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Indice

Presentazione di Sandro De Maria	7				
Articoli					
Questioni di metodo					
Antonio Curci, Alberto Urcia L'uso del rilievo stereofotogrammetrico per lo studio dell'arte rupestre nell'ambito dell'Aswan Kom Ombo Archaeological Project (Egitto)	9				
Pier Luigi Dall'Aglio, Carlotta Franceschelli Pianificazione e gestione del territorio: concetti attuali per realtà antiche	23				
Culture della Grecia, dell'Etruria e di Roma					
Claudio Calastri Ricerche topografiche ad Albinia (Grosseto)	41				
Maria Raffaella Ciuccarelli, Laura Cerri, Vanessa Lani, Erika Valli Un nuovo complesso produttivo di età romana a Pesaro	51				
Pier Luigi Dall'Aglio, Giuseppe Marchetti, Luisa Pellegrini, Kevin Ferrari Relazioni tra urbanistica e geomorfologia nel settore centrale della pianura padana	61				
Giuliano de Marinis, Claudia Nannelli Un "quadrivio gromatico" nella piana di Sesto Fiorentino	87				
Enrico Giorgi, Julian Bogdani I siti d'altura nel territorio di Phoinike. Un contributo sul popolamento della Caonia in età ellenistica	95				
Marcello Montanari Il culto di Zeus Ammon a Cirene e in Cirenaica	111				
Riccardo Villicich Riflessioni sull'evergetismo nei piccoli centri della Cisalpina romana: le aree forensi	121				

Archeologia tardoantica e medievale

Marco Martignoni	
Alle origini di un tipo architettonico.	
Ipotesi sulle chiese a due navate e due absidi della Lunigiana alla luce dei dati archeologici	139
Archeologia orientale	
Anna Chiara Fariselli	
Maschere puniche. Aggiornamenti e riletture iconologiche	155
Andrea Gariboldi	
Sogdian and Early Islamic Coins from Kafir Kala (Uzbekistan)	171
Articoli-recensione	
Simone Rambaldi	
Ridonare sostanza all'immateriale (ricercando gesti e suoni del mondo antico)	187
Adriano Maggiani, Luca Cerchiai	
La casa etrusca. A proposito di: Elisabetta Govi, Giuseppe Sassatelli (a c.), La Casa 1 della Regio IV -	
Insula 2, I-II, Bologna 2010	193
Atti dell'Incontro di Studi "Impasti parlanti. Anfore in alto Adriatico	
tra età repubblicana e prima età imperiale. Archeologia e archeometria"	
Le ragioni di un incontro	
di Luisa Mazzeo Saracino	207
Maria Luisa Stoppioni	
Anfore a Rimini in età romano-repubblicana: dalle greco-italiche alle Lamboglia 2	209
Elisa Esquilini	
Studio archeometrico preliminare di anfore greco-italiche medio adriatiche (Cattolica, Rimini)	223
Silvia Forti	
Le anfore Lamboglia 2 del porto romano di Ancona: problemi e prospettive di ricerca	231
Simonetta Menchelli	
Anfore vinarie adriatiche: il Piceno e gli altri contesti produttivi regionali	239
Anna Gamberini	
Problemi di identificazione di aree produttive di anfore in ambito adriatico: i dati archeologici e archeometrici di Suasa	245
Federico Biondani	
La diffusione delle anfore brindisine in area padana: nuovi dati dal territorio veronese	255
Conclusioni	
di Daniele Manacorda	267

Sogdian and Early Islamic Coins from Kafir Kala (Uzbekistan)* Andrea Gariboldi

This article analyzes a collection of copper coins recovered from excavations undertaken by the University of Bologna (2001-2008) in Kafir Kala (Republic of Uzbekistan), a Sogdian fortress located along the Dargom canal, near Samarkand. The thirty-nine coins in this grouping date to the Late Sogdian period or the beginning of the Islamic Era (end of the 8th/beginning of the 9th century) and are extremely useful in reconstructing the sociopolitical context of this site during the convulsive phases of Arabic conquest in the territories along the Zarafšan Valley. The coins found at the Kafir Kala site are similar in type to those recovered from Panjikent. The Sogdian coins under study bear a characteristic quadrangular hole in the center (along the model of Chinese coins of the Tang), a legend in the Sogdian language, and the dynastic symbols (tamgha) of the kings of Samarkand.

The numismatic material coming from the excavations (2001-2008) of the Sogdian castle of Kafir Kala, near Samarkand, consists of 39 copper coins¹. Some coins were found in the citadel,

* The present research was conducted in June 2008 during the "Second Ethno-linguistic Mission in the Yaghnob Valley (Republic of Tajikistan)", directed by Prof. A. Panaino (University of Bologna). I shall thank Prof. M. Tosi (University of Bologna) and Dr. S. Mantellini, for giving to me the opportunity to spend time in Samarkand studying the coins that have been found in Kafir Kala during their previous excavations. I express also particular gratitude to Dr. A. Berdimuradov (Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan), for granting me access to this important numismatic material. I should like to thank also Prof. N. Sims-Williams (University of London) and Prof. B. Callegher (University of Trieste), for insightful comments on my manuscript.

