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PARTHIAN COINS FROM KAMPYRTEPA *

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The ancient settlement of Kampyrtepa (“Hill of the Old Lady” in Uzbek) is situated 30 km south-west of the town of Termez, downstream the Amu Darya River. The history of Kampyrtepa’s exploration is 30 years old.¹ The settlement consists of the citadel, the main residential part – the “lower town” – and the two separate parts beyond the wall – a complex of constructions reserved for funeral rites and religious worship, as well as the ‘quay’. The archaeological discoveries have been examined in a number of articles and seven collections of the “Materials of the Tokharistan Expedition” (*MTE*).² The overall research into the history of the settlement of Kampyrtepa makes the following picture.

The first period, the Hellenistic, encompasses the span of the Seleukid and the Graeco-Baktrian times, from the late 4th to the early second half of the 2nd century B.C. (periods KT-1 and KT-3). During this period, the settlement area expanded onto the south-eastern part of the terrace, where the citadel stood, and the slopes of the opposite natural ravine. Archeologists discovered buildings inside the citadel and a complex of constructions at the gateway with an adjacent

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¹ Alpatkina 2009.

² Essential information on the excavations is provided by: Rtveladze 2000a; Rtveladze 2001; Rtveladze 2006; Rtveladze 2008, 79–80.

stretch of fortified walls³, as well as a pottery in the suburban area, dating from the late 4th – early 3rd centuries B.C.⁴

The second period, encompassing the Yuezhi phase – the second half of the 2nd – the first part of the 1st century B.C. – and the Parthian phase – from the reign of Orodes II (ca. 57–39 B.C.)⁵ to the early 1st century A.D. (periods KT-4 and KT-5). During this period the settlement was developing within the same area, the way it was in the first period, but the citadel walls lost their functional purpose. Utility rooms were erected in front of the walls.⁶

The third period, the early Kushan and the Kushan – the early 1st – mid 2nd centuries A.D. (KT-6 and KT-7). During this period the territory of the principal part of the residential settlement, the so-called “lower town”, was being settled.⁷ Defensive walls had been erected to surround the town where blocks of houses were springing up.

The Parthian period of the history of the settlement is the least explored. The discovery of coins of allegedly Parthian origin called for distinguishing it as a separate phase. According to the initial attribution, they are coins of Orodes II (ca. 57–38 B.C.), Phraates IV (ca. 38–2 B.C.), Phraatakes (ca. 2 B.C. – 4 A.D.) and Gotarzes II (ca. 40–51 A.D.). In various publications their number varies from 6 to 12.⁸ The same list appears in some other works too.⁹ Yet these coins from Kampyrtepa were published only but recently. Unfortunately,

³ Mkrtichev, Bolelov 2006, 52; Rtveladze 2006, 6–7; Sverchkov, Voskovskii 2006, 26–28; Dvurechenskaia 2006, 113–115.

⁴ Rtveladze, Bolelov 200, 102; Bolelov 2001, 19.

⁵ Here and below in the text, all dates of the Parthian kings' reigns and the typology of their coinage are given in accordance with D. Sellwood's study (Sellwood 1980).

⁶ Rtveladze 2006, 7; Rtveladze 2009, 79.

⁷ The “lower town” is the name given by some researchers to the main residential part of the town surrounding the citadel on three sides where the site development followed a regular pattern of blocks of houses (Cf. Bolelov 2005, 37; Bolelov 2006, 15; Mkrtichev, Bolelov, 2006, 49; Dvurechenskaia 2006, 110). E.V. Rtveladze put forward a different description: he applies the term ‘lower town’ to the extinct part of the settlement, south of the citadel, assumedly washed away by the waters of the Amu Darya (Rtveladze 2008, 80). Yet, this description seems a little far-fetched since the very existence of the town development to the south of the citadel is deemed hypothetical. Despite the fact that a number of rooms located on the steep edge of the natural terrace do not have southern walls in the housing estates marked «Г», «Ж» и «З», S. Kurbanov (2000, 70, 1–5, 1–6, 1–7) holds that, considering the topographical specifics of the settlement, the area of the terrace occupied by the citadel premises allegedly washed out by the Amu Darya could not have been very large. If there indeed existed a ‘quay’ to the south-east of the citadel, it sat on the same axis as the citadel (Rtveladze 2001, 9, fig. 2). This indicates that the river was flowing close to the citadel, which makes the housing development southward impossible.

⁸ Cf. Rtveladze 1987, 61–62; 1993/94, 82, 87; 2000b, 89; 2001, 7; 2008, 80; 2010, 13.

⁹ See Litvinskii 2010, 91–92; Bongard-Levin, Koshelenko 2003, 391.

this first publication, presenting only six coins that are deemed Parthian,¹⁰ leaves a number of questions still unsolved: the attribution of the type, the date of issue and circulation, the archeological context of the finds, the reasons for issuing such coins. This called for having a closer look at the Parthian coins from Kampyrtepa.

Two of the coins examined in the first publication are totally corroded (fig. 5–6). The outlines of the design are damaged beyond recognition, so they are excluded from the list of coins examined below.¹¹

Table 1. Parthian coins from Kampyrtepa

Nos.	Weight (grams)	Size (mm)	Axes (hrs.)	Place and circumstances of the find ¹²		
				Unit	Room number	Layer
1	2.77	14.1x14.5	12 o'clock	Citadel	–	Surface find
2	2.69	16.2	ditto	ditto	–	ditto
3	2.94	18x18.2	ditto	ditto	107	Above the upper floor ¹³
4	3.2	16.9x18.9	ditto	ditto	46	Occupation layer above the 1 st floor

1. Phraates IV. Chalkous (fig. 1)¹⁴

Obverse: bearded bust of ruler left, with triple necklace round his neck, diadem on his head with three ends hanging loose behind back; star in outer left field; blurred image of crowned bird behind head; circular dotted border, partially preserved (at the stretch of 7 – 2 o'clock).

Reverse: deer with lowered head in square of blurred Greek legend; below it (at 5 o'clock) monogram Π.

No direct analogy with the coin no. 1 has been found; it must be a unique specimen. Analogous bronze coins of Phraates IV (king's profile bust left/deer

¹⁰ Biriukov 2010, 34–48.

¹¹ Biriukov 2010, 36–37, nos. 3, 6.

¹² The findspot for the coins nos. 3–4 can now be given as correct: the earlier published records were erroneous (Biriukov 2010, nos. 4–5).

¹³ S. Kurbanov in his report mistakenly indicates the findspot as above the second floor (Kurbanov 2000, 58).

¹⁴ The photographs were taken by G.A. Kogodin (Tashkent), to whom the author is sincerely grateful.

right) were struck at the Ekbatana mint (with a monogram representing a combination of Greek letters A, Γ and T).¹⁵ Copper coins of Phraates IV of similar type struck at the Margiana mint are unknown. The published records do not register any finds of Parthian copper coins struck at either the Margiana or any other mint. Thus, Kampyrtepa is the easternmost place of discovering Parthian copper outside Parthia. The monogram on the reverse side is noteworthy. Common opinion holds that Π on the reverse side of Parthian coins should denote the monogram of the Margiana mint.¹⁶ Yet Biriukov argues that this symbol is the abbreviation for the Nisa mint – “Parthaunisa”. He believes that before Phraates IV the abbreviation for the Nisa mint was rendered as NI, NICA, NICAIA, and starting with his reign and under his Parthian successors the product of this mint bore the symbol Π.¹⁷

This can be countered by the following objection. First, the coinage of a certain mint is characterized by typical monograms or abbreviations which stand for the name of the mint.¹⁸ Coins struck at the Nisa mint bear the letters NICA, NICAIA, NI, N.

