

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS



Ak Beshim-Suyab

Author(s): Gerard Clauson

Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, No. 1/2 (Apr., 1961), pp. 1-13

Published by: [Cambridge University Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25202406>

Accessed: 04/08/2012 06:11

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Cambridge University Press and Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

AK BESHIM—SUYAB¹

By GERARD CLAUSON

AN ORIENTAL CONGRESS at Moscow seemed to provide a very suitable occasion on which to call the attention of Western scholars to some recent important discoveries by Soviet archaeologists, and at the same time to suggest to Soviet scholars a new interpretation of some of their finds.

The city of Balasağun had a short life, but a glorious one. Traditionally said to have been built by the founder of the Karakhanid dynasty a little before the middle of the tenth century, it and Kashgar were the two capitals of that dynasty in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It was the place where the author of the first great Turkish literary work, the *Kutadğū Bilig*, was born and worked. In A.D. 1210 it stood a siege of sixteen days by an army of the Kara Khitay, but finally its massive walls were breached and it was sacked for three days, 47,000 of its inhabitants perishing during these grisly events. The Mongolian invasion very soon followed and from then onwards Balasağun played no part in history and probably for practical purposes ceased to exist. Its name survived in the pages of the Moslem geographers for some centuries after that date, but their accounts of its location vary so wildly that it is clear that they had no direct knowledge of its location or even of its existence.

Its location began to arouse the interest of modern scholars in the nineteenth century, and there is, for example, a long note on the subject in N. Elias and D. Ross's *History of the Moghuls of Central Asia*, London, 1898, pp. 361 ff. That note reached no firm conclusion, but I think that it would have been generally agreed at that time, and I think would still be agreed, that Balasağun lay north of Kashgar and west of the Issik Kol probably somewhere in the valley of the River Chu, that is to say round about 43° N. and between 74° and 76° E.

During his famous journey to Central Asia in 1893-4 Professor V. V. Barthold discovered a large ancient site now called Ak Beshim on the southern bank of the River Chu about 5 miles south-west of Tokmak (42° 50' N. ; 75° 30' E.), and with the due reservations

¹ A summary of this paper was read at the 25th International Congress of Orientalists in Moscow in August, 1960.

characteristic of that great and cautious scholar expressed the view that it might be the ruins of Balasağun. The site was visited by M. E. Masson in 1927 and A. I. Terenozhkin in 1929, and in 1938–40 the Semirechie Archaeological Expedition under the leadership of A. N. Bernshtam did some minor work there. As a result of it, Bernshtam, whose enthusiasm habitually overpowered his judgement, persuaded himself that it was Balasağun, and this view seems to have been the official one in the Soviet Union for a number of years. Western scholars, who have naturally accepted this view, and often find it difficult to keep abreast of the enormous output of Soviet archaeologists, should be warned that this theory is now definitely exploded, and that the location of Balasağun is just as much of a mystery as it ever was. No doubt Soviet archaeologists, who are busily engaged on a programme of reconnaissance and excavation on a scale comparable with the vast areas which they have to cover, will in due course come up with a solution.

This does not of course mean that Ak Beshim is an unimportant or uninteresting site. Quite the contrary. In *Uchëniye Zapiski Instituta Vostokovedeniya*, vol. xvi, 1958, there is a set of three articles of great importance about Ak Beshim. The first is a summary account by L. P. Kyzlasov of the excavations carried out on this site in 1953–4 by the Chu Archaeological Detachment, led by himself, of the Kirgiz Composite Archaeological-Ethnographical Expedition of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. The site is a very large one and Kyzlasov does not suggest that what has been done so far is more than a beginning. The site is in effect in three zones. The central point is a roughly rectangular walled city, surrounded by massive walls with bastions, covering an area of about 86 acres. On the eastern side of it there abuts a suburb covering about 148 acres also surrounded by a wall but a less massive one. All these walls and the buildings enclosed by them were built of *pisé-de-terre* or unbaked bricks and are now represented by mere shapeless mounds of earth.