Kafir Kala lays about 11 km South-East from modern Samarkand (Republic of Uzbekistan), see Berdimuradov, Mantellini 2005. Unfortunately we do not know the Sogdian name of this place. Franz Grenet suggests to identify Kafir Kala with Rīwdad, which was located one *farsākh* (ca. 8 km) distant from Samarkand (Grenet, de la Vaissière 2002, p. 188, nt. 41; Cazzoli, Cereti 2005, p. 136). See also Barthold 1928, p. 93: "In Māymurgh there was a particularly large number of castles; here, in Rīwdad, the chief village of this district, were the castles of the Ikhshīds themselves, i.e. the pre-Muslim rulers of Sogd. According to Sam'ānī,

while others came from sporadic findings along the Dargom canal. All these coins were isolated finds, since the silver hoard of Islamic dirhams (133 pieces), which was found into a pit in the citadel, is not taken here into consideration².

The number of coins discovered in Kafir Kala is considerable, valuable as stratigraphic data, and very important to sketch a framework of the circulation of money in the Samarkand region as a living context. In future, it would be interesting to compare the monetary circulation

Rīwdad was one *farsākh* distant from Samarqand; in the twelfth century there was a military camp here at a certain period of the year". Samʿānī wrote a "Book of Genealogies" (*Kitāb al-Ansāb*) and visited Bukhārā and Samarkand in 1155/6; his work is very important for the study of Medieval geography, too.

The Islamic hoard, which was found during the excavations in 2006, is composed by 2 Sasanian drachms of Xusraw II (590/591-628), both of the mint of Shiraz (ŠY) in Fars, one of year 25 (g 3.10, mm 29) and the other one of year 35 (g 2.40, mm 29), 3 Umayyad dirhams and 128 'Abbāsid coins. The Islamic coins were issued from H. 25/645-6 A.D. to H. 190/805-6 A.D., so the majority of them were minted in the second half of the 8th c. A.D. Information kindly given by Dr. Atochodžaev (Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan).

of Kafir Kala with Afrasyab, Panjikent, and other similar archaeological sites, such as Dabusiya, for instance. The numismatic evidence, therefore, is significant to draw important conclusions about the level and the intensity of life in this outstanding Medieval castle, and shall throw light on trade relations of ancient inhabitants along the Zarafšān Valley.

The analysis of the coins of Kafir Kala evidences that this mound, fortified during the late Sogdian period (6th-8th c. A.D.), was one of the most important strongholds around Samarkand. The citadel continued to be lived in until the first centuries of the Islamic Age, as Panjikent, before being completely abandoned. What seems striking to me, is that at present the total number of Sogdian coins exceeds that of the Islamic ones. We have, in total, 21 Sogdian coins, 1 coin of the Bukhār-khudāh type and 12 Islamic coins, while 5 are unidentifiable specimens (figg. 2, 3). Many coins are consumed by fire. A traumatic event, probably the Arab conquest of the castle in the first half of the 8th c., caused the disappearance of the Sogdians from there.

It is likely that the late Sogdian coins could have circulated till the end of the 8th c. A.D., because there was no systematic withdrawal of the old ones (Zejmal´ 1994, p. 249). Undeniably, such a remarkable presence of late Sogdian coins, coming from the deeper strata of the excavations, reveals a definite Sogdian presence in Kafir Kala, particularly during the second half of the 7th and the first half of the 8th centuries A.D.

The Kings of Samarkand and the "Sino-Sogdian" coins

Based on numismatic data, I cannot say anything certain about the earlier period, since all the Sogdian coins that have been discovered up to 2008 are of the so called "Chinese-type". These "Sino-Sogdian" coins are thin cast copper coins with a characteristic central square hole encircled with a flat rim³. On the obverses, if one con-

Following the Chinese model, the "Sino-Sogdian" coins were always cast and not struck. This method of coining actually requires a less complicated technology and ability than minting with metallic dies. Thus,

siders as the obverse of the coin the face with the Sogdian legend, there are no iconographic motifs. Thus, abandoning an old Iranian figurative tradition, it was engraved just the king's name, written in semi-cursive Sogdian (Skjærvø 1996, pp. 519-530), accompanied by the title of (MLK'), "King" (Sog. $\partial x \dot{s} \bar{e} \delta$). The ductus of the legends closely resembles that of the Sogdian of the Ancient Letters. The legends are disposed in two concentric lines starting from the lower rightcorner of the central square. On the reverses, two tamghas are usually represented: one of the city of Samarkand, with the typical y-shaped device (Smirnova 1981, pp. 538-542), and one picturing to the king's dynastic symbol, with a vague rhomboidal form.

I would like compare the *tamgha* of Samar-kand with the iconography of a *bulla* that was found in Kafir Kala (fig. 1): in the centre of this clay seal a large ring with three hooks, two that hang down from one side and another one that is at the opposite, stands out. Thus, the presence of the symbol of Samarkand in the archive means that the seal is contemporaneous with the Sogdian coins of 7th-8th c. A.D.



Fig. 1. Bulla with the tampha of Samarkand (KK Inv. 287).

The "Sino-Sogdian" coins were widely introduced in Samarkand Sogd after 630, when the Sogdian confederation became almost independent, although it nominally recognized the sovereignty of China, which had defeated the Western Turks. In fact, the Tang launched an attack into Central Asia between 645 and 658, conquering under Gaozong the Turkish dominions and a significant part of Transoxiana (Gibb 1970, pp. 22-23; Thierry 2003, p. 110). Therefore the economic and political influence of the Chinese empire over Sogd in this period was very strong

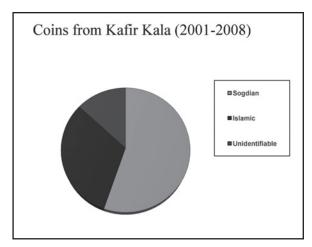


Fig. 2. Graph of the Coins from Kafir Kala.

