survived longer in Gandhara. The “Beishi” gives information that the country Jiduoluo (Kidara), with other countries of northern India and southern Afghanistan sent embassies and tribute to the Wei empire in AD 477.⁶⁵⁰

Based on the study of the numismatic material Martin and Ghirshman opposed this idea, concluding that the time of the Kidara should be attributed to the 4th century AD. Martin thought that Kidara ruled in the second half of the 4th century AD and was subordinated to Shapur II. History of the later Kushans was hypothetically restored by him: about AD 350 the Rourans forced the Kushans to leave Bactria, part of them going to the Pricaspian area, and some, led by Kidara, going to Gandhara. After this the military campaign of Shapur II to the East took place, and Kidara was forced to acknowledge the power of Iran. In AD 367/368, Martin supposes according to coins, Kidara freed himself from this dependency, but soon the danger of invasion by the White Huns threatened him, so that he left his son in Peshevar Piro, and moved to the west. The outcome of a battle with the White Huns is unknown, but about AD 400 the latter had already invaded Kabul and Gandhara.⁶⁵¹

The Priscus referred to the “Kidarite Huns” for the first time in 456 as

the genuine Hunnish form underlying the Bactrian title “*uonano šao*”: Aman ur Rahman et al. 2006, 127-128.

⁶⁴⁹ Cribb 2007, 369.

⁶⁵⁰ Errington/Curtis 2007, 88.

⁶⁵¹ Martin 1937, 342-345, 348-349.

adversaries of the Sasanian king Yazdegerd II (438-457), who had discontinued a tribute paid by his predecessors to Iran's eastern neighbours. Two earlier defeats of the latter king on the border of Tokharistan are mentioned by Lazar Parpetsi; his foes, though conventionally styled as "Kushans," are probably already the Kidarites. They might already have been involved in the eastern wars of Warahran V, but their name does not appear in sources pertaining to his reign. Ghirshman, who in details explored history of the Chionites and the Hephthalites, sees descendant of the Kushans in the Kidarites. Kidara ruled in the 4th century AD and was a contemporary of Shapur II as indicated by the resemblance of their crowns and the composition of the treasure from Tepe-i Marenjan. With the help of the Chionites he put an end to Sasanian authority in Bactria, but in compensation had to accept the general power, becoming Shapur II's vassal. The capital of Kidara's state, in Ghirshman's opinion, was in Balkh. Soon after AD 358 Kidara, with support of the tribe Zabul (one of the Chionite tribes), conquered Kabul and Gandhara and escaped its dependency from Iran in AD 367 - 368 defeating Shapur II and founding the 4th dynasty of Kushans. However, Shapur II entered an alliance with the Chionites and seized Bactria in AD 371.⁶⁵²

Slightly differently according to Mitchiner the Kidarite state formed in the 360-ies in the north-east of Pakistan, when the mint of the last Kushan kings Shilada stopped functioning and in Gandhara,⁶⁵³ their first silver coins (drachms) appeared. Later they managed to conquer the rest of northern Pakistan and Kashmir and possibly Kidara also began to mint gold staters, similar to issues of the Kushan ruler of Gandhara.⁶⁵⁴

Grum-Grzhimailo, criticizing the opinion of Shpeht, considered that the Rourans at the beginning of 5th century AD pushed *Ki-to-lo*, king of the Kushan, to move south of the big mountains, where he conquered five principalities, laid from Kandahar northward.⁶⁵⁵ He supposed that pressure by the Rourans caused only change of the capital and Kidara's march to northern India was not caused by hostile

⁶⁵² Ghirshman 1948, 73-74; Samolin 1956, 296.

⁶⁵³ Mitchiner 1975, 153.

⁶⁵⁴ Mitchiner 1975, 162-163.

⁶⁵⁵ Specht 1883, 348-349.

action the Rourans, since they never penetrated so far south.⁶⁵⁶

The name Kidara was kept further as an honorific title (meaning “hero”, “valiant”), long after the Kidarite state had ceased to exist according to E. Zeimal. Similarly, Kidara also used to style himself on coins as “Kushana Shahi” (king of the Kushans) even after the fall of the Kushan kingdom.⁶⁵⁷

Errington and Curtis suppose that from c. AD 370 the Kidarites supplanted the Kushano-Sasanians in Bactria, Kabul and Gandhara and last Kushan in Punjab. They started to mint gold and silver coins of the Kushano-Sasanian style with names *Kidara* and *Warahran*, copper Bactrian style coins with name *Warahran* and silver coins in Sasanian style with names *Peroz*, *Kidara* and *Warahran*.⁶⁵⁸

Another view is held by Mandelshtam, who, based on the “Beishi” information that Kidara is called the king of the Greater Yuezhi, and on the coins bearing his title *Kushanshah*, believes that he was a representative of Kushan dynasty by origin and ruled the late Kushan state in northern Bactria, formed after the elimination of Sasanian power in Bactria around AD 293.⁶⁵⁹

Mandelshtam dates the time of his rule to the second half of 4th century AD. The numismatic data cited by Martin, but particularly the inscriptions on crowns of some silver coins with the name Kidara, indicate that this crown is a copy of the crown of Shapur II. Ghirshman brings important additional arguments for the dating of Mandelshtam: 12 Kushan-Sasanian coins were contained in the treasure found at the excavations of Buddhistic priory in Tepe-i Marenjan, and bear the stamp of Kidara. In this treasure, except for those mentioned, we find the coins of Shapur II, Ardashir II and Shapur III, that is to say only Sasanians, who ruled in the second half of the 4th century. Mandelshtam supposes that change the capital of Kushans had occurred because of nomads, whose specific name was unknown to the author of the “Beishi” and who acted in Central Asia, simply being named by the Chinese as Rourans. However the Rourans, for the Chinese, in this time generally denoted all

⁶⁵⁶ Грум-Гржимайло 1926, 173.

⁶⁵⁷ Zeimal 1996, 124.

⁶⁵⁸ Errington/Curtis 2007, 86.

⁶⁵⁹ Мандельштам 1958b, 68.

western nomads.⁶⁶⁰

Vaissière thinks that Kidarites were in Tokharistan in the 20's-50's of the 5th century AD and then, under the pressure the Sasanian military operations of the 440's and the Hephthalite expansion into Tokharistan starting in AD 456 split the Kidarite kingdom into two parts, one to the south, the other in Sogd. The Kidarite conquest of part of Sogd is attested by coins of the 5th century AD from Samarqand, bearing on the obverse the schematized portrait of a ruler with the Sogdian legend "kyδr". It is also supported by the interruption of Sogdian embassies to China between AD 441 and 457, and by a piece of information in the "Weishu" referring to 457: "The country of Sute is situated to the west of the Pamirs. It is what was Yancai in ancient times. It is also called Wennasha. It lies on an extensive swamp and to the northwest of Kangju. It is 16,000 li distant from Dai. Formerly, the Xiongnu killed the king and took the country. King Huni was the third ruler of the line."⁶⁶¹ Another evidence presence of the Kidarites in Samarqand is clay sealing from collection of Aman ur Rahman.⁶⁶²

Grenet indicates that the Kidarites ruled in Tokharistan AD 420-467.⁶⁶³ Then they had to abandon Tokharistan because of the rise of the Hephthalites in this region in the first half of the 5th century AD. Between AD 412 and 437 Kidara unified the north and south of the Hindukush, establishing his capital at Bolo (Balkh).⁶⁶⁴

The Kidarite dynasty had already been established in the early 5th century AD during reign of Warahran V. The Kidarites in Gandhara were conquered by the Hephthalites between AD 477 and 520. Kidara, in the mid 5th century AD, was moving westwards and abandoning his territory north of the Hindukush and fought with the Sasanians in the Caspian coastal area as recorded by Priscus of Panium. Kidara was succeeded in this area by his son Kunghas who was defeated by Peroz

⁶⁶⁰ Мандельштам 1958b, 69.

⁶⁶¹ Vaissière 2005a, 107-109; Grenet 2005b, <http://www.iranica.com/newsite/index.isc> ; Although E. Zeimal (1996, 120) dates these coins from the middle of the 4th century AD when according to him Sogd was conquered by the Kidarites.

⁶⁶² Aman ur Rahman et al. 2006, 125-131.

⁶⁶³ Grenet 2005, 93.

⁶⁶⁴ Enoki 1970, 35-36.

in about AD 468 at Balaam.⁶⁶⁵ The state of the Kidarites continued to exist in Gandhara in AD 477, when they sent an embassy to the court of the Chinese emperor, both Litvinsky⁶⁶⁶ and Grenet⁶⁶⁷ agreeing in this question.

The starting date of the Kidarite state is given as AD 420 by Kabanov. Bisvas, based on the analysis of the Indian sources, presumes that Kidara captured Gandhara after AD 388. Lukonin, again based on numismatic material, thought that the Kidarites ruled AD 390 - 450, and acknowledged the similarities between the Kidara crown and that of Shapur II as relative and insufficient chronologically to assign Kidara's government to the era of Shapur II.

Göbl, in his major study, comes to similar conclusions as Lukonin, dating the Sasanian rulers of Kushan lands to ca. AD 371-385, while in ca. AD 385-440 all are considered Kidarites.⁶⁶⁸

Nikitin supposes that the Kushan-Sasanian kingdom was a vassal of the Sasanians and was founded at the beginning of the 4th century AD in the time of Hormizd II (303-309) or Shapur II (309-379), for more effective management of the territory. This kingdom minted its coins and developed a culture somewhat different from the Sasanian one. The end of this kingdom, according to Nikitin, came at the end of the 4th century AD.⁶⁶⁹

It should be noted that the rulers of the kingdom, on coins, named themselves as Kushanshahs. These coins were minted to AD 399. After that the title Kushanshah disappeared from coins. Mitchiner has attributed this to the conquests of the major part of the Kushano-Sasanian kingdom by the Hephthalites. As a result this kingdom was reduced to the area that includes the Kabul valley.⁶⁷⁰

Unlike Priscus of Panium, who saw the Kidarites as opponents of Peroz, Syrian chronicles supposed that the Iranian shahinshah waged war against the

⁶⁶⁵ Enoki 1969, 4-5.

⁶⁶⁶ Litvinskij 1998, 100.

⁶⁶⁷ Grenet 2002, 211.

⁶⁶⁸ Göbl 1967-I, 24.

⁶⁶⁹ Nikitin 1999, 261

⁶⁷⁰ Mitchiner 1975, 158, 161.

Chionites: “Kionaye, who are Hunns”. From the Priscus of Panium report we know that Peroz defeated the Kidarites, in particular, the Byzantine historian, talking about the Persian embassy to the Byzantine court in AD 468, wrote: “In this time came from Persia embassy with the news that the Persians won over Huns Kidarites and were besieging the town of Balaam. In announcing this victory, they related it in the barbaric tradition, wishing to show how great was their power”.⁶⁷¹

Returning to the “Weishu”, where it is reported that the state of the Greater Yuezhi was created by folk previously living southward from the Rourans and fleeing from them to the west, Borovkova supposes that the state of the Greater Yuezhi was not a successor of the Kushan kingdom, but a new state formation of the 5th century AD. Later on, under the rule of Ki-to-lo they left south and conquered the five states in Peshavar. She draws attention to the fact that in the description of Tsiantolo it is said that it was conquered by the Hephthalites. In her opinion, the Greater Yuezhi who conquered Peshavar were the same Yeda i.e. the Hephthalites.⁶⁷²

Having defeated the Kidarites, Peroz turned to the Hephthalites in spite of the fact that he had concluded a treaty with them, and began preparations of war. The reason for this, in the report of ad-Dinawari, was that the population of Tokharistan, discontented the Hephthalites’ oppressions, asked Peroz for help. Thus the pretext for the shahinshah to begin war was given. He used it without delay, but before beginning the war, Peroz, in the report of Tabari, built a row of fortresses in different areas of his state. In this period (the second half of the 5th century AD) the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, the deserts of Turkmenistan, areas around the Amudarya, extensive territory towards the eastern ward and along the upper course of the rivers Murgab and Tejen (Northern Afghanistan) became part of the Hephthalite state. The north foothills of the Kopetdag and the oases on the lower course of the Murgab and Tejen remained under the power of the Sasanians.⁶⁷³

Peroz had defeated the Kidarites with Hephthalite help. The Kidarites were attacked simultaneously by the Hephthalites in the Transoxianian territory of the

⁶⁷¹ Кабанов 1953, 207.

⁶⁷² Боровкова 1989, 117, 164.

⁶⁷³ Вязигин 1957, 149.

Kidarites in AD 466 and this area captured in same year, as reconstructed by Harmatta. Peroz also started war with the Kidarites. The Hephthalites took possession of the eastern part of Kushanshahr, and then very soon they also took Balkh from the Persians. This was a major reason for Peroz to begin war with the Hephthalites.⁶⁷⁴

Peroz launched three campaigns against these Huns, all disastrous: in the first being led to a waterless desert and forced to surrender, and in the third charging to his death in a concealed ditch with all his cavalry. His coin series tends to confirm this version, depicting the king with three different successive crowns, thus implying two separate restorations.⁶⁷⁵

The first military campaign of Peroz against the Hephthalites was in AD 474/475. The campaign, in which according to Balami, Peroz had an army of fifty thousand, ended in a defeat of the Persians.⁶⁷⁶ From the reports of Procopius of Caesarea we know that Peroz was captured by the Hephthalites, thanks to a trick. The army of the shahinshah was lured into a deep gorge at the end of which there was a dead end. The bulk of Hephthalites were hidden in ambush, the others retreated on the road leading to the valley in pretended flight, where the enemy rushed after them. The Sasanian military action was led by Peroz, and no one warned him risking persecution by the Hephthalite troops. Only the Byzantine ambassador Euseius who was in the army of Peroz decided to warn him. But it was too late, the way back was cut off by the ambush. Thus, the Sasanian army had been locked in the valley. The Hephthalite king proposed to release the shahinshah under conditions, which he accepted with delight. One condition for the release of Peroz was a huge amount of gold. The required amount was given by the Byzantine emperor Zenonius (474-491), since between the two states there was an agreement under which the Sasanians pledged to hold the Caucasus mountain crossings Alan and Derbent by forts and garrisons and not to allow enemies to pass through this territory, for which a sum was paid by Byzantium. The data on this battle, we can find and in the work of

⁶⁷⁴ Harmatta 1969, 394.

⁶⁷⁵ Bivar 2003, 199.

⁶⁷⁶ Исоматов 2006, 150.

al-Faqih (10th century): “Then settled Ardashir, Babek’s son in Fars, and was it (Fars) abode of the kings (Persian), and Khorasan was the Hephthalite kings ... He went (once) against them, they shot down his cunning road, so he began to pursue to the waterless and fatal places. Then they attacked him and captured him, along with most of his court. Firuz asked the Hephthalites to give them and his captured soldiers freedom. He assured them (the Hephthalites) of God and firmly pledged that he would never overstep their boundaries. He has put between themselves and the Hephthalites a stone, which was made as border, and vowed that (he would not cross that border), calling as witnesses the Almighty God ... Hephthalites pardoned Firuz and gave him freedom and those who had been captivity with him”.⁶⁷⁷ This first battle occurred, in the opinion of Gumilev, in the Kopetdag mountains.⁶⁷⁸

For Tabari and Balami there are other comparative sources on the march of Peroz. These sources reported that the Persian army headed erroneously into the desert, led by a person who was sent by the Hephthalite king. He especially crippled himself and having appeared in such a way before Peroz, promised to conduct the Persian army through secret routes. He futilely led the Persians into the desert, having dedicated his life to saving his Fatherland. Being in a difficult position in the desert, Peroz asked for peace from the Hephthalite king. Hushnavaz agreed and required the Sasanian shahinshah to promise never to start wars against the Hephthalites.⁶⁷⁹ This history is extraordinarily similar to the tale about the Saka patriot Sirak, who wounded himself and led the army of the Achaemenian king Darius I (522 - 486) into the desert.

Peroz, as is known, violated the treaty and went to war a second time against the Hephthalites, but was defeated again and fell into captivity. This time, Peroz pledged to pay 30 mules loaded with silver coins for his liberation, and gave to the Hephthalites the border town of Talaqan. All this he countersigned by oath. Above all this, Peroz was forced to bow to the Hephthalite king’s feet. The “Chronicle” of Joshua the Stylite described this situation: “He sent a land that was under his

⁶⁷⁷ Булгаков 1963, 214; According to Balami Hushnavaz built a stone tower which was not supposed to be cross by the Sasanian ruler Peroz: Исоматов 2006, 150-151.

⁶⁷⁸ Гумилев 1967b, 97.

⁶⁷⁹ Tabari 1869, 133-136; Веселовский 1877; Гумилев 1967b, 96.

authority, and hardly collected 20 loads, as the previous war completely emptied the royal treasury inherited from his predecessors. For the other ten remaining loads he will send them, as hostage and guarantee Kavad, his son and he concluded with an agreement for the second time not to fight with them. When Peroz returned to his nation, he overlaid poll tax on all their land, sent ten loads of *zuze* (silver coin. – A.K.) and relieved his son”.⁶⁸⁰ This battle took place around AD 476/477.⁶⁸¹

Tabari wrote that on his march to the Hephthalites, Peroz with the army came to the tower which was built at the border by Warahran V. Then Peroz tried to conceal the violation of the oath he gave not to cross the border, given to the Hephthalite king Akhshunwar after the first unsuccessful campaign. Tabari reported that Firuz ordered to attach to the tower 50 elephants managed by 300 people; the tower was dragged before him, and he followed in the belief that in this way he does not violate the agreement, concluded with Akhshunwar”.⁶⁸² Al-Faqih reported a stone, which was placed by Peroz, and then ordered to find a stone like this and carry it to the army. Peroz was defeated and died in battle, but this was not during the second campaign. His death occurred on a third march. According to Gubaev, after Peroz’s defeat Merv and the oasis around it came under the authority of the Hephthalites because of the terms of the agreement.⁶⁸³

Lazar Parpetsi wrote about the situation in the Sasanian Empire after the two defeats from the Hephthalites: “Even in time of peace the mere sight or mention of a Hephthalite terrified everybody, and there was no question of going to war openly against them, for everybody remembered all too clearly the calamities and defeats inflicted by the Hephthalites on the king of the Aryans and on the Persians”.⁶⁸⁴

Many of his closest military chiefs and dignitaries advised him not to begin

⁶⁸⁰ Пигулевская 1941, 58; Пигулевская 1956, 292-293; In spite of this source Schindel thinks it does not mean that silver was not available in Iran at all. First 20 loads were paid by Peroz, which he had brought with him or placed in the closest city and next 10 more were paid from local treasure: Schindel 2006, 681.

⁶⁸¹ After this time a third type of Peroz’s coins appeared, which was a model for the Hephthalite imitations: Alram 2002, 151.

⁶⁸² Tabari 1869, 138-139; Nöldeke 1973, 129.

⁶⁸³ Губаев 1981, 37; Булгаков 1963, 215; According to Vaissière (2005a, 232) Merv was under the control of the Hephthalites until the beginning of the 6th century AD.

⁶⁸⁴ Тер-Мкртчян 1979, 55.

war with the Hephthalites. In spite of this, the shahinshah set off on the third military campaign. The reason for the third war was the deception of Peroz. According to the report of Priscus of Panium, Peroz had offered a “Kidarite” king by the name of Kunkhas to conclude the disputes and as guarantee of their sincere intentions sent Kunkhas a woman as wife, referring to her as his sister. Having arrived in that purpose, this woman told him that she was slave, rather than the sister of Peroz. So, the fraud was revealed. The insulted king Kunkhas resolved to revenge himself on the shahinshah. Citing that he had a big army, but no experienced officer, he asked Peroz to send him experienced people as military instructors. Suspecting nothing, Peroz sent 300 Persian instructors. When they came, the “Kidarites” mutilated a part of them and killed the others. The hostilities were renewed. However, we should note that Priscus, telling about this fraud, saw in the enemy of Peroz not the Hephthalites, but Kidarites. Gafurov does not exclude that this report pertains to Kidarites, but considers that all versions are biased and that Priscus of Panium named all Central Asian Huns as “Kidarites”, and in his tale mixed reports about the Kidarites and miscellaneous Central Asian nomads.⁶⁸⁵

The Sasanian military leaders were increasingly inclined to think that the Hephthalites were an invincible enemy. The new campaign was perceived, not only by the people close to the king, but also by the troops, as unsuccessful. Thus Balami specifically stresses that Peroz attacked the Hephthalites, despite the objections of the high priest and the army. Not listening to anyone, Peroz in AD 484 went against the Hephthalites for the third time, with an army of 100,000 people and 500 elephants.⁶⁸⁶

According to Lazar Parpetsi, when the Hephthalite king had learned about the intentions of the shahinshah, he sent him a letter of warning: “You concluded peace with me in writing under seal; and you promised not to fight with me. We defined common frontiers not to be crossed with hostile intent by either party. So remember disasters and the oath that you swore when I took pity on you, let you go and did not

⁶⁸⁵ Гафуров 1972, 199-200; Konukçu (1973, 78-79) thinks that this event was the reason for the first war between Peroz and the Hephthalites.

⁶⁸⁶ Tabari 1869, 138; Isomatov (2006, 151) presumes that Peroz had this great army during the second march.

deprived you of life. Return to peace and do not go to meet death. If you do not pay attention to my words, then know that I will destroy you and all your army, on which you can rely on, because (when) we are fighting on my side there is the preservation of the oath and justice, while on your same side are lies and perjury. Consequently, how can you defeat me?”⁶⁸⁷

Peroz ignored this message and continued his march. When the approach of the Persian troops became known, a part of the ruling chiefs of the Hephthalites came urgently, requiring to approach the king, but he refused to conduct the troops on so long a shot. He has preferred to let the Persians cross the border, having prepared a clever plan. On a big field he dug pits, lightly timbered over and topped with soil, having left narrow spaces, on which ten mounted warriors could go in a row. Before the approach of the Persians the Hephthalites remained at rest. Only when they received news, through spies, that the Persian troops reached the border town of Gorgo (on south-eastern shore of the Caspian Sea),⁶⁸⁸ the Hephthalites disposed their troops beside the marked fields. One from the troop was sent to the Persians to lead them to the pits.

The trick succeeded. In pursuit of a running Hephthalite avant-garde, the Persian army, led by Peroz in parade went towards the enemy. As a result, the first series of Persian troops were caught in the trap; others were partly killed, partly captured. Here is how Procopius of Caesarea describes the situation: “But the Persians, having no means of perceiving the stratagem, gave chase at full speed across a very level plain, possessed as they were by a spirit of fury against the enemy, and fell into the trench, every man of them, not alone the first but also those who followed in the rear. For since they entered into the pursuit with great fury, as I have said, they failed to notice the catastrophe which had befallen their leaders, but fell in on top of them with their horses and lances, so that, as was natural, they both destroyed them, and were themselves no less involved in ruin. Among them were

⁶⁸⁷ Тер-Мкртчян 1979, 56.

