

European Science Foundation (ESF)
Origin of Man, of Language, of Languages (OMLL)

STEPPE AND THEIR SUBURBS WORKSHOP
2007 September 29-30 & October 1st

Numismatic Contribution to a better understanding of the Türkish nomadic societies

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What is Currency ?

- 1- A specific object for exchanges
- 2- A general equivalent
- 3- A measure of the value of goods and services
- 4- A means of propaganda
- 5- A mark of social division of labour

The Organization of the Turkish Nomadic Society

- 1-Leader-tribe which has a traditionally recognized right to supply the leaders of tribal Federations.
- 2-Ordinary-tribes under their own tribal chiefs, willing to obey a supreme leader from the leader-tribe.
- 3-Workers-tribes which have to serve the Federation as a whole.
- 4-Slaves, personnal slaves, tribal slaves and personnal slave of the supreme leader.

The four Types of exchanges in the Türkish World

- 1-Internal exchanges : inside the tribe, between tribesmen.
- 2-Federal exchanges : between different tribes.
- 3-State exchanges : between the Türkish confederation and the vassal Cities or Kingdoms.
- 4-External exchanges : between the Khanate and the foreigners (China, Tibet, Iran, Byzance, other nomadic federations, Siberian populations, etc).

Coins, Currency in Nomadic Societies : Four Questions

Which role for Currency in these exchanges ?

Which role for Currency in a nomadic Empire ?

Could Nomadism and Mints be considered contradictory

Does the Currency play only an economical role ?

The Türks as workers-tribe

Iron production, tools and weapons production and
blacksmith activities need a form of settlement for :

- 1-Mining activities and iron Ore melting
- 2-Wood and Charcoal supply
- 3-Workers needs and control
- 4-Weapons and other tools storage, gestion and security

**The Türks were partly sedentarized
before the constitution of the Khanate**

First contacts and exchanges between Türks and China

542 : Plundering Chinese countryside along the frontiers.

Before **545** : Arrival at the frontiers markets for exchanging silk.

545 : Starting of diplomatic relations between Western Wei China and Türks with the help of Sogdians.

546-551 : Starting of official exchanges, local products and horses for silk.

At this stage, Currency is not necessary

Historical Constitution of the Western Türk Khanate

- Downfall of the Rouran leadership (552) after a civil War in the Rouran Confederation.
- Unification of the tribes under Bumin of the Türkish Arsila tribe (552-553).
- War against Hephtalites under Bumin's brother Istämi (563-567).
- Around 570 : the Western Türks Khanate under Istämi :
From Qočo, Tarim cities, Suyab valley, Yedisu, Ferghana, Čač, Soghd to the western bank of Amu-darya (Balkh, Kunduz).

Türkish World ca AD 600

Western Türks

Eastern Türks

Tibet

Sui China

图例 Legend

- 首都 Capital city
- 郡县 Seat of Jun-level administration area
- 城市 Other inhabited locality
- 政治疆界 Boundary of a regime or a tribe

Copper coins of Western Central Asia



Copper coin of Farankat
(Čač)
early 6th century



Copper coin of Bukhara
Late 5th-early 6th century

Silver Coins of Central Asia



Sasanian drachm of Peroz



Hephthalite drachm, Imitation of Peroz



Bukharian drachm, Imitation of Varham V

Copper coins of Eastern Central Asia at early stage of Türkish Rule



Wuzhu of Kingdom of Qiuci
(Kuca)
(late 6th century)

Wanxuanzhai 1570



Gaochang jili
copper coin of Kingdom
of Qocho (*ca* 620)

BNF-MMA *Cat. Chin.* II, n° 1008

Copper coins of Western Central Asia at early stage of Turkish Rule



Copper coin of Samarkand
(*ca* 600)



Copper coin of Tashkent
tudun (*ca* 600)

Türkisch countermarks at early stage of Türkish Rule (2)



BNF-MMA.1965-400



BNF-MMA.1965-394



Türkish countermarks at early stage of Türkish Rule (1)



BNF-MMA.1971-86



BNF-MMA.1965-403



BNF-MMA.1970-689



dišdji bogi



qaghan bogi



tekin



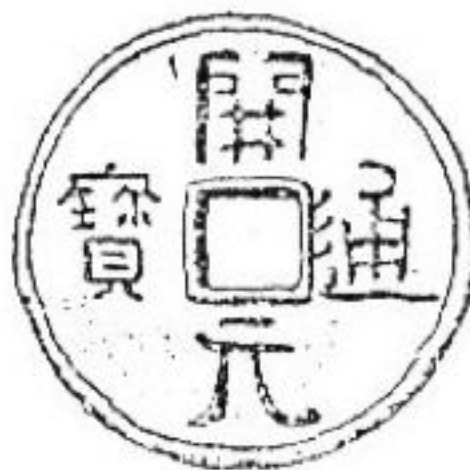
Türkish imitations of Sasanian drahms of Ormazd IV (579-590), Mint : Balkh



