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Detail from above the entrance of Tehran's fire temple, 1286š/1917–18. Photo by © Shervin Farridnejad

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Jongeward, David, and Joe Cribb. 2015. *Kushan, Kushano-Sasanian, and Kidarite Coins*. New York: American Numismatic Society. 322 pp, color and black and white figures, 79 color plates.

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It is fair to say that since the publication of Robert Göbl's monumental study of Kushan and Kushano-Sasanian coins,¹ the (admittedly limited) world of Central Asian studies has been waiting for an updated study of the coins of this important period of history. The volume under review here, well publicized in academic circles, was most anticipated by scholars of numismatics, Central Asian studies, Iranian Studies, world history, and others concerned with the history of this lesser studied region and period. The promise of the volume, and in particular the presence of eminent numismatist Joe Cribb as a co-author, made the prospect of leafing through the volume exciting and worthy of patience. Indeed, considering Cribb's previous important studies of the Kushan coins, including his well-known disagree-

¹- Robert Göbl, *System und Chronologie der Münzprägung des Kusānreiches* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984).

ments with Göbl on fundamental issues such as chronology of the coin issues, the student of this field is rightly justified to anticipate another monumental study and treatment of the collection.

The published volume – despite providing valuable insights, some convincing arguments, and a respectable catalogue of Kushan, Kushano-Sasanian, and Kidarite coins – nonetheless leaves the expected audience in a confused state. One can argue that a treatment of the whole series like Göbl, with detailed and tedious charts dedicated to various emissions and sometime typological studies that can now be dismissed in face of newer evidence, would have been an unrealistic prospect. However, a more scholarly treatment of the coins, as an update to Göbl (whose influence is generously acknowledged in the preface) and also a reflection of Cribb's own valuable contributions to the field could be expected. Furthermore, considering the current state of numismatic research in the field of Iranian and Central Asian studies, as well as evidence of epigraphy and sigilography, a volume of this size and range is rightly anticipated to be firmly based on impeccable research and to also provide a useful guide to the issues it covers. In light of the precise studies offered by what now should be called the "Vienna School" of numismatics, including the SNS volumes² and the recent studies of the coins of "Iranische Hunnen,"³ a work of Kushans, Kushano-Sasanians, and Kidarite coins would have been most useful as an addition to these volumes. As it stands, we can look forward to seeing such fundamental study of the Kushan coins and the coins of those following them in Bactria and Trans-Hindukush in the future.

The present volume is mostly made up of a catalogue of Kushan, Kushano-Sasanian, and Kidarite coins in the collection of the American Numismatic Society (ANS), with some studies of the monetary system, coin types, portrait styles, and mints included in a general Introduction and individual introductions to each chapter. These introductions are mostly summaries of Cribb's previous studies and a re-affirmation of the particular ideas expressed within them, including his take on chronology. The over-arching frame of study is the Kushan history and monetary system and the Kushano-Sasanian and Kidarite coins are considered as simple continuations of the Kushan coin series.

The general Introduction provides an overview of Kushan history, as well as their monetary system, including the establishment of a gold standard, and their mints, extending from Balkh in Bactria to the newly established mints in Gandhara and beyond. Brief discussions of copper coinage, mint locations for gold issues, and attempts at matching Kushan historical progress with the development of their monetary system is among the useful information in this chapter. The authors devote minimal attention to die studies, an important method for revealing the relation between various issues and establishing fundamentals of coin production and connection between emissions. As such, many of their conclusions cannot be verified through the book itself and the research contained within, and instead one needs to refer to the previous studies, which are however scarcely acknowledged or discussed. A very useful chart of Kushan, Kushano-Sasanian, and Kidarite coin types follows the introduction, with references to the coins inside the catalogue, although lack of illustrations and tracings renders the chart hard to use.

2- Michael Alram and Rika Gyselen, *Sylloge Nummorum Sasanidarum, Band I* (Vienna: Verlag der ÖAW, 2003); Michael Alram and Rika Gyselen, *Sylloge Nummorum Sasanidarum, Band II* (Vienna: Verlag der ÖAW, 2012), Nikolaus Schindel, *Sylloge Nummorum Sasanidarum Band III* (Vienna: Verlag der ÖAW, 2004), including the supplemental volumes and two more volumes to be released in the future.

3- Matthias Pfisterer, *Hunnen in Indien* (Vienna: Verlag der ÖAW, 2013) and Klaus Vondrovec, *Coinage of the Iranian Huns and Their Successors from Bactria to Gandhara (4th to 8th Century CE)* (Vienna: Verlag der ÖAW, 2014).

