



UNIVERSITÀ DI NAPOLI L'ORIENTALE
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THE ITALIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION IN AFGHANISTAN

THE COINS FROM TAPA SARDAR AND GHAZNI

Michael Alram and Arturo Annucci



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With contributions by

Roberta Giunta and Giovanni Verardi



ISMEO

In collaboration with

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MUSEUM

ÖAW
Österreichische
Akademie der
Wissenschaften

Österreichisches
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ROMA 2026

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Giuseppe Tucci in the courtyard of the Ghaznavid Palace in Ghazni, 1966

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PREFACE

The publication of this volume on Ghazni coins is the happy conclusion of a long story, spanning several generations of scholars and reflecting, in its complexity, numerous aspects of the history of research *in* Afghanistan and *on* Afghanistan.

The first of these generations—that involved in the excavations carried out between 1957 and 1976—made fundamental scientific contributions. Among these, the accuracy of the documentation should not be overlooked, since it has enabled subsequent generations of scholars to continue working assiduously on archaeological data even in the absence of new excavations. An important part of the documentation produced are the coin casts, without which this volume would never have seen the light of day, because the original finds were lost during the chaotic events that have marked Afghanistan's recent history since the late 1970s. More details are provided by the Authors. I have, however, the very pleasant task of offering readers some additional information about this book that will, I hope, make them appreciate its value even more.

The Authors are two scholars who well represent the transgenerational history of which this work is an expression. Michael Alram's reputation is such that he needs no introduction, but I would like to recall that significant progress in numismatic studies regarding areas and periods that are still little-known is due to him—not only for his notable personal contribution, but also for his generous commitment to the continuity and prestige of such studies. By broadening the scope of the Viennese tradition inherited from Robert Göbl, Michael Alram has paved the way for younger colleagues, now established and brilliant scholars who together form a kind of vital ecosystem. Among them is Arturo Annucci, a member of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan, which is administered by ISMEO (The International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies) and has always had strong roots in the University of Naples L'Orientale. In fact, Arturo Annucci trained at L'Orientale, and his early encounter with Michael Alram and the Viennese school gave his talent and studies a firm direction and definition.

The publication in a single volume of the coins from Tapa Sardar, the Buddhist settlement on the hill of the same name, and those from the Islamic sites of Ghazni—which sees the collaboration of a great scholar at the height of his career and a young scholar at the beginning of his—is significant for a number of reasons, which are listed below in no particular order.

Firstly, it strengthens a long-standing relationship between the ISMEO Archaeological Missions and the Viennese numismatic school, as the Authors explain in their Forewords. I will limit myself here to emphasising that it is the relationship with archaeology tout court that represents one of the most solid theoretical foundations of the Viennese numismatic school, a circumstance which, although common in the field of 'Classical' studies, cannot be taken for granted in Asian studies.

The corpus of Ghazni coins analysed here consists of 206 specimens (100 from Tapa Sardar, 106 from Islamic sites), which together cover a long period of time, from the end of the 1st/beginning of the 2nd century to the 20th century CE, and constitute, despite their heterogeneity, original documentary material whose importance can hardly be overestimated.

With all the limitations that this formidable work has had to face (due to gaps in knowledge, poor material preservation, and weak or absent parallels for comparison), which the Authors explain clearly, it remains, for Afghanistan, the first of its kind: a rigorous catalogue of excavated coins, accompanied by an equally rigorous overview of the regional and supra-regional history of their production and circulation, involving not only Ghazni and Afghanistan, but also—and throughout the long time period and all the historical phases covered by the coin assemblage—the areas with which Ghazni and Afghanistan were politically and economically connected. In this extraordinary overview, critically compiled on the basis of the data currently available, the coins

from Ghazni include specimens documented archaeologically for the first time, thus broadening the debate not only in numismatics but also in historiography.

Secondly, this volume presents a condensed story of cultural resilience, which has made it possible to collect archaeological data, transmit it, explore its meaning, and transform it into material of historical significance. The first part of this story coincides with the most thriving period for archaeological research in Afghanistan. In the years following World War II, Afghanistan saw a proliferation of excavations and surveys, with the arrival of various foreign missions (after almost thirty years of exclusively French presence) and the first Afghan-led excavations under C. Mustamindi (a prelude to the founding of the Archaeology Institute of Afghanistan). During this period, research also benefited from advances in scientific archaeology, which were particularly transformative in the 1970s. However, the Soviet occupation in 1979 and the long years of civil war that followed put an end to all archaeological initiatives. The brief return of peace in 2001, with the fall of the first Taliban regime and the establishment of a fragile democracy, was followed by more difficult years, especially for the civilian population—and consequently for all cultural activities, including field research. In the meantime, however, research based on archive materials never ceased. This process, which continued unabated despite the adverse conditions, enabled a young and brilliant scholar such as Arturo Annucci to develop his skills and join a project led by one of the foremost scholars in the field. The project has also benefited from the generous contributions of Giovanni Verardi and Roberta Giunta, who provided the archaeological framework for the coins from Tapa Sardar and Islamic Ghazni, respectively. Giovanni Verardi, although younger than Maurizio Taddei, participated in the Tapa Sardar excavations directed by the latter and may therefore be considered a representative of that first generation mentioned above. Roberta Giunta, deputy director of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan and head of the ‘Islamic Ghazni’ section, like the present writer (although younger) is instead a member of the ‘middle’ generation that has in some way acted as a bridge between the foundations laid by Umberto Scerrato, Maurizio Taddei and Giovanni Verardi and the new generation of scholars—to which Arturo Annucci belongs—who are chronologically disconnected from pre-conflict Afghanistan. In short, this publication is, as mentioned, also the result of a transgenerational history.

But there is a third aspect that I would like to highlight here. When Giuseppe Tucci founded the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan in 1957, the initial programme was to conduct archaeological research on Islamic Ghazni, which at the time was known mainly from written sources but still little known in terms of material evidence.

However, very soon, the excavations and surveys aimed at uncovering material remains of the Islamic period were joined by the exploration of pre-Islamic contexts and, although the two areas of expertise remained clearly and appropriately distinct (each entrusted to highly trained and insightful scholars), Ghazni offered the possibility of crossing this boundary.

It did not escape the notice of the archaeologists who came to Ghazni to investigate the medieval Islamic city that the area’s archaeological interest was not limited to this, but extended far back in time, as controversial sources indeed suggested. It was Umberto Scerrato—at the time involved in the excavation of the Ghaznavid Palace—who immediately expanded the boundaries of the research, not only with the hypothesis of a pre-Islamic date for a large quadrangular enclosure (1,200 × 600m; see R. Giunta in this volume) identified southwest of the Palace, but also with the recognition and reporting of the archaeological potential of the Tapa Sardar hill. Surveys began there in 1959, and then excavations conducted regularly from 1967 onwards revealed a large Buddhist settlement which, due to its history and characteristics, proved to be one of the most important in the field of Buddhist archaeology in Afghanistan known to date.

The discoveries made by the excavations and surveys conducted by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan, although incomplete due to the dramatic events that have engulfed Afghanistan since the late 1970s, throw light on the question of the identification of Ghazni with certain toponyms mentioned in the sporadic pre-Islamic sources that have come down to us.

While the identification of Ghazni with the Gázaca or Gāzaca mentioned by Ptolemy seems to be ruled out, there are other possibilities: in Classical sources, ‘Ἀλεξάνδρεια/ Ἀλεξανδρόπολις in Arachosia or Ortospana/*Oryospana, and later, the Hexina described by the Chinese monk, pilgrim and diplomat Xuanzang in the 7th century.

The fact remains that Ghazni was a key point in a regional and supra-regional road system connecting the areas north and south of the Hindu Kush—and above all, in the so-called ‘southern route’, which from Kabul to Kandahar, proceeding southwards over a series of relatively easy passes, leads to the middle course of the Indus. In all likelihood, this favourable position was the basis of its fortune as a busy commercial centre where traffic between Iran, Central Asia and India converged, as evidenced by Arabian geographical accounts.

It was long believed that in pre-Islamic times Ghazni had remained largely marginalised with respect to these major communication routes, but archaeological research has confirmed the vitality of the ‘southern route’ and opened up new perspectives for study. Of course, history is not made of ifs and buts, but we cannot help thinking that, if field research had continued, the boundary crossing mentioned above would have taken place sooner or later, and that today we would perhaps know something more about the flow of history beneath the course of momentous events. The pre-Islamic/Islamic division is based on categories that represent undeniable specificities, but it also draws an artificial line that risks making us lose sight of important relationships and connections. I find it symbolically significant that, in this study, the oldest coin in the Islamic section is a Hindu Shahi coin found in the Ghaznavid Palace, and the oldest Islamic coin, Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-Ghaffār’s fals, comes from Tapa Sardar. It would seem that the many merits of this publication include that of having marked a first milestone in this boundary crossing.

In short, this work concludes a long journey but also traces a projection into the future. In such difficult times for Afghanistan, every advance in knowledge, every systematic revision of data that gives substance to history, represents something more than scientific progress: it is also a civil contribution against the cultural marginalisation of the country and gives hope for change.

Anna Filigenzi
*Director of the Italian Archaeological
 Mission in Afghanistan*

July 2025

FOREWORDS
BY THE AUTHORS

FOREWORD

by Michael Alram

When Anna Filigenzi once asked me during the conferences on *Coins, Art and Chronology II* held in Kyoto and Vienna in 2008 (Alram *et al.* 2010) whether I might be interested in working on the coins found in Tapa Sardar, I spontaneously agreed, without realizing how long it would actually take until the work would finally be completed. It should be added that Maurizio Taddei, the director of the excavation of this Buddhist sanctuary near Ghazni, had already entrusted the publication of the coins to David MacDowall in the 1970s. David MacDowall also gave an initial report at the *Twelfth International Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists* in Helsinki in 1993.¹ Unfortunately, however, he never brought his work to publication. It was also subsequently no longer possible for me to get in touch with David, whom I had already got to know and greatly esteemed during my student days and with whom I was later in continuous contact, sharing numerous research interests, and to exchange ideas with him in this regard. David MacDowall passed away on 8 August 2024 at a respectable age. His publications have been groundbreaking in numerous areas of the monetary history of the Indo-Iranian borderlands. His death is a great loss, and we will always honour his memory.

As can be seen from the title of our publication, this volume deals not only with the coins found in Tapa Sardar but also with those from the excavations of the Italian Archaeological Mission in neighbouring Ghazni, which focused on the Ghaznavid Palace and the House of Lustrewares. The decisive impetus for this came from Arturo Annucci, who had come to Vienna from Naples for two semesters as a guest student for his dissertation and with whom I finally devised the plan to publish the coins found in Tapa Sardar together with those from the Islamic Ghazni, which had been entrusted to him by Roberta Giunta for study and publication. This gave us the unique opportunity to systematically examine the coin circulation of a region on the basis of coin finds from two documented archaeological excavations, from the Kushans to well into the Islamic period. This was complemented by Annucci's dissertation, which focused on the relations of power and monetary economy in the eastern Iranian borderlands from the 8th to the 11th century and on the interaction between Islamic and non-Islamic political groupings during this period (Annucci 2024a).

Our project was connected to a project funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), which was led by Deborah Klimburg-Salter at the Institute of Art History (University of Vienna) and in which I acted as National Research Partner together with Klaus Vondrovec (Coin Cabinet of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna).² The aim of this project, which also included a special numismatic component, was to define the cultural history of the kingdoms of the Early/Turk and Late/Hindu Shahis, which from the 7th to the 10th century extended over eastern Afghanistan and the north-west of the Indian subcontinent (Gandhara, Swat, Gilgit). Despite the importance of these kingdoms in the successful defence against the Arabs, as well as for the history of later Buddhist art and culture and for the emergence of Islamic art in the eastern border regions of the Islamic caliphate, the cultural history of this period, which lasted almost 300 years, has never been the subject of a comprehensive study. The numismatic legacy in particular plays a decisive role in researching the political processes as well as the economic and cultural exchange. In this regard, the coins found at Tapa Sardar and Ghazni are of particular importance, especially as they are among the few fully documented numismatic complexes that come from regular excavations

¹ Cf. the references in Verardi and Paparatti 2004: 94 and Verardi 2010: 344.

² Austrian Science Fund (FWF), Project number 31246-G25: *Cultural Formation and Transformation: Shahi Buddhist Art and Architecture from Afghanistan to the West Tibetan Frontier at the Dawn of the Islamic Era* (duration: 2018–2023).

and thus provide an unadulterated insight into monetary circulation in the region from the 2nd to the 15th century and beyond.³ In addition, the coins also give us the opportunity to at least rudimentarily tell the history of the region on the basis of original documents. Likewise, it is important to relate the numismatic findings to the archaeological, epigraphic and literary evidence. It should be noted, however, that due to the overall severely limited source base, we very quickly reach our limits, and much still remains in the dark.

The present project stands in a long tradition that links the ‘Viennese Numismatic School’ founded by Robert Göbl with the Italian Archaeological Missions in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Its beginnings date back to 1962, when Domenico Faccenna entrusted Robert Göbl (1976) with the publication of the coins found during his excavations in Butkara I (Swat, Pakistan). Since then, the connections have never been broken off. More recently, Anna Filigenzi, who took over as head of the Italian Mission in Afghanistan in 2004, carried out one of her projects at the then Institute for the Study of the Ancient Culture of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (now part of the Department of Classics of the Austrian Archaeological Institute) from 2010 to 2014, further strengthening the links.⁴ Last but not least, the collaboration with the Italian Archaeological Mission in the Swat Valley under the direction of Luca M. Olivieri has to be mentioned, in the course of which my student Ehsan Shavarebi worked on the coins found in Bazira/Barikot (Shavarebi 2025). He and Arturo Annucci are also entrusted with the study and publication of the coins found in Udegram by Elisa Iori and Luca M. Olivieri.

The coins from Tapa Sardar have a clear focus on the Kushan period. A small group of extremely rare coins from the late period of the sanctuary date from the late Huns to the reign of the Turk Shahis. Robert Göbl’s studies are an indispensable basis for all these coins and for understanding their minting contexts. For the Kushans, these are Göbl (1984) and (1993), with Jongeward and Cribb (2015) as an important supplement. However, it should be noted that numerous questions regarding the chronology and mints are still the subject of controversy in the field of Kushan and Kushano-Sasanian numismatics. Although it was not possible for me to address all the open issues in detail within the scope of this paper, I felt it was important to at least mention those that I consider most significant in order to provide the reader with some guidance.

For Hunnic and Turkic coinage, Göbl 1967 is pathbreaking.⁵ This is supplemented by my own research⁶ and that of my students Matthias Pfisterer (2013) and Klaus Vondrovec (2014), in which new material has been prepared and analysed accordingly. Gyselen (2009a) provides a new basis for the important group of Zabulite copper coinage based on the Sasanian model under the rule of the Turk Shahis. The numeration of the individual coin types, which are referred to as ‘Emissionen’ in Göbl (1967), still follows Göbl’s system—here referred to as ‘Type’ for the sake of simplicity. Göbl’s numbers were also adopted in all recent studies, supplemented where necessary, and still form the international means of communication for addressing the individual coin issues.

Behind every publication, in addition to the authors responsible, there are a number of other people without whose help it would not have come about. First and foremost, there are the friends and colleagues who willingly offered their help, answered countless questions and were not afraid

³ Further numismatic studies that were carried out as part of the FWF project or are related to it concern the coins found in the excavations of Bazira/Barikot (Swat Valley; Shavarebi 2025) and Qol-e Tut (Kabul; Alram *et al.* forthcoming); in addition, there is a survey of the coins of the Turk and Hindu Shahis found in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Shavarebi and Annucci forthcoming) and—building on the study presented by David MacDowall (1968)—a new analysis and revised chronology of the coinage of the Hindu Shahis (Annucci forthcoming).

⁴ Austrian Science Fund (FWF), Project number P 21902: *The cultural history of Uddiyana 4th to 8th century CE*; cf. Filigenzi 2015.

⁵ For the coin legends, see Humbach 1966.

⁶ See in particular Alram 1996; 2000; 2014; 2016; 2018.

to enter into a critical discussion with the authors about the many problems presented by the material. The various workshops held as part of the FWF project led by Deborah Klimburg-Salter were particularly stimulating. In addition to Deborah, the participants included Arturo Annucci, Adam Hardy, Minoru Inaba, Tasha Kimmet, Gosia Leńko, Luca Olivieri, Ehsan Shavarebi, Ingo Strauch, Noémie Verdon and Klaus Vondrovec. I would also like to thank my Viennese colleagues Nikolaus Schindel, Florian Schwarz and Fabrizio Sinisi, who supported our project in various ways. I am also indebted to Heinz Bons, Joe Cribb, Rika Gyselen, Hodge Mehdi Malek, Zafar Paiman, Aman ur Rahman, Jean-Pierre Righetti, Rüdiger Schmitt, Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis and Nicholas Sims-Williams for their advice and help. Special thanks are due to Sophie Francis Kidd and Nicola Wood for their English translations and proofreading.

The coins found at Tapa Sardar were also part of a cooperation project between the Coin Cabinet of the Kunsthistorisches Museum and the Numismatic Research Group of the Department of Classics at the Austrian Archaeological Institute (AAI), which aims to analyse various coin finds from Afghanistan and Pakistan. I would like to thank Klaus Vondrovec, my successor as director of the Coin Cabinet, and Nikolaus Schindel, head of the Numismatic Research Group at the AAI, for their constant support.

I am particularly grateful to Anna Filigenzi, Roberta Giunta and Chiara Visconti from the University of Naples L'Orientale, without whose commitment the project could not have been realized. And last but not least, special mention should be made of Giovanni Verardi, who spontaneously agreed to return to Tapa Sardar after such a long time to contribute to this publication.

Michael Alram
December 2024

POST SCRIPTUM

At the beginning of September 2025, I received news that the long-awaited book by Joe Cribb and Robert Bracey, *Kushan Coins and History* (Cribb and Bracey 2025), had finally been published. At the same time, the review process for our book had just been completed and the manuscript was ready to go to layout. It was therefore no longer possible for me to work through this comprehensive, two-volume magnum opus and take it into account in my commentaries on the Kushan and Kushan-Sasanian coins from Tapa Sardar. However, I have endeavoured to include corresponding references to the relevant passages in Cribb and Bracey 2025 in my footnotes.

The main cornerstones of the theses put forward by Joe Cribb and Robert Bracey (2025) remain unchanged from older publications (see in particular Jongeward and Cribb 2015, Cribb 2018 and Cribb 2021a), so that the points of criticism I raise here – particularly regarding the minting locations and the chronology of the Kushano-Sasanian coin series – remain valid. It is worth highlighting the authors' efforts to 'explain how inferences are made and respect the degrees of doubt and language of probability which underpins inferences' and '...to distinguish between those inferences which are merely possibilities, and those which seem plausible, or are far the most probable interpretation of evidence' (Cribb and Bracey 2025: 13). However, the diversity and heterogeneity of the sources cited and commented on by Cribb and Bracey inevitably mean that this noble intention often cannot be fulfilled. A note should be made regarding the authors' decision to present the coins in the form of a type catalogue. Particularly in the case of the extensive copper coinage, this leads to the problem that, due to the poor minting and preservation of the coins, the type variants and stylistic groupings meticulously determined by the authors are often difficult or impossible for the user to follow. Likewise, the important and extensive comments on the die links within the gold coinage cannot be verified without appropriate documentation.

Whatever criticism may still be raised, this work undoubtedly represents another milestone in Kushan numismatics, for which the two authors deserve our utmost congratulations. It is the starting point for all future research on the Kushans and will keep scholars busy for decades to come.

Michael Atram
September 2025

FOREWORD

by Arturo Annucci

At the beginning of my master's programme in 2016, Roberta Giunta offered me the opportunity to study the coins found in the Islamic sites of Ghazni by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan. This numismatic material has never been the subject of in-depth research, let alone any publication, except for a preliminary note published by Giunta in the *Annali* of the Italian Institute of Numismatics (Giunta 2003a). This first research of mine—focused entirely on Islamic and Iranian numismatics—turned out to be more complicated than expected, especially due to the impossibility of studying the original specimens, lost during the chaotic events that affected Afghanistan. The only documentation consisted of plaster casts and photographs produced by the mission members before leaving the country in 1978 and shown to me by Giunta among the materials held at the University of Naples L'Orientale.

The core of the present project developed during my first study period at the Münzkabinett in Vienna in 2018. Michael Alram—then director of the Cabinet—while introducing me to the study of the numismatics of the Iranian territories, showed me the casts of the coins found at the Buddhist site of Tapa Sardar, which he had received from Anna Filigenzi. We decided to include the Islamic coins of Tapa Sardar in my final dissertation for the master's thesis, defended in the autumn of 2018 at the University of Naples L'Orientale. Furthermore, we agreed on publishing the whole corpus of coins in a single volume later on, bringing together the material from Tapa Sardar and the Islamic sites and starting this project, which sees renewed collaboration between the Italian Archaeological Missions in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the 'Viennese Numismatic School'.

A new organization of the entire documentation of the numismatic material was possible thanks to the project *Buddhist and Islamic Archaeological Data from Ghazni, Afghanistan. A multidisciplinary web-based archive for the managing, study, and preservation of an endangered cultural heritage*, co-financed by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung of Düsseldorf and the University of Naples L'Orientale. The project, directed by Roberta Giunta and Anna Filigenzi, involved the management and study of the whole of the documentation collected by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan to preserve its integrity by merging the data into a database and making it available to the public, thanks to a website.⁷ Later, some of the casts were also included in a permanent exhibition in the Museo Orientale 'Umberto Scerrato', established in 2012 by the University of Naples L'Orientale, as part of the important achievements of the first members of the mission that allowed the study of the material published here.

The study's first results on the Islamic material were presented at the *European Association for South Asian Archaeology and Art* (Naples, 2–6 July 2018) (Annucci 2018), and the round table *Textes et contextes. Recherches en cours sur le monde oriental iranien (IXe-XVe s.)*.⁸ Further opportunities to present the advances in researching the Ghazni material were the workshops of the project *Cultural Formation and Transformation: Shahi Buddhist Art and Architecture from Afghanistan to the West Tibetan Frontier at the Dawn of the Islamic Era* financed by the Austrian Science Fund (Project number 31246-G25) and directed by D. Klimburg-Salter (University of Vienna).

⁷ <https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/>. In 2019, it was decided to keep the numismatic section of the mission's website closed to the public, pending completion of the studies. The publication of this research also corresponds to the opening of this section, where all the technical information and classifications of the numismatic material are collected.

⁸ The presentation was then published in the proceedings of the round table (Allegranzi and Laviola 2020; Annucci 2020).

The coins included in part ‘B’ attest to a more heterogeneous classification than those of part ‘A’: for the latter, the Kushan coins represent the central core; for the coins from the 9th century onwards, overall, a greater variety is recorded, even though there are remarkable groups of coins (i.e. Hindu Shahis, Ghaznavids, Ghurids). The earlier coins included in this part of the volume are those struck by the Hindu Shahis, the Brahmanic dynasty who controlled the territories between Kabulistan, Gandhara and Uddiyana from the 9th century onwards and whose political and economic roles had a great impact on the local coinage, including the Islamic one. Despite the few coins from archaeological excavations, studies on Hindu Shahi numismatics have progressed significantly, starting from the work of MacDowall (1968), who analysed the material until the Islamic conquest. F. Schwarz partially dealt with this topic, especially focusing on the first influence that the Hindu Shahi issues had on the Islamic ones (SNAT 1995). Abdur Rahman (1976) has provided critical historical clues about this dynasty by analysing historical, epigraphic and numismatic sources. All these studies have been the starting point for new research on the Hindu Shahi coinage’s chronology (Annucci forthcoming) that I follow in the present volume.

The research conducted during my doctoral years (Annucci 2024a) has allowed me to complete other aspects of this project, trying to include the Islamic coin finds in the broader context of the Indo-Iranian borderlands (Afghanistan and Pakistan). The Islamic coinage of this period represents a little-researched topic, mainly due to its heterogeneous nature and the difficulties of cataloguing. For the field of Islamic numismatics, we can argue that the direction of the research has led to a good knowledge of the coin legends, but further studies are required regarding the historical and geographical contexts and the circulation areas. Museum collections and non-institutional databases play an essential role in our knowledge of Islamic numismatics. Among the associated museum collections or research centres, the main one is the Forschungsstelle für Islamische Numismatik Tübingen (FINT). Indeed, the most important publications in this field consist of the volumes of the *Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum* of Tübingen (SNAT), which, for the areas of our interest, present the specimens from Ghazni and Kabul (SNAT 1995).

The coin provenance is also extremely heterogeneous: approximately 70% come from the Ghaznavid Palace; a smaller part comes from the other Islamic areas, the House of the Lustrewares and the area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd; finally, some of them were retrieved in the site of Tapa Sardar. These data have allowed us to analyse—within limits—the numismatic data in the archaeological contexts, investigating the link between the historical phases and the coin finds, also in the light of the studies on the other classes of materials that have been carried out over the years.

Finally, the analysis of this numismatic material is important because of the scarcity of studies of coin finds—especially Islamic—from the territories of present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan and north-western India. We hope that new studies, some of which are already underway, can provide further information on the monetary circulation of these areas, especially during the years of the Islamic advance.

Various people helped with their advice and support to complete this volume. I am grateful to the members of the Shahi project directed by Deborah Klimburg-Salter; in addition to the director herself, thanks are due to all the members of the project: Michael Alram, Adam Hardy, Minoru Inaba, Tasha Kimmert, Gosia Leńko, Luca Olivieri, Ehsan Shavarebi, Ingo Strauch, Noémie Verdon and Klaus Vondrovec.

Thanks go to Florian Schwarz and Fabrizio Sinisi of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and Michele Bernardini of the University of Naples L’Orientale, whose help was indispensable during my research years. My thanks also go to Sebastian Hanstein, director of the Forschungsstelle für islamische Numismatik in Tübingen (Germany), and Lutz Ilisch for their precious advice on Islamic coinage and the availability offered to me. Thanks likewise go to Stephen Album, Joe Cribb, John Deyell, Nicholas Sims-Williams and Luke Treadwell. I am grateful to Nicola Wood for proofreading the English text.

My heartfelt thanks go to Anna Filigenzi—director of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan and of the Buddhist Ghazni Project—and Roberta Giunta—vice-director of the mission, director of the Islamic Ghazni project and my mentor—for their support and contribution to this publication. I would also like to thank all the current members of the mission; for the Islamic part, Viola Allegranzi, Agnese Fusaro, Valentina Laviola and Martina Massullo; for the Buddhist part, Giulia Forgione. Finally, thanks go to Chiara Visconti, director of the *Series Maior*.

Arturo Annucci
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PART A:
THE COINS FROM THE 2ND TO THE 8TH CENTURY

Michael Alram
with a contribution by Giovanni Verardi

INTRODUCTION

The coin finds presented in Part A originate mainly from the excavations at Tapa Sardar. The Buddhist complex of Tapa Sardar is located 4 km north-east of the town of Ghazni in east-central Afghanistan (Appendix III, Figures 1, 2). It is situated on a hill overlooking the Dasht-i Manara plain along the old ‘southern route’ that still connects Kabul and Kandahar. When Alexander the Great conquered the Achaemenid Empire, his route also took him through Ghazni, which according to Claude Rapin is probably to be identified with *Ortospana*/**Oryospana* of the ancient sources (Rapin and Grenet 2018: 147–56).¹ At that time, Ghazni belonged to the Achaemenid satrapy of Arachosia (*Harauvatish*),² whose administrative centre is assumed to have been in Kandahar (*Shahr-i Kona*), where the seat of the satrap was also located (Ball 2021: 359–61; Petrie 2021: 30–36). *Sattagydia* (*Thataghush*/*Bannu Basin*), which borders on the east, was probably also administered from Arachosia. North of Arachosia lay the *Paropamisadae* and *Gandhara* (*Peshawar Valley*), which were administratively closely connected to the Bactrian satrapy (Petrie 2021: 100–03).³

In these eastern peripheral areas of the Achaemenid Empire, rule remained predominantly in the hands of local princes or petty kings who, on the one hand, acted within the Achaemenid imperial administration and, on the other, enjoyed great independence in their own territories (Petrie 2021: 99–102). This testifies to rather small-scale ruling structures, which can also be observed in later times and are also reflected accordingly in the coinage.

After Alexander’s death in 323 BCE, the empire was divided among his generals. The entire east from Syria to Mesopotamia, Iran and Central Asia fell to Seleukos (Strootman 2021). However, Seleukos had to give up *Gandhara*, *Paropamisadae* and parts of Arachosia. Here Chandragupta stood in his way and took possession of these territories for the Indian Maurya Empire.⁴ Under Chandragupta’s grandson, Ashoka (c.268–232 BCE), the Maurya Empire experienced its greatest flowering (Jansari 2021). Ashoka is also known as a great promoter of Buddhism. His edicts scattered throughout the empire bear eloquent testimony to this. In the north-west, they are known from Kandahar (in Greek and Aramaic), from Laghman near Jalalabad (Aramaic) and from the Peshawar Valley from Manshera and Shabazgarhi (*Gandhari* in *Kharoshthi* script) (Falk 2006).

From the perspective of monetary development, it should be noted that beginning with Alexander, but especially under Seleucid and Mauryan rule, monetarization in the Indo-Iranian borderlands progressed decisively. This went hand in hand with increased urbanization of the region.

At the beginning of the 2nd century BCE, *Paropamisadae*/*Kabulistan*, *Arachosia*/*Zabulistan* and *Gandhara* fell into the hands of the Greek kings of Bactria, who had broken away from the Seleucid state in around 250 BCE, crossed the Hindu Kush and extended their empire to the east of the Punjab. Whether and for how long the entire area of Arachosia/*Zabulistan* was under the ambit of the Greek kings is unclear. The area bordered *Drangiana*/*Sistan* to the west, which was already part of the Parthian sphere of influence (Ball 2021). The borders between the Parthians and the Indo-Greeks were probably fluid, but it can be assumed that the Greek kings first lost the northern part of Arachosia with Ghazni and Gardez to the Indo-Scythians. In the 1st century BCE, the latter set out to oust the Indo-Greek kings from the Indo-Iranian borderlands, but were subsequently forced to give way to the Indo-Parthians. They were joined by the Yuezhi, who finally founded the Kushan Empire and thus ensured stable ruling structures again for over 100 years. It

¹ See the maps in Rapin and Grenet 2018: 144, fig. 1 and Petrie 2021: 38, fig. 3.6.

² On the geographical extent of Arachosia, see Ball 2021: 357–59; cf. also the map in Petrie 2021: 32, fig. 3.2.

³ On the ‘Indo-Iranian frontier’, see Callieri 2012 and Rapin and Grenet 2018: 158–61, 163–67.

⁴ On this, most recently Strootman 2021: 13–14 and Petrie 2021: 41–43.

can be assumed that the area around Ghazni was under Kushan rule by the beginning of the 2nd century at the latest (see section 1.1.b).

As already mentioned, Ghazni was situated on the important connecting road that linked Kandahar with Kaboura/Kabul⁵ and Kapishi/Alexandria ad Caucasum (Begram).⁶ This road was part of a supraregional road system that encircled the Hindu Kush and was referred to as ‘the Old World’s eastern roundabout’ (Toynbee 1961: 4; Inaba 2015) (Appendix III, Figure 3). From Ghazni, important connections also led eastwards into the Indus Valley (Inaba forthcoming). Thus, one could reach Bannu (Akra) via Gardez and the Kurram or the Tochi Valley. Another connection to India led from Ghazni in a south-easterly direction over the Golam Pass to Multan (Petrie 2021: 97–99; Inaba forthcoming) (Appendix III, Figure 4).

In a north-westerly direction, one reached the valley of the Band-e Amir from Ghazni via the western foothills of the Hindu Kush (Koh-i-Baba Range), to Yakaulang (Ribat-e Karvan) and further to Guzgan (Western Bactria). From Yakaulang eastwards, the route led along the Hari Rud to Herat (Artacoana/Alexandria in Aria) and westwards to Bamiyan (Inaba 2012) (Appendix III, Figure 5). Ghazni was thus integrated into a network of regional and supraregional traffic routes and must certainly have been of strategic as well as economic importance. However, as yet no archaeological traces from pre-Kushan times have been found (Ball 2021).

The chronological framework of the 102 coins found in the course of the excavations at Tapa Sardar extends from the late first/beginning of the 2nd century CE to the first half of the 13th century, thus encompassing a period of more than 1,200 years (Appendix II, Figure 1). The centre of gravity of the coin influx clearly lies in the pre-Islamic period, and there in the time of the Kushan dynasty, representing 71% (73 coins) of the total amount (nos 1–83).

Unlike Cribb and Bracey (2025), I still do not believe that the chronology of the Kushan kings has been convincingly settled, but at least the beginning under Kujula Kadphises in the 1st century CE and the end around or after the middle of the 4th century, when the Kidarites had pushed the Kushans out of the Punjab as well, are undisputed.⁷ Contentious too is the issue of when the Sasanians ousted the Kushans from Bactria, Kabulistan, Zabulistan and Gandhara and started minting their own coinage in Kushanshahr.⁸ Here, in my opinion, the numismatic evidence clearly shows that the coinage of the Kushano-Sasanian governors cannot have started in Kabulistan and Gandhara before the late 3rd or early 4th century. The question of whether the western part of the Kushan Empire (Bactria and the regions south of the Hindu Kush to Gandhara) was subject to the Sasanians before this point in time, and if so to what degree, is still open to debate. At Tapa Sardar the Sasanians are present with a mere 3% (3 coins; nos 84–86). Providentially, alongside a Kushano-Sasanian copper coin of Shapur, these include two imperial drachms of Shapur II (309/10–379), the dating of which is undisputed.⁹ However, the length of Shapur’s reign, which lasted more than 70 years, makes them of only limited value for dating. After this there is a gap

⁵ On Kabul, cf. de Planhol 2012.

⁶ Kapishi is the old name of the Koh Daman plain north of Kabul (Fussman 2008: 119); its old urban administrative centre of the same name is identified with today’s Begram. Kapishi/Alexandria ad Caucasum was the meeting-point for the important traffic routes from Bactria and India; for a fundamental account accompanied by an in-depth analysis of the ancient sources, see Rapin and Grenet 2018.

⁷ This concerns the phasing out of the Kushan gold coinage under Shaka and Kipunadha in the Taxila/Punjab region; cf. Göbl 1993: 167–70; Cribb 2010: 100–02; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 149–51; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 104–09, 230–33.

⁸ The views of Göbl (1993), Cribb (2018; 2021) with Cribb and Bracey (2025) and Schindel (2020; 2025), are opposed to one another; see section 1.2.a for details.

⁹ However, the drachma no. 85 could also be an imitation, in which case it would be dated after 379 CE; see section 1.2.a.

of around 300 years, lasting until approximately 680 CE. Within this period of time, the region around Ghazni was under the dominion of the Hunnic Alkhan and Nezak kings, represented in the find material by a single late specimen dating to the late 6th/early 7th century (no. 87). The dynasty of the Early/Turk Shahis, who put an end to the rule of the Nezak after 661 CE, marks the second, albeit modest, peak in the find material at 7% (7 coins; nos 88–95). But the influx of coins breaks off well before the middle of the 8th century. It is particularly striking that the silver and aes coins of the Late/Hindu Shahis who superseded the Turk Shahis in Kabulistan, Zabulistan and Gandhara in around 820 CE, coinage that was produced in huge quantities, left no trace at Tapa Sardar.¹⁰ The coins that can be assigned to the Islamic period amount to 9% (9 coins, nos 100, 101, 117, 119, 120, 164, 175–177). However, these are largely surface finds and are probably associated with the subsequent use of this strategically important place (see part B, section 2.4).

Thus, the coin finds from Tapa Sardar are very unevenly distributed and do not yield a cohesive picture of the coins in circulation in the region. Apart from the Kushan period, all we have here are, as it were, discrete ‘spotlights’ from individual successive periods. Numerous links in the chain are missing, but their absence does not justify the drawing of sweeping conclusions about the historico-political or economic circumstances. Another factor to consider is that Tapa Sardar is a sanctuary, where the coin influx is subject to different rules than would pertain in the case of an urban settlement. Matters are complicated by the fact that only a part of the complex was able to be excavated.¹¹

When coins are found in archaeological excavations, they serve as more or less reliable aids to dating, if only as a *terminus post quem* in the form of a chronological reference point. As a rule, the image and script together with technical features enable the numismatist to identify the time and place it was struck with reasonable certainty. What we do not know, however, is how much time elapsed until the coin reached its final circulation area and when it was lost or deposited. Determining this period of time is only possible in a small number of cases. However, this factor is of decisive importance for dating within the context of archaeological stratigraphy. As mentioned above, at Tapa Sardar this is not the only problem we are confronted with: in many cases we cannot supply clear answers to our standard questions concerning the time and place of minting. Most of the coins bear neither an indication of a date nor the name of a mint. Where an issuer’s name appears, the period of rule—as in the case of the Kushan—is disputed or can only be roughly delimited. Moreover, many issuers remain anonymous or are only known from their coins. In these cases, their chronological placement can only be approximately established via comparisons of types, stylistic characteristics, metal quality, weights and other technical features.

The find evidence is not least also of decisive importance in determining the place where a coin was minted and the region in which it circulated. Whereas in ancient Greece or Rome we have recourse to a dense network of hoard and single finds from documented archaeological excavations, in Afghanistan there is virtually no such network. Most of the coins that have swamped the international market in their thousands over the past 50 years are chance finds or derive from illicit excavations, the precise location of which cannot be identified. The coin finds from Tapa Sardar thus have a very special significance in that they derive from a documented archaeological excavation. Within the context of a comparative find analysis, this stock of material should be interrelated with coin finds from other excavations in the region. However, here the limits are very narrowly set: in the environs of Tapa Sardar there are currently no secured coin finds from archaeological excavations that could be adduced for such analysis (cf. Appendix III, Figure 6).

¹⁰ In contrast to this is the find evidence at Ghazni, see part B, section 1.2.

¹¹ See Verardi 2010 and his contribution in the present volume.

Looking south, the excavations in Kandahar (Shahr-i Khona; approximately 350 km to the south-west of Ghazni) would provide an important point of reference. However, to date there is only a rough, insufficiently illustrated list of the coin finds from this site with inadequate identifications (MacDowall 1996; Helms 1997) which does not yield anything for comparison. Looking north, the excavations at Mes Aynak (Logar Province; c.180 km north-east of Ghazni) are of the very greatest importance. Systematic excavation of this vast site with Buddhist monastic complexes, settlements, metal-processing workshops and fortifications started in 2009 but came to an abrupt end with the return of the Taliban in August 2021.¹² While there is no stratigraphic documentation of the coins found at Mes Aynak with corresponding find lists, numismatic identifications, technical data and numbers of specimens, the published preliminary reports afford an approximate insight into what was uncovered (Mes Aynak 2011; 2013; Dovudi 2017). On the basis of what is known to date, the numismatic spectrum of Mes Aynak seems at all events to be not dissimilar to that of Tapa Sardar, extending from the first to the 8th century CE.

The situation is quite different with the documentation of the coin finds from the Buddhist complexes of Tepe Narenj and Qol-e Tut in the Kabul area, which were excavated by the Afghan Institute of Archaeology under the supervision of Zafar Paiman between 2004 and 2019 (Appendix II, Figures 4, 5). Here methodically impeccable documentation of the excavation is available, and the coins can be used as a clear reference point for Tapa Sardar (Paiman and Alram 2010; Paiman 2013; Alram 2013; Alram *et al.* forthcoming).¹³

Another invaluable ensemble for the circulation of coins in the region of Kabulistan (Kapishi-Kabul region) is the coins assembled by Charles Masson in Begram between 1833 and 1838 which were recently presented in an exemplary publication by Elizabeth Errington (2021). Furthermore, there is the evidence yielded by the systematic excavations of the DAFA at Begram that were undertaken in 1941, 1942 and 1946 under the supervision of Roman Ghirshman in the areas of Burj Abdullah, New Royal City and City Gate. Although these coins have never been published, handwritten notes on them exist, made by Robert Göbl in 1962 during his stay at the Afghan National Museum in Kabul on the basis of the original coins (Morris 2021).¹⁴ These at least represent a statistical reference point.

The excavations of the Italian Mission in ancient Uddiyana (Swat Valley, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan) assume particular importance. Exemplary find documentation of both the Buddhist complex of Butkara I (Göbl 1976) and the urban settlement of Barikot/Bazira exist (MacDowall and Callieri 2004), forming an excellent complement to each other and representing important points of reference for Tapa Sardar. Uddiyana was the bread basket of Gandhara. Although we still do not know the precise nature of Uddiyana's political connection to Gandhara and Kapishi, sources suggest that from the Kushans to the Hindu Shahis, the region was linked very closely with Gandhara and Kapishi, often under joint rule. The coin finds from Barikot deriving from the excavations from 1984 to 2022 (Appendix II, Figure 6) have recently been subjected to meticulous examination by my student Ehsan Shavarebi (2025). They convey an outstanding picture of coin circulation in Uddiyana and are firmly anchored in the flawlessly documented archaeological stratigraphy (Olivieri *et al.* 2019). Shavarebi also provides a conspectus of the most important find evidence from the Swat Valley and from Gandhara, on which I rely here. Attention should be drawn in particular to the evidence from the Hindu cave complex of Kashmir Smast that was laudably assembled by Nasim Khan (*et al.* 2008). However, caution is required here, especially as most of the material does not derive from documented archaeological excavations.

¹² Engel 2013; Klimburg-Salter 2018; Klimburg-Salter 2019; Filigenzi 2021.

¹³ Cf. also Paiman 2018 and Paiman and Filigenzi 2019.

¹⁴ The documents are in the archives of the Coin Cabinet of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna.

And finally, there is no way round Taxila. The coin finds assembled by Marshall (1951) give a rough overview of the vast number of coins excavated at various places there. However, they are of only limited use for modern comparative analysis. In this regard, special acknowledgement should be accorded to the studies by Gul Rahim Khan (Khan 2007; 2009; 2010; 2014), who re-classified the Kushan coins found at Taxila and supplied a critical commentary. It thus gives us a reliable data basis that also provides important points of reference for the adjacent regions.

This brief survey shows that the reference material adduced for evaluating coin circulation is of highly variable resilience and validity. Moreover, it amounts solely to points of light in the darkness that do not yet allow for a comprehensive reconstruction of coin circulation in the areas mentioned. Furthermore, it is not the author's intention to compile a complete record of coin finds from the excavations in Zabulistan, Kabulistan, Gandhara and the adjacent regions. For this, the published evidence is too heterogeneous, and the classification of the coins in many cases too imprecise or of little use as evidence on account of the lack of or poor-quality photographic documentation. As shown in exemplary fashion by Gul Rahim Khan in his work on the Kushan coins from Taxila, much will have to be re-examined and re-catalogued on the basis of the original specimens. In many cases, however, this is not even possible, as the coins are no longer accessible. This is also true of the coins from Tapa Sardar, which were stolen from the museum in Kabul. Their plaster casts have been preserved in the archives of ISMEO in Rome and were made available to me for analysis by Anna Filligenzi (cf. Appendix I). Owing to the often poor state of preservation of the originals, in many cases exact identification from the plaster casts presented a considerable challenge, and some of the typological details may therefore have remained undetected or been misread on my part. On the other hand, plaster casts can sometimes reveal details more clearly than photographs, especially in the case of coins that are in poor condition. The data relating to weight and diameter derive from the records of the excavators, while the die axes are consistently lacking. Special thanks are due to the staff of the photo laboratory of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, who compiled an outstanding photographic documentation of the plaster casts—which cannot, however, replace the originals.

1.1 Kushans

a. Kujula Kadphises

The first Kushan king whose name we know and who described himself as Kushan (Gr. ΚΟΡΕΝΑΟΥ, ΚΟΡΚΑΝ or ΧΟΡΑΝΣΥ; Khar. *kuṣaṇa*) is Kujula Kadphises. He not only left behind a rich numismatic heritage but is also named as the great-grandfather of Kanishka I (Bac. ΚΟΖΟΥΛΟ ΚΑΔΦΙΣΟ) in the Rabatak inscription set up by the latter.¹⁵ Under Kujula Kadphises the Kushans had already crossed the Hindu Kush and established a new power base in Kabulistan (Kapishi-Kabul region). From there, Kujula gradually succeeded in ousting the Indo-Parthians from Gandhara, parts of the Punjab and Sind, laying the foundations for the Kushan Empire in India. Kujula's coinage is, however, still very much heterogeneous, partly continuing encountered traditions and lacking uniformity, both in terms of typology and denomination.¹⁶ One of his main issues, which was probably minted over a lengthy period of time, follows the model of the Indo-Greek king Hermaios, showing on the obverse the diademed bust of the ruler and on the reverse a standing Heracles (Cribb and Bracey 2025: nos 9–17) (Figure 1b).¹⁷



Figure 1. Early Kushans

a. Anonymous imitation in the name of Hermaios, Æ, 8.73g. KHM GR23343; b. Kujula Kadphises, Æ, 9.77g. KHM GR 42308; c. Kujula Kadphises unofficial imitation, Æ, 5.68g. KHM GR44030

¹⁵ On the Rabatak inscription, see Sims-Williams and Cribb 1996 and Sims-Williams 2008a; on the name, Sims-Williams 2010: no. 218. For the titles and various spellings of Kujula Kadphises' name, see Cribb and Bracey 2025: 36–37.

¹⁶ For a survey of the coinage of Kujula Kadphises, cf. Alram 1999: 22–33, Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 21–26; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 32–42, 141–59; nos 1–32. On the gradual expansion of Kujula's realm from his power base in Paropamisadae southwards to Gandhara and the Punjab and northwards to Bactria, see now the convincing study by Sinisi 2022.

¹⁷ Heracles is well known from the coinage of the Greek kings in Bactria, but also found his way into Parthian coinage as the Iranian god of victory Verethragna; finally, Huvishka also put him on his gold dinars and copper coins (Göbl 1984: series 269, 886–895); cf. also Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 287. In the Kushan context, the image of Heracles is associated with the god Wesh (Oesho), who from Vima Kadphises onwards occupies a prominent place among the images of the gods on Kushan coins; see Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 282–83; Sinisi 2022: 103; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 37.

In keeping with Indo-Greek tradition, the inscription on the obverse is in Greek and on the reverse in Gandhari in Kharoshthi script. Kujula's name is rendered in Greek as ΚΑΔΦΙΣΗΣ or ΚΟΖΟΥΑΟ ΚΑΔΦΙΖΟΥ, in Gandhari as *Kujula Kasasa*. One remarkable element is the title of yabghu (Khar. *yavugasa*), encountered here for the first time on coins.¹⁸ These are made of a copper alloy and issued as tetradrachms on a reduced Indian standard (approx. 7/9g). Although the mint is assumed to be Kapishi (Begram),¹⁹ no cast-iron proof can be supplied. This hypothesis is primarily based on the coin finds gathered in and around Begram by Charles Masson.²⁰ Within this huge complex, Kujula's Heracles coppers constitute the second-largest group with 593 coins (9%), after the issues of Soter Megas (695 coins, 11%).²¹ This contrasts with the evidence from the systematic excavations carried out by DAFA under the supervision of Roman Ghirshman in 1941, 1942 and 1946 in the areas of Burj Abdullah, New Royal City and City Gate:²² here 443 coins came to light, the proportion of Kujula's coinage (mainly Heracles coppers) at 16% (73 coins) being more than double that of Soter Megas (30 coins, 7%) or Vima Kadphises (28 coins, 6%);²³ the great mass of coins derives from Kanishka I and his successors (47%, including imitations). It is also interesting to cast a brief glance at Taxila, where the Heracles coppers of Kujula Kadphises constitute a remarkably high proportion at over 1,800 specimens from a total of more than 12,000 coins recorded by Marshall (1951).²⁴

The area of circulation of the Heracles coppers, of which numerous underweight imitations with blundered images and legends were put into circulation (Figure 1c),²⁵ extended from Kabulistan across Gandhara and Uddiyana to Taxila.²⁶ In Uddiyana, Italian excavations at Butkara I uncovered 64 Heracles coppers, albeit exclusively imitations.²⁷ Five of these imitations were also found at Barikot (Shavarebi 2025: nos 81–85). In addition, mention should also be made of a votive deposit from the Buddhist site at Ranigat (Buner District, Gandhara), demonstrating how long Kujula's Heracles coppers were still available. Set into the floor of the west corridor of the large stupa, Japanese archaeologists found 14 copper coins ranging from Azes II to Vasudeva I, including one specimen of Kujula's Heracles coppers.²⁸

¹⁸ On the coin legends of Kujula, cf. Alram 1986: nos 1271–1285; on the Indian names and titles, see Falk 2010.

¹⁹ It can be deduced from the posthumous issues of Eucratides I, which show on the reverse the enthroned city goddess of Kapishi, that there was a mint at Kapishi; the inscription expressly names her as 'goddess of the city of Kapishi' (Khar. *kavishiye nagara devata*); cf. Boppearachchi 1991: series 24, nos 121–122 and Cribb 2021a: fig. 24.16.

²⁰ Of the originally more than 60,000 coins, 6,219 are documented in Errington 2021; see the survey in Cribb 2021a: 87–90, tabs 7, 8.

²¹ Cribb 2021a: 103–05; the data relating to the numbers of specimens seem to include both originals and imitations.

²² Cf. Alram 1999: 28; Morris 2021: 32–33. The data are based on the notes made by Robert Göbl in the National Museum of Afghanistan during his stay in Kabul in 1962, which are today preserved in the archives of the Coin Cabinet of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

²³ Here too caution is advised, since Göbl's notes make no distinction between original issues of Kujula and imitations.

²⁴ On this, see the comprehensive study by Kahn and Cribb 2012; however, no clear distinction between originals and imitations is drawn here either, and coins from hoards are also included.

²⁵ Some of their weights are less than 2g; cf. Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 85–99; Cribb 2021a: figs 35.1–16; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 151; no. 19.

²⁶ On the coins of Kujula Kadphises found in Taxila, cf. Khan and Cribb 2012; moreover, Cribb (2021a: 103) conjectures that the Heracles coppers were also produced in Taxila (Cribb and Bracey 2025: nos 14–18). One original and four imitations are also documented from Akra (Bannu District), cf. Cribb 2002: nos 44–48.

²⁷ Göbl 1976: nos 77–140; see also Alram 1999: 29–30.

²⁸ Nishikawa 2011, I: 565–76, esp. 572–74; the whole ensemble consists of one coin each of Azes II and Kujula Kadphises, four coins of Huvishka and eight of Vasudeva I.

It remains unclear where and when the numerous imitations of Kujula's Heracles coppers were struck. It is likely that several local workshops were involved and that one or the other could well have been located in Uddiyana. Neither can it be excluded that some of these imitations are posthumous issues that were brought into circulation even after the monetary reform of Soter Megas (see section 1.1.b).

However this may be, the Heracles coppers of Kujula Kadphises take their place at the end of a long chain of imitations that starts with the end of Indo-Greek rule in Kabulistan in around 70 BCE and is oriented on the coinage of the Indo-Greek kings.²⁹ The main emphasis, as also reflected in the coins gathered by Masson in Begram, is the imitations that copy the coins of the last Greek king of Kapishi, Hermaios (c.90–70). They constitute the preliminary stage of the Heracles coppers of Kujula Kadphises, as it were (Figure 1a). The Indo-Scythians³⁰ or the Yuezhi have been proposed as the issuers of the Hermaios imitations. According to Bopearachchi, the Yuezhi had already crossed the Hindu Kush in around 70 BCE, established themselves in Kabulistan and there assumed the legacy of Hermaios.³¹ During this time in the areas south of the Hindu Kush, a gradual deterioration in the silver content of the tetradrachms and drachms issued on the Indian standard becomes noticeable, leading, after the turn of the century, to the complete collapse of the bimetallic monetary system introduced by the Indo-Greeks south of the Hindu Kush.³² By the time Kujula started minting in Kapishi, silver as a coin metal had almost completely disappeared in the Indo-Iranian borderlands, and subsequently the Kushan Empire also dispensed wholly with silver as a metal for coinage. Not until the Sasanians advanced to Kushanshahr and Sasanian imperial minting was started in Kabulistan by Shapur II in the course of his campaigns against the Huns in around 365 CE did the silver drachm on the Sasanian model begin to replace the Kushan gold dinar as the leading denomination (see section 1.2.a).

b. Vima Taktu / Soter Megas (nos 1, 2)

Let us now return to Kujula Kadphises, who was followed on the Kushan throne by his son Vima Taktu towards the end of the 1st century CE. His name (Bac. OOHMO TAKTOO) is also recorded in the above-mentioned Rabatak inscription of Kanishka I.³³ He is also named in the bilingual inscription (Bactrian/Kharoshthi) of Dasht-i Nawur (60 km west of Ghazni)³⁴ and in the Brahmi inscription on the base of his monumental seated statue from the *devakula* of Mat (Bra. *vema takṣu[ma]*).³⁵ These are joined by a series of local issues of Vima Taktu, which Joe Cribb assembled during the course of the publication of the Rabatak inscription in 1996 and which immediately follow the issues of Kujula Kadphises.³⁶ The genealogy of the Kushan kings revealed

²⁹ On this, see most recently Cribb 2021a: 100–02 (with further literature).

³⁰ Dobbins 1970; Senior 2000.

³¹ Bopearachchi 1991; 1995; 1997; 1999. On this, see also the detailed account of both positions in Cribb (2021a: 100–02), who on the strength of Chinese sources argues for the Indo-Scythians as the authors of the Hermaios imitations. I myself have decided in favour of the Yuezhi on purely numismatic grounds (Alram 1999: 26–30), likewise Sinisi 2022: 101–04. On the relationship between Yuezhi and Kushans, see now Kuwayama 2022.

³² Widemann 2000; even under the Indo-Greek kings, gold played a minor role south of the Hindu Kush and was no longer used for coinage by the Indo-Scythians. The main denomination of the Indo-Scythian monetary system is the silver tetradrachm (approx. 9.8g) issued on the Indian standard, accompanied by drachms (approx. 2.45g) and copper alloy coins of different denominations.

³³ Sims-Williams and Cribb 1996 and Sims-Williams 2008a. On the name, see Falk 2009 and Sims-Williams 2010: no. 353; on the name and titles see also Cribb and Bracey 2025: 45–47.

³⁴ Fussman 1974; Davary and Humbach 1976; Sims-Williams and Cribb 1996: 95–96; Falk 2015: 108–09.

³⁵ Rosenfield 1967: pl. 1; Fussman 1998. Cf. also Cribb 2014: 92–93 with tab. 1; Falk 2015: 107–08.

³⁶ Sims-Williams and Cribb 1996: 111–23; see also Alram 1999: 33–37. Most recently the material is commented on in Cribb 2014, Jongeward and Cribb 2015, Cribb 2021a: 103–04 and Cribb and Bracey 2025: 161–65; nos 47–52.

in the Rabatak inscription, from Kujula Kadphises, Vima Taktu and Vima Kadphises to Kanishka I, ultimately also prompted the hypothesis that the large group of issues of the so-called ‘Nameless King’, which introduced a new Kushan monetary policy and that the purely numismatic evidence places clearly between the issues of Kujula Kadphises and Vima Kadphises, can be assigned to Vima Taktu.³⁷ Now the coinage reform of the ‘Nameless King’, who merely bears the title Soter Megas, is indeed remarkable, laying as it did the foundations for the bimetallic monetary system inaugurated by Vima Kadphises that had an enduring influence on the Indian monetary area and in which the gold dinar constituted the new leading denomination. Instead of the local currencies produced in the various regions of the empire that were based on the structures encountered there, a new coin type of copper alloy was created which was issued in two denominations (approx. 8.5g and 2.1g)³⁸ and circulated all over the empire from Bactria to India (Figure 2). On the obverse is a diademed, radiated male bust holding in his right hand an arrow or a lance and perhaps representing the sun god Miiro.³⁹ On the reverse is a horseman—possibly the king—rendered in the style of the Indo-Scythian/Indo-Parthian coinage (nos 1, 2). This is joined by the Greek legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΣΩΤΗΡ ΜΕΓΑΣ (‘king of kings, great saviour’). What is remarkable here is that after the mostly corrupted and blundered Greek legends of Kujula Kadphises, in most cases correct Greek is used, indicating that the administration still had recourse to staff who had a mastery of Greek.⁴⁰ A special mention should be made of the tamghas, which occur in two variants (three- or four-pronged tamgha) on the obverse and reverse.



Figure 2. Kushans, Soter Megas
a. 2Δ (Æ), 7.30g. TS430 (no. 1); b. 2Δ (Æ), 8.32g. KHM GR23376

Cribb surmises that there was one single mint at Begram (Kapishi), from where the reform of the coinage started.⁴¹ However, this should be qualified by stating that in my view, the problem of the location of the Kushan mint(s) as such has not yet been satisfactorily solved. We will return to this later. It is equally unclear whether the Soter Megas issues were in fact produced at a single mint or rather in several different places.

As already mentioned, Cribb (Cribb and Sims-Williams 1996) ascribed all the Soter Megas issues to Vima Taktu, with which I concurred at the time (Alram 1999). However, objections to this were soon raised, given that the pictorial idiom of Soter Megas’s coins represents a consid-

³⁷ At the time (Alram 1999) I concurred with Cribb’s opinion (Sims-Williams and Cribb 1996), merely questioning a number of readings of local issues.

³⁸ Given in Cribb (2014: tab. 3; 2021a: 156) as a didrachm (unit) and hemidrachm (quarter) on the reduced Attic standard; see the weight chart in Cribb and Bracey 2025: fig. 3.16.

³⁹ On the iconography, see Sinisi 2017: 829–31 and Falk 2019: 7–9.

⁴⁰ On the use of Greek in the Indo-Iranian borderlands, see Cribb 2021b.

⁴¹ Cribb 2021a: 103; in Cribb 2014: 98, however, he adds the qualifying statement: ‘It is unclear as yet whether any subsidiary mints were set up in addition to the Begram mint to produce Soter Megas general issue coins, but the distribution of the coins argues against this’; see also Cribb and Bracey 2025: 159–60; nos 33–39.

erable break with the coin images of Kujula Kadphises and the local issues bearing the name of Vima Taktu, as well as those of his successor Vima Kadphises. A usurper was proposed, who is supposed to have taken Vima Taktu's place and is perhaps identical with the general who according to Chinese sources (*Hou Han shu*) had been appointed by Kujula Kadphises as governor of the Indian regions.⁴² Ultimately Cribb (2014) revised his opinion, surmising that Kujula Kadphises was the initiator of the Soter Megas issues.⁴³ Here is not the place to go into the details of the pros and cons of these three hypotheses. From my point of view, however, it is clear that the current body of source material does not permit a final decision in the question of attribution. We must wait and see whether new facts can bring clarification.

In any case, the issues of Soter Megas were produced in large numbers and replaced the local coinages of Kujula Kadphises and those bearing the name of Vima Taktu across the empire towards the end of the 1st century and the beginning of the 2nd century. Their core area of distribution extended from Bactria⁴⁴ across the Hindu Kush to Taxila⁴⁵ and beyond. As mentioned above, in Begram they constitute the largest contingent with 695 specimens (11%).⁴⁶ In the relic chambers of the oldest Buddhist stupa at Nagarahara/Jalalabad they are among the earliest votive offerings, alongside the coins of Kujula Kadphises and Gondophares.⁴⁷ Khan (2010/1) gives an overview of the coins of Soter Megas found in archaeological excavations in Gandhara. Here reference should be made in particular to the evidence from the Buddhist complex of Aziz Dheri (Swabi District), where ten coins of Soter Megas were found in various different strata.⁴⁸ In combination with the hoard evidence from Taxila, Gul Rahim Khan drew the conclusion that the coins of Soter Megas could have been reintroduced into circulation in the late Kushan period.⁴⁹ This shows that the utmost caution should be exercised when considering coins as a means of dating within archaeological contexts. Shavarebi (2025: tab. V.5) gives a clear overview of the find evidence from Uddiyana. At Butkara I Soter Megas is represented with 14 coins (8%), almost equalling the issues of Huvishka (16 coins, 9%) that constitute the largest contingent from the Great Dynasty. In Barikot the proportion of Soter Megas coins amounts to 6.5% (13 coins) and is only half that of Kanishka I (27 coins, 13%).

In Tapa Sardar and Ghazni two Soter Megas coins came to light. Commencing our series of coins, they are the earliest coins from the two excavation sites (nos 1, 2 ; Figure 2a). From a numismatic point of view, this small number and the complete lack of any issues of Kujula Kadphises are a clear sign that the sanctuary was not founded in the early Kushan era but at a later date.

The now sadly destroyed trilingual inscription of Dasht-i Nawur, which in the Bactrian version, according to Nicholas Sims-Williams' reading, names Vima Taktu (Bac. $\omega\eta\mu\omega \tau\alpha\kappa\tau\omega$ /

⁴² Fussman 1998; Bopearachchi 2006; Bopearachchi 2008; Bopearachchi 2012; cf. also the summary in Cribb 2014.

⁴³ On this, see the detailed argumentation in Cribb 2014: 100–05, and Cribb 2021a: 156. Cribb assigns the coins that show the four-pronged tamgha on both sides to Kujula Kadphises (Cribb and Bracey 2025: nos 33, 34); he identifies those with a four-pronged tamgha on the obverse and a three-pronged tamgha on the reverse as a joint issue between Kujula Kadphises and Vima Taktu, assigning those with a three-pronged tamgha on both sides to the sole reign of Vima Taktu; cf. Cribb and Bracey 2025: 159–60, tab. 3.1; nos 33–39.

⁴⁴ Cf. e.g. Zeymal 1983, where 153 specimens are recorded; on this, see also Cribb 2014: tabs 4, 5.

⁴⁵ Khan (2014) records 119 coins of Soter Megas from single and hoard finds from Taxila.

⁴⁶ Cribb 2021a: tabs 7, 8; the proportion of Soter Megas coins from the excavations of DAFA amounts to around 7% (30 specimens).

⁴⁷ On this, see Errington 2012 and the survey in Fussman 2015: 156–61.

⁴⁸ The Buddhist complex of Aziz Dheri lies in the Peshawar Valley; on this, see Khan 2010/1, 2: 21–23 and tab. 3. See also the evidence from Shaikhani Dheri (Charsadda), where 38 coins of Soter Megas were found (Dani 1965: 35–38).

⁴⁹ Kahn 2014: 141–42.

Khar. *vehma kuśasa*),⁵⁰ may indicate that the region was wrested from the Indo-Parthians under this king by the very latest and that Ghazni was therefore probably already part of the Kushan Empire at that time.⁵¹ The date is given in Greek as the year 279 ([month] Gorpaios, [day] 15) of an unnamed era. This could correspond to the Greek era that also occurs in the reliquary inscription of Rukhuna and synchronizes with the Azes era (Year 27 of the reign of the Apraca king Vijayamitra being equivalent to Year 73 of the Azes era and Year 201 of a Greek era).⁵² Starting from the beginning of the Azes era in 58/57 BCE, Salomon (2005) put the beginning of this Greek era in the year 186/85 BCE. Subsequently, however, Falk and Bennet (2009) corrected the start of the Azes era to 47/46 BCE, thus moving the beginning of the Greek era to 175/74 BCE.⁵³ This is roundly contradicted, however, by Karl-Heinz Golzio, who was highly critical of Falk's calculations and interpretations and reaffirms the start of the Azes era as 58/57 BCE.⁵⁴

If we assume that the date given in the Dasht-i Nawur inscription follows the Greek era given, and if we accept the correction of the Azes era to 47/46 BCE, the inscription would then date to the year 104/05 CE. On the other hand, if we adhere to the traditional start of the Azes era in 58/57 BCE, we would arrive at the year 93/94 CE.⁵⁵ From a numismatic perspective, both approaches are possible, since it is undisputed that the coinage of Vima Taktu follows on directly from that of his father Kujula Kadphises, which is in turn very closely intertwined with that of the Indo-Parthian kings and probably extends as far as the last decade of the 1st century CE.⁵⁶

c. Vima Kadphises (nos 3, 4)

Now let us turn to the coinage of the Great Kushan Dynasty that begins with Vima Kadphises and continues via Kanishka I and Huvishka to Vasudeva I. The epigraphic evidence confirms indisputably that the period from Kanishka I to the end of the reign of Vasudeva I lasted just under 100 years.⁵⁷ It

⁵⁰ The inscription is written in Bactrian, Kharoshthi and an as yet undeciphered script; see Fussman 1974; Fussman 1994/2011; Sims-Williams and Cribb 1996: 95–96 with fig. 9; Sims-Williams and Falk 2014; Falk 2015: 108–09, nos 089, 090. Fussman (1998: 614–19) is sceptical of Sims-Williams's reading, however. In 2022, new rock inscriptions were found near Dushanbe (Tajikistan), in the Almosi Valley (Hissar Range). One of them is in Bactrian and names Vima Taktu. The others are in the 'Unknown Script' and, according to Harry Falk, also contain the name Vima Taktu; cf. Davary 2022; Falk 2023; Cribb 2024.

⁵¹ On Ghazni in the Kushan period, see the brief remark in Verardi 2010: 344.

⁵² On the inscription, see Salomon 2005 and Baums 2012: 212–13.

⁵³ Cf. also Falk 2010; Cribb 2018: 11–14; Baums 2018: 61–65. Moreover, Cribb (2005; 2018) surmises that the time reckoning introduced by Kanishka I is a continuation of the Greek era (Year 1 of Kanishka I = Year 301 of the Greek era), just as the Azes era could be seen as a continuation of the Arsacid era (Year 1 of Azes = Year 201 of the Arsacid era); see also Cribb and Bracey 2025: 34–35.

⁵⁴ Golzio 2012a; Golzio 2012b. A critical evaluation of the theses aforementioned theses can be found in Salomon (2012), who comes to the conclusion: 'So, in the end, like so many discoveries, the Rukhuna Inscription has raised at least as many questions as it has answered. But it has at least clarified the central issue, which now boil down whether or not the Azes and Vikrama eras are identical, and this question must remain open, pending clarification that may come from some future discovery or insight. Only time will tell—perhaps' (Salomon 2012: 227). To my knowledge, nothing has changed in this regard to this day.

⁵⁵ It should be pointed out that according to the epigraphic evidence, several 'Greek eras' might have been in use, and thus without an explicit designation, it is not clear which era is being referred to in any particular case; on this, see Golzio 2012a: 142–43; cf. also Cribb 2018: 12, n. 12; Falk 2007; Falk and Bennet 2009: 204, n. 13.

⁵⁶ Göbl (1993), who surmised Year 1 of Kanishka to be around 232 CE, is still consistent with this dating.

⁵⁷ On this, see for example the overview in Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 4, tab. 2 and Cribb 2018: 13–14, tabs 2, 3. The years attested in the Indian inscriptions follow the time reckoning introduced by Kanishka I and result in the following regnal spans: Kanishka I, Years 1–23; Huvishka, Years 28–60; Vasudeva I, Years 64–98. See also Cribb and Bracey 2025: 21, tab. 2.1.

is unclear from when and how long Vima Kadphises ruled. Those who equate Year 1 of Kanishka I with the year 127 of the Common Era⁵⁸ surmise a time span of around 13/14 years in order to accommodate Vima Taktu / Soter Megas and Vima Kadphises between c.90 and 127 CE.⁵⁹ One point of reference for the chronological positioning of Vima Kadphises is supplied by the rock inscription of Khalatse (Ladakh), which mentions him by name and is dated to Year 287 of an unnamed era.⁶⁰ If this is the same Greek era as mentioned in the Dasht-i Nawur inscription of Vima Taktu, then Vima Kadphises, Vima Taktu's son, would have been on the throne in 112/13 CE (or 101/02 CE, see above).



Figure 3. Kushans, Vima Kadphises
a. 4Δ (Æ), 16.5g. TS428 (no. 3); b. 4Δ (Æ), 16.68g. KHM GR44037

The coins themselves yield no points of reference for a precise dating.⁶¹ As already mentioned, Kushan gold coinage in various denominations began under Vima Kadphises,⁶² accompanied in copper alloy by tetradrachms (approx. 16g), didrachms (approx. 8g) and drachms (approx. 4g). While the images in gold on the obverse displayed a hitherto unmatched variety of royal self-representation,⁶³ the reverses were reserved exclusively for the god Oesho/Wesh.⁶⁴ By contrast, on the copper alloy coinage the pictorial language was limited to the king making an offering beside an altar, with Oesho and his bull on the reverse (Figure 3). The legends took up

⁵⁸ Based on the widely accepted interpretation of an Indian astronomical text propounded by Harry Falk (2001), scholarly opinion today mostly assumes that the Kushan era begins in 127 CE. For a critical view of Falk's reading and interpretation, see Golzio 2008 (with a chronological overview on p. 89), Golzio 2012a and Golzio 2012b. Golzio moots 155/156 as the beginning of the Kushan era; cf. also the commentary by Sims-Williams and de Blois 2018: 42–44. On the numismatic argumentation, see most recently Cribb 2018, who emphatically defends the date of 127 CE; against this is Nikolaus Schindel, who—loosely following Göbl (1984; 1993; 1999)—argues for 227 CE (Schindel 2005; 2009; 2011; 2012; 2014; 2025). In contrast, Cribb and Bracey 2025: 58 state: 'As such the 'date of Kanishka' which was the central historiographic problem of Kushan studies in the 20th century is today a closed issue' – I can only agree with this statement to a limited extent.

⁵⁹ Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 53–56; Cribb 2018: 11–14, tab. 3.

⁶⁰ Falk 2015: 109, no. 091.

⁶¹ The die study of the gold coinage of Vima Kadphises compiled by Bracey (2009) provides insight into the volume and rhythm of production; however, conclusions about the duration of Vima's reign can only be drawn from this to a limited extent. For Vima Kadphises and his coinage, see Cribb and Bracey 2025: 48–53, 166–73; nos 53–67.

⁶² The leading denomination is the dinar (stater, approx. 8g), which is accompanied by the double dinar and the half and quarter dinar. See the weight chart in Cribb and Bracey 2025: fig. 3.23

⁶³ Alongside varying bust depictions, the king has himself represented enthroned, seated cross-legged, riding on an elephant, driving a biga or looking out of the window of a litter; see Cribb and Bracey 2025: 49–50; fig. 3.22.

⁶⁴ Cribb 1997; Srinivasan 2016. Grenet (2015: 207) sees in Vima's choice of title an indubitable Shivaistic influence, interpreting the image on the reverse as Shiva. But see also Falk 2019: 11–31, esp. 15–28 and Cribb and Bracey 2025: 51–52.

the old Indo-Greek model again and are in Greek on the obverse and in Gandhari on the reverse. However, the titles used in the Indian and Greek versions do not correspond.⁶⁵

The prevailing opinion is that Vima's gold coinage was produced at a single mint.⁶⁶ However, its location is disputed. While Göbl (1984) surmised that it was in Taxila (Mint B),⁶⁷ Jongeward and Cribb (2015) and Bracey (2012) proposed Bactra/Balkh in Bactria as the main mint (likewise in Cribb and Bracey 2025). However, since Vima's coinage is clearly rooted in the coinage tradition of the Indo-Greek kings, a mint north of the Hindu Kush seems more than unlikely to me. In keeping with the principle of serial minting, Göbl also assumes that the mass of bronze coins was produced together with the gold coinage at one mint.⁶⁸ Against this, both Jongeward and Cribb (2015) and Bracey (2012) conjecture that there was a separate mint for bronze coinage, which they locate at Kapishi (Begram). This hypothesis is upheld by Cribb and Bracey (2025). While Göbl (1984) also does not exclude the possibility that there were separate mints for Kushan bronze coinage, he suggests that this does not happen until the time of Huvishka.⁶⁹

It should be pointed out in particular that the identifications of the mint locations thrown into the ring here should all be regarded as working hypotheses, as the coins themselves do not bear any names of mints. Moreover, the net of documented finds with secure archaeological proveniences is still far too wide-meshed for any conclusions to be drawn in regard to the localization of individual mints.⁷⁰ On the basis of typological and stylistic characteristics together with die analyses, numismatics can build related groups of coins that in turn can be regarded as products of different mints. Nonetheless, assigning them to particular locations remains purely speculative.

Bactria was indubitably a centre of Kushan power. This was recently underlined by a Bactrian inscription on a silver plate which relates that Kanishka I had returned to 'Tokhwarstan' following his great Indian campaign in Year 10 of his reign.⁷¹ Moreover, Balkh is the only mint to appear with its name *Baxlo* (Balkh/Bactra) on Kushano-Sasanian scyphate dinars and is thus unequivocally attested as being the location of a mint, albeit in later times. However, to draw from this the conclusion that Kushan gold coinage from Vima Kadphises to Vasudeva I was primarily produced in Balkh (Bactria) seems problematic to me.⁷² Especially in the case of Vima Kadphises, who draws on the Indo-Greek model in the legends of his coins, a mint south of the Hindu Kush would seem to me to be more likely. Likewise, the assumption that there was a strict local separation between the minting of gold and bronze coins cannot be proven from the numismatic context.⁷³

⁶⁵ Alram 1986: nos 1286–1302; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 54. On the name of Vima Kadphises, cf. Sims-Williams 2010: no. 352. On name and titles see Cribb and Bracey 2025: 50–51.

⁶⁶ On this, Göbl 1984 and Bracey 2009.

⁶⁷ Erroneously labelled as Mint A in pls 1 and 72; identified correctly as Mint B (Taxila), however, in the text and the synchronogram in pl. 179.

⁶⁸ According to Göbl (1984: 59), it is uncertain whether Vima's bronze coinage was produced at just one or several different mints.

⁶⁹ Göbl 1984: 27. In principle, it is possible to assume an administrative separation of coin production into one mint (or workshop) for gold and another for non-precious metals, although the coins themselves provide no clear evidence for this. Nevertheless, I consider it unlikely that the gold would have been produced in a mint north of the Hindu Kush in Balkh, while the base-metal mint was located south of the Hindu Kush, in Kapishi; see also note 73.

⁷⁰ This problem is clearly outlined in Bracey 2012.

⁷¹ Sims-Williams 2015.

⁷² Göbl (1957) likewise located the entire production of gold coinage in Balkh; however, in Göbl 1984: 23 he deviated from this hypothesis.

⁷³ A silver trial of a copper drachm (?) that had been acquired by Charles Masson in Charikar near Begram and is regarded as a kind of trial striking for copper drachms of Vima Kadphises is adduced as evidence of bronze

At Tapa Sardar only one single tetradrachm of Vima Kadphises is attested from the archaeological context (no. 3; Figure 3a), having probably reached the place where it was lost after a lengthy period of circulation with later Kushan coinage. While displaying considerable signs of wear, at a weight of 16.5g, it is still within the range of tolerance. The second coin (no. 4) lacks provenience and was acquired in Ghazni.

d. Kanishka I (nos 5–14)

With Kanishka I we reach the zenith of Kushan power. If one accepts the information relayed in Kanishka's Rabatak inscription, at that time the Kushan Empire extended from Bactria over the Hindu Kush into the north-east of India to Magadha (Bihar).⁷⁴ Its core zone extended from Bactria to the region around Mathura. Kanishka's coinage draws directly on that of his father Vima Kadphises. In gold it is the dinar that clearly dominates, with rarer issues of quarter dinars. In copper alloy coinage, the tetradrachm (unit; approx. 17–18g) and didrachm (half unit, approx. 8–9g) are the preferred denominations, whereas drachms and half drachms are now of only local importance. While Vima Kadphises liked to present himself in various poses on his gold coins, the only type Kanishka adopts is the standing figure of the king making an offering at an altar that was introduced by Vima for his copper coinage. It becomes his hallmark, as it were, and occurs on the obverse of all his denominations in gold and copper. On the reverses Oesho with the bull is replaced by images of a wide variety of deities, who are also mentioned by name in the legends, giving us a unique insight into the Kushan pantheon and beliefs (Figures 4a–c).⁷⁵ Kanishka also treads new paths in the legends of his coins: the Gandhari (in Kharoshthi script) used by Vima Kadphises on the reverses of his coins is discontinued, and both sides are inscribed in Greek. But in the very next emission there is a change to purely Bactrian legends. The use of Greek for coin inscriptions in the Indo-Iranian Borderlands has thus finally disappeared.⁷⁶

According to Göbl (1984), Kanishka I relocated his main mint from Vima's Mint B (Taxila) to Mint A (Peshawar). Göbl sees the motive for this in 'Buddhist tradition' and the building of the famous stupa of Shahji-khi-Dheri (Kanishkapura), which is supposed to have been commissioned by Kanishka I.⁷⁷ On the other hand, Göbl points out the close stylistic affiliation and 'identical

minting by Vima Kadphises in Kapishi (Begram), which is said to have subsequently served as the main mint for Kushan copper coinage; cf. Bracey 2009: 44. From this, Cribb (2021a: 105) inferred that 'The discovery of the trial coin suggests that the success of the Soter Megas coinage made Begram the main copper mint of the Kushans, ...'; see also Cribb and Bracey 2025: 170–71; no. 66. Against this, Göbl (1984: 59 with pl. 1, series 4) regarded this coin as a silver trial of a gold dinar, an interpretation that I find more convincing; cf. also Göbl 1993: 41–42. See also note 69.

⁷⁴ Sims-Williams in Sims-Williams and Cribb 1996: 77–81; Sims-Williams 2008a: 55–57; Falk 2015: 112–14.

⁷⁵ On this, cf. Grenet 1984; Cribb 2008; Shenkar 2014; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 267–92 (Appendix C); Grenet 2015; Falk 2019: 31–35; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 60–67; 173–83.

⁷⁶ The change from purely Greek to purely Bactrian coin legends was related to a passage in the Rabatak inscription which—according to the translation by Nicholas-Sims-Williams 2008a: 56 (cf. Falk 2015: 112, no. 096)—speaks of Kanishka having inaugurated not only a new time reckoning but also a 'language reform': 'Kanishka.... who has inaugurated the year one as the gods pleased. And he *issued a Greek* edict (and) then he put it into Aryan.' However, a new translation of the passage by Malzahn (2024) has cast doubt on this. According to Malzahn, the passage does not refer to the change from Greek to Bactrian but to the new time reckoning introduced by Kanishka: 'Kanishka.... who has inaugurated the year one as the gods pleased. And he led out the Greek time reckoning (and) then restored it in the Iranian way.' Nevertheless, it remains a fact that Kanishka replaced Greek with Bactrian as the official language on his coins.

⁷⁷ Göbl 1984: 22, 61–62; cf. also Bracey 2012: 123–24 and Cribb and Bracey 2025: 62. On the history of the building of the main stupa of Shahji-khi Dheri, see Kuwayama (2002: 83–89), who dates the first building phase to no later than Kujula Kadphises; he also states that this first stupa was subsequently built over by Kanishka I.

engraving hand' shared by the coinages of Vima and Kanishka, which is not indicative of the mint having been moved from B to A, something that he substantiates on purely historical grounds. Based on the numismatic facts, I do not see any conclusive reason for this. For Jongeward and Cribb (2015) Kanishka's main mint was identical to that of Vima Kadphises and to be localized in Bactria, probably Balkh.⁷⁸ There was also a second mint, which Jongeward and Cribb surmise was in Gandhara (probably Peshawar), contrary to Göbl (1984), who favoured Taxila (Mint B). Jongeward and Cribb (2015) continue to see the main mint for copper coinage in Kapishi, whereas Göbl (1984) localizes this block of coinage at his Mint A together with the gold. The bronze issues assigned by Göbl to Mint B figure in Jongeward and Cribb (2015) under the subsidiary mint in Gandhara and a further mint which they thought to be in Kashmir (Cribb and Bracey 2025: 173–77; nos 68–96).

With Kanishka I (Figure 4), the influx of coins to Tapa Sardar rises appreciably. His share of the Kushan coins found at Tapa Sardar (73 coins) lies at 9.5% (7 coins). Four tetradrachms (nos 5, 6, 8, 9) and one didrachm (no. 7) are attested from the main mint. The other coins are two drachms from the subsidiary mint (nos 13, 14) whose location Jongeward and Cribb (2015) proposed as Kashmir. The weights of the tetradrachms (unit) from the main mint range from 17.85 to 16.85g, that of the didrachm (half unit) is 8.8g. The two drachms (quarter unit) from the subsidiary mint weigh 4.2g and 3.2g respectively. The nominal weight for the tetradrachm (unit) should have been over 17g. Most of the coins show relatively marked signs of circulation, as opposed to the didrachms from the main mint (no. 7) and one drachm from the subsidiary mint (no. 14), which still display a sharper profile.



Figure 4. Kushans, Kanishka I

a. 4Δ (Æ), 17g. TS589 (no. 5); b. 2Δ (Æ), 8.8g. TS592 (no. 7); c. Δ (Æ), 4.2g. TS1017 (no. 14)

If we compare the ratio of Kanishka's coinage with that from the excavations conducted by DAFA in Begram (Morris 2021),⁷⁹ measured against the total amount of Kushan coins there, his share is 13% (51 coins). In Barikot (Shavarebi 2025) Kanishka's share is also 13% (25 coins), whereas in Butkara I (Göbl 1976), he is only represented with 6% (10 coins). For Taxila, Khan (2007) lists 180 copper alloy coins of Kanishka I—almost twice as many as those of his successor Huvishka (99 specimens), who, however, reigned considerably longer than his predecessor. This corresponds to about 33.5% of all Kushan coins from Kanishka I to Kanishka II found there.

⁷⁸ Likewise Bracey 2012: 119 and Cribb and Bracey (2025).

⁷⁹ Cf note 22. In Masson's Begram collection (Cribb 2021a: 89, tab. 8), Kanishka's share only amounts to around 5% (139 coins).

Finally, reference should be made to a Brahmi inscription on a clay pot unearthed during the excavations at Tapa Sardar. The inscription names a *Kanika [sic?] mahārāja vihāra* and may relate to the foundation of the monastery of Tapa Sardar by a King Kanika/Kanishka (?).⁸⁰ Regardless of whether Kanika is a corrupted form of Kanishka, the numismatic evidence does not exclude the possibility that Tapa Sardar was indeed founded under Kanishka I. Nonetheless, it should be borne in mind that—as the finds demonstrate—Kanishka's coins remained in circulation over a lengthy period of time, so that the possibility cannot be excluded that coins of Kanishka I found at Tapa Sardar arrived at their place of loss at some later point in time.

e. Huvishka and Imitations (nos 15–32)

Reigning for some forty years, Huvishka, who followed Kanishka I on the Kushan throne, ruled for almost twice as long as his predecessor. Little changed in the structure of the coinage. The gold coinage continued to be produced in two mints; in addition to the dinar, quarter dinars were also issued on special occasions. The obverses of the gold coins invariably bear a half-length bust of Huvishka depicted with various crowns and holding a range of attributes. The reverses were still reserved for depictions of deities, though their number increased compared to the coinage of Kanishka. According to Jongeward and Cribb (2015), the main mint remained in Bactria (Balkh?) and the subsidiary mint in Gandhara (Peshawar?) (Cribb and Bracey 2025: 187–94; nos 103–2). In Göbl (1984) these are Mints A (Peshawar?) and B (Taxila?). As regards copper alloy coinage, only tetradrachms (unit) were produced under Huvishka, and a gradual barbarization of the images and legends together with declining weights can be observed (Figure 5). On the obverses three standard types occur (king riding on elephant, king seated on kline, king sitting cross-legged above a mountain). According to Jongeward and Cribb (2015), two mints continued to operate—the main mint at Kapishi (Begram?) and the subsidiary mint at Gandhara (Peshawar?). These are joined by a further mint in Kashmir and another in Mathura (Cribb and Bracey 2025: 195–99; nos 123–134).⁸¹ By contrast, Göbl (1984) dispenses with classification according to mints, organizing the material according to typology, style and weights into eleven groups. He states that under Huvishka a general decentralization of the production of aes coinage took place, which he views as the result of a foreign policy event that also affected the gold coinage.⁸² Without going into further detail in this context, it should be stated that Jongeward and Cribb (2015) also divide Huvishka's coinage into an early and a later phase. During the latter, a reduction in the weight standard of the bronze coinage occurs, stabilizing at around 10–12g.⁸³ The fluctuations in weight of the bronze coins are, however, considerable. We are also confronted for the first time with imitations, although the dividing line separating these from regular coinage is not always easy to define.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ On this, see Verardi in the present volume with Figure 55 and note 376. In an email, Ingo Strauch confirmed the dating of the inscription to the 4th/5th century (Gupta era). Fussman (2015: 177) doubts that the name is corrupted and refers to one of the Kushan kings named Kanishka, seeing in Kanika 'a kind of hereditary governor of the province'. For the various spellings of Kanishka's name see the overview in Cribb and Bracey 2025: 60.

⁸¹ See also Khan (2009: 96–102, table A), who on the basis of the coin finds from Taxila, surmises that there were six mints producing Huvishka's bronze coinage, displaying partial correspondence with Göbl's groups.

⁸² Göbl 1984: 66–67; based on his late dating and the deities Oaxsho (Oxus) and Oanindo (Victoria) appearing on Huvishka's gold coins, Göbl surmised that there had been a Sasanian incursion into Bactria which had been successfully repulsed by Huvishka. According to Göbl, the resulting decentralization of the copper coinage also impeded its synchronization with the gold coinage.

⁸³ Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 90.

⁸⁴ Göbl (1984: 67) established a limit of 7.5g as the dividing line for separating out imitations; but see also Cribb and Bracey 2025: 199–204; nos 135–146.

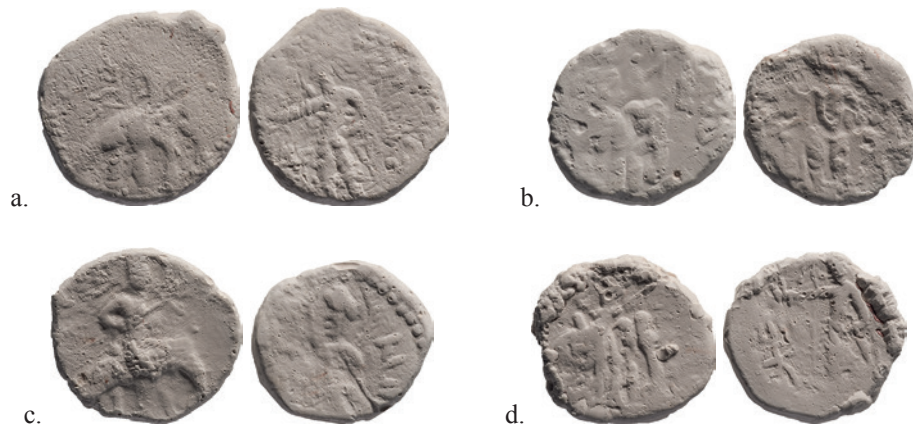


Figure 5. Kushans, Huvishka

a. 4Δ (Æ), 14.85g. TS1012 (no. 16); b. 4Δ (Æ), 9.9g. TS587 (no. 27); c. Æ, 7.85g. TS1624 (no. 28); d. Unofficial imitation, Æ, –g. TS1230 (no. 30)

Huvishka is represented at Tapa Sardar with 15 coins, amounting to a proportion of 20.5%. His share is thus twice as great as that of Kanishka I. Of the coins classified as regular issues (11 coins), ten come from the main mint. Nine of these belong to the early phase (nos 16, 18–22, 24–26; Figure 5a), with just one coin dating from the later phase (no. 27; Figure 5b). A second coin from the later phase is assigned to a subsidiary mint, perhaps Mathura (no. 28; Figure 5c). Four coins are classified as imitations (nos 29–32; Figure 5d). Their images and legends are (if distinguishable) barbarized, and they are extremely underweight. Both Göbl (1984) and Jongeward and Cribb (2015) detect in these unofficial copies the signs of a monetary crisis, which Huvishka was, however, able to surmount.⁸⁵

Huvishka's coins from Tapa Sardar all show signs of heavy wear, indicating lengthy circulation. The weights of the nine early-phase tetradrachms from the main mint (nos 16, 18–22, 24–26) vary between 15.3g and 13.67g. The tetradrachm's nominal weight can be deduced to be around 15–16g (Cribb and Bracey 2025: 196, fig. 3.41). From the outset, this therefore lies clearly below that of Kanishka I. The coin assigned to the late phase from the main mint (no. 27) weighs only 9.9g and would thus correspond to the reduced late-phase standard of 10–12g postulated by Jongeward and Cribb (2015) and Cribb and Bracey (2025: 200, fig. 3.45). The coin also ascribed to the late phase from the subsidiary mint (no. 28) weighs a mere 7.85g. The weights of the four imitations (nos 29–32) range between 7.50g and 3.30g.

As mentioned above, Huvishka's share of the Kushan coins from Tapa Sardar amounts to 20.5% (15 coins). At the DAFA excavations in Begram (Morris 2021) this lies at 18% (70 coins), at Butkara I (Göbl 1976) at 16% (27 coins) and at Barikot (Shavarebi 2025) at 16.5% (32 coins).⁸⁶ At Tapa Sardar it is striking that of the regular coinage, the overwhelming majority of the coins derive from the early phase (9 coins, 60%) and only two (13%) from the late phase (nos 27, 28); the imitations amount to 27% (4 coins). This is a trend that cannot be observed either at Butkara

⁸⁵ See Göbl 1984: 66–70 and his commentary on pl. 83, where he talks about emergency production; on this, see also Cribb 2021a: 105: 'During the reign of Huvishka there was a monetary crisis of some kind, which resulted first in an outburst of unofficial copies, then a reduction in the official weight standard...'. Khan (2009: 102) distinguishes between heavy and light imitations. Furthermore, the possibility that some of Huvishka's imitations were issued posthumously cannot be excluded; likewise Khan 2009: 104. Cribb and Bracey (2025: 73) suggest that the crisis reflected in the coinage may have been caused by a plague epidemic (Antonine Plague or Galen's Plague).

⁸⁶ The imitations are included in each case.