The town and its suburb are located in the north centre of what can best be described as a protected area, which is bounded on the north by the precipitous southern bank of the River Chu, on the east by a deep ravine running north into that river, and on the south and west by a long wall built on a curve from the ravine to the river bank with a radius of about a mile centred on the walled city. It is obvious that this must once have been a large and important place.

Five points were chosen for excavation, the centre of the walled city and four mounds outside but fairly contiguous to the walls. They were as follows :—

(1) Within the city two large shafts were dug to establish the stratigraphy of the site, one 14×6 metres to a depth of 8·5 metres, 7·5 metres through cultural deposits, and the last metre, as a precaution, in the natural soil, and the other, as a check on the first, 3×3 metres to a lesser depth. The shafts descended through a complex mass of superimposed buildings, each successive building overlying the ruins of the previous one. Four levels were distinguished, the first dated to the fifth–sixth centuries and the last to the ninth–tenth.

(2) A mound covering an area of about 85×35 metres just outside the south-west corner of the city was completely excavated and proved to be a Buddhist temple which was burnt and ruined some time in the second half of the eighth century. The site was partly reoccupied by squatters as a dwelling site in the ninth–tenth centuries and abandoned in the eleventh.

(3) A mound about 300 yards west of the city was excavated and proved to be a burial area datable to the seventh–eighth centuries. The central point was a brick platform on which corpses were laid to disintegrate prior to burial, presumably in accordance with Zoroastrian or similar rites. It was surrounded by a number of burials of reassembled bones of Europeoid type in clay jars and two communal vaults.

(4) A mound in the northern part of the suburb, 100 yards east of the city, was excavated and proved to be a Christian church of the eighth century. The church was of a type for which parallels are said to exist in Armenia and Asia Minor, a domed chancel and sanctuary with attached but separate baptistery (?), and an open courtyard surrounded by a roofed colonnade abutting it on the west. In and adjacent to the courtyard was a number of burials of bodies of Europeoid type some wearing bronze pectoral crosses.

(5) Finally a small mound south of the city and 200 yards west of the suburb was excavated and proved to be a small rectangular castle or fortified house of the sixth or seventh century.

The dates of the various levels and buildings were established by coins, pottery, and other datable objects. A few scattered finds, pottery and coins, of a later period on or immediately below the modern surface, including a small hoard of seventy-six coins

of the second quarter of the eleventh century in the debris above the temple, show that there was a very slight reoccupation of the site in the eleventh century.

The second article, by Professor O. A. Smirnova, gives a list of the coins found and discusses a number of points arising from them. The final article by A. M. Shcherbak discusses the legends on some of them from a Turcological point of view ; it was apparently written without a sight of the second.

The history of the site is quite clear. It was first occupied, presumably as a trading post, by a small community of merchants, probably Sogdian, in the fifth or sixth century. The town grew and was at some date surrounded by a strong defensive wall ; the population increased to a point at which a defended suburb had to be added ; various religious buildings were erected ; it was invaded and sacked more than once and ceased to exist as a city some time in the tenth century just about the time when Balasagun was built. Kyzlasov ends his paper by pointing out that it cannot be Balasagun and must remain nameless until further research provides it with a name.

I venture to suggest, however, that the facts which he has marshalled already supply the answer. The history of Ak Beshim as reconstructed by the archaeologists is exactly that of the famous city of Suyab as recorded by the historians, and my suggestion, quite simply, is that Ak Beshim is Suyab.

This suggestion is not in fact entirely an original one. The standard authority on the history of Central Asia in this period is E. Chavannes' *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) Occidentaux*, St. Petersburg, 1900, and I have drawn freely on this work in the following paragraphs. References like " (p. 28) " are to this book. Chavannes (p. 10 and elsewhere) habitually identifies Suyab with Tokmak, and Ak Beshim seems to be the only important ancient site near Tokmak ; it is therefore rather surprising that the identification was not made years ago.

