

Notes on the Yuezhi – Kushan Relationship and Kushan Chronology

By Hans Loeschner

Professor Michael Fedorov provided a rejoinder¹ with respect to several statements in the article² “A new Oesho/Shiva image of Sasanian ‘Peroz’ taking power in the northern part of the Kushan empire”.

In the rejoinder Michael Fedorov states: “The Chinese chronicles are quite unequivocal and explicit: Bactria was conquered by the Ta-Yüeh-chih! And it were the Ta-Yüeh-chih who split the booty between five *hsi-hou* or rather five Ta-Yüeh-chih tribes ruled by those *hsi-hou* (yabgus) who created five yabguates with capitals in Ho-mo, Shuang-mi, Hu-tsao, Po-mo, Kao-fu”. He concludes the rejoinder with words of W.W. Tarn³: “The new theory, which makes the five Yüeh-chih princes (the Kushan chief being one) five Saka princes of Bactria conquered by the Yüeh-chih, throws the plain account of the *Hou Han shu* overboard. The theory is one more unhappy offshoot of the elementary blunder which started the belief in a Saka conquest of Greek Bactria”.¹

With respect to the ethnical allocation of the five *hsi-hou* Laszlo Torday provides an analysis with a result which is in contrast to the statement of Michael Fedorov: “As to the kings of K’ang-chü or Ta Yüeh-shih, those chiefs of foreign tribes who acknowledged their supremacy were described in the *Han Shu* as “lesser kings” or *hsi-hou*. ... The *hsi-hou* (and their fellow tribespeople) were ethnically as different from the Yüeh-shih and K’ang-chü as were the *hou*... from the Han. ... If Kuei-shuang and his four colleagues were not ethnic Yüeh-shih, then their forefathers had to be those princes who had been compelled to swear allegiance to the victorious Yüeh-shih king. Like all *hsi-hou* or *yabghu* before or after them, they too were put in charge of outlying territories. ... The overwhelming probability is that these *hsi-hou* were chiefs of those subjugated K’ang-chü elements which had been rolled south by the Yüeh-shih onslaught and which had subsequently participated in the ravaging of Ta Hsia.”⁴

In the essay “Sogdians and Buddhism” Mariko Namba Walter informs: “The *Han-shu* describes five lesser kings of K’ang-chü, which match with some major Sogdian and neighboring city kingdoms, according to the Tang shu’s editor, who thus interpreted the record of the *Han-shu*. These five kingdoms are Čač (Tashkent), Bočāra (Bukhara), Kešš (Šahr-i-Sabz), Kušāniya (west of Samarqand), and Khwārizm (Khiva).”⁵ South-west of Samarqand is the fertile river region of the Kashkha Darya (Figure 1). Large-scale irrigation systems were developed in the Zerafshan and Kashka Darya valleys and the Tashkent oasis, as well as in the Surkhan Darya and Sherabad Darya valleys.⁶

When c. 245 the Bactrian satrap Diodotos I broke away from the Seleucid empire, Ferghana and parts of Sogdiana gained independence from Greek rule. These Sogdian parts were the Samarkand (Marakanda) and probably also the Kashkadarya oasis regions. Bukhara gained independence from Greek rule in 208/6 BC⁷ under Euthydemus (c.220-186BC^{8,9}) weakened by the Seleucid emperor Antiochos III laying siege to his capital Bakh (Bactra).

Greek rule could further be maintained for half a century in “Southern Sogdiana”, the fertile river regions north of the Oxus (Amu Darya) river which had formed the border between the Bactrian

¹ Fedorov 2008

² Loeschner 2007

³ Tarn 1951, p. 283.

⁴ Torday 1997, pp. 385-386.

⁵ Walter 2006, p. 6.

⁶ Mukhamedjanov 1994, p. 266.

⁷ Boppearachchi 1991/2, p. 13.

⁸ Senior 2004, p. 5.

⁹ Senior 2005/6, p. xv.

and Sogdian satrapies.^{10,11,12} This region, heartland of the Kushan empire¹³, included “Oxiane”, that are the Sherabad and lower Surkhan river regions (Figure 1) and the other oases along the upper Surkhan river, the Karfirnigan and the right bank of the Wakhsh. Oxiana is a geographical name known mainly in relation with the period of Alexander.

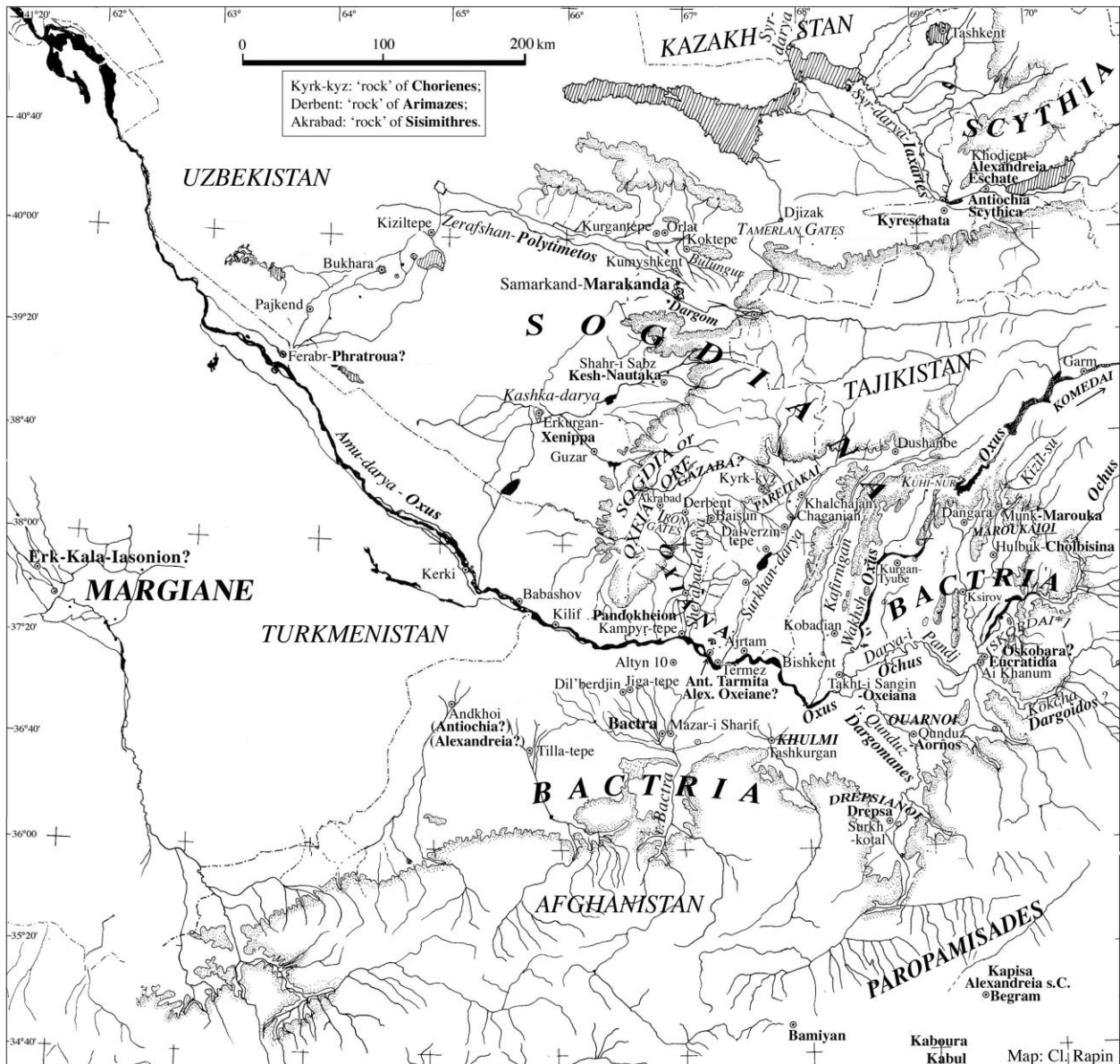


Figure 1: Map of Central Asia including recent allocations¹⁴

Oxiana, coined “Northern Bactria” by Soviet archaeologists¹¹, is well protected to the North and to the West by steep mountain regions only cut by narrow gorges, apart from a connection to Kashka Darya through a pass in the Hissar (Oxiane or Sogdian) mountains west of Derbent. At this weak spot a protective wall was erected in Hellenistic times which later during the Kushan era was further strengthened and known as the famous “Iron Gates”.^{12,14}

Recent excavations at Samarkand-Afrasiab have shown that Eucratides I (c. 172/171 – 145¹⁵ / 139 BC^{8,9}) was able to regain Sogdia for a short time period. Claude Rapin points out that the

¹⁰ Grenet and Rapin 2001

¹¹ Rapin and Rakhmanov 2002

¹² Rapin, Baud, Grenet, and Rakhmanov 2006

¹³ Pugachenkova 1966; cited in ref. 47, p. 102.