The coinage of drachms at this mint continued not only under Phraates IV,¹⁹ but also under his successors Phraatakes,²⁰ Artabanus II (ca. 10–38)²¹ and Vardanes I (ca. 40–45).²²

The symbol Π is a distorted letter M, which represents the monogram of the Margiana mint and not “Parthaunisa”, as D.V. Biriukov believes. Initially the Margiana mint monogram was rendered as MAP. We know that there were issues of drachms of Phraates II (ca. 138–127 B.C.),²³ Artabanos I (ca. 127–124 B.C.),²⁴ Gotarzes I (ca. 95–90 B.C.),²⁵ and Orodes I (ca. 90–80 B.C.)²⁶ bearing the letters MAP. Drachms of Darius (ca. 70 B.C.) feature the monogram as a combination of letters M and A,²⁷ and starting with the reign of Phraates III

¹⁵ Wroth 1903, 129, nos. 242–245, pl. XXII, 16–17; Sellwood 1980, type 52.50. The design of a deer can be found on dichalkoi of Orodes II minted in Mithridatkirt (Sellwood 1980, type 47.38, 48.20). D.V. Biriukov relates this coin to the issues of Orodes II (Biriukov 2010, 36, no. 1), though he does not support his attribution with references to the appropriate literature.

¹⁶ Sellwood 1980, 13.

¹⁷ Biriukov 2010, 41–42.

¹⁸ Sellwood 1976, 11–16; Sellwood 1980, 12–15.

¹⁹ Sellwood 1980, type 52.17–18, 53.8, 54.12.

²⁰ Sellwood 1980, type 56.14.

²¹ Sellwood 1980, type 63.8, 63.14–15.

²² Sellwood 1980, type 64.32.

²³ Pilipko 1976, 116, ill. 2, no. 28.

²⁴ Sellwood 1980, type 20.5–6, 22.4.

²⁵ Sellwood 1980, type 33.7.

²⁶ Sellwood 1980, type 31.9.

²⁷ Sellwood 1980, type 36.16.

(ca. 70–57 B.C.), its type face turns into letter M (a variant of Π).²⁸ This variant of the monogram is also found on drachms of Mithridates III (ca. 57–54 B.C.),²⁹ Orodes II,³⁰ Phraates IV,³¹ Artabanos II,³² and Gotarzes II.³³ Thus, under Phraates IV and his successors, until the mid 1st century A.D., the issues of drachms at the Nisa and Margiana mints continued concurrently and almost without interruptions. Hence, it is wrongful to identify Margiana drachms marked with an M monogram with the issues of the putative “Parthaunisa”. It was not until the last quarter of the 1st century A.D. that the north-eastern mints of Parthia – Nisa and Margiana (also should be included the mint at Old Nisa/Mithradatkirt) – ceased to mint silver coins while the bulk of the emissions started to be produced at Ekbatana.³⁴

Second, silver coins and, predominantly, copper issues bearing the Π monogram minted under Orodes I,³⁵ Sinatrukes (ca. 75 B.C.),³⁶ Orodes II³⁷ and Phraates IV³⁸ were found at Gyaaur-kala/Merv, the capital of Margiana. By the mid 1st century, the coinage here had ceased to be a state controlled matter, yielding the prerogative to lesser rulers, independent of the central Arsacid power, to carry out the mass issues of copper coins marked with a Π sign³⁹ (their number reaching hundreds of pieces). The first ones were the coins modeled on the type of Phraates IV’s drachms.⁴⁰ The local character of circulation of copper coins with the Π mark is not to be questioned: they circulated in the Merv Oasis; outside its frontiers such finds have been singular⁴¹.

²⁸ Sellwood 1980, type 38.10, 39.12.

²⁹ Sellwood 1980, type 40.13, 41.11.

³⁰ Sellwood 1980, type 43.8, 46.13, 47.11, 47.30.

³¹ Sellwood 1980, type 52.19.

³² Sellwood 1980, type 63.16.

³³ Sellwood 1980, type 64.37.

³⁴ Pilipko 1987, 125.

³⁵ Loginov, Nikitin 1996, 44, no. 15 (drachm).

³⁶ Loginov, Nikitin 1996, 44, no. 18 (drachm).

³⁷ Loginov, Nikitin 1996, 44, 47, nos. 19 (drachm), 22–23, 26–27, 29, 31–36 (chalkoi).

³⁸ Loginov, Nikitin 1996, 47, nos. 40–41, 43–45 (chalkoi).

³⁹ Occasionally, starting from the mid 1st century A.D., these coins bear different monograms – the letter A, combinations of Π and A, as well as Π and T (Pilipko 1980, 113–114, type III.5, IV.1, IV.2, V.1). V.N. Pilipko, who has examined the Merv local coinage in good detail, is very special in pointing out that though we are lacking of a satisfactory explanation of the appearance of these monograms, there is no ground to place this coinage at a different door. The mass finds of coins of this type in Margiana testify to this, as well as the typological relations with the coins of other series (Pilipko 1980, 118).

⁴⁰ Sellwood 1980, type 52.39; Pilipko 1980, 113, types I.1 and I.2; Nikitin 1998, 16.

⁴¹ Pilipko 1980, 106–107.



2. Imitation of Phraates IV's drachms with a countermark (fig. 2)

Obverse: bust of ruler facing left; details not preserved; coin flan rugged with upper edge partially chipped (at 11–1 o'clock); countermark in lower field; very blurred image on countermark – schematic head facing left.

Reverse: poorly discernible Greek legend in square arrangement; enthroned personage facing left with bow in outstretched arm;⁴² monogram Π below bow; badly worn surface opposite countermark.

3. Imitation of Phraates IV's drachms with a countermark (fig. 3)

Obverse: bust of ruler facing left; details not preserved; rugged flan; countermark in lower field; schematic blurred head facing left on countermark; clearly visible straight nose and eye; image executed in hachure mode.

Reverse: visible outline of seated person facing left; legend and monogram worn out.

4. Imitation of Phraates IV's drachms with a countermark (fig. 4)

Obverse: bust of ruler facing left; details not preserved; rugged flan; countermark in lower field; blurred, outlined helmeted head facing left on countermark.

Reverse: barely discernible Greek legend arranged in square; contour of seated man facing right; bow indiscernible.

The exact attribution of coins nos. 2–4 is impossible owing to their badly preserved state. The same factor prevents the establishment of authenticity of the countermark. This accounts for a series of indirect criteria determining our choice of attribution presented below.

The practice of overstiking of copper pieces is rather rare, which stems primarily from the physical properties of copper, which, unlike silver, is a less ductile metal. Before striking a countermark on the flan, one had to heat it. This always carried a risk of overheating the flan thereby causing a change in its initial shape and deterioration of design, making it completely “unreadable”, thus such a procedure proves pointless. Moreover, such practice shortens the life of a die.⁴³ Also, overstiking and – even more so – countermarking copper is not, as

⁴² For an interpretation of this scene, see Raevskii 1977; Zeimal 1982.

