

Coins reported from Ākra

JOE CRIBB

Introduction

In 1998 I was asked by my colleague Robert Knox to examine coins reported from the site of Ākra in the Bannu District, Pakistan. Since 1995 the site has been the subject of investigation by the Bannu Archaeological Project (an international collaborative project between the Pakistan Heritage Society, University College London, Sydney University and the British Museum). The preliminary excavations during 1995-98 have already been reported (Khan, *et alii* 2000).

The purpose of this article is to assemble the numismatic evidence for the chronological and political context of the site available before the excavations, so that the excavated finds can be understood within a pre-existing framework.

The earliest coin from the site (no. 1) is an issue of the period before Alexander the Great and points to connections between the Bannu region and the Achaemenid provincial centres in northern Pakistan and Afghanistan, where coins of this type were made. The second oldest coin from the site (no. 2) has not been examined directly, but appears from the published description to be an issue of the Mauryan Empire, made during the period of the Mauryan rule in the region, i.e. c. 300-180 BC. Robert Knox reported to me a rumour from the site that a hoard of the Mauryan period silver coins had recently been found in the Bannu area, but its contents have been dispersed, either to be melted for jewellery or into the hands of local coin collectors. It is believed that a small quantity of these coins may still survive in private hands.

The Greek dynasties, who put an end to the Mauryan rule during the second century BC, are well represented among the reported coins (nos. 3-13). The Greek kingdoms, south of the Hindu Kush ranges were overthrown in the first century BC by rulers, now identified as the Indo-Scythians. The number of Indo-Scythian coins reported to have been found at Ākra is artificially increased by what appears to be a small parcel from a hoard (nos. 16-24, 26-28). Even if this distortion is taken into account, the number of Indo-Scythian coins (nos. 14-41) does suggest that there is a higher level of coin use at the site during the Indo-Scythian period, c. 80 BC-AD 50. This contrasts the Indo-Scythian period at the site with the following Indo-Parthian period, c. AD 20-80, which only yields one coin (no. 42).

The largest series of coins (nos. 43-89) from Ākra is that issued during the Kuṣāṇa period, c. AD 10-360. Like the Indo-Scythian coins, this series is boosted by the inclusion of a hoard group (nos. 55-86). Coins issued by most of the Kuṣāṇa rulers are present among the Ākra coins. The Kuṣāṇa hoard group also contained coins (nos. 90-99) issued by their contemporaries, the Kuṣāṇo-Sāsānian rulers in Afghanistan and northern Pakistan, c. AD 230-370. As Kuṣāṇo-Sāsānian coins are often hoarded together with late Kuṣāṇa coins it is difficult to determine from such a hoard whether the area within which the coins are circulating is Kuṣāṇa or Kuṣāṇo-Sāsānian territory.

After the Kuṣāṇa period coinage in the region is less well documented and only eleven later coins have been reported. Three are issues of the Hūṇa rulers who overthrew Kuṣāṇa and Kuṣāṇo-Sāsānian rule in the region (nos. 100-101). There is a gap of about 300 years before the next reported coins, issues of the Turkish dynasties, both before and after their conversion to Islam (nos. 103-108). Two nineteenth century coins have also been reported from the site (nos. 109-110).

The coins therefore show coins in use at the site from the Achaemenid period (fourth-third century BC) down to the nineteenth century. The random nature of coin survival and coin collecting make the small sample presented here no more than an indication of local coin use. In the Indo-Scythian period (late first century BC to early first century AD), however, the unusual mixture of

coins suggests a local production centre. The locally found hoards also show a clearer window on coin circulation at particular periods and indicate, for example that during the late Kuṣāṇa period Ākra was part of a larger currency area reaching northwards and including Gandhāran, Swāt and the Taxila region.

Until the full range of historical periods is excavated at the site these coins remain the clearest testimony of the range of periods during which this important city was a centre of habitation. The existence of a single coin at Ākra does not, of course, prove that the ruler it identifies was in actual authority over the region or the city. Indo-Scythian and Kuṣāṇa coins found in relatively large numbers do, however, provide firmer evidence of what is likely to have been the suzerainty of those dynasty in the Bannu region. Hopefully stratified groups of coins of various periods from Ākra will provide more reliable information about the probable historical associations and sequence of rulers of the site and in the Bannu region and provide an understanding of its broader chronological relationships with the broader world. The presence of the various dynasties of the north-west and north Subcontinent of the late centuries BC and early centuries AD in the coins so far collected from Ākra is evidence at least for their contact with the Bannu region.

The chronology of ancient Pakistan, particularly during the Kuṣāṇa period, is a matter of great debate among scholars arguing, for example, to place the first year of the Kuṣāṇa king Kaniṣka I at various dates over a period of two hundred years. The dating used here for the coins reported from Ākra is based on the chronology proposed in Cribb (1999), emended to take account of the Harry Falk's redating of Kaniṣka I's first year to AD 127 (Falk 2001).

Coins reported to have come from Ākra

This account of the numismatic evidence relating to Ākra is compiled from a variety of sources. Some coins in British public collections have been documented as acquired at the site. From these accurate details have been gathered by direct examination of the coins, and they are all illustrated in this article. Written reports of coin finds augment this evidence, but some caution has to be applied to the identification of the coins reported in this way, as the actual examples are not available for verification of their identity. The changing nature of some of the attributions of coins from this region, such as the identification of late Kuṣāṇa copper coins as Kidarite issues, renders such unverified reports as questionable.

Coins in British public collections

Ashmolean Museum: package of 67 coins (and one piece of wire thought to have been a coin) labelled 'Coins from Ākra Bannu sent by Dept. Commissioner of Bannu through Abdul Ghafur, May 20, 1928'. This package was brought to our attention by Dr David MacDowall.

