

The Earliest Coinage of Bharat as Unearthed from Bahaj Excavations

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Abstract:

The excavations at Bahaj near Govardhan in Mathura region have been quite rewarding archaeologically. The site has provided a brilliant information of early Indian numismatics and palaeography. For numismatic studies, the site has provided a significant number of coins which include silver punch-marked, copper punch-marked and uninscribed copper cast coins that have been found in the lowest deposits of the site taking back the antiquity of coinage in India to somewhat seventh-eighth century BCE. The coinage which is found with the deposit of succeeding periods is again very significant and throws new light on the pre-existing knowledge about their chronology and understanding.

Key-words: Bahaj, silver punch-marked coins, copper punch-marked coins, uninscribed copper cast coins, cast coins, Kushan coins etc.

Introduction

The site of Bahaj (27°47'14.14" N and 77°37'37.130" E) is located at a distance of 4 km east of District headquarters in Deeg, Rajasthan. The sacred Govardhan hill and Mathura are situated 6 km and 30 km east of the site respectively. The famous archaeological site Sonkh (Hartel 1993) is situated about 15 km to the north-east of Bahaj. The area is generally flat and fertile. Some isolated hillocks are located towards the north-west of the site. The hills are part of the Aravallis. The local tradition believes that the site is the old place of Vajranabha, the great grandson of Bhagavana Sri Krishna, credited for revival of Braj spots after the demise of Sri Krishna and his Yadava colleagues and based on that the mound is known as Vajranabhaka-Khera.

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Excavations

The site was taken up for excavations by the Jaipur Circle of Archaeological Survey of India under the direction of the principal author for two seasons between January 2024 and July 2025. During the first season of excavation, 14 quadrants measuring 4.25 x 4.25 m forming part of different trenches, *i.e.*, XB8, ZA7, ZB9 particularly were taken up for excavations. In the second season of excavations, 15 trenches comprising 50 quadrants were undertaken for excavation, the most important among them are the Trenches XB9, ZB6, XG3, XG4 and XF3. The site provides an uninterrupted cultural sequence from the recent times/ medieval period to the earliest cultural period of the area. The trenches at the centre of the mound during the first season provided information of cultures starting from the Medieval period to post-Gupta, Gupta, Kushan, Sunga, Mauryan, Pre-Mauryan and PGW period with occurrence of BRW and OCP in the lowest deposits of PGW culture. In another area towards the periphery (contour- 211 m) of the mound, the cultural sequence starts with the Sunga period and goes down to the OCP and Palaeolithic period. The layers are running almost horizontally all over the site with limited disturbances. The overall deposit helps in understanding the socio-cultural life in relation to the climate of the area. Various cultural phases are marked by the occurrence of Palaeolithic tools, Red Ware, Grey Ware, Painted Grey Ware, Black Slipped Ware, Northern Black Polished Ware, Black-&-Red Ware and Ochre Coloured Pottery (OCP) and Bahaj-Govardhan Culture pottery indicating various historic to proto-historic periods.

Two seasons of excavation at the Bahaj mound have yielded significant evidence of ancient Indian numismatics. These were recovered from various levels of the trenches. A total of 220 coins and 47 cowries were recovered. However, due to excessive soiling and patination on the coins, most of them appeared obscure. The symbols and inscriptions on them were not visible. Therefore, these coins were handed over to the Science Branch of the Archaeological Survey of India, Jaipur, for treatment and cleaning. After treatment and cleaning, encouraging results began to emerge. However, only 101 coins could be selected for study; the remaining coins were found unsuitable due to obliterated features. The study identified coins of following varieties: Silver Punch-marked coins, Copper Punch-marked coins, Uninscribed Copper cast coins, Inscribed copper coins, Kshatrapa and Kushan coins.

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Silver punch-marked coins

Seven silver punch-marked coins were found during the excavation. These coins were found from Trenches XB8/Q4 and ZA7/Q2. These coins weigh from 3 gm to 3.3 gm. They are rectangular in shape. Their size ranges from $1.2 \times 1 \times 0.4$ cm to $1.8 \times 1.1 \times 0.2$ cm. These coins have been cut from the edges to balance their weight. Four to five symbols are seen on them. Sun, three-arched hill with crescent top, animal, caduceus, six-armed symbol, are seen on the obverse side and *Nandipada*, caduceus on the reverse side of many of these coins. Certain symbols are not visible on some coins. Out of these, except coin no.1, all coins from coin no. 2 to 5 have the symbol of Sun on the obverse. Coin no.1 was found in a very worn condition, and a copper punch-marked coin was also found affixed to it (see coin no.10). This suggests that it was in circulation for a considerable period. This coin likely came into circulation during the pre-Mauryan period or even earlier and continued in the pre-Mauryan period, as it was excavated from a layer belonging to the pre-Mauryan period. Other coins belong to the pre-Mauryan and Mauryan periods.

Copper punch-marked coins

18 Copper punch-marked coins were found during the excavation. These coins were found from Trenches XB8 and XB9. These coins are rectangular and square in shape. Their weight ranges from 2.8 gm to 6.47 gm. Their size ranges from $1.1 \times 1.1 \times 0.3$ cm to $1.9 \times 1.2 \times 0.3$ cm. These coins are of three types. The first type has a lion standing in front of the *Indradhvaja*, the second has a wolf or a dog standing in front of the *Indradhvaja*. The third type of coin bears obscure symbols. To make these coins, thin copper sheets were cut into rectangular or square shapes. Then, various stamps were used to create these marks. These marks were made with great precision. The symbols and technique differed slightly from those used for silver punch-marked coins. The first type of coin has also been found in the excavations at Sonkh (Hartel 1993: 309). These coins were found during excavations from the pre-Mauryan levels. A hoard of 14 coins was also found from Trench XB8/Q1. Two circular copper cast coins were found in this hoard (See Coin Nos. 27, 28). Both these coins appear as if they have been minted recently. It seems that they were preserved in the hoard as soon as they were minted. But these were not made using the punching technique rather by using the casting technique.

Uninscribed Copper Cast Coins

A total of 6 copper uninscribed cast coins have been found from Bahaj. These have been found from Trenches XB8 and ZA5. These are square and circular in shape. Their size ranges from $1.4 \times 1.4 \times 0.3$ cm to $1.7 \times 1.7 \times 0.5$ cm. Their weight ranges from 2.47 gm to 5.01 gm. They have been made using casting technique. Three types of coins have been found from here. In the first type of coin, symbols of left-facing elephant, a three-arched hill with a crescent on top are found. On the second type of coins, symbols of three-arched hill with a crescent on top and five-leaved tree in railing (*chaityavriksha*) are found. On the third type of coins, the following symbols are found: left-facing lion with *Indradhvaja* in front and a three-arched hill with a crescent on top along with two taurine symbols on both the sides. The symbol on the third type of coin, the left-facing lion with *Indradhvaja* on the obverse, is also found on the copper punch-marked coins recovered from Bahaj. However, the symbol, a three-arched hill with a crescent on top, along with two taurine symbols on both sides is not found on those coins. All the coins, except Coin No. 29, are from the pre-Mauryan and Mauryan periods.

Inscribed Copper Cast Coins

A total of three inscribed copper cast coins have been recovered from this site, recovered from Trenches ZB6/Q2 and ZA7. One coin belongs to King Brahmamitra and another to King Sujeshtha. Another coin bears an illegible Brahmi script. Coins of Brahmamitra have also been recovered from Sonkh (Hartel 1993) and Rairh in Rajasthan (Puri 1940). However, an interesting coin has been recovered from Bahaj, bearing the inscription *Sujethasa* (Sujyeshtha) in Brahmi script on its obverse. Previously, only one coin of this type was known, found in Ajit Ghosh's collection (*JNSI* 1954). However, he did not mention the place of discovery of this coin. Another type of lead coin belonging to the same king was also recovered from excavations at Atranjikhhera (Gaur 1983: 451). However, for the first time, a copper coin belonging to King Sujeshtha has been found from proper stratigraphic context at Bahaj which is dated to the Sunga period. It suggests that King Sujeshtha was likely a Sunga king. The *Puranas* indicate that after the death of the Sunga ruler Pushyamitra, his son Agnimitra was succeeded by a king named Sujeshtha, who ruled for seven years (Pargiter 1913). Many scholars believe that the Sujethas mentioned on coins discovered earlier is the same Sujyeshtha as described in the *Puranas* (Gupta 1965).

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Kshatrapa copper coins

A total of 23 copper coins belonging to the Kshatrapas were recovered during the excavation at Bahaj. These were found in Trenches ZA7 and ZC5/Q1. In Trench ZC5/1 the coins were found in the form of a hoard which contained 18 coins in total. This hoard was kept inside the south-facing brick wall of the said trench. The weight of all the coins recovered from there ranges from 1.52 gm to 3.07 gm and their dimensions range from $1.4 \times 1.5 \times 0.3$ cm to $1.8 \times 1.7 \times 0.5$ cm. All the coins are circular in shape. All these coins belong to the Kshatrapa King Shodasa. Some coins are unclear. No symbols are visible on them. However, the coins which have inscriptions have the word 'Sodasasa' written in Brahmi. Standing Lakshmi, a wavy line, a tree and a *svastika* symbol are also found on them. Coins of Kshatrapa King Shodasa have also been found from Sonkh (Hartel 1993: 312-314).

Kushan Copper Coins

A total of 34 Kushan copper coins were found during the excavation. These coins were found in the following trenches namely ZB6/Q3, ZA5/Q2, ZD5/Q2, ZB5/Q4 and XE1. There is also a hoard from Trench XE1 containing a total of 26 coins. These coins were kept in a small pot. The weight of all these coins found from the excavation of Bahaj ranges between 14.41 gm to 4.30 gm. These are circular and semi-circular in shape. Their size ranges from $2 \times 2.1 \times 0.4$ cm to $1.7 \times 1.8 \times 0.2$ cm. These include coins of Kushan kings Kanishka I, King Vasudeva I and kings of the later Kushan period. A coin of Vasudeva I was also recovered from our excavations at Bewan. A large hoard of coins of later Kushan kings was also found from Jamwaramgarh, Jaipur (Pokharna 1997: 51, Pls. XXIV, XXV).