⁶⁸⁸ Bivar (2003, 199) suggests that the Hephthalites did not reach Gorgan, and the reference may rather be to Gorganj/Jorjaniya in Khorezm.

Perozes and all his sons”.⁶⁸⁹

Among the captives was a daughter of Peroz (Perozduht in Tabari), who later became wife of a Hephthalite king. The entire camp of the shahinshah with the property fell into the hands of the victors. The defeat suffered by Peroz in the eastern Caspian area was one of the strongest shocks in the history of the Sasanian empire. Among the dead were Peroz and his seven sons (according to Sebeos and Firdousi). Only Kavad was recovered from the pits alive by the Hephthalites. Persian and Arab authors believed that Peroz died in eastern Khorasan, but here, I think, the Armenian and Byzantine historians, who witnessed the event, should be preferred. The body of the shahinshah, according to the Syrian-Byzantine authors, was not found among the masses of dead Persians, but according to Balami the shahinshah's body was found and buried in the cemetery.

After that defeat, Lazar Parpetsi in his work “History of Armenia” recorded the speech of a Persian noble: “Peroz lost in the wars with the Hephthalites (our) so much and independent state, and (did so) to such an extent that, while there will exist the country of Arians (Iran), it will not be able to rid us of so grievous service”.⁶⁹⁰ The Zoroastrian source “Bundahišn” gives only a short notice on this event: “Then Xušnawāz, lord of the Hēvtāls, came and killed Pērōz. Kawād and his sister presented a Fire to the Hēvtāls as a pledge”⁶⁹¹

The several wars which the Hephthalites led with the Sasanians are also indicated by the fact that after the first known official embassy of the Hephthalites to the Chinese court of the Northern Wei in AD 456 there was a break up to AD 507 when another Hephthalite embassy arrived to the court of Northern Wei.⁶⁹²

According to Procopius of Caesarea Kavad paid tribute to the Hephthalites two years and then refused to pay, but there is no clear report on the government of Balash (484-488) and in addition, if the data is based on numismatics, there are

⁶⁸⁹ Procopius 1914-I, 25; Procopius in other page (1914-I, 31) wrote that “Cabades, the youngest son of Perozes, was then the only one surviving”.

⁶⁹⁰ Тер-Мкртчян 1979, 56.

⁶⁹¹ Christensen 1932, 61-65.

⁶⁹² Kuwayama 1989, 116; Kuwayama 2002, 128.

Sasanian coins with legends in the language of the Hephthalites. Such coins were issued in the years of Balash, Kavad (488-531, with a break) and at the beginning of the reign of Khusrow I. Thus, the successor of Peroz, Balash, was forced to pay the Hephthalites annual tribute, which Sasanians stopped, probably, only in the time of Khusrow I Anushirvan (531-579).⁶⁹³ According to Firdausi, after Peroz, the Hephthalites seized in captivity the shahinshah Kavad. Sufray, marzban of Kabul, Bost, Ghazni and Zabul collected 100.000 warriors and raised objections to the enemy. He freed Kavad from captivity and returned the treasure. The Amudarya river became a border between the states.⁶⁹⁴

Other sources state that after the death of Peroz, the Sasanian nobility decided to take up the strengthening of the state. The representatives of the noble houses Zarmihr from Karens and Shapur from Mihrans took the initiative to establish a new army. Then Zarmihr successfully fought with the Hephthalites, forcing them to return what they took from Peroz.⁶⁹⁵

Nevertheless the numismatic facts show that mints of Kavad's silver drachms are absent in Merv during the first two decades since the beginning of his reign. They appeared only in the 22nd year (in another study these authors noted the 24th year, i.e. AD 512⁶⁹⁶) of his rule and then continued without interruption until the end of the Khusrow II.⁶⁹⁷ Thus the revenge of the Persians, according to Arab-Persian sources (going back to official Sasanian traditions), is a falsification, created for lifting the lost prestige of the Sasanian state. Persians ceased to pay tribute to the Hephthalites, as we already reported above, only during the rule of Khusrow I Anushirvan.

After the death of Peroz, his brother Balash became a new Sasanian shahinshah. The Syrian chronicle of Joshua the Stylite reported: "He has not found

⁶⁹³ Christensen 1944, 297; Vaissière 2005a, 111; According to V. Masson (1964, 204) the Sasanians paid a tribute from AD 484 to 545.

⁶⁹⁴ Фирдоуси 1989, 14–21; The same information is given by Tabari: Nöldeke 1973, 130-132.

⁶⁹⁵ Дьяконов 1961, 278.

⁶⁹⁶ Логинов/Никитин 1988, 40.

⁶⁹⁷ Loginov/Nikitin 1993, 275; Because coins of Kavad re-started to mint in Merv from the 24th year of his regal year and the same happened in other mints of Khorasan, Herat and Abarshahr, Schindel (2006, 684-685) supposes that Kavad could return to this territory in the 20-ies of his reign, i.e. AD 508.

anything in the treasure house of the Persians, but the ground devastated because of the Huns. So you know what damage and expenses the king bears at war even victorious, and even more so when unhappy”.⁶⁹⁸

The troops did not support Balash, since he had no money for paying the army. The attempt to get a subsidy from Byzantium was unsuccessful for the shahinshah. As a result, in AD 488 discontented priests and nobility overthrew Balash from the throne and blinded him (in Firdausi he was overthrown by Sufray). The son of Peroz, Kavad, became new shahinshah, who in his childhood was hostage among the Hephthalites for some time.

In the last quarter of the 5th century AD in Iran the movement under the leadership of Mazdak began. About him and his ideas Tabari reported: “God had given to man should be distributed equally and that men had abused this in their injustice to one another. To rectify this injustice, Mazdak and the ‘Mazdakites’ told the people that wealth of the rich should be taken away and given to the poor, returning to the dispossessed their deserved share.”⁶⁹⁹

The words of Mazdak had huge success. According to Biruni countless numbers of people followed him. In short time the revolt spread throughout the country; Kavad decided to support the rebellion.⁷⁰⁰ The reason was, perhaps, that the shahinshah sought to strengthen the central power by weakening local lords and the representatives of the largest nobility. According to Tolstov Kavad, who was in hostage during his childhood among the Hephthalites and was familiar with the Hephthalite customs, realized that the “community or family traditions of the Hephthalite social order coincided with slogans of the Mazdakite movement and Kavad could see in these slogans a path to Sasanian strength, weakening the unity of the empire following the example of the “White Huns”, having won a multi-year struggle with the powerful “shahinshah of Iran and not Iran”, as the Sasians called themselves”.⁷⁰¹ Dyakonov and Mandelshtam suppose that open appearance of the

⁶⁹⁸ Пигулевская 1941, 60.

⁶⁹⁹ Gaube 1982, 111.

⁷⁰⁰ Бируни 1957, 213.

⁷⁰¹ Толстов 1948, 216.

Mazdakits at the beginning of 90's of the 5th century AD used in some measure the support of the Hephthalites, so that Kavad was forced to become part of the Mazdakit party.⁷⁰²

Discontented nobility, because Kavad sustained Mazdak and his supporters, imprisoned him in "the castle of the oblivion" (where persons were imprisoned, which names were forbidden to mention), planning later to secretly kill him. Kavad's brother Jamasp (Zamasp) was placed on the shahinshah throne, who became a puppet in the hands of nobility and priests. However, meanwhile Kavad fled from captivity with the help of his wife and moved to the Hephthalites, in the hope of receiving military help from them. These events occurred in AD 496.

After arriving in the Hephthalite state, Kavad was married to the daughter of the Hephthalite king. She was his niece, as she was also daughter of his sister, captured in AD 484 by the Hephthalites and becoming the wife of their king. This was, in full accordance with the custom of Persian shahinshah, to marry their sisters and other close relatives. The "Chronicle" of Joshua the Stylite describes further events as follows: "Kavad became a relative to the king and crying in front of him every day, asked him to give him an army to help, that he could execute the nobility and get back his state. And his father-in-law gave him a great army at his request. When he reached the Persian land, his brother heard about him and ran away, but Kavad fulfilled his desire and executed the nobility".⁷⁰³ The aid of the Hephthalites to Kavad is also reported by Procopius of Caesarea.⁷⁰⁴ The return of Kavad occurred in AD 498/499. Thus, Kavad, with the Hephthalite aid, returned to the throne and massacred the nobility, who at one time opposed him.

The fact that Kavad was the son-in-law of the Hephthalite king did not play a major role in the delivery of assistance. At the end of the 5th century AD the situation existed that any interference in the internal affairs of the Sasanians could only be at hands of the Hephthalites who were interested in restoring Kavad on the throne,

⁷⁰² Дьяконов/Мандельштам 1958, 348; Gaube (1982, 121-122) thinks Mazdak was a Manichaeon and Kavad using his ideas and the Hephthalite aid could demolished a power of aristocracy and Zoroastrian clergy. It was made to strengthen royal power.

⁷⁰³ Гафуров 1972, 213-214.

⁷⁰⁴ Procopius 1914 - I, 47-49.

because of his loyalty to them. In addition, the stay of the shahinshah in his childhood at the court of the Hephthalite king (years of hostage), known to Tabari as Akhshunwar and in the Persian tradition as Hushnavaz, could not pass without leaving a trace. He studied the language and customs of the Hephthalites. However, his father Peroz, while struggling with his brother Hormizd for the throne, also fled to the Hephthalites and requested assistance from their king Faganish. Thanks to the Hephthalite troops of 30.000 people who were given him by Faganish, he managed to overthrow his brother and became the shahinshah.⁷⁰⁵

Based on the report of Tabari, we can assume that Kavad remained besides king (in Tabari - kaghan) around four years and left, after receiving an army, forcing Zamasp to abandon fight and run, and the discontented nobility to be calm.⁷⁰⁶

When Kavad was confirmed on the throne, the Hephthalite troops were not sent home. Their support should be rewarded. In this period Kavad intensified relations with Byzantium. The reason for this, according to Procopius of Caesarea, was the refusal of the Byzantine emperor Anastasius I (491-518), to lend Kavad money in order to pay the Hephthalites annual tribute. Kavad was resolved to obtain cash by hostilities. War with Byzantium, was a possibility, from which he reconed to pay to the Hephthalites, and to settle problems with an ancient enemy of Sasanian Iran. Thereby, Kavad marched on Byzantium in AD 502 attracting the Hephthalite troops as allies.

The Hephthalites took part in battles during the siege of Tella, Harran and Edessa by Kavad. The “Chronicle” of Joshua the Stylite reports that in battle the Persians preferred darts pointed at the enemy, the Arabs directed spears, but the Hephthalites used clubs. According to Procopius of Caesarea the amassed Byzantine troops faced “eight hundrends of the Hephthalites presented asleading troop of the Persian army”.⁷⁰⁷

By AD 506 the Persian campaigns against the Asian provinces of Byzantium ended successfully for Kavad. An armistice was concluded for seven years. The

⁷⁰⁵ ШМИДТ 1958, 450.

⁷⁰⁶ Пигулевская 1941, 63.

⁷⁰⁷ Бернштам 1951а, 189.

enormous wealth, captured by the Persians on the territory of the enemy, particularly in Amida, led to Byzantium to accepting tribute of determined amounts of golds, which Constantinople gave Ktesifon for the guarding of the borders from nomads. This definitively conciliated Kavād with the Byzantine emperor Anastasius I, since the shahinshah for long obtained it. The Hephthalites, who took part in the military campaign, were rewarded by Kavād from the treasure captured in the course of war.

Sykes, McGovern and Bernshtam consider that Kavād, breaking the alliance, which he had concluded with the Hephthalites, entered into war with them from AD 503 to 513.⁷⁰⁸ Pigulevskaya does not agree with this statement. She thinks that this error occurred because of inadequate analysis of the sources, as has been corrected by. The reason for the appearance of the “war” between Hephthalites and Kavād was the report of Procopius of Caesarea that the Persians “had heavy war with Huns”, which these researchers believed had been the Hephthalites. Against whom, then, did Kavād wage war? The analysis of Procopius of Caesarea’s text, according to Pigulevskaya, provides an answer to this question. After Procopius of Caesarea gave lengthy explanations on a number of differences between Huns and “White Huns” (Hephthalites), he reported about the wars of Peroz, several times switching the names from the Huns to the Hephthalites. In the story about the Kavād’s escape, he returned to the name of the Huns-Hephthalites, and then calls them only Hephthalites. A few lines below, the people with whom Kavād waged war are named Huns and he says that the war with them was in the northern areas. Because of the duration of this war Kavād was forced to accept a truce with Byzantium, as combating the Huns was prolonged. “In the name of the enemies of the Persians forces we must see not the Hephthalites who fought in alliance with them against Byzantium, but the proper Huns”, - concludes Pigulevskaya.⁷⁰⁹

There are specially minted coins, dating to the time of Kavād, with Hephthalite inscription. V. Masson, based on these coins, thought Iran paid an annual tribute to the Hephthalites.⁷¹⁰ This fact is indicated since the Sasanians were

⁷⁰⁸ Sykes 1921, 443; Sykes 1975, 138; McGovern 1939, 414-415; Бернштам 1951а, 187.

⁷⁰⁹ Пигулевская 1941, 65.

⁷¹⁰ Массон 1964, 204.

dependent on the Hephthalites far back in time. In the opinion of Gafurov the border between Sasanian Iran and the Hephthalite state at the beginning of the 6th century AD passed along the river Gurgan and between Merverud and Talaqan.⁷¹¹

From AD 509 envoys from Samarqand presented themselves under the name of the Hephthalites, so from this time Sogd was controlled by the Hephthalites.⁷¹²

The Hephthalite Empire at its zenith

a. Extension to the south

The Hephthalite rulers in the second half of the 5th century AD started a military campaign in the south, repeating basically the routes of the political expansion of the Greco-Bactrian and Kushan rulers. Indian sources report struggles with the Hephthalites, whom they called 'Huna' with the Gupta dynasty rulers, who controlled most of the Indian subcontinent at that time.

Probably the conquest of Gandhara occurred between AD 460 and 470 because one of the Gupta rulers, Skandagupta (455 – 467/68)⁷¹³, was forced to fight with the Hephthalites, even to stop their first attack. Gafurov states that these were the first raids of the Hephthalites to Gandhara.⁷¹⁴ The earliest Indian report on the 'Huna' is in the Bhitari inscription of Skandagupta, where the king is said to have been in intense conflict with the 'Huna'. As Skandagupta possessed Malwa and Gujarat, the 'Huna' probably came into contact with the Indians in the Lower Indus region.⁷¹⁵ According to Bailey, this happened in AD 455,⁷¹⁶ while others think the first clash of the Hephthalites with the Gupta empire occurred around AD 457 -

⁷¹¹ Гaфyрoв 1955, 113.

⁷¹² Grenet 2002, 211.

⁷¹³ In the opinion of Göbl (1967-II, 318), Skandagupta ruled till AD 480.

⁷¹⁴ Гaфyрoв 1972, 201.

⁷¹⁵ Cunningham 1893, 244.

⁷¹⁶ Bailey 1954, 12; Bivar (2003, 199) proposes that the Gupta emperor Kumaragupta, in his final year AD 454-455, faced an invasion from the north, which was repelled by his crown prince Skandagupta, who then succeeded him, but had to counter several later attacks, with varied success.

460.⁷¹⁷ Harmatta suggests that Skandagupta won a victory over the ‘Huna’, and in accordance with the historical situation, these must have been Kidarites.⁷¹⁸

There is some discussion about how the Hephthalites got to Gandhara. One proposal is that the Hephthalites came to the North-West from the west beyond Nagarahara: the Hephthalites first occupied Zabulistan, Kapisa and even Bamiyan and from there invaded Gandhara. Kuwayama proposed that the Hephthalites came to the North-West from Tokharistan via the valleys between the Hindukush and the Karakorum without passing Bamiyan, Kapisa, or Zabulistan.⁷¹⁹

It is not clear also what kind of relationship had existed between the Hephthalite principalities in Transoxiana and those in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. We have seen that in coin mint there were differences. Bivar thinks that more probably they were separate and independent.⁷²⁰ Another question is who were these ‘Huna’ - the Alchons or the Hephthalites? Grenet considers that they were Hephthalites,⁷²¹ while in Göbl’s opinion these people were Alchons and proper Hephthalites never penetrated beyond the Hindukush.⁷²² In the light of the copper inscription from the Schøyen collection we have to revise an old view on the history of the Hephthalites in India. If before it was considered that Toramana was the king after Khingila, now, due to this inscription, we have information that they both ruled at the end of the 5th century AD.⁷²³

One of the first Hephthalite rulers who conquered Gandhara and came close to Kashmir was Tighin (or Thujina), who may have been Khingila. Song Yun reported: “In the middle of the fourth month of the first year of Cheng-kuang [520], I entered Kan-t’o-lo [Gandhara], which was another land that appeared very much like Wu-ch’ang [Uddhyana, present day Swat Valley]. Originally, the land was known as

⁷¹⁷ Массон 1964, 204; Гафуров 1972, 201; Антонова et al. 1979, 117; V. Smith (1906, 281-282) suggests that the Hephthalites in AD 470 attacked Skandagupta’s possession, after he was able to reflect their first incursion in AD 457.

⁷¹⁸ Harmatta 1969, 398.

⁷¹⁹ Kuwayama 1989, 109; Kuwayama 2002, 123-124.

⁷²⁰ Bivar 2003, 199.

⁷²¹ Grenet 2002, 209-214.

⁷²² Göbl 1967-II, 89-91.

⁷²³ Melzer 2006, 274.

Yeh-po-lo [Gopāla] which had been defeated by the He-ta (Hephthal) and their Chih-chin [Tegin or provincial governor] became the king. Since the time they gained control of this land two generations have passed”.⁷²⁴ Based on this report Dani supposes that if Song Yun’s visit was in AD 520, so Gandhara was conquered approximately in AD 465.⁷²⁵

At the end of 5th century AD the Hephthalites were led by Toramana (ca. 490 – 515). In the “Rajatarangini”, his name was Vasukula⁷²⁶, who also had the title Teghin and the epithet Jaūvla, which means “*falcon*”.⁷²⁷ According to the copper inscription his title was – “devarāja” (god-king).⁷²⁸ There is information in one of India's inscription, about him, which reads “famous Toramana great luster of great glory, governor of land”.⁷²⁹ Toramana ruled in parts of present-day Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab and Kashmir. His expansion to the west was stopped by the Aulikaras around Mandsaur. This is documented by the Risthal stone slab inscription of Prakashadharma Aulikara (ca. 515).⁷³⁰

There are different versions about the meaning of the name of Toramana:

⁷²⁴ Yamada 1989, 82; According to Kuwayama Song Yun met the Hephthalite Tegin of Gandhara in his military camp located an eight day journey to the east of the Indus. This would be somewhere around modern Jhelum, a town strategically important as a gateway connecting Punjab with Gandhara: Kuwayama 1989, 95-96; Kuwayama 2002, 112.

⁷²⁵ Dani 2001, 143.

⁷²⁶ Kalhana 1961, 43; Some scientists suppose that there were two Toramana. Cunningham (1893, 256-257) did not accept an identity of Toramana of Eran and the Gwalior stone inscriptions with the Toramana in the “Rajatarangini”. The son of Toramana, in the history of Kashmir, was Pravarasena. He minted gold and silver coins bearing the name of Kidara, so probably he was Kidarite; Thakur thinks that the Kalhana is often unreliable and the coin inscription “Kidara” could mean that the Hephthalites simply continued the Kidarites’ minting. In the opinion of Thakur, Pravarasena was mixed up with other conquerors by the author of the “Rajatarangini”: Thakur 1967, 290-296; According to Yamada (1989, 79-113) the Hephthalite king Toramana, who had the title *Shāhi jaūwla*, is different from *śrī Toramāna*, the Hūna king. The name Toramana mentioned in central Indian inscriptions refers to the Hūna king, while the name Toramana found on coins unearthed in Taxila refers to a Hephthalite king. Mihirakula, the son of Toramana, was an Hūna king; he was not the Hephthalite king that Song Yun, met in Gandhara in AD 520. Their power did not extend as far as Gandhara in northwestern India. The Hephthalites invaded India from the north and moved into Gandhara and Taxila, but they did not move any further into central India.

⁷²⁷ Choudhary 1959, 124; Thakur 1967, 96.

⁷²⁸ Melzer 2006, 274.

⁷²⁹ Fleet 1889, 229.

⁷³⁰ Ghose 2003, 145.

1. Tolstov: “tora” – “god”, this word exists in the Chuvash language, “tora” + “man” - typical, but now not used in modern Turkic languages suffix for building own names, as reflected in the “ko + man” etc.;
2. Gumilev: “tore” from Turkic - “*in law; prince*”;
3. J. Karabachek: again from Turkic as - *rebel, revolted*.⁷³¹

After the death of Toramana his son Mihirakula has been supposed to have become the next king, who ruled, according to Göbl from 515 – 528/542⁷³² (according to others up to 540⁷³³). His name was not mentioned in the copper inscription. Again there are various versions concerning the meaning of his name:

1. Tolstov: “Mihir” – Middle Persian version of Mitra + “ogul”, “son” from the Turkic, or, from Turkic “kul” – “*slave*”; “*slave of Mitra*” or “*son of Mitra*”;
2. Thakur: from the Sanskrit designation Mihiragula as “*the son of the Sun*” or “*born from the Sun*”,⁷³⁴;
3. Bailey: Mihirakula’s name seems securely to be “*miθra-krta*” - formed like the Sasanian royal name *Yazata-krta*, Yazdigird (or Yazdegerd)⁷³⁵.

Xuanzang wrote that Mo-hi-lo-ku-lo (Mihirakula), who was of talent and naturally brave, ruled throughout India and all neighbouring states were his vassals.⁷³⁶ Indian sources indicate that Mihirakula had ferocity and fearlessness. Especially Kalhana, in his historical chronicle of Kashmir “Rajatarangini”, gave a description of the king as violent and like the god of destruction Kala and many people feared him.⁷³⁷

⁷³¹ Bühler 1892 (Reprint New Delhi, 1971), 239.

⁷³² Göbl 1967-II, 68.

⁷³³ Bayur 1987, 87; Bivar 2003, 200.

⁷³⁴ Thakur 1967, 133; It is interesting to note that one of the rulers of Hindu-Shahis carried the name Toramana-Kamalu (903-921): Abdur Rahman 2002, 41.

⁷³⁵ Bailey 1979, 210.

⁷³⁶ Yuan Chwang 1904, 288-289; Si-Yu-Ki 1906-I, 167.