(Zejmal´ 1983b, pp. 256-260), at least from a numismatic point of view, since the local Sogdian princes adopted a coin type directly derived from the new Tang prototype (coined after 621 A.D.), the so called *kai yuan tong bao*⁴. This model was reproduced on the earliest Sogdian issues with the mere addition of the Sogdian word ⟨xwβ⟩ (*khuv*), "lord", "ruler", heterogram ⟨MR'Y⟩. The title of ⟨xwβ⟩ is commonly found also on the coins of Čač, the territory of modern Tashkent (Rtveladze 1997/98, pp. 309-310), but there ⟨MLK'⟩ never appears, which was evidently reserved for high ranking rulers, such as the kings governing over Sogd in the Samarkand region.

It is important to stress that the *kai yuan tong bao* coins, an official denominations according to Chinese sources, actually replaced the circulation of the wuzhu, the previous copper coins which were valued by weight. The new types, instead, present a stronger fiduciary value, and they had a

- a wax model of the required shape was prepared and it was enclosed in a clay matrix and exposed to heat; so that the wax dripped out of the hole made for this purpose, leaving a mould into which the molten alloy was poured.
- Thierry 1999, p. 321; Alram 2004, pp. 54-55; Thierry 2003, pp. 112-116. *Tong bao* means "precious object which circulates (freely)", and *kai yuan* refers to the opening of a "new era", a period of harmony between the Celestial order and the Earth, ruled by the Tang dynasty.
- Zejmal' 1994, pp. 249-250; Smirnova 1981, pp. 36-38; See also Culture and Art of Ancient Uzbekistan, II, p. 35, n. 405. The heterogram «MR'Y» is attested in the Parthian of Nisa for xwatāw, "lord", while the corresponding Middle-Persian form is «MR'HY», xwadāy.

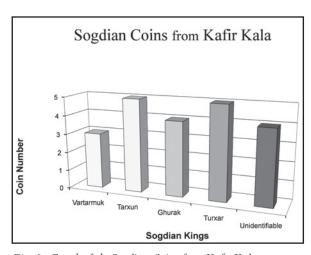


Fig. 3. Graph of the Sogdian Coins from Kafir Kala

deep impact on the economies of the States bordering China in Central Asia. The pattern of the *kai yuan tong bao* coins was also adopted by some kingdoms in Transoxiana, and in the khanats of Türgesh or the Ouïghours (Thierry 1999; Baratova 1999). In Sogdiana proper, the "Sino-Sogdian" coins were struck with peculiar types at Bukhārā, Samarkand, Panjikent, and probably also in the district of Parγar, in the Valley of the Zarafšān, east of Panjikent.

The Sogdian lords maintained their formal autonomy, although a Chinese garrison was located near the royal cities. Bukhārā, for example, became in 659 the prefecture of Anxi (Anxi zhou), before being attacked by the Arabs in various raids until its conquest by Qutayba, in 709. The region of Samarkand, instead, was integrated for a period into the Chinese empire as the province of Kangju, under king Varxumān (Chinese Fuhuman), the famous Sogdian king depicted in the Ambassadors Hall at Afrasyab⁶. The list of the Kings of Samarkand in the second half of the 7th c. and the first half of the 8^{th} – the period of the influence of the Chinese pattern on Sogdian copper coins – has been quite well established by Smirnova, who based her learned studies both on numismatic data (a large amount of coins coming from Panjikent) and historical sources⁷.

Livšic 2006, pp. 59-74. Varxumān, according to a Sogdian inscription on the painted wall of Afrasyab, received at his Court the ambassador coming from the Čaγānian sovereign, Turāntaš.

The name of Varxumān is a compound clearly of Iranian origin, probably from Old Iranian *bara-hu-

In chronological order, the principal rulers of Sogd who minted coins were: Šyšpyr (ca. 642-650), Varxumān (ca. 650-675), Urk Vartarmūk (ca. 675-696), Tukāspādāk (696-698), Māstič Unaš (698-700 ?)⁸, Tarxūn (700-710), Ghūrak (710-738) and Turγār (738-750) (Smirnova 1981, pp. 40-41; Zejmal´ 1983b, p. 256).