British Museum: Collyer Gift of 18 coins from Major H.O. Collyer, November 1921, according to register: 'Coins found associated with potsherds on same site ['unstratified mound at Ākra, 8 m. south of Bannu, Punjab, India'].'

British Museum: Taylor coins, four coins "sent home by Major Reynell Taylor, procured from the ruins of Ākra, in Bunnoo...presented by Major-General, Lieutenant-Governor of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, to the British Museum". Coins described by Edwardes 1851.

Written reports

Edwardes: five more coins from Ākra, sent to Major-General Taylor by his son. One gold coin (Edwardes a) was illegible and not described and therefore omitted from list.

Khan 1986: a summary list of reported finds from the site with no details or quantities. References have been included in list, but without indications of types or numbers of examples. The source of information is unclear and some of his coins could be duplications of information from other sources.

Bannu Gazetteer: a similar summary list, published by the Punjab Government in 1884.

Khan 1867: *Hayat-e-Afghani*, a local history refers to copper coins with Greek letters and symbols (Indo-Greeks to Kuṣāṇa), some with horse and soldier (Indo-Scythian), some with king in *dhoti* and bull (late Kuṣāṇa).

No.	Description	Source	References	Metal, weight, size
PUNCH MARKED SILVER				
1	Local bent-bar type, quarter denomination, single punch, circular geometric design, 4th century BC.	Ashmo. no. 1	Allan 1936, Pl. I, 4	Ar, 2.40 g, 15 x 12 mm
CAST COPPER				
2	Square coin, no details, 3rd-2nd century BC	Khan 1986		Ae
BACTRIAN GREEKS AND INDO-GREEKS				
3	Demetrius I, silver obol (Attic standard), head with elephant-scalp cap right / Heracles standing facing, c. 200-190 BC	BM, Taylor 1	Edwardes 1851, p. 605, no. 3 Gardner 1886, Demetrius no. 9 Bopearachchi 1991, Series 3B	Ar, 0.58 g, 13 mm
4	Apollodotus I, square drachm (Indo-Greek standard), c. 200-190 BC	Edwardes 1851, p. 607, coin e	Bopearachchi 1991, Series 4	Ar
5	Antimachus II, silver drachm (Indo-Greek standard), winged Victory left/horseman right c. 200-190 BC	Edwardes 1851, p. 606, coin b (acquired from an Afghan soldier who wore it as a charm)	Bopearachchi 1991, Series 1	Ar
6	Eucratides I, no details c. 170-45 BC	<i>Bannu Gazette</i> 1884		Ar or Ae
7	Menander I, Athena type, with monogram BN 182, insufficient data, denomination not reported c. 155-130 BC	Edwardes 1851, p. 606, coin d		Ar or Ae
8	Menander I, square bronze, no details, c. 155-130 BC	Khan 1986		Ae
9	Strato I, silver drachm (Indo-Greek standard), head right/Athena left c. 125-110 BC	BM, Taylor 2	Edwardes 1851, p. 604, no. 1 Gardner 1886, Strato no. 3 Bopearachchi 1991, Series 27A Khan 1986	Ar, 2.34 g, 17.5 mm

No.	Description	Source	References	Metal, weight, size
10	Philoxenus, no details c. 100 BC	<i>Bannu Gazette</i> 1884		Ar or Ae
11	Apollodotus II, round bronze, Apollo standing right, holding arrow/ tripod, c. 80-65 BC	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921- 11-14-18 (CM 1979-2-15-15)	Bopearachchi 1991, Series 6C	Ae, 15.26 g. 27 mm
12	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 2	Bopearachchi 1991, Series 6 (variety illegible)	Ae, 16.01 g, 30 mm, (part of edge cut off)
13	Ditto	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921- 11-14-25 (CM 1979-2-15-15)	Bopearachchi 1991, Series 6 (variety illegible)	Ae, 16.01 g, 27 mm
INDO-SCYTHIANS				
14	Maues, round bronze, elephant head/ caduceus, c. 80 BC	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921- 11-14-19 (CM 1979-2-15-16)	Gardner 1886, Maues no. 1; Mitchiner 1975-6,	Ae, 8.82 g, 28 mm
15	Maues, no details	Khan, 1986		Ar or Ae
16	Azilises, silver drachm, horseman holding spear right / goddess with lamp and palm walking left, c. 30 BC	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921- 11-14-22a (CM 1979-2-15-11)	cf. Gardner 1886, Azilises no. 11; Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 744a	Ar, 2.09 g, 16 mm
17	Azes II, silver drachm, horseman with whip right/Athena standing right c. 20 Bc-Ad 20	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921- 11-14-20a (CM 1979-2-15-3)	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 106;	Ar, 2.15 g, 16 mm (with trace of suspension mount)
18	Ditto	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921- 11-14-20b (CM 1979-2-15-4)	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 106 (but different obverse control mark); Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 847d	Ar, 2.43 g, 17 mm (double struck)
19	Ditto	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921- 11-14-20c (CM 1979-2-15-5)	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 108 (but different obverse control mark); Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 847d	Ar, 2.11 g, 15.5 mm (double struck)
20	Ditto	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921- 11-14-20d (CM 1979-2-15-6)	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 108 (but illegible obverse control mark); Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 847d	Ar, 2.36 g, 16 mm

