
SOME INFORMATION RELATED TO THE ART HISTORY OF THE HEPHTHALITE TIME (4TH-6TH CENTURIES AD) IN CENTRAL ASIA AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the artefacts which might be related to the Hephthalites, who lived in territory of Central Asia and neighbouring countries in 4th – 6th centuries AD. In the 5th - 6th centuries AD, the Hephthalites could establish a great empire. It is noted that the materials are very limited, and even the dating is often approximate and inexact. Nevertheless author has 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.

RESUMEN

Este artículo trata de los objetos que podrían estar en relación con los heftalitas, quienes vivieron en el territorio de Asia Central y sus regiones vecinas en los ss. IV y VI d. C. En los ss. V-VI d. C., los heftalitas pudieron crear un gran imperio. Es sabido que sus materiales son muy escasos e incluso que su datación es a menudo aproximada e inexacta. Sin embargo el autor intenta interpretar, en esta ocasión, los datos disponibles provenientes de varias fuentes sobre los heftalitas, a pesar de que algunas cuestiones de gran importancia continúan estando abiertas a la discusión y que probablemente permanezcan así por algún tiempo todavía.

KEYWORDS

Hephthalites, art history, Central Asia, Indian subcontinent.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Heftalitas, arte, historia, Asia Central, Subcontinente indio.

1. INTRODUCTION

Central Asia and neighbouring countries have very old and rich history. A poorly studied and complex period of that region is Early Medieval time (4th – 6th centuries AD). During that time, took place the “Great Movement of Peoples”, a migration of nomadic peoples (Huns) from Asia to Europe. In the South and Central Asia were existed great empires, including Sasanian Iran, Gupta India and several smaller states. Across Central Asia, appeared mysterious new peoples: Hephthalites, Kidarites and Chionites, among others. Their origin is still debated. Some scholars suggest that they were a part of a Hunnic confederation, while others propose that each of them had different origin.

On the Central Asian historical stage, of the new peoples the biggest impact was made by Hephthalites (also known in Byzantine sources as White Huns - the name they used themselves is unknown). They are important in the development of the Turkic and later Islamic character of the Central Asia – though primary sources are lacking. In the 5th - 6th centuries AD, Hephthalites founded a great empire in the territories of the modern states of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and China. They dominated that region and political history for two centuries. A true study of the Hephthalites must include both archaeology and historical analysis of written sources. Such a study, incorporating modern data on the archaeology of the Hephthalite

sites from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Central Asian republics with the historical data from written sources, has not been done.

2. RESEARCH HISTORY

Generally, the early research on the Hephthalites was based only on written sources. For the first time, Hephthalites were mentioned in AD 361 at a 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 aspect 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 - *Hēvtāls*.
- 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*.² 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. Suggestions vary from the Hephthalites being a part of the Hunnic confederation to other different origins. It is also uncertain whether Hephthalites, Kidarites, and Chionites had a common or different origin – that is, are they three branches of the same ethnic group or are they culturally, linguistically, or genetically distinct from one another?

This is explained by the fact that the written sources referring to that 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 the history, particularly about monetary circulation. But, in spite of the aforesaid, the collection of available facts allows reconstruction of a more or less clear picture of the political and socio-economic life of that 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 the 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

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

² According to Z. Togan, the name of the Hephthalites in the first period of Arabic-Persian sources should be *Habtal* instead of the name *Haital*, because the letter *b* in the Arabic script was wrongly written sometimes as *y* due to the similarity of the former: Togan 1985, 59.

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 hypotheses on their history remains controversial.

