

SEALS AND SEALINGS FROM BAHAJ EXCAVATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Excavations at Bahaj in the Deeg region of Rajasthan have revealed thirty-nine seals and sealings spanning from the Painted Grey Ware phase to the Kushan period. The earliest examples, from PGW levels, contain pre-Mauryan Brahmi characters, indicating that the Brahmi script was in use before the Mauryan empire and likely developed indigenously. A unique jasper seal with nine religious symbols demonstrates continuity with Harappan artistic traditions, while later examples record names, symbols, and deities linked to Sanatana dharma. One sealing bears both Brahmi and Kharoshthi inscriptions—the second such instance known from the subcontinent. The Bahaj corpus refines the palaeographic sequence of northern India and clarifies the cultural and religious milieu of the early historic Braj region up to the fourth century CE.

KEYWORDS: Excavations, Brahmi Script, Seals, Painted Grey Ware Culture.

INTRODUCTION

The site of Bahaj (27°47'14.14" N and 77°37'37.130" E, Pl. 1) 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 Vajranabha-ka-Khera.

EXCAVATIONS

The site was taken up for excavations for two seasons between January 2024 and July 2025 by the Jaipur Circle of ASI under the direction of the principal author. 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 in particular, 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 from the Sunga period and goes down to the OCP 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 Red Ware, Grey Ware, Painted Grey Ware, Black Slipped Ware, Northern Black Polished Ware, Black-&-Red Ware and Ochre Coloured Pottery (OCP) indicating various historic to proto-historic periods.

Seals, Sealings and other inscribed objects

A total of 48 seals and sealings (46 included here), mostly with inscription and some with only symbols or obliterated features have been found from the site. These are described below:

S. No.: 01

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-I, XB8/Q2

Depth: 398 cm

Period: Late PGW

Material: Clay

Script: Early Brahmi

Inscribed: ज(जि)नक



One of the most striking finds of the site is the presence of four sealings made of unbaked clay from the upper levels of the PGW period. Such sealings have never come to notice from anywhere in the subcontinent. The sealings are of two varieties. Two of them have similar impression on four sides and the remaining two have similar impressions on four sides. One of the impressions has two separate elephant-riding figures (in all possibility deities) and two standing figures who to some extent match with the representations of Samkarshana and Vasudeva on some early Mathura coins (Gupta 1989: 124-139). There are some other devices in the impression but these are not clearly identifiable. The other type of impression observed on two other sealings is very complex and has yet not been identified but in all probability seems to depict some religious subject.

The present sealing has four marks; The first mark is either a letter or a symbol. Similar symbol can also be seen on PMC coins (Hardaker and Gupta 2014: 185) and a sealing from Ahichchhatra (Kumar *et al.* 2021: 133). Other three markings appear similar to Brahmi letters ज/ जि (*ja/ja*), न (*na*), क (*ka*). Inscription can be read as ज(जि)नक. A comparative table of sealing's letters, Mauryan script, and Devanagari transliteration is given below –

Symbol and letters on sealing	PMC, Mauryan	देवनागरी
—, —	—	
Ε	Ε	ज/जा
⊥	⊥	न
+	+	क

Discovery of this sealing makes it clear that the people of PGW culture were familiar with writing and the emergence of the Brahmi script can be dated back to the time of the PGW culture. This finding further strengthens the possibility of Brahmi script being of Indian origin.

S. No.: 02

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-I, XB8/Q2

Depth: 398 cm

Period: Late PGW

Material: Clay

Script: Early Brahmi

Inscribed: नो/यो खा र



This sealing was also obtained from upper PGW level as was sealing at S. No. 1. Inscription on sealing could be read as 'नो/यो (no/yo)', 'खा (kha)', 'र (ra)'. The letters can be compared to the Brahmi script of the Mauryan period. A comparison of the Mauryan letters and the letters written on this sealing is given in the following table -

Letters on sealing	Mauryan	Devanagari
नो/यो	नो/यो	नो/यो
खा	खा	खा
र	र	र

These finding of these two sealings confirm that the Brahmi script had its beginning in the PGW (Painted Grey Ware) culture period. These sealings provide a missing link of writing.