No.	Description	Source	References	Metal, weight, size
21	Ditto	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921-11-14-20e (CM 1979-2-15-7)	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 108 (but different obverse control mark); Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 847d	Ar, 2.24 g, 15 mm
22	Ditto	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921-11-14-20f (CM 1979-2-15-8)	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 108 (but different obverse control mark); Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 847d	Ar, 1.87 g, 15 mm
23	Ditto	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921-11-14-20g (CM 1979-2-15-9)	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 108 (but different obverse control mark); Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 847d	Ar, 1.93 g, 15 mm
24	Ditto	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921-11-14-22b (CM 1979-2-15-10)	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 90 (but drachm denomination and different obverse control mark); Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 847d	Ar, 2.13 g, 15 mm
25	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 4	Ditto	Ar, 2.08 g, 16 mm
26	Ditto, horseman with whip right / Athena standing facing	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921-11-14-20h (CM 1979-2-15-12)	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 80, Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 825d	Ar, 2.17, g, 16 mm
27	Ditto, horseman with whip right / Zeus standing left, holding Nike	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921-11-14-20i (CM 1979-2-15-13)	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 37, Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 856c	Ar, 2.55 g, 15 mm
28	Ditto	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921-11-14-20j (CM 1979-2-15-14)	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 37, Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 856c	Ar, 2.30 g, 15 mm
29	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 3	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 37, Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 856c	Ar, 2.07 g, 16 mm
30	Ditto, base silver drachm, horseman with whip right/ Zeus standing left, holding Nike, late or posthumous issue, c. AD 40	Ashmo. no. 5	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 41; Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 856n	Base Ar, 2.43 g, 13 mm

No.	Description	Source	References	Metal, weight, size
31	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 6	Ditto (illegible)	Base Ar, 2.43 g, 12 mm
32	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 7	Ditto (illegible)	Base Ar, 2.43 g, 14 mm
33	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 8	Ditto (illegible)	Base Ar, 2.43 g, 12 mm
34	Ditto, round copper, lion standing right/Tyche seated left, late or posthumous issue, c. AD 40	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921-11-14-21 (CM 1979-2-15-17)	cf. Gardner 1886, Azes no. 134, Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 839e	Ae, 17.5 mm, 5.02 g
35	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 9	Ditto	Ae, 19.5 mm, 5.01 g
36	Ditto, round lead, lion standing right/Tyche seated left, late issue	Ashmo. no. 10	cf. Mitchiner 1975-76, no. 905b misidentified as a lion/Heracles issue of the Mathura satrap Rajavula)	Pb, 12.5 mm, 1.54 g
37	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 11	Ditto	Pb, 12 mm, 1.23 g
38	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 12	Ditto	Pb, 13 mm, 2.65 g
39	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 13	Ditto	Pb, 12 mm, 1.53 g
40	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 14	Ditto	Pb, 10 mm, 1.13 g
41	Ditto, no details			
INDO-PARTHIANS				
42	Gondophares, no details, c. AD 20-46	Khan 1986		
KUṢĀṆĀS				
43	Great Yuezhi, bronze 4 drachm, imitating silver 4 drachm of Indo-Greek king Hermaeus, retaining his name on obverse and reverse, head right/Zeus seated left, c. AD 10	BM, Taylor 3	Edwardes 1851, p. 605, no. 2 Gardner 1886, Hermaeus no. 32 Bopearachchi 1991, Series 20GG	Ae, 9.24 g, 26 mm
44	Kujūla Kadphises, bronze 4 drachm, adapted from silver 4 drachm of Indo-Greek king Hermaeus, retaining his name on obverse, head right/Heracles standing facing, c. AD 30-60	Ashmo. no. 15	cf. Gardner 1886, Hermaeus and Kadphises I, no. 1; Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 1044-5	Ae, 6.27 g, 23 mm
45	Ditto, unofficial copy	Ashmo. no. 16	cf. Gardner 1886, Hermaeus and Kadphises I, no. 15; Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 1064	Ae, 6.27 g, 23 mm

No.	Description	Source	References	Metal, weight, size
46	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 17	Ditto	Ae, 1.88 g, 1.5 mm
47	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 18	Ditto	Ae, 1.12 g, 13 mm
48	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 19	Ditto	Ae, 0.61 g, 10.5 mm
49	Anonymous issue (<i>Soter Megas</i> . Wima Takto), bronze drachm, head with sun rays right/ horseman with whip right, c. AD 80-110	Ashmo. no. 20	cf. Gardner 1886, Soter Megas, no. 13 Mitchiner 1978, no. 2985	Ae
50	Ditto, denomination not reported	Edwardes 1851, p. 607, coin c		Ae
51	Wima Kadphises, bronze coin, denomination not reported, c. AD 110-127	<i>Bannu Gazette</i> 1884		Ae
52	Kanishka I, bronze coin, denomination not reported, c. AD 127-151	<i>Bannu Gazette</i> 1884		Ae
53	Huvishka, bronze coin drachm, Ist issue, king on elephant right/ fire god Athsho left, c. AD 151-190	Collyer gift, BM, OA 1921-11-14-23 (CM 1979-2-15-18)	cf. Gardner 1886, Huvishka, no. 140; Mitchiner 1978, 3216; Göbl 1984, no. 832	Ae, 14.71, g, 24.5 mm
54	Huvishka bronze coin, denomination and type not reported c. AD 127-151	<i>Bannu Gazette</i> 1884		Ae
55	Anonymous issue (late Kuṣāṇa), bronze 4 drachm, king standing left/Siva facing and bull left, c. AD 260-300	Ashmo. no. 21	cf. Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 3765; Göbl 1984, no. 1010	Ae, 4.95 g, 19 mm
56	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 22	Ditto	Ae, 4.05 g, 19 mm
57	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 23	Ditto	Ae, 5.62 g, 19 mm
58	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 24	Ditto	Ae, 4.85 g, 20 mm
59	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 25	cf. Göbl 1984, no. 1010, 76	Ae, 4.60 g, 18 mm
60	Ditto, but cruder and smaller flan size, c. AD 300-360	Ashmo. no. 26	Ditto	Ae, 2.18 g, 15 mm
61	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 27	Ditto	Ae, 2.35 g, 14 mm
62	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 28	Ditto	Ae, 3.01 g, 15 mm
63	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 29	Ditto	Ae, 3.40 g, 15 mm
64	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 30	Ditto	Ae, 2.90 g, 16 mm
65	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 31	Ditto	Ae, 2.29 g, 15 mm
66	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 32	Ditto	Ae, 2.05 g, 14 mm
67	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 33	Ditto	Ae, 2.25 g, 14 mm