manah, "(the one who) brings good thought". On the coins, the king's name is rarely spelled «βrxwm'n», Avarxumān, with a prosthetic /a/ or more commonly «βrxwm'n». See Smirnova 1970, p. 275; Ead. 1981, pp. 38-39. Also Tukāspādāk ‹twk'sp'δ'k› reveals an Iranian derivation, as Sogdian «sp'δ» is "army" and «twk» can stand for "powerful", we have "(the one who has a) strong army". In the Chinese form, recorded under 696 A.D., is Dusuoboti (Chavannes 1903, p. 137; Yoshida 2004, p. 408; Livšic 2006, p. 62). However the etymology of the proper names of the kings of Samarkand remains problematic, as Dr. Pavel Lurje kindly explained to me. Some names are probably of Iranian origin, while others seem to be Turkish names (Gibb 1970, p. 6: "It is certain at least from both Chinese and Arabic accounts that these rulers were not Turks. The Turkish names by which they are sometimes called were given out of deference or compliment to their Turkish suzerains"), like Turγār and Tarxūn (on coins respectively (twry'r) and (trxwn), the latter maybe is connected with the title tarqan. In the parallel sources we have: Ar. Tarxūn, Chinese *Tuhun*, Bact. Ταργανο (as a title, not as the name of this ruler). Also the name Ghūrak (Ar. Ġūrak, Chinese Wuleqie) is difficult to interpret. On Sogdian coins the traditional reading is «wγrk» (considering the following possibilities: '-w-γ/ x/r-r/k-k), while Smirnova 1981, pp. 42; 158, proposed to read «wr'kk». A probable etymology is from OIr. *ugra-ka-, "powerful", "mighty" (Cf. Elam. uk-rak-ka); Tremblay 2001, p. 186, nt. 309, proposes a derivation from Christian Sog. <pwry>, "exalted", "glorious". Urk Vartarmūk, or Ukkurt-camūk, is even more problematic, but it seems a non-Iranian name; Smirnova 1981, p. 45, reads on coins «'wkk-wrtcm'wk», or «rm'wk», and underlines that on some coin legends the final /k/ is by mistake divided in <k->. This phenomenon, at any rate, is not present or visible on our specimens (ns. 11, 6, 30). The reading «wrk-wrtrmwk», is generally accepted, see Achunbabaev 1986, p. 87; Fedorov 2003, p. 8. The name «cm'wk» is found also on coins of Panjikent, with the legend <pncy MR'Yn cm'wk'n>, "Čamūkyān lord of Panč" (Smirnova 1981, pp. 47; 230-233; Yoshida 2004, p. 408), but the meaning and the etymology of Čamūk is unknown, while the final <-y'n>, "favour, mercy", is a common element in Sogdian names.

Māstič was probably a relative of Varxumān, since they both bear the same patronymic name Unaš; in the Afrasyab inscription and on coins it is written «m'stc 'wnš». See Livšic 2006, pp. 61-62. The name Māstič probably means "Great" or "Elder", as Sog. «m's'k» is "old"; MP. mahist, "greatest", Av. masišta-, OP. ma θišta-.

Our knowledge of these kings is very scanty apart from the numismatic evidence: some kings are mentioned in Arabic sources concerning the process of conquest of Sogdiana, such as Ya'qūbī, Balādhurī and Tabarī, and one must not forget the Chinese texts as contemporary Nebenüberlieferungen (Thierry 2003, pp. 132-136). The kingship of these $\partial x \bar{s} \bar{e} \delta s$ was probably a sort of primacy in an oligarchic system (de la Vaissière 2004, p. 152; Marshak 1990, p. 287); nevertheless, the succession was somewhat hereditary within the royal house of Samarkand (the Unaš family?), even if the landed aristocracy (*dehqāns*) and the rich merchants had the faculty to depose the king in particular occasions. After the Arab conquest of Bukhārā, for instance, Tarxūn was forced to open negotiations with Qutayba b. Muslim, then the governor of Khurāsān, and to give up hostages and a tribute to maintain the peace, but his weakness was judged unacceptable by the people of Samarkand. Therefore Tarxun was deposed and forced to commit suicide, and Ghūrak was elected king in 710, perhaps with the help of the Turks (Gibb 1970, pp. 35-47; Thierry 2003, p. 133). It has been remarked by Smirnova, as evidence of this dynastic change, that Ghūrak introduced on his coins a new type of tamgha: a rhomboidal form with two hooks, leaning on a short base (see ns. 29-31) (Smirnova 1981, p. 42).

But even Ghūrak, after he sued in vain for peace, was not able to face the military pressure of the Arabs on Samarkand in 712. As a matter of fact, Qutayba was strongly supported by the inhabitants of Bukhārā and from Khoresmia to such an extent, that Ghūrak said to the Arab leader that he was achieving victory thanks to the help of his "brothers and kinsmen" (Ṭabarī, 1244; Barthold 1928, p. 185). The king was therefore forced to subscribe a humiliating treaty, which included a huge contribution of 2.000.000 dirhams and a yearly tribute of 200.000 dirhams to maintain his formal recognition as king of the Sogdians (Smirnova 1960; Ead. 1970, pp. 203-211). Thus Ghūrak retired from the capital with many merchants and moved southward to the new capital Ištixan. After the death of Qutayba in 715, Ghūrak asked the Tang Court for help; but the emperor preferring not to intervene directly, delegated the Western Turks of Türgesh to chase the Arabs

from Sogd. It is not by chance, therefore, that they adopted the same "Chinese-type" coins in this period⁹.

The lord of Panjikent, Dēwāštīč, who is well known from the Sogdian documents of Mount Mug, was a contemporary of Tarxūn and Ghūrak¹⁰, but unfortunately he did not mint coin (at least under his name)11, since his authority was probably restricted to a limited area. After that the official king of Sogd, Ghūrak, had to surrender to the Arabs leaded by Khudhayna in 721, Ghūrak partially collaborated with the Arabs, conceding them the faculty to encamp near Ištixan (Grenet, de la Vaissière 2002, p. 157). According to the letters of Mount Mug, it seems that Dēwāštīč even tried to discredit Ghūrak as king, and it also seems reasonable to believe that Dēwāštīč looked for Arab support so as to be recognized as the sole king of Sogd (Yakubovich 2002, pp. 244-250). According to the letters, he recognized the sovereignty of the Emir al-Ğarrāḥ, but also took Tarxūn's sons under his patronage. However, when it was clear that the qaghan would not intervene anymore, Dēwāštīč remained almost completely isolated and was besieged on the hill,

Thierry 2003, pp. 135-136; Id. 1999, pp. 321-322; Baratova 1999, pp. 226-234; Smirnova 1981, pp. 60-61. The coins of Türgesh, a clan of the Western Turks, were issued by Sogdian artisans in the region of Suivab and Talas, following the same Chinese model of the Sogdian coins of Samarkand. The apotheosis of Türgesh reign was under the direction of Sulu (716-737 A.D.), one of the strongest opponents to the Arab conquest of Central Asia.