S. No.: 03

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB6/Q3

Depth: 850 cm

Period: Kushan (Pre/Early Mauryan)

Material: Jasper

Script: Early Brahmi

Inscribed: मशना



A rare Early Mauryan seal made of jasper stone was unearthed from Trench ZB6 from the deposit of the Kushan period. The seal was found in very finely preserved conditions. Overall,

it comprises nine symbols or Brahmi letters with a sound of ‘*m*’ denoted by a dot as the tenth one. The seal has incised depictions of: a turtle (*kurma*), a fish (*matsya*), a lizard (*grihagodha*), a stag (*mriga*), a peacock (*mayura*), a *svastika*, a *nandipada* (or Brahmi ‘*ma*’) and Brahmi letters ‘*Sa Na*’. All the symbols have relevance in Sanatana dharma. *Kurma* is related to Bhagavana Vishnu’s second incarnation, *matsya* with Vishnu’s first incarnation, *grihagodha* or *godha* with Maa Parvati, *mriga* with Bhagavana Siva, *mayura* with Karttikeya, *svastika* and *nandipada* are well known sacred symbols and ‘*Sa Na*’ can actually have been ‘*Sa Ni*’, i.e. name of planetary deity Sani. It seems that the seal was an object of high reverence because of which it was kept carefully by its possessors for more than three centuries. At the back there seems to be a knob to hold it but it is too shortened and smoothened now for some unknown reasons. The most important aspect about this seal is that such seals and representations are not found in early historical period, if not for the presence of Brahmi letters, this seal seems to be in continuity of the Harappan artistic tradition. No other seal of this type has been found so far. Out of the nine beautiful symbols and alphabets engraved on it, some of the symbols are similar to those found on ancient punch-marked coins.

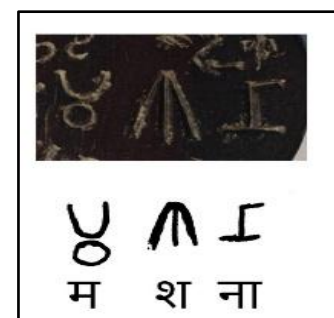
Symbols - Turtle same as found on coin from Kosala (Hardaker 2019), *svastika* same as found on coin from Kasi (Hardaker 2019: Coin’s series no. KO41), lizard, stag, fish same as found on coin from Ujjain (Pathak and Thakur 2006: 1-2, Pl. 1, Figs. 10-11) and peacock same as found on coin from Magadha (Gupta and Hardaker 1985: types 590, 591, 592B, 593) but it also matches with peacock on pottery of Cemetery H culture from Harappa (Fig. 1) and on jar (Fig. 2) (Vats 1940: Pl. LXIV, Fig. 8 and Pl. LXII, Fig. 8) from the same place.



Figure 1. Peacock on pottery of Cemetery H



Figure 2. Peacock on jar



Transliteration Plate 3

The fish symbol on this seal, apart from resemblance with the fish on Mauryan coins from Ujjain also shows similarity with fish design on an axe from a Copper hoard found from Rewari (Yule 1985: Pl. 64, Fig. 738). All these indicate the continuity of the design of the symbols over a long period of time.

The Brahmi letters written on the seal can be read as ‘मशना’ (*Masana*, with mirror) ‘नेशम’ (*Nesamam*, without mirror). Similarity of the letters can be compared with the letters of the inscription of Asoka found on the rock of Kalsi (Ojha 1918: 329, *Lipipatra* 2). Seal is datable to the early Mauryan period, though it has been unearthed from the deposit belonging to the early Kushan period. It indicates that the seal was a sacred object to its possessors and they kept it safely for about four centuries.

S. No.: 04

Type: Stone-ring

Locus: BHJ-I, XB8/Q2

Depth: 275 cm

Period: Pre-Mauryan

Material: Jasper

Script: Early Brahmi

Inscribed: भिलस



This is a stone-ring/disc, with carving of mother goddess and acanthus leaves on one side and inscription ‘भिलस (*bhilasa*)’ in Mauryan Brahmi script on the other side. Letter ‘la’ is written in an angular form instead of the usual form, similar to the 14th Edict at Girnar, 6th Edict at Kalsi and 5th Edict at Jaugada (Upasak 1960: 283). Inscribed mother goddess stone-rings have also been found from other city sites like Kosam and Patna (Agrawala 1993). The present stone-ring belongs to the early fourth century BCE, though the Brahmi characters might have been written over the reverse surface some decades later.