⁴³ Simonetta 2006, 41.

a rule, a big political issue.⁴⁴ We know of only two occasions of mass copper overstriking in Parthia. The first was conducted by Mithradates II (123–87 B.C.), who had the chalkoi of Hyspaosines of Charakene⁴⁵ overstruck as well as his own earlier issues that did not bear the legend “King of Kings”. The second group of overstruck pieces dates back to the 1st century A.D. when an attempt to regulate currency was made in Parthia. At that time, rulers used their own earlier issues as flans.⁴⁶ We must not forget that the issue of copper coins was not a very costly procedure owing to the cheapness of copper. Bearing this in mind, we are safe to relate the coins from Kampyrtepa to copper imitations of Parthian drachms. Their copper core must have been plated with silver, though not a trace of silvering has been preserved.⁴⁷

It is significant that the quality of silver coins struck in the eastern parts of Parthia started to deteriorate in the middle of the 1st century B.C. In the coins issued at the Mithradatkirt mint, from the collection of the national Museum of Iran, the ratio of fine silver to copper and other alloys was as follows: for drachms of Orodes II⁴⁸ – 85.7%, for the two drachms of Phraates IV⁴⁹ 40.2% and 28.2% respectively, for the drachms of Vardanes I⁵⁰ 32.5%⁵¹. In other words, from the mid 1st century B.C. to the mid 1st century A.D. the mint at Mithradatkirt⁵² used, at least for a certain number of drachms, an alloy with properties corresponding to those of billon. The quality loss in silver coins was also evident in the territories to the east of Parthia – Arachosia, Gandhara, Kabulistan (Kapisa) that constituted the kingdoms of Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians. Thus, the second period of coinage under the Indo-Scythian King Azes (according to D.W. McDowell) is marked by the quality loss in the metal and an introduction of a new one – billon. This process is referred to as “the great debasement of silver”.⁵³ The imitation of coins under the last Greek king Hermeias of Paropamisadae⁵⁴ reveals simultaneous

⁴⁴ Sellwood 1993, 104.

⁴⁵ Simonetta 2006, 43.

⁴⁶ Nikitin 1988, 86.

⁴⁷ On the plating of Roman coins in the Kushan period, see Zeimal 1967, 64–65.

⁴⁸ Sellwood 1980, type 47.31.

⁴⁹ Sellwood 1980, type 54.14.

⁵⁰ Sellwood 1980, type 64.33. Contrary to the opinion expressed by D. Sellwood, V.N. Pilipko, drawing upon certain stylistic features, relates this coin type to the first decade of the 1st century A.D. on the assumption that it was issued by one of the ephemeral Parthian rulers (Pilipko 1987, 119).

⁵¹ Khademi, Arkan, Arkan, Saffari 2006, 196, tab. 2.

⁵² The issue of coins at this mint continued until the rule of Vologases I (Pilipko 1987, 117).

⁵³ MacDowall 1996, 116–117; MacDowall 2007a, 102.

⁵⁴ The coins of Spalirises and Azes are known to have been overstruck from the earlier posthumous coins of Hermaios that had been minted circa 70–55 B.C. (Bopearachchi 1999, 126). The attribution of coin imitations of Hermaios is a controversial question. O. Bopearachchi argues that it was

changes in the composition of metal. Out of the 10 groups of coins issued on behalf of this king, the first three were made of silver with negligible alloys, groups nos. 4–7 were made of billon, groups nos. 7–10 of pure copper (classification according to O. Bopearachchi⁵⁵). Such high-standard coins as the tetradrachms of Heraios also revealed deterioration of silver. There is a unique silver plated billon coin minted under this ruler.⁵⁶

Thus, the issue of imitations of Parthian drachms was accompanied by the debasement of silver coins' quality.

The coins nos. 2–4 bear the countermarks of two types.

Type 1. Head facing left (coins nos. 2–3; noteworthy is the stylistic peculiarity of these countermarks). No other available Parthian coins and their imitations feature this peculiarity.⁵⁷ The countermark showing the head facing left surrounded by the legend OTANNHΣ can be found on coins of Orodes I, Sinatrukes, Phraates III and Orodes II.⁵⁸ There are drachms of Mithradates II, Gotarzes, Orodes I, Sinatrukes, Phraates III, Orodes II and Phraates IV with the countermarks showing a head turned left, wearing a peculiar headdress of a cap with a tassel and the legend TANAIC.⁵⁹

Type 2. Helmeted head facing left (coin no. 4). The countermark of this type can be found on drachms, admittedly related to the coinage of Orodes II⁶⁰ and imitations of drachms of Vardanes I (this countermark is smaller than that on the imi-

done by the Yuezhi (Bopearachchi 1999, 114–115). R. Senior attributes them to the Indo-Scythian rulers (Senior 2000; Senior 2004, xxxv). F. Widemann assumes that these coins were sequentially struck by Indo-Scythians (groups 2–4), late Indo-Greek rulers – Hermaios II and Hermaios III (groups 5–6), Indo-Parthians (group 7) and Kushans (Widemann 2009, 389–390, 395–400).

⁵⁵ Bopearachchi 1999, 132–134. He dates the 4–5 group issues AT 55 B.C. – A.D. 20.

⁵⁶ Widemann 2000, 239, fig.11. Here it is relevant to put a question: if the process of deterioration of the quality of Indo-Scythian coins of Azes, Azilises, Azes II (the reign of these kings encompasses the period of 57 B.C. to 20 A.D.; R. Senior argues that all these coins were struck by two or even one king who ruled for a very long time: Senior 2001: Vol. I, 89–90), Parthian drachms of the late 1st century B.C. and imitations of Hermaios' emissions was relatively synchronous, then the billon tetradrachms of Heraios may have constituted the final stage of this coinage, hence the beginning of their issue may be dated at the late 2nd – early 1st centuries B.C. Thus, D.V. Biriukov and E.V. Rtveladze, on the grounds of stylistic changes in the coinages of Heraios, assume that they were being issued during a long period of time and, possibly, by several rulers (D.V. Biriukov 1995, 18–28; E.V. Rtveladze 2005, 137–138). Yet, according to the well-known assumption made by J. Cribb, these coins were issued by Kujula Kadphises (ca. 40–90 A.D.) (Cribb 1993, 107–134). Here and below the dates of reigns of the Kushan kings are reconstructed according to IDK (the initial date of Kanishka) as 127 A.D. This date, based on a hypothesis put forward by H. Falk (Falk 2001, 126–136), is commonly accepted by most researchers.

⁵⁷ Cf. Sellwood 1980, type 91; Simonetta 2006, 46–47.

⁵⁸ Sellwood 1980, type 91.2–6.

⁵⁹ Senior 2001: Vol. II, 145, issue 195; Vol. III, 46.

⁶⁰ The attribution suggested by R. Senior is questionable (Senior 2001: Vol. II, issue 198.5D).

tations from Kampyrtepa).⁶¹ Among the most common group of imitations of Parthian coins in Baktria, the imitations of drachms of Phraates IV with a helmeted head turned right are more typical. The obols of Eukratides⁶² or their imitations⁶³ served as their prototypes. E.V. Zeimal pointed to a still unpublished case of a “copper drachm” of Phraatakes (or its imitation) discovered at Varryk-depe.⁶⁴

Thus, the countermarks of the two copper imitations of Parthian coins from Kampytepa represent a hitherto unknown type, while the countermark of the third coin correlates with the countermarks struck on drachms of Phraates IV (and on one drachm, presumably, of Orodes II). That the countermark is placed in the field to the advantage of the main image, which has already been noted in the literature, testifies to the acknowledgement of the authority of the Parthian king and also means that these coins were issued in the domains of vassals dependent on Parthia.⁶⁵

In the attribution of the imitation 2, the symbol II, the monogram of the Margiana mint struck on the reverse of the coin, serves as a clincher. From out of the available imitations of Parthian coins, only one type has it – imitations of Phraates IV’s drachms.

Let us examine the reasons why coins of this type were issued.

The conquest of Baktria by the Sakas and the Yuezhi in the second half of the 2nd century B.C. was actually a migration of nomadic tribes to the territory of a sedentary and agricultural society.⁶⁶ They subdued the economically and socially developed areas. Baktria, from the time of the campaign led by Alexander of Macedonia, for over 180 years had been part of the Hellenistic states – the Seleukid empire and the Graeco-Baktrian kingdom (ca. 328–140 B.C.).