I or at Barikot or Taxila. At Butkara I the ratio between the early and late phase is more or less balanced at 18.5% (5 coins) to 22% (6 coins); at 59.5% (16 coins) the imitations form the largest group found there.⁸⁷ By contrast, at Barikot the late phase predominates at 47% (15 coins) compared to the early phase at 31% (10 coins), while the imitations amount to 22% (7 coins). At Taxila, based on Khan's (2009) classification, the early phase accounts for around 38% (38 coins), the late phase 33% (33 coins), and the imitations amount to 28% (28 coins).

f. Vasudeva I and Imitations (nos 33–70)

Under Vasudeva I, who ruled for over 30 years, a radical narrowing in the typology of Kushan coinage can be observed. The rich variety of the bust portraits of Huvishka is abandoned, to be replaced by the standing figure of the king making an offering at an altar familiar from the reign of Kanishka I, this time, however, clad in a kind of armour. On the reverses the diverse Kushan pantheon is reduced to a single deity, Oesho. This main type—offering king/Oesho—is now used for all denominations in gold (dinar and quarter dinar) and aes (unit).⁸⁸

As Göbl (1984; 1993) established, the coinage of Vasudeva I can be roughly divided into three successive phases of production based on variants in the obverse image and additional control marks: without trident above the altar (phase 1), with trident above the altar (phase 2) and *nandipada* in the right field (phase 3).⁸⁹ According to Jongeward and Cribb (2015), the main mint for gold coinage continued to be located in Bactria (probably Balkh), with the subsidiary mint in Gandhara (probably Peshawar). Against this, Göbl (1993) relocates Vasudeva I's main mint from former A ('Peshawar') to former C ('Kabul' = new Mint I).⁹⁰ Alongside these, mints II ('Taxila' = former Mint B) and III ('Peshawar' = former Mint A) continue to operate, as does a peripatetic mint (Mint E).⁹¹ Ascription to individual mints is here based exclusively on stylistic considerations, with the inevitable result that differences arise in the classification of the coinage between Göbl (1993) and Jongeward and Cribb (2015). According to Jongeward and Cribb, the main mint at Kapishi (probably Begram) continued to bear the brunt of production as regards aes coinage. Göbl (1984) largely dispenses with assigning coins to individual mints, expressly defining his groupings of bronze coinage as 'typologische Ausgangspunkte' ('typological points of departure').⁹²

As in the case of Huvishka, we are confronted by a plethora of imitations in the aes coinage of Vasudeva I, some of which were probably also produced posthumously and circulated over a long period. With the increasingly slipshod execution, making the reading of legends and the identification of design variants and control marks difficult, it is often impossible to arrive at an unequivocal attribution or to distinguish between original issues and imitations. This is exacerbated by the mostly poor state of preservation of the coins, which likewise poses a considerable challenge

⁸⁷ Five coins that Göbl (1976) had regarded as regular issues (nos 169, 171, 176, 181, 182) should probably be considered as imitations, even though their weights come relatively close to the reduced standard of the late phase.

⁸⁸ One exception is Nana, who initially appears on gold dinars from Mint B (Göbl 1984: series 514); Cribb and Bracey 2025: no. 147 (2a), attributed to the first phase of the main gold mint, Balkh.

⁸⁹ Göbl (1984) had assigned the coinage of Vasudeva I bearing the *nandipada* to a Vasudeva II but revised this in Göbl 1993; cf. Göbl 1993: 35–38, pls 1–24.

⁹⁰ In Göbl (1984) Mint C ('Kabul' = Mint I in Göbl 1993) does not begin operation until the third phase of Vasudeva I (there Vasudeva II); cf. Göbl 1984: series 640–659.

⁹¹ Göbl (1993) introduces new names for the mints, some of which do not synchronize with the old names in Göbl 1984 (the correlations given in Göbl 1993: 35 are partly erroneous). This primarily concerns the main Kushan mint, which Göbl (1984) surmises to be still in 'Peshawar' (Mint A) but in Göbl 1993 is relocated to 'Kabul' (Mint I).

⁹² Göbl 1984: 73; see also the proposed classification of types in Göbl 1993: 150. Kahn (2010) presents a refined arrangement based on the coin finds from Taxila; cf. also Khan 2006. Cribb and Bracey (2025) continue to locate the aes coinage in Begram (nos 172–174), but suspect an additional mint in Mathura (no. 176).

for exact identification. The question of who was behind these imitations is a matter of dispute. They are presumably the expression of a political and economic crisis confronting the Kushan Empire towards the end of the reign of Vasudeva I. Göbl (1984; 1993) surmised internal religiously motivated conflict between Vasudeva I, Kanishka II and Vasishka that split the empire. On top of this came pressure from outside the empire from the Sasanians, who ultimately succeeded in conquering the north-western part of the Kushan Empire from Bactria to Gandhara under Shapur II in around 355 CE (Göbl 1993: 43–44). Jongeward and Cribb (2015), on the other hand, put the Sasanian conquest back to around 230 CE under Ardashir I (224–240).⁹³ They surmise that some of the scyphate gold dinars from the main Bactrian mint (= Mint I [‘Kabul’] in Göbl 1993) that bear the name Vasudeva and were assigned to Vasudeva I by Göbl (1993: pls 34–35) had already been minted under the rule of the Kushano-Sasanian kings Ardashir⁹⁴ and Peroz (I)⁹⁵ between around 230 and 270 CE.⁹⁶ By analogy, the bronze coins following the model of Vasudeva I and regarded as imitations should then be predominantly ascribed to the Sasanian administration.⁹⁷ The controversial question of when the Kushan Empire was conquered by the Sasanians and Kushano-Sasanian coinage began to be minted at Kushanshahr is dealt with in the following section (1.2.a).⁹⁸ Here it should be clearly stated that neither the above-mentioned scyphate gold dinars bearing the name of Vasudeva nor the barbarized bronze coins drawing on Vasudeva’s model yield indications of any kind to identify them as products of the Sasanian state or Kushano-Sasanian kings. That is pure speculation arising from Cribb’s early dating of the start of Kushano-Sasanian coinage, the substance of which cannot be proven on the basis of the current body of source material. The situation is different with Göbl’s (1993) hypothesis of internal discord and conflict between Vasudeva I, Kanishka II and Vasishka leading to a division of the empire within the reign of Vasudeva I. On the one hand, this rests on his interpretation of the sudden reduction to Oesho and Ardokhsho in the reverse types under Vasudeva

⁹³ On this, see the chronological overview in Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 4, tab. 2, which in its general outline is based on Cribb 1990. According to Jongeward and Cribb (2015: 150), Bactria had already been conquered under Ardashir I at the end of the reign of Vasudeva I, whereas Kapishi and Gandhara had been incorporated into the Sasanian realm under Shapur I during the reign of Vasishka in around 260; see also Cribb 2021a: 105–07, 177–85. Most recently, Schindel 2025 has addressed this issue in detail again, rightly opposing Cribb’s early dating of Kushano-Sasanian coinage. In Cribb and Bracey 2025: 109–22, esp. 114–16, an attempt is made to justify the early dating once again. The arguments of Schindel (2005; 2009; 2011; 2012; 2014; 2016) are also discussed in detail. However, the authors were unable to take into account Schindel’s new monograph (2025), which was published shortly before their own work. I myself still consider the beginning of Kushano-Sasanian rule around 230 CE to be impossible.

⁹⁴ Ardashir I according to Göbl (1993); see also Schindel 2025, tabs 55, 56.

⁹⁵ Peroz 1–5 according to Göbl (1993); see also Schindel 2025, tabs 55, 56. The assumption expressed by Cribb and Bracey (2025: 110) that the Kushano-Sasanian kings Ardashir and Peroz I could be sons of the Sasanian Shahanshah Ardashir I lacks any basis in the sources.

⁹⁶ A selection can be found in Jongeward and Cribb (2015: nos 1689–1703); this concerns Göbl (1984: series 640–659A, 666–698) and corresponds mainly to the block of coinage still attributed there to a Vasudeva II (in Göbl 1993: pls 2–6 this attribution is corrected to Vasudeva I); see also Cribb and Bracey 2025: 92–93, 109–10, 209–11, fig. 3.53; nos 164–171. Here what may be regarded as an original issue of Vasudeva I and what as an imitation is not so easy to distinguish. It is not inherently unusual for a design to become partially barbarized and continued as an immobilized type over a lengthy minting span, and this does not necessarily indicate a change of ruler. On the other hand, the possibility cannot be excluded that new issuers are indeed behind the gradual barbarization of the Vasudeva type. However, it is more likely that these would need to be sought in the Kushan ambit rather than among the Sasanian kings.

⁹⁷ Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 150, 179–80 and Cribb and Bracey 2025: 211–14, figs 3.54–3.57. For late Kushan bronze coinage, see also the comments in Schindel 2025: 176–81.

⁹⁸ In this connection, reference should be made to Nikitin (1999), who questioned whether the conquest of the Kushan Empire by the Sasanians and the beginning of Kushano-Sasanian coinage should necessarily be considered simultaneous events.

I and Kanishka II—that is at all events a fact and must have had a politically and/or religiously motivated background.⁹⁹ The other pillar on which Göbl's hypothesis rests is his reconstruction of the sequence of gold coinage at the various mints (Göbl 1993: pls 1–24). This sequence was developed exclusively from the numismatic material and can only be corrected or falsified on the basis of the material itself. With a material basis now hugely expanded since Göbl's time, correction and reordering of the sequence are now being undertaken, and we must wait and see what this brings.¹⁰⁰

At Tapa Sardar Vasudeva I is represented with 33% (24 coins) of the Kushan issues (Figure 6). The imitations amount to 16.5% (12 coins). The distribution among the reasonably securely identified coins between the individual minting phases is relatively even, despite a rather large proportion (10 coins) not being clearly assignable. The weights of the four coins from the early phase (Phase 1; nos 33–36; Figure 6a) range between 10.7g and 8.70g and follow the reduced standard of Huvishka. The five coins from the middle phase (Phase 2; nos 38–41, 47; Figures 6b, d) vary between 8.90g and 7.85g. The only unit that can be clearly assigned to the late phase (Phase 3; no. 42; Figure 6c), weighs 7.85g; in the case of four further coins deriving either from Phase 2 or Phase 3 (nos 43–46), the weights fluctuate between 9g and 8.15g. Viewed as a whole, the median weight of the coins from the three minting phases lies between 8.5g and 9.5g.

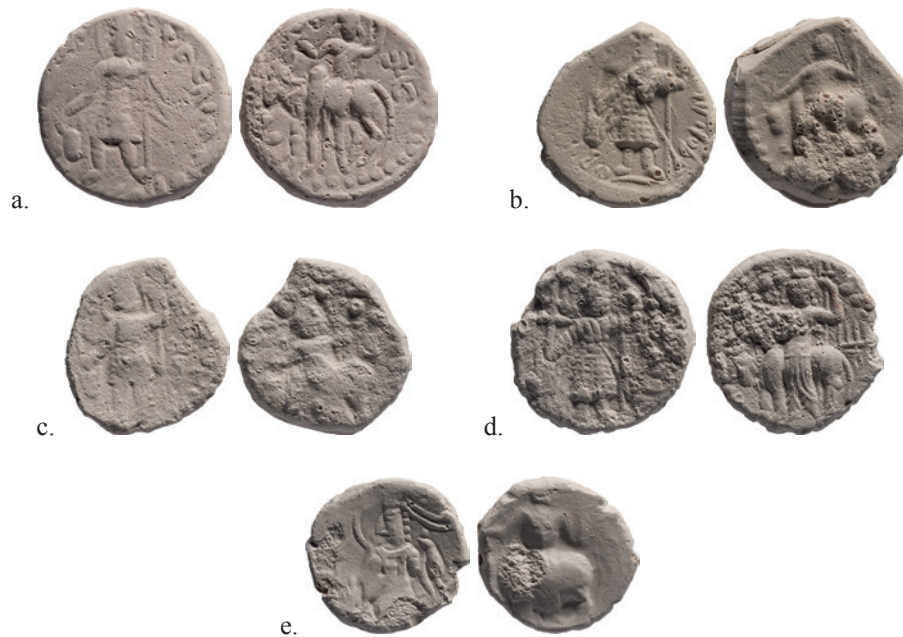


Figure 6. Kushans, Vasudeva I

a. AE , 9.05g. TS429 (no. 34); b. AE , 8.75g. TS1036 (no. 38); c. AE , 7.85g. TS1038 (no. 42); d. AE , 8.9g. TS1033 (no. 47); e. Unofficial imitation, AE , 5.25g. TS591 (no. 65)

⁹⁹ In contrast, Joe Cribb (2023) would like to see in the reduction of reverse types merely 'an indication of a different practice in mint organisation', but this seems to me to take too limited a view of the case; cf. Cribb *et al.* 2023: 251, 254, 265 and Cribb and Bracey 2025: 84, 91–92, 96.

¹⁰⁰ Bracey (2009) has already provided new insights for Vima Kadphises, while the first corrections to Göbl's sequence of emissions for Kanishka I are apparent from Cribb (1998); on this, cf. also Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 11. In the limited time available, I was unable to verify the production sequences proposed by Cribb and Bracey (2025) based on their die analysis. However, the authors' choice of presenting the material in the form of a type catalogue makes it extremely difficult to understand the production processes they describe.

The weights of the coins classified as imitations (nos 59–70; Figure 6e) range between 8.6g and 2.35g. Here the diameters are also interesting, being reduced from 23 to 17mm. The coins' state of preservation varies; most—as far as can be established from the plaster casts—are badly corroded. The weight charts published by Cribb and Bracey (2025: 212, fig. 3.55; 220, fig. 3.62) provide an overview of the falling weight standard from the end of the reign of Huvishka to Vasudeva I and its imitations.

Thus at 33% (49.5% including imitations), the coins of Vasudeva I clearly head the series of Kushan coins from Tapa Sardar. The proportion of these is more than three times as large as in the DAFA excavations at Begram (15% including imitations; Morris 2021). In the Masson Collection, Vasudeva's share likewise heads the Kushan coins at 25% (746 coins including imitations), ahead of Kujula Kadphises (20%) and Soter Megas (24%).¹⁰¹ At Butkara I (Göbl 1976), his coins amount to 20% of the total, and at Barikot (Shavarebi 2025), 30% (both including imitations). The evidence from Taxila is remarkable. Here Khan (2010) recorded 1,384 coins of Vasudeva I, of which he classified only 97 (9%) as originals, with the overwhelming majority (1,287 coins = 93%) being imitations.¹⁰²

g. Kanishka II and Imitations (nos 71–79)

The last of the Kushan kings represented in the coin finds from Tapa Sardar is Kanishka II, who, according to the evidence of the dated Indian inscriptions, ushers in the 2nd century of the Kushan era. For how long he ruled is unclear, but his reign is generally allotted a duration of around 15 years.¹⁰³ While the obverses once again show the standing figure of the king making a sacrifice, as a rule, Kanishka II wears a kaftan and not armour like Vasudeva I. On the reverses Oesho is generally replaced by the goddess Ardokhsho.¹⁰⁴ As in the case of Vasudeva I, this main type is used for all denominations in gold (dinar, quarter dinar) and copper (unit). According to Göbl (1993), two mints in particular were active for Kanishka II: Mint III ('Peshawar')¹⁰⁵ and a peripatetic mint in Punjab (Mint E).¹⁰⁶ Jongeward and Cribb (2015) also assume that Kanishka II's main mint was in Gandhara (probably Peshawar) and produced both gold and aes coinage. Against this, Cribb (2021) relocates the minting of Kanishka II's copper coinage back to Kapishi (Begram), before this mint came under Kushano-Sasanian control towards the end of the reign of Kanishka II.¹⁰⁷ In Cribb and Bracey (2025: 215–17; nos 190–195), in addition to the main mint in Gandhara (probably Peshawar or Taxila) and a subsidiary mint, it is assumed that two further short-lived mints existed for gold, one of which was in Balkh, while the mint for copper remained in Begram. Leaving aside all interpretations and hypothetical constructions, when one compares the classification of the individual groups of coins in Göbl and Cribb, a high degree of correspondence becomes

¹⁰¹ Cribb 2021a: 88–90, tab. 8.

¹⁰² However, numerous small hoards are included here, in particular from the Dharmarajika complex, cf. Khan 2010: 41–43.

¹⁰³ Falk 2015: 126–27. For more on Kanishka II see Cribb and Bracey 2025: 93–97; 215–22.

¹⁰⁴ However, Oesho is still present in one gold issue (Göbl 1984: series 547, 548; Cribb and Bracey 2025: no. 192). A further exception is Nana on a rare gold dinar (Göbl 1984: series 660; Cribb and Bracey 2025: no. 194); a second specimen struck from the same dies and two quarter dinars have now also surfaced, cf. Cribb *et al.* 2023: figs 1b, 2, 3. Göbl (1984) assigns these issues to his Mint C ('Kabul'), where they interrupt the coinage of Vasudeva I. Cribb (*et al.* 2023: 251–54), on the other hand, locates the mint in Bactria (presumably Balkh) and considers placing these issues between the reign of Vasudeva I and the Sasanian conquest; likewise, Cribb and Bracey (2025: 217), who speculate that 'this was the last issue of the Kushan gold mint at Balkh before the Kushano-Sasanian conquest'.

¹⁰⁵ Göbl 1984: series 538–553 (Mint A).

¹⁰⁶ The issues from Mint E (Göbl 1993: pl. 24, series 634–636) are assigned to Kanishka III by Jongeward and Cribb (2015: 169–70).

¹⁰⁷ Cribb 2021a: 105, 178.

apparent. However, there is a considerable difference in the intersection demonstrated by Göbl of individual emissions of Vasudeva I, Kanishka II and Vasishka, which led him to the assumption that the reigns of these kings partially overlapped and that the Kushan Empire broke apart as a result of internal conflict.¹⁰⁸ Against this stands Cribb's model, which—based on the epigraphic evidence of the dated Indian inscriptions—assumes a strictly linear succession in the emissions of the kings concerned. Cribb and Bracey (2025) upheld this model, but I was unable to form an opinion based on the newly presented numismatic documentation in the short time available.



Figure 7. Kushans, Kanishka II
a. Æ, 7.70g. TS432 (no. 71); b. Unofficial imitation, Æ, 6.60g. TS1622 (no. 74)

The number of coins issued by Kanishka II found at Tapa Sardar amounts to 12% (9 coins). Imitations are included here, since owing to their poor state of preservation, in most cases no clear line can be drawn between an original and an imitation (Figure 7). Weights fluctuate between 7.70g and 1.90g. The number of coins of Kanishka II from the DAFA excavations at Begram (Morris 2021) amounts to 20%; however, here the picture is distorted by a small hoard. In Butkara I (Göbl 1976) it lies at 10%, in Barikot (Shavarebi 2025) at around 15%. From Taxila 196 coins of Kanishka II are assembled in Khan (2010), with 83% (163 coins) classified as originals and only 17% (33 coins) as imitations. If one observes the influx of coins to Taxila from Kanishka I to Kanishka II as documented in Khan (2007; 2009; 2010), disregarding for once the imitations after Vasudeva I and Kanishka II, Kanishka I leads with 180 specimens (33.5%), followed by Kanishka II with 163 coins (30%); then follows Huvishka with 99 specimens (18.5%, of which 28 are imitations) and finally Vasudeva I with 97 coins (18%). Looking at the same period of time in the Masson Collection, Kanishka II's share amounts to a mere 18% (271 coins), and that of Kanishka I to only 9% (139 coins).

In sum, the coin influx into Tapa Sardar displays a steady rise from Kanishka I and reaches its height under Vasudeva I before falling off again with Kanishka II (Appendix II, Figure 1). Amounting to 71% of the total quantity of coin finds from Tapa Sardar, the Kushan coins represent the absolute zenith of this coin influx.

¹⁰⁸ Göbl's classification (1993: pl. 4, series 661–665) of the emissions includes a further Kushan king by the name of Khodeshah, whom he places between Kanishka II and the second coinage of Vasudeva I at Mint I ('Kabul'). According to Cribb (1990: 155), Göbl's reading of the obverse legend is, however, erroneous, the former claiming that the legends of the series concerned are incorrectly written and in fact belong to Kanishka II (likewise Cribb and Bracey 2025: 209); cf. also the commentary by Sims-Williams 2010: no. 535. At this point, reference should also be made to the problem with Vaskushana, which is also still awaiting a satisfactory solution; see Göbl 1993, pl. 24, series 628–631 and the commentaries by Sims-Williams 2010: no. 63 and Falk 2015: 127, no. 127. Cribb and Bracey (2025: 98, 102; nos 222–224) interpret the Bactrian legend of these issues as a blundered version of the coin inscriptions of Vasudeva II.

1.2 Sasanians and Kushano-Sasanians

a. Shapur II (nos 84–86)

As mentioned above, the point at which the Sasanians ousted the Kushans from Kabulistan and Zabulistan is disputed. According to Göbl (1993), this took place in the course of the eastern campaigns of Shapur II around 350/355 CE during the second minting phase of Vasudeva I.¹⁰⁹ By contrast, according to Cribb (2018, 2021a) it was Shapur I (240–272) who drove Kanishka II out of Kabulistan.¹¹⁰ We are here once again faced with the problem of chronology, to which I do not presently see a convincing solution. What principally fails to convince me is Cribb's (2018; 2021a; 2025) early placement of the start of Kushano-Sasanian coinage under Ardashir I around 230 CE and the associated assumption that the coinage of the Kushano-Sasanian kings lasted more than 120 years.¹¹¹ In my view, Nikolaus Schindel has demonstrated convincingly that the main group of Sasanian Kushanshahs cannot possibly begin before Narseh (293–302/03) or Ohrmazd II (302/03–309/10), and thus the entire coinage can by no means have lasted over a hundred years.¹¹² The end of Kushano-Sasanian minting south of the Hindu Kush occurred under Shapur II (309/10–379) during the defensive war against the Huns and may be connected with the establishment of a Sasanian imperial mint in Kabulistan during the last 15 years of Shapur's reign which served to finance the costly military campaigns in the border region.¹¹³

A crucial argument for this hypothesis is provided by the hoard from the Buddhist monastery of Tepe Maranjan (Kabul) that was discovered by French archaeologists in 1933 (Figure 8).¹¹⁴ The hoard contains 367 Sasanian drachms: 325 specimens of Shapur II (309/10–379), 28 specimens of Ardashir II (379–389) and 14 specimens of Shapur III (383–388). In addition, there are twelve scyphate gold dinars, of which one can be assigned to the Kushano-Sasanian king Wahram 5, while the other 11 already derive from the Hunnic Kidarites.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ Cribb (2018), Jongeward and Cribb (2015; and Cribb and Bracey (2025) identify these gold dinars as Sasanian imitations on the model of Vasudeva I; they localize the mint in Bactria and not, as Göbl (1993) does, in Kabulistan, see above. However, I consider it problematic to regard these gold dinars as products of the Sasanian state. Ardashir I's new political concept was based on an ideological reorientation of Iran that was expressed clearly in all his visual media. Gold dinars modelled on those of the Kushan king Vasudeva do not fit the picture.

¹¹⁰ Cribb 2021a: 105–06, 182; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 109–11, 251; according to Cribb, the first Kushano-Sasanian king to mint copper coinage in Begram and/or Peshawar was Peroz I (= Peroz 5 in Göbl 1993); see Schindel 2025: 61–71 and Cribb and Bracey 2025: no. 302 (southern copper mint Begram).

¹¹¹ Likewise, Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 197–201 and Cribb and Bracey 2025: 21, tab. 2.1; 110, tab. 2.13.

¹¹² See e.g. Schindel (2012; 2020; 2025), who rightly also corrects Göbl's late placing of the duration of Kushano-Sasanian coinage from c.350/355 to 385 CE (cf. Göbl 1993: 82).

¹¹³ In addition to Mint IX ('Kabul'), which served as the empire's main mint during this period, mints XI and XII, also to be located in the east, were in operation. In Göbl 1984, series 1354–1356 Mint XI is referred to as a 'subsidiary of Kabul'. The drachms from Mint XII still figure in Göbl 1984: series 1324 under Mint IX ('Kabul') but were singled out by Schindel (2004, 1: 232–38; 2: pls. 17–19) as a stylistic group in its own right that is continued under Ardashir II, Shapur III and Wahram IV. Whether Mint XI is indeed a Sasanian imperial mint is the subject of a new study currently in progress (Alram *et al.* in preparation); cf. also notes 121.

¹¹⁴ Curiel 1953; Göbl 1984: 55–56, pls 145–156; Göbl 1993: 27–29; Schindel 2004, 1: 232–237; Cribb 2010: 92–93; Alram 2014: 268; Alram 2016: 38–40; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 113, 264. On the archaeological conditions under which the hoard was found, see also the critical remarks by Kuwayama 1991: 100–03.

¹¹⁵ Göbl 1984: pl. 156, series 735–738. The Wahram 5 dinar (Göbl 1984: pl. 156, series 718, no. 2515) was likewise assigned by Cribb (2010) to the Kidarites on the basis of the tamgha, but I do not consider this to be sufficiently justified. It is unclear whether the dinars circulated contemporaneously with the Sasanian drachms or were added to the hoard at a later point. According to Göbl (1984; 1993), the mint that produced the Kidarite dinars should be localized in 'Kabul', whereas Cribb (2010) surmises it to be in Bactria (probably Balkh). In this case Cribb's proposal should be emphatically accepted, in particular since Kuwayama (1999: 38–39)



Figure 8. The hoard of Tepe Maranjan

a. Shapur II, Δ, 4.08g, Mint IX ('Kabul'). NMA (Göbl 1984: 146, no. 34); b. Ardashir II, Δ, 4.09g, Mint IX ('Kabul'). NMA (Göbl 1984: 155, no. 345); c. Shapur III, Δ, 4.19g, Mint IX ('Kabul'). NMA (Göbl 1984: 155, no. 361)

The Sasanian portion of the hoard concludes at around 385 CE and marks the withdrawal of the Sasanians from Kabulistan.¹¹⁶ The stylistic homogeneity of the Sasanian drachms from Tepe Maranjan identifies them as the product of a single mint (Mint IX, 'Kabul')¹¹⁷ and supplies one of the most substantial arguments for assuming the presence of a Sasanian imperial mint in Kabulistan. A further piece of evidence for this is provided by the dies of Shapur II and Shapur III from the very same mint that fell into the hands of the Hunnic Alkhans and were used by the latter to initiate the minting of their own coinage in Kabulistan (cf. Figure 12).¹¹⁸

In addition, there are now two further hoards and a smaller one (probably the content of a purse) unearthed during excavations at Mes Aynak (40 km south-east of Kabul, Logar Province). Hoard 1 comprises 52 drachms ranging from Shapur II to Yazdgerd I (399–420).¹¹⁹ As far as can be deduced from the illustrations provided by Davoudi (2017), the drachms of Shapur II, Ardashir II and Shapur III mainly originate from Mint IX ('Kabul') and Mint XII ('East'). The purse contains five drachms of Shapur II from Mint XI ('East').¹²⁰ Still unpublished is Hoard 2 with 1,005 Sasanian silver drachms

convincingly demonstrated that the Kidarites did not invade north-west India through Kabulistan but across the mountainous regions north of Gandhara and via the Swat Valley. On the Kidarites, see most recently Cribb and Bracey 2025: 122–38, 263–67; nos. 346–355, 358–369.

¹¹⁶ Göbl (1993: 28) surmised correctly that 'der Machtwechsel in Kabul mit all seinen Auswirkungen noch zu Lebzeiten des Šabühr III. stattgefunden hat' ('the transition of power in Kabul with all its consequences took place during the lifetime of Šabühr III').

¹¹⁷ On this, see Schindel 2004, 1: 232–37.

¹¹⁸ See e.g. Vondrovec 2005, Alram and Pfisterer 2010: 15–16 and Alram 2016: 63–69. On the obverse dies of Shapur II and Shapur III, the clan name *alxanno* in Bactrian has been additionally engraved and in some cases also the Alkhan tamgha.

¹¹⁹ Dovudi 2017: 171–80.

¹²⁰ Mes Aynak 2013: 98–101; Dovudi 2017: 180–82. On the type, cf. Schindel 2004, 1: pls 17–18, nos 258–261.

covering the period from Shapur II (309/10–379) to Wahram IV (388–399).¹²¹ This yields a *terminus post quem* of around 399 CE for the concealing of the hoard. The overwhelming majority of the drachms date from the reign of Shapur II and come from those mints that are thought to have been located in the area of Kabulistan. In contrast to the Tepe Maranjan hoard, which only contained Sasanian drachms from Mint IX ('Kabul'), these are in the minority in Hoard 2 from Mes Aynak. Here most of the drachms derive from Mint XI ('East').¹²² The question now arises of whether these are originals of Shapur II or imitations. In order to answer this question, the analysis of Hoard 2 from Mes Aynak must be completed.¹²³ Similarly, no definitive statement can yet be made about the number of Shapur II's eastern mints and where they might be localized.

Finally, a larger number of scattered Sasanian coins was recovered at Mes Aynak which—as far as presently known to me—range from Shapur II to Yazdgerd I (399–420).¹²⁴

In addition to the coin finds, the Sasanian influence at Mes Aynak is underlined by the find of two silver plates.¹²⁵ One plate shows a prince in Sasanian dress hunting lions. While his crown approximates to that of Ardashir II, the korymbos is inscribed within a crescent moon. With the Sasanian kings this detail is not found until the crown of Wahram V (420–438) and thus should provide the *terminus post quem* for the dish from Mes Aynak. In this context, reference should be made to the Kidarite crowns, which on the drachms minted in Bactria and Gandhara occasionally display the korymbos in the crescent moon. In Bactria these are coins issued by Tubazini, while in Gandhara they are issues of Kidara.¹²⁶ It cannot therefore be excluded that this type of crown migrated from the Kidarites to the Sasanians. The second plate, which displays at its centre a bust on the model of Shapur II, I have tentatively assigned to an Alkhan prince, given that the design of the bust deviates from the standardized portraits of Shapur II and constitutes a clear parallel with the early Alkhan drachms that copy the portrait of Shapur II.¹²⁷

Finally, reference should be made to a group of Bactrian letters in which a *shahanshah* Shapur is mentioned, who can only be Shapur II or Shapur III (Sims-Williams and Grenet 2022/23). These letters originate from a single archive somewhere in south-eastern Afghanistan and are addressed to an individual named Sansidd, who holds the title of 'royal retainer of the just Shapur'. One of the writers refers to himself as 'the royal retainer of Kwastu', a place identified by Sims-Williams as Khost, located east of Ghazni (near the border with Pakistan). Khost lies on an important route between the Indus Valley and the Afghan highlands. It leads from Bannu via Kost and the Kost-Gardez Pass to Gardez, and then on to Ghazni or Kabul/Kapishi (Inaba forthcoming) (cf. Appendix 3, Figures 4, 6). Grenet suspects that Sansidd may have been the 'chief political agent of the Sasanians' based in Kapishi (Sims-Williams and Grenet 2022/23: 142). Much still remains to be discovered, but these documents at least give us an initial insight into the Sasanian administrative structures in the areas south of the Hindu Kush.

The number of Sasanian coins found at Tapa Sardar is low (Figures 9, 10). They comprise two drachms of Shapur II and a Kushano-Sasanian copper coin bearing the name Shapur (Bac. *šaboro*),¹²⁸

¹²¹ On this, see the brief remark in Dovudi 2017: 184. The publication of the hoard by Michael Alram, Robert Keck, Fahim Rahimi and Nikolaus Schindel within the *Sylloge Nummorum Sasanidarum* (SNS) framework is currently in preparation (Alram *et al.* in preparation).

¹²² Cf. e.g. Schindel 2004, 2: nos 260, 261; a coin of this type is also illustrated in Dovudi 2017: fig. 21.

¹²³ Alram *et al.* (in preparation).

¹²⁴ More than 60 specimens are currently known to me which were brought to my attention by Fahim Rahimi, former director of the Kabul Museum.

¹²⁵ Mleziva 2016: 97–103, nos 77, 78; Dovudi 2017: 61–64, pls 8, 11.

¹²⁶ On Tubazini, see Alram and Pfisterer 2010: 33–36; on the name, see Sims-Williams 2010: no. 472. On Kidara, see Cribb 2010: type B3, fig. 45 and Pfisterer 2013: type 14-1.

¹²⁷ Mes Aynak 2013: 96; Alram 2014: 269–70; Alram 2016: 63 with illustrations on p. 47–48.

¹²⁸ Sims-Williams 2010: no. 548.

the obverse of which shows the bust of Shapur II with the mural crown. These amount to 3.5% of the total coin finds. In terms of value, however, the two Sasanian silver drachms clearly rank at the top of the coins found in Tapa Sardar. One of the drachms (no. 84; Figure 9a) derives from the ‘Kabul’ mint (Mint IX). The peculiar style of the second drachm (no. 85; Figure 10a) indicates that it is a product of Mint XI (‘East’), specimens of which are so numerous in Hoard 2 of Mes Aynak (Figure 10b). However, as already mentioned, it still needs to be clarified whether this coin type is an original Sasanian issue or an imitation.



Figure 9. Sasanians, Shapur II

a. Δ, 4.35g, Mint IX (‘Kabul’). TS1042 (no. 84); b. Δ, 4.07g, Mint IX (‘Kabul’). KHM GR44272 (Göbl 1984, series 1319, no. 4)



Figure 10. Shapur II or imitation (?)

a. Δ, 3.90g, Mint XI (‘East’). TS2034 (no. 85); b. Δ, 3.99g, Mint XI (‘East’). NMA 19.43.10904 (from the Mes Aynak Hoard 2)

Drachms of Shapur II are—as we have seen—amply represented in the excavations at Mes Aynak and likewise in the region of Kabul-Begram.¹²⁹ The relic deposit of the Buddhist stupa of Tope Kelan (Hadda, near Jalalabad) contained, among other coins, around 180 Sasanian drachms.¹³⁰ These include issues by Shapur I (240–272), Shapur II (309/10–379), Wahram IV (388–399), Yazdgerd II (438–457) and Peroz (2nd crown; c.458–474¹³¹). Of Shapur II’s issues, only a drawing of a drachm has been preserved, which Errington (2017) classifies as an imitation.¹³² This coin may be a product of Mint XI, issues of which are so plentifully attested in the new hoard from Mes Aynak (see above). Allegedly deriving from Bajaur (Pakistan) is a group of forger moulds all bearing imprints of drachms of Shapur II and Ardashir II from the ‘Kabulistan’ mint (Mint IX).¹³³ A drachm of Shapur II from Kabulistan (Mint IX) is also documented

¹²⁹ In addition to the cited hoard from Tepe Maranjan, they are also represented in the Masson Collection, cf. Cribb 2021a: tabs 21, 22.

¹³⁰ Errington and Sarkhosh Curtis 2007: 93–95, figs 82–83 and Errington 2017: 174–91. The Sasanian drachms were associated with drachms of the Kidarites and Alkhan, as well as with late Roman solidi.

¹³¹ The dating follows Schindel 2004, 1: 399, tab. 8.

¹³² Errington 2017: 185–86, fig. 281.11. Cribb (2010: 146, figs 71, 72) also includes illustrations of two coins of this style which are described as imitations of Shapur II.

¹³³ Alram 2014: 268; Alram 2016: 39–40; Bonev 2017.

from Kashmir Smast.¹³⁴ To date, no Sasanian drachms have been found at Barikot. Against this, we know a drachm of Wahram IV (388–399)¹³⁵ and one of Yazdgerd II (438–457)¹³⁶ from Butkara I. According to Göbl (1976) and Schindel (2004), these drachms of Wahram IV display an eastern style. While drachms of this style are also represented among the coin finds from Taxila, I doubt that there was a Sasanian mint at this location.¹³⁷ Mention should also be made of a hoard uncovered recently in the Punjab near the city of Ahmadpur Sial (Jhang District) that, in addition to 180 gold coins of the late Kushans, Kidarites and Guptas, also contained five Sasanian drachms of Yazdgerd II (438–457) and 37 drachms of Peroz (2nd crown; c.458–474).¹³⁸ Ultimately Sasanian drachms from Kabulistan made their way along the ‘Silk Roads’ as far as Turfan.¹³⁹

The mint that struck the heavily worn Kushano-Sasanian copper coin (no. 86; Figure 11b), whose images can only be made out in outline, is surmised to have been in Gandhara or Kabulistan.¹⁴⁰ Weighing a mere 2.02g, it can probably be identified—not least in view of the poor quality of the strike—as a local imitation.¹⁴¹ This corresponds with the rather square flan that distinguishes them from the regular coinage with round flans (Figure 11a). In typological and stylistic terms, the regular issues are closely interconnected with the imperial drachms from the early minting phase of Shapur II, which Schindel dates from 309 to the 320s or 330s.¹⁴²



Figure 11. Kushano-Sasanians

a. Shapur II, Æ , 3.78g. AuR (Schindel 2025: no. 4.188); b. Unofficial imitation of Shapur II, Æ , 2.02g. TS1981 (no. 86); c. Unofficial imitation of Shapur II, Æ , 1.39g. Zeno #309548

¹³⁴ Khan *et al.* 2008: no. 129.

¹³⁵ Göbl 1976: no. 263.

¹³⁶ Göbl 1976: no. 264; cf. Schindel 2004, 1: 300–01.

¹³⁷ Marshall 1951: 823, nos 285–287. In Schindel 2004, 1: 300–01 the mint is referred to as ‘Unsigniert B (“Taxila”)’. The obverse die of the drachm published by Schindel (2004, 2: pl. 33, no. A2) has been recut and allegedly shows individual Brahmi characters in place of Pahlavi letters; however, a meaningful reading has yet to be proposed. Moreover, Marshall’s catalogue records two drachms of Shapur III (383–388) from the mint at Merw (Schindel 2004, 2: pl. 28, nos 31–32; Marshall 1951: 823, nos 283–284, pl. 244).

¹³⁸ Khan and Hasan 2017.

¹³⁹ Thierry 1992: 90–91, nos 6–8; Göbl 1993: 29.

¹⁴⁰ Göbl (1993: pl. 38, ‘Synchronogramm der KS-Prägungen’; 1984: series 1120, 1121) dated to after 350/355 CE; Jongeward and Cribb (2015: 224) with a surmised minting span of between c.330 and 379 CE. Attribution to a mint in Gandhara is, however, purely hypothetical; neither can Kabulistan be excluded. Schindel (2025: 109–29) provides an in-depth treatment of chronology and mints, dating these issues to the 330s and surmising that ‘Kabul’ was the mint.

¹⁴¹ The weights of the regular issues range in Göbl (1984: series 1121) between 4.53g and 3.47g; in Jongeward and Cribb (2015: nos 2398–2408) between 5.29g and 3.78g. On the imitations, cf. also the coins recorded from Kashmir Smast in Khan (*et al.* 2008: nos 138–156). But see now Schindel 2025: 139–44, which provides a detailed metrological analysis.

¹⁴² Schindel 2004, 1: 219 (‘Prägetabelle 1’); Schindel 2012: 65–66; Schindel 2025: 172–75.

In Cribb and Bracey (2025: 114, 257–58; nos 336–339) these coin issues with the name of Shapur are divided between two mints: one group (Bac. *šaboro*), which follows the coinage bearing the name of Kawad (Bac. *kabad*) and is characterized by irregular and underweight flans (1.5–2.5g), is attributed to Begram. The second group (Bac. *šaboro* and Pah. *šhpwhly*) with a ‘restored weight standard’ (c.4.0g) and round flans is attributed to Taxila. But here too, a “collapse of standard” below 1.0g is said to have occurred, with the shape of the flans becoming irregular again in a second phase. This division into two mints proposed by Cribb and Bracey (2025) is a hypothesis that I cannot agree with. Their division into two mints is based in part on the assumption that the coins from Begram—such as those bearing the name of Kawad—show the bust in flames on the reverse, while those from Taxila show only the fire altar without the bust. As Cribb and Bracey (2025: 258) themselves point out, the coins they believe to be from Begram are so poorly made that the design is usually not clearly recognizable. The assumed shift from a reduced weight standard to a restored weight standard and back into a reduced one also seems difficult to justify to me. Therefore, I would assume that most coins bearing the bust of Shapur II on irregular flans and with reduced weights are unofficial imitations, produced in different mints south of the Hindu Kush. The regular issues with good weight and design, bearing the name in both Bactrian and Middle Persian and which provide the model for the imitations, were most probably produced in Kabulistan. In any case, the currently known find evidence is not a convincing argument for assuming that these coins were minted in Taxila.

Their core area of circulation lies south of the Hindu Kush.¹⁴³ At Mes Aynak they circulated in larger numbers, together with other Kushano-Sasanian copper issues and the late Kushan imitations.¹⁴⁴ However, the record made by Dovudi (2017) of the Kushano-Sasanian aes coins found at Mes Aynak does not allow a more precise breakdown. In the Masson Collection (Begram) 40 coins of this type are recorded.¹⁴⁵ The excavations at Butkara I yielded nine Kushano-Sasanian copper coins,¹⁴⁶ including six of Kawad with a lion headdress¹⁴⁷ and three of King Meze wearing a horned crown.¹⁴⁸ In Barikot 20 identifiable Kushano-Sasanian copper coins have been found to date. They range from Shapur II via Peroz 5 (I) to Kawad 1 and Meze (Shavarebi 2025: tabs. VI.2, VI.3).¹⁴⁹ Finally, a larger number of Kushano-Sasanian copper coins are known from Taxila, among which those with the bust of Shapur II also feature.¹⁵⁰

In summary, it can be said that the shift in focus of imperial Sasanian coin production to Kabulistan for almost two decades (c. 365–385) resulted in a fundamental reordering of the monetary landscape in regions south of the Hindu Kush. Whereas in Bactria the Kushan gold currency was continued by the Kushano-Sasanian governors and their successors the Kidarites, south of the Hindu Kush the triumph of the Sasanian silver drachm, which gradually replaced Kushan gold, began. The small-scale monetary transactions of the markets were carried out with copper alloy coins, with late Kushan,

¹⁴³ As Schindel (2025: 155–58) shows, the Kushano-Sasanian aes coins minted south of the Hindu Kush also circulated in larger numbers in Bactria, whereas the aes coinage minted in Bactria did not make its way south; likewise, Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 199.

¹⁴⁴ Mes Aynak 2011: 59 (Meze; cf. Göbl 1984: series 1125); Mes Aynak 2013: 97 (Shapur II; cf. Göbl 1984: series 1121); Dovudi 2017: 159–68. In addition, scyphate gold dinars of Peroz 3, Wahram 1 and Wahram 5 were also found; cf. Mes Aynak 2011: 54–56 and Stančo 2016: nos 56–61.

¹⁴⁵ Cribb 2021a: 183, fig. 51.27–30. From the DAFA excavations come six unidentifiable Kushano-Sasanian copper coins (Morris 2021: 32–33, tab. 3).

¹⁴⁶ Göbl 1976: nos 247–255.

¹⁴⁷ Göbl 1984: series 1122 (Kawad 1); Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 2244–2294 (Ohrmazd I in the name of Kawad).

¹⁴⁸ Göbl 1984: series 1127, nos 44–46 (= Göbl 1976: nos 253–255); Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 2350–2358.

¹⁴⁹ This also includes a compilation of Kushano-Sasanian coin finds from archaeological excavations in Uddiyana.

¹⁵⁰ Marshall (1951: 790) speaks of ‘183 specimens of the “Bust of king and squat altar type”’; however, in the catalogue only 14 specimens are listed (Marshall 1951: 823–24, nos 279–282, 289–298).

Kushano-Sasanian aes and local imitations mixing, as evidenced by the finds. With the withdrawal of the Sasanians from Kabulistan and Gandhara towards the end of the reign of Shapur III (383–388), silver coinage on the Sasanian model was continued by the Alkhan and Kidarites. However, the influx of Sasanian imperial money did not cease, and can be followed into the time of Peroz (457–484).

1.3 Iranian Huns and Turk Shahis

a. Nezak, Alkhan-Nezak Crossover (no. 87) and Shri Shahi Issues

According to numismatic evidence, Kabulistan (Kapishi-Kabul region), and thus presumably also the area around Ghazni, fell into the hands of the Hunnic Alkhan around the mid-80s of the 4th century, during the reign of Shapur III (383–388).¹⁵¹ The Alkhan appear to have taken over the Sasanian mint located there. This is evidenced by the captured dies of Shapur II and Shapur III, which were recut by the Alkhan and reused for their own coinage (Figure 12).¹⁵²



Figure 12. Alkhan
Anonymous (after 385 CE), Δ, 3.63g, struck with a recut die
of Shapur II from Mint IX ('Kabul'). KHM GR42698 (Type 36)

It is unclear whether the region around Kapishi-Kabul was taken by the Kidarites on their way from Bactria to Gandhara shortly before. However, Shoshin Kuwayama convincingly argued that the Kidarites did not travel to Gandhara via the Hindu Kush and the Khyber Pass, but took the route through the mountainous regions north of Gandhara, via Chitral and the Swat Valley (Uddiyana).¹⁵³ In my opinion, this hypothesis is supported by the numismatic evidence.¹⁵⁴

In this context, reference should be made once again to the large Sasanian coin hoard from Mes Aynak, which is currently being analysed and contains mainly drachms of Shapur II, assigned by Schindel (2004, I: 237) to Mint XI ('Osten').¹⁵⁵ Prior to the discovery of the Mes Aynak hoard, only a few examples of these drachms were known. They display a very peculiar style with barbarized legends, possibly indicating that they are not Sasanian originals of Shapur II but rather imitations.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ The loss of the Sasanian mint 'Kabul' (Mint IX) to the Alkhan is assumed by Schindel (2004, 1: 282–84) around 384/85.

¹⁵² Göbl 1967, I: type 36; Alram and Pfisterer 2010: 15–16; Vondrovec 2014, I: 177–80, 230; Alram 2016: 63–69.

¹⁵³ Kuwayama 1999: 37–41, 43–45; Kuwayama 2002: 123–24, 209. However, Kuwayama's equation of the Alkhan with the Hephthalites is erroneous; Göbl (1967) already pointed out that the Alkhan and the Hephthalites were two different political groupings and that the Hephthalites themselves never crossed the Hindu Kush.

¹⁵⁴ Cribb (2021a: 106–07), on the contrary, assumes that the Kidarites preceded the Alkhan and briefly occupied the region around Begram (Kapishi) c.388; see also Errington and Sarkhosh Curtis 2007: 85–91; Cribb 2010: 111–12; Cribb 2018: 23–27.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. notes 113, 121.

¹⁵⁶ In Göbl (1967, I: type 28A) such a drachm is recorded, on which Göbl thought he could read the name Wahram, which, however, cannot be confirmed on the basis of the new hoard from Mes Aynak; Göbl assigned it

However, it is currently too early to make a final judgement, and the publication of the hoard must be awaited.¹⁵⁷

In any case, the numismatic evidence clearly shows that the Alkhan had established themselves in the Kapishi-Kabul region in the last quarter of the 4th century and had begun to mint their own coins. Under Khingila (c.430/40–495), who was the first Alkhan prince to put his name on the coins (Figure 13), the Alkhan began to expand into Gandhara and Punjab, where they gradually displaced the Kidarites. Towards the end of Khingila's reign, rule in the Alkhan Empire appears to have been divided among four kings. This can be deduced from an inscription (Schøyen Copper Scroll) in which, in addition to Khingila, the kings Toraman, Javukha and Mehama (Figure 14) are named as the founders of a Buddhist stupa.¹⁵⁸ The fact that individual Alkhan kings ruled alongside each other simultaneously is also confirmed by the coinage, as Matthias Pfisterer (2013) was able to show.¹⁵⁹ However, it is not possible to make more precise statements about the extent and administrative structures of the Alkhan Empire nor about the domains of the kings named on the coins.



Figure 13. Alkhan
Khingila (c.430/40–495), Δ, –g. NMA (Type 61/61A; found in Mes Aynak; Mes Aynak 2011: 59)



Figure 14. Alkhan
Mehama (2nd half of the 5th cent.), Δ, 2.45g. NMA (Type 74;
found in Qol-e Tut; Alram et al. forthcoming, no. 8)

to an intermediate group ('Zwischengruppe') in the Kabul area (see Göbl 1967, II: 55–56), and I have followed him in this (Alram 1984: no. 1472). In Göbl (1993: 28–29, pl. 26, nos 21, 22, with legend facsimilia on pl. 28) two specimens are illustrated and labelled as 'postume Šabühr II.-Typen' (see also Göbl 1984: series 1355). Cribb (2010: 110, figs 71, 72) assumes that the Kidarites were the issuers.

¹⁵⁷ Alram *et al.* (in preparation).

¹⁵⁸ Melzer 2006; Bakker 2020. Melzer dates the inscription to the year 492/93 according to the Laukika era, while Bakker favours the Kanishka era, which would place the inscription in the year 495/96—if one follows Falk's (2001) dating approach, which equates the beginning of year one of Kanishka I with 127 CE; cf. note 58.

Melzer (2006) interprets the *Tālagānika-Devaputra-Sāhi* mentioned in the inscription as the lord of Talaqan, a place in Bactria. La Vaissière (2012) raises objections to this and suggests Talagang in the Punjab (north of the Salt Range) as the place of origin of the inscription. This proposal also fits better with the numismatic evidence.

¹⁵⁹ According to Pfisterer (2013: 83–100), there seems to have been a coordinated joint coinage ('koordinierte Gemeinschaftsprägung') between the kings Khingila, Mehama, Javukha and Lakhana. By contrast, la Vaissière (2007: 128) assumes that Khingila had already died by the time the inscription was written.

It remains unclear how far the Alkhan's sphere of influence extended southwards into Zabulistan. The evidence of coin finds to date is not very conclusive here. I am not aware of any finds of Alkhan coinage with a certain provenance from Zabulistan itself, not even from Tapa Sardar. A hoard of 57 scyphate dinars of the Alkhan king Aduman (Göbl 1967, I: type 85),¹⁶⁰ allegedly discovered near Ghazni, was brought to my attention in 2005, but the location cannot be verified. In Mes Aynak, in the province of Logar to the north-east of Ghazni, six Alkhan drachms have been documented, including two of Khingila (Figure 13).¹⁶¹ But even in Kabulistan itself, the number of reliably documented Alkhan coin finds is limited. Excavations in the Buddhist sanctuary of Qol-e Tut (Kabul), for example, only brought to light two Mehama drachms (Figure 14),¹⁶² while in the neighbouring Buddhist complex of Tepe Narenj only one late specimen of Toramana II's Type 150 was found (cf. Figure 20b).¹⁶³ At least 33 Alkhan coins are documented in Masson's Begram Collection, ranging from the early Shapur II imitations (Type 33) to Toramana II (Type 150) in the second half of the 6th century.¹⁶⁴ The number of finds in Gandhara and Uddiyana is somewhat higher, but the number of coins from documented excavations is also low here (Shavarebi 2025: tab. VIII.1).

Towards the end of the 5th century, the political landscape in the Alkhan Empire south of the Hindu Kush appears to have changed. The Nezak kings emerged as a new power, taking over rule of Zabulistan and Kabulistan from the Alkhan (Figures 16, 17). We do not know whether this happened peacefully. Led by Toramana I, the military engagement of the Alkhan at that time was directed against India. Toramana I succeeded in extending the Alkhan dominion as far as Malwa (540 kilometres south of New Delhi).¹⁶⁵ However, his son and successor Mihirakula (Figure 15) suffered a devastating defeat against an alliance of Indian princes led by Yashodharman, the king of Malwa, around 532 CE, heralding the decline of Hunnic power in India.¹⁶⁶



Figure 15. Alkhan
Mihirakula (c.515–540), Δ, 3.61g. JPR 940 (Type 310; Pfisterer 2013, no. 310-1)

¹⁶⁰ Vondrovec 2014, I: 144–45, 154–55. On the name, see Sims-Williams 2010: no. 9.

¹⁶¹ Mes Aynak 2011: 59 (two specimens; cf. Pfisterer 2013: type 61/61A); Mes Aynak 2013: 95 (one specimen, cf. Pfisterer 2013: type 52A = Vondrovec 2014, I: 313, type 73A). Of three drachms of Type 60, which were allegedly found in Mes Aynak, I only know images of the obverses, which Zafar Paiman brought to my attention in 2014; cf. also Dovudi 2017: 185, figs 23, 24.

¹⁶² Alram *et al.* (forthcoming): nos 7, 8.

¹⁶³ Paiman and Alram 2012: fig. 21b (Narana?); Alram 2013: no. 6.

¹⁶⁴ Cribb 2021a: 107–08.

¹⁶⁵ Alram 2016: 89–95; Bakker 2020: 59–91. A compilation of sources can be found in Balogh 2020.

¹⁶⁶ Willis 2005: 147; Bakker 2020: 92–100. See also Balogh 2020 for the relevant sources.



Figure 16. Nezak, Group I (š-type)

a. Anonymous (end of the 5th cent.), Δ, 3.76g. KHM GR45603 (Type 217); b. Anonymous (first half of the 6th cent.), Ob, 0.55g (with tamghas *S 61* on obverse and reverse). JPR 896 (Type 219B; Alram 2016: 109, no. 3); c. Anonymous (mid-6th cent.), Δ, 3.85g. KHM GR45607 (Type 222)



Figure 17. Nezak, Group II (ā-type)

a. Anonymous (first half of the 6th cent.), Δ, –g. BHM 68.559 (Type 198; from the Gardez Hoard, cf. Göbl 1967, II: 36–38; Alram 2016: 110: no. 5); b. Anonymous (second half of the 6th cent.), Δ (Æ), 3.56g. KHM GR43815 (Type 198)

Another event that probably favoured the takeover of Nezak rule in Zabulistan and Kabulistan was the defeat of the Sasanian king Peroz by the Hephthalites in 484 CE, which led to an overall weakening of the Sasanian position in the east (Schindel 2004, 1: 414–19).

It is not clear from the sources to what extent the Hephthalites, Alkhan and Nezak originally belonged to a common grouping or confederation. However, there seems to be some evidence to suggest that there may have been some kind of dynastic connection between the Alkhan and the Hephthalites.¹⁶⁷ A connection of this kind could also have existed between the Alkhan and the Nezak, especially as the ancestor of the last king of Kapishi, Hexiezhi, whom Kuwayama (1999) associates with the Nezak dynasty, is said to have been a certain Xinnie (= Khingila) according to the Chinese sources, who is perhaps identical to the Alkhan king Khingila of the coins.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ From a numismatic point of view, the tamgha *S 2* should be mentioned, which is found on coins of the Alkhan as well as on those of the Hephthalites and Kidarites; cf. Alram and Pfisterer 2010: esp. 33–36.

¹⁶⁸ Kuwayama 1999: 41–45; however, Kuwayama would like to date this Khingila, and thus the beginning of the Nezak coinage, to only around the middle of the 6th century, seeing no connection between Nezak and the Alkhan,

The characteristic feature of the Nezak coinage is the king's winged buffalo-head crown, which clearly distinguishes him from the Alkhan and Hephthalites. The wings are borrowed from the third crown of Peroz, which thus provides a *terminus post quem* of around 474 CE for the beginning of the Nezak coinage.¹⁶⁹

The golden buffalo-head crown worn by the rulers of the kingdom of Cao (Kapishi) is also reflected in Chinese sources.¹⁷⁰ The *Suishu* (vol. 83), for example, reports that the king of Cao wore such a crown in the late 6th and early 7th centuries.¹⁷¹ However, as the *Suishu* draws on a variety of sources, it cannot be ruled out that this remark also refers to earlier times. It could also contain events or reports relating not only to the Kapishi-Kabul region, but also to neighbouring Zabulistan.¹⁷² It therefore seems quite plausible that the report in the *Suishu* refers to the Nezak kings, who, according to the numismatic evidence, were the first in the region to introduce the buffalo-head crown as a royal insignia and probably began minting coins in Zabulistan as early as the late 5th century.¹⁷³

The coins of the Nezak can be divided into two large groups according to their typological and stylistic characteristics (Figures 16, 17), which probably reflect the work of two mints. Group I (š-type), whose mint Göbl (1967, I: types 217–222) assumes to be located in the area of Zabulistan/Ghazni, begins earlier than Group II (ā-type), which he assumes to be in the area of Kabulistan/Kapishi-Kabul (Göbl 1967, I: type 198).¹⁷⁴ While Group I starts towards the end of the 5th century and presumably ends with the Sasanian occupation of Zabulistan after 560 (Figure 16), Group II begins in the first quarter of the 6th century and continues until the middle of the 7th century (Figure 17). It should be added, however, that the chronological framework given is only an approximate guide. The end of the Nezak coinage in particular (Type 198) is still under discussion and requires more detailed numismatic research (see below). The same applies to the localization and number of mints. As explained above, we assume that the minting of the Nezak coinage was carried out in at least two mints, which according to Göbl (1967) are presumably to be localized in Zabulistan/Ghazni and Kabulistan/Kabul (or Kapishi).¹⁷⁵ If we follow Kuwayama (1999; 2002) and relate the already cited message in the *Suishu* to the Nezak kings, then at least one mint should be localized in Kapishi (Begram), although Kabul cannot be ruled out either. Furthermore, the Nezak coinage in Kapishi-Kabul should only have come to an end with Hexiezhì, after 660 CE.¹⁷⁶

whom he erroneously assigns to the Hephthalites (cf. also Kuwayama 2002: 208–15, 253–57). For opposing views, see Grenet 2002a: 218; Pfisterer and Uhlir 2015: 44–45; Alram 2016: 105–11. Cf. also Inaba 2020.

¹⁶⁹ Vondrovec 2010: 170–72. On the dating of the third crown of Peroz, see Schindel 2004, 1: 396, 415–19.

¹⁷⁰ In the *Suishu* the kingdom is called Cao, in the Tang period Jibin, and sometimes also included the region around Kabul (cf. Kuwayama 1999: 29–32; Kuwayama 2002: 198).

¹⁷¹ Kuwayama 1999: 37, 45–48; Kuwayama 2002: 215–17. In the surviving version of the *Suishu*, however, a golden fish-head crown is reported. Kuwayama (1999; 2002), on the other hand, convincingly argues that this must be an error, especially since both the *Beishi* (vol. 97; published in 659 CE) and the *Tongdian* (vol. 192; published between 766 and 768 CE), which refer back to the *Suishu* in their description of the Cao kingdom, report a golden buffalo-head crown.

¹⁷² I would like to thank Minoru Inaba for these comments, especially as I am not a specialist in Chinese sources.

¹⁷³ As already stated, based on the report in the *Suishu*, Kuwayama (2002: 208–21) would like to move the beginning of the Nezak coinage to the middle or second half of the 6th century, placing Type 198 (Group II, ā-type) at the beginning (Kuwayama 2002: 220–21). From a numismatic point of view, however, this must be rejected.

¹⁷⁴ In Group I the last letter of the legend is formed like a š (= š-type), while in Group II it is an ā (= ā-type). On the coinage of the Nezak, see Göbl 1967, II: 71–75; Alram 1996; Alram 2000; Vondrovec 2010; Vondrovec 2014, I: 449–77; Pfisterer and Uhlir 2015; Alram 2016: 105–11.

¹⁷⁵ According to Pfisterer and Uhlir (2015: 59), additional mints may have been involved in the late phase of Type 198 (Group II, ā-type).

¹⁷⁶ A detailed treatment of this problem cannot be undertaken in this study, but will be carried out elsewhere together with Minoru Inaba, taking into account the written and archaeological evidence.

What can be deduced with some certainty from the sparse find evidence is the circulation area of the Nezak coins, which is concentrated in the Kandahar-Ghazni-Kapishi-Kabul-Gardez region. Parts of large, self-contained hoard complexes of Nezak drachms, which appeared in the bazaars of Kabul and Gardez, are known, but their origin cannot be verified.¹⁷⁷ Scerrato (1967) reported on a large hoard of Nezak drachms of Group II (ā-type) that he had seen in the Gardez bazaar in 1957. It is said to have consisted of over 500 specimens, which later also appeared in the Kabul bazaar.¹⁷⁸ This hoard could be identical to the one of which Robert Göbl was able to acquire 80 specimens at the Kabul bazaar in 1962 (Figure 17a).¹⁷⁹ Another hoard was allegedly found recently near Kandahar. It is said to have consisted of over 1,600 specimens (Group II; ā-type), of which Pfisterer and Uhler (2015) were able to examine and metallurgically analyse a small selection of 127 specimens. In contrast, the number of Nezak drachms in Masson's Begram Collection is strikingly low, with only two specimens of Group I (š-type) and one specimen of Group II (ā-type), all of which come from the Kabul bazaar.¹⁸⁰ Likewise in the Kapishi area (Kham-i Zargar/Kuh-i Muri) another drachm of the š-type (Type 222) was found, which was brought to my attention by Zafar Paiman in 2014.

I am only aware of a few Nezak coins from documented archaeological excavations. Two early Nezak drachms of Group I (š-type) came to light in Tepe Narenj (Kabul) (Alram 2013: nos 4, 5),¹⁸¹ while two Nezak drachms come from the DAFA excavations in the Hindu sanctuary of Khair Khana (near Kabul), and one from the Saka fort.¹⁸² Another two Nezak drachms of Group II (ā-type) were discovered by Umberto Scerrato in a tumulus in the Jaghatu-Bargul region (20 km north-west of Ghazni);¹⁸³ and finally, two Nezak coins were found during the British excavations in Old Kandahar.¹⁸⁴ Mention should be made of a find from the Wardak region (48 km west of Kabul), where two Nezak drachms of Group II (ā-type) were found in a relic vase alongside 19 Kushan copper coins.¹⁸⁵ I am not aware of any finds of Nezak coins from Gandhara. Only two obols have survived from Kashmir Smast.¹⁸⁶

No Nezak coins were found in Tapa Sardar itself, although the Nezak kings could have played a prominent role as potential patrons of the sanctuary.

Let us return to historical developments: around 560 CE, a new political upheaval occurred when the Sasanian king Khusro I (531–579), in an alliance with the Western Turks, succeeded in putting an end to Hephthalite supremacy in Bactria (Howard-Johnston 2010: 46–51). In the aftermath of this event, the Sasanians also seem to have brought parts of Zabulistan back under their control, as attested by the administrative seal of an *āmārgar* (tax officer) of *Zāvulistān* and

¹⁷⁷ This overview is also included in Alram *et al.* (forthcoming).

¹⁷⁸ Scerrato 1967: 22–23, n. 18, fig. 46.

¹⁷⁹ Göbl 1967, II: 36–38; Pfisterer and Uhler 2015: 48–59.

¹⁸⁰ Cribb 2021a: fig. 53, 4, 5 (Group I, š-type), 6 (Group II, ā-type); see also Errington and Sarkhosh Curtis 2007: 99, where reference is made to four specimens.

¹⁸¹ Cf. also Alram 2016: fig. 72.

¹⁸² Hackin 1935: 289; Hackin 1936: 4–5; Carl 1959: 18; Kuwayama 2002: 164. Unfortunately, the coins are not illustrated, making it impossible to distinguish between š-type (Group I) and ā-type (Group II) specimens.

¹⁸³ Scerrato 1967: 21, figs 44, 45; Verardi and Paparatti 2004: 91.

¹⁸⁴ Helms 1997: 98–99; Joe Cribb, who is currently working on the publication of the coins from the Kandahar excavation, was so gracious as to send me the photos of the two coins that belong to Type 198 (Group II, ā-type).

¹⁸⁵ Falk 2008: fig. 7; however, only one Nezak coin is illustrated.

¹⁸⁶ Khan *et al.* 2008, nos 579, 580; there identified as Type 218 (Group I, š-type); however, owing to the poor quality of the illustrations I was not able to verify this.

Varāzigān (Figure 18a).¹⁸⁷ A Sasanian mint was also established in Rakhvad (near Kandahar, Arachosia) under Ohrmazd IV (578/79–590) (mint signature LHW; Figure 18b), which remained active until the second year of the reign of Khusro II (= 591/92) (Mochiri 1983: figs 307, 308).¹⁸⁸



Figure 18. Sasanians in Zabulistan

a. Sasanian sealing of an *āmārgar* of *Zāvulistān* and *Varāzigān*. Saeedi Coll. (Photo and drawing R. Gyselen; Gyselen 2002: fig. 11); b. Ohrmazd IV (578/79–590), Δ, –g, (year) 12 / LHW (Rakhvad), with *Cm II* on the obverse. Mochiri Coll. (Photo R. Gyselen)

The extent to which the Sasanian advance also affected the area around Ghazni and Tapa Sardar is uncertain. In any case, there is no evidence of Sasanian numismatic remains from this period. There is a group of imitations modelled on those of Kawad I (2nd reign, 499–531), which were found in Kandahar and are probably of local origin.¹⁸⁹ Another group of imitations modelled on Kawad I (1st reign: 488–496) shows the tamgha *S 61* on the reverse instead of the mint signature (Göbl 1967, I: types 260, 261) (Figure 19a).¹⁹⁰ This tamgha is also documented on obols of the Nezak issues of Group I (š-type), which we assume to be localized in Zabulistan (cf. Figure 16b).¹⁹¹ A group of drachms based on the Sasanian model, on which the king wears a winged buffalo-head crown, should also be emphasized (Göbl 1967, I: types 262, 263; 265, 266) (Figure 19b, c).¹⁹² In terms of style and manufacture, however, these issues can be clearly distinguished from those of the Nezak (Groups I and II). They are partly made of good silver and according to their typological characteristics can be dated at least to the time after Khusro I (531–579).¹⁹³ Their Pahlavi legends are often barbarized, but on some specimens the mint signature LHW (= Rakhvad) can clearly be read (Figures 19b, c),¹⁹⁴ as it also appears on the regular issues of Ohrmazd IV

¹⁸⁷ Gyselen 2019: 226, 244–45; Gyselen 2002: 175–78.

¹⁸⁸ For Ohrmazd IV, the years 9, 10 and 12 are attested; see also Gyselen 2019: 345–49 with map 11.

¹⁸⁹ MacDowall 1996: fig. 222.3; the mint signature LHW (= Rakhvad) can be clearly read on at least one specimen. On the imitations modelled on Kawad I, see Schindel 2004, I: 479–81.

¹⁹⁰ Vondrovec 2014, I: 423–24, 437.

¹⁹¹ Vondrovec 2014, I: 455–57, types 219A, 219B.

¹⁹² Vondrovec 2014, II: 526–30, 628–33 with type 265A.

¹⁹³ Göbl (1967, II: 50–51 [‘Emissionsschema 4’], 93–94) dates these emissions to the early 8th century, which in my opinion is too late; see also Vondrovec 2014, II: 526.

¹⁹⁴ The attribution of these issues to Bactria considered by Göbl (1967) and Vondrovec (2014) on the basis of the title Pahl. *ybgw bhlk’n* (‘Yabghu of Balkh’?) on the coins is thus invalid; see already Vondrovec 2014, II: 528, n. 649. It should also be mentioned that Göbl (1967, I: 182) already considered associating the sigla LH/RH with Arachosia. On other specimens of Types 265, 265A and 266 there is another mint signature that cannot be read with certainty, but which can perhaps be reconstructed as Pahl. *z’wlst’n/zāvulstān*; on one specimen (Vondrovec 2014, II: 632, no.

(cf. Figure 18b) and Khusro II. Whether the issuers of these coins were possibly a splinter group of the Nezak who took over Arachosia from Khusro II after 591/92 remains to be investigated.¹⁹⁵



Figure 19. Unknown rulers in Arachosia (mint Rakhvad, signature LHW and tamgha *S 6I*), presumably associated with the Nezak, after 590/91 CE (?)

- a. Anonymous, Δ, 4g. AuR Huna 530 (Type 261A, with tamgha *S 6I* in the reverse; Vondrovec 2014, I: 437, no. 261A-1); b. Anonymous, Δ, 3.99g. LHW / ?. JPR 1525 (Type 263; Alram 2016: 145, no. 1); c. Anonymous, Δ, 3.68g, (year) 11 (?) / LHW. JPR 1697 (Type 265A var.; Alram 2016: 145, no. 2)

After the defeat of Mihirakula by Yashodharman in around 532 CE, the Alkhan Empire in north-west India seems to have gradually reduced to Gandhara as its core zone. It is noteworthy that during this period the silver content of the drachms continued to decline and eventually consisted only of aes. A parallel development can be observed in the Nezak drachms (Group II, ā-type). At the end of this development, during the reign of the Alkhan king Toramana II (Pfisterer 2013: 165–89), there seems to have been a confrontation with the Nezak kings in Kabulistan (Figure 20). The numismatic results of this confrontation were, on the one hand, the overstriking of Toramana II (Type 150) on Nezak drachms (Type 198; Figures 21b, c)¹⁹⁶ and, on the other hand, the adoption of the Nezak buffalo head by Toramana II in his own crown on the drachms he minted in Gandhara (Figure 21d).¹⁹⁷ It is not clear when this event took place, but it would not be wrong to place it after the middle of the 6th century.¹⁹⁸

265A-3) the year 15 (*pncdh/pānzdah*) seems to be indicated. See also Malek 2019, 2: nos 1345–1349; on no. 1345 (Type 265) the year 2 can be read, and Malek also assumes the name/title Spur (Pah. *spwl*) on the obverse; however, the Pahlavi legends are all heavily corrupted, meaning that no unambiguous readings can be given.

¹⁹⁵ Currently, Ehsan Shavarebi is working on his doctoral thesis at the University of Vienna, in which he analyses the coinage of the Turk Shahis and their wider environment.

¹⁹⁶ Alram 1996; Alram 2000; Vondrovec 2010: 176–77; Pfisterer 2013: 166–67; Vondrovec 2014, I: 199–202, 338–48, 459–60; Pfisterer and Uhlir 2015: 63–66; Alram 2016: 111, nos 9, 10.

¹⁹⁷ Alram 1996: nos 59–61 (Types 150B, 76, 150A); Pfisterer 2013: 168–70; Vondrovec 2010: 178–80 (with type 76B); Vondrovec 2014, I: 197–99, 335–37. I had incorrectly read the legend of Types 150 and 150B as *śrī śahi na/nara* and assigned the coins to a Narana Narendra (Alram 1996; Alram 2000). In contrast, Pfisterer (2013: 188–89) rightly corrected my reading to *śrī śahi tora* and thus introduced Toramana II into the historical record. However, Vondrovec (2014, I: 199–200, 338) is sceptical about this reading; he proposes *śrī vapa(ta)*, but this does not make sense to me.

¹⁹⁸ According to Göbl (1967, II: 70–71), these issues are to be dated between 570/80 and 600, an estimate that is still valid today; cf. also Vondrovec 2014, I: 459–60.

We assume that Type 150 of Toramana II, and thus also the overstrikes on Type 198 of the Nezak, originated in the Kapishi-Kabul area (Figures 20, 21a–c).¹⁹⁹ Whether Toramana II used a Nezak mint located there or opened his own mint is uncertain. Also still under discussion is the related question of whether the minting of the Nezak ended with Toramana II's overstriking campaign or continued afterwards.²⁰⁰



Figure 20. Alkhan, Toramana II (2nd half of the 6th cent.)

- a. Δ (Æ), 3.52g. KHM GR42719 (Type 150 var. 1); b. Δ (Æ), 4g. NMA (Type 150 var. 2; found in Tepe Narenj; Paiman & Alram 2012: Figure 21b); c. Δ (Æ), 4.23g. KHM GR42338 (Type 150 var. 3); d. Anonymous, Δ (Æ), 3.40g. Private Coll. (Type 320; cf. Vondrovec 2014, II: 337)

In around 1990, a hoard of over 400 Toramana II copper drachms (Type 150) was allegedly discovered ten kilometres north of Kabul.²⁰¹ Among them were also some specimens of the aforementioned overstrikes (Figures 21b, c). Beyond that, the find evidence is again more than meagre: the Begram Collection of Masson contains eight coins of Type 150 (Cribb 2021a: figs 53.1–3); one specimen each is reported from Tepe Narenj (Figure 20b; Alram 2013: no. 6) and from Tapa Skandar (Kuwayama 1974: 12, fig. 14).

Based on the numismatic evidence, Göbl (1967, II: 70–71) postulated that part of the Alkhan had migrated back from India to Kapishi-Kabul or Zabulistan in around 600 CE and that the Nezak had subsequently incorporated Gandhara into their domain. The extent to which the typological development of coinage here actually reflects migratory movements and the associated military confrontations remains to be seen. What is certain is that there was a change in political structures during this period, with the formation of a new confederation of principalities headed by the

¹⁹⁹ In addition to Type 150 and its variants, Toramana II probably also minted Type 150 var. 4 with horseman on the reverse (cf. Pfisterer 2013: fig. 3.9.30; Vondrovec 2014, I: 201, 348). Closely related to Toramana II's issues is also Type 320 with a fish on the obverse in front of the bust (Vondrovec 2014, I: 199, 337), probably deriving from the same mint. However, on Type 320 (Figure 20d) the king wears a crown with a rosette instead of the trident in the rear crescent moon, which could point to a new, previously unknown ruler.

²⁰⁰ Göbl (1967, II: 50) and Alram (1996: 531–32; 2000: 133) are in favour of a continuation; for a contrasting view, see Vondrovec 2014, I: 460. Pfisterer (2013: 187) and Pfisterer and Uhlir (2015: 68) leave the question open; it can only be answered in the context of a comprehensive analysis of the entire Nezak coinage.

²⁰¹ Alram 1996; Alram 2000.

king of Kapishi (Jibin).²⁰² The territory stretched from Zabulistan via Kabulistan to Gandhara and perhaps also included Uddiyana. This is the empire that Xuanzang travelled through in the first half of the 7th century and which he reports as consisting of at least ten principalities.²⁰³ On his journey from China to India, Xuanzang had not chosen the route via the Karakoram, travelling instead via Tokharistan, the Hindu Kush and Kapishi to Gandhara.²⁰⁴ This route, which according to Shoshin Kuwayama formed the main traffic route from Central Asia to India from the middle of the 6th century onwards, was of decisive importance for the economic and cultural development of Kabulistan and Zabulistan.²⁰⁵ Another political turning point was the year 657, when the Chinese Tang defeated the Western Turks and between 658 and 661 placed the entire ‘Western Regions’, which included the kingdoms of Kapishi (*Xiuxian dudufu*) and Zabulistan (*Tiaozhi dudufu*), under Chinese administration (Anxi Protectorate).²⁰⁶



Figure 21. Toramana II and the Nezak

a. Anonymous Nezak king (second half of the 6th cent.), Δ (Æ), 3.81g. JPR 148 (Type 198; Alram 2016: 110, no. 6); b. Toramana II, Δ (Æ), 3.32g. KHM GR43240. (Type 150 struck on Nezak Type 198; from the ‘Kabul Hoard’; Alram 1996: no. 79); c. Toramana II, Δ (Æ), 3.19g. KHM GR42337 (Type 150 struck on Nezak Type 198; from the ‘Kabul Hoard’; Alram 1996: no. 78); d. Toramana II, Δ, 3.27g, mint in Gandhara. BnF 1974.433 (Type 150B; Pfisterer 2013: 168, f)

After a gap of over 300 years, the coin finds in Tapa Sardar resume with a drachm minted from billon or copper alloy (no. 87) belonging to the group of Alkhan-Nezak Crossover issues (Göbl 1967, I: types 225–235) (Figures 22–24).²⁰⁷ On the obverse it shows the portrait of the ruler

²⁰² Kuwayama 1991: 113–18; cf. also note 170.

²⁰³ In 643, Xuanzang had met the king of Jibin (Kapishi) in Udabhandapura (Hund) on the Indus and travelled with him via Ghazni (Zabulistan) to Kapishi (cf. Appendix III, Figure 6); see Göbl 1967, II: 70–71, Kuwayama 2002: 255, Petrie 2021: 63–66 and Inaba (forthcoming).

²⁰⁴ Kuwayama 1988; Kuwayama 2002: 140–42.

²⁰⁵ Kuwayama 1991: 114; Kuwayama 2002: 140–55; Inaba 2015; Klimburg-Salter 2019; Inaba 2022: 343.

²⁰⁶ Kuwayama 1999: 41; Kuwayama 2002: 134–35; Inaba 2005: 9–12; Inaba 2015. On the close political ties between the Kingdom of Kapishi and the Tang Court, see also the overview in Kuwayama 1991: 115, tab. 3, where a total of 23 diplomatic missions are mentioned in the Chinese sources between 619 and 750.

²⁰⁷ Vondrovec 2010: 182–83; Vondrovec 2014, I: 481–88, 490–500; Alram 2016: 113–21.

with a crown consisting of three crescent moons with an inscribed trident (or a blossom). These are attached to a smooth cap surrounded by a pearl diadem. The crescent moons are borrowed from the crowns of the Alkhan, such as those used in the crown of Toramana II (cf. Figure 20). The hairstyle, ear jewellery, bust design and the ribbons attached to the pearl necklace correspond to the Nezak coins (cf. Figures 16, 17). The twig-like ornament under the bust is also adopted from the Nezak but can usually only be recognised in part. A small Alkhan tamgha (*S I*) is placed above the ribbons, sometimes with an unclear sign/letter below it (Figures 22a, b). A second series bears the tamgha *S I 03* (Type 226; Figure 22c) instead of the Alkhan tamgha. The inscription is purely decorative and copies the Pahlavi legend of the Nezak to some extent. The reverse image with the fire altar and the assistant figures, with small rosettes hovering above their heads, is also taken from the Nezak. Overall, the Nezak influence is clearly predominant, with links to the Alkhan only through the tamgha (*S I*) and the crescent moons in the crown.



Figure 22. Alkhan-Nezak Crossover issues (phase 1)

a. Anonymous, Δ (BI/Æ), 3.65g. TS586 (no. 87; Type 225); b. Anonymous, Δ (BI/Æ), 3.55g. KHM OR7124 (Type 225; Alram 2016: 117, no. 1); c. Anonymous, Δ (BI/Æ), 3.39g. JPR 233 (Type 226; Alram 2016: 117: no. 2); d. Anonymous, Æ, 2.56g. KHM GR43323 (Type 227)

In terms of style and manufacture, the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover issues are closely related to the Nezak coinage, so that it can be assumed that the die cutters and mint workers came from their immediate environment. As far as can be seen with the naked eye, these drachms contain little or no silver. They are accompanied by a small copper denomination (Figure 22d), which did not previously exist in the Nezak currency area and was evidently brought from Gandhara by the Alkhan.²⁰⁸

A chronological reference point for the dating of the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover series is provided by a coin type with a double circle on both sides of the coin and a crescent-star combination at the four crossing points on the reverse (Göbl 1967, I: type 231) (Figure 23b).²⁰⁹ This motif is derived from the drachms of Khusro II (590–628) and was first minted in the second year of his

²⁰⁸ In Kabulistan this denomination (Göbl 1967, I: type 151) is found for the first time together with Type 150 of Toramana II.

²⁰⁹ Labelled a half-drachm by Vondrovec (2014, I: 484).

reign (= 591/92) (Figure 23a). As this coin type belongs to the first phase of the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover issues, its beginning can be dated to the last quarter of the 6th century at the earliest.²¹⁰



Figure 23.

a. Khusro II (590–628), Δ, 4.07g, (year) 2 / AW. KHM GR42031; b. Alkhan-Nezak Crossover (phase 1), Æ, 3.51g. JPR 244 (Type 231; Alram 2016: 118, no. 4)



Figure 24. Alkhan-Nezak Crossover issues (end of the 6th, first half of the 7th cent. ?)

a. Anonymous (phase 1), Δ (BI/Æ), 3.55g. KHM OR7124 (Type 225); b. Anonymous (phase 2), Δ (BI/Æ), 2.96g. KHM GR43772 (Type 232); c. Anonymous (phase 3), Δ (BI/Æ), 3.23g. KHM GR43809 (Type 234)

From the different crowns worn by the rulers on the Alkhan-Nezak issues—the number of crescents being reduced from three (Types 225–231) to two (Types 232, 233) and finally to one crescent (Types 234, 235)—it would seem that the coinage was struck in three successive phases (Figure 24). However, it is not possible to determine how many kings were involved. The use of two different tamghas (*S I* and *S I03*) possibly indicates two political groupings or clans.

²¹⁰ Göbl (1967, II: 50 [‘Emissionsschema 4’]) assumes a beginning only after 600 CE; Vondrovec (2014, I: 486) suggests the period from 580/90 to 650/80 for the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover series. The date of the beginning depends not least on whether Type 231 should be placed at the beginning (according to Göbl 1967) or at the end of the first minting phase; in contrast, Vondrovec (2014, I: 484), considers placing Type 231 at the very end of the entire Alkhan-Nezak Crossover series, i.e. after Type 234: ‘Thus Type 231 may well be the last offspring of the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover and could be dated to the middle, or even the second half of the seventh century’. In my view, however, this is untenable, especially since the king’s crown with the three crescent moons clearly identifies Type 231 as belonging to the first minting phase.

It is also unclear how many mints were involved in the minting. Although at first glance there are no major stylistic or technical differences between the individual issues, a detailed numismatic analysis is required before a final judgement can be made.

Göbl (1967, II: 74–77) assumes that the mint of the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover issues was in the Ghazni area, where the Nezak had minted their š-type (Group I) until around 560 CE. However, as the investigations of Klaus Vondrovec (2014, I: 486–88, fig. 8.5) show, things are more complicated, since both the Nezak š-type and the Nezak ā-type have direct typological successors which actually leave no real place for the compact group of Alkhan-Nezak Crossover issues in either of the two presumed Nezak mints.²¹¹ Moreover, the Alkhan-Nezak find a direct continuation in the Shri Shahi issues (Figure 25), which, given their date (c.660–700), presumably already led into the period of the reign of the Early/Turk Shahis. In terms of typology and style, they are closely related to the Alkhan-Nezak coins and were probably struck at the same mint(s). They differ from their predecessors above all in the inscriptions in Bactrian or Brahmi, which name the title Bac. *srio šaui[o]* or Bra. *śrī śāhi* ('His Perfection, King').²¹²



Figure 25. Shri Shahi issues, Bactrian and Brahmi group (after 661 to c.680 CE ?)

a. Anonymous, Δ (BI/Æ), 3.16g. KHM GR45623 (Type 236); b. Anonymous, Æ, 1.09g. KHM GR43329 (Type 238); c. Anonymous, Δ (BI/Æ), 3.35g. KHM GR43988 (Type 252); d. Anonymous, Æ, 1g. KHM GR43788 (Type 253)

Let us now look at the find evidence that has brought new results in recent years. First and foremost is the excavation of the Buddhist complex of Qol-e Tut (Kabul) by Zafar Paiman. Here, embedded in documented archaeological contexts, five Alkhan-Nezak Crossover drachms of Type 225 were found as single finds.²¹³ In addition, there are two small hoards or purse finds: Hoard C consists of an Alkhan-Nezak drachm of the second minting phase (Type 232) and five drachms of the Bactrian Shri Shahi type (Types 236, 237; Alram *et al.* forthcoming: nos C1–C6); Hoard B consists of 16 Bactrian inscribed Shri Shahi drachms (Types 236, 237; Figure 26). There are far fewer finds from other excavation sites. Of the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover issues, only one drachm of Type

²¹¹ See also Vondrovec 2010: 183–87.

²¹² Göbl 1967, I: types 236–239; 252, 253; Vondrovec 2014, II: 512–15, 572–87; Alram 2016: 113–21.

²¹³ Alram *et al.* (forthcoming): nos 9–13.

225 is documented in Masson's Begram Collection but 20 specimens of the small copper denomination issued in parallel (Type 227); in addition, there are 11 specimens of Type 231 (Cribb 2021a: figs 53.8, 14–17). Of the Shri Shahi issues, eight small copper coins of the Bactrian-inscribed type are documented in Masson's Begram Collection (Cribb 2021a: fig. 53.18), as well as a larger number of Brahmi-inscribed drachms and associated copper coins.²¹⁴ A single Shri Shahi coin is attested from the 1939 DAFA Begram excavations.²¹⁵ Two Shri Shahi drachms are documented from the neighbouring Qol-e Tut monastery of Tepe Narenj (Alram 2013: nos 9, 10).²¹⁶ Also noteworthy is a votive deposit from the Buddhist complex of Fondukistan in the Ghorband Valley (Parvan Province, approximately 120 km north-west of Kabul), where French archaeologists found an urn with a golden bracteate, a countermarked drachm of the Sasanian King Khusro II from the 37th year of his reign (= 627/28) and three Shri Shahi drachms inscribed in Bactrian under the famous 'princely couple'. Judging by its composition, the deposit must have been created after c. 689 CE.²¹⁷ In this case, the coins appear to have been taken directly from current circulation.



Figure 26.

A roll of 16 Shri Shahi drachms (Types 236, 237) found in the Qol-e Tut excavations
(Photo: Z. Paiman; Alram et al. forthcoming, nos. B1–B16 and fig. 1)

If we look at Gandhara and Uddiyana, we see that both the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover issues and the Shri Shahi types circulated there.²¹⁸ Especially in Kashmir Smast, both groups are found in larger numbers and seem to have been imitated there.²¹⁹ A countermarked Shri Shahi drachm (*Cm* 99) was also found in Butkara I.²²⁰

To summarize, it can be said that the circulation area of the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover issues and their successors, the Shri Shahi issues, differs significantly from that of the Nezak coinage and extends from Zabulistan and Kabulistan to Gandhara and Uddiyana. This, as well as their concentrated occurrence in Qol-e Tut, raises the question of whether the mint(s)—contrary to

²¹⁴ Cribb 2021a: figs 53.9–13, 19–23.

²¹⁵ Morris 2021: 32–33, tab. 3A.

²¹⁶ Cf. also Paiman and Alram 2012: figs 22a, g (the caption is erroneously under d).

²¹⁷ Ghirshman 1948: 28–32; Göbl 1967, II: 313–14, III: pl. 91, IV: pl. 8. The drachm of Khusro II bears two countermarks (*Cm* 3 and *Cm* 10), and one of the Shri Shahi drachms is also countermarked (*Cm* 99), which together provide the *terminus post quem* for the creation of the deposit; cf. also Alram et al. (forthcoming).

²¹⁸ See the overview of finds in Shavarebi 2025: tab. IX.1 and Shavarebi and Annucci (forthcoming).

²¹⁹ Khan et al. 2008: nos 581–600, 604–55; on the imitations, see also Vondrovec 2014, II: 514–15, 587–97 and Ziad 2022: 63–74.

²²⁰ Göbl 1976: no. 262.

previous assumptions—should be localized not in Ghazni/Zabulistan, but in the Kapishi-Kabul/Kabulistan area.²²¹

Due to the chronological position of the Shri Shahi issues within the Hunnic-Turkic coin series, I discussed the possibility of linking them to the takeover of rule by the Early/Turk Shahis in Kabulistan (Kapishi-Kabul region) under the leadership of Barha Tegin.²²² After 661 CE, the latter overthrew Hexiezhī, the last king of the so-called Khingal dynasty of Kapishi, who had ascended the throne in around 653 (see above).²²³ According to the Arab chronicler al-Bīrūnī (Sachau 1888, II: 10), Barha Tegin was of Turkic origin and designated Kabul as the new centre of power.²²⁴ These events and the Turkic origin of the new kings are confirmed by the report of the Korean monk Huichao, who travelled to Jibin and Gandhara in the 30s of the 8th century.²²⁵ Minoru Inaba (2005) convincingly demonstrated that these Turks were probably from the Khalaj tribe, which had settled south of the Hindu Kush in an area between Zabulistan and Kabulistan towards the end of the 6th century. When Xuanzang travelled from Ghazni to Kapishi with the king of Kapishi in the first half of the 7th century (Appendix III, Figure 6), they passed through Fulishisatangna, whose king is said to have been a Turk and a vassal of the king of Kapishi.²²⁶ This Turkic dynasty may have subsequently taken power in the kingdom of Kapishi (Jibin). According to Kuwayama (1999; 2002), the residence of the king of Fulishisatangna would have been in Kabul.²²⁷ However, Inaba (2004) argues against this, assuming that Kabul belonged to Kapishi. Be that as it may, Kapishi and Kabul should be considered as potential mints due to their importance at that time. If Kabul belonged to Fulishisatangna, then there could also have been a mint that was operated by the local kings.²²⁸ The same could be assumed for the local kingdom around Ghazni (Caojuzha), which was also a vassal state of Kapishi and of which Xuanzang reports that there was a second fortified capital (Hesaluo) in addition to Hexina (Ghazni).²²⁹

For the chronological placement of the Shri Shahi issues, the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover issues, whose minting—as we have seen—cannot have begun long before c.580/90, are decisive. A further indication is provided by the countermarks, which were first encountered in the area south of the Hindu Kush on the Shri Shahi issues inscribed in Bactrian (Types 236, 237). The countermarking campaigns are directly related to the advance of the Muslim troops to Khurasan. They began in the second half of the 7th century, initially mainly north of the Hindu Kush, and then also spread southwards.²³⁰ The countermarks on the Shri Shahi drachms (Figure 27) show either an insect with the Brahmi letters *ṣā-hā* (Cm 99) or the Brahmi letters *tī-gī* (Cm 100).²³¹

²²¹ Cf. the commentary by Shavarebi 2025: 166–68 and Shavarebi and Annucci (forthcoming).

²²² Alram 2014: 22–23; Alram 2016: 123–29; Alram 2018: 12–14.

²²³ Kuwayama 1999: 41–45, 55–58.

²²⁴ Kuwayama 1991: 113–18; Kuwayama 1999: 56–61; most recently Inaba 2022: 344; Klimburg-Salter 2022: 76–78; Verdon (forthcoming).

²²⁵ *Wang Wu-Tianzhuguo zhuan* ('A record of travels to India comprising the Five Districts'), cf. Kuwayama 1991: 116; Kuwayama 1999: 58–66.

²²⁶ Kuwayama 1999: 57–58; Kuwayama 2002: 258; Inaba 2004: 106–08.

²²⁷ See also Kuwayama 1991: 117.

²²⁸ In the *Da Tang Xiyu ji* (vol. 12), the capital of Fulishisatangna is given as Hubina; cf. Inaba 2004.