S. No.: 05

Type: Bell

Locus: BHJ-I, XB8/Q1

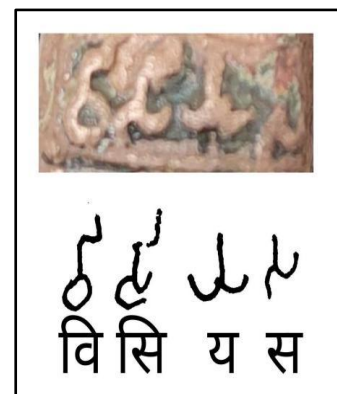
Depth: 221 cm

Period: Mauryan

Material: Copper

Script: Early Brahmi

Inscribed: विसियस



This is a copper bell with one-line Brahmi inscription. Its transliteration in Devanagari is as follows – ‘विसियस (*visiyasa*)’. It could be a person’s name or it might have actually meant

‘*vishayasya*’, i.e. of the *Vishaya*, a unit of administration during the Mauryan period. Period of the bell could be dated around 300-200 BCE.

S. No.: 06

Type: Bell

Locus: BHJ-II, XB9/Q2

Depth: 303 cm

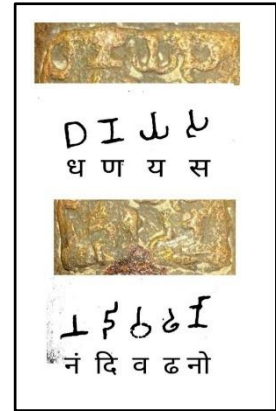
Period: Sunga

Material: Copper

Script: Sunga Brahmi

Inscribed: धणयस

नंदिवढनो



This is a brass or copper bell with two-line Brahmi inscription. Its transliteration in Devanagari is as follows –

First line reads as ‘धणयस (*Dhanayasa*)’ which in Sanskrit would be ‘धनयश (*Dhanayasa*)’ or ‘धनयस्य (*Dhanayasya*)’. Second line reads as – ‘नंदिवढनो (*Nandivadhano*)’, although the third character is unclear from the bottom and could be either ‘न (*na*)’ or ‘व (*va*)’. However, ‘न (*na*)’ is not considered here, because no meaningful word is being formed, and if we consider ‘व (*va*)’, it would be ‘नंदिवढनो (*nandivadhano*)’. In Sanskrit – ‘नंदिवर्धनः (*nandivardhanah*)’ as often Sanskrit words derived from its root word ‘वृधु वर्धने’ having ‘ध (*dha*)’ changed into ‘ढ (*dha*)’ in Prakrit and in Prakrit, the ‘रेफ (*ra*)’ of Sanskrit language is often dropped and ‘विसर्ग (:)’ becomes ‘ओ (*o*)’ (Dixit 1959).

Therefore, according to the above linguistic transformation rules, the Prakrit word ‘वढनो (*vadhano*)’ would correspond to the Sanskrit word ‘वर्धनः’ (*vardhanah*). Hence, ‘नंदिवढनो (*nandivadhano*)’ would be equivalent to the Sanskrit word ‘नंदिवर्धनः (*nandivardhanah*)’. Thus, choosing व (*va*) makes the inscription reading more accurate. Palaeographically as well as stratigraphically, the bell can be dated in around 200 BCE.

S. No.: 07

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB6/Q3

Depth: 910 cm

Period: Sunga

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A

It is a worn-out sealing, possibly Sunga in date.



S. No.: 08

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB6/Q4

Depth: 915 cm

Period: Sunga

Material: Terracotta

Script: Sunga Brahmi

Inscribed: का क (स)

से ल य स

न



There are no symbols on this sealing. Legends could be read as -

का क (स) {ka ka (sa)}

से ल य स (se la ya sa)

न (na)

The script of the inscription dates back to *circa* 200 BCE.

S. No.: 09

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB6/Q4

Depth: 905 cm

Period: Sunga

Material: Terracotta

Script: Sunga Brahmi

Inscribed: नागसुखस



This sealing bears the inscription ‘नागसुखस’ (*Nagasukhasa*) without any symbol. The script of this seal can be compared with the letters inscribed on the Bharhut Stupa, with the exception of the letter ‘ख *kha*’ (Luders 1998: Pl. XII), almost all the letters are similar. The letter ‘ख *kha*’ on the sealing shows an earlier form than the letters on the Kushan period Bodhisattva image (Luders 1961: 31) from Katra Keshavdev, Mathura. The date of the sealing can be fixed in the late Sunga period.