¹⁴ Reproduced with permission from Claude Rapin. This map is published in: Rapin 2007, p. 30.

Hellenistic programme of urban fortification was interrupted before it was completed, “only a short time after his murder around 145 BC, in the first year of the rule of Heliocles I, a few coins of whom have been discovered north of the Oxus.”¹⁵

Also Northern Bactria (Oxiana) was lost by the Greeks towards the end of the reign of Eucratides I, at a time when Aï Khanum (Eucratidia) was first destroyed in c. 145 BC (Paul Bernard: “La fin de la ville grecque fut brutale”¹⁶).

In his detailed book “The Yuezhi” Craig G.R. Benjamin explains that in “133/2 BC the Yüeh-chih / Yuezhi were expelled from the Ili region”¹⁷ by the Wusun (with support from the Xiongnu) and, after a short residency in southwestern Ferghana “limited perhaps to the winter of 133/2 BC or 132/1 BC” entered the Kangju state who, in order to avoid conflict, passed them on to their lesser kingdoms in Sogdia in the Zeravshan valley, including the oasis of Samarkand and Bukhara, as testified by archaeological excavations.¹⁸ Though, the attribution of podboy¹⁹ tombs to the Yuezhi should be taken with caution as pointed out by Enguo Lu²⁰: “...when there are no written documents available, one should be especially cautious about relating the archaeological material to ancient ethnic groups”.

There is most valuable information from the Chinese Han envoy Zhang Qian (Chang Ch'ien) who in 138 BC started his mission under emperor Wudi (149 – 86 BC) to find the Yuezhi but fell into the hands of the Xiongnu (Hsiung-nu) for 10 years. Escaping from captivity he reached the Da Yuezhi in 129/8 BC after passing through Dayuan (Dawan, Ta-Yüan) in Ferghana and the Kangju (K'ang-chü) territories. Taishan Yu points out: “The ‘Kangju’ that he reached must have been the dependent territory of the Kangju, namely Sogdiana, which was located between the Syr Darya and Amu Darya. This is because the mainland of Kangju was located on the northern bank of the Syr Darya, thus...he went to the royal court of the Da Yuezhi from Dayuan, and the court was located on the northern bank of Amu Darya, and Sogdiana was the road that he had to take”.²¹

The location of the royal court of the Da Yuezhi north of the Amu Darya at the time of the visit of the Chinese envoy Zhang Qian is not known. There are different theories, two of which are shortly described:

- Lazlo Torday points out: “The great German Iranist Marquart recognised in the Yüeh-shih the tribe known to Ptolemy as the ‘latioi’...The most likely Han-period pronunciation of Yüeh-shih was *Ywati, sounds which a Hellenistic source could only have transcribed as lati(o)i...Ptolemy marks the Yüeh-shi (latioi) along the lowermost section of the Jaxartes. ...The king’s camp was, therefore, in the ‘Scythian delta’, formerly the site of K’ang-chü winter camps, in the vicinity of Babish Mulla, Balandy and Chirik, sites which give clear indication of having been suddenly abandoned in the middle of the second century BC.”²²
- Craig G.R. Benjamin points out: “By 128/7 BC then, the Yuezhi were well established at ‘the seat of the (king’s) government’ at Jianshi (Khalchayan?), and in their most comfortable position for decades...they had established themselves in a strongly-fortified position in the Surkhan Darya valley, and had subdued the extensive, wealthy and organised state of Bactria to the south, where the land was ‘rich and fertile and seldom troubled by invaders. They were also protected by an important buffer state in Kangju/Sogdia, which already acknowledged ‘nominal sovereignty’ to the Yuezhi.”²³

¹⁵ Rapin 2007, p. 48.

¹⁶ Bernard 2006, p. 66.

¹⁷ Benjamin 2007, pp. 164-166.

¹⁸ Zadneprovsky 1999, pp. 3-6.

¹⁹ Tombs with a lateral niche, in Russian ‘podboi’ (reference 12)

²⁰ Lu 2002, pp. 21-22.

²¹ Yu 2006, p. 6.

²² Torday 1997, pp. 301 and 306.

²³ Benjamin 2007, pp. 214-215.

Torday's allocation is not supported so far by archaeological findings and therefore not accepted. Benjamin's allocation is not consistent with the relative locations of places described by Zhang Qian (Figure 2). There is the statement that the eastern border of the Yuezhi is Anxi (An-shi, for Parthia) which at that time included the Margiana oasis and reached as far as to the Oxus river north of Bactria.

Zhang Qian clearly separates between the Yuezhi and Daxia (Ta Hsia, Bactria) realms, again in 116/115 BC during his second mission (to the Wusun) where in the *Shiji* ch. 123 it is recorded that “Zhang Qian, therefore, sent his deputy envoys on separate missions to the states of Dayuan, Kangju, Da Yuezhi, Daxia, Anxi, Shendu, Yutian, Wumi and the adjacent states”.²⁴

For A.K. Narain at that time Bactria “was still an independent state south of the Oxus and could be negotiated with.”²⁵

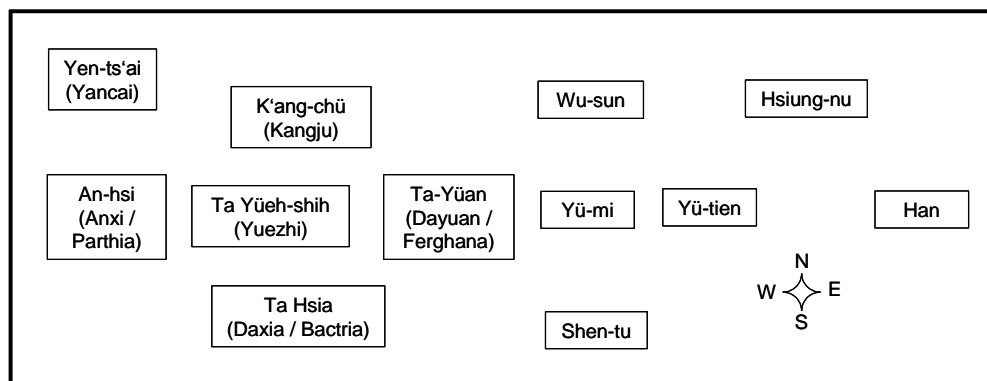


Figure 2: Relative locations of places described by the Chinese Han envoy Zhang Qian²⁶ (in brackets information from Figure 22 in reference 27)

Thus, Jianshi, the seat of the royal court of the Yuezhi at the time of early conquest, might be located at the middle section of the Oxus river which was bordering Anxi. There is low probability that the royal seat was at the Bokhara oasis. Therefore it might be possible that Jianshi, the royal court of the Yuezhi north of the Amu Darya, was located in the Kashka Darya region. If indeed the Yuezhi entered this region in 130/129 BC most likely the Kušāniya king, former *hsi-hou* of the Kangju became a *hsi-hou* of the Yuezhi with a stronghold in Oxiane due to earlier conquests 145 – 140 BC.