²²⁹ Beal 1884, II: 282; Petrie 2021: 64–65. According to Bosworth (2008: 107), the rulers of Zabulistan (Rutbils) would have had their summer residence in Ghazni and their winter residence in Arachosia (al-Rukhkhaj/Rakhvad).

²³⁰ For a fundamental account, see Göbl 1967, II: 112–202, esp. 155–163; cf. also Walker 1941: cxlii–cxlvi and Malek 2019, 1: 379–93.

²³¹ Göbl 1967, IV: pl. 9.

Göbl (1967, II: 157–58) assigned both countermarks to Tegin Khurasan Shah, the *Wusan teqin sa* of the Chinese sources, son and successor of Barha Tegin, and dated them to the end of the 7th century. This is confirmed by a Shri Shahi drachm discovered by Klaus Vondrovec (2014, II: 651–52, no. 240-10), which is overstruck with Tegin's Type 240 (Figure 28). As Tegin's Type 240 is dated by its inscription to the year 480 of the 'Bactrian era' (= 702/03 CE)²³², this gives us a *terminus ante quem* for the minting of the Shri Shahi types.



Figure 27.

- a. Shri Shahi drachm (3.49g) with *Cm 99* (Bra. *ṣā-hā*). BHM 93.159 (Type 236; Alram 2016: 119, no. 7);
 b. Shri Shahi drachm (3.16g) with *Cm 99* and *Cm 100* (Bra. *tī-gī*). BM 1894.5.6.302 (Type 236)



Figure 28.

Shri Shahi drachm (2.71g; Type 236/237) overstruck by Tegin Khurasan Shah (Type 240).
 AuR Huna 490 (Vondrovec 2014, II: 652, no. 240-10)

The above-mentioned evidence prompted me to place the Shri Shahi issues in a rough time frame of between 660 and 700²³³ and to link them to the takeover of power by the Turk Shahis in the kingdom of Kapishi. However, it should be made clear that this is only a hypothesis. If we exclude the Turk Shahis as the minting authority of the Shri Shahi issues, the question arises as to who else could be considered. The typological and stylistic interlocking with the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover coinage would suggest that one and the same political grouping was behind both series. This would have minted its coins in parallel with the Khingal dynasty of Kapishi, which we—following Kuwayama (1999; 2002: 208–21)—identify with the Nezak kings (Type 198; Group II, ā-type). Klaus Vondrovec, on the other hand, considers assigning the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover group, which he dates to between c.580/90 and 650/80, to this Khingal dynasty.²³⁴ This means

²³² I hereby follow the dating approach of Sims-Williams and de Blois (2018), who assume the year 223/24 as the starting point of the 'Bactrian era'. In contrast, Schindel (2011) and la Vaissière (2018) argue in favour of 227 CE, linking it to the era of Kanishka or the second century of that era. A summarizing overview of the various standpoints can be found in Sims-Williams and de Blois 2018 and Sims-Williams 2020.

²³³ See also Göbl 1967, II: 50 ('Emissionsschema 4') and Vondrovec 2014, II: 512.

²³⁴ Vondrovec 2014, I: 486–88, II: 515–16.

that the *Suishu* passage cited by Kuwayama (1999: 36–37; 2002: 215–17), which reports that the king of Cao (Kapishi) wore a golden buffalo-head crown (see above), would refer not to the Khingal dynasty but to the earlier political conditions in the Kapishi-Kabul-Ghazni region, when the Nezak kings still ruled there. It should be added that in the Kapishi-Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar region, the buffalo-head crown as a royal insignia was still repeatedly encountered on coins up to the 8th century, so it was certainly still worn by the Turk Shahis. We are faced with a ‘numismatic dilemma’ for which I cannot offer a definite solution at present.

b. From the ‘Later Nezak’ to Tegin Khurasan Shah (nos 88–95)

Between 663 and 665, Kabul was for the first time repeatedly plundered by Arab troops under the command of ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Samura.²³⁵ But the new Kabul Shah, who was presumably already in office at this time, quickly regained the upper hand. This early phase of Arab incursions into Kabulistan and Zabulistan also saw the destruction of parts of the sanctuary of Tapa Sardar by a great fire, which the excavators presumably associate with the war campaigns of ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Abī Bakra (governor of Sistan) around 671/72.²³⁶ Afterwards, however, the shrine was quickly rebuilt.²³⁷

Eight coins (nos 88–95) can be associated with this late phase of Tapa Sardar, which I divide into three groups and roughly date to the end of the 7th and the first half of the 8th century. The first group consists of three copper half-drachms (nos 88–90), the obverse of which shows the bust of the king with the winged buffalo-head crown modelled on the well-known type of the Nezak kings. They belong to a group of coins that Klaus Vondrovec (2014, II: 515–21) refers to as ‘Later Nezak’. These are typologically related to the old Nezak type, but differ significantly from them in their style and technical characteristics.²³⁸ At the beginning of this group are drachm issues (Göbl 1967, I: type 202) (Figure 29a) which copy the Nezak Type 198 (Group II, ā-type);²³⁹ the Pahlavi legends are corrupt and merely decoration. New features include a dot above the buffalo’s skull and a Z-like sign behind the bust. On the reverse the high, feather-like flames are particularly distinctive. A second drachm issue (Göbl 1967, I: type 201) (Figure 29b) shows the tamgha *S 101*²⁴⁰ instead of the Z symbol, and the king’s costume is decorated with a star on the right shoulder, while the dot above the buffalo skull remains in place. Metal analyses show that the silver content of these drachms is between 18.4 and 23.7%, a marked improvement on the old Nezak drachms of Group II (ā-type), which were only made of pure copper.²⁴¹ A third drachm issue (Göbl 1967, I: types 200, 200A) is the largest in number and can be divided into an early and a late phase according to its style (Figure 29c).²⁴² There are also metal analyses of these issues,

²³⁵ Murgotten 1969: 146–48; Rahman 1979: 57–60; Kuwayama 1991: 96, tab. 1 (based on Bosworth 1968); Kuwayama 1999: 62–63; Petrie 2021: 68–70, 108–11; Alram 2018: 14–15.

²³⁶ We should, however, keep in mind that the partial destruction of the sanctuary is not necessarily related to a military intervention. On ‘Ubayd Allāh, see Malek 2019, 1: 320–21.

²³⁷ See the contribution by Verardi in this volume, as well as Verardi and Paparatti 2004: 99; Verardi and Paparatti 2005: 429–32; Filigenzi 2009; Verardi 2010: 344. On the campaigns of ‘Ubayd Allāh, see Rahman 1979: 64–65, n. 19 (with further literature) and Kuwayama 2002: 181–82.

²³⁸ On the typological and stylistic peculiarities and the chronological sequence of the drachm issues, see Pfisterer and Uhlir 2015: 68–72; cf. also Vondrovec 2014, II: 515–21.

²³⁹ However, as with the Nezak drachms of Group I (š-type), the snout of the buffalo points downwards into the crescent moon.

²⁴⁰ Identical in its basic form to tamgha *S 2*, which first appears on the early Shapur II imitations of the Alkhan (Göbl 1967, I: types 33–35; Vondrovec 2014, I: 178–79, 228–29).

²⁴¹ See the overview in Pfisterer and Uhlir 2015: tab. 4.5.

²⁴² Pfisterer and Uhlir 2015: fig. 4.16.

which show a silver content of 16.5 to 24.6% for the drachms.²⁴³ The discovery of an overstrike of Type 200 (late phase) on a drachm of Type 201 by Matthias Pfisterer is important for establishing the internal chronological sequence.²⁴⁴



Figure 29. 'Later Nezak' issues (last quarter of the 7th, early 8th cent. ?)

a. Anonymous, Δ (Æ), 3.45g. JPR 189 (Type 202; Vondrovec 2014, II: 599, erroneously labelled there as type 200A); b. Anonymous, Δ (BI), 3.73g. KHM GR43320 (Type 201); c. Anonymous, Δ (BI), 2.92g. KHM GR43319 (Type 200, early phase)

Göbl (1967) dated the beginning of this newly issued Nezak type from c.700.²⁴⁵ Decisive for this is the typological and stylistic interlocking of Type 202 with Type 205,²⁴⁶ which in turn is linked to Type 206 and can be clearly attributed to Tegin Khurasan Shah, the *Wusan teqin sa* of the Chinese sources, through the Bactrian legend on the obverse (Figure 30).²⁴⁷ Based on a drachm issue minted by Tegin (Göbl 1967, I: type 240), which is dated to the year 480 of the 'Bactrian era', he must have been in power at least around 702/03²⁴⁸ but had probably already succeeded his father Barha Tegin on the throne around or after 680.²⁴⁹ The poor metal quality of Type 240 indicates that it belongs to the early phase of Tegin's reign. This is also confirmed by an overstriking in which a Shri Shahi drachm (Type 236/237, see above) served as a flan for Tegin's Type 240 (cf. Figure 28).²⁵⁰

²⁴³ Pfisterer and Uhler 2015: tab. 4.5.

²⁴⁴ Pfisterer and Uhler 2015: fig. 4.17.

²⁴⁵ Göbl 1967, II: 50 ('Emissionsschema 4'), 77–83.

²⁴⁶ Vondrovec 2014, II: 516, fig. 9.5.

²⁴⁷ On the name, see Sims-Williams 2010: no. 457.

²⁴⁸ See note 232.

²⁴⁹ Kuwayama 1991: 116; Kuwayama 1999: 58–62. Kuwayama refers here to a message from Huichao, who visited Gandhara in 726 and reported that the father of the reigning Turkish king (probably Tegin Khurasan Shah) had originally been a vassal of the king of Jibin but had deposed the latter from the throne. For the chronology see also Verdon (forthcoming).

²⁵⁰ Vondrovec 2014, II: 541–42, fig. 9.27, 652, type 240-10.



Figure 30. From the 'Later Nezak' to Tegin Khurasan Shah
 a. 'Later Nezak', anonymous, Δ (BI/Æ), 3.45g. JPR 189 (Type 202); b. 'Later Nezak', anonymous, Δ (BI), 3.43g. JPR 197 (Type 205; Alram 2016: 136, no. 1); c. *Śrī Samaraśukārī*, Δ (BI), 3.15g. JPR 316 (Type 314; cf. Alram 2016: 136, no. 2; new reading of the legend courtesy of Ingo Strauch); d. Tegin Khurasan Shah, Δ (BI), 3.02g. BHM 93.220 (Type 206; Alram 2016: 137, no. 5)

The drachms are accompanied by copper issues (Figures 31–33),²⁵¹ the reverses of which feature an unprecedented variety of new pictorial compositions. Also dominant is the tamgha *S 61*, which—as already mentioned—first appears in the obol coinage of the Nezak (Group I, š-type), which we assume was minted in Zabulistan (cf. Figure 16b).²⁵² At the beginning is Type 203, which shows the king with a new pageboy hairstyle.²⁵³ On the reverse the assistant figures next to the fire altar are replaced by the tamgha *S 61*, with a star above them instead of the wheels (Figure 31a). The tall, feather-like flames are also characteristic. In the next stage of development, a second crescent moon is added to the king's buffalo-head crown. A triangular, cross-ribbed band rises behind the right and left shoulders of the king's bust, and a small crescent moon with a star is set into the field in front of and behind the head (Figures 31b–e).²⁵⁴ The legends appear to be written in Pahlavi but are corrupt and cannot be read with absolute certainty.²⁵⁵ According to our current state of knowledge, seven different reverse images are combined with this obverse type: Bactrian inscription *zonado* flanked by tamgha *S 61*, above it a star in a crescent (Type 271); lion (Type 267A); ibex (Type 267); bull (Type 270); elephant (Type 270A); and two depictions of

²⁵¹ Labelled copper half-drachms by Vondrovec (2014, II: 519–21).

²⁵² Vondrovec 2010; Vondrovec 2014, I: 455–57. In a slightly modified form, this tamgha is also found on the rock inscription of Jaghuri, which is dated to the year 535 of the 'Bactrian era' (= 757 CE according to Sims-Williams and de Blois 2018); cf. Sims-Williams 2020/21.

²⁵³ Göbl 1967, I: type 203; Vondrovec 2014, II: 601. The obverse shows an unclear symbol behind the bust, below the diadem ribbons, which can be identified as tamgha *S 61* on a specimen illustrated by Vondrovec 2014, II: 601, no. 203–4.

²⁵⁴ Göbl 1967, I: types 267–271; Vondrovec 2014, II: 520, fig. 9.7, 603–10.

²⁵⁵ Vondrovec (2014) suggests Pah. *zwn'd/t* (?) (Types 269, 271)—as did Sims-Williams (2010: no. 160, iv); however, I do not consider the reading to be certain. What is certain is that—with the exception of Type 270—all the types mentioned are inscribed with the same characters. On Type 270 Vondrovec (2014) assumes Bactrian *akioo*, but here too the letters cannot be read with certainty.

deities inspired by Kushan coin images (Types 268, 269). Tamgha *S 61* is added as an additional mark in each case. According to Sasanian tradition, the animals are sometimes decorated with ribbons. They symbolize royal power and strength and serve as a sign of royal glory (*khwarrah*).²⁵⁶ There are numerous overstrikes within this group, with one example of Type 270A being struck on a Nezak Type 198 (Figure 32).²⁵⁷



Figure 31. 'Later Nezak' and related issues (last quarter of the 7th, early 8th century ?)

a. Anonymous. $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ ($\text{\AA}$), 3.15g. AuR Huna 571 (Type 203; Vondrovec 2014, II: 601, no. 203-2); b. Anonymous, $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ ($\text{\AA}$), 2.70g. TS1982 (no. 88; Type 271 var.); c. Zunad, $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ ($\text{\AA}$), 2.94g. BHM 93.197 (Type 271 var.; Alram 2016: 128, no. 8); d. Anonymous, $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ ($\text{\AA}$), 2.16g. TS1169 (no. 89; Type 268); e. Anonymous, $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ ($\text{\AA}$), 2.68g. AuR Huna 974 (Type 268; Vondrovec 2014, I: 606, no. 268-3)

Two specimens from this series are now represented in the spectrum of coins found at Tapa Sardar (nos 88, 89). No. 88 (Type 271 var.), as mentioned above, bears the name Zunad (Bac. *zonado*) in a prominent position on the reverse instead of the fire altar (Figures 31b, c).²⁵⁸ The name could be interpreted as that of the issuing authority but in any case refers to the god Zhun, who was particularly venerated in Zabulistan. The original shrine of the god Zhun was probably located in Kabulistan, on Mount Aruna (called Congling in the *Suishu*), which Kuwayama (1991: 92–94; 1999: 27–36) identifies with the Lower Shrine of the sanctuary of Khair Khana (north of Kabul).²⁵⁹ Between 606 and 629/30, that is, before Xuanzang first visited Kapishi, there seems to have been a religious conflict between the followers of the god Zhun and those of the sun goddess

²⁵⁶ Daryaei 2016.

²⁵⁷ Vondrovec 2014, II: 610, no. 270A-1.

²⁵⁸ On our specimen, the name is not written from top to bottom, as is usually the case, but from bottom to top, with the stars set in a crescent, cf. Alram 2016: 128, no. 8. On the name, see Sims-Williams 2010: no. 160, iv. The equation of Zhunad with the Zhulad Guzgan known from silver drachms and the Bactrian documents, as suggested by Vondrovec (2014, II: 520), I consider to be mistaken. A signet ring with the Bactrian inscription *zono?* was found in one of the relic deposits of the stupa of Manikyala (south of Rawalpindi, Pakistan), cf. Errington and Sarkhosh Curtis 2007: 211–14.

²⁵⁹ Cf. also Kuwayama 2002: 200–07. On the DAFA excavation at Khair Khana, see Hackin and Carl 1936.

Surya²⁶⁰, which prompted the former to relocate the Zhun shrine to Zamindawar (north of Bust) in southern Zabulistan, on what was then called Mount Zhunahira.²⁶¹

The second specimen from this group (no. 89) belongs to Type 268 and shows a standing Figure facing left with a sceptre in its right hand and an umbrella (?) in its left; a crescent-star combination is placed in the left field, the tamgha *S 61* in the right field (Figures 31d, e). Göbl (1967, II: 81) rightly suspected Kushan influence here, assuming the Shaoreoro type of Huvishka as a model.²⁶²



Figure 32.

‘Later Nezak’ copper drachm (3.38g) with elephant on the reverse (Type 270A) struck on Nezak Type 198. AuR Huna 25 (Vondrovec 2014, II: 610, no. 270A-1)

The third specimen (no. 90) belongs to Type 204A and features a variation in the design of the king’s bust (Figures 33b, c). The crown with the buffalo head and the two crescent moons remains unchanged, but the ribbons hang down from the crown rather than rising up behind the shoulders in a triangular shape or being attached to the necklace—as on drachma Types 202, 201 or 200 (cf. Figure 29). The king is also wearing the typical Central Asian caftan with the lapel turned up.²⁶³ The crescent-star combination is depicted in the right field; in the left field, above the right shoulder, there is an E-shaped symbol that can perhaps also be interpreted as a protruding ribbon.²⁶⁴ On the reverse, tamgha *S 61* stands in the centre and is surrounded by an oval ring decorated on the outside with small umbrellas (?). Type 204A (no. 90) is closely related to a second issue (Type 203A; Figure 33a), which shows an identical bust on the obverse but bears the corrupt Nezak legend instead of the crescent-star combination in front of the bust.²⁶⁵ As with Type 204A, tamgha *S 61* is the central pictorial element on the reverse, but it is flanked by a star and a crescent above it. Noteworthy is the double circle of pearls surrounding the image, which first appears on copper coins of the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover group (Type 231; cf. Figure 23b).

²⁶⁰ According to Kuwayama (1991; 1999), the Lower Shrine of Zhun was abandoned in Khair Khana as a result of this dispute and the Upper Shrine was built for Surya, where the marble statue of Surya on a chariot and another statue of Surya were found; see Bernard and Grenet 1981.

²⁶¹ Bosworth 2008: 105.

²⁶² Göbl 1984: series 239.1, pl. 170.

²⁶³ In this context, reference should be made to a story by al-Bīrūnī (Sachau 1988, 2: 10–11), who reports that Barha Tegin, the first Kabul Shah, presented himself to the people in this very clothing after his seizure of power (cf. also Kuwayama 1991: 116). The adoption of ‘Turkic’ clothing (*qābā*) is part of the self-fashioning process of the new rulers, who endeavoured to convey a new image of rulership to their subjects that would show their royal authority and military strength in the right light; cf. Flood 2009: 61–75 and Klimburg-Salter 2022: 78.

²⁶⁴ This is usually not clearly recognizable, but see the specimen illustrated in Vondrovec 2014, II: 608, no. 204A-2 and Alram 2016: 127, no. 5.

²⁶⁵ Vondrovec 2014, II: 517–18, fig. 9.6, type 203A; Alram 2016: 127, no. 4.

As already mentioned, Göbl dated the discussed drachms of the newly issued Nezak type ('Later Nezak') to c.700 CE, while the half-drachms were not minted until after 720 in his opinion.²⁶⁶ In contrast, Vondrovec (2014, II: 517) considers dating them to between c.580/600 and 665. They would then have been produced in parallel with the Alkhan-Nezak Crossover issues (see above) but at a different mint. However, I consider this early dating to be problematic, especially since, as explained above, the typological and stylistic development speaks against such an early position in the coinage system. The archaeological evidence from Tapa Sardar would now also support—with all due caution—a dating of this group of coins to the early reign of Tegin Khurasan Shah, i.e. around or after 680 CE. It should also be mentioned that the tamgha *S 6I*, so prominently represented in the issues just discussed, is also encountered as a countermark on an Arab-Sasanian drachm dating to the year 67 AH (= 686/87 CE).²⁶⁷



Figure 33. 'Later Nezak' and related issues (last quarter of the 7th, early 8th century ?)

- a. Anonymous, $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ (Æ), 3.56g. JPR 607 (Type 203A; Alram 2016: 127, no. 4);
- b. Anonymous, $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ (Æ), 1.90g. TS1252 (no. 90; Type 204A);
- c. Anonymous, $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ (Æ), 2.19g. JPR 608 (Type 204A; cf. Alram 2016: 127, no. 5)

The question of the mint remains unsolved. Here numismatic research still has a number of tasks ahead that cannot be completed within the scope of this study. Göbl (1967) has divided the individual types/emissions into three different mints in Kapishi-Kabul region). However, this currently remains a working hypothesis. What is certain is that the three half-drachms (nos 88–90) found in Tapa Sardar can be divided between no more than two mints, whose die-cutters, however, show a very similar hand, one that can also be observed on the accompanying drachms. Types 271 (no. 88) and 268 (no. 89) undoubtedly come from the same mint. Whether Type 204A (no. 90) also belongs to this is possible, but cannot be proven with absolute certainty at present. This is not least due to the number of mints that worked on the drachm issues (Types 202, 201 and 200; cf. Figure 29). It is also unclear where the mint(s) can be localized. Kabul, as the political centre of the Turk Shahis, is certainly a possibility, but a mint in Zabulistan cannot be ruled out either. As far as I can see at present, Tapa Sardar is so far the only place where these coin types have been found in an archaeological context. Without wishing to overemphasize this, it opens up the possibility of localizing the mint(s) in the Ghazni area.

At this point, it is appropriate to return briefly to the political developments in the kingdom of Kapishi (Jibin). After Tegin's rise to power, a conflict must have broken out within the royal family, prompting the Kabul Shah's elder brother to flee to Zabulistan in the 680s and found an in-

²⁶⁶ Göbl 1967, II: 50 ('Emissionsschema 4'), 80–81.

²⁶⁷ Göbl 1967, II: 164, KM 20; IV: pl. 8.

dependent kingdom there.²⁶⁸ From then on, the ruler of Zabulistan is referred to in Arabic sources as Rutbil or Zunbil (equivalent to the Turkic *İltäbär*).²⁶⁹ However, the names of the various Rutbils are not known to us from the written sources, and the coins, which can be attributed to Zabulistan/Zabul and Rakhvad on the basis of their mint signatures (see below), do not provide any clarity. In the face of the threat from the Arabs, the two ruling dynasties certainly remained in close contact and fought side by side against the Muslim enemy.

The next group of coins from Tapa Sardar to be discussed mentions for the first time the name of a ruler who presumably held the dignity of Rutbil in Zabulistan (nos 91–94). This is Pangul, whose coins can be divided typologically into two groups.²⁷⁰ One group (Figure 34) is inscribed exclusively in Bactrian and consists of the already known so-called copper half-drachms (Göbl 1967, I: type 245). On the obverse they show two opposing Senmurv protomes with serpent tails,²⁷¹ above them a new tamgha *S 67* flanked by two small crescent moons with stars.²⁷² Below the Senmurv protomes is the two-line Bactrian inscription *panogolo xoddēoo bago* ('Pangul, Lord, Majesty').²⁷³ On the reverse a variant of the well-known tamgha *S 61* (executed with angular hasps) is surrounded by a double circle of pearls; the Bactrian legend *tadono tarxano bagddiggo uarobido* ('Tudun, Tarkhan, supreme Lord of Balkh?') is inscribed in the field between the circles.²⁷⁴ This type of design is borrowed from the Arab-Sasanian coinage and that of the local rulers of Guzgan respectively, where it first appeared in the 680s.²⁷⁵ A second copper coin type (Vondrovec 2014, II: 664, type 245C) has a Senmurv protome facing left with the tamgha *S 67* above it on the obverse; the reverse is identical to the previous type in image and inscription (Figure 34c).

On a specimen of Type 245 (no. 93) acquired by the Italian excavation team in Ghazni, the countermark *Cm 107* (Senmurv or boar's head r.) is struck on the reverse, which, together with the similar *Cm 106*, is also found on the silver drachms of Spur (see below) from the Zabulistan mint.²⁷⁶ The countermarks undoubtedly originate from the area of the Turk Shahis themselves and could perhaps belong to Tegin Khurasan Shah, who apparently repeatedly carried out countermarking campaigns — also for his own coins.²⁷⁷ In the present case, Tegin would have used

²⁶⁸ Huichao mentions (cf. Hyecho, § 23, tr. Yang *et al.* 1984: 51) that Kabul and Zabul were ruled at that time (c.726) by Turkic kings who were Buddhists and that the king of Kabul was the uncle of the ruler of Zabul, cf. Kuwayama 1999: 61–66; Verardi and Paparatti 2004: 97–100; Inaba 2005.

²⁶⁹ Bosworth 1968: 19–21; Bosworth 1973: 268–83; Bosworth 2008: 106–10.

²⁷⁰ Vondrovec 2014, II: 545–48, 661–63 (types 245, 245C 245A, 245AA, 246); cf. also Nikitin 1984; Humbach 1996; Gyselen 2009b; Gyselen 2010.

²⁷¹ Grenet (2002a: 219) interprets the Senmurv with lion heads as a reference to the hero Rustam. On the Senmurv, see also Göbl 1967, II: 156; Compareti 2006; Gyselen 2010: 338.

²⁷² The tamgha *S 67* is also documented on the following issues and unites these types into a coherent group: Göbl 1967, I: types 255, 256, 259; Vondrovec 2014, II: 623, type 255A; 625, type 255AA; 676–77, types 327, 327A; 681–85, types 244A, 256B, 259; 259A.

²⁷³ On the name, see Sims-Williams 2010: no. 366.

²⁷⁴ According to Nicholas Sims-Williams, *uarobido* could be translated as 'lord of all/supreme lord'. The interpretation of *bagddiggo* as 'Bactrian' or 'of Balkh' is uncertain (email 11 May 2024); but see also la Vaissière 2010: 214; Vondrovec 2014, II: 535–36; Alam and Keck (forthcoming): n. 47.

²⁷⁵ Sims-Williams 2008b; Gyselen 2009b: 147, 154 (with further literature); Gyselen 2010: 344; Vondrovec 2014, II: 533. Malek 2019, I: 403–05.

²⁷⁶ Göbl 1967, I: types 213, 214, 216; Vondrovec 2014, II: 669–70, nos 216-2, 216-3. On the countermark, see Göbl 1967, II: 156–57.

²⁷⁷ This assumption was already made by Göbl (1967), although he assumed that all the issues discussed here originated from Tegin Khurasan Shah. However, the phenomenon of countermarking has not yet been sufficiently studied, so the assumptions made here must be regarded as working hypotheses.

the countermarks to confirm the circulation of a coin issued by the Rutbil in his own territory. Alternatively, the countermark could have been used to indicate a specific payment transaction.



Figure 34. Copper alloy coins of Pangul, mint unknown

a. Pangul, $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ (Æ), 1.45g. TS1591 (no. 91; Type 245); b. Pangul, $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ (Æ), 3.08g. JPR 282 (Type 245; Alram 2016: 146, no. 6); c. Pangul, Æ, 3.48g. AuR Huna 616 (Type 245C; Vondrovec 2014, II: 664, no. 245C-2)

The second group of Pangul's coin issues also consists exclusively of copper alloy coins of three different denominations (Figures 35, 37).²⁷⁸ It basically follows the Sasanian model and shows the king's bust facing right or in three-quarter frontal view.²⁷⁹ Portraits in three-quarter view are in fact not used in Sasanian imperial coinage. They are an innovation of the Hunnic Kidarites, who used this design on their drachms minted in Gandhara from the end of the 4th century.²⁸⁰ The winged crown is inspired by Khusro II (590–628 CE). The two crescent-shaped emblems with inscribed decorations sitting on the double pearl diadem go back to crown emblems that are first documented on drachms of the 'Later Nezak' (Type 205; cf. Figure 30b) and Tegin (Type 206; cf. Figure 40a) and became permanent components of the crowns of the Turk Shahis in various variations and combinations.²⁸¹ The decoration at the top of the crown is unclear, perhaps representing a lion's head.²⁸² In the right field in front of the bust, a Senmurv protome is some-

²⁷⁸ In addition to copper drachms (Göbl 1987: type 245A = ASCC 111 and Göbl 1967, I: type 246 = ASCC 114), small copper coins (ASCC 115 = Vondrovec 2014, II: 667, type 245AA) were also issued (Figure 35a). A further denomination is medallion-like coins weighing more than 17g (ASCC 112; Nikitin 1984: 234, no. 2) (Figure 37b); see also the compilation of types and denominations in Gyselen 2010: figs 3, 5.

²⁷⁹ An exception here is Pangul's three-quarter frontal portrait on his medallions (Figure 37b), which is surrounded by six boar/Senmurv heads. Type 204 (Göbl 1967, I), in which the king's bust on the obverse is surrounded by four buffalo skulls, offers a typological parallel; cf. also Vondrovec 2014, II: 608.

²⁸⁰ Cf. Cribb 2010; Alram 2016: 51–52, nos 5–8. It cannot be ruled out that the late Roman-Byzantine gold coinage also had a certain modelling effect. For example, the stupa deposit from Tope Kelan (Hadda 10), which dates to the end of the 5th century, contained five late Roman solidi, which are known to show the image of the emperor in three-quarter frontal view (cf. Errington and Sarkhosh Curtis 2007: 94, fig. 82; there, however, erroneously labelled as imitations).

²⁸¹ For the different crown types, see Göbl 1967, IV: pls 1–2; Gyselen 2010: fig. 8.

²⁸² Cf. especially ASCC 112 with pl. 18 (Figure 37b). On Type 246 (= ASCC 114) the lion's head is depicted frontally at the crown tip (Figure 35d); Göbl (1967, I: 169), however, assumes that the head is that of a Senmurv or boar. The lion's head at the top of the crown is particularly prominent on Tegin's drachms of Type 208 (Figure 39c).

times depicted as a sign of the royal *khwarrah* (ASCC 111, 112) or a small bust with raised arms (?) presenting a pearl necklace. This is undoubtedly an investiture symbol, as the king himself is depicted on his coins wearing such a necklace with a pearl pendant (Figure 35d).²⁸³ Below the investiture symbol is the tamgha *S* 67 known from the first group (Type 245; cf. Figure 34).



Figure 35. Copper alloy coins of Pangul, mint Zabulistan

a. Æ (small), 1.26g, year illegible / *Zāvulstān* (?). AuR Huna 1009 (Type 245AA = ASCC 115; Vondrovec 2014, II: 667, no. 245AA-1); b. Æ (small), 0.45g. [(year) 3 / *Zāvulstān*]. TS431 (no. 94; Type 216A = ASCC 51); c. Æ (small), 0.94g, (year) 3 / *Zāvulstān*. AuR Huna 611 (Type 216A = ASCC 51; Vondrovec 2014, II: 671, no. 216A-1); d. Æ (medium), 3.53g, undated / *Zāvulstān*. AuR Huna 207 (Type 246 = ASCC 114; cf. Vondrovec 2014, II: 668, no. 246-1)

The reverses show either the Sasanian fire altar with frontally standing assistant figures based on the standard coinage of Khusro II (cf. Figure 23a) or the frontal bust of a deity with a flaming nimbus, which can be identified as the Iranian fire god Adur or as the personification of the royal divine glory (*khwarrah*).²⁸⁴ This coin type was introduced by Khusro II for a series of special issues and was first minted in his 23rd year of reign (= 612/13; Figure 36). The legends on the obverse and reverse are generally written in Bactrian and Pahlavi, only on the smallest denomination (Figure 35a) exclusively in Pahlavi. Of particular significance are again the double or triple circles filled with Bactrian legends on the reverses of Types 246 (Figure 35d) and ASCC 112 (Figure 37b)—we have already seen them on Pangul's Type 245 (cf. Figure 34). New features in this group include the indications of mint and year, which—following the Sasanian model—are sometimes mentioned on the reverses. On Type 245A (ASCC 111; Figure 37a), for example, we find the mint 'Rakhvad' (Pah. *lhwt*) and the year '1'. ASCC 112 is dated to year '4' and also comes from the mint of Rakhvad (Figure 37b). Type 246 (ASCC 114) is undated and names the mint 'Zabulistan' (Pah. *z'wlst'n*). Type 245AA (ASCC 115) also comes from Zabulistan, although the date—if in fact present—is not legible (Figures 35a, d).²⁸⁵

²⁸³ Göbl 1967, IV: pl. 15, *S* 68. A comparable scene is also depicted on the silver bowl from Lukowka (Marschak 1986: 276–80 with fig. 193), which is dated to the 8th century and is associated with the courts of the Kabul Shahis and Rutbils; cf. also Agostini and Stark 2016: 32–33, fig. 1; Alram and Keck (forthcoming).

²⁸⁴ On the interpretation of the bust with flaming nimbus, see Gyselen 2000. Since this image is particularly prominent on the Zabulite imitations, Gyselen (2010: 347) considers the possibility of interpreting the image in this context as a depiction of the god Zhun, who was particularly venerated in Zabulistan; Martin (1936) had already emphasized this.

²⁸⁵ On the Rakhvad mint, see also Malek 2019, 1: 181–82; on Zabulistan, Malek 2019, 1: 239–40.



Figure 36.
Khusro II (590–628), Δ, 4g, (year) 37. KHM OR7264 (Alram 2016: 30, no. 14)

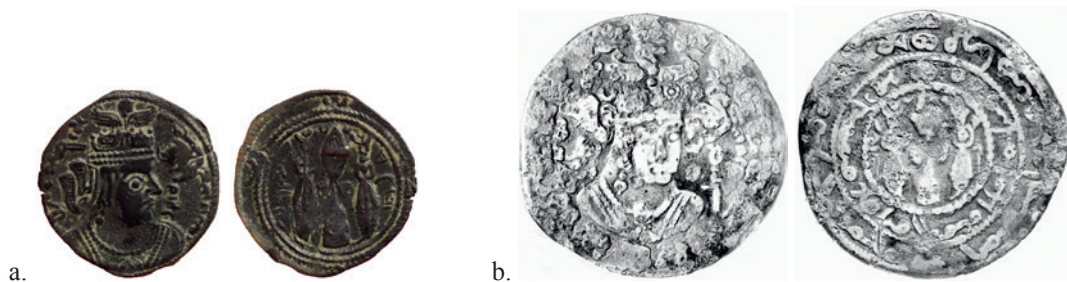


Figure 37.
Copper alloy coins of Pangul, mint Rakhvad
a. Æ (medium), 2.06g, (year) 1 / *Rakhvad*. BHM 93.322 (Type 245A = ASCC 111; Alram 2016: 146, no. 5); b. Æ (large), 17.45g, (year) 4 / *Rakhvad*. HMM (ASCC 112; Gyselen 2009a: pl. 118, type 112, no. 1)

This group is now joined by another coin type of the smallest copper denomination, which is signed with ‘Zabulistan’ (Pah. *z’wlst’n* / *zāvulstān*) and the year ‘3’ (Pah. *TLT’* / *sē*) (Göbl 1967, I: type 216A = ASCC 51), a specimen of which was also found in Tapa Sardar (no. 94; Figures 35b, c). Typologically it follows the special issues of Khusros II and shows the frontal bust of the king with the winged mural crown on the obverse and the frontal bust of Adur on the reverse. In contrast to the Sasanian model, the king’s bust is flanked on each side by a Senmurv protome. The legend is only on the reverse and is in Pahlavi. Due to an incorrect reading, this coin type was previously attributed to a ruler bearing the name/title Spur (Pah. *spwl*), of whom various copper coin types and silver drachms are known (see below). The previous reading of the legend *spwl bg hwt’p* in the left field²⁸⁶ has now been corrected by Ehsan Shavarebi to *pngwl bg hwt’p* (*Pangul bay xvadēv* = ‘Pangul, His Majesty, Lord’),²⁸⁷ which gives us another dated issue from Zabulistan for Pangul that fits seamlessly into the coinage system.²⁸⁸

On Pangul’s coins we have two mints mentioned for the first time, which of course immediately raises the question of which mint is actually meant by the designation ‘Zabulistan’.²⁸⁹ In

²⁸⁶ Thus Göbl 1967 and ASCC; also Gyselen 2009b: 152–54, fig. 5; Gyselen 2010: fig. 1; Vondrovec 2014, II: 549–51, 671 (there, however, the first and last letters of the name are read correctly).

²⁸⁷ The title is a translation of the common Bac. *bago xoddēo*.

²⁸⁸ Shavarebi in Shavarebi and Annucci (forthcoming).

²⁸⁹ Göbl (1967, I: 149), however, does not understand the geographical designations as mint names but as a kind of claim to rule over the area in question; he assigns the coins to the ‘Kabul’ mint; cf. also Göbl 1967, II: 50 (‘Emissionsschema 4’).

addition, the mint signature ‘Zabul’ (Pah. z’wl) is also attested under Tegin and Spur (cf. Figures 38a, b, 41a). As there are no recognizable technical or stylistic differences between the coins with the signature ‘Zabulistan’ and those with ‘Zabul’, I assume that they represent the same mint. Moreover, the signature ‘Zabul’ on Tegin’s small copper coins (Type 256A = ASCC 113; here no. 95; Figures 38a, b) seems to be merely a shortening of the mint name for reasons of space. Zabulistan/Zabul can probably be identified with Ghazni²⁹⁰, the administrative centre and summer residence of the Rutbils in Zabulistan. The second mint, Rakhvad (al-Rukhkhaj, Arachosia), is already known from Sasanian coinage and also seems to have been active in the production of imitation drachms from the immediate Nezak environment (see above, Figure 19).²⁹¹ Rakhvad is also said to have been the winter residence of the Rutbils.²⁹²



Figure 38. Copper alloy coins of Tegin Khurasan Shah, mint Zabul / Zabulistan
a. *Æ* (small), 0.87g, (year) 2 / *Zāvul*. TS1234 (no. 95; Type 256A = ASCC 113); b. *Æ* (small), 1g, (year) 2 / *Zāvul*. JPR 299 (Type 256A = ASCC 113; cf. Vondrovec 2014, II: 647, type 329A); c. *Æ* (medium), 4.72g, (year) 2 / *Zāvulstān*. BnF 179.143.34 (ASCC 118 = Type 329; cf. Vondrovec 2014, II: 646)

The question remains in which mint Pangul’s Type 245 was minted, which in terms of volume is his largest issue. Apart from Tapa Sardar (nos 91–93), I am only aware of Kandahar as an archaeologically documented find-spot,²⁹³ so that it is reasonable to assume that one of the mentioned mints, Rakhvad or Zabulistan/Ghazni, was the place of production. Especially as these are local copper coins, which are not necessarily assumed to have been used in supra-regional monetary transactions, the mint should in any case be located in the Kandahar-Ghazni-Gardez region. Tapa Sardar is also the only known archaeologically documented find-spot for Pangul’s Type 216A (no. 94; Figure 35c), which must have been in circulation for some time, judging by the signs of wear it shows.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁰ I follow Gyselen 2009b: 146 and Gyselen 2010: 344–45.

²⁹¹ Cf. here pp. 38–39 and notes 189–195.

²⁹² Bosworth 1968: 35; Bosworth 2008: 107 (with further literature).

²⁹³ Joe Cribb has kindly informed me that 21 specimens of Pangul’s type 245 have been found in Kandahar. The Pangul coins appear to be part of the stupa, where they were planted in the ritual path around the stupa along with other coins (email 21 November 2024); publication of these coins is currently being prepared by Joe Cribb.

²⁹⁴ I consider the origin of this coin type from Kashmir Smast (Sakra region) postulated by Ziad (2022: 131–32, type 2.2.20, Sakra Group IV) to be questionable; it is not a ‘derivative’ from the Sakra region, but a regular copper coinage of Pangul, which was produced in Zabulistan. Since it is local small change, its circulation as far as Gandhara/Kashmir Smast would be rather unusual. Based on interviews with ‘antiquarians in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’, Ziad’s information cannot be verified.

Pangul's coins provide hardly any clear indications for their chronological placement.²⁹⁵ The double circles of the reverse filled with a Bactrian inscription points to a date of production after the 680s.²⁹⁶ Alexander Nikitin (1984: 238) saw Pangul as the first Rutbil, who had gained independence from his brother, Tegin Khurasan Shah, in Zabulistan in around 680 CE, but died in battle against the Arabs in around 686/87 (or a few years later), after 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Āmir had been appointed governor of Sistan.²⁹⁷ His son and successor, the second Rutbil, fought successfully against Arab troops in 693/94 and 697/98.²⁹⁸ He must have been the person reported by Huichao (c.726) to have been the nephew of the king of Kabul (Jibin), that is, Tegin Khurasan Shah.²⁹⁹

As explained above, three issues of Pangul are marked with the numbers '1' (Figure 37a), '3' (Figures 35b, c) and '4' (Figure 37b). According to Sasanian custom, these should indicate the years of reign. If Pangul was indeed the first Rutbil, then year 1—if we follow the historical reconstruction of Kuwayama 1999 and Inaba 2005—should be equated with +680 CE, and year 4 would correspond to +683/84 CE.³⁰⁰ However, Nikitin's (1984) assumption that Pangul was the first Rutbil is contradicted—as explained in detail by Rika Gyselen (2009b: 154; 2010: 349)—by the design of the double circles with astral symbols and inscribed legends (Types 245, 245C, 246 = ASCC 114, ASCC 112), which does not appear on the supraregional drachms, which are presumably to be regarded as the model, until 63 AH (= 682/83 CE).³⁰¹ It would be rather unusual, although not completely impossible, for the local copper coinage of Pangul to have played a pioneering role in this specific case. Caution is therefore advisable, and we must leave the question of Pangul's exact chronological placement open for the time being. In any case, the typological development within the Turk Shahi coinage system suggests that Pangul's issues should be placed at the transition from the imagery still partly influenced by the Nezak (Type 245 with tamgha *S 6I*) to the distinctly Sasanian orientation of the subsequent coin issues. It should be added that our knowledge of the coinage system in this period still has considerable gaps and that we have to assume that there were several parallel coin issues, which suggests that in addition to the two main protagonists Kabul Shah and Rutbil, other local lords were probably also involved in the coin production (cf. for example Figure 30c).

²⁹⁵ The attempt by Rezakhani (2020) to date Pangul 'to the latter part of the 8th and perhaps to the earlier part of the 9th centuries, following Phrom Kesar' ignores any numismatic contexts and should be dismissed.

²⁹⁶ Cf. notes 275 and 301.

²⁹⁷ Gaube 1973: 61–62; Kuwayama 1999: 64–66; Inaba 2005; Gyselen 2009b: 144–48 (with further literature); Malek 2019, 1: 262–63.

²⁹⁸ Bosworth 1968: 19–25; Gaube 1973: 60–61, 74–75; Bosworth 1973; Bosworth 2008: 105.

²⁹⁹ Kuwayama 1999: 55–56; see also note 268.

³⁰⁰ As a time frame for the reign of the first Rutbil, the years from c.680 to 690 CE at the latest may be considered; cf. Kuwayama 1999: 64.

³⁰¹ These are dirhams of the Arab governors of Khurasan and the so-called Arab-Hephthalite issues of the rulers of Guzgan (mint Anbir/Sar-i Pul); see Göbl 1967, I: types 271A–281; Sims-Williams 2008b; Vondrovec 2014, II: 531 ff; Malek 2019, I: 309–408. The dates given on the coins are not always clearly legible; it is also not always clear whether they are to be converted according to the Hijri, the Yazdgerd era or the post-Yazdgerd era. According to Walker (1941) and Göbl (1967) most of the dates should be converted according to the Hijri, resulting in a range from 63 to 69 AH (= 682/83–688/89 CE). Cf. also the commentary by Göbl (1967, I: 143, type 208). In contrast, Cribb (2021a: 110) mainly converts the dates according to the Yazdgerd era. Furthermore, he reads the dates on the drachms of Zhulad Guzgan as 84–89 instead of 64–69 Hijri (in the catalogue, however, the year 68 Hijri is given again, cf. Cribb 2021: 193, fig. 57.1, 2); at the beginning of Zhulad's coinage he places Type 281, on which he reads the date 69 and converts it according to the Yazdgerd era (= 699/700). Cribb (2021) thus arrives at a reign of approx. 700 to 707 for Zhulad Guzgan.

The last coin to be discussed from Tapa Sardar (no. 95) is, like that of Pangul (no. 94), one of the smallest denominations of its time. In its basic features, the type follows the standard coinage of Khusro II, but shows the three-quarter frontal royal portrait with winged crown on the obverse (Figures 38a, b). Two crescents with inscribed pearls sit on the double pearl diadem, and two cross-ribbed diadem ribbons depend from the crown. Like Pangul, the king wears a necklace with three oval pearls as pendants. The inscription is exclusively in Pahlavi and follows the Sasanian model: in the left field is the ideogram *GDE* for *khwarrah* ('royal glory') — the word *ābzūd* ('the royal glory has been increased'), which usually follows, is omitted for reasons of space. In the right field *tegin bay / xvadēv* ('Tegin, His Majesty, Lord') is written in two lines. The reverse shows the fire altar with the two assistant figures standing frontally. In the left field is the number *dō* ('2'); in the right field, the mint signature shortened to 'Zavul'.³⁰² Typologically the type fits seamlessly into the coin series from Zabulistan and Rakhvad, which are closely based on the Sasanian model. However, its relative chronological position within this series cannot be clearly established. First of all, it should be made clear that Tegin—although the addition *xvarāsān* is missing—is Tegin Khurasan Shah, especially since the accompanying issue of copper drachms, which are marked with the year '2' and 'Zabulistan' (Figure 38c), adds this to the title (*tegin bay xvadēv / xvarāsān šāh*).³⁰³

As we have seen, Tegin Khurasan Shah probably succeeded his father Barha Tegin on the throne in around 680 CE. In 738 CE he abdicated at an advanced age and asked the Chinese emperor to invest his son *Fulin Jisuo* (Frum Kesar).³⁰⁴ Tegin's title 'King of the East' is quite unusual and could have been understood as a direct challenge to the Umayyad caliph. In the struggle against the Arabs, the Kabul Shah seemed to see himself as the legitimate successor to the Sasanian Shahanshah, laying claim to rule over the entire east of the former Sasanian Empire. According to Agostini and Stark (2016), the increasing Sasanian influence, which also manifested itself in the coinage of the Turk Shahis during this period, could derive—among other factors—from Sasanian princes who had taken refuge in exile at the court of Kabul Shah. Tegin's territory extended from Kabulistan via Gandhara to Uddiyana and at times also included Zabulistan.

Although Tegin probably ruled for over 50 years, only a few coin types can be attributed to him with certainty.³⁰⁵ Moreover, it cannot be ruled out that other, subordinate rulers were also involved in minting coins during the constant defensive struggle against the Arabs. Due to the unsatisfactory find situation, however, the areas of circulation and mints of these coins can only be determined to a very limited extent, if at all.

Two issues are of particular importance for Tegin's chronological position (Göbl 1967, I: types 240, 208): one gives the year 480 of the 'Bactrian era' (= 702/03 CE following Sims-Williams and de Blois 2018), the other the year 77, which is based on either the Yazdgerd era (708 CE) or the post-Yazdgerd era (728 CE).³⁰⁶ Following Göbl (1967), I have decided in favour of the post-Yazdgerd era on the basis of the typological correlations.³⁰⁷

³⁰² In this case the mint signature seems to have been shortened for reasons of space, especially as the name is written out in full on the accompanying drachms (Figure 38c).

³⁰³ On the Bactrian-inscribed Type 206, which I also attribute to Tegin Khurasan Shah and which is to be placed in an early phase of Tegin's reign, the addition *uōrosano* is also missing (cf. Figure 30d).

³⁰⁴ Kuwayama 1999: 61–66; Alram 2016: 131–37; Alram 2018: 15–19; Petrie 2021: 70–76. According to Inaba (2010b), Frum Kesar may have assumed the role of viceroy in Gandhara during his father's reign, but see also note 357. On the chronology, see Verdon (forthcoming).

³⁰⁵ For a general overview, see Vondrovec 2014, II: 537–44, 646–58.

³⁰⁶ In my opinion, a conversion according to the Hijri, which would result in 696/97 CE, can be ruled out.

³⁰⁷ Likewise Vondrovec 2014, II: 543.

Type 240 (Figure 39a) dates from the early phase of Tegin's reign. The drachms display a very unique, rough style. The facial features of the moustachioed king are particularly striking. The crown consists of a broad, cross-ribbed crescent moon with an inscribed trident (or flower); it sits above the forehead and is attached to a double pearl diadem. The diadem ribbons flutter upwards, while the king wears a pearl necklace and occasionally a large round earring. The entire composition displays only distant echoes of the preceding Nezak and Shri Shahi busts. The reverse follows the late Sasanian model. The legends are in Bactrian and name 'Tegin, King of Khurasan' (*tagino uōrosano šauo*) on the obverse in front of the bust. The reverse shows the common title *sri šao* in the left field and 'year 480' (*xšono u'p'*) in the right field. The drachms are made of an almost pure copper alloy³⁰⁸ and, like the preceding Shri Shahi issues (see above),³⁰⁹ are accompanied by a small copper denomination (Figure 39b), which bears the abbreviated legend *Bac. togino šao* on the obverse; the reverse is anepigraphic. If we compare Type 240 with the issues from Zabulistan (cf. Figure 38), it becomes clear that we are dealing here with two completely different workshops/mints, whose products must also be separated chronologically from each other.



Figure 39. Tegin Khurasan Shah

a. Δ (BI/Æ), 2.79g, year 480 BE (= 702/03 CE). KHM GR43745 (Type 240); b. Æ, 0.96g. AuR GC186 (Type 240A; Vondrovec 2014, II: 654, no. 240A-1); c. Δ (BI), 3.19g, (year) 77 PYE (?) (= 728 CE). BHM 93.215 (Type 208); d. Æ, 1.33g. AuR GC593 (Type 210; Vondrovec 2014, II: 657, no. 210-1)

Type 208, which was minted at the latest from 728 CE, definitely belongs to the second half of Tegin's reign (Figures 39c, 40b). This is probably Tegin's most extensive issue, which must have been struck over several years. The quality of the die cut is of the highest standard, and the silver quality of the drachms is significantly improved, even if certain fluctuations in silver content can be observed over the course of the longer minting period. The obverse shows Tegin's bust in three-quarter frontal view. He wears a lion's head crown³¹⁰ adorned with two decorative emblems on the crown cap above the pearl diadem, which first appear in a similar form on Tegin's issue 206

³⁰⁸ Described by Göbl (1967) as 'Billon, fast AE', Vondrovec (2014, II: 651) speaks of 'base silver'. The specimens I examined physically did not show any silver to the naked eye.

³⁰⁹ We have already referred to an overstrike (Type 240 on Type 236/237; cf. Figure 28) discovered by Vondrovec (2014, II: 651–52, type 240-10), which is important for the internal chronology.

³¹⁰ Described by Göbl (1967, I: 142–45) as Senmurv.

(Figure 40a).³¹¹ A vertical row of pearls is set between the two emblems. Two cross-ribbed ribbons depend from the pearl diadem. The king wears earrings consisting of a ring with two large pearls, a pearl necklace and a rosette on his chest.³¹² Between two circles is the proto-Sharada legend ‘His Perfection İltābār of the Khalaj, devotee of the highest divinity, the perfect (?) King, the Shahi Tegin Lord had made this [coin]’.³¹³ In the field in front of the bust runs the Bactrian title ‘His Perfection, King’. On the reverse we see the frontal bust of Adur (see above) surrounded by a double circle. The astral symbols (12h/3h/9h) and a symbol resembling a horizontal 8 at 6h are depicted between the circles. The inscription is exclusively in Pahlavi: on the left side of the image is the number ‘77’, on the right ‘Tegin, King of Khurasan’.³¹⁴ As with Type 240, the drachms are accompanied by a small copper denomination (Göbl 1967, I: type 210; Figure 39d).³¹⁵



Figure 40. Tegin Khurasan Shah
a. Δ (BI), 3.02g. BHM 93.220 (Type 206); b. Δ, 3.22g. KHM GR43743 (Type 208)

Let us now take a look at the find evidence:³¹⁶ both Types 240 with 240A and Types 208 with 210 are found not only in Kabulistan but also in Gandhara and Uddiyana. Type 240/240A is known from Barikot (Shavarebi 2025: no. 462) and Kashmir Smast;³¹⁷ Types 208/210 are documented in Mes Aynak,³¹⁸ in Masson’s Begram Collection,³¹⁹ Taxila³²⁰ and in the stupa deposit of Manikyala (near Rawalpindi).³²¹ The circulation area of these coin types thus extends from Kabulistan deep into Gandhara and Uddiyana, so that the mint(s) is/are probably to be sought in the

³¹¹ Vondrovec 2014, II: 648–49. On Pangul’s drachms from Zabulistan (Type 246 = ASCC 114) such an emblem is also placed in the rear crescent moon. The prince kneeling before Buddha in Chapel 3 of Tepe Narenj has similar decorations on his crown, cf. Paiman and Alram 2012: 49, figs 6, 7; Alram 2016: fig. 77.

³¹² According to Göbl (1967, I: 144), the breast rosette found its way onto the Turk Shahis’ coinage via the Arab-Sasanian dirhams, where it is encountered between 60 and 83 AH (679/80–702/03 CE).

³¹³ For the legend and the title ‘İltābār of the Khalaj’, cf. Inaba 2005.

³¹⁴ Göbl (1967, I: type 209) seems to be inscribed with a Bactrian legend between the double circles of the reverse; however, I have not been able to verify any specimen with a legible inscription.

³¹⁵ Vondrovec 2014, II: 542–43, 657.

³¹⁶ This is clearly summarized and discussed in Shavarebi and Annucci (forthcoming); cf. also Shavarebi 2025: tab. IX.1.

³¹⁷ Khan *et al.* 2008: nos 601–603; see also Ziad 2022: 124–28; however, the evidence cited there for the small copper coins of Types 240A and 210, which were allegedly found in such large numbers in the area around Kashmir Smast (‘Sakra sites’), are for the most part not ‘derivatives’ (Ziad 2022: figs 2.2.12 and 2.2.22) but original issues that were minted in parallel with the drachms.

³¹⁸ Mes Aynak 2013: 94–95; Dovudi 2017, 186–89, fig. 25.

³¹⁹ Cribb 2021a: figs 57.4–7.

³²⁰ Marshall 1951, II: 822.

³²¹ Prinsep 1834: pl. XXI; Errington and Sarkhosh Curtis 2007: 212, fig. 177.

Kabul area or east of it. Göbl (1967) assumed ‘Kabul’ (?) as the mint for both issues. However, due to the obvious time interval between Type 240 and Type 208 and the lack of intermediate links, this assumption cannot be substantiated for the time being.³²²

Let us return to Tegin’s issue 256A (= ASCC 113) from Tapa Sardar (no. 95; Figure 38a). In addition to the mint signature ‘Zabul’, it also bears the number ‘2’. In this case, however, it is unlikely that the second year of Tegin’s reign is meant, especially since this issue would then take us into the 680s, which is difficult to reconcile with the typological development. In this context, Rika Gyselen (2010: 155) has made the interesting suggestion of referring the year 2 to Tegin’s reign in Zabulistan. Chinese sources indicate that Jibin (Kapishi-Kabul/Kabulistan) exercised a kind of supremacy over Zabulistan around 710 CE. This seems to have lasted until 720 CE, when an envoy was sent to the court of the Chinese emperor to confirm the enthronement of Shiquer/Shiyu (the second Rutbil) as king of Zabulistan (*Xieyu*) and that of Tegin as king of Jibin.³²³ Tegin’s year 2 in Zabulistan would then be around 712 CE. Göbl (1967), on the other hand, assumed that the year 77 PYE (= 728 CE) documented on Type 208 was the beginning of a new era founded by Tegin, to which he related the numbers/years on the Zabulite coinage. With the year 2 indicated on Tegin’s coins, we would then arrive at the year 729 CE. Finally, Klaus Vondrovec (2014, II: 551–52) suggested interpreting the years mentioned on the Zabulite coins as a consecutively counted era of the Rutbils, which he suggests began with Pangul after c.688 CE.

But let us leave aside the problem of chronology and the interpretation of the dates mentioned on the coins, and turn to another group of issues from Zabulistan which completes the picture of typological development drawn so far. It is closely interlinked with those of Pangul and Tegin and may have been struck by a third authority who gives the name/title Spur (Pah. *spwl*) on his coins.³²⁴

Spur minted drachms of good silver (Figure 41),³²⁵ typologically modelled on Khusros II’s standard coinage on the one hand and his special issue on the other, though influences of the Arab-Sasanian dirhams are also noticeable.³²⁶ The most striking deviation from the Sasanian models are the marginal legends in Pahlavi,³²⁷ for which—as already mentioned—Arab-Sasanian and related issues of the rulers of Guzgan from the 680s presumably provide the *terminus post quem*.³²⁸ Arabic influence is also noticeable in the formula Pah. *pād nām ī yazd* (‘in the name of God’), which appears in the marginal legends on the obverse of Spur’s drachms and copies the *bism Allāh* common on Arab dirhams.³²⁹ In addition to the Pahlavi inscriptions, the reverse also bears the Brahmi formula *śrī vakhudevaḥ*, ‘vakhudevaḥ’ being regarded as a Sanskritization of the MP title *bay xvadēv* (Bact. *bago xoddēo*).³³⁰ Spur’s drachms bear the numbers Pah. ‘8’ (Type 211),

³²² Göbl 1967, II: 50 (‘Emissionsschema 4’).

³²³ Kuwayama 1999: 54–56, 64; Inaba 2005: 3–6.

³²⁴ As an appellative, MP *spwl* (*spurr*) is well attested and means ‘full, perfect’; for the onomastic use, see Gignoux 2003: nos 308, 309; I would like to thank Rüdiger Schmitt for these references. Cf. also Humbach 1966: 65; Humbach 1996: 250; Gyselen 2009b: 149.

³²⁵ Possibly fed by the subsidy payments of the Arabs; see Gyselen 2009b: 146, 154 and Bosworth 1968.

³²⁶ Göbl 1967, I: types 211–216. Fundamental to this is Gyselen 2009b, cf. there also the overview of Spur’s coin types in fig. 5 and Gyselen 2010: 333, fig. 4. See also Vondrovec 2014, II: 549–52, 669–73, but note that the Type 216A (Figure 35b) listed there should now be attributed to Pangul (see above).

³²⁷ However, an unambiguous reading of the Pahlavi legends has not yet been achieved, see the detailed documentation in Gyselen 2009b: 148–52.

³²⁸ Gyselen 2009b: 147 (with further literature); cf. also notes 275 and 301.

³²⁹ On the drachms of the Zhulad of Guzgan minted north of the Hindu Kush, the Arabic formula *bism Allāh* is directly adopted; cf. Göbl 1967, I: types 280, 281; Vondrovec 2014, II: 531–35, 640–41 with type 281A.

³³⁰ Humbach 1996: 248; Gyselen 2009b: 152. I am also indebted to Ingo Strauch for corresponding information.

‘9’ (Types 212, 213, 215), ‘10’³³¹ and ‘15’ (?) (Type 216) combined with the mint signatures Pah. ‘Zabul’ and ‘Rakhvad’ (Type 211)³³² or ‘Zabulistan’ (Types 212, 213, 215, 216).³³³



Figure 41. Spur, mint Zabul / Zabulistan

a. Δ, 3.33g, (year) 8 / *Zāvul*. Berlin 18308989 (Type 211); b. Δ, 3.46g, (year) 9 / *Zāvulstān*. BnF 1971.720 (Type 212); c. Δ, 3.17g, (year) 15 (?) / *Zāvulstān*. KHM GR45634 (Type 216 with *Cm 106*)

There are also three copper coin types,³³⁴ two of which bear the number ‘11’ and the name of the mint ‘Zabulistan’ (Figures 42b, c).³³⁵ The third type appears to be undated and also bears no indication of the mint (Figure 42a). However, it is special in that it is based on a rare Arab-Sasanian dirham of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Āmir which has a purely epigraphic reverse. It comes from the mint of Sistan and is dated 72 AH (691/92 CE).³³⁶ This results in a *terminus post quem* for Spur’s copper coin type.³³⁷ ‘Abd al-‘Azīz is incidentally the governor of Sistan against whom the first Rutbil, Tegin’s brother, presumably fell in battle.³³⁸

I am not aware of any finds of Spur’s drachms from archaeological contexts. Only in Masson’s Begram Collection is a countermarked drachm (Type 216) from the year 15 (with *Cm 106*) documented.³³⁹

³³¹ A specimen with this date was published by Malek 2019, 2: no. 1344.

³³² Drachms with the year 8 are attested from the mints ‘Zabul’ and ‘Rakhvad’ (Malek 2019, 2: nos 1326, 1327); in addition, there is a third mint, whose mint mark, however, cannot be read with certainty (Malek 2019, 2: no. 1328; Malek suggests Pah. *hywkh*); I am indebted to H. M. Malek, who sent me a photo of this coin.

³³³ Spur’s drachms are sometimes countermarked with a boar or Senmurv head (*Cm 106, 107*); cf. Göbl 1967, II: 156–57, IV: pl. 9; Vondrovec 2014, II: 669–70, nos 216–2, 3; this type of countermark is also attested on Pangul’s Type 245 (here no. 93; see above with note 276).

³³⁴ Gyselen 2010: 331, fig. 1.

³³⁵ See also Vondrovec 2014, II: 673, type 328 (= ASCC 117).

³³⁶ Malek 2019, 1: 263, fig. 9.10.2.

³³⁷ Gyselen 2009b: 152–53, fig. 6; Gyselen 2010: 339, fig. 11.

³³⁸ Murgotten 1969: 149; Nikitin 1984: 237; cf. also Kuwayama 1999: 64; Malek 2019, 1: 262–63.

³³⁹ Cribb (2021a: 108, 193–96, fig. 57.3) dated there without further justification between c.746–753. Ziad (2022: 108) reports that according to his sources in the antiquities trade, Spur’s drachms are found both in the Kabul region and in Gandhara.

The question now arises again—as already discussed in the case of Pangul and Tegin—as to whether the numbers on Spur’s drachms (8, 9, 10, 15) and copper coins (11) indicate regnal years or a continuous era of the Rutbils. Rika Gyselen (2009b) has dealt with this problem in detail and has attempted to put Spur’s coinage into chronological order, assuming, in my view correctly, that these are regnal years.³⁴⁰ She considers identifying Spur as the second Rutbil and thus as Tegin’s nephew, who, according to the literary evidence, took office after c.686/87 (= year 1).³⁴¹ The years attested on Spur’s coins would thus cover a period at least up to +701 (= year 15). It should be borne in mind that some of the dates could also be ‘frozen dates’. This means that coins bearing the year 15, for example, would have been minted over a longer period of time.³⁴²



Figure 42. Copper alloy coins of Spur

- a. Æ (medium), –g. (ASCC 86 = Gyselen 2009a: p. 175–76, 225–26, type 86);
- b. Æ (medium), 3.85g, (year) 11 / *Zāvulstān*. JPR 308 (ASCC 117 = Type 328; Alram 2016: 147, no. 7);
- c. Æ (small), 0.59g, (year) 11 / *Zāvulstān*, (ASCC 116 = Gyselen 2009a: pl. 18, type 116, no. 2)

Let us recall that the second Rutbil, whom Kuwayama (1999) identifies as Shiquer/Shiyu,³⁴³ was confirmed in office by the Chinese emperor in 720 (see above). Like his uncle Tegin Khurasan Shah, Shiyu must therefore have been in power for a considerable time. It was not until 738/39 that his son *Rumofuda* (*dhawaulfradar>dhawul-frataraka = ‘governor of Zabul’) succeeded him as the third Rutbil of Zabulistan,³⁴⁴ while in Jibin Tegin was succeeded by his son Frum Kesar (*Fulin Jisuo*) as Kabul Shah.

³⁴⁰ A drachm of Frum Kesar from ‘Zabul’ (Type 247) published by Malek 2019, 2: no. 1322, which bears the year 4 (*ALBA/cahār*), a year which is also documented on an issue of Pangul from Rakhvad (ASCC 112; Figure 37b), now proves beyond doubt that the numbers mentioned on the coins are actually the regnal years of the respective rulers and not a ‘Rutbil era’. Another drachma of year 4 is known to me from the Righetti collection (Figure 43b).

³⁴¹ Although the sources are contradictory, the second Rutbil must in any case have come to power before 693/94 (Kuwayama 1999: 64).

³⁴² This is the case, for example, with Tegin’s Type 208, which is dated 77 PYE (see above).

³⁴³ Gyselen (2010: 347–48) considers the possibility of seeing Shiquer/Shiyu as the third Rutbil, and thus Spur’s successor; but this can be ruled out on the basis of Huichao’s account, since the second Rutbil, a nephew of Tegin, was still in office in around 726, see note 268.

³⁴⁴ Kuwayama 1999: 64–65. Minoru Inaba pointed out to me that the Chinese court’s approval of the succession in Kabul and Zabul in 738 does not necessarily mean that it actually took place in that year, as diplomatic

If Spur is indeed the second Rutbil and is identical to Shiquer/Shiyu, then his reign runs almost parallel to that of Tegin. The dates 8–15 attested for Spur's coins could easily be placed between c.686/87 and 738/39. However, it is striking that we know of no coins of Spur with dates before 8 or later than 15 from his reign of over 40 years. On the one hand, one could argue that there are gaps in the material record, but on the other hand, one could also ask whether the custom of dating by regnal years was introduced not at the beginning of Shiyu/Spur's reign but at a later date. A possible starting point for year 1 would be 720 CE, when Shiyu's official investiture by the Chinese emperor took place.³⁴⁵ This would place the oldest dated coin type of Shiyu/Spur from the year 8 (Type 211) in the year 727/28, the most recent issue with the year 15 (Type 216) in the year 736/37. However, the question then arises as to which coin types could be attributed to Shiyu/Spur before 720. Although there are a number of types that possibly date from the period between c.690 and 720, their attribution to individual rulers and mints/coinage districts as well as their relative chronological sequence is still a matter of debate.

A further, as yet unsolved problem is that of the identity of the minting authorities. Most recently, Rika Gyselen (2009b; 2010) assumed that Pangul, Tegin and Spur were three different individuals. Looking at the arrangement of the various components of the Pahlavi legends on the Zabulite copper coins, the names of the rulers Pangul and Tegin always precede the titles *bay* ('His Majesty') and *bay xvadēv* ('His Majesty, Lord') respectively. The coins with the name/title Spur follow this pattern exactly, so that it is reasonable to see Spur as the name of an independent personality who used this title as a ruler's name.³⁴⁶ However, this cannot be proved with absolute certainty, and the possibility of Pangul or Tegin as the actual minting authority behind Spur cannot be ruled out.³⁴⁷

Leaving all speculative considerations aside for a moment and returning to the numismatic facts, it remains to be noted that Pangul's and Spur's coinage forms a remarkably homogeneous group, the copper coin types of which also show a close interconnection with Tegin's issues from Zabulistan/Zabul, suggesting a certain temporal proximity for these issues. The find evidence from Tapa Sardar further emphasizes this conclusion. The identical countermarks (*Cm 106*, *Cm 107*) that are sometimes found on both Pangul's (Type 245) and Spur's (Type 216) coinage also show that they circulated together. However one interprets the numbers on Pangul's and Spur's coins, they clearly establish the relative chronological sequence of the individual types within these two groups. In the case of Spur, Gyselen (2009b) places the undated type with epigraphic reverse (ASCC 86; Figure 42a) at the beginning, which makes perfect sense. This results in a *terminus post quem* of at least 691 CE for Spur's issues. As the *terminus ante quem* for Spur's coinage, I would suggest the year 738/39, when Frum Kesar took over the reign from his father, Tegin Khurasan Shah.³⁴⁸ The drachms minted by Frum Kesar in 'Zabul' (Type 247) are typologically and stylistically related to Spur's drachms of year 8 from 'Zabul' (Type 211), which at least establishes the relative chronological sequence of these two emissions (Figure 43).³⁴⁹

communication between the Chinese government and the West may have been cut off by the Tibetans, especially in the 720s and early 730s (email 31 May 2024).

³⁴⁵ Similar considerations were put forward by Göbl 1967, I: 176 (on Type 255).

³⁴⁶ Gyselen 2010: 340–43, fig. 13. Incidentally, Tegin (= 'Prince') also uses a title as his official ruler's name, see Sims-Williams 2010: no. 457.

³⁴⁷ Gyselen (2009b: 152 with figs 4a, b) refers to an interesting connection between Pangul's Type 246 (ASCC 114) and Spur's drachm issues (Types 2012–216), which bear an identical, albeit unfortunately not clearly legible Pahlavi legend on the reverse; cf. also Gyselen 2010: 341–42 with fig. 15, 349. In this context, it should be recalled again that Göbl (1967) assigned the coins with the names/titles Pangul, Spur and Tegin to a single individual, namely Tegin Khurasan Shah.

³⁴⁸ See note 344.

³⁴⁹ Vondrovec 2014, II: fig. 9.36. It should be noted, however, that Frum Kesar may have already minted coins as the viceroy of Tegin, i.e. prior to 738/39, cf. Inaba 2010b. In this context, reference should be made



Figure 43.

- a. Spur, Δ, 3.33g, (year) 8 / *Zāvul*. Berlin 18308989 (Type 211);
 b. Frum Kesar (c.738–745), Δ, 3.03g, (year) 4 / *Zāvul*. JPR 286 (Type 247)

Finally, let us try to outline the chronological position of the three coinage groups of Pangul, Tegin and Spur in relation to each other more precisely: since no coins in silver have survived for Pangul, it is obvious to place his issues (here nos 91–94; Figures 34, 35, 37) chronologically before those of Tegin and Spur. In addition, Pangul's Type 245 (nos 91–93) is typologically and denominationally linked to the preceding issues of the 'Later Nezak' (see above), which also speaks in favour of an earlier date of issue. From an absolute chronological point of view, I would assume the 690s as the lowest time limit. I would place Tegin's copper drachms (ASCC 118) and small copper coins (Type 256A = ASCC 113) from Zabulistan/Zabul with the year 2 (here no. 95; Figure 38) after his Type 240, which is dated to the year 480 of the 'Bactrian era' (= 702/03 CE) and before Type 208 from the year 77 of the post-Yazdgerd era (= 728 CE). For Spur, I suggest a maximum time frame of c.690 to 738/39.

There are still too many unanswered questions when linking the numismatic evidence with the protagonists known from the epigraphic and literary sources to be able to draw a definitive conclusion. In addition, how many individuals are actually concealed behind the names/titles Pangul, Spur and Tegin would have to be clarified. The evidence currently available does not provide enough information for this. The geographical designations 'Zabul', 'Zabulistan' and 'Rakhvad' mentioned on the coins should be understood as mint signatures. At least, I do not see anything that speaks against this at the moment, and the find evidence from Tapa Sardar provides a welcome additional argument in favour of this.

Chronologically speaking, the coins of Pangul and Tegin are, in any case, the most recent stratified coins from Tapa Sardar. According to the archaeological evidence, together with nos 89 and 90, they can be assigned to the late phase of the sanctuary and were thus in circulation from at least the last quarter of the 7th to the first half of the 8th century. But of course, it cannot be ruled out that they were already in circulation before the partial destruction of the sanctuary and were only lost during or after the reconstruction.

No coins of the aforementioned Frum Kesar (cf. Figure 43b), who succeeded his father Tegin Khurasan Shah as Kabul Shah in 738/39 and of whom we know drachms and copper coins, have been found in Tapa Sardar.³⁵⁰ Frum Kesar must have been particularly successful in the

to a Bactrian document from the year 503 of the 'Bactrian era' (= 726 CE according to Sims-Williams and de Blois 2018), which was written 'at the court of Mir-Ziniy, lord of Khesh (under?) the prince of Khorasan' (Sims-Williams and la Vaissière 2011). Following Sims-Williams, the title *uōrsano oisboro* ('prince of Khurasan') could refer to Frum Kesar, the son of Tegin Khurasan Shah. Khesh, the place of writing mentioned in the contract, may be identified as an area in the far west of Kabulistan, close to the border with Bamiyan.

³⁵⁰ Göbl 1967, I: types 247–251; Sims-Williams 2008b: 123–28; Vondrovec 2014, II: 553–55, 674–78; Alram 2016: 139–49; Malek 2019, I: 406–08.

defensive campaign against the Arabs. This is evidenced by a group of Sasanian drachms and Arab-Sasanian dirhams that were countermarked by Frum Kesar with special ring dies bearing the Bactrian inscription ‘Frum Kesar, His Majesty, the Lord, who smote the Arabs / and thereby saved prosperity’.³⁵¹ The countermarks may have been used in the course of a campaign against the Arabs in Tukharistan, in which Frum Kesar probably took part.³⁵²

According to the Chinese chronicles, Frum Kesar’s son, Bofuzhun, succeeded his father on the throne of Kabul in 745 CE and was also invested as king of Uddiyana by the Chinese emperor.³⁵³ However, we have not yet been able to attribute any coins to him with certainty.³⁵⁴

New light was recently shed on the late period of Turk Shahi rule in Zabulistan by a Bactrian rock inscription published by Nicholas Sims-Williams (2020/21) which was found in the Jaghuri district (Ghazni Province). The inscription is dated to the year 535 of the ‘Bactrian era’ (= 757 CE according to Sims-Williams and de Blois 2018)³⁵⁵ and reports the victory of Prince Frum Kesar over an Indian prince. Below the inscription are two identical tamghas engraved in the rock, which we know in a similar form from the coins of Pangul and other issues of the Turk Shahis and early Nezak kings and which can presumably be associated with Zabulistan (see above, Figures 16b, 19a, 31–34).³⁵⁶ According to Nicholas Sims-Williams (2020/21), the Frum Kesar mentioned in the inscription could be the grandson of Frum Kesar (I), the son of Tegin Khurasan Shah. The father of Frum Kesar (II) could have been Bofuzhun, who held the throne of Kabul when his son and crown prince fought successfully against the Indians.³⁵⁷ In any case, the inscription shows that the area around Ghazni, and thus also Tapa Sardar, was still undisputedly in the hands of the Turk Shahis in around 757 CE.

Finally, a drachm issue should be mentioned in this context bearing the name Bac. *sandan* and in proto-Sharada script *candāna* on its obverse (Göbl 1967, I: type 244) (Figure 44).³⁵⁸ Ma (2011) associates this Sandan with a Zhantan(huli) who, according to a report by the Chinese Buddhist monk Wukong from the year 762, is said to have been the younger brother of the Kabul Shah.³⁵⁹ If the Zhantan(huli) mentioned by Wukong is indeed identical with the Sandan of the coins, then after 762, he would have succeeded his brother, who can possibly be identified with Bofuzhun, as Kabul Shah.³⁶⁰ However, such a late date for Sandan’s coinage seems difficult to justify, even though

³⁵¹ Sims-Williams 2008b: 124–27; Malek 2019, I: 407–08.

³⁵² Grenet (2022a: 43–47) considers linking this campaign, in which Frum Kesar could have participated, with al-Hārith’s revolt in Tukharistan (c.734–745; cf. Bosworth 1968: 70–74). However, the countermarking may also have been carried out south of the Hindu Kush, especially since countermarked coins—as we now know from the findings from Qol-e Tut and Tepe Narenj—were also a common means of payment within the territory of the Turk Shahis. Reference should also be made to the countermarks bearing the Bactrian inscription *for* or *foro* (Göbl 1967, II: 164–65; IV: pl. 9, KM 59, 60), which presumably also originate from Frum Kesar; see also note 349.

³⁵³ Kuwayama 1999: 73; Inaba 2010b: 446; Verdon (forthcoming).

³⁵⁴ Cribb (2021a: 193–96, fig. 57.3) seems to equate Spur with Bofuzhun, but there is no evidence of this.

³⁵⁵ See note 232.

³⁵⁶ Göbl 1967, IV: pl. 15, S 61.

³⁵⁷ According to Inaba (forthcoming), Frum Kesar II may have held the office of Rutbil of Zabulistan. From a numismatic point of view, we would thus be faced with the problem of whether the coins bearing the name of Frum Kesar should be attributed to Frum Kesar I or Frum Kesar II or divided between the two rulers. This problem, however, needs to be analysed elsewhere.

³⁵⁸ Cf. also Alram and Keck (forthcoming). On the name, see Sims-Williams 2010: no. 412.

³⁵⁹ Inaba 2010b: 450; Inaba 2020: 107; Sims-Williams 2020/21: 68.

³⁶⁰ Al-Ya’ qūbī (d. 897) mentions a Kabul Shah named Khinjil/Khinkhil, who must have ruled during the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdī (775–785). Whether this Khinjil is to be identified with Bofuzhun or with one of his successors cannot be proven; cf. Rahman 1979: 83, 175; Kuwayama 2002: 259; Verdon (forthcoming).

it cannot be completely ruled out, since both the chronological sequence and the absolute dating of the Turk Shahis' coinage—as repeatedly mentioned—are still subject to numerous unanswered questions.³⁶¹



Figure 44.
Sandan, Δ, 3.08g. KHM GR41709
(Type 244 with *Cm 103* and *Cm 104*; Alram 2016: 148, no. 11)

c. From the End of the Turk Shahis to the 13th Century (nos 110, 111, 117, 118, 120, 161, 172)

According to al-Bīrūnī, the last Turk Shahi on the throne of Kabul was a certain Lagaturman, who was deposed by his Brahman minister Kallara.³⁶² We do not know when this event took place, and the coins do not provide any information about it. An important chronological reference point for Kallara's coup could be provided by a bilingual inscription (Persian and Sanskrit), which is said to come from Zalamkot in the lower Swat Valley. The dates contained in the inscription point to a hitherto unknown era beginning in 822 CE.³⁶³ Rahman (1998; 2002) convincingly linked this new era to the rise to power of the Late/Hindu Shahis. Kallara's coup can thus be seen as a consequence of the crushing defeat of the Turkic Kabul Shah by the troops of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn in 814/15.³⁶⁴ However, to identify this Kabul Shah with Spalapati Deva, with whom the 'bull and horseman' coinage begins (Figure 45), is in my opinion misguided.³⁶⁵ In their visual language, their technical production process and their high degree of fineness, the coins of Spalapati Deva show a clear break with the coins of the Early/Turk Shahis, which in my view can only be explained by the change of dynasty. They thus stand at the beginning of the coin series of the so-called Late/Hindu Shahi dynasty and—if the Zalamkot inscription does indeed document the introduction of a new era by the Hindu Shahis—can be dated to around 822 CE.³⁶⁶

³⁶¹ Göbl (1967, II: 50, 'Emissionsschema 4') dates Sandan's drachms to around or after 720 CE, thus placing them before Tegin's issues (Type 208; Figures 39c, 40b) dated with the year 77 PYE (= 728 CE). Cribb 2021a: 108, 196, fig. 57.9–10 assumes c.700–750 as the chronological frame for Sandan's drachms. Cf. also Alram and Keck (forthcoming).

³⁶² Rahman 1979: 85–94; Rahman 2002; Bosworth 2008: 107–112; Alram 2016: 151–57; Alram 2018: 20–21; Verdon (forthcoming).

³⁶³ Holz and Strauch (forthcoming) have now fixed the beginning of the Hindu Shahi era at 822 CE. See also Rahman 1998; Rahman 2002; Shavarebi and Strauch 2022.

³⁶⁴ In the wake of the defeat, the Kabul Shah, who is referred to by al-Azraqī (Ghafur 1965/66) and al-Bīrūnī (Sachau 1910, II: 157) as the 'Ispahbad of Kabul', is said to have converted to the Islamic faith; see most recently Verdon (forthcoming).

³⁶⁵ Thus MacDowall 1968; Rahman 1979: 185–90; Petrie 2021: 76; Cribb 2021a: 109.

³⁶⁶ A new chronology of the coinage of the Hindu Shahis is presented by Annucci (forthcoming); cf. also part B, section 1.2. For newly conducted, extensive metal analyses on Hindu Shahi coins, see Uhlig *et al.* (forthcoming).



Figure 45. Hindu Shahis
Spalapati Deva (c.822–870), AR, 3.17g. KHM MK OR2652 (Annucci forthcoming: no. 29)

Less than 50 years later, the rule of the Rutbils in Zabulistan was extinguished by Ya‘qūb b. al-Layth al-Ṣaffār in 870/71. In the same year, Ya‘qūb advanced as far as Kabul. The holy temple was plundered and its treasures were sent to the Abbasid caliph of Baghdad.³⁶⁷ However, the Hindu Shahis seem to have recovered and regained their rule in Kabulistan for a while (Inaba 2018), but their centre of power shifted to Udabhandapura (Ohind/Hund) in Gandhara, where they maintained their rule until the beginning of the 11th century, when Gandhara, Uddiyana and the Punjab were conquered by the Muslim Ghaznavids.³⁶⁸

On the political situation in Zabulistan after the overthrow of the last Turk Shahi in Kabul Lagaturman by Kallara and the takeover of power by the so-called Hindu Shahis, I refer to the contribution by Arturo Annucci in the present volume (see part B, section 1.2). From a numismatic point of view, it is in any case astonishing that none of the ‘Bull and Horseman’ coins of the Hindu Shahis, which were minted in such large numbers, have been found at Tapa Sardar. This is in contrast to the finds from the Buddhist monastic complexes of Tepe Narenj and Qol-e Tut, where these coins are found in even greater numbers (Shavarebi and Annucci, forthcoming).³⁶⁹ Only three specimens are also known from the pre-Ghaznavid and Ghaznavid periods (nos 117, 118, 120), which interestingly represent the most ancient group of Islamic coins found in the area (see part B, section 1.3.a, 4a, 4c). Whether this allows us to draw the conclusion that Tapa Sardar came to an end before the Hindu Shahis came to power cannot be deduced from the numismatic evidence alone (see Verardi in the present volume). The gaps in the influx of coins in the post-Kushan period appear to be too large, and the overall density of evidence too low, for further conclusions to be drawn from the absence of individual coin types.

The nine identifiable coins from the 10th to 13th centuries are mostly surface finds that came to light outside the archaeological context of the Buddhist sanctuary and are presumably related to the subsequent use of this strategically important hill (see part B, section 2.4). They range from the pre-Ghaznavid period, the middle of the 10th century (no. 117), via the Ghaznavids (nos 118, 120), to the first half of the 13th century and the Khwarezm Shahs (no. 172). In addition, there are two anonymous imitations of the ‘Bull and Horseman’ type, which can only be roughly dated to the 10th to 13th centuries (nos 110, 111), as well as another such imitation from the Tomaras and Chauhans of Delhi (no. 161). Nine coins which presumably belong to this period remained unidentified (nos 188, 200–207).

³⁶⁷ Rahman 1979: 96–105; Bosworth 1994: 98–108; Bosworth 2008: 109–112; Flood 2009: 29–37; Klimburg-Salter 2010.

³⁶⁸ Rahman 1979: 130–67; Petrie 2021: 77–82, 111; Annucci (forthcoming).

³⁶⁹ On Tepe Narenj, see Paiman and Alram 2012 and Alram 2013; on Qol-e Tut cf. Alram *et al.* (forthcoming).

THE BUDDHIST SANCTUARY OF TAPA SARDAR IN THE LIGHT OF THE NUMISMATIC EVIDENCE*

Giovanni Verardi

The sanctuary of Tapa Sardar, established on a schist formation located in the Dasht-i Manara, overlooked from a distance the town of Ghazni and nearest Rawza (Figures 46, 47, 50). To the north-west loomed the massif with the Dasht-i Nawur, below which are the mountains of Qarabagh and Jaghuri, dotted with Buddhist caves, mostly left unfinished (Figures 119–126). As much as the position of the site must have favoured the monastic settlement, this was also the cause of the repeated damage and destruction that it suffered, the last such event occurring in 2001 in imitation of what had happened in Bamiyan.

Excavations started in 1959 under the direction of Dinu Adamesteanu³⁷⁰ and continued in 1961 with Salvatore Puglisi. It was only under the direction of Maurizio Taddei, who was in the field in 1962 and from 1967 to 1976, that excavations were conducted with regularity, even if it was not possible to bring them, if not to conclusion, at least to the point of presenting an orderly chronological sequence and obtaining more detailed knowledge of the early phases of the sanctuary.

The first presentation of the stratigraphy and periodization of the site was provided by M. Taddei (1968: 111–12), who set it out in detail after the excavations between 1974 and 1976 that focused on the Gandharan and late Gandharan periods (Taddei and Verardi 1985b: 274–75). In 1986 Taddei revised the proposed chronology,³⁷¹ and finally, Verardi and Paparatti (2005) tried to further refine the stratigraphic data on the basis of the extant documentation, though limiting their work to the area of the *māhastūpa* (Main Stupa) and to the area of Stupa 64 and Chapel 100 (Figure 48). In the context of historical archaeology, and not only that, the stratigraphic method followed in the 1960s and 1970s was not as analytical as it would be later on. No coins are reported to have been found in a sealed layer, and in general the stratigraphic position can be deduced, or at least suggested, for only a limited number of them. It is only through cross-referencing with the evidence offered by the set of excavation data that reasonable hypotheses can be put forward.

The major problem of the excavations at Tapa Sardar, and of the fate itself of the Gandharan and late Gandharan sanctuary, is to be identified in the radical reconstruction that took place towards the end of the 7th century, after the destruction that it had undergone in 671 CE, when the whole territory from Bust to Kabul passed into the control of the Muslims led by ‘Ubayd Allāh (Gold 1976: 75; Kuwayama 2002: 182). The new sanctuary, characterized by new types of stupas, the ‘Stupas of the Descent’ (Figures 101, 103), and by chapels decorated with a profusion of clay images and paintings different in style and meaning from the preceding ones, came to occupy only the highest part of the *tapa*, where the *māhastūpa* was located (Figures 49–53). The new sanctuary was built entirely with unfired bricks (38 × 38cm) and *paḥsā*, its erection requiring, in places, imposing terracing operations to bear the weight of the new structures. After the desertion of the site, which took place sometime after the mid-8th century (Verardi and Paparatti 2004: 100; 2005: 441–42; cf.

* A special thank goes to Anna Filigenzi, who provided me with the documentation without which I would not have been able to intervene once again on the excavation of Tapa Sardar. My thanks also go to Sandro Sunda, who has arranged the photographs and, above all, has adapted the plans of the excavation as needed.

³⁷⁰ In his only contribution, Adamesteanu devoted less than two pages to Tapa Sardar, in which he identified five terraces on the *tapa*, where he began excavating the *māhastūpa* (Adamesteanu 1960: 28–29).

³⁷¹ Taddei’s revision of the chronology was proposed in one of his lectures held at the Collège de France in 1986, which remained in typescript form and is currently not available to me. It is, however, discussed in Verardi and Paparatti (2005: 405).

below), the chapels on the fringe of the *tapa* began to slide downhill, the reason why no trace was left of those once existing to the east of the *mahāstūpa*, which were arranged in a row and accessed by narrow passages (nos 26, 27, 28 in Figure 49), like the chapels on the northern stretch of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha*, where similar downhill collapses took place.³⁷² The conformation of the *tapa* had not permitted the building of larger chapels on these two sides of the processional path like those built to the south (nos 17, 23, 37 in Figure 49), behind which other chapels were built, square in shape and devoid of any direct access to the outside (nos 36, 41, 75 in Figure 49; cf. Figure 104). These were the object of brief descriptions in *Ismeo Activities*, regularly published in *East and West*, but were not properly published. Staircase 35, behind Vihara 36, testified to the existence of a second floor.³⁷³

Many of the efforts of the Italian team focused on the excavation and preservation of the late sanctuary, entirely built, as mentioned, with unfired bricks, plaster made of clay mixed with straw (the *khāgel* still in use) and differently processed clay for the images—coarser for the cores of large images and finer for the surfaces. The presence of two restorers was required in the field to restore the fragile clay statues still *in situ* and the great number of fragments, even large ones, sheltered in the storehouse. The walls of the excavated chapels, too, required continuous maintenance, not to mention the need to protect them from the rigours of Ghazni winters with roofing—the new ones that had to be set up after each excavation campaign and the previous ones that had to be rearranged.

I will return below to the late period of the sanctuary, which yielded a considerable number of coins that provide useful information. The bulk of the coins recovered from the site, stratified in late layers, pertain to its earliest phases, mainly to the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

The Upper Terrace

The cumbersome presence of the late sanctuary made it possible to investigate only some parts of its earlier facet. We have the plan of the former, though incomplete, whereas of the latter we only know, with the exception of the *mahāstūpa* and a few other minor stupas, what emerged from the excavation of two terraces located at lower altitudes to the west and south, respectively, of the Upper Terrace—the area of Stupa 64 and Chapel 100 and, to a lesser extent, that of Stupa 81 (Figures 48, 60, 98).³⁷⁴

With regard to the early monuments built on the *tapa*, the Upper Terrace presented aspects that were not, nor are they now, easy to account for, starting from the *mahāstūpa* and the *pradakṣiṇāpatha*. The *mahāstūpa*, whose lower and upper parts were erected at different times, was built with carefully cut and uniformly thick schist slabs (Figures 51–53) and was originally provided, on its western side, with a steep stairway, which was later reshaped. The tests carried out inside the monument did not reveal the existence of a previous, subsequently enlarged stupa, the relic chamber being apparently cut into the rock (Taddei 1968: 114). The position of the *mahāstūpa* high on the *tapa* implied difficult access from the west due to the considerable jump in altitude from the last terrace that was met coming from the *dasht*. Only the remains of some steps, numbered 102, identified in Area 64–100, and a short stretch of pathway identified under Chapel 36 of the late sanctuary indicate access routes from below (Figures 60, 80).

³⁷² Taking into account the position of the *mahāstūpa*, the sanctuary is NE-SW-oriented. In the text, for simplicity, the N is made to coincide with its left side.

³⁷³ No traces of the monks' quarters were identified. One possibility is that they were situated above the inner chapels—a rather eccentric position indeed but justified by the fact that during the winter the *mahāstūpa* could otherwise not be accessed.

³⁷⁴ Galina A. Pugačenkova was not wrong, in principle, when after visiting the site together with Irina T. Kruglikova, then engaged in the excavations of Dilberjin Tepe, she decreed 'détruire pour comprendre'—something which, however, could not and was not intended to be done, in accordance with the standards of excavation and conservation that were followed. The destructions that have taken place in recent decades could make one regret not having followed Pugačenkova's advice.