The main body of the work, labelled as Catalogue, follows the Introduction. Each section devoted to the coins of a king starts with an introduction and quick discussion of the history, titlature, design, denomination, and iconography of the coins. Most of these sections are epitomised versions of previous research by Cribb and a few other scholars. Useful typological presentation of the coins, including tracings and differentiation of various types, is unfortunately missing in this section. Discussions of mints, development of designs, and other issues are quite brief and deny the interested reader the possibility of using the book as a reference for scholarly study of the coins outside the presented collection. Presenting types such as ‘cross-legged king type’ or ‘helmeted warrior’ type, although helpful in distinguishing the coins in the catalogue, really do little to increase one’s understanding of the proper typology of Kushan coins and its development. Assumptions and theories, such as the well-known discussion of the ‘Heraus’ coins types and Cribb’s take on them, are presented without much discussion of opposing ideas or their consideration in presentation of the material.

Presentation of the coins of Vima Takto, the second known Kushan authority, is naturally connected to the reading of the Rabatak inscription, which led to the discovery of the name of this authority. Cribb’s participation in the deciphering of the inscription, and his suggestion that Vima Takto is indeed the same as the coin authority known as Soter Megas, commonly placed between Kujula Kadphises and Vima Kadphises, is well known and well referenced here. Less so are acknowledgements of criticisms such as those by Bopearachchi who doubt the simple equation of all Soter Megas coinage with Vima Takto.⁴ Despite the fact that Fussman’s criticism of various epigraphic evidence relating to the name of Vima Takto is acknowledged, and dismissed, no detailed discussion of coins themselves and their possible connection with each other, outside epigraphic discussions, is offered. This is indeed odd and unexpected in a work that is essentially numismatic in nature and in which one expects a discussion of coin typologies and drawing of possible connection between the issues of Soter Megas and those clearly bearing the name of Vima Takto.

Among the curious items throughout the volume are the unfamiliar philological choices made. For example, in certain instances, the authors differentiate between “Prakrit” and “Sanskrit” language legends written in the Kharoshthi script (coins 73-75 and 76-78, Kujula Kadphises), perhaps an unnecessary distinction, while for the rest of the catalogue such distinction is abandoned. Perhaps even stranger is the choice of the authors to ignore the normal conventions for transliterating Middle Persian Pahlavi. Throughout the book, the Arameogram for *Shah* “King”, conventionally transliterated as MLK’ in the literature⁵ is written with lowercase and as *mlka* (see p. 202ff). The name of Ardashir I, the first Kushano-Sasanian authority, is written as *arthshtr* – instead of the expected *rthštr* – where presumably the first *h* transcribes the letter /h/ used in the Pahlavi original, but the second *h* is acting as a diacritic for *s*, reflecting how one writes the sound /š/ in English! The same is true for the transliteration of the word Kushan (Phl. kwš’n) where the authors have opted for the strange combination of kwshan, somewhere between transliteration and transcription from Pahlavi and the conventional writing of the word in English. Other unusual readings of the legends include the reading of the coin of Ardashir I as BAFO

4- Osmund Bopearachchi, “Les Premiers Souverains Kouchans: Chronologie et Iconographie Monétaire,” *Journal des Savants* 1, no. 1 (2008): 3–56.

5- This is a standard based on David Neil MacKenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

ΑΡΔΑΡΟΡΟ ΟΟΖΟΡΚΟ ΚΟΡΑΝΟ ΡΑΟ (translated as *Lord Ardashir the great, Kushan king*, p. 203). One would be hard-pressed to see anything, or find space for, beyond ΑΡΔΑΡΟΡΟ ΚΟΡΑΝΟ ΡΑΟ “Ardashir, the Kushan King.” Even more unusual is perhaps the choice of translation of what the author’s read, where “the great” is taken as the title of Ardashir, an unprecedented occurrence, instead of a modifier for “Kushan Shah”, for a translation of “Lord Ardashir, the Great Kushan Shah” as one would expect.⁶

The beginning of the Kidarite coinage and the author’s discussion of it, lands us in a brief discussion of the absolute chronology presented for the whole series and the various rulers. It is a well-known fact that Cribb is a proponent of an early dating of the Era of Kanishka (here given as AD 127).⁷ However, it is rather unexpected to see that the catalogue still holds on to the very early date for the Kushano-Sasanian coinage, against an overwhelming amount of current research,⁸ putting their beginning already at the period of the rule of the Sasanian Ardashir I and giving the date for Ardashir 1 as AD 230.⁹ Similarly uncommon is the start of the rule of the Kidarites at AD 340, considerably earlier than what many would propose, and a place where detailed analysis of the coins, based on which such dating could be argued, would have been extremely useful. Instead, a very brief introduction gives the basic summary of what is presented in the catalogue, without much elaboration. Presenting the first Kidarite authorities as indistinguishable from the issues of “the Kushano-Sasanian king Varahran” and presentation of an authority called Kirada as the forerunner of the Kidarites further complicates the matter. No particular explanation is provided for the sequence of the coin issues as they are presented, another difficulty for which one would have to consult the more detailed articles and previous works of Cribb and other experts. Some broad conclusions, including the reference to the by now famous seal from Kashmir Smañ and its reference to a king of the “Huns” and the “Kushan” and assigning it to the Kidarite rule, do beg further elaboration, which is not rewarded in the book.