Near modern Karshi, the capital of the Kashka Darya region, the impressive (1.5x1.5km²) nomadic city of Kala-i Zakhoki Maron has been found which due to the archaeological context was built in the second to first century BC.²⁸ This site might have been Jianshi, the early Yuezhi capital north of the Oxus river.

With respect to the Yuezhi conquest of Daxia (Bactria) Craig G.R. Benjamin points out that “...by the time the Yuezhi arrived, the remaining Greek elites had already abandoned much of their former realm to the Saka hordes and refocused their attention south of the Hindu Kush (although remnants of Greek power persisted locally in parts of Bactria north of the Hindu Kush for up to another half century...).... Northern Graeco-Bactria thus suffered (at least) two separate nomadic “conquests” – by the Sakas in c. 145-140 and by the Yuezhi a decade and a half later.”²⁹ This double invasion is testified by the discoveries made in 1977 and 1978 in the royal treasury of Aï Khanum.³⁰

²⁴ Yu 2006, p. 12.

²⁵ Narain 2000, p. 38, as cited in Benjamin 2007, p. 207, n.221.

²⁶ Torday 1997, p. 108.

²⁷ Mallory and Mair 2000, p. 56.

²⁸ Abdullaev 2007, pp. 84-86.

²⁹ Benjamin 2007, p. 189.

³⁰ C. Rapin, 1992, p. 287-294.

An explanation of the Yuezhi conquest of Bactria and the later conquest of Kao-fu by the Kushan is envisioned by Laszlo Torday as follows: “One can easily visualise a young Kuei-shuang prince and his fellow noblemen leading the southern K’ang-chü elements across the Oxus to subdue Ta Hsia and hold it in sway on behalf of the Yüeh-shih king. In 128 BC Chang would write about these ‘petty chiefs ruling the various cities’ in a country which had ‘no great ruler’. Four decades after Chang left the region, the descendants of these ‘petty chiefs’ would be fully-fledged *hsi-hou*, virtual masters of Ta Hsia, though still nominally loyal to their Yüeh-shih overlord. It is not surprising that a descendant of the most highly born among them, the *hsi-hou* Kuei-shuang, should later have eliminated his fellow barons and seized the throne of the Yüeh-shih king. The Han were evidently unaware of the blood-tie between the ruling house of K’ang-chü and the ‘kings of Ta Yüeh-shih’ until AD 84 when they discovered (according to a notice in HHS 74) that the two royal families had ‘recently’ become ‘related by marriage’.” ...Comparing the list of the five *yabghus* in HS 96 and HHS 118 reveals a discrepancy which cannot be glossed over. In the *Han Shu* the fifth *yabghu* is named Kao-fu (Kabul) while in the *Hou Han Shu* he is called Tu-mi (Termez). The author Fan Yeh was determined to put the record straight by insisting that the *Han Shu* list was anachronistic: *Kaofu never belonged to the Yüeh-shih* [during the Early Han period]. *When the Han Shu makes it one of the five hsi-hou, this is incorrect. Later it belonged to An-shi* [in this context to Gondophares] *and after the Yüeh-shih defeated An-shi, [it was then that] for the first time they possessed Kao-fu* (with text in [] brackets by Laszlo Torday).”³¹

The western itinerary of the Yuezhi like the one sustained by Laszlo Torday is contested by Claude Rapin who thinks that “when this nomad group reached the frontiers of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, the Zerafshan valley was then already occupied by the Sakaraucae – or a neighbouring people – which had destroyed Samarkand around 145 B.C.”³² As can be inferred from the discoveries made at Aï Khanum, it seems that the Yuezhi penetrated in the Oxus region through the Karategin (meanwhile, indeed, Zhang Qian arrived through Ferghana). Therefore, Jianshi has not to be searched in the Kashka Darya valley, which was then already occupied by the Kangju, successors of the Sakaraucae, but on the east of the Iron Gates.”³³

A recent study of Frantz Grenet, using detailed and valuable information from François Thierry³⁴, locates Jianshi near Khulm (south of the Amu Darya, west of Bactra) and the five *yabghus* north of the Amu Darya: (i) “Gaofu” with capital “Gaofu” at the lower Sherabad and Surkhan river valleys³⁵, (ii) “Shuangmi” with capital “Shuangmi” at the upper Surkhan Darya, “Xidun” with capital “Bomao” at the lower Kafirnigan valley, (iii) “Xiumi” with capital “Hemo” at the upper Wakhsh, and (v) “Gueishuang” (Kushan) with the capital “Hucao” at the lower Wakhsh (Oxus) and the Darya-i Pandj (Ochus) river valley towards Aï Khanum.³⁶

³¹ Torday 1997, pp. 389-392.

³² Rapin 2007, pp. 48-49: “...the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom ...was apparently conquered through two routes: the first followed the most direct road from Chinese Turkestan to Bactria along the north eastern valley of Karategin in Tadjikistan, the Comedai of the ancients; the second led to conquest from the west, from the northern regions and by various tracks that crossed the Semirechie or the Ferghana valley, then the Ustrushana (between the Syr-darya and Djizak) towards the Zerafshan valley. In the same period, the western part of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom suffered pressure from the Parthians.”

³³ Claude Rapin (private communication March 17th, 2008) will develop this opinion in a study on the cartographical organisation of the Central Asia detailed by Zhang Qian (forthcoming).

³⁴ Thierry 2005

³⁵ Grenet 2006, p. 334: “Pour la localisation du Gaofu originel, il existe une solution beaucoup plus simple, qui rend directement compte du remplacement de ce nom par celui de Termez: c’est qu’il s’agit de la même région, le Kuffân des sources arabes, le région montagneuse du Kuhitang (les Montes Oxien de Ptolémée), avec le bassin du Sherabad-darya et sans doute aussi le bas Surkhan-darya. **kâu-b’iu*, **kauh-bôh*, doit refléter la forme iranienne ancienne **kaufa-* «montagne, pays de collines», don Kuffân est la forme moyen-iranienne doublement suffixée (pluriel sogdien –*t*, suffixe de nom de lieu – *ân*)”.

³⁶ Grenet 2006, map on p. 341.

At Xuanquan at Dunhuang researchers have found most interesting inscribed slips of the Han Dynasty, dated from the first century BC. Documents dated 87-49 and 84-73 BC mention ambassadors of the “king of the Da Yuezhi” whereas there are later documents from *xihou* ambassadors: A document from 43 BC on “Wanruo, the ambassador of the *xihou* of Shuangmi of Dayuezhi” and another document from 37 BC informs about an “escort [...] *xihou* of Ximu of the Da Yuezhi.”³⁷ Frantz Grenet provided the following comment on these documents: “Ceci évidemment laisse ouverte la possibilité que les hordes auxquelles commandaient les *yabghus* n’étaient pas composée uniquement de Yuezhi”.³⁸ He points out the possibility that in the time period 80 – 50 BC the Yuezhi lost their royal supremacy and that the power vacuum then was filled through “re-unification” of the five *yabghus* by Kujula Kadphises.³⁹

There is important analysis on the relationship between the Yuezhi and the Kushan by Taishan Yu as cited in an article by Xinru Liu⁴⁰: “The presence of the Sakas and the Scythians in Bactria was obvious even under the rule of the Kushan. Yu Taishan argued that the five tribes, or *Xihou* as recorded in the Chinese history, unified by the Kushan were not necessarily from the Yuezhi, because the *Xihou* was not a known institution in the Yuezhi structure before they entered Bactria. The *Xihou* were probably tribal chiefs in Bactria before the Yuezhi and were assigned by the Yuezhi ruler to maintain order there.”^{41, 42} “As for the statement ‘all the five *Xihou* are subject to the Da Yuezhi’ it shows precisely that all the five *Xihou* were not Da Yuezhi.”⁴³