S. No.: 10

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB6/Q3

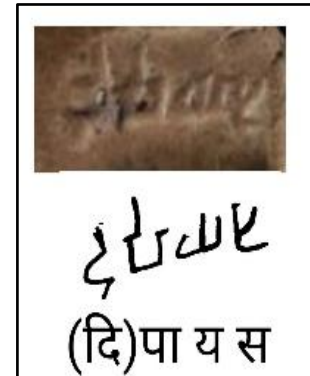
Depth: 330 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed: दिपायस



There are no symbols on this sealing, the inscription reads ‘दिपायस (*Dipayasa*)’. Similar name is also found on a sealing from Kaushambi (Kumar *et al.* 2022: 1497, Fig. 44). Sealing could be dated to around the beginning of the Common Era.

S. No.: 11

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB5/Q1

Depth: 845 cm

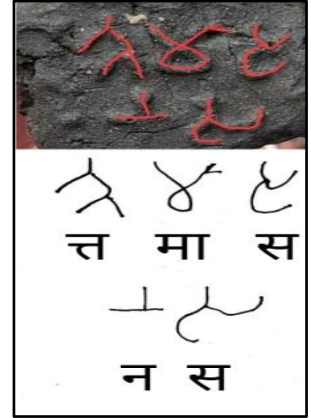
Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed: त मा स

न स



The initial letters of this sealing are damaged. The inscription is in Brahmi script of the Sunga period. Similarity in the structure of the letters 'ma' and 'sa' can be observed in the brick inscription of Damamitra¹ and Ashadhamitra². Inscription on sealing could be read as –

त मा स (tta maa sa)

न स (na sa)

S. No.: 12

Type: Seal

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB6/Q3

Depth: 360 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed: नहुदत्त

कोपवह(ष)

गा



The inscription on the seal has not been fully deciphered yet. However, it is in Brahmi of the time of the Kushans. A possible translation of its two lines is as follows -

नहुदत्त (Nahudatta)

कोपवह(ष) {Kopavaha(sha)}

गा³(ga)

¹ Srivastava, O.L. 2019. *Erach ke Abhilekha evam Sikke* (in Hindi). Vrindavan: Braj Sanskriti Shodh Sansthan: 21.

² *Ibid*, p. 25.

³ Prof. Arvind Kumar Singh from Jiwaji University Gwalior Suggested tentative reading –

नहुदरन (Nahudarana)

जो उवरष (Jo Uvarasha)

श्री मगा (Sri Maga)

Prof. Richard Solomon has suggested it to be a cryptic inscription.



Transliteration Plate 12 Line 1



Transliteration Plate 12 Line 2

S. No.: 13

Type: Seal

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB5/Q1

Depth: 795 cm

Period: Kushan (Sunga)

Material: Terracotta

Script: Sunga Brahmi

Inscribed: स, म, ग



Letters on sealing are much worn-out. Only three letters could be deciphered with help of a microscope and other devices. Letters स (*sa*), म (*ma*), ग (*ga*) are in early form of Brahmi. The sealing can be dated to *circa* 100 BCE.

S. No.: 14

Type: Seal

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB5/Q1

Depth: 825 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi & Kharoshthi

Inscribed: शिवांशस, संघाय



This is second sealing from the subcontinent that features inscriptions in Brahmi and Kharoshthi together. Prior to this discovery, no sealing with Kharoshthi script had been found in the entire Braj region. Although, few Kharoshthi inscriptions, including the famous Lion Capital had been found in Mathura, this is the first sealing discovered with Kharoshthi writings. This sealing bears the *Nandipadam* symbol and inscriptions in Brahmi and Kharoshthi scripts, resembling Sivarakshita's sealing from Taxila (Konow 1929: Pl. 20, Fig. 11).

The sealing has Kharoshthi inscriptions at top and bottom, with 3 – letters Brahmi inscription near the *Nandipadam* symbol. The sealing is in highly brittle state, making it extremely difficult to read. Despite this, using microscopic photography and estimation, one of Kharoshthi inscription has been tentatively read as 'शिवांशस (*Sivamsasa*)'. The second Kharoshthi inscription is too worn-out to read. The hypothetical reading of Brahmi inscription is 'संघाय (*Samghaya*)'. It can be dated to *circa* 100 BCE as is the sealing of Sivarakshita from Taxila.



