

Kushan Empire

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In Chapter 27, **From Kurgans to Pyramids** the Kushite Empire was mentioned and its name meaning “bird” in Turkish was questioned. The reason being that, this word is found in languages that have been separated for very long periods of time. This word meaning “bird” is found as **kus** in the Sumerian language and as **kutz** in the Maya language. As no words could have been borrowed from Sumerian to Mayan or vice-versa, the only logical explanation is that Sumerian, Mayan and Turkish stem from a common root language, which is the Asiatic Proto-language.

But there is one more clue supporting the Central Asiatic origin of this word. This clue is found in the name of an Empire known as the **Kushan** Empire, which lasted from the first to the third centuries AD, but has a much ancient beginning. The Kushan name is clearly made out two words Kush and Han meaning “bird” and “king”, where “Han” is a late version of the “Khan” title used also for Ottoman emperors.

The bird has been an important animal for ancient cultures, symbolizing the solar deity (see **25-The bird symbolism**). Below we see the territories controlled by the Kushan Empire. It extended from western China on the east, to Bactria on the west and included the Indus Valley as well as most of northern India.



In the name of the **Hindu-Kush** Mountains (shown on the map) we can still find the connection between Hind (ancient India) and Kush (the Kushan Empire). The Kushan Empire included important cultural centers such as Belh (Bactra), Kashgar, Kucha, Turfan and the capital city Ghandara. The northern region of the ancient Kushan Empire is defined nowadays as BMAC (see Chapter 16, **The south-west expansion**). This vast region has been the land of the Saka (As-Okh / Scythians), the Sarmatians, the Kushans and the Alans.

The people forming the Kushan Empire were descendents of the Central Asiatic **Yueh-chi** or **Yuezhi** tribes who were nomads traveling long distances. They even went up to the north-eastern regions of Asia for fur trading. There are numerous theories about the derivation of the name Yuezhi. My own interpretation is that these Asiatic people defined themselves as “superior”, a word pronounced as **Yuedje** in Turkish. This meaning is quite possible considering that the difficult phoneme “dje” -not found in Chinese- has been replaced, most probably, by the “zhi” sound, which is quite common in Chinese.

There are several statues found in Ghandara indicating the dressing style of the Kushan rulers. In the pictures below we see two such examples where the right arm has been left uncovered. Luc Kwanten says the following about this dressing habit (1):

Uighur representations of Buddhist saints, like the Chinese, are always clothed, whereas in the Gandhara style, at least one of the shoulders is naked.

This dressing style has already been identified among the Sumerian, the Indus Valley kings and the spiritual leader of present Tibet (see Chapter 17, **The Indus Valley script**).



Statues of Ghandara

An important Kushan ruler is known under the name Mahasena Huvishka (circa 155 to 187 AD). The coin shown below belongs to this king, but the letters stamped on the coin do not agree with either Mahasena or Huvishka. I tried to read the stamped name with the help of the ancient Turkish (Orhun) letters, as shown below-right.



KUSHAN Coin



H A D C K A Θ

H a i q a n T e Q i n t

Orhun letters → ◀) h n θ

HAKAN TEKIN

Except the two first letters H and a, which also are of Asiatic origin (2), the remaining letters on the coin perfectly agree with the Orhun letters shown in red. The transcription then becomes “Hakantekin”, where Tekin or Tigin is a Turkish title given to minor regional kings or princes.

At the Orhun Valley in Central Asia we have the **Kül Tigin** stele, which is 3.35 m high and contains several lines of Turkish inscriptions written with the Orhun characters. The scribe has added his name at the end of the inscriptions as: **Yollugh Tigin** (3).

The coin above has two more interesting clues which are worth mentioning. The first one is the bird held in the right hand of the king, a possible indication to “Kush-Han” (bird-king) and the next clue is the pelerine wore by the king. We find a similar pelerine on the young Saka (Scythian) prince (see Chapter 23, **The Issik kurgan**).

References

- (1) Chapter 1, Ref 5, page 57.
- (2) See Chapter 24, **From Orhun to Canaan**.
- (3) Chapter 21, Ref. 2, page XII.