The name Suyab frequently appears in the Chinese authorities in the spellings Su-yeh or Sui-yeh (Giles, *Chinese English Dictionary*, No. 10,348, or 10,416—12,997), in Karlgren's *Ancient Chinese* (that is one of the dialects spoken in the seventh century), *Suo-* (Grammata Serica 68) or *Suâi-* (G.S. 490n), *ïäp* (G.S. 633a), but for some obscure reason Chavannes (p. 359) transcribed these characters Sou- or Soei-che, which, he suggested, represented *Souj*

(i.e. *Suzh*). The name seems to appear occasionally in isolation, apparently as the name of a district, but more often in the combinations Su-(Sui-) yeh shui (Giles 10, 128) as the name of a river, or Su-(Sui-) yeh ch'êng (Giles 763), alternatively Su-(Sui-) yeh shui ch'êng, as the name of a town. The identity between the Ancient Chinese *Suo*-(*Suái*-) *ÿp* and the Arabic spelling *Sÿyâb* (see Minorsky, *Hudud al-'Âlam*, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial, New Series, xi, London, 1937, Index A) make it clear that the name was so pronounced and that Chavannes' spelling *Souj* is an error. There can be no doubt that, when used as the name of a river, it refers to the River Chu. It has been suggested that it should be broken down into *Su*(*Suy*) representing the native name Chu and the Iranian word *âb* "water, river"; but there is some phonetic difficulty here, since it would be very unusual for the Chinese to represent an initial *ch*- by characters beginning with *s*- when initial *ch*- is such a common Chinese sound.

The valley of the Chu, separated from Ferghana and Sogdiana by a great mass of mountains culminating in the Alexandrovski range and from Sinkiang by the Tien-shan, was one of the most remote corners of the ancient world, and for its history during the first millennium A.D. we are completely dependent on the Chinese authorities, but during the first half of that millennium it was really even beyond the Chinese ken. In the second century B.C. the Issik Kôl basin, and therefore probably at least the eastern part of the Chu valley, were occupied by an enigmatic people called by the Chinese Wu-sun, of whom practically nothing is known except that they were probably Indo-European, and tentatively Northern Iranian. In the fifth century A.D. the area is said to have been part of the "Empire" of the Juan-juan, but as these were a nomadic people, probably Turkish-speaking, the sedentary population is not likely to have changed to any great extent. In the middle of the sixth century that Empire was destroyed by the T'u-küe (Türkü) and for the next century remained part of their dominions. Very soon after their defeat of the Juan-juan the Türkü split into two sections, known in history as the Western and Northern Türkü. The Western Türkü were a confederation, often a very loose one, of ten tribes, divided into two groups of five tribes each, and it is recorded in the *Chiu T'ang Shu* that, at any rate in the middle of the seventh century, Suyab was on the boundary between these two groups (Chavannes, p. 28). For nearly a hundred years after their

defeat of the Juan-juan the Türkü wielded great power and very often were in a position to impose their will on the transitory Chinese governments of that time (pp. 259 ff.). The turning point came in A.D. 630, soon after the T'ang dynasty had seized power and re-established order in China (p. 264). In that year they subjugated the Northern Türkü and soon after that turned their attention to the Western Türkü. In A.D. 648 they had moved west far enough to conquer the king of Kucha (p. 113, note) and set about organizing the "Protectorate of An-hsi" (that is, "the pacification of the west") to govern their dominions in this area. Suyab is mentioned in connection with events in A.D. 655 (p. 35, note) and in a reference to events in A.D. 658 the term "the Four Garrisons" is first employed to designate the administrative framework of the Protectorate (p. 113, note). The Four Garrisons were originally Kucha, Kashgar, Khotan, and Suyab, which must by this time have been firmly in Chinese hands.