See the in-depth historical reconstruction of this troubled period made by Grenet, de la Vaissière 2002, pp. 155-157; Zejmal´ 1983b, p. 256. Dēwāštīč claimed to be in the Sogdian letters, from 719 to 722, "King of Sogd, lord of Samarkand" «sγwδyk MLK' sm'rknδc MR'Y, and he was for some respect in competition with the official Sogdian king Ghūrak, before he was definitively defeated on Mount Mug in 722 by the Ar-

abs lead by Sulaymān b. Abī al-Sarī.

The hypothesis advanced by Achunbabaev 1986, pp. 82-83, that Dēwāštīč could strike coins in Panjikent under the name of 'prykk', "Afrig", "Blessed", based on a different reading of some coins of Ghūrak (Smirnova 1981, pp. 43; 166), with an imitation of the central hole, does not seem tenable, since in the name of Ghūrak, 'wr'kk according to Smirnova or 'wyrk according to Livšic, the second letter is not a /p/, that in Sogdian has a longer tail. Achunbabaev 1986 supposes a conversion of Dewastič to Islam, thus "Afrig", according to him, could be an epithet of Dēwāštīč. See also Fedorov 2003, pp. 10-11.

launching unheeded demands of reinforcement, until his final defeat.

Sources concerning this period are rather scanty and confused. Ghūrak supported the Arabs against the Turks, but in the meanwhile he sent his son Muxtar to the Turkish side: it seems, he wished to serve two masters. As reported by Tabarī (1518), during the siege of Kamarğa in 728/29, a fortified centre near Samarkand, where the Turks had surrounded a group of combined Arab and Sogdian forces, the qaghan even tried to present Xusraw, the grandson of Yazdgird III, as legitimate heir to the Persian throne, in exchange of the surrender of the town (Grenet, de la Vaissière 2002, p. 170; Gibb 1970, pp. 70-71). This proposal was refused with disdain, but it demonstrates that the prestige of the house of Sasan still could play a strong political role in this epoch. Later on, Ghūrak, again with the Turk aid, was able to retake Samarkand in c. 734. After his death in 738, the Sogdian kingdom was probably divided amongst his sons (Gibb 1970, pp. 79-80). Turyār was one of Ghūrak's sons, and he was the only king of Samarkand to put his name on the Bukhār-khudāh silver coins; but a sign of the Sogdian confederation collapse may be seen by the poor Turyār's forwarding of ten horses to China, compared with the magnificent gift of one hundred horses made by Qutayba of Bukhārā in 750. From this time onward, undermined by intestine struggles between yellow and black tribes, the power of Türgesh inexorably started to decline (Tremblay 2001, p. 31), and so it became impossible to defend Samarkand from the Arab raids, who re-conquered the city around 740, with the subsequent and definitive spread of the Muslim civilization to Sogdiana.

Amongst the 21 Sogdian coins that come from Kafir Kala, the oldest ones I have identified are three pieces of Urk Vartārmuk, followed by five coins of Tarxūn, four of Ghārak, and lastly there are five coins of Turyār, who was the last Sogdian king who struck coins before the Arab conquest of the whole region. This means that around the second quarter of the 8th c. A.D., Kafir Kala was still under Sogdian control. The same hypothesis was advanced by Cereti (Cazzoli, Cereti 2005, p. 137), based on the palaeographic evidence of the seals and it is now confirmed by the numismatic material, too.

The Sogdian coins had poor intrinsic value and circulated mainly within the region of Sogd¹², where local authorities could force their use. This was probably a deliberate policy aimed at avoiding that foreign merchants take away precious material from the region (de la Vaissière 2004, pp. 156-157).

It is also interesting to note that the "Sino-Sogdian" coins follow the metrology of Chinese pattern, as they have an average weight of 4.1 g and a diameter of about 25 mm¹³. I believe that these coins are not simply «imitations de monnaies chinoises» (de la Vaissière 2004, p. 156), but rather they should be considered a parallel and provincial issue as daily currency of Sogd. As a matter of fact, it seems it is demeaning to consider an official monetary series which lasted about a century as a mere imitation.

In the first half of the 8th c., under Turγār, the average coin weight decreased to around 2.8 g and the diameter was restricted to about 20 mm (Smirnova 1981, pp. 44-45). We may notice a gradual impoverishment of the coin style: legends and figures progressively became more and more unclear. Amongst the "Sino-Sogdian" coins which were found in the excavations of Pan-

The "Sino-Sogdian" coins were issued as local currency. Each region of Transoxiana, such as Khoresmia, Sogdiana, Ustrushana, Čāč and Ferghana, had its own coinage minted by different authorities. One coin of Tarxūn was incidentally found as far as Susa; it was wrongly attributed to Ghūrak by Walker 1960, p. 65 (n. XXII). The same oversight is repeated by Alram 2004, p. 55, nt. 34. This exemplar was published again by Thierry 2003, p. 261, n. 1452, with the correct attribution.