The medieval sources have served as the main base for multiple judgments on the ethnic history of the Hephthalites. Some researchers see in the Hephthalites the descendants of the Yuezhi (V. de Saint-Martin, V. Bartold, N. Veselovsky, G. Grum-Grzhimailo),³ others derive them from the ancient Mongols (J. Marquart, R. Grousset)⁴ or Huns assimilated by Central Asian people (S. Tolstov, A. Bernshtam).⁵ Yet another theory advocated an Eastern Iranian language of the Hephthalites and their Iranian origin (A. Mandelshtam, M. Dyakonov, B. Gafurov).⁶ Bartold, K. Enoki, L. Gumilev and B. Gafurov⁷ think the Hephthalites were quite different peoples than the Chionites; others (R. Ghirshman, S. Tolstov, A. Bernshtam, A. Mandelshtam, and V. Masson)⁸ try to prove their identity or consider that the Hephthalites were the name of the dominating class of the Chionites. The various authors listed above are only more prominent scientists that have grappled with the question who were the Hephthalites. Many others argued that Hephthalites were Mongols or Turks or Huns or a number of other ethnicities. This shows how fragmentary and confused the historical sources are, and that they must be combined with other evidentiary lines for understanding Hephthalite history.

3. SEALS AND SEALINGS

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 connected with them. The materials are very limited, and even the dating is often approximate and inexact. Nevertheless here we would like to discuss some materials that might be connected with the Hephthalites.

Examining the collection of seals from the Peshawar and the British Museums, Callieri notes that some of the images are very close to the Hephthalite images. According to his study, 11 seals can be related to the Hephthalites, of which 8 represent a bust of a man with beard and moustache, two busts of a woman with diadem, and one of a couple. In the images the body is shown in three-quarters (all have head in full profile and upper body in three-quarters view). All seals have inscriptions. Most of them are in 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 seal 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.⁹ Callieri writes: “The prevalence of Brāhmī inscriptions, if not statistically completely fortuitous, perhaps indicates a North Indian provenance, and Indian names in

³ Saint-Martin 1849; Бартольд 1963; Веселовский 1877; Грум-Гржимайло 1926.

⁴ Marquart 1901; Grousset 1970.

⁵ Толстов 1948a; Толстов 1948b; Толстов 1962; Бернштам 1947; Бернштам 1951.

⁶ Мандельштам 1958a; Мандельштам 1958b; Дьяконов/Мандельштам 1958; Гафуров 1972.

⁷ Бартольд 1963; Еноки 1955; Еноки 1959; Гумилев 1959; Гумилев 1967; Гафуров 1972.

⁸ Ghirshman 1948; Толстов 1948a; Толстов 1948b; Толстов 1962; Бернштам 1947; Бернштам 1951; Мандельштам 1958a; Мандельштам 1958b; Массон 1964.

⁹ Callieri 1999, 282-284.

the inscriptions, if they refer to Hūna rather than local individuals, provide an interesting indication of cultural assimilation”.¹⁰

Callieri also notes a seal of Khingila 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 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 the first known person to bear the name or title Khingila¹¹. The legend on the seal 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”¹².

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 devotee is offering a flower. Lastly, an amethyst seal in the same museum with the frontal busts of a crowned male and female couple also belongs to this group. There are also a number of other seals, which seem to be closely associated 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 Indamič, 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.
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 eyelids in reliefs, the shoulders and chest have soft rounded outlines.¹³

¹⁰ Callieri 1999, 285.

¹¹ Callieri 2002, 121, 131.

¹² 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 *qijiraq* “double-blade knife”. So Eškingil is a Hunnic name or title – “companion of the sword”: Vaissière 2003, 129.

¹³ 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 the “Hunnisch” group: Göbl 1967-I, 232-255.