For many a time suffering a defeat, the exiles who had abandoned their home lands and who owed their initial success in conquering the Graeco-Baktrian kingdom, enfeebled by many wars, to favorable circumstances, the nomads had to adjust to the new surroundings. In theory, any forms of suchlike

⁶¹ Sellwood 1980, type 91.14. Prototype – drachms minted at Mithridatkirt (Sellwood 1980, type 64.33).

⁶² Rtveladze 2002b, 149–150.

⁶³ Diakonov 1950, 174; Zeimal 1983, 101–102, 135.

⁶⁴ Zeimal 1983, 134, note 53. D. Sellwood’s work provides information about a chalkous of Phraates IV struck at Ekbatana with a countermark showing a helmeted head turned right (Sellwood 1980, type 91.15).

⁶⁵ Sarianidi, Koshelenko 1982, 311; Zeimal 1983, 133; Simonetta 1974, 283; Widemann 2009, 361.

⁶⁶ On the Central Asian society in the Achaemenid, Seleukid and Graeco-Baktrian periods, see: Pugachenkova, Rtveladze 1990, 22–25, 29–33, 42–45, 62–67; Zeimal 2002, 549–550; Litvinskii 2004, 788–794; Piankov 2005, 600–620; Koshelenko, Gaibov 2007, 223–232; Bickerman 1983; Bernard 1994a, 88–97; Bernard 1994b, 99–129.

conquest are nothing but a manifestation of political adaptability to the outside world of the sedentary world. The conquest ensured most favorable non-economic conditions for the nomads to procure agricultural and artisan products. Such procurement was carried out by means of: 1) outright and unlimited looting; 2) tributary relations; 3) direct taxation; 4) establishment of agricultural and artisan structures in their own society; 5) seizure of lands and acquisition of income – rents and direct exploitation of peasants turned into leaseholders and sharecroppers.⁶⁷

This allows for the singling out of three patterns of forming nomadic empires: typical, tributary and aggressive. 1) “Typical” – nomads and tillers live far apart, the surplus product is acquired through remote exploitation: plundering raids, exacting ‘gifts’ (a racket of sorts) and so forth. 2) “Tributary” – peasants are subjected to nomads, the exploitation form being tributary. 3) “Aggressive” – nomads conquer the agricultural community and settle down at its territory; regular taxation of tillers and townspeople substitutes for looting and tributaries.⁶⁸

The formation of the Kushan empire must have followed the last pattern.⁶⁹ Yet, to turn nomads into sedentary communities was possible only when the living conditions allowed for this, which happened very rarely, especially in the western part of southern Bactria and Margiana (provinces of Djuzdjan, Fariab, Badghiz in the south-west of Afghanistan and eastern Turkmenistan) where there are large arid zones – the steppe, semidesert and desert areas. The following burial grounds are found in northern Bactria: Tup-Khona, Tulkhar, Kokum, Aruktau, Ksirov (Tajikistan), Babashov (Turkmenistan), Rabat and Airtam (Uzbekistan). The debate is still going on as to the dating of this burial grounds and the ethnicity of those who had left them, but their very existence testifies that the nomads had never settled down here, they had stuck to their traditional way throughout the whole history of the Kushan state.⁷⁰ It is not fortuitous that nomads would frequently come into conflict with their neighbours and, as often as not, acted there as a driving force. This served a pretext to claim gifts, money or simply to plunder their neighbours, for example, Parthia.

⁶⁷ Khazanov 2008, 245–248.

⁶⁸ Kradin 2003, 141.

⁶⁹ A comparison can be made with the early Arsacid state's development, see, e.g. Bader 1989, 222–223.

⁷⁰ According to A.M. Mandel'shtam, the burial sites at Tup-Khona, Tulkhar, Aruktau and Kokum date between the last third of the 2nd century B.C. and the beginning of the 1st century A.D., whereas the necropolis of Babashov – between 2nd century B.C. and 2nd century A.D. (Mandel'shtam 1974, 193; Mandel'shtam 1975, 125–130; Mandel'shtam 1992, 114). B.A. Litvinskii and A.V. Sedov date the burial sites of the Bishkent valley at the 1st–3rd, or even 4th centuries A.D. (Litvinskii, Sedov 1984, 120–134). E.P. Denisov dates the Ksirov necropolis at the 2nd c. B.C. – 2nd c. A.D. (Denisov 2008, 184). The burial sites of Airtam and Rabat date to the 1st c. B.C. – 1st c. A.D. (Turgunov 2002, 125; Abdullaev, Annaev 2001, 24; Abdullaev 2007, 79–82).

During the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C., Parthian kings were very efficient in pursuing their foreign policy in the East. The power of Parthian kings encompassed Margiana, Areia and Drangiana, and following the emergence of the Indo-Parthian kingdom they reached out to Arachosia and the Kabul valley. And the western part of Baktria proper may have fallen under Parthian control.⁷¹ At the same time the conquest of Baktria resulted in its splitting into separate domains – appanages. The western part of Baktria may have been occupied by the Saka tribes (Sakaraui/Sakaraui), while the eastern part by the Yuezhi-Tochar.⁷² The conquest of Baktria ended the regular minting of silver coins, which cause a coin deficit. This situation favoured the inflow of Parthian drachms. The ways the nomads acquired the necessary means are well covered in the ancient tradition.

The eastern nomads' first involvement in Parthian wars happened under Phraates II. This king had colluded with the "Scythians" promising to pay them in return for rendering him assistance in his war against the Seleukid king Antiochos VII Sidetes. It was not until the war ending in the defeat of the latter that the "Scythians" arrived. They were wrongly accused of failing to arrive on time. According to Justin 42.1.2, the Scythians "since they arrived on the scene only when the battle was over and were cheated of their pay on the pretext that they had arrived too late with their support, they regretted having made such a long journey for nothing and demanded either compensation for their inconvenience or another enemy to fight. Receiving a disdainful response, the Scythians took offence and proceeded to lay waste Parthian territory" (transl. J.C. Yardley). In the end, the fight against them cost the Parthian King his life.

Apart from Justin's account, there is new evidence for nomadic mercenaries hired in Baktria. Recently, a new Greek document on skin, deriving from northern Afghanistan, has been published. The text, dated to year 30 of a king Antimachos, is a contract mentioning Skythian mercenaries who received 100 drachmas in coined silver.⁷³

⁷¹ Pilipko 2003, 126.

⁷² Bernard, Abdullaev 1997, 68–86; Bernard 1987, 758–768; Enoki, Koshelenko, Haidary 1994, 181–182; Rapin 2007, 58–61. The period of an all-Yuezhi unity had lasted approximately till the 80–50s of the 1st century B.C. The recently discovered records from the Chinese province of Gansu testify to this. Here, in the vicinity of Dunhuang, a post office had been excavated, yielding administrative records on wooden sticks. Two documents dating from 87–49 and 84–73 B.C. (or later) mention ruler's missions to the Dayuezhi. Two other documents bear evidence of the already independent missions to a Dayuezhi *xihou* called Shuangmi dated 43 B.C., and another Dayuezhi *xihou* named Xiumi, dated 37 B.C. (Grenet 2006, 339).

⁷³ Clarysse, Thompson 2007, 273–277. Number "30" seems to indicate an era date which probably refers to the Yavana era, starting in 186/5 B.C. (Salomon 2005; Jacobsson 2009, 505–510) or in 175/4 B.C. (Falk, Bennett 2009, 206–211). Consequently, the text should be dated either at 156/5 or at 145/4 B.C.