No.	Description	Source	References	Metal, weight, size
68	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 34	Ditto	Ae, 2.40 g, 16 mm
69	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 35	Ditto	Ae, 2.41 g, 14 mm
70	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 36	Ditto	Ae, 2.22 g, 14 mm
71	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 37	Ditto	Ae, 2.30 g, 17 mm
72	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 38	Ditto	Ae, 2.12 g, 12 mm
73	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 39	Ditto	Ae, 1.58 g, 14 mm
74	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 40	Ditto	Ae, 1.34 g, 15 mm
75	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 41	Ditto	Ae, 0.77 g, 14 mm
76	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 42	Ditto	Ae, 0.61 g, 11 mm
77	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 43	Ditto	Ae, 0.81 g, 11 mm
78	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 44	Ditto	Ae, 0.79 g, 13 mm
79	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 45	Ditto	Ae, 1.07 g, 14 mm
80	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 46	Ditto	Ae, 0.65 g, 11 mm
81	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 47	Ditto	Ae, 0.97 g, 12 mm
82	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 48	Ditto	Ae, 0.91 g, 12 mm
83	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 49	Ditto	Ae, 0.51 g, 12 mm
84	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 50	Ditto	Ae, 0.46 g, 12 mm
85	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 51	Ditto	Ae, 0.39 g, 10 mm
86	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 52	Ditto	Ae, 0.63 g, 11 mm
87	Anonymous issue (late Kuṣāṇa), bronze 4 drachm, king standing left/Siva facing and bull left	Khan 1867		Ae
88	Anonymous issue (late Kuṣāṇa), bronze 4 drachm, no details, (misidentified as Kidara Kuṣāṇa issue)	Khan 1986	Ditto	Ae
89	Modern forgery, loosely based on anonymous late Kuṣāṇa issue, king standing left/Siva facing and bull left, bronze 4 drachm, before 1860	Ashmo. no. 53	cf. Mitchiner 1978, no. 3715; examples in British Museum, acquired in 1860	Ae, 1.45 g, 11 mm
KUṢĀṆO-SĀSĀNIAN (SĀSĀNIAN KUṢĀṆASHAHS)				
90	Piruz II, Gandharan series copper coin, head with bull horn crown right/ firealtar c. AD 300-325	Ashmo. no. 56	cf. Mitchiner 1978, no. 1290; Göbl 1984, no. 1127; Cribb 1990, 37	Ae, 3.07 g, 16 mm
91	Shapur II, Gandharan series copper coin, head with bull horn crown right/ firealtar c. AD 325-370	Ashmo. no. 57	cf. Mitchiner 1978, no. 1267; Göbl 1984, no. 1126; Cribb 1990, 37-40	Ae, 3.07 g, 16 mm
92	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 60	Ditto	Ae, 1.43 g, 14 mm

No.	Description	Source	References	Metal, weight, size
93	Ruler unidentified, Gandharan series copper coin, head right/firealtar, c. AD 300-325	Ashmo. no. 58	cf. Cribb 1990, 31-40	Ae, 1.90 g, 13 mm
94	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 59	Ditto	Ae, 3.35 g, 17 mm
95	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 61	Ditto	Ae, 1.80 g, 14 mm
96	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 62	Ditto	Ae, 2.55 g, 16 mm
97	As no. 58 or no. 91, design illegible	Ashmo. no. 65		Ae, 1.56 g, 15 mm
98	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 67		Ae, 1.77 g, 14 mm
99	Ditto	Ashmo. no. 68		Ae, 0.41 g, 9 mm
HŪṆAS (CHIONITES, HEPHTHALITES, ETC.)				
100	Issuer unknown, bronze coin, head with Sāsānian style crown left/Brāhmī inscription: <i>Jyi</i> , 4-5th century	Ashmo. no. 54	Unpublished	Ae, 1.45 g, 15 mm
101	Issuer unknown, bronze coin, head wearing Hūṇa hair-style left, illegible Brāhmī inscription/Brāhmī inscription: <i>Jvicha</i> , 4-5th century	Ashmo. no. 55	cf. Göbl 1967, E18	Ae, 1.64 g, 15 mm
102	Hepthalite, no details	Khan 1986		
HINDU SAHIS (TURKISH RULERS IN KABUL AND GANDHARA)				
103	Spalapatideva, silver drachma, no details reported c. AD 750-850	<i>Bannu Gazette</i> 1884	cf. Deyell 1990, nos. 17-33	Ar
104	Samantadeva, silver, silver or bronze drachma, no details reported, c. 850-950	<i>Bannu Gazette</i> 1884	cf. Deyell 1990, nos. 44-52	Ar or Ae
105	No details reported	Khan 1986		
GHAZNAVIDS				
106	Nasir ad Dawla Sabuktegin (977-997) base silver dirham, <i>lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahū lā sharīka lahū, Al Trīī lillāh Muhammad rasūl Allāh, Nūḥ bin Mansūr, Sabuktegin</i> , Margin inscriptions off flan edge, Farwan mint, type issued 993-7, in the name of Caliph Al Ta'i' and Samanid overlord Nuh bin Mansur	BM	cf. <i>BMC II</i> , nos. 452-3	Base Ar, 2.54 g, 19 mm

No.	Description	Source	References	Metal, weight, size
107	Ditto, no details reported	<i>Bannu Gazette</i> 1884		
108	Abu'l Qasim Yamin ad Dawla Mahmud (998-1030), silver dirham, no details reported	Khan 1986		Ar
PRINCELYS STATES ETC.				
109	Bharatpur State, copper paisa, dagger emblem, in name of Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II, dated 1215 = AD 1800	Ashmo. no. 63		Ae, 5.98 g, 18 mm
110	Qandahar or Kabul city mint, copper fals, sword and stars emblem, illegible, issued c. 1830	Ashmo. no. 64		Ae, 8.39 g, 19.5 mm