⁷³⁷ Kalhana 1961, 43; The “Rajatarangini” called Mihirakula “king of India”, as Cosmas Indicopleustes, does, although it is unlikely that Mihirakula made a march to southern India and Sri Lanka: Fleet 1886, 245; Kalhana 1961, 44.

The Gwalior inscription tells us about Mihirakula: “(There was) a ruler of [the earth], of great merit, who was renowned by the name of the glorious Tôramâna; by whom, through (*his*) heroism that was specially characterised by truthfulness, the earth was governed with justice. Of him, the fame of whose family has risen high, the son (*is*) he, of unequalled prowess, the lord of the earth, who is renowned under the name of Mihirakula, (*and*) who, (*himself*) unbroken, [broke the power of] Pasupati”⁷³⁸

Mihirakula managed to extend his authority beyond north-western India to the Jammu-Ganges plain to Gwalior and built a city, calling it Mihirapura. In his time the Hephthalites reached their highest power in India.

However, according to the fragment of the Mandsaur inscriptions: “...even that (*famous*) king Mihirakula, whose forehead was pained through being bent low down by the strength of (*his*) arm in (*the act of compelling*) obeisance”⁷³⁹, in AD 532/533, was defeated and captured by the ruler of Mandsaur Yashodharman from the dynasty Aulikars, who controlled central India, but later he was freed by Baladitya, governor of Magadha (according to some scientists it was Narasimhagupta from the Gupta dynasty, or they were same person and Baladitya was a title of Narasimhagupta).⁷⁴⁰ According to Smith this event happened in AD 528.⁷⁴¹

Baladitya (his name explained as “rising or young sun”), king of Magadha, who was Buddhist, rebelled against Mihirakula’s order to persecute Buddhism in his empire, according to Xuanzang. Mihirakula invaded Magadha but he was defeated and imprisoned by Baladitya. Later Mihirakula was released after a petition by Baladitya’s mother. Because his younger brother became king in his kingdom,

⁷³⁸ Fleet 1886, 245; Fleet 1888a, http://projectsouthasia.sdstate.edu/docs/history/primarydocs/Epigraphy/Gupta-Era/gwalior_stone.htm ; Parlato 1990, 265.

⁷³⁹ Fleet 1888b, http://projectsouthasia.sdstate.edu/docs/history/primarydocs/Epigraphy/Gupta-Era/mandasor_pillar.htm ; Stein 1905, 82.

⁷⁴⁰ Синха/Банерджи 1954, 94; Cunningham 1967, 11; Chattopadhyaya 1968, 225, 229; Raychaudhuri 1996, 518; In last studies of Gupta dynasty appear a new version that Narasimhagupta ruled in AD 468-473 and Xuanzang’s Baladitya was the ruler of Ayodhya, son of Vikramaditya: Errington/Curtis 2007, 97.

⁷⁴¹ Smith 1906, 288-289; Smith 1914, 318-319; The rule of the dynasty of Mihirakula in Kashmir and Gandhara ended about AD 625. In Kashmir it was replaced by the Karkota dynasty and in Gandhara by the Turki Shahi dynasty: Harmatta 1969, 404.

Mihirakula took refuge in Kashmir where he murdered the ruler became king himself. Then he defeated the Gandhara kingdom but less than a year after victory he died.⁷⁴² After the death of Mihirakula, his heirs (in the “Rajatarangini” some names of the rulers survived: Baka, Pravarasena II, Narendraditya-Lakhana, Hinga, Yudhisthira) did not have his abilities and great strength, and thus their political power in India weakened.⁷⁴³

According to Dani the last independent ruler was Yudhishtira, who inherited the throne from Narendraditya Khinkhila, whose long rule in Kashmir was suspended in AD 670 by Durlabha–Vardhana, representative of the new Karkota dynasty.⁷⁴⁴ Sundermann thought that the end of the Hephthalite rule in Kashmir was in AD 625-626.⁷⁴⁵

Later, the Hephthalites settled in the occupied lands and gradually adopted the religion and language of the conquered population in north-western India. The invasion of India by the Hephthalites in the middle of the 5th century AD led to the downfall of the great Gupta Empire, though the Gupta dynasty in Magadha retained its authority until the end of the 7th century AD. In the 7th century, the western Punjab, according to Indian sources, was called “Hun country” Huna-Desha.⁷⁴⁶

We may also draw attention to the interesting fact that as late as the 9th century AD the Hindu ruler Devapala (810 - 850) of the Pala dynasty, who had a principality in the eastern Punjab, defeated “Huna” (ie the Hephthalites) in the north.⁷⁴⁷ The Indian poet Rajaśekhara (9th century AD) praises the beauty of “Huna” women.⁷⁴⁸ Also in 9th century, to the north-west of Malwa, a principality Hunamandala was located, which was ruled by king Jajjappa. On the Una copperplate Balavarman, a feudatory of Pratihara Mahendrapala, is said to have

⁷⁴² Yuan Chwang 1904, 288-289; Si-Yu-Ki 1906-I, 168-172; According to Cunningham (1893, 247-248) a reason for Mihirakula’s invasion to Magadha was the rejection by Baladitya to pay tribute to him.

⁷⁴³ Kalhana 1961, 84-85.

⁷⁴⁴ Dani 2001, 149.

⁷⁴⁵ Sundermann 1996, 474.

⁷⁴⁶ Литвинский 1996, 165.

⁷⁴⁷ Choudhary 1959, 139-140; Медведев 1990, 135.

⁷⁴⁸ Puri 1979, 185.

killed Jajjapa and other kings of Huna race in AD 893.⁷⁴⁹ Even in the 11th century AD we still find traces of “Huna”. The Bheragat stone inscription, for example, reports that the Kalachur ruler Karnadeva married the “Huna” princess Avalladevi. The memory of the Hunas was alive in India even later, as the 16th century Jaina writer Brahmana equated the Portuguese with the Huna.⁷⁵⁰

b. Extension to Eastern Turkestan

The Hephthalite state extended its authority further to Eastern Turkestan, where they were known as *Khun*.⁷⁵¹ The fact that after AD 462 the arrival of ambassadors stopped from Kashgar to the Northern (or Toba) Wei empire (386 - 534), founded by the Tabgach, one of Xianbei tribes, and after AD 467 from Khotan, should be linked to the conquests of the Hephthalites.⁷⁵² The region of Turfan was subjugated by the Hephthalites in AD 479, Urumchi in AD 490 - 497.

In AD 495 the southern part of Teleuts (T'ieh-le) submitted to them, in 496 northern Teleuts suffered the same fate too, and their lands were annexed by the Hephthalite state. Thus, at the beginning of 6th century AD most of Eastern Turkestan was in the hands of the Hephthalites. The “Beishi” states that “from Yeda owner in the western province depend Qangu, Khotan, Shale, Ansi and 30 other small holdings”.⁷⁵³

The Hephthalites' neighbours in the region were the Rourans. The Hephthalites defeated the Teleuts in union with them.⁷⁵⁴ The Rourans were a mixture of Sanbi and Hunnic birth, after their defeat by Tabgachi. They had originated from the Mongolian plains, where these peoples had been mixing with various tribes and and multilingual people, at the end of 4th century AD, formed a separate ethnic group

⁷⁴⁹ Choudhary 1959, 140; Banerji 1962, 61.

⁷⁵⁰ Choudhary 1959, 141.

⁷⁵¹ Samolin 1957/58, 148.

⁷⁵² Кляшторный 1992, 122.

⁷⁵³ Бичурин 1950, 269.

⁷⁵⁴ Golden 1992, 78; According to Golden (1992, 79) there was also a familial connection between the Hephthalites and the Rourans.

and established its kaghanate in AD 402 when their leader Shelun took the title of kaghan.⁷⁵⁵

The Hephthalites had a good relationship with the Rourans. The Rouran kaghan Chou-nu signed an agreement with the Hephthalites directed against the Wei empire, their common enemy. As could be expected, the Rouran-Hephthalite unification led to a breakdown of relations between the Hephthalites and the Wei empire.

From AD 460 to 533 Hephthalite embassies were sent (almost every year) to the Northern Wei empire (386-534). In AD 516, 520 and 526 the Hephthalite embassies arrived to southern China, the Liang empire (502-556/57). But in AD 546, 553 and 558 the Hephthalites sent embassies to the Northern Zhou empire (557-581).⁷⁵⁶

In AD 520 kaghan Chou-nu died and A-na-kui became new ruler of kaghanate. Some part of the Rourans was discontent, A-na-kui was defeated and fled to the Wei court where he obtained help. Meanwhile the vacant throne was occupied by A-na-kui's uncle Brahman, known in Chinese transcription as Po-lo-men. A-na-kui, with the Chinese help, could defeat Po-lo-men, who succeeded to establish himself in the area near Kokonor. In AD 521 Brahman established links to the Hephthalites. Three of Brahman's daughters (or sisters) simultaneously got married to the Hephthalite king. In spite of this Wei troops later captured Brahman, and brought him to the empire, where he subsequently died in AD 524. A-na-kui remained the sole ruler of the Rourans.⁷⁵⁷

Given that the Hephthalites conquered much of Central Asia, Eastern Turkestan and many land in the south, towards India, it is clear that by the mid-6th century AD the Hephthalites had created a huge empire. Thus, the "Liangshu" reported that the Hephthalites conquered the neighboring states: Bosy (Persia), Gibin (North India), Yanqi (Karashar), Qiuci (Kucha), Shule (Kashgar), Gumo (Aksu),

⁷⁵⁵ Кычанов 1997, 76.

⁷⁵⁶ Herrmann 1925, 578.

⁷⁵⁷ Sinor 1990, 294-295.

Yutian (Khotan) and others.⁷⁵⁸

The first half of 6th century can therefore be considered as the time when the Hephthalite empire flourished. In the second half of this century, it suffered from the onset of the Turkic kaghanate from the north and in the south from Sasanian Iran. Later, as rightly pointed out by Mandelshtam, this sequence of events directly led to the downfall of the Hephthalite empire, some recovery being possible only in general terms an full meagre evidence and inconsistencies.⁷⁵⁹

The last phase of the Hephthalite Empire

A new state association which formed in the second half of 6th century AD, and played an important role in the history of Central Asia was the Turkic kaghanate (551-774). The Turks are known in the written sources by different, though similar names. The Turkic kaghan Bumin (551-552) in AD 551 started war with the Rourans, who dominated over the Turks. The Turks finally defeated and destroyed the state of the Rourans, and became one of the strongest political entities in Central Asia. In the future the borders of the Turkic kaghanate would stretch from Korea to the Black Sea.

Part of the defeated Rourans fled to northern China in AD 554 and another part to the west, towards Eastern Europe, where they appeared in AD 558 and became known as the Avars and set up a new state – the Avar kaghanate, in Pannonia (modern Hungary).⁷⁶⁰

The appearance of the Turks in the mid-6th century AD in Central Asia fundamentally changed the situation. As a result of their western campaign in AD 554, which was led by the younger brother of Bumin who carried title Yabghu-

⁷⁵⁸ Боровкова 1991, 83.

⁷⁵⁹ Мандельштам 1958b, 78.

⁷⁶⁰ Кляшторный/Султанов 1992, 78; Кляшторный/Савинов 1994, 15; Ecsedy 1984, 258; The question about the similarity of the Rourans with the Avars is still open. According to Artamonov (1962, 107-108) the Avars were the Ugric tribes Var and Huni (Chionites), who, unwilling to submit to the Turks, moved to the west, and there received their new European name of Avars; There is also opinion that the Avars who appeared in Europe were the Hephthalites who had been defeated by the Turks: Grousset 1970, 172; Samolin 1957/58, 62-65.

kaghan Istemi (died in 575),⁷⁶¹ the Turks for one and a half years controlled the whole of central Kazakhstan, Semirechye and Khorezm. In AD 555 they reached the Aral Sea and approached the border of the Hephthalite empire.⁷⁶² However, these new enemies did not start war immediately. Active military actions began only eight years later. The reason for this was that the Hephthalites were busy with fights in India, the danger of a Sasanian invasion, and the Turks war against the Rourans.

The first military collision between the Turks and the Hephthalites, according to Grignaschi, was in AD 555. Turkic troops were led by Mukhan kaghan (553-572), the son of Bumin kaghan. A second one occurred in AD 558 and was led by Istemi.⁷⁶³

We can observe that the political situation of the Hephthalite state significantly changed in the middle of 6th century AD. Sasanian Iran, under the governance of Khusrow I Anushirvan, (which means “Immortal Soul”, 531 - 579) in the 30s of the 6th century began to grow rapidly. The first result was the termination of paying tribute to the Hephthalites. But he was not ready to engage in open combat against the Hephthalites. Khusrow I, in AD 557, concluded a truce with Byzantium, which after five years, changed into a peace agreement, so he had calmed the western borders.⁷⁶⁴ Even before that, in AD 554, the Sasanian empire and the Turks entered into an offensive alliance against the Hephthalites, which was sealed by the marriage of Khusrow I and the daughter of Istemi (she gave birth to the later shahinshah Hormizd IV, 579-590).⁷⁶⁵ There is also another version under which the wedding took place after the victory over the Hephthalites. Since AD 555 the Turks were at war with the Hephthalites and it would have been very dangerous for the Turkic

⁷⁶¹ In Byzantine sources his name was Silzibul, Dizavul and Sinjibu in Arabic sources: Кляшторный/Савинов 1994, 18; Sinor rejects this identification and believes that there is a phonetic difference between the two names and Chinese sources do not indicate that Ishtemi had, besides Tardu, another son, as it is noted in Byzantine sources. He writes: “If Silziboulos had really been Ishtemi, one of the two founding fathers of the empire, whose name was still revered some two centuries later, his son Tardu would have certainly come to the obsequies...It would then appear wise not to identify Ishtemi with Silziboulos”: Sinor 1994, 305.

⁷⁶² Гумилев 1967а, 34–35.

⁷⁶³ Grignaschi 1984, 221.

⁷⁶⁴ Sykes 1921, 454.

⁷⁶⁵ Артамонов 1962, 135; Кляшторный 1992, 133-134.

bride of Khusrow I Anushirvan to cross the Hephthalite lands at that time. The only possibility was for the wedding procession to reach the Sasanian empire via Khorezm.⁷⁶⁶

Thus the Hephthalite state was caught from two sides, on the north the Turkic kaghanate and in the south Sasanian Iran (**fig. 81**). In this context, we need to take into account the fact that in the south another part of the Hephthalites was still fighting the Indian principalities and could not provide any real assistance to their northern branch.

The Hephthalites, in this situation, tried to renew their relations with China, but without any success. A councilor of the Hephthalite king Gatfar was named Katulf.⁷⁶⁷ Katulf kept the king from beginning military action, arguing that it would be better in their own land, where they were stronger than the enemy. However, insulted by Gatfar, he betrayed his country and fled to Khusrow I. In AD 558 Yabghu-kaghan Istemi, attacked the Hephthalites from the north in alliance with Khusrow I.⁷⁶⁸ The reason was given by the Hephthalites themselves. Trying to prevent the alliance between the shahinshah and the kaghan, he killed the Turkic embassy, moving through the Sogd, except for one man escaped and brought the message to the kaghan. War became inevitable. Mobilizing troops, the Turks invaded the Hephthalite state. First they conquered Chach (Tashkent), then crossed the river Chirchik and the Turkic troops stayed in Maimurg (principality in the Samarqand region, south of the Zarafshan).⁷⁶⁹ Gatfar had already begun to gather troops. In the region of Bukhara the troops from Balkh, Shugnan, Vashgird, Termez, Amul, Zemm and other areas of the state concentrated.⁷⁷⁰ The Hephthalite king decided not to take

⁷⁶⁶ Grignaschi 1984, 234.

⁷⁶⁷ Fedorov 2005, 197; Gatfar, according to Firdausi, was a grandson of Akhshunwar, although Fedorov noted that this name is given only by Firdausi, and is not found either in Tabari or Balami. The name Katulf is explained by Altheim as Turkic: *qatil* – gemischt werden, sich mischen plus Nominalsuffix-*p*. So the meaning of the name Katulf (*qatil-p*) is “Gemischter, Mischling”: Altheim 1959, 45.

⁷⁶⁸ Kuwayama 1989, 119; Kuwayama 2002, 130.

⁷⁶⁹ Гумилев 1967а, 40; Gumilev (1967а) writes that the troops of Khusrow I first started fighting in 562 and defeated the Hephthalites (p. 40). But on another page of his book this year dates the first defeat of the Hephthalites by the Turks (p. 438).

⁷⁷⁰ Firdausi 1915, 331.

the battle on the plain, where the cavalry of the Turks had more advantages. He retreated to the mountains and fought at Nesef (Karshi). The battle lasted for eight days and ended with victory for the Turks. The date of this event is placed by some researchers as AD 557 (Droin), AD 558 (Frye), AD 563 (Saint-Martin), AD 565 (Grousset), while Chavannes believes it was between AD 563-567. The description of the battle is found in Firdausi's work:

“.....Bukhárá,
Was all fulfilled with mace and axe, for there
The of the Haitálíans was encamped.
Ghátkár had come forth with a mighty host,
And gathered all the native chiefs. The troops
Troops rushed to both sides,
Advanced from every quarter to the war,
And left the wind no way.....
Upon the eighth day, 'gainst Ghátkár the world
Was all bedarkened like night azure-dim,
The Haitálíans were o'erthrown irreparably
For years, the wounded scattered everywhere,
And all the march was full of slain and captives”.⁷⁷¹

The remainder of the defeated Hephthalites moved south, where they chose as successor of Gatfar, fallen in battle,⁷⁷² the Chaganian ruler Faganish, Hephthalite by origin, who hurried to comply with the Sasanians in order to avoid full defeat from the Turks. Khusrow I had attacked simultaneously with the Turks against the Hephthalites and occupied some of the areas south of the Amudarya.⁷⁷³

The Sasanian shahinshah had been waiting for the Turks and the Hephthalites to weaken each other in the war, and joined later according to Solovyov. In his view, this explains why that Hephthalites gathered troops in Tokharistan, since from the

⁷⁷¹ Firdausi 1915, 331-332; Фирдоуси 1989, 119.

⁷⁷² Фирдоуси 1989, 612; One of the parts of Zerafshan river in medieval time was called Hitfar, a name corresponding to the Hephthalite king Gatfar: Сулейманов 1979, 21.

⁷⁷³ Мандельштам 1958а, 352.

south no one threatened. It was only after the victory of the Turks, that Khusrow I moved, trying to get his share of the Hephthalite state.⁷⁷⁴

Tabari reported on the battle between the Hephthalites and the Turks: “the strongest, most gallant and mighty of the Turks was kaghan Sinjibu, and he had most of all troops with whom he fought against Warāz, king of the Hephthalites. Not in the East he was not frightened by their multiplicity and power, has killed their king Warāz and all his army, has seized their wealth and has occupied their country with the exclusion of that part, which was earlier achieved by Khusrow”.⁷⁷⁵ According to ad-Dinawari, Khusrow I had sent the troops to the country of the Hephthalites and conquered Tokharistan, Zabulistan, Kabulistan and Chaganian. Then the Turkic ruler Sinjibu kaghan gathered his men and marched to the Khorasan, he occupied Chach, Ferghana, and Samarqand, Kesh and Neseif and received Bukhara.⁷⁷⁶

Menander Protector mentions that when in AD 568 the Turkic ambassadors arrived in Constantinople, Emperor Justin II asked them: “You have subjected all the power of the Hephthalites?” – “All” - answered the ambassadors.⁷⁷⁷

Thus, we see that in AD 568 the Hephthalite state was already broken up and we could agree with the conclusions of Chavannes, which are based on the idea that the defeat of the Hephthalite state was between 563 and 567. As late as AD 598, a letter from Dyangu (or Tardu) kaghan (son of Istemi) to the Byzantine Emperor Mauritius (592-602), as reported by Theophilaktos Simocattes, said: “Having defeated the leader of the Abdels (I mean those who are called the Hephthalites), the Kaghan conquered them and has obtained power over them”.⁷⁷⁸

The Hephthalites thus fought against two mighty enemies simultaneously

⁷⁷⁴ Соловьев 1997, 21.

⁷⁷⁵ Гафуров 1972, 217; In the opinion of Nöldeke, the name could sound as “Varz”. V. Masson translates it from Iranian as “wild boar”. Gafurov considers that some Eastern Iranian rulers carried such a title (“Varaz”), for instance Merv, Herat, Garchistan, and Nisa. Another interpretation of this name as “high” can not be excluded: Гафуров 1972, 217.

⁷⁷⁶ Гафуров 1972, 217; Frye suggests that the Hephthalite state was split by the allies in AD 558. However, the Sasanian shahinshah started an offensive policy against the Hephthalites after concluding a peace treaty with Byzantium in AD 562: Фрай 1972, 314.

⁷⁷⁷ Menander the Guardsman 1985, 115.

⁷⁷⁸ Артамонов 1962, 105.

during nearly 10 years. Due to an agreement concluded in AD 566 (or 571) between the Turks and the Persians, Khusrow I received all former Hephthalite lands south of the Amudarya: Sindh, Bost, Ar-Rokhaj (Arachosia), Zabulistan, Dardistan (here, perhaps Garchistan is the region of the upper Murgab) and Kabul, as well as the inheritance of the Hephthalite king Faganish-Chaganian. The Turks received Sogd, Shash, Fergana and eastern Turkestan.⁷⁷⁹ Khusrow I was actually unable to establish his authority in the territory of Arachosia and Zabulistan so that there the Hephthalite king continued to rule, as well as in Badghis and Herat.⁷⁸⁰ Harmatta presumed that Huttal and Kabul were not included in this list. These provinces could preserve their independence after the fall of the Hephthalite empire.⁷⁸¹

The dividing of the Hephthalite state did not bring complete peace between the recent allies. The apple of discord was northern Tokharistan, where the remainders of the Hephthalite troops concentrated. According to Artamonov the Turks required from Iran, which was paid by the Hephthalites, as well as free journey through the territory of Iran for merchants from Sogd, which had become part of the Turkic kaghanat. Khusrow I rejected these conditions and the Turks moved to the Sasanian border, but, having encountered powerful fortifications on their way in Gurgan, did not dare to go further.⁷⁸² The Amudarya became the frontier between the two states.⁷⁸³

Ambassadors of the kaghan to Constantinople were to convince the Byzantine emperor Justin II to begin joint actions against Sasanians. Byzantium delayed an answer, but the Turks did not want to begin the war against Persians on their own. They have moved against the agreement with the Persian of AD 571. Firdausi (a similar version in Tabari) places these events shortly after each other. The kaghan of the "Chins" (Turks) sent ambassadors to Khusrow I, who were intercepted by the Hephthalites. The Turks attacked the Hephthalites and won, having killed

⁷⁷⁹ Widengren 1952, 69-94; Гумилев 1967а, 47; Here Gumilev (1967а) again is contradictory, on p. 47, we see the date of the treaty in AD 571, and on p. 438, AD 566, is given?