The episode described by Justin lends us a key to understanding the events that led to the issue of coin imitations of Phraates IV. Justin's "*Epitome*" contains the information that after his victory over Marc Antony (36 B.C.) Phraates "resorted to wanton cruelty, so the people exiled him". During his absence, the Parthians elected a certain Tiridates the king (circa 30 B.C.), a henchman to the Romans. Phraates pestered the neighbouring states with appeals, the Scythians included, who sent a large Scythian army to have him restored as a king. Tiridates, learning about the approaching Scythians, fled to the Romans (Justin 42.5.4–4; Dio Cass. 51.18.2–3).⁷⁴ The silver drachms struck at the Margiana mint must have formed the donation that the grateful Parthian king granted to the "Scythians"⁷⁵ for his restoration to the throne.⁷⁶ One can only make guesses about the size of this donation, but the patent popularity of and trust in these drachms on the market was so great that this entailed a long typological series of imitations.⁷⁷ Let us examine the ranking of the coins from Kampyrtepa in this typological series by drawing upon the most accurate table of the chronology of imitation coinage, elaborated by E. V. Zeimal (Table 2).

⁷⁴ The evidence in the sources is contradictory. Dio Cassius dates these events at 30 B.C. – the time when Augustus was in Syria, and Justin dates them at the time when Augustus was waging a war in Spain in 26–25 B.C. We know of tetradrachms with the legend containing a Greek word ΦΙΛΟΠΟΜΑΙΟ issued in 26 B.C. (the date in the Seleukid era is given in Greek script – CΠΣ = 286) (Wroth 1903, 135, nos. 1–2, pl. XXIII, 8–9; Sellwood 1980, type 55). For various interpretations of the events of this civil war in Parthia see, e.g., Koshelenko 1963, 59; Debevoise 1938, 135–138; Nedergaard 1988, 105.

⁷⁵ G.A. Koshelenko identifies the „Scythians” with Dahai and Parnoi (Koshelenko 1963, 60), but A.S. Balakhantsev sees in them the Sakai of Drangiana (Balakhantsev 1998, 158).

⁷⁶ A similar episode happened during the reign of Artabanos I, when he managed to return to the throne during the internecine war broken out on Roman instigation, now with the help of the Dahai and the Sakai (Ios. *Ant. Iud.* 18.4.4/18.100). According to Flavius Josephus, during the reign of Vologases I (ca. 50–80 A.D.) the Dahai and the Sakai, taking advantage of the absent king, who was busy preparing for the war against King Adiabene Izates, invaded Parthia and plundered it (Ios. *Ant. Iud.* 20.4.2/20.91). It is significant that many a time had the Parthian kings to resort to the practice of buying off or paying tribute to the nomads. For instance, they had twice bought off the Alans: in 72 A.D. when the Median satrap Pakoros had to pay 100 talents to buy back his harem (Ios. *Bell. Iud.* 7.4.2; for this campaign of the Alans, see, e.g., Balakhantsev 2009, 11–12), and in 136 A.D., when Vologases III bought them off with gifts under the threat of invasion (Dio Cass. 69.15.1; for the details of this event, see: Perevalov 2006, 318–335).

⁷⁷ There are several examples interpreted as the evidence that coins of a particular type and denomination were used to buy off the nomads. For example, the issue of coin imitations of Euthydemos (an analogy with the issue of imitations of drachms of the Sasanian king Peroz (459–484 A.D.), who paid a great contribution after his defeat in the war with the Hephtalites) A.I. Naimark interprets as a result of imitating the most popular coin type – the tetradrachm – paid to the nomads (Naimark 2005, 36–37; Naimark 2008, 68; see also: Smirnova 2008, 79). O. Bopearachchi does not exclude that the Kunduz treasure of Greco-Baktrian coins may have been meant to pay the nomads off (Bopearachchi 1999, 114). Another example – the issue of drachms by Bahram V at the Merv mint for the needs of the Sasanian army fighting its eastern neighbours – Chionites. Subsequently, it was these coins that became the prototype for the so-called ‘Bukharkhudat’ coins.

Table 2. Chronology of coinage of imitation drachms of Phraates IV

Stages of minting coins countermarking or imitating Phraates IV's drachms	Findspot ⁷⁹	Date of issue
Countermarking drachms of Phraates IV ⁸⁰	Tillya-tepe ⁸¹	Late 1 st century B.C. – early 1 st century A.D.
Striking imitations of drachms of Phraates IV and their countermarking ⁸²	–	1 st – 2 nd quarters of the 1 st century A.D.
Striking imitations with false countermark and squared legend ⁸³	Takht-i Sangin ⁸⁴	2 nd quarter – mid 1 st century A.D.
Striking imitations with false countermark and circular legend	Begram ⁸⁵	3 rd –4 th quarters of the 1 st century A.D.

Prototype. *Obverse*: head of bearded king turned left, wearing diadem; bird holding wreath in its beak behind head. *Reverse*: enthroned figure facing right holding bow; monogram Π below bow; squared legend: above (in two lines) – ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ, on the right – ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ; below (in two lines) – ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ ΔΙΚΑΟΥ; on the left (in two lines) ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝΟΣ.⁸⁶

⁷⁹ The literature contains information about two more coins. One was found in the settlement of Old Termez, the other on Eagle's Mount/Gora Orlinaia (Khodzha Gulsuar), see: Rtveladze 2000, 89; Staviskii 2001, 54. The exact location of these coins is unknown now.

⁸⁰ Wroth 1903, 114, no. 96, pl. XXI, 4 (British Museum), also see Dobbins 1971, 138–139, fig. 1/P; Mitchiner 1976, 411, type 612 (M. Mitchiner treated the specimen as an imitation with a false countermark, and all the other coins of this type likewise); Sellwood 1980, type 91.12.

⁸¹ Sarianidi, Koshelenko, 1982, 309–310, no. 2. E.V. Zeimal thought it was not a false drachm but an imitation (Zeimal 1983, 131, note 51; Zeimal 1984, 187, note 26).

⁸² Simonetta 1958, 166, pl. I, 7; Simonetta 1974, pl. I, 5; Simonetta 2006, fig. 10–12; Zeimal 1983, 131 (State Eremitage, inv. no. 20928; for a Picture, see Nikitin 1998, pl. I, 10); Senior 2001: Vol. I, 106; Vol. II, 146, issue 199.1D; Vol. III, 46.

⁸³ Wroth 1903, 114, nos. 97–102, pl. XXI, 5–6 (British Museum), see also Simonetta 1958, 166, pl. I, 8–15; Dobbins 1971, 138–139, fig. 2/P; Mitchiner 1976, 411, type 612; Sellwood 1980, type 91.13; Mitchiner 1976, 410–411, type 611–1 (according to Mitchiner these are imitation of Orodes II's drachms; cf. also Callieri 2005, 361, fig. 1–2), 612; Zeimal 1983, 131 (State Eremitage, inv. no. 20929; for a picture, see Alram 1998, Taf. 4, 46); Senior 2001: Vol. I, 106; Vol. II, 146, issue 199.2D; Vol. III, 46.

⁸⁴ Zeimal 1983, 135–139, table 16–17.

⁸⁵ Girshman 1946, 197, pl. XXII, 7.

⁸⁶ Sellwood 1980, type 52.19. As Simonetta has observed, such a stylistic feature as a long beard allows for dating the issue of this type at 27 B.C. at the latest (Simonetta 1958, 166). G.A. Koshelenko and V.A. Gaibov note that the subject of Nike with a wreath behind the king's head represented at the earlier types of drachms of Phraates IV (Sellwood 1980, type 50) is replaced by an image of a bird crowning the king (the Vargna bird with the royal *farn*) (Sellwood 1980, type 52–54). The change in iconographic images, they believed, must have been connected with the political strife in Parthia during the civil war between Phraates and Tiridates (Koshelenko, Gaibov 2010, 193).

