

On The Coins of The Pre-Islamic Fergana Valley

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Abstract. From ancient times to the present, various civilizations and cultures have existed in the territory of Central Asia. In this article, we have thoroughly analyzed the early medieval numismatic materials of the Ferghana Valley region, one of the oldest regions of Central Asia, compared the coins found during excavations in archaeological monuments, and made general conclusions. O.I.Smirnova, L.S.Baratova, E.Rtveladze, G.Babayarov carried out extensive works on the numismatics of this region, and we analyzed the data in their scientific works. We can say that the coins found in Fergana region, like the coins found in other historical regions of our country, give us very clear and important information about the period of their minting

Keywords: Ferghana, Choch, Isfijab, Khagan, numismatic materials, Turkic Khaganate, early Middle Ages, Kuva

Enter. In the early Middle Ages, the Fergana Valley consisted of several large and small administrations - estates, sometimes their number reached up to 6. Although pre-Islamic Chinese and Arab-Persian sources mention a number of political associations in the Ferghana valley, they are not mentioned by name, so it is not possible to fully determine which areas of the valley these political associations encompassed and which dynasties ruled them. Even numismatic materials cannot help enough in this matter.

In this matter, when we get acquainted with the political-administrative structure and ruling dynasties of Chach, Ustrushana and Isfijab (Sayram) regions neighboring or somewhat close to the Ferghana valley in the early Middle Ages, it is noticeable that a somewhat different situation prevailed. In particular, it is known that coins were issued by dynasties such as Chach tegins, Chach tuduns, Chach rulers [Baratova L.S. 2007. – B.43-49] Each of Ustrushana and Isfijab principalities was basically ruled by one dynasty, and it is understood that the political-administrative aspect in them was somewhat different from that of Choch.





Methodology. In contrast to the large settled principalities of Central Asia, such as Choch and Sugd, Tokhoristan, the types, weight, geography of distribution of Ferghana Valley coins and archaeological monuments where coins were found are relatively few. Researchers mainly explain this situation as follows [Babayarov G. 2023. – B. 97-118]:

- 1) in the early Middle Ages, the coin-money system was relatively poorly developed in the Ferghana valley, and the first tradition of coin minting here began during the period of the Turkic khaganate;
- 2) in most of the archaeological sites in the valley, the cultural layers belonging to the early Middle Ages have not been sufficiently excavated. Therefore, the pre-Islamic Ferghana coins are not well known to the world of science.

Coins belonging to the pre-Islamic period found by chance from other regions of Central Asia, especially from regions such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, etc., are quite large. However, this situation is not so observed in the Fergana valley. This strengthens the view that the use of coins in the Ferghana valley in the early Middle Ages was somewhat slower than in other regions.

Table 1. Ferghana coins of the early Middle Ages (Baratova L.S. 2007. – B.43-49; Babayarov G. 2007. – B.151-156) .


No	Titles on coins	Coin pictures	Mintage and commemoration	Published research
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1	1. <i>qğn (Qağan)</i> " khagan " and <i>knm?</i> "ruler" (obverse) <i>[x']γ'nc pny?</i> " Khagan's coin?" (reverse) 2. <i>[q]ğn (Qağan)</i> "Khagan" and <i>knm?</i> (obverse), <i>[cp]γw? x'[γ'n]</i> "Djabgu-khagan?" (reverse)		VII century. Kuva	Babayarov 2004 : 32, Babayarov 2023: 98-99 ; Baratova 2007: 44
2	<i>x'γ'n</i> "khagan" (obverse) , the reverse side is without writing (reverse)		VII - VIII centuries .Kuva, Kyzil-tepa (Osh) and others.	Smirnova 1981: 338-339, No. 1435, Babayarov 2023: 99-100
3	<i>x'γ'n</i> "Khagan" (obverse), <i>βryn</i> "Fergana" (reverse)		VII - VIII centuries .Kuva, Kizil-tepa (Osh) and others.	Smirnova 1981 : 340, No. 1441 ; Babayarov 2023: 100-101
4	<i>prn</i> " kut " (obverse) , <i>pny</i> "coin" (reverse)		VII - VIII centuries. Kuva	Baratova 2007: 43-49; Babayar 2007: 151-156

Analysis and results. Some researchers, in particular O.I. Smirnova, L.S. The Baratovas believe that other coins than those listed in this table were minted in the Fergana Valley. They are as follows: 1) coins with the image of the ruler and the queen on the right surface, and the stamp on the reverse side and the Sugdian inscription around it; 2) coins with the image of the ruler facing straight on the right surface, and the stamp on the reverse side and the words «farn bagi... » in Sugdian script next to it; 3) coins with the words «Alp-khagan tutuq» in Sugdian writing on the right surface, with no writing on the reverse surface, imitation of Chinese coins with a square hole in the middle.