Commentary

The range of coins recorded as finds from Ākra covers the whole of the history of Pakistan's traditional coinage from the first punch-marked coins of the fourth century BC down to the local issues of the nineteenth century. The ancient coins suggest that coins have been lost at the site from the Achaemenid period down to the period of the early Islamic period, i.e. ninth-tenth century. The number of coins so far recorded does not provide a very detailed historical account, but is a scattered representation of the coinage issued throughout that period. Only two groups provide a deeper insight into the history of the site, coins of the late Indo-Scythian period during the first century AD and coins of the late Kuṣāṇa period during the fourth century AD, and a more detailed account of these will be made below. Apart from these a few coins are unusual and deserve comment.

The record provided by the coins is a little distorted by the sources of information. Edwardes, the *Bannu Gazetteer* and Khan 1986 are focused on easily identifiable coin types and contain very little information on the more obscure and less easily recognised coins such as the Indo-Scythian, late Kuṣāṇa, Kuṣāṇ-Sāsānian and Hūṇa coins represented in the Ashmolean Museum parcel. It is likely that a future detailed survey of the site might give yet more emphasis to these obscure coins than the sources suggest. The British Museum coins from Taylor and Collyer might also represent a similar bias. The desire to emphasise the Greek heritage of the region could also be seen as a distorting factor.

There is also no indication in any of the sources or the collection documentation whether the reporters and collectors were operating a chronological cut-off point for the material, omitting, for example, anything later than the Ghaznavid period, because it was considered too modern to be of interest. The two nineteenth-century coins in the Ashmolean group might have been included because their condition obscured their late date.

An unprovenanced group of coins in the British Museum acquired in 1921 from the Sturt Collection through the London dealer Spink and Son Ltd might also come from Ākra or somewhere in Bannu, because it contains two examples of the unusual Indo-Scythian coins represented in both the Collyer and Ashmolean groups. The range of ancient coins in the Sturt group is similar to that suggested by the reported coins from Ākra:

Indo-Greek	Peucolas (c. 90 BC)	1 bronze
Indo-Scythian	Azilises (c. 30 BC)	1 bronze 1 bronze
	Kharahostes (c. AD 20)	1 bronze (as Ākra nos 34-35)
	Azes II (c. AD 20)	1 lead (as Ākra nos. 36-40)
Kuṣāṇo-Sāsānian	Illegible (c. AD 350)	1 bronze
Sāsānian/Kidarite	Shapur II (c. AD 350)	1 gold (local Sāsānian-type issued by local rulers in Sind, probably Kidarites)
Hūṇas	Satrap Tarika (c. AD 400)	2 bronzes
	anonymous (c. AD 450)	2 bronzes

The Sturt Collection also contained a large sample of Islamic coins of the types commonly found in Pakistan: 16 Ghaznavid and early Sultans of Delhi, 16 Mughal empire, 7 Afghanistan Duranni-Barakzai, and 5 Iranian coins. The proportion of these later coins to the ancient pieces is more typical of randomly assembled groups of coins from Pakistan as regularly seen in the possession of local collectors and tourists. The Sturt coins do not seem to have been systematically assembled according to any criteria as they contain both common coins as well as the exceptional coin of Peucolas (only the seventh known example of his coinage), the Azes coins (see below) and the rare Sind gold coin with the portrait of Shapur II. The absence of later coins from the recorded finds from Ākra is therefore unusual and reflects their assembly on selective criteria.

The recorded finds are not evenly distributed throughout the period they cover. Three groups probably representing finds of hoarded material, or selections from such material, distort the coverage: the Azes and Azilises silver coins in the Collyer collection, the Azes lead coins and the late Kuṣāṇa and Kuṣāṇo-Sāsānian bronze coins in the Ashmolean group. Apart from these hoard groups the uneven coverage is not exceptional. Coins before the Indo-Greek period are scarce, but from the time of Menander onwards down to the Indo-Parthian period the coverage is even. The Kuṣāṇa period from Kujūla Kadphises down to the late Kuṣāṇas and their Kuṣāṇo-Sāsānian contemporaries is well represented, reflecting the higher level of coin production during this period. The end of the fourth to the fifth century is thinly covered by three Hūṇa coins, but from then there are no coins until the Turkish Hindu-Śāhi issues of the eighth century. Apart from a few Hūṇa and early Turkish silver coins there are no common coins issued during the period in the area, so the missing centuries are not unexpected.

The evidence provided by the broad coverage is of very limited use for a detailed view of the history of the site. The following discussion of particular groups and individual pieces shows the type of conclusions available, but it is worth drawing attention to the need for caution in interpreting these finds. The survival in use of copper coins in the area can be extensive. In the British Museum there is an Indo-Parthian coin of the first century AD re-stamped for circulation in the nineteenth century, an extreme example, but a clear warning about the limited use of single coins as evidence of activity at the site at particular periods. The coins need to be assessed in the context of other finds, as in the case of the late-Kuṣāṇa and Kuṣāṇo-Sāsānian coins which can be identified as a hoard group and dated by comparison with other recorded hoards.