So, during the reign of Phraates IV, Bactria receives a large number of drachms struck in Margiana. To establish the legitimacy of their circulation within the borders of the domain, the rulers, who were dependent on Parthia, had to countermark them.⁸⁷ The striking authority (authorities) who countermarked the drachms of Phraates IV must have been located on the Parthian – Baktrian border.⁸⁸ During the period between the end of the 1st century B.C. and the early 1st century A.D. – the time of a sharp deficit of silver – these coins were in great demand on the market. Apparently, the emission of imitations was related to the production of the north-eastern mints of Parthia, whose quality had noticeably deteriorated. The production of imitations with countermarks and imitations with false countermarks showed a gradual degradation of the legend, weight and iconography.⁸⁹ About the middle of the 1st century A.D. the north-eastern mints of Parthia cease to issue the all-Parthia coinage, but the mint of Margiana continues to produce copper coins for the local use. With the influx of silver receding, the rulers issuing imitations of drachms of Phraates IV must have been compelled to resort to plating copper flans with silver. Although one cannot exclude the fact that the issue of plated imitations was a conscious measure aimed at profit. Distinguishing silver imitations from the copper coins plated with silver was possi-

⁸⁷ See also Widemann 2009, 359.

⁸⁸ The researchers who drew attention to the matters of ethnic attribution of the imitation issues differ in opinions on this issue. V.I. Sarianidi, G.A. Koshelenko, E.V. Rtveladze and S.A. Yatsenko hold that the imitations of Phraates IV's drachms were countermarked by the Yuezhi ruler Sapadbizes (it was W. Wroth who noticed the similarity of the rulers' images on countermarks and coins minted by Sapadbizes, see Wroth 1903, 114) and preceded his rare silver issues (Sarianidi, Koshelenko 1982, 315–316; Rtveladze 2002, 161–162; Iatsenko 2006, 177–178; Rtveladze 1993/4, 92–93). The obverse shows the ruler's head facing right, wearing the Attic helmet; the reverse represents the lion facing right. These typologically close issues (which may allow us to code name them “coins of the Sapadbizes group”) differ only by the legends rendering the name of the ruler on the obverse: Sapadbizes, Arseiles (the other version being “Agiseles”) and Pulages (Mitchiner 1975, 303, type 509–511; Senior 2001: Vol. II, 214, issue A4.1–A6.1a). On the contrary, G.A. Pugachenkova and L.I. Rempel' assumed that imitations of Phraates IV's drachms had been issued by the Sakai rulers in the border territories of western Bactria and Sakastan (Pugachenkova, Rempel' 1986, 6–8). According to P. Bernard and K. Abdullaev, the Parthian drachms with countermarks were “the coinage carried out by minor chiefs of the nomads of non-Yuezhi origin” (Bernard, Abdullaev, 1997, 73). F. Grenet had a similar opinion (Grenet 2000, 133–134). M. Mitchiner argues that it was the Sakai who struck imitations of the drachms of Phraates IV, while the Yuezhi were responsible for the coinage of Sapadbizes and Agiseles (Mitchiner 1975, 303; Mitchiner 1976, 411). F. Widemann argues that they were countermarked by later rulers in Kapisa and Arachosia (Widemann 2009, 363). The latter assertion is speculative: such location contradicts the topography of coin finds.

⁸⁹ The weight of drachms in the reign of Phraates IV averaged to 3.70–3.95 grams (Wroth 1903, lxiv), while the average weight of 69 imitations of drachms with false countermarks, which were found in Takt-i Sangin, is 2.15 grams, the maximum weight being 2.32 grams (Zeimal 1983, 130). The weight of the six drachms from the British Museum is 3.62, 2.54, 3.03, 2.75, 2.92 and 3.62, respectively (Wroth 1903, 114, nos. 97–102).

ble only after the thin layer of silver had worn off. The new types of countermarks on these coins testify either to the growing number of issuers or to the emergence of new domains issuing them.

The coins nos. 2–4 from Kampyrtepa, if they really derive from the imitations of drachms of Phraates IV, must be placed at the bottom of the typological series represented in Table 2. These issues may be dated at the mid 1st century at the earliest, but they could have been in circulation until the monetary reform of Vima Kadphises (ca. 100/105–127 A.D.).

Apart from the above-mentioned data, the archaeological context of the finds serves as a factor of the dating. The coins nos. 1, 2 were surface finds; the coins nos. 3, 4 were found in the rooms on the top construction level of the citadel at Kampyrtepa. In room no.107, where coin no. 3 had belonged, a Vima Kadphises coin was discovered in the top layer.⁹⁰ The coin no. 4 was found in room 46; here, among the debris, an imitation of the coins of Heliokles was discovered;⁹¹ moreover, two coins of Kanishka are reported to have been found on the floor of the same room (ca. 127–150 A.D.).⁹² S. Kurbanov, taking part in the excavations of the citadel at Kampyrtepa, dates the archaeological complex of rooms on the top construction level at the 1st–2nd centuries A.D.⁹³ It is significant that the imitations of Parthian coins from Takht-i Sangin and from Tillya-tepe are dated at the same time. Thus, imitations of the drachms with false countermarks of Phraates IV from Takht-i Sangin belonged to the pit (“botros”) no. 3 lowered from the second level above the virgin soil. The ‘youngest’ coin dating the floor from which the ‘botros’ was lowered is a copper didrachm of Kanishka I.⁹⁴ The burial ground of Tillya-tepe, which yielded an imitation of a Phraates IV’s drachm with a countermark, is dated at the mid – last quarter of the 1st century or even the early 2nd century A.D.⁹⁵

Thus, both typologically (considering the composition of metal) and also stratigraphically, the coins discovered at Kampyrtepa are dated, at the earliest, at the beginning of the 1st century A.D. and they cannot be used to reconstruct the hypothetical Parthian period in the history of the settlement. It is significant that single pieces of Parthian art at Kampyrtepa were either chance finds, or belonged to the layers of the Kushan time. A hairpin with a design showing a nude figure of a woman sitting cross-legged with her hair styled in a peculiar Parthian fashion was found among the debris finds in the eastern part of the citadel. Another similar hairpin was excavated

⁹⁰ Gorin 2002, 69, table 1, no. 22. In the article by S. Kurbanov, the findspot of this coin is mistakenly indicated as being above the second floor (Kurbanov 2000, 58).

⁹¹ Aiupova, Gorin 2001, 129, table 1, no. 9.

⁹² Kurbanov 2000, 50.

⁹³ Kurbanov 2000, 66. Yet the ceramic complex from a number of rooms is dated at 1st century B.C. – 1st century A.D. (Mkrtychev, Bolelov 2006, 55).

⁹⁴ Zeymal 1997, 93.

