

The Crown of Deity:

Representations of headdresses on murals in the Minor Throne Hall of the palace of Afshins

Nikita V. Semionov (Hermitage museum)

1First of all, I would like to say about the tremendous work that has been done in extracting the myriad fragments from the obstruction of the room, their processing, restoration and reconstruction. The result, which is now presented at the exhibition of the Hermitage and the Donish Institute, would not have been possible without the participation of Vladimir Sokolovsky, whose shoulders lay the bulk of this work.

2In the Minor Throne Hall of Kala-i-Kahkaha palace the wall paintings were arranged in three tiers and depicted battles between humans, gods and demons. The remaining fragments of this mural show various details of weaponry, armors, ornamented garments, including several kinds of headdresses, executed in very elegant manner. **3 4**The most interesting of them for us today are represented by a few images of crowns or wreaths. Some of them are the same ones because these paintings have narrative subject with reappearing characters.

5 For example, one type of crown belongs to goddess Nana depicted twice on east wall and once on south. **6**Numerous representations of same image in various materials and techniques – sculpture, terracotta, metalworks, paintings – enable to identify her with goddess Nana. **7**The crown of the goddess Nana consists of a rim in the upper part of which are semicircles alternating with the carob-shaped segments with pendants at the ends. The remaining fragments allow you to see the details of the crown and other jewelry - the rim, horns and semicircles are decorated with a stylized floral ornament in the form of petals. Similar design of the headdress can be seen on the relief image of Anahita from the palace in Kish of 5 century, now in the collection of the museum of natural history in Chicago and on one of the characters on the frieze from Ayrtaam 2-3 cc. Semicircles are decorated with heart-shaped tops, the lapis lazuli color of which indicates that they are encrusted. The same color also features earrings and a pendant of the goddess's necklace on the mural. **8**Similar image of Nana represented on the painting from room 26 of the VI object of Penjikent. Here, as well as on the mural of the third tier of the eastern wall of the Minor Hall, the Goddess is depicted in a mandorla, with a flame nimbus, a cape with a head down, earrings close in shape. Unfortunately the headdress of the Punjakent Nana is not preserved, on the Ustrushana mural the cape comes down from the crown. **9** There are analogies to the crown and other ornaments on the paintings in the archaeological material - this is a bronze two-part suspension, originating from the temple I of Penjikent. Its upper rectangular plate with a socket for insertion, decorated at the edge of the grain, is connected with a hinge to a heart-shaped part with three sockets. The Penjikent pendant and its

painted analogue on the chest of the goddess for a number of features (simple forms, inlays, granules) are comparable to the finds, partly from burials, but mostly random in a wide range from the Danube to Kirghizia. In the midst of nomads in the 5-8 cents. similar types of jewelry (diadems, breastplates, bracelets) are spread with granules, inlaid with colored inserts, chased vegetal ornamentation - a diadem with arches from Kerch, a diadem with pendants and an ornament with a muzzle of a horned beast - the burial ground of Kara-Agach, a ring with balls on the edges inserts - Morskoi Chulek (Azov Sea), earrings with a bead on the rod (influence of Byzantium) - treasures found in Glodosy and Small Pereshchepino, from which other decorations also come: a Grivna with a rectangular inlaid plate, bracelets, a gold overlaid with foliage. Researchers attribute these pieces according to a number of features with the Turkic influence.

10 The image of a character sitting in a chariot drawn by winged horses is found in five scenes on the mural and represents another model of headdress. **11**The crown of this kind, with outstretched wings and crescent, was widespread in various forms in art of Central Asia as a royal or divine attribute and natively was inspired by some Sasanian crowns. **12**On the considered fragment of the painting one can see an oblong face with half-closed eyes in a small turn to the right, the wing feathers of the wings are crossed out by two curved chains of pearls and are transmitted by five curls, the upper feather is bent inward, the rest are outwardly These details find parallels in the coinage of Ustrushana VI-VIII cc. - There are three types of coins with the image of a ruler crowned with a similar crown - these are the Chirdmish, Rahanch and Satachari afshins. The first two types were found directly at the site of the Kalai-Kakhkaha I. In Northern Tokharistan in the 6th-8th centuries. the circulation of drachma imitating Sasanid coins is most common, imitation of Peroz's drachmas (457-484) with the depiction of the king in the winged crown and the later drachmas of Khosrau II (591-628), on which the feathers are crossed out by several arcuate lines - as well as and on afshin coins, it is interesting that the Sassanid drachmas with the image en face or in light half-turn are rare - drahm of Varahran IV. In Ustrushana, more early image of such crown is shown on a medallion from the Longari Khojien burial dating by middle of millennium. **12**The crowns in question are fully correlated with numerous reproductions on terracotta and painting of neighboring Sogd VII-VIII cc. For example, in the painting of Penjikent from the Black Hall, there is a painting depicting the ruler in a winged wreath. And although in Sogd or Ustrushana such headdresses has not yet been met, there is a **decoration** in the form of a crescent with a star, found in Kukhi Surkh and belonging to the V-VIII cc.