Cowries

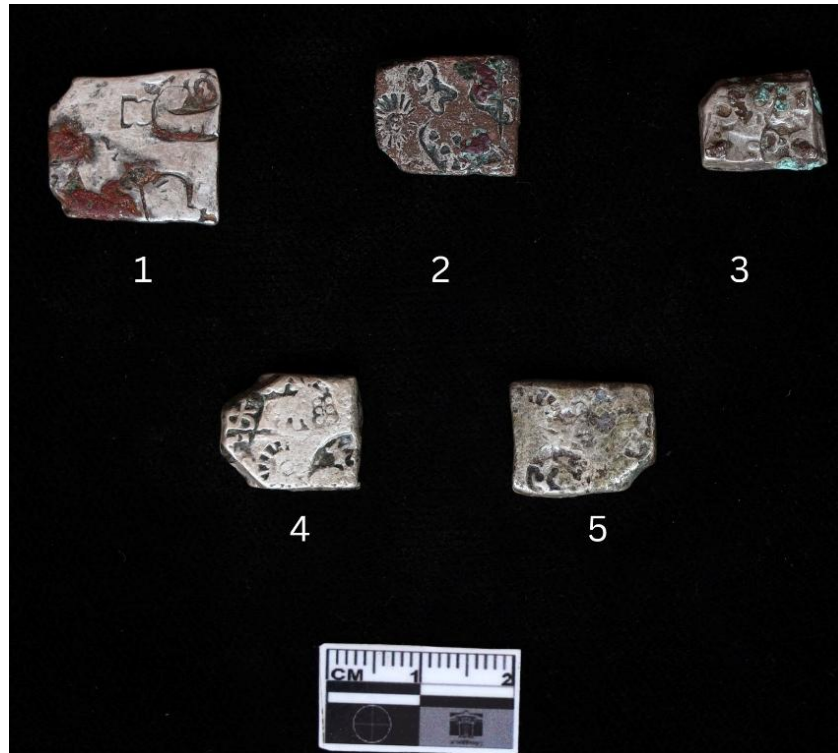
An interesting hoard was recovered from Trench XD1. It is a hoard of cowries, 47 in number, found kept in a small pot. Along with these cowries, two copper coins were found stuck together, with a cowrie shell stuck to them. The patina on the coins makes them difficult to discern, but they are likely Kushan, as the strata in which they were found belongs to the Kushan period.

Catalogue of Bahaj Coins

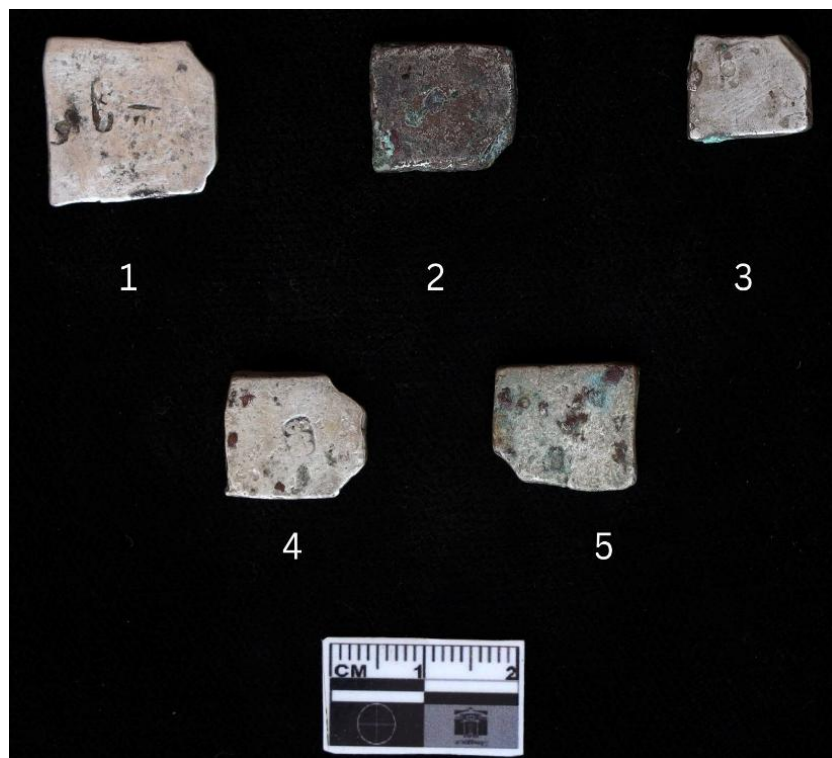
Silver punch-marked coins (Pl. I)

1. Obv.: There are some symbols on this side, not clearly visible.
Rev.: Symbols are not clearly visible.
Wt.: 3 gm, Size: $1.8 \times 1.1 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q4, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan
2. Obv.: Five symbols: 1. Sun, 2. three-arched hill with a crescent at the top, 3. animal (elephant?), 4. Caduceus, 5. not visible
Rev.: *Nandipada*
Wt.: 3 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.2 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q4, Depth: 280 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan (Ref.: Allan 1936: 36; Puri 1940: Pl. XXVIII; Gupta 1965: 65-77)
3. Obv.: 1. Sun, 2. Six-armed, 3. hill, other symbols are not visible.
Rev.: Symbols are not clearly visible.
Wt.: 3.21 gm, Size: $1.2 \times 1 \times 0.4$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q4, Depth: 210 cm, Period: Mauryan (Ref.: Allan 1936: 36; Puri 1940: Pl. XXVIII; Gupta 1965: 65-77)
4. Obv.: Four symbols are visible on this side; 1. Sun, 2. Caduceus (?), 3. Right-facing animal eating leaves, 4. not visible
Rev.: Caduceus
Wt.: 3.23 gm, Size: $1.4 \times 1.2 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q4, Depth: 190 cm, Period: Mauryan (Ref.: Allan 1936: 36; Puri 1940: Pl. XXIX; Gupta 1965: 65-77)
5. Obv.: Sun symbol is visible, other symbols are not visible.
Rev.: Blank
Wt.: 3.10 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.2 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: ZA7/Q2, Depth: 614-630 cm, Period: Mauryan (Ref.: Allan 1936: 36; Puri 1940: Pl. XXIX; Gupta 1965: 65-77)

Plate I



Obv.



Rev.

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(Pl. I a, Pl. I b)

(a) Obv.: There are some symbols on this side, not clearly visible.

Rev.: Symbols are not clearly visible.

Wt.: 3.08 gm, **Size:** $1.7 \times 1.3 \times 0.1$ cm, **Shape:** rectangular, **Locus:** XB8/Q4, **Depth:** 320 cm, **Period:** Pre-Mauryan

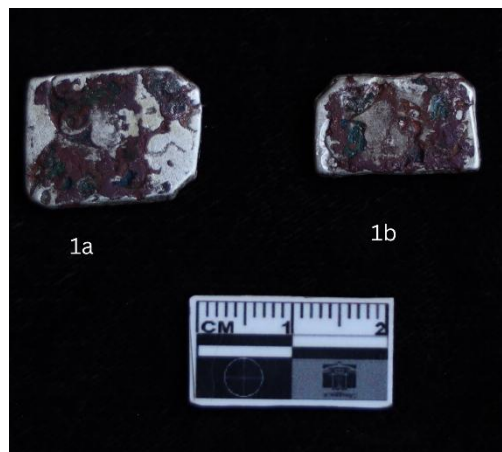
(b) Obv.: There are some symbols on this side, not clearly identifiable.

Rev.: A quadruped can be identified in the symbols; rest is not clear.

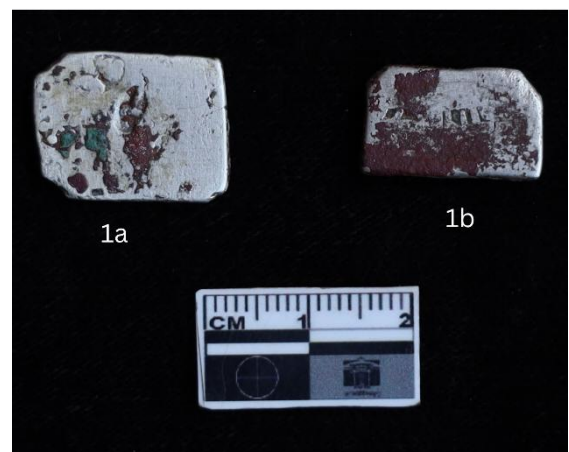
Wt.: 3.2 gm, **Size:** $1.6 \times 1 \times 0.2$ cm, **Shape:** rectangular, **Locus:** XB8/Q4, **Depth:** 320 cm, **Period:** Pre-Mauryan

Note: These two and Coin Nos. 1 and 10 (four in number) were found kept wrapped in a cloth from inside a ritualistic miniature pot. The coins mentioned in Pl. 1 a were included after the initial preparation of this paper when these were received after chemical treatment from Science Branch, Jaipur. Hence these are not counted in the sequence numbering.

Pl. 1 a



Obv.



Rev.



Pl. I b. Coins wrapped in a cloth piece

Copper punch-marked coins (Pl. II)

6. Obv.: Left facing lion with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 3.03 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.8 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: square, Locus: XB8/Q4, Depth: 280 cm,

Period: Pre-Mauryan

7. Obv.: Left facing lion with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 6.47 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 1.4 \times 0.4$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q4, Depth: 344

cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

8. Obv.: Left facing lion with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 3.5 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.1 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB9/Q1, Depth: 256-

271 cm, Period: Early Mauryan

9. Obv.: Left facing lion with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 4.02 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 1.4 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 290

cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

10. Obv.: Left facing wolf /dog (?) with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 4.87 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.5 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q4, Depth: 320

cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

Note: It was found stuck with Coin No. 1 and coins included in Pl. I a inside a miniature pot which was offered inside a ritualistic pit.