⁹⁵ Zeymal 1999, 239–243; Iatsenko 2006, 172.

from the residential block in the “lower town” that was fully functional there in the 2nd century A.D.⁹⁶ A terracotta statuette representing a figure of a man in a style closely related to that of the Parthian portrait, also originates from the excavations of the “lower town” and dates from the 1st–2nd centuries A.D.⁹⁷

Table 3. Finds of coins imitating Heliokles’ issues in northern Bactria

Southern Uzbekistan			
<i>Sherabad Darya valley</i>	<i>Surkhan Darya valley</i>	<i>Amu Darya's right bank (Termez region)</i>	
Akkurgan – 2 specimens	Barattepa – 1 specimen	Ayrtam – 4 specimens	
Dzhandavliattepa – 3 specimens	Dalverzintepa – 5 specimens	Mirzakultepa – 9 specimens	
«Iron Gates» – 1 specimen	Zang – 1 specimen	Kampyrtepa – 16 specimens	
Paenkurgan – 1 specimen	Zartepa – 15 specimens	Termez – 4 specimens	
Talashkantepa – 2 specimen	Khairabadtepa – 1 specimen	Fayaztepa – 1 specimen	
Khudoidottepa – 1 specimen	Khalchayan – 6 specimens	Khatyn-rabat – 2 specimens	
Shortepa – 4 specimens	Sheralitepa – 2 specimens	–	
–	Ialangtushtepa – 1 specimen	–	
14 specimens	32 specimens	36 specimens	
Southern Tajikistan			
<i>Vakhsh valley</i>	<i>Kafirnigan valley</i>	<i>Hissar valley</i>	<i>Kulyab</i>
Takht-i Sangin – 3 specimens	Tepai-Shoid – 1 specimen	Shahrinai – 4 specimens	Saksanokhur – 1 specimen
Ushtur-mullo – 2 specimens	Dushanbe – 2 specimens	Chimkurgan settlement – 3 specimens	–
Yavan settlement – 4 specimens	Kalai-Shadmon – 1 specimen	–	–
Turtkul settlement – 1 specimen	–	–	–
10 specimens	4 specimens	7 specimens	1 specimen

On the citadel, a wooden statue of a “Parthian” in a silver case was found; it may be dated to the 2nd century A.D.⁹⁸ A potsherd with a fragment of hypotheti-

⁹⁶ Nikitenko, Shagalina 2002, 115–117; Bolelov 2005, 74, drawing 25.

⁹⁷ *DluU* 1991, no. 159; Iliasov 2000, 101; the figure was found in room no. 74 together with two coins of Kanishka I (Kurbanov 2000, 47).

⁹⁸ *KIDU* 1991, 120, no. 137; *DluU* 1991, no. 166; Khakimov, Giul, Yagnos 2001, no. 75.

cal Parthian inscription is a chance find.⁹⁹ As we may well see, there is no evidence of a lengthy presence of the Parthians at Kampyrtepa and the ceramic complex of the Parthian times has not been discovered yet at the citadel.

The geographic range of coin imitations circulation lay within the frontiers of political communities or ethnic groups issuing them. The very fact of “barbarian imitations” circulating within a certain territory shows that it lay beyond the jurisdiction of the states with their well-developed monetary system and that imitations circulated at the prescribed rate.¹⁰⁰

So the typology of their finds allows us to single out, though, naturally, rather vaguely, particular numismatic provinces of Baktria. It is noteworthy that although all researchers place the issue of imitations of countermarked drachms of Phraates IV in the territory of western Baktria, the actual context is in eastern Baktria (with the exception of the coins from the burial ground of Tillya-tepe and Begram situated in the neighbouring Kapisa region). The major sites of finds are situated along the narrow strip on the right bank of the Amu Darya: Kampyrtepa, Old Termez (?), Khodzha Gulsuar – “Gora Orlinaia” (?), Takht-i Sangin. The same goes for the Parthian drachms of Sinatrukes and Phraates III that were found at the settlement of Mirzabekkala¹⁰¹ on the bank of the Amu Darya.¹⁰²

An analogous conclusion can be made for coins of the Sapadbizes group, typologically related to the imitations of drachms of Phraates. Registered finds are attributed to the following settlements: Zartepa – a hemidrachm;¹⁰³ Khairabad-tepa – a chalkous;¹⁰⁴ Kampyrtepa;¹⁰⁵ Dilberjin (Afghanistan, 40 km north-west of the town of Balkh) – an obol.¹⁰⁶ The rest of the coins belong to museum collections.¹⁰⁷ The total number of Sapadbizes’ coins is 20.¹⁰⁸ Significantly, the

⁹⁹ Rtveladze 2002a, 104, 107, drawing 12.

¹⁰⁰ Zeimal 1975, 56, 58. For Phraates IV’s coin imitations, this was specifically noted (Zeimal 1983, 132).

¹⁰¹ Pilipko 1985, 189, table LII, nos. 32–33.

¹⁰² M.E. Masson (Masson 1928, 285, no.4) mentions a “Sinatrukes’ drachm” with a countermark featuring “a head (or a deer) with traces of corrupted circular legend” found in the town of Kerki in 1927. E.V. Rtveladze gives the particulars of drachms of Mithridates II and Sinatrukes found in Old Termez (Rtveladze 2010, 13). Yet the location of these coins is currently unknown. No Parthian coins were found during the excavations of Old Termez (personal communication by Sh.R. Pidaev).

¹⁰³ Albaum 1960, 37–39, drawing 22,3.

¹⁰⁴ This is a unique specimen. Copper coins of Sapadbizes are not attested to in other publications, see Rtveladze 1987, 94–95, no. 19; Rtveladze 2002b, 146; Rtveladze 1993/94, 82; KIDU 1991, 83, no. 57.

¹⁰⁵ On this unpublished and fragmented coin, see Rtveladze 2002b, 146.

¹⁰⁶ Vainberg, Kruglikova 1976, 179, no. 54.

¹⁰⁷ E.g., in the Eremitage (Zeimal 1978, table IV, 10), in the Herat Museum (MacDowall, Ibrahim 1979, 48, pl. I, no. 25), and in the British Museum (Mitchiner 1975, 303, type 509–510; Rtveladze 2002b, table XV, Cribb 2007, 352, fig. 74).

¹⁰⁸ Rtveladze 2002b, 146–147.

findspots of these coins partly coincide with the area in which finds of the imitations of Heliokles' issues occur.¹⁰⁹ And, as the topography of finds of the major group of imitations of the coins of Heliokles in northern Bactria (Southern Uzbekistan and Southern Tajikistan) shows, they were most frequently encountered on the sites in the valley of the Surkhan Darya and its tributaries, the valleys of the Kafirnigan and partially the Vakhsh rivers. The Surkhan Darya region in Uzbekistan boasts 21 sites where 82 imitations of coins of Heliokles were found.¹¹⁰ Southern Tajikistan boasts ten sites with 22 coin finds¹¹¹ (Table 3).

Registered finds of imitations of Heliokles' coins are very rare in northern Afghanistan. One imitation was found at each site of Ai Khanoum, Dilberjin, and Djagat-tepe.¹¹² These coins had circulated, at least in northern Bactria, until the early 2nd century B.C., as testified to by the stratigraphic distribution of coin finds at Mirzakultepe and Kampyrtepe. At Mirzakultepe, excavations revealed two construction horizons with layers which constituted the ceramic complex of the early Kushan period. Rooms were erected directly on the virgin soil.¹¹³ The site excavation produced 27 coins, including: imitations of Heliokles' issues – 9 pieces; coins of “Soter Megas” (ca. 90–110 A.D.)¹¹⁴ – 16 pieces; one piece of Vima Kadphises

¹⁰⁹ E.V. Zeimal has elaborated the most accurate classification and chronology of the issues of coin imitations of Heliokles. He divided the available material according to the iconographic type and nomination into the following groups: I) rare silver imitations of tetradrachms (imitations), II) silver imitations of drachms (imitations), III) copper imitations of tetradrachms of Heliokles (the obverse shows the figure of standing Zeus; the most numerous group – six series), IV) copper imitations of Heliokles' drachms (the obverse has the figure of standing Zeus), V) copper imitations of Heliokles' tetradrachms (the obverse has a walking horse turned left), VI) copper imitations of Heliokles' drachms (the obverse has a walking horse turned left). Zeimal subdivided the whole issue of these imitations into eight successive chronological periods with a matching issue of a certain group or a series within it: the first period – groups I and II; the second – group III, series 1; the third – group III, series 2; the fourth – group III, series 3; the fifth – group III, series 4; the sixth – group III, series 5; the seventh – group III, series 6; the eighth – groups IV, V, VI. The choice of the eighth group is hypothetical and its typical modifications cannot be classed only as chronological (Zeimal 1983, 111–116).