Plate 14b

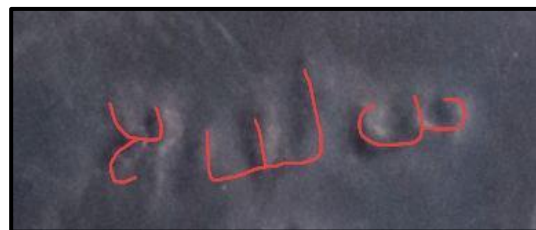


Plate 14c

S. No.: 15

Type: Seal

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB5/Q1

Depth: 1184 cm

Period: Sunga

Material: Terracotta

Script: Sunga Brahmi

Inscribed: N/A



There are no letters on this seal. Instead, it bears some symbols. For instance, a sacrificial post (*yupa*) resembling a railing, whose upper end appears to be connected with a *nandipada*. Such depictions of the *yupa* can be seen on some coins from Vidarbha and Ayodhya (Pieper 2021: 369, 144). The second symbol is similar to the one found on the coins of the Mitra dynasty of Panchala (Pieper 2021: 209). The third symbol is the Ujjaini sign, which can be seen on the coins of the Satavahana kings (Kulkarni 2004: 12-13) and those of Ujjain (Kulkarni 2012: 201).

S. No.: 16

Type: Miniature Pot

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB6/Q4

Depth: 1055 cm

Period: Sunga

Material: Terracotta

Script: Sunga Brahmi

Inscribed: शि व, ह त म्यो, ध र स, क र को न, को न षि



This is a handmade, unbaked clay miniature vessel. It was possibly used in rituals. Around its surface, there is an inscription written in Brahmi script which is as follows:



‘शि व’ (Si va)



‘ध र स’ (dha ra sa)

‘ह त म्यो’⁴ (ha ta myo)



‘क र को न’ (ka ra ko na)



को न षि?⁵ (ko na shi)

The script of this inscription is similar to that of the inscriptions of the Kshatrapas of Mathura. However, its date may fall between 100 BCE and 1st CE. In the first inscription, the use of the vowel sign ‘o’ over the letter ‘ma’ in the word ‘myo’ resembles the inscriptions from Mathura dated to the 4th–12th years, which were written without mentioning the names of kings (Verma 1989: 289 ff).

⁴ Could be read हतव्यो

⁵ This character is somewhat erased and not clearly visible

S. No.: 17

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZA5/Q4

Depth: 880 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed: गग्ग (गर्ग) योनस



This Sealing features two symbols. On the left is an inverted *nandipadam*⁶ and on the right is a *svastika*. Both symbols have also been found together on the sealing of 'Jethadattasa' from Rajghat (Thaplyal 2006: Pl. II.1 & Agarwala 1983: Pl. 1, Fig. 1A) but in that sealing *nandipadam* is facing upright. 'Jethadattasa' sealing has been dated around 1st century BCE. Our sealing also has a Brahmi inscription which could be read as- 'गग्ग (गर्ग) योनस'⁷ (*Gagga(rga)Yonasa*) as Sanskrit गर्गयोनिस् (Garggayonisya) or गर्गयोने: (Garggayoneh). The letters 'ग (ga)' and 'य (ya)' on this sealing resemble those found in the Rudradamana's Andhau Inscription (Banerji 1922: 24ff & Ins. B). The language of our inscription is Prakrit and the sealing could be dated around first century CE.

S. No.: 18

Type: Seal

Locus: BHJ-II, ZC6

Depth: 675 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed: रुद्रदत्तस



⁶ This symbol is sometimes referred to as 'tri-ratna' but in the rock art on the Padana hill in Maharashtra, this symbol is accompanied by a Brahmi inscription 'नंदिपदं' confirming that the name of symbol is *Nandipadam*. See for details: *The Journal of Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XV (1881 - 82): 320, Pl. III, H.

⁷ Prof. Harry Falk has suggested that inscription reads खत्तयोनिस (Khattayonisa) or गुत्तयानस (Guttayanasa).

No symbol is marked on this seal but ‘रुद्रदत्तस’ (*Rudradattas*) is written in Brahmi script, which in Sanskrit would read as ‘रुद्रदत्तस्य’ (*Rudradattasya*). The script on the seal has similarities with the coin of Rudradasa of Audumbara Republic (Pieper 2021: 154).