The foundation of a large schist monument under the later Stupa 16, also built with schist slabs, and the remains of the base of another schist stupa under Stupa 21, originally provided with a stairway whose construction was probably interrupted (Taddei 1968: 117–18; Verardi and Paparatti 2005: 409) (Figures 56, 57), raises questions that remain unanswered. The evident difficulty in completing the construction of the *mahāstūpa* (Taddei 1968: esp. 113) is coupled with the limited number of schist stupas of Gandharan and late Gandharan type erected over time along the processional path (nos 11, 16, 20, 21, 22, 25, 51 in Figure 49) and with the riddle of the earlier monuments that were left unfinished. A sort of aedicule, an unexplained feature, was superimposed on Stupa 11 at the north-eastern corner of the processional path and in the 8th century was re-plastered to adapt it to the style of the stupas and thrones erected in the late period (Figures 58, 101).³⁷⁵

When the *mahāstūpa* was provided with a podium whose pilasters, instead of being constructed with schist slabs, consisted of sandstone blocks, stupas 16 and 20 were built in the same style (Figures 52, 56, 59). Stupa 20 was not aligned with the main monument and its podium, of which it shared the building features, nor was it aligned with the row of viharas from the late period opening on the southern part of the processional path. It was equipped with a barrel vault which, as observed by Kuwayama (2002: 191–92), had a real arch with a keystone, something undocumented south of the Hindu Kush.

As suggested by the inscription on a pot mentioning the *Kanika mahārāja vihāra* (Figure 55),³⁷⁶ and by later, though uncertain evidence,³⁷⁷ Tapa Sardar seems to have been a royal establishment, dependent on royal patronage and a select elite and not on the generous and continuous devotion of the faithful. This might explain the lack of the usual crowding of votive monuments around the *mahāstūpa*, as tentatively suggested by Verardi and Paparatti (2005: 410), who, however, excluded the possibility that the sanctuary could date to the time of Kanishka I, because when their contribution was written the era established by Kanishka was thought to coincide with the Shaka era, and because the considerations put forward by Kuwayama (2002: esp. 191–92) on the chronology of some of the monuments and finds of Tapa Sardar had a considerable weight. As mentioned, Taddei too had taken into account Kuwayama's observations and had moved forward the chronology of the Gandharan period. The earliest monuments on the *tapa* would have been built in the 3rd century, and the latest between the 4th and the 6th century (cf. Verardi and Paparatti 2005: 405).

These dates, however, do not seem to account for the whole span of the site's life, particularly in relation to its early phase, characterized by Gandharan monuments built directly on the rock and not, like the later ones, on earlier structures and on fills. The construction of the sanctuary in its first phase of life advanced very slowly, both as regards the completion of the *mahāstūpa* and the erection of minor stupas along the *pradakṣiṇāpatha*. Not only are they very few, but their con-

³⁷⁵ Taddei was not sure if it really was a stupa, in that the drum was surmounted by a quadrangular feature (a sort of aedicule), which perhaps contained an image (cf. Verardi and Paparatti 2005: 418). Referred to as a 'monument' in Verardi and Paparatti (2005), here, in the absence of further evidence, it continues to be referred to as a stupa.

³⁷⁶ According to Riccardo Garbini, this Brahmi inscription on a line painted on a pot in fragments datable to the 4th–5th century, reads:

- a) *paga[m]na - kanika mahārāja vī (hara/ka)*
- b) *[gh]alāsti [ma ?]pi(g/s)a dharma [b ū?]dhagama [s?]ya*
- c) *[-śa?]ma caturyaya śī*

For Garbini's comments, cf. Verardi and Paparatti 2005: 430–31.

³⁷⁷ It has been suggested that the *shāhbahār*, that is, *rājavihāra*, mentioned by al-Bayhaqī and other authors can be identified with Tapa Sardar (see on the matter Taddei 1968: 110), and the inscription on the pot might support this identification. The esplanade for manoeuvres and parades of Sultan Maḥmūd (998–1030) would have found adequate space in the *dasht* between the Ghaznavid quarters and the deserted sanctuary. According to Inaba (2018: 127–28), the *shāhbahār* of the sources could rather be the sanctuary of Fondukistan.

struction, as mentioned, came to an abrupt halt. It is not possible to estimate the time that elapsed before the construction yard reopened, but it cannot have been short, otherwise the monuments whose construction had already begun would have been completed. When the yard opened again, only a few monuments were built, for example stupas nos 16 and 21, whereas the late Gandharan stupas 11 and 20 discussed by Kuwayama were only erected in the 6th century. The fact that the oldest monuments, besides being few in number, were never completed explains why we have no iconographic and decorative materials from the early Gandharan period. An exception is the stucco statuette of an ascetic (TS1866/1867) probably pertaining to Stupa 65 in Area 64–100. The majority of the stucco fragments from the Upper Terrace are probably later, being mainly a decorative complement to the *mahāstūpa*, whose construction proceeded slowly.

The Gandharan iconographic materials and the medallion-stamped ceramics, mostly attributable to the 6th or even the first part of the 7th century, massively overlapped with the earlier, presumably scanty production before being, in turn, destroyed and dispersed. The numismatic corpus, by contrast, includes coins that probably circulated in the 2nd and 3rd centuries—something of an exception in the scanty record of early Tapa Sardar.

The Gandharan and Late Gandharan Sanctuary

Early Gandharan monuments number only six: the *mahāstūpa*, stupas 65 and 81, and the never completed structures underlying stupas 16, 21 and 25. The two lower terraces (Figures 48, 60, 98), besides bearing witness to the layout of the sanctuary before its late reconstruction, also provide us with some information on its long life and complexity.

The earliest monuments built in Area 64–100 were Stupa 65 and, situated at a slightly lower level, chapels 100 and 101 in their early layout. Stupa 65, of which only the lower part of its western side and the still less-preserved remains of its southern side had survived, was the largest stupa ever observed on the *tapa*, with the exception of the *mahāstūpa*, and like the latter was built on the rock. It measured no less than 15m on each side and was not aligned with the *mahāstūpa* uphill (Figures 61–64). It is deserving of careful study in order to propose a dating at least on stylistic grounds.

A terracing operation was required to build Chapel 100 and the adjoining Chapel 101, and we do not know whether in their original layout they were contemporary with Stupa 65. Chapel 101 was originally plastered with the light-green plaster typical of the earliest period of the sanctuary. Similarly plastered walls were observed in the rooms partly brought to light in 1976 in a stretch of the trench opened across the west side of the *tapa* on an axis with the *mahāstūpa* with the aim of shedding light on the side of the hillock overlooking Rawza and Ghazni—an excavation that was begun but that did not run its course due to force majeure (Figure 48). Chapel 101 lost its function when, perhaps for static reasons, most of it was bricked up with 42 × 42cm bricks, apparently the earliest documented on the site. The remaining space was transformed into Niche 76.

The latter housed an image of the Buddha in unbaked clay preserving traces of gilding to whom two *devas* paid homage (Figures 65–68a, b). Originally the *devas* (and in all likelihood the Buddha) were painted, as their surviving heads show, and indeed, at least two layers of paint were observed. It was only later that the images of the Buddha and the *devas* were covered with gold leaf. This indicates that the time span covered by the life of the niche was quite long and that the gilding was part of a late decoration process. The gold leaf applied to one of the *devas* remained imprinted on the clay that covered it when the niche, although walled up, was seriously damaged. Traces of gilding were also observed on other fragments from, presumably, the late Gandharan phase, and we must conclude that in a given period of pre-reconstruction Tapa Sardar, the clay images housed in the chapels glittered with gold, as would the images of the late sanctuary.³⁷⁸ Gold implies the existence of a rich, determined patronage, not easy to identify in the 6th century (see below).

³⁷⁸ We do not know whether the Zarkashan gold mine, located in the territory of Ghazni, was known and exploited at the time; gold could otherwise only come, at great cost, from Badakhshan.

The fact that Niche 76 was walled up seems to substantiate the hypothesis that there were static problems here, perhaps due to the terracing operations necessary to create the floor on which Stupa 64 and Monument 69–71 would be built. In Niche 76 a mutilated stucco statuette of an ascetic (TS1866/1877) had been saved from a lost decorated panel and laid next to the clay statue of the Buddha (Figure 66). Stucco decoration is documented, as mentioned, by the fragments related to the *mahāstūpa*, whose second storey was coated and decorated with this material (Taddei 1968: 113), as were the podium added to it (Figures 54a, b)³⁷⁹ and Stupa 21. The statuette, stylistically comparable—as far as it is possible to judge—to early Gandharan specimens, may have been part of the decoration of Stupa 65. What eludes us is the chronological relationship of stucco and unbaked clay decoration, even if the scanty available evidence suggests that the two techniques coexisted for a period.

Only a small part of the back and side walls of Chapel 100 survived destruction. On the basis of the type of unfired bricks employed in the early phases of Tapa Sardar (bricks of 42 × 42cm and then of 46/47 × 46/47cm) this chapel, for reasons that cannot be determined, was reconstructed when the largest bricks were in use, and what was brought to light by the excavation pertains to the time of its reconstruction (cf. Taddei and Verardi 1985b: 283–85).³⁸⁰ A huge image of the Buddha dominated the chapel, as shown by the right foot of the statue, which measured 1.6m and preserved traces of the gold leaf that covered it (Figures 73, 74). On the side walls of the chapel there were two images, probably of Bodhisattvas, of which only the feet had partially survived. To the right of the Buddha the legs of a group of donors wearing trousers thickly decorated with round plaquettes were preserved from the knees down, members of one and the same family, as can be inferred from the presence of a child's feet. One of the donors held a reliquary in his hand, found in the debris (Figure 75). The surviving part of the chapel's back wall preserved a painted scene showing a seated Buddha at the centre to whom a female worshipper was paying homage, a standing male figure wearing 'Kushan' pants and, to the right, the walls of a town, within which a few figures were visible, one wearing a high, conical hat (Figure 76).³⁸¹

The Buddha was certainly seated, which means that the chapel, while developing considerably in height, also widened in depth, so much so that at least part of the terrace with Stupa 64 immediately behind it was closed towards the west by a very high wall supporting the wooden beams of the chapel's roof and of the roof that protected the terrace of Stupa 64. Chapel 100 was destroyed by the very violent fire that affected the entire Area 64–100, attested here by the firing, and almost vitrification, of the clay sculptures.

The few remains of a similar chapel with donors wearing Central Asian clothes, numbered 163 in Verardi and Paparatti (2005: 123, 126; cf. here Figure 78), survived in the western corner of the *Parinirvāṇa* Chapel built in the first half of the 8th century (no. 63 in Figure 49), which implies that the layout of the *mahāstūpa* area was not organized differently than in the late period. The shod foot of two adult devotees and those of a child that had survived the radical cleaning carried out after the fire that here, too, destroyed the Gandharan chapels and burned the clay images were unearthed. The presence of presumably post-Kushan donors in a chapel opening towards the

³⁷⁹ It is not certain, though probable, that the *mahāstūpa* was coated and decorated with stucco in its earliest phase (Taddei and Verardi 1985b: 275). In his report of 1968 Taddei reported that many fragments of stucco plaster were recovered from a fill (numbered as Layer 5) lying on the rock (p. 112–13). However, the stucco fragments recovered at the foot of the monument might also relate to the added podium. Inv. no. TS818 (Figure 54a) is a small fragment of a Corinthian capital showing a corner abacus and an acanthus leaf; it was found in the eastern stretch of the *pradakṣiṇāpata* which belonged to the *mahāstūpa*.

³⁸⁰ Examining the size of the bricks of several sites to test their diagnostic value for chronology, Kuwayama (2002: 181) observed that 'relating differences in brick size to specific stratigraphic levels seems valid only within the site of Tapa Sardar'.

³⁸¹ See a somewhat more detailed description of the painting in Taddei and Verardi (1985b: 287–88).

north side of the *mahāstūpa* and the contextual absence of schist stupas along the related stretch of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* suggest once again considerations on the discontinuity of the works carried out on the Upper Terrace of the pre-reconstruction sanctuary.

TS1505 (Figure 79) is the head of a devotee wearing a luxurious conical cap, held in place by a band worn under the chin. It was found at the bottom of the trial trench made in Chapel 36 among the debris thrown away when the terracing operations in order to build the inner chapels of the late sanctuary started (Figure 49). The discarded Gandharan fragments came from the decoration of a not localized and probably entirely destroyed chapel. They were dumped near one of the ancient paths paved with slabs of schist leading from the lower terraces to that of the *mahāstūpa* (Figure 80). Few as the traces of the chapels due to Kushan and post-Kushan patronage on the upper terrace may be, we can get an idea of what they looked like on the basis of Chapel 100: head TS1505 could well be attributed to one of its donors.

The presence of devotees wearing clothes of Central Asian type can also be assumed on the basis of other fragments such as TS1707 (Figure 87), regarding which we can rely on a better-preserved example from the clay production of Kafir Kot in the Kharwar plateau, Logar, a very large site not far from Ghazni as the crow flies. The male donor, wearing pants and a short coat, as the donor of Tapa Sardar arguably also did, is holding a bunch of flowers as an offering (Figure 88).³⁸²

Returning now to Area 64–100, the slope below Stupa 65 was terraced, which caused the plinth of the stupa to be covered up (Figure 62). Stupa 64 (Figure 69), octagonal in shape and showing later features like Stupa 11, was built at the north-eastern corner of the *mahāstūpa*. At a short distance from it, the very peculiar Monument 69 was built, which delimited the area to the south (Figures 71a, b, 72). It reproduced the walls of a city, showing features such as the round bastions, which have been the object of a careful study by Kuwayama (1991; 2002: 173–99), who in addition to situating them in relation to the pottery with medallion-stamped decoration, plentiful at Tapa Sardar (Figures 89–97), listed numerous sites where they are documented, from Kapishi (Begram and Shotorak among others) to Logar (Gol Dara). All of this adds up to show that on a typological basis, Monument 69, together with the octagonal Stupa 64 and Monument 11 on the upper terrace, dates back to the 6th century.

Initially Monument 69, now destroyed, was shorter in length and did not reach Stupa 65, leaving room for circumambulation of the latter. The passage that had been left open was later closed by Addition 69a, which closed off the area to the west. The top part of Monument 69–69a was smooth and perfectly horizontal, but we do not know if anything else was superimposed on it. It is unlikely, in any case, that it formed the western limit of the original terrace, since downhill collapses of structures took place here. A real resumption of Monument 69–69a was Addition 71, by which a large part of the area of Stupa 64 was probably encircled. To the south it was closed by the imposing mass of Stupa 65.

Between Monument 69 and Stupa 64 an inscription was drawn right into the soil by means of a wooden tool (Figure 70). Published by Sandra Parlato (1979) and dated by her to the 3rd or 4th century, it has been analysed by other scholars (Filigenzi 2020: 187, n. 14), but its meaning has yet to be clarified. It is likely that it was written after Addition 71 was built, and a later date than the proposed one is to be suggested.³⁸³ To the left of Stupa 64, but at a certain distance from it, traces of a looted interfaced stupa (Negative interface 170, cf. Verardi and Paparatti 2005: 416) were visible.

³⁸² Kafir Kot, an illegally much-exploited site consisting of a town, a fortress, Buddhist monasteries and stupas, was the object of a necessarily brief visit in 2003. Besides a summary description provided by Verardi (2007: 239–48), a report was submitted to the National Geographic, which funded the survey. Some clay sculptures, recovered by the Afghan authorities, are kept in the Kabul Museum.

³⁸³ Filigenzi (2020), on the basis of a possible, though not certain reading of the key word of the inscription (*Ghama/Yama* according to Parlato 1979) and of the flower drawn on the northern part of the mud floor of the stupa, argues that the area of Stupa 64 was modelled after the Iranian garden of *Yima/Jamshid* adapted to a Bud-

Putting in sequence data and conjectures, a tentative phasing of Area 64–100 can be proposed:

1. Stupa 65 built on the rock and stucco image of ascetic TS1866/1867.
2. First layout of Chapel 100 and Chapel 101 with walls plastered in light green.
3. Walling up of Chapel 101.
4. Creation of Niche 76 in a saved part of Chapel 101 and first layer of paint on *deva* heads TS1870 and TS1871.
5. Niche 76: second layer of paint on *devas*.
6. Terracing operation and erection of Stupa 64 and, probably, of interfaced stupa.
7. Construction of Monument 69.
8. Addition 69a, precluding circumambulation of Stupa 65.
9. Resumption 71 of Monument 69–69a.
10. Inscription on the mud floor between Stupa 64 and Monument 69–69a.
11. Niche 76: image of Buddha and *devas* are covered with gold leaf.
12. Second layout of Chapel 100, the statues in which are covered with gold leaf.
13. Niche 76 walled up after depositing there stucco image TS1866/1867.

This sequence is observable in a very limited area of the site (considered in its excavated and unexcavated parts), but shows that major interventions and minor changes followed one another, all having—to different extents—chronological implications. The fact that circumambulation of an important monument such as Stupa 65 was precluded, for example, presupposes some major event. This warns us against the risk of narrowing the chronology of the pre-reconstruction period.

As regards the iconographic output, how long the debt to Hellenistic models persisted in Gandharan art is well known, from the examples in unbaked clay from Tapa Shotor, for example (cf. e.g. Tarzi 1976). The Gandharan clay fragments from the trial trench in Chapel 36 and from Area 64–100 (Figures 81–87) elude a precise dating on stylistic grounds, and only their stratigraphic context is of some help. Later Gandharan production included ‘colossal’ statues (Figures 73, 74), comparable to those familiar to us from Bamiyan to Xinjiang, but in this case, too, it is difficult to generalize.³⁸⁴ The images in Niche 76, earlier than the last, massive iconographic output, show that the use of mould decoration is not that late and that there was continuity over time. It will become ubiquitous in the figurative production of the late sanctuary (cf. Figure 116).³⁸⁵ The use of a stick is also documented, as shown by several fragments from Area 64–100 (Figures 81–83).

The collapse of the structures was caused by the big fire that occurred at the time of the taking of Zabulistan in 671. It is documented by entire blocks of collapsed masonry and by large fragments of burnt beams that were part of the roofing of the terrace (Figure 77). The fire caused the blackening and fragmentation of the clay images, which in many cases literally

dhist context. I am rather uncertain, however, about the possibility that an archetypal Iranian myth could re-emerge in a 6th-century Buddhist ambit. In Verardi and Paparatti (2004: 418), I hinted at the possibility that the area of Stupa 64 represented a paradise. In Gandharan art, the *Tuṣita* heaven often takes on the aspect of a town, with spectators from balconies, and later the *Sukhāvatī* will often be represented as a large city. H. Falk suggests ‘the light/lustre of meditation’ for the passage in question (Filigenzi 2020: 187, n. 14). Much remains to be investigated, however.

³⁸⁴ In Gandharan schist reliefs, the Buddha figure is normally much larger in size than the other ones. At Mathura, colossal images are inherent to Kushan art in relation to the Buddha as *cakravartin*, as shown by the head of a Buddha of the *uṣṇīṣin* type, 57cm high, from the Chaubara mounds, kept in the Government Museum and first described by Growse (1883: 114; I refer the reader to Verardi 2020 for a discussion thereof).

³⁸⁵ See Taddei and Verardi (1978: esp. 58–82) for an idea of the extraordinary number of moulds used for creating images.

burst. It also affected the roof made of wooden beams that protected the terrace of Stupa 64 and Chapel 100.³⁸⁶

The evidence from the early period of the sanctuary in the area of Stupa 81 (Figure 98) is much more limited, because with a few, though important, exceptions, the structures were poorly preserved and often interfaced, and because of the very limited number of finds. Stupa 81, brought to light in 1961, was built on the rock, thus probably belonging to the earliest layout of the Gandharan sanctuary. Excavations in the area were resumed only in 1975 and were continued during the following season, after which all activity ceased.³⁸⁷

Semicircular stone wall 109, poorly preserved, testifies to the existence of an early apsidal structure that was later reshaped. The reconstruction works led to the creation of Room 87, which housed a star-shaped altar of unbaked clay reserved for the *homa* ritual, and that of the adjoining Room 89, a sacristy, both datable to the late Gandharan period (Taddei 1976: 600). The remains of a few stone walls were also brought to light, one of which, Wall 88, more than 10m long and almost completely stripped of the stone it was made of, was founded on the rock, thereby also testifying that the terrace had probably been occupied since the sanctuary was first established.

Medallion-stamped potsherds are documented in the area (Figures 89–90), whereas no trace of activity datable to the late period was observed. This shows that this part of the *tapa* was also abandoned after the destruction of the late Gandharan sanctuary.

The Late Sanctuary

The extraordinary investment in a large site in ruins is to be emphasized. The major decision taken was to leave to their fate the areas considered unrecoverable, such as that of 64–100, to occupy the highest part of the *tapa* after freeing it from the unrestorable Gandharan debris and to erect an entirely new sanctuary, preserving only the *mahāstūpa* and the minor schist stupas around it, to which thrones and other stupas made of unbaked bricks and clay were added (Taddei and Verardi 1985). On the basis of what was brought to light—no small amount of it documented by iconographies as complex as they are only partially preserved—three stages seem to be identifiable within a programme that remained unitary and coherent for several decades.

The compositional and iconographic programmes observable in chapels 17 and 37 (for a detailed presentation of which we refer the reader to Taddei and Verardi 1978) look familiar to us. A large image of the Buddha, or perhaps Maitreya, was seated on the throne on the back wall of Vihara 17, whose side walls were decorated with tiers of niches, each housing a Buddha, with the spaces between the niches housing *kiṃnaras* and *devas* (Figures 105, 106). The composition, albeit with understandable differences, recalls Buddhist sites in western Central Asia, from Bamiyan—whose proximity to Tapa Sardar was underlined by Taddei as early as his report of 1968 (p. 120)—to Ajina Tepe in Tajikistan (Litvinskij and Zejmal' 1971), where a chapel with the *Parinirvāṇa* Buddha was unearthed, similar to that at Tapa Sardar in Chapel 63, also in terms of its planimetric position. In the very rich decoration of Vihara 17 we note, as mentioned, a very abundant use of moulds, which implies a well-organized and fast-working chain. An example of their use can be seen on the hair of Durga in the adjacent Vihara 23 (Figure 116).

As for Chapel 37, the main image, a Buddha, sat on a large lotus flower and was flanked by two Bodhisattvas standing on smaller lotuses supported by two *nāgas* (Figure 108). Besides Gandharan precedents, it finds parallels in the post-Gupta art of the western Deccan, from Karle to

³⁸⁶ In the 1970s, at least as regards historical archaeology, the use of radiocarbon dating was still rare. In our case, the results of such analyses would have been rewarding because of the number and quality of the available samples. The same applies to the burnt wooden beams, found in abundance, pertaining to the canopies that in the last phase of the sanctuary ran along the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* of the Upper Terrace to protect access to the viharas (Figures 117, 118).

³⁸⁷ M. Taddei and the present writer were in Ghazni again in the following autumn, busy with the inventory, the photographic documentation of the finds and the maintenance of the excavation site.

Kanheri and Aurangabad, where a sculpted panel in Cave 2 is particularly indicative (Brancaccio 2001: 255, fig. 26; cf. also Verardi and Paparatti 2005: 436–38).³⁸⁸

What is most striking in the decoration of these chapels is the physiognomic variance, increasingly evident, not only from Gandharan models, but from the post-Gupta Indian production as well: the presence of sinicizing images ranges from examples still preserving post-Gupta features such as the hair locks, moulded in our case, of TS1500 (Figure 107) to images strictly depending on Tang art (Figures 109–113). The images seated on the thrones which alternated with the *Avatāra Stūpas* along the processional path are entirely lost but for a few fragments, but they conformed to Tang patterns, too (Figure 110). On the interrelationships between Chinese art, Central Asia and India in the 7th and 8th centuries, especially for the years 680–720, the reader is referred to Rhie (1988). The sinicization process was a consequence of the expansionist policy of Tang China and the policy pursued by Wu Zeduan in particular, who in 692 re-established the Four Garrisons, replacing Qarashahr with Suiye/Aq Beshim in present-day Kyrgyzstan, where Chinese monks ran the smaller of the two Buddhist temples (Forte 1994: 54). Proceeding southward, a similar process of sinicization can be observed at Ajina Tepe, for which the Bodhisattva head from Corridor XXVII is to be cited (Litvinskij and Zejmal' 1971: pls. 46–47).

Kuwayama (2002: esp. 115–16) was able to establish that as many as 24 missions were sent to the Tang Court from Kapishi/Jibin (Kabul) in the 7th century and until the year 758, when the battle of Talas had already taken place. Missions from Zabul were sent to Chang'an in 710, 720 and 753. Judging from the artistic output at Tapa Sardar, the interaction with the Tang became stronger and stronger, as attested to by the latest clay production at the site. The presence of Chinese monks can be taken as certain, since the latest choroplastic production cannot be explained in any other way.³⁸⁹

The economic commitment to rebuild the sanctuary was no small feat, and it is worth asking who the patrons of such a project could be. The Korean monk Huichao, who in the year 726 visited Jibin and Zabul, reports that the territories south of the Hindu Kush were ruled by Turks other than those who were ruling in the north (Kuwayama 2002: 116–17). Inaba (2004: 106–08) has argued that in the first half of the 7th century, the Turks, probably to be identified with the Khalaj, were settled on the southern slopes of the Hindu Kush and ruled the territory corresponding to Xuanzang's Fulishisatagna (and later also Jibin/Kabul). Xuanzang had pointed to them as staunch supporters of Buddhism (Beal 1884, 2: 285).

A Bactrian rock inscription near Sang-i Masha in Jaghuri dated 757 CE, recently made known by Sims-Williams (2020/21), reports that Frum Kesar had defeated the Indians, arguably the Hindu Shahis, who had moved war. Frum Kesar was the eldest grandson of Tegin, whose reign had begun not later than the year 702/03 (Sims-Williams 2020/21: 67) and who was succeeded by Frum Kesar the elder, who ruled until the year 745. In turn, he was succeeded by his son, known as Bofuzhun/Bozhun by the Chinese sources, still ruling in 757 (Sims-Williams 2020/21: 68). Thus, we have the names of the rulers to whom the reconstruction of Tapa Sardar was probably due, except for the period following the destruction of the Gandharan sanctuary in 671 CE and the accession to the throne of Tegin. As regards the end of the sanctuary, the date cannot be much later than the year 757. The Tang, whose imprint on the renovation works on the Upper Terrace, left unfinished, had been so strong, had abandoned their protectorates in the whole territory.

Next to Vihara 17, to the west, opened Vihara 23, largely collapsed downhill (Figure 114). While on the back wall only the throne survived of the main image, certainly a Buddha, some remains of the images added on the side walls were still extant. The former, on the left wall, was an image of the Bejewelled Buddha, and the latter, on the right, that of *Durgā Māhiṣamardīnī*

³⁸⁸ According to Brancaccio (2011: 133), the Buddha seated on the lotus throne in Cave 2 is preaching from the *Gṛdhrakūṭa*.

³⁸⁹ The wooden head of Chinese manufacture from Cave G at Bamiyan (Hackin and Carl 1933: fig. 82; Klimburg-Salter 1989: 142) was an import, serving as a model to be used to set up local production.

(Figures 115, 116). It is not difficult to understand the meaning of these apparently conflicting iconographies if we consider the transition between the Turk Shahis and the Hindu Shahis in today's eastern Afghanistan and north-western Pakistan that was then underway, the latter already present for a long time east of Zabul. The region of Ghazni had never been controlled by them, but the ongoing process must have been clear to everyone once the Chinese presence was gone. The Bejewelled Buddha is none other than the Buddha in his guise of *cakravartin*, the only and true ruler of the world, before whom the hostile, armed Brahmanical deities could not but surrender (Verardi 2018: 401–03).³⁹⁰ The issue is at the core of the *Vajrayāna*, and became central in the Indian world starting from the 8th century for a long time to come.

The excavation of the inner chapels located behind those facing the *pradakṣiṇāpatha*, i.e. the briefly described viharas 17, 23 and 37, could not be completed, and they (nos 36, 41, 52, 75 in Figure 49) could not be studied in detail. The planimetric and decorative arrangement of the larger of them, by the presence of corner images and, in the case of chapels 41 and 75, by stupas in the centre, is noteworthy. The stupa in Chapel 41 (Figure 103) was of the type of the Descent and contained a manuscript of which some fragments were preserved.³⁹¹ The stupa in Chapel 75 (Figure 104) is of no less interest. As for Chapel 52, it preserved a large fragment of a painting (TS1800), which was restored and moved to the storehouse.

The sanctuary was abandoned, possibly following a military assault that caused a fire which destroyed the wooden canopy protecting the processional path on the Upper Terrace (Figures 117, 118) and caused the firing of a number of clay sculptures (cf. e.g. TS1850, Figure 113). It is probable that Zabul was attacked by Ibrāhīm b. Jibrīl before he reached Kabul in 795, but it is not probable that the sanctuary was still officiated by that time. Usually, Buddhist shrines were of no interest whatsoever for the conquerors and were simply left to their fate. The case of Tapa Sardar may have been different due to its dominant position over the city of Ghazni and over the *dasht*, which allowed a long-range view of the road to Kandahar and towards the slopes of the Hindu Kush. The site was, and is to these days, an unmissable military post.

Regarding the Buddhist caves of Qarabagh and Jaghuri, forming a large, impressive monastic settlement that was never completed (Figures 119–126), in a previous work (Verardi and Paparatti 2004) I put forward the hypothesis that work on constructing them began after the desertion of Tapa Sardar. However, the rock inscription from 757 CE implies the presence of the Turk Shahis in that part of the territory of Ghazni from at least the early years of the 8th century. Thus, the caves may well be contemporary to Tapa Sardar's late period and left unfinished, just as the reconstruction of the sanctuary was not completed.

The Coins

The coins from Tapa Sardar were described in the inventory of the finds by M. Taddei, who took care to entrust the study to a specialist in the coinage of the Indo-Iranian region. Only now, however, can we rely on a detailed, comprehensive study and be more precise regarding both the early sanctuary and its late life.

In its original layout the sanctuary may date back to the 2nd century, and it is reasonable to think that the Kushans controlled it throughout the 3rd century, the Kushan tradition then lingering for centuries. It remains difficult to identify the patrons who later on, making the Kushan tradition their own, kept the sanctuary alive.

³⁹⁰ Indeed, it was not easy to come to such an obvious conclusion (cf. e.g. Taddei 1973: 211–12; Verardi and Paparatti 2004: 102).

³⁹¹ The fragments of manuscript were photographed as carefully as possible in 2003 by Eugenio Monti, and the photographic documentation was handed over to Francesco Sferra for study. Other fragments of manuscripts had been yielded by the excavation, as per the inventory.

Soter Megas and Vima Kadphises

We have a single specimen each of Soter Megas and Vima Kadphises. The former, TS430 (no. 1), was found at the level of the base of Stupa 11, that is, in immediate proximity to the podium of the *mahāstūpa*. Stupa 11 was plastered anew when the sanctuary was rebuilt, and it can be surmised that the coin came up from the original surface level of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* during the late reconstruction works (Figures 49, 58, 101). Ghazni, being the natural access to the region of the Dasht-i Nawur, where a trilingual inscription ascribed to Vima Taktu was discovered (Fussman 1974; Bivar 1976), could not but have been part of the Kushan territories. The early Kushans must have had a base in Ghazni, even if this does not mean that they had an interest in promoting Buddhism in the region.

The coin of Vima Kadphises, TS428 (no. 3), was found on the stairway of the *mahāstūpa*, arguably the reconstructed one, contemporary with the construction of Stupa 20 (Verardi and Paparatti 2005: 429). The works to rebuild the stairway and other works whose nature escapes us but are testified to by the presence of two columns in front of the *māhastūpa* (Taddei 1968: 115; Verardi and Paparatti 2005: 420–21) may suggest that it was during these works that the coin resurfaced (Figure 49).

Kanishka I

Of the seven coins of Kanishka I, three are unstratified (TS440, no. 6; TS1017, no. 14; TS1320, no. 9) and provide limited information. Coins TS589 (no. 5), TS592 (no. 7) and TS593 (no. 8) come from the trial trench MLS, Level 2, made between the *mahāstūpa* and Vihara 17 on the Upper Terrace (Figure 49). Level 2 was defined as a thick layer formed by the collapse of the mud-brick structures of the late sanctuary, which in part also affected the underlying Level 3, formed by the collapses of the *mahāstūpa* (Taddei 1968: 111). TS1623 (no. 13) comes from the northern part of Area 64–100 (that is, from near Chapel 100), whose remains lay just below surface level. If this is the stratigraphic situation, the information provided by these coins regarding the chronology of the sanctuary is limited.

That said, it is not easy to ignore the pot inscription datable to the 4th–5th century mentioning the vihara of the *Mahārāja Kani(ś)ka* (above, note 376). It is not very likely that it refers to Kanishka II, who ruled in the 3rd century, because only an unstratified coin of his comes from the site and because the coins of his predecessors Huvishka and Vasudeva I are too numerous. When Kanishka II ruled, the sanctuary was already in existence.³⁹² Naturally the inscription may have been written on the pot on the basis of a spurious and propagandistic tradition.

Huvishka

We have 11 coins of Huvishka and four Huvishka types. Of the former, TS587 (no. 27), TS588 (no. 19) and TS2035 (no. 26) are unstratified, TS442 (no. 22) comes from Trench D2(a) [Level] I in the Area of Stupa 81, as documented by a sketch plan drawn by S. Puglisi (Figure 99). The Roman numeral indicates the top layer of the two identified in the excavation (in a part of this area the natural soil is near to the surface layer). From the same area comes TS1940 (no. 25), a surface find.

TS1032 (no. 18) was found in the upper debris of the late sanctuary. TS1012 (no. 16) comes from Passage 34 behind Vihara 37 and near Staircase 35 (Figure 49), and TS 2031 (no. 21) in the aforementioned thick Layer 2 from an only partially excavated area of the late sanctuary south of Chapel 36.

From Area 64–100 we have TS1744 (no. 24), which lay on the floor of the small, almost completely wiped-out Room 70 (Figure 60), and TS1594 (no. 20) was found ‘below 66’, that is, on the terrace of Stupa 64.

³⁹² Regarding Soter Megas, Vima Kadphises and Kanishka I, the coins purchased in the Ghazni bazaar, one each of Soter Megas and Vima (no. 4) and three of Kanishka (nos 10–12), are of some interest in that they too attest to the presence of the Kushans in the region. They were inventoried in a separate inventory book.

As for TS1624 (no. 28), it was recovered north of Stupa 11, apparently in the collapsed material of the *mahāstūpa*. When the place where it was found is given as being near to or at a short distance from Stupa 11 in the inventory, more precise information can sometimes be gleaned.

Of the Huvishka imitations, TS1595 (no. 32) was found in Trench 64–100. The other three coins are unstratified (nos 29–31).

Vasudeva I

These are 24 in number, of which one is a surface find (TS1873, no. 35) and three others are inventoried as unstratified (TS429, no. 34; TS435, no. 40; TS1229, no. 57).

TS1033 (no. 47), TS1038 (no. 42) and TS1257 (no. 51) come from the debris of the late sanctuary (south of Door 47, in the upper debris of Vihara 36, and in the debris of the eastern wall of Chapel 50, which opened onto the northern part of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha*; cf. Figure 49).

Four coins were retrieved from better-defined finding places within the late sanctuary. TS1631 (no. 56) comes from the north-eastern corner of the *mahāstūpa*, that is, near or not far from Stupa 11, from where, as seen above, Huvishka's coin TS1624 (no. 28) was also found. TS2079 (no. 53) lay on the floor in front of Pedestal 85, TS1626 (no. 49) just nearby 'below [Wall] 30' (behind Vihara 17), and TS2022 (no. 55) came from Chapel 52, to the west of Chapel 36.

Coins TS1592 (no. 52) and TS2044 (no. 50) come from Area 64–100. The former was found near Stupa 65—not, however, in the trench that brought to light its plinth (Figure 62), therefore being related to the later terracing made to create the floor on which Stupa 64 was built; the latter is a surface find from below Chapel 100.

TS1040 (no. 45) and TS1044 (no. 54) come from the trial-trench in Chapel 36, which was erected, as mentioned, on a massive fill made to terrace the area where some of the inner chapels of the new sanctuary were built. The fill buried the stretch of an early path paved with large slabs of schist (Figure 80).

As for TS441 (no. 58), it was found in the above-mentioned Trench D2(a) [Level] II in the Area of Stupa 81.

Vasudeva Imitations

They are 12 in number. TS1745 (no. 68) was found on the floor of the poorly preserved Room 70 to the south of Chapel 100 and Niche 76 in Area 64–100, from where a coin of Huvishka was also recovered (TS1744, no. 24). TS1041 (no. 61) and TS1319 (no. 62) come from the thick fill under Chapel 36. The find-spot would link these coins to the late Gandharan sanctuary, but it is more probable that they ended up in the fillings made for terracing the area of Stupa 64 and, later on, that of the late sanctuary in the Upper Terrace.

Four coins come from the trenches opened in the southern stretch of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* in the Upper Terrace recorded as MLN (TS931, no. 63), MLR (TS591, no. 65), MLS in front of Vihara 17 (TS590, no. 66) and MLX (TS849, no. 67). The aim of these trenches was to investigate the state of the processional path in relation to the construction of the *mahāstūpa*.

Three coins come from strata of the late sanctuary: TS436 (no. 60) at the level of the base of Stupa 11, from where TS1596 (no. 59) also comes. TS1170 (no. 70) was found at the north-western corner of the *mahāstūpa* area, while TS1004 (no. 69) was yielded by an upper layer behind Vihara 23.

Finally, TS2080 (no. 64) was recovered near the kiln in the east-west trench across the *tapa* (Figure 48).

Kanishka II and Later Imitations

Only one coin, TS432 (no. 71), is ascribable to Kanishka II, and it is unstratified. Of the other eight coins, whose attribution is uncertain and may be later imitations, TS1625 (no. 73) is the most significant, as it was found on the flooring of Stupa 64 (Figures 60, 69). TS1630 (no. 78) was likewise recovered from Area 64–100, but from an undefined layer to the south of Monument 69.

TS1622 (no. 74) comes from the lower layer of the late sanctuary in the north-eastern corner of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha*, in the vicinity of Stupa 11. This also applies to TS1200 (no. 79), recovered from an upper layer in the same area. Coin TS2074 (no. 72) was found in the area of Stupa 81.

The other coins are either unstratified (TS434, no. 75) or found in layers of the late sanctuary (TS1244, no. 77; TS2051, no. 76).

Uncertain Late Kushan Coins or Imitations

TS1593 (no. 82) and TS1597 (no. 80) come from Area 64–100, the former from a find-spot related to Chapel 100. The other two, TS1235 (no. 81) and TS2039 (no. 83), come from the area of the inner chapels of the late sanctuary.

Shapur II, Kushanshahs, Alkhan-Nezak

The Kushano-Sasanian coin TS1981 (no. 86) was found in the upper debris of the late sanctuary in the area of Room 36, same as the coin TS1042 of Shapur II (no. 84). The other coin of Shapur II (TS2034, no. 85) is unstratified. The only coin of the Alkhan-Nezak (TS586, no. 87) is also unstratified.

Turk Shahis

The presence of the Turk Shahis is attested to by seven coins, one of which, TS1982 (no. 88), is a surface find, while TS433 (no. 92) was inventoried with a contradictory indication regarding its find-spot.³⁹³

TS1234 (no. 95), a copper coin of Tegin Khurasan Shah, is of great interest, because it was found in a layer immediately antedating the erection of the late sanctuary, when what had remained of the destroyed late Gandharan chapels was used for terracing the area selected for the construction of the new viharas.³⁹⁴ It could therefore testify to the engagement of the Turk Shahis in the reconstruction of the sanctuary.

TS1252 (no. 90), from the north-western corner of the Upper Terrace, comes from a layer formed by the collapses of the structures of the late sanctuary, which includes burned materials (Figures 117, 118). The other coins were recovered, as expected, from layers of the sanctuary's last period. TS1169 (no. 89) comes from Chapel 49, while Pangul's coin (TS1591, no. 91) was found in Chapel 63, which harboured the *Parinirvāṇa* Buddha.

Five out of the six earliest coins come from the Upper Terrace and are of the early Kushan kings: a coin of Soter Megas (TS430, no. 1), one of Vima Kadphises (TS428, no. 3) and three of Kanishka I (TS589, no. 5; TS592, no. 7; TS593, no. 8). The latter, as mentioned, were found in the trenches made in the southern part of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* in order to investigate the deposit below the walking level of the late period. The other coin of Kanishka I, TS1623 (no. 13), is a surface find from Area 64–100. As said above, two of the coins from this area are of Huvishka, TS1594 (no. 20) and TS1744 (no. 24), and a third is a Huvishka imitation (TS1595, no. 32). TS1592 (no. 52) and TS2044 (no. 50) are of Vasudeva I, whose two other coins, TS1040 (no. 45) and TS1044 (no. 54), come from the fill under Chapel 36.

Two later imitations of the coins of Kanishka II come from Area 64–100: TS1625 (no. 73) with a good provenance, namely the floor of Stupa 64 (which, however, is later than Kanishka II's reign), and TS1630 (no. 78) from near Monument 69. From Room 70 comes a Vasudeva imitation (TS1745, no. 68), while of the two uncertain late Kushan coins or imitations, TS1593 (no. 82) is apparently related to Chapel 100, arguably to the time of its reconstruction.

³⁹³ According to the inventory, the find-spot is 'Northern side of the Great Stupa, behind the big statue', but the 'big statue' can only be that of Vihara 17 on the southern side of the *mahāstūpa*.

³⁹⁴ According to the inventory book, the coin comes from Layer 5, below Pedestal 18, described as a fill containing Gandharan material (Taddei and Verardi 1985b: 274).

Area 64–100 had a long life, and the presence of post-Kushan coins is significant, because they attest to the frequentation of the sanctuary when, in an age whose characteristics largely elude us, important modifications and reconstruction works took place, again raising the question of patronage. In the area of Stupa 81 we have a coin of Huvishka and one of Vasudeva I. The former, TS442 (no. 22), was probably found below surface level, while the latter, TS441 (no. 58), is from a lower layer, just above the natural soil.

The coins from the area of Stupa 11 at the north-eastern corner of the *mahāstūpa* provide some additional information. We have a coin of Huvishka (TS1624, no. 28), one of Vasudeva I (TS1631, no. 56) and two later imitations of Kanishka II (TS1200, no. 79 and TS1622, no. 74). The indication of their find-spots varies in the inventory, but it is clear that they come from one and the same area, situated between the *māhastūpa* and the Chapel of the *Parinirvāṇa* Buddha (no. 63 in Figure 49). The coins are presumably related to the chapel of the Kushan or post-Kushan period obliterated by the construction of the *parinirvāṇa* Chapel (Figure 78) or to a similar chapel nearby. The three coins of Kanishka I from the opposite part of the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* (TS589, no. 5; TS592, no. 7; TS593, no. 8) add to this evidence.

While the presence of Kushan and post-Kushan coins on the Upper Terrace may be significant, Area 64–100 has yielded only one coin of Kanishka I (no. 13) from the surface, evidence too uncertain to suggest any hypothesis regarding Kushan involvement in that part of the sanctuary, were it not for the presence of monumental Stupa 65 (Figures 61–64). The latter has been the object of little attention in the brief excavation reports presented after the forced interruption of the works in 1976, but it is of crucial importance in order to evaluate the site's earliest facet.

Although the coins of Kanishka I found near the *mahāstūpa* and the inscription mentioning the *vihāra* of *Kanika mahārāja* may suggest that the foundation of the sanctuary was due to Kanishka I, drawing ultimate conclusions is difficult. On the one hand, the fact that the Buddhist establishment at Tapa Shotor, situated in as central a region as Nagarahara, dates to the end of Huvishka's reign or the beginning of the reign of Vasudeva I (Vanleene n.d.), advises caution; on the other, the inscription of the Dasht-i Nawur and the presence, just north of the Hindu Kush, of such a site as Surkh Kotal, with all the implications of the case, would make the hypothesis credible, if not true.

If there are reasons to believe that the Great Kushans were involved in the foundation and growth of the sanctuary, it is more difficult to establish who, later in Zabul, were the rulers engaged in the preservation of what existed and in financing on a large scale its enlargement and renewal. Later imitations of Kanishka II and Vasudeva imitations from layers of the late Gandharan sanctuary could open a window on the patronage if we could put a name to the issuers of the coins. Equally uncertain is the identification of the rulers acting locally at the time of Shapur II and of the involvement of the Kushanshahs, of which only one coin (no. 86) was yielded by the site.

The rule of the Alkhan-Nezak corresponds to the period that saw the vigorous revival of the life of the sanctuary attested to by the late Gandharan production. Their coinage, however, is documented only by a single sample. Fragments of a pot stamped with medallions showing the bust of a princely figure facing right (TS 446, TS 447; Figures 89, 90) yielded by the lower layer of the trench made near Stupa 81 (Figure 99) may add to the existing, scant evidence. The medallion-stamped pottery, according to the chronology proposed by Kuwayama (2002: 173–74), would date to the 6th century.

Regarding the coins of the Turk Shahis, it is worth noting that one of them, as already noted, comes from the fill made for the terracing operations carried out to build the late viharas, whose construction is due to them (no. 95). No coin of the Turk Shahis was found dating to after the mid-8th century, which further suggests that the reconstruction of the sanctuary was due to their patronage. There are no coins later than theirs on the site. The failure to complete the series of stupas and thrones in unbaked bricks and clay along the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* (north side, in particular) is an indication, after the rapid, one might say frantic, effort made to erect the new sanctuary, of a sudden stop.



Figure 46. Tapa Sardar before excavations



Figure 47. Tapa Sardar after the excavation campaign of 1976

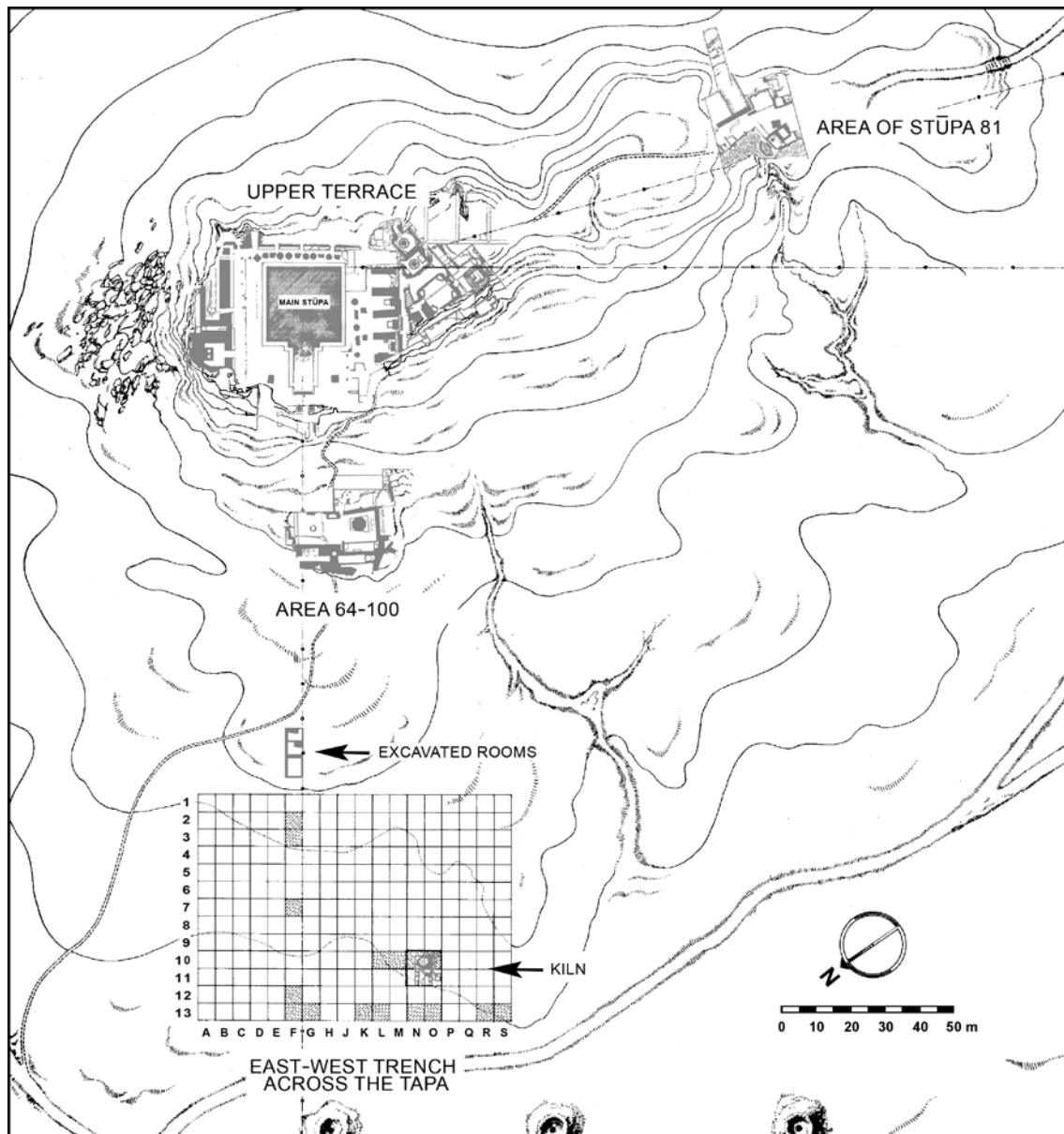


Figure 48. General plan of the excavations

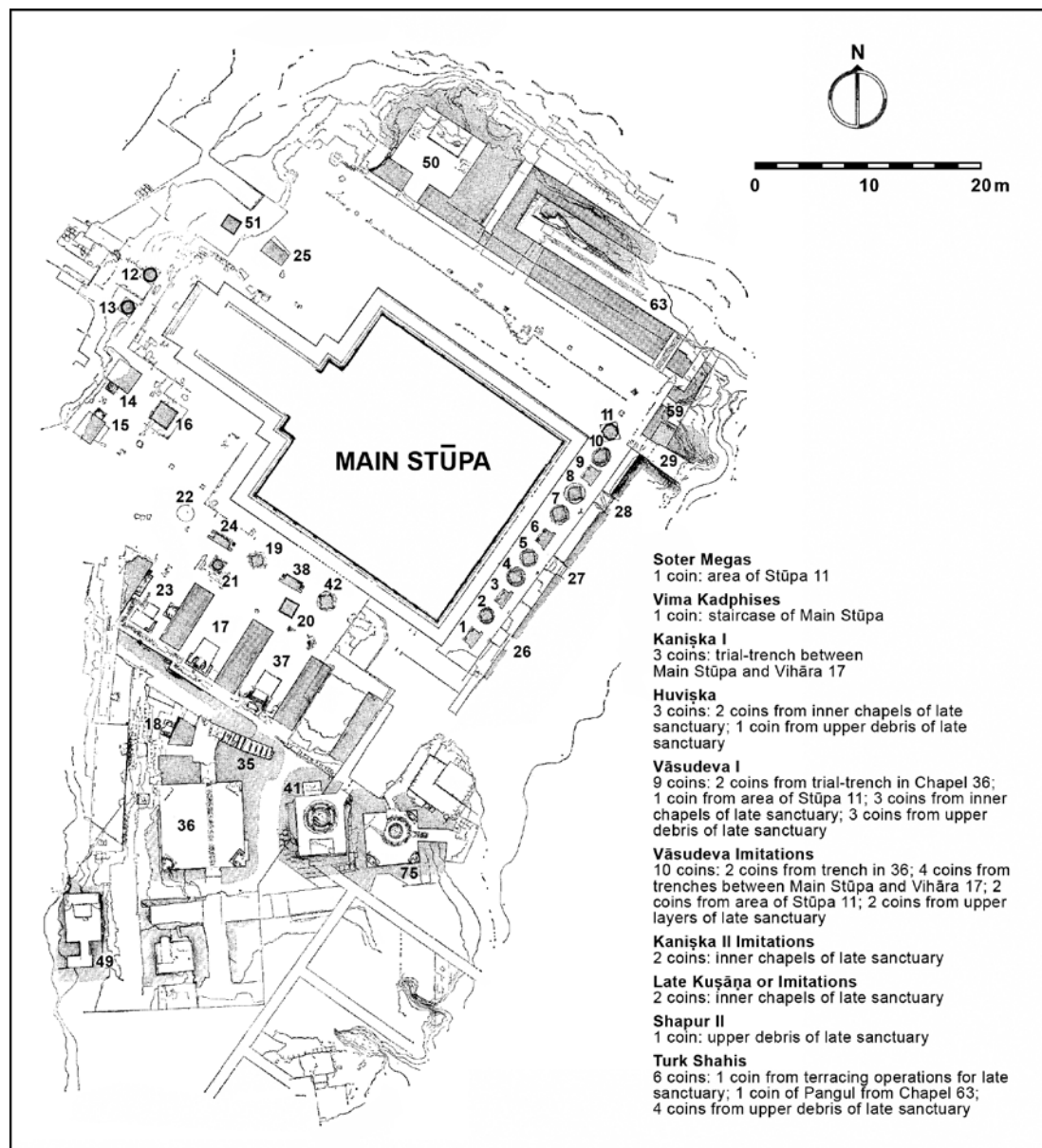


Figure 49. Plan of the Upper Terrace and positioning of the coins found

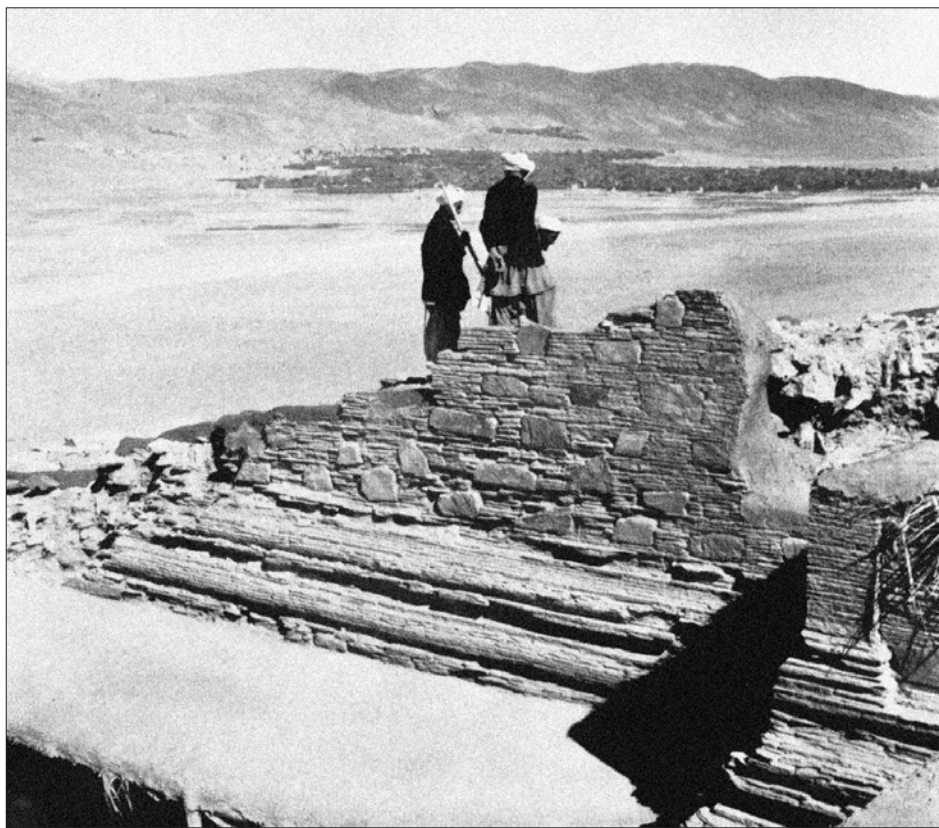


Figure 50. Main Stupa. Western side of the stairway. Rawza oasis in the background (1968)



Figure 51. Main Stupa. Detail of the western side



Figure 52. Main Stupa. Detail of the western side showing the lower podium

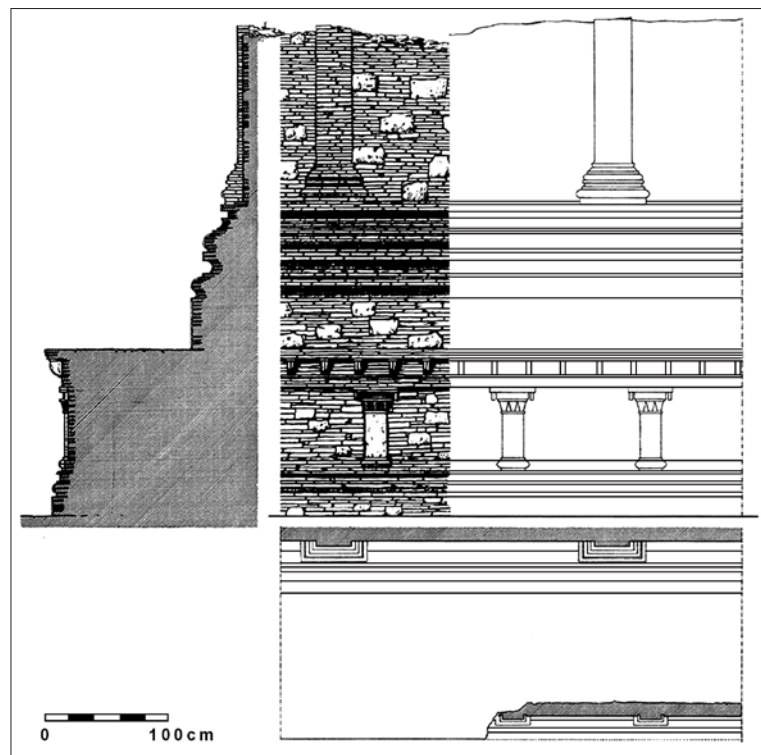
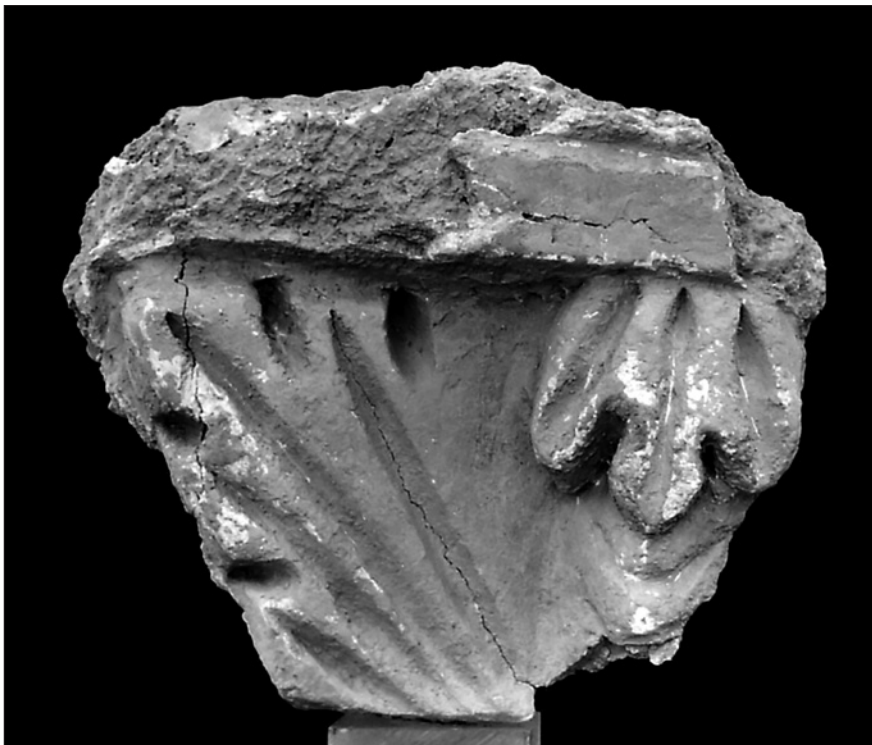
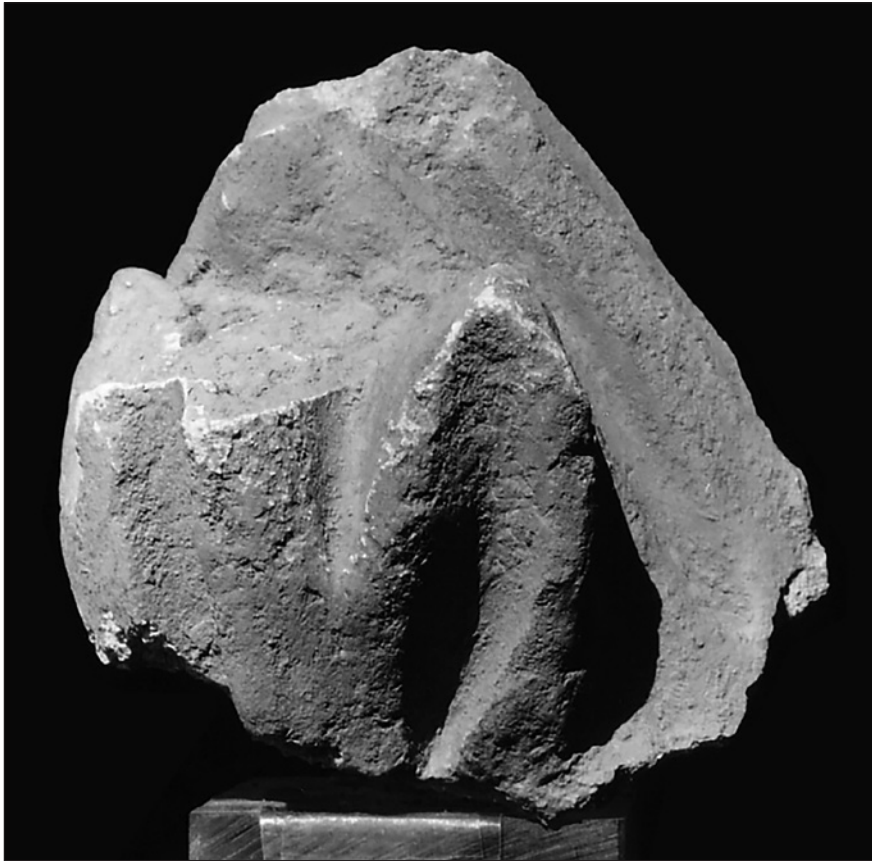


Figure 53. Main Stupa. Detail of the western side showing the lower podium



Figures 54a, b. Main Stupa. Fragments of stucco decoration TS818 (max. 0.05m) and TS315 (0.123 × 0.145m)



Figure 55. Fragments of partly preserved jar TS1510 bearing the inscription
Kanika mahārāja vihāra in Brahmi script

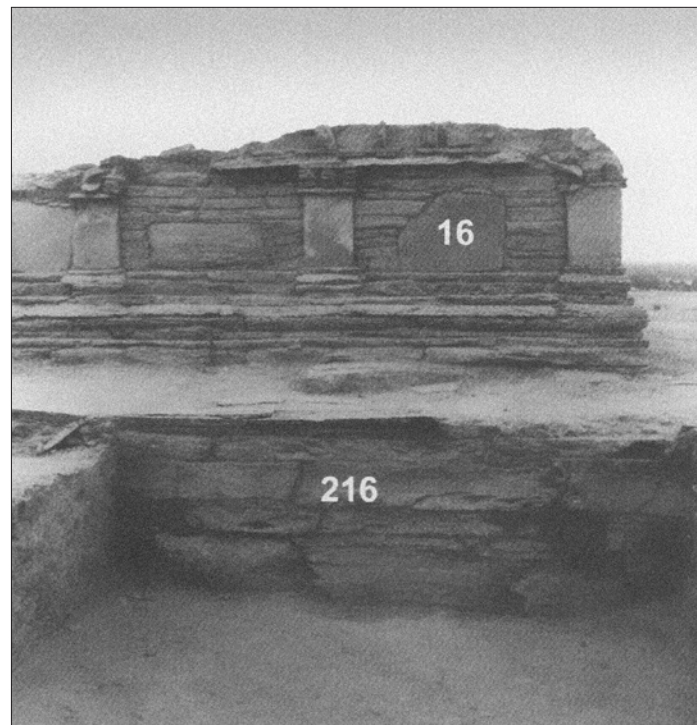


Figure 56. Stupa 16 built on the previous unfinished Structure 216



Figure 57. Stupa 21 built on an earlier stupa

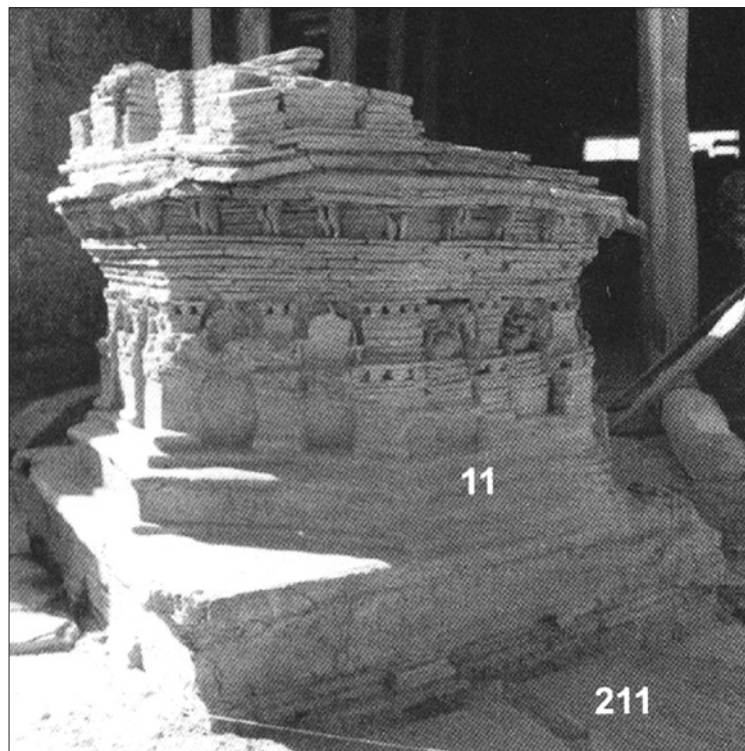


Figure 58. Late Gandharan Stupa 11 built on a podium (?) and Pavement 211

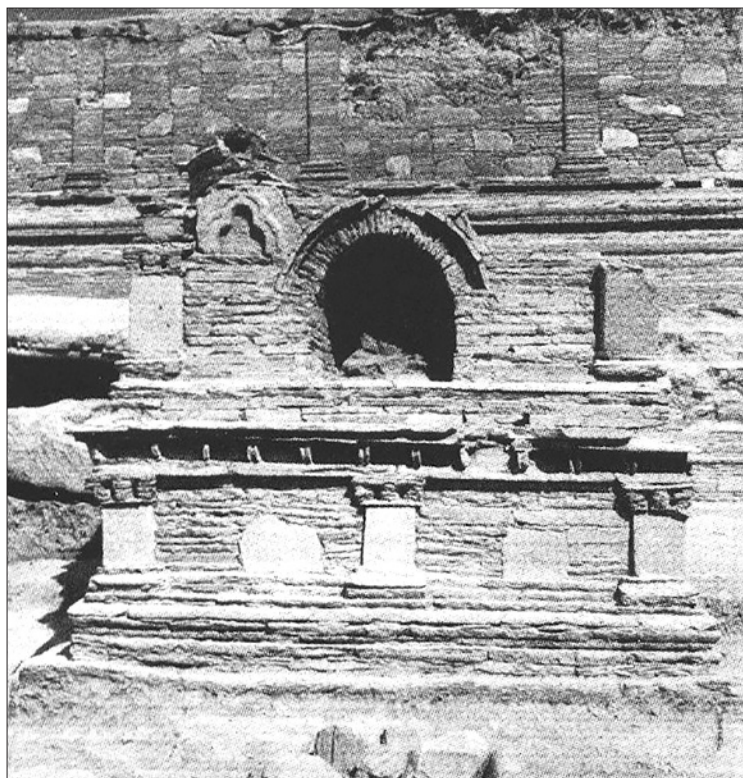


Figure 59. Late Gandharan Stupa 20

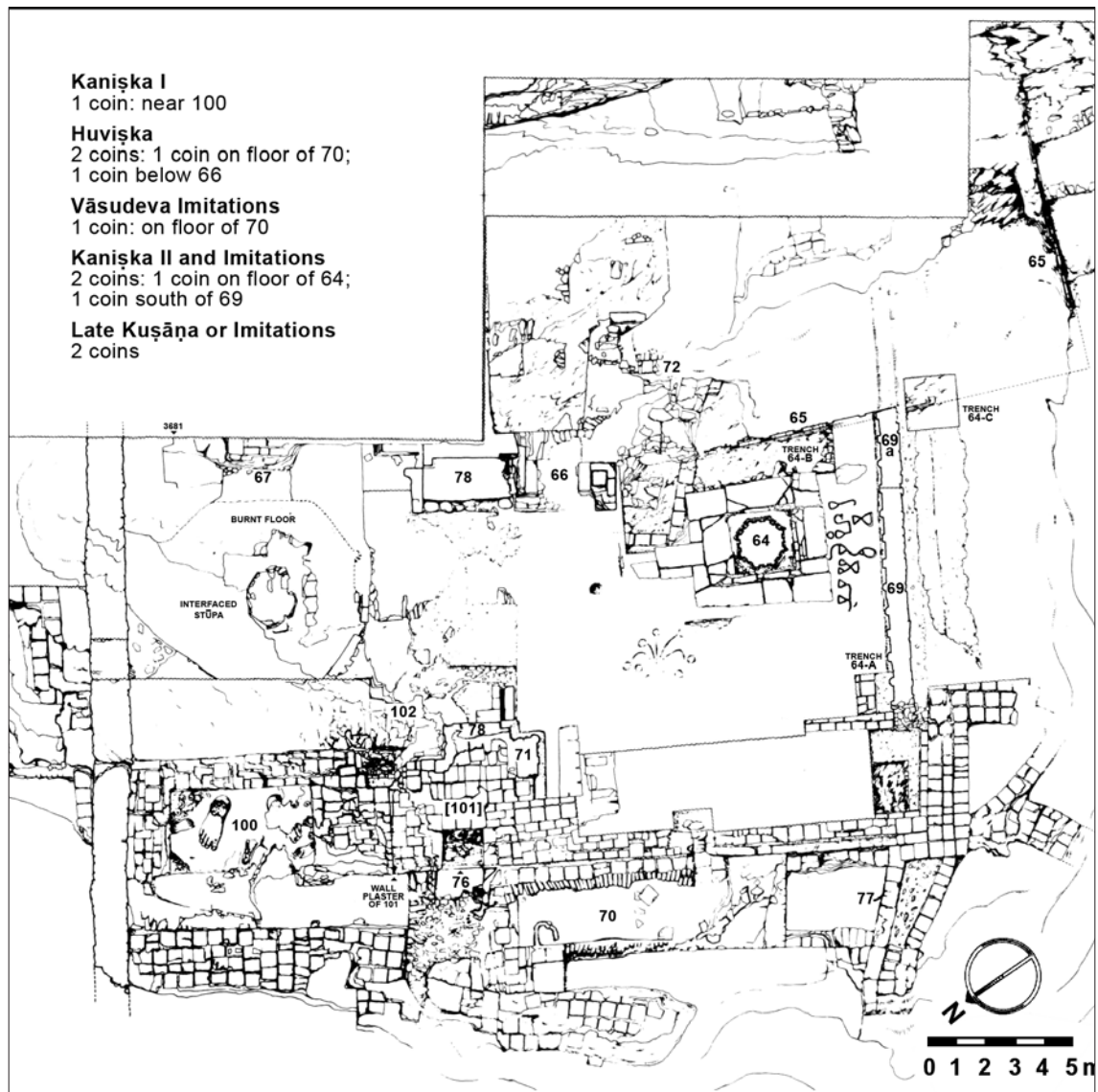


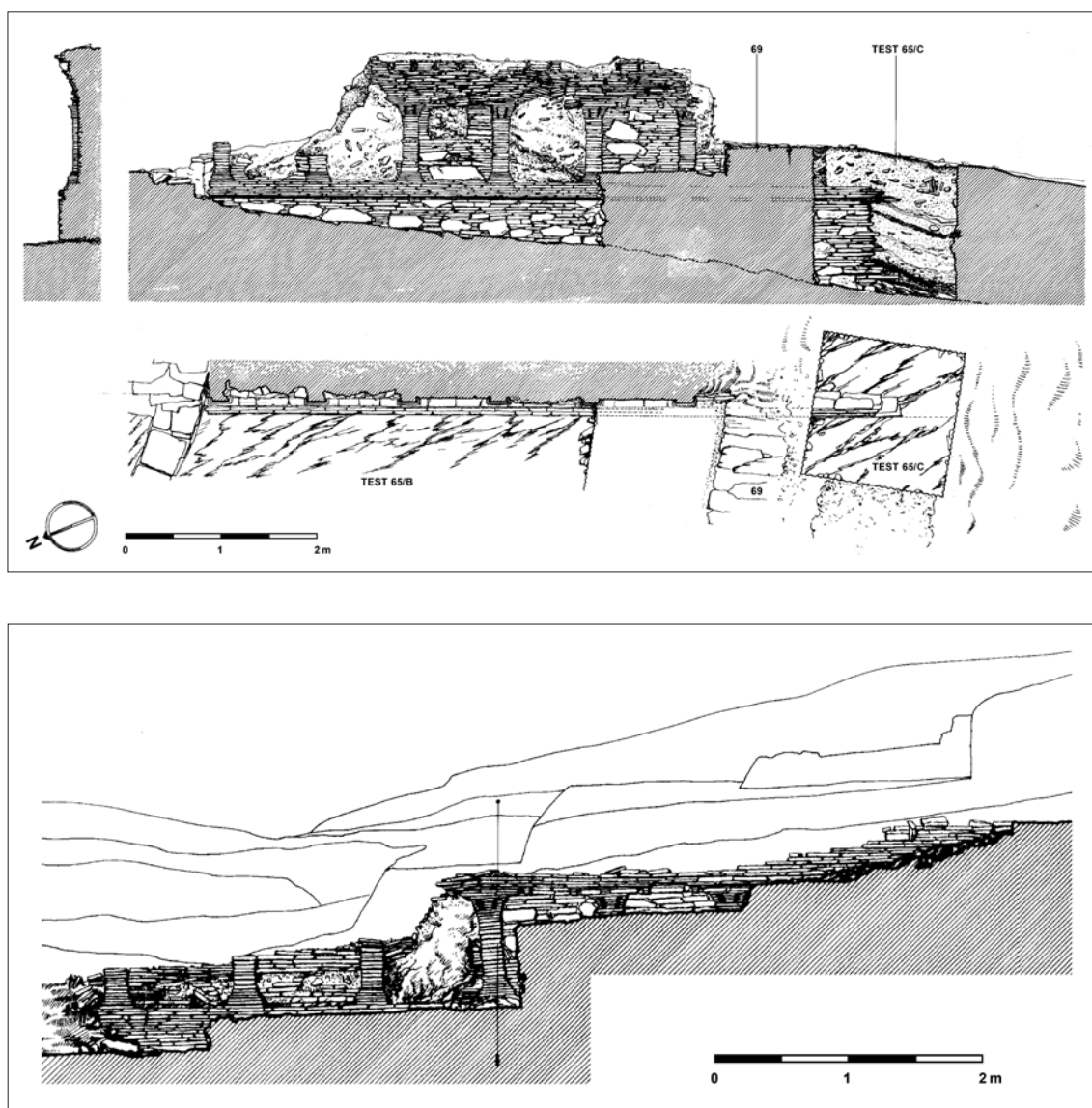
Figure 60. Plan of Area 64–100 below the Upper Terrace



Figure 61. Stupa 65 built on the rock



Figure 62. Subfloor for a later paving in front of Stupa 65



Figures 63, 64. Stupa 65, elevations



Figures 65, 66. Niche 76 with clay seated Buddha and salvaged stucco statuette of ascetic TS1866 (ht. 0.34m) and TS1867 (head, ht. 0.082m)



Figure 67. Head of *deva* TS1870 (ht. 0.177m)



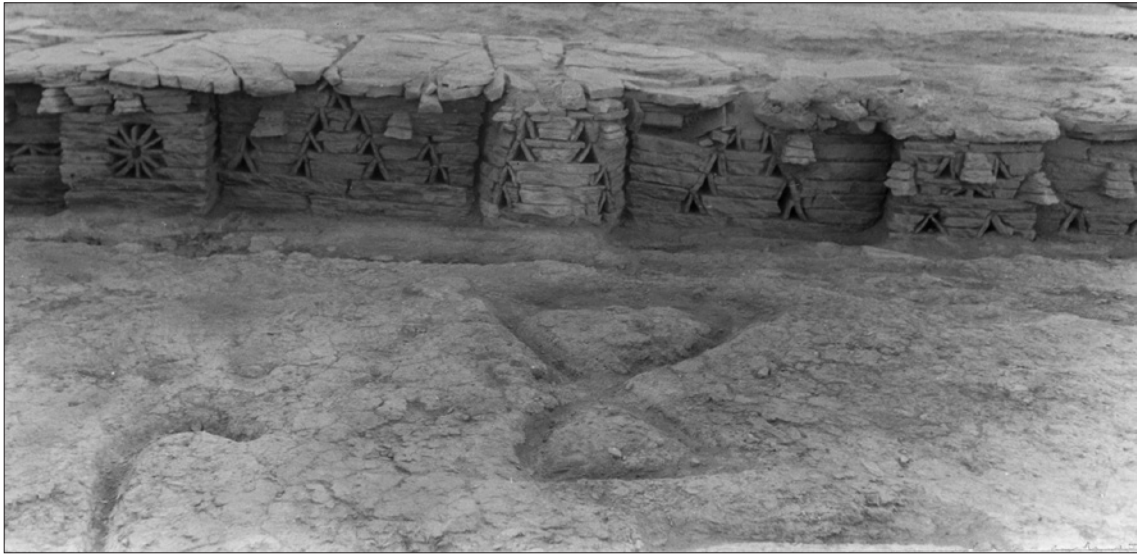
Figures 68a, b. Head of *deva* TS1871 (ht. 0.188m) and the gold leaf that covered it



Figure 69. Late Gandharan Stupa 64



Figure 70. Inscription traced on the beaten floor between Stupa 64 and Monument 69



Figures 71a, b. Detail of Monument 69 representing the walls of a town

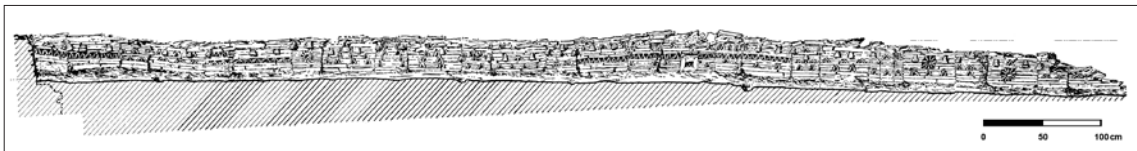


Figure 72. Monument 69, elevation



Figures 73, 74. Remains of Chapel 100

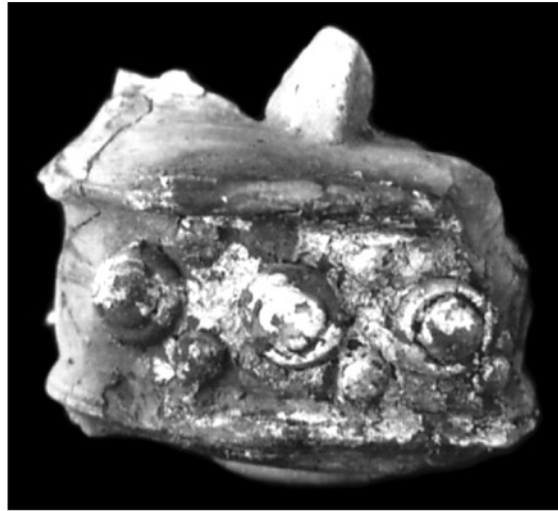


Figure 75. Chapel 100. Reliquary TS2090 held by devotee ($0.075 \times 0.10 \times 0.075\text{m}$)



Figure 76. Chapel 100. Drawing of the painting on the back wall



Figure 77. Collapses in the area of Stupa 64



Figure 78. Remains of the early chapel within the *Parinirvāṇa* Chapel of the late sanctuary

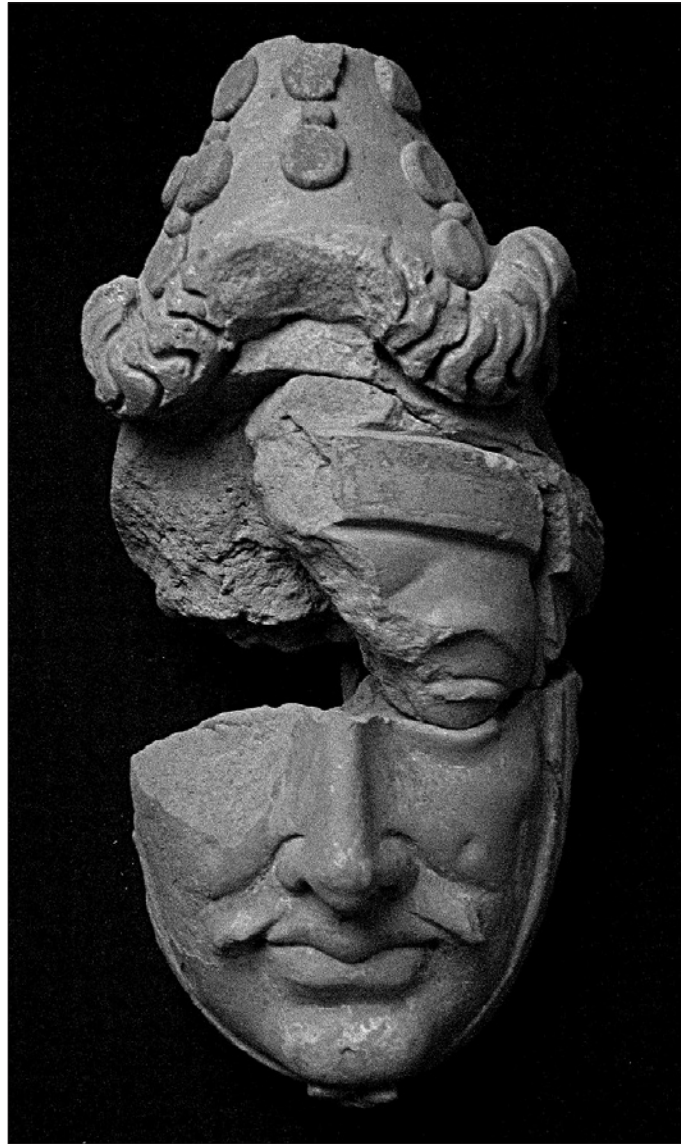


Figure 79. Head TS 1505 from the fill under the late Chapel 36

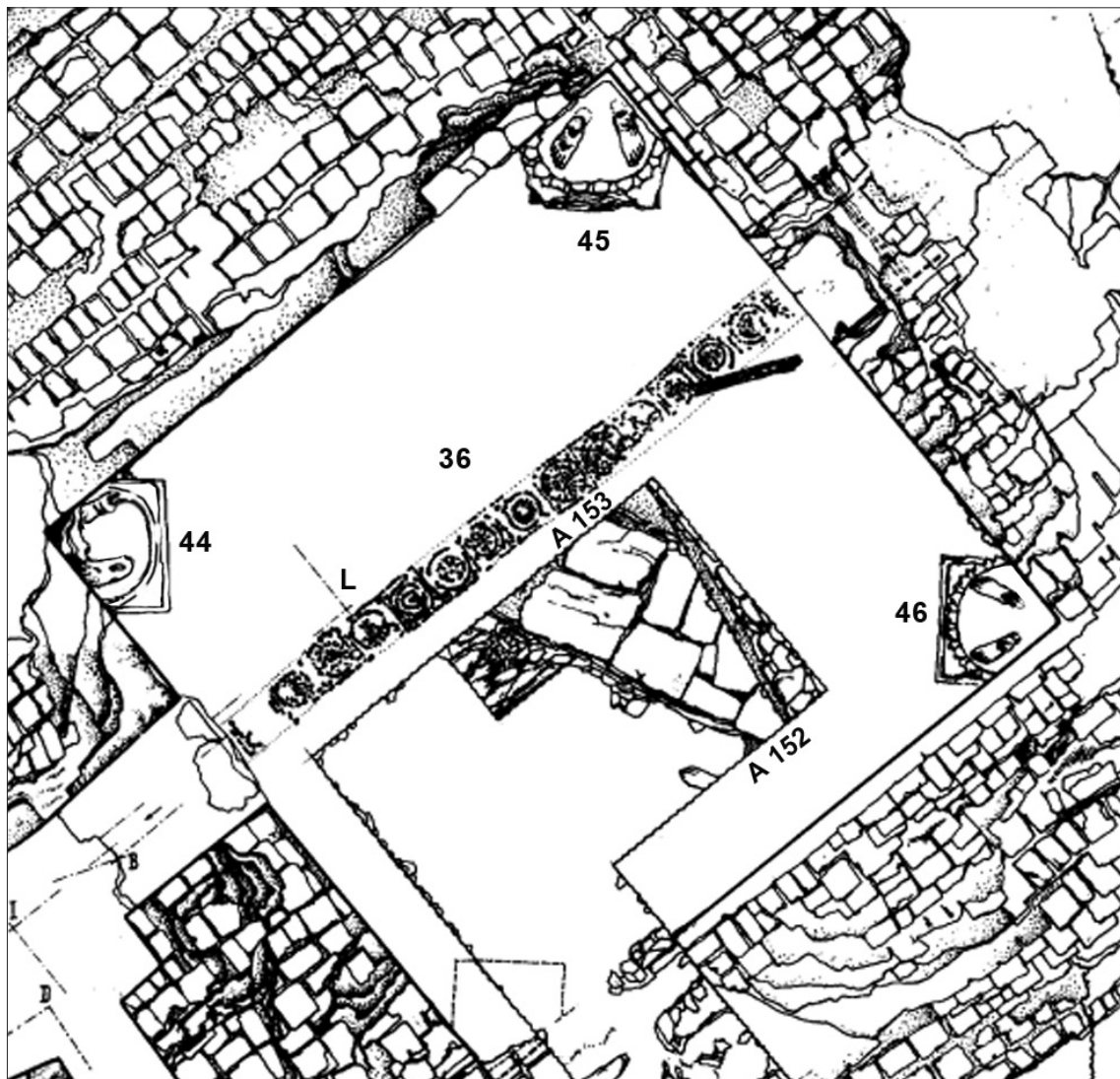


Figure 80. Paved path under the late Chapel 36



Figure 81. TS1502 (0.10 × 0.14m)



Figure 82. TS1469 (0.12 × 0.085m)



Figure 83. TS1621 (0.125 × 0.12 × 0.14m)

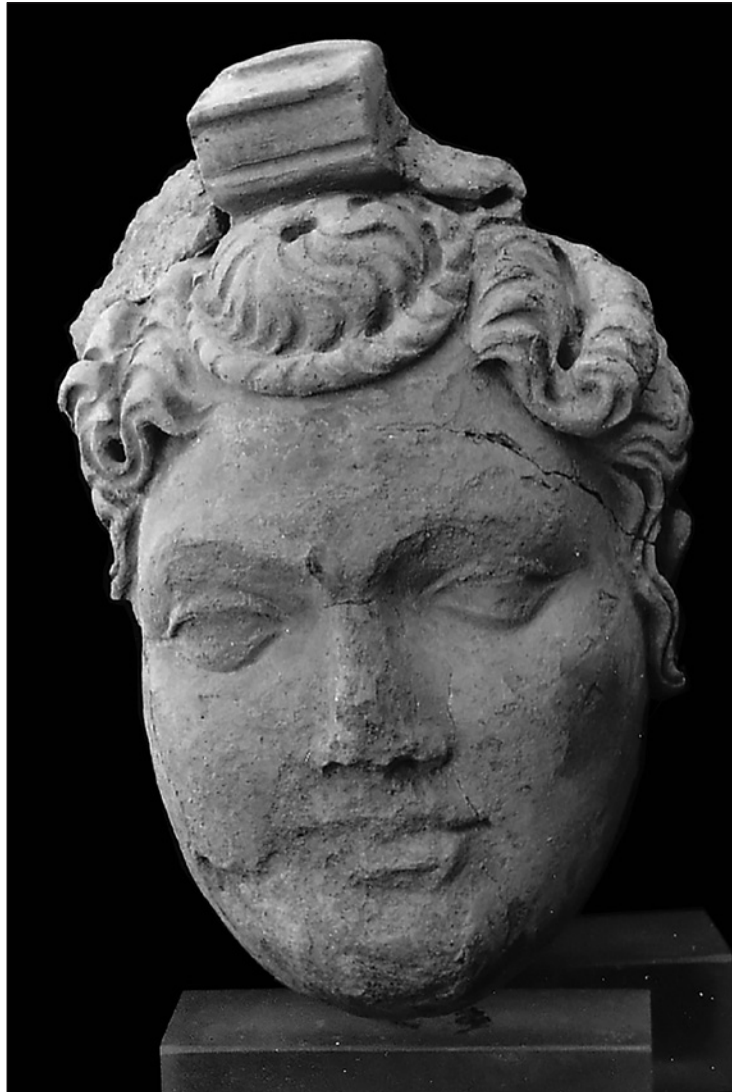


Figure 84. TS1655 (0.24 × 0.16m)



Figure 85. TS1604 (0.12 × 0.12m)



Figure 86. TS1652 (0.165 × 0.145m)



Figure 87. TS1707 (0.10 × 0.14m)



Figure 88. Devotee offering flowers from Kafir Kot, Kharwar plateau, Logar. Kabul, National Museum