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 belong 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.¹⁴

Other new samples which can be added to Class V are three clay sealings from the collection of Aman ur Rahman, which were found in the territory of the Kashmir Smast range. One of the sealing (30 mm thick and 60 mm in diameter) depicts the bust of a ruler in crown turned three-quarters to the left. The face has no beard and moustache. There is an earring with attached pearl in the right ear (in the left ear may also be an earring, but only one side is shown) and a pearl necklace on the neck. The sealing also has a 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.¹⁵

As Lerner has remarked, the Rosen Collection (New York) has a seal dated to the 5th century AD that shows a profile bust of a male with a moustache and curly hair. Above the bust is an ornamental spray of leaves. He also has a torque or garment secured at the neck by ribbons. On his right is a Bactrian inscription *alχono*. So, the owner could have belonged to the Hephthalites, specifically to the group described as Alxon and Khingila.¹⁶

During excavations in the site Kafir-kala (near Samarkand) more than 400 sealings were recovered. Among them one shows a beardless man, with long face, where “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 ‘Hunnish’ busts and can be dated around the 5th century AD”.¹⁷

In 2004 three ‘Huna’ fired clay bullae were found in Pakistan, and now are in a private collection. Two of them show a typical male bust representing a ‘Hunnish’ nobleman, while the third depicts a sun wheel (chakra). The inscriptions in Brahmi tell 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 mm, thickness 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 remain 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 the 5th century / first half of the 6th century. Dimensions: 24 x 18 mm, thickness 21 mm. Bust of a man, plain, short hairstyle combed outwards from crown, moustache, and earrings. Tunic with low, circular neckline, draped in linear folds. According to Alram, this type of portrait is close to the images on the coins of Sahi Javukha/Jaukha, dated to the time of Khingila (430/440-490).
3. *jihah* (Jina) dated to the end of the 5th / 6th century. Dimensions: 21 x 23 mm, thickness 16 mm. Sun wheel with eleven curving spokes, surrounded by 15

¹⁴ Callieri 2002, 122-123.

¹⁵ Aman ur Rahman et al. 2006, 125-131.

¹⁶ Lerner 1999, 268.

¹⁷ Cazzoli/Cereti 2005, 143.

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 also found 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.¹⁸

In Jumalyk-tepe clay reliefs and carved trees were also discovered. The scenes of the people, holding a flower or bouquet in the bent hand are also interesting. They are found on Gandhara reliefs, and precisely such scenes are often encountered on carved gem-seals connected to the Hephthalites.¹⁹

The Eastern Department of the State Hermitage keeps a gem-seal. 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 seal is a portrait of a middle-aged man. His head is depicted in three-quarters profile. The face is elongated, beardless with long pendulous moustache, forked at the end. The nose is long, and straight lines stress the nostrils. On the head is a small cap with a sheaf of three feathers. From left to right are words in italic read as *Aspurabah*, probably the name of the owner of the seal. According to Stavisky, the tamgha placed behind the man’s head is in “the Hephthalite character”.²⁰ However, Stavisky suggests this seal is related to the Chionites not to the Hephthalites, because this sign does not appear on the 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.²¹ Marshak and Krikis thought that the date should be somewhat later and according to him the sign is also found on the later coins.²²

The gem from Hermitage is analogous with a lapis lazuli gem with Bactrian inscription *Yozino* from E.T. Newell’s collection. Göbl dates it by the middle of the 5th century AD.²³

A lapis lazuli gem was found near the Bezymyannyi (Nameless) city-site in Kobadian. On the lapis lazuli was engraved a sign, 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 like tamghas on the coin issues 287, 287A, 288 and 289, which Göbl links with the Hephthalites.²⁴

4. 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 in respect to the mural size, wealth of the scenes, reality and rich colors of images.²⁵

Such paintings were discovered in Dilberjin (near Balkh), Balalyk-tepe, Adzhina-tepe (a Buddhist monastery of the 7th century AD, 12.5 kilometers east of Kurgan-Tube),

¹⁸ Alram 2003, 177-182.

¹⁹ Ставиский 1969b, 149; Callieri, 1997.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ Ставиский 1961, 56.

²² Маршак/Крикис 1969, 79; Göbl (1967-I, 235-236) dates this gem by the first half of the 5th century AD.

²³ Göbl 1967-I, 237.