Letter ‘ra’, ‘da’ and ‘dra’ can be compared with those on our seal. The coin is dated to pre-Kushan period, so our seal could also be dated to pre-Kushan period. Legend’s name ‘*Rudradattasa*’ is also same as on S. No. 2 (ZD5/Q3) sealing but the present seal is two or three centuries earlier than the latter sealing. So, Rudradatta of this seal is different from Rudradatta of the above-mentioned sealing. Language of the seal is Sanskrit influenced Prakrit.

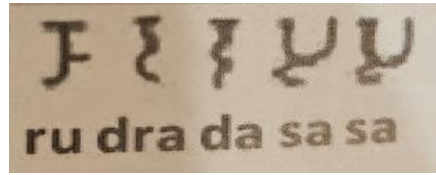


Figure 3. Legends on Rudradasa's coin, copyright @ Wilfred Pieper

S. No.: 19

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ - II, ZA5/Q1

Depth: 690 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed: श्री वटुवरस



There is a symbol like some *dhvaja* on the sealing with inscription ‘श्री वटुवरस’ (*Sri Vatuvarasa*) in Brahmi script of the Kushan period. Each letter is provided with a headline which is commonly seen from the third to seventh century CE (Kudo 2023: 147& tables)⁸. वटु (Vatu) is interpreted to mean a *brahmachari* (celibate) or a disciple (माणवक) of Vedic schools⁹. Vatu is

⁸ Also seen on Indra's sculpture in the Met Museum, for details one can see “*The Arts of South and Southeast Asia (The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin)*, Spring 1994, Vol. LI, No.4, Fig. 11a, p. 24. The difference between the ढ in the sealing and ढ on the sculpture can be seen. Often, there is a confusion between ढ and ढ.

⁹ वटु: - माणवक: - *The Unadisutras of Bhoja with the Vritti of Dandanatha Narayana*, अ. 2, पा. 1, सू. 7, University of Madras. Also, in a Sanskrit manuscript of *कृष्णियम्* preserved in the Oriental Research Institute and Manuscript Library of The Kerala University (MS No. 1103), the term *Vatuvara* has been used to refer to Lord Vishnu's Vamana Avatara, see *Journal of the Kerala University Oriental Research Institute and Manuscripts Library*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, Ed. by K. Raghavan Pillai, p. 23.), 1970.

also popularly identified with Bhagavana Vamana. Language of the sealing is Prakrit based on Sanskrit and belongs to the Kushan period.

S. No.: 20

Type: Sealing

Locus: ZA5/Q3

Depth: 470 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed: श्री/ (प्र) ग ख पुरे



The inscription seems to indicate the name of an ancient city which may either be read as 'Srigakhapura' or 'Pragakhapura'. The chances of the latter reading are more. Further research would throw light on identification of this place with some present-day settlement, possibly in the Braj region.

S. No.: 21

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZD5/Q3

Depth: 730 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed: श्री रुद्रदत्तस्य, श्री: मित्रदासस्य, सिङ्हिस्य / सिङ्हस्य,



On this sealing more than one legend's names are inscribed, along with depiction of a humped bull at more than one place. The instance of more than one symbol and names on the same sealing is also found in sealings obtained from other places such as Rajghat (Agrawala 1982: Pl. 3, Fig. 34B (II-IV), 32c, 32f), Basarh (Bloch 1904: 104ff) etc. The Legends and symbols inscribed on the above sealing read as:



Front face
'श्री रुद्रदत्तस्य'
(Sri Rudradattasya)



Upper face
Symbol of Zebu Bull which is
same on the left side face as well.



Below Face



Transliteration Plate 21d
Conch Symbol with legend
'श्री: मित्रदासस्य' (Srih Mitradasasya)



Left side profile
Illegible legend could be
'सिंहस्य'/'सिंहस्य' (Simhasya)



Transliteration

The Brahmi text on the sealing is similar to the sealing of 'Sri Vishnubhadrasya' preserved in the Meerut Museum, which is dated to second-third century CE (Kumar *et al.* 2021: 868, Fig. 853). Legend's names are based on Vedic deities Mitra and Rudra. Language is Sanskrit and sealing could be dated around 2nd to 3rd century CE.