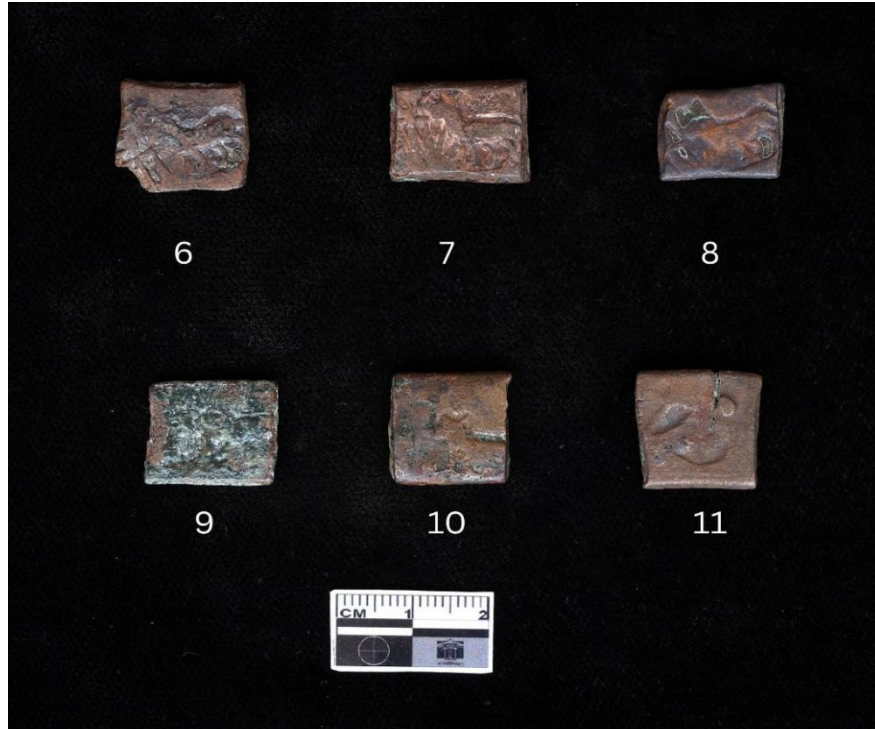
11. Obv.: Two ambiguous symbols are visible.

Rev.: A crescent-shaped symbol is visible.

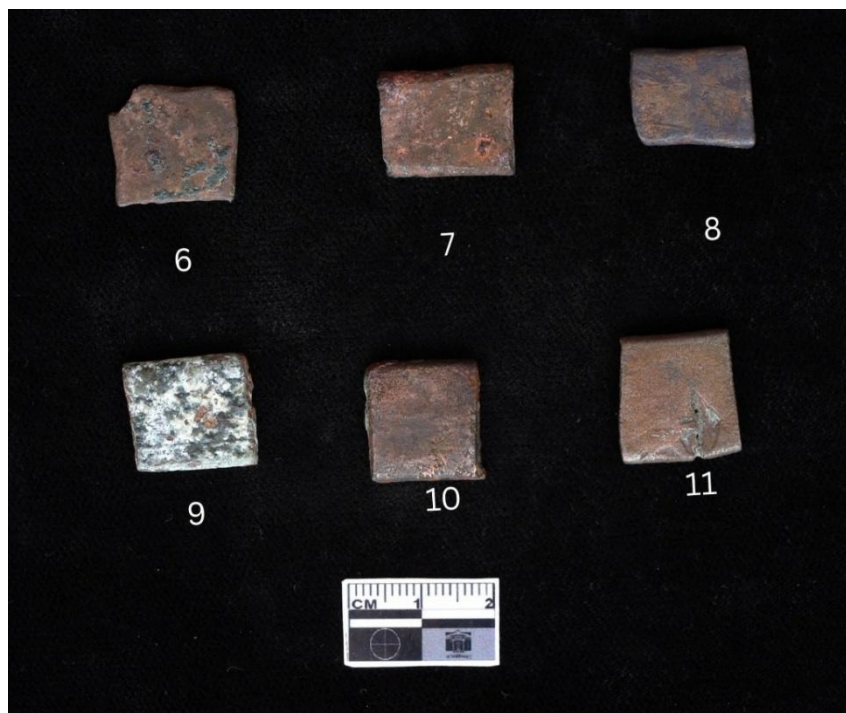
Wt.: 4.47 gm, Size: $1.1 \times 1.1 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: square, Locus: XB8/Q4, Depth: 180 cm,

Period: Mauryan

Plate II



Obv.



Rev.

Hoard 1 (Pl. III)

12. Obv.: Left facing lion with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 3.4 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 1.6 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: square, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

13. Obv.: Left facing lion with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 3.6 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.5 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

14. Obv.: Left facing lion with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 3.8 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 1.6 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

15. Obv.: Left facing lion with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 4.03 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 1.6 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

16. Obv.: Left facing wolf /dog (?) with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 4.07 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.6 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

17. Obv.: Left facing wolf /dog (?) with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 2.8 gm, Size: $1.4 \times 1.3 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

18. Obv.: Left facing wolf /dog (?) with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 3.8 gm, Size: $1.8 \times 1.5 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

19. Obv.: Left facing wolf /dog (?) with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 4.15 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.6 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

20. Obv.: Left facing wolf /dog (?).

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 5.3 gm, Size: $1.8 \times 1.6 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

21. Obv.: Left facing wolf /dog (?) with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: Blank

Wt.: 3.3 gm, Size: $1.9 \times 1.2 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

22. Obv.: Symbols are not visible.

Rev.: Blank

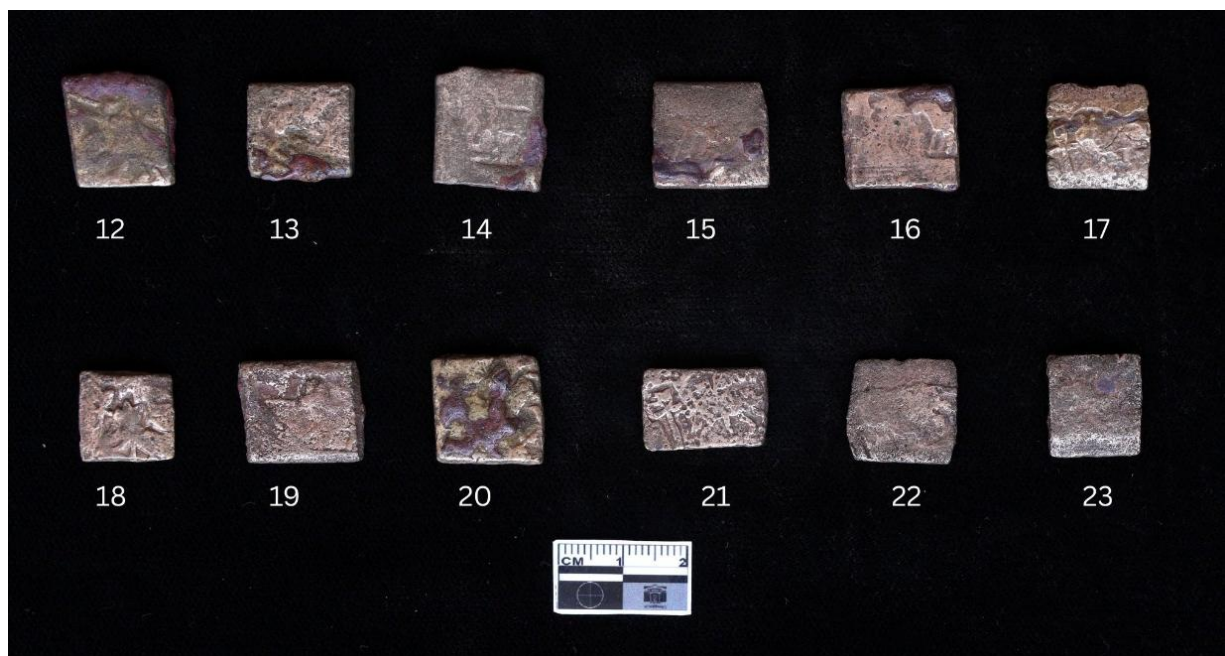
Wt.: 3.22 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.5 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

23. Obv.: Defaced

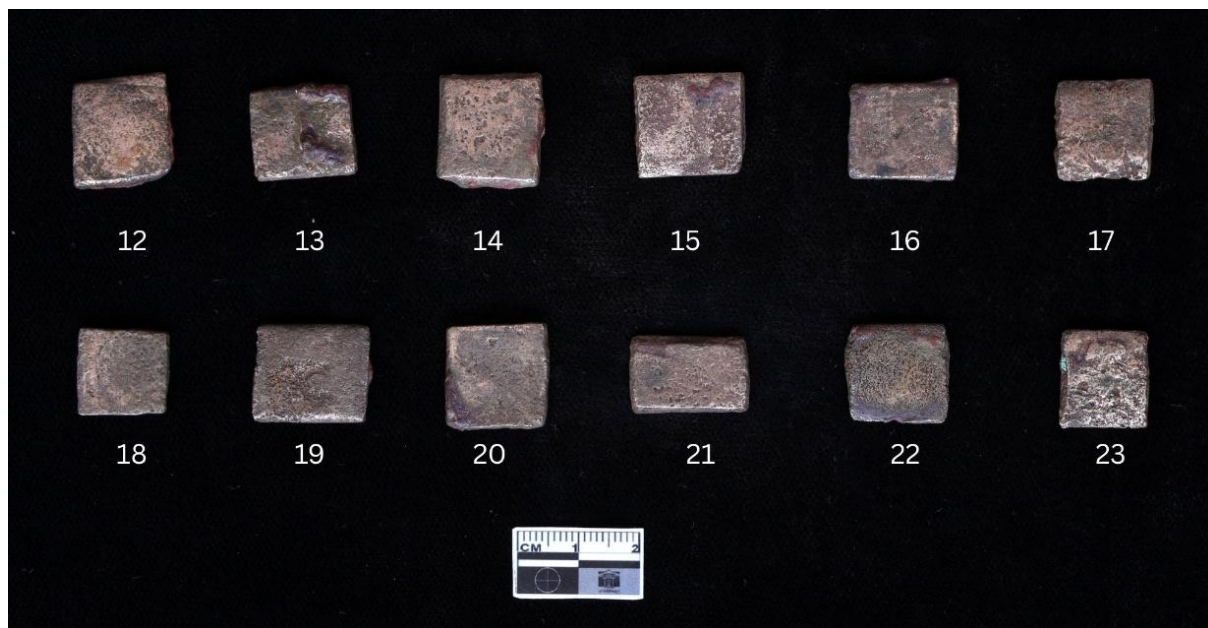
Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 3.55 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.4 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

Plate III



Obv.