⁷⁸⁰ Grignaschi 1984, 245.

⁷⁸¹ Harmatta 1969, 401-402.

⁷⁸² Артамонов 1962, 134.

⁷⁸³ Christensen 1944, 373.

their king. They seized the territory of the Hephthalites and moved towards Gurgan. The alarmed Khusrow I deployed his troops in Gurgan. The kaghan was prepared to attack, but on hearing of their drawing near first sent an embassy. Having returned, the ambassadors told him about the power of the Sasanians and the kaghan, having reconsidered his attack, offered the shahinshah his daughter as wife. Thereby, as a result of negotiations, the border of political influence was fixed on the Amudarya, northern Tokharistan remaining a sort of buffer territory under the power of the Hephthalites, but paying tribute to the Turks. The southern part of Central Asian thus, probably for a certain time, continued to exist as a semi independent Hephthalite possession. However, in the reports of Masudi, Khusrow I, having used some pretext, occupied an area lying beyond the “Balkh river”, that is to say the Amudarya and reached Huttalan or Huttal (the origin of the name is connected to the Hephthalites in the Arabic transcript *Haital*). The Hephthalite king (named Akhshunwar, but possibly, according to Gafurov this was a title, rather than a proper name) was killed and his holdings were integrated into the Sasanian empire.

A reliable witness of this event is Jinagupta, a Buddhist monk of Gandharan origin, who left there in AD 554 for Chinese Central Asia via Kapisa, Bamiyan and Tokharistan. His biographer, Daoxuan, makes a special allusion to the current political emergency which Jinagupta often suffered from during his stay in AD 555 at the Hephthalite headquarter where he saw the land extensive but barren without producing anything to eat.⁷⁸⁴

In AD 569-570 Turkic army launched a military expedition against Sasanian Iran and conquered the territory of the former Hephthalite kingdom belonging to Iran. In AD 570 the Turks were certainly operating in the Kabul-Gandhara area.⁷⁸⁵

The invasion of the Turks in Transoxania was a result of the rebellion in AD 581, when the Hephthalite ruler of northern Tokharistan acted in alliance with Khotan and with support from Sasanian Iran, according to Mandelshtam. The details of the rebellion are unknown, but probably, following Mandelshtam, it ended unhappily, and the Turks took northern Tokharistan, whence they invaded Sasanian

⁷⁸⁴ Kuwayama 2002, 210.

⁷⁸⁵ Harmatta/Litvinsky 1996, 368.

territory around Herat in AD 588, which was held by the Sasanian military leader Bahram Chubin. This invasion was the Turkic answer to the Sasanian support of the Hephthalite rebellion. After suppression of the rebellion, the Hephthalite state in northern Tokharistan was reduced to a small domain.⁷⁸⁶

In another opinion of Gafurov, the Turks, given the volatile situation in Iran following the death of Khusrow I in AD 579, decided to occupy the Hephthalite principality of Tokharistan, which at the end of 70's - beginning of the 80's of the 6th century AD had achieved independence. The Turks had to fight with the Hephthalite and Sasanian troops. Although the Turks won, the victory was only partial, since they conquered the Hephthalites on the right bank Tokharistan and the Hephthalites of left bank remained independent. In AD 589 the Turks, led by Save (after V.Masson, Shaba, son of the kaghan) invade the province of Badghis and Herat, but the Turkic army was defeated by Bahram Chubin in the same year after the battle in Herat. The further development is known to us in two versions. According to the first, the Persians crossed the Amudarya, once again defeated the Turks, headed by Barmuda (or Yel-tegin), son of the killed Turkic ruler, while in the second version peace was concluded in the region of Termez between the rivals. Yet another version is given by the Armenian bishop Sebeos. According to him Bahram Chubin "defeated the army of the Tetals (the Hephthalites-A.K.), forcibly seized Balkh province and the whole country of the Kushans, up to the other great river, called Vehrod (Amudarya) ... Bahram at the time led war with the great king of the Maskuts who lived across the great river, defeated his large army and the king was killed in battle. The Persians captured the entire treasury of the kingdom".⁷⁸⁷

From this report of the Armenian historian, Gafurov concludes that the Turks (i.e. Maskuts) fought in alliance with the Hephthalites living in northern Afghanistan against Sasanian Iran. V. Masson differs in his view that in Tokharistan or some of its parts the Hephthalites retained possessions and recognized the supreme power, first of Khusrow I, and then of the Turkic kaghan. He thinks that the Hephthalites

⁷⁸⁶ Мандельштам 1958а, 355.

⁷⁸⁷ Гафуров 1972, 221; Тер-Мкртчян 1979, 58.

could survive in Tokharistan, accepting the power of the Turks.⁷⁸⁸

Harmatta writes: “Because of the revolt of Bahrām Čōbīn, the military successes had no lasting consequences. However, after the conclusion of peace with Byzantium, the new Persian governor of Xorāsān, Vistahm compelled the Hephthalite rulers Šāvak and Parmuka to acknowledge his supremacy but he was treacherously murdered (in AD 595 or 596) by the latter.”⁷⁸⁹

Narshakhi (10th century) in his “History of Bukhara” reports that in Paikent (near Bukhara) people chose Abrui as their ruler: “After the lapse of some time, as Abrūi grew powerful, he exercised tyranny such that inhabitants of the district could not stand it. The *dihqāns* and rich (merchants) fled from this district and went to Turkistān and Tarāz where they built a city... Then those people who had remained in Bukhara sent a man to their nobles and asked for succor from the oppression of Abrūi. Those nobles and *dihqāns* went to the ruler of the Turks who was called Qarā Jūrīn Turk...”.⁷⁹⁰ He sent his son Shīr-i Kishvar with troops against Abrui. The son of the kaghan defeated Abrui and ordered his execution, himself then becoming the ruler of this area. Following Markwart the tyranny of Abrui occurred in the 60s of the 6th century. Abrui is not a personal name, but the title “*War-iz*” of the last representative of the Hephthalite dynasty, which ruled in Paikent. Markwart connected this title with the proper name of the Hephthalites: “*War*” and “*War-ič*”. Qarā Jūrīn Turk of Narshakhi he identified with Istemi.⁷⁹¹

Differently, Tolstov identifies Abrui with the son of the Mugan kaghan (553-572) Ta-lo-pien, who carried the title Abo (in Chinese sources). Ta-lo-pien had thrice unsuccessfully tried to get a throne. Finally, he raised a rebellion against kaghan Shabolio, but was defeated and fled to the west to his uncle Datu kaghan “Khakan of western country”. As guest of his uncle, Ta-lo-pien collected troops and once again opened hostilities, but was caught in captivity by the military leader Shabolio in AD 556. Tolstov considers that the origin of the title “*Abrui*” = “*avarich*” is identical to

⁷⁸⁸ Массон 1964, 209.

⁷⁸⁹ Harmatta 2000, 251.

⁷⁹⁰ Narshakhī 1954, 7.

⁷⁹¹ Markwart 1938, 147-148

Chinese “Abo”. He thinks that the Hephthalite title “*avarich*” was adopted in the occupied residence of the Hephthalites Paikent Turkic prince. Acceptance by Ta-lo-pien of this title was a political step, reflecting the continuation of the social policy of his Hephthalite predecessors.⁷⁹²

Local aristocracy could amass more power and threaten the Hephthalite rule in the oasis in the opinion of Mandelshtam. So the Hephthalites decided to stop the Dekhkans. The head of the Hephthalites in the Bukhara oasis, Abrui, in 40’s or begin of the 50’s of the 6th century AD (before the fall the Hephthalite state) thus forced the Dekhkans to emigrate.⁷⁹³ Tolstov’s idea on the identification of Abrui with Abo Kaghan is pure hypothesis according to Mandelshtam. Following Gumilev, Abrui was the Turkic prince Toreman with the title Abo (the oldest), who in 80’s of the 6th century AD, in the course of fighting for the throne, reached Transoxiana and conquered Paikent.⁷⁹⁴ Vaissière thinks this story is reflection of the Sogdian colonization of Semireche by noble initiative and “and an extension of sedentary and urban cultures to the north”.⁷⁹⁵

In AD 616 (or 617) the Sasanian military leader Smbat Bagratuni made two campaigns against right bank Tokharistan, where there were several Hephthalite possessions, dependant of the Balkh ruler and formerly under suzerainty of the Turks.⁷⁹⁶

Smbat could defeat the army of the “Kushans” and, according to Sebeos, “the Kushan kings asked for help from a great kaghan, the king of the North. He came with an army, and then the Hephthalites standing together with the Turks defeated the Persian army and forced them to flee”.⁷⁹⁷

The victors chased the Persians and reached Rei, robbed the country, then for

⁷⁹² Толстов 1948, 253–256.

⁷⁹³ Мандельштам 1958а, 351; The same opinion is expressed by O. Smirnova. According to her the head of the Hephthalites Abrui committed a coup, and the nobility emigrated. Later it merged with the Turks and as a result the Hephthalite state fell: Смирнова 1970, 35.

⁷⁹⁴ Гумилев 2002, 128-134.

⁷⁹⁵ Vaissière 2005а, 114.

⁷⁹⁶ Гафуров 1972, 221.

⁷⁹⁷ Тревер 1954, 142.

unknown reasons, the military ruler Chembuhu was ordered to return. Sebeos wrote that the Turks, crossing the river Vehrod (Amudarya), went back to their places. After that, for Sebeos, Smbat again gathered an army “and marched to the Kushan people, and the king of the Hephthalites”, renewed combat occurred, in which the Sasanian commander was able to defeat the “Kushans”, who had been left without their allies. In this report, as noted by Trever, one part is interesting. During the second march Smbat fought “the Kushan people, and the king Hephthalites”, two lines further, Sebeos calls him the king of the “Kushans”. Trever believes that this was the same person - king of the Kushans, of Hephthalite origin.⁷⁹⁸

On the base of this report of Sebeos Trever comes to the following conclusion: the names “Kushan country”, “Kushan kingdom”, “Kushan king” were preserved not only in the 5th century AD, at period of the bloom of the Hephthalites, but also in the time of Sebeos, i.e. the 7th century AD. According to the Armenian historian, the Hephthalites at that time lived in the area of Herat, Badghis, Talaqan, and Balkh. Although Smbat Bagratuni could win, the above mentioned territories were not in the hands of the Sasanians, so that the Turks could expell the Sasanian troops in the opinion of Gafurov.⁷⁹⁹

In spite of his victory Smbat returned back in Nishapur, according to Masson, but this would mean that his military success was not so great, as is presented by Sebeos. After this Tokharistan has definitively under Turkic power and control, being entrusted to the son of kaghan Tardu-Shad, who was installed not far from Kunduz.⁸⁰⁰

Regarding the Hephthalites remaining in Kapisa-Gandhara, there is information that small Hephthalite states continued to exist. They issued coins with the title “xingil” and legend on Brahmi. Until ca. AD 625 troops of the Western Turkic kaghanate under the leadership of the father of Tardu-Shad, Ton-Yabgu, crossed the Indus river and conquered some regions there, replacing the Hephthalite dynasties with Turkic ones. The last Hephthalite governor of Kapisa-Gandhara was

⁷⁹⁸ Тревер 1954, 143.

⁷⁹⁹ Гафуров 1972, 221.

⁸⁰⁰ Массон 1964, 206.

Narendra II, former vassal of Western Turkic kaghan.⁸⁰¹

The ruler with the name Khingila or its other forms – Khinkhila, Xingila etc. – is problematic. Several rulers with such name existed:

1. Khingila on the coins.
2. Khinkhila in the Kalhana's "Rajatarangini".
3. Khinkhila (or Khinjil), in work of al-Yakubi.
4. Khingala in the two line inscription of the marble Ganesa statue from Gardez.
5. Khīngīla from the copper plate inscription.
6. Khingila on the Bactrian inscription running round the circumference of the seal from the private collection of Mr. A. Saeedi (London).

Sundermann presumes that the founder of the Hephthalite state was Xingila, which later became the dynastic title of his heirs and was ultimately transferred to the Turki Shahi dynasty.⁸⁰² The Turkic rulers of Kapisa-Gandhara from the tribe Askil Nezak Tegin accepted the Hephthalite title "*Khingila*" and considered themselves the heirs of the Hephthalite rulers according to Harmatta. In AD 670 a representative of this dynasty began to rule in Zabulistan as well as Kapisa-Gandhara. This dynasty maintained power in these areas, despite the war with the Arabs, until the end of the 7th century AD.⁸⁰³

Khingal is not a personal name but an eponym based on a dynasty which passed down from generation to generation in eastern Afghanistan and north-western India, in the opinion of Petech.⁸⁰⁴ Callieri pointed out that Khingila may also represent a title.⁸⁰⁵

⁸⁰¹ Harmatta 1996, 475; Harmatta/Litvinsky 1996, 370; It is supposed that the title "Xingil" is a Turkic title "Tegin". Biswas (1973, 53) writes that such a Turkic title was for governors of regions.

⁸⁰² Sundermann 1996, 474.

⁸⁰³ Harmatta 1996, 476.

⁸⁰⁴ Petech 1988, 187-194.

⁸⁰⁵ Callieri 2002, 130.

In reality a kingdom, inaugurated by Khingal, existed in the Kabul valleys with capitals at Begram in the summer and Hund in the winter in the opinion of Kuwayama. It came into existence in parallel with the political weakness of the Hephthalites toward the middle of the 6th century AD and lasted until the rise of the Turks in Kabul in the middle of the 7th century AD.⁸⁰⁶ According to him the kings of the Khingal dynasty in Kapisa were not Hephthalites. There is indeed reason for separating the Khingal from the Hephthalites on account of differing coinage. The crown decorated with a bulls head is the dynastic one of the Khingal kings in Kapisa, not that of the Hephthalites. If the dynasty inaugurated by Khingal was truly local and issued coins, they must have differed from the last series of the Hephthalite coins depicting the peculiar busts of Hephthalite kings. Probably, the Khingal dynasty was local, belonging to the warrior class.⁸⁰⁷ Khingal most probably founded his dynasty of Kapisa in the middle or late 6th century, released from the yoke of the Hephthalites.⁸⁰⁸ After AD 661 the Khingal dynasty was usurped by the Turks. From Chinese sources we know that in AD 720 the governor of Zabul Qaradachi Eltabar accepted this title.⁸⁰⁹

In a different scenario, the kings of Kapisa might well have originated from a branch of the Hephthalites who had escaped from the north at the time of the dislocation of their empire, according to Grenet. Although the edited text of Xuanzang presents them as *Chali* “kṣatriyas”, the most ancient manuscripts have the word *Suli* “Sogdians” and the “Suishu” gives their family name as Zhaowu, one traditionally carried by all Sogdian rulers. However, they appear as a distinct political entity from the homonymous Nezak Tarkhans of southern Tokharistan, although they have sometimes been confused by modern scholars and may in fact have been ultimately related.⁸¹⁰

It is likely that Khinkhila Narendratitya was the Hephthalite ruler who called

⁸⁰⁶ Kuwayama 1999, 36-37, 48.

⁸⁰⁷ Kuwayama 1998, 339; Kuwayama 1999, 43.

⁸⁰⁸ Kuwayama 1998, 336; Kuwayama 2002, 255; This opinion is also supported by Abdur Rahman (2002, 37-38).

⁸⁰⁹ Kuwayama 1999, 54-55; Kuwayama 2002, 221.

⁸¹⁰ Grenet 2002, 218.

himself Deva Shahi Khingila.⁸¹¹ Deva Sahi Khingila was a Hephthalite king who began his reign between AD 460 and AD 466.⁸¹² Harmatta supposes that Khikhila Narendraditya was another Hephthalite king who ruled before AD 570, so he would be Khingila II.⁸¹³ The same opinion is supported by Enoki.⁸¹⁴

Khinkhila (or Khinjil), in the work of al-Yakubi, was one of the Kabul Shahs of Turkish origin and Khingala, in the Ganesha inscription was also Kabul Shah, identifiable with Bofuzhun, who ascended the throne in AD 745, as stated in the “Jiu Tangshu” and the “Tang Huiyao”.⁸¹⁵ Khingila on the Bactrian inscription (**fig. 54**) running round the circumference of the seal from the private collection of Mr. A. Saeedi (London) is dated to the first half of the 5th century AD.⁸¹⁶ The copper plate inscription is also dated to the end of 5th century, therefore both cases can be related to one Khingila.

The name Khingila may have a link to the name of the sacred sword worshipped by the Xiongnu, *kenglu* compared with Turkish *qinjiraq* “double-blade knife” in the opinion of de la Vaissière. This sword was worshipped among the Xiongnu in the same way as the Scythians and the Huns of Attila worshipped swords. *Kenglu* was also name of god of war among Xiongnu and the Huns of Attila, so Khingila might have been a theophoric name.⁸¹⁷

According to Kuwayama no written document supports the extension of power of the Hephthalites beyond the western Hindukush to Kapisa and Zabulistan.⁸¹⁸ He notes: “A misconception about an illusory Hephthalite presence in Kapisi and Zabulistan has long strongly influenced scholars to take a firm hold of a historical unreality and attribute the so-called Napki coins to the Hephthalite coinage. The Hephthalites really had nothing to do with these kingdoms, but directed their

⁸¹¹ Kuwayama 1998, 340-341; Kuwayama 1999, 45.

⁸¹² Harmatta 1969, 398.

⁸¹³ Harmatta 1969, 403.

⁸¹⁴ Enoki 1969, 25.

⁸¹⁵ Kuwayama 1998, 340; Kuwayama 1999, 44; Kuwayama 2002, 221.

⁸¹⁶ Callieri 2002, 121, 131.

⁸¹⁷ Vaissière 2003, 129.

⁸¹⁸ Kuwayama 1998, 332; Kuwayama 1999, 37; Kuwayama 2002, 208.

concerns only towards the northwest. A reference in the “Suishu” to the crown worn by a king of Cao lends strong support for the identification of the Napki coins with those issued by the kings of the Khingal line of Kapisi”.⁸¹⁹

This theory of Kuwayama is opposed by Alram, who believes that the numismatic evidence gathered by Göbl clearly demonstrates that the Alchon Huns reached India via the Kapisa-Kabul area. According to Alram the fourth phase of the Alchon coinage used the same two symbols (tamgha and crescent) noted above, but for the first time, the obverse bears the typical bust of a king, which is placed on top of a floral motif. In front of the bust, the Bactrian *alxannano* and behind the bust, the name *Khingila*, written in Brahmi letters. This is the first bilingual coin type, and the use of Brahmi perhaps indicates that this type was not struck in the Kapisa-Kabul region but further east in the province of Gandhara. This idea supported by a hoard of sixteen drachms of these early types, which was found at Shahji-ki Dheri near Peshawar, in 1911. In general, these types are also common in the Punjab district.⁸²⁰

Ilyasov thinks that Alchon-Chionites conquered lands beyond the Hindukush under the aegis of the Hephthalites, but kept their symbolic and tribal name.⁸²¹

Song Yun was admitted to the Hephthalite ruler at his headquarter in Tokharistan and then to the Tegin of Gandhara in AD 520. He further says that some 40 countries sent their envoys to the headquarters. The “Weishu” and Song Yun’s account make no mention of Bamiyan and Kapisa among the vassal states of the Hephthalites.⁸²² The Hephthalites had their winter quarters around the town Huoluo in the Baghlan-Gori plain according to Kuwayama. Their summer pasture was first in Badakhshan and then in Hsi-mo-ta-lo. It is possible that the Hephthalites kept the western half of Hsi-mo-ta-lo, while the Turks took the better, eastern half of Badakhshan. The Hephthalites thus seem to have been independent, even during

⁸¹⁹ Kuwayama 1999, 45.

⁸²⁰ Alram 1999/2000, 131.

⁸²¹ Ilyasov 2003, 154.

⁸²² Kuwayama 1998, 332; Kuwayama 1999, 38; Since the *qishlaq* near a town is always on the lower course of the river in Tokharistan, the Hephthalite king received Song Yun somewhere on the Surkhab or the Talaqan-Kunduz, but not in Badakhshan, a site of summer pasturing: Kuwayama 1989, 114-115; Kuwayama 2002, 127.

Turkic hegemony, until the first decade of the 8th century AD.⁸²³ Grenet opposes the idea of Kuwayama that Kapisa was bypassed by the Kidarites and the Hephthalites as incorrect, because this appears quite unlikely in view of the role always played by the Panjshir valley in the history of invasions of northwestern India.⁸²⁴

Sebeos also tells about the escape of the last Sasanian shahinshah Yazdegerd III (632 - 651) from the Arabs in AD 651 and his death on the territory of modern Turkmenistan. According to the Armenian historian, "... Yazkert fled from them (Arabs) but could not escape because they pursued and overtook him near the borders of the Kushans (i.e. Merv) and destroyed all of his troops. He fled to the Hephthalites ... Tetals troops captured and killed Yazkert".⁸²⁵ In the opinion of Trever Sebeos, in this report, gives the Hephthalite area and ruler with his troops an ethnic identity. She remarks that country and people were identified as Kushans, but the king and the army as Hephthalites, i.e. the upper class and part of the troops belonged to other tribes, who were all part of the Kushan kingdom. The king of the Tetals used his dynastic name (of his tribe), so the king of the Kushans was a political name also indicating the country. Thereby the ethnic kinship between Kushans and the Hephthalites could be constructed.⁸²⁶

When pursued by the Arabs Yazdegerd III fled to Khorasan, to the walls of Merv where he met Nezak Tarkhan, owner of Badghis (the region between Serahs and Herat) who came with his troops. According to the medieval writer al-Belazuri (9th century AD) conflict flared between Yazdegerd III and Nezak Tarkhan. The reason was Nezak Tarkhan's request to give him as wife a daughter of the shahinshah. Yazdegerd III was angered, because he considered the proposal unworthy of his daughter. A considerable role in this quarrel was played by the marzban of Merv Mahuye, who was not honest with his suzerain.⁸²⁷ As a result the troops battled (it is interesting to compare Sebeos about the Tetals), Yazdegerd III

⁸²³ Kuwayama 1989, 130, Kuwayama 2002, 138.

⁸²⁴ Grenet 2002, 207.

⁸²⁵ Тер-Мкртчян 1979, 62.

⁸²⁶ Тревер 1954, 143.

⁸²⁷ Аннанепесов (ed.) 1992, 9-10; The same information was given by Tabari: Аннанепесов (ed.) 1992, 61-62.

was defeated and fled to Merv, but Mahuye did not open the gates of the city to him. The shahinshah was killed not far from Merv and was buried by Christians, who found his body. Nezak Tarkhan later, after long resistance to the Arabs, was killed by the Arabic governor of Khorasan Qutaiba ibn Muslim (died in 715) in 709.