S. No.: 22

Type: Seal

Locus: BHJ-II, ZD5/Q2

Depth: 770 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed: श्री बुद्धिन



This Seal has a symbol of conch on the top and the inscription ‘श्री बुद्धिन’ (*Sri Buddhina*) at bottom. The script is similar to that of the sealing of “*Shri Dinnasya*” preserved in the Mathura Museum (Kumar *et al.* 2022: 1542, Acc. No. 42.2941, Fig. 89). Here, the use of the vowel mark ‘u’ on the second letter “ba” should normally be towards the back, but in this seal, it is towards the front. Similar mistake or usage is also found on the sealing of Bhu-Vaishnavi from Gandhara (Rahman and Falk 2011: 165, S.N. 15.07.12). The seal can be dated to the late Kushan period.

S. No.: 23

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZD5/Q3

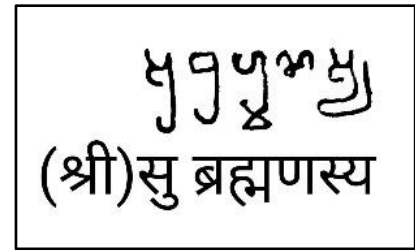
Depth: 780 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed: श्री सुब्रह्मण (ण्य)स्य



Sealing with Zebu bull symbol on top. Legend on sealing could be read ‘श्री सुब्रह्मण (ण्य) स्य’ [*Sri Subrahman(ya)sya*]. It can be dated to second-third century CE. The script is similar to the above-described sealing at No. 21.

S. No.: 24

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZD5/Q3

Depth: 750 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed: सुब्रह्मण(ण्य)स्य, श्री रुद्रदत्तस्य, श्री:मित्रदासस्य



Sealing found from the same spot from where the sealing ‘सुब्रह्मण(ण्य)स्य’ (*Subrahmanyasya*) was obtained. But the legends and symbols are similar to the seal obtained from Locus ZB5/Q3. It reads ‘श्री रुद्रदत्तस्य’ (*Sri Rudradattasya*) and ‘श्री:मित्रदासस्य’ (*Srih Mitradasasya*).

S. No.: 25

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZC6

Depth: 70 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A



There is only a cross like symbol on this sealing with no inscription and other marks.

S. No.: 26

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB5/Q1

Depth: 510 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed:



Sealing with some Brahmi characters of the Kushan period but difficult to read.

S. No.: 27

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZA5/Q4

Depth: 505 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed: श्री रथ



Sealing without symbol, inscription in Brahmi script is not clear and possibly reads “श्री रथ” (*Sri Ratha*). It dates back to the third century CE.

S. No.: 28

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZC5/Q1

Depth: 820-854 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A

It seems to be depicting a device of Siva standing against Nandi.



S. No.: 29

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ – II, ZB5/Q4

Depth: 630 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Kushan Brahmi

Inscribed: श्री, ण्रस्य दत्त स्या(स्ये)यं

It's damaged sealing with two-line inscription which tentatively reads –



श्री_ (sri-)

ण्रस्य दत्त स्या(स्ये)यं {*ntrasya datta sya (sye) yam*}

These letters are written in box-headed Brahmi as on other similar sealings, for example sealing of 'Jitam Bhagavata' from Sanghol and 'Sri visvesvaradasasya' from Kausambi. The sealing may be related to an administrative person or official (Daivakarni 2010: Pl. 25 and Fig. 323). It can be dated to the Kushan Period.

S. No.: 30

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB6/Q2

Depth: 142 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A

Worn-out sealing with some letters visible.



S. No.: 31

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZA5/Q2

Depth: 520 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A

It's a much worn-out sealing.



S. No.: 32

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB5/Q1

Depth: 795 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A



S. No.: 33

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB6/Q3

Depth: 910 cm

Period: Sunga

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A

A stamp with few horizontal incisions.



S. No.: 34

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZC6

Depth: 50 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A

A worn-out sealing.



S. No.: 35

Type: Stamp

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB6/Q2

Depth: 142 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A

A stamp with obliterated details.



S. No.: 36

Type: Stamp

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB5/Q1

Depth: 860 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A

A stamp with a symbol of fish shown inside a circle.



S. No.: 37

Type: Stamp

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB6/Q4

Depth: 310 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A

A stamp with a symbol, possibly a Nandi.



S. No.: 38

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZC5/Q3

Depth: 800 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A

A worn-out sealing belonging to the early century of the Common Era.