Taishan Yu explains in “A Study of Sakā History”: {“The Sai tribes as seen in *Hanshu*, ch. 96A, must have been the Sakās of the Behistun inscription of Darius I (521-486 B.C.) of Achaemenian Persia. The Sai or Sakās were mainly made up of the four tribes the Asii, the Gasiani [*sic*], the Tochari and the Sacarauli. By the end of the 7th century B.C. the Asii and other tribes had already lived in the valleys of the Rivers Ili and Chu. They were called “Issedones” in the “Arimaspea”, a long epic written by a Greek poet, Aristaeus of Proconnesus, to describe what he had seen and heard during his journey to Central Asia. “Issedones” may be a transcription of “Asii”. It seems to show that the Asii and the other tribes had already formed a tribal confederacy, which gave first place to the Asii. As late as the 520s B.C. the Asii and the other tribes extended westwards as far as the right bank of the Syr Darya, from the valleys of the Rivers Ili and Chu, and drove away the Massagetae, who originally lived there. After that, they were called “Sakās” by the Persians. In around 177/176 B.C., the Sai tribes were forced to give up the valleys of the Ili Rivers and Chu because of migration of the Da Yuezhi. Some of them moved south and split and separated in the Pamir Region and then moved east and entered the oases in the Tarim Basin. In around 140 B.C., large numbers of the Sakās crossed the Syr Darya and moved south. A group of them entered Ferghāna and another group, Bactria. The latter destroyed the Greek kingdom of Bactria. The states they founded were respectively noted as Dayuan and Daxia in the *Shiji*, ch. 123. Both “Da-yuan” [dat-iuat] and “Da-xia” [dat-hea] appear to have been transcriptions of “Tochari”, which seemed to show that those who founded both of the states were mainly the Tochari. At about the same time, another group of the Sakās (who were mainly made up of the Asii) migrated to the littoral of the Aral Sea and the Caspian Sea going downstream along the Syr Darya. These Sakās were noted as “Yancai”, but those who remained on the northern bank of the Syr Daria were known as “Kangju” in the *Shiji*, ch. 123. “Yan-cai” [iam-tziat] may be taken as a transcription of “Asii” and “Kang-ju” [kang-kia] may be taken as “Saca[rauli]”, as [ki(kang)] would be palatalised to [si(sa)]. Therefore, the former were mainly the Asii and the latter, the Sacarauli. In 130 B.C., the Wusun made an expedition to the Da Yuezhi; they defeated the latter and occupied the valleys of the Rivers Ili and Chu. The

³⁷ Grenet 2006, p. 339 and n. 39 providing the Chinese references

³⁸ Grenet 2006, p. 339.

³⁹ Grenet 2006, p. 340 and n. 40: “La phrase laconique de Justin (prologue au Livre 42) *reges Tocharorum Asiani interitusque Saraucarum* indique-t-elle l’abolition temporaire de la royauté Yuezhi du fait de la domination des Asiani (Alains)?”

⁴⁰ Liu 2001, page 277.

⁴¹ Yu 1998, p. 30 and n. 33 on p. 41.

⁴² Also cited by Hill 2003.

⁴³ Yu 1998, n. 50 on p. 43.

Da Yuezhi once more migrated west and reached the valley of the Amu Darya, defeating Daxia and occupying their territory. Thereupon, the state of Wusun and the Da Yuezhi, as described in *Shiji*, ch. 123, were established. On the other hand, some of the Sakās who lived in the Pamir region passed through a natural barrier, which was known as “Suspended Crossing”, and invaded Gandhāra and Taxila, driving away the Greek rulers and founding the state of Jibin as recorded in *Hanshu*, ch. 96. The date was not earlier than 129 B.C. The second western migration of the Da Yuezhi also drove some of the Sakās to invade the Parthian Persia from Sogdiana and Tukhārestān, and to occupy Drangiana and Arachosia. Drangiana was consequently called Sakāstan. These Sakās had once been crushed by Mithridates II (124/123-87B.C.) but they proclaimed independence soon after the latter had died. The state of Wuyishanli described in the *Hanshu*, ch. 96, was in fact the kingdom of the Sakās, whose political center was in Sakāstan. After they had occupied the territory of the Daxia, the Da Yuezhi ruled Bactra and its surrounding area directly, and controlled the eastern mountain region by means of the so-called five Xihou. The five Xihou were all Daxia, who were propped up and used as puppets by the Da Yuezhi. Qiujique, the Gueishuang Xihou, who overthrew the power of the Da Yuezhi, and established the Kushān kingdom, must have been the descendant of the Gasiani, one of the Sakā tribes which invaded Bactria. The state of Guishuang described in the *Hou Hanshu*, ch. 88, may also be considered to have been established by the Sakās. “Guishuang” [giuēt-shiang] must have been a transcription of “Gasiani”.⁴⁴

Taishan Yu further points out that “the Sai tribes, which appeared in the valleys of the Ili and Chu rivers by the end of the seventh century B.C. had possibly come from the east: “The precursors of the Asii, the Tochari, the Gasiani and the Sacarauli seem to have been the Rong of the surname Yun, the Daxia, the Yuzhi and the Suoju who appeared in pre-Qin records and books. In 623 B.C., Duke Mu of Qin, dominated the Western Rong and opened up territories which extended for 1,000 *li*. This event possibly caused the Sai tribes’ westerly migration.”⁴⁵

The Kushan dynastic temple (Figure 3) from Khalchayan^{46,47}, located along the upper Surkhan river (ancient Pareitakene – region of the “rock” of Chorienes of the time of Alexander the Great, see Figure 1), shows most interesting reliefs which can be interpreted as a narration of this transition from Yuezhi to Kushan lordship.

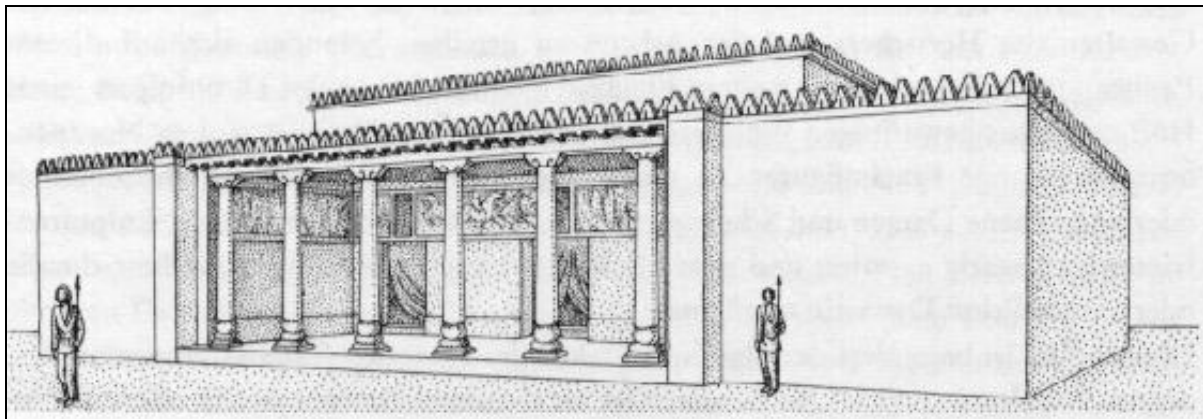


Figure 3: Reconstruction of the Kushan dynastic temple from Khalchayan⁴⁷

One relief shows a seated king with five standing warriors / princes next to him (Figure 4). The focus is on one of these princes standing at the right side of the seated ruler. This prince holds a heavy cavalry armour. A goddess standing in a horse driven chariot, probably Nana - the Kushan goddess of investiture⁴⁸, is ready to meet him.

⁴⁴ Yu 1998, Introduction pp. 1-2.

⁴⁵ Yu 2000, Introduction pp. 1-2.

⁴⁶ Pugachenkova, Dar, Sharma, and Joyenda 1994, pp. 339-345.

⁴⁷ Stawiski 1979, pp. 91-103.

⁴⁸ Ghose 2006



Figure 4: Reconstruction of one side relief of the Kushan dynastic temple from Khalchayan⁴⁷

Thus, this relief most likely shows the seated Yuezhi ruler with his lesser kings, the five *hsi-hou* who ruled Daxia. The full plastic statue of the standing prince taking up the royal warrior suit could be nearly completely restored (Figure 5) and shows an impressive portrait. The eyes have an oblique position, induced or reinforced⁴⁹ by the artificial skull deformation.