Azes lead coins

The Ashmolean coins from Ākra contain five examples (nos. 36-40) of a previously unpublished variety of a lead coinage of the Indo-Scythian series in the name of the king Azes II (c. 20 BC-AD 20). They have a lion on the front and a seated figure of the Greek city goddess Tyche on the back. Apart from these five, only six other lead coins in the name of Azes II are

known. Two examples of the same variety as the Ākra coins are in a private collection, and there are four of a slightly different variety with a different Kharoṣṭhī monogram on the back: one in the same private collection, two published and one in the British Museum's Sturt Collection. These lead coins have types derived from a bronze coinage represented by two more examples from Ākra (nos. 34 and 35). The bronze coins are commoner than the lead versions and 41 examples have been recorded. The lead coins seem to be a continuation of the bronze coins at a reduced weight standard. Like the lead coins the bronze coins can be divided into varieties on the basis of their monograms. They also show a gradual reduction of the weight standard.

Because this series is so poorly published the following list of recorded specimens is presented to place the Ākra coins in context. According to Marshall 1951, pp. 781 and 809, 87 bronze coins of the Lion-Tyche type have been recorded from the Sirkap site at Taxila (strata IV: 6 specimens; stratas III and II: 58; surface strata I: 23), but the examples are not differentiated and so cannot be listed according to variety in the following list. One example, which appears to be an example of variety G, is illustrated as *Rare and Unique Coin* no. 145.

No.	Weight & Diameter	Place	Reference
<i>Lion-Tyche Bronz</i>			
<i>Variety A circle / vi</i>			
1	7.86 g 19 mm	Ashmolean	de Shortt, plate IX, 11; Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 839 i, 3
2	6.21 g 19 mm	British Museum	1843-8-12-45; Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 839 i, 2
3	5.59 g 18 mm	Senior Collection	no. 122.10
4	5.50 g 19 mm	Mitchiner Collection	Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 839 i, 5
5	5.02 g 17 mm	Ākra 34	
6	5.01 g 19 mm	Ākra 35	
7	4.38 g 20 mm	British Museum	1921-3-31-68 (Sturt Collection); Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 839 i, 1
8	3.55 g 17 mm	British Museum	OR 5291
9	18 mm	Ashmolean	Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 839 i, 4
10		Hardaker Collection	Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 839 i
11		Hardaker Collection	Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 839 i
12	20 mm	Lahore Museum	<i>PMC</i> , plate XII, no. 222
13	19 mm	Lahore Museum	<i>PMC</i> , no. 223
14	18 mm	Lahore Museum	<i>PMC</i> , no. 224
<i>Variety B circle / ti</i>			
15	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , no. 221 (not seen)
<i>Variety C circle / a</i>			
16	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , no. 221 (not seen)
17	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , no. 220a (not seen)
18	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , no. 220b (not seen)

19	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , no. 220c (not seen)
20	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , no. 220d (not seen)
21	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , no. 221e (not seen)
Variety D circle / A, <i>vri</i>			
22	4.34 g 19 mm	British Museum	G1128; Mitchiner 1975-6, 839h
23	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , 226
Variety E circle / <i>bu</i>			
24	4.39 g 17 mm	Senior Collection	no. 123.10
25	4.38 g 16 mm	Senior Collection	no. 122.11
26	4.34 g 18 mm	British Museum	1857-8-13-109; <i>BMC</i> 134; Mitchiner 1975-6, 839 e
27	3.29 g 17 mm	British Museum	1894-5-6-1912
28	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , 225
Variety F <i>a-jhu</i> / E <i>vi</i>			
29	2.72 g 15 mm	British Museum	1894-5-6-1913; Mitchiner 1975-6, 839 d, 2
30	2.38g 15 mm	British Museum	1853-3-1-1298; Mitchiner 1975-6, 839 a, 1
31	2.12 g 15 mm	Senior Collection	no. 123.16
32	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , 228a
33	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , 228b
34	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , 228c
Variety G <i>a-jhu</i> / circle <i>sam</i>			
35	2.68 g 15 mm	Ashmolean	de Shortt, plate IX, 10; Mitchiner 1975-6, 839 c
36	2.45 g 14 mm	Senior Collection	no. 123.15
37	2.44 g 15 mm	British Museum	G1127; Mitchiner 1975-6, 839 d, 1
38	2.43 g 15 mm	British Museum	<i>BMC</i> , no. 136
39	2.13 g 15 mm	Lahore Museum	<i>PMC</i> , 229a
40	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , 229b
41	Lahore Museum		<i>PMC</i> , 230
<i>Lion-Tyche Lead</i>			
Variety H <i>mi</i> / <i>sam</i>			
42	2.65 g 13 mm	Ākra 38	
43	2.20 g 11 mm	Senior Collection	no. 123.21
44	1.54 g 12 mm	Ākra 36	
45	1.53 g 12 mm	Ākra 39	
46	1.24 g 11 mm	Senior Collection	no. 123.50 (square coin)

47	1.23 g	12 mm	Ākra 37	
48	1.13 g	10 mm	Ākra 40	
Variety I <i>mi</i> / <i>a-vi</i>				
49	2.45 g	11 mm	British Museum	1921-3-31-62 (Sturt Collection)
50	1.82 g	12 mm	Ashmolean	<i>JNSI</i> , 1961, plate IX, 13
51	1.80 g	11 mm	Mitchiner Collection	Mitchiner 1975-6, 905 b, 2 (misattributed to Rajavula)
52	1.68 g	11 mm	Senior Collection	no. 123.20

These coins seem to show a progressive reduction of weight and size, apparently reflecting the contemporary progressive debasement of Azes II's silver coinage. Variety A has a weight standard of about 5-6 g; varieties B and C are not properly reported; varieties D and E have a 3-5 g standard; varieties F and G a 2-3 g standard and varieties H and I (the lead coins) have a 1-2.5 g standard. As the standard goes down the coins have a smaller diameter.

The control marks used on these coins identify them as base-metal lower denominations issued alongside a very common series of base silver drachms in the name of Azes II, with Zeus, standing left, holding Nike, reverse types. The commonest varieties of the drachms have the same control marks as the Lion-Tyche coin varieties A (see Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 856c), F (see Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 856s), G (see Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 856n) and H (see Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 856m). Four of these drachms are present among the Ākra coins: nos. 30-33. No. 30 is a variety G issue, but the other three are illegible. The drachms are all debased, but variety A still looks silver, while the others look copper.