¹¹⁰ On the findspots, see Albaum 1960, 37, drawing 22, 1–2; Pugachenkova 1966, 111–113, drawing 74, b; Pugachenkova 1967, 75, no. 3, table I, 4; Rtveladze 1974, 75, 79; Pugachenkova, Rtveladze 1978, 228, nos. 2–5, drawing 159, 1–2; Rtveladze, Pidaev 1981, 25, 47–56; Rtveladze 2002b, 117–118; Pidaev 1990a, 32–33; Pidaev 1990b, 54; Zavialov 2008, Appendix no. 2, 247, no. 3; Albaum 1990, 26; Abdullaev 2000, 369, 375, n. 16; Abdullaev 2004, 12; Abdullaev, Stancho 2004, 23; Abdullaev, Stancho 2006, 14; Aiupova, Gorin 2001, 129, table 1, nos. 1–15; Rtveladze, Gorin 2003, 159, 167, nos. 16, 83–84; Gorin 2008, 91.

¹¹¹ Zeimal 1983, 126–128, table 13–15; Zeymal 1997, nos. 158, 263, 369; Dovudi 2006, 48.

¹¹² Bernard 1985, pl. 10, TF–51; Vainberg, Kruglikova 1984, 125, 129, no. 161; Kruglikova 2004, 561, Appendix III, no. 107. In Afghanistan, 23 imitations of Heliokles' coins were found, all of them without details on the circumstances of finds (Zeimal 1983, 117, n. 36).

¹¹³ Pidaev 1978, 34–35, drawing 5.

¹¹⁴ There is no unanimity in the attributing of these coins. Thus, according to J. Cribb, the coinage of “Soter Megas” was carried out by Vima Taktu (ca. 90–113 A.D.) (Sims-Williams, Cribb

(ca. 110–127 A.D.) and one of Kanishka I (ca. 127–150 A.D.). The coins of Vima Kadphises and Kanishka I were found in debris layers of the desolation period; the coins of Soter Megas and imitations of Heliokles – in the layers filling the rooms and on the floors, which evidences their one-time circulation.¹¹⁵

Considering the narrow geographic range of the topography of the finds of coin imitations of Heliokles in Southern Uzbekistan and coin imitations of Eukratides in Southern Tajikistan, we may assert that there simply was no room left in northern Bactria for any principality to issue silver imitations of Parthian drachms of Phraates IV. We may assume that during the period of a severe shortage of silver, rare Parthian drachms and their silver imitations may have been used as the agents of trade.¹¹⁶ The penetration of Parthian coins is all the more possible since the Amu Darya, which in ancient times flowed near the settlement of Kampyrtepa, served as a busy commercial waterway.¹¹⁷ This waterway connected Bactria, Parthia and Khwarezm.¹¹⁸ It served as an agent of exerting cultural influences between the two neighbouring cultural and historical regions of Parthia and Bactria. Their contacts

1996, 99–100, 118–123; Cribb 2005, 222–223, tab. 6). O. Bopearachchi is of a different opinion: he relates the coins of “Soter Megas” (ca. 92–100 / 97–110 A.D.) to the coinage carried out by a “usurper” of the Kushan throne, who had seized power after a short reign of Vima Taktu (ca. 90–95/95–100 A.D.) (Bopearachchi 2007, 43–50; Bopearachchi 2008, 49–52). On the name of Vima Taktu, see Falk 2009, 105–116.

¹¹⁵ Pidaev 1990a, 32–37; Pidaev 1991, 96–97. In all probability these coins were removed from the market after a monetary reform of Vima Kadphises. 157 coins of Soter Megas, Vima Kadphises and Kanishka I (without any imitation specimen) were discovered in the area of the Kampyrtepa “lower town” in secured stratigraphic layers: in the stucco coats covering the walls, in flooring layers and on the virgin soil (Gorin 2009, 116–117).

¹¹⁶ Cf. Litvinskii 2010, 92–93. Yet we cannot exclude the fact that imitations of drachms of Phraates IV with a countermark could have penetrated Bactria under different circumstances. For example, the coins from Takht-i Sangin may have been the offering of pilgrims to the Oxus temple (Grenet 2000, 133, note 14). Such an explanation does not strike us as something impossible, for they were found in the votive pit (“botros”) no. 3 together with chalkoi of Antiochos I, Euthydemos I, obols of “Heraios” and coins of Vima Kadphises. The assortment of coins from other “botroses” is no less wide; in fact, all the coins constitute treasures that took a long time to accumulate. The “botros” no. 4 contained 97 copper Kushan coins of Soter Megas, Vima Kadphises and Kanishka I; “botros” no. 6 – 41 countermarked Indian coins and an obolos of Eukratides (Zeimal 1983, 294–295, annex, treasures nos. 16–17).

¹¹⁷ At present, the Amu Darya flows 2–3 km south of the settlement.

¹¹⁸ Sherkova 1991, 25–26; Peters 1996; Balakhlantsev 2005, 35–36; Rtveladze 2010, 17–22; an account of classical evidence concerning the trade along the Amu Darya water way, is given by Piankov 1997, 46, 60, 282. A reference to this trade can be found in Chinese records, especially in the *Shiji*: “Near the Wei river, there are markets where people who do business and trade use carts and boats, and they travel to neighbouring countries, sometimes journeying several thousand *li*”. Cited after Tao 2007, 90. Bichurin’s Russian translation (1950) is as follows: “По реке Гуй-шуй живут торговцы и купцы, которые сухим путем и водою развозят свои товары по соседним владениям – даже за несколько тысяч ли” (Шицзи. 123.7). A similar description is given by the *Hanshu*, see Tao 2007, 94 (cf. Bichurin 1950: Цань Хань Шу 95.54).

can be traced, for example, to their burial rites.¹¹⁹ Yet the available numismatic evidence is surely not sufficient to assert that the Parthians in the 1st century B.C. – 1st century A.D. exercised a direct control over the bulk of Baktria. Apart from scarce publications, the records of finds of Parthian coins in the valley of the Amu Darya are still classed among ‘the mentioned ones’, for these coins remain unobtainable for researchers as their location is unknown. Moreover, one cannot be too careful when using the records of the geographical range of circulation of these silver coins to reconstruct various political events, for these issues are apt to ‘travel’ very far in time and space from their original mint and date of production. Imitations of the Parthian drachm type were struck and circulated beyond the borders of Parthia proper. According to their typology and the archaeological context, imitations of Parthian coins found in Baktria belong to the 1st century A.D. at the earliest. This, in turn, allows us to speak only about the spread of the Parthian political dominance to the adjacent areas of Baktria before their annexation to the Kushan state.

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¹¹⁹ Litvinskii 2010, 93–99.

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Abstract

The ancient settlement of Kampyrtepa ("Hill of the Old Lady" in Uzbek) is situated 30 km south-west of the town of Termez, downstream the Amu Darya River. The history of Kampyrtepa's exploration is 30 years old. The Parthian period of the history of the settlement is the least explored. The discovery of coins of allegedly Parthian origin called for distinguishing it as a separate phase. In various publications their number varies from 6 to 12. These publications leave a number of questions still unsolved, including the attribution of the types and the issue and circulation dates. This calls for having a closer look at the Parthian coins from Kampyrtepa.

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