²⁴ Пуясов 2003, 143.

²⁵ Альбаум 1975, 3.

Kafyr-kala (Kurgan-Tube district in Tajikistan), Kalai Kafirnigan (80 km south-west of Dushanbe), Kalai Shodmon, and several others. The subjects of the images are essentially religious in nature, excluding the image of Balalyk-tepe with secular scenes.

Art historians have identified a number of painter's schools for the period. The Tokharistan school was represented by Balalyk-tepe, Adzhina-tepe, Kafyr-kala; the northern Tokharistan school was found in the Buddhist Temples of Kuva and in Jeti-su; the School of the "western edge" was found in the monuments in Sogd, Khorezm, castles in Varakhsha, Afrasiab (Samarkand), in the Ihshids palace in Kalai Kakhkakh I (Ustrushana), and on the paintings on ossuaria from Tok-kala.²⁶

As noted Albaum, the paintings of Balalyk-tepe belong to the 6th century AD and portray a feasting scene.²⁷ Solovyov, after analysis of ceramics from the site, thinks that Balalyk-tepe's paintings should be dated to the end of the 6th – the first half of the 7th century AD.²⁸ In another of his studies Solovyov dates the paintings from Balalyk-tepe to the middle or the second half of the 7th century AD.²⁹ Belenitsky and Marshak date them broadly to the 5th - 7th century AD and the paintings of Kalai Kafirnigan to the end of the 7th century AD.³⁰

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 a drink, the woman is holding her right hand at her chest. These figures represent a pair. The complete scenes of Balalyk-tepe produce a wedding feasting scene.³¹ This point of view was supported by Solovyov.³² The paintings of Afrasiab are dated from the end of the 7th century - the first quarter of the 8th century AD, and show the arrival to the palace of embassies from various countries and their reception by the governor of Samarkand.³³

The paintings of Bamiyan and most early paintings of Pendzhikent date from the 5th – 6th centuries AD.³⁴ The spread of the Indian culture and its reflection in the paintings of Varakhsha and Pendzhikent become specifically observable during that period, which is also characterized by the Hephthalite-specific markers.³⁵ We may presume that the wall paintings of Pendzhikent, due to their realistic character, can be used as source for reconstruction of the ethnic composition of the population. Belenitsky, in these paintings, sees depictions of representatives of three ethnic groups - Sogdian, Turkic, and Kushan-Hephthalite.³⁶

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, shown on different paintings at Pendzhikent, is very distinct from the other depictions in the Sogdian art, and resembles the Hephthalite prototypes. The portraits feature narrow skulls, V-shaped eyebrows, hooked noses and heavy jaws, and thus closely resemble some portraits of Khingila on the coins.³⁷

²⁶ Пугаченкова / Ремпель 1982, 108.

²⁷ Альбаум 1960, 174, 196.

²⁸ Соловьев 1997, 120.

²⁹ Соловьев 2004, 91.

³⁰ Беленицкий / Маршак 1979, 35

³¹ Альбаум 1975, 95.

³² Соловьев 2006, 153.

³³ Альбаум 1975, 19; Stavisky and Yatsenko (2002, 313) date the paintings of Afrasiab to the 7th century AD.

³⁴ Альбаум 1975, 93.

³⁵ Толстов 1964, 140.

³⁶ Брыкина 1982, 127.

³⁷ Grenet 2002, 218-219.

