

THE

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MEDALS COMMEMORATING



THE MOUNTAIN JEWS



FEATURING:

MEDALS OF JEWISH COLONIZATION IN SOVIET RUSSIA by Ira Rezak

FROM STONES TO SHEKELS by Charles Catlett

HEBREW MAGIC SQUARES by Simcha Kuritzky

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COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS OF MOUNTAIN JEWS

By Dr. Vladimir Bernshtam

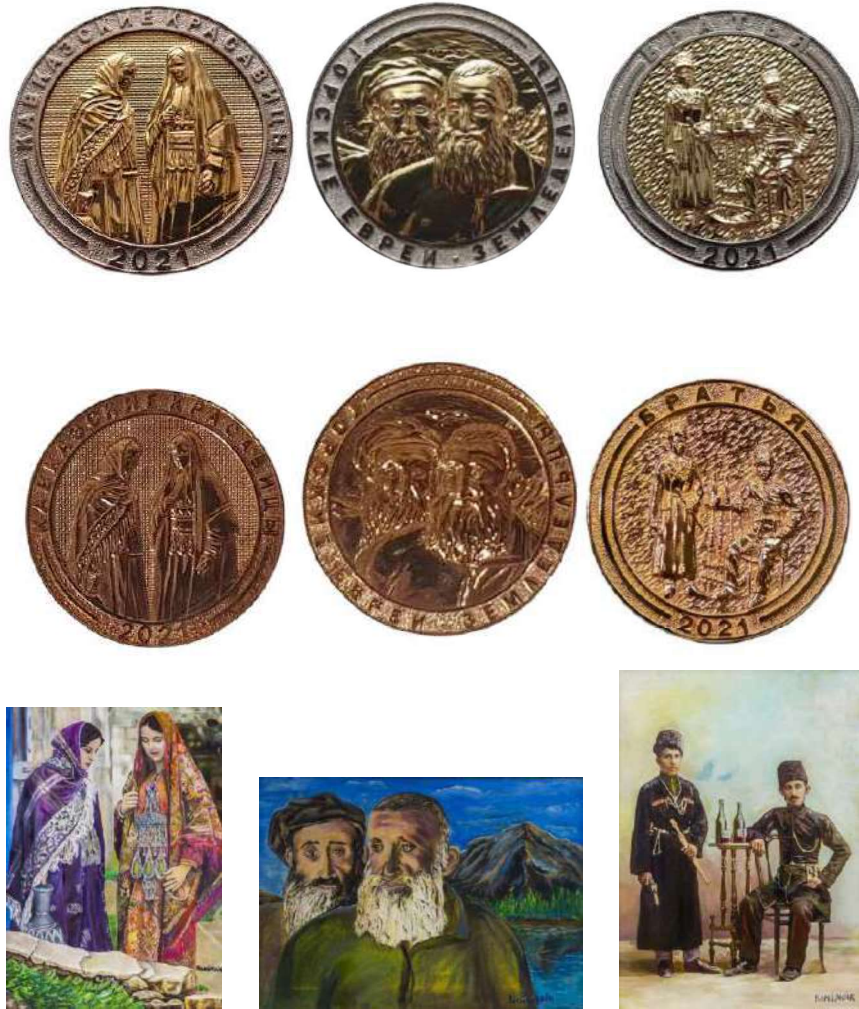
In 2021, Israeli artist Rami Meir began making a series of medals dedicated to Mountain Jews. Mountain Jews or Gorsky Jews are Jews of the eastern and northern Caucasus, mainly Azerbaijan, and various republics in the Russian Federation: Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia, and Kabardino-Balkaria. The Mountain Jews are the descendants of Persian Jews from Iran. Mountain Jews took shape as a community after Qajar Iran ceded the areas in which they lived to the Russian Empire as part of the Treaty of Gulistan of 1813. The forerunners of the Mountain Jewish community have inhabited Ancient Persia from the 5th century BCE. The language spoken by Mountain Jews, called Judeo-Tat, is an ancient Southwest Iranian language, which integrates many elements of Ancient Hebrew. Mountain Jews came to Persia from Ancient Israel in the 8th century BCE. They were known as skilled warriors and riders. Living in the Caucasus, they were engaged in gardening, winemaking, carpet weaving and fabrics, leather, fish and other crafts traditional for the Caucasus. In total, there are more than 250 thousand Mountain Jews in the world. Most of them currently live in Israel (140-160 thousand), as well as in the United States (40 thousand).

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The artist Rami Meir, the author of the medals described below was born on April 11, 1962 in Baku, the capital of the Azerbaijan SSR, into a family of Mountain Jews. His birth name is Rachamim Migirov. Rami Meir studied at Baku Art College where he specialized in embossing on art objects and jewelry. He started taking interest in pictorial art also in his student days. He began to study styles and artistic movements and try out various techniques all by himself. However, Rami Meir started painting professionally only at a mature age. He began to create the history of his people, the Mountain Jews of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia, in his paintings.

The basis for the images on the medals "Mountain Jews", created by the artist, was a series of paintings by Rami Meir "Mountain Jews", on which, based on historical documents, he recreated the life, crafts, clothes, jewelry of the Mountain Jews of Azerbaijan and Dagestan. In 2021, 3 types of medals were created (Fig. 1 - 6). Each type of medal was made from two types of metals: the first from gold and silver (Fig. 1-3), and the second from bronze (Fig. 4-6). The obverses of these medals depict scenes from three paintings by Rami Meir (Fig. 7-9). The reverses of all medals depict Jewish symbols, the inscription: "Mountain Jews" in Russian and Hebrew, as well as the name of the author in English: "Rami Meir" (Fig. 10, 11). On the edge of medals made of precious metals there is a stamp with information about the fineness of gold (585) and silver (925) (Fig. 12).

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“Caucasian Beauties” Medal in silver and gold, in bronze, and in painting; “Mountain Jewish Farmers” medal in gold and silver, bronze, and painting; “Brothers” medal in gold and silver, in bronze, and in painting.

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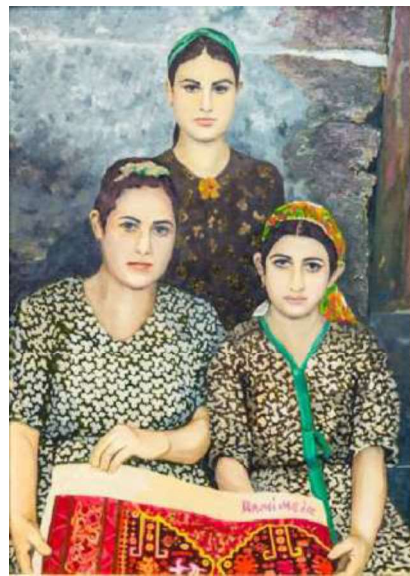


The reverse of the medal in silver and gold; the bronze medal reverse; the stamp on edge.

In 2022, the “Carpet Weaving” medal was issued (Fig. 13), on the obverse of which is a drawing of Rami Meir’s painting “Guba Carpet Weavers” (Fig. 14).

All medals are made using the casting technique with subsequent manual processing. Precious metal medals have a diameter of 30 mm, a thickness of 3 mm, and a weight of 21 grams, bronze medals with a diameter of 30 mm and a thickness of 3 mm have a weight of 18.02 grams.

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“Carpet Weaving” medal in gold with silver, in bronze, and in painting.

(The author used materials from Rami Meir’s personal site <https://ramimeir.com>).