Thierry 2003, pp. 114-115. The weight system in Central Asia before the Arab conquest is almost unknown (Maršak, Raspopova 2005; Fedorov 2003, pp. 15-16). In Panjikent, however, 32 weights made of stone or bronze, bearing inscriptions and incised signs have been discovered. From the analysis of this material, it clearly emerges that the Sogdians used the drachm (Sog. (δrxm)) as base unit of account, and probably the Sogdian drachm was equal to 16 copper fen <pny>, according to Smirnova 1970, p. 190. The stater «st'yr», worth 4 drachms, is common too, while a heavy unit called in Sogdian pātmanak (p'tmnk) (confront with Pth. padmādag, "measured" and MP. paymānag, "measure"), was intended as a kind of mina (715.2 g = 160 drachms). This Sogdian drachm weights about 4.46 g and was clearly of Attic origin, but it was also compatible with the Arab mithqāl. On the presumed relation of the reduced Sasanian denār with the mithqāl, see Gariboldi 2006, p. 420.

jikent¹⁴, a large number present some defect of workmanship, such as the total or partial lack of the central hole. This phenomenon is clearly visible on our coin n. 10. Thus, it appears that political instability and internal struggles for power between the Sogdian factions favored an economic crisis, which is also reflected in the coins.

The Bukhār-khudāh and the early Islamic coins

After this important Sogdian presence at Kafir Kala in the second half of the 7th and the first half of the 8th Centuries, when the citadel was strongly fortified to face the Arabs, during the early Caliphate there was a period of reoccupation of the site, which is testified by the hoard of Islamic dirhams and by three 'Abbāsid fals of the local governor of Bukhārā, Ğunayd b. Ḥālid (ns. 20, 33, 39).

Thus, the general picture of the coin circulation of Kafir Kala is similar to the situation of Panjikent. It has been found also one debased coin of the so called Bukhār-khudāh (lord of Bukhārā) that was discovered near the entrance of the castle (n. 1). This coinage imitates for a long time the drachms of the Sasanian šāh Wahrām V (420-438 A.D.)¹⁵. It presents, on the obverse, the king's bust wearing a mural crown surmounted with lunar crescent, characterised by a broad and linear portrait of Khoresmian style, and on the reverse a stylized fire altar with human bust in flames, flanked by two attendants. Recently, Schindel has convincingly remarked a stylistic continuity between the silver issues of Wahrām V from the mint of Merw, the most important mint in Khurāsān, and the Bukhār-khudāh coins. The minting technique

Lerch 1879, pp. 417-429; de la Fuÿe 1927; de Morgan 1936, pp. 459-460; Walker 1941, pp. 80-90; Frye

1949, pp. 24-31.

Thierry 1999, p. 335, nt. 20. Smirnova 1955, published a hoard of 129 Sogdian copper coins which was found in Panjikent during the excavation of a urban temple. The archaeologists discovered in one room the rests of a furnace and some lumps of gypsum, that served as moulds for casting. Many coins were defective and Smirnova argued that probably they were amassed to be melted down in this ambient, which probably was a workshop to produce coins.

also shows significant similarities, such as the broad flan and the shortened, almost incomprehensible, legends (Schindel 2005, pp. 45-47; Zejmal' 1994, p. 246).

However it is not always easy to distinguish official issues of Merw from imitations. In the late 7th c. the Bukhār-khudāh coins started to be struck in a debased metal and the reduction of the silver content was so great that in the 8th c. A.D. these coins are made of copper, probably silvered. The mints were probably located in Bukhārā, Samarkand and in the Čač region, but the relative chronology of the lords of Bukhārā is difficult to assess¹⁶. Smirnova has made the important inference that the distinctive sign of the Samarkandian coins is a circle over the king's crown, instead on Bukhārān coins there is a crescent with a dot over it (Smirnova 1970, p. 163; Fedorov 2003, p. 20).

The date of their initial appearance is also much disputed. If we take as reference the original prototype, it should be assumed that these coins started to be minted from the 5th c. onward, but according to Narshakī, the first khudā of Bukhārā who struck silver coins was Kānā, in the reign of the caliph Abū Bakr (632-634 A.D.)¹⁷. The first coins were of pure silver, impressed with his crowned image. Instead the later types, that still bear the image of Wahram V, mention the 'Abbāsid caliphs al-Mahdī and Hārūn al-Rashīd, and thus belong to the late 8th early 9th Centuries. In this time, the governor of Khurāsān, Ghitrīf, because the notables of Bukhārā went to him and requested silver money for the city, ordered that coins should be minted with the old dies, for local currency, using a poor alloy made of six different metals: gold, silver, brass, tin, iron and copper. People used to call these coins "black dirhams" or Ghitrīfī money. Since the inhabitants of Bukhārā did not willingly accept these debased coins, the caliph imposed an exchange rate of six Ghiṭrīfī for one silver dirham. The name Ghitrīf was used to denote a low value coin until the 12th c.

The Bukhār-khudāh coins can be divided into three main groups:

- I. Those with corrupted Pahlavi legend on the left of King's head, and "Bukharan" legend on the right.
- II. Those with Arabic legend on the left and "Bukharan" on the right, which were coined till the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (786-809 A.D.)
 - III. With Arabic legend only.