Figure 5: Standing prince with royal warrior suit of the Khalchayan Kushan dynastic temple⁴⁷



Figure 6: Coins of the “Tyrant *Hsi-Hou Sanab* (repulser of an enemy⁵⁰) Kushan”:
 a) Tetradrachm (Ø 29/30mm)^{51,52, 53}, b) Obol (Ø 12mm)⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Abdullaev 2003), footnote 15: “It is possible that the oblique position of the eye was reinforced by the skull deformation”.

⁵⁰ Rtveladze 1997, cited in ONS Newsletters No. 160, p. 9 (Oriental Numismatic Society, Summer 1999).

⁵¹ Obtained at the 57th auction of H.D. Rauch, Vienna, Austria, lot no. 89, (April 4th, 1996)

⁵² Göbl 1978, Vol. 2, plate 113, coin no. 2324.

Already in 1966 Galina A. Pugachenkova, the excavator of Khalchayan, has pointed to the similarity between this portrait sculpture and the coins of “Heraios”.¹³ Figure 6 shows impressive portraits on tetradrachm and obol coin examples.

In two Xiongnu kurgans (Kurgan 6 and Kurgan 25) in Noin-Ula, located in present day eastern Mongolia, precious “Bactrian carpets” were found. One of these shows a “Heraios” type portrait (Figure 7). Kurgan 6 is the tomb of the Xiongnu Shanju Wu-chu-li Jo-ti-hsien and could be dated exactly to 12/13 AD⁵⁵. The carpets in Kurgan 6 and Kurgan 25 are from the same fabric.⁵⁵ Thus this date provides an estimate for the earliest possible start of the reign of the “Tyrant Hsi-Hou Kushan”: Assuming that the Xiongnu emperor died at the age of 70 and that he received the carpet as a present when he started his rule at an age of 20, the start of the reign of the *Hsi-Hou* Kushan (“Heraios”) might be prior to 40 BC.



Figure 7: Detail of a “Bactrian carpet” from Kurgan 25 of the Xiongnu tombs at Noin-Ula^{55,56}



Figure 8: Terracotta medallion from Khalchayan⁵⁵

The centre relief (Figure 9), above the entrance to the sanctuary room at the Khalchayan dynastic temple, shows a seated emperor and queen, with princes and princesses on their sides, and on a lower throne, a further seated royal couple⁵⁷ with – according to Galina A. Pugachenkova – “Parthian appearance”.

Most probably the seated king in the centre of the panel shows Kujula Kadphises, the first Yuezhi / Kushan emperor. This interpretation is supported by rare coins⁵⁸ (Figure 10) of Kujula Kadphises where the king wears a similar royal hood, not known from other Kushan emperors.

Galina A. Pugachenkova also found a terracotta medallion in Khalchayan showing a seated king who wears this early type of a Kushan crown (Figure 8).⁵⁹ A flying Nike is placing the wreath of investiture on the emperors head, the same motif as visible on the reverse of the Tyrant Kushan 4Δ coin (Figure 6a). There is very rare AE coinage of the “Heraus type” in the name of Kujula Kadphises^{60,61,62} pointing to the close connection between the first Kushan emperor and the “*Hsi-hou* Kushan”.

⁵³ Alram 1986, pp. 294-295 and Plate 40, coin no. 1263.

⁵⁴ Donated to the author by Indusnumis, UK (June 2007).

⁵⁵ Stawiski 1979, Figure 55 and p. 83

⁵⁶ Seipel 1996, p. 316, Abb. 178.

⁵⁷ Maybe residing as “lesser king of the Kushan emperor” in the Shiberghan oasis west of Bactra / Balch, where at Tillia Tepe, (“golden hill”) in 1979 a Soviet–Afghanian archaeology team under Viktor Sarianidi excavated six tombs: Schiltz 2006.

⁵⁸ Senior 2001, Vol. II, p. 219, coins B4.1D and B4.2D. Photographs of the coins were taken by Walt Dobbins (Robert C. Senior, private communication, Jan 30th, 2008).

⁵⁹ Stawiski 1979, pp. 90-103 and Figure 75.

⁶⁰ Cribb 1993, Plate XXVII, coins no. 155 and no. 156.



Figure 9: Reconstruction of the centre relief of the Kushan dynastic temple from Khalchayan⁴⁷



Figure 10: Silver coins of Kujula Kadphises (diameter: ca. 16mm)⁵⁸

At the Khalchayan dynastic temple there are additional reliefs with battle scenes (Figure 11) where the Bactrian artist treated the images of the adversaries of the Kushan / Yuezhi in a grotesque manner. According to Kazim Abdullaev “it is possible to identify all these grotesque personages with long side-whiskers as enemies of the Yuezhi and relate them to the Sakaraules....iconographically they are very close to the representations on the early coins with the archer on the reverse..., which have mainly been found in the regions of Samarkand and Bukhara”⁶³.



Figure 11: Reliefs of the Khalchayan dynastic temple, at left with battle scenes⁶⁴

⁶¹ Alram 1986, p. 302 and Plate 41, coin no. 1283.

⁶² Senior 2001, Vol. II, p. 219: coin no. B3.1T.

⁶³ Abdullaev 2007, pp. 89-94.

⁶⁴ Pugachenkova, Dar, Sharma, and Joyenda 1994, p. 341, Figure 11.

Edvard Rtveladze informs: “In north-eastern Bactria, in the zone bordering the Amu Darya and probably in the south-eastern part of that region as well, Kushan tetradrachms and obols of Heraus and his successors were circulating....no finds at all of Kujula Kadphises coins, which occurred in large numbers in Taxila, for example. This testifies to the fact that Northern Tokharistan still did not belong to the Kushans during the reign of that king and was only conquered by them when Soter Megas (Wima Takto) was in power.”⁶⁵ In contest to this statement it is pointed out that Kujula Kadphises most likely issued posthumous Heliocles coins in Tokharistan as his successor Wima I Takto continued to use this money type, adding on some rare issues his *tamgha* on the rump of the prancing horse on the coin reverse⁶⁶.

A “king Kushan” is cited in the Panjtar Kharoshthi inscription, dated in year 122 (probably of the Azes Era) and on the Taxila silver scroll Kharoshthi inscription, dated Azes 136. Furthermore at Mat in India there is a Brahmi inscription where Wima is named *Kushanoputro*, i.e. son of “Kushan” (through the Rabatak inscription⁶⁷ there is knowledge now that this inscription refers to Wima I Takto and not to Wima II Kadphises). Because of these circumstances Joe Cribb has identified Kujula Kadphises with “Heraios / The Kushan” based on the inscription of the “Tyrant Kushan” coin (Figure 6a).⁶⁸ But probably the ruler of the Kushan empire was named “The Kushan” like in Rome the emperors were called “Caesar” or “Augustus” and the Indo-Parthians used the title “Gondophares” (Vindapharna – Old Persian for ‘Winner of Glory’⁶⁹). Therefore, the identification of “Heraios / The Kushan” with Kujula Kadphises is a possibility but not probable as outlined above using the narrative message of the panel sculptures of the Khalchayan dynastic temple which most probably was erected during the reign of Wima I Takto.

A famous issue of Kujula Kadphises is shown in Figure 12, obviously inspired by a Roman coin type, first issued in c. 30/29 BC⁷⁰ by Octavian / Augustus (Figure 13).



Figure 12: AE coin (Δ) of Kujula Kadphises⁷¹,
Ø 17.5/18.5mm



Figure 13: Denarius of Octavian / Augustus⁷²,
Italian mint (Rome?), 30/29 BC, Ø 19mm

Assuming 10 years between the Roman and the Kushan coin issues, there is definitely the possibility that the reign of Kujula Kadphises started as early as c. 20 BC, i.e. “more than 100 years after the c. 130 BC Yuezhi conquest of Daxia” referring to the Chinese sources.