**The Northern Türks Khanate (682-742) set up in reaction to the Chinese control over the Turkish puppet Kaghans and to the sinization of the Turkish Elits :
Recession of monetarization level**



BNF-MMA *Cat. Chin.* II, n° 663



From Sertkaya Osman & Alimov Rysbek,
Eski Türklerde para, Ankara 2006

Türkish inscriptions in Turco-altaic characters

Chinese influence in Sogdian coinage-1

(ca 645-700)



Tang *kaiyuan tongbao* (ca 650)

Wanxuanzhai 1258



Kaiyuan of Bukhara (ca 660)

BNF-MMA *Cat. Chin.* II, n° 1453



Kaiyuan of Samarkand (ca 660)

Photograph from ZENO.RU-Oriental Coins Database

Chinese influence in Sogdian coinage-2

(*ca* 660-740)



King Wartramuka of Samarkand
(*ca* 675-696)



King Gurak of Samarkand
(*ca* 710-738)

Chinese influence in Türkish coinage

(*ca* 660-740)



Çekin çor bilgä de Panj (*ca* 700)



Hai Inal (*ca* 700)

ON OK TÜRGEŞH KHANATE ca 730



Sino-Sogdian coinage of Western Türks Kaghans (*ca* 700-740)



Sulu Türgesh Qaghan (711-737)

Wanxuanzhai 1724



Tekin of Talas (*ca* 660)

Photograph from ZENO.RU-Oriental Coins Database



Oghitmiş Türgesh Qaghan (*ca* 740)

Wanxuanzhai 1727



Bıtmış Türgesh Qaghan (*ca* 740)

Wanxuanzhai 1728

A new stage : the coinage of the late Western Türks

The Türkish currency is clearly an imitation of Chinese currency
The coins production is not able to compete the Chinese production, and
the main goal of the Türkish coins production is not to compete the
Chinese production

but

- 1-The coin bears the title of Kaghan
- 2-The coin bears the ethnonym
- 2-The coin sometimes bears the personnal name of the Kaghan
- 3-The coin bears the *tamgha* of the Kaghan or of the Kaghan's clan

The coin is a means of propaganda

A casting coins Mint needs :

- 1- Metal supply
- 2- Wood and Charcoal supply
- 3- Supplies of special clay for making molds
- 4- Workshops for making mother-cash and molds
- 5- Furnaces for melting copper, zinc, tin, lead and/or old coins and tools
- 6- Coins production workshops
- 7- Locals for cleaning edges and for making strings
- 8- Stores
- 9- Administration for workers, craftsmen, accountants needs and control
- 10- Troops for Security of mints and stores

**Casting coins needs more sedentary settlements
than striking coins**

**Türkish mints are an indication of a
sedentarization proces**

Uygur Khanate (747-839) : the Triumph of the Türks in banking activities

- 1- The coin bears the title in full, the personal name and the ethonym
 - 2- The coin bears the mention of the Kaghan's casting coins monopoly
- As the late Western Türk currency has, the Uygur coinage has mainly a political purpose**
- 3- Mints should be established in Ordubaliq, the Kaghan's Capital
 - 4- The Uygurs (not only the Sogdians) are deeply involved in banking activities in China.
 - 5- The Uygurs are important traders using Chinese currency
 - 6- The Uygurs (even the Kaghan) uses the currency with Chinese units (account in strings and cash) and habits
 - 7- In the early 9th C. the Uygurs are a powerful financial threat inside the Tang China Society

Uyghur coinage of Boquq Khan (795-808)



Kül bilgä tengri Boquq Uygur qaghan
Wise as a Lake, the Heavenly Boquq
Kaghan of the Uygur



Il tutmish yarliqinga
By the Low
of the Holder of the Empire

Conclusion

- 1- The proces of monetarization of the Türkish Societies is an indication of a proces of sedentarization and of a change in the social organization.
- 2- The casting coins activities are a proof of a certain level of sedentarization.
- 3- The monetarization, the casting coins and the banking activities show clearly the change of the early « nomadic » Türkish rule organization in a sophisticated form of bureaucratic despotism.