Rev.

Uninscribed Copper Cast Coins (Pl. IV)

24. Obv.: Left facing elephant.

Rev.: A three-arched hill with a crescent at the top.

Wt.: 2.47 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.3 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XB8/Q4, Depth: 344cm,
Period: Pre-Mauryan

25. Obv.: Left facing elephant.

Rev.: A three-arched hill with a crescent at the top.

Wt.: 3.6 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 1.5 \times 0.4$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XB8/Q2, Depth: 270 cm,
Period: Pre-Mauryan

26. Obv.: A three-arched hill with a crescent at the top.

Rev.: Five-leaved tree in railing (*chaityavriksha*).

Wt.: 2.9 gm, Size: $1.4 \times 1.4 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: square, Locus: XB8/Q2, Depth: 300 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 60, Pl. I 29; Allan 1936: 93, Nos. 72-75; Gupta 1965: 90; Paramar 1972-73: 4, 23, Pl. I 4)

27. Obv.: Left facing lion with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: A three-arched hill with a crescent at the top. Along with two taurine symbols on both sides.

Wt.: 3.4 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.5 \times 0.4$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 60, Pl. I 27; Gupta 1965: 91)

Note: This coin was found in Hoard no. 1 along with the punch-marked copper coins.

28. Obv.: Left facing lion with *Indradhvaja* in front.

Rev.: A three-arched hill with a crescent at the top along with two taurine symbols on both the sides.

Wt.: 3.5 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.7 \times 0.5$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XB8/Q1, Depth: 320 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 60, Pl. I 27; Gupta 1965: 91)

Note: This coin was found in Hoard no. 1 along with the punch-marked copper coins.

29. Obv.: Defaced

Rev.: A three-arched hill with a crescent at the top along with two taurine symbols on both the sides.

Wt.: 5.01 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 1.7 \times 0.5$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZA5/Q1, Depth: 435 cm, Period: Mauryan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 60, Pl. I 27; Gupta 1965: 91)

Plate IV



Obv.



Rev.

Inscribed Copper Coins (Pl. V)

King Brahmamitra

30. Obv.: Standing Lakshmi, with the *Ujjayini* symbol on the left, '[Brah]mamitasa' legend in Brahmi script from 9 o'clock to 2 o'clock on the right side.

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 9.18 gm, Size: 2 × 1.9 × 0.7 cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZB6/Q2, Depth: 1165 cm, Period: Sunga, (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 88, Pl. VIII12; Smith 1906: 194; Allan 1936: 173; Puri 1940: 51-52, 67, Pl. XXVII11; Gupta 1965: 190, Hartel 1993: 312)

31. Obv.: There is an inscription in Brahmi script on the edge, but it is not readable.

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 4.4 gm, Size: $2.1 \times 2.1 \times 0.4$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZA7, Depth: 518 cm,

Period: Sunga

King Sujestha

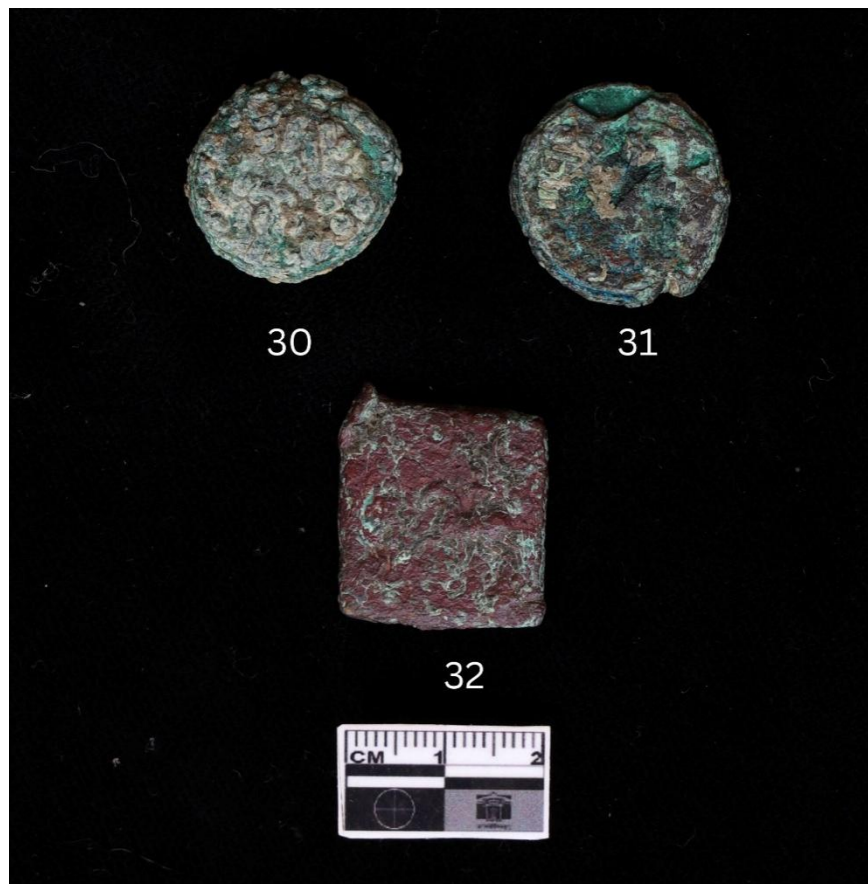
32. Obv.: In front of the horseman is a male figure, with a *chakra* shown in upper right end and the Brahmi legend '[Su]jethasa' inscribed above.

Rev.: Abhisheka Lakshmi is standing inside the circular circumference.

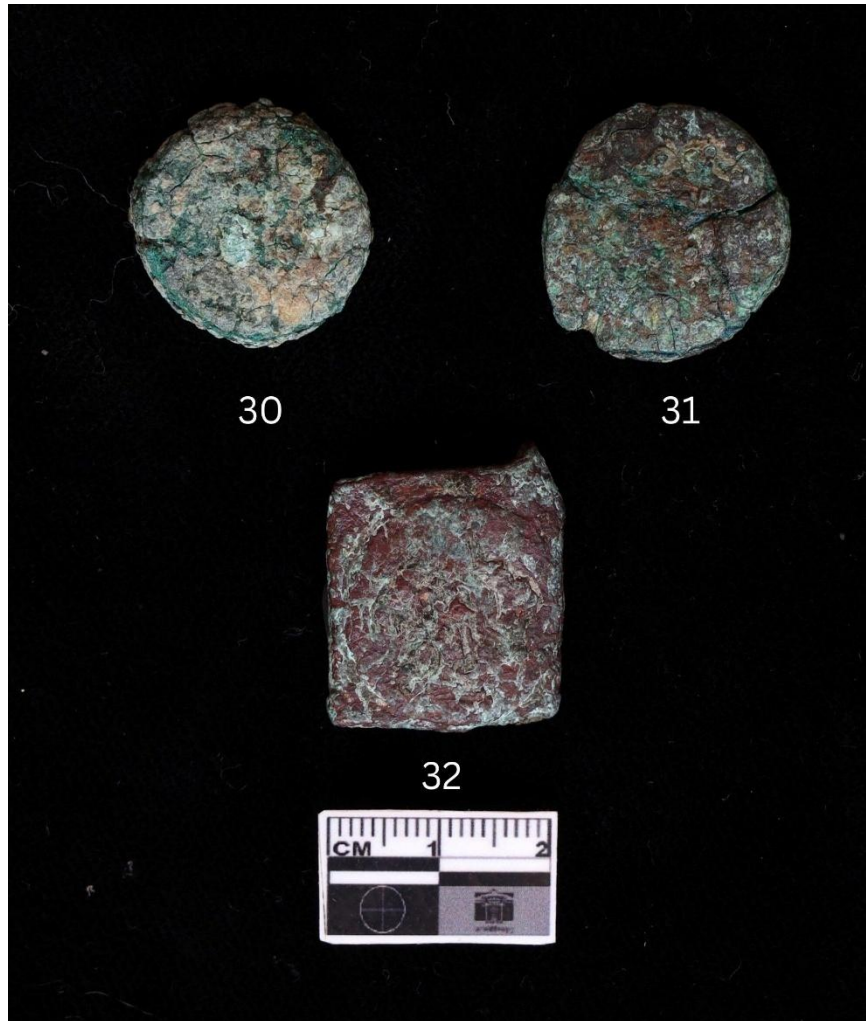
Wt.: 7.11 gm, Size: $2 \times 2.1 \times 0.4$ cm, Shape: square, Locus: ZA7, Depth: 408 cm,

Period: Sunga, (Ref.: Ghose 1954: 59, Pl. V 2; Gaur 1983: 451, Pl. CXXXV 11; *JNSI* 1968, Vol. XXX: 56-60; Gupta 1965: 199-200)

Plate V



Obv.



Rev.

King Ramadatta

32 (a). Obv.: The goddess is standing in the middle in *abhayamudra*. Below this is a river with four dots. To the right is a lotus-like symbol, and to the left, a tree. To the left of the goddess, from 8 o'clock to 1 o'clock, is inscribed '*Rajnaramadattasa*' in Brahmi script.

Rev.: Three dots above a wavy line down this side.

Wt.: 9.27 gm, Size: 2.3 × 2.1 × 0.3 cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5, Depth: 1040 cm, Period: Late Sunga



Obv.