Figures 89, 90, 91. Stamped potsherds TS446 (max 0.04m) and TS447 (0.09 × 0.08m) showing a bust of a ruler; potsherd TS842 (max 0.06m) decorated with a floral stamp



Figures 92, 93, 94. Potsherd TS316 (max 0.056m) decorated with a floral stamp; potsherd TS611 (max 0.066m) stamped with a pinwheel motif; potsherd TS861 showing a woman looking at herself in a mirror



Figure 95, 96, 97. Potsherd TS1003 decorated with a stamp with caprids; potsherd TS334 (max 0.071m); potsherd TS452 (max 0.072m) decorated with stamps with ducks

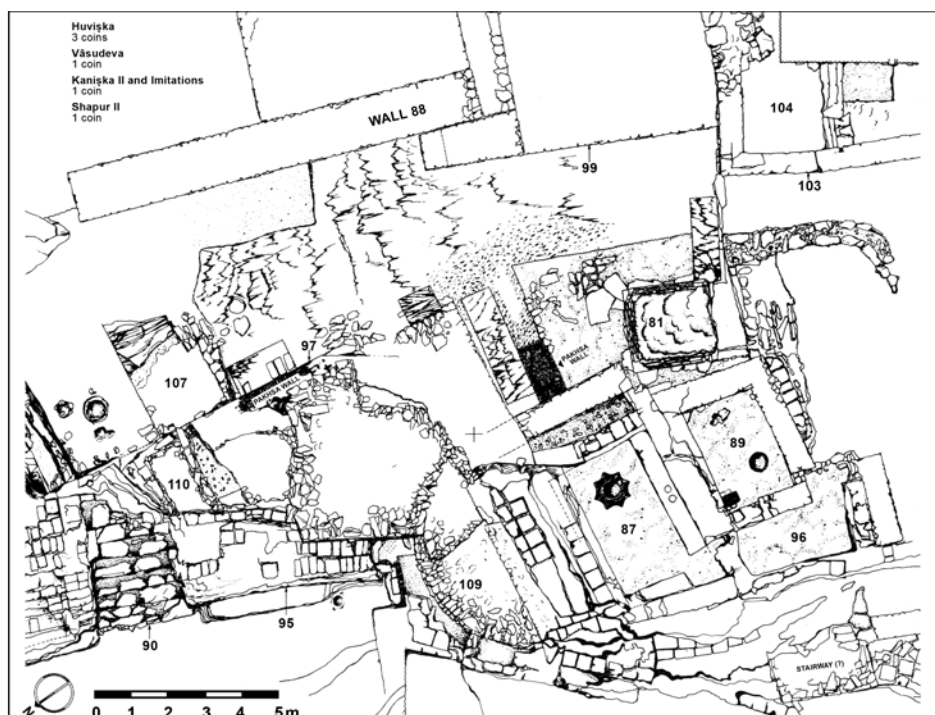


Figure 98. Plan of the area of Stupa 81

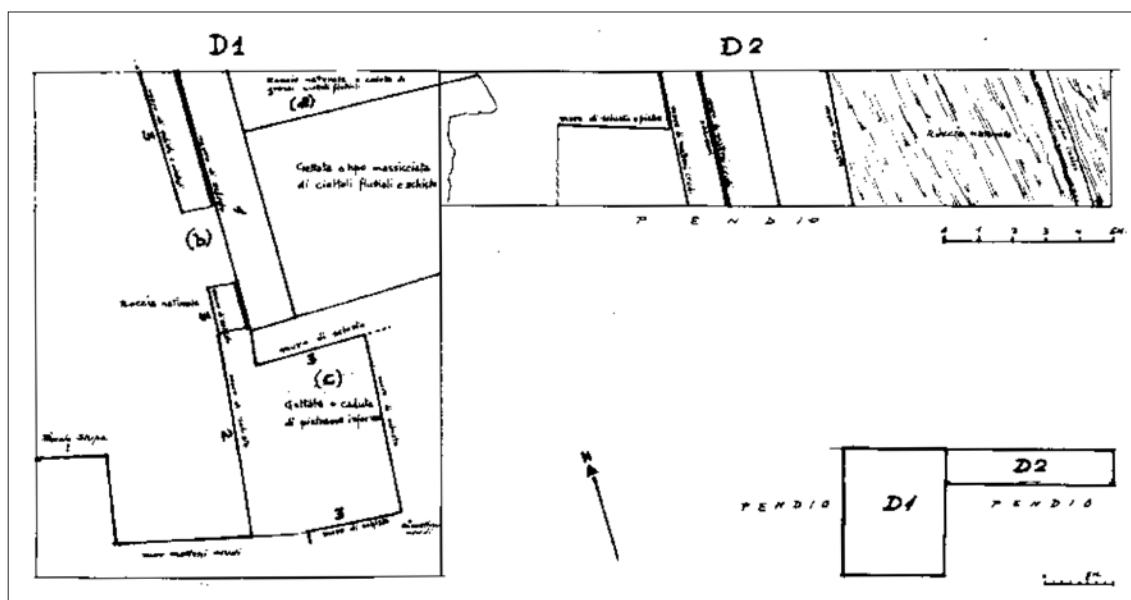


Figure 99. Trenches D1 and D2 in the area of Stupa 81, excavated in 1961



Figure 100. Room 87 with a fire altar for the *homa* ritual



Figure 101. Clay Stupa 10 (front) and stone Stupa 11 (back)



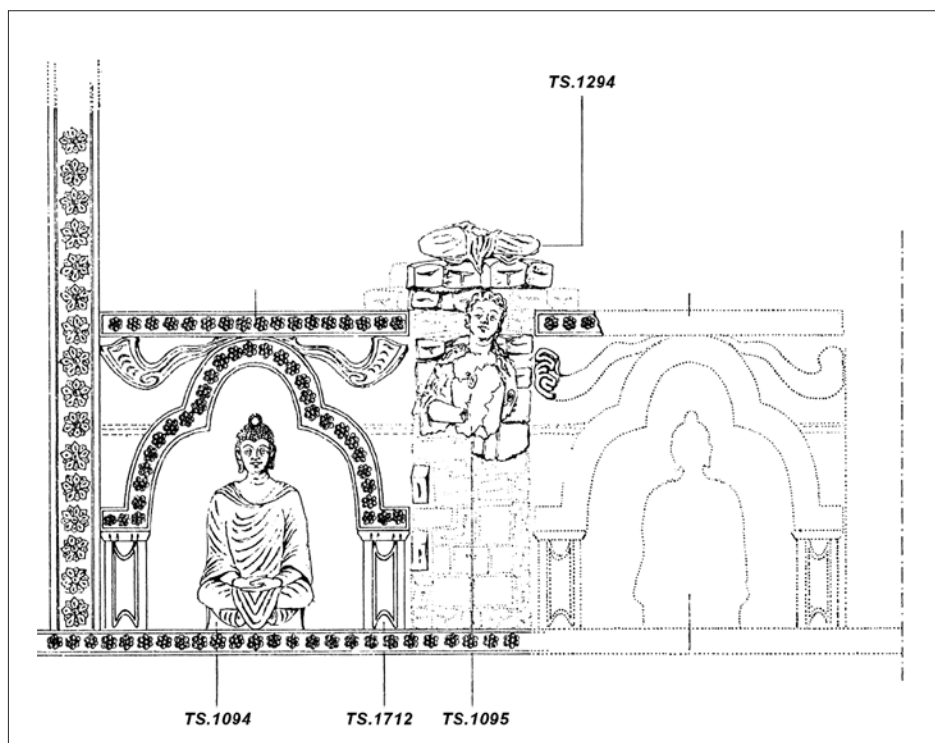
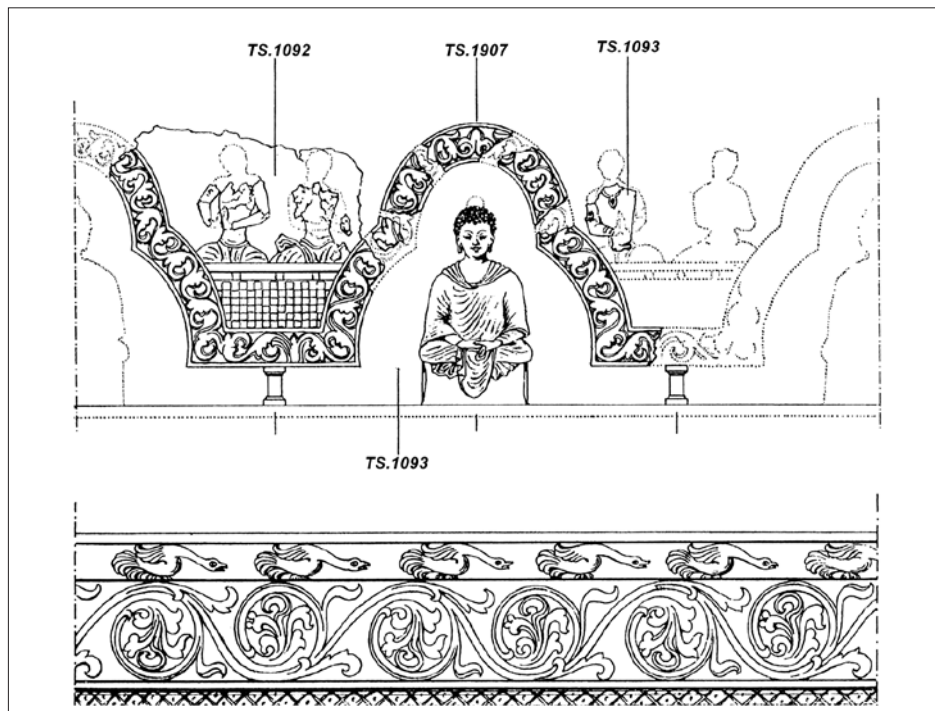
Figure 102. Throne 6



Figure 103. Stupa in Chapel 41



Figure 104. Chapel 75



Figures 105, 106. Chapel 17. Decoration of the side walls as reconstructed from fallen fragments



Figure 107. *Deva* TS1500 from Chapel 17



Figure 108. Vihara 37. *Nāga* supporting the stem of the Buddha's lotus throne, found *in situ*



Figure 109. Buddha head TS1085 from Chapel 36 (ht. 0.080m)



Figure 110. Buddha head TS170, found near Stupa 4 (0.10 × 0.083m)



Figure 111. Buddha head TS613 from Vihara 17 (0.14 × 0.8m)



Figure 112. TS 576 from Vihara 17 ($0.125 \times 0.09 \times 0.08\text{m}$)

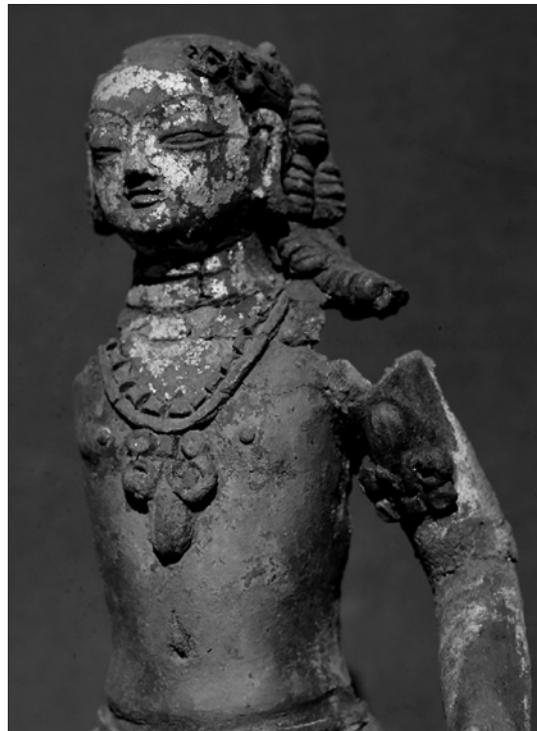


Figure 113. *Deva* TS1850, found in front of Chapel 59 ($0.188 \times 0.137\text{m}$)

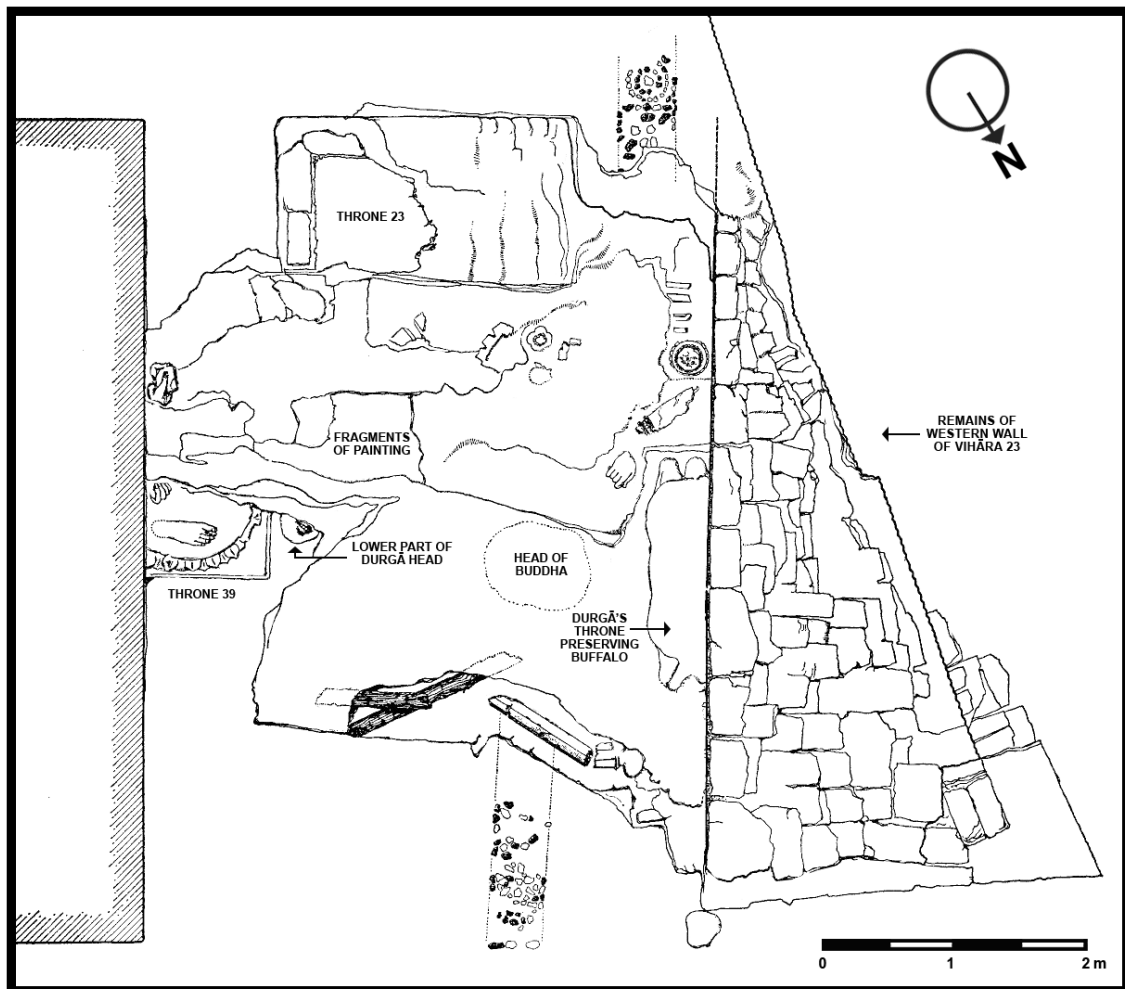


Figure 114. Plan of Vihara 23 during excavation



Figures 115, 116. Durga head TS1145 from Vihara 23 (ht. 0.64m)

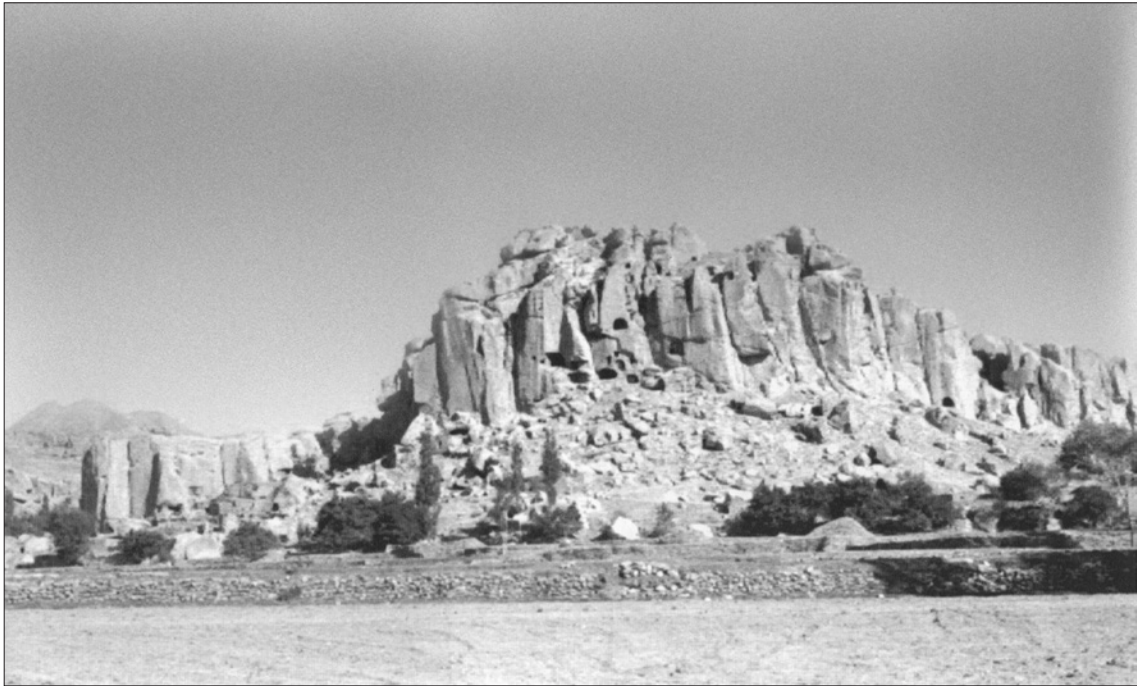


Figure 120. Qarabagh-e Ghazni. Massif of Nay Qal'a

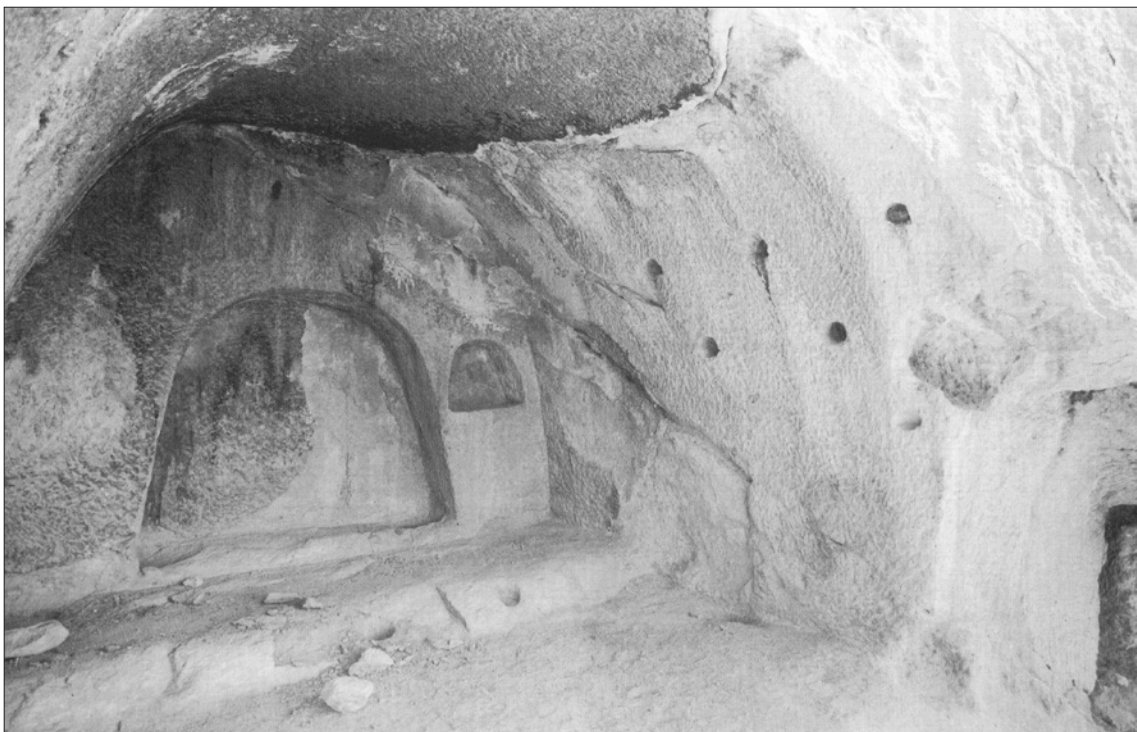


Figure 121. Nay Qal'a. Cave 10

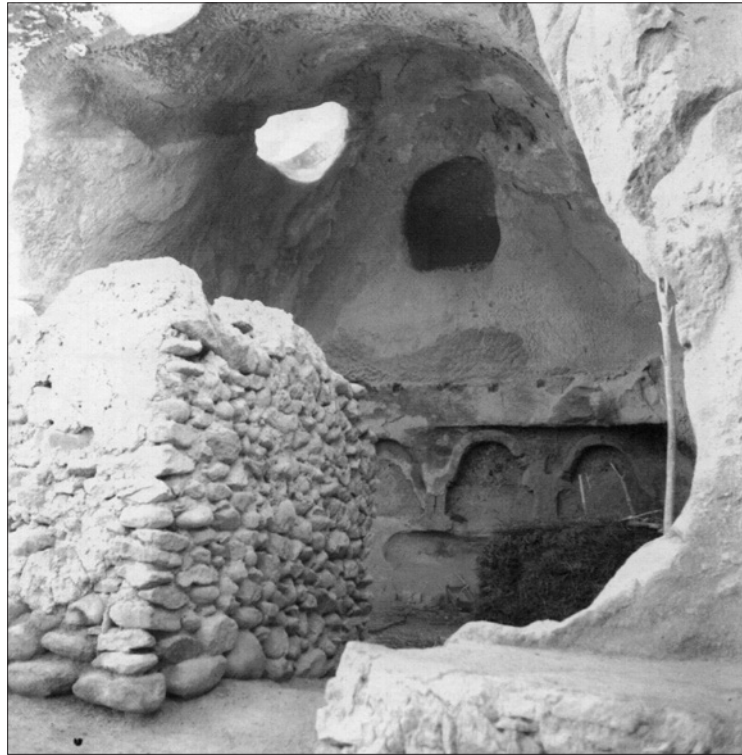


Figure 122. Tapa Sanawbar. Cave 2

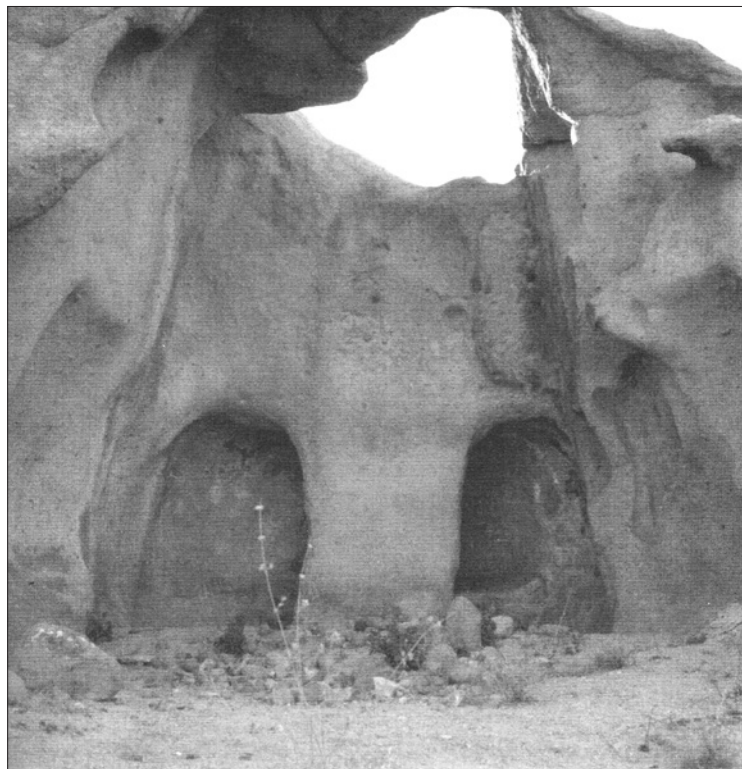


Figure 123. Sangdara. Cave 1

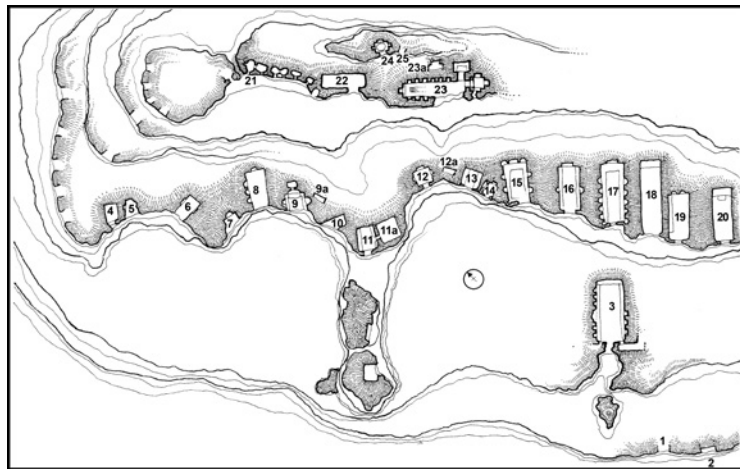


Figure 124. Tapa Zaytun. Sketch plan of the site

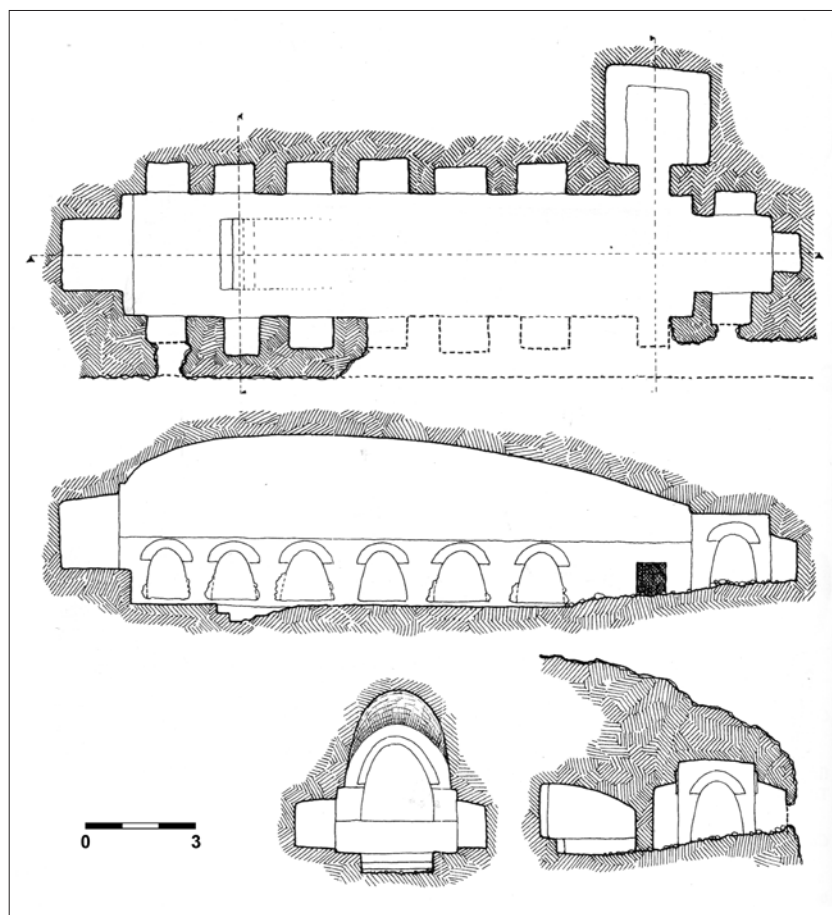


Figure 125. Tapa Zaytun. Cave 23, plan and sections



Figure 126. Tapa Zaytun. Cave 24

PART B:
THE COINS FROM THE 9TH TO THE 20TH CENTURY

Arturo Annucci
with a contribution by Roberta Giunta

INTRODUCTION

Coins found in Tapa Sardar and Ghazni, dating from the 9th to the 20th century, were minted under Islamic and non-Islamic authorities.¹ In the Ghazni area, 106 specimens were found, almost all in bronze, copper or billon (approx. 89%) and a few in silver (approx. 11%). The numismatic material comes mainly from the archaeological contexts excavated by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan (Tapa Sardar, Ghaznavid Palace and House of the Lustrewares);² a small amount comes from the mausoleum of Maḥmūd b. Sebuktigin;³ the rest is part of sporadic finds or purchases.

Over 60% of the specimens belong to the pre-Mongol phase (pre-1221), of which almost 40% belong to the Shahi and *Arab-Shahi* classes (see section 1.15), i.e. bronze or billon coins deriving from the silver type issued by the Hindu Shahis (9th–11th centuries), a Brahmanic dynasty that held power in the Indo-Afghan area. Even though the chronology of the coins offers a good overview of the history of Ghazni during Islamic times (Appendix II, Figure 2), they do not present a homogenous corpus, and especially for the modern period, there are gaps in our chronology, likely also caused by the poor state of preservation of the coins.

In any case, the excavations of the Italian Archaeological Mission focused on the Ghaznavid Palace, the palatine structure of the area, and the private residence known as the House of Lustrewares.⁴ Indeed, the first members of the mission recognized other archaeological contexts in the Ghazni area that deserved to be excavated, but the works were interrupted because of the chaotic situation which affected the country. On the other hand, this numismatic corpus is one of the few we have for the Islamic times of the Afghan territories coming from well-documented archaeological excavations, even though not stratigraphical ones. It is a key site for understanding the monetary circulation in these territories and acquiring hints on the changes that affected the area during the Islamic times, starting from the 10th century.

The study of this material revealed some difficulties. First of all, the lack of the original specimens (Appendix I) could not be completely compensated for by the plaster casts (Figure 1), which nevertheless represent an important source that makes it possible to continue to study them nowadays. Secondly, the state of preservation of the coins is generally bad, and this is particularly true for the coins belonging to the modern period (15th century onwards), preventing a reliable classification of the material. Moreover, for some of the coins belonging to the centuries after the Islamic conquest, only the mission's archive photos were preserved, sometimes in low quality, not sufficient to detect the details and reach a final classification.

¹ Islamic coins can be classified as: 'pre-Ghaznavids', Ghaznavids, Ghurids, an uncertain issue attributable to Ghurids/Turkish Slave Commander or Iltutmish b. Ilaḥ Khān (Delhi Sultan), Khwarezm Shahs, Timurids, Mughals and Durrani. Non-Islamic ones are classifiable as Hindu Shahis, 'post-Shahi', Tomaras and Chauhans of Delhi, and Sikhs. For a detailed list of the authorities and the respective catalogue numbers, see the Catalogue Index (p. 199–201).

² Sixteen coins were found in Tapa Sardar, 89 in the Ghaznavid Palace, eight in the House of Lustrewares, and eight came from Rawza, particularly the area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd. Eleven are under the label of 'Sporadic' (= *Sporadica*) or were purchased locally. See section 2 and Appendix IV.

³ Coins from Maḥmūd's mausoleum had no inventory number. An identification number was assigned to them between 2018 and 2020 by Roberta Giunta, director of the study of Islamic material of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan.

⁴ See Giunta, in the present volume.



Figures 1a, b. Some of the plaster casts held at the Museo Orientale ‘Umberto Scerrato’, University of Naples L’Orientale (Italy)

This leads us to another problem, which affects the Islamic numismatics of these territories: the lack of comparative material. We can mention some important publications related to the coinage of the area, such as the volume by Florian Schwarz of the *Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum Tübingen* dedicated to Ghazni and Kabul (SNAT 1995), or the volume dealing with the post-Mongol coinage of the Iranian lands of the *Sylloge of the Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean Museum* (SICA 9). However, these publications, as precious as they are, cover only a part of the coinage of these areas; indeed, it is not uncommon to identify new types and variants for the Islamic coinage of these territories, which, however, makes the identification of coin finds from excavations extremely difficult, considering all the problems related to the reading of their legends and the poor state of preservation. For the category of coins deriving from the Hindu Shahi prototype, the volume of reference is *Jitals* by Robert and Monica Tye (1995) (see section 1.15); it is the only attempt to order this huge amount of material, study of which is extremely complicated.⁵

Finally, for an understanding of the economy and monetary policies, one must turn to the works of John Deyell, especially *Living Without Silver* (1990), which offers a good overview of the economic phenomena that involved the Indo-Iranian borderlands and the territories of northern India during the centuries of interest.

There is also a lack of comparative material from other archaeological contexts. Afghan sites with a considerable number of coins are few (Appendix III, Figure 6). Among them, Lashkari Bazar occupies a relevant role; it was excavated between 1949 and 1951 by the Délégation Archéologique Française in Afghanistan (DAFA), directed by Daniel Schlumberger and Marc Le Berre, who carried out additional research in 1952. The coins from the site were published by Jean-Claude Gardin (1963). In the area between this last site and the city of Bust, other short archaeological activities were conducted by the Helmand-Sistan Project (1971–77), back then directed by William Trousdale and funded by the Smithsonian Institution. The project is

⁵ Another reference for the coins struck by the Islamic dynasties in northern India is Goron and Goenka 2001.

now active thanks to the coordination of Mitchell Allen, who entrusted me, Nikolaus Schindel and Fabrizio Sinisi with the coins found during the old excavations and more recently, as yet unpublished (Annucci *et al.* forthcoming).

In the Kabul area, the archaeological site of Qol-e Tut was excavated by the Afghan Archaeological Institute under the direction of Zafar Paiman. It is another example of an important documented site from the Afghanistan area (Aram *et al.* forthcoming). Many Islamic coins, especially from the Ghurid period, have been found there (Appendix II, Figure 5). Knowledge of the Kabul area is also completed by the corpus of coins acquired locally in the Begram area by Charles Masson and recently published by Elizabeth Errington (2021).

Finally, the coins from Balkh represent another important piece of evidence that we can count among the data from Afghanistan. This material will be published soon in a volume on medieval Balkh edited by Arezou Azad, Edmund Herzig, Robert Hoyland, Paul Wordsworth and Philippe Marquis.

The few data we have from Afghanistan could partially be completed by the coin finds from Pakistan, especially from Uddiyana, some of which have been studied by Ehsan Shavarebi (2025), with a special focus on the pre-Islamic period (Appendix II, Figure 6).⁶

⁶ For a full overview of the coin finds from these territories, see section 1.15.

HISTORICAL AND NUMISMATIC COMMENTARY

Information on the history of Zabulistan and Ghazni, its main centre, in the period immediately preceding the rise of the Ghaznavid dynasty (9th–10th centuries) is scarce. The 10th-century sources agree in describing Ghazni as a fundamental centre for trade between the Iranian territories and India (Bombaci 1959: 4).

During the first part of the 9th century, the Early/Turk Shahi dynasty (see part A, section 1.3.c) was succeeded by the new dynasty of the Late/Hindu Shahi rulers (nos 96–99). The former suffered a severe defeat by the Abbasid Caliphate ruled by al-Ma'mūn (813–817), as attested by two inscriptions.⁷ This defeat would have resulted in the payment of a tribute that, according to the hypothesis of Abdur Rahman (1979: 87), undermined the power of Turk Shahis among their people. It caused a rebellion which ended in 822 with the dethronement of the last Turk Shahi ruler, Lagaturman, and the seizure of power by the Hindu Shahis. Abdur Rahman deduces the date of 822 from the deciphering of the bilingual inscription (Persian and Sanskrit) of Zalamkot, which in the Sanskrit section identifies the date with the year 189 of the 'Shahi Era',⁸ reading confirmed by the upcoming study by Strauch (Holz and Strauch forthcoming).⁹ The beginning of this era would correspond to the first year of the first Hindu Shahi ruler and it could also date the beginning of the coinage of the Hindu Shahis (Annucci forthcoming; Holz and Strauch forthcoming; see also below). The dynastic change between the Turk Shahis and the Hindu Shahis constituted further instability in these territories, together with the continued presence of the Rutbil (or Zunbil),¹⁰ who had presented a problem to the Islamic caliphate since the Umayyad era.

After the rise of the Hindu Shahis, a new political entity appeared on the scene of these territories, the Saffarid dynasty (861–1003). These rulers were the first to conquer the city (c.870s) during the years of Ya'qūb b. al-Layth, the founder of the dynasty (Bosworth 1975a: 110–11). After taking possession of Kabul, where the son of the Rutbil had taken refuge, the Saffarid emir besieged Ghazni and destroyed the citadel, imposing a tribute of 10,000 dirhams per year on the local ruler, Abū Maṣṣūr Aflaḥ of the Lawiks, who, in the meantime, had taken refuge in Gardez (Bosworth 1994: 102). We know very little about these latter rulers, although their power in the pre-Ghaznavid history of Ghazni appears to have been fundamental and relatively long-lasting.¹¹

⁷ The inscriptions are presented by Ghafur (1965/66: 9–10) and are recorded by Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Azraqī (9th century) in his work *Akḥbār Makkah*, the earliest existing work on the history of the city (Abdul Ghafur 1965/66: 4–5). The first inscription informs us about the order the caliph would have given to his *wazīr*, al-Faḍl b. Sahl, to send the king's throne of the Kabul Shah (= Turk Shahi) to the Ka'ba. The latter was defeated in 814/15 and made tributary of the Abbasid Caliphate. The second inscription is dated 199 AH (= 814/15 CE) and recalls the arrival of the Turk Shahi ruler at the court of Marw to pay allegiance to al-Ma'mūn, who ordered the raising of the Abbasid black flag in Kabul and on the Indus River.

⁸ Rahman 1993; Rahman 1998: 473. The inscription also bears the date in the Arabic-Persian text: *dhū'l-qa'da* 401 AH (= June 1011 CE).

⁹ In a previous article, Strauch proposed a new reading of the Figure as 187—or, though less likely, 189—which would have moved the beginning of the era in 824 CE (Shavarebi and Strauch 2022: 198, 200–201). However, drawing on new comparative evidence and further epigraphic analysis, Strauch returns to Rahman's original reading, reaffirming 189 as the most plausible interpretation.

¹⁰ The root, *rtbyl*, is probably a corruption of the Turkish title *İltābār*. For more information about this period see part A, section 1.3.b. One of the issues still to be resolved remains the methods and timing of the transfer of power from the Rutbils to the Lawiks in the Ghazni and Gardez area. Further research is needed.

¹¹ A contribution to the reconstruction of the history of this dynasty was provided by Bosworth (1965: 18) who, through the indirect study of some manuscripts published by the Afghan historian and poet 'Abd al-Hayy

They fought against Alptigin when he arrived in Ghazni from Khurasan in 962, and after being defeated, they returned to the city, called by the local people to fight another Turkic ruler, Boritigin, with an army that included the son of the Hindu Shahi ruler (Bosworth 1965: 17).

The numismatic material represents one of the sources we have for this little-known dynasty: in fact, bronze coins of Aflaḥ were minted in the area of Ghazni and Gardez in the 870s (Figure 2), bearing the Hindu Shahi type of ‘elephant and lion’. We cannot establish how and when the Lawik dynasty came to power, perhaps replacing the Rutbil, who held control of Zabulistan under the Turk Shahis (Annucci forthcoming). We also do not know whether political or kinship relations existed between the Lawiks and the Rutbils or between the Lawiks and the Hindu Shahis, a topic that needs further investigation in the future. However, they seem to have survived the partial Saffarid conquest of the area: possibly with close kinship to the Hindu Shahi, the Lawik dynasty was likely reduced to a tributary state. They probably acted as a Hindu Shahi sentinel in the area, a kind of buffer state between the Muslim and Shahi territories (Petrie 2021: 92).



Figure 2. Lawiks

Aflaḥ b. Muḥammad (c.870s), AE, 1.54g, mint in Ghazna or Gardez. FINT 96-37-84

During the same centuries, the Saffarids struggled with the Samanids (819–1005) in Sistan for dominion over the city of Bust; the armies of these two emiral dynasties repeatedly stopped in Ghazni (no. 117), but it seems that the city was not fully part of the *dār al-Islām* (Inaba 2018: 143).

Finally, in 977, the Turkic troops in Ghazni chose Sebuktigin (977–997) as their leader, and his twenty-year reign started (Bosworth 2000). He was a Turkic *ghulām* and vassal of the Samanids, and his arrival marked the beginning of a new phase: the city became the seat of power of a hereditary dynasty, the Ghaznavids (977–1186), which constituted an independent emirate from approx. 1000 (= 388 AH). Later, by caliphal designation, the Ghaznavid emirate was elevated to a sultanate in the second half of the 11th century. With the Ghaznavids, Ghazni became one of the major economic and cultural centres of the eastern territories of the caliphate, hosting a lively and refined court (Bosworth 1975b: 165–68). Despite the role of the city, during Sebuktigin’s emirate, no precious metal coinage was struck in the city, which hosted a mint for base metal coinage alone.¹² In fact, only with the reign of his son and successor, Maḥmūd b. Sebuktigin (998–1030), we do have evidence of the first precious metal coins struck in the capital, specifically in 999–1000 (= 389 AH). This date corresponds to the second year of Maḥmūd’s reign, when he obtained independence from the Samanid emir, as proven by the new *laqab* (‘honorary title’) of *Yamīn al-Dawla*, included on coins minted starting from the same year and usually followed by *wa-Amīn al-Milla* (Annucci 2024b).

Ḥabībī Qandahārī, states that the presence of this dynasty in the Ghazni area dates back to the first Muslim raids in Sistan (‘Pashto wa Lowīkān-I Ghazna, yak toḥqīq-i jadīd dar ta’rīkh-i adabiyat-i Pashto ma ta’rīkh-i Ghazna/Pashto and Loyaks of Ghazna’, *Publications of the Afghan Historical Society*, no. 69, 1341/1962. Kabul). However, Bosworth himself confirms the impossibility of verifying the information provided by Ḥabībī due to the unavailability of the manuscripts, of which the Afghan scholar had also lost track.

¹² The founder of the Ghaznavid dynasty struck silver coins with a thick and narrow flan in the mint of Farwan. In fact, after the conquest of the city of Ghazni, he was officially made a Samanid vassal in 990–91 (= 380 AH) and, in that same year, he started to strike silver dirhams in Farwan with those of the Abbasid caliph al-Ṭā’i (974–991) and the Samanid emir Nūḥ II b. Maṣṣūr I (976–997).

Historical sources inform us about the dynasty and the city's monuments in the years of Maḥmūd b. Sebuktigin and his son Mas'ūd I (1030–1041) (no. 118); these two rulers were supporters of a considerable territorial expansion (Appendix III, Figure 7). During their reigns, Ghaznavid control extended from the territories of Khurasan to the northern area of the Indian subcontinent, with the crucial conquest, during the reign of Maḥmūd, of the city of Lahore,¹³ which began to play a fundamental role: it became the seat of the heir to the throne and, together with Ghazni, the seat of one of the main mints.¹⁴ This expansion suffered a setback with the defeat inflicted by the Seljuks (1040–1194) at Dandanqan (1041) and the consequent loss of the western territories.¹⁵

Starting from the end of the reign of Mas'ūd I, the historical information dwindles, while some architecture of the city is known thanks to the archaeological research of the Italian Mission. The architectural remains shed light, above all, on the years between the reigns of Ibrāhīm b. Mas'ūd I (1059–1099) and Bahrām Shāh b. Mas'ūd III (1117–1157) (nos 120–141).¹⁶

The Ghaznavid territories still included part of present-day Afghanistan and the northern area of the Indian subcontinent. In 1151, Ghazni was sacked and burned by the Ghurid sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Ḥusayn, known as Jahānsūz, 'the world burner' (1149–1161) (de Planhol 2000). After briefly recapturing the city with the support of the Seljuk sultan Aḥmad Sanjar (1118–1157), who became the overlord of Bahrām Shāh (nos 130–135), the Ghaznavids finally lost control over their western territories in 1173 to the Ghurids (c. early 11th century–1215), when Ghazni became the capital of Mu'izz al-Dīn (1173–1206) (nos 159–168). The Ghaznavids definitively retreated to Lahore; here, the last Ghaznavid ruler, Khusraw Malik b. Khusraw Shāh (1160–1186) (no. 142) was deposed in 1186 (= 582 AH) by Mu'izz al-Dīn.

The Ghurid ruler started ruling over Ghazni, with his brother Ghiyāth al-Dīn (1163–1203) as supreme sultan (no. 159); with the latter's death in 1203, he was appointed supreme sultan of Ghur and India (Bosworth 2001). As with the Ghaznavids, the Ghurids used Ghazni as a starting point for raids into the northwestern area of the Indian subcontinent, aiming to extend their conquests to the territories controlled by Hindu dynasties.¹⁷ Upon the death of Mu'izz al-Dīn, Tāj al-Dīn Yildiz (no. 169), a former *ghulām* of the ruler, established himself in the city and retained control over it until the arrival of the Khwarezm Shahs (c. 1077–1231). Moreover, the Turkic slave also had to face the attack of the Delhi sultan Iltutmish b. Ilam Khān (1211–1236) (no. 169) in Punjab. In fact, after Mu'izz al-Dīn's death, the different rulers who took over power in the Ghazni, Hindustan, Sind, Bengal and Delhi regions had to face political problems. The sultanate of Iltutmish turned out to be one of the most powerful and lasted for 26 years, during which the Delhi Sultanate was strengthened economically, culturally and with military conquests.¹⁸

Returning to Ghazni, after the defeat of Tāj al-Dīn Yildiz, the city was in the hands of the Khwarezmian sultans 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (1220–1220) (nos 170–172) and Jalāl al-Dīn Mengubirti (1220–1231; nos 173–174). They controlled it in the years preceding the Mongol

¹³ For the Indian Campaign of Maḥmūd, see Bosworth 1975b: 177–80. Maḥmūd appears to have renamed the city of Lahore to Maḥmūdīpūr, see Bosworth 2007: 299.

¹⁴ The important role played by Lahore is comparable to that of Nishapur and then Herat in the first Ghaznavid era in Khurasan, before their loss at the hands of the Seljuks (11th century). Cf. Allegranzi 2019: 43.

¹⁵ The history of the early part of the Ghaznavid dynasty is well-known thanks to the information transmitted by 'Utbī, Bayhaqī and Gardīzī (11th century). For a detailed analysis of historical sources in the Ghaznavid period, see Bosworth 1963, 1977 and Allegranzi 2019.

¹⁶ From the first phase (Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd I), the mission only found a few elements of architectural decoration; see Giunta, in the present volume.

¹⁷ Cf. O'Neal 2015: 115–17. See also Bosworth 2001.

¹⁸ For more information about the history of Islamic India, see Habib and Nizami 1970 and Wink 1997. The coinage of the Delhi Sultanate is covered by Wright (1936) and Goron and Goenka (2001).

invasion of 1221 (= 628 AH) (Bernardini and Guida 2012: 33), also leaving part of the *de facto* power to the short-lived dynasty of the Qarlughids (1224–1259).¹⁹ The Mongol arrival marked the end of an era: Ghazni ceased to be a political and economic centre for these regions.

The history of Ghazni during the 14th century is little known: the city underwent a period of stability as part of the territory under the power of the Kartids (1245–1389) (Sourdel and Sourdel 2004: 461), a dynasty that settled in the area of Herat and Balkh, controlling a buffer kingdom between the Iranian territories and the Chagatay Khanate (1227–1363). It is to this period that the last issues with the mint *Ghazna* are dated, with copper coins either anonymous or bearing the name of a certain Qutlugh Khwajā (or Qocha; c.1297–1298).²⁰

The period of stability was interrupted by the arrival of Tīmūr-i Lang (Tamerlane; 1370–1405), founder of the Timurid dynasty (1370–1507) (nos 175–176). In 1401, he gave Ghazni to his nephew Pīr Muḥammad b. Jahāngīr (1405–1407) (Bosworth 1991: 1075).²¹ Together with Kandahar, the city was later included in the principality of Kabul; given to Suyurgatmish Khān (no. 175), son of Shāh Rukh Mīrzā, in 1468 it was entrusted to Ulugh Beg Mīrzā b. Abū Saʿīd b. Muḥammad b. Mīrān Shāh.²² The latter ruled until 1501, the year of his death; his son ʿAbd al-Razzāq remained in power for less than one year, when he was deposed.²³

In 1504, Ṣāḥīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur (1526–1530; as the Mughal emperor), Timurid prince, king of Ferghana and founder of the Mughal dynasty, conquered the city and brought it into the Mughals' orbit (1526–1858) (no. 177) until the 18th century, when the Afghans declared themselves independent and briefly occupied Persia. In the Afghan area, the Abdalis tribe, initially in the service of the Safavid Nādir Shāh (1736–1748), gained full power in 1747, when Aḥmad Shāh took the title of *Durr-i Durrān*, 'the pearl of pearls', the name by which the dynasty came to be known (nos 179–182). This branch of the Abdalis was also known as the Sadozay. In the 1810s, a second branch of the Abdalis, the Barakzays, rose to power in the Kabul area, later claiming the title of *amīr* (Bosworth 1996: 342). The Emirate of Afghanistan was established in 1823, following the loss of the Indian territories, and from this moment on, political involvement in the British Empire and the two Anglo-Afghan wars characterized its history. The current borders of Afghanistan were defined under the reign of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (1880–1901).

During the post-Mongol era, Ghazni ceased to be an important commercial and cultural centre but became a centre with a strong religious character and a destination for local pilgrimages, as also attested by the growth of the funerary landscape.²⁴

1.1 The 'Pre-Mongol' Coinage in the Indo-Iranian Borderlands

Ghazni is on the border of an area between Zabulistan, Gandhara and the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent (Appendix III, Figures 1, 2). Although the city has been dominated exclusively by Islamic dynasties since the Ghaznavid conquest, its geographical location brought about

¹⁹ Album 2011: 195. Some Qarlughid coins were found at the site of Hund (Khan forthcoming; see also section 1.15).

²⁰ This same information is also reported by Diler 2009: 871; Qutlugh Khwajā is likely the eldest son of Duʿa (or Duwa; c.1282–1306) of the Chaghatayid dynasty who was installed in control of the territories south of the Oxus (Jackson 2018: 95). However, the chain of historical events of these regions from this period onward is extremely complicated, especially when it comes to understanding the hierarchy of powers. The succession of rulers, such as the Chaghatayid or the Timurids, together with the only apparently 'minor' actors, such as the Qarawnas, makes comprehension of the political scenario tangled. See Biran 1997, 2002 and Bernardini 2013. I would like to thank Michele Bernardini for all the information he gave me about this period.

²¹ For more information on Tamerlane, see Bernardini 2022.

²² The latter should not be confused with Ulugh Beg, son of Shāh Rukh (1393–1449); see Massullo 2017: 24.

²³ For epigraphic documentation relating to this period, see Massullo 2020.

²⁴ Massullo 2017. To understand the relevance of Ghazni as a place of pilgrimage, see Szuppe 2005.

strong influences from the Late/Hindu Shahis, even though they never ruled over Zabulistan directly. From the 9th century, these influences affected the coinage and its local circulation, giving rise to a monetary system derived from that of the Brahmanic dynasty. According to the current data, the monetary production of the Hindu Shahis was based on a bimetallic system, with coins in silver, bearing the type known as ‘bull and horseman’, and in bronze, the latter limited to local circulation. This coinage marked an important point for the local monetary tradition: the evidence seems to demonstrate how the coin production of the Hindu Shahis had a distinctly centralized structure, in contrast to the systems of previous eras (Annucci forthcoming).

The Hindu Shahi coinage was struck in Kabulistan and later in Gandhara (see section 1.2); the silver one circulated in a large area, between Zabulistan, Kabulistan and the north-west of the Indian subcontinent, and was taken up, with or without variations, by all the Islamic dynasties that settled in these areas. Consequently, these issues became an integral part of the Islamic monetary system, at least until the Mongol invasion, together with the ‘canonical’ issues.

The Ghaznavids were the first to use this monetary type consistently, adding the Shahi-type coinage with the ‘bull and horseman’ or ‘bull and legend’ to the Islamic one. According to Deyell (1990: 74), ‘Shahi type’ coinage was issued in Lahore; the capital Ghazni was the seat of the mint where issues more adherent to the Islamic model were struck. The latter, although formally adhering to the model reformed by the Abbasid caliph al-Ma’mūn (813–833),²⁵ displayed some differences, especially in the metrology, as is, for example, the case for the silver coin (dirham), which is usually thicker, weighing between 2.5 and 3.5g,²⁶ likely influenced by Hindu Shahi coinage.²⁷

Furthermore, starting from the reign of Mas’ūd I, silver started to decrease (Album 2011: 178), a common pattern for almost all monetary issues of this period, and that will reach its peak in the following centuries.

1.2 Hindu Shahis

In the 9th century, the Late/Hindu Shahis took power in the Kabul area during al-Ma’mūn’s caliphate after defeating the last ruler of the Early/Turk Shahi dynasty, Lagaturman, succeeding him in control in Kabulistan, Gandhara, and Uddiyana.²⁸

From that moment on, the Hindu Shahis represented the main political counterpart to the Muslim rulers in the eastern Iranian territories. The reconstruction of the history of this dynasty is rather complex, also due to the few historical sources, almost all external to the Shahi court. The main one is al-Bīrūnī, whose work (*Fī taḥqīq mā li-l-Hind min maqūla maqbūla fī l-‘aql aw mardhūla*) provides information about this dynasty;²⁹ the inscriptions associated with these rulers

²⁵ In 821/22 the caliph implemented a reform that profoundly changed Islamic monetary production, above all due to the important consequences of the progressive reduction of the number of issuing centres, probably to centralize power in Baghdad, the capital of the caliphate. See al-Hibri 1993.

²⁶ The weight of the reformed dirham was around 2.8–2.9g.

²⁷ The use of Shahi flans in the Islamic context is attested for the first time with the Saffarid dynasty in the Panjhir mint in 872/73 (= 259 AH) (Annucci 2022; 2024a). Over the years, this phenomenon took on ever greater significance until it was used systematically in the Ghaznavid era.

²⁸ Ghafur 1965/66; Rahman 1993, 1998; Inaba 2018: 137; Shavarebi and Strauch 2022.

²⁹ Bīrūnī’s list includes *Kallar*, *Sāmand*, *Kamalū* (Rai of Hindustan at the time of the Saffarid ‘Amr b. al-Layth, c.878–890), *Bhīm* (c.950–958), *Jaipāl*, *Ānandapāla*, *Tarojanapāla* (d. 1021) and *Bhīmapāla* (d. 1026) (MacDowall 1968: 190). For an analysis of the work of the Persian historian, see Verdon 2024; for a new analysis of the titles of the Shahi rulers see Verdon (forthcoming).

are also noteworthy, most of them located in the Hund area, but which, however, are often in a poor state of preservation and therefore only partially legible.³⁰

The coinage has represented, and in part still represents, the main tool for defining some of the main aspects of these rulers, without, however, providing a complete overview. The new dynasty issued a homogeneous coinage in silver and bronze, presenting features which differed from the preceding monetary tradition: the treatment of the flan (thicker and smaller); a high percentage of precious metal (silver) in the alloy; and iconographic models closer to the Indian cultural sphere. Their coinage was based around the issue of silver coins bearing the so-called ‘bull and horseman’ type: on the obverse a legend in proto-Sharada (usually *śrī* + name or title + *deva*) appears above the bull Nandi;³¹ on the reverse, a horseman holding a spear (Figure 3). The imitations and the use of the ‘bull and horseman’ model during the later phases underline that these issues represent a solid coinage in the Afghan area and northern India, probably mainly due to the high content of precious metal that characterizes the first phase of the issues for this dynasty.³²



Figure 3. Hindu Shahis
Spalapati Deva (c.822–870), AR, 3.33g, mint in Kabulistan
(Annucci forthcoming: no. 15). KHM OR 11750

A new study on this coinage has updated the chronology proposed by MacDowall (1968), as well as its production pattern, mint organization, the main historical implications and its relationship with the neighbouring Islamic coins (Annucci forthcoming). The new chronology that I proposed for the Hindu Shahi silver coinage is the following: Spalapati Deva (c.822–870), Samanta Deva (c.870–1000), Khudarayaka (c.870s), Bhima Deva (mid-10th century), Samanta Deva billon (after c.1000). For the bronze coinage: Spalapati Deva (c.822–870), Vakka Deva (second half of the 9th century?), Samanta Deva (c.870–1000), Khudarayaka (c.870s), Bhima Deva (c. mid-10th century).

While updating the chronology was feasible thanks to new data and new considerations on this coinage, the functioning and distribution of the Hindu Shahi mints are significantly more obscure. The mint for Spalapati Deva is very likely to have been located in Kabulistan when the Hindu Shahis still controlled this territory. The minting policy behind the Samanta Deva class is more obscure and revolves around three different hypotheses: 1) the mint was moved to Gandhara after the loss of

³⁰ For the first time a project focused on the comprehensive and complete study of the Shahi inscriptions has been started by Ingo Strauch and Kathrin Holz; see Holz and Strauch (forthcoming).

³¹ Correspondence between the authorities (and/or titles) present on this coinage and the dynastic lines provided by historical sources is almost impossible; the only authorities that figured in al-Bīrūnī's list of Hindu Shahi rulers are *Sāmanta* (= *Sāmand*) and *Bhīma* (= *Bhīm*), although even these attributions are uncertain. See MacDowall 1968: 190 and Verdon (forthcoming).

³² Contrary to previous studies, and considering current findings, however, I must point out that Hindu Shahi silver issues never came to play a major role in international trade. The coins of the ‘bull and horseman’, although found in the areas of the Euro-Asian steppes, of the Volga, and in the Scandinavian peninsula, represent a low percentage when compared with the numbers of dirhams minted in the Iranian territories which, without a doubt, represented the actual currency at the centre of international exchanges between the Iranian territories and Eastern Europe. For the Hindu Shahi coins found in Northern Europe's hoards see Ehrnsten 2017: 7–8; Jonsson 2013: 26; Jonsson 2018: 9; Kuleshov 2018: 30; Leimus 2017; Toropov 2014: 217.

Kabul at the hands of the Saffarids; 2) the move of the mint took place only later, and the Kabulistan mint remained active; 3) multiple mints functioned simultaneously. Unfortunately, given the current state of research, it is not possible to provide an answer to this problem; moreover, this ambiguity also has consequences in establishing the issuing centres of Bhima Deva, Vakka Deva and Khudarayaka.

Our corpus contains 21 coins attributable to the Hindu Shahi and ‘post-Shahi’ issues. The latter are coins that derive directly from the Samanta Deva issues but were struck by unknown Islamic or non-Islamic authorities over a long period, from the 10th to 13th centuries, during the last years of the Hindu Shahi kingdom or after its fall.

a. Śrī Spalapati Deva (no. 96)

Only one silver coin belongs to the ‘bull and horseman’ type and bears the legend *śrī spalapati deva* on the obverse. The Spalapati Deva issue would date between the rise of the new dynasty (c.822) and the 870s CE, when Kallara’s rule also ended (Verdon forthcoming).

Found in the Ghaznavid Palace (see section 2.1), this coin bears the *ka* symbol on the reverse, partially off flan. The coins of this class include numerous issues, each one characterized by different marks on the reverse. Our specimen belongs to issue IV (MacDowall 1968: 197): on the reverse, three dots are present below the horse’s front paw, and the original Brahmi script legend of the issue is now completely corrupted and reminiscent of the Arabic numerals ‘881’ (= ٨٨١).³³

According to the hypothesis of E. Thomas, then taken up by MacDowall (1968: 190), the coins of Spalapati are found in considerable numbers in Afghanistan, while they are less frequent in the Punjab and India, allowing us to advance the hypothesis of a mint in the Afghan area, most likely Kabul. This reconstruction seems to be confirmed by the new data on the archaeological finds (Shavarebi and Annucci forthcoming).

b. Śrī Sāmanta Deva (nos 97–99)

Two silver coins bear the legend *śrī sāmanta deva* (870–1000) and were most likely minted in the Indian territories in a later period, when the Islamic advance repelled the Hindu Shahis from the Afghan area (nos 97–98). One of the specimens appears under the category ‘sporadic’, and the second was found in the Ghaznavid Palace; they both bear the ‘bull and horseman’ type and belong to the group of issues which show a crude treatment of the surface, with the feather on the horse’s head detached from the rest of the figure.

A third coin of Samanta Deva, still from the palace, is a bronze specimen (no. 99), in a poor state of preservation, of the type ‘elephant and lion’ (Figures 4a, b).³⁴ On the obverse, the legend *śrī sāmanta deva* is on the top of the elephant; on the reverse is a lion with a long tail folded over itself, surmounted by a four-petalled rosette with dots among the petals.



Figure 4. Hindu Shahis, Samanta Deva (c. 870–1000)

a. Æ, 1.53g, mint in Kabulistan or Gandhara. C4488 (no. 99);

b. Æ, –g, mint in Kabulistan or Gandhara Zeno #94569

³³ The Brahmi legend is read as *shahi deva* that, in turn, replaced the Bactrian legend *sri spalapati* (MacDowall 1968: 192, 195–196).

³⁴ The ‘elephant and lion’ type is typical of all the bronze issues of the dynasty, except for those bearing the legend of *śrī spalapati deva*, following the ‘bull and horseman’ model.

The coins of *śrī sāmanta deva* are recorded more frequently in Punjab, probably due to the political shift of the Shahi territories towards India following the Islamic conquest. Again, the geographical distribution of the finds has led to the hypothesis that most of these issues would have been minted in the Shahi administrative centre of Udabhandapura, in Gandhara (Annucci and Shavarebi forthcoming).

c. Post-Shahi' and Minor Dynasties – 'Sāmanta Deva' (nos 100–113)

Fourteen specimens fall into the group of issues known as 'post-Shahi', and they were found in Tapa Sardar and the Ghaznavid Palace or are the results of 'sporadic' finds and purchases. These are coins of the 'bull and horseman' type with the legend *śrī sāmanta deva*, usually with a low percentage of silver. Although tracing the issuing authority is not possible with certainty, one can hypothesize that they belong to the final phase of the Hindu Shahi kingdom or to a period immediately following its fall.³⁵ Based on the iconographic rendering, I have divided this issue into two groups: one is characterized by a clear and detailed rendering that matches the realism of the 'official' issues ('Type A'; nos 100–109); the other is characterized by an accentuated abstract style ('Type B'; nos 110–113) (Figures 5a, b). Considering these features, it is likely that the coins under the label 'Type A' may belong to an earlier phase than those under 'Type B'. Indeed, the latter seems much closer to the model used later by the other dynasties, e.g. the Tomaras and Chauhans of Delhi (see section 1.5).



Figure 5. 'Post Shahi' and minor dynasties,
'Samanta Deva' Anonymous or Unattributed (c. 10th–13th cent.)
a. Æ, 33g (Type A). C3439 (no. 102); b. Æ, 2.82g (Type B). C118 (no. 113)

Furthermore, on the coins of this second group, the *ti* in proto-Sharada script placed behind the horse on the reverse is usually off flan. However, it should be noted that the state of preservation of our specimens makes perceiving the differences between the two groups difficult.

Three further coins from the Ghaznavid Palace bear the model of the Hindu Shahi of the 'bull and horseman' type, with clear traces of the bull design on the obverse or the horseman on the reverse (nos 114–116). However, the bad state of preservation of the specimens prevents any precise classification either to the main line of the Hindu Shahi dynasty or to later issues by subsequent authorities.

1.3 'Pre-Ghaznavids'

a. Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd al-Ghaffār (no. 117)

The earliest Islamic coin was found in Tapa Sardar (no. 117). It is a bronze specimen (*fals*) in a fairly good state of preservation, which bears the name of a certain Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd al-Ghaffār

³⁵ Tye and Tye 1995: 37. Despite the impossibility of establishing a precise chronology, these specimens follow the official issue of 'Samanta Deva', as they are closely connected to it.

(c.949–956).³⁶ The mint is illegible, as is part of the date of minting. The latter retains only the hundreds digit (‘three [hundred]’, *thalath*) (Figures 6a, b).³⁷



Figure 6. ‘Pre-Ghaznavid’, Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-Ghaffār (946–956)

a. Fals (Æ), 2.65g, AH 34x / *Ghazna*. TS1586 (no. 117);

b. Fals (Æ), 2.4g, AH 342 (= 953 CE) / *Ghazna*. Zeno #145549

Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-Ghaffār is a figure not known in historical sources, a circumstance that prevents us from referring back to the role he played in the area. The rare coins in his name are in bronze, are issued by the Ghazni (*Ghazna*) mint and dated between 338 AH (= 949 CE) and 343 AH (= 955 CE), a period that precedes Alptigin’s conquest of the city in 963 by about a decade.³⁸

According to N. Hattori (1990/94), Ibrāhīm was the military leader who defeated the Lawiks, the local rulers who held power in the Ghazni area; one can exclude this hypothesis, since in Ibn Hawqal’s account (*Kitāb Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*), the siege of the city, the defeat of the local ruler and the assumption of control of Ghazni are attributed to Alptigin (954–66).³⁹

Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-Ghaffār may have performed military duties that involved a settlement in Ghazni during the Saffarid and Samanid periods, when the area emerged as the starting point for expansion towards India (Inaba 2015: 113). It is likely that even before the arrival of Alptigin, there were military garrisons and movable mint workshops in the city.

Regardless of the role this character played in the city before the settlement of the Ghaznavids, his issues—perfectly adhering to the ‘reformed’ Islamic model—are the earliest ones struck in the city after the Islamic conquest. This phenomenon is even more interesting considering the peripheral position of Ghazni, not fully included in those years, within the borders of *dār al-Islām* and considered a commercial emporium for trade and communication between Islamic and Shahi territories (Flood 2009: 17).

1.4 Ghaznavids

Most of the coins in the Islamic section of our corpus (29) are ascribed to the Ghaznavid dynasty. Except for a single specimen in the name of Mas‘ūd I b. Maḥmūd (1030–1041), the material dates

³⁶ In Album (2011) Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-Ghaffār figures among the authorities of the Ghaznavid era, preceded by Bilgatin (c.932–938; no. T1594) and followed by Alptigin (c.954–966; no. A1595), Bilgatin (966–973; no. 1595) and Maṣṣūr b. Bilgatin (c.969 and 977–983; no. A1596). However, as known and as evidenced by Album himself, these figures do not appear in any way related to Sebuktigin (977–997), the founder of the Ghaznavid dynasty (‘Sebuktiginids’). In the new edition of the Checklist (Album forthcoming: 284), these governors are labelled under ‘Pre-Ghaznavid governors’. In this work, I have included this coin under the heading ‘pre-Ghaznavid’. F. Schwarz (SNAT 1995: nos 93–96) identifies Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-Ghaffār as *Amīr*.

³⁷ The date is in *scriptio defectiva* since the term *mi’a*, marking the hundreds, is missing.

³⁸ The other known examples are dated 338 AH (= 949/50 CE) (Hattori 1990/94: VS, 4f, tab. I,1), 340 AH (= 951/52 CE) (Hattori 1990/94: II, nos 61–62, tab. 1) and 343 AH (= 954/55 CE) (SNAT 1995: no. 93; Album 12, lot 450). Other specimens do not preserve the date (SNAT 1995: nos 94–96; SARC 15: lot 450).

³⁹ Inaba 2015: 100; Inaba 2018: 144.

between the second half of the 11th century and the second half of the 12th century,⁴⁰ with coins in the name of Farrukhzād b. Masʿūd I (1052–1059), Ibrāhīm b. Masʿūd I (1059–1099), Masʿūd III b. Ibrāhīm (1099–1115), Bahrām Shāh b. Masʿūd III (1117–1157) and Khusraw Malik b. Khusraw Shāh (1160–1186). The mission also recorded an anonymous issue and some coins that cannot be classified precisely due to their poor state of preservation.

Ghaznavid silver coinage followed the standards introduced by Sebuktigin in c.990–991,⁴¹ with the addition of local variants, resulting in a heterogeneous coinage.⁴² Considering this factor, with the lack of a systematic study of the coinage for this dynasty, classification of the specimens can also be difficult. As has been noted (section 1), from a metrological point of view, one of the main characteristics of part of the Ghaznavid coinage is the use of flans also deriving from the Hindu Shahi system, which deviated from the standard of the dirham. These flans, introduced for the first time in the mint of Farwan, were often smaller than the dies, which made the legend in the margin with the mint and date illegible.⁴³

The silver coins of Maḥmūd b. Sebuktigin are also known by the expression *yamīnī* dirham, referring to the *laqab* of *Yamīn al-Dawla* that Maḥmūd received from the Abbasid caliph al-Qādir (991–1031).⁴⁴ For the sake of simplicity, this expression is sometimes commonly used to name some issues of his successors as well.

Since the reign of Masʿūd I, most of the metal alloy present in coins had been made up of debased silver; Ibrāhīm's reign apparently represented the first peak of this process of debasement.⁴⁵

One of the most interesting and most discussed aspects of medieval Islamic coinage is the use of sovereign titles and *laqabs* in the protocols of the rulers, which become extremely articulated and useful for understanding some historical-political dynamics that characterize these territories. Therefore, in the following section, in addition to the main information on the identified specimens, emphasis will also be placed on the titles adopted by the various rulers.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ I reiterate that the archaeological contexts and the materials from these contexts found by the Italian Mission also date to the late Ghaznavid phase (11th–12th centuries).

⁴¹ Although with variations in precious metal content, the model inaugurated by Sebuktigin and his son Maḥmūd remained in force throughout the Ghaznavid period.

⁴² In this regard, it is necessary to mention the macro-dirhams of the Badakhshan area. These coins, distinguished by a diameter and weight significantly greater than the standard dirham, were first struck during the Samanid period, and their production continued down to the reign of Maḥmūd. The first attempt at a systematic classification and historical contextualisation of the macro-dirhams was made by Mitchiner (1973), whose study remains the principal reference work, although subsequently updated and partially corrected by S. Album (1976) and F. Schwarz (SNAT 2002). The question of the frequent die links within the macro-dirhams was raised by N. Lowick (1977). Schwarz further advanced the study of this type of coins through a representative die-analysis of the series, which yielded significant results, particularly for the identification of the issuing authorities named on the reverse and for establishing different criteria of organisation. More recently, additional insights have been provided by a new die analysis dedicated to the macro-dirhams (Annucci 2024a: II.2i, III[A].3).

⁴³ In our cases the mint is almost always detected on the basis of published specimens used as references. The Ghaznavids also minted the traditional dirhams on a large flan; among the mints involved in this type of issue were those of Khurasan, especially Balkh and Nishapur and to a lesser extent, Herat and Marw. See Album 2011: 178.

⁴⁴ A general overview of the coinage during the time of Maḥmūd, with an update on his mint production and titlature, is offered in Annucci 2024b.

⁴⁵ Although this process is evident from the coins, one must mention that no extensive analyses have been conducted on large samples of Ghaznavid coins to define these levels of debasement. The only exception is the study by L. Ilisch and F. Schwarz (Ilisch *et al.* 2003).

⁴⁶ I have included summary tables of the titles identified for the Ghaznavid, Ghurid and Khwarezm Shah rulers.

a. Mas'ūd I b. Maḥmūd (no. 118)

Like the coin of Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd al-Ghaffār, the only specimen attributed to this ruler comes from Tapa Sardar. It is a broken dirham in poor condition, minted in Ghazni (Figures 7a, b). In the centre of the obverse is the profession of faith (preceded by *'adl*);⁴⁷ in the margin the date and the mint are both illegible. On the reverse the name of the Abbasid caliph, al-Qā'im (1031–1075), precedes the Ghaznavid emir's *laqab* *Nāṣir-Dīn Allāh* and his *ism* (Table 1). Because of the presence of the expression *ṣahīriyya* on the first line of the reverse, these dirhams can also be identified as *ṣahīriyya* dirhams (SNAT 1995: nos 280–284).⁴⁸



Figure 7. Ghaznavids, Mas'ūd I b. Maḥmūd (1030–1041)

a. Dirham (AR), 3.17g, mint in Ghazni. TS1992 (no. 118);

b. Dirham (AR), 3.43g, mint in Ghazni. Zeno #322558

Protocol

Ism: Mas'ūd (مسعود)

Title	Cat. no.
<i>Laqab</i>	
ناصر دين الله <i>Nāṣir-Dīn Allāh</i>	118

Table 1. Elements of Mas'ūd I's protocol attested on the coins included in the corpus

b. Farrukhzād b. Mas'ūd I (no. 119)

Only one coin, a *dāniq*,⁴⁹ can be attributed to this ruler, and it represents the most ancient specimen found in the Islamic sites (no. 119), specifically in the House of Lustrewares.⁵⁰ It bears the *ism* (name) of the Ghaznavid ruler on the reverse, preceded by *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*; on the obverse the initial part of the *shahāda* is followed by the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Qā'im.

Protocol

Ism: Farrukhzād (فرخزاد)

⁴⁷ Literally meaning 'justice', it is an expression included in the legends of the Islamic coins, especially during the medieval period. It could be found either alone or introducing religious formulae or titulatures.

⁴⁸ Probably the word *ṣahīriyya* can be traced back to one of the *laqabs* of Mas'ūd I, *Ṣahīr khalīfat Allāh*, attested on coins and in historical sources. See Giunta and Bresc 2004: 193.

⁴⁹ *Dāniq* is the Arabic translation of the Persian term *dang*. Nominally it corresponds to 1/6 of the dirham.

⁵⁰ I would like to thank L. Ilisch for showing me a coin of this same type held by the FINT (visit date: 08.05.2023). The coin is unpublished. A similar specimen is published in SNAT (1995: no. 364) in the name of Farrukhzād. For similar *dāniqs* in the name of Ibrāhīm b. Mas'ūd I, see SNAT 1995: nos 419, 420.

c. Ibrāhīm b. Masʿūd I (nos 120–127)

Eight specimens are ascribed to the reign of Ibrāhīm, five in silver and four in bronze. However, one of the bronzes is not of secure attribution.⁵¹

All the silver specimens are dirhams with a type consisting of legends following the same pattern (nos 120–123): in the centre of the obverse, the *shahāda* precedes the name of the caliphal authority, first al-Qāʾim and then al-Muqtadī (1075–1094); in the margin, if present, there is a religious legend. On the reverse, the protocol of the ruler is introduced by the official title (*al-Sulṭān al-aʿẓam*)⁵² followed by the *laqab* and sometimes by the *kunya*.⁵³ According to the numismatic and epigraphic data we have, Ibrāhīm was the first Ghaznavid officially bearing the title of *al-Sulṭān al-aʿẓam*. Conferred on him by the Abbasid caliph al-Qāʾim, this title likely dates back to the 1070s (SNAT 1995: 8).

The same arrangement of the legends is also attested on a bronze coin minted by the sultan during the caliphate of al-Mustazhir (1094–1118) (Table 2).

The official title of *al-Sulṭān al-aʿẓam* appears on all specimens of the corpus, except on coin no. 120. Dating to the caliphate of al-Qāʾim, this coin mentions Ibrāhīm only with *ism* and the *laqabs*.⁵⁴

Two bronze coins belong to the Arab-Shahi type (nos 125, 126):⁵⁵ on the obverse, the bull Nandi is depicted below the legend *śrī sāmanta deva*; on the reverse, the legend in Kufic script with the titulature of the issuing authority replaces the horseman of the original Hindu Shahi type. This variant is said to be struck in the Lahore mint⁵⁶ and is sometimes known by the expression ‘bull and legend’ (Deyell 1990: 75).⁵⁷ Neither of the two specimens of the corpus bears the name of the mint, which should also correspond in this case to the city of Lahore (Figures 8a, b).⁵⁸ The attribution to Ibrāhīm of one of these two specimens (no. 126) is proposed based only on some traces of the *ductus* of the legend on the reverse due to the poor state of preservation.



Figure 8. Ghaznavids, Ibrāhīm b. Masʿūd (1059–1099)
 a. ₤, 3.17g, mint in Lahore (with dotted circle in reverse margin). C135 (no. 125);
 b. ₤, 3.14g, mint in Lahore (legend in reverse margin). Zeno #301847

⁵¹ All the coins of this ruler were found in the Ghaznavid Palace, with the sole exception of one specimen found in Tapa Sardar. See section 2.

⁵² C. Bresc (Giunta and Bresc 2004: 168) identified some coins issued by Masʿūd I, father of Ibrāhīm, in Sind, on which the ruler bears the title of *al-Sulṭān*. Bresc does not, however, provide a specific bibliography, and I have not been able to trace this information.

⁵³ Patronymic, an onomastic element composed of *Abū* (m.; ‘father’) or *Umm* (f.; ‘mother’) plus a name.

⁵⁴ There are known issues of Ibrāhīm with the title *al-Sulṭān al-aʿẓam* also bearing the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Qāʾim (BMCO II: nos 566, 568).

⁵⁵ In the present work, I use this term to identify the Islamic coins deriving from the Hindu Shahi coinage, a discussion of which is provided in Annucci 2024a. The use of this term may be less ambiguous than *jital* and allows for a more precise definition of a coin type that constituted one of the most significant monetary issues of the Indo-Iranian borderlands for at least five centuries. See also section 1.15 and note 94.

⁵⁶ On the first issue of this type there is a legend in the margin explicitly naming the mint of Lahore.

⁵⁷ Apparently, this type was first introduced by Mawdūd (1041–1048), as a variant of the ‘bull and horseman’ type.

⁵⁸ On neither coin is the first line of the reverse legible. In this part of the field, two expressions are usually present on Ibrāhīm’s issues: *sayf* (‘sword’) or *ʿadl* (‘justice’). The first is attested, for example, in BMCO II: nos 561–562. In Tye and Tye (1995: nos 103.3–4), the two types are graphically represented, but only *ʿadl* is proposed as a reading. Three legible specimens with *sayf* have been published by Errington 2021: figs 61.21, 23 and 31; the last specimen is erroneously attributed to Masʿūd III.

A third bronze coin bears only legends in Arabic script on the obverse and reverse, and it was certainly minted in Ghazni, despite the mint mark that distinguishes this coin type being illegible (no. 124).

The bronze specimen no. 127, heavily blundered, can be attributed to Ibrāhīm based on the few traces of the *ductus* of some letters. However, the weight and diameter reported in the Italian Mission inventories differ significantly from the weight standards for these issues.

Protocol

Ism: Ibrāhīm (إبراهيم)⁵⁹

Title	Cat. no.	
Sovereign title		
السلطان الأعظم <i>al-Sulṭān al-a ʿẓam</i>	121–123 (AR)	124–127 (AE)
<i>Laqab</i>		
سيد السلاطين <i>Sayyid al-Salāṭīn</i>	121–123	
ظهير الدولة <i>Ẓahīr al-Dawla</i>	120	
قاهر الملوك <i>Qāhir al-Mulūk</i>	121–123	
ملك الإسلام <i>Malik al-Islām</i>	121–123	
نصير الملة <i>Naṣīr al-Milla</i>	120	
Kunya		
أبو المظفر <i>Abū ʿl-Muẓaffar</i>	122, 123 (AR)	125, 126 (AE)

Table 2. Elements of Ibrāhīm's protocol identified on the coins in our corpus

d. Mas'ūd III b. Ibrāhīm (nos 128, 129)

Two coins, presumably in billon, were minted by this ruler.⁶⁰ They bear the same type made up of legends in Arabic: the name of the Abbasid caliph, al-Mustaẓhir, and the mint formula on the obverse; his official title (*al-Sulṭān al-a'ẓam*) in the centre of the reverse, within a square frame, surrounded by a legend containing other elements of his protocol (Figures 9a, b) (Table 3).



Figure 9. Ghaznavids, Mas'ūd III b. Ibrāhīm (1099–1115)

a. BI, 2.43g, (*Ghazna*). Sp124 (no. 129);

b. BI, 2.78g, AH 494 (= 1100/01 CE) / *Ghazna*. Zeno #294213

⁵⁹ It is necessary to specify that the *ism* Ibrāhīm on coins, as well as some inscriptions, is in *scriptio defectiva*, since it lacks the 'alif after the *rā*'.

⁶⁰ One coin was found in the Ghaznavid Palace; the second one is a sporadic find.

Only one of the two specimens partially retains the mint formula with the final part of the date with the hundreds (*arba 'mi'a* = four hundreds).⁶¹

Protocol

Ism: Mas'ūd (مسعود)

Title	Cat. no.
Sovereign title	
السلطان الأعظم <i>al-Sulṭān al-a'ẓam</i>	128, 129
<i>Laqab</i>	
سنة الملة <i>Sinā' al-Milla</i>	128, 129
ظهير الإمام <i>Ẓahīr al-Umām</i>	128, 129
علاء الدولة <i>'Alā' al-Dawla</i>	128, 129
محقق الإمام <i>Muḥaqqaq al-Imām</i>	128, 129
ملك الإسلام <i>Malik al-Islām</i>	128, 129

Table 3. Elements of Mas'ūd III's protocol identified on the coins in our corpus

e. Bahrām Shāh b. Mas'ūd III (nos 130–139)

Of the ten coins attributed to Bahrām Shāh, six are in silver,⁶² all from the same archaeological context (nos 130–135).⁶³ On the obverse *'adl* precedes the initial part of the *shahāda*, the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Mustarshid (1118–1135) and that of the Seljuk sultan Sanjar (1118–1157), the latter with his *ism* and the *laqab* *'Aḍud al-Dawla* (عُضد الدولة). The margin with mint and date is always illegible; in the centre of the reverse is the final part of the *shahāda*, followed by the titulature of the Ghaznavid sultan, and the margin bears a Koranic verse (Kor. 30:4) (Figures 10a–c; Table 4).



Figure 10. Ghaznavids, Bahrām Shāh b. Mas'ūd III (1117–1150 and 1152–1157)

a. Dirham (AR, debased?), 2.84g, *Ghazna*. C4498 (no. 133); b. Dirham (AR, debased?), 3.14g, *Ghazna*. Zeno #136118; c. Dirham (AR, debased?), 2.17g, *Ghazna*. Zeno #52133

⁶¹ A specimen with this same type is included in SNAT (1995: no. 458) and bears the date 494 AH (= 1100/01 CE).

⁶² Allegedly, after the fall that occurred starting from the reign of Ibrāhīm, during the reign of Bahrām Shāh, the level of precious metal increased until it reached a percentage of 50 to 70%, cf. Album 2011: 178.

⁶³ Room XXXI of the Ghaznavid Palace, see section 2.1.

The presence of the name of the Seljuk sultan on the coins of Bahrām Shāh highlights the condition of vassalage of the Ghaznavid, who, after a first Ghurid incursion in 1151, managed to reconquer the throne thanks to the support of Sanjar (see section 1).

The remaining four coins (nos 136–139), from the Ghaznavid Palace are in a poor state of preservation but have been identified thanks to the partial legibility of the legend and, above all, the ray-type frame, characteristic of this type of coins. These specimens bear the ruler's *laqab* on the obverse and the *ism* on the reverse (Figures 11a, b).



Figure 11. Ghaznavids, Bahrām Shāh b. Mas'ūd III (1117–1150 and 1152–1157)
a. BI, 2g, *Ghazna*. C3438 (no. 136), b. BI, 1.91g, *Ghazna*. Zeno #93382

Protocol

Ism: Bahrāmshāh (بهرامشاه)

Title	Cat. no.
Sovereign title	
السلطان الأعظم <i>al-Sulṭān al-a'ẓam</i>	130–135
<i>Laqab</i>	
يمين الدولة <i>Yamīn al-Dawla</i>	130–139

Table 4. Elements of Bahrām Shāh's protocol attested on the coins included in the corpus

f. Anonymous (nos 140, 141)

Two coins belong to an anonymous issue which bears the *shahāda* divided on the obverse and reverse and were found in the palace. The legend of the obverse margin is unknown, as it is always illegible; the one on the reverse bears the formula with mint and date, illegible on our specimens.

g. Khusraw Malik b. Khusraw Shāh (no. 142)

The only specimen in the name of this sultan is an Arab-Shahi coin in bronze or billon of the type 'bull and legend': on the obverse the bull is depicted in a marked abstract style;⁶⁴ on the reverse the word '*adl*' is followed by the sultan's protocol (Table 5).

⁶⁴ The coin comes from the Ghaznavid Palace.

This specimen constitutes a new variant (currently unpublished) among the numerous and heterogeneous variants of the Arab-Shahi coinage minted by this ruler (Figures 12a–d).



Figure 12. Ghaznavids, Khusraw Malik b. Khusraw Shāh (1160–1186)

- a. Æ, 2.79g, mint in Kurraman. C45 (no. 142); b. Æ, 2.17g, mint in Kurraman. Zeno #131520
c. Æ, –g, mint in Kurraman. Zeno #170419; d. Æ, 3.6g, mint in Kurraman. Zeno #91267

Protocol

Ism: Khusraw Malik (جسرو ملك)

Title	Cat. no.
Sovereign title	
السلطان الأعظم <i>al-Sulṭān al-a‘ẓam</i>	142
<i>Laqab</i>	
تاج الدولة <i>Tāj al-Dawla</i>	142

Table 5. Elements of Khusraw Malik’s protocol attested on the coins included in the corpus

h. Illegible (nos 143–146)

The four illegible specimens could be ascribed to the Ghaznavid dynasty due to the preservation of the sunray frame and the shape and treatment of the flans: the weight and dimensions fall within the standards of the issues in base metal (probably bronze) of the late Ghaznavid phase, corresponding to the sultanates of Bahrām Shāh b. Mas‘ūd III (1117–1157), Khusraw Shāh b. Bahrām Shāh (1157–1160) and Khusraw Malik b. Khusraw Shāh (1160–1186).

1.5 Tomaras and Chauhans

In the 12th century, the Rajput dynasties of the Tomaras of Delhi and the Chauhans controlled the Delhi area, opposing the Ghaznavid expansionistic policy.

Most of the issues of these Rajput rulers belonged to the ‘bull and horseman’ class, for which Cunningham (1871) elaborated a first chronology, based on the chronicle of Abū’l-Faḍl (d. 1602) *Ā’in-i-Akbari*.⁶⁵ Deyell (1990) has rediscussed the numerous problems relating to this coinage through a detailed analysis. He considers historical, metrological, and stylistic aspects, developing an updated chronology, even though, as the scholar himself states (Deyell 1990: 148), a

⁶⁵ The *Ā’in-i-Akbari* is the third volume of the *Akbar-nāma*, the official history of the reign of the Mughal ruler Akbar (1559–1605), composed by order of the ruler himself; see Eaton 1984.

crucial point remains the analysis of the coin hoards of this dynasty. According to the conclusions reached by Deyell, all the Rajput coinage of the ‘bull and horseman’ type was struck in the mint(s) active in Delhi during the 12th century.

Billon coins arrived in significant numbers in the territories of Afghanistan only after the Ghurid conquest, as these issues are not found in hoards with late Ghaznavid debased silver coins from the Punjab or with Ghurid ones minted in the Peshawar area (Deyell 1990: 180).

Coins in our corpus would belong to this period: three are attributed to Chahada Deva (1173–1191), and nine are anonymous copies of Madana Deva (1145–1167).⁶⁶

a. Chahada Deva (nos 147–149)

The three coins identified for this ruler bear on the obverse, above the bull, the epithet *asāvarī* preceding *śrī sāmanta deva*; on the reverse, in proto-Sharada, the name of the issuing authority.⁶⁷ They are all classified as sporadic finds.

Through a stylistic analysis of the coins included in many hoards, especially from the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent, Deyell (1990: 160) discussed the dating of the coinage of this ruler and concluded that the coins of Chahada Deva cannot be produced as late as 1235–1260, nor could they have been produced at a mint other than that of the Chauhan kings in Delhi (Deyell 1990: 151).

Moreover, using the epithet *asāvarī* makes it possible to detect a group of issues of this dynasty, which include the coins of Somesvara (1169–1173), Chahada, and Prithvi Raja (1191–1192). Finally, the fabric analysis of the coins has given Deyell (1990: 162) the possibility to insert the coins of Chahada between those of Somesvara and Prithvi Raja.

b. Anonymous ‘Madana’ Imitations (nos 150–158)

The remaining coins belong to the same type (Tye and Tye 1995: 39). They are particularly common coins, imitations of the specimens issued for the first time during the reign of Madana Pala Deva (1145–1167).⁶⁸ The iconography of the bull and the horseman of these coins is heavily stylized and decidedly more basic.

The identification of this type is extremely complex due to the usual poor state of preservation in which these coins find themselves, often preserving few traces of the legend. Another element that makes their classification difficult is the resemblance of these issues to the others of the ‘Shahi’ type, differing only in very few, often undetectable, details.

1.6 Ghurids

During the 12th century, the rise of the Ghurids reduced the Ghaznavid power when the former definitively conquered Ghazni in 1173 CE (= 569 AH) and made it their capital. The ten Ghurid coins in our corpus belong to Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām (1173–1206), the ruler who completed the process of conquest of the city.

Like the Ghaznavid coinage, the Ghurid one has not been subjected to systematic and comprehensive study, especially due to its complexity, even though Michael O’Neal has conducted some of the most important research on this topic.⁶⁹ According to Deyell’s hypothesis (1990: 196–203), the Ghurids pursued a monetary policy focused on adapting their coinage to that al-

⁶⁶ In Tye and Tye (1995: 39) coins minted by Rajput rulers are placed under the heading ‘Delhi Rajas’.

⁶⁷ Chahada Deva could be Chahar, subsidiary Chauhan king of Delhi and Ajmer.

⁶⁸ The provenances are Tapa Sardar, the Ghaznavid Palace, the House of Lustrewares and the Rawza, close to the Tomb of Maḥmūd.