More information and in-depth discussion is provided in the three appendices/appendixes that follow the main body of the book. Appendix A concentrates on Indian imitations of the copper coins of Kanishka, which become a long-standing monetary standard in northern and eastern India. Appendix B is a fairly detailed study of the portrait types of Huvishka on his gold and copper issues. Here, the authors do present several stages of development and provide information that can be used to establish a sort of typology for the issues of Huvishka. This makes it even clearer that the entirety of the book suffers from a lack of similar, and more detailed, studies of the coins and the need for establishing usable typologies. Appendix C is a study of the deities reflected on the reverse of the Kushan coins and provides an interesting and quite usable summary of the entire assemblage, from the Greek pantheon

6- For comparison, see the Ka’aba Zardusht inscription of Shapur I (ŠKZ 18) where “the great” is always a modifier for titles such as “the great king of Armenia.”

7- Harry Falk, “The Yuga of Sphujiddhvaja and the Era of the Kusanas,” *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 7 (2001): 121–36.

8- For example, Nikolaus Schindel, “The Beginning of Kushano–Sasanian Coinage,” in *Sylloge Nummorum Sasanidarum* vol. II (Vienna: Verlag der ÖAW, 2012), 65–73.

9- A criticism perhaps, although it is a personal choice indeed, is the choice of the authors to use Roman numerals to reflect ordinal numbers for both the Sasanian and Kushano-Sasanian kings. The very useful convention of Göbl to use Arabic numbers for the Kushano-Sasanian authorities who often share the same names as the main-line Sasanian rulers, if adopted by all numismatists, would be a useful way of avoiding confusion. I have chosen this convention throughout this review in order to be clear, although the volume under review does not.

of the early Kushan coins to the more varied later Kushan pantheon that includes Buddha and of course Oesho. Again, the peculiar thing here is that the authors have taken the extra step of providing a reverse typology based on the usage of divine iconography on the coins, but the same effort has not been applied to the coins throughout the catalogue. This then appears rather as an afterthought, or perhaps as a basic guideline for the future sylloge volume whose publication seems inevitable. In this part of the study, it would have been valuable to make some commentaries regarding the proliferation of certain gods, most importantly Oesho and Ardokhsho, on the later Kushan coins and if the choice to use them reflects anything about the minting location of the coins by authorities after Huvishka. Here we should perhaps again point to the unorthodox transliteration choices of the authors. While the constant inclusion of the Bactrian spurious -o ending at the end of the words (Bizago, Oanindo, etc.) might be justifiable for a work of numismatics, the choice to use different transliteration methods to write these names is bewildering. As an example, the authors use the conventional letter 'x' to denote the sound written in Bactrian as /x/ in the name of the god Arshaeixsho (although again using the English 'sh' to render /š/, as above). However, for the name of the god Ardokhsho/Ardoxšo, they surprisingly opt for German *Ardochsho*, where 'ch' represents the same sound /x/ in German, while obviously in English, it usually renders the sound /č/. This shows an internal inconsistency, which is perhaps emblematic of the entire volume and a lack of editorial oversight, in addition to other issues. Appendix D, a short explanation of Kushan tamghas provides a pictorial overview of this important feature of the Kushan coinage and is quite useful for identifying various coins. For deeper explanations of the development of the tamghas and their significance, one still has to refer back to Göbl's treatise on the matter.

A short story of the surfacing of a Kushan fake coin in the ANS collection, as well as a very useful concordance chart to Göbl's volume concludes the body of the book. The bibliography is rather brief, but it does offer references to the most important works on the subject where the interested reader can follow up on the scholarship. The last part of the book is over 70 pages of plates of the coins in the ANS collection.

All in all, the present volume is a much welcomed and anticipated work in the field of Central Asian numismatics. Despite the limitation of representing only one collection (that of the ANS), the volume provides a useful overview of the Kushan, Kushano-Sasanians, and Kidarite coinage. Considering the presence of one of the most important numismatists of the Kushan period on the cover of the volume, it also manages to render a useful summary of his influential research. One can hope that a future sylloge style volume, perhaps including the coins of the British Museum, would provide a more detailed and scientifically sound study of the Kushan and sub-Kushan coins, incorporating in depth studies of style, typology, and minting practices and locations of these coins. Future generations of the historians of late antique Central Asia would be dependents on such a contribution for furthering the study of Central Asian history.