On the coins there is a transformation of the ruler’s title *hsi-hou* from HIAOV/H β AOY (Figure 6a) to ZAOOY (Figure 12; on the reverse in Kharoshthi the title is written as “Yavusa/Yavugasa” for *yabghu*). Sir Alexander Cunningham noted: “According to the Chinese all the kings of the *Tuholo* or Tochari, bore the title of *Shao-wu*, which is transliterated in Greek by ZAOOY, or *Zavu*, on the coins of Kozola Kadaphes, and in Gandharian letters by *Yavūa* on some and by *Yaūga* on others. I take this to be the same title as β AO, or *Shao*, on the coins of the later Kings

⁶⁵ Rtveladze 2007, pp. 89-94.

⁶⁶ Cribb 2007, pp. 352-353, Figures 77 and 82, and p. 365.

⁶⁷ Sims-Williams and Cribb 1995/96

⁶⁸ Cribb 1993, p. 131.

⁶⁹ Senior 2001, Vol. I, pp. 108-110

⁷⁰ Mattingly 1928, p. 294 and Plate XL / 1

⁷¹ Obtained at the former coin shop “Numismatica”, Vienna, Austria, April 1970.

⁷² Obtained at CNG Auction 180, lot 121, Jan. 23rd, 2008.

Kanishka, Huvishka, and Vâsu-deva, and the *Shâhi* of the Indian inscriptions of Kanishka and Vâsu-deva.”⁷³ The later coinage of Kujula Kadphises uses already the emperor title (in Kharoshthi) “Maharayasa Rayatirayasa Devaputrâsa Kuyula Kara Kapasa (Kushanasa)”⁷⁴, reflecting that the Kushan rulers were venerated as “heavenly sons of the gods”.

That there was already intense trade between Central Asia and Rome in the early first century AD is testified by the deposit of an aureus of Tiberius (minted in Lugdunum between 16 and 21 AD ⁷⁵) as found in tomb 3 at Tilia-Tepe.⁷⁶

This Roman coin finding at Tilia-Tepe is much earlier compared with the deposit at Ahin Posh near Jalalabad, where gold coins of Wima Kadphises, Kanishka I and Huviska were found together with aurei from Domitian, Trajan and Sabina. The coin of Sabina is described as “much worn” and this argument has been used by Robert Göbl to place this deposit to the third century AD⁷⁷, overlooking arguments that the coin “seems to have greatly suffered by being exposed to heat.”⁷⁸

There is a Azes year 103 inscription which is allocated by Joe Cribb⁶⁸ to Kujula Kadphises. As pointed out by B.N. Puri this “Takht-i Bahi inscription” of the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares is dated in the twenty-sixth year of his reign. “Its reference to *erjhuna kapa* suggests the presence of Kujula Kadphises as a prince at the court of the Indo-Parthian king.”⁷⁹ This allocation is questioned by Robert C. Senior who attributes this inscription to the second successor of Gondophares I the Great, i.e. to Gondophares-Sases.^{80, 81}

In his rejoinder Michael Fedorov raised the question “Where are the Saka?” in the conquest of Bactria.¹ As pointed out above the conquest was twofold, by Saka tribes in the 145 - 140 BC time frame and 130/129 BC by the Yuezhi supported by lesser kings.

There are important Western sources as put together by Craig G.R. Benjamin: {“Strabo [XI, 8.2] wrote, in a general discussion of the Scythian ‘peoples’: “*But the best known of the nomads are those who took away Bactriana from the Greeks, I mean the Asii, Pasiani, Tochari and Sacarauli, who originally came from the country on the other side of the Jaxartes River (Syr Darya) that adjoins that of the Sacae and the Sogdiani and was occupied by the Sacae.*” In Justin’s Prologue to Pompeius Trogus’ Book XLI there is the information: “*Since then it has been ruled by Scythian people, the Saraucae and the Asiani, who occupied Bactria and Sogdia*” and later, in the Prologue to the Book XLII, there is the important addition “*Reges Tocharorum*”

⁷³ Cunningham 1893/4, p. 113.

⁷⁴ Senior 2001, Vol. II, p. 220, coins B11.1 and B11.2.

⁷⁵ Zeymal 1999, p. 240.

⁷⁶ “Afghanistan, les trésors retrouvés” (Musée national des Arts d’asiatiques - Guimet, Paris, France, 2006), Œuvre exposée no. 95 and p. 276.

⁷⁷ Göbl 1993, pp. 22-23.

⁷⁸ Gardner 1886, page li. “The reigns of the Roman imperial persons in this deposit cover the period 81-136 AD; and this proves that the deposit cannot have been buried until about 130 AD, probably in the reign of Hoerkes”. He adds an important footnote: “Sabina came to the throne in 128. The coin of her issue, now preserved in the British Museum, is not as stated by previous writers ‘much worn,’ but seems to have greatly suffered, whether in ancient or modern times, by being exposed to heat. The coin of Trajan is worn.”

⁷⁹ Puri 1994, p. 248.

⁸⁰ Senior 1997, footnote 24: “Most implausibly it is suggested by some scholars that this mention of a ‘Prince Kapa’ is a reference to Kara Kujula Kadphises. With the chronology proposed here it would be impossible though it *could* be possible if the Takht-i Bahi inscription is dated in an era beginning c. 129/8 BC and *does* refer to Gondophares The First. The inscription would then have been inscribed c. 25 BC and since I date Kujula Kadphises to c. 25 BC to c. AC 25 it could fit. However, I regard this as impossible since the inscription is almost certainly dated in the Azes-Vikrama era. Why too would a powerful Kushan ruler want to be referred to on a minor dedication mentioning his rival from a different ethnic group?”

⁸¹ Senior 2001, Vol. I, p. 125

Asiani interitusque Saraucarum”, i.e. “The Asiani became kings of the Tochari and (then) annihilated the Saka king (in Bactria)”.^{82,83}

Confusion was caused by some interpretations of Strabo’s message who most likely put together events from different times into one statement that (implicitly, though not explicitly) at the same time the Asii, Pasiani⁸⁴, Tochari and Sacarauuli took away Bactria from the Greeks.

The presently wide-spread assumption that the Yuezhi can be identified with the Tocharians⁸⁵ and the Asiani with the Kushans^{86,87} is contested by the detailed analysis of Taishan Yu in “A Study of Sakā History”⁴⁴ as outlined above.

Meanwhile the Asii-Asiani could be the Kangju on the West of Derbent and not the Kushans, Claude Rapin considers that “on a cultural point of view the Kushans east of Derbent differed from the proto-Sarmatians and proto-Alans identified on the west of this frontier in the necropolis of Sogdiana and in the tombs of Tillia-Tepe. As he was not Kushan, the king of Tillia-Tepe could have belonged to a southern tribe of the Kangju federation, which occupied western Bactria before the definitive victory of the Kushans (as can be inferred from the date of these tombs it means that this Kushan victory occurred in the 1st century AD, and not before our era). “Reges Tocharorum Asiani” means that for a while the Tochari-Kushans have been under the power of the Asiani-Kangju, with a territorial distinction between the peoples. The modern translations of the Prologue XLII are rarely correct, as the original text is grammatically erroneous because it has probably been cut by a lacuna and has no verb: the meaning could be ‘[facts] of the period when the Asiani dominated the Tochari and of the end of the Sacaraucae’.”⁸⁸

On ‘*Scythicae gentes, Saracae et Asiani, Bactra occupauere et Sogdianos*’ Claude Rapin comments: “As there are no literary references to the first Saka who conquered Eastern Bactria, the information provided by the Graeco-Roman sources and available to the West seems to concern mainly the western edge of the Graeco-Bactrian world, the nearest region to the Parthian kingdom and “Bactria” means the Graeco-Bactrian Kingdom in the period when it was deprived from the Sogdian part with Samarkand. On the other hand, some territories had probably changing extensions before the strengthening of the frontier of Derbent: the Sacaraucae occupied probably Sogdiana from the region of Samarkand to Oxiana on the right bank of the Amu Darya in the region of the Sherabad and Surkhan Darya; we do not know if later the Kangju occupied Oxiana, but it is probable that they occupied also a part of western Bactria south of the Oxus (cfr Tillia-Tepe), before they abandoned the southern part of central Asia and were limited in their expansion in the Kushan territory by the wall of Derbent.”⁸⁸

As Michael Fedorov pointed out in his rejoinder, citing the *Hou Han Shu*: “...One hundred years and odd later Ch’iu-chiu-ch’ueh, *hsi-hou* of the Kuei-shuang, attacked and destroyed four *hsi-hou*, became independent (underlined by HL) and set himself on the throne”.¹

⁸² Benjamin 2007, pp. 184-185.