There are many mentions of the name Nezak in historical sources from AD 651 to 709. During this time several persons had this name:

1. In 709 Nezak was killed by Qutaiba;
2. In 719 Nezak sent an emissary to the court of China;
3. In 739 Nezak is mentioned as the governor of Shash (Tashkent);
4. In 754 Nezak is described as a supporter of Abu Muslim, leader of the Abbasid revolt;
5. In 873 Nezak appears as a supporter of the ruler of Ahwaz in Khuzistan.

Some researchers think that Nezak Tarkhan, a king of the Hephthalites, was also the vassal of the Tokhara Yabghu of the Western Turks and seized a Turkic lady of his sovereign in AD 710 but was captured and killed by Qutaiba ibn Muslim.⁸²⁸ However, Inaba considers that he had a Khalaj origin.⁸²⁹ The Arabic geographer Yakut al-Hamavi (1179-1229) referring to Badghis, describes it as the main center (country) of the Hephthalites “Dār mamlakat al-Hayātila”.⁸³⁰ Harmatta thinks that Nezak Tarkhan was a king of Kabul and there minted his coins with the inscription “Nezak shah”.⁸³¹ According to Esin the real name of Tarkhan was not Nezak but Tirek in the work of al-Kufi (9th century AD). He was not Hephthalite, but a Turgesh dignitaries with the rank of Tarkhan. The Tirek were vassals of the Turkish Yabghus of Tokharistan. Tirek, as well as Tarkhan, were Turkish hereditary titles. The Turgeshs were a Western Turkish tribe of the Chu valley, who had been subjects of the Turkic Kaghanate and who, after the fall of the Western branch of the Kaghanate in AD 658, founded their own Kaghanate which lasted until AD 766, when they were

⁸²⁸ Kuwayama 1989, 130, Kuwayama 2002, 138; Litvinskij 1998, 106.

⁸²⁹ Inaba 2005, 15.

⁸³⁰ Bivar 1971, 304.

⁸³¹ Harmatta 1969, 408.

conquered by the Karluks.⁸³² Frye also comes to the conclusion that Nezak was a widely distributed name, and Ibn Khurdadbeh even described Nezak as title of a minor Turkish prince.⁸³³

The castle Kafir Qalai Barfak could be identified with “Kurz” (krz), the eagles’ nest where Qutaiba besieged and finally captured the Nezak Tarkhan according to Grenet: “it stands to the east of the river, overlooking a footpath to the Chahar-dar pass, towards which the tarkhan was probably heading on his way to Kabul”.⁸³⁴

As the “Tongdian” informs us, 127 towns and cities west of Kashgar came under Tang rule in AD 659. Mentioned among these states are the Yida, or the Hephthalites. In the “Tangshu” the Hephthalites clearly appear among the 16 major regions: “The Dahan government-general (otherwise called Taihan in some editions, the first character *tai* has one more stroke than *da*) is located at the town Huoluo, the capital of the Hephthalie *ulaq*; [The Tang emperor] has their chieftain Dahan govern over his territory consisting of fifteen *ulaqs* which are under the rule of the [Hephthalite] Dahan”.⁸³⁵

The Arabs named their opponents as the nomads of Badghis and Tokharistan, the Turks or the Hephthalites. For example, Tabari describing the struggle of Ahnaf ibn al-Kais with nomads of Tokharistan in the second half of 7th century AD, in one place calls them Turks, in another Hephthalites. Specifically Tabari writes: “Ibn Amir took the direction of the desert Raber ... directed to Abrashahr, city (region) Nishapur. The avant-garde of his army was commanded by al-Ahnaf ibn Kays. He took the path to Kuhistan and went to Abrashahr. He met the Hephthalites. Al-Ahnaf came with them in battle and defeated them. Then Ibn Amir arrived in Nishapur”.⁸³⁶

Yakubovsky explains this confusion in the works of Arab-Persian authors by

⁸³² Esin 1977, 323-324; Grenet (2002, 216) criticized Esin, who claims that all the sources identify these rulers as Turks, despite the fact that Hamza Esfakhani calls Nezak Tarkhan “the king of the Hephthalites”.

⁸³³ Frye 1974, 117-118; Harmatta (1969, 406-407) thinks that Nezak was a dynastic title.

⁸³⁴ Grenet 2002, 217.

⁸³⁵ Kuwayama 1989, 125; Kuwayama 2002, 134 (with a slightly different translation).

⁸³⁶ Волин et al. (eds.) 1939, 98.

saying that when the Turks with the Persians had defeated the Hephthalites these were not banished and not destroyed completely. The Hephthalites remained and the Turks, arriving in the area, mixed with them. Yakubovsky remarks that in the description of events in Dehistan, where the Turks in the first quarter of 8th century AD under the leadership of Sul fought against the Arabs, under the commander Yezid bin Mukhallab, Arab-Persian authors did not mix them with the Hephthalites but named them directly as Turks.⁸³⁷ V. Masson considered that Dehistan was included among the “Chionite-Hephthalites, but then the Turkic association began to penetrate in this area, so first there were Hephthalites, then Turkic tribes”.⁸³⁸

In AD 701-703 the Hephthalites, together with the Turks and Tibetans, took part in the siege of Termez, when its governor Musa ibn Abdallah ibn Khazim rebelled against the regent of Khorasan. The siege ended with the defeat of the attacking troops. Only 15 years later the rebel ruler was defeated.⁸³⁹

The “Cefu Yuanggui” includes a memorial presented in AD 718 to the Tang emperor by a younger brother Puluo of the Tokhara yabghu Nuo(Pan)duili. According to the memorial the Hephthalite chieftain had fifty thousand soldiers and horsemen at his command. In the same memorial an equal military power was also at the command of the kings of such neighboring states as Khuttal, Chaghanian, Akharun-Shuman, Shughnan, Wakhan, Guzgan, Bamiyan and Badakhshan (**fig. 90**). In AD 729 there was an embassy from the Hephthalites to China. According to Chavannes here we should see the yabghu of Tokharistan, who after the death of his vassal Nezak in AD 710, added to his title another one, King of the Hephthalites, and this was reflected in the “Cefu Yuanggui” as the Hephthalite embassy.⁸⁴⁰ Following Kuwayama, in AD 729 the Tang emperor appointed Kutluk Ton Tardu, a chieftain of Tokharistan, as the Tokhara yabghu according to the “Tang Huiyao” and the “Cefu

⁸³⁷ Якубовский 1947, 53-54; Каррыев et al. 1954, 9-10.

⁸³⁸ Массон 1961, 41.

⁸³⁹ Соловьев 1997, 26.

⁸⁴⁰ Chavannes 1904, 49; Another Yeda embassy in AD 748 may also be referred to in the same source: Chavannes 1904, 80.

Yuanguui”, and also as the king of the Hephthalites according to the “Tangshu” and the “Cefu Yuanguui”.⁸⁴¹

In this connection we may also note in the work of the historian Abul Fazl Beikhaki (996-1077) the people named Kenjine, who were among the troops of the governor of Chaganian, emir Abul Kasim, in 1035. The Kenjine occupied the valley between Huttal and Chaganian and are mentioned as Turks linked to the Hephthalites.⁸⁴²

The Abbasid khalifs’ vezir dynasty of the Barmakids may have had its origins from the Hephthalite rulers of Balkh. One of the Hephthalite kings was named Pariovk or Barmak. It is believed that this name might be from the Buddhist title “pramukha” or the Sanskrit “parmak”. Such a title was given to the head of a major Buddhist monastic center in Naubahar near Balkh.⁸⁴³

Finally some comments are necessary on the relations of the Hephthalites with Khorezm. There is a message of Zemarhos from Kilikia in the work of Menander Protector - an ambassador of the Byzantine emperor Justin II to the Turkic kaghan Istemi (Silzivul in Menander). In AD 569 Istemi was preparing to march against the Sasanians, when the Byzantine embassy arrived. Kaghan captured Zemarhos, but asked the other members of the embassy to wait for him in the country of “Khoalits”. When Istemi released Zemarhos, he permitted only the ruler of the “Khoalits” to join the return Turkic embassy, the kaghan having refused other dependent Central Asian rulers. Veselovsky considered that the “Khoalits” are the Hephthalites receiving this honour because of their bravery, while he writes that the Byzantine author also mentions the Hephthalites, separately from the “Khoalits”. According to Lerkh, the “Khoalits” were Khorezmians, where “Khoali” is “Khoari” without the second part “zm”, but with the Greek prefix “toi” instead.⁸⁴⁴

⁸⁴¹ Kuwayama 1989, 131, Kuwayama 2002, 139.

⁸⁴² Волин et al. (eds.) 1939, 255.

⁸⁴³ Harmatta/Litvinsky 1996, 371; In the opinion of Belenitsky (1949, 84), this temple could also have been a temple of fire or a temple of the Sun or Moon; According to Pugachenkova (1976, 148) Naubahar initially sounded like Nava Vihara, a Buddhist monastery, and later was drawn into Naubahar, which means “spring”.

⁸⁴⁴ Веселовский 1877, 18-19.

Veselovsky thought that the Hephthalites controlled all of the right bank Khorezmia, even in the time of Makdisi (11th century AD), named as Haital. A city Haytalia also existed in Khorezm. The Hephthalites, in his opinion, were further known under the name of Kidarites which may reflect a changed form of the name Kerder. Yakut in his work “Mujam al-buldan” (the dictionary of the countries) wrote: “Kerder is an area in the territory of Khorezm or on its borders to the area of Turks. The language (of the population) is neither Khorezmian nor Turkic”.⁸⁴⁵

At the beginning of the 8th century AD on the territory of Khorezm Arabic sources noted the city Khamjird. In the opinion of some scholars, Khamjird is Ghurganj, which was situated on left bank of the Amudarya (Khorasan part). Soon, the city changed to become capital of the left bank and began to compete with Kiat (on the Haital part).⁸⁴⁶

Before the Arab invasions, the Khorezmshah was Azkajwar (Azkazwar) and his younger brother Khurzad also pretended to the throne. The Khorezmshah, being not able to fight with his brother, called on Arabic help. He promised Qutaiba ibn Muslim to pay tribute and to recognize the supremacy of the khalif. The Arabs headed by a brother of Qutaiba ibn Muslim Abd al-Rahman ibn Muslim in 712 invaded Khorezm and killed four thousands people. Khurzad was caught and executed.⁸⁴⁷ However, according to other sources the Khorezmshah was Chegan and he fought against his younger brother Khurzad. He asked the Arabs to help him and promised three golden keys from Khorezm’s treasure and the key of his own city.⁸⁴⁸ Qutaiba ibn Muslim, who was in Sogd at that time, went to Khorezm with his troops. Khurzad was killed. For this service the Arabs received 10 thousand livestock from the Khorezmshah. But as soon as they left, discontented by Chegan people killed him. Having heard about this, Qutaiba ibn Muslim returned with troops and cruelly massacred the enemies of the murdered Khorezmshah. The Arabic commander left in Gurganj his brother Abdallah ibn Muslim, as co-ruler of the Chegan’ son, whom he

⁸⁴⁵ Волин et al. (eds.) 1939, 431.

⁸⁴⁶ Юсупов 1997, 148.

⁸⁴⁷ Nerazik/Bulgakov 1996, 228-229.

⁸⁴⁸ Неразик 2000, 77.

appointed as Khorezmshah.⁸⁴⁹ In Biruni, after the second conquest of Khorezm, Qutaiba ibn Muslim made Azkajmuk ibn Azkajvar king of Khorezm.⁸⁵⁰

These events taking place in Khorezm are of interest to our topic because there is an assumption that Khorezmshah Chegan had Hephthalite origins. Vainberg, on the basis of numismatic data (the similarity of name and the Chegan and Chaganian tamghas) presumed that Khorezmshah Azkajvar and Chegan (in Arab-Persian works) were the same person. The period of his rule dates back to the beginning of the 8th century till 713, when he was killed. Vainberg also had to recognize that there is no data, when and how a representative of the Hephthalite Chaganian dynasty may have been able to seize the throne of Khorezm.⁸⁵¹

⁸⁴⁹ Nerazik / Bulgakov 1996, 229-230; In other sources Azkajvar Chegan fled to the north to the Turks and then to Qutaiba: Муминов (ed.) 1976, 52.

⁸⁵⁰ Бируни 1957, 48; Fedorov (2006, 352) presumes that there were two Azkajvar. One was killed in AD 713; another ruled in the second half of the 8th century AD – AD 821/822 and had a second name Abdallah; Fedorov (2008, 267-275) in his later article he corrected AD 818 to AD 821/822 after finding a new coin which extended his rule.

⁸⁵¹ Вайнберг 1977, 63, 93; In excavations of the multi-layer site Odei-depe (30 km north-west from Turkmenabat, Turkmenistan) coins of Azkajvar were found: Пилипко 1979, 49-51; Pilipko also writes that since the 5th century AD the material culture of Odei-depe was closer to Khorezm than to the southern regions of Central Asia: Пилипко 1979, 53; On the territory of Khorezm no coins of Chegan have been discovered. This can be explained if 1. Chegan was an usurper who tried to be king in Khorezm with Arabic help, ruled a short time and was killed, or 2. Chegan is an etymologically obscure nickname of the Khorezmshah Azkajwar II: Nerazik / Bulgakov 1996, 230-231; Rtveldadze, after analysis of numismatic materials and historic-topographical data comes to the decision that there is no connection between Chegan and Chaganian. So Azkajvar and Chegan were not same person: Ртвеладзе 1980, 51-58; He was supported in this opinion by Fedorov (2006, 351-352).

6.3. Socio-political structure and state

The main feature of the Hephthalite period is supposed to be substantial change in archaeological material, in agriculture and urban life, accompanied by a process of political disintegration and government decentralization.⁸⁵²

For the 4th - 6th centuries AD, which Tolstov names Kushano-Hephthalite, there was a crisis of the antique system: 1) decline of irrigation 2) a sharp decline of urban centers. This also meant a decline in the quality of pottery, and generally of crafts connected to cities. This process was provoked by the barbaric elements of the steppe tribes.⁸⁵³

The socio-economic crisis of the 4th – 5th centuries AD in the south of Central Asia and Afghanistan has been connected to the Chionites. This is supported by deserted towns and villages such as Dalverzin-tepe, Zar-tepe, Kai-Kubad Shah or Shahri-Nau. Then, in the 5th century AD the Hephthalites occupied these regions and development revived.⁸⁵⁴

In the economically stronger areas the recovery began earlier and took place rapidly. At the same time culture also revived. During the 5th - 8th centuries AD throughout Central Asia all forms of material culture generally changed: types of settlement, housing and urban topography.⁸⁵⁵

Albaum, examining monuments of right-bank Tokharistan (Angor district of the Surkhandarya region), conquered in the Hephthalite time, suggested that the idea of collapse as a result of the Hephthalite invasion is wrong. Quite to the opposite agriculture recovered. This is evidenced by large numbers of seeds of different plants discovered in excavations. There were gardens around the palaces, as well as cotton and cereal fields. Besides, shortly after the Hephthalite conquest the Zang irrigation system on the territory of Uzbekistan was restored. All preserved palaces are located

⁸⁵² Тревер 1967, 154.

⁸⁵³ Толстов 1949, 27.

⁸⁵⁴ Пуасов 2003, 139.

⁸⁵⁵ Брыкина 1982, 9.

on the banks of this canal.⁸⁵⁶ The revival of Samarqand similarly began in Hephthalite time.⁸⁵⁷

In a different region, Sedov remarked that: “Judging from the archaeological materials in the 4th - 5th centuries AD in Kobadian there was no socio-economic decline, but instead, we recorded the stabilization and even, perhaps, some recovery of organisation”.⁸⁵⁸

At the end of 5th – at the beginning 6th century AD new towns and fortresses were constructed, including interiors decorated by paintings, sculpture and wood carvings. In Northern Bactria these are Balalyk-tepe, Jumalak-tepe, Zang-tepe, etc., in Sogd - Samarqand, Pendzhikent and several other centers.⁸⁵⁹

The Hephthalite empire were composition which several more or less independent principalities of medieval Central Asia and neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan.⁸⁶⁰ Litvinsky notes that “The state system was a complex amalgam of institutions originating in Hephthalite society and frequently going back to ancestral tribal arrangements, as well as institutions which were native to the conquered regions”.⁸⁶¹

The Western and Eastern written sources describe the Hephthalites under the designation of state. Within this society the upper level was provided by nobles, so there was social division. If we agree with the conclusions of Tolstov and Trever, who believed that the Hephthalites were descendants of the Priaral Massaghetae, who, in their view, preserved the longest-kept community traditions, the existence of polyandry (in Chinese sources) in Hephthalites families would not be surprising. Thus, the “Zhoushu” reports: “In this country, brothers jointly have one wife. If her husband has no brother, the wife wears a hat with one horn. If her husband has

⁸⁵⁶ Альбаум 1960, 209-211.

⁸⁵⁷ Тереножкин 1950, 161.

⁸⁵⁸ Седов 1987, 114.

⁸⁵⁹ Альбаум 1975, 93.

⁸⁶⁰ Lyonnet 1997, 270.

⁸⁶¹ Litvinsky 1996, 146.

several brothers, as many horns are added”.⁸⁶²

Similar data are given in the “Suishu” but with the additional information that any child born will belong to the eldest brother. This feature of the Hephthalites, according to Trever, is a relic of the Massaghet group marriage, who also had polyandry. As for the elite of Hephthalite society, the “Beishi” noted the custom of polygamy: “the owner’s wife lived separately at 200 and 300 *li* distance one from another, and he goes to them in order, each month visiting one place, and during the winter frosts stays three months, not traveling”.⁸⁶³ Xuanzang reported about similar custom when he described a population of the country Hsi-mo-ta-lo. “In respect of their modes of behaviour and forms of etiquette, their clothes of wool, and skin, and felt, they are like the Turks. Their wives wear upon their headdress a wooden horn about three feet or so in length. It has two branches (*a double branch*) in front, which signify father and mother of the husband. The upper horn denotes the father, lower one the mother. Whichever of these two dies first, they remove one horn, but when both are dead, they give up this style of headdress.”⁸⁶⁴

Vaissière thinks polyandry was a genuine Bactrian custom, not a Hephthalite one because Chinese sources mixed together customs of the various components of the Bactrian society and gave them the name of the leading tribe, that of the Hephthalites.⁸⁶⁵ This theory can be supported by new facts about polyandry in Tokharistan before the Hephthalites comes from a Bactrian marriage agreement (document A, dated AD 343) in the archive of Rob. It is the time when Bactria was ruled by the Kushanshahs. In this agreement the marriage of the two brothers Bab and Piduk with a woman called Ralik is mentioned. The text of the contract tells us that Bab and Piduk will be regarded as fathers of Ralik’s children.⁸⁶⁶

The social structure of the Hephthalites is also described by Procopius of Caesarea: “For they are not nomads like the other Hunnic peoples, but for a long

⁸⁶² Енокі 1959, 51.

⁸⁶³ Бичурин 1950, 268.

⁸⁶⁴ Si-Yu-Ki 1906-II, 290.

⁸⁶⁵ Vaissière 2003, 119.

⁸⁶⁶ Yakubovich 2005, <http://www.iranica.com/newsite/articlenuavigation/index.isc>

time have been established in a goodly land. ... It is also true that their manner of living is unlike that of their kinsmen, nor do they live a savage life as they do; but they are ruled by one king, and since they possess a lawful constitution, they observe right and justice in their dealings both with one another and with their neighbours, in no degree less than the Romans and the Persians”.⁸⁶⁷

The “Beishi” states: “The throne can not be transmitted hereditarily, and is received according to the ability of the relatives. Penalties are severe. If a robbery happens, without determination of the amount stolen, beheading is imposed”.⁸⁶⁸

Menander Protector preserved the report of a Turkic embassy, which stated that Hephthalites lived in the cities with Turks, who defeated the Hephthalites and became masters of their cities.⁸⁶⁹

Theophanous Byzantios informs us that, after the victory over the Persians, the Hephthalites become masters of the cities and harbors, which were formerly owned by the Persians. The Chinese chronicles, in particular the “Beishi”, states differently: “They do not have cities, and live in places full of grass and water, in tents. During the summer they elect a cool place, in winter a warm one”.⁸⁷⁰ Song Yun wrote that the “Ye-da” (Hephthalites) have no cities with walls, but they maintain order through a permanent army, which always moves from one place to another.⁸⁷¹

Another traveler, Xuanzang, said that the residents of Hsi-mo-ta-lo, who are the Hephthalites, lived in tents and wandered. He also stated that in the past they have conquered a lot of countries and ruled many fortified towns and settlements.⁸⁷²

The contradictions between the medieval Chinese chronicles (Hephthalites were nomads) and Byzantine historians (Hephthalites were sedentary inhabitants), could be explained if the Byzantines came to know the Hephthalites much later than

⁸⁶⁷ Прокопий 1914 - I, 15.

⁸⁶⁸ Бичурин 1950, 269.

⁸⁶⁹ Menander the Guardsman 1985, 115.

⁸⁷⁰ Бичурин 1950, 268.

⁸⁷¹ Медведев 1990, 221.

⁸⁷² Si-Yu-Ki 1906-II, 290-291.

the Chinese, after they lived in their conquered cities and agricultural oases. However, the data of Procopius of Caesarea seems to show that the Hephthalites populated an agricultural area from ancient time, and they were different from the other nomads.⁸⁷³

There have been many cases in history when nomads, after establishing their rule over state(s), wholly or partially preserving their traditional life-style, successfully adapted to the culture and life-style of the subordinated people.

If, in the areas south of the Amudarya, the Hephthalites remained mainly nomads, they could still be more sedentary people in Central Asia. The Hephthalites not only changed to a settled life, but were also partly included in the urban population. Evidence exists that the Hephthalites preserved a large part of the administrative structure, titles and the court ritual from their Kushan predecessors. The title “kanurang” (guard of the border), of Kushan origin, was well received both among the Hephthalites and the Sasanians.⁸⁷⁴

The Hun invasion, and the waves that followed it, destroyed the sedentary economy of Central Asia. Tokharistan, ravaged for more than a century (until the expansion of the Hephthalites in the middle of the 5th century). There was a decline of the region from the second half of the 4th century to the 6th century AD: neglected irrigation networks (valley of the Vakhsh), multiple layers of burning (Chaqalaq-tepe), abandonment of sites (Dilberjin, Emshi-tepe), barren layers in the stratigraphy of sites (Tepe Zargaran at Balkh), cemeteries over ancient urban areas (Termez, Dalverzin-tepe), sacking (Kara-tepe). In the region of the Syrdarya, the sites of the Dzhetyasar culture were widely abandoned. It may also be noted that the sites of Dzhetyasar are close to the areas in which the Western sources place the European Huns prior to their crossing of the Volga. Situation changed in 5th century AD. Sogd rapidly recovered in this period under a stable Xiongnu dynasty, and later under the Kidarites.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷³ Неразик 1963, 419.