A winged crown on the murals of the Minor Hall is also found on the depiction of the personification of the Moon. The last was preserved on two fragments with the goddess - on the

lower tier of the eastern wall and on the second tier of the south (here the figure of the goddess is completely destroyed and the image of the Moon also suffered greatly). Nevertheless, the first fragment seems to me to represent the male form of the deity, Mah in the Iranian tradition, it is depicted with a halo and the tongues of flame behind his shoulders, his head is crowned with a winged crown with a crescent in front. This appearance at least does not contradict the Kushan and early medieval iconography of the deity Mach.

In addition, the winged crown in different variations is represented in numerous images of demons. The most interesting accessory is preserved on several fragments: on the first tier of the north wall - a pair of conversing demons on the veranda of the second floor of the structure occupying the left part of the tier, the right one is distinguished by a crown with a rim curved at the bottom, a similar shape of the crown on the considered paintings is depicted on the personification sun, unfortunately the top of the headdress was not preserved and it is impossible to say whether this crown refers to the winged ones. To the right on the same wall is a group of characters and probably the crown crowned the demon's head on his knees, holding the warrior's right hand. Behind him is depicted a group of demons in unusual poses - which Sokolovsky treats as prisoners. One of the figures lying on the stomach was well preserved, its head was raised and given in profile, while the crown is shown in the front. Unlike most data images in three quarters, as on the coins of Ustrushana, an image typical of most Sassanian drachmas with a ruler in a winged wreath is reproduced here. On the second tier of the south wall, a demon shooting from a bow is depicted, his crown is also given in profile, which is rarely found on Sassanid coins; it is a more archaic iconography, for example, on the drachma of Hormizd II (302-309) or Varahran IV (388-399), or Sogdian imitations of a later time. This crescent does not have a crescent moon, but the rim is worked out with teardrop-shaped notches, the fly feathers are given in the form of curls and separated from the wing by chains of pearls as in the image of the character in the chariot. The front part of the crown over the rim is ornamented with vegetative curls. In the same way, the crown of the kneeling demon is decorated on the second tier of the western wall. This unusual detail deserves special attention - the fact is that on the above-mentioned crowns, presented on paintings, terracotta, coins and toreutics, a crescent with a disc is depicted above the hoop, sometimes on three points, like on the coins of Ustrushana, but nowhere is it over a whole shovel curls with traced leaves. At one time Marshak suggested that the more elegant linear drawing of the paintings of the Small Hall testifies not just about the Chinese influence, but the direct acquaintance of the local artist with the works of the East Turkestan school. Perhaps, this influence concerns not only the manner of execution, but also individual details of iconography. In the Buddhist iconography of Eastern Turkestan painting, represented by the well-preserved paintings of Shikshin, Dunhuang, Bezeklik, there are images

of bodhisattvas and other characters in magnificent headdresses adorned with diadems, ribbons and floral ornaments. In the absence of direct borrowing, a general morphological similarity, in our opinion, takes place to be.

Several fragments from the Small Hall depict demons in profile and in the turn crowned with crowns, on which the crescent is attached to the rim not in the front, but on the side, the shape and details of these headdresses vary. Analogies can be found in the painting of Penjikent and East Turkestan - the image of a noble person in the painting from the room of the I object; image of a Bodhisattva on a mural from Dunhuang. The origin of this headdress is not entirely clear, one can accept an external resemblance to the images on the Sassanid drachma, where the head is given in profile, and the crown with the crescent is in the front.