Very soon after this the Tibetans emerged from Tibet for the first time in a drive to the north, and in A.D. 670 the Chinese had to abandon the Four Garrisons (p. 113, note). A period of very confused fighting ensued which it is impossible to follow in detail, but some dates have been preserved. A few years later than A.D. 670 an Imperial Commissioner, P'ei Hsien-chien, re-established order in the Chu valley, capturing a Tibetophile Turkish chief near Suyab, and in A.D. 679 Wang Fang-i, who had been appointed Protector on his recommendation, built walls round the city of Suyab (p. 75, note). We are told that the work was finished in fifty days and that there were three gates on each face of the city ingeniously masked by bends and detours (that is what is called, in describing European castles, a "crooked entrance"). This reads very like a description of the city walls of Ak Beshim as shown in Kyzlasov's sketch plan, and there can be no reasonable doubt that these are the walls built by Protector Wang. Further confused fighting ensued between the Chinese and Tibetans, with Turkish tribes participating on both sides. It is probable that the Chinese retained control of Suyab during this period, since it is stated (p. 188) that at about this time the city stood a siege of several years, during which the troops suffered great hardships. In A.D. 692 the Chinese won a great victory over the Tibetans and re-established the Four Garrisons. Abortive peace negotiations followed and further fighting, in the course of which there seems to have

been a revolt in Suyab, since in A.D. 700 it had to be recaptured (p. 282).

Towards the end of the seventh century, although the legitimate line of Western Türkü kağans continued to exist, and perhaps even nominally to rule, the leadership of the Western Türkü fell effectively into the hands of the Türgesh, one of the five tribes of the eastern group. The Türgesh were of course nomads and not townsmen, and their paramount chief, who at about this date assumed the royal title of kağan, established his principal encampment in the Chu valley, with a lesser encampment further east in the valley of the Ili (p. 79).

At about this time, too, new developments occurred further east. The Northern Türkü, who had been submissive vassals of China for fifty years, threw off the Chinese yoke and reappeared as a great power under the leadership of a distinguished line of strong kağans (p. 282). In A.D. 699 they officially annexed the Western Türkü country and became the suzerains presumably both of the legitimate kağans and of the kağan of the Türgesh (p. 282, note). However, the Türgesh were not happy with this new arrangement and maintained direct contact with the Chinese court, hoping in this way to play their two overlords off against each other (p. 79). The plan did not succeed and before long the Türgesh were at odds with both parties, and in A.D. 711 the Northern Türkü captured and executed the Türgesh kağan (pp. 80, 283). This roused the Chinese to action and in A.D. 714 they intervened on behalf of the legitimate Western Türkü kağan and killed one of his sub-chiefs who had revolted (p. 77). A battle royal between the Chinese and Northern Türkü might then have ensued, but in A.D. 716 the kağan of the latter died and his successor was for a time not in a position to intervene in the west. It was probably at about this time that the legitimate line of Western Türkü kağans died out and the vacuum was filled by the chief of one of the Türgesh sub-tribes, who was called Su-lu by the Chinese. He pulled the whole tribe together and proclaimed himself kağan (p. 81). In order to consolidate his position he promptly, in A.D. 715, sent an ambassador to the Chinese court and was given a high Chinese title (p. 44). He continued the practice of sending ambassadors annually to the court, or going there himself, while at the same time showing disturbing signs of insubordination. The Chinese Emperor tried a policy of appeasement (pp. 45, 81, 285). In A.D. 718 and 719 he gave him bigger and better

titles; in A.D. 719 he ceded Suyab to him for a capital and transferred the Fourth Garrison to Ark (Agni, the modern Karashahr); and in 722 he gave him the hand of a high-born Turkish maiden, who was given *ad hoc* the honourable title of "Princess of Chiao-ho". Even this did not appease him and he continued to behave in a most irregular fashion, allying himself with the Arabs and the Tibetans and raiding Sinkiang (p. 82). He married two more princesses, daughters of the Northern Türkü kağan and the king of Tibet (p. 45). However, the pace was too good to last, and in 738, after a paralytic stroke, he was murdered by one of his subordinates (pp. 46, 83), and the tribe broke into two sections sometimes called the Black and Yellow Türgesh. The kağan of the latter was installed at Suyab and some confused fighting followed (p. 83).