⁸⁷⁴ Фрай 1972, 334-335.

⁸⁷⁵ Vaissière 2005, 18-19; Vaissière 2006, <http://www.iranica.com/newsite/search/index.isc>

The cities in Central Asia are structurally divided into two parts:

1. the citadel, “kuhendiz”, is the most fortified part and served as the residence of the chief;
2. the city shakhristan surrounded by walls with towers and gates at the end of the main streets and were built to provide maximum protection. Therefore, cities were, if possible, on the banks of ravines or kanals. Urban development was largely inside the walls.⁸⁷⁶

Voronina does not agree with Bartold on the partitioning (shakhristan, citadel and handicraft suburb - rabad) of Central Asian towns in the early Middle Ages, believing that cities of that period could be of only one block, or the number of constituent parts could increase, for example, through the necropolis, as may be the case in Ramitan.⁸⁷⁷

The main building materials, used in all constructive elements, of this period were mud-bricks and beaten clay (pakhsa).

The time of active urban planning in Central Asia was during the 5th - 6th centuries AD. Thus, in Samarqand the second town walls were built and the city had an area of 75 hectares, Paikent occupied an area of 21 hectares, a new wall with towers encircled Varakhsha and a further fortification of the citadel and palace were built, the new town of Kavardan was founded in Chach. Erkurgan (150 hectares) with its infrastructure was one of the biggest centers in Central Asia in the Hephthalite time. In general, during the 4th - 7th centuries AD in Sogd there was rapid growth of settlements and towns (**fig. 92**).⁸⁷⁸

In Pendzhikent during the 5th century, in the construction of the town, a new urban structure was created, elements of which were fortress walls, streets and temples. Town planners considered the citadel and shakhristan as two parts of a whole, as Raspopova remarked.⁸⁷⁹ In the Hephthalite time the castle in Ak-tepe near

⁸⁷⁶ Нильсен 1966, 325.

⁸⁷⁷ Воронина 1959, 87.

⁸⁷⁸ Маршак 1987, 236; Алпаткина 1999, 61-62; Сулейманов 2000, 68; Сулейманов/Глантз 2006, 64.

⁸⁷⁹ Распопова 1990, 164.

Tashkent was also erected.⁸⁸⁰

Consolidation of boroughs and fortresses also developed in the Merv oasis sites Durnali, Chilburj, Changly, Munon-tepe and Dev-qala.⁸⁸¹

Several sites of Khorezm, such as Kanga-qala, Kunya-Uaz (upper layers), Barak-tam, Kuyuk-qala, Igdy-qala and others are monuments left by the tribes of the Chionite-Hephthalite group, according to Tolstov. The monument Barak-tam, which consisted of three castles is especially interesting. Among them the better preserved castle Barak-tam I consists of a two-story building. On the second floor, in the ceremonial hall, traces of a carpet were discovered, and in a nearby room more fragments of wool carpet. Noting that the monument is undoubtedly the prototype of Afrigid castles Tolstov wrote: "This structure does not follow Khorezmian ancient traditions, perhaps, it is closer to domestic and aesthetic demands of the castle's owners – the Chionite chiefs, who built it on the north-eastern outskirts of Khorezm in the period of the 4th - 5th century AD".⁸⁸²

In the Khorezmian oasis there is another monument at Yakke-Parsan (5th century AD) representing a typical castle of that period. Yakke-Parsan's courtyard center is surrounded by three rows of walls, and located in a square (24x24 m) rises the stilobat of the castle on a mud platform. The entrance was protected by a wide moat filled with water, with spillover through the bridge of a tower. In the castle and the first solid wall (about 20 meters from the tower) lay the rooms of the owners. Near the second wall, 10 meters from the first, the homes of servants were placed, while inside the third wall, 40-45 meters from the second, the economic zone was identified. The facades of the castle were decorated by semi-pillars, so-called gofr.⁸⁸³

In the 5th - 6th century AD the northern delta of the Akchadarya, in the eastern part of the Aral-foreland, was one of the centers of the Chionites.⁸⁸⁴ During the 4th – 5th centuries AD on the north-west borders of Khorezm nomadic tribes appeared. The

⁸⁸⁰ Тереножкин 1950, 162.

⁸⁸¹ Сулейманов 2000, 69.

⁸⁸² Толстов 1962, 239.

⁸⁸³ Мамедов/Мурадов 1998, 16.

⁸⁸⁴ Ягодин 2008, 119.

origin of these tribes might have connections with areas of the middle and lower Syrdarya. Later they mixed with local people but preserved the custom of circular deformation of skull. Yagodin supposes that these people came from the lower Volga region.⁸⁸⁵

The sites of Setalak I in the Bukhara oasis (4th – 5th centuries AD), Ak-tepe near Tashkent (5th - 8th centuries AD), Kafyr-qala near Samarqand (5th - 7th centuries AD), and Kanga-qala and Kunya-Uaz in Khorezm were remarked by Suleimanov. These sites have a similar structure with have solar symbols (cross-shaped) and also have a commemorative meaning. During the 4th century AD in the ceramics of Sogd elements of the Kaunchi culture appeared, together with temples containing ritual fire places. Both are new features in Sogd beginning at the Chionito-Hephthalite time.⁸⁸⁶

The walls of castles at Khairabad-tepe (Uzbekistan) were changed during the Hephthalite period according to Albaum. In the Kushan time they were paired, but later they became straight and the thickness of the walls decreased from 2-2,5 cm to 1-1,3 cm.⁸⁸⁷

Other settlement change can be observed at the beginning of 5th century AD in Central Asia. Many small sites appeared, some of which could only exist in a densely populated neighborhood. The new site distribution almost globally repeats natural geographic divisions of agricultural zones in Central Asia in separate oases and small areas, usually connected with waterways and large irrigation systems. All this was a result of the formation of separate, economically closed and, largely isolated units. The economic centre of gravity and political life moved to rural terrain, and this may have caused the desolation of cities and large settlements. In each microregion its own local economic and political centre formed, which often then gradually changed into a city. Some of the former cities became centres of such regions, having survived the temporary period of decay, and then continuing to

⁸⁸⁵ ЯГОДИН 2008, 121-122.

⁸⁸⁶ СУЛЕЙМАНОВ 1979, 17-21.

⁸⁸⁷ АЛЬБАУМ 1960, 210.

develop in new conditions.⁸⁸⁸

The Chinese sources do not give detailed description of the territory of Central Asia of that time (**fig. 88**), but mention only part of the political units, of which not even all can be exactly localized. Instead of Qangu appeared Zhe-she, which may be “Chach”, an area on the middle course of the Syrdarya of (modern Tashkent oasis). The unit Po-lo-na appears in the place of Da-wan, with the centre in the city Gui-shan, Po-lo-na being a transfer of the name “Ferghana”, while Gui-shan is a name of “Kasansai” (in the northern part of the Ferghana valley).

In that period there were varieties of small units in the Zaravshan valley: Xi-wan-jin (Samarqand), Zhe-ji-sian (Ishtihan), Zha-bu-dan (Kabudan), and Nui-mi (Bukhara oasis); to the south-west of the last place lay Mou-ji, in which we can see the Amul (near modern Turkmenabat). Further west from Nui-mi we find Afu-tai, Khan, Zhao-zha-ji, the location of which is unknown, and Xu-si-mi (Khorezm). Two holdings existed in the modern Kashkadarya area: Zhe-she-ni (Kesh) and No-she-bolo (Nakhsheb).

On the way between Kashgar and Samarqand Mi-mi and Zhe-zhi-ba were situated. Zhe-zhi-ba is located in the southwest of the Ferghana valley, and Mi-mi in the Zaaminsu valley.⁸⁸⁹

On territory of modern Turkmenistan the largest possession formed in the Etrek valley, Dehistan, the center of which are the modern ruins of Meshhed-Misrian. The monuments of Dehistan of this period can be classified into several types. The small borough pertained to the first: Uly-Kyz-qala and Shauduz-qala. The area of the second type was 1-2 hectares and they had a citadel: Ortadepeslik, Akcha-qala, Dyyandyk, and Khanly-tepe. The third type includes square fortresses (3-5 hectares), having round towers on the corners and semicircular ones on the front walls: Geokchik-tepe and D-35. The fourth type unites small square tepes.⁸⁹⁰

The separate small units formed an Amul, where a dynasty ruled, related to Samarqand. It is unknown which was the management system of the individual

⁸⁸⁸ Дьяконов/Мандельштам 1958, 345.

⁸⁸⁹ Sverchkov 2009, 319, 330.

⁸⁹⁰ Массон 1961, 39.

provinces that were part of the Hephthalite state. According to Chinese sources subordinates to the Hephthalites supplied a significant tribute each year and all foreign relations stopped, but to what extent their autonomy over local affairs was limited is unknown. In any case, a change of ruling dynasties in most Central Asian possessions did not occur. The political divisions created at the beginning of the 5th century AD continued to exist after the fall of the Hephthalite state.

After the defeat of the Hephthalite state in the river plains of Central Asia the units, established at the beginning of 5th century AD are again indicated, though along with them, perhaps, new ones formed. In the modern Tashkent region Chach was situated with the center in Binket. A separate unit was Ferghana with Kasan. On the upper of river Zeravshan we find Buttam and lying north of the mountainous areas near Ura-Tube lay a region named Ustrushana, with the center in Bunjikent, whose whereabouts are set around Shahrستان. Sogd with its capital in Samarqand was divided into smaller units: Pendzhikent, Maimurg, Samarqand, Ishtihan, Kesh, Neseif, Arbinjan, Kushania and Dabusia. Separate entities were: Ilak, Isfijab, Termez, Huttalan (between the Vakhsh and Panj rivers near Kulyab), Kobadian (southern valley of the Kafirnigan), Vakhsh (region of Kurgan-Tube), Chaganian (Surkhandarya valley along with the western ends of the Hissar valley), Kumud (upper reaches of the rivers Kafirnigan and Vakhsh). The political units were divided into districts - rustaqs. For example, Ustrushana was divided into 18 small rustaqs, which were administered by *dekhkans* who had their own armed groups. All these rustaqs were under the ruler of Ustrushana, who bore the title “*afshin*”.⁸⁹¹

On the territory of northern Tokharistan (**fig. 89**) originally a small buffer state maintained the power of the Hephthalite dynasty. However, it soon ceased to exist, and disintegrated into several smaller units: Guftan (in the Sherabaddarya valley), Aharun (southern slopes of the Hissar range), Chaganian, Termez, Kobadian, Huttalan and others, on very small territories. In the mountainous areas of the Pamir foothills and the Pamir some tribes that do not constitute any large group regained their independence.⁸⁹²

⁸⁹¹ Негматов 1957, 129; Негматов 1999, 114.

⁸⁹² Дьяконов/Мандельштам 1958, 353.

Tokharistan divided in: Eastern and Western. Eastern Tokharistan included: Parkhar, Shughnan, Badakhshan, Taluqan, Khuttal, Wakhsh, Kobadian, Khost, Andarab, Bahlan, Warvaliz, Rustaqbank, Termez, Chaganian, Zemm and fortress Tabushkan. Western Tokharistan: Khulm, Samanjan and Bamian.⁸⁹³

Regarding the army of the Hephthalites there is some disagreement among researchers. Thus, according to Gafurov the Hephthalite army was mostly cavalry.⁸⁹⁴ This is confirmed by Cosmas Indicopleustes' report, that the Hephthalites had a great cavalry and about 2000 elephants.⁸⁹⁵ Gumilev notes that the Hephthalites used the club and ax (infantry weapons), rather different from the steppe horsemen, therefore, the Hephthalite army should have been mostly infantry.⁸⁹⁶

The Syrian author Joshua the Stylite, in the passage dealing with the siege by Kavad on the Byzantine fortresses Tella, Harran and Edessa, wrote that in AD 502 the Persians used arrows, the Arabs used spears, and the Hephthalites used clubs (cudgel). According to Song Yun, Mihirakula's army had about 700 combat elephants with about 10 men armed with swords and spears located on each of them.⁸⁹⁷

The destruction of public relations caused by the Hephthalites as a result of their conquests of Central Asia, which had been marked by urban culture, was manifested in the first documented written sources and archaeological data. The differing results of Kushan and Hunnic-Hephthalite (according to Bernshtam) rule, in both cases, nomads was due to the fact that in the first case they were nomads who had long coexisted with the settled areas, while in the second case the nomad relationship with the settled areas was carried out only through conquest and trade. However, the decline of urban life in the Hunnic-Hephthalite period should not be viewed as an economic crisis and not as a result of violent destruction, while not excluding those factors completely. In the external manifestations of decay and

⁸⁹³ Lyonnet 1997, 272.

⁸⁹⁴ Гафуров 1972, 211.

⁸⁹⁵ Cosmas 1967, 370-371; Cosmas Indicopleustes 1973, 350.

⁸⁹⁶ Гумилев 1967b, 94.

⁸⁹⁷ Stein 1905, 82; Sen (ed.) 1979, 164.

economic crisis we can observe the genesis of new forms of public relations, not limited only by economic decline. Overcoming this decline occurred in a very short time, because in the 6th – 8th centuries AD a new flourishing culture began in Central Asia.⁸⁹⁸ As Sedov remarked, in Tokharistan in Hephthalite time the recovery of economic and cultural life took place, as well as the formation of a new material culture, different from the earlier, but related to it genetically.⁸⁹⁹

In Sogd were situated the main Central Asian cities of the Hephthalite empire. Samarqand, beginning from the 5th century AD, is again mentioned in Chinese chronicles. One of the big towns of the Kushan empire, Kushania (near Katta-Kurgan)⁹⁰⁰, did not lose its importance. Some 6 km south of Samarqand there was the town of Rivdad (now Tali-Barzu), the center of Maimurg principality which had more importance than Samarqand in the 5th century AD.⁹⁰¹ It is from this town, that in AD 456 the Hephthalite embassy was sent to China. Economically in Sogd of the 5th and at the beginning of the 6th century AD the urban centers flourished, developing crafts and commerce.⁹⁰² In Varakhsha, during the Hephthalite period, a process of Renaissance and revival began and other settlements and irrigation systems around it formed.⁹⁰³

Jinagupta was a Buddhist monk of Gandharian origin, who left in AD 554 for Chinese Central Asia via Kapisa, Bamiyan and Tokharistan. His biographer Daoxuan wrote that Jinagupta was in the Hephthalite capital in between AD 555 and 557 and saw their land extensive but barren without producing anything to eat and drink.⁹⁰⁴

The capital of the Hephthalites, according to some researchers (Marquart, Tolstov, Trever), is mentioned in the Chinese chronicles as Pa-ti-yen (ancient Patikanta), i.e. Paikent (near Bukhara). The archaeological research of the site began

⁸⁹⁸ Бернштам 1951а, 196.

⁸⁹⁹ Седов 1987, 116.

⁹⁰⁰ Other researchers suppose that Kushania was situated between Samarqand and Bukhara and it was founded by the Kidarites: Aman ur Rahman et al. 2006, 128.

⁹⁰¹ Массон 1950, 160.

⁹⁰² Вайнберг/Ставиский 1994, 171.

⁹⁰³ Шишкин 1963, 233-234.

⁹⁰⁴ Chavannes 1905, 340; Kuwayama 1999, 40.

in 1913 by L. Zimin, and was continued in 1939 by Yakubovsky. Badian may be an unsuccessful transfer of the name Badakhshan according to Gafurov⁹⁰⁵, although this author in his earlier work, wrote: “The centre of the Hephthalite kingdom became the city Paikent (near Bukhara)”.⁹⁰⁶

However, the capital of the Hephthalites, according to the “Tangshu”, was Lanshi in Afghanistan. In the “Beishi” about the capital of the Hephthalites is written: “Their capital is 200 li or more to the south of the river Wuhu. To Chang’an, there are 10,100 li. The capital of their king is the town of Badiyan, which probably (means) the residence of the king. Its city wall is ten square li or more. There are many pagodas, all decorated with gold”.⁹⁰⁷ The “Zhoushu” states: “It is king his capital in the walled city of Pa-ti-yen, which means something like “the walled city in which the king resides”. This walled city is some 10 li square”.⁹⁰⁸ Therefore the word *Badian* (or Pa-ti-yen) is not a proper noun but simply means a town of a king’s residence, or the capital of a kingdom.⁹⁰⁹

Marquart thinks that Warwaliz of Islamic sources was situated not far from modern Kunduz.⁹¹⁰ Kuwayama supposes that Warwaliz is attributable to Bala Hisar near Qala-e Zal on the south bank of the Amudarya.⁹¹¹

According to Herrmann Faizabad was a winter residence of the Hephthalite kings.⁹¹² Ghirshman considered the ruins to the south of Faizabad as the Badian of the Chinese chronicles⁹¹³, while Bartold thinks that the Hephthalites’ capital was in Badakhshan⁹¹⁴. Differently, according to Nerazik the location of the city Badian is

⁹⁰⁵ Гафуров 1972, 226.

⁹⁰⁶ Гафуров 1955, 114.

⁹⁰⁷ Vaissière 2003, 125.

⁹⁰⁸ Miller 1959, 11-12.

⁹⁰⁹ Kuwayama 2002, 279.

⁹¹⁰ Marquart 1938, 44.

⁹¹¹ Kuwayama 1999, 53.

⁹¹² Herrmann 1925, 576.

⁹¹³ Ghirshman 1948, 91.

⁹¹⁴ Бартольд 1963, 180

unknown.⁹¹⁵ Mandelshtam, on the other hand, locates Badian near modern Kunduz (north-east Afghanistan), but the Hephthalite king lived in the capital just three winter months, while the rest of the year, he moved around and the center at that time became his mobile headquarter. This last version of Mandelshtam was also supported by Stavisky and Yatsenko.⁹¹⁶

Armenian sources (Fawstos Buzand, Moses Khorenatsi) report that the capital of the Hephthalites was Bahl, interpreted as Baktra.⁹¹⁷ The Hephthalites established their capital in Budrach on the place of a small Kushan period fortress, which is situated at the inflow of the river Kyzylsu-Sangardak to the Surkhandarya and had size of 50 hectares in the opinion of Ilyasov.⁹¹⁸ There is also yet another suggestion that one of the residences of the Hephthalite kings was Varakhsha, where a palace of the 5th century AD was uncovered by excavation.⁹¹⁹

Kafyr-qala, another possibly important center, is situated in southern Tajikistan. It was a center of the Vakhsh valley and in early medieval time this site included a town of 360x360m size with citadel. The citadel (70 x 70m) with two walls is situated in the north-eastern corner of the town. The southern part of the palace contained a Buddhist sanctuary. The walls of the sanctuary were decorated with polychrome murals depicting the Buddha and other Buddhist figures.⁹²⁰

The town existed from the 6th century AD up to the middle of the 8th century AD. The history of town has been divided into three periods. The phase KF-II in Kafyr-qala dates from the mid 6th to the mid 7th century AD. It started in the second half of the Hephthalite-Sasanian era in the history of Tokharistan. Some links of the city with the Hephthalites are demonstrates not only by the discovery of a silver Hephthalite coin,⁹²¹ but also by the Hephthalite inscription on the wall of a Buddhist

⁹¹⁵ Неразик 1963, 407.

⁹¹⁶ Ставиский/Яценко 2002, 279.

⁹¹⁷ Тер-Мкртичян 1979, 68.

⁹¹⁸ Ильясов 1999, 36; Ильясов 2004, 120.

⁹¹⁹ Тревер et al. 1950, 131.

⁹²⁰ Litvinsky 1996, 150; Litvinsky/Zamir Safi 1996, 182.

⁹²¹ Litvinskij/Solovjev 1985, 16.

sanctuary.⁹²² During the excavation of residential homes in Kafyr-qala in 1957 in a KF-II layer the Hephthalite coin was found, which belongs to a very large group of coins, bearing the legend “Napki malka”. Based on this coin layer KF-II is dated to the middle of the 7th century AD.⁹²³

In the 20's of the 7th century AD all Tokharistan was conquered by the Turks. The West-Turkic ruler Ton-yabghu (618-630) not only included Tokharistan to his possessions, but he established his own territory and the first ruler was his son Tardu shad.⁹²⁴

The city of Pendzhikent grew during the Hephthalite period, its fortifications were strengthened and temples were rebuilt.⁹²⁵

Some cities of early medieval period were very large in area. Thus, the Shakhristan of Merv reached 400 hectares, Bukhara - 65 hectares, Paikent - 20 hectares and Pendzhikent - 14 hectares. In the 5th century AD new cities with area of 8-12 hectares appeared in Sogd. In general, cities of this time in Central Asia were administrative and political centers of the region and individual oases or districts. We may also note the growth of urban areas and the building of new walls. With regard to urban centres of the Hephthalite period on the territory of Turkmenistan, we may remark the city Balkhan, which was besieged by the Sasanians. Yusupov supposes that this city should be modern Igdy-qala, located at the mouth of the upper Uzboy, 200 kilometers north-east of the Balkhan mountains. It is also worth noting the settlement Arapkhana, which existed in the 3rd – 8th centuries AD in the Lebap region of Turkmenistan (at that time under the control of the Hephthalites) and formerly one of the developed and rich settlements on the middle Amudarya.⁹²⁶

In this area other settlements of early medieval time also existed, such as Hoja-Idat-qala, Hazarek-tepe, Navidah, Kekreli-tepe, Ak-qala, Hoja-Kunduz-qala.⁹²⁷

⁹²² Соловьев 1983, 80-81.

⁹²³ Литвинский/Соловьев 1985, 46.

⁹²⁴ Литвинский /Соловьев 1985, 145.

⁹²⁵ Marshak/Negmatov 1996, 236.

⁹²⁶ Бурханов 1993, 7; Бурханов 1991, 44-46.

⁹²⁷ Бурханов 1994, 39-75.

In the southern territory of Turkmenistan, apart from Merv, there are the smaller sites of Shauduz-qala, Uly-Kyzyli, Geokchik-tepe, Hanly-tepe, Khosrow-tepe, Kishman-tepe, Munon-tepe, Chilburj and others (**fig. 91**).⁹²⁸

On the basis of excavations in Pendzhikent, we can conclude that each structure of the early medieval city had its individual plan. The dwellings and the decor to a certain extent imitated the palace of the rulers. The technical level of the construction work was essentially the same for the representatives of all social layers. The urban houses in Kafyr-qala (Tokharistan) are similar to those in the Sogdian fortification of Kalai-Kafirigan. This also concerns the castle structures of Sogd, Ustrushana, Chach, and Tokharistan, which were close to each other in architecture, and with the houses of the nobility.⁹²⁹

The early medieval castles in Central Asia were for the most part two-storied, the ground floor used for the economic and auxiliary purposes, and the living rooms arranged on the upper floor.⁹³⁰ Usually, the city was surrounded by numerous castles, which were the most exterior type of monumental construction, generally raised along the rivers, the main channels and the main roads. The castles in their turn were surrounded by the estates of farmers smaller in size, but often also fortified.⁹³¹

As far as the fortification of the guarding castles of that time is concerned, it was not intended, for prolonged defense, but rather served for temporary shelter of the ruler during small campaigns. They had only one defense line of walls and were quite small. As an example, the sizes of the some castles from the Surkhandarya region may serve: Baba-tepe (46 x 47m), Balalyk-tepe (30 x 30m), Kuevurgan (18 x 20m), Jumalak-tepe (30 x 30m).⁹³² In Sogd, at the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 6th century AD, around the square castles external defensive walls were raised with a series of quadrangular towers, which later acquired oval form.⁹³³

⁹²⁸ Губаев/Ханмурадов 1987, 35.