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 a link between them.³⁸

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 the scenes depicted on the Hephthalite gems and coins.³⁹

According to Kageyama, in a painting of ambassadors attributed to the fourth Liang emperor Xiao Yi, represents an ambassador of the Hephthalite kingdom. At same time Kageyama suggests that the Hephthalite ambassador is not necessarily of Hephthalite origin, because nomadic tribes often sent foreigners, like Sogdians, as their emissaries.⁴⁰

In the opinion of Bivar, the painting of the destroyed smaller Buddha (35 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, was concluded an armistice between the Persians and the Chionite Huns, with an understanding that they should conclude 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. I am inclined to place this event 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”.⁴¹

Towards the north-east, and north-west corners of the niche of the destroyed greater, 53 m Buddha, are relatively well-preserved areas with paintings. These are more in 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 forms typical of a Buddhist art, seated within large coloured haloes. Others, adorned with jewelry, have bare torsos, and may be supporters of the community, conceived as Bodhisattvas. In the opinion of Bivar, some figures of the supporters can be real people, for example, one of these partly damaged figures is wearing a dress with rounded decoration, a long necklace of pearls, and a regal crown of gold with three crescents, each topped with 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.⁴² Bivar suggests a hypothesis that the mural paintings of the 53 m Buddha originated from the reign of the Hephthalite king Khingila, and that he is depicted there.⁴³

³⁸ Litvinsky 1996, 151.

³⁹ Ставиский 1969а, 22-23.

⁴⁰ Kageyama 2007, 14, 16.

⁴¹ Bivar 2005, 320.

⁴² Bivar 2005, 320; According to Pugachenkova (1963, 75-76) an image of a kneeling donator in the niche of the greater Buddha can be ascribed to the Hephthalites. The donator is depicted in a kaftan, with a dagger on a belt, and holding above his head a large tray with donations. His profile looks like the profiles of Hephthalite kings on the coins.

⁴³ Bivar 2005, 324.

5. BOWLS

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

In 1961 a bowl was found in the village Chilek 31 kilometres north-north-west from Samarkand. It is dated to the 5th century AD, weighing 1003 g. and 18.5 cm in diameter.⁴⁴ It is smooth on the inside, and its exterior is richly decorated by hammering. The picture shows six women standing under arcades. The arcades are decorated with bust images of winged geniuses. On the base of the bowl is a bust of a beardless man facing left, with a rounded cap on his head and a lotus in his hand. Based on the similarity of the images with the profiles of the Hephthalite rulers on the coins, the cup's provenance was defined as Hephthalite.⁴⁵ The portrait on the Chilek bowl may be that of a sovereign, because the cone with the rounded-top, the hairstyle, and the ribbons on the back are the distinct attributes found only in the costumes of the rulers in a number of coins. This portrait may reflect a Hephthalite ideal of beauty.⁴⁶ The Hephthalites, under the influence of the Sasanian official portrait style, created their own iconography; judging from the images on the coins, seals and vessels, it was well established and standardized. In the opinion of Marshak and Krikis, the Chilek bowl's composition can be understood as a scene of the king's feast.⁴⁷

The Chilek silver bowl has an analogy in the silver bowl from the British Museum 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 is clearly the man depicted in the medallion.

The form of bowl from British Museum, and the subject of its ornamentation are associated with Sasanian art. It is 16.8 cm in diameter, 5.7 cm high, and 190 g in weight.⁴⁸ The central medallion is obviously of no relevance to the whole scene. Therefore, a character with bared head is shown not only in the centre of the cup bottom, but also in the main composition, as a hunter shooting at two tigers. The portrait might be of the owner of the dish, a Hephthalite noble. Next the head of one horseman are five unclear Brahmi characters. The other riders, with three different hats are portraits of rulers, possibly associates of the cup owner. One of the characters, a king killing a lion with a sword, has a crown distinct from the rest. This rider, judging from the crown and typical hairstyle around forehead, can be identified as a Kidarite. However, the ball in the crown has not survived. Another rider is shown with a spear. His crown is different from the Kidarite one only in the form of the side wings. The horseman with a spear is probably also a Kidarite, though unknown to us from the coins. Characteristically, the Hephthalites are shown in profile, and the Kidarites are shown frontally, that is, in accordance with the monetary iconography of the Hephthalites and the late period of Kidara. The swords of riders are similar to the swords of the Hun Empire of the 4th - 5th centuries AD.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Brentjes 1971, 77.