We have in the *T'ang Shu* a description of Suyab as a city in which barbarian (*hu*) merchants from the neighbouring kingdoms lived side by side (p. 120). It is not precisely dated but presumably refers to the first half of the eighth century. *Hu* at this period normally meant "Sogdians" and no doubt included Zoroastrian and perhaps Buddhist Sogdians and Nestorian Christians, Sogdian or Syrian.

The murder of Su-lu, or some other event, provoked the Chinese to further action and in A.D. 748 General Wang Chêng-chien captured Suyab and built the "Temple of the Great Cloud at the place where the Princess of Chiao-ho had formerly resided" (pp. 45, 286). This can hardly be anything but the Buddhist temple excavated by Kyzlasov (No. (2) in the list of excavations), but it cannot have had a very long life.

The Northern Türkü "Empire" had collapsed in 744 and the revolting tribes, Uyğur, Basmil, and Karluk proceeded to carve it up between them. In face of this situation the Türgesh could hardly maintain their independence. The Karluk gradually worked their way west and occupied Suyab and the adjacent district in about 766 (p. 286). Meanwhile the Tibetans too had broken out again and by 787 the Chinese had completely lost control of the Four Garrisons (p. 114, note).

What is worse from our point of view, they completely lost interest in their lost dominions, and for the subsequent history of Suyab we are almost completely dependent on scattered references in the works of the Moslem geographers. There is no reason to suppose that tribal warfare was any less endemic in the Chu valley during

this period than it had been before 766, and it is known that the Karluk were raided by their neighbours from time to time and lost part of the territory which they had seized in the eighth century, but it seems that they remained substantially in possession of the Chu valley until about the middle of the tenth century when a new tribal movement led to the creation of the Karakhanid kingdom (see Minorsky, op. cit., p. 287). There is in the *Hudūd al-'Ālam* (Minorsky, op. cit.), which was written in 983, but is largely a compilation of material from earlier sources, a reference to Suyab as a village with 20,000 inhabitants. This is likely to have been the population not of the actual city but of the district of which it was the centre. It seems likely that the final devastation of Suyab/Ak Beshim occurred before the end of the tenth century and that only a few squatters remained on the site, of whom one buried his savings in the temple ruins in the middle of the eleventh century, hoping to return but never doing so.

The most interesting small finds on the site are the coins. They fall into three distinct categories.

The first comprises four Chinese coins. Two, both found within the walled city, bear the legend *K'ai-yüan t'ung-pao*. This is almost unique among Chinese coin types as being practically useless for dating purposes; coins with this legend were issued several times between 621 and 927. One coin found on an "eighth-ninth century level" on the temple site bears the legend *Ta-li yüan-pao* and was issued between 766 and 769, which fits neatly with the supposed history of the temple. The last, found on an upper, undatable level on the church site bears the legend *Ch'ien-yüan ch'ung-pao* and was issued between 758 and 760, which again fits quite neatly.

The second category comprises the Karakhanid coins, fifteen single coins and the hoard of seventy-six found in the upper layers of the temple site and one stray find in the walled city. Their condition varies from poor to execrable, but those that can be dated belong to a period round about 1025 to 1050 and obviously belong to the "squatter" period.