⁹²⁹ Распопова 1983, 73.

⁹³⁰ Хмельницкий 2001, 122.

⁹³¹ Хмельницкий 2000, 15.

⁹³² Соловьев 1997, 105.

⁹³³ Лебедева 2000, 153.

The foundation of new towns was in the 5th century AD and the appearance of a new type of walls occurred before the 6th century. The urban contraction of the 5th century AD appeared because of the arrival of new people, and the change of the type of fortress walls was the result of advances in technology and the organisation of defense.⁹³⁴ Based on research of the Sogdian cities in the early Middle Ages, we can draw the conclusion that the interior area was already planned on foundation of the city, including the network of roads. The normal width of streets in Pendzhikent and Paikent did not exceed 2-2,5 m (1.5 m carriageway).⁹³⁵

Central Asian cities played an important role as religious-ideological centers. They had places of worship and in the palaces and religious buildings a great amount of cultural and artistic value was concentrated, including written documents. In addition, the cities were, of course, centers of trade and commerce.⁹³⁶

⁹³⁴ Семенов 1996, 208.

⁹³⁵ Семенов 1998, 99, 104.

⁹³⁶ Вайнберг 1994, 137.

6.4. Linguistics

Different nomadic tribes of various language groups presumably united to one main horde. This horde, forming the dominant layer, provided the ruling circle, and spoke a specific language, perhaps alien to the subordinated peoples. Thence some of the confusion about the proper names of people, princes, language, and the difficulties in the description of the appearance of each tribe.

The language of the Hephthalites has not yet been sufficiently studied scientifically, since we dispose only of a very small database. As judged by separate words, they spoke Turkic, Iranian, as well as some elements of debatable origin. In the composition of the Hephthalite state we find territories populated by different folks so probably, besides “Hephthalite”, other languages were also used. In particular, the Sogdian language is represented, traces of which in are found in Eastern Turkestan in preserved documents. Except for Sogdian, Khorezmian script was wide-spread. On the territory of Tokharistan and northwestern India Kharoshti was also in use, but adjacent to the Sasanian state Pehlevi was the rule.

The Bactrian alphabet (**fig. 93**), adopted by the Hephthalites in the 4th century AD, developed out of the Greek alphabet and spread throughout Bactria and nearby regions during the Greco-Bactrian period. Bactrian then became the official alphabet of the Kushan state, from where it presumably passed on to the Hephthalites. However, the system of writing in Hephthalite time differed from Bactrian and Kushan, being a more developed cursive. In the Bactrian script, besides the 25 signs - 24 letters of the Greek alphabet - one additional letter for “sh” was added in the 1st century AD. Xuanzang wrote that in Tokharistan: “Their language differs somewhat from that of other countries. The number of radical letters in their language is twenty-five; by combining these they express all objects (things) around them. Their writing is across the page, and they read from left to right. Their literary records have increased gradually, and exceed those of the people of Su-li”.⁹³⁷ The Hephthalites continued to use the Bactrian language written in Greek script, but spreading to the

⁹³⁷ Si-Yu-Ki 1906-II, 38; Enoki 1959, 39.

east they also adopted Indian languages and scripts.⁹³⁸ The manuscripts found in Eastern Turkestan by Stein are very important. Based on these manuscripts, F. Thomas drew attention to a text in one of them. Comparing it with legends on Kushan-Sasanian coins, he has defined the text as written in Hephthalite letter on the base of the Greek alphabet, as evidenced by the message of Xuanzang about the alphabet “*Tuholo*” with 25 letters and the manner of the writing as having a direct relationship with Greek alphabet. The text is not a document, but part of the Buddhist literary works. Thomas points to the need to study the texts of the “Berlin Hephthalite fragments” (**fig. 94**). Seven fragments on birchbark, paper and palm leaves, stored in the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, from the collection of A. von Le Coq, which were found in the ruins of a monastery in the valley of the river Tuyok in the Turfan oasis. It should be noted that only some words from these fragments can be interpreted because of the condition of preservation.⁹³⁹

Bernshtam disagree with Thomas on the date of the manuscript – 4th century AD - because, in his opinion, Stein, who found this manuscript, was sometimes wrong ascribing dates to the monuments he discovered.⁹⁴⁰

Le Coq dated them to the 9th - 10th century AD. Livshits, who attributed them to the 7th - 8th century AD, notes that the letters are clear, but no full lines have survived; there are only a few words out-of-context.⁹⁴¹ Therefore, the reading of O. Hansen needs some clarification.⁹⁴² According to H. Humbach these texts contain hymns dedicated to the Sun God.⁹⁴³

Except for the fragment of these manuscripts and coin legends on the Hephthalite language, to count of monument the Hephthalite letter in Central Asia possible to refer (although, regrettably, the text of these inscriptions, have not yet been read):

⁹³⁸ Frye 1974, 116.

⁹³⁹ Thomas 1944, 1-3; Оранским 1963, 449.

⁹⁴⁰ Бернштам 1947, 137-138.

⁹⁴¹ Лившиц 1975, 49.

⁹⁴² Лившиц 1969, 72.

⁹⁴³ Humbach 1966-I, 120-121; Humbach 1967-II, 7.

1. Inscription on a fragment of pottery, six (incomplete) lines from Zang-tepe (**fig. 52, 2**);
2. Graffiti-inscriptions from Kara-tepe (**fig. 95**);
3. Two lines of cursive writing discovered in Afrasiab;
4. Badly preserved inscription in the Buddhist sacred site of Kafyr-qala (Tajikistan);
5. Small fragment of ceramic bar with five letters, found in Dalverzin-tepe.⁹⁴⁴

The rock inscription from Uruzgan (to north-west from Kandahar) also refers to the Hephthalites.⁹⁴⁵ Bivar suggests that in the inscriptions from Uruzgan there is the name of Mihira(kula) as ruler of Zabul and he believes that the Uruzgan valley was a major part of the kingdom of Zabul, and would be the ideal place to find the supreme site of the Hephthalite nomads.⁹⁴⁶

According to D. Sirkar the name Shahi Khingila is mentioned in an inscription on the base of the marble image of the Hindu deity Ganesha (7th century AD) from the Kabul Museum (found in Gardez) (**fig. 72**). The inscription was written in the north-Indian alphabet.⁹⁴⁷

H. Nakatani examined the inscription and attributed it to the 8th century AD. The letter *y* was the only reason of Sirkar for his dating. Nakatani finds a form similar to this letter in the manuscripts preserved in the Buddhist monasteries in Japan.⁹⁴⁸

The king by the name Sri Shahi Khimgala in the inscription is probably a definite personality of the 8th century AD, perhaps one of the Turki Shahis in the Kabul valley, or the Kabul Shahis.⁹⁴⁹

⁹⁴⁴ Литвинский /Соловьев 1985, 144.

⁹⁴⁵ Humbach 1967b, 26; Habibi 1974, 323; Mac Dowall 1978, 244.

⁹⁴⁶ Bivar 1954, 116-117.

⁹⁴⁷ Sirkar 1963, 44-46.; Stadtner (2000, 42) names this inscription proto-Sharada.

⁹⁴⁸ Kuwayama 1999, 71-72; Kuwayama 2002, 252-253.

⁹⁴⁹ Kuwayama 1999, 72, 257.

G. Bühler supposes that an inscription written on Sanskrit and found in the Salt Range (south of Taxila between the Jhelum and Indus rivers), with the name of Toramana (“*rājā mahārājā toramāna-shā (hi) jāū*”), may be connected with a ruler of the Hephthalites. He notes that Toramana not only receives the epithet “*Shāhi*” but also the word “*Jaū*” which he feels should be understood as “*jāwla*” and which may be a tribal name.⁹⁵⁰ The term “*jāwla*” has been found inscribed on a series of Hephthalite coins which were also found in an area ranging from Taxila to Zabulistan (present day Ghazni).⁹⁵¹

Amongst the handwritten documents found in mount Mug, there are four documents with seals on them. On one seal, depicting an head in profile, there is an inscription, which Ghirshman considers as Hephthalite script. However, A. Freiman has interpreted this inscription as Sogdian mentioning the title of the Samarqand ruler Devashtich.⁹⁵²

Among the most latest data the discovery of manuscripts (most of them legal documents) in Bactrian language in Northern Afghanistan should be noted, which are known as the “archive of the ruler Roba” and which contain material from the Kushan period until the middle of the 8th century AD. This archive was translated and published by Sims-Williams.⁹⁵³

Three letters and four documents are interesting, which mention the Hephthalites.⁹⁵⁴ The letter (**jb**) is an undated letter, which has special interest because of its contents: “To Sart son of Khwadewbandan, the glorious *yabghu* of the Hephthal, the ruler of Rob, the scribe of the Hephthalite lords, the judge of Tukharistan (and) Gharchistan...”⁹⁵⁵

Sims-Williams notes that “... to judge from his patronymic, this ruler was not a Hephthalite but a member of the local dynasty, who presumably received these

⁹⁵⁰ Bühler 1892 (Reprint New Delhi 1971), 238-242.

⁹⁵¹ Yamada 1989, 104.

⁹⁵² Фрейман 1960, 212 - 214.

⁹⁵³ Sims-Williams 2000; Sims-Williams 2007.

⁹⁵⁴ Sims-Williams 1997, 16; Симс-Вильямс 1997, 7-8; Sims-Williams 1999, 255; Sims-Williams 2008, 94-95.

⁹⁵⁵ Sims-Williams 1999, 255; Sims-Williams 2007, 126-127.

impressive titles as a result of submission to the Hephthalites”.⁹⁵⁶

He also remarks on the language or ethnic make-up of the Hephthalites and the title *yabyu* was originally Chinese, but was used by the Kushans.⁹⁵⁷

The title “*tegin*” was used by the Hephthalites on the territory of Afghanistan.⁹⁵⁸ Sims-Williams writes: “Since we know from Chinese sources that the title *tegin* was already used by the Hephthalites, it is tempting to regard this as evidence of the Altaic affinities of the Hephthalites ... but in Bactrian, names which appear to derive from *tegin* occur in texts which probably predate the Hephthalite period”.⁹⁵⁹

In the “Beishi” we find the following on the language of the Hephthalites: “Their language differs from that of the Juan-juan, Kao-ch’e, and various Hu”.⁹⁶⁰

Enoki presumes that the Rourans spoke Mongolian, while Kao-ch’e was Turkic and “Hu” included several Iranian tribes in Central Asia.⁹⁶¹

Scholars who support the Iranian affiliation of the Hephthalites identify the manuscripts from Eastern Turkestan as Eastern-Iranian. However, against this the suggestion has been raised that the Hephthalites could have officially used a language of the inhabitants conquered by them. In spite of the information from the “Beishi”, where a diversity of languages among the Hephthalites is noted, many scientists suppose that the majority of names of Hephthalite rulers and their titles known to us find the explanation from the Turkic languages, even though analysis of the linguistic materials available also show a presence of Iranian elements.

From Tabari’s report, we know that in AD 457 Garchistan, Tokharistan, Balkh, Badakhshan were under control of the Hephthalite king Akhshunwar (Vakhshunwar, in other sources named as Hushnavaz).⁹⁶²

⁹⁵⁶ Sims-Williams 1999, 255.

⁹⁵⁷ Sims-Williams 2002, 233.

⁹⁵⁸ Frye/Sayili 1943, 204.

⁹⁵⁹ Sims-Williams 2002, 234.

⁹⁶⁰ Enoki 1959, 39.

⁹⁶¹ Enoki 1959, 39.

⁹⁶² Неразик 1963, 407.

The name of the Hephthalite king has generated a lot of disputes. According to Livshits this name is explained from Sogdian (i.e. one of the Eastern Iranian languages) as “protecting the kingdom”; Gömeç considered that the Hephthalite king carried the name Aksungur; the Byzantine historian Theophilaktos Simocattes names the victor against Peroz Eftalan, who, in other sources was referred to as Akhshunwar. In the text of Makhmud Kashgari (11th century) this name sounds Ahshundar, but Vamberi explained the etymology as Akshongar (Aksongar), which in translation from Turkic means “white falcon”.⁹⁶³ V. Masson thought that the name “Eftalan” was a throne name, added to the proper name of the ruler, just like the Parthian kings were referred to as Arsakids.⁹⁶⁴

A different sense is proposed by Droin, drawing the name from Persian, where it could mean “good governor”.⁹⁶⁵ Similarly Grousset and Sundermann assume that Akhshunwar is a Sogdian title, which was adopted by the Hephthalites and meant “governor”.⁹⁶⁶

Yet another version is suggested by Bernshtam, who said that name of the Hephthalites king Hushnavaz (Kushnavaz), or its ancient form “Kushnavar”, consisted of two words, which reflected the mixing of the names of two tribes, one local - Kushan and another - Avar. Thereby Bernshtam proposed that Kushnavar was not a proper name, but joint tribal names: *Kush* + *Avar*; later he writes that the “proper name of the head of the tribe sooner arose out of the tribes name”.⁹⁶⁷ This point of view was criticized by Gumilev. He considers that Bernshtam wrongly read the first letter in the name of the Hephthalite king – “K” (from Persian), when indeed this letter should be read as – “H”, while the last letter in this name is “Z”, rather than “R”, attributed to slips of the pen of the copier. Gumilev then proposes another meaning of the Hephthalite kings name: Hushnavaz is a Persian word, meaning “skilful musician”.⁹⁶⁸ Analysing the geographical denomination located near the

⁹⁶³ Вамбери 1873, 110; Конукчу 1973, 67.

⁹⁶⁴ Массон 1964, 205.

⁹⁶⁵ Droin 1895, 235-236.

⁹⁶⁶ Grousset 1970, 68; Sundermann 1996, 474.

⁹⁶⁷ Бернштам 1951а, 190.

⁹⁶⁸ Гумилев 1959, 132-133.

Surkhandarya valley's border, Karmysheva remarked Vakhshivor, ("like Vakhshu" – deity of the flowing water according Suhareva), where the grave (mazar) of Sufi Allayar is located. This place also is referred to as Hazrati Vakhshivor (Saint Vakhshivor), pointing to similarities with name of the Hephthalite king.⁹⁶⁹

Masson, without theories, considers that the Hephthalite language belonged to one of the Eastern Iranian groups. In his opinion, the proper names connected with the Hephthalites have an Eastern Iranian etymology. Thus he provides the example of the Chionite king Grumbat (Masson wrongly indicates that Grumbat was prince although he was king of the Chionites), which can be explained from Iranian, as "protected by Bahram". The name of one of the last Hephthalite kings, Vr̥z (according to Tabari), is translated by Masson as "wild boar".⁹⁷⁰

However, it may be remarked that Masson does not analyse the names of the Hephthalite rulers in India (Toramana and Mihirakula), whose names are against an evolution only from the Turkic language. Masson does note that it is "possible to assume, in the composition of the Chionite-Hephthalite association separate Turkic lingual speaking tribes also entered. Anyway, the Hephthalites of Gandhara were using such Turkic title as "tegin".⁹⁷¹

In the opinion of Altheim, the Hephthalite language was Turkic and the presence of Iranian words was connected with penetrations from subordinated population. The name Katulf is explained by Altheim as Turkic *qatil* – gemischt werden, sich mischen plus nominal suffix. So the meaning of the name Katulf is "Gemischter, Mischling".⁹⁷² The name Kunkhas is explained as *qun-qan* meaning "Hunnen-Herrscher, ruler of Huns".⁹⁷³ The above mentioned name, Grumbat, can be explained from the old Turkic language: *Quwrat*, *Qubrat* – to amount (aufhäufen).⁹⁷⁴ The ethnonym Kidarite is also drawn from old Turkic – *kidirti* –in the west. So

⁹⁶⁹ Кармышева 1976, 135.

⁹⁷⁰ Массон 1964, 207.

⁹⁷¹ Массон 1964, 207.

⁹⁷² Altheim 1959, 45.

⁹⁷³ Altheim / Stiehl 1954, 277; Altheim 1959, 37.

⁹⁷⁴ Altheim / Stiehl 1954, 277.

kidirti qun – Huns in the west.⁹⁷⁵

Vaissière supposes that the name Khingila has a link with the name of the sacred sword worshipped by the Xiongnu, *kenglu* compared with Turkic *qijiraq* “*double-blade knife*”. This sword was worshipped among the Xiongnu in the same way as the Scythians and the Huns of Attila worshipped swords. *Kenglu* was also the name of the god of war among Xiongnu and the Huns of Attila. So Khingila might have been a theophoric name. The name Eshkingil is explained by Vaissière that Eš- can be the common Turkic prefix and means “comrade, companion of”. So Eškingil is a meaningful Hunnic name or title – “*companion of the sword*”.⁹⁷⁶

There is an inscription “...Lord Ularg, the king of the Huns, the great Kushan-shah, the Samarkandian, of the Afrigan (?) family” on the sealings from collection of Aman ur Rahman which was found in the territory of the Kashmir Smast range. These sealings are related to the Kidarites. It is supposed that *Ularg* or in other reading *Oglargo* is a derivation from Turkic *oğul-lar* >*oğlar* which means “sons; princes” + Iranian adj. suffix – *g*.⁹⁷⁷

Tolstov thought that the base of the Hephthalite language formed from the language of the Saka-Massaghet tribes, over time subjected to influences seeping from Altaic ethnic elements, amongst which the greater role was played by the Turkic one. According to him the language of the Hephthalites was closer to Turkic, and can be referred to the group of Paleo-Turkic languages, represented in the Middle Ages by Bulgar and Khazar, but in the modern stage by the Chuvash language. Previously having supported the opinion of Turkic language for the Hephthalites the academician V. Struve, in his review Tolstov’s book “Ancient Khorezm”, denies Turkic speaking of Massaghets. In particular, he writes: “If the author is correct in placing the language of the Hephthalites among the group of Paleo-Turkic languages then it becomes little probable that this expresses the direct suggestion that the Hephthalites were a branch of the Massaget-Yuezhi. Anyway, I do not think that the language of turkizised Massaghet-Yuezhi, that is to say Irano-

⁹⁷⁵ Altheim 1959, 32-33.

⁹⁷⁶ Vaissière 2003, 129.

⁹⁷⁷ Aman ur Rahman et al. 2006, 128.

Thracian people, can be comprised among the group of Paleo-Turkic languages”.⁹⁷⁸

There are very vague and contradictory conclusions by Mandelshtam on the language of the Hephthalites. In one of his works he writes: “... as illustrated by recent studies, most of the present data about them (the Hephthalites – A.K.) indicate that they were Iranian language speaking people and had an ethnic proximity to Tokhars”,⁹⁷⁹ but on a different page of the same work, he refutes himself: “... because the language and culture of the Chionites-Hephthalites is not yet known, we have nothing to say about the quality of their role in the interest of our process”.⁹⁸⁰

Gafurov thought that the Hephthalites were Eastern Iranian by language and origin, who formed on the basis of “some Middle Asian tribes”.⁹⁸¹ Who these tribes were is, regrettably, not indicated. Ghirshman, having discovered legends on the Hephthalite coins came to conclusion that their language belonged to the Eastern Iranian group. However, his decipherment was subject to a critique by some scientists: Dyakonov, Mandelshtam, and V. Masson.⁹⁸²

Litvinsky supposed that the official language of the Hephthalite aristocracy in Tokharistan was Eastern-Iranian, but he noted that there were no data about the language of simple people.⁹⁸³ Vertogradova thought that the Hephthalites used Bactrian language and titles.⁹⁸⁴

⁹⁷⁸ Струве 1949, 148-149.

⁹⁷⁹ Мандельштам 1954, 61.

⁹⁸⁰ Мандельштам 1954, 62.

⁹⁸¹ Гафуров 1972, 210.

⁹⁸² Дьяконов/Мандельштам 1958, 339; Массон 1964, 199.

⁹⁸³ Litvinskij 1998, 101.

⁹⁸⁴ Вертоградова 1982, 137.

6.5. Religion

As noted above, the Hephthalites politically unified different peoples with distinct cultures and religious outlooks. In the 4th - 6th centuries AD many religious systems and cults existed in Central Asia. In Central Asia Zoroastrism had mixed with local cults. For example, with the cults of Anahita and Siyavush. Thus it is known that in the 4th century AD on Novruz day Zoroastrians in the early morning brought a cock as sacrifice to Siyavush on his grave in Bukhara. Also at that time existed the cults of Vakhsh, Anahita, Mithra and Tishtria.⁹⁸⁵

Buddhism

Buddhism was wide-spread in the Hephthalite period, particularly in the southern territory of their state. However, there are many controversial facts about the relation of the Hephthalites to this religion.

The “Beishi” reports that in residence of the Hephthalite ruler there was an “ensemble of Buddhistic temples and an obelisk, and all covered by gold”. The same data is found in the “Suishu”.⁹⁸⁶ Enoki, discussing the reports of Song Yun and Xuanzang about the Hephthalites, says they did not believe in Buddhism and even persecuted Buddhists.⁹⁸⁷ This point of view is similar to that of Marshall who supposes that the Hephthalites destroyed Buddhist temples on the territory of modern Pakistan and North-West India.⁹⁸⁸

Other scientists think the Hephthalites were not Buddhists although Buddhism played a certain role in the greater cities of the Hephthalite state. Kuwayama considers the possibility that Hephthalite destruction of Buddhist temples resulted from inaccurate interpretations of the Chinese literary documents.⁹⁸⁹

⁹⁸⁵ Беленицкий 1949, 84-85.

⁹⁸⁶ Бичурин 1950, 286.

⁹⁸⁷ Enoki 1959, 49.

⁹⁸⁸ Marshall 1960, 38-39.

⁹⁸⁹ Kuwayama 1989, 90-92; Kuwayama 2002, 107-109.