⁴⁵ Brentjes 1971, 77-78; Пугаченкова 1986, 273-275; Lerner 1996, 24-25.

⁴⁶ Маршак/Крикис 1969, 67-68.

⁴⁷ Маршак/Крикис 1969, 69.

⁴⁸ Göbl 1967-II, 262.

⁴⁹ Marschak 1986, 32-33.

In the image of the women on the Chilek bowl is felt an influence of the Gupta tradition. The Chilek bowl is thus closer to the art of India. Lush hairs of heavy figures in the tympanum of arches resemble monuments in Gupta style. The bowl in the British Museum is dated to the 450's - 460's, and the Chilek bowl should be synchronous, or somewhat later, but the bowls are so similar that the date of the two can hardly pass beyond the 3rd quarter of the 5th century AD.⁵⁰ The final conquest of Samarkandian Sogd dates by AD 510, which date is established by the cessation of presents brought by the Samarkand embassies to China, and the beginning of regular Hephthalite embassies to China.⁵¹ According to Pugachenkova, the bowl should be attributed to the Punjab school; it has no tradition in Bactria.⁵² Solovyov does not agree with that opinion, noting that in spite of Indian features present on the Chilek bowl that is not enough to detach it from the Bactrian tradition, because Indian features were also typical for some other finds in Central Asia. For example, the Lyakhsh bowl, where again are found images of women identical to the scenes of women in Indian art.⁵³

The "Stroganov" silver bowl in the State Hermitage museum (St. Petersburg), supposedly found in the Perm region of Russia, shows a cross-legged seated couple in Central Asian dress. 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.⁵⁴ Some researchers suggest that the depicted couples are Hephthalites. They cite the description of one of the Hephthalite customs in "Liangshu", that rulers were receiving their guests jointly with their wives. This depiction is analogous with the image of seated couples on the northern wall of the Shi Jun's funerary coach.⁵⁵

Another bronze bowl was found in Kashmir Smast. 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 its back 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 at the Hephthalite time in the 4th / 5th centuries AD.⁵⁶

6. STONE STATUETTES

A dark-green soapstone statuette-plaque of a sitting woman playing a harp, in the Peshawar Museum is attributed by a number of iconographic features to the Hephthalites.⁵⁷ While some iconographic features, particularly the peculiar, huge ear-rings, resemble terracotta tiles from the Kashmiri monastery of Harvan, attributed to the Huna period at

⁵⁰ 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.

⁵¹ Маршак/Крикис 1969, 77, 80.

⁵² Пугаченкова 1987, 81-82; Пугаченкова 1990, 29.

⁵³ Соловьев 1997, 68.

⁵⁴ Callieri 2002, 126-127.

⁵⁵ Grenet/Riboud 2003, 134-141.

⁵⁶ Nasim Khan 2006, 76-85.

⁵⁷ Callieri 1996, 391.

the end of the 5th century AD, the style and material of the Peshawar statuette, as well as technical features such as the use of shallow engraved lines for rendering of decorative details, are common with the other sculptures of the group, and seem to provide a strong evidence for dating the statuette to the early 6th century AD.⁵⁸

In this connection there is an interesting marble image of the Hindu deity Ganesha (7th century AD) from the Kabul Museum (found in Gardez). On its base the name Shahi Khingila is mentioned, written in the north-Indian alphabet.⁵⁹ According to Bivar this marble image links to the painting of a Hephthalite king at the cave of the 53 m Buddha in Bamiyan. In the painting, the adjoining figure of a prince wears a jewel in the form of a bull's head, also seen on marble sculptures related to the Ganesha image.⁶⁰

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⁵⁸ Callieri 1996, 391.

⁵⁹ Sircar 1963, 44-46, Stadtner (2000, 42) calls this inscription proto-Sharada.

⁶⁰ Bivar 2003, 200.

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