In fact, some of these coins belong to Sugd and Otrar rule in the following table:

Table 2. Coins indicated as belonging to the reign of Ferghana, but in recent years have been identified as belonging to other reigns

N o	Titles on coins	Coin pictures	Mintage and commemoration	Published research
1	<i>MR'Y βcs' γ'twnh</i> "ruler ... wife" (O.I. Smirnova); <i>MR'Y pny nn x'twnh</i> "Ruler Nana-Khatun coin" or "Ruler (and) Nana-Khotun coin"		VII - VIII centuries . _ Samarkand, Fergana, Tashkent vil.	Smirnova 1981: 359; Babayarov 2021: 96 , 176; Babayarov, Kubatin

				2013: 95-107
2	<i>prn βγγ...</i> "Divine kut..." (O.I. Smirnova); <i>prn βγγ pny</i> "Divine kut (owner)" (G'. Babayarov)		VII - VIII centuries . _ Fergana Valley, Panjikent, Samarkand region	Smirnova 1981: 7, 25, 54; Babayarov 2023: 65-76
3	<i>lpw? γ'γ'n twtwγ</i> "Alp-khagan tutuq"		VII - VIII centuries . _ Ferghana Valley, Varakhsha, Otrar, Sayram (Gen. Kazakhstan)	Smirnova 1981: 56-57; Babayarov, Kubatin 2014: 183-194; Baytanaev et al. 2020 : 134-135, 200, 203

The coins listed in this table were issued at the time of Although included by O.I. Smirnova in the «Group of Ferghana coins», the researcher did not lose sight of the possibility that they belonged to other rulers [Smirnova. 1981 – B.58]. However, a number of researchers who conducted research after that did not reach a decision on whether these coins belong to the Ferghana Valley or vice versa. In particular, L.S. Baratova connects the coins with the title «Alp-khagan tutuq» with the Ferghana valley [Baratova L.S. 2007. – B.45], G. Babayarov and A. Kubatins proved that they belong to the Otrar rulership [Babayarov G. 2014. – B.183-194]. Pre-Islamic coins of Ferghana mostly bear the title «khagan», which was used by the supreme rulers of the Turkic khaganate at that time. The appearance of this title on coins of Ferghana is considered to have been minted directly or indirectly in connection with the Turkic khaganate [Babayarov G. 2014. – B.70-75]. In due time O.I. Smirnova, L.S. The Baratovas included these coins in the «group of ancient Turkic coins of Central Asia», but left open the question of which Turkic dynasty they were minted by. G. Babayarov believes that Ferghana coins with the title «khagan» belong to the Ashina dynasty, which ruled the valley in the 7th-8th centuries. According to him, the Ashina dynasty, which became the leading dynasty in the Ferghana Valley in the second quarter of the 7th century, dates back to the Western Turkic Khaganate, and the representatives of this dynasty ruled until the first quarter of the 9th century. Their rule in the valley was ended in 810 by the Arab viceroys, one of the founders of the Samanid dynasty, Ahmad ibn Asad [Babayarov G. 2023. – B.42]. The iconography on the coins of the Ferghana Valley - the image of the ruler, the shape of the stamp, the title, etc., is very close to the coins of the West Turkic Khaganate minted in the Choch oasis at the end of the 6th - beginning of the 7th century. This further strengthens the view that Ferghana was ruled by representatives of the Ashina dynasty at that time. It is known that in the 630s, after one of the Western Turkic khagans killed the local ruler of Ferghana named Kibi, the administration of the valley was transferred to the representatives of the Ashina dynasty (Bichurin N.Y.1950. – B.284).

Summary.In short, in the early Middle Ages, more precisely, in the 6th - 8th centuries, the Ferghana Valley was a separate oasis under the rule of the Turkic Khaganate, and the main power here belonged to the representatives of the Ashina dynasty. Other dynasties in the valley were subordinate to this house and had some freedom in their internal administration. Apparently, they did not have the right to mint their own coins. A small number of coins found in the remains of the old city of the Ferghana valley belong to the Ashina dynasty, and are confirmed by the title «khagan» typical of the khaganate. Apparently, the representatives of this dynasty minted coins in the name of Western Turkic khagans. On the other hand, as a branch of the khaganate, it is hypothesized that the representatives of the Ferghana Ashina dynasty used this title while issuing their coins.

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