⁸³ According to Claude Rapin (private communication March 17th, 2008), “it must be precised by the words... ‘*who originally came from the country of the other side of the Jaxartes River (Syr Darya) that adjoins that of the Sacae and the Sogdiani and was occupied by the Sacae*’ could be referred only to the Sacaraucae, and not necessarily also to the Asiani, Pasiani and Tochari.

⁸⁴ Rapin 2007, p. 58, footnote 43: “The ethnonym ‘[P]asiano’ is probably an erroneous form resulting from the fusion of the Greek ‘or’ {the letter *eta* being confused with *pi*} and “*Asiano’ (original form of the textual source: ‘Asioi or Asiano’...”

⁸⁵ Benjamin 2007, pp. 186-187.

⁸⁶ Leriche 1988, p. 341.

⁸⁷ Abdullaev 2007, p. 75.

⁸⁸ Claude Rapin, private communication March 31st, 2008.

Kujula Kadphises has been identified with Ch'iu-chiu-ch'ueh.⁸⁹ He ousted Gondophares (who before had been successful to build up his huge “Indo-Parthian” empire) from the Kabul region, as testified by Robert C. Senior through careful analysis of the posthumous Hermaios coinage.⁹⁰

Many ethnical groups have been incorporated into the Kushan domains as is usually the case for an empire of nomadic origin. Despite of this fact there are indications about the mother tongue of the Kushan elite: According to János Harmatta there is high probability that the Kushan rulers spoke a Saka language⁹¹ (“Khotanese Saka”, language distribution shown in “The Tarim Mummies” of J.P. Mallory and Victor H. Mair⁹²). János Harmatta pointed out that this Saka language is very similar to the Bactrian language as outlined in his analysis of the Dasht-e Nawur inscriptions (DN I in Bactrian, DN III in Khotanese Saka).⁹¹

Nicholas Sims-Williams pointed out that “the Kushans, or more generally the Yuezhi, introduced some ‘Saka’ elements into the Bactrian language, including of course the hypocoristic suffix - (η)βκο. In the *Prologues* of Pompeius Trogus, we read that ‘Scythian tribes’, amongst them the Asiani, seized Bactra and Sogdiana, and that later ‘the Asiani became kings of the Tochari’....If the Kushans were indeed the royal family of the Asiani or Asii, the likely ancestors of the Ossetes, we need not be surprised to find Scythian elements in the names of their kings.”⁹³ “It seems to me virtually certain that the Aryan language referred to in the Rabatak inscription is Bactrian, and that by this time -- after several generations in Bactria -- the Kushans had adopted the Bactrian language as their own. But their names, especially those ending in *-shk*, are clearly not Bactrian. They probably belong to another Iranian language, perhaps Saka/Scythian, but that is not an absolute certainty.”⁹⁴

János Harmatta translated the Dasht-e Nawur inscription DN I as follows: “[Era-year] 279, 15th [day of the month] Gorpaios. King of Kings, the noble, great Ooemo Takpiso, The Kuṣāṇa ,,,”.⁹¹ He allocated this inscription to Wima Kadphises as the existence of Wima I Takto was not yet known at the time of his study.

János Harmatta pointed also to a further most important unfinished Bactrian inscription from Surkh Kotal: “Era-year 299, on the 9th [day] of [month] Dios. King of Kings Ooēmo Takpiso, the Majesty, the Kuṣāṇa, had the canal d[ug here]”, together with the following statement: “Very likely, Wima Kadphises died after the completion of the canal and before the finishing of the inscription. Thus, he assured the water supply for the building operations which were probably continued by his successor Kanishka without interruption. Therefore, the inscription witnessing the building activity of Wima Kadphises at Surkh Kotal was never finished.”⁹¹

With the Rabatak inscription the previous error in the allocation of the Dasht-e Nawur inscription could be corrected, i.e. to allocate the inscription in the Unknown Era year 279 to Wima I Takto.

In 1996/1999 Joe Cribb commented the “Unknown Era” as follows: {“The Kushan kings are recorded using two eras in their inscriptions other than the Azes and Kanishka Eras....Once the Kushans were in possession of former Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian territory...they appear to have adopted a completely different dating system. Two clear examples of its use are the Dasht-e Nawur inscription of Wima I Tak[to] dated 279 and the Khalatse inscription of Wima II Kadphises dated 284 or 287. There are less clear inscriptions from Surkh Kotal which also seem to be dated according to the same era....Is it possible that during the reign of Wima I Tak[to] the Kushans invented an historical era for themselves out of an event in their own history?....The Unknown Era’s association with the kings Wima I Tak[to] and Wima II Kadphises suggests that it should be recognised as the era of two early Kushan inscriptions found at

⁸⁹ Sims-Williams 1998

⁹⁰ Senior 2000, p. 62.

⁹¹ Harmatta 1994, pp. 418-420 and 422-427.

⁹² Mallory and Mair 2000, Figure 160 on p. 301.

⁹³ Sims-Williams 2002, p. 240.

⁹⁴ Nicholas Sims-Williams, private communication March 27th, 2008.

Mathura. These inscriptions dated 270...and 299....refer respectively to the ‘Great King’ and the ‘Great King, King of Kings’....If this attribution of the year 270 and 299 inscriptions is accepted this provides a new closer margin within which to limit the first year of the Kanishka Era. The latest recorded date of Kujula Kadphises is the Azes year 136 of the Taxila inscription, i.e. AD 78. There must now be at least 30 years (270-299) between this date and the first year of the Kanishka Era. The earliest possible date for year 270 is during AD 78 (i.e. the Unknown Era commenced in 193 BC or soon after), so the earliest possible date for Kanishka Era year 1 is AD 107.⁹⁵

Joe Cribb questioned the above cited year 299 Surkh Kotal inscription and dated the Khalatse inscription to year 284 or 287.⁹⁶

The allocation of the Unknown Era year 299 to the last year of the reign of Wima II Kadphises led to a conflicting situation with (i) the allocation of Kanishka Year 1 to 127 AD as pushed forward by Harry Falk⁹⁷ and (ii) the finding of Richard Salomon⁹⁸ that the Yona (Greek) Era probably started in 186/5 BC (by Demetrios I, crushing the Mauryan empire) under the assumption that the Azes Era equals the Vikrama Era, started 58/57 BC.

As a consequence Joe Cribb recently contested the common view that the great Indo-Scythian Azes started his reign in 58/7BC but instead proposed a start of the Azes Era in 46 BC⁹⁹ which explains itself by the 128 year time span between the Yona Era and the Azes Era⁹⁸ and subtracting 299+2 years from 127 AD (127 AD - 299 - 2 + 128 = 46 BC).

However, when correctly allocating the year 299 to the last year of Wima I Takto¹⁰⁰ at first hand there is no conflict to identify the Unknown Era with the Yona Era started in 186/5 BC as then the last year of his reign is 112/3 AD, leaving sufficient time span for the reign of Wima II Kadphises until the start of the reign of Kanishka in 127 AD, as outlined for **Case B (KE1=127AD)** in Table 1. As a consequence the Khalatse inscription is allocated to the year 184 as was originally the case.¹⁰¹

But as outlined by Robert C. Senior, with a start of the Yona Era in 186/5 BC the start of the Apraca ruler Vijayamitra is fixed to 12 BC and the length of his reign until 19/20 AD (Figure 14). As a consequence the great Indo-Scythian king Azes (there is not a second one under this

⁹⁵ Cribb 1999, pp. 201-202

⁹⁶ Cribb 1992

⁹⁷ Falk 2001.