The third, and by far the most interesting, category comprises the local coins, which belong to the class known as "Sogdian". Soviet numismatists led by Professor O. A. Smirnova have done admirable work in the last ten years on the typology of these coins. Like the Chinese coins from which they are imitated, they are cast and have a central aperture surrounded by a square frame;

they usually bear either a sort of badge (what would in Turkish be called a *tamğa*), or a legend in the Sogdian language, or both. Smirnova has written a series of articles on the Sogdian coins of which the most important are in *Materiali i Issledovaniya po Arkheologii S.S.S.R.*, vol. xv, 1950; *Epigrafika Vostoka*, iv, 1951; vi, 1952; x, 1955, and *Kratkiye Soobshcheniya Instituta Istorii Materialnoy Kultury*, Parts 55 and 60. The coins from Ak Beshim are fairly typical Sogdian coins but quite distinct from the rest. One stray specimen of Smirnova's first type (see below) turned up at Khocho in Sinkiang and was published, with a misreading of the legend in F. W. K. Muller's *Uigurica II*, Berlin, 1911, p. 95. Another stray specimen turned up in Kashgar and was published in the same year, with a different misreading of the legend, by Radloff in *Alltürkische Studien* iv, *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk*, 1911. Four specimens of her second type were found by A. D. Bernshtam in 1939 on an ancient site a little west of Ak Beshim which he was accustomed to describe as the ancient Saryg; photographs of three of them and a commentary which it would be kindest to pass over in silence were published by him in *Tyurkologicheskii Sbornik* i, 1951. Except for these this is the first study of these coins.

Apart from one stray surface find in the walled city, which looks as if it was home-made in a mould constructed by impressing a Chinese coin on one side of it and an unidentified Sogdian coin on the other, they fall into three types which Smirnova tentatively, and I think unfortunately, lists in an inverse order of age.

The first, that is latest, type has on one side, tentatively described by Smirnova as the obverse but actually I think the reverse, a badge in the form of a bow, and on the other a Sogdian inscription $\beta\gamma\gamma$ *turkyš* $\gamma'\gamma'n$ *pnv* "a coin of the divine Türgesh kağan". Although the ruler was a Turk, the language, as both Smirnova and Shcherbak point out, is Sogdian; so is the spelling *turkyš*, pronounced *Türgésh*; the Turkish spelling would be *tywrk'š* pronounced *Türgesh*. These are fine coins of first-rate workmanship, probably as Smirnova points out made by a Chinese craftsman. The diameter varies from 25 to 31 mm. and the weight from 7.09 grammes to 2.04 for a very worn specimen. Eighteen specimens in all were found on eighth or ninth century or undated levels on all sites except the Zoroastrian burial area.

The second type has the same legend "a coin of the divine

"Türgesh kağan" on the obverse (Smirnova, "reverse") as the first type, and a badge (not the same as that on the first type) and a legend on the reverse. The legend contains two words of which the second $\gamma\epsilon\beta\omega$ "lord" can be read with certainty. This word means specifically "subordinate (not paramount) ruler", and occurs on some other Sogdian coins, see Smirnova's article in *Epigraphika Vostoka* vi. The first word is tentatively read $\gamma\upsilon\mu\acute{s}$ by Smirnova, only the w and \acute{s} being regarded as certain. These are coins of very indifferent quality with an uneven surface and irregular outline. They are smaller than those of the first type, the diameter varying from 22 (in one of Bernshtam's finds) to 16 mm., and the weight from 2.52 to 0.63 grammes. Except for one each from the walled city and the church site all the twenty-two specimens found at Ak Beshim, mostly badly worn, were found on the temple site and two actually in the structure of the temple, one in a *pisé-de-terre* block in one of the walls and the other under a column. Others were found *in situ* on the floor.

The third (earliest) type has on the obverse a badge, similar to that on the second type and a legend which is read as $\gamma\upsilon\mu\acute{s} n'k \gamma\epsilon\beta\omega$; the reverse is blank. These coins are smaller than those of the second type and of even more indifferent quality. The diameter varies from 13 to 11 mm. and the weight from 0.83 to as little as 0.25 gramme, the last a very worn specimen. All the eight specimens so far found were on the temple site in levels dated seventh-eighth (which must be eighth, if the temple was actually built in 748) and eighth-ninth centuries.