⁶⁹ Cf. O’Neal 2013; 2020. The scholar also presented different aspects of the Ghurid coinage at several conferences.

ready in circulation in the conquered territories. There are important differences between the Afghan issues and those of the Indian subcontinent: the former adheres more to the Islamic ‘canonical’ models; the others adapt, both in type and in the protocol of the ruler (often Sanskritized), to the regional issues and fit seamlessly into the previous and contemporary tradition.

a. Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām (nos 159–168)

Among the ten coins belonging to this ruler,⁷⁰ only one example is in silver and bears on the obverse the name of the Abbasid caliph al-Mustaḍī (1170–1180) and that of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām (1163–1203), elder brother of Mu‘izz al-Dīn and his overlord until his death (no. 159). Ghiyāth al-Dīn bears the title *al-Sulṭān al-a‘ẓam*, the *kunya* and the *ism*. On the reverse is the protocol of Mu‘izz al-Dīn, which includes the titles of *al-Sulṭān al-a‘ẓam*, *shāhanshāh* (misspelt as *shahānshā*) and *ghāzī*, followed by the *kunya* *Abū ‘l-Muẓaffar* (Tables 6 and 7).

The two rulers, born three years apart, have the same *ism* and the same *nasab* (both *Muḥammad b. Sām*) but differed both in the *kunya* (*Abū ‘l-Faṭḥ* for the former and *Abū ‘l-Muẓaffar* for the latter) and in the main *laqabs*: the eldest acquired first that of *Shams al-Dīn*, then—when he assumed power over the sultanate of Ghur—that of *Ghiyāth al-Dīn*; the younger that of *Shihāb al-Dīn* and then that of *Mu‘izz al-Dīn*.

During the years of ‘co-reign’, the protocols of the two brothers reflect a complexity linked not only to the sharing of the *ism* and *nasab* but also to the official titles, the reflection of a hierarchy of power. According to a hypothesis by Spengler (1994: 114–15), taken up by Flood (2005: 266–67) and O’Neal (2020: 210–11), Ghiyāth al-Dīn would have held a superior role compared to Mu‘izz al-Dīn: the former with the title of *al-Sulṭān al-a‘ẓam*, the latter with that of *al-Sulṭān al-mu‘aẓẓam* (Figure 13).⁷¹ Spengler also notices that, on some Ghazni’s issues struck between 569 AH (= 1173 CE) and 581 AH (= 1185 CE), Mu‘izz al-Dīn is styled as *al-Sulṭān al-a‘ẓam* while Ghiyāth al-Dīn bears no title. This hypothesis—confirmed by some coins published by F. Schwarz (SNAT 1995: nos 539–49)—would raise questions of whether Mu‘izz al-Dīn was ‘the humble, loyal and deferential servant of his elder brother’ (Spengler 1994: 115). Interestingly, the coin in our corpus bears the title of *al-Sulṭān al-a‘ẓam* for both rulers, as also attested on some specimens in the Tübingen collection (SNAT 1995: nos 536–537). On these coins, considering the absence of *laqab*, the distinction of the two brothers occurs only based on the presence of the *kunya* and the title of *ghāzī* in the protocol of Mu‘izz al-Dīn, a title attested for this ruler also in the textual sources (Giunta and Bresc 2004: 229).



Figure 13. Ghurids, Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām (1173–1206) with his brother (and overlord) Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām (1163–1203), dirham (AR), 3.20g, AH 598 (=1201/02 CE) / Ghazna. Zeno #130614

⁷⁰ Eight coins were found in the Ghaznavid Palace and two in the House of Lustrewares.

⁷¹ This usage of the protocol follows the one of the Seljuks in the first half of the 12th century, when Sanjar b. Malik Shāh (1118–1157) ruled in Khorasan but was recognized as a senior sultan by the other Seljuk rulers to the west (O’Neal 2020: 211).

The nine remaining coins are in bronze. Seven coins are part of the same issue—minted in Ghazni—with the *laqab* of the sovereign divided on the obverse and reverse, inscribed in a square frame (nos 160–165) or an eight-pointed star (no. 166) (Figures 14a, b).⁷²



Figure 14. Ghurids, Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām (1173–1206)

a. Æ, 3.88g, mint in Ghazni. C1033bis (no. 160); b. Æ, 2.73g, mint in Ghazni. V585 (no. 166)

The remaining two coins attributed to Mu‘izz al-Dīn are both in bronze. The first bears the sultan’s titulature on the obverse and religious formulas on the reverse, which is almost totally illegible (no. 167). On our specimens also the date is almost completely illegible, but this issue is usually dated between 596 AH (= 1199/1200 CE) and 598 AH (= 1201/02 CE), even though specimens with clearly legible mint and date formula are still missing (Figures 15a–c).⁷³ The mint of Ghazni is uncertain. On the obverse of the second specimen, a complex motif with a six-pointed star frames a flower; the reverse retains the Ghurid sultan’s title in the centre; in the margin is an undeciphered legend, probably in proto-Sharada (no. 168).



Figure 15. Ghurids, Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām (1173–1206)

a. Æ, 3.14g, AH 59x / mint in Ghazni (?). C163 (no. 167); b. Æ, 2.94g, AH59x / mint in Ghazni (?). Zeno #266164; c. Æ, 2.08g, AH “556” (= 1160/61 CE) mint in Ghazni (?). Zeno #262800

Protocol

Ism: Muḥammad (محمد; Mu‘izz al-Dīn)

Title	Cat. no.
Sovereign title	
السلطان الأعظم <i>al-Sulṭān al-a‘ẓam</i>	159, 167, 168
شہانشا (sic) <i>Shahānshā</i>	159
غازی <i>Ghāzī</i>	159

⁷² This type will be the model for some later issues, including the one presented in section 1.7 and those of the Khwarezm Shahs and Chingiz Khān (1206–1229). Cf. Tye and Tye 1995: 54.

⁷³ Some specimens seem to bear the date 556 AH (= 1160/61 CE), possibly to be interpreted as an engraver’s error (Figure 15c).

<i>Laqab</i>	
معز الدنيا والدين <i>Mu‘izz al-Dunya wa’l-Dīn</i>	160–166
<i>Kunya</i>	
أبو المظفر <i>Abū’l-Muẓaffar</i>	159, 167

Table 6. Elements of Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām’s protocol attested on the coins included in the corpus

Ism: Muḥammad (محمد; Ghiyāṭ al-Dīn)

Title	Cat. no.
Sovereign title	
السلطان الأعظم <i>al-Sulṭān al-a‘ẓam</i>	159
<i>Kunya</i>	
أبو الفتح <i>Abū’l-Faṭḥ</i>	159

Table 7. Elements of Ghiyāṭ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām’s protocol attested on the coins included in the corpus

1.7 Uncertain (Ghurids/Turkish Slave Commander or Iltutmish b. Ilam Khān, Delhi Sultan)

a. Anonymous (no. 169)

At the end of Mu‘izz al-Dīn’s reign, the Ghurid’s power was severely reduced due to some internal strife among the claimants to the throne. Such a scenario provided the opportunity for a Turkish *ghulām*, Tāj al-Dīn Yildiz (no. 169), to take *de facto* power in Ghazni, removing it from the control of the Ghurids of Bamiyan.⁷⁴

According to Schwarz (SNAT 1995: no. 587), an anonymous billon specimen found in Ghazni should be attributed to Tāj al-Dīn. However, this attribution is not certain; Robert and Monica Tye (1995: no. 364) classify this coin as ‘Anonymous Early Sultans of Delhi Copper’. The same topic is presented by Goron and Goenka (2001: 19; 24, nos D84, D85), who attribute these coins to an anonymous issue of the Indian Sultanate during the reign of Iltutmish b. Ilam Khān (1211–1236). Indeed, the coinage of the Delhi Sultan partly followed the model of those struck by Mu‘izz al-Dīn, as did all those that followed the Ghurid ruler’s reign. A good number of anonymous issues are attributed to the reign of Iltutmish through stylistic comparisons.

Here, the coin is under the label ‘uncertain’, even though I am inclined towards Tübingen’s Sylloge attribution. In any case, in this study, I correct the reading of the obverse legend: ‘*adl*’ instead of ‘*abd*’. This correction entails losing the argument which supported the attribution to Yildiz (‘*abd*’ = ‘slave’). However, the archaeological context of this coin, a little hoard wrapped in a woollen cloth found in the palace, seems to exclude a possible later attribution for this issue (see section 2.1).

⁷⁴ Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad was heirless. The Turkish fringe of the army supported his nephew Ghiyāṭ al-Dīn Maḥmūd (1206–1212), while the local commanders supported Bahā’ al-Dīn Sām of Bamiyan (1192–1206) and, after his death, his two sons. Finally, Ghiyāṭ al-Dīn Maḥmūd prevailed; cf. Bosworth 1968b: 166.

In any case, one should keep in mind that similar arrangements of short, usually anonymous, legends within circular or sunray frames are widely used from the Ghurid period onwards, also in Indian sultanates (Figures 16a–e). Lacking further evidence, a final and precise classification remains impossible.



Figure 16.

a. Ghurids, Mu'izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām (1173–1206), Æ, 2.60g, mint in Ghazni. Zeno #108616; b. Sultans of Delhi, Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish (1211–1236), Æ, 2.36g. Zeno #228053; c. Sultans of Delhi, Mu'izz al-Dīn Kay Qubādh (1287–1290), Æ, 0.45g. Zeno #66742; d. Sultans of Delhi, Jalāl al-Dīn Khaljī Fīrūz (1290–1296), Æ, 2.28g, *ḥaḍrat Dehli*. Zeno #273424; e. Sultans of Bengal, Shams al-Dīn Ilyās (1339–1358), AV, 2.70g. Zeno #49299

1.8 Khwarezm Shahs

In an attempt to regain Ghazni from Yildiz, the Ghurid Ghiyāth al-Dīn Maḥmūd (1206–1212) sought the support of the Khwarezm Shahs, heralding the end of the Ghurid dynasty. In fact, in 1215, Ghazni was conquered by the main exponent of the Khwarezm Shahs, 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (1200–1220). Four of the six coins identified for this dynasty belong to this ruler.⁷⁵ Two more specimens were minted under his successor Jalāl al-Dīn Mengubirti (1220–1231).⁷⁶

The coinage of this dynasty shows an even more marked heterogeneity than the Ghaznavid and Ghurid ones and, like the latter, reveals a tendency to adapt to the pre-existing coinage of the conquered territories. Under 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad, the number of mints issuing coins for regional circulation increased. The complex coinage of this dynasty essentially consists of gold and silver coins, along with numerous types of copper-based coinage (including both *fals* and coins bearing the 'Shahi' type). The specimens identified in our corpus fit into those that Album (2011: 187) includes under the *jitals* category, taking up the division and terminology of Tye and Tye (1995). These are bronze coins minted in large quantities during the reign of 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad and Mengubirti, usually the result of a good strike even if their appearance is often quite worn, especially due to the metal alloy.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Coins from Tapa Sardar and the Ghaznavid Palace.

⁷⁶ The two specimens come from Tapa Sardar.

⁷⁷ No analysis has been conducted on these specimens. In some cases, coins of 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad seem to have a very low percentage of silver.

a. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad (nos 170–172)

The three specimens attributed to ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad belong to completely different types, as is typical of his coinage, extremely heterogeneous.⁷⁸ All of the coins bear no mint⁷⁹ but include the complex titulature of this sultan (Table 8).

The coins presented in our corpus, all in bronze, represent only a small sample of the variety of issues of this sovereign, which, however, already attests to the great differences in the organization of the field.⁸⁰

Protocol

Ism: Muḥammad (محمد)

Title	Cat. no.
Sovereign title	
السلطان الأعظم <i>al-Sulṭān al-a‘ẓam</i>	170–172
<i>Laqab</i>	
علاء الدنيا والدين <i>‘Alā’ al-Dunya wa ‘l-Dīn</i>	170–172
<i>Kunya</i>	
أبو الفتح <i>Abū ‘l-Faṭḥ</i>	171–172
<i>Nasab</i>	
بن سلطان <i>bin Sulṭān</i>	171–172

Table 8. Elements of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad’s protocol attested on the coins included in the corpus.

b. Jalāl al-Dīn Mengubirti (nos 173, 174)

The other two coins minted during the Kharezm Shah period were minted during the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn Mengubirti; they belong to the ‘bull and horseman’ type.⁸¹ On the obverse the legend in proto-Sharada script *śā jalāladiṇa* (‘Sanskritized’ version of the *laqab*) is placed above the bull; on the reverse, in the margin and still in proto-Sharada script *śrī hamīraḥ*. This issue is historically connected to the ruler’s withdrawal from Sind due to the Mongol invasion. Many specimens of

⁷⁸ This sovereign is credited with issuing approximately 20% of the Shahi coinage minted throughout the period of circulation of this type. However, this class represents only one of the many circulating during his reign. According to the few studies conducted so far, the sultan does not seem to have started a standardized coinage during his reign, simply maintaining the pre-existing one in the conquered areas; see Hornle 1889: 7–23; Tye and Tye 1995: 67; Album 2011: 187.

⁷⁹ According to bibliographic comparisons (SNAT 1995: nos 612–645), one specimen (no. 171) should have been minted in Ghazni, while another one (no. 170) was probably struck in Bamiyan.

⁸⁰ A fair number of coins of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad were found in the archaeological excavations of Udegram Castle (Swat, Pakistan), a small part of which was published by Giunta 2006: 237–62. The remaining coins have not been studied and are unpublished (see section 1.15).

⁸¹ This ruler is one of the great heroes of traditional Islamic history and the last ruler of the dynasty that reigned after the arrival of the Mongol hordes in the area.

this type have been found in India. The mint for this type is unknown: Multan, or more likely a new mint in the Nandana area, are two possible guesses (Tye and Tye 1995: no. 71).

1.9 Timurids

a. Suyurgatmish Khān and Uncertain / Anonymous (nos 175, 176)

Two specimens (nos 175, 176), both found in the Ghaznavid Palace, are attributed to this dynasty which controlled the Ghazni area from the 14th century. The first coin bears an unpublished type (no. 175), according to my knowledge. Only one other specimen, in a better state of preservation, is kept at the FINT (Inv. No. HI2 E1) (Figures 17a, b). The coin bears on the obverse, within a complex cartouche, the name of the issuing authority Suyūr and the date in numbers 828 AH (= 1424/25 CE); on the reverse, within an astroid with four Timurid knots, the mint Kabul (*Kābul*). The issuing authority should be identified with Suyurgatmish Khān, one of Shāh Rukh's sons (1405–1447), who held the office of governor of Kabul from 1418 to 1426, as well as that of lord of Kandahar and Ghazni.

The second specimen, a schyphate *dangi*⁸² in bronze, is completely illegible but retains a Timurid countermark inside a cartouche bearing the mint *Kabūl* (of the countermark) (no. 176).



Figure 17. Timurids, Suyurgatmish Khān (15th cent.)

a. Æ, 3.62g, AH 828 (= 1424/25 CE) / *Kābul*. C1859 (no. 175); b. Æ, –g, AH 828 (= 1424/25 CE) / *Kābul*. FINT HI2 E1

1.10 Mughals

a. Anonymous (Akbar I b. Humāyūn) (no. 177)

The only coin (no. 177) surely dating back to the Mughal period from Ghazni comes from the area of Mahmud's tomb. It is an anonymous copper coin, probably a *dam*,⁸³ bearing the date 973 AH (= 1565/66 CE) that places the issue under the reign of Akbar I b. Humāyūn (1559–1605).⁸⁴ These coins have the date in figures and Persian script on the obverse. The reverse usually contains the mint formula, unfortunately in our case off flan; it could very likely be identified with Narnol (Haryana, India) (Figures 18a–c).

⁸² From Persian, *dang* means 'one-sixth'. It is used for some rare silver coins minted in Iran between the 12th and 13th centuries and for most copper coins of Central Asia from the 15th century. The term is occasionally attested in some legends on Central Asian copper coins minted in the late 15th–early 16th century; cf. Album 2011: 7.

⁸³ The denomination is used in the Indian territories to indicate particularly heavy coins, around 15–20g. In our case, I could not determine precisely whether it is a *dam* or a *nisf* (½ *dam*), as the weight for the specimen is not recorded.

⁸⁴ Nothing remains of the Mughal period in Ghazni. Most likely the city was affected by a rather intense construction activity, with mosques, gardens and the palaces of high officials. The growth of the funerary landscape is the only trace that remains of this period; see Massullo 2017: 29.



Figure 18. Mughals, Akbar I b. Humāyūn (1556–1605)

a. Dam? (Æ), –g, AH 973 (= 1565/66 CE), the mint reading is uncertain. IG1917 (no. 177); b. Dam? (Æ), 20.3g, AH 979 (= 1571/72 CE) / *Lahore*. Zeno #287661; c. Dam (Æ), 20.27g, AH 987 (= 1579/80 CE) / *Narnol*. Zeno #332297

1.11 Sikhs

a. Ranjit Singh (no. 178)

Following the decline of the Mughals, the Sikh Empire (1799–1849) extended over an area corresponding to the Punjab region.⁸⁵ The only specimen (no. 178) ascribed to this dynasty is a bronze paisa minted under the authority of the *mahārāja* of the Punjab Ranjit Singh (1801–1839) in Amritsar (India). This issue bears legends in Gurmukhi and, as many of the specimens issued, the ‘frozen’ year of 1885 VS,⁸⁶ which probably characterizes the issues for a relatively long period, most likely from 1885 VS (= 1828 CE) to 1905 or 1906 VS (= 1848 or 1849 CE).⁸⁷ On the second line of the reverse, slightly off flan, a leaf represents a mark that the mint master placed to standardize the issues, initially only on rupees and then also on copper coins.⁸⁸

1.12 Durrani

Four bronze specimens are attributable to the period under the control of the Durrani rulers, and they were all found in the Ghaznavid Palace.

Durrani coinage follows the standards set by the Mughals, and some of the early bronzes of this dynasty also bear the name of the ruler (Album 2011: 309). However, all the issues in our *corpus*, especially late and aes ones, are anonymous and civic; therefore, they fall under the category of ‘Iranian Civic Copper’.

⁸⁵ The beginning of the Sikh community is to be placed in the 15th century with the activity of its founder, Guru Nanak (d. 1539), whose teachings grew the Sikh community throughout the area. However, it was not until 1799 that the Sikh territories unified politically; this operation was the work of Ranjit Singh, who conquered Lahore and assumed the title of *mahārāja*, taking the Punjab out of the Afghan orbit. After the Treaty of Amritsar (1809), his power was also officially recognized by the British. The latter also decreed its end in 1849 with the second Anglo-Sikh War. For more information on the history of Sikhs and the Sikh Empire, see Grewal 1990.

⁸⁶ *Vikrama Samvat* calendar. Hindu astronomers set its beginning as 19th September 58 BCE; other datings differ significantly. Conventionally, nowadays, *Vikrama Samvat* years are converted to the year of the Common Era by subtracting the first 57.

⁸⁷ Herrli 2004: 88. The issuing of these frozen-date coins started in Amritsar and then in Lahore. According to the hypothesis of Herrli (2004: 33), its spread between rupees and bronze issues in Gurmukhi script was a consequence of a monetary reform or reorganization of the mints.

⁸⁸ We do not know why the leaf was chosen as a symbol. For more information about the identification of the leaf type and the different representations, see Herrli 2004: 25–26.

a. Iranian Civic Copper' (nos 179–182)

Four coins are assigned to this class. The first specimen (no. 179) was minted in Kabul and was likely struck in what is commonly referred to as the third period (c.1600–1878) for issues of the 'Iranian Civic Copper'.⁸⁹ On the obverse, a flower is framed by two swords; on the reverse, there are traces of the mint (in particular of the letter *kāf* of *Kabūl* interlacing with the *lām* of *fulūs*). On one of the illegible specimens (see below, no. 183), it is possible to note the same interweaving between the letters *kāf* and *lām*, which may support a similar attribution.

The second example (no.180), a fals, has the scimitar between two stars on the obverse and the mint *Aḥmadshāhī* (= Kandahar) and part of the date in figures on the reverse, probably 1255 AH (= 1839/40 CE), between the reigns of Dūst Muḥammad (1826–1839) and Shāh Shujā' (1839–1842), of the Durrani Sadozays.

The third specimen (no. 181), minted in Herat (lit. *Harāt*), bears the year of issue in figures, probably 1311 AH (= 1893/94 CE)—under the reign of 'Abd al-Raḥmān (1880–1901)—and the denomination on the last line of the obverse below a representation of the throne room. On the reverse, almost completely obliterated, there are traces of the mint *Dār al-Nuṣrat Harāt*, the seat of central power. The reading of the date is uncertain due to the state of preservation and the quality of the photo; anyway, according to Album (2011: 291) the epithet of *Dār al-Nuṣrat* for the city of Herat is used occasionally only after 1273. For this reason, the reading of 1311 AH is more likely than 1211 AH (= 1796/97 CE).⁹⁰

The fourth and last specimen was minted at Kandahar (lit. *Qandahār*) (no. 182). It does not bear the name of the issuing authority: the mosque with the minbar is represented on the obverse, while three diacritical points and part of the mint's name are visible on the reverse. The date is illegible but the known specimens (SICA 9: nos 1087–1088) are all struck in 1322 AH (=1904/05 CE), under the reign of Ḥabīb Allāh (1901–1919).⁹¹

1.13 Illegible Modern Copper Coins

The five coins (nos 183–187) included under this heading belong to modern copper coinage, which is unfortunately characterized by a poor strike and in our specimens, also by a bad state of preservation.

Unfortunately, this prevents us from making a precise classification, even though I can propose a chronology starting from the 18th century. They testify to a late frequentation of the site, which in modern times became a destination for local pilgrimages, as also attested by the growth of the funerary landscape. The find-spots for these coins, e.g. the area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd, seem to support this hypothesis.

1.14 Illegible (Islamic)

Some coins have been classified as illegible due to their poor state of preservation or the absence of adequate documentation, such as casts or high-quality photographs. Among these, twelve spec-

⁸⁹ During this period, many particularly productive mints were active, so much so that the number of types registered during this phase is high and heterogeneous. The Kabul mint is one of the most productive, where machine-struck coinage was introduced in 1890/91 (= 1308 AH). For a more detailed discussion of this class, see Album 2011: 316–21.

⁹⁰ Due to the poor state of preservation, the specimen from Ghazni was attributed to Zamān Shāh b. Tīmūr (Sadozay; 1793–1800) in Annucci 2020: 216, fig. 11 because the date was read as 1211 AH (= 1796/97 CE). This attribution was revised after inspecting specimens in a better state of preservation, making it possible to verify and correct the reading. A specimen available online (Numista no. 110236: <https://en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces110236.html>) read the date as 1331 AH (= 1912/13 CE); however, this reading seems unlikely.

⁹¹ In Annucci (2020: fig. 12) erroneously given as a picture of a coin struck under the reign of 'Abd al-Raḥmān.

imens (nos 188–199) have been labelled as ‘Islamic’ based on the presence of residual Arabic legends; nevertheless, their condition or the substandard quality of the available visual material precludes a more precise identification.

The fabric of the coins nos 188 and 199 suggests a later/modern attribution, even though the Arabic script is completely blundered.

Mu‘izz is legible on one side of the coin no. 190, within dotted and plain circles. However, this hint is not enough to attribute this coin to the Ghurid dynasty; indeed, the other side is completely blundered, the *laqab* of *Mu‘izz al-Dīn* was common to some rulers of these territories through the centuries, from the period of the Ghaznavid ruler Khusraw Shāh, who bore this title, and then from the Ghurid period onwards. Finally, the same device is frequently used in the Indo-Iranian borderlands (Figures 19a–d).



Figure 19. a. Æ , 2.95g. C178 (no. 190)

b. Ghaznavids, Khusraw Shāh b. Bahrām Shah (1157–1160), Æ , 3.2–3.4g. Zeno #21521; c. Ghurids, *Mu‘izz al-Dīn* Muḥammad b. Sām (1173–1206), Æ , 3.3g. Zeno #53629; d. Sultans of Delhi, *Mu‘izz al-Dīn* Kay Qubādh (1287–1290), Æ , 2.3g. Zeno #154320

Specimen no. 191 is likely to be attributed to the medieval period, and so is coin no. 194. The latter could be identified as a Ghaznavid issue, but the legends are illegible. Also, the coins nos 195, 196 and 198 may belong to the later issues of the Ghaznavid dynasty.

One specimen (no. 197) retains the legend ‘*adl*’ on the obverse, with an arrangement of the legends which seems to suggest a Ghurid attribution

Finally, the coin no. 193 preserves some traces of a clear Arabic script; unfortunately, it has not been possible to identify the authority and reach a final classification for this specimen, even though I cannot exclude an attribution to the Indian Sultanates period (Figures 20a–d).



Figure 20. a. Illegible, Æ , 1.90g. C116 (no. 193)

b. Sultans of Delhi, ‘*Alā’* al-Dīn Muḥammad (1296–1316), 2 gani (BI), 3.44g. Zeno #331526; c. Sultans of Delhi, Khusraw Khān (1320), Æ , 2.12g. Zeno #301590; d. Sultans of Delhi, Muḥammad b. Firūz (1389–1394), 2 falus (Æ), 9.28g. Zeno #280521

1.15 The Arab-Shahi Coinage and Its Circulation in the Indo-Iranian Borderlands

A large group of the specimens belongs to the issues deriving from the Hindu Shahi ‘bull and horseman’ type, i.e. bearing some characteristics of the original device of the Brahmanic dynasty. This class of coins was struck both by Islamic and non-Islamic rulers. In the first and only study that tries to catalogue this monetary class, Robert and Monica Tye (1995) call these issues *jital*, from an expression included on some coins attributed to this monetary class. However, it is necessary to add that this denomination is attested only on some issues dated to the 13th century.⁹² Furthermore, the attribution of some coins to this class, as conceived in the volume, is sometimes uncertain, especially due to the lack of comprehensive studies aimed at analysing the numismatic material of these Islamic territories during the centuries preceding the Mongol invasion.

For this reason, in this study, to define the coins deriving from the Hindu Shahi model issued by non-Muslim rulers, I simply adopt the expression *Shahi-type coin*,⁹³ for those coins minted by Muslim rulers, I adopt the definition *Arab-Shahi*.⁹⁴ This expression is based on comparable terms already in use in numismatic literature, such as *Arab-Sasanian* or *Arab-Byzantine*. It is intended to emphasize that these issues unite the ‘Indian’ and Islamic monetary traditions; they represent one of the longest-lived coinages in the Indo-Iranian border region.

The label *Arab-Shahi* includes all those coins that bear elements of the Hindu Shahi type, excluding, given the lack of specific studies in this field, all those that have certainly been affected by the Hindu Shahi coinage from a metrological point of view. The adoption of the Shahi flan, smaller and thicker than the standard dirham, had an initial faint diffusion with the Saffarids when they conquered the mines in the Panjhir area (Figures 21a–c); only with the Ghaznavids did it systematically enter the Islamic coinage when Sebuktigin started minting dirhams with this flan at the Farwan mint. From this moment on, all the Islamic dynasties that followed the Ghaznavids began to issue Arab-Shahi-type currency, integrating it as a fundamental part of the monetary system.



Figure 21. a. Hindu Shahis, Spalapati Deva (c.822–870), AR, 3.09g
(Annucci forthcoming: no. 67). KHM OR 11775

b. Saffarids, Ya'qūb b. al-Layth (861–879), dirham (AR), 3.32g, AH 261 (= 874/75 CE) / *al-Banjhūr* (SNAT 1995: no. 53). FINT EA2 F2; c. Abbasids, Hārūn al-Rashīd (786–809), dirham (AR), 2.86g, AH 193 (=808/09 CE) / *Madinat Balkh*. Zeno #281351

⁹² Tye and Tye 1995: nos 351, 358.

⁹³ A group of these coins, those struck in the mint(s) of Dehli, is also called *dehlīwālas*, after the place of origin of these issues; see Deyell 1990: 180 and Goron and Goenka 2001: xvi.

⁹⁴ This definition is a preliminary suggestion to identify this class of coins and emphasize the importance of the Hindu Shahi coinage for the Islamic one of the following centuries. However, the use of this definition requires further discussion and research.

The role that this coinage had in the monetary circulation on the borders of the Indo-Iranian territories is highlighted by the good number of coins belonging to this class found in the Islamic sites of Ghazni, where they account for around a quarter of the total (Figure 22).

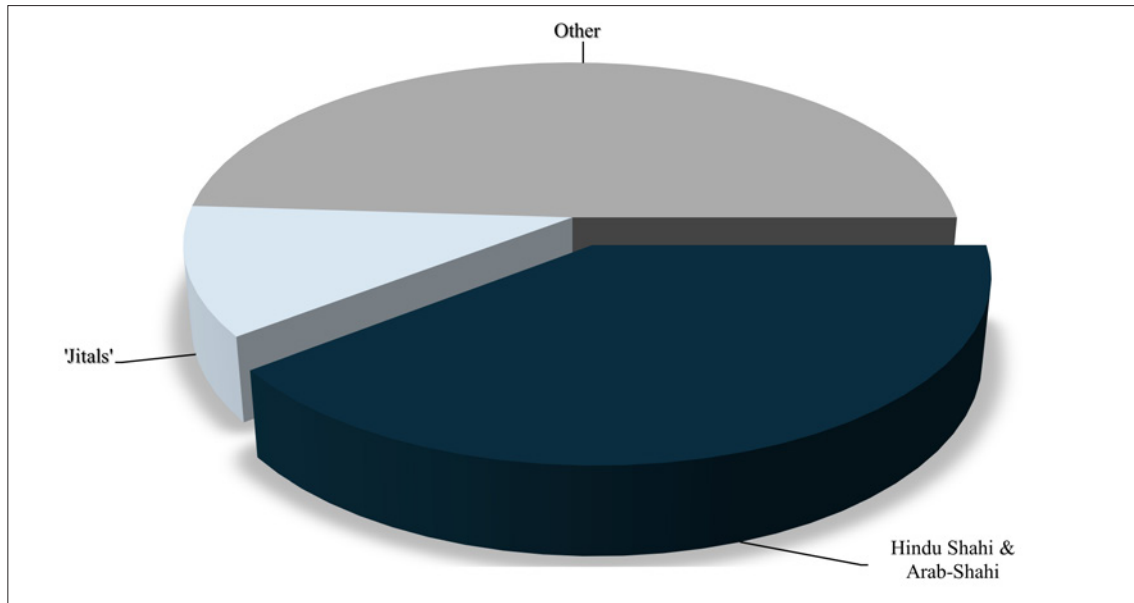


Figure 22. Pie chart showing the percentage of Hindu Shahi and Arab-Shahi coins identified from Ghazni and Tapa Sardar excavations. The entry 'jitals' includes the issues listed in Tye and Tye 1995 that do not use the original Hindu Shahi type

Our knowledge of Hindu Shahi coins from archaeological sites, far from abundant, nevertheless returns the image of a coinage highly present in the Zabulistan area with the site of Ghazni and, above all, in Kabulistan. In the latter area, the sites of Qol-e Tut (Aram *et al.* forthcoming) and Tepe Narenj (Paiman and Aram 2012) have yielded coins of Spalapati Deva and Samanta Deva, while a coin of Khudarayaka was found only in the latter (Appendix II, Figures 4, 5). As already mentioned (cf. Introduction), another fundamental collection for understanding the monetary circulation in these territories is the Masson Collection from Begram (Errington 2021), which includes a high number of Hindu Shahi coins.

Our knowledge of the monetary circulation in these territories is even more limited for the subsequent pre-Mongol Islamic period, which includes, above all, the coinage of the Ghaznavids, the Ghurids and the Khwarezm Shahs. The only group of coins dated to these years from an archaeological site other than those of Ghazni comes from the Buddhist area of Qol-e Tut. From this site, the high number of Hindu Shahi coins is completed by a massive presence of Arab-Shahi coins minted by the Ghurids of Bamiyan (1145–1215) and by a single coin of the same class attributed to 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad of the Khwarezm Shah (Aram *et al.*: cat. nos 14–29, 33–39). A good number of Arab-Shahi coins are also part of Masson's collection.⁹⁵

The circulation of coins in the Afghan territories of Arab-Shahi type during the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries also seems to be confirmed by the presence of coins of the Tomaras and Chauhans together with Ghaznavid and Ghurid coins in some hoards attributed to the areas of Ghazni and Baghlan and included in Deyell's work (1990: Appendix E). With the sole exception of some coins

⁹⁵ Cf. Errington 2021: figs 61.18, 21–24, 31, 38, 39, 42, 43; 62.1, 13, 15–19, 25–28, 31–33; 63.4, 8.

in a hoard found near Qunduz, containing Arab-Shahi coins of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad—many of which were probably minted in the territories south of the Hindu Kush (Deyell 1990: 209, 312)—the Shahi and Arab-Shahi-type coins seem to spread precisely in the territories south of the main Afghan mountain range, with high concentrations in Kabulistan.

Turning our gaze west, to Sistan, a completely different situation emerges. From the Palatine site of Lashkari Bazar come coins dated to the Samanid and Ghaznavid periods, therefore preceding the first Islamic coins from the Islamic sites of Ghazni (Gardin 1963). This is understandable when considering the older nature of this complex and the area compared to Islamic sites. What is interesting to note is that no coins attributable to the Shahi or Arab-Shahi type come from Lashkari Bazar;⁹⁶ on the other hand, a good number of Ghaznavid dirhams with small flans are attested.

The same pattern is recognized in the coins retrieved by the Helmand-Sistan Project, the study of which is being published (Annucci *et al.* forthcoming).⁹⁷ Again, the presence of Abbasid, Samanid and Ghaznavid coins provides an earlier chronology for the Islamic era than the one for the coins from Ghazni territories; another common element is the total lack of Hindu Shahi and Arab-Shahi-type coins.

This evidence allows us to move the western border of circulation of this monetary class into the Afghan territories: in the Ghaznavid period and, to a lesser extent, until the Khwarezm Shah period (early 13th century), the circulation seems to include the area of Zabulistan with Ghazni, slightly further west than supposed by Deyell (1990: 82).

Given the scarcity of available data we have regarding the Afghan territories, it is necessary to broaden our field of research to include the hoards and archaeological findings in the territories of Pakistan and north-western India. The study of this material can provide data of fundamental importance, complementary to that of the Afghan area, which is unfortunately sporadic. Uddiyana (Swat Valley) is the area that yielded the highest number of Hindu Shahi coins from urban and religious archaeological contexts, a clue to the role that the region played for the Hindu Shahi dynasty, especially starting from the 870s, when the kingdom’s axis shifted significantly eastward after the partial loss of the western territories.⁹⁸ Other coins come from excavations in the archaeological area of Hund/Ohind, which according to literary sources, was the provincial capital of the Hindu Shahi kingdom (see Kimmet 2020; Verdon 2021; for the coins from Hund, see Khan forthcoming).

A good group of Hindu Shahi coins comes from the regions of Gandhara and Kashmir and the site of Taxila in the Punjab area, while other finds are mentioned in western and northern India.⁹⁹

The data we have for subsequent Arab-Shahi coinage, especially minted by Muslim rulers, are incomplete but still higher in numbers when compared to the same data attested in the Afghan territories. Deyell (1990) lists the coins in some hoards in the territories of Punjab and north-western India. Numbers are notable, suggesting a good circulation for this monetary class in the area at

⁹⁶ The only exception would appear to be coin no. 39 (Gardin 1963: 185). The image of the specimen is not very clear, and it would be attributable to the period of the Khwarezm Shahs, when the issue and circulation of this type with the horseman spread to other mints, even outside the territories south of the Hindu Kush.

⁹⁷ The current coordinator of the project is Mitchell Allen, thanks to whom it was possible to analyse the important numismatic documentation found during the 1970s and 1980s by the first members of the project. For the photographic documentation, I must thank Alireza Khounani, and Jennifer Gloede, together with staff photographers of the National Numismatics Collection of the Smithsonian Institution. The photographic documentation was delivered to N. Schindel, F. Sinisi and me, who had the task of cataloguing the material. The coins are currently being published in the second volume of the project.

⁹⁸ Among the numerous specimens that come from the area, one must certainly mention those from the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan. The coins from the Barikot site are published by Ehsan Shavarebi (2025).

⁹⁹ For a detailed analysis of archaeological findings relating to Hindu Shahi coins, see Shavarebi and Annucci (forthcoming).

least until the period of the Khwarezm Shah.¹⁰⁰ There is little data from archaeological excavations: a good number of ‘bull and horseman’ Islamic coins come from the Hund area, some of which can be attributed to the Qarlughid dynasty (1224–1259) (Khan forthcoming).¹⁰¹ However, the area that could offer greater possibilities for research on and study of monetary circulation in the future is Swat, in particular relating to material excavated by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan in the last century in the area of Udegram Mosque and Castle. The coins are almost totally unpublished, except for a small group of 37 coins published in a preliminary study by Roberta Giunta (2006), who states that, except for some pieces, ‘all the coins are in billon or copper and are known as *jitals*’, highlighting how once again, Arab-Shahi-type coinage is strongly present in the archaeological excavations of the area (Figure 23). An initial assessment undertaken suggests that the first preliminary evidence can also be applied to the entire corpus of coins from these archaeological sites.¹⁰² For this reason, we hope that in the near future, a systematic study of the entire corpus could provide valuable information on the monetary history of these territories, useful for filling, at least partially, the gaps left by the scarcity of materials from Afghan excavations.



Figure 23. Selection of coins from Udegram (after Giunta 2006). Khwarezm Shah
 b. Bi, –g, *Kuramān* (Giunta 2006: no. 17); c. BI, –g, *Parswar* (Giunta 2006: no. 18); d. BI, –g, *Parswar* (Giunta 2006: no. 19); e. BI, –g, *Parswar* (Giunta 2006: no. 20); f. BI, –g, *Parswar* (Giunta 2006: no. 21)

In light of the above, one can therefore state that starting from the Hindu Shahi period, the area of Ghazni and Zabulistan seems to fall within an area of monetary circulation that included the territories of Uddiyana, and later also the territories of northern India. The Arab-Shahi coinage appears to be a long-lasting unifying factor of the economic fabric and monetary circulation for these territories. The lack of coins of the Hindu Shahi period and the early Islamic period up to at least the Ghurid phase from other contexts, except for sporadic finds, seems to suggest that the boundaries of this area of monetary circulation are to be traced back to the Hindu Kush range, a natural border in the Afghan territories, to the north, while to the west, it does not seem to have involved the Sistan area, which as per the data known to date, has not yielded coins of this class (Appendix IV, Figure 6).

This analysis considers the data known to date. I hope that there will be an opportunity to improve our knowledge with new information that could lead to confirming or modifying the picture known so far.

¹⁰⁰ Most of the hoards mentioned by Deyell (1990) are unpublished. For a better understanding of the circulation of this class of coins, it would certainly be of fundamental importance to initiate a systematic study of these hoards to supplement the fragmentary state of our knowledge of monetary circulation during Islamic times.

¹⁰¹ Among the coins found in Hund, a good number of Hindu Shahi coins are attested, especially of Vakka Deva. For the Islamic period, some of the following coins have been identified: Ghaznavid specimens of Sebuktigin and Khusraw Malik; Ghurid coins of Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad; and one specimen each for Iluttmish of the Sultans of Delhi and Sayf al-Dīn al-Ḥasan of the Qarlughids (1224–49) (Khan forthcoming).

¹⁰² In this context, I would like to thank Ehsan Shavarebi, who, after his study trips to Pakistan to examine the ancient coins of Barikot (Shavarebi 2025), showed me some photographs he had taken of material from Islamic sites in Uddiyana.

THE COINS AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROVENANCES

The 9th- to 20th-century coins from Ghazni were found in Tapa Sardar and the Islamic sites. This long span involved profound political and economic changes that affected the city and the entire region. Based on monetary issues, these events can be divided into five periods:

1. Early 9th century–977: ‘pre-Ghaznavid’ period. The city was controlled by the local Lawik rulers, probably related to the Brahmanic Late/Hindu Shahi dynasty, and it gradually became an Islamic military outpost.
2. 977–1040: ‘early Ghaznavid’ period (Bosworth 1975b: 162–97). The city became the capital of the Ghaznavid emirs, who were defeated by the Seljuks in the Battle of Dandānqān in 1040 and lost many of their western territories.
3. 1041–1186: ‘late Ghaznavid’ period. The Ghaznavids maintained control of the eastern area of Afghanistan until the Ghurid conquest of 1186. Later in this phase, the Ghaznavids received the title of sultans from the caliph.
4. 1187–mid-13th century. The city was under the control first of the Ghurids and then of the Khwarezm Shahs. In 1221, with the Mongol conquest, Ghazni lost its role as capital.
5. Mid-13th–early 20th centuries. A long chronological span at the beginning of which Ghazni lost its administrative and commercial importance, from the 14th century not hosting a mint.

The following Table (9) shows the correspondence between the five periods and the dynasties/authorities to which the coins under investigation are ascribed.

<i>Period</i>	<i>Dynasty (authority)</i>
1. ‘pre-Ghaznavid’	<i>Hindu Shahis</i> (Spalapati Deva; Samanta Deva) <i>‘pre-Ghaznavids’</i> (Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-Ghaffār)
2. ‘early Ghaznavid’	<i>‘early Ghaznavids’</i> (Mas‘ūd I)
3. ‘late Ghaznavid’	<i>‘late Ghaznavids’</i> (Farrukhzād; Ibrāhīm; Mas‘ūd III; Bahrām Shāh; Khusraw Malik) <i>Tomaras and Chauhans</i> (Chahada Deva)
4. 1187–mid-13th cent.	<i>Ghurids</i> (Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām) <i>Anonymous issue – uncertain</i> (Ghurids/Turkish Slave Commander or Iluttmish) <i>Tomaras and Chauhans</i> (anonymous ‘Madana’ imitations) <i>Khwarezm Shahs</i> (‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad; Jalāl al-Dīn Mengubirti)
5. Mid-13th–early 20th cent.	<i>Timurids</i> (Suyurgatmish Khān) <i>Mughals</i> (Akbar I b. Humāyūn) <i>Sikhs</i> (Ranjit Singh) <i>Durrani</i> (‘Iranian Civic Copper’) <i>Illegible modern copper coins</i>

Table 9. Correspondence between the five monetary periods and the dynasties/authorities of the coins in the corpus

I have not included the ‘post-Shahi’ coins in the chronological scan since they date between the mid-10th and the end of the 13th century and fall within periods 2, 3 and 4.

Regarding the provenances, 70% of the coins come from the palace excavations; eight specimens come from the House of Lustrewares and the Tomb of Maḥmūd at Rawza, respectively. Sixteen coins were discovered at Tapa Sardar, while 11 are of unknown provenance and recorded as sporadic.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ This numbers include the coins classified as ‘illegible’.

2.1 The Coin Finds from the Ghaznavid Palace

The coins found in the excavations of the palace, the largest number, are ascribed to a wide chronological span, which ranges from the Hindu Shahi (9th–10th centuries) to the Barakzay (20th century; periods 1, 3, 4 and 5). The absence of photographic documentation prevented the classification of 28 specimens (c.30%) for which only some metrological data is provided.

The coins were found in numerous find-spots;¹⁰⁴ a small hoard of nine base metal coins, wrapped in a woollen cloth, was discovered in Room XXXI, on the western side of the west court (Appendix IV).¹⁰⁵

Period 1: 'Pre-Ghaznavid' (early 9th century–977)

The Hindu Shahi coins include the silver specimen of Spalapati Deva (c.822–870) (no. 96), found between Rooms X and XI on the western side of the central court, and two specimens of Samanta Deva, in silver and bronze respectively (nos 97, 99), found in apartment III, specifically in the court and Room IIId (Figure 24). No coin for period 2 have been identified in the Ghaznavid Palace.



Figure 24. Plan of the palace developed by C. Passaro. Find-spots for the coins from Period 1 are highlighted in blue (A. Annucci)

¹⁰⁴ For the plan of the Palace with the room numbers, see Giunta, in this volume: Figure 33.

¹⁰⁵ The hoard was discovered on 18/09/1962. As Giunta (2003a: 185) also states, it is likely that G. Tucci was talking about this hoard in an interview (given on 16/12/1962) when he claimed that, during the last campaign in Ghazni, 'a real treasure in gold and silver coins which had been buried at the time of Genghis Khan's invasion' (*IsMEO Activities* 1962: 86) was found. Tucci probably did not see the hoard himself and was only informed about the discovery, likely with incorrect information, since all the hoard's coins are in base or debased metal.

Period 3: 'late Ghaznavid' (1041–1186)

The highest number of coins (25), minted during the years of power of the following rulers, belong to this phase (Figure 25):

1. Ibrāhīm b. Mas'ūd I (1059–1099).
2. Mas'ūd III b. Ibrāhīm (1117–1157).
3. Bahrām Shāh b. Mas'ūd III (1117–1157).
4. Khusraw Malik b. Khusraw Shāh (1160–1186).

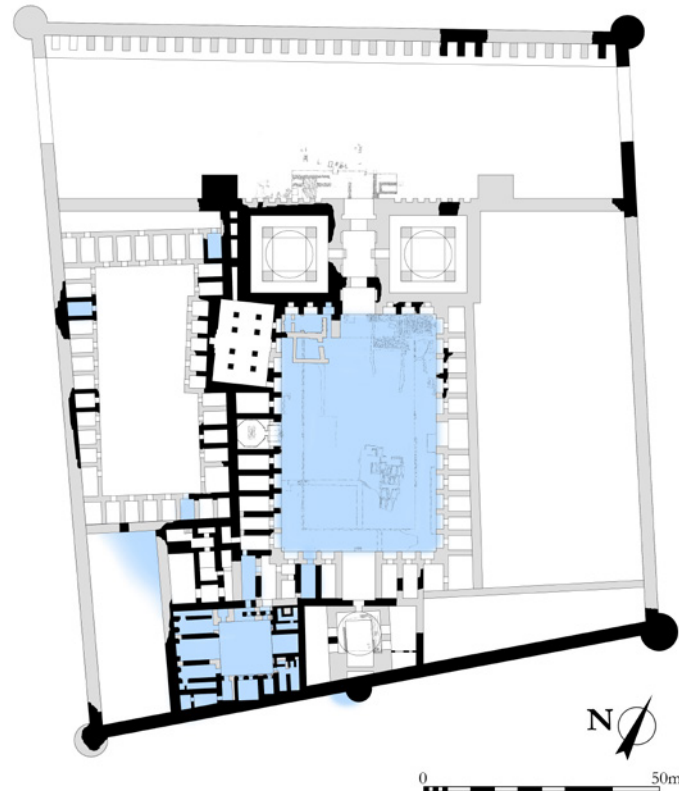


Figure 25. Plan of the palace developed by C. Passaro. Find-spots for the coins from Period 3 are highlighted in blue (A. Annucci)

This period also includes two anonymous specimens that can be securely dated to the 12th century, between the reigns of Bahrām Shāh and Khusraw Malik.

Of the seven coins of Ibrāhīm, three come from the central court: a dirham (no. 121) was found in the south-western side of the court, while of the two bronze specimens of the same Arab-Shahi type, one comes from the space in front of Antechamber XXI (no. 125), the other from the central courtyard (no. 126). From the same Antechamber XXI comes another bronze coin, attributable to Ibrāhīm only with regard to metrological aspects, since the legends are no longer legible (no. 127). Two coins, in silver and bronze (nos 122, 124), were found in the private apartments. For the last silver specimen (no. 123) the precise find-spot has not been recorded.

The only specimen of Mas'ūd III, in billon, comes from Antechamber XVI (no. 128).

Of the ten specimens of Bahrām Shāh, six dirhams were included in the hoard and also mention the Seljuk sultan Sanjar (nos 130–135). The other four coins are in bronze (nos 136–139) and come from the private apartments (Room IIIc; courtyard, north side), the northern sector of the south-western area and Room XXVII.

The only coin of Khusraw Malik is in bronze, of the Arab-Shahi type, and comes from the north side of the private apartments' courtyard (no. 142).

The two anonymous bronze specimens (nos 140, 141)¹⁰⁶ come from Room Va, in the western area of the palace, and from the north-eastern part of the central court.

Finally, the specimens of probable Ghaznavid attribution (nos 143–146) but of uncertain identification come from Room Va, the southern external wall, the northern sector of the south-western area and Room XXIII, respectively.

Period 4 (1187–mid-13th century)

The coins of this period (Figure 26) constitute the second largest group (17 specimens) and cover a span from the Ghurid conquest of Ghazni to the years closely following the Mongol conquest.

The rulers attested by numismatic evidence are:

1. Mu'izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām (1173–1206).
2. 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (1200–1220).



Figure 26. Plan of the palace developed by C. Passaro. Find-spots for the coins from Period 4 are highlighted in blue (A. Annucci)

Added to these is an anonymous issue of uncertain attribution (Ghurids/Turkish Slave Commander or Iltutmish).

Coins of Mu'izz al-Dīn, the Ghurid conqueror of Ghazni, have been found in several rooms of the palace. The only silver specimen, also bearing the name of his brother Ghiyāth al-Dīn (no. 159), was found in Room IX, together with a bronze specimen (no. 168). The largest group

¹⁰⁶ Cf. SNAT 2002: nos 522–526.

of bronze coins, all of the same type (nos 160–164), was found in various rooms of the palace: Room XXIII, the throne room and the south outer wall of the south-eastern area of the private apartments. A final specimen comes from Room Va (no. 167).

For the only bronze specimen of uncertain attribution that could be ascribed to the Ghurid period (no. 169), I refer to the section below on the treasure of Room XXXI, from which this specimen comes.

One can also ascribe to this phase the anonymous billon issues of ‘Madana’ (nos 151–156)¹⁰⁷ found in Rooms XXIII, Va, XXXI (not part of the hoard) and the north side of the courtyard of the private apartments, respectively.

One of the two bronze specimens of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad is part of the treasure of Room XXXI (no. 170); the other one was found in the north-eastern side of the central court (no. 171).

Period 5 (mid-13th–early 20th century)

For Period 5, numismatic evidence is lacking for the 13th and 14th centuries. The specimens date, in fact, between the 15th and 20th centuries.

These are superficial finds: a dangi (no. 176) with a Timurid countermark found in Room XXVI and a dangi bearing the unpublished type of Suyurgatmish, found near the *miḥrāb* of the mosque (no. 175). Four bronze coins of the Durrani rulers come from the palace. A single anonymous bronze specimen was found in the *ziyāra* Ibrāhīm (no. 179); from the private apartments comes a bronze fals belonging to the last period of the Sadozays branch (c.1839/40) (no. 180); two coins from the Barakzay branch (no. 181: ‘Abd al Raḥmān, 1880–1901; no. 182: Ḥabīb Allāh, 1901–1919) come from Room IIa and from Ivan I, to the west and north of the throne room, respectively (Figure 27).



Figure 27. Plan of the palace developed by C. Passaro. Find-spots for the coins from Period 5 are highlighted in blue (A. Annucci)

¹⁰⁷ See section 1.5.b.

Final Considerations on the Coins from the Ghaznavid Palace

Before providing the final considerations, a plan of the palace with the indication of the coins' provenances and a table linking the construction and decorative phases of the palace to the phases derived from the ceramic findings are included (see Giunta, in this volume) (Figure 28; Table 10).¹⁰⁸

The specimens belonging to the first two monetary periods are few and ascribed solely to the Hindu Shahi dynasty; this circumstance could corroborate, as I will state later, the hypothesis proposed by R. Giunta of an initial construction phase of the building dating back to a period preceding the rise of the Ghaznavids. No coins in the names of Sebuktigin, Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd I have been found.¹⁰⁹ The first Ghaznavid coins date back to Ibrāhīm, when the building was surely used as a palace, as also seems to be attested by the data relating to the main architectural and decorative phases of the building that should precede the rise to power of Mas'ūd III. However, although the latter is credited with an important phase of reorganization of the central area of the palace—with the addition of the antechambers surrounding the courtyard and their decoration with sumptuous marble slabs—there is almost no monetary data. In fact, only the presence of a billion specimen coming from Antechamber XVI is recorded.



Figure 28. Plan of the palace developed by C. Passaro. The issuing authorities are marked with different symbols and below the plan. Symbols do not represent the exact number of specimens found in the area (A. Annucci)

¹⁰⁸ Table X is an update of Table XIII, originally conceived and arranged by Giunta (in this volume) for the correlations between architectural and pottery productions.

¹⁰⁹ According to Giunta (in this volume) the first three Ghaznavid rulers were not involved in the first construction phases of the palace.

<i>Architectural phases</i>	<i>Pottery productions</i>	<i>Dating</i>	<i>Monetary periods</i>
I	–	before the 11th century	1–2
II	I	11th century	
III			
IV	II	Late 11th century–first half of the 12th century	3
V	III	Second half of the 12th century–first half of the 13th century	4
VI	IV	13th–17th centuries	5

Table 10. Architectural and pottery production phases and their correspondence with the monetary periods

Most of the coins date to the years between the second half of the 12th and the first half of the 13th century (periods 3 and 4), with a large number dating to the reigns of the Ghaznavid Bahrām Shāh and the Ghurid Mu‘izz al-Dīn. Most of Bahrām Shāh’s coins come from the hoard discovered in Room XXXI. The Ghurid Mu‘izz al-Dīn has the highest number of specimens, found in various rooms of the palace, attesting to the continuous use of the structure, which, in these years, was undergoing a further phase of rearrangement and habitation after the fire started by the Ghurids themselves.

Later coins were found almost exclusively in the central part of the building;¹¹⁰ they attest to different phases of frequentation, some of which are almost certainly contemporary with the construction of later structures and burials, primarily located in the south-eastern area and the north-eastern corner of the central court. An anonymous specimen also comes from the *ziyāra* Ibrāhīm, built in the western ivan.

As already highlighted, the western area of the palace has been the most investigated one. The coins come mainly from the private apartments and the nearby Room Va. Identified coins found in the private apartments (16 out of 22 specimens) are ascribed to periods 1, 3 and 4, attesting to a continuity of frequentation for this area of the palace. Coins retrieved in Va, a larger group than the previous ones (23 specimens), belong to periods 3 and 4: eight units are certainly Ghaznavid, Ghurid and ‘Madana’ copies of the Tomaras; the remaining 15 coins can be classified only based on metrological data,¹¹¹ which allow us to hypothesize an attribution to the end of the 12th–beginning of the 13th century. The weights are between 0.89g and 3.66g, with almost all the specimens ranging between 1.50g and 2.90g; the diameters are between 13 and 15mm (Figure 29).¹¹²

Finally, let us analyse the small hoard of nine coins found in Room XXXI; this room was most likely built during the first phases of the palace, in the south-western area of the western court (Figures 30a–i). The hoard does not include coins in precious metals. Indeed, the six dirhams of Bahrām Shāh should have contained a small percentage of silver (c.50–60%),¹¹³ the other specimens issued by various authorities between the 11th and 13th centuries are in bronze or billon, including a ‘post-Shahi’ issue, the anonymous issue of uncertain attribution (Ghurids or Sultan of Delhi) and a coin of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad. While on the one hand, these data allow us to establish that the hoard was buried no earlier than the 13th century, on the other hand, it is difficult to understand the reasons behind its deposition during a phase when the palace was abandoned.

¹¹⁰ The only exception is a coin found in the private apartments.

¹¹¹ Photographic documentation for these coins is lacking (Appendix I).

¹¹² These metrological data could fall within the standards known for coins from the late Ghaznavid and Ghurid periods. This hypothesis would coincide with the data of the remaining classifiable coins; furthermore, three fragments of glazed ceramic tiles found in this same room would also be ascribed to the 12th–13th centuries (Fusaro 2014: 234).

¹¹³ These percentages are known from other available numismatic data for these issues. See Album 2011: 181, no. 1652.



Figure 29. Plan of the palace developed by C. Passaro.
Find-spots for the coins are highlighted in blue (A. Annucci)

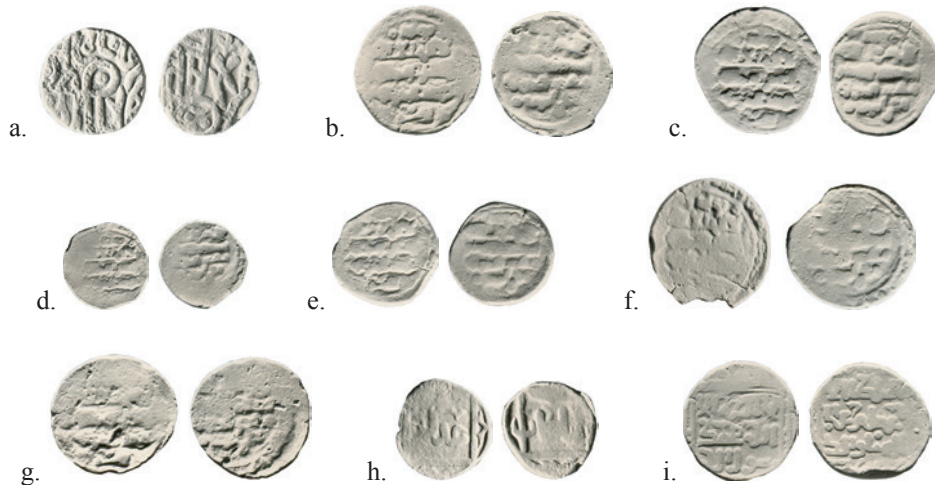


Figure 30. The coins included in the hoard found in Room XXXI

a. 'Post-Shahi' and minory dynasties, 'Samanta Deva', AE, 2.90g (Type B). C4497 (no. 112); b. Ghaznavids, Bahrām Shāh b. Mas'ūd III (1152–1157), dirham (AR, debased?), 3.15g, *Ghazna*. C4499 (nos. 130); c. Ghaznavids, Bahrām Shāh b. Mas'ūd III (1152–1157), dirham (AR, debased?), 2.99g, *Ghazna*. C4500 (nos. 131); d. Ghaznavids, Bahrām Shāh b. Mas'ūd III (1152–1157), dirham (AR, debased?), 2.95g, *Ghazna*. C4495 (nos. 132); e. Ghaznavids, Bahrām Shāh b. Mas'ūd III (1152–1157), dirham (AR, debased?), 2.84g, *Ghazna*. C4498 (nos. 133); f. Ghaznavids, Bahrām Shāh b. Mas'ūd III (1152–1157), dirham (AR, debased?), 2.80g, *Ghazna*. C4501 (nos. 134); g. Ghaznavids, Bahrām Shāh b. Mas'ūd III (1152–1157), dirham (AR, debased?), 2.80g, *Ghazna*. C4502 (nos. 135); h. Anonymous – Uncertain (Ghurids/Turkish Slave Commander or Iltutmish; c.1206–1215), 2.53g, *Ghazna*?. C4494 (no. 169); i. Khwarezm Shahs, 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (1200–1220), AE, 2.89g, *Bamiyān*?. C4496 (no. 170)

Equally difficult is the interpretation of further data preserved only in the mission's archive: the finding of three unstruck flans in the palace's entrance area, in Rooms XXXII and XVIII. Unfortunately, we could rely only on this information and the metrological data¹¹⁴ since we lack photos and casts for these objects, and because of this, we cannot advance any hypothesis.

Finally, it is also worth noting the lack of coins in the northern area of the palace, where a bazaar would have been located according to archaeologists.¹¹⁵

2.2 The Coin Finds from the House of Lustrewares

Very few coins were found in the House of Lustrewares. Only four out of ten coins have been identified because two lack documentation and four are illegible.

One of the specimens is dated to Period 3 and is a *daniq* of Farrukhzād b. Mas'ūd I (no. 119), the most ancient Islamic coin from the Islamic sites. The remaining three specimens are dated to Period 4: two bronze ones of the Ghurid Mu'izz al-Dīn (nos 165–166) and an anonymous base metal issue of a 'Madana' copy (no. 157).

The Mu'izz al-Dīn specimens date to the end of the 12th century, while the Rajput coins are dated between the 12th and 13th centuries. The lack of coinage after this period would support the hypothesis of the building's abandonment with the arrival of the Mongol hordes in the first half of the 13th century.¹¹⁶

2.3 The Coin Finds from the Area of Rawza

In its archive, the Italian Mission has recorded nine coins found in the area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd at Rawza as sporadic.¹¹⁷ These specimens can be classified with limited precision, but none can be ascribed to the Ghaznavid rulers. An anonymous 'Madana' coin belongs to Period 4 (no. 158), while the other six specimens, in bronze, belong to Period 5: a coin of the Mughal Akbar I (no. 177) and five illegible modern coins (nos 183–187). Finally, one specimen is illegible, and another one has been presented in part A, as it is a Kushan coin of Soter Megas (see part A, section 1.1.b).

2.4 The Coin Finds from Tapa Sardar (9th–20th Centuries)

The Buddhist site of Tapa Sardar has yielded 16 coins dating from the 9th century onwards. Due to their poor state of preservation, I have been able to identify only seven of these specimens, one from the 'pre-Ghaznavid' period (Period 1), two from the Ghaznavid period (periods 2 and 3), one struck during the Khwarezm Shah period, one from the Tomaras and Chauhans (Period 4), and finally two 'post-Shahi' specimens.

The fals of Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd al-Ghaffār (no. 117) belongs to Period 1 and was found in find-spot '50', to be identified with Chapel 50, containing a large statue of the Buddha, attributed to phase 7 of the Buddhist sanctuary (c.680–720; Verardi and Paparatti 2005: 434).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ The metrological data listed in the archives report fairly homogeneous weights and diameters (3.04g, 3.10g, 3.46g; 16mm, 16mm, 14mm),

¹¹⁵ The hypothesis of the presence of a bazaar is linked to the discovery of some small rooms on the northernmost wall of the palace.

¹¹⁶ As already stated by other studies on the lustrewares found in this private residence. See Scerrato 1959a: 52; Fusaro 2020: 100; Fusaro and Allegranzi 2023: 28.

¹¹⁷ The area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd, particularly frequented by the believers, has been the subject of renovation works over time, starting from the beginning of the 20th century at the request of King Amānullāh Khān (1919–1929).

¹¹⁸ The coin was found before M. Taddei started working at the site.

Period 2 includes a dirham of Mas‘ūd I (no. 118), from find-spot 47, close to the previous area of Chapel 50.¹¹⁹ A second Ghaznavid dirham, minted under Ibrāhīm, dates from Period 3 and was found on the surface in the north-eastern corner of Room 100 (no. 120).

Period 4 yielded a bronze coin of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad, found in surface layers (no. 172), and a ‘Madana’ coin of the Tomaras (no. 150). This latter coin was found in an upper layer between the Main Stupa and Vihāra 17.

Finally, in Tapa Sardar, two anonymous ‘post-Shahi’ base metal coins were found in a surface layer and on the northern side of the upper terrace, among the debris of the Main Stupa, respectively (nos 110, 111).

2.5 Final Consideration on the Distributions of the Coin Finds

The oldest coins in this section are the 9th-century non-Islamic specimens of the Hindu Shahis, discovered in the southern area of the palace (Period 1). The oldest Islamic coin, Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-Ghaffār’s fals, comes from Tapa Sardar. The importance of this specimen lies both in the small number of known coins bearing the name of this authority¹²⁰ and in the issuing period. Indeed, it would provide a clue to the hypothesis of Tapa Sardar being used as a military outpost in the 10th century, when Samanid armies were stationed in the area of Ghazni (Inaba 2018: 143) and the Buddhist site had already been abandoned. This circumstance, together with the discovery of the Hindu Shahi coins, potentially provides further evidence of a phase of occupation of the southern area of Ghazni preceding the Ghaznavid conquest, as supposed by Scerrato, who interpreted the two enclosures (A and B) located immediately south of the palace as settlements or military camps which arose no earlier than the end of the 10th century (see Giunta, in this volume: Figure 32).

Numismatic evidence for the early Ghaznavid period (Period 2) is scarce: no coin in the entire Ghazni area is ascribed to Sebuktigin or Maḥmūd. Only one coin of Mas‘ūd I is attested at Tapa Sardar and only one of Farrukhzād comes from the House of Lustrewares. The highest number of specimens is ascribed to periods 3 and 4, that is, from the phase of the ‘late Ghaznavids’ until the Mongol invasion. The coins of Ibrāhīm, except for one specimen found at Tapa Sardar, were discovered in the palace. The only coin of Mas‘ūd III comes from the palace, a building that has yielded mostly coins dating from the reign of Bahrām Shāh to the Mongol invasion. Coins from Period 4 also come from the area of Rawza and Tapa Sardar, the latter minted by the Khwarezm Shah ruler ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad. Consequently, it is found that the coins of Period 4 constitute on the one hand the largest group of specimens found, and on the other, an element common to all the archaeologically investigated sites.

Modern coins (Period 5) have been found in the area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd, including the single Mughal (1526–1858) specimen and the group of illegible base metal coins. Some coins found in the excavations of the palace also date to the modern period and the early 20th century.¹²¹ These circumstances attest to a prolonged frequentation of the two contexts over time (Figure 31).

¹¹⁹ It is not possible to identify find-spot 47, but it certainly must be located on the Upper Terrace.

¹²⁰ This specimen is the only one that comes from an archaeological context. See section 1.3, especially note 38.

¹²¹ The House of Lustrewares and Tapa Sardar have not yielded any specimens for modern and contemporary periods, probably indicating an interruption in frequentation of these sites.

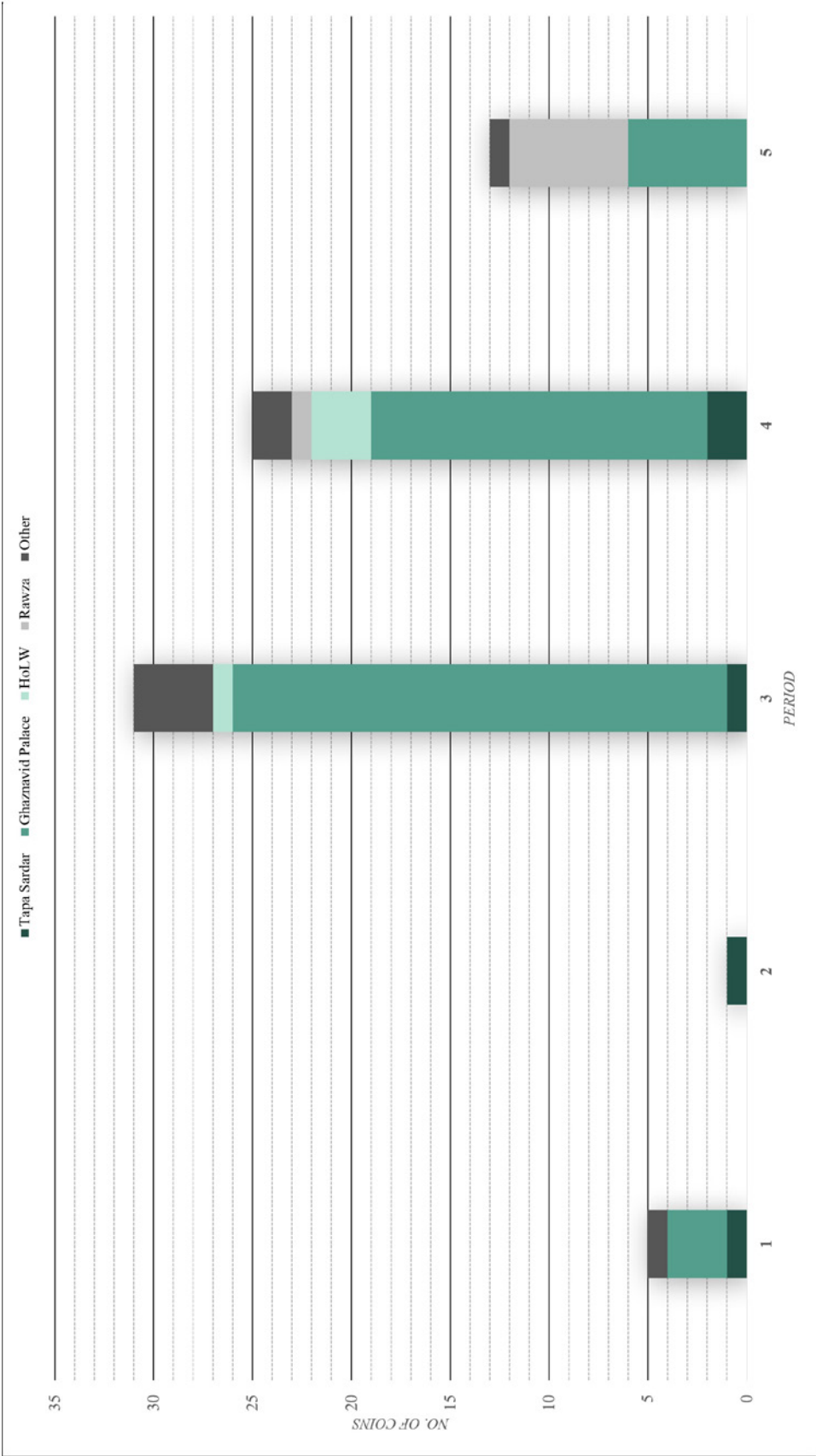


Figure 31. Distribution of the coin finds in the archaeological areas for each period

GHAZNI IN THE ISLAMIC PERIOD: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Roberta Giunta

Studies on the Islamic period documentation acquired in Ghazni by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan (established by IsMEO) have continued almost uninterruptedly since 1956, the year of the first survey conducted in the city by Giuseppe Tucci and Alessio Bombaci.¹²² The field activities, directed over time by Alessio Bombaci, Umberto Scerrato and Dinu Adamesteanu, lasted until 1978 and involved the opening of two excavation sites (a royal palace and a private house) in the so-called Dasht-i Manara plain, north-east of the citadel; surveys in the city and its surroundings, especially in the cemetery areas; the consolidation and restoration of several mausoleums; small and sporadic excavation soundings in the vicinity of historical monuments; the setting up and inauguration of a Museum of Islamic Art on the Rawza hills.¹²³ Prior to the arrival of the Italian Mission, neither archaeological investigations nor in-depth research had ever been conducted in Ghazni,¹²⁴ despite the fact that some 30 years earlier, in 1923, the French archaeologist André Godard, during a brief survey, had identified interesting artefacts of Ghaznavid production, important evidence of the period when the city was one of the main capitals of the eastern Islamic territories.¹²⁵

The initial results of the activities carried out by the Italian Mission appear in a fair number of publications,¹²⁶ but due to the vast amount of data collected and the forced interruption of fieldwork due to well-known historical events, much still remained to be done. For this reason, in the early 1990s, Scerrato resumed the analysis of the excavation documentation of the palace¹²⁷

¹²² Tucci reached Afghanistan in the autumn season, after conducting a first archaeological mission in the Swat Valley in Pakistan. The preliminary survey in Ghazni, preceded by initial inquiries into historical sources by Bombaci, aimed to identify an area in which to begin the first archaeological research. See *IsMEO Activities* 1957: 392 and Bombaci 1957.

¹²³ For a summary of the activities and the names of all those who took part in the missions over the years, see the *IsMEO Activities* 1957: 392; 1958: 274; 1959; 1960: 306; 1961; 1962: 86; 1966: 384; 1967; 1972: 379–84; 1974: 478; 1975: 544–46; 1977: 470; 1978: 338–39). These reports also mention the surveys and activities carried out by the Mission in other cities of Afghanistan, particularly in Kabul, Herat, Balkh and Bamiyan.

¹²⁴ Kohzad (1955: 13), who was President of the Afghan Historical Society at that time, warmly welcomed the agreement made with G. Tucci and the Italian Mission to begin the first research in a city that had become ‘una pianura vasta cosparsa di tombe, mausolei, pietre tombali, un immenso campo di rovine e di colline artificiali formate dai resti della città’ (‘a vast plain scattered with tombs, mausoleums, tombstones, an extensive field of ruins and artificial hills consisting of the remains of the city’).

¹²⁵ Godard’s brief report (1925) was followed by a preliminary study by Flury (1925) based on the photographic documentation collected during this inspection. Subsequently, the Délégation Archéologique Française focused its attention on the area of Bust/Lashkari Bazar where, starting from 1949, it carried out systematic excavations (Schlumberger 1952; Schlumberger and Sourdél-Thomine 1978). See also Gardin 1963.

¹²⁶ For accounts of the archaeological excavations, see Scerrato 1959a, Bombaci 1959, 1961 and Adamesteanu 1960; for the Persian-language inscription on the marble slabs found during the excavation of the Ghaznavid palace and the reconstruction hypothesis for a Ghaznavid mosque through historical sources, see Bombaci (respectively 1966 and 1964); for glazed pottery tiles and metal artefacts, see Scerrato (respectively 1962, and 1959b, 1961, 1964, 1971, 1972); for the consolidation and restoration work on some historic buildings, see Bruno 1962, Orazi 1977 and Galdieri 1978, 1982.

¹²⁷ Scerrato’s initial new reflections on the archaeological activities carried out in Ghazni and, above all, on the excavation of the Ghaznavid Palace appear in an article that the scholar dedicated to G. Tucci on the centenary of his birth (Scerrato 1995).

and entrusted me with the study of the tombs and epitaphs from the medieval period.¹²⁸ After Scerrato's death in 2004, I was entrusted with two significant responsibilities that I still hold today. IsIAO¹²⁹ appointed me to lead the project titled 'Islamic Ghazni: An IsIAO Archaeological Project in Afghanistan';¹³⁰ Anna Filigenzi, now as then Director of the Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan, appointed me as the Mission's deputy director and head of the Islamic section.¹³¹

From 2004 to 2013, I had the opportunity to go to Afghanistan many times. The research was primarily conducted at the National Museum in Kabul, where, during the years of conflict, the then Museum Director, Dr Omara Khan Massoudi, had relocated many materials discovered in Ghazni for security reasons.

The issue regarding the locations where the materials discovered in Ghazni were stored is somewhat complex, so I believe it is appropriate to provide a general overview. Upon the Mission's arrival in 1956–57, there was an *Antiquarium* in Ghazni, on the Rawza hills, where, among other artefacts, some high-quality marble elements with zoomorphic and anthropomorphic bas-relief decoration were preserved. Some of these elements were found during the redevelopment of the area surrounding the mausoleum of Maḥmūd the Ghaznavid in Rawza, a site highly frequented by worshippers due to the political and religious prestige of the famous emir.¹³² With the exception of the tombs and some materials that were left *in situ*, the artefacts discovered by the Italian Mission during the excavations and research were initially stored in a warehouse in Ghazni for inventory and preliminary study.¹³³ However, the agreements established between the Afghan authorities, the Afghan Ministry of Education and G. Tucci anticipated that, at the end of the archaeological activities, the materials would be divided into three groups, two would remain in Afghanistan, while one would be transferred to Italy. In Afghanistan, most of the artefacts were to be housed in a museum in Ghazni, which the Italian Mission undertook to establish, while the most representative pieces would be transferred to and exhibited at the National Museum in Kabul. In Italy, the Italian Mission would receive artefacts of which similar specimens existed in Kabul and Ghazni, and would be responsible for their study, preservation, and display.¹³⁴

¹²⁸ The study of tombs and epitaphs from the Ghaznavid and Ghurid periods, as well as that of other epigraphic elements in marble found during the Mission's surveys in the city area, was the subject of my doctoral thesis at the Université Aix-Marseille (Giunta 1999). A monographic volume devoted solely to funerary material appeared a few years later (Giunta 2003b).

¹²⁹ In 1995 IsMEO was merged with the Italian-African Institute, giving rise to the Italian Institute for Africa and the East (IsIAO) which was closed in November 2011.

¹³⁰ The Project involved the reorganization, digitization, study, and publication of the entire documentation. This undertaking required the establishment of a team of specialists, which was created from the outset (see Giunta 2005a).

¹³¹ After the fall of the Taliban regime in 1999 and the untimely death (in February 2000) of Maurizio Taddei, who was the Director of the Mission, the leadership was entrusted to Giovanni Verardi and, from 2004, to Anna Filigenzi.

¹³² The restoration of Maḥmūd's mausoleum in Rawza and the reorganisation of the surrounding garden were sponsored by Emir Ḥabīb Allāh Khān (d. 1919) at the beginning of the last century (Naīmi 1952: 14). According to historical sources, this area was also intended to house the *Bāgh* and the *Kākh-i Fīrūzī* ('the Garden' and the 'Palace of Turquoise'), which were ordered by Maḥmūd himself (see Adamesteanu 1960: 27 and Allegranzi 2014). Some of these marble elements had been transferred to the Kabul Museum before the arrival of the Italians, who promptly inspected them. For a preliminary description of the artefacts, see Bombaci 1959: 10–14. In 1978, at the request of the Director of the Afghan Institute of Archaeology, the Italian Mission conducted a small excavation essay near Maḥmūd's mausoleum where the remains of a marble floor were found. These remains almost certainly belonged to one of the buildings from the reign of this ruler (*IsMEO Activities* 1978: 345).

¹³³ The exact location of this warehouse is unknown to me, but it was certainly a facility located not far from the excavation area of the palace.

¹³⁴ The 'Joint agreement of the Kabul Museum and the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (Is.M.E.O.)', of which we retain a copy of the original, was written in English and Persian and signed on 30 Oc-

The agreements were honoured,¹³⁵ but over time events took a different course. The nearly 30 years of conflict caused serious damage to the two Afghan museums: many artefacts disappeared¹³⁶ or were destroyed, many others were locked in crates, which were gradually transferred to several premises located in ‘strategic’ points in Kabul and its surroundings, and a warehouse/hiding place in Ghazni.¹³⁷ The artefacts moved to Italy were deposited at the Museo Nazionale d’Arte Orientale in Palazzo Brancaccio in Rome, but only a small number were put on display, as most remained in storage, still packed.

Needless to say, given such a challenging starting point, the recovery and re-inventorying of artefacts, as well as the reorganization of the excavation documentation and the graphic and photographic archives, required many years of work. The current location and condition of the artefacts preserved in Afghanistan are only partially known to me, considering the many years that have passed since my last mission in the country. In 2013, at the request of the then-Governor of Ghazni, Mr Musa Khan, and on the occasion of the celebrations of Ghazni as the *Capital of Islamic Culture 2013 for the Asian Region*, I organized, together with D. Rosati—at that time the draftsman of the Mission—a temporary exhibition of the most representative artefacts from those stored in the aforementioned warehouse/hiding place.¹³⁸ The exhibition was set up in a building located within the Governor’s compound, but a few months after the inauguration it was destroyed by a car bomb; many artefacts were damaged, some were once again secured in the warehouse, and others were transferred to the Kabul Museum, which I have not since had the opportunity to visit. Although less ‘dramatic’, the situation of the artefacts stored in Rome remains problematic. Between the end of 2017 and the first half of 2018, the Museo d’Arte Orientale was relocated from Palazzo Brancaccio in Via Merulana to Palazzo delle Scienze in the EUR district of Rome, and it became part of the Museo delle Civiltà (MuCiv). To date, only a small number of artefacts discovered in Ghazni have been adequately displayed, and no member of the Mission has been granted authorization to inspect the storage facilities.

Firmly believing that the only safeguard that can be guaranteed for these archaeological finds lies in knowledge of them and in the dissemination of the results obtained through in-depth studies, in 2012 the Mission established its own website which collects the files (with photos and drawings) of all architectural decoration artefacts, marble tombs, and coins. The website is constantly being updated and in the near future it is planned to include the most representative finds in ceramics,

tober 1962. It stipulated that the division of materials would take place under the supervision of a representative of the Ministry of Education of Afghanistan.

¹³⁵ For the Kabul Museum, where a ‘Ghazni Room’ was set up, see, for example, Courtois 1961: 28, *Ancient Art from Afghanistan* 1966, Rowland 1971, and Hatch Dupree, Dupree and Motamedi 1974. In Ghazni, on the Rawza hills, the members of the Mission set up a Museum of Islamic Art inside the mausoleum of ‘Abd al-Razzāq, which they had previously restored; its inauguration took place in 1966, see Bruno 1962: 99–101. For artefacts delivered to the Italian Mission, see *IsMEO Activities* 1966: 384.

¹³⁶ The number of Ghazni artefacts enriching public and private collections is very high. The problems facing the antiques market are unfortunately still serious today, as numerous recent auction catalogues attest.

¹³⁷ The main events affecting the Kabul Museum and its collections between 1979 and 1996 are outlined in Grissmann (2001). The scholar pointed out that, in the summer of 1996, ‘the Islamic bronze and lusterware from Ghazni had been mainly destroyed by fire’ (Grissmann 2001: 7). In Ghazni, the Museum of Islamic Art on the Rawza hills was closed, and the materials were transferred to a building that the Italians had constructed in the city to set up a second museum, dedicated to the artefacts discovered during the excavations at Tapa Sardar, which began in 1959. See *IsMEO Activities* 1959: 309, and 1975: 546. Since this second museum was never inaugurated, the building served as a ‘hiding place’ for the Islamic artefacts from the Rawza Museum.

¹³⁸ It should also be noted that, since 2002, the year of our first inspection of the warehouse (see the previous note), it was discovered that, over the years, it had become a hidden place for many other artefacts found in and around the town by local people. In some cases, there was no prior documentation for such artefacts.

metal and glass.¹³⁹ In addition, a multimedia totem is currently being organized at the Museo Orientale ‘Umberto Scerrato’ of L’Orientale University in Naples. This platform will allow users to take virtual tours of the Ghazni site and explore the main artefacts discovered by the Mission.

In the following two sections, we present the main data related to the royal palace and the private house, brought to light during the archaeological excavations.

The Royal Palace

The Palace of Ghazni is well known as, together with the southern Palace of Lashkari Bazar,¹⁴⁰ it is one of the few pieces of archaeological evidence of a civil building certainly commissioned by Ghaznavid rulers. The two palaces, in addition to their architectural layout and abundant use of baked brick for the flooring and the upper wall coverings of many rooms, share a complexity linked to a varying number of construction, renovation, and reuse phases. However, while it can be stated with a reasonable degree of certainty that the foundation of the southern palace of Lashkari Bazar dates back to the reign of Maḥmūd (998–1030), the attribution to Mas‘ūd III (1099–1115) of the first construction phase of the Palace of Ghazni has always been very uncertain.

At the end of the first excavation campaign in 1957, Scerrato and Bombaci assumed that the building dated back to the reign of Sultan Ibrāhīm (1059–1099) or that of his son, Sultan Mas‘ūd III, therefore to a period ranging from the early second half of the 11th century to the first half of the following century. This hypothesis was based, on the one hand, on the presence of a *ziyāra* built a few centuries later within the building’s western ivan, which popular tradition called ‘Ziyārat Ibrāhīm’, and, on the other, on the discovery, in one of the inner walls of the *ziyāra*, of a portion of a marble arch bearing an inscription dedicated to Mas‘ūd III.¹⁴¹ Adamesteanu who, in the absence of Bombaci and Scerrato, was the field director of the third and fourth excavation campaigns, instead assumed that it was a ‘monument de l’époque de Mahmoud qui a subi des transformations à l’époque de Massoud Ier et, probablement, à l’époque d’Ibrahim et de Massoud III’.¹⁴² However, the reasons supporting this assumption are vague and, in some respects, incorrect¹⁴³ and, in fact, this dating proposal was never taken into account by Bombaci and Scerrato in their subsequent studies.¹⁴⁴

A date to the pre-Islamic period, or in any case prior to the time of the Ghaznavid conquest, was proposed by Scerrato for the very large quadrangular enclosure (1,200 × 600m), identified immediately southwest of the palace (‘platform B’). This enclosure was flanked to the east by a smaller enclosure (‘platform A’; 300 × 100m) to which it must have been connected. Based on the traces visible on the ground and, above all, on aerial photographs, the archaeologist believed that

¹³⁹ The website ‘Buddhist and Islamic Archaeological Data from Ghazni, Afghanistan’ is accessible at <https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/>, and is divided into the two sections ‘Buddhist Ghazni’ and ‘Islamic Ghazni’. The site benefited in 2012 and 2017 from two generous co-fundings from the Gerda Henkel Stiftung in Stuttgart and the University of Naples L’Orientale. The bibliographic section lists all the studies conducted so far on excavation activities, research, and material. See also Giunta 2010; 2020.

¹⁴⁰ See note 125.

¹⁴¹ See Scerrato 1959a: 26, 42 and Bombaci 1959: 20; see also Bombaci 1961: 67. Based on its shape, Bombaci supposed that the marble element ‘was perhaps a piece of a basrelief that decorated a vaulted passage’. Adamesteanu, in an unpublished report on the fourth excavation campaign of 1960, specified that he had been informed that the portion of the arch was found in the palace mosque area.

¹⁴² Adamesteanu 1960: 26.

¹⁴³ Two Afghan authorities who were on site in 1959 together with Adamesteanu identified Maḥmūd’s name and that of his son Mas‘ūd I in the epigraphic bands of some marble slabs forming the plinth of the antechambers overlooking the palace’s central courtyard, which we will discuss later.

¹⁴⁴ See, in particular, Bombaci 1961, 1966 and Scerrato 1961, 1962, 1995.

the two enclosures were once a settlement or military camp. The northern boundary of the small enclosure ('A') was only about 15 metres from the south wall of the palace (Figure 32).¹⁴⁵

Regardless of the time of its foundation, it soon became clear that the palace had undergone an initial major destruction, followed by progressive reconstructions and rearrangements of the decorative apparatus. This continued until a prolonged period of abandonment during which several structures were built over time, including the aforementioned *ziyāra* and two burial spaces, one in the southeastern corner of the courtyard, and one a few metres west of the entrance (Figure 33).

The excavations only revealed the central north-south area of the building. As for the surrounding wall, the foundations and part of the elevation of the entire southern side remained, with two circular towers at the corners and a semicircular tower in the centre, along with portions of the other three sides, including the circular tower at the northeastern corner. The discovery of many portions of the enclosing wall and three towers positioned at the corners has made it possible to estimate the area occupied by the building (c.15,100m²). The conditions of the entire eastern area and the southwestern zone have been severely compromised by illegal excavations,¹⁴⁶ the remaining faint traces of the western area—which, however, was only partially excavated—suggested the presence of a second, large central courtyard. The northern area appeared to be more problematic—where the only entrance opened (XVIIa)—and consisted of a large, likely unbuilt space, a kind of street,¹⁴⁷ bordered to the south by a sequence of small rooms (each 3 × 2m), orthogonal to the boundary wall.

The central area of the building, described in various publications,¹⁴⁸ featured a large courtyard (50.60 × 31.90m) surrounded by a walkway (4.50m wide and c.15cm high), with four ivans arranged axially. The northern ivan (XVII) was accessible through an entrance vestibule (XVI-Ia–c) flanked by two large square rooms (XVIII, XIX). The southern ivan (I; 9.20 × 6.50m) led to a room (II) with a podium (*suffa*)¹⁴⁹ in the centre and a large rectangular recess at the back. This hall certainly served as the throne room, at least for a time.

Around the courtyard, on either side of the west, south, and east ivans, there was a sequence of rectangular rooms of similar size (approximately 3m wide), each preceded by an antechamber. On the northern side, only a few antechambers remained, as the construction of the two square halls had evidently obliterated the original rooms. An equally anomalous situation was found in the northwest corner, where four antechambers preceded the mosque (XIII). The latter, rectangular in plan and of the hypostyle type, had five naves perpendicular to the *qiblī* wall, each composed of two rows of four columns of which the marble bases remained. The column shafts must have been made of wood. The *mihrāb* niche was quadrangular in shape (1 × 1.50m).

Two residential complexes (III and IV) were located in the southeast area of the palace; they had a central courtyard and an upper floor, as evidenced by portions of staircases found in Rooms IIIIn and IVd. Based on its shape and size, the northern complex (III) must have been the main one. It was situated immediately west of Room II but was not connected to it. Access to both apartments, in fact, was provided through several rooms that opened onto the central courtyard.

¹⁴⁵ See Scerrato 1959a: 24, 30–31 and figs 16, 17.

¹⁴⁶ Scerrato (1959a: 24) pointed out that 'all that remains on the east side is the negative trace of a wall consisting of a deep trench dug by seekers for building materials'.

¹⁴⁷ In his unpublished excavation report, Adamesteanu defines this street as 'via-canale che penetra nel Palazzo' ('street/channel penetrating the Palace').

¹⁴⁸ The first description of the palace plan was provided by Scerrato (1959a) who added some details in one of his last essays (Scerrato 1995).

¹⁴⁹ The height of the podium was about 50cm above the floor level.

The rooms were paved with baked bricks of different sizes, laid flat or on their edge,¹⁵⁰ except for the central courtyard, the walkway surrounding it and some thresholds paved with marble slabs.¹⁵¹ In some of the rooms, as a result of reconstructive work, re-used marble slabs, sometimes with bas-relief decoration, covered portions of the brick floors.

Based on the materials found during the excavation and the layout of the rooms, archaeologists have hypothesized the roofing system only for certain areas, in particular: a dome over Room II to the south, or possibly a semi-dome over the recess in the southern part of the room; two imposing domes over the two square-shaped halls situated on either side of the entrance; barrel vaults covering the ivans, as well as the antechambers and, perhaps, the rooms behind, arranged around the courtyards; a flat roof over the mosque (Figures 34–36). The courtyards were uncovered; the empty space between the façade and the northern enclosure wall was likely also open. This space might have been accessed through two large arches, one to the northeast and one to the northwest (Figure 36).