Rev.

32 (b) Obv.: The goddess stands in *abhayamudra*, with a six-pointed flower to her left. Brahmi script is visible along the border, but it is illegible.

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 5.67 gm, **Size:** 1.6 × 1.6 × 0.4 cm, **Shape:** circular, **Locus:** ZB6/Q3, **Depth:** 1010 cm, **Period:** Late Sunga



Obv.



Rev.

Kshatrapa Copper Coins (Pl. VI)

Shodasa

33. Obv.: Standing Lakshmi, a wavy line from top to bottom on the right side and a tree symbol on the left.

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 1.77 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.6 \times 0.4$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZA7, Depth: 255 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 86-87, Pl. VIII 5)

34. Obv.: Standing Lakshmi, a wavy line from top to bottom on the right side and a tree symbol on the left.

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.30 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.7 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZB5/Q1, Depth: 985 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 86-87, Pl. VIII 5)

35. Obv.: Standing Lakshmi, a tree symbol on the left, legend in Brahmi script, but illegible.

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.31 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 1.7 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: NA, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 86-87, Pl. VIII 5)

36. Obv.: Standing Lakshmi, a wavy line from top to bottom on the right side.

Rev.: Symbols are not clearly visible.

Wt.: 2.43 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.6 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: NA, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 86-87, Pl. VIII 5)

37. Obv.: Standing Lakshmi, a wavy line from top to bottom on the right side and a tree symbol on the left.

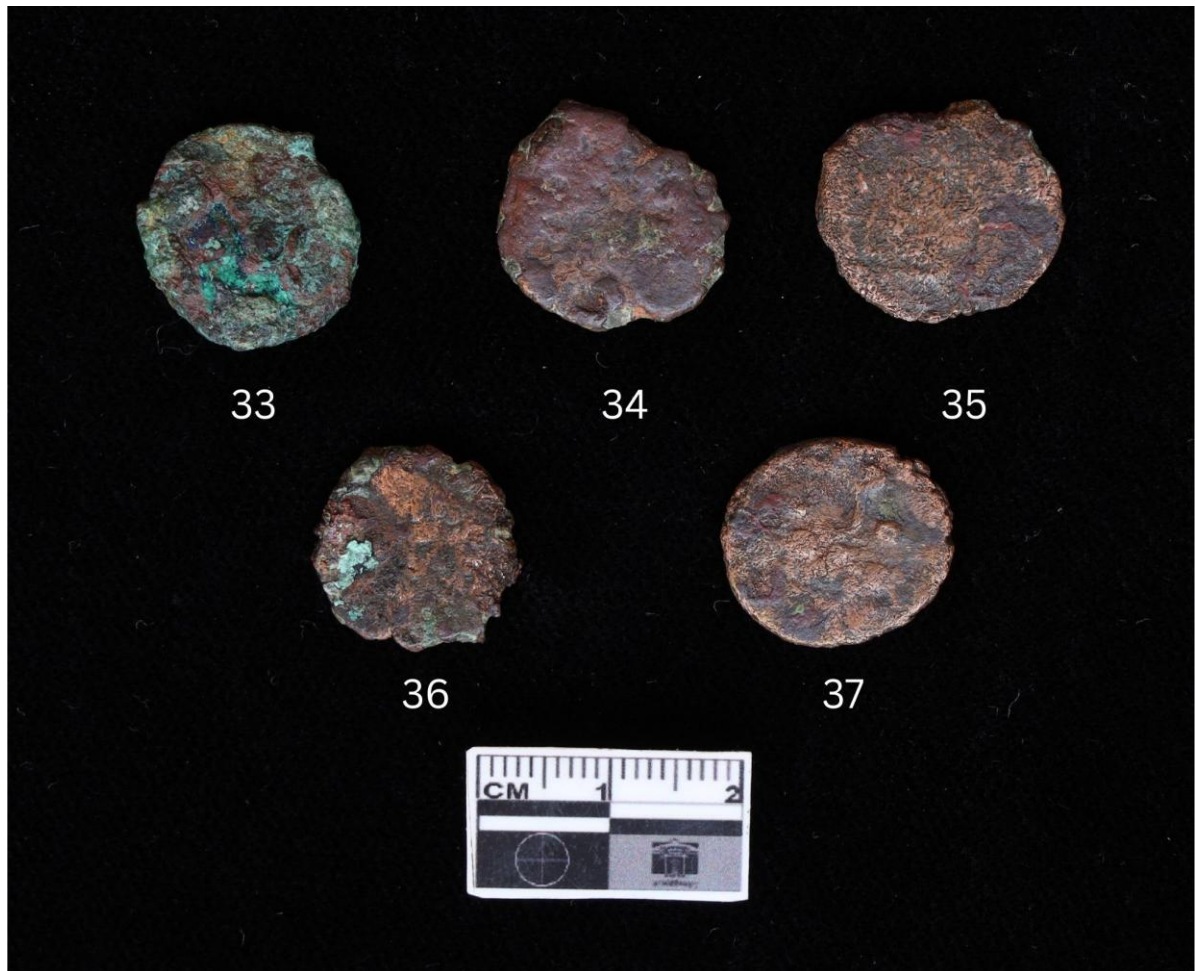
Rev.: Symbols are not clearly visible.

Wt.: 2.41 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 1.6 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 1000 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 86-87, Pl. VIII 5)

Plate VI



Oby.



Rev.

Hoard 2 (Pl. VII)

Shodasa

38. Obv.: Standing Lakshmi, a wavy line from top to bottom.

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.54 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.7 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 86-87, Pl. VIII 5)

39. Obv.: Standing Lakshmi (?)

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.40 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.7 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 86-87, Pl. VIII 5)

40. Obv.: *Svastika* symbol is marked below, on the left side there is a legend in Brahmi script [*Soda*]*sasa*.

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 3.07 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 1.7 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 86-87, Pl. VIII 5)

41. Obv.: *Svastika* symbol is marked below, on the left side there is a legend in Brahmi script [*Soda*]*sasa*.

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.87 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.5 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 86-87, Pl. VIII 5)

42. Obv.: Standing Lakshmi, a wave line from top to bottom on the right side.

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.52 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.6 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 86-87, Pl. VIII 5)

43. Obv.: Symbols are not clearly visible.

Rev.: Symbols are not clearly visible.

Wt.: 3.02 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.6 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan

44. Obv.: Standing Lakshmi.

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.68 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.7 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan (Ref.: Cunningham 1891: 86-87, Pl. VIII 5)

45. Obv.: Defaced

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.75 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.6 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan

46. Obv.: Defaced

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.40 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.7 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992,
Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan

47. Obv.: Defaced

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.57 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.5 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992
cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan

48. Obv.: Defaced

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 3.39 gm, Size: $1.8 \times 1.7 \times 0.5$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992
cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan

49. Obv.: Defaced

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.68 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.3 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992
cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan

50. Obv.: Defaced

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.56 gm, Size: $1.8 \times 1.7 \times 0.5$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992
cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan

51. Obv.: Defaced

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 1.58 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.6 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992
cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan

52. Obv.: Defaced

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.94 gm, Size: $1.4 \times 1.5 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan

53. Obv.: Defaced

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 1.99 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.5 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan

54. Obv.: Defaced

Rev.: Defaced

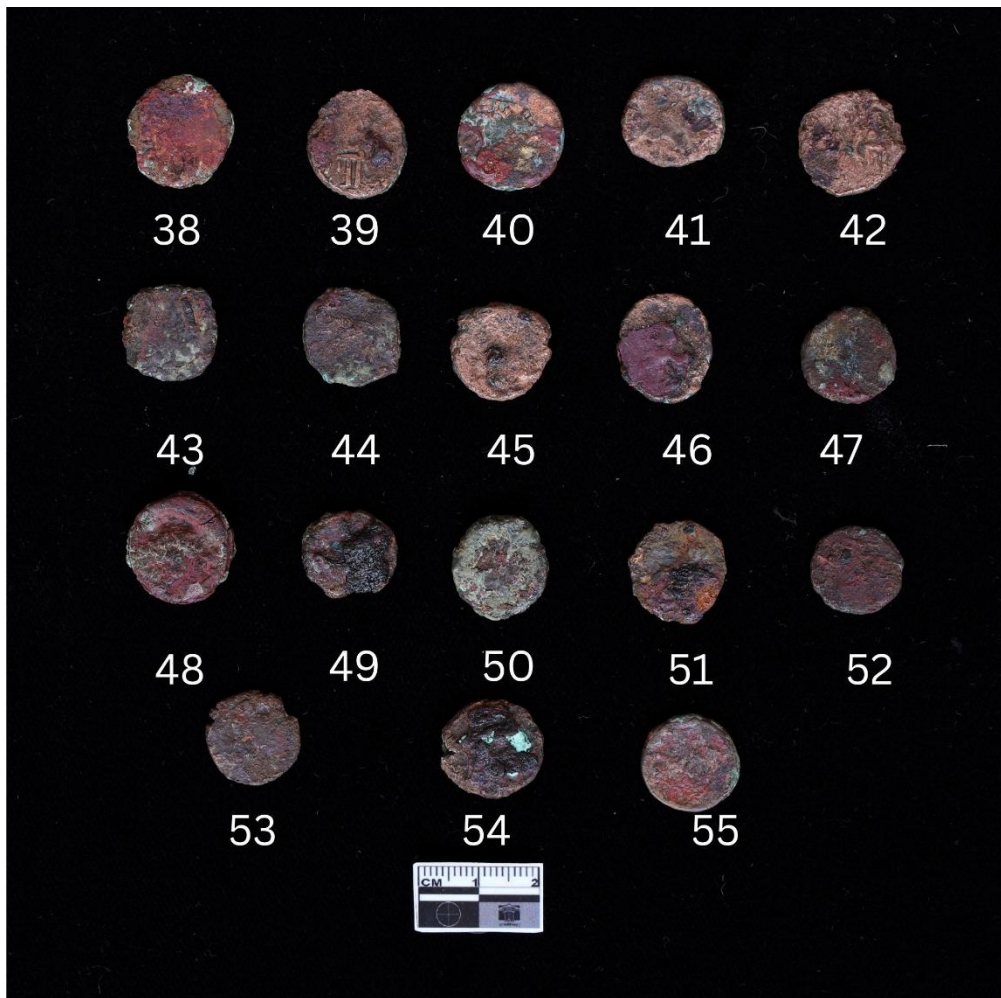
Wt.: 3.39 gm, Size: $1.8 \times 1.7 \times 0.5$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan

55. Obv.: Defaced

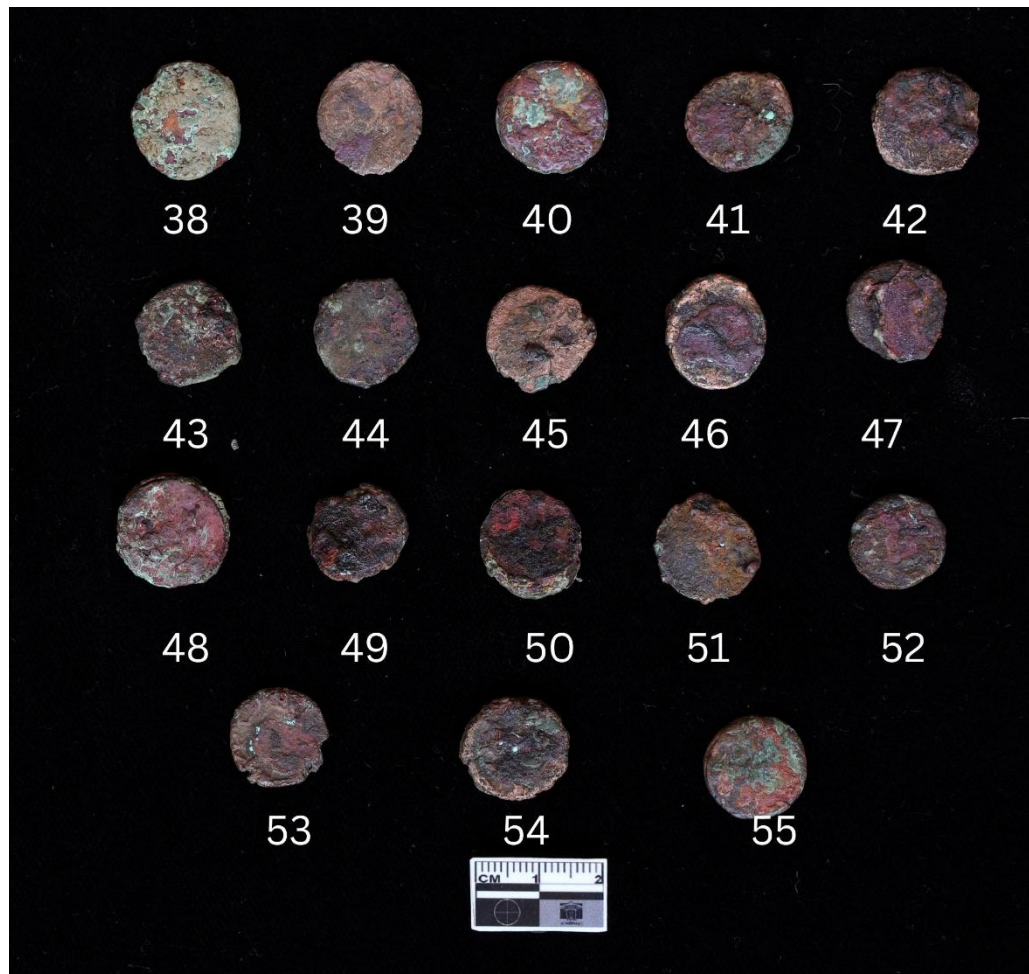
Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 2.15 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.5 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZC5/Q1, Depth: 992 cm, Period: Kshatrapa/Kushan

Plate VII



Obv.



Rev.

Kushan Copper Coins (Pl. VIII)

Kanishka I

56. Obv.: King standing, offering at altar.

Rev.: Unclear deity

Wt.: 14.41 gm, Size: $2.5 \times 2.3 \times 0.5$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZB6/Q3, Depth: 860 cm,
Period: Kushan

Vasudev I

57. Obv.: King standing, holds a trident in his left hand.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull (?)

Wt.: 7.55 gm, Size: $2.1 \times 2.2 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZB6/Q3, Depth: 1025 cm,
Period: Kushan

58. Obv.: some dots on the edge.

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 5.68 gm, Size: $2.1 \times 1.8 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: semicircular, Locus: ZA5/Q2, Depth: 685 cm,
Period: Kushan

59. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 4.30 gm, Size: $1.9 \times 1.8 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZB6, Depth: 720-750 cm,
Period: Kushan

60. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 5.82 gm, Size: $2 \times 1.9 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: ZD5/Q4, Depth: 860 cm, Period:
Kushan

61. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 7 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 2.1 \times 0.4$ cm, Shape: semicircular, Locus: ZD5/Q4, Depth: 860 cm,
Period: Kushan

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62. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

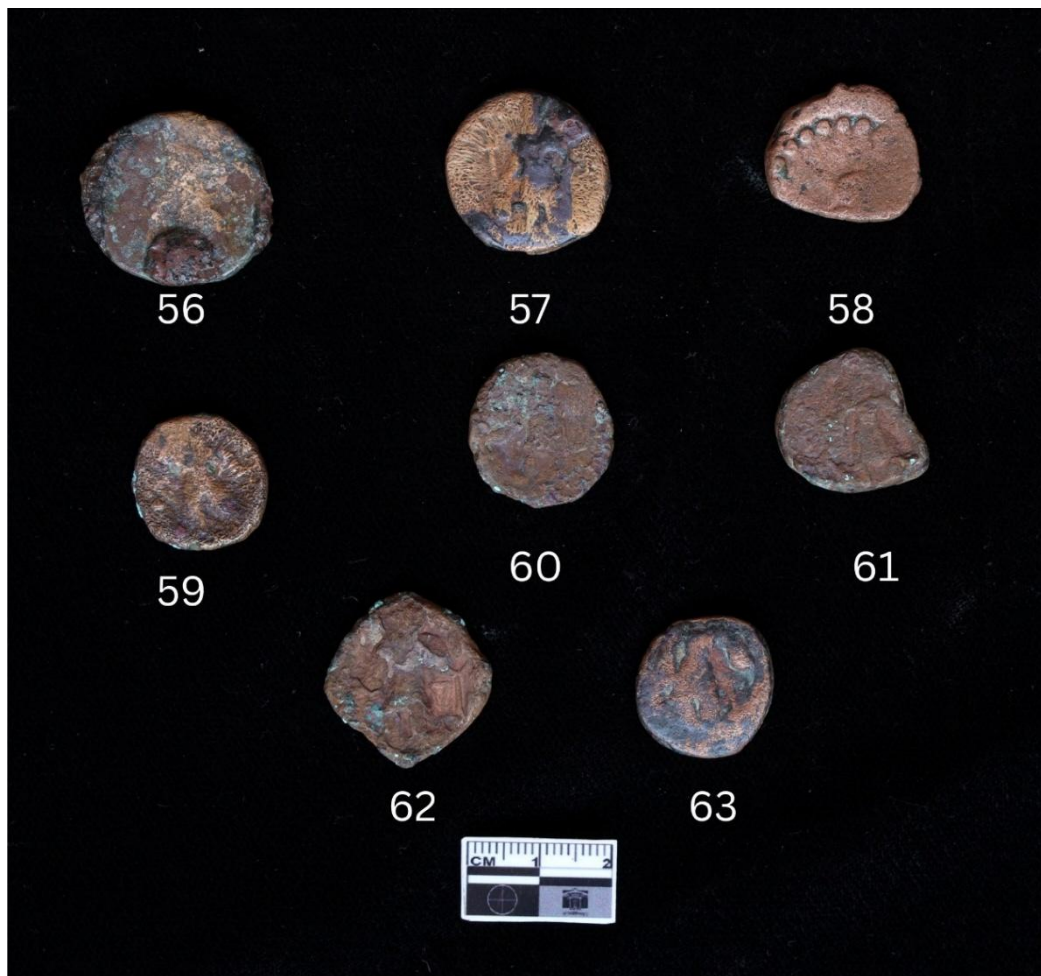
Wt.: 6.18 gm, **Size:** 2 × 2.1 × 0.3 cm, **Shape:** square, **Locus:** ZD5/Q4, **Depth:** 860 cm, **Period:** Kushan

63. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 5.86 gm, **Size:** 1.9 × 1.9 × 0.4 cm, **Shape:** circular, **Locus:** ZB5/Q4, **Depth:** 720, **Period:** Kushan

Plate VIII



Obv.



Rev

Hoard 3 (Pl. IX)

Vasudeva I

64. Obv.: King standing facing.

Rev.: Two-armed Siva standing facing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 5.23 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 2 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

65. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 5.57 gm, Size: $1.9 \times 1.9 \times 2.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

66. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 5.80 gm, Size: $1.9 \times 2.0 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

67. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 6.50 gm, Size: $1.9 \times 1.9 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

68. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 6.02 gm, Size: $2.0 \times 2.0 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

69. Obv.: King standing facing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 6.33 gm, Size: $1.9 \times 1.9 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

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70. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 5.85 gm, Size: $1.9 \times 2.0 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period:
Kushan

71. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 6.04 gm, Size: $1.9 \times 2.1 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period:
Kushan

72. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 5.82 gm, Size: $2.1 \times 1.9 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period:
Kushan

73. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 5.53 gm, Size: $2.0 \times 2.0 \times 0.2$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period:
Kushan

74. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 6.42 gm, Size: $1.9 \times 2.0 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period:
Kushan

75. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 6.24 gm, Size: $1.9 \times 1.9 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period:
Kushan

76. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 6.00 gm, **Size:** $1.9 \times 2.0 \times 0.3$ cm, **Shape:** circular, **Locus:** XE1, **Depth:** 283 cm, **Period:** Kushan

77. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 5.60 gm, **Size:** $1.9 \times 1.9 \times 0.3$ cm, **Shape:** circular, **Locus:** XE1, **Depth:** 283 cm, **Period:** Kushan

78. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 5.38 gm, **Size:** $1.9 \times 1.9 \times 0.4$ cm, **Shape:** circular, **Locus:** XE1, **Depth:** 283 cm, **Period:** Kushan

79. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 5.48 gm, **Size:** $1.9 \times 1.9 \times 0.2$ cm, **Shape:** circular, **Locus:** XE1, **Depth:** 283 cm, **Period:** Kushan

80. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 7.63 gm, **Size:** $2 \times 2.1 \times 0.4$ cm, **Shape:** circular, **Locus:** XE1, **Depth:** 283 cm, **Period:** Kushan

81. Obv.: Defaced.

Rev.: Siva standing, behind him bull.