Smirnova concludes, no doubt rightly, that on the archaeological evidence the third type is oldest, then the second and then the first, and this is exactly what the legends themselves suggest. I had an opportunity during the Moscow Congress to discuss these coins with her and we are agreed that the legends on the reverse of the second type and on the obverse of the first type both refer to the same place and that the name of the place is the eighth-ninth century form of Tokmak. Thus Chavannes' identification of Su-(Sui-)yeh with Tokmak is fully justified by these coins, just as the identification of Su-(Sui-)yeh with Ak Beshim is justified by the identity between the buildings said to have been erected at the former and those excavated by Kyzlasov at the latter. There are, however, still some minor difficulties about the actual legends. Smirnova still thinks that the last letter of the word on the second

type is more like a $-š$ than a $-γ$ but is prepared to accept the reading *tywmγ*, which is an exact Sogdian representation of Tokmak, with the familiar metathesis of $γ$ and w found for example in Classical Sogdian $δγwt$ for "daughter", $δūχt$, which is in fact the spelling in the "Ancient Sogdian letters". The *tywm'n'k* on the second type looks like a word with a Sogdian adjectival affix $-n'k$, but this could hardly be an adjective formed from Tokmak and she is inclined to think that the right reading may be *tywmγ'k*, which is said to be an alternative (and older?) form of Tokmak.

How does all this fit with the history of Suyab, as we know it? It could not fit better. At some time during the seventh century, probably at a date when the Chinese were not firmly in control of the city, the local ruler of Suyab, who did not claim to be more than a *γwβw*, thought that it would be nice to have a coinage of his own, like his neighbours in Sogdiana, and instructed one of the local artisans, probably a Sogdian, to make him some coins bearing the legend "the lord of Tokmak". At some date later in the seventh or early in the eighth century but no doubt before 711, the Türgesh paramount chief who had usurped the title of *kağan* decided to celebrate the fact by having an issue of coinage with the legend "a coin of the divine Türgesh *kağan*", the previous legend "lord of Tokmak", slightly altered, being relegated to the reverse. The third type can be easily, and picturesquely, explained. We know that the Chinese Emperor had a habit of lending the services of Chinese craftsmen to vassals whom he delighted to honour. For example the funerary monument of Kül Tégin, the brother of the Northern Türkü ruler Bilge *Kağan*, records the fact that the Emperor sent one of his court painters to decorate the tomb. It seems to me very reasonable to suggest that the Emperor, as well as giving Su-lu a series of high-sounding titles and the hand of a rather synthetic Princess, some time soon after 715 lent him a professional mint-master. This mint-master manufactured a series of coins bearing the royal title on the obverse and the Türgesh *taṃṅa*, ousting the name of the local *γwβw*, on the reverse. It is even possible that further excavation might locate, probably in the suburb, the mints where these and the previous series of coins were made.

The chronology fits admirably with the points where the coins have been found. The earliest issue was strictly local and soon became obsolete, but a few were still knocking about and were lost in the temple. The second issue was a rather more general one

and specimens found their way as far as Bernshtam's "Saryg". They were probably still current in 748 and so two got incorporated in the structure of the temple and others were lost in it. The last issue commanded even greater respect and specimens got as far as Khocho and Kashgar on the other side of the Tien-shan, while others were lost all over the city of Suyab.

One numismatic problem remains. What did the inhabitants of Suyab and the Chu valley use for money between the early eighth century when Su-lu quarrelled with the Chinese and the late tenth century when the Karakhanids began to strike their own coins on a Moslem model? The future may show, but it seems to me very likely that during this interim the people got on without coined money and conducted all their business by barter, just as the people of Russia did in the sixth to eighth centuries, after the supply of Roman coins had run out and before the arrival of the Moslem dirhams (see V. L. Yanin's *Denezhno-Vesovye Sistemi Russkovo Srednevekoviya*, Moscow, 1956).