Starting from a reading of all the excavation reports, written between 1957 and 1960 and still unpublished, an analysis of the plans and sections produced between 1957 and 1966, and a study of the data relating to the walls (construction techniques, foundation trenches, thicknesses, alignments, interlocking, and abutments of walls), the shape of the rooms, the internal subdivision of the spaces and limited information on the horizontal stratigraphy, we formulated the hypothesis that the building had six major construction phases and an unspecified number of intervention phases within them (Figure 37 and Table 11).¹⁵²

<i>Phases</i>	<i>Colours</i>	<i>Related structures</i>
I	Red	Boundary wall and a section of wall running north-south (25m long), parallel to the boundary wall on the western side and joined to the boundary wall on the southern side. ¹⁵³
II	Brown	Room II (about 13m in length) at the half-way point of the boundary wall, behind the semicircular tower; south-north wall (about 70m long) leaning against the north wall and running parallel to the room; three walls that, together with the phase I wall, define a large space in the western area; arrangement of the western space, to the north of the previous space, through the construction of an irregularly shaped rectangular courtyard, surrounded by small rooms, at least on the east, south and west sides. It is not unreasonable to hypothesize that a similar courtyard arrangement with rooms surrounding it might have been planned in the eastern area as well, adjacent to the east boundary wall. ¹⁵⁴
III	Blue	Arrangement of the central space, east of the western court (or, probably, in the centre between the two courts) with a court in the form of a regular rectangle surrounded by rectangular rooms and two opposing ivans, in the centre of the south and north sides, respectively.

¹⁵⁰ Floors made of baked bricks arranged on edge were mainly found in the southern area, particularly inside and outside the residential complex III.

¹⁵¹ For the location of the quarry discovered a hundred metres from the city, see in particular Bombaci 1959: 8.

¹⁵² After the initial results obtained with D. Rosati, work proceeded with C. Passaro in 2014.

¹⁵³ This first phase was also assumed by Scerrato (1959a: 33).

¹⁵⁴ The irregular shape of the west courtyard (and that of the possible east courtyard) was due to the irregularity of the perimeter wall of the building. The latter was due, to the south, to the presence of enclosure 'A', and to the north to the presence of the street. See above and Figure 32.

IV	Green	Rearrangement of the apartments, including the southernmost one with four ivans around a central courtyard; construction of the two ivans on the east and west sides of the central courtyard and addition of the anterooms; construction of the mosque which was rotated by 5°. The inclusion of the forced a reorganisation of the northeast side of the western court.
V	Yellow	Further rearrangement of the apartments; construction of the two large square rooms to the north; construction of the small rooms orthogonal to the south wall.
VI	Purple	Long phase of abandonment. The building was no longer a residence.

Table 11. The six main construction phases

In order to propose dating hypotheses for these phases, it is necessary to take into account the materials found during the excavations.

It is also well known that the palace had sumptuous wall decoration, featuring marble, brickwork and stucco elements, as well as, to a lesser extent, glazed ceramic tiles.¹⁵⁵ With regard to the vessels, the excavations yielded a very high number of ceramic sherds and many fragments of metal and glass objects.¹⁵⁶

The marble elements can almost all be dated to the same period, due to the working technique, the nature of the decoration and the writing styles of the epigraphs. Most of these elements are rectangular slabs which adorned the lower part of the walls of the entrance vestibule (as well as, perhaps, of the façade, on either side of the entrance),¹⁵⁷ the ivans (certainly the eastern and western ones) and, above all, the antechambers that opened onto the central courtyard, where they were also found *in situ* (Figures 38a, b). Consequently, we believe that the majority of the marbles belong to Phase IV.

This same phase may include the bases of the columns of the mosque (Inv. nos C6178–C6185), as well as the upper part of the arch bearing the name of Mas‘ūd III (Inv. no. C2952; 72 × 100 × 12cm) and two marble transennas with the date 505 AH (= 1112 CE), discovered by Adamesteanu during the third excavation campaign (Inv. nos C2975 [48 × 92 × 12cm] and C2976 [48 × 94 × 12cm]).¹⁵⁸ These last three elements, found in the mosque area, were certainly part of a single structure (180 × 100cm), originally leaning against a wall.¹⁵⁹ A closer reading of

¹⁵⁵ Almost all these finds can be found on the mission’s website, along with the corresponding bibliographic references. Among the major works that have been conducted so far by the research group, I think it is worth mentioning Martina Rugiadi’s PhD thesis on marbles (2012a; see also 2012b; Rugiadi and Lazzarini 2013), Simona Artusi’s PhD thesis on brickwork and stucco (2009), as well as Viola Allegranzi’s PhD thesis on the long Persian inscription on marble slabs (2017; see also Allegranzi 2019). The latter study was a continuation of Bombaci’s work (1966). For glazed ceramic tiles, see a recent study by Agnese Fusaro (2020).

¹⁵⁶ See especially Agnese Fusaro’s PhD thesis (2014; see also 2015) on ceramic material and Valentina Laviola’s PhD thesis on metalwork (2016; see also Laviola 2017 and 2020). The glass material has only been studied very partially; see Laviola (2019). We also note that preliminary results have been obtained by Sara Fiorentino, Barbara Venezia, Nadine Schibille and Mariangela Vandini on assemblages of glassware and bracelets based on a chrono-typological and archaeometric analysis (Fiorentino *et al.* 2019).

¹⁵⁷ These are the slabs with decoration divided into three horizontal registers. The upper register bears a Kufic inscription in Persian, or a cursive inscription in Arabic. Rugiadi used the definition ‘Dado panels. Type 14’ for the former and ‘Dado panels. Type 2’ for the latter. See <https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/islamic/finds/marble/dado-panels>.

¹⁵⁸ The two transennas were found immediately north of the *ziyāra*, at the base of the pillar between the antechambers located in front of the mosque (between XIIIc and XIIIId). For the provenance of the arch, see note 138.

¹⁵⁹ On several occasions, I introduced the reconstruction hypothesis for this structure. This hypothesis is based on the shape and size of the three artefacts, the location of their discovery, but above all the position and content of the inscriptions. The date, repeated on the two transennas, refers to the completion of the construction of an unspecified building which, in my opinion, could not have been the palace. The celebration of a sultan’s residence

Adamesteanu's 1960 excavation reports revealed two interesting details: the excavations of the prayer room yielded a large number of burnt wooden fragments enveloped in a mass of ash, as well as, to the north of the *mihrāb* niche, the traces of three steps that 'si dipartono dal pavimento e montano sulla superficie del muro, leggermente incassati'.¹⁶⁰ The archaeologist assumed that the steps had belonged to the *minbar*. The presence of a large amount of wood in the prayer room is not surprising since this material must have been used both for the beams that supported the flat ceiling and for the columns whose marble bases remain. However, we can assume that wooden columns also served as connecting elements between the arch and the transennas of the marble structure,¹⁶¹ which could in turn be associated with the stairs and thus the *minbar* (Figure 39). Furthermore, the discovery of numerous fragments of nails and other iron elements could support the hypothesis that the structure was anchored to the *qiblī* wall (Figure 40).

All this data allows us to attribute to Mas'ūd III the fourth construction phase, which can be therefore dated to the first half of the 12th century.

The numerous stucco fragments of various sizes found in the prayer hall, in front of the *mihrāb* niche, can certainly also be attributed to the work phase ordered by Mas'ūd III. These fragments formed a rectangular panel (about 60cm long) with a vegetal decoration, bordered on all four sides by an epigraphic frame containing a Koranic verse (Kor. 3:18; Figures 41a–c). The panel was possibly placed inside the *mihrāb*.¹⁶²

The attribution of marble elements to the phases preceding and following Phase IV is not a simple task. However, we are fairly certain that two perfectly matching fragments of a portion of frame (29 × 23 × 4cm; Inv. nos C2781 and C2784) found in the northern part of Room II belong to an earlier production (Figure 42).

The vegetal composition of this frame seems to be inspired by the decoration of the top element of Sebuktigin's Tomb (977–997); the style of Kufic script is closely compared to that of the inscriptions on the Tomb of Maḥmūd in Rawza (d. 1030).¹⁶³ The importance of this inscription lies also in its content, as it is the only epigraph discovered in the palace, bearing the name of a prominent Figure who does not belong to the Ghaznavid or Ghurid dynastic lines (*al-Shaykh al-Jalīl al-Sa[yyid?...]*). The names of the Ghaznavid rulers Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd I appear in the Persian inscription on the dado panels of the antechambers on the western side of the central courtyard. However, contrary to Adamesteanu's assertion,¹⁶⁴ they are not mentioned as the patrons of the palace's construction, but rather as prominent rulers of the dynastic line celebrated in the text, which dates back to the years of Mas'ūd III.¹⁶⁵ The name of the latter appears in the inscription on the above-mentioned arch, as well as on a portion of a marble well curb found in the central courtyard, not far from the 'Ziyārat Ibrāhīm'.¹⁶⁶ The question of the probable presence of an inscription dedicated to a ruler of the Ghurid dynasty will be dealt with later, as it was executed in brickwork.

would have warranted a more monumental inscription (see, in particular, Giunta 2020 and 2022).

¹⁶⁰ 'Three steps spread out from the floor and mount/rest on the surface of the wall, slightly recessed'.

¹⁶¹ Both transennas feature two circular holes on their upper surface.

¹⁶² Although broken into fragments, the panel bears only one inventory number (IG6190). Its reconstruction was based on the inscription. It is worth noting that, apart from this panel, the only other Koranic verse (Kor. 2:255) is found on the frames of the arch of the *minbar*.

¹⁶³ See Giunta 2003b: 19–44, pls I–VIII. The style of Kufic writing is also comparable with that of the only funerary stele found at Ghazni, dedicated to a personage from Nishapur and ascribed to the 11th century (Giunta 2003b: 70–72, pl. XVII).

¹⁶⁴ See note 141.

¹⁶⁵ The content of the Persian inscription is discussed in depth by both Bombaci (1966) and Allegranzi (2019).

¹⁶⁶ Inv. no. C2977. The other inscriptions on marble and brickwork that mention the names of the Ghaznavid rulers were found outside the palace area. See Giunta 2005b.

If our assumptions are correct, the marble frame could date back to the first half of the 11th century, when the construction or the first rearrangement of Room II took place (Phases II or III). The hypothesis would be corroborated by the dating that can be proposed for two alabaster fragments and a stucco panel discovered in the same room, which also differ in their working technique and decoration from those that we can ascribe to the early 12th century (Figures 43a–c).

The fragment of a small column base (Inv. no. C1051)¹⁶⁷—probably belonging to a panel of the *mihrāb*-like type—can be compared with the column bases of the *mihrāb*-like panels decorating the centre of the four faces of the cenotaph of Maḥmūd's tomb, also made of alabaster, whose decoration appears to have served as a model for the vegetal interlacing of fragment Inv. no. C2978 (23 × 16cm).¹⁶⁸ The rectangular panel Inv. no. C3600 (68 × 26.5 × 13.5cm) stands out as a unique piece among all the stucco artefacts discovered during the palace excavations. The vegetal motif, which echoes the so-called 'Style C' of 9th-century Samarra stucco, might have served as a prototype for the vegetal composition of the numerous baked brick pilasters produced later, especially in Phase IV.¹⁶⁹

The numerous fragments of architectural decoration in baked brick and stucco, varying greatly in size, are not easily classified in a chronological sequence. Compared to marble, the material is less homogeneous and fits into different categories, each of which includes several subtypes. Moreover, the fires and devastations that have marked the history of the palace certainly required the reconstruction of the upper parts of the walls in many rooms and the rearrangement of the decorative apparatus. The studies conducted so far have allowed for the identification of the main morphological-functional types and the formulation of hypotheses regarding the original placement of some of the materials, since, with very few exceptions, the artefacts were found in layers of collapse. At the current state of research, we can only establish that most of these materials were produced especially during Phases II–III and IV, thus spanning from the first half of the 11th century to the first half of the 12th century.

The construction of the two large square halls (XVIII and XIX) that we have included in Phase V, i.e. the last phase in which the building continued to serve as a royal residence, led to a significant change in the entrance area. Additionally, between the western wall of the west hall (XVIII) and the eastern wall of the west courtyard, a residual space (about 19m long) was generated, which archaeologists have referred to as 'Corridor' XVIII. This space served as a dumping ground for many baked brick elements that had evidently once constituted the decorative apparatus of the rooms upon which Room XVIII was later built. Many of these fragments bear large Kufic epigraphic bands. The letters, made of bricks arranged on their edge, stand out against an undecorated background coated with a layer of white plaster (Figures 13a–b).¹⁷⁰

The same technique and the same style of writing were used for many other Kufic epigraphic bands and panels found in other areas of the palace, which we believe to be coeval and therefore not later than phase IV.

A different script and, more importantly, a different technique can be observed in three large portions of epigraphic panels discovered near the antechambers on the southwestern side of the central courtyard: the inscription is in cursive and the background is filled with triangular stucco cells. The inscription must certainly have been part of a single large epigraphic band that likely served as a frame for the antechambers south of the western ivan (Figures 44a–c).

¹⁶⁷ We do not know the dimensions of the fragment.

¹⁶⁸ It is interesting to note that this vegetal interlacing is also very similar to that seen on four fragments of brick pilasters, all found outside the palace excavations for which we have proposed a date to the 11th century; see https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/islamic/finds/brickwork/bw_pilasters/type-5.

¹⁶⁹ See https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/islamic/finds/brickwork/bw_pilasters, in particular Types 1 and 2. Also in this case the width of the pilasters does not exceed 27cm.

¹⁷⁰ Due to the condition of the panels, it has not been possible to decipher the inscription. It may, however, be a benedictory text.

The text is certainly dedicated to a ruler since on two portions of the band the title *al-sultā[n]* *al-muʿazza[m]* can be discerned (Figures 45b, c); the third portion (Figure 45a) may contain the word *al-muʿmin[n]*, a term that may appear in the final part of a ruler's titling in order to enshrine the relationship with caliphal authority. No Ghaznavid ruler held the title of *al-sultān al-muʿazzam*, a title that appears instead in the protocol of the Ghurid ruler Muʿizz al-Dīn who reigned in Ghazni between 1173 and 1203, after the Ghaznavids had lost their capital.¹⁷¹ In an inscription dated 599 AH (= 1203 CE) carved on a marble slab discovered by the Mission in the village of Ramak, 25km southeast of Ghazni, this sultan bears both the official title *al-sultān al-muʿazzam*, and the honorary title *Nāṣir khaliḥat Allāh Amīr al-muʿminīn*.¹⁷² It is most likely that the ruler inhabited the palace after ordering new construction work, inserting the two rooms on either side of the entrance (and most probably the sequence of rooms against the northern boundary wall), and celebrating his power in a large epigraphic band clearly visible from the central courtyard. Phase V could consequently date to the end of the 12th century or the early years of the following century.

The issue regarding the glazed ceramic tiles is unresolved. Most of the specimens (76 units) come from the private apartments (Zone III), where they served as a decorative element on the walls.¹⁷³ Their production seems to be limited to the Ghazni area, both for plain tiles and those with moulded relief decoration. Scerrato (1962) believed that all the specimens dated to the Ghurid period (Phase V). Based on a detailed study of the entire ceramic corpus, Fusaro (2014: 190–99) proposed that production may have begun in the late Ghaznavid period (Phase IV?), at least for the undecorated tiles.

As for the ceramic ware, Fusaro (2014: 261–96) divided the production into four main periods, dating from the 11th century to the 17th century (Table 12).¹⁷⁴ This periodization excludes the few fragments found in secondary stratigraphic positions, which can be attributed to a period between the 8th and the beginning of the 10th century.

<i>Periods</i>	<i>Dating</i>
I	11th century
II	late 11th century–first half of the 12th century
III	second half of the 12th century–first half of the 13th century
IV	13th–17th centuries

Table 12. Periodization of ceramic wares from the palace excavations

In the first period, the production included primarily archaic slip-painted ceramics, monochrome and monochrome graffito, which were found in the few deeper, stratigraphically reliable levels of the palace. The second period encompasses a much broader and more varied range of productions, including primarily splashed graffito ware, dotted graffito ware, and ceramics with a

¹⁷¹ According to epigraphic data, the Ghaznavid rulers, starting with Ibrāhīm, bore the title *al-sultān al-aʿẓam* (Giunta and Bresc 2004: 187–88, 225). See also Giunta 2005b.

¹⁷² It is a construction text of an unspecified mosque, reused on the *qiblī* wall of a modern shrine (Giunta 2003c).

¹⁷³ In addition to the tiles found in the excavations of the palace and the private residence (from which about 30 were recovered), and in both cases none in their original position, around 60 specimens were housed at the Kabul Museum, with some fragments in the so-called *Antiquarium* of Rawza.

¹⁷⁴ The study focused on glazed ceramics, although the scholar always considered the corpus of unglazed ceramics, particularly where it was possible to establish a chronological association with the glazed ones.

siliceous body and opaque turquoise glaze.¹⁷⁵ The third period witnessed significant changes, especially in technological, morphological, and aesthetic aspects. There was a near-complete disappearance of earlier productions, with some classes evolving—such as splashed and monochrome graffito ware—alongside the introduction of new productions, such as the class (with related sub-classes) featuring alkaline transparent glazes. This third period includes fragments of lustreware, mina'i, imported Chinese porcelain, as well as one of the most original productions discovered in Ghazni: ceramics with white siliceous slip-painting applied directly onto the ceramic body beneath a transparent turquoise glaze.¹⁷⁶ The final period is marked by a noticeable reduction in ceramic production. Given the small number of fragments, primarily found in the uppermost layers, it is difficult to establish precise chronological ceramic associations. Furthermore, it is likely that these fragments are imports from neighbouring regions.

The following table illustrates a chronological framework based on a comparison of data related to architectural and decorative phases and the ceramic finds (Table XIII).

<i>Architectural phases</i>	<i>Pottery productions</i>	<i>Dating</i>
I	–	before the 11th century
II	I	11th century
III		
IV	II	late 11th century–first half of the 12th century
V	III	second half of the 12th century–first half of the 13th century
VI	IV	13th–17th centuries

Table 13. Dating hypothesis for the history of the palace

The number of metal artefacts from the palace excavations includes around 70 specimens, almost all of which are in a fragmented state and not easily datable.¹⁷⁷ A noteworthy exception is two cylindrical inkwells in copper alloy, discovered in the area of the private apartments (III). Both specimens, in good condition, retain their ribbed dome-shaped lids with knob handles and feature very elaborate decoration.¹⁷⁸ The vegetal and epigraphic decoration on one of the two specimens is engraved on silver plates applied on the box and on the lid (shoulder and lobes of the dome). For this specimen, we agree with Laviola's proposed dating of no later than the 11th century (Architectural phase II–III; Pottery production I; see Table XIII).¹⁷⁹ We also agree with the

¹⁷⁵ Fusaro (2014: 275) believes that during this period 'iniziano a essere prodotte le mattonelle invetriate non decorate e iniziano a diffondersi gli sphero-conical vessels' ('undecorated glazed tiles began to be produced and sphero-conical vessels began to spread').

¹⁷⁶ The originality mainly lies in the decorative techniques.

¹⁷⁷ Metalwork documented at Ghazni by the Archaeological Mission between 1957 and 1978, dated to a chronological span between the 9th and 13th centuries, have been the subject of an in-depth study by Valentina Laviola (2020). Of these, only about 100 items come from the two archaeological sites.

¹⁷⁸ The specimens were catalogued under Inv. nos C10 and C11 (Laviola 2020: nos 390–391). The current location of the first specimen (C10), which was displayed in the 1960s at the Museum of Islamic Art of Rawza, is unknown. The second specimen (C11) is housed at the Museo delle Civiltà – Museo d'Arte Orientale in Rome (Inv. no. 8368). For a photo of the discovery at the excavation site, see Laviola 2020: 466, fig. 81. See also Scerrato 1959a: 39, 1959b: 96–97.

¹⁷⁹ It is interesting to note that, from an aesthetic perspective, the decoration on this inkwell evokes the carving found on the aforementioned stucco panel, for which we have proposed the same dating (Inv. no. C3600; Figure 43c).

hypothesis that the second inkwell may belong to a later production period (end of the 11th–first half of the 12th century?; Architectural phase IV; Pottery production II).

The data provided by the coins found in the excavations is presented in this volume. I would just like to emphasise the difficulty of the study conducted by the two numismatists, who had to rely solely on photographic documentation and a fair number of casts. The agreements with the Afghan authorities, to which we have already alluded,¹⁸⁰ stipulated in fact, in section B-1b, that ‘All coins whatever their metal or historical period shall be the property of the Kabul Museum’, and in section B-1d that ‘copies and casts of unique objects may be made and taken by IsM.E.O. at its own expense’. Unfortunately, the coins preserved at the Kabul Museum have been lost.

Based on the archaeometric analyses, it has emerged that ‘all the analysed objects were manufactured by using a plant ash-based glass in line with Central Asian glassmaking technology. Regarding the glassware, the closest affinities have been shown with the so-called “Mesopotamian I” type, a compositional category identified among 9th- to 11th-century CE plant ash-based glass assemblages from Central Asia’.¹⁸¹ This dating, which should, however, be appropriately compared with a morpho-typological study, suggests that the glass production can be ascribed to Architectural phase I or, in my opinion much more likely, to Architectural phases II–IV.

In conclusion, based on the current state of research, we can hypothesize that Phase I of the building predates the 11th century. However, we lack data to determine the exact date of its foundation, its initial function, and the organization of the spaces enclosed within the boundary wall. However, we doubt that the building was conceived as a royal palace at the time of its foundation, especially considering its location on the southernmost of the two ancient roads of the city, as well as its close proximity to the northern part of the pre-Ghaznavid ‘A’ enclosure, which has influenced the irregular shape of the building’s perimeter (see Figure 32).¹⁸² Furthermore, with the exception of a small number of pottery sherds attributed to the 8th–10th centuries, there is no architectural decoration element that can be dated to the period before the Ghaznavid conquest.¹⁸³ The two subsequent Phases (II and III) were certainly Ghaznavid and would date to a period between the reigns of Maḥmūd and Ibrāhīm b. Mas‘ūd I (early 11th century to 1099), although it remains difficult to establish the exact use of the building during this century. The presence, in Hall II, of a marble frame fragment bearing the name of a *shaykh* (which dates to the early 11th century; see Figure 42) and, more importantly, the absence, throughout the entire area of the building, of marble elements with figurative bas-relief decoration, comparable to those found in Rawza, where the palaces and gardens of Maḥmūd and his son Mas‘ūd I were located (Figures 46a, b, 47a, b), suggests that even during the first half of this century the building was not used as a royal palace. Such a function can only be proposed from the second half of the 11th century onwards, during the reign of Ibrāhīm, when the central courtyard area of the building was reorganized with the four ivans and rooms arranged on all four sides.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ See note 134.

¹⁸¹ See Fiorentino *et al.* 2019: 168.

¹⁸² We know from coeval historical sources that the founder of the Ghaznavid dynasty, Sebuktigin, had his palace and a mosque built on the citadel occupying the southwestern area of the city. His son Maḥmūd, however, preferred the area of Rawza to the northeast. We lack information on the construction of the buildings in the central-southern area of the city during the earliest Ghaznavid period.

¹⁸³ It is worth mentioning the close proximity between the southern boundary wall of the building and the so-called enclosure A. See above and Figure 32.

¹⁸⁴ See above and note 132; see also <https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/islamic/finds/marble/dado-panels/dado-antropomorphic-decoration-39>, <https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/islamic/finds/marble/dado-panels/dado-zoomorphic-decoration-41>, <https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/islamic/finds/marble/dado-panels/dado-zoomorphic-decoration-43>, <https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/islamic/finds/marble/dado-panels/dado-zoomorphic-decoration-44>, <https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/islamic/finds/marble/screens/screen-7>, <https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/islamic/finds/marble/screens/screen-7a>, <https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/islamic/finds/marble/screens/screen-8>, <https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/islamic/finds/marble/screens/screen-9>.

However, we owe to Mas'ūd III a comprehensive renovation of the palace, featuring lavish architectural decoration (Phase IV). This renovation coincided with the foundation of his great mosque, located in the immediate vicinity of the palace, as evidenced by its minaret. Phase V would correspond to the fall of the Ghaznavids and the subsequent reuse of the palace by the Ghurid Mu'izz al-Dīn between the late 12th century and the early years of the following century. This sultan is likely to have ordered new construction and restoration work, almost certainly following the fire that the Ghurids themselves had started in the city in 1150/51. The final Phase VI extended over a long period, right up to the 17th century. The building ceased to function as a residence and was gradually transformed into a burial area, a phenomenon that appears to have affected the entire medieval city.¹⁸⁵

Although based on an incorrect interpretation of some data, the hypothesis put forward by Adamesteanu regarding an early dating of the building to the beginning of the 11th century¹⁸⁶ would therefore prove to be correct. However, we do not have sufficient evidence to support the other archaeologist's hypothesis that the building served as a *madrassa*.¹⁸⁷

The House of the Lustrewares

This private residence was uncovered during a single excavation campaign (1957) a few kilometers northwest of the palace and about 200m to the west of the tomb of Sebuktigin, in the area between the citadel and the Rawza hills.¹⁸⁸ The only detailed account is provided by Scerrato¹⁸⁹ although the plan of the building is merely sketched, and we lack information on the stratigraphic sequence.¹⁹⁰

The building had a quadrangular floor plan (approximately 30–40 meters on each side) and was enclosed by a stone wall, of which mainly the northern portion has been found. The main entrance was located on the southern side. Thirteen rooms, defined by mudbrick walls on stone foundations, were arranged around a central square courtyard. The presence of numerous staircases made it possible to determine that the building also had an upper storey (Figure 48). The floors were made of beaten earth, except for one room in the southeast area, which had a baked brick floor. A trench dug in the courtyard, however, led to the discovery of some portions of a marble floor at a depth of about 2.27m below the walking surface. The roofing system mainly consisted of barrel vaults.

The dwelling, which showed clear signs of many rearrangements, contained several 'hiding places': a niche with a vaulted ceiling, located in the lower part of the northeast wall of Room II, and some ceramic vessels in which a number of objects had been 'hidden', first and foremost the large jar buried in the floor up to the rim in Room III. The niche in Room II is famous, due to the presence of eight perfectly preserved lustrewares—which gave the residence its name—dated to a period between the second half of the 12th century and the first half of the 13th century (Figure 49).¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ See also note 124.

¹⁸⁶ See above and note 143.

¹⁸⁷ Adamesteanu 1960: 23. This hypothesis was supported, over the years, only by J. C. Courtois (1961: 28–29).

¹⁸⁸ Scerrato 1959a: 23, 42–52. Further information can be found in his unpublished excavation report and notebooks.

¹⁸⁹ Scerrato 1959a: 23, 42–52. Further information can be found in his unpublished excavation report and notebooks.

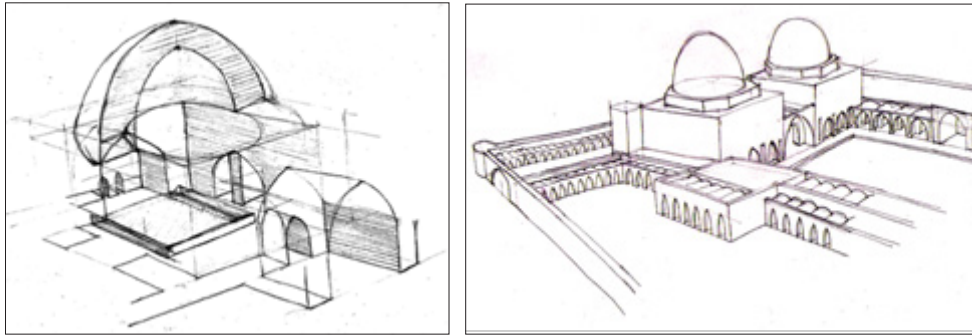
¹⁹⁰ In this case as well, the archaeological site had been compromised by illicit excavations, particularly its southern part. Scerrato (1959a: 42) reports that traces of clandestine excavations were clearly visible in many of the numerous mounds scattered across the hillsides.

¹⁹¹ For a recent study on these lustrewares, see Fusaro and Allegranzi (2023). The two scholars point out that 'The Ghazni specimens belong to the distinctive production of lustre-painted stonepaste pottery developed in Iran during the second half of the 12th century and the early 13th century [...]' and that they 'constitutes an exceptional early collection of lustrewares, assembled shortly after their production date' (Fusaro and Allegranzi 2023: 2).

The studies conducted by Scerrato (1959a: 42–53), first, and Fusaro (2014: 253–60), later, attest that the building was certainly occupied at least from the first half of the 12th century, but that the phase of greatest occupation occurred between the second half of the 12th century and the first two decades of the 13th century, thus when the city had become the capital of the Ghurids. Scerrato also advanced the hypothesis that the dwelling was abandoned due to an unforeseen event and that this event could be traced back to the arrival of the Mongol hordes in 1221.

This is a detailed architectural floor plan of the Temple of Isis at Philae. The plan shows a complex arrangement of rooms, courtyards, and corridors. Rooms are labeled with Roman numerals (I through XXV) and some with letters (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z). The plan includes a large central courtyard (I) and several smaller courtyards. The temple is surrounded by a wall, and there are several gates or entrances marked. A scale bar at the bottom indicates a distance of 0 to 25 meters. A north arrow points towards the top right of the plan.

Figure 33. Plan of the palace with indication of the room numbers (drawing by G. Ioppolo, 1966; reworking by C. Passaro, 2024)



Figures 34, 35. Reconstruction hypothesis for Room II and ivan I, and for the northern area and the western court (drawings by D. Rosati, 2012)

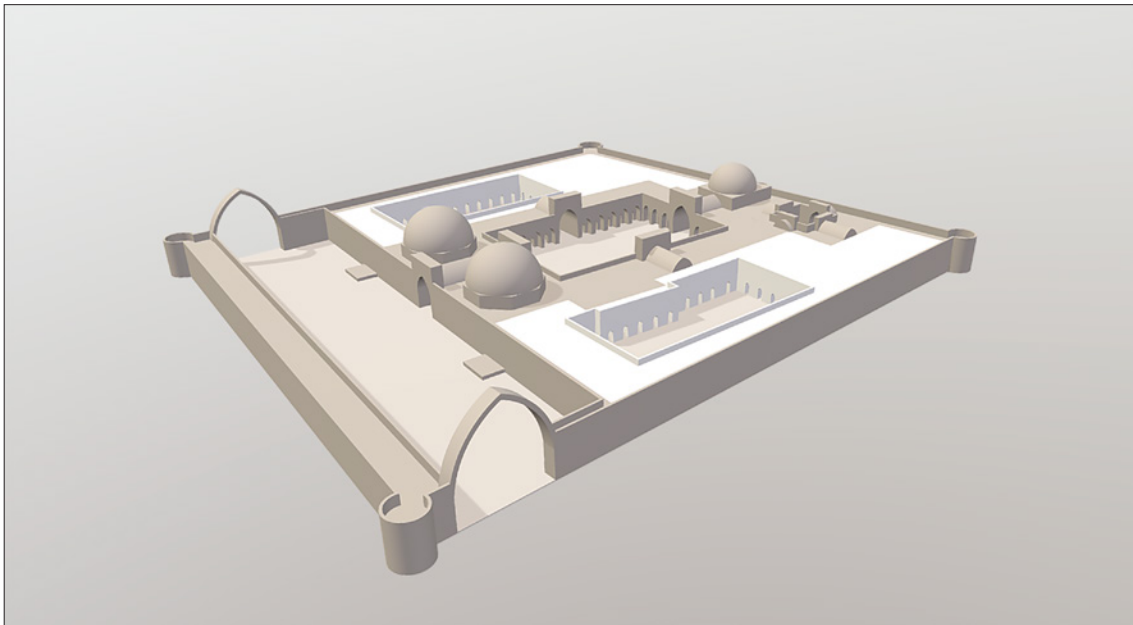


Figure 36. Reconstruction hypothesis for the palace (drawing by C. Passaro, 2015)



Figure 37. Plan of the palace showing the six main construction phases (elaboration by C. Passaro)



Figures 38a, b. Marble dado panels with Persian (a) and Arabic (b) inscriptions. a: C1198 (74 x 41.5 x 7 cm); b: C2066 (71 × 46 × 5 cm). Figure 39. Reconstruction of the marble structure consisting of the arch and the two transennas (elaboration by C. Passaro, 2024)



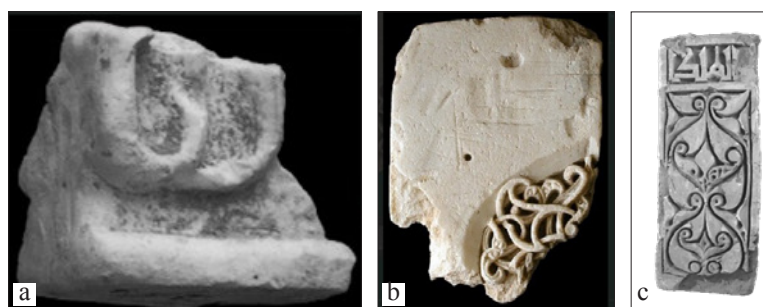
Figure 40. Hypothetical reconstruction of the prayer hall (drawing by C. Passaro, 2024)



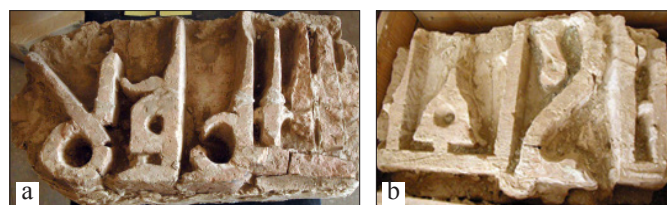
Figures 41a, b, c. Stucco fragments and partial reconstruction of the panel



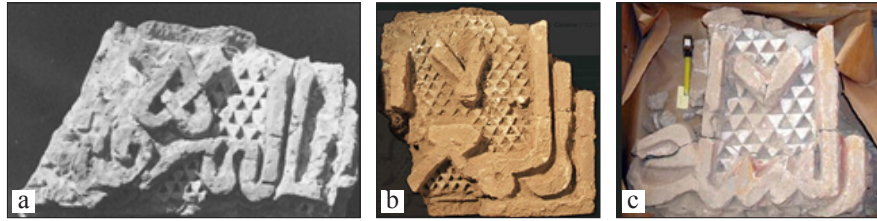
Figure 42. Portion of a marble frame found in Room II



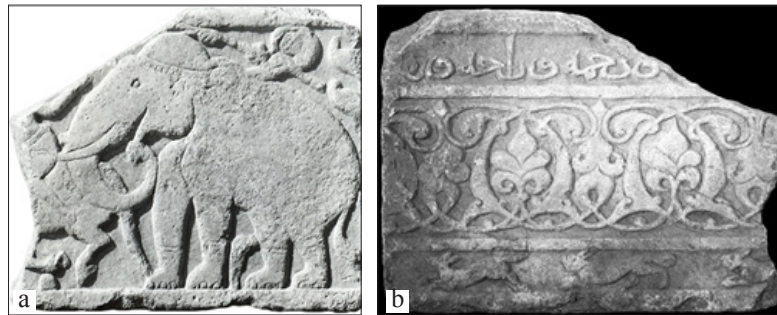
Figures 43a, b. Alabaster fragments; c. Stucco panel



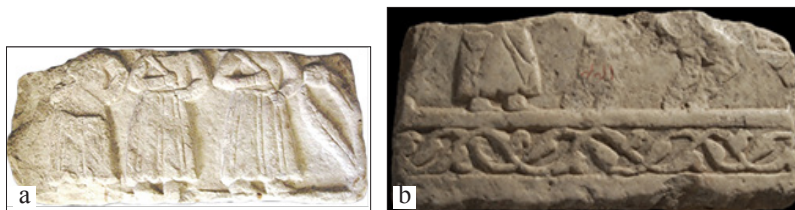
Figures 44a, b. Portions of epigraphic panels found in 'Corridor' XVIII.
a: C6025 (29 × 56 × 20 cm); b: C5973 (31 × 52 × 20 cm)



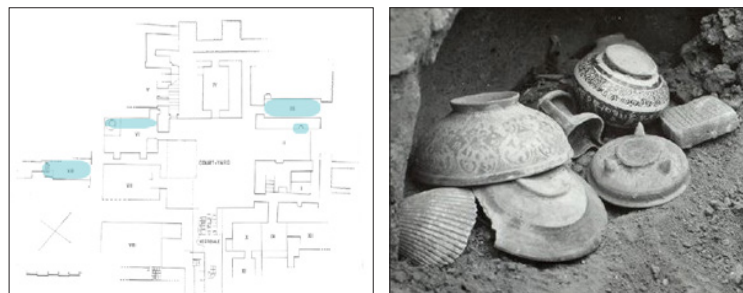
Figures 45a, b, c. Portions of epigraphic panels in cursive script.
a: C5612 ($48 \times 72 \times 20$ cm); b: C2719 ($58 \times 56 \times 21$ cm); c: C5784 ($58 \times 53 \times 15$ cm).



Figures 46a, b. Marble screen found on the Rawza hills with decoration on both sides;
first half of the 11th century. RM0040 ($45.5 \times 60.5 \times 7$ cm, sides 1 and 2)



Figures 47a, b. Marble screen found on the Rawza hills with decoration on both sides;
first half of the 11th century. RM0039 ($23 \times 34 \times 4.5$ cm, sides 1 and 2)



Figures 48, 49. Plan of the House of the Lustrewares (from Scerrato 1959a: 44, tab. II);
the House of the Lustrewares. The niche/hiding place in Room II (from Scerrato 1959a: fig. 49)

CATALOGUE

CATALOGUE GUIDE AND INDEX

General Remarks

The coins are arranged chronologically according to dynasties and rulers. The descriptions of the images are brief and generally do not include detailed information; this can be found in the cited references and in the text. The references are arranged chronologically according to their year of publication.

As only plaster casts and/or photos were available for the study of the coins found at Tapa Sardar and the Islamic sites (see Appendix I), it was not possible to provide technical details such as die axes or comments on the state of preservation. The information on weight and diameter comes from the excavators. Within a type and denomination, they are arranged according to decreasing weights. The information on the respective find location of the coins is taken from the excavation diaries. Some coins do not originate from the excavation; they are identified by the siglum 'Sp' (sporadic) preceding the inventory number and are visually separated from the excavation coins in the catalogue by a dividing line. Such a dividing line is also inserted if a type/denomination was found both in Tapa Sardar and in the Islamic sites.

For each type/denomination, an enlarged photo (3:2) is shown before the description, while all coins are shown on a scale of 1:1 after the catalogue entries, which give the technical information on the coins (catalogue number, denomination, metal, weight, diameter, find location and inventory number).

Part A: The Coins from the 2nd to the 8th Century

For the absolute dating of the Kushan kings, the dates according to Jongeward and Cribb (2015), which are accepted by the majority of scholars, are adopted, but it should be noted that I do not yet consider the chronology problem to have been finally resolved (see part A, section 1.1.). The mint identifications are in most cases hypothetical and refer only to certain regions. For the Kushan mints, both Göbl's (1984, 1993) and Cribb's (Jongeward and Cribb 2015) identifications are listed in juxtaposition. As mentioned in the foreword, the extensive publication by Cribb and Bracey (2025) could only be taken into account to a very limited extent. For the catalogue, however, I have endeavoured to provide references from Cribb and Bracey 2025 for the Kushan and Kushan-Sasanian coins from Tapa Sardar. However, precise identification using the type catalogue presented by the two authors is no easy task, especially since the type variants described in detail in the catalogue can only be recognized with great difficulty, if at all, in the accompanying illustrations. This is, of course, also due to the coins themselves, which, as a result of their often poor manufacture and/or preservation, do not reveal the relevant details in their design. With regard to the chronology and mint identifications, not much has changed since Jongeward and Cribb 2015 or Cribb 2021 for the material presented here.

Part B: The Coins from the 9th to the 20th Century

In the catalogue, the dates of the Islamic rulers are given both in Hijri and Common Era calendars, according to Bosworth (1996) or Album (2011). For all the other rulers, only the Common Era dates are given.

The mint identifications for most of the coins bearing the 'bull and horseman' type are hypothetical and refer only to certain regions. Lacking additional studies to investigate their chronology and production, I have decided to insert the 'post-Shahi' issues after the proper Hindu Shahi denominations.

For the Arabic script, hamza (ء) is always included in the legend transcriptions.

<i>Dynasty and Authority</i>	<i>Cat. no.</i>
PART A: The Coins from the 2nd to the 8th Century	
<i>Kushans</i>	
Soter Megas	1, 2
Vima Kadphises	3, 4
Kanishka I	5–14
Huvishka	15–28
Huvishka Types (unofficial imitations)	29–32
Vasudeva I	33–58
Vasudeva Imitations	59–70
Kanishka II	71
Kanishka II and Imitations	72–79
Uncertain Late Kushan Coins or Imitations	80–83
<i>Sasanians</i>	
Shapur II	84–85
<i>Sasanian Kushanshahs (Kushano-Sasanian Governors)</i>	
Imitation (?) Modelled After Shapur II	86
<i>Alkhan-Nezak Kings</i>	
Anonymous	87
<i>'Later Nezak' / Turk Shahis</i>	
Anonymous	88–90
<i>Turk Shahis</i>	
Pangul	91–94
Tegin	95
PART B: The Coins from the 9th to the 20th Century	
<i>Hindu Shahis</i>	
Spalapati Deva	96
Samanta Deva	97–99
<i>Post-Shahi and Minor Dynasties</i>	
'Samanta Deva' Anonymous or Unattributed	100–109
<i>Unattributed 'bull and horseman' Type</i>	114–116
<i>'Pre-Ghaznavids'</i>	
Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd al-Ghaffār	117

<i>Ghaznavids</i>	
Mas'ūd I b. Maḥmūd	118
Farrukhzād b. Mas'ūd I	119
Ibrāhīm b. Mas'ūd I	120–127
Mas'ūd III b. Ibrāhīm	128, 129
Bahrām Shāh b. Mas'ūd III	130–139
Anonymous	140, 141
Khusraw Malik b. Khusraw Shāh	142
Illegible	143–146
<i>Tomaras and Chauhans</i>	
Chahada Deva	147–149
Anonymous 'Madana' Imitations	150–158
<i>Ghurids</i>	
Mu'izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām I	159–168
<i>Uncertain (Ghurids/Turkish Slave Commander or Iltutmish b. Iltutmish, Delhi Sultan)</i>	
Anonymous	169
<i>Khwarezm Shahs</i>	
Abū'l-Faṭḥ 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad	170–172
Jalāl al-Dīn Mengubirti	173, 174
<i>Timurids</i>	
Suyurgatmish Khān	175
Uncertain / Anonymous	176
<i>Mughals</i>	
Anonymous (Akbar I b. Humāyūn)	177
<i>Sikhs</i>	
Ranjit Singh	178
<i>Durrani</i>	
'Iranian Civic Copper'	179–182
<i>Illegible Modern Copper Coins</i>	183–187
<i>Illegible (Islamic)</i>	188–199
<i>Illegible</i>	200–227

PART A:
THE COINS FROM THE 2ND TO THE 8TH CENTURY

Michael Alram

KUSHANS

Soter Megas (c.90–113, or later)

Uncertain mint(s) (Kapishi/Begram?)



1.

Obverse

Diademed, radiate bust of Miuro (?) r. holding an arrow; three-pronged tamgha (?)

Reverse

King (?) on horseback r.; three-pronged tamgha (?)

Gr.: BACIAEV(C) BACIAEYΩN CΩTHP MCTAC (?, most parts off flan)

References: Göbl 1993: nos 58–71; Cribb 2014: fig. 18; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 177–206.

Cf. Cribb 2021a: figs 37.3–18; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 37 B.C1-iii (1?/1?) (Begram centre, phase 3)

1. 2Δ (Æ); 7.3g; 21mm
Tapa Sardar, level of the base of Stupa 11; 1960 (Inv. TS430)

2. 2Δ (Æ); – g; 22mm
Rawza, area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd; 1957–1966 (Inv. IG1958)



1.

2.

Vima Kadphises (c.113–127, or later)

Mint B (Taxila)¹ / Main mint (Kapishi/Begram)

3.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar

Gr.: BACIAEVC BACIAEΩN CΩTHP MEΓAC OOHMO KAΔΦICHC (most parts off flan)

Reverse

Oesho and bull

Khar.: *maharajasa rajadirajasa sarvaloga isvarasa mahisvarasa vi'ma kathphisasa tradara* (most parts off flan)

References: Göbl 1984: series 762; Göbl 1993: nos 87–105; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 274–305; Cribb 2021a: figs 38.4–14; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 63 C.C1-ii (1–3?/?) (Begram copper production centre, phase 2)

3. 4Δ (Æ); 16.5g; 26mm

Tapa Sardar, stairway of *mahāstūpa*; no year (Inv. TS428)

4. 4Δ (Æ); 16.15g; 25–26mm

Purchased at Ghazni; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp211)



3.

4.

¹ In Göbl (1984: pl. 72) Mint A erroneously indicated, but see p. 22 and the *Synchronogramm* on pl. 179.

Kanishka I (c.127–151, or later)

Mint I (A) (Peshawar) / Main mint (Kapishi/Begram)

5.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar

Bac.: $\text{PAO KANH}\bar{\text{P}}\text{KI}$ (most parts off flan)*Reverse*

Athsho standing l.

Bac.: $\text{A}\Theta\text{PO}$

References: Göbl 1984: series 772; Göbl 1993: nos 153–154; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 459–517; Cribb 2021a: figs 39.21–23; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 79 D.C1-ii (1?/1a) (main copper mint, probably at Begram, phase 2)

5. 4Δ (Æ); 17g; 26mm
Tapa Sardar, trial trench MLS, between *mahāstūpa* and Vihara 17 (2); 1962 (Inv. TS589)
6. 4Δ (Æ); 16.85g; 25mm
Tapa Sardar, unstratified; no year (Inv. TS440)



5.

6.



7.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar

Bac.: bAO KANHbKI (most parts off flan)*Reverse*

Athsho standing l.

Bac.: AObO

References: Göbl 1984: series 773; Göbl 1993: no. 155; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 518–519; Cribb 2021a: figs 40.20–21; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 80 D.C1-ii (1a) (main copper mint, probably Begram, phase 2)

7. 2Δ (Æ); 8.8g; 22mmTapa Sardar, trial trench MLS, between *mahāstūpa* and Vihara 17 (2); 1962 (Inv. TS592)

7.



8.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar

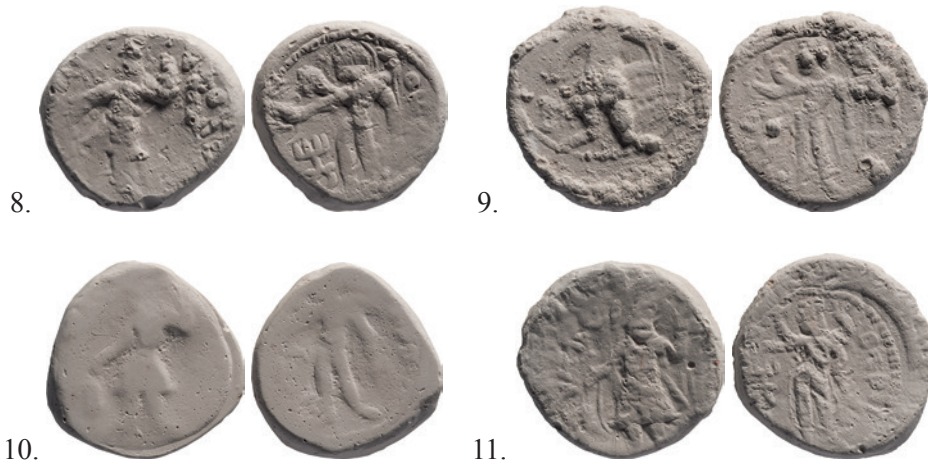
Bac.: $\text{PAO KANH}\bar{\text{P}}\text{KI}$ (most parts off flan)*Reverse*

Oesho standing l.

Bac.: $\text{OH}\bar{\text{P}}\text{O}$ (partly off flan)

References: Göbl 1984: series 781; Göbl 1993: no. 164; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 553–575; Cribb 2021a: figs 40.9–12; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 79 D.C1-ii (6a) (main copper mint, probably at Begram, phase 2)

8. 4Δ (Æ); 17.85g; 26mm
Tapa Sardar, trial trench MLS, between *mahāstūpa* and Vihara 17 (2); 1962 (Inv. TS593)
9. 4Δ (Æ); 16.9g; 27mm
Tapa Sardar, unstratified; no year (Inv. TS1320)
-
10. 4Δ (Æ); 16.27g; 23–24mm
Purchased at Ghazni; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp210)
11. 4Δ (Æ); 15.65g; 25–26mm
Purchased at Ghazni; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp209)





12.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar

Bac.: $\text{PAO KANH}\overline{\text{PKI}}$ (partly off flan)*Reverse*

Oado running l.

Bac.: OAAO (? , illegible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 783; Göbl 1993: nos 167–173; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 579–614; Cribb 2021a: figs 40.1–8; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 81 D.C1-iii (5a) (main copper mint, probably at Begram, phase 3)

12. 4Δ (Æ) 17.15g; 24-26mmPurchased at Ghazni, coming from *Ziyārat Kula-e Sawz*; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp208)

12.

Mint II (B) (Taxila) / Kashmir mint

13.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar

Bac.: $\text{BAO KANH}\bar{\text{P}}\text{KI}$ (? , illegible)*Reverse*

Nana standing r.

Bac.: NANA (? , illegible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 806; Göbl 1993: nos 201–202; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 656–671;
 Cribb 2021a: figs 41.1–4; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 95 D.C3-ii (?/4?) (Kashmir copper mint, phase 2)

13. Δ (Æ); 3.2g; 17mm

Tapa Sardar, northern part of Area 64–100, trench 64; no year (Inv. TS1623)



13.



14.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar

Bac.: $\text{PAO KANH}\bar{\text{P}}\text{KI}$ (partly off flan)*Reverse*

Oesho standing l.

Bac.: $\text{OH}\bar{\text{P}}\text{O}$ (? , most parts off flan)

References: Göbl 1984: series 813; Göbl 1993: nos 208–212; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 684–699; Cribb 2021a: figs 41.24; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 95 D.C3-ii (2?/6?) (Kashmir copper mint, phase 2)

14. Δ (Æ); 4.2g; 18mm

Tapa Sardar, unstratified; no year (Inv. TS1017)



14.

Huvishka (c.151–190, or later)

Group 1 / Main mint (Kapishi/probably Begram)

15.

Obverse

King reclining on couch

Bac.: $\text{PAONANONPAO OOHPE KOPANO}$ (? , illegible)*Reverse*

Mihr standing l.

Bac.: MIIPO/MIOPO (? , illegible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 821 (Mihr) or 824 (Mioro); Göbl 1993, nos 302–306; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 880–885 (early phase); Cribb 2021a: figs 43.6–7 (phase I); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 124 E.C1-i (3?/3?) (main copper mint, Begram, phase 1)

15. 4Δ (Æ) 14.75g; 22–24mm

Purchased at Ghazni; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp213)



15.



16.

Obverse

King mounted on elephant r.

Bac.: $\text{PAONANO PAO OOH PKE KO PA NO}$ (? , illegible)*Reverse*

Athsho (?) standing l.

Bac.: A TH PO (? , mostly illegible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 832 (?); Göbl 1993: nos 309–311; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 826–847 (early phase); Cribb 2021a: figs 42.12 (phase I); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 124 E.C1-i (1st/8a?) (main copper mint, Begram, phase 1)

16. 4Δ (Æ); 14.85g; 27mm

Tapa Sardar, Passage 34 behind Vihara 17; no year (Inv. TS1012)



16.



17.

Obverse

King sitting cross-legged facing

Bac.: $\text{PAONANOPAO OOHPE KOPANO}$ (? , illegible)*Reverse*

Athsho standing l.

Bac.: AΘPO

References: Göbl 1984: series 834; Göbl 1993: nos 315, 316; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 956–961 (early phase); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 124 E.C1-i (2?/8a) (main copper mint, Begram, phase 1)

17. 4Δ (Æ); 15.65g; 22.6mm
 Donation; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp127)



17.



18.

Obverse

King mounted on elephant r.

Bac.: ΠΑΟΝΑΝΟΠΑΟ ΟΟΗΡΚΕ ΚΟΠΑΝΟ (? , illegible)

Reverse

Deity standing l. (Athsho or Mao?)

Bac.: ΑΘΠΟ or ΜΑΟ (? , illegible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 832 (Athsho) or 835 (MAO); Göbl 1993: nos 309–311 (Athsho) or 317–319 (Mao); Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 794–821 (Mao) or 826–847 (Athsho) (early phase); Cribb 2021a, figs 42.4–8 (Mao) or 12, 13 (Athsho) (phase I); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 124 E.C1-i (1⁷/8a or 2a) (main copper mint, Begram, phase 1)

18. 4Δ (Æ); 15.3g; 26mm

Tapa Sardar, Room 36, upper debris; 1969 (Inv. TS1032)



18.



19.

Obverse

King reclining on couch

Bac.: $\text{PAONANONPAO OOHPE KOPANO}$ (? , mostly illegible)*Reverse*

Miuro or Mao standing l.

Bac.: $\text{MIIPO, MIOPO or MAO}$ (? , illegible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 821 (Miuro), 824 (Miuro) or 836 (Mao); Göbl 1993: nos 302–306 (Miuro/Miuro) or 320–325 (Mao); Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 880–891 (Miuro/Miuro) or 892–914 (Mao) (early phase); Cribb 2021a: figs 43.3–5 (Mao) or 6, 7 (Miuro) (phase I); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 124 E.C1-i (3?/3a–c or 2a) (main copper mint, Begram, phase 1)

19. 4Δ (Æ); 14.6g; 28mm

Tapa Sardar, unstratified; 1962 (Inv. TS588)

20. 4Δ (Æ); 14.25g; 28mm

Tapa Sardar, Area 64–100, Terrace of Stupa 64, below 66; no year (Inv. TS1594)



19.

20.



21.

Obverse

King reclining on couch

Bac.: ΠΑΟΝΑΝΟΠΑΟ ΟΟΗΡΚΕ ΚΟΠΑΝΟ (? , mostly illegible)

Reverse

Unidentified deity standing l.

Illegible Bac. inscription

References: Göbl 1984: series 821 (Miïro), 824 (Mïoro), 833 (Athsho) or 836 (Mao); Göbl 1993: nos 302–306 (Miïro/Mïoro), 312–314 (Athsho) or 320–325 (Mao); Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 880–885 (Miïro), 892–914 (Mao) or 915–923 (Athsho) (early phase); Cribb 2021a: figs 43.3–5 (Mao), 6–7 (Mïoro) or 8, 9 (Athsho) (phase I); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 124 E.C1-i (3?/3?, 2? or 8a) (main copper mint, Begram, phase 1)

21. 4Δ (Æ); 14.65g; 26mm

Tapa Sardar, south of Chapel 36, upper collapses (2); 1976 (Inv. TS2031)



21.



22.

Obverse

King sitting cross-legged facing

Bac.: $\text{PAONANO}\text{PAO OOH}\text{PKE KOPANO}$ (? , mostly illegible)*Reverse*

Oesho (?) standing l.

Bac.: OHPO (? , mostly illegible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 851; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 962–967 (early phase); Cribb 2021a: fig. 42.23 (phase I); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 124 E.C1-i (2?/5?) (main copper mint, Begram, phase 1)

22. 4Δ (Æ); 14.95g; 26mm

Tapa Sardar, area of Stupa 81, trial trench D2(a), level I; 1961 (Inv. TS442)



22.



23.

Obverse

King mounted on elephant r.

Bac.: $\text{PAONANO}\text{PAO OOH}\text{PKE KO}\text{PANO}$ (partly off flan)*Reverse*

Oado running l.

Bac.: $\text{OA}\Delta\text{O}$ (? , illegible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 852; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 859, 860 (early phase); Cribb 2021a: fig. 42, 14 (phase I); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 124 E. C1-i (1?/18a) (main copper mint, Begram, phase 1)

23. 4Δ (AE); – g; 26.1mm
Sporadic; 1957–1966 (Inv. IG1980)



23.



24.

Obverse

King mounted on elephant r.

Bac.: $\text{PAONANO}\text{PAO OOH}\text{PKE KOPANO}$ (? , mostly illegible)*Reverse*

Unidentified deity

Illegible Bac. inscription

References: cf. Göbl 1984: series 820–823, 826–835, 849, 852; cf. Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 777–897 (early phase); cf. Cribb 2021a: figs 42.4–15 (phase I); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 124 E.C1-i (1?/?)
(main copper mint, Begram, phase 1)

24. 4Δ (Æ); 15.30g; 25mm

Tapa Sardar, Area 64–100, Room 70, surface; no year (Inv. TS1744)



24.



25.

Obverse

King reclining on couch

Bac.: βαονανοβαο οοηπε κε κοβανο (? , illegible)

Reverse

Unidentified deity

Illegible Bac. inscription

References: cf. Göbl 1984: series 821, 824, 833, 836, 848, 850, 853; cf. Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 880–935 (early phase); cf. Cribb 2021a: figs 43.1–10 (phase I); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 124 E.C1-i (3?/?)
(main copper mint, Begram, phase 1)

25. 4Δ (Æ); 14.60g; 26mm

Tapa Sardar, area of Stupa 81, surface; 1975 (Inv. TS1940)



25.



Obverse

Вас.: ПАОНАНОРАО ООНРКЕ КОРАНО (? , illegible)

Reverse

Bac.: MIIPO / MIOPO (? , illegible)

References: cf. Göbl 1984: series 820–854; cf. Göbl 1993, nos 302–338; cf. Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 777–967 (early phase); cf. Cribb 2021a: figs 42.4–13, 17–20, 43.3–7 (phase I); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 124 E.C1-i (?/3?) (main copper mint, Begram, phase 1)

Tapa Sardar, area of Stupa 81, unstratified; 1976 (Inv. TS2035)



26.

Group 2 / Main mint (Kapishi/probably Begram)

27.

Obverse

King mounted on elephant r.

Bac.: ΠΑΟΝΑΝΟΠΑΟ ΟΟΗΡΚΕ ΚΟΠΑΝΟ (? , illegible)

Reverse

Oesho (?) standing l.

Bac.: ΟΗΡΟ (? , illegible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 855; Göbl 1993: nos 339–344; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 968–983 (late phase); Cribb 2021a: figs 44.1–6 (phase III); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 126 E.C1-iii (5?) (main copper mint, Begram, phase 3)

27. 4Δ (Æ); 9.9g; 25mm

Tapa Sardar, unstratified; 1962 (Inv. TS587)



27.

Group 8 / Mathura mint

28.

Obverse

King mounted on elephant r.

Bac.: $\text{bAONANOB\AA O OH\text{P}KO KO\text{b}ANO$ (? , illegible)*Reverse*

Miho standing l.

Bac.: MIHO (partly off flan)

References: Göbl 1984: series 933; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: no. 1022 (late phase); cf. Cribb 2021a: fig. 44.10 (Gandhara mint); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 134 E.C4-ii (1a/3k, l) (Mathura copper mint, phase 2)

28. AE ; 7.85g; 23mmTapa Sardar, collapsed material of *mahāstūpa* north of Stupa 11; no year (Inv. TS1624)

28.

Huvishka Types (unofficial imitations)

Mint locations uncertain

29.

Obverse

King reclining on couch

Traces of blundered Bac. inscription

Reverse

Mihiro (?) standing r.

Bac.: MIIPO (?, blundered)

References: cf. Göbl 1984: series 971, 974, 978 (Rev. cf. 972/5); cf. Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1053–1070; cf. Cribb 2021a: figs 45.13–18; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 137 E-imit.C1-iii (3a/2d) (imitations of main copper mint, phase 3)

29. Æ; 3.30g; 19mm

Tapa Sardar, eastern part of Area 64–100, unstratified; no year (Inv. TS1627)



29.



30.

Obverse

King mounted on elephant r.

Traces of blundered Bac. inscription

Reverse

Mao (?) standing l.

Traces of blundered Bac. inscription

References: cf. Göbl 1984: series 973; Göbl 1993: no. 385; cf. Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1039, 1040; cf. Cribb 2021a: figs 45.1–6; cf. Cribb and Bracey 2025: 135, 136 E-imit.C1-i, ii (imitations of main copper mint, phases 1, 2) or 140–146 E-imit.C3-i–vii (1?/2?) (imitations of main copper mint, Gandharan production, phases 1–7)

30. Æ; – g; 23mm

Tapa Sardar, unstratified; no year (Inv. TS1230)



30.



31.

Obverse

King sitting cross-legged facing

Traces of blundered Bac. inscription

Reverse

Mao (?) standing l.

Traces of blundered Bac. inscription

References: Göbl 1984: series 975; Göbl 1993: nos 391–394; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1071–1073; Cribb 2021a: figs 45.7–12; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 136 E-imit.C1-ii (2a/2?) (imitations of main copper mint, phase 2)

31. Æ; 4.20g; 22mm

Tapa Sardar, unstratified; 1960 (Inv. TS437)



31.



32.

Obverse

King reclining on couch

Traces of blundered Bac. inscription

Reverse

Miir or Mao standing l.

Traces of blundered Bac. inscription

References: cf. Göbl 1984: series 978; cf. Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1053–1070; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 135 E-imit.C1-i (3?/3a; 2a, b) (imitations of main copper mint, phase 1)

32. Æ; 7.50g; 23mm

Tapa Sardar, Area 64–100, trench 64 (6); no year (Inv. TS1595)



32.

Vasudeva I (c.190–230, or later)

Uncertain mint and Mint I (A) (Peshawar) / Main mint (Kapishi/Begram)

34.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar

Bac.: $\text{PAONANO}\text{PAO BAZO}\Delta\text{HO KO}\text{PA}\text{NO}$ (? , most parts off flan)*Reverse*

Oesho and bull

Bac.: OHPO (? , most parts off flan)

References: Göbl 1984: series 1000; Göbl 1993: nos 481–485; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1103–1105 (early phase); Cribb 2021a, figs 46, 4–10 (phase I); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 172 F.C1-i (1/1) (Begram copper mint, phase 1)

33. AE ; 10.70g; 24mm

Tapa Sardar, below 69, in the fill between the containing walls, presumably 5; no year (Inv. TS1629)

34. AE ; 9.05g; 26mm

Tapa Sardar, unstratified; 1960 (Inv. TS429)

35. AE ; 9g; 25mm

Tapa Sardar, surface; no year (Inv. TS1873)





36.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar; trident surmounts altar (?)

Bac.: $\text{BAONANOPAO BAZOΔHO KOANO}$ (? , illegible)*Reverse*

Oesho and bull

 OHPO (? , illegible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 1001; Göbl 1993: nos 486–493; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1106–1116 (early phase); cf. Cribb 2021a: figs 46.11–15 (phase II); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 173 F.C1-ii (1, 2?) (Begram copper mint, phase 2)

36. AE ; 8.7g; 22.5mm

Tapa Sardar, trench of 64 (6); no year (Inv. TS1677)

37. AE ; 8.5g; 23–26mm

Purchased at Ghazni; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp212)



36.

37.



39.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar; trident surmounts altar; illegible control marks

ΠΑΟΝΑΝΟΠΑΟ ΒΑΖΟΔΗΟ ΚΟΠΑΝΟ (? , most parts off flan)

Reverse

Oesho and bull

ΟΗΠΟ (? , illegible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 1002; Göbl 1993: nos 494–497; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1123–1151 (middle phase); cf. Cribb 2021a: figs 46.11–15 (phase II); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 173 F.C1-ii (?) (Begram copper mint, phase 2)

38. Æ; 8.75g; 24mm

Tapa Sardar, Vihara 23, above the debris of the vault; 1969 (Inv. TS1036)

39. Æ; 8.47g; 24mm

Tapa Sardar, trial trench below 23 (5), layer of schist chips; no year (Inv. TS1251)

40. Æ; 7.85g; 23mm

Tapa Sardar, unstratified; 1960 (Inv. TS435)

41. Æ; – g; 23mm

Tapa Sardar, Room 49 (2); 1970 (Inv. TS1168)





42.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar; trident surmounts altar; *nandipada* to r.
 PAONANOPAO BAZOΔHO KOΠANO (? , most parts off flan)

Reverse

Oesho and bull
 OHΠO (? , illegible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 1004; Göbl 1993: nos 506–510; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1152–1164 (late phase); Cribb 2021a: figs 46, 16–20 (phase III); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 174 F.C1-iii (2B) (Begram copper mint, phase 3)

42. Æ; 7.85g; 24mm

Tapa Sardar, debris of late sanctuary, south of Door 47; 1969 (Inv. TS1038)



42.



46.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar; trident surmounts altar; tamgha or *nandipada* (?)
 BAONANOBAO BAZOΔHO KOBAHO (? , illegible)

Reverse

Oesho and bull
 OHPO (? , illegible)

References: cf. Göbl 1984: series 1003 or 1004; cf. Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1152–1173 (late phase); cf. Cribb 2021a: figs 46.11–20 (phase II or III); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 174 F.C1-iii (2A, B?) (Begram copper mint, phase 3)

43. Æ; 9g; 22mm
 Tapa Sardar, north-western corner of the Upper Terrace (3); no year (Inv. TS1280)
44. Æ; 9g; 23mm
 Tapa Sardar, below 18 (5); 1971(?) (Inv. TS1585)
45. Æ; 8.30g; 23mm
 Tapa Sardar, Upper Terrace, below Chapel 36; 1969 (Inv. TS1040)
46. Æ; 8.15g; 22mm
 Tapa Sardar, II terrace (6); 1962 (Inv. TS597)





47.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar; crossbar on altar trident
 BAONANOBAO BAZOΔHO KOBAHO (? , illegible)

Reverse

Oesho and bull
 OHPO (? , illegible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 1005; Göbl 1993: nos 511, 512; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1117–1120 (middle phase); Cribb 2021a: figs 46.11–15 (phase II); Cribb and Bracey 2025: 173 F.C1-ii (3A) (Begram, copper mint, phase 2)

47. Æ; 8.9g; 24.5mm

Tapa Sardar, debris of late sanctuary, south of Door 47; no year (Inv. TS1033)

48. Æ; 8.3g; 25mm

Nandeh, sporadic; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp123)



47.

48.



55.

Obverse

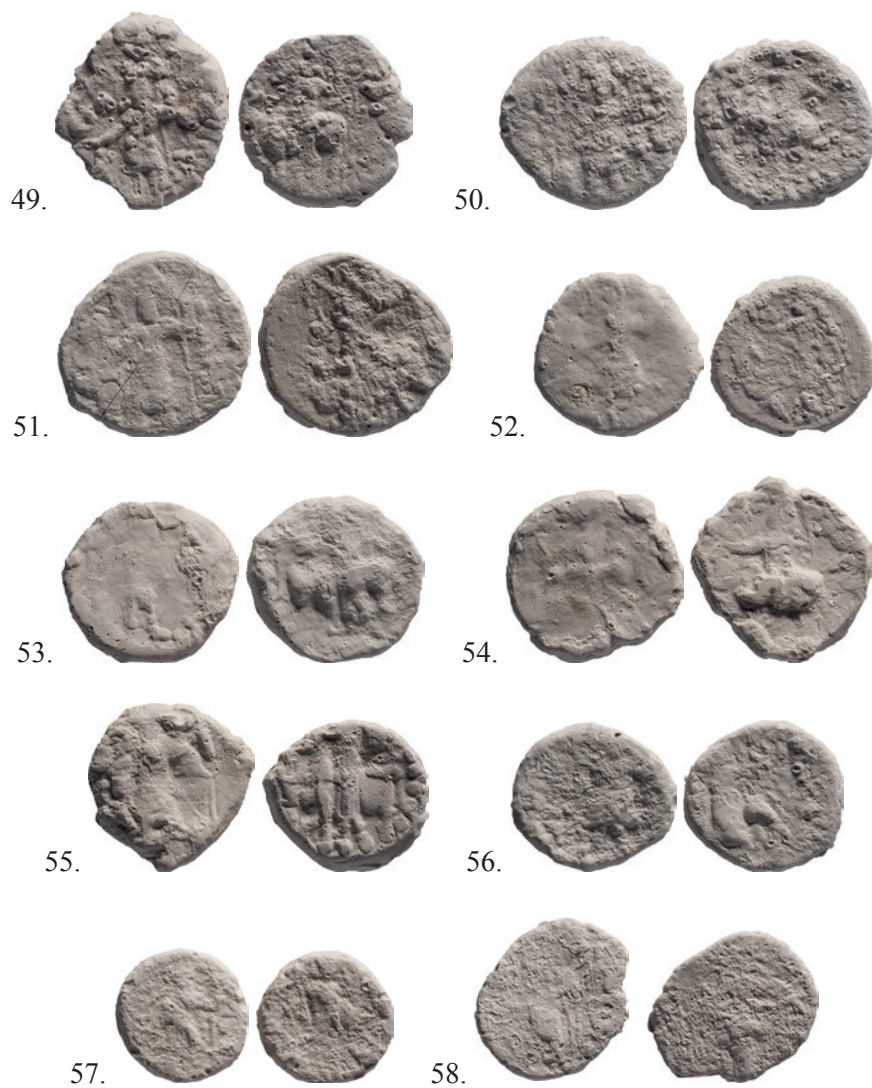
King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar; unclear designation
Illegible Bac. inscription

Reverse

Oesho and bull; unclear designation
Illegible Bac. inscription

References: cf. Göbl 1984: series 1000–1009; cf. Göbl 1993: nos 481–515; cf. Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1103–1173; cf. Cribb 2021a: figs 46.4–20; cf. Cribb and Bracey 2025: 173, 174 FC.1-ii, iii (Begram copper mint, phases 2, 3) or 179 F-imit.C1-i (Vasudeva imitations, copper production centre A)

- 49. Æ; 9.20g; 25mm
Tapa Sardar, below Wall 30 (5); no year (Inv. TS1626)
- 50. Æ; 9.05g; 24mm;
Tapa Sardar, Area 64–100, surface find below Chapel 100; 1976 (Inv. TS2044)
- 51. Æ; 8.95g; 26mm
Tapa Sardar, debris on eastern wall of Chapel 50; no year (Inv. TS1257)
- 52. Æ; 8.35g; 22mm
Tapa Sardar, Area 64–100, near Stupa 65 (6); no year (Inv. TS1592)
- 53. Æ; 7.70g; 23mm
Tapa Sardar, Room 75, on the floor in front of Pedestal 85; 1976 (Inv. TS2079)
- 54. Æ; 7.60g; 23mm
Tapa Sardar, trial-trench in Chapel 36; 1969 (Inv. TS1044)
- 55. Æ; 6.80g; 21.5mm
Tapa Sardar, Chapel 52; 1976 (Inv. TS2022)
- 56. Æ; 5.90g; 20mm
Tapa Sardar, north-eastern corner of *mahāstūpa*; no year (Inv. TS1631)
- 57. Æ; 4.45g; 17mm
Tapa Sardar, unstratified; no year (Inv. TS1229)
- 58. Æ; 3.70g; 22mm
Tapa Sardar, area of Stupa 81, Trench D2(a), level II; 1961 (Inv. TS441)



Vasudeva Imitations (c. middle of 3rd – middle of 4th century)

Mint(s) in uncertain location

60.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar; unidentifiable variant
No legend (?)

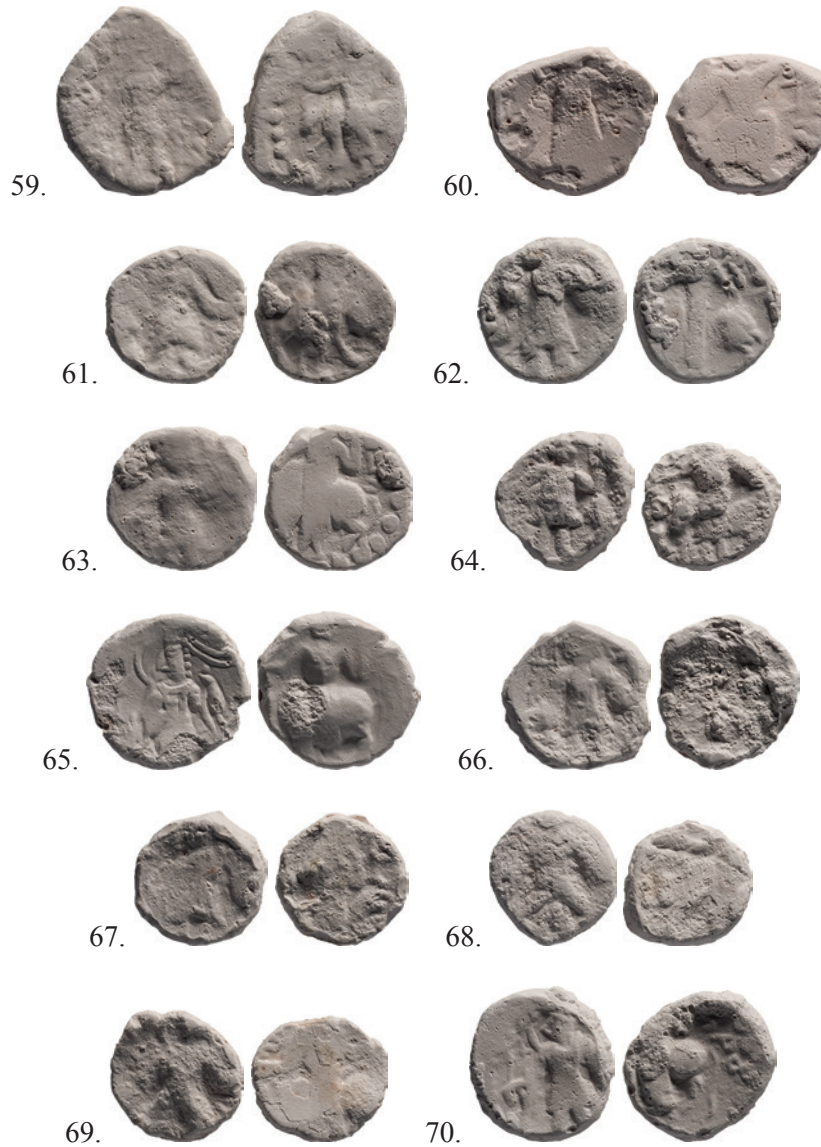
Reverse

Oesho and bull; unidentifiable variant
No legend (?)

References: Göbl 1984: series 1010; Göbl 1993: nos 518–592; cf. Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1177–1196; cf. Cribb 2021a: fig. 46.21–28; cf. Cribb and Bracey 2025: 180, 181 F-imit.C1-ii, iii (copper production centre A, phases 2, 3) or 182, 183 F-imit.C2-i, ii (copper production centre B, phases 1, 2)

- 59. Æ; 8.6g; 23mm
Tapa Sardar, Stupa 11, level of the base; no year (Inv. TS1596)
- 60. Æ; 7.65g; 21mm
Tapa Sardar, Stupa 11, level of the base; 1960 (Inv. TS436)
- 61. Æ; 7.60g; 23mm
Tapa Sardar, thick fill below Chapel 36; 1969 (Inv. TS1041)
- 62. Æ; 6.20g; 19mm
Tapa Sardar, thick fill below Chapel 36; no year (Inv. TS1319)
- 63. Æ; 5.80g; 20mm
Tapa Sardar, Upper Terrace, trench MLN; 1967 (Inv. TS931)
- 64. Æ; 5.40g; 17.5mm
Tapa Sardar, kiln in the east-west trench across the tapa; 1976 (Inv. TS2080)
- 65. Æ; 5.25g; 22mm
Tapa Sardar, Upper Terrace, trench MLR; 1962 (Inv. TS591)
- 66. Æ; 3.70g; 22mm
Tapa Sardar, Upper Terrace, trench MLS; 1962 (Inv. TS590)
- 67. Æ; 3.70g; 17mm
Tapa Sardar, Upper Terrace, trench MLX; no year (Inv. TS849)

68. Æ; 3.15g; 17mm
Tapa Sardar, Area 64–100, Room 70, surface; no year (Inv. TS1745)
69. Æ; 2.35g; 18mm
Tapa Sardar, Corridor 31 behind Vihara 23, upper layer; no year (Inv. TS1004)
70. Æ; – g; 20mm
Tapa Sardar, north-western corner of *mahāstūpa*, cleaning operations; 1970 (Inv. TS1170)



Kanishka II (c.230–247, or later)

Uncertain mints (Peshawar, NW-Punjab) / Main mint (Kapishi or Gandhara)²

71.

Obverse

King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar

ΠΑΟΝΑΝΟΒΑΟ ΚΑΝΗΒΚΟ ΚΟΒΑΝΟ (? , off flan)

Reverse

Ardokhsho enthroned to front

Bac.: ΑΡΔΟΧΣΟ (only traces visible)

References: Göbl 1984: series 1015–1016; Göbl 1993: nos 619–628; cf. Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1202–1267; cf. Cribb 2021a: fig. 47.1–14; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 195 G.C1-i (1?) (main copper mint, Begram, phase 1)

71. Æ; 7.70g; 23mm

Tapa Sardar, debris south of Doorway 47; 1960 (Inv. TS432)



71.

² Jongeward and Cribb (2015) assume Kanishka II's main mint to have been in Gandhara (probably Peshawar), while Cribb (2021a: 105) suggests, that Kanishka's copper coins were issued at the main Kushan copper mint at Begram (Kapishi); likewise Cribb and Bracey (2025).

Kanishka II and Imitations (c. middle of 3rd – middle of 4th century)

Mint(s) in uncertain location

75.

Obverse

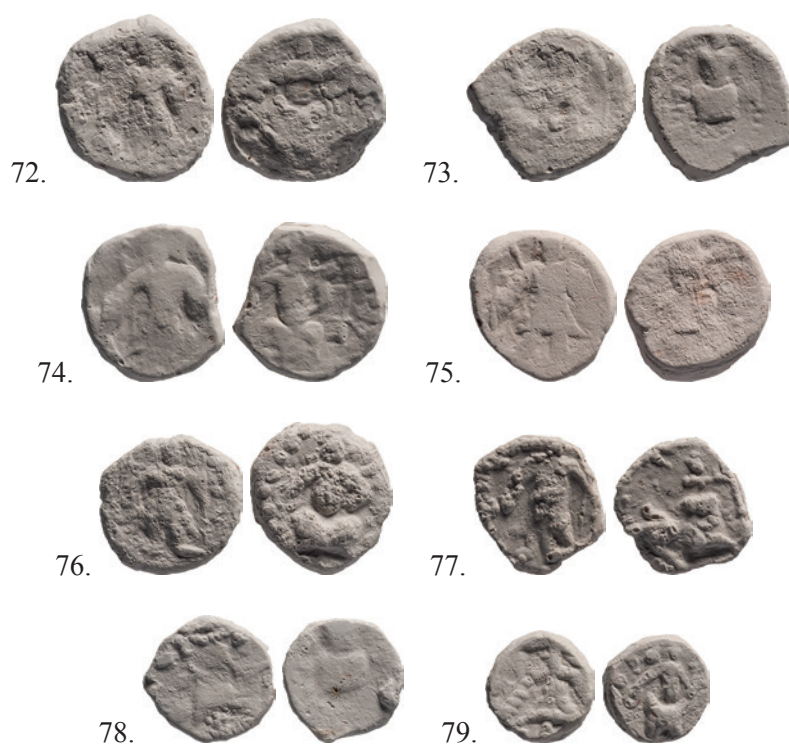
King standing l. making an offering at a fire altar; control marks illegible
No legend visible

Reverse

Ardokhsho enthroned to front
No legend visible

References: Göbl 1984: series 1017; Göbl 1993: 629–652; cf. Jongeward and Cribb 2015: nos 1268–1603; cf. Cribb 2021a: fig. 47.15–22; cf. Cribb and Bracey 2025: 195 G.C1-i (1?) (main copper mint, Begram, phase 1), 197 G-imit.C1-i (Kushano-Sasanian imitations) or 198 (G-imit. C2.i (local imitations)

- 72. Æ; 7.65g; 22mm
Tapa Sardar, Stupa 81, north side, in the fill near oven (5); 1976 (Inv. TS2074)
- 73. Æ; 7.60g; 21mm
Tapa Sardar, Area 64–100, on the floor of Stupa 64; no year (Inv. TS1625)
- 74. Æ; 6.60g; 21mm
Tapa Sardar, north-eastern corner of Upper Terrace, lower layer (near Stupa 11); no year (Inv. TS1622)
- 75. Æ; 6.60g; 20mm
Tapa Sardar, unstratified; 1960 (Inv. TS434)
- 76. Æ; 4.92g; 18mm
Tapa Sardar, Chapel 49 (2); 1976 (Inv. TS2051)
- 77. Æ; 2.67g; 18mm
Tapa Sardar, Chapel 50, upper debris; no year (Inv. TS1244)
- 78. Æ; 1.90g; 19mm
Tapa Sardar, Area 64–100, undefined layer south of 69s; no year (Inv. TS1630)
- 79. Æ; – g; 14mm
Tapa Sardar, north-eastern corner of Upper Terrace, upper layer (near Stupa 11); 1970 (Inv. TS1200)



Uncertain Late Kushan Coins or Imitations

Mint(s) in uncertain location

82.

Obverse

King at altar(?); unidentified type

Reverse

Unidentified deity (Oesho or Ardokhsho ?)

References: cf. Göbl 1984: series 1010 or 1017 (?)

80. Æ; 2g; 16mm
Tapa Sardar, Area 64-100, trench of Stupa 64 (6); no year (Inv. TS1597)
81. Æ; 0.35g; 15mm
Tapa Sardar, below Pedestal 18, pre-reconstruction sanctuary; 1970 (Inv. TS1235)
82. Æ; – g; 22mm
Tapa Sardar, Trench 64, north (6); no year (Inv. TS1593)
83. Æ; – g; 17mm
Tapa Sardar, inner chapels of late sanctuary; 1976 (Inv. TS2039)



SASANIANS

Shapur II (309–379)

Mint IX ('Kabul')

84.

Obverse

Bust of king r.

Pah. *šhpwhly MLKAn MLKA* (partly blundered)*Reverse*

Fire altar with bust in flames flanked by two figures

No inscription

References: Göbl 1984: series 1319, no. 4; SNS 3: type Ib1(5)/3a(3)

84. Δ (AR); 4.35g; 25mm

Tapa Sardar, Room 36, upper debris; 1969 (Inv. TS1042)



84.

*Mint XI ('East')*³



85.

Obverse

Bust of king r.

Illegible Pahlavi inscription

Reverse

Fire altar with bust in flames flanked by two figures

No inscription (?)

References: Göbl 1984: series 1355; SNS 3: type 1b1/3a, nos 260, 261; Cribb 2010: 146, figs 71, 72

85. Δ (AR); 3.90g; 31mm

Tapa Sardar, area of Stupa 81, unstratified; 1976 (Inv. TS2034)



85.

³ Presumably this coin is an imitation; see section 1.2.a.

SASANIAN KUSHANSHAHS (KUSHANO-SASANIAN GOVERNORS)

Imitation (?) Modelled After Shapur II (mid-4th century)

Uncertain mint (Kapishi or Gandhara?)

86.

Obverse

Bust of king r. wearing mural crown

Bactrian: PA[BOPO]

Reverse

Fire altar (?)

References: cf. Göbl 1984: series 1121; Cribb 1990, no. 41; Jongeward and Cribb 2015: 2398–2408; Cribb 2021a: figs 51.27–30; Cribb and Bracey 2025: 336, 337 X.C1-i, ii (Begram copper mint, phases 1 or 2)

86. Æ; 2.02g; 13.5mm

Tapa Sardar, area of Chapel 36, upper debris; 1975 (Inv. TS1981)



86.

ALKHAN-NEZAK KINGS

Anonymous (end of 6th / first half of 7th century)

Mint in Zabulistan or Kabulistan

87.

Obverse

Bust of king r. wearing a crown with a crescent at the front, the centre, and the back, containing a blossom/trident

Pah.: *nycky MLKA* (blundered)

Reverse

Fire altar with two attendants, wheels above their heads

References: Göbl 1967: emission 225 or 226; Vondrovec 2014, I: 490, type 225 or 226 (tamgha unclear); Alram 2016: 117, no. 1 or 2

87. Δ (base AR/Æ); 3.65g; 30mm
Tapa Sardar, unstratified; 1962 (Inv. TS586)



87.

‘LATER NEZAK’ / TURK SHAHIS

Anonymous (last quarter of 7th century, early 8th century ?)

Mint in Zabulistan (?)

88.

Obverse

Bust of king r. wearing a crown with two crescents on the diadem, a buffalo's head on top, and wings on both sides; in the left and right field star in crescent
Remnants of unclear Pah. inscription

Reverse

Left and right tamgha S 61, above them star in crescent
Bac.: ζοαδο

References: Alram 2016: 128, no. 8; cf. Göbl 1967: emission 271 (var.); cf. Vondrovec 2014, II: 605, type 271 (var.)

88. $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ (Æ); 2.70g; 21mm

Tapa Sardar, surface; 1975 (Inv. TS1982)



88.



89.

Obverse

Bust of king r. wearing a crown with two crescents on the diadem, a buffalo's head on top, and wings on both sides; in the left and right field star in crescent
Remnants of unclear Pah. inscription

Reverse

Figure standing l., holding a long staff and an umbrella (?); in the left field star in crescent, in the right field tamgha *S 61*

References: Göbl 1967: emission 268; Vondrovec 2014, II: 606, type 268

89. $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ (Æ); 2.16g; 22mm

Tapa Sardar, Chapel 49, upper levels (2); 1970 (Inv. TS1169)



89.



90.

Obverse

Bust of king r. wearing a crown with two crescents on the diadem, a buffalo's head on top, and wings on both sides; in the right field star above a crescent

Reverse

Tamgha S 61 in an almond-shaped decoration, which is adorned with small umbrellas (?) on the outside

References: Vondrovec 2014, II: 608, type 204A; Alram 2016: 127, no. 5

90. $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ (Æ); 1.90g; 19.5mm

Tapa Sardar, Upper Terrace, north-western corner (4); no year (Inv. TS1252)



90.

TURK SHAHIS

Pangul (end of 7th / first half of 8th century)

Mint in Zabulistan (?)

91.

Obverse

Two opposing Senmurv protomes, above tamgha S 67

Bac.: πανογολο / χοδδηοο βαγο (mostly off flan and only partially legible)

Reverse

Tamgha S 61d

Bac.: ταδονο ταρχανο βαγδδγγο ναροβιδο (mostly off flan and only partially legible)

References: Göbl 1967: emission 245; Vondrovec 2014, II: 661, type 245; Alram 2016: 146, no. 6

91. $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ (Æ); 1.45g; 18mm
Tapa Sardar, Chapel 63 (4); no year (Inv. TS1591)
92. $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ (Æ); 0.95g; 22mm
Tapa Sardar, north side of the *mahāstūpaa*, behind the big statue (Vihara 17?); no year (Inv. TS433)
-
93. $\frac{1}{2}\Delta$ (Æ); – g; – mm
Sporadic; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp176)
Rev.: Cm 107 (head of Senmurv r.)



Mint Zabulistan

94.

Obverse

Bust of king in frontal view, wearing a crown with mural elements, wings and a star on a crescent on top; left and right a Senmurv protome

Reverse

Bust of Adur in frontal view with nimbus of flames

Pah.: *pngwl bg hwt'p – TLT' z'wlst'n* (illegible)

References: Göbl 1967: emission 216A; ASCC 51; Vondrovec 2014, II: 671, type 216A⁴

94. Æ; 0.45g; 14mm

Tapa Sardar, stairway of *mahāstūpa*; 1959 (Inv. TS431)



94.

⁴ The name/title of the issuer has so far been erroneously read as a Spur (Pah. *spwl*); see section 1.3.b.

Tegin (after 680–c.738)

Mint Zabul



95.

Obverse

Bust of king in three-quarter frontal view r., wearing a crown with two crescents with dots, two wings, and a stand with a crescent with a star/dot.

Pah.: *GDE – tkyn bg / hwt'p'* (partly illegible)

Reverse

Fire altar with two attendants

Pah.: *TLYN' – z'wl* (illegible)

References: ASCC 113; Vondrovec 2014, II: 647, type 329A

95. Æ; 0.87g; 16mm

Tapa Sardar, below pedestal 18 (5); 1970 (Inv. TS1234)



95.

PART B:
THE COINS FROM THE 9TH TO THE 20TH CENTURY
Arturo Annucci

HINDU SHAHIS

Spalapati Deva (c.822–870)

Mint (Kabulistan)



96.

Obverse

Recumbent humped bull l.
pr.Sh.: *śrī spalapati deva*

Reverse

Horseman r.

References: MacDowall 1968: no. 12; Tye and Tye 1995: no. 5.1

96. AR; 2.38g; 17mm

Ghaznavid Palace, between Rooms X and XI; 1957–1966 (Inv. C6128)



96.

Samanta Deva (c.870–1000)

Mint (Kabulistan or Gandhara)

97.

Obverse

Recumbent humped bull l.

pr.Sh.: śrī sāmanta deva

Reverse

Horseman r.

References: MacDowall 1968: no. 23; Tye and Tye 1995: no. 14

97. AR; 2.90g; 19mm

Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, courtyard, north side; 1958 (Inv. C44)

98. AR; –g; 18.7mm

Sporadic; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp197)



97.

98.

Mint (Kabulistan or Gandhara)



99.

Obverse

Elephant standing l.

pr.Sh.: *śrī sāmanta deva*

Reverse

Lion r., with tail curved over back

References: MacDowall 1968: nos 41–43; Tye and Tye 1995: no. 9.1

99. Æ; 1.53g; 16mm

Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, Room IIIId; 1957–1966 (Inv. C4488)

Obv.: heavily blundered



99.

POST-SHAHI AND MINOR DYNASTIES

‘Samanta Deva’ Anonymous or Unattributed (c.10th–13th centuries)

Type A – Uncertain mint (north-western India?)

101.

Obverse

Recumbent humped bull l.

pr.Sh.: *śrī sāmanta deva**Reverse*

Horseman r.