Our specimen (very poorly preserved n. 1) belongs to group I. I have accepted the interpretation of the legend given by Henning 18, who read on the obverse, on the right side of the bust, the Sogdian writing $\langle pwx'r-xw\beta-k'w'\rangle$, "lord King of Bukhārā". The Persian title of Kay (Sog. $\langle k'w-\rangle$) was probably borrowed from the Sasanian coins of the fifth Century. On the whole, judging from the different languages used for the legends, usually bilingual, written in a distorted form of Pahlavi, Sogdian (in a local variety of Bukhārā) and Kufic, the Bukhārkhudāh coins should be spread over a long span of time.

It is curious to note that the same coin-type was maintained for centuries by different authorities, attesting the Sasanian prestige on Sogdian coinage and culture (Cribb 2007, pp. 371-372). One important politic reason for the perseverance of this Sasanian typology, is given by Ḥudud al-ʿĀlam, who writes that the ruler of Khurāsān "in ancient times" resided in Merw and then moved his palace to Bukhārā. This might explain the strong influence of the Sasanian coinage of Merw on Bukhārā (Schindel 2005, p. 49). Anyway, it is attested both by written and archaeological sources that the Sogdians could use Sasanian drachms for their business¹⁹. Some documents of Mount Mug probably refer to (Bukhārān) sil-

de la Vaissière 2004, pp. 152-157. For instance, a hoard of 45 Sasanian drachms (44 Pērōz and 1 Xusraw II) was found in 1987 at Kultepa, province of Surdarja (Uzbekistan). See Baratova 2002, pp. 51-58.

^{Miles 1975, p. 366; Davidovič 1979, pp. 106-115; Ze-jmal´ 1983a, pp. 291-295; Id. 1994, pp. 246-248 (Fig. 1); Naymark 1999; Fedorov 2003, pp. 18-21; Dovudi 2009, pp. 66-75.}

Walker 1941, pp. 88-89; Frye 1949, pp. 24-49; Id. 1954, pp. 35-37 (Narshakī XVII); quoted also by Barthold 1928, pp. 204-205.

Henning 1958, p. 53 [1996, p. 40]; Smirnova 1963, pp. 38-39. Henning's initial opinion was published by Frye 1949, pp. 26-29, who reports in detail the debate on this coin legend. The third word of the legend is the most problematic. See also Naymark 1999; Fedorov 2003, p. 20, who reads «k'n'», Kānā, following Narshakī's narrative (cf. Walker 1941, p. lxxxix).

ver "drachms" «δrxmyh²⁰. The Bukhār-khudāh coinage, therefore, stands out among the most conservative issue in Central Asia.

Finally, is worthy of mention a small anonymous Umayyad fals (n. 37) with typical Kufic legend. On the obverse one can read the incipit in three lines of the *kalima* (the third line is missing because the coin is broken), the profession of Islamic faith, which appeared for the first time on coins: *la ila illa Allah waḥda-hu* [*la šarīk lā-hu*], «There is no God but Allah alone, He has no partner» (Bernardini, Giunta 2001, pp. 35-43).

The Islamic copper coins of later periods, such as Samānid or Timurid issues, are too scanty at the moment to believe that the castle of Kafir Kala was actually inhabited at that time. These sporadic coins remain quite isolated in the general context, and probably they are just the tangible sign of the presence of some military post along the Dargom canal.

Catalogue of the Coins from Kafir Kala (2001-2008)*

Ikhshīd of Samarkand

Urk Vartarmūk (c. 675-696 A.D.)

Obv. Sogdian legend around central square hole; 'wrk-wrtrmwk MLK'

Rev. Two *tamghas* around central square hole. Bibl.: Smirnova 1981, pp. 217-227, ns. 657-732 (Pls. XXI-XXIII).

Achunbabaev 1986, p. 87. Rtveladze 1987, pp. 178-179, n. 61.

11-AE 26; g 5.4. 6-AE 28; g 4.8. 30-AE 25; g 2.6.

Livšic 1962, p. 21 (Nov 3, l. 20); p. 22 (Nov 4, l. 20); de la Vaissière 2004, p. 156, nt. 52. See also the text given by Yakubovich 2006, pp. 310-319. In the marriage contract (Nov. 3, l. 20), drafted in the tenth year of the reign of king Tarxūn "thirty good, pure drachms of dinar-type", «XXX δrxmyh δyn'rk'h šyrh kr'nh», are mentioned as penalty.

Coins are numerated with the inventory numbers. Illustrations enlarged to show details.

Tarxūn (c. 700-710 A.D.)

Obv. Sogdian legend around central square hole; trxwn MLK'

Rev. Two *tamghas* around central square hole. Bibl.: Smirnova 1981, pp. 138-158, ns. 215-358 (Pls. X-XIII).

4-AE 24; g 2.9. 27-AE 25; g 2.8. 2-AE 24; g 2.5. 13- AE 22; g 1.6.

12- AE 24; g 1.5.

Ghūrak (710-738 A.D.)

Obv. Sogdian legend around central square hole; 'w yrk MLK'

Rev. Two *tamghas* around central square hole. Bibl.: Smirnova 1981, pp. 158-190, ns. 359-473 (Pls. XIII-XIV).

Rtveladze 1987, pp. 180-181, n. 62.

29-AE 25; g 4.1. 25-AE 23; g 4. 28-AE 24; g 3.8. 31-AE 24; g 3.2.

Turγār (738-750 A.D.)

Type II

Obv. Sogdian legend around central square hole; $twr\gamma'r$ MLK'

Rev. Two *tamghas* around central square hole, crescent above.