The base-silver drachms are found widely. Examples have been recorded in quantity from Begrām, Swāt and Taxila. There is no evidence of finds north of the Hindu Kush. The bronze Lion-Tyche coins are recorded only from Ākra and Taxila; the lead exclusively from Ākra. The restricted movement of base-metal coinage suggests that perhaps the lead coins were actually made at Ākra. Although a larger number have been reported from Taxila, the proportion of these coins in comparison with other Azes II issues found there suggests that they might have been relatively more common at Ākra than at Taxila. This is a question which more detailed information from Ākra might answer. The relatively wide distribution of the base-silver drachms does not rule out their production in Ākra.

The finds of the base-silver drachms provide some evidence for the dating of the series. In a hoard collected in Peshawar a variety A drachm was found with other late Azes II coins and an early issue of Gondophares, but none of the commoner varieties F, G, H were present (Cribb 1977). This suggests that the commoner varieties could have been issued during the reign of Gondophares (c. AD 20-46). Another large hoard collected in Gandhara contains variety F and G coins together with Indo-Parthian coins through to Sāsān (c. AD 65) and Indo-Scythian issues of Aspavarma (c. AD 45-60). The *a-jhu* and *E-vi* control marks of variety F also appear on coins of Aspavarma.

The use of lead coins for this issue in the name of Azes II also finds a useful parallel in the coinage of the Indo-Scythian satrap Rajavula issued in Jammu (Mitchiner 1975-6, no. 905). Like the Azes II coins these also have a Lion design on the front, but with a standing Heracles on the back. Rajavula's use of lead is derived from the coinage of Strato II, his Indo-Greek predecessor in Jammu. Strato II issued c. 8 and 4 g lead coins. Rajavula's coinage begins on the 8 g standard, but soon drops for his second issue to the 5-6 g standard used by Azes II (variety A). His third issue has the 3-5 g standard of Azes II's varieties D and E, and his fourth and last issue matches

the 2-3 g standard of Azes II's varieties F and G. His coinage is followed by a Lion and Athena lead issue of Gondophares, matching Azes II's last standard for varieties H and I, 1-2.5 g. As in Azes II's coinage the size of the coinage reduces from 18 mm in Rajavula's first issue down to 12 mm for Gondophares' coins. The relationship of the Azes II and Rajavula coinage again suggests a date for them in the period of Gondophares, whose succession after Rajavula in Jammu is already attested (Cribb 1985).

The progressive reduction in weight standard and metal quality (lead in place of copper and debased silver) observed in the Lion-Tyche and related base silver drachms in the name of Azes II and in the apparently parallel lead issues of Rajavula (his silver drachms also show progressive debasement) are part of a generalised devaluation of the standard denominations of the coinages of first century AD northern Pakistan and its neighbouring areas. The silver coins of the late Indo-Scythians and of the Indo-Parthian kings all show progressive reduction of their silver content.

The early Kuṣāṇa coins in the name of Kujūla Kadphises (Ākra no. 44) are copper versions of a silver denomination, issued in the Kabul region where the debasement has already progressed to the point where the silver content has been eliminated (Ākra no. 43). The unofficial imitations of these Kuṣāṇa coins which are commonly found in the Kabul region, Swāt and Taxila are also recorded from Ākra (Ākra nos. 45-48). They are another example of devaluation and are probably contemporary with the Azes II and Rajavula debasement and weight reductions. All these forms of devaluation are probably a symptom of the economic disruption caused by the conflicts between the Indo-Scythians, Indo-Parthians and Kuṣāṇas which beset the area throughout the first two thirds of the first century AD.

The relatively high incidence of coins in the name of Azes II at Ākra provides firm evidence of the occupation of the site by an Indo-Scythian regime in the first half of the first century AD. The survival of their production into the Indo-Parthian period makes the identity of their issuer unclear; it is possible that they are posthumous issues. The control mark association with Aspavarma could be significant in this respect.

The silver Azilises and Azes II drachms in the Collyer Gift are perhaps a hoard or hoard group. They are typical of Indo-Scythian coin circulation and can be compared with the Peshawar hoard mentioned above and the earlier parts of the Smithsonian hoard.

Late Kuṣāṇa and Kuṣāṇo-Sāsānian Coins

The largest part of the Ashmolean Museum parcel consists of what appears to be a hoard or hoard group of late Kuṣāṇa and Kuṣāṇo-Sāsānian coins of the types circulating widely in Gandhara and the Punjab. Kuṣāṇo-Sāsānian coins are issues of the Sāsānian princes who ruled conquered Kuṣāṇa territory and used the title *Kuṣāṇashah*, 'Kuṣāṇa King'. A number of similar hoards have been published (Cribb 1981, 1985b, 1990), mostly seen in trade, but one is from the Butkara excavations in Swāt (Faccena et al. 1993) and one a treasure trove from Mathura (Srivastava 1989). The Ākra hoard group seems to be datable to the mid-fourth century because it contains badly made issues with the portrait of the Sāsānian king Shapur II (AD 309-379). The Kuṣāṇa coins in the hoard are not attributable to particular rulers and might not have been issued by the Kuṣāṇas as such. The designs used for these coins was derived from the Shiva and bull copper coinage of Vasu-Deva I, c. AD 190-227, but the weights of the coins are well below his c. 8 g standard and correspond more closely to the official Kuṣāṇa standard (c. 4 g) of the late third-century issues of Vasu-Deva II, c. AD 280-320, or represent a further decline.