S. No.: 39

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZA5/Q2

Depth: 520 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A



A worn-out sealing belonging to the Kushan period.

S. No.: 40

Type: Seal

Locus: BHJ-I, XB8/Q3

Depth: 136 cm

Period: Sunga

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A



This seal seems to have a *svastika* symbol which has been made wrong by mismarking of a stroke.

S. No.: 41

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-I, ZB6/Q2

Depth: 985 cm

Period: Sunga/Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: Brahmi

Inscribed: नवजदस



The sealing is partially worn-out, though still legible. The reading is –

नवजदस (*Navajadasa*)

In Sanskrit it would have been '*Navajadasya*' which should be a proper noun either indicating the name of a place or a person. Final ढ (*da*) style is comparable to second-first century BCE Brahmi script. Based on paleography, the sealing can be assigned to the period between 200 – 100 BCE. A spear like symbol is visible above the letters.

S. No.: 42

Type: Seal

Locus: BHJ-I, XB8/Q2

Depth: 161 cm

Period: Sunga

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A

Seal has *Ujjaini* symbol.



S. No.: 43

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-I, ZB9/Q3

Depth: 298 cm

Period: Kushan (Pre-Kushan)

Material: Terracotta

Script: Brahmi

Inscribed: N/A



This is a broken sealing bearing unclear Brahmi characters, which dates to the pre-Kushan period.

S. No.: 44

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-I, ZA7/Q2

Depth: 223 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: N/A

The device seems to be a broken *Nandipada* symbol.



S. No.: 45

Type: *Suchi*

Locus: BHJ-II, ZC5/Q3

Depth: 790 cm

Period: Kushan (Sunga)

Material: Terracotta

Script: Brahmi

Inscribed: भे

This is a *suchi* (bar) made of spotted red sandstone which would have formed part of a religious establishment as a railing. A single letter 'भे *bhe*' in Brahmi script is inscribed on it. It possibly belongs to the Sunga period.



S. No.: 45

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-I, ZA7/Q2

Depth: 285 cm

Period: Kushan

Material: Terracotta

Script: N/A

Inscribed: शाडा [स ?] ओपलशम

This is a stone lid featuring an inscription in Brahmi script dating to the Kshatrapa period reading:

शाडा [स ?] ओपलशम / *sada (sa) o pa la sa ma*



S. No.: 46

Type: Sealing

Locus: BHJ-II, ZB5

Depth: 1190 cm

Period: Early Sunga

Material: Terracotta

Script: Brahmi

Inscribed: वदानकस



This sealing seems to mention a proper noun, either the name of a town or a person. In Sanskrit it would read '*vadanakasya*'.

Conclusions:

The excavations at Bahaj have provided a significant number of seals and sealings which is quite high considering the limited area and timing of excavation. The earliest sealings from the late levels of PGW period with three pre-Mauryan Brahmi letters on each is one of the most important findings as far as the palaeographical studies are concerned. These confirm the presence of script in north India before the Asokan edicts were inscribed on non-perishable materials. The origins of Brahmi script must go in hoary past and the development of Asokan Brahmi must have been a gradual one. Another very significant finding is of the Early or pre-Mauryan jasper seal with nine symbols or letters. This is a unique find of this type. Finding of a seal with inscription in Brahmi and Kharoshthi scripts both is again a very interesting occurrence, in fact the second in the history of sub-continent so far known. Besides, the finding of so many seals and sealings is useful in confirming the chronology of those archaeological layers and it is also useful in palaeographical studies. Most of the names found mentioned on these seals and sealings are related to Sanatana dharma like Rudra, Vatuka, Garga, Nandivardhana etc. and similar is the case with religious symbols which are again related to Sanatana dharma like *Nandipada*, Nandi, Siva standing against Nandi, *dhvaj* etc. The seals and sealings found till date from the site do not date beyond the fourth century CE.

Acknowledgement:

The author is grateful to the Government of Bharat through the then Secretary, Culture Shri Govind Mohan and present Secretary, Culture Shri Vivek Agrawala and DG, ASI Shri Yadubir Singh Rawat for granting him permission to excavate Bahaj and his colleagues and staff of Jaipur Circle. The students who played important role during excavations are all to be thanked

for their hard work at the site. Shri Manoj Meena, a research student also took keen interest in the reading of seals and sealings and suggested certain readings and corrections. Ms. Vishakha Gupta, a research student has also helped in the final setting of this paper.

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