The last two variants of a winged crown with a month - with floral ornament and a crescent on the side - are an example of the stylization of the traditional motif. It seems to me that on the considered Buddhist images from Dunhuang, the motif of the winged wreath is beaten in its own way, - ribbons on the sides of the hoop or bandages are treated in the form of wings. This interpretation does not seem to be entirely believable if one turns to another example of the stylization of the motif of the winged crown - on the painting from Penjikent with the image of the demon king, the crown instead of the wings depicts the palms, and instead of the crescent the skull, as again in the images of fierce deities such as Mahakala in East Turkestan.

In connection with complex headgear on paintings from eastern Turkestan, which includes a hairdo, let's look at the image of the harpist to the right of the central figure on the Western wall. On the one hand, her high hairstyle and diadem, with a decoration adorned above the hoop, are comparable to those presented in the image of musicians, including those playing on Konghou, on the north wall of the cave 249 in Magao. Some similar head of Bodhisattva demonstrating many stylistic analogies to this piece feature in collections brought back from Central Asia by the European explorers Albert Grünwedel, Paul Pelliot and Aurel Stein. All have a number of quite specific features: soft, correct facial features, a rounded head, elegantly arched brows, the hair above arranged in symmetrical locks, with a tripetal ornament rising up on top of the head. However, a more accurate analogy to the form of a diadem is associated with Bactria - a diadem with an ornament of this form is found on one of the relief figures of the Airtam frieze.

The diadem of another form on the murals of the small hall crowns the heads of the three-faced deity with the bow. Preservation does not allow reconstructing the entire upper part of the image, but some details are clearly visible - the rim inlay, the central decoration over the rim of the components of a volute-like palmette crowned with a crescent with a rosette or bud. Similarly a three-faced deity is depicted on the paintings in Penjikent, on the foot of which the Sogdian inscription of Veshparkar was preserved. Wesh, the Indic Shiva, was highly esteemed

among the East Iranian peoples, as is shown by his numerous images-on Vasudeva's Kushan coins, terracotta images, there is not much information about the spread of his cult in Soghd during the post-Kushan era, nevertheless, a sculpture from Ancient Penjikent, Shiva and Parvati, found in the Sith in one of the chapels on the temple square. Another early medieval image of the three-faced deity comes from Khotan. The sanctuary in Dandan Uiluk discovered by A. Stern gave rich material, including a picturesque one - a series of wooden tablets with depictions of deities and heroes of the local epic. On one of them the sitting Three-faced Wesh is represented, with the right face - female - Parvati, and the left awesome - Bhairava. On the Penjikent painting the left face is also represented in the form of a monster with an animal-like muzzle. He has a trident in his hands, a Phrygian cap on his head. The other tablet shows a three-faced character with a bow.

On the frescos of the Small Hall, above the image of Wesh, on the third tier there is a fragment with the image of this deity in a different guise, he also with a trident, but not in the heat of battle. His one-sided head is turned slightly to the left, it is crowned with a diadem with a crescent, dressed over a bell decorated with pearls. The diadem is treated somewhat differently than on the first tier, but it also has a wedge-shaped projection at the front. A similar shape is found in the Shikshin terracotta - the figures of the Sakya warriors have the same form of hairstyle and headdresses (helmets), the same helmet can be seen on the terracotta sculpture of the god Vayu. As for his cap, in the paintings of the Small Hall, a similar headpiece can be seen on the image of a flying demon, only with closed ears, and judging by the drawings, the leftmost character on the north wall on the veranda of the structure on the first tier also wears a similar cap. In the art of Sogd, it is often found in terracotta, the typology of this headgear is sufficiently developed, its distribution among the peoples of Central Asia is confirmed by a mass of examples from Scythian felt helmets from Pazyryk to the headgear of the Dalai Lama presented in the table compiled by the explorer of the Pazyryk barrows, Polos'mak. There are pictures of this headdress on Kushan coins and Sassanian reliefs. A decorated with a pearl cap can be seen on a sculptural image of a man with a bowl from Gandhara. But truly unique painting on canvas from Xinjiang II century with the image of Huwisha, in a crown of this type, decorated with pearls and other jewelry. Later analogies lead us again to Penjikent - the painting depicting the Deity of Grain. In such caps on the works of art on the Silk Road depicted Sogdians - the merchant's figure from Shikshin is one of the examples. Among the early medieval coins minted in the Semirechie are several types with the image of the ruler's head in a similar headdress, one of them is associated with the formidable name of Turgesh khagan Suluk (715-738), a protector of the Transoxiana, who did not let the Arabs sleep peacefully.

In general all representations viewed here support the viewpoint that medieval art of Ustrushana reflect various cultural traditions.