Wt.: 5.13 gm, **Size:** $1.7 \times 1.8 \times 0.2$ cm, **Shape:** circular, **Locus:** XE1, **Depth:** 283 cm, **Period:** Kushan

Late Kushan

82.Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Seated Goddess Ardoksho (?)

Wt.: 6.35 gm, Size: $2.1 \times 1.8 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

83.Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Seated Goddess Ardoksho.

Wt.: 6.44 gm, Size: $2.0 \times 2.0 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

84.Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Seated Goddess Ardoksho on throne.

Wt.: 6.67 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 1.8 \times 0.4$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

85. Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Not clear.

Wt.: 6.40 gm, Size: $2 \times 1.9 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

86.Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Seated Goddess Ardoksho.

Wt.: 5.99 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 2 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

87.Obv.: King standing.

Rev.: Seated Goddess Ardoksho.

Wt.: 5.55 gm, Size: $1.9 \times 1.7 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

88.Obv.: Defaced

Rev.: Unclear deity

Wt.: 5.87 gm, Size: $1.9 \times 1.8 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

89.Obv.: Defaced

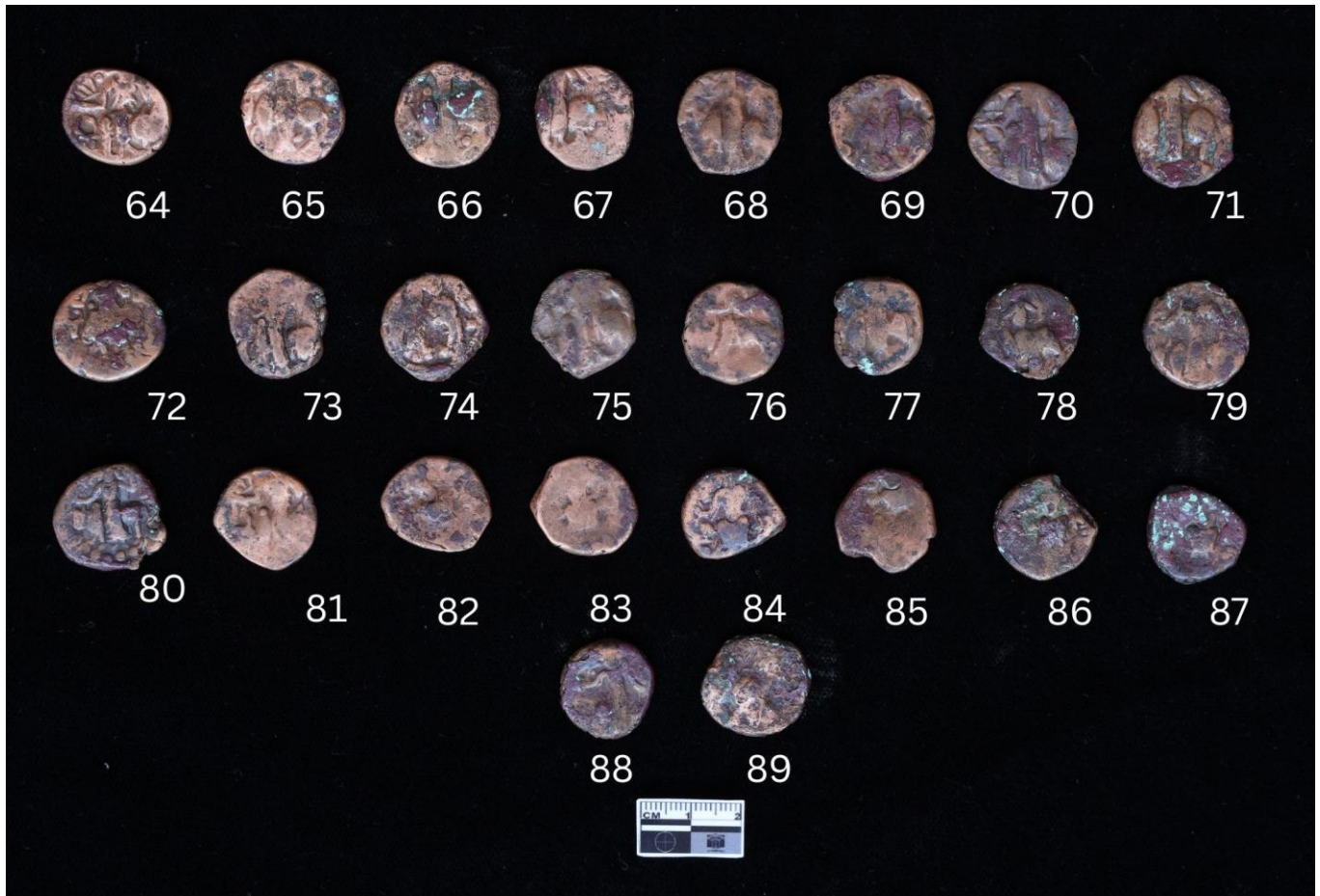
Rev.: Defaced

Wt.: 4.80 gm, Size: $2 \times 2.1 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

Plate IX



Obv.



Rev.

Cowries

Hoard 4 (Pl. X)

90. A total of 47 cowries were found in this hoard. Two copper coins were also found, with cowries stuck to them. Locus: XE1, Depth: 283 cm, Period: Kushan

Plate X



Dorsal side



Ventral side

Other Ancient Coins

Small denomination coins

The excavation yielded one very small silver coin from Trench XB9/Q2 and one copper coin from Trench XB8/Q3. Coin no. 91, made of silver, weighs 1.17 gm, measures $1.1 \times 1.1 \times 0.3$ cm, and is circular in shape. Coin no. 92, made of copper, weighs 2.28 gm and measures $1.1 \times 1.1 \times 0.4$ cm. These coins are half the weight and size of the silver punch-marked recovered here. These tiny coins are likely to be '*mashaka*', smaller proportions of the '*pana*'. Such small coins have also been found along with hoard of '*pana*' coins from Bhir mound in Taxila and Thathari in Madhya Pradesh. Besides these, coins of this type have also been occasionally found from places like Rawalpindi, Nasik, Maheshwar, Kaushambi, etc. (Gupta 1965: 78). These coins were of small denominations. The finds from Bahaj indicate that these coins were used for religious purposes in addition to transactions, as Coin no. 92 was found in a miniature pot. It may have been placed there for a ritualistic purpose.

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Other coins

Coin number 93 has the *nandipada* symbol on the obverse. This coin is likely a copper cast coin. Coin numbers 98, 99, and 100 are similar in size to copper punch-marked coins. Therefore, these coins should also be copper punch-marked coins. Coin number 101 shows some Brahmi script characters, but they are illegible due to the patina on the coin.

91. Obv. Defaced

Rev. Defaced

Wt.: 1.17 gm, Size: 1.1 × 1.1 × 0.3 cm, Shape: circular, Material: silver, Locus: XB9/Q2, Depth: 213 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan



Obv.



Rev.

92. Obv. Some symbols are there but they are not visible.

Rev. Defaced

Wt.: 2.28 gm, Size: 1.1 × 1.1 × 0.4 cm, Shape: circular, Material: copper, Locus: XB8/Q3, Depth: 201 cm, Period: Mauryan



Obv.



Rev.

93. Obv. *Nandipada* is visible on this side.

Rev. Defaced

Wt.: 3.60 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.5 \times 0.5$ cm, Shape: circular, Material: copper, Locus: XB8/Q4, Depth: 390 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

94. Obv. Defaced

Rev. Defaced

Wt.: 4.47 gm, Size: $1.4 \times 1.4 \times 0.5$ cm, Shape: circular, Material: copper, Locus: XB9/Q2, Depth: 294 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

95. Obv. Defaced

Rev. Defaced

Wt.: 3.75 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.5 \times 0.5$ cm, Shape: circular, Material: copper, Locus: XB9/Q2, Depth: 294 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

96. Obv. Defaced

Rev. Defaced

Wt.: 4.06 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 1.7 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: circular, Material: copper, Locus: XB8/Q3, Depth: 280 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

97. Obv. Left facing wolf /dog (?).

Rev. Blank

Wt.: 4.57 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.5 \times 0.5$ cm, Shape: circular, Material: copper, Locus: XB9/Q2, Depth: 210 cm, Period: Mauryan

98. Obv. Defaced

Rev. Defaced

Wt.: 2.99 gm, Size: $1.6 \times 1.3 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Material: copper, Locus: XB8/Q2, Depth: 213 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

99. Obv. Defaced

Rev. Defaced

Wt.: 3.80 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.6 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Material: copper, Locus: XF3, Depth: NA, Period: Pre-Mauryan

100. Obv. Defaced

Rev. Defaced

Wt.: 3.45 gm, Size: $1.8 \times 1.7 \times 0.4$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Material: copper, Locus: XB9/Q1, Depth: NA, Period: Pre-Mauryan

100(a). Left facing lion (?) with *Indradhvaja* in (?) front.