Bibl.: Smirnova 1981, pp. 198-217, ns. 519-656 (Pls. XVIII-XXI).

8-AE 20; g 2.9. 26-AE 20; g 2.7. 9-AE 20; g 2.6. 3-AE 20; g 2.5. 10-AE 19; g 2.3.

Unidentifiable Ikhshīd of Samarkand

16-AE; g 1.
Fragmented and burnt.
17-AE; g 1.3.
Fragmented.
15-AE; g 1.6.
Fragmented and oxidized.
35-AE 24; g 2.
Fragmented.

Bukhār-khudāh (8th c. A.D.)

Mint of Bukhārā

Obv. King's head turned r., with crenellated crown; above crown, crescent with dot above it. Legend in corrupt Pahlavi, on l.; blundered Sogdian legend, on r.: *pwx'rxwβk'w'*, "lord King of Bukhārā".

Rev. Fire altar with king's head r., in flames, flanked by two attendants, with a series of pellets, strokes and crescents.

Bibl.: Walker 1941, p. 164, b. 8 (Pl. 28). Smirnova 1963, p. 58, n. 13 (Pl. 2, 6).

1-AE 26; g 3.3; 3.

Islamic Coins

Umayyad Caliphate (696/697-750 A.D.) Fals-anonymous

Bibl.: Walker 1960, p. 64, ns. 19-20 (Pl. 7).

37-AE 15; g 1.2. Broken.

'Abbāsid Caliphate (749-1258 A.D.) Ğunayd b. Ḥalid Bukhārā H. 151 (768 A.D.) Fals Bibl.: Lavoix 1887, p. 419, n. 1554. Smirnova 1963, p. 151, n. 916.

33-AE 16; g 2.1. 39-AE 17; g 1.6. 20-AE 17; g 0.6. Samarkand (between H. 172 and H. 185)

Fals-anonymous

18-AE 22; g 2.5. Broken.

Sāmānids (874-998 A.D.) **Abd al-Malik b. N**ūḥ (H. 343-350) Bukhārā H. 349 (960 A.D.) Fals Bibl.: Lane-Poole 1876, p. 105, n. 391.

19-AE 25; g 1.9. Pierced. Unidentifiable Islamic Coins

24-AE 26; g 6.1. 23-AE 20; g 2.4. Timurid c. 16th c. A.D. (?) 21-AE 14; g 1.2. 38-AE 20; g 1. Broken 32-AE 15; g 1. 22-AE 14; g 0.3.

Unidentifiable

7-AE 25; g 4.5. Pierced and concreted. 5-AE 22; g 2.3. 34-AE 19; g 2. 36-AE 18; g 1.1. Broken. 14-AE (?); g 0.5. Burnt fragments.



5. KK1(08): Room 2 (3/06/08)

10. KK1UZB 01: US 6 n. 2600 (8/10/01)





11. KK1UZB 02: 401 n. 3043. Sporadic from Dargom canal (18)





16 KK1UZB 01: US 6, n. 2599 (8/10/01)





12. KK1UZB 01: US 6 n. 2598 (8/10/01)



17. KK1UZB 01: US 6, n. 2594 (8/10/01)





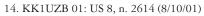
13. KK1UZB 01: n. 3066, in the citadel near the gate





18. KK1UZB 01: TT Dargom (10)



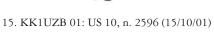






19. KK1(02): SMR-E 250. Survey 2002 (13)

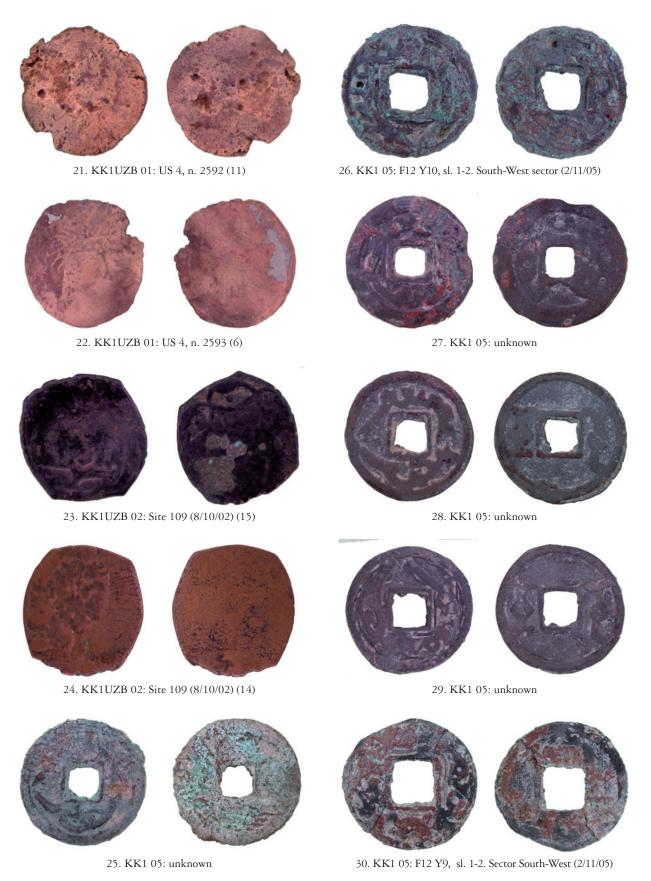








20. KK1UZB 01: US 15, n. 2597 (12) (16/10/01)





183

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