References: Tye and Tye 1995: no. 31

100. Æ; 3.37g; 15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XVIII; 1957–1966 (Inv. C4483)
101. Æ; 3.35g; 16.5mm
Ghaznavid, Palace, Room XXI; 1961 (Inv. C3442)
Obv.: legend partially illegible
102. Æ; 3.33g; 15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, south-eastern area; 1961 (Inv. C3439)
Obv.: legend partially illegible
103. Æ; 3.32g; 15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, southern side; 1961 (Inv. C3441)
104. Æ; 3.25g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room IIa, western wall; 1958 (Inv. C22)
105. Æ; 3.19g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXIV; 1957–1966 (Inv. C4485)
106. Æ; 3.17g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXXI; 1962 (Inv. C4492)
107. Æ; –g; –mm
Ghazni, 1957–1966 (Inv. IG1996)
Obv.: completely blundered
-

108. Æ; 3.20g; 16.5mm
Nandeh, sporadic; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp125)
Obv.: legend slightly out of strike
109. Æ; 2.90g; 16.2mm
Purchased at Ghazni; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp214)
Obv.: legend slightly out of strike



Type B – Uncertain mint (north-western India?)

112.

Obverse

Recumbent humped bull l.

pr.Sh.: [śrī] sāmanta [deva]

Reverse

Horseman r.

References: Tye and Tye 1995: no. 34

110. Æ; 3.45g; 14mm
Tapa Sardar, surface; 1957–1966 (Inv. TS850)
Obv.: heavily blundered
111. Æ; 2.05g; 14.5mm
Tapa Sardar, north side of the upper terrace, debris of the main stupa (Inv. TS1034)
Obv.: legend out of strike
-
112. Æ; 2.90g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXXI, little hoard in a woollen cloth; 1962 (Inv. C4497)
113. Æ; 2.82g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXVI; 1958 (Inv. C118)
Heavily blundered



UNATTRIBUTED 'BULL AND HORSEMAN' TYPE



114.

Obverse

Recumbent humped bull l.
Margin illegible

Reverse

Heavily blundered

114. Æ; 2.53g; 15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Ivan I; 1958 (Inv. C24)

115. Æ; -g; -mm
Ghazni, 1957–1966 (Inv. IG2002)
Obv.: completely blundered but traces of Arabic script in margin



114.

115.



116.

Obverse

Completely blundered

Reverse

Horseman r.

116. Æ; 2.56g; 13mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room X; 1957–1966 (Inv. C4503)



116.

PRE-GHAZNAVIDS

Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Ghaffār (338–345/946–956)

Mint Ghazna

117.

Obverse

Within a plain circle (Arabic): مما أمر به / إبراهيم بن عبد / الغفار

Margin (Arabic): mint and date formula

Reverse

Within a plain circle (Arabic): محمد / رسول / الله

Margin: Kor. 30:4

References: SNAT 1995: nos 93–96; SARC 15: no. 450; SARC 32: no. 554

117. Fals (Æ); 2.65g; 22mm; 34x AH

Tapa Sardar, find-spot (50); 1957–1966 (Inv. TS1586)

Obv.: on margin بسم الله ضرب [هذا الفلّس بغزنة بسنة... وأر] بعين وثلاث*Rev.:* Heavily blundered. On margin [لله الأمر من قبل ومن بعد ويومئذ يفرح المؤمنون] بنصر الله

117.

GHAZNAVIDS

Mas'ūd I b. Maḥmūd (421–432/1030–1041)

*with the caliph al-Qā'im bi-Amr Allāh (422–467/1031–1075)**Mint Ghazna?*

118.

Obverse

Within a plain circle with 4 annulets (Arabic): لا إله إلا الله وحده / لا شريك له

Below (Arabic): س (mintmark)

Margin (Arabic): mint and date formula

Reverse

Within a plain circle with 4 annulets (Arabic): محمد رسول الله / القائم بأمر الله / ناصر دين الله

مسعود

Margin (Arabic): unread

References: SNAT 1995: nos 280–284

118. Dirham (AR, debased?); 2.7g; 18mm
 Tapa Sardar, 47 (2); 1957–1966 (Inv. TS1992)
Obv.: عدل and margin illegible
Rev.: Heavily blundered and margin illegible



118.

Farrukhzād b. Mas'ūd I (443–451/1052–1059)

with the caliph al-Qā'im bi-Amr Allāh (422–467/1031–1075)

Mint Ghazna



119.

Obverse

Within a plain circle (Arabic): لا إله إلا / الله القائم / بأمر الله

Reverse

Arabic: محمد / رسول الله / فرخزاد

Below (Arabic): ح (mintmark)

References: SNAT 1995: no. 364

119. Dāniq (AR); 0.27g; 8mm; mint Ghazna?
House of Lustrewares, Room VI; 1957–1966 (Inv. V170)
Obv.: لا إله إلا / الله القائم / بأمر الله
Rev.: mintmark illegible



119.

Ibrāhīm b. Mas'ūd I (451–492/1059–1099)

*with the caliph al-Qā'im bi-Amr Allāh (422–467/1031–1075)**Mint Ghazna*

120.

Obverse

Within a plain circle (Arabic): القائم / لا إله إلا / الله وحده / لا شريك له / بأمر الله

On the left: ف (mintmark)

Margin (Arabic): الملك لله

Reverse

Within a plain circle (Arabic): محمد / رسول الله / ظهير الدولة / ونصير الملة / إبراهيم

Margin (Arabic): الملك لله

References: SNAT 1995: nos 388-391

120. Dirham (AR); 2.55g; 22mm
 Tapa Sardar, north-eastern corner of 100 (surface); 1957–1966 (Inv. TS2045)
Obv.: القائم illegible. Margin heavily blundered
Rev.: Margin illegible



120.

with the caliph al-Muqtadī bi-‘Amr Allāh (467–487/1075–1094)

Mint (Ghazna)



121.

Obverse

Within circle (Arabic): ق ر ا ر / لا إله إلا الله / محمد رسول الله / المقتدي بأمر الله / ملك الإسلام

Reverse

Within circle (Arabic): السلطان / الأعظم قاهر / الملوك / سيد السلاطين / إبراهيم

References: BMCO IX: nos 558^{d-f}; SNAT 1995: nos 430–433

121. Dirham (AR); 2.10g; 16–17mm

Ghaznavid Palace, central courtyard, south-western side; 1959 (Inv. C674)

Obv.: ق ر ا ر almost illegible



121.

Mint Ghazna?

122.

Obverse

Within circle (Arabic):

لا إله إلا الله / محمد رسول الله / المقتدي بأمر الله / ملك الإسلام

Above: six-leaf flower between two ringlets

Below: ornament between mintmark in Arabic (ـ) and pr.Sh. (t)

Margin (Arabic): mint and date formula

Reverse

Within circle (Arabic): عمادي / السلطان الأعظم / قاهر الملوك / سيد السلاطين / أبو المظفر / إبراهيم

Margin unread (Arabic)

References: Thomas 1848: no. 119; BMCO IX: no. 558^d; SNAT 1995: nos 426–427

122. Dirham (AR); 3.68g; 18mm
 Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, A2 south outer wall, south-eastern area; 1963
 (Inv. C5487)
Obv.: ornament and mintmarks illegible. Margin illegible
Rev.: عمادي illegible. Margin blundered
123. Dirham (AR, debased?); 3.36g; 19–20mm
 Ghaznavid Palace; 1957–1966 (Inv. C1848)
Obv.: ornament and mintmarks illegible. Margin illegible
Rev.: إبراهيم partly illegible. Margin blundered



122.

123.

with the caliph al-Mustaẓhir bi-llāh (487–512/1094–1118)



124.

Obverse

Within a plain circle, in the field (Arabic): المستظهر / لا إله إلا / الله محمد / رسول الله / بالله

Right in the field (Arabic): mintmark

On the margin (Arabic): الملك لله

Reverse

Within a plain circle (Arabic): حافظ / السلطان / الأعظم / إبراهيم

Margin unread (Arabic)

References: Thomas 1848: no. 125; BMCO IX: nos 560^{e, s}; SNAT 1995: nos 444–451

124. Æ; 3.39g; 18mm

Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, courtyard, north side; 1959 (Inv. C1036bis)

Obv.: mintmark and margin illegible

Rev.: margin blundered



124.

*no caliph**Mint (Lahore)*

125.

Obverse

Bull towards l.

pr.Sh.: śrī sāmanta [deva]

Reverse

Within pointed and plain circles (Arabic): عدل (or سيف) / السلطان / الأعظم / أبو المظفر / إبراهيم

References: Tye and Tye 1995: no. 103

125. Æ; 3.18g; 14mm

Ghaznavid Palace, in front of Antechamber XXI; 1957–1966 (Inv. C135)

Rev.: first line illegible

126. Æ; 3.34g; –mm

Ghaznavid Palace, central courtyard; 1959 (Inv. C1034bis)

Rev.: heavily blundered

125.

126.

uncertain

127.

Obverse

Within plain circle (Arabic): المقتدي (or المستظهر) / لا إله إلا الله محمد / رسول الله / بأمر الله (or بالله)

On the margin (Arabic): الملك لله

Reverse

Within pointed and plain circles (Arabic): عدل (or حافظ) / السلطان / الأعظم / أبو المظفر / إبراهيم

References: SNAT 1995: nos 440–451

127. Æ; 0.73g; 11mm

Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXI; 1961 (Inv. C3437)

Obv.: field completely blundered. Margin partially legible

Rev.: [...] السلطان / [...] الأعظم / [...] إبراهيم]



127.

Mas'ūd III b. Ibrāhīm (492–508/1099–1115)

*with the caliph al-Mustazhir bi-llāh (487–512/1094–1118)**Mint Ghazna*

128.

Obverse

Within a plain circle (Arabic): المستظهر / لا إله إلا / الله محمد / رسول الله / بالله

Margin (Arabic): mint and date formula

Reverse

Within a square inscribed in a circle (Arabic): السلطان / الأعظم / مسعود

Upper section (Arabic): ظهير

Lower section (Arabic): ع (mintmark)

Margin (Arabic): ظهير الإمام محقق الإمام ملك الإسلام علاء الدولة وسناء الملة

References: SNAT 1995: no. 458

128. Bi; 2.43g; 13mm; 5xx AH
 Ghaznavid Palace, Antechamber XVI; 1962 (Inv. C4504)
Obv.: المستظهر illegible. Margin: mint obliterated, date [خم-سماثه]
Rev.: [الدولة وس-بناء ...]

129. Bi; 2.77g; 17mm
 Nandeh, sporadic; 1957-1966 (Inv. Sp124)
Obv.: المستظهر illegible. Margin: mint and date obliterated
Rev.: [الدولة وس-بناء ...]



128.

129.

Bahrām Shāh b. Mas‘ūd III
(first reign: 511–545/1117–1150; second reign: 547–552/1152–1157)

with the Seljuk sultan Sanjar (511–552/1118–1157) as overlord
with the caliph al-Mustarshid bi-llāh (512–529/1118–1135)

Mint Ghazna?



130.

Obverse

Within a plain circle (Arabic): عدل / لا إله إلا الله / المسترشد بالله / عضد الدولة / سنجر

Margin (Arabic): mint and date formula

Reverse

Within a plain circle (Arabic): عميد (?) / محمد رسول الله / السلطان الأعظم / يمين الدولة / بهرامشاه

Margin (Arabic): محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين or

محمد رسول الله أرسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله ولو كره المشركون

References: SNAT 1995: nos 506–507

130. Dirham (AR, debased?); 3.15g; –mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXXI, little hoard in a woollen cloth; 1962 (Inv. C4499)
Obv.: margin illegible
Rev.: margin illegible
131. Dirham (AR, debased?); 2.99g; 17mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXXI, little hoard in a woollen cloth; 1962 (Inv. C4500)
Obv.: margin illegible
Rev.: margin illegible
132. Dirham (AR, debased?); 2.95g; 11mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXXI, little hoard in a woollen cloth; 1962 (Inv. C4495)
Obv.: سنجر and margin illegible
Rev.: عميد and margin illegible
133. Dirham (AR, debased?); 2.84g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXXI, little hoard in a woollen cloth; 1962 (Inv. C4498)
Obv.: margin illegible
Rev.: margin illegible

134. Dirham (AR, debased?); 2.80g; 17mm
 Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXXI, little hoard in a woollen cloth; 1962 (Inv. C4501)
Obv.: slightly blundered and margin illegible
Rev.: slightly blundered and margin illegible
135. Dirham (AR, debased?); 2.80g; 17mm
 Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXXI, little hoard in a woollen cloth; 1962 (Inv. C4502)
Obv.: عدل illegible. blundered and margin illegible
Rev.: slightly blundered and margin illegible



*no overlord or caliph**Mint (Ghazna)*

136.

Obverse

Within a sunray circle (Arabic): يمين / الدولة

Reverse

Within a sunray circle (Arabic): بهرا / مشاه

References: SNAT 1995: nos 518–521

136. Æ; 2g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, Room IIIc; 1961 (Inv. C3438)
Obv.: يمين / الدولة
Rev.: بهرا / مشاه
137. Æ; 1.61g; 15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, south-west area, northern side; 1957–1966 (Inv. C1856)
Obv.: illegible
Rev.: بهرا / مشاه
138. Æ; 1.42g; 15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXVII; 1963 (Inv. C5492)
Only one side preserved, probably the *obverse* (يمين / الدولة؟)
139. Æ; 1.15g; 12mm
Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, courtyard, north side; 1963 (Inv. C5493)
Heavily blundered and illegible



Anonymous (first half 6th century/first half 12th century)

Mint Ghazna?

140.

Obverse

Within a plain circle (Arabic): لا إله / إلا الله

Above and below the legend, branches (*Reine*)

Margin: unread

Reverse

Within a plain circle (Arabic): محمد / رسول / الله

Margin (Arabic): mint and date formula

References: SNAT 1995: nos 522–526

140. Fals? (Æ); 1.88g; 13mm
 Ghaznavid Palace, Room Va; 1958 (Inv. C171)
Rev.: illegible

141. Fals? (Æ); 1.62g; 15mm
 Ghaznavid Palace, central courtyard, north-eastern side; 1957–1966 (Inv. C5592)
Rev.: [محمد / رسول / الله]. Margin illegible



140.

141.

Khusraw Malik b. Khusraw Shāh (555–585/1160–1186)

Mint (Kurramān)

142.

*Obverse*Bull towards l. with *om* (pr.Sh.) below*Reverse*

Within a plain circle (Arabic): عدل / السلطان / الأعظم / تاج الدولة / خسروملك

References: BMCO II: no. 584 (but عدل absent); BMCO IX: nos 587^{d-e} (but عدل absent); Tye and Tye 1995: no. 116 (but with ظفر instead of عدل)

142. Æ; 2.79g; 16mm

Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, courtyard, north side; 1958 (Inv. C45)



142.

Illegible

Mint (Ghazna?)

143.

Obverse

Trace of sunray circle

Reverse

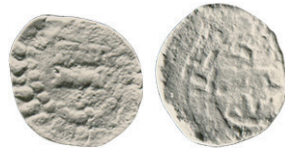
Trace of sunray circle

143. Æ; 1.56g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room Va; 1958 (Inv. C180)



143.

Uncertain mint



144.

Obverse

Illegible Arabic inscription within sunray circles

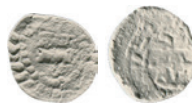
Reverse

Within a plain circle (Arabic): محمد / رسول / الله

Margin: unread inscription?

144. Æ; 1.46g; 12mm

Ghaznavid Palace, southern outer wall, central tower; 1963 (Inv. C5490)



144.



145.

Obverse

Traces of unread Arabic legend within a sunray circle

Reverse

Traces of sunray circle

145. Æ; 1.30g; 15mm

Ghaznavid Palace, south-west area, northern side; 1957–1966 (Inv. C1855)



145.



146.

Obverse
Completely illegible

Reverse
Traces of plain and dotted circles

146. Æ; 1.28g; 13mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXIII; 1962 (Inv. C4510)



146.

TOMARAS AND CHAUHANS

Chahada Deva (1172–1191)

Mint (Delhi)

147.

*Obverse*Recumbent bull l. pr.Sh.: *asāvarī śrī samanta deva**Reverse*Horseman r. pr.Sh.: *śrī cāhaḍa deva**References:* Tye and Tye 1995: no. 50

147. Bi; –g; 16.9mm
Sporadic; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp171)
148. Bi; –g; 16mm
Sporadic; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp172)
149. Bi; –g; 15.6mm
Sporadic; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp170)



Anonymous: 'Madana' Imitations (13th century)

Uncertain mint

158.

Obverse

Recumbent bull l.

pr.Sh.: *mādhava śrī samanta deva* (partly off flan)*Reverse*

Horseman r.

pr.Sh.: *śrī madana pāla deva* (partly off flan)*References:* Deyell 1990: nos 208–210; Tye and Tye 1995: no. 53.3

150. Bi; 1.85g; 12.5mm
Tapa Sardar, from an upper layer between the *mahāstūpa* and Vihara 17; 1957–1966 (Inv. TS851)
-
151. Bi; 3.01g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXIII; 1962 (Inv. C4511)
152. Bi; 2.81g; 12mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXIII; 1962 (Inv. C4509)
153. Bi; 2.75g; 15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room Va (1st layer, surface ashes); 1957–1966 (Inv. C161)
154. Bi; 2.66g; 15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room Va; 1957–1966 (Inv. C162)
155. Bi; 2.17g; 12mm
Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, courtyard, north side; 1963 (Inv. C5488)
156. Bi; 2.03g; 11mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXXI; 1962 (Inv. C4493)
157. Bi; 1.80g; 13mm
House of Lustrewares, Room XIII; 1966 (Inv. V199/8)
Broken
158. Bi; –g; –mm
Rawza, area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd; 1957–1966 (Inv. IG1912)



GHURIDS

Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām I
(569–599/1173–1203 as vassal; 599–602/1203–1206 as supreme sultan)

with Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām (558–599/1163–1203) as supreme sultan
with the caliph al-Mustaḍīr bi-Amr Allāh (566–575/1170–1180)

Mint (Ghazna)



159.

Obverse

Within sunray and plain circles (Arabic): لا إله إلا الله / المستضي بأمر الله / السلطان الأعظم / أبو الفتح محمد
Diacritic point above المستضي

Reverse

Within sunray and plain circles (Arabic): شاه / محمد رسول الله / السلطان الأعظم /
شهانشا (sic) غازي / أبو المظفر محمد
Diacritic point above الأعظم

References: SNAT 1995: nos 536–537 (read شاهانشاه)

159. Dirham (AR); 3.05g; 17–18mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room IX; 1959 (Inv. C5480)



159.

no overlord or caliph

Mint (Ghazna)



160.

Obverse

Within a square inscribed in a circle (Arabic): معز / الدنيا

Reverse

Within a square inscribed in a circle (Arabic): والد / ين

References: SNAT 1995: no. 568; Tye and Tye 1995: no. 190.1

160. Æ; 3.88g; –mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Throne Room II; 1959 (Inv. C1033bis)
161. Æ; 3.09g; 13mm
Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, A2 south outer wall, south-eastern area; 1959 (Inv. C5486)
162. Æ; 3.05g; 16–17mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXIII; 1962 (Inv. C4512)
163. Æ; 2.39g; 15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXIII; 1962 (Inv. C4506)
Obv.: معز / [الدنيا]
Rev.: [والد / ين]
164. Æ; 2.31g; 14–15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXIII; 1962 (Inv. C4507)
Heavily blundered
165. Æ; 1.98g; 15mm
House of Lustrewares, Room V; 1966 (Inv. V142)
Obv.: معز / الدنيا
Rev.: والد / ين





166.

Obverse

Within a looped square (Arabic): معز / الدنيا

Reverse

Within a looped square (Arabic): والد / بين

References: Tye and Tye 1995: no. 191

166. Æ; 2.73g; 16mm

House of Lustrewares, courtyard; 1957 (Inv. V585)



166.

No mint

167.

Obverse

Field partially read (Arabic): لا إله إلا الله / محمد / رسول الله

Margin (Arabic): mint and date formula

Reverse

Within a plain circle (Arabic): عدل / السلطان الأعظم / معز الدنيا وا / لدين أبو المظفر / محمد بن سام

References: Allen 1921: 338

167. Æ; 3.14g; 14mm; 59x AH
 Ghaznavid Palace, Room Va; 1958 (Inv. C163)
 Rev.: Margin (؟) [مائة] تسعين و خمس [مائة] [في شهور...]



167.

Mint (Kurraman?)



168.

Obverse

Flower in a complex star frame

Reverse

Within an inner plain circle (Arabic): السلطان / الأعظم

Margin: unread pr.Sh. legend within an outer plain circle

References: Tye and Tye 1995: no. 176

168. Æ; 2.5g; 13mm

Ghaznavid Palace, Room IX; 1959 (Inv. C5481)



168.

UNCERTAIN (GHURIDS/TURKISH SLAVE COMMANDER
OR ILTUTMISH B. ILAM KHĀN, DELHI SULTAN)

Anonymous

Mint (Ghazna?)



169.

Obverse

Within a square inscribed in a circle (Arabic): عدل

Reverse

Within a square inscribed in a circle

(Arabic): سلطان

References: SNAT 1995: no. 587(read عبد on rev.); Tye and Tye 1995: no. 364

169. Æ; 2.53g; 13mm

Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXXI, little hoard in a woollen cloth; 1962 (Inv. C4494)



169.

KHWAREZM SHAHS

Abū'l-Faṭḥ 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad (596–617/1200–1220)

Mint (Bamiyan?)

170.

Obverse

Within a square inscribed in a circle (Arabic): لا إله إلا / الله محمد / رسول الله
 Margin unread

Reverse

Within a looped square (Arabic): السلطان الأ / عظم علاء / الدنيا والد / ين
 Margin (right sector; Arabic): السلطان

References: Tye and Tye 1995: no. 276

170. Æ; 2.89g; 16mm

Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXXI, little hoard in a woollen cloth; 1962 (Inv. C4496)

Rev.: [ين] / الدنيا والد / عظم علاء / السلطان الأ. Margin illegible



170.

Mint (Ghazna)

171.

Obverse

Arabic: السلطان / الأعظم علاء / الدنيا والد / ين

Reverse

Arabic: أبو الفتح / محمد بن / السلطان

References: SNAT 1995: nos 612–645

171. Æ; 3.15g; 15mm

Ghaznavid Palace, central courtyard, north-eastern side; 1957–1966 (Inv. C6129)

Obv.: السلطان[ان] / الأعظم علاء / الدنيا والد / [ين]*Rev.:* [السلطان] / محمد بن / أبو الفتح

171.

Uncertain mint



172.

Obverse

In the centre, within a double plain circle (Arabic): محمد (ʿ)

Margin, within pointed and plain circles (Arabic): السلطان الأعظم علاء الدنيا والدين

Reverse

In the centre, within a double plain circle: flower

Margin, within pointed and plain circles (Arabic): أبو الفتح محمد بن سلطان نكش

References: Tye and Tye 1995: no. 265

172. Æ; 2.75g; –mm

Tapa Sardar, unstratified; 1957–1966 (Inv. TS2032)



172.

Jalāl al-Dīn Mengubirti (617–628/1220–1231)

Mint (Nandana?)

173.

*Obverse*Recumbent bull l. pr.Sh.: *šā jalāladiṇa**Reverse*Horseman r. pr.Sh.: *śrī hamīrah**References:* Tye and Tye 1995: no. 318

173. Bi; 3.25g; 15mm
Sporadic; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp215)

174. Bi; –g; 15,6mm
Sporadic; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp203)



TIMURIDS

Suyurgatmish Khān (821–830/1418–1426 as governor of Kabul)

Mint Kābul

175.

Obverse

Within a complex star and frame (Arabic): سنة ٨٢٨ / سيور

Reverse

Within an asteroid (Arabic): كابل / ضرب

Hearth knots on margin

References: –

175. Dangi (Æ); 3.62g; 20mm; [82]8 AH (= 1424/25 CE)
Ghaznavid Palace, prayer room (XIII; *mihrāb*); 1930 (Inv. C1859)



175.

Uncertain / Anonymous

Mint Kābul (countermark)

176.

Obverse

Timurid countermark on an illegible coin within the countermark (Arabic): کابل / ضرب

Reverse

Illegible

References: SNAT 1995: nos 847–848

176. Dangi (Æ); 4.97g; 25mm
 Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXVI, on the floor); 1957–1966 (Inv. C117)
 Another illegible c/m; host coin illegible



176.

MUGHALS

Anonymous (Akbar I b. Humāyūn [963–1014/1556–1605])

Uncertain mint

177.

Obverse

Persian: نهصد [وهفتاد و سه] ۹۷۳

Reverse

Arabic: ضر [ب] فلو [س...]

References: Cf. Bruce II *et al.* 1981: 26, no. 22.16

177. Dam? (Æ); –g; –mm; 973 AH (= 1565/66 CE)
Rawza, area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd; 1957–1966 (Inv. IG1917)



177.

SIKHS

Ranjit Singh (1801–1839)

Mint Amritsar

178.

*Obverse*Gurmukhi: *ākāl / sahaī gūr / nānakjī*Mark on the second line between *sahaī* and *gūr**Reverse*Gurmukhi: *jaraba sri / āmb ratsa / rjī 1885*Leaf on the second line between *āmb* and *ratsa**References:* Herrli 2004: 92, no. 01.54

178. Paisa? (Æ); 9.95g; 20-21.5mm; 1885 VS (= 1828 CE)

Donation; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp217)

Obv.: [*ākāl / sahaī*] *gūr* / [*nānakjī*]*Rev.:* [*jara*] *ba sri* / [*āmb*] *rat[sa / rjī 1885]*

178.

DURRANIS

‘Iranian Civic Copper’ (17th–20th centuries)

Mint Kābul

179.

Obverse

Flower between two swords

Reverse

Within circles (Arabic): فلوس كابل

References: Valentine 1911: 164–167, nos 25–29

179. Fals (Æ); 9.45g; 20mm (t. 3mm)
 Ghaznavid Palace, *ziyāra* Ibrāhīm; 1957–1966 (Inv. C1849)
Rev.: فلوس كابل [كابل]



179.

Mint Aḥmadshāhī (Qandahār)

180.

Obverse

Scimitar and stars

Reverse

Mint and date formula (Arabic)

References: Valentine 1911: 176–77, nos 45–48; Michael 2015: 19, no. 26

180. Fals (Æ); 8.26g; 22mm; (12)55 AH? (= 1839/40 CE?)
 Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, Room IIIc; 1961 (Inv. C3440)
Rev.: (؟)[١٢]٥٥ ضرب فلوس احمدشاهي



180.

Mint Dār al-Nuṣrat Harāt



181.

Obverse

Durbar hall with throne in the centre. Below: تَك بَيْسَة ١٣١١

Reverse

Almost completely blundered (Arabic): ضَرْب دَارِ النُّصْرَةِ هَرَات

References: Valentine 1911: 182, no. 4

181. Paṣa (Æ); 5.78g; 21mm; 1311 AH (= 1893/94 CE)
 Ghaznavid Palace, Room IIa, western wall; 1957–1966 (Inv. C21)
 Rev.: almost completely blundered



181.

Mint Qandahār

182.

Obverse

Mosque with minbar

Reverse

Arabic: Mint and date formula

References: SICA 9: no. 1088

182. Æ; 6.08g; 18mm; [1322 AH (=1904/1905 CE)]
 Ghaznavid Palace, Ivan I; 1958 (Inv. C25)
Rev.: heavily blundered, traces of diacritical points



182.

ILLEGIBLE MODERN COPPER COIN

Mint Kābul



183.

Obverse
Illegible

Reverse
Arabic: فلو[س] كـ[ابل]

183. Fals (Æ); –g; –mm
Rawza, area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd; 1957–1966 (Inv. IG1898)



183.

*Mint illegible**Obverse*

Illegible

Reverse

Illegible

184. Æ; –g; –mm
Rawza, area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd; 1957–1966 (Inv. IG1928)
185. Æ; –g; –mm
Rawza, area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd; 1957–1966 (Inv. IG1985)
186. Æ; –g; –mm
Rawza, area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd; 1957–1966 (Inv. IG2003)
187. Æ; –g; –mm
Rawza, area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd; 1957–1966 (Inv. IG1909)



ILLEGIBLE (ISLAMIC)

188. Æ; 18.6g; 21mm
Tapa Sardar, trial pit below 60 (2)?; 1957–1966 (Inv. TS1628)
-
189. Æ; 3.88g; –mm
Ghaznavid Palace, *ziyāra* Ibrāhīm; 1959 (Inv. C1031bis)
190. Æ; 2.95g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room Va; 1958 (Inv. C178)
Obv.: Completely illegible, traces of the pointed circle
Rev.: [...] معز
191. Æ; 2.63g; 17mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room IX; 1959 (Inv. C5484)
192. Æ; 2.07g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXIV; 1957–1966 (Inv. C4484)
193. Æ; 1.90g; 18mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXVI; 1957–1966 (Inv. C116)
194. Dirham (Æ); 1.81g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXVII; 1963 (Inv. C5491)
195. Æ; 1.8g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, courtyard, north side; 1957–1966 (Inv. C4489)
196. Æ; 1.76g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, southern outer wall, central tower; 1959 (Inv. C1853)
197. Æ; 1.75g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room IX; 1959 (Inv. C5485)
198. Æ; 0.36g; 8mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Antechamber LII; 1957–1966 (Inv. C5634)
-
199. Æ; 3.10g; 13.5mm
Nandeh, sporadic; 1957–1966 (Inv. Sp126)

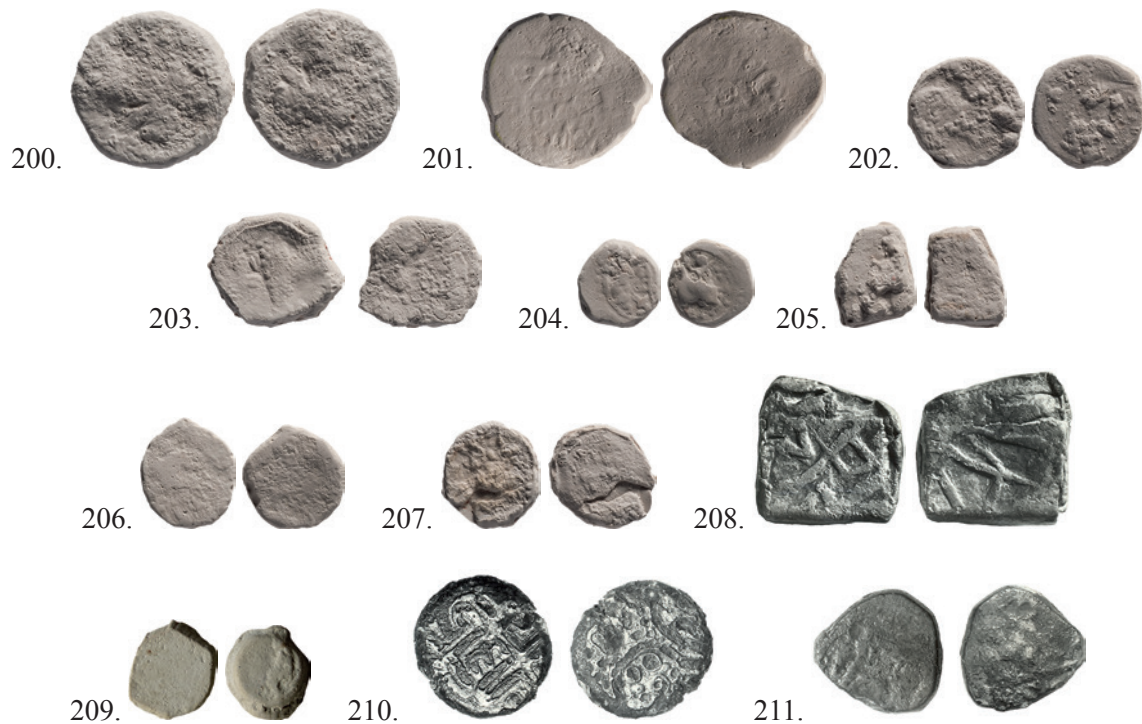




ILLEGIBLE

200. Æ; 7.10g; 21.5mm
Tapa Sardar, 83 (4); 1957–1966 (Inv. TS1957)
201. Æ; 4.05g; 23mm
Tapa Sardar, surface; 1957–1966 (Inv. TS1043)
202. Æ; 3.4g; 15.5mm
Tapa Sardar, trench ON/11, surface; 1957–1966 (Inv. TS2043)
203. Æ; 3.37g; 17-20mm
Tapa Sardar, the debris over 65, surface; 1957–1966 (Inv. TS2041)
204. Æ; 2.75g; 12mm
Tapa Sardar, unstratified; 1957–1966 (Inv. TS2033)
205. Æ; 1.55g; 14x11mm
Tapa Sardar, Room 52 (4); 1957–1966 (Inv. TS2023)
206. Æ; 1.55g; 14–15mm
Tapa Sardar, surface; 1957–1966 (Inv. TS2040)
207. Æ; 0.5g; 14mm
Tapa Sardar, trench in 36, (5); 1957–1966 (Inv. TS1318)
-
208. Æ; 11.33g; 20mm
Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, Room IIIId; 1961 (Inv. C3443)
209. Æ; 3.36g; 13mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room Va; 1958 (Inv. C177)
210. Æ; 3.13g; 19mm
House of Lustrewares, Room XIII; 1966 (Inv. V199/09)
211. Æ; 2.90g; 17mm
House of Lustrewares, Towers 1–3; 1957–1966 (Inv. U234/01)
212. Æ; 2.87g; 12mm
Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, courtyard, north side; 1959 (Inv. C5482)
213. Æ; 2.81g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Throne Room II; 1959 (Inv. C1030bis)
214. Æ; 2.75g; 15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, courtyard, north side; 1957–1966 (Inv. C5483)
215. Æ; 2.75g; 13mm
House of Lustrewares, Towers 1–3; 1957–1966 (Inv. U234/02)
216. Æ; 2.65g; 15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room Va; 1958 (Inv. C168)
217. Æ; 2.64g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Antechamber LV; 1957–1966 (Inv. C5594)

218. Æ; 2.62g; 13mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXVI; 1957–1966 (Inv. C119)
219. Æ; 2.38g; 18mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXXI; 1957–1966 (Inv. C4490)
220. Æ; 2.05g; 15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, between Rooms IIIi and IVe; 1957–1966 (Inv. C129)
221. Æ; 1.83g; 14mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXXI; 1962 (Inv. C4491)
222. Æ; 1.75g; 15mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Antechamber LV; 1963 (Inv. C5593)
223. Æ; 1.65g; 13mm
House of Lustrewares, Towers 1–3; 1957–1966 (Inv. U234/03)
224. Æ; 1.41g; 13mm
Ghaznavid Palace, private apartments, Room IIIIn; 1957–1966 (Inv. C104)
225. Æ; 0.67g; 12mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXIII; 1957–1966 (Inv. C4508)
226. Æ; –g; –mm
Ghaznavid Palace, Room XXIV; 1957–1966 (Inv. IG1896)
227. Æ; 1.83g; 14mm
Rawza, area of the Tomb of Maḥmūd; 1957–1966 (Inv. IG1995)





APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

The Documentation of the Coin Finds

The Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan started its work in the summer of 1956, as one of the activities launched by the then IsMEO (Istituto Italiano per il Medio e Estremo Oriente – Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East, then IsIAO), with a visit by Giuseppe Tucci and Alesio Bombaci. During the summer of 1957, the first excavations started, revealing the two Islamic sites: the Ghaznavid Palace and a private residence, then known as the House of Lustrewares. In 1959, further works resulted in the discovery of the Buddhist area of Tapa Sardar.

The numismatic material retrieved by the mission dates back to the year of the field excavations and numbered 259 specimens, according to the information reported by the mission's archives.

Currently, we do not know the location of the material. In 1963, the coins were delivered to the Kabul Museum and kept in the storeroom, together with many other materials coming from the excavations carried out by the mission in the area of Ghazni (see Giunta in this volume). During the Soviet period and the Taliban regime, much damage was caused to the museum, which was partially hit by a missile in the 1990s, also partially destroying the material stored there.

Fortunately, the excellent documentation work of the first members of the mission has made it possible to study many of the materials, even nowadays, coins included. In fact, during the period of the Italian Archaeological Mission's presence in Afghanistan, plaster casts were made for a good part of the numismatic material in order to facilitate study of the specimens in Italy, where the casts were brought. The documentation was completed with a good number of photographs. The disappearance of the coins makes the existence of this documentation even more precious today, although the possibility of investigations on the metal is precluded, investigations that could have provided important clues about the issues.

According to the inventory information, c.70% of the coins are documented only with plaster casts; for c.15% the presence of both the cast and photos of the original specimen is attested, while for a small group only photographic documentation is recorded. Finally, for c.12% we do not have any documentation, casts or photos. Unfortunately, sometimes the quality of the photos and partial preservation of the documentation (e.g. a photo of only one side of the coin) prevent complete classification, especially for the coins coming from Islamic sites.

The negatives of the photographs are held in the archives of the Museo delle Civiltà in Rome. At the same time, the plaster casts are kept by the Museo 'Umberto Scerrato' of the University of Naples L'Orientale, where some of the casts are also exhibited.

The following tables (I.A, I.B) summarize the state of the documentation for the coins.

A final list includes the correspondence between the inventory numbers and the catalogue numbers.

	Tapa Sardar	Islamic Sites	Sporadic
Cast ^(a)	100	67	21
Cast ^(a) and negatives		37	
Negatives		2	
No negatives or casts	1	30	1

Table I.A: General overview of the coins' documentation. (a) Today, the total number of casts in the hands of the mission (held at the Museo 'Umberto Scerrato' in Naples) includes 83 from the Islamic sites, 100 from Tapa Sardar and 21 sporadic finds. The remaining 21 casts from the Islamic sites are documented only by photos.

Table I.B: Correspondence between the catalogue numbers and the inventory numbers. The list includes the state of the documentation for the specimens included in the catalogue

Cat. No.	Inv. No.	Neg. No.	Cast photos¹	Cast location
1.	TS430	1000/5, 6	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
2.	IG1958	IG1958/obv, IG1958/ rev	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
3.	TS428	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
4.	SP211	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
5.	TS589	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
6.	TS440	1674/1, 6	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
7.	TS592	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
8.	TS593	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
9.	TS1320	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
10.	SP210	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
11.	SP209	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
12.	SP208	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
13.	TS1623	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
14.	TS1017	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
15.	SP213	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
16.	TS1012	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
17.	SP127	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
18.	TS1032	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
19.	TS588	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
20.	TS1594	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
21.	TS2031	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
22.	TS442	1673/2, 1674/5	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
23.	IG1980	IG1980/obv, IG1980/ rev	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
24.	TS1744	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
25.	TS1940	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
26.	TS2035	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
27.	TS587	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
28.	TS1624	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
29.	TS1627	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
30.	TS1230	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
31.	TS437	1000/3, 4	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
32.	TS1595	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
33.	TS1629	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
34.	TS429	1000/1, 2	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>

¹ *KHM* = photo of the casts taken by the photographic team of the Kunsthistorisches Museum; *MOUS* = photo of the casts taken by A. Annucci in the Museo Orientale 'U. Scerrato' (Naples). If additional inventory numbers are listed, photos of the casts were included in the original material of the mission.

35.	TS1873	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
36.	TS1677	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
37.	SP212	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
38.	TS1036	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
39.	TS1251	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
40.	TS435	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
41.	TS1168	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
42.	TS1038	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
43.	TS1280	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
44.	TS1585	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
45.	TS1040	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
46.	TS597	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
47.	TS1033	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
48.	SP123	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
49.	TS1626	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
50.	TS2044	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
51.	TS1257	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
52.	TS1592	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
53.	TS2079	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
54.	TS1044	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
55.	TS2022	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
56.	TS1631	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
57.	TS1229	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
58.	TS441	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
59.	TS1596	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
60.	TS436	1005/1, 2	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
61.	TS1041	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
62.	TS1319	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
63.	TS931	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
64.	TS2080	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
65.	TS591	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
66.	TS590	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
67.	TS849	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
68.	TS1745	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
69.	TS1004	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
70.	TS1170	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
71.	TS432	1000/8a obv, 1000/8a rev	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
72.	TS2074	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
73.	TS1625	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
74.	TS1622	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
75.	TS434	1005/3a, 4b	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
76.	TS2051	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>

77.	TS1244	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
78.	TS1630	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
79.	TS1200	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
80.	TS1597	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
81.	TS1235	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
82.	TS1593	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
83.	TS2039	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
84.	TS1042	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
85.	TS2034	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
86.	TS1981	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
87.	TS586	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
88.	TS1982	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
89.	TS1169	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
90.	TS1252	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
91.	TS1591	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
92.	TS433	999/1a obv, 999/1a rev	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
93.	SP176	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
94.	TS431	1001/5b, 6a	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
95.	TS1234	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
96.	C6128	—	3699/35, 37	—
97.	C44	1101/1, 2	3686/16, 18; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
98.	SP197	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
99.	C4488	—	3693/27, 29, <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
100.	C4483	—	3692/20, 22	<i>MOUS</i>
101.	C3442	1670/6, 1669/1 (coin)	3691/31, 33	<i>MOUS</i>
102.	C3439	1670/2 (coin)	3691/56, 58	<i>MOUS</i>
103.	C3441	1669/2	3691/7, 9	<i>MOUS</i>
104.	C22	—	3686/11, 13; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
105.	C4485	—	3692/64, 66; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
106.	C4492	—	3693/24, 26; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
107.	IG1996	1669/5, 6	—	—
108.	SP125	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
109.	SP214	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
110.	TS850	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
111.	TS1034	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
112.	C4497	—	3692/19, 21; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
113.	C118	1003/9, 10	3687/15, 17; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
114.	C24	1005/5, 6	3686/68, 70; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
115.	IG2002	1669/3, 4	—	—
116.	C4503	—	3695/23, 25; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
117.	TS1586	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
118.	TS1992	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
119.	V170	999/7, 8	3701/55, 57; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>

120.	TS2045	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
121.	C674	1004/5, 6	3699/19, 21; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
122.	C5487	—	3697/51, 53	—
123.	C1848	—	3689/15, 17	—
124.	C1036bis	1673/6, 7	3689/9, 11; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
125.	C135	1003/5, 6	3699/59, 61; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
126.	C1034bis	—	3689/16, 19	—
127.	C3437	1670/4	3690/28, 30; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
128.	C4504	—	3695/8, 10; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
129.	SP124	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
130.	C4499	—	3694/25, 27; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
131.	C4500	—	3694/29, 31; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
132.	C4495	—	3694/21, 23; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
133.	C4498	—	3694/36, 38; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
134.	C4501	—	3695/33, 35; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
135.	C4502	—	3695/59, 61	<i>MOUS</i>
136.	C3438	1670/5	3691/27, 29; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
137.	C1856	—	3690/49, 51	—
138.	C5492	—	3698/69	—
139.	C5493	—	3698/11, 13	—
140.	C171	1001/11, 12	3688/32, 34; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
141.	C5592	—	3698/45, 47	—
142.	C45	1003/1, 2	3686/23, 25; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
143.	C180	1004/3, 4	3688/39; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
144.	C5490	—	3697/37, 39	—
145.	C1855	—	3690/7, 9	—
146.	C4510	—	3696/73, 75; <i>MOUS</i>	—
147.	SP171	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
148.	SP172	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
149.	SP170	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
150.	TS851	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
151.	C4511	—	3692/50, 48	<i>MOUS</i>
152.	C4509	—	3696/60, 62	<i>MOUS</i>
153.	C161	—	3687/19, 21	<i>MOUS</i>
154.	C162	C162_obv, C162_rev	3687/72, 74	<i>MOUS</i>
155.	C5488	—	3697/47, 49	—
156.	C4493	—	3693/17, 19; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
157.	V199/8	1003/7, 8	3701/12, 14; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
158.	IG1912	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
159.	C5480	1671/3, 6	3696/63, 65; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
160.	C1033bis	—	3689/31, 33	—
161.	C5486	—	3697/59, 61	—
162.	C4512	—	3696/67, 69; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>

163.	C4506	—	3695/65, 67; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
164.	C4507	—	3695/71, 73; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
165.	V142	1004/1, 2	3701/35, 37; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
166.	V585	1005/11, 18	3701/31, 33; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
167.	C163	1004/5–6	3687/40, 42; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
168.	C5481	1004/9, 10	3696/55, 57; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
169.	C4494	—	3694/51, 53; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
170.	C4496	—	3694/47, 49; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
171.	C6129	—	3688/27, 29	—
172.	TS2032	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
173.	SP215	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
174.	SP203	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
175.	C1859	1000/9, 10	3690/3, 5; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
176.	C117	1002/5, 6	3687/65, 67; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
177.	IG1917	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
178.	SP217	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
179.	C1849	1673/4, 1671/5	3690/11, 13; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
180.	C3440	1672/1	3691/47, 49	—
181.	C21	1002/3, 4	3686/43, 45; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
182.	C25	1002/1–2	3686/68, 70; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
183.	IG1898	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
184.	IG1928	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
185.	IG1985	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
186.	IG2003	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
187.	IG1909	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
188.	TS1628	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
189.	C1031bis	—	3689/23, 25	—
190.	C178	1003/11, 12	3688/52, 54; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
191.	C5484	1671/1, 2	3697/56, 58; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
192.	C4484	—	3692/71; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
193.	C116	999/5, 6	3686/44, 46; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
194.	C5491	—	3698/40, 42	—
195.	C4489	—	3693/53, 55; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
196.	C1853	—	3690/28, 30	—
197.	C5485	1671/4, 7	3697/7, 9; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
198.	C5634	—	3698/41, 43	<i>MOUS</i>
199.	SP126	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
200.	TS1957	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
201.	TS1043	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
202.	TS2043	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
203.	TS1041	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
204.	TS2033	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
205.	TS2023	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>

206.	TS2040	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
207.	TS1318	—	<i>KHM</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
208.	C3443	1673/1, 1674/2	3691/63, 65; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
209.	C177	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
210.	V199/09	1001/7, 8	3700/4, 6; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
211.	U234/01	1002/11, 12	3700/39, 41; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
212.	C5482	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
213.	C1030bis	—	3688/71, 73	—
214.	C5483	1670/1, 3	3696/3, 5; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
215.	U234/02	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
216.	C168	—	3688/37	—
217.	C5594	—	3698/15, 17	—
218.	C119	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
219.	C4490	—	3693/57, 59; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
220.	C129	—	3687/51, 53; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
221.	C4491	—	3693/61, 63; <i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
222.	C5593	—	3698/35	—
223.	U234/03	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
224.	C104	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
225.	C4508	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
226.	IG1896	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>
227.	IG1995	—	<i>MOUS</i>	<i>MOUS</i>

Inventory numbers of the 32 coins without any documentation: TS2151, C125, C128, C164, C165, C166, C167, C169, C170, C172, C173, C174, C175, C176, C179, C181, C182, C182bis, C1037bis, C1038bis, C1857, C4486, C4487, C4505, C5489, C5787, C5788, C5802, C6130, U215, U285, SP62.

The following list provides the correspondence between the inventory numbers and the catalogue numbers

Inv. No. Cat. No.

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TS428	3	TS1200	79	TS2032	172
TS429	34	TS1229	57	TS2033	204
TS430	1	TS1230	30	TS2034	85
TS431	94	TS1234	95	TS2035	26
TS432	71	TS1235	81	TS2039	83
TS433	92	TS1244	77	TS2040	206
TS434	75	TS1251	39	TS2043	202
TS435	40	TS1252	90	TS2044	50
TS436	60	TS1257	51	TS2045	120
TS437	31	TS1280	43	TS2051	76
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TS592	7	TS1595	32	C44	97
TS593	8	TS1596	59	C45	142
TS597	46	TS1597	80	C104	224
TS849	67	TS1622	74	C116	193
TS850	110	TS1623	13	C117	176
TS851	150	TS1624	28	C118	113
TS931	63	TS1625	73	C119	218
TS1004	69	TS1626	49	C129	220
TS1012	16	TS1627	29	C135	125
TS1017	14	TS1628	188	C161	153
TS1032	18	TS1629	33	C162	154
TS1033	47	TS1630	78	C163	167
TS1034	111	TS1631	56	C168	216
TS1036	38	TS1677	36	C171	140
TS1038	42	TS1744	24	C177	209
TS1040	45	TS1745	68	C178	190
TS1041	61	TS1873	35	C180	143
TS1041	203	TS1940	25	C674	121
TS1042	84	TS1957	200	C1030bis	213
TS1043	201	TS1981	86	C1031bis	189
TS1044	54	TS1982	88	C1033bis	160
TS1168	41	TS1992	118	C1034bis	126
TS1169	89	TS2022	55	C1036bis	124
TS1170	70	TS2023	205	C1848	123
		TS2031	21	C1849	179

C1853	196	C5492	138	SP215	173
C1855	145	C5493	139	SP217	178
C1856	137	C5592	141		
C1859	175	C5593	222		
C3437	127	C5594	217		
C3438	136	C5634	198		
C3439	102	C6128	96		
C3440	180	C6129	171		
C3441	103	IG1912	158		
C3442	101	IG1896	226		
C3443	208	IG1898	183		
C4483	100	IG1909	187		
C4484	192	IG1917	177		
C4485	105	IG1928	184		
C4488	99	IG1958	2		
C4489	195	IG1985	185		
C4490	219	IG1995	227		
C4491	221	IG1996	107		
C4492	106	IG2002	115		
C4493	156	IG2003	186		
C4494	169	U234/01	211		
C4495	132	U234/02	215		
C4496	170	U234/03	223		
C4497	112	V142	165		
C4498	133	V170	119		
C4499	130	V199/09	210		
C4500	131	V199/8	157		
C4501	134	V585	166		
C4502	135				
C4503	116	VARIA			
C4504	128	IG1980	23		
C4506	163	SP123	48		
C4507	164	SP124	129		
C4508	225	SP125	108		
C4509	152	SP126	199		
C4510	146	SP127	17		
C4511	151	SP170	149		
C4512	162	SP171	147		
C5480	159	SP172	148		
C5481	168	SP176	93		
C5482	212	SP197	98		
C5483	214	SP203	174		
C5484	191	SP208	12		
C5485	197	SP209	11		
C5486	161	SP210	10		
C5487	122	SP211	4		
C5488	155	SP212	37		
C5490	144	SP213	15		
C5491	194	SP214	109		

APPENDIX II
Graph and Charts

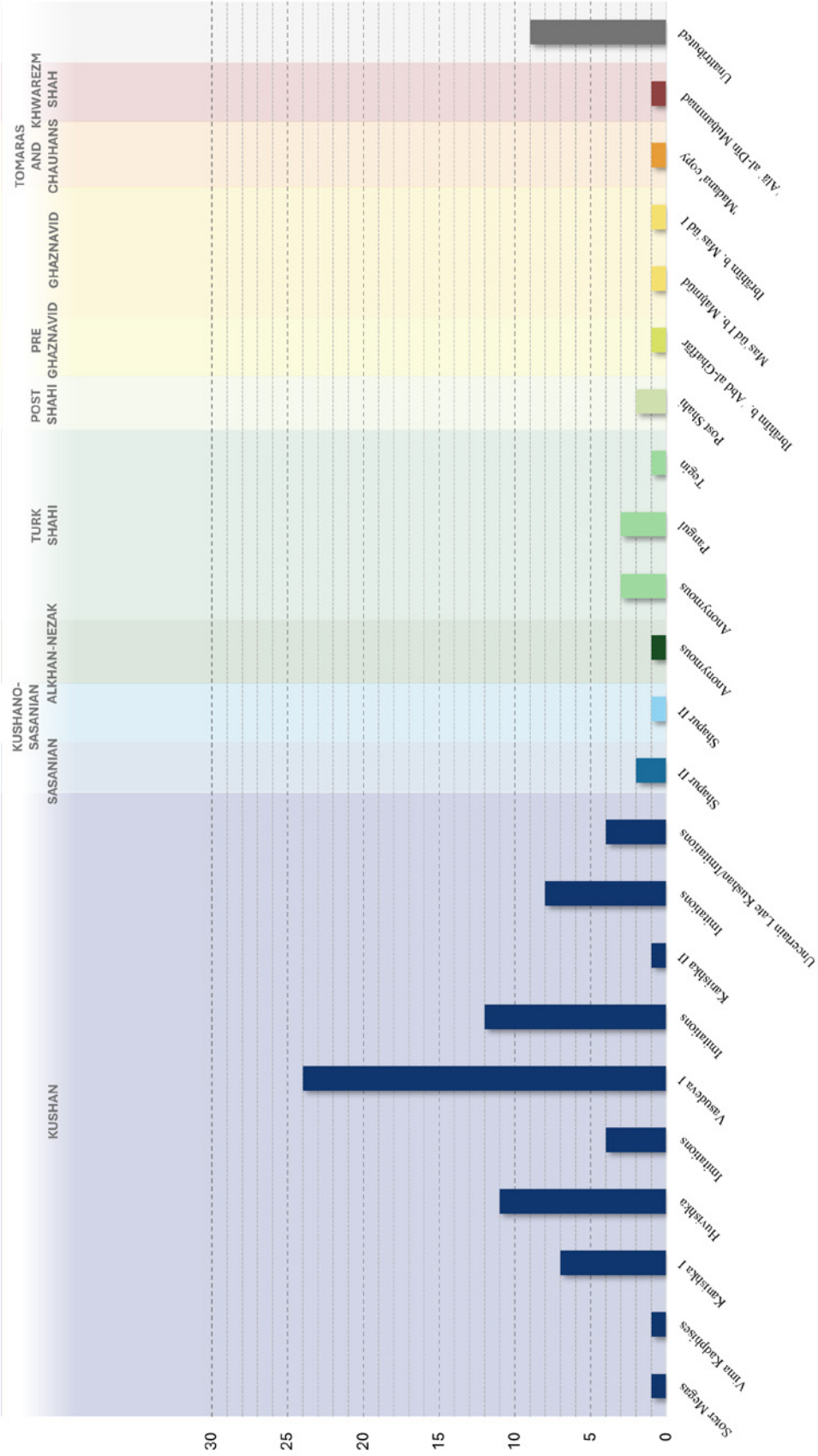


Figure 1. Distribution of the coin finds in Tapa Sardar



Figure 2. Distribution of the coin finds in the Islamic sites

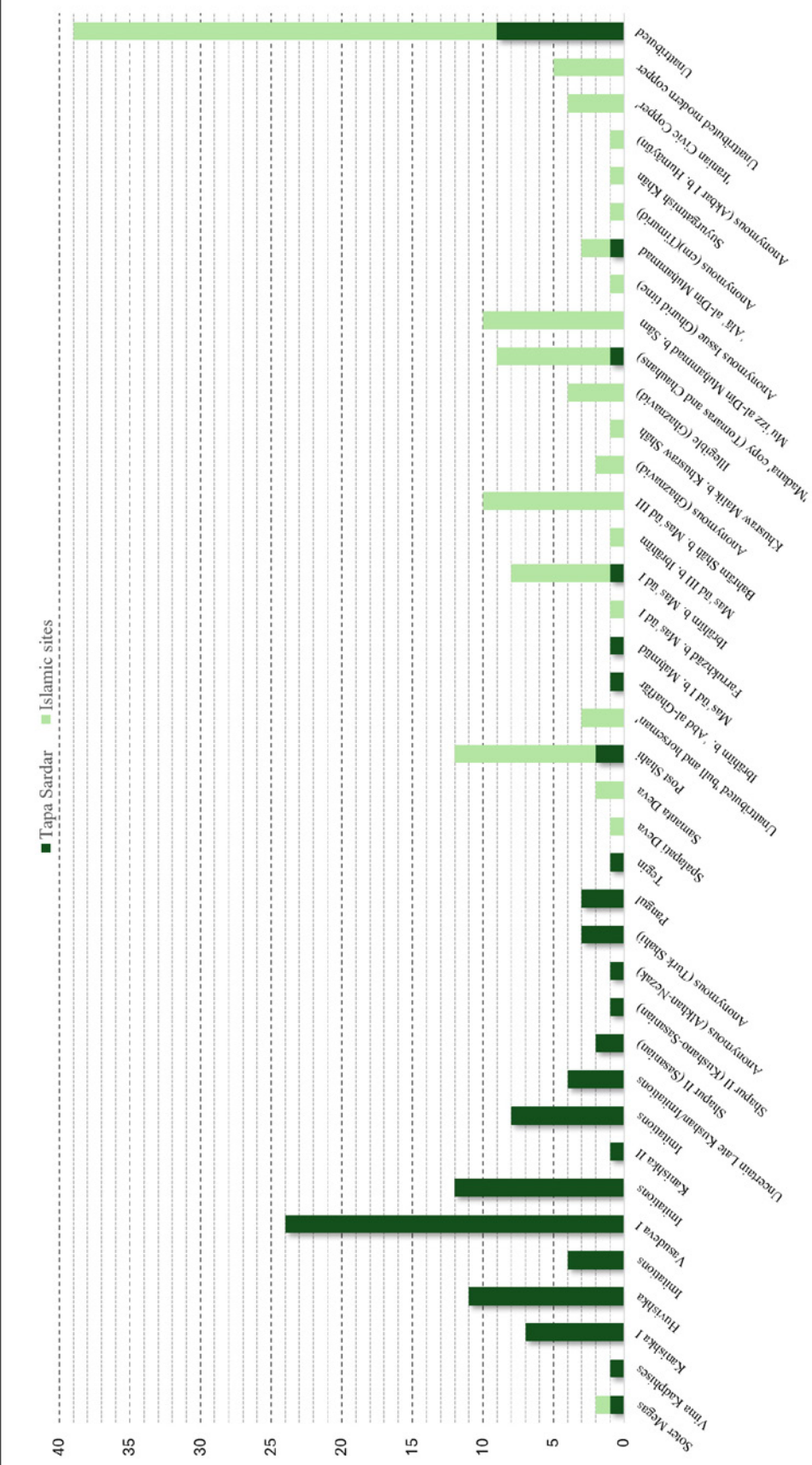


Figure 3. Distribution of the coin finds in Tapa Sardar and the Islamic sites

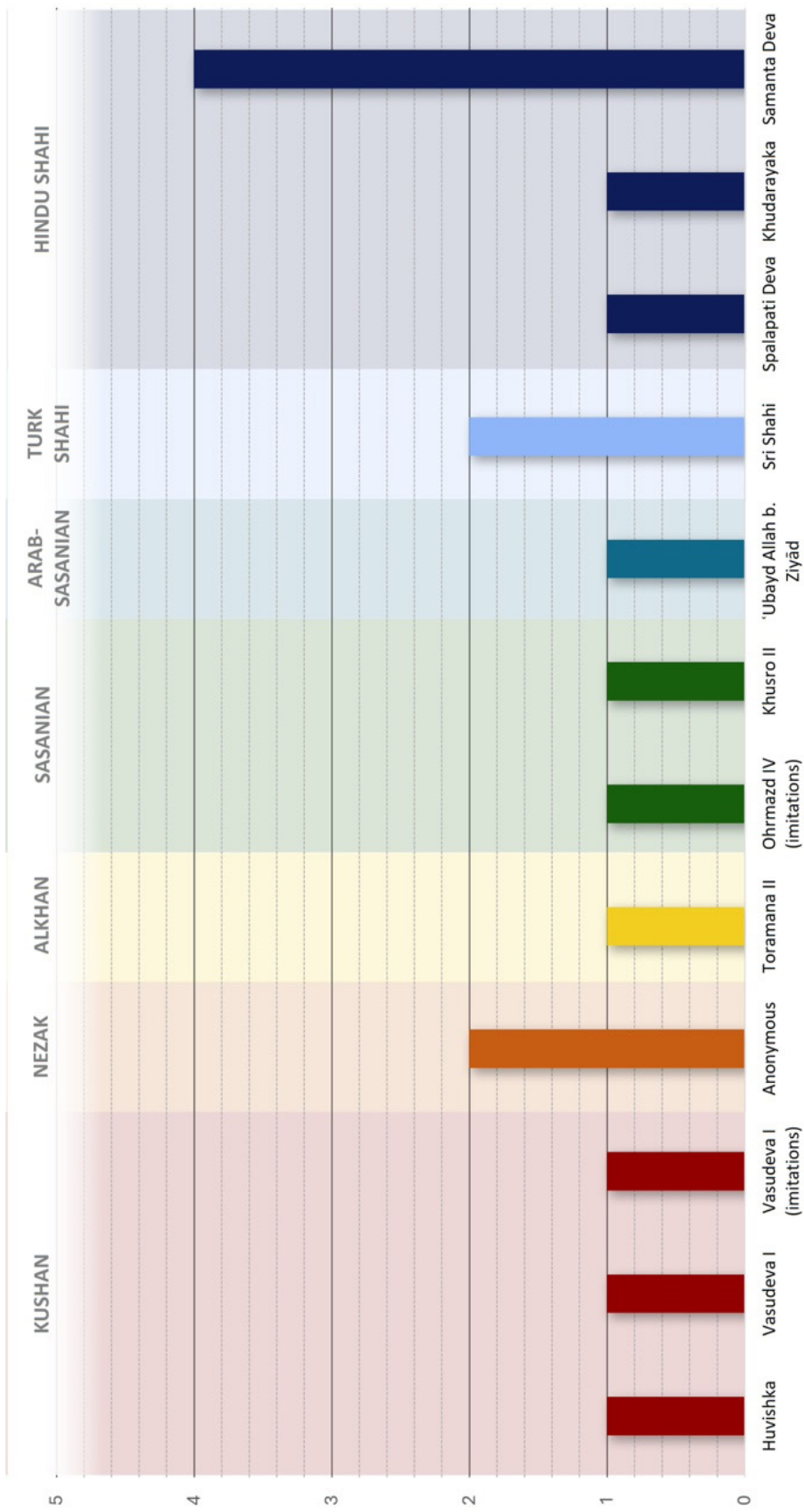


Figure 4. Distribution of the coin finds in Tepe Narenj

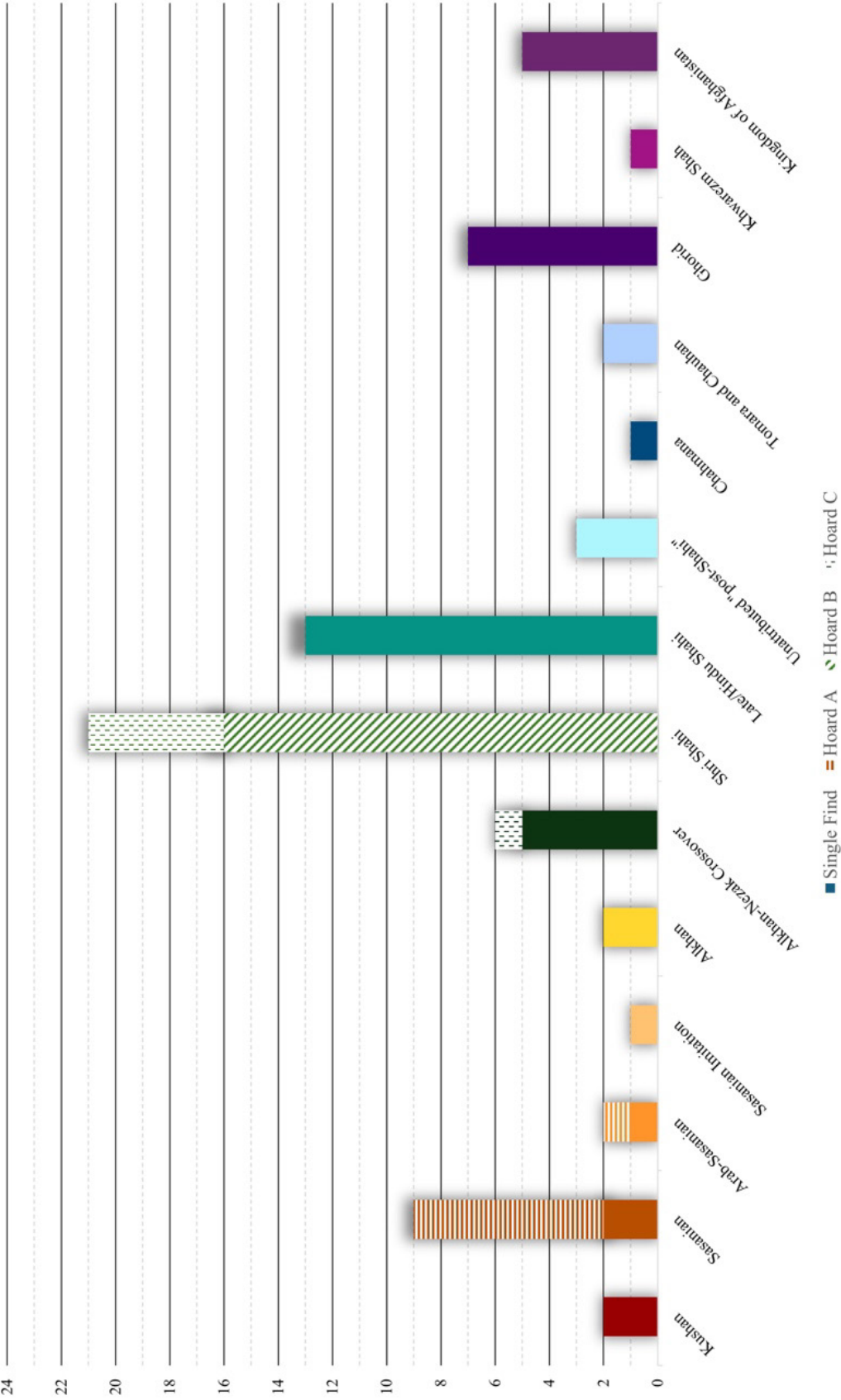


Figure 5. Distribution of the coin finds in Qol-e Tut

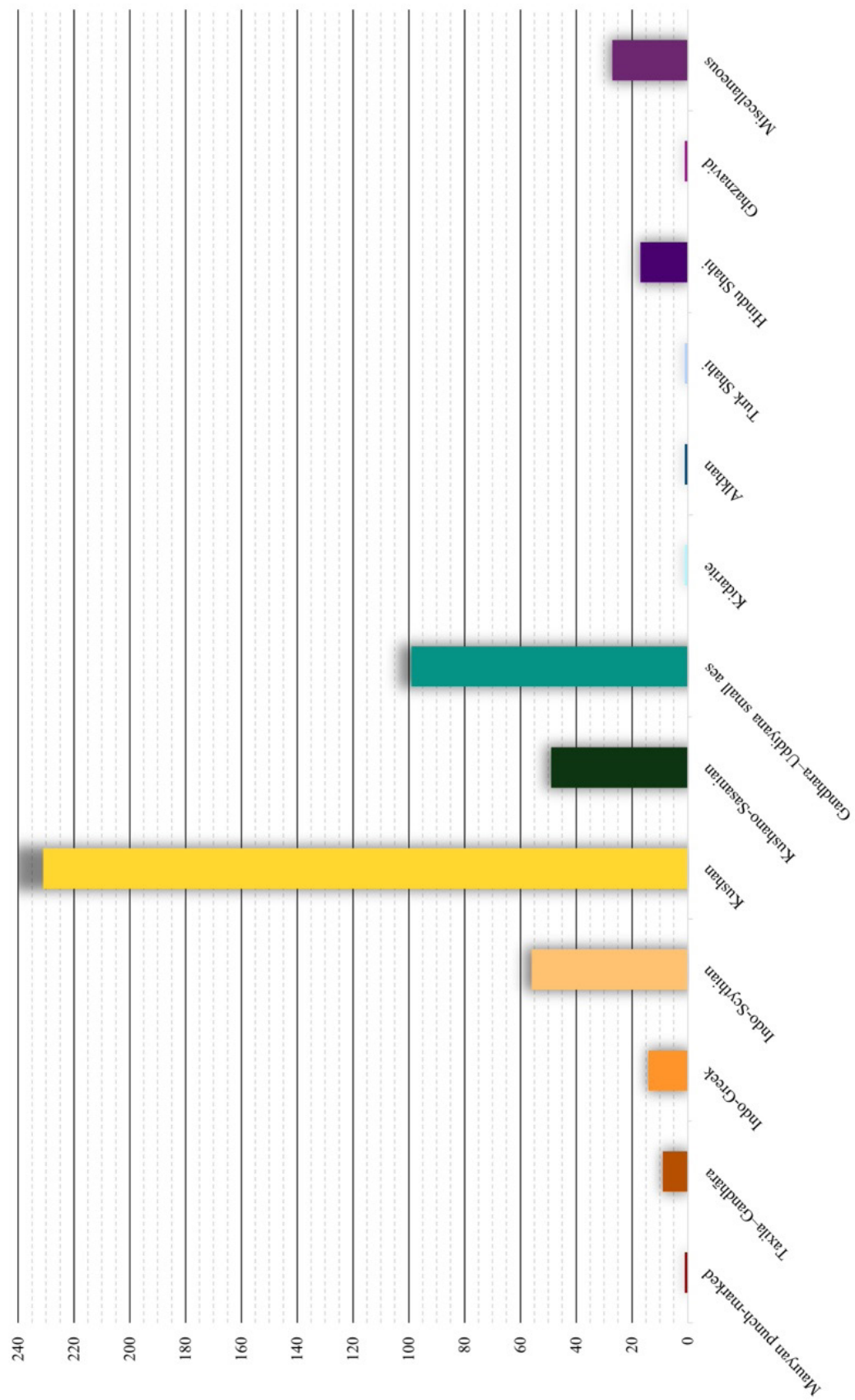


Figure 6. Distribution of the coin finds in Barikot

APPENDIX III
Maps

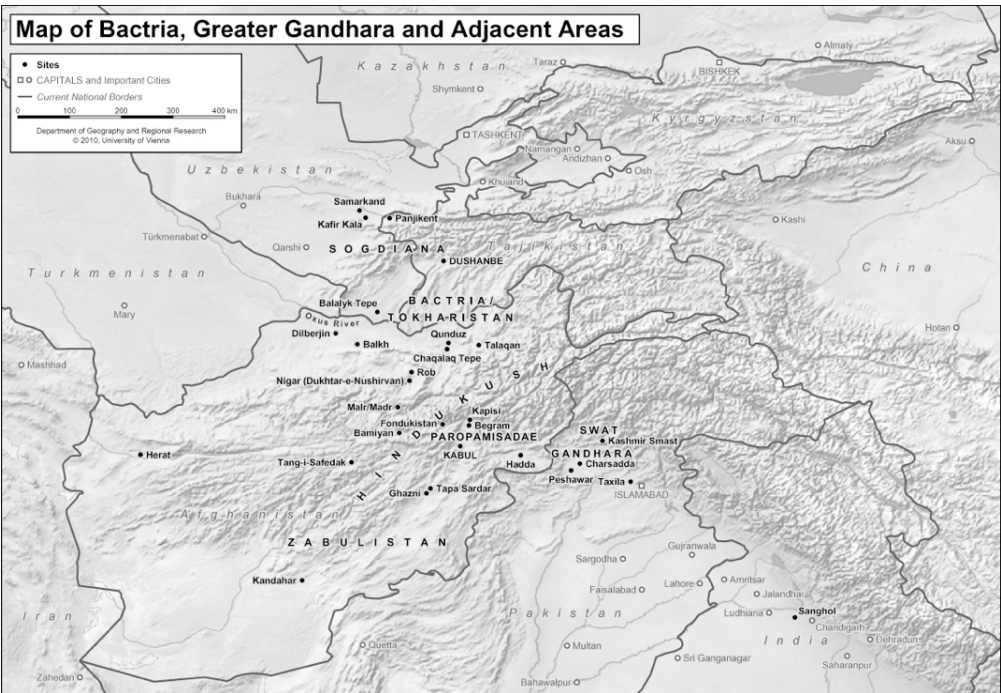


Figure 1. Map of the Indo-Iranian borderlands
(© University of Vienna, Department of Geography and Regional Research)



Figure 2. Overview of the Shahi Kingdoms Territory
(© University of Vienna, Department of Geographical and Regional Research, 2025, CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0)

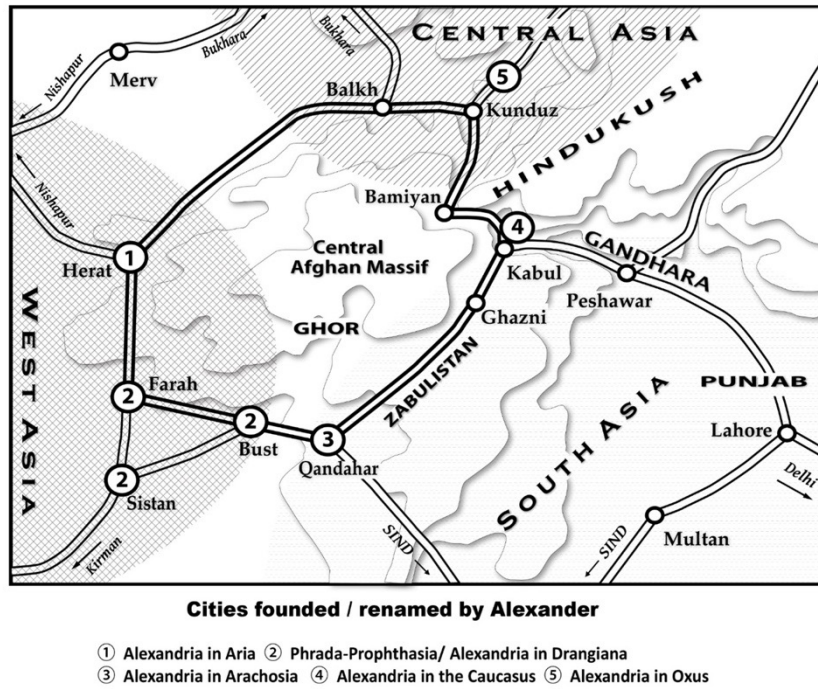


Figure 3. Road network that surrounds the Central Afghan Massif (© M. Inaba)

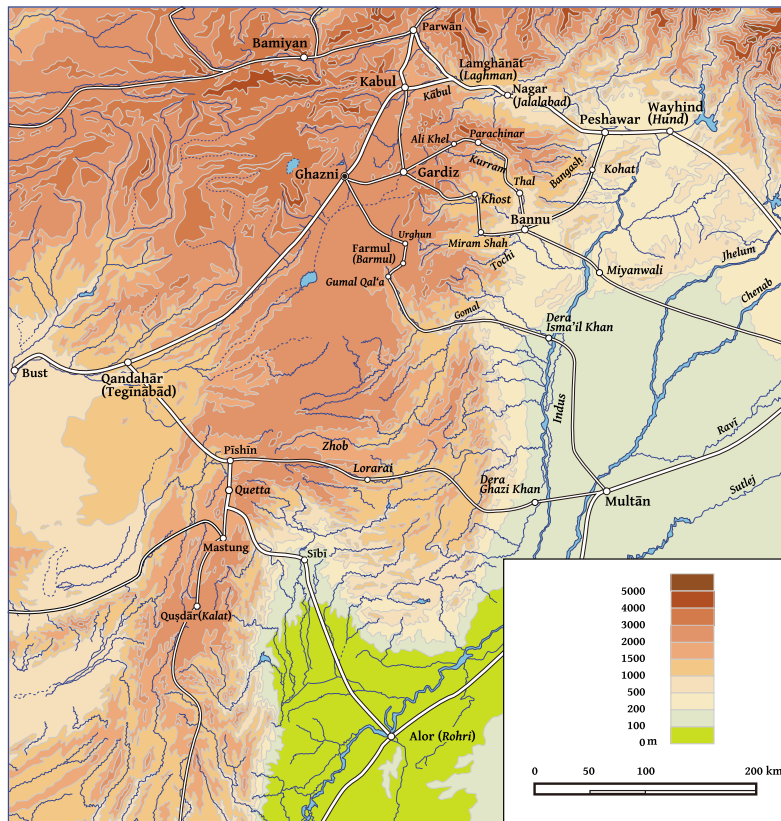


Figure 4. Main routes from Ghazni to India (© M. Inaba)



Figure 5. Route between Zabulistan and the Band-e Amir Valley
(© University of Vienna, Department of Geography and Regional Research)

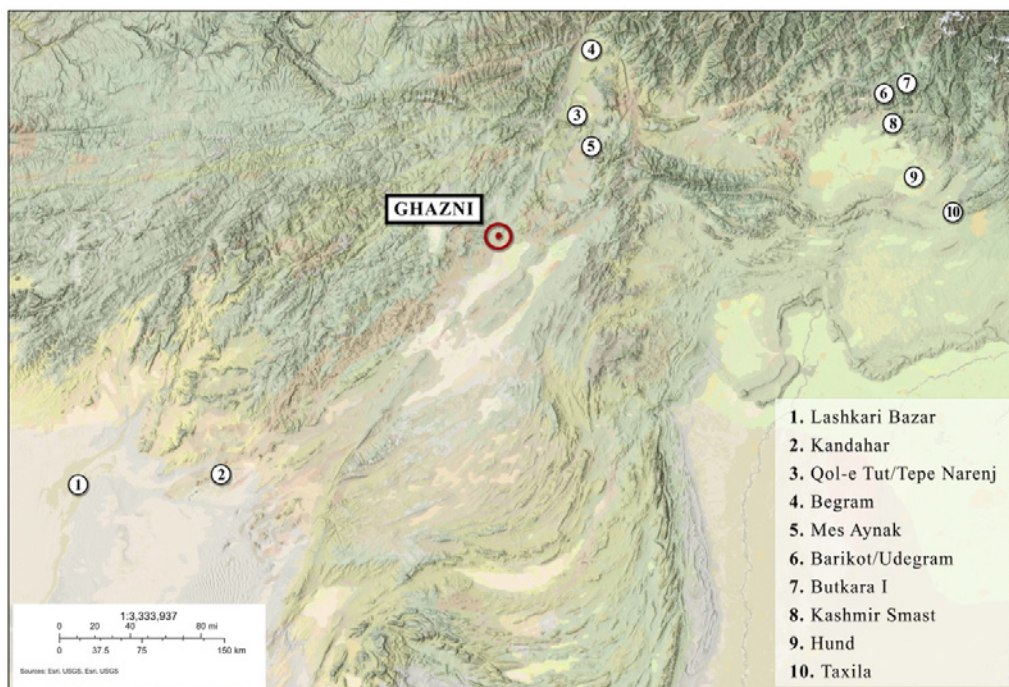


Figure 6. Map of the main archaeological sites in the Indo-Iranian borderlands

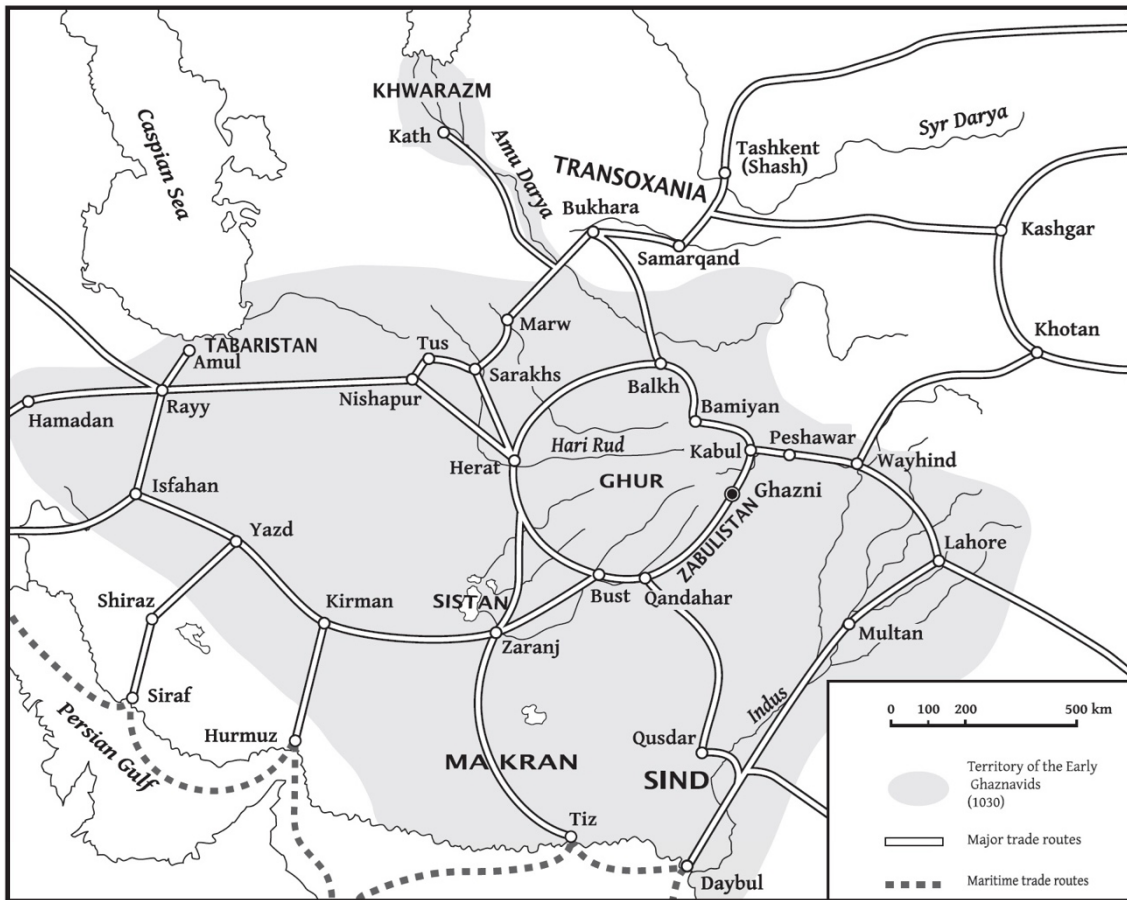


Figure 7. The territory of the early Ghaznavids ca. 1030 (© M. Inaba; see Inaba 2014: fig. 1)

APPENDIX IV

Find-spots of the Coins

(*) Included in the inventory, but no photos or cast for the specimen

TAPA SARDAR

FIND-SPOT	Cat. No.
18 (5), below	44
23, trial trench below 23 (5), layer of schist chips	39
36 (5), trench	207
47 (2)	118
50	117
60 (2), trial pit below	188
69, below, in the fill between the containing walls, presumably 5	33
83 (4)	200
95, debris over	203
100, north-eastern corner (surface)	120
II terrace (6)	46
Area 64–100	
Eastern part, unstratified	29
Near Stupa 65 (6)	52
Northern part, trench 64	13
On the floor of Stupa 64	73
Room 70, surface	24, 68
Surface, below Chapel 100	50
Terrace of Stupa 64, below 66	20
Trench 64 (6)	32
Trench of Stupa 64 (6)	80
Undefined layer, south	78
Chapel 36 (Upper Terrace)	
Below	45
South of, upper collapses (2)	21
Thick fill below	61, 62
Trial-trench	54
Upper debris	86
Chapel 49	
(2)	76
Upper levels (2)	89
Chapel 50	
Debris on eastern wall	51
Upper debris	77
Chapel 52	55

Chapel 63 (4)	91
Corridor 31 , behind Vihara 23, upper layer	69
Door 47 , south of, debris of Late Sanctuary	42, 47
Inner chapels of the Late Sanctuary	83
Kiln in the east-west trench across the tapa	64
<i>mahāstūpa</i> (Main Stupa) and Vihara 17 , from an upper layer between	150
<i>mahāstūpa</i> (Main Stupa)	
Collapsed material, north of Stupa 11	28
Debris, north side of the upper terrace	111
North-eastern corner	56
North side, behind the big statue (Vihara 17?)	92
North-western corner, cleaning operations	70
Stairway of	3, 94
MLR , trial trench, between <i>mahāstūpa</i> and Vihara 17 (2)	7, 8
MLS , trial trench, between <i>mahāstūpa</i> and Vihara 17 (2)	5
Passage 34 , behind Vihara 17	16
Pedestal 18	
Below	95
Below, pre-reconstruction sanctuary	81
PR , north-eastern corner (3)	59
Room 36 , upper debris	18, 84
Room 49 (2)	41
Room 52 (4)	205
Room 75 , in front of Pedestal 85, on the floor	53
Stupa 11 , level of the base	1, 59, 60
Stupa 81	
Surface	25
North side, in the fill near oven (5)	72
Trench D2(a), level II	58
Trial trench D2(a), level I	22
Unstratified	26, 85
Surface	35, 88, 110, 201, 206, TS2151(*)
Trench 64 , (6), north (6)	82
Trench of 64 (6)	36
Trench ON/11 , surface	202
Unstratified	6, 9, 14, 19, 27, 30, 31, 34, 40, 57, 71, 75, 87, 172, 204
Upper Terrace	
North-eastern corner, lower layer (Stupa 11)	74
North-eastern corner, upper layer (near Stupa 11)	79
North-western corner	43
North-western corner (4)	90

Trench MLN	63
Trench MLR	65
Trench MLS	66
Trench MLX	67
Vihara 23 , above the debris of the vault	38
Wall 30 (5) , below	49

ISLAMIC SITES

Ghaznavid Palace

FIND-SPOT	CAT. No.
Antechamber XVI	128
Antechamber XIX	C5489 ^(*)
Antechamber XXI , in front of	125
Antechamber LII	198
Antechamber LV	217, 222
Central Courtyard	
North-eastern side	141, 171
South-western side	121
South-western side	126
Facade , north-west external side	C5802
(Ivan) I	114, 182
Private apartments (Room III)	
A2 south outer wall, south-eastern area	122, 161
courtyard, north side	97, 124, 139, 142, 155, 195, 212, 214, C1857 ^(*)
Courtyard, north side (in a well)	C1037bis ^(*) , C1038bis ^(*)
Room IIIc	136, 180
Room IIIId	99, 208
Room IIIi and Ive, between	220, C128 ^(*)
Room IIIIn	224
South-eastern area	102
Southern side	103
Prayer Room (XIII) (<i>miḥrāb</i>)	175
Room IIa , western wall	104, 181
Room IV , under the foundation of the north wall	C125 ^(*)
Room V	165
Room Va	
—	140, 143, 154, 167, 190, 209, 216, C164 ^(*) , C165 ^(*) , C166 ^(*) , C167 ^(*) , C169 ^(*) , C170 ^(*) , C172 ^(*) , C173 ^(*) , C174 ^(*) , C175 ^(*) , C176 ^(*) , C179 ^(*) , C181 ^(*) , C182 ^(*) , C182bis ^(*)
1st layer, surface ashes	153
Room IX	159, 168, 191, 197

Room X	116
Rooms X and XI, between	96
Room XVIII	100, C5787, C5788, C4505 (melted flan) ^(*)
Room XXI	101, 127
Room XXIII	146, 151, 152, 162–164, 225
Room XXIV	105, 192, 226
Room XXVI	
–	113, 193, 218
On the floor	176
Room XXVII	138, 194
Room XXXI	
–	106, 156, 219, 221
Little hoard in a wollen cloth	112, 130–135, 169, 170
Room XXXII	C4486 (melted flan) ^(*) , C4487 (melted flan) ^(*)
Southern outer wall	
Central tower	144, 196
South-west area, northern side	137, 145
Throne Room II	160, 213
Unregistered	115, 123
Ziyāra Ibrāhīm	179, 189, C6130 ^(*)

House of Lustrewares

FIND-SPOT	CAT. No.
Courtyard	166, U285 ^(*)
Room V	165
Room VI	119
Room XIII	210, U215 ^(*)
Room XIII	157
Towers 1–3	211, 215, 223

Rawza

FIND-SPOT	CAT. No.
(Area of the) Tomb of Maḥmūd	2, 158, 177, 183–187, 227

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ABBREVIATIONS AND EDITORIAL REMARKS

Transliteration notes

Geographical and personal names, as well as other designations, are usually transcribed from Middle Persian or Sanskrit without diacritical marks. Greek, Bactrian, Middle Persian, and Sanskrit coin legends are generally transliterated.

Names, coin designations, offices, royal protocols, and coin legends are transliterated from Arabic according to the system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Except for names, all these elements are presented in italics.

Dates

Other calendars use common acronyms (see below); the dates are always given together with the corresponding date in the Common Era calendar. For the sake of simplicity, the same system is used throughout the text for the Hijri years (e.g. 569 AH [= 1173/74 CE]).

Only in the catalogue (Part B) is the standard system retained for the Hijri years (e.g. 421/1030–31)

Abbreviations

Descriptions

Obv.	Obverse
Rev.	Reverse
l.	(to the) left
r.	(to the) right

Denominations and material

4Δ	tetradrachm
2Δ	didrachm
Δ	drachm
½Δ	hemidrachm
Ob	obol
Æ	copper or copper alloy
AR	argentum = silver
BI	billon = silver-copper alloy

Varia

AH	Hijri Year
Bac.	Bactrian
BE	Bactrian era
Bra.	Brahmi
Cm	countermark (after Göbl 1967, abbreviated there as KM)
Gr.	Greek
ht.	height
Khar.	Kharoshthi
MP	Middle Persian
Pah.	Pahlavi
PYE	post-Yazdgerd era
pr.Sh.	proto-Sharada
S	symbol (after Göbl 1967)

Sp	sporadic
TS	Tapa Sardar
VS	Vikrama Samvat

Collections

AuR	Aman ur Rahman Collection, Dubai
Berlin	Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Münzkabinett
BHM	Bernisches Historisches Museum, Bern
BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet des médailles, Paris
BM	British Museum, Department of Coins and Medals, London
FINT	Forschungsstelle für Islamische Numismatik Tübingen
HMM	The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg
JPR	Jean-Pierre-Rhigetti Collection, Ferpicloz
KHM	Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Münzkabinett
NMA	National Museum of Afghanistan

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The volume focuses on the study of the coins discovered in the region of Ghazni during the excavations carried out by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan between 1956 and 1978 in the areas of the Buddhist complex of Tapa Sardar and the Islamic sites.

It is an as yet unpublished corpus of excavated coins that have unfortunately been lost. However, thanks to archival documentation and the plaster casts made after the coins were found, it has been possible to resume and deepen the investigation in recent years.

Arranged and described in a catalogue, the 227 coins cover a wide chronological range and testify to the long history of the Ghazni region—from antiquity to the present day—which greatly enhances our understanding of the political and economic history of the region. The coins are presented in two sections: The first contains coins from the 2nd to 8th centuries, the second from the 9th to 20th centuries. Each section is accompanied by a detailed numismatic analysis and enriched by updated archaeological contributions on Tapa Sardar, the Ghaznavid Palace and the House of Lustreswares.

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