Scholars who believe in the Hephthalite destruction of Gandharan Buddhism without any regard for nomadic modes of invasion have linked two quite independent matters: conducting massacres and not believing in the Buddhism. The oversight has promoted the false image of the Hephthalite king as killer of Buddhist monks.⁹⁹⁰

In the opinion of Litvinsky and T. Zeimal the Hephthalite rulers conducted a different policy towards Buddhism and that “during hostilities here and there Buddhist religious institutions decayed and were robbed. As a whole, to all appearances, in Central Asia under the Hephthalites Buddhism was not subjected to persecutions, some of the Hephthalite rulers even supported Buddhism”. Later, after the fall of the Hephthalite state in Hsi-mo-ta-lo there still existed a small Hephthalite principality and its rulers were Buddhists.⁹⁹¹

Controversial opinions are given by Bernshtam and Gafurov. Bernshtam, in one of his articles, wrote that the Hephthalites continued the work of the Kushans and supported Buddhism,⁹⁹² but in another study he states that the Hephthalites were shamanists.⁹⁹³ Such contradictions are also found in the work by Gafurov. In his opinion, amongst a certain part of the Hephthalites Christianity was a wide-spread, and priests were directed in the 6th century AD by the ruler of the Hephthalites to the Sasanian capital by Mar Aba I (patriarch of Christian-Nestorians in the Sasanian Empire) with a request to put this bishop above all Hephthalite Christians. Later Gafurov says the Hephthalites did not believe in Buddhism (though he adds that under influence of subordinated population, which confessed the Buddhism, in the Hephthalite context adherents of this religion appeared), but honoured their own god. “Each morning they came out of their own tents and prayed. Possibly, they honoured the sun”.⁹⁹⁴

Solovyov supposes that in Tokharistan the Hephthalites were neutral to Buddhism, neither supporting nor persecuting it.⁹⁹⁵ There is data that Toramana

⁹⁹⁰ Kuwayama 1989, 94-95; Kuwayama 2002, 111.

⁹⁹¹ Литвинский/Зеймаль 1971, 119, 122.

⁹⁹² Бернштам 1947, 46; Бернштам 1997, 469-476

⁹⁹³ Бернштам 1951а, 183.

⁹⁹⁴ Гафуров 1972, 211-212.

⁹⁹⁵ Соловьев 1997, 138.

supported a Buddhist temple in the Salt Range⁹⁹⁶ and Nezak Tarkhan was a follower of Buddhism.⁹⁹⁷

Dani states that there are no archaeological facts indicating that the Hephthalites destroyed Buddhist temples.⁹⁹⁸ V. Masson also thinks that Hephthalite rulers did not destroy Buddhist constructions. The complex of Buddhist temples in the Bamiyan valley, built in the Kushan period, continued to exist in the 5th - 7th centuries AD.⁹⁹⁹

Song Yun and the biography of Narendrayashas prove that Buddhism had prospered at least until the Hephthalite rule, or the middle of the 6th century AD. The decay of Buddhism therefore came in the Indian part of the Hephthalite empire in the later half of the 6th century AD after the political withdrawal of the Hephthalites.¹⁰⁰⁰

On the territory of Tokharistan in the 5th - 7th centuries AD Buddhism was also spread and old Buddhist centers, such as Kara-tepe, Fayaz-tepe (Old Termez), Adzhina-tepe, Dalverzin-tepe or Zar-tepe, continued their life.¹⁰⁰¹ Two marble statues of bodhisatvas found in Afghanistan. One is standing figure with donating inscription is dated to 5th century AD and another one is sitting without any inscription but also referred to the same period on the basis of its style.¹⁰⁰²

Another source which shows that the Hephthalites did not persecute the followers of Buddhism is the copper inscription in the Schøyen collection and which was inscribed to mark the consecration of a stupa, a Buddhist sanctuary in the region around modern Talaqan, situated east of Kunduz (north-east Afghanistan). In the list of donors are the name of Hephthalite kings.¹⁰⁰³

⁹⁹⁶ Dani 1986, 6.

⁹⁹⁷ Thakur 1967, 260.

⁹⁹⁸ Dani 1986, 6, 148.

⁹⁹⁹ Массон 1964, 214.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Kuwayama 1989, 110-111; Kuwayama 2002, 124.

¹⁰⁰¹ Ставиский 1983, 81–82; Литвинский 1983, 282.

¹⁰⁰² Stadtner 2000, 37, 41.

¹⁰⁰³ Melzer 2006, 274.

Hinduism

Xuanzang reported that a reason for war between Mihirakula and Baladitya was that the first persecuted Buddhists. Mihirakula, according to the Gwalior inscription worshipped Shivaism, and on his coins there was the head of the bull Nandi, symbol of Shiva.¹⁰⁰⁴ According to Dani one of the descendants of Mihirakula also supported temples of Shiva.¹⁰⁰⁵

Narana/Narendra the successor of Mihirakula, appears from his name to have been a devotee of Vishnu (he also introduced the Vishnuite symbols of chakra and sankha on his Gandharan coins), and he may have supported early organized Hindu worship in eastern Afghanistan.¹⁰⁰⁶

During the Hephthalite time in Kashmir Smast several Hindustic temples were active, one of them inside of the Great cave which is on the top of the mountain. The cave consists of three main halls and one side cave at the beginning of the last hall and also below the entrance in plain there are several religious building of post-Kushan period.¹⁰⁰⁷ The main Hinduistic goddess of the temple in cave was Bhima.¹⁰⁰⁸ The two marble Suryas (**fig. 32**) (“the Supreme Light”, in Hinduism the chief solar deity) dated to the late 4th of first half of 5th century AD from Khair Khaneh (in 15 km north of Kabul) may also be added here.¹⁰⁰⁹

Cult of the Sun

The Chinese source “Liangshu” reports that the Hephthalites worshipped the god of the Sky (Tien-shen) and the god of Fire (Huo-shen). Every morning, coming out of their tents, they were prayed to this god and then proceed with their meals.¹⁰¹⁰

¹⁰⁰⁴ Stein 1905, 83; Kalhana 1961, 46; Biswas 1973, 109; Dani 2001, 143; It should be noted that coins of the Turkic yabghu of Tokharistan had the same depiction: Harmatta/Litvinsky 1996, 370.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Dani 1986, 76.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Verardi/Paparatti 2004, 101.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Falk 2003, 1.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Falk 2003, 1; Falk 2008, 137-138.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Stadtner 2000, 37-40.

¹⁰¹⁰ Parker 1902, 156-157; Litvinsky 1996, 147; Rtveldze (1999a, 272) notes this was main religion of the Hephthalites.

Thakur supposes that Toramana was a follower of Sun cult and ordered a Sun temple to be build in Multan.¹⁰¹¹

Ghirshman writes that under the influence of Brahmanism, a fusion resulted between the Iranian cult of the god Sun-Mithra-Mihira and the religion of India, so that Mihira became not only Surya but also Vishnu and Shiva without, however, losing the Iranian aspect of monotheism. He also noted that the main god of the Chionites-Hephthalites was the Sun-god and that later the cult of this God was connected with the cult of Mithra.¹⁰¹²

Christianity

Amongst a certain part of the Hephthalites Christianity was a wide-spread. The Syrian source "History of Mar Aba" reports that in AD 549 the Hephthalites sent a priest to the Nestorian patriarch Mar Aba I with a request to appoint this priest as bishop in their land for those Hephthalites who were Christians (*Krestyāne haptarāyē*). The request of the Hephthalites was approved.¹⁰¹³

Thus part of the Hephthalites confessed to Christianity of Nestorian doctrine, the followers of which unfolded a broad missionary activity at this time. One of the main their directions was Central Asia and China. Nestorian influences developed after the council of Chalkedon in AD 451, taking on new (orthodox) wording about not jointness and not dividedness of the two natures of Jesus Christ - divine and human - and preserving the particularities in one united person. This wording has caused the objection of two parties. The Syrian church sustained diophysition, that is the delimitation of the two natures of Christ, and accepted a certain possibility of a joint between them. At the head of this currents stood the Constantinopol patriarch Nestorius, who was blamed for his view as heretic in the Council of Ephesus in AD 431, and from whom this direction had received its name. The persecution of supporters of Nestorian teachings began. There were other currents too, which kept the idea about the united and divine nature of Christ, but considered his human

¹⁰¹¹ Thakur 1967, 262.

¹⁰¹² Ghirshman 1948, 122-124.

¹⁰¹³ Литвинский/Зеймаль 1971, 122; Litvinsky/Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya 1996, 424.

nature as not there from the beginning. This direction of Christianity was named monophysitism. The founder was Constantinopl archimandrite Eutyches. Monophysitism and was also declared as an heretical current in the Chalkedon Council of AD 451. However, in spite of this, it was supported by the churches of Armenia, Egypt (Coptic) and Western-Syria.¹⁰¹⁴

After the schism, a fight between the currents began, displacing some from Byzantium to Sasanian Iran. In the course of the struggles, Nestorians broadly spread their teaching amongst Persian Christians and were able to confirm the patriarchate in the Sasanian capital Ctesiphon. In AD 484, in Bet-Lapat (Gundishapur), Nestorianism was declared to be the single “correct” doctrine of the Persian Christian church. Nikitin also notes that Christianity, in the exact Nestorian sense, was a religion among the Hephthalites.¹⁰¹⁵ The residence of the Hephthalite bishop would be in Samarqand where later there was a Mitropolite.¹⁰¹⁶

There is an interesting report by Eghishe, that the Armenians, in the course of their fights for independence from the Sasanians, sent a representative to the country of Hons (i.e. the Hephthalites) to negotiate a union against the Persians. The Hephthalites agreed and “took a vow to become Christians with fervour and to keep unity with them (the Armenians-A.K.)”.¹⁰¹⁷

These facts permit us to accept that amongst the Hephthalites Christianity was wide-spread. We also have information that in the 5th century AD in Merv, which for a short time belonged to the Hephthalites, the episcopate was transformed into a Mitropolity. Merv became one of the main centres of Nestorians in Central Asia. Not far from Merv, at Kharoba-Koshuk, a Nestorian church existed.¹⁰¹⁸

According to Ter-Mkrtychyan, the spreading of Christianity amongst the Hephthalites is connected to their participation in the fight of the Armenians against the Persians and Zoroastrism. Further, she notes, this was founded on similarities of

¹⁰¹⁴ НИКИТИН 1984, 122.

¹⁰¹⁵ НИКИТИН 1984, 124; БОГОМОЛОВ et al. 1994, 12.

¹⁰¹⁶ НЕГМАТОВ 1968, 30.

¹⁰¹⁷ Тер-Мкртичян 1979, 53.

¹⁰¹⁸ Дресвянская 1974, 178-179.

their ideologies. This was expressed in real help which was rendered to the Armenians from the Hephthalites by their march into Persia during the hottest period of the Armenian war against Yazdegerd II.

Near Aivaj village (Shaartuz district in south-west Tajikistan) a cave complex was found with several rooms. This complex, judging by the architectural features, was dated to the 5th - 7th centuries AD. One room had a dome and on top of this dome there was a cross. According to Atakhanov and Khmel'nitsky, the complex was used as a Christian monastery and could have depended on the Nestorians.¹⁰¹⁹

Manichaeism

Alongside Zoroastrism, different in Central Asia from the practice in Iran, Manichaeism continued to spread quickly once the religion was persecuted by the Sasanians and forced out of Iran, including into the state of the Hephthalites. There are no facts about any connection of this religion and the Hephthalites, but it should be mentioned that the Manichaen religion, having arisen in the 3rd century AD, had spread widely in this period.¹⁰²⁰ It is possible that the Mazdakite sect arose in a Manichaen surrounding. The interesting aspect is that Kavad, with the help of Mazdakites, went to the Hephthalites looking for help, since Manichaenism had an influence in Central Asia.¹⁰²¹ In the 7th century AD the head of the Manichaens had his residence in Tokharistan.¹⁰²²

Summarizing, in the Hephthalite state was several religions: Buddhism, Zoroastrism, Christianity (basically Nestorianism), Manichaeism, Hinduism, as well as pagan views (the worship of the Sky, Fire). The Hephthalites held various religious views. It is difficult to say if one of religion dominated, because of the controversial nature of the sources. It seems that different religions co-existed and religious tolerance was characteristic in the Hephthalite empire, as it was later for the Turks and the Mongols in the time of Chingis Khan.

¹⁰¹⁹ Атаханов/Хмельницкий 1973, 187-204.

¹⁰²⁰ Litvinskij 1998, 180; Tremblay 2001, 20-21.

¹⁰²¹ Беленицкий 1954, 42.

¹⁰²² Frye 1991a, 163-164.

6.6. Change of ethnic identity

After the collapse of their own state the Hephthalites were probably assimilated by other peoples, but they have left traces in some modern peoples of Central Asia. It is considered that Karluks, Khalachs, Abdals and Rajputs are descendants of the Hephthalites or have relations with them.

Karlucs

According to the report of Muhammad ibn Najib Bakran (13th century AD), author of “Jaghan-name”, Karlucs resettled in the region of Zabulistan and Ghazni, were later identified as Khalach.¹⁰²³ V. Minorsky supposes that the Karlucs were called Khalach because of the similar writing of their names in Arabic.¹⁰²⁴

In the opinion of Z. Validi, Karlucs appeared for the first time on historical arena in Tokharistan, as an Hephthalite part in Badakhshan.¹⁰²⁵ However, according to Gardezi the relations between Karlucs and Hephthalites were friendly.¹⁰²⁶

Khalachs

Al-Khorezmi wrote: “Al-Hayātila are a tribal group (ǧīl min al-nās) who were formerly powerful and ruled over Tuxaristan; the Xalaǧ and Kanǧīna Turks are remnants of them”. Kanǧīna was one of Saka tribes, which later became part of the Hephthalites. Ptolomey also mentioned the Saka tribe Kōmēdoi.¹⁰²⁷

Khalachs are mentioned in connection with the campaigns of Yakub ibn Saffar against Zabul in the second half of the 9th century AD. Istakhri mentioned the

¹⁰²³ Ghirshman 1948, 106.

¹⁰²⁴ Hudud al-Alam 1980, 348.

¹⁰²⁵ Кармышева 1976, 186.

¹⁰²⁶ Литвинский/Соловьев 1985, 145.

¹⁰²⁷ Bosworth/Clauson 1965, 6-8; Alram and Lo Muzio (2006, 134-135) give samples of two bronze coins (one from a private collection and the other one from the Bibliothèque National de France) with Bactrian legend that could be restored as *xalassano* or *xalassano* and which could be coins of the Khalachs. These coins have very close stylistic links to the Hephthalite silver imitations of Peroz coins which circulated in Tokharistan and are chronologically not very distinct from each other (6th century AD), so Al-Khorezmi may be right in his statement.

Khalachs in the Kabul area. Yakut says: “The Khalachs are a kind of Turks. They came to the land in ancient times. They are owners of the land and Turkish in appearance, dress and language”.¹⁰²⁸ According to Frye and Sayili the Khalachs were descendants of the Hephthalites and have Turkic origin.¹⁰²⁹ Bivar writes: “A tribal element with a claim to Hephthalite descent was the medieval *Ḳalaj* (q.v.). There are indications that sections of this group were originally Turkish-speaking, though federated in the earlier Middle Ages with Pashto-speaking tribes.”¹⁰³⁰ Contrary to this, some researchers think that Khalachs were Turks who moved westwards before the collapse of the Hephthalite state in the third quarter of the 6th century AD.¹⁰³¹

In the Persian anonymous source “*Hudud al-Alam*” (10th century AD) we find the information that the Khalachs lived on the area of Gazni and were Turks. It is also possible to meet Khalachs in the areas of Balkh, Tokharistan, Bust and Guzgan.¹⁰³² One branch of the Khalachs established their rule in Kabul and Zabulistan in the later half of the 7th century AD and continued to rule there until the 9th century AD.¹⁰³³ Thereafter the Khalachs changed ethnically and became one of the Afghan tribes named Ghilzai.¹⁰³⁴

Jelal-ad Din Firuz from the Khalachs took power in the Delhi sultanate in 1290 and established a dynasty of Khalachs. Another Khalach dynasty ruled in Central India (Malwa) in 1436-1531. The Lodi dynasty in the Delhi sultanate (1451-1526) originated from the Khalachs.¹⁰³⁵ It should be noted that Khalachs cannot be found among the Turkmen tribes, but in Iran and Turkey.¹⁰³⁶

Sims-Williams gives information that in one of the Bactrian documents (**fig. 96, 1**), in a sale contract dated AD 678, there is a name of Khalach, slave-boy. This is

¹⁰²⁸ Frye/Sayili 1943, 206.

¹⁰²⁹ Frye/Sayili 1943, 207.

¹⁰³⁰ Bivar 2003, 200.

¹⁰³¹ Verardi/Paparatti 2004, 99.

¹⁰³² *Hudud al-Alam* 1980, 111; Vogelsang 2002, 186-187.

¹⁰³³ Inaba 2004, 108.

¹⁰³⁴ Minorsky 1940, 433; Bosworth/Doerfer 1978, 917.

¹⁰³⁵ Minorsky 1940, 433.

¹⁰³⁶ Bivar 1983, 216-217.

for now one of the first mentions of the Khalachs. In other document (**fig. 96, 2**), dated AD 710, a princess Khalas is mentioned. According to Sims-Williams these facts do not support the theory that Khalachs were actually the last descendants of the Hephthalites.¹⁰³⁷

From the 10th century AD onwards the Khalachs were mentioned in the area south of the Amudarya, especially in northern India and the eastern section of the Iranian plateau.¹⁰³⁸

Abdals

Many researchers see the descendants of the Hephthalites in the Turkmen tribe Abdal. G. Vasileva thinks that some names of Turkmen tribes indicate that such names as Abdals, Yazyr, Olam indicate that pre-Oghuz people, like the Hephthalites and others, took part in the ethnogenesis of the Turkmen.¹⁰³⁹

The Abdals were included in the medieval Chowdur association, but occupy an isolated position within it and do not link with the other subdivisions.¹⁰⁴⁰

Few Abdals remained on the territory of Turkmenistan, a large part of them now living in the Astrakhan area of the Russian Federation, where they were resettled together with a part of the Chowdurs from north-eastern Pricaspia in the second half of the 17th century because of oppressions of the Kalmyks and the Khiva khan. This process lasted until the first half of the 18th century. In 1802-1803 some Turkmen tribes, amongst which the Abdals, were resettled in Astrakhan province. Later, in 1813 in Astrakhan another 606 Turkmen-Abdals arrived. The Russian emperor Alexander I gave the Turkmen-Abdals of Mangyshlak a document accepting them in citizenship of the Russian empire. Astrakhan Turkmen-Abdals subdivided into Kurban, Menglikhoja, Ogry and Burunjik. Besides this Abdals entered in the composition of the Stavropol Turkmen-Soinaj.¹⁰⁴¹ A sort of Abdals

¹⁰³⁷ Sims-Williams 1997, 20; Симс-Вильямс 1997, 9; Sims-Williams 2002, 234-235.

¹⁰³⁸ Inaba 2005, 16.

¹⁰³⁹ Васильева 1964, 2.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Джикиев 1963, 197-198.

¹⁰⁴¹ Курбанов 1993, 159-160; Курбанов 1995, 28-29, 33, 35-38.

exists in composition of other Turkmen tribes: Saryk, Ata and Ersary.¹⁰⁴² Some Turkmen-Abdals live in the Manghistau region of Kazakhstan.¹⁰⁴³

According to V. Vostrov and M. Mukanov: “It is probably that Kazakh and Turkmen Abdals are the remainders of the Hephtal (the Hephthalites), split on two parts, from which one entered the Turkmens, and then through Turkmens the Kazakhs”.¹⁰⁴⁴

Some Abdal elements can also be found in the composition of Bashkirs, Uzbek-Lokays, Azerbaijanians and Turks. In Eastern Turkestan we find further Abdals, known under name “Adana – Abdallar”.¹⁰⁴⁵ Amongst the Bulgarian tribes formed on the Volga (the state of Volga Bulgars) Savirs, Avars and Abdals are mentioned.¹⁰⁴⁶

The Hephthalites may also have participated in the origin of the Afghans. The Afghan tribe Abdal is one of the big tribes that has lived there for centuries. Renaming the Abdals to Durrani occurred in 1747, when descendants from the Sadozai branch Zirak of this tribe, Ahmad-khan Abdali, became the shah of Afghanistan. In 1747 the tribe changed its name to “Durrani” when Ahmad-khan became the first king of Afghanistan and accepted the title “Dur-i-Duran” (the pearl of pearls, from Arabian: “durr” – pearl).

During the rebellion in northern Iran in 1814 of the Astrabad governor Muhammed Zaman-khan, Abdal-Meliks cavalry participated in the composition of the governmental troops. The Abdal-Meliks were originally in Dereghez (north-eastern Iran) and were then resettled in Shiraz, from where, after a string of new transmigrations, in 1855 they were definitively settled on the shore of the Caspian Sea between mouth of the river Nika and the peninsula Miyan-qala. In 1883-1884 the Abdal-Meliks dwelt together with the Lur tribe of Khojavends in Kudjur.¹⁰⁴⁷

¹⁰⁴² Джикиев 1991, 275; Атаниязов 1994, 112.

¹⁰⁴³ Аманниязов 2004, 16.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Атаниязов 1988, 11.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Карпов 1939, Manuscript of the Central scientific library of Turkmenistan.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Гундогдыев 1998, 105.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Карпов 1939, Manuscript of the Central scientific library of Turkmenistan.

Rajputs

Together with the Hephthalites in India, the Gujars also appeared, who were settled in Punjab, Sind and Rajputan, but a part of them afterwards moved into Malwa, an area later named after them - Gujarat.¹⁰⁴⁸

As a result of the merging of the Hephthalites and the Gujars with population from northwestern India, the Rajputs (from Sanskrit “rajputra” – “son of the rajah”) formed. According to the Rajput tradition, the Hunas were included as one of the 36 Rajput clans.¹⁰⁴⁹ One of the Rajput clans still keeps the name “Hun”.¹⁰⁵⁰

In the 8th century AD the Rajputs moved into the rich area of the Ganges valley and Central India and created the large state under the name Gurjara-Pratihara. The Rajput rulers of the Tomars in 736 built the city Dhillika (modern Delhi) as capital of their state.¹⁰⁵¹ These conquests have transformed them to one of the decisive factors of the politics in India from the 8th century AD on. The Rajputs, during several centuries, remained in India as an united ethnic unit. In spite of the fact that Rajputs have adopted the religion (though special importance is added Sun) and language of local people, they were able to preserve their mentality and military customs. The Rajputs noticeably differ from their neighbours by nature, according special value to soldierly valor.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Bivar 2003, 200; According to Bivar (2003, 200) the Gujars are ancestral also to the Gujar pastoralists who today frequent the higher elevations of the North-West Frontier Province and Kashmir.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Banerji 1962, 57-58.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Литвинский 1996, 165.

¹⁰⁵¹ Smith 1907, 927-928; Медведев 1990, 134.

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