Rev.: Blank

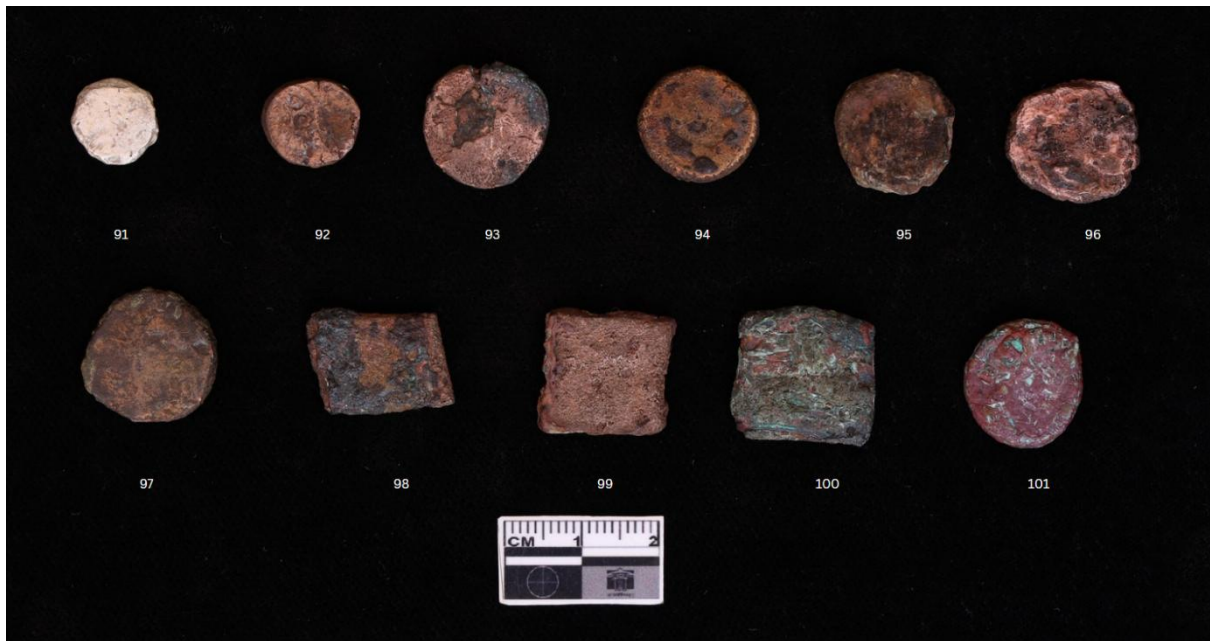
Wt.: 3.38 gm, Size: $1.7 \times 1.3 \times 0.3$ cm, Shape: rectangular, Locus: XB8, Depth: 315 cm, Period: Pre-Mauryan

101.Obv. Some Brahmi script letters are visible on this side but they are not readable.

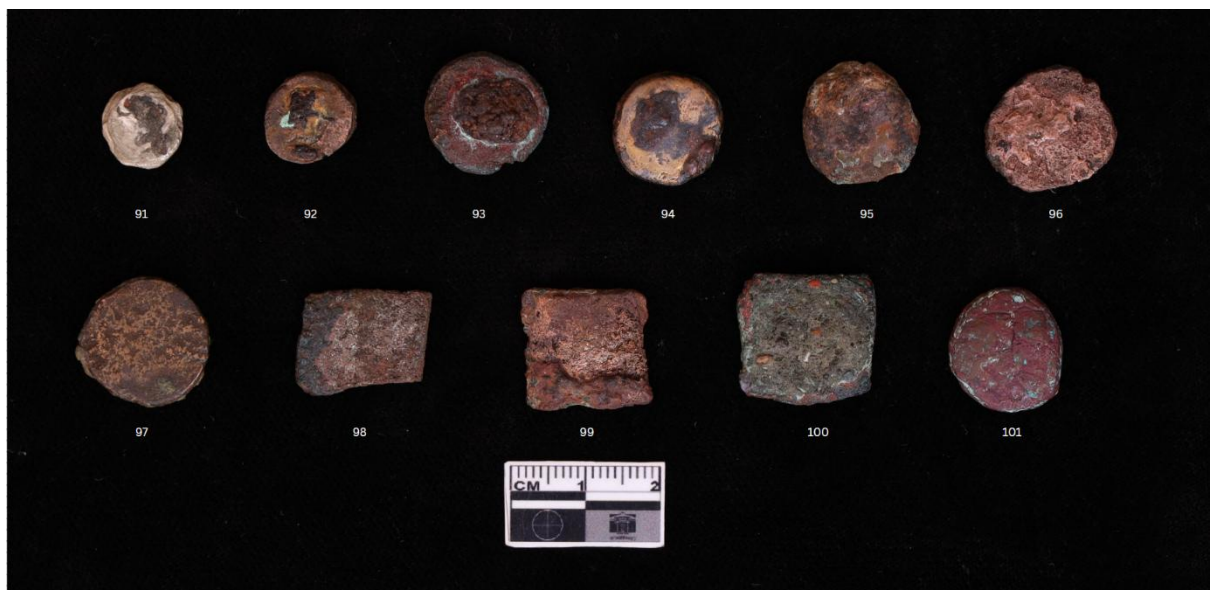
Rev. Defaced

Wt.: 3.19 gm, Size: $1.5 \times 1.6 \times 0.4$ cm, Shape: circular, Material: copper, Locus: ZC5/Q2, Depth: NA, Period: Kshatrapa/ Kushan

Plate XI



Oby.



Rev.

Conclusion

The study of coins recovered from the excavations at Bahaj has revealed numerous historical insights. They have played a significant role in establishing the stratigraphy of this site. Coins from the pre-Mauryan period to the late Kushan period have been recovered here, highlighting the site's historic significance and importance. The hoards recovered here reveal that the people of Bahaj kept their money in small pots to preserve them. Some coins bear traces of cloth stuck to them, indicating that they kept them tied in bundles. The silver punch-marked coins recovered here confirm the pre-Mauryan and Mauryan presence at Bahaj.

Copper punch-marked coins have also been found at Bahaj, bearing symbols such as a lion and a standing *Indradhvaja*, a symbol unique to Indian numismatics. Coins of this type have previously been found at Sonkh (Hartel 1993), and are now being found in significant numbers at Bahaj. Therefore, it is clear that these coins are indigenous to the Mathura region and were likely introduced into circulation by the local kings of the region. They were in circulation during the pre-Mauryan and Mauryan period, as these coins have been found alongside pre-Mauryan and Mauryan strata. One of these coins was accompanied by a worn silver punch-marked coin, also pre-Mauryan in date.

Copper cast coins, renowned for their minting techniques, have also been recovered from this site. Two circular coins are particularly interesting, found with the hoard of copper punch-marked coins. These bear symbols distinct from those found on other minted coins here. These include a lion and a standing *Indradhvaja* in front, and a three-arched hill with a crescent on top, along with two taurine symbols on both sides. These are a new type of coin, earlier only recovered from Punjab by Cunningham (1891). However, they bear symbols similar to those found on the previously mentioned punch-marked copper coins. Therefore, these should also be local coins of Mathura region.

The most striking outcome of the Bahaj numismatic study is the early chronology of the silver and copper punch-marked coins. The two types of coins were found in the same strata in the pre-Mauryan context. Uninscribed copper cast coins are also found with copper and silver punch-marked coins, though they seem a bit younger and lesser in number in the

early strata. The most significant examples come from Trench XB8 at a depth of 320 cm. Stratigraphically, the deposit belongs to *circa* 450-550 BCE. Since the coins found in this deposit are much defaced, it is plausible that they were in circulation for at least a hundred to two hundred years. Hence, the punch-marked coinage or the Indian coinage can be better termed as Janapada coinage and its antiquity can go back to seventh-eighth century BCE.

An important aspect related to finding of earliest coins at Bahaj is their use for ritual cause. As the coins are still considered sacred and are used in worship, particularly during the Lakshmi Puja on Dipavali day and as offering to the sacred rivers, the people of pre-Mauryan period also used coins for ritualistic activities. In Trench XB8, we found four coins wrapped in a cloth piece kept inside a miniature pot which was offered in a ritualistic pit (*yajnakunda*) filled with natural sand. One or two coins were found as direct offerings in such ritualistic pits without use of miniature pots. When the four coins wrapped in a cloth piece (Pl. Ib) were examined, three were found to be silver punch-marked coin (Coin No. 1, and coins in Pl. I a) and the fourth a copper punch-marked coin (Coin No. 10).

Among the inscribed copper coins, two important coins have been found here which were found from the strata of the Sunga period, one is of the local king Brahmamitra of Mathura and the second coin is very interesting. This coin belongs to the Sunga King Sujeshtha mentioned in the *Puranas*. Leaving aside the lead coin found from Atranjikhhera (Gaur 1983), this type of copper coin of Sujeshtha found from Bahaj is the first such coin found stratigraphically in excavation. Seen from the iconographical point of view also, the said coin is a specimen of excellent art. The depiction of Abhisheka Lakshmi is somewhat exquisite. Finding of this coin add a new dimension to the numismatic history of the Sunga period. The two coins of Ramadatta again confirm the Sunga presence at the site and the ruler might have ruled in around the beginning of the Common Era.

A good number of Kushan era coins have been found from Bahaj. This shows that the Kushan rulers had a considerable influence on Bahaj. Plenty of remains of Kushan period structures have also been exposed at Bahaj. Coins of King Kanishka I, King Vasudeva I and later Kushans have been found here. Among these, coins of Vasudeva I have been found in greater quantity. In a hoard found here, coins of Vasudeva I and subsequent Kushan rulers

have been found. This confirms the fact that Vasudeva I and the subsequent rulers also had authority here.

A hoard of cowries recovered from Bahaj reveals that during the Kushan period, people here were using cowries for transactions along with coins. Two coins were also found with a cowrie shell stuck to them. This is solid evidence of the use of these cowries as currency. Cowries are often ignored during excavations, but their discovery provides information about the currency system of that time. Since cowries were an important medium of exchange and trade, it continued to reflect in Indian psyche and traditions till few decades back.

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