The Ākra group is slightly exceptional, because it contains no copies of the seated goddess reverse types issued by the late Kuṣāṇa kings Kanishka II (c. AD 227-247) and Vasishka (c. AD 247-266), nor are there any of the late linear design Shiva and Bull types found in some other

fourth-century hoards. It appears that the late Kuṣāṇa coins in the Ākra hoard could be local productions following, but not exactly matching, the imitations in use elsewhere. Joint hoards of late Kuṣāṇa and Kuṣāṇo-Sāsānian coins have been discussed elsewhere (Cribb 1981, 1985b, 1990).

Exceptional Coins

The earliest coin recorded from Ākra is a fractional issue of the earliest coinage issued in the Indian tradition. The full unit would be the typical bent-bar punch-marked coin, recorded from the Chaman Hazouri hoard deposited c. 360 BC (Cribb 1983, 1985c). Its loss at Ākra could represent occupation of the site as early as the Achaemenid period.

The silver coin of the Greek king Demetrius I is an unexpected find from a site south of the Hindu Kush and it is possible that it was acquired at the site rather than found there. Edwardes account of the Taylor coins refers to the purchase of another Greek coin from a soldier and this Bactrian issue could have come to Ākra in the same way.

The two Hūṇa coins in the Ashmolean parcel are extremely rare types, one previously unknown, the other only known from one other example. They are dated on the basis of comparison with other Hūṇa and local Sāsānian issues of the late fourth century, but could be a little later. Both are inscribed in late Kuṣāṇa-period Brāhmī script, a feature they share with the Satrap Tarika coins. It is perhaps no coincidence that the British Museum's Sturt coins include two coins of this ruler. Excavations in the Bannu region might reveal more of what appears to be a local branch of the Hūṇa rulers who succeeded the Kuṣāṇo-Sāsānians and Kuṣāṇas as rulers of northern Pakistan in the second half of the fourth century.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Robert Knox for inviting to examine the coins from Ākra. We are grateful to David MacDowall who brought the Ashmolean parcel to our attention and we thank Michael Metcalf, former Keeper of the Heberden Coin Room in the Ashmolean Museum, for allowing me to publish them. I am also indebted to Bob Senior, Liz Errington, Osmund Boppearachchi, Michael Willis, Nasim Khan and Emma Smith for their invaluable help in preparing this paper. Since this article was prepared the coins in Bob Senior's collection have been published in his three-volume study of Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian coins (Senior 2001).

Bibliographic References

- Allan, J. 1936, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India*, London.
- Boppearachchi, O. 1991, *Monnaies gréco-bactriennes et indo-grecques: Catalogue raisonné, Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris.
- Cribb, J. 1977, Indo-Scythian Silver Coins from Pakistan, *Coin Hoards*, III, 108-113.
- 1981, Gandharan Hoards of Kushano-Sasanian and late Kushan coppers, *Coin Hoards*, VI, 84-108.
- 1983, Investigating the introduction of coinage in India -- a review of recent research, *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Varanasi, 80-101.
- 1985-a, New Evidence of Indo-Parthian Political History, *Coin Hoards*, VII, 282-300.
- 1985-b, Some further hoards of Kushano-Sasanian and late Kushan coppers, *Coin Hoards*, VII, 308-321.
- 1985-c, Dating India's earliest coins, J. Scotsman and M. Taddei (eds.), *South Asian Archaeology 1983*, Naples, 1985, 535-554.
- 1990, Numismatic evidence for Kushano-Sasanian Chronology, *Studia Iranica*, 19, 153-193 and plates I-VIII.
- 1999, The early Kushan kings: new evidence for Chronology. Evidence from the Rabatak Inscription of Kanishka I, M. Alram and D. Klimburg-Salter, *Coins, Art and Chronology, Essays on the pre-Islamic History of the Indo-Iranian Borderlands*, Vienna, 177-205.
- de Shortt, H. 1961, Notes on Some Ancient and Medieval Indian Coins, *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, 328-333.
- Deyell, J. 1990, *Living without Silver, The Monetary History of Early Medieval North India*, Delhi.

- Edwardes, 1851, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier*, London.
- Errington, E. and Cribb, J. 1992, *Crossroads of Asia: Transformation in Image and Symbol*, Cambridge.
- Faccena, D. et alii, 1993, A report on the recent discovery of a deposit of coins in the sacred area of Butkara I (Swat, Pakistan), *East and West*, 43, 95-114.
- Falk, H. 2001, The yuga of Sphujiddhavaja and the era of the Kushanas, *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, vol. 7, 121-136.
- Gardner, P. 1886, *The Coins of the Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India in the British Museum*, London.
- Göbl, R. 1967, *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Iranischen Hunnen in Baktrien und Indien*, Wiesbaden.
- 1984, *System und Chronologie der Münzprägung des Kusanreiches*, Vienna.
- 1993, *Die Kusanmünzen im Münzkabinett Bern und die Chronologie*, Vienna.
- Khan 1867, *Hayat-e-Afghani*,
- Khan 1986: F. Khan
- Khan, F., Knox, J.R., Magee, P. and Thomas, K.D. 2000, Akra: the Ancient Capital of Bannu, *Journal of Asian Civilisations*, Vol. XXIII (1).
- Marshall, J. 1951, *Taxila*, Oxford.
- Mitchiner, M. 1975-6, *Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian Coinage*, London.
- 1978, *Oriental Coins and their Values: The Ancient and Classical World*, London.
- Punjab Government, 1884, *Bannu Gazette*
- Senior, R.C. 2001, *Indo-Scythian Coins and History*, London.
- Srivastava, A.K. 1989, Treasure Trove Finds from Mathura, in Srinivasan, D.M. (ed.), *Mathura: the Cultural Heritage*, New Delhi, 119-123.
- Whitehead, R.B. 1914 (*PMC*), *Catalogue of Coins in the Panjab Museum, Lahore*, vol. I, Indo-Greeks, Oxford.