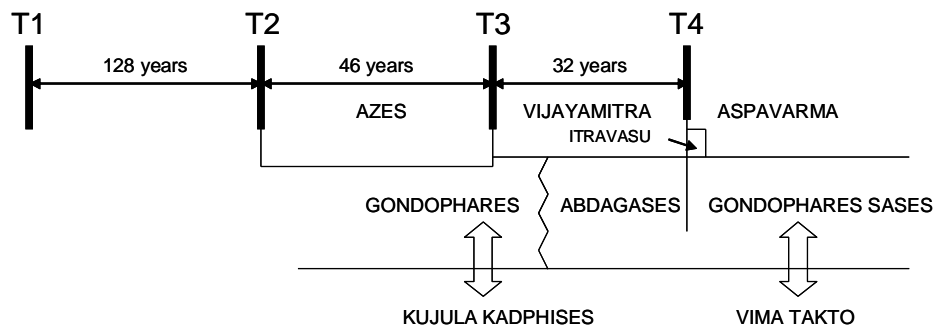
⁹⁸ Salomon 2005, pp. 366 and 370.

⁹⁹ Cribb 2005, p. 214.

¹⁰⁰ Bracey 2004: A wealth of valuable information, in particular also about inscriptions, is found on the website of Robert Bracey: www.kushan.org, in particular in the essay “A new discovery and a new problem“, where the UE 299 inscription is allocated to Wima I Takto.

¹⁰¹ A most important narrative is provided by Francke 1914, pp. 94-95: “On the 25th September, we marched to Khalatse, on the right bank of the Indus. Half a way we passed by a gorge which forms the entrance to the valley of the village of Tar. ... We arrived in Khalatse just in time to prevent the boulders containing the oldest inscriptions of Ladakh from being broken. There are several rocks near Khalatse bridge, bearing ancient Kharōshthi inscriptions, and one with an ancient Brāhmi inscription. As a new bridge was under construction, many boulders, some with interesting rock carvings and inscriptions had been blasted; and the boulder with the Brāhmi inscription had already been marked for blasting. I spoke to the Public Works overseer in charge, as well as to the authorities at Khalatse, and entreated them to preserve these invaluable stones. I hope that this may not have been in vain. We took photos of the Brāhmi, the longer Kharōshthi*, and the old Gupta inscriptions. ... * “Our photograph of the longer Kharōshthi inscriptions was sent to Professor Rapson of Cambridge. He writes in his letter of the 23rd September 1910, as follows: The title Maharajasa is quite clear. After this comes the name beginning with A and ending with the genitive termination sa. Four or five syllables intervene, but I am not quite certain about any of them. Above the king’s name is a date which I read – with some doubt as to whether three strokes at the end are part of the date or not – as 100 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 4 [+3]; that is to say 184 or 187”.

scenario) rules until 12BC and the great Indo-Parthian king Gondophares I until c. 5 BC followed by the Indo-Parthian kings Abdagases and Gondophares-Sases (19/20 – c. 50 AD).¹⁰²



	Unknown Era	T1 Yona Era	T2 Azes Era	T3	T4	Kanishka Era Year 1
Case A	c. 245 BC	186/5 BC	58/57 BC	12 BC	19/20 AD	78 AD
Case B	= Yona Era	186/5 BC	58/57 BC	12 BC	19/20 AD	127 AD
Case B*	208/6 BC	172/1 BC	44/3 BC	c. 0 AD	c. 30 AD	127 AD
Case C	= Yona Era	c. 120 BC	c. 5 AD	c. 45 AD	c. 75 AD	227 AD

Figure 14: Relationship between the Unknown Era, Yona Era and the Azes Era, the reign of the Apracaraja Vijayamitra, the first Indo-Parthian rulers and Kushan emperors for Cases A, B, B* and C, respectively, stimulated by a corresponding figure for Case A¹⁰².

This causes still unresolved conflicts within Case B as Kujula Kadphises is contemporary to Gondophares I whereas Wima I Takto is contemporary with Gondophares-Sases.

Because of these reasons Robert C. Senior has outlined in his publications that **Case A (KE1=78AD)** would solve the Indo-Scythian, Indo-Parthian and Kushan chronology issues (Table 1).

With allocation of year 299 of the Unknown Era not to Wima II Kadphises but correctly to the last year of the reign of Wima I Takto, for Case A the Unknown Era starts in c. 245, i.e. at the times when Sogdiana gained independence from Greek rule. Most likely during the reign of Wima I Tak[to] the Kushans came back to a historical era out of an important event in their own history. For Case A the year 184/7 Khalatse inscription cannot be attributed to the Azes Era but instead is attributed to the era of Maues (c. 120 – 85 BC¹⁰³).

Rejecting the common view that “Soter Megas” can be identified with Wima I Takto, Osmund Bopearachchi recently has put forward the hypothesis that Soter Megas was a usurper¹⁰⁴ who became powerful as the general installed by Kujula Kadphises to rule the conquered Indian territories. His chronology of the early Kushan empire is as follows:¹⁰⁵

Greek era founded by Graeco-Bactrian Demetrios	186/5 BC
Saka era of Vikrama era founded by Indo-Scythian Azes	57 BC
Reign of Gondophares, founder of the Indo-Parthian kingdom	AD 21-40
Reign of Kujula Kadphises, founder of the Kushan empire	AD 40-95 or 40-90
Reign of Wima Taktu	AD 95-100 or 90-95
Reign of the usurper Soter Megas	AD 97-110 or 105-127
Reign of Wima Kadphises	AD 100-127 or 105-127
Kanishka I	AD 127-150

¹⁰² Senior 2005/6, pp. vi - ix.

¹⁰³ Senior 2005

¹⁰⁴ The author thanks Claude Rapin for this reference and making this recent publication available.

¹⁰⁵ Bopearachchi 2007

But, in the authors' view, the only possibility to keep KE1=127AD is by shifting the Azes Era, in analogy to Joe Cribb, but taking into account that the Year 299 inscriptions should be attributed to Wima I Takto and that the Khalatse inscription has Year 184(187). This scenario is denoted as **Case B*** (Figure 14 and Table 2). The Khalatse inscription cannot anymore be attributed to the Azes Era and therefore is attributed to the Maues Era (as valid for Case A). This attribution is probable because of the location of the inscription¹⁰¹ in the heartland of Maues. As the king's name on the Khalatse inscription is not very clear¹⁰¹ the attribution to Kujula is a possibility.

For Case B* the start of the Yona Era is shifted to 172/1 BC, i.e. the start of the reign of Eucratides I^{8,9}. With 128 years between the Yona Era and the Azes Era, the latter starts in 44/43 BC. The Unknown Era, which cannot anymore be allocated to the Yona Era, starts for Case B* in 208/6 BC when under Euthydemus⁷ all parts of Sogdiana except the Oxiana east of Derbent gained independence from Graeco-Bactrian rule.

With respect to the “Kushano-Sasanian Era”, previously fixed to start 232/3 AD, an interesting analysis was recently provided by Martha Carter.¹⁰⁶ But this case is not applicable anymore because of the most important finding that the Kushano-Sasanian Era started in 223/4 AD and is the same as the Era of Ardashir I, the founder of the Sasanian empire.^{107,108}

At the 6th European Conference on Iranian Studies, Vienna, 18-22 September 2007, Nikolaus Schindel presented the talk “The Year 1 of the Kushan King Kanishka I”. He informed that the Year 1 of Kanishka I the Great may be allocated to 227 AD¹⁰⁹ based on his careful study of the Kushano-Sasanian coinage¹¹⁰ in connection with Sasanian numismatics¹¹¹. According to Nikolaus Schindel the analysis of Robert Göbl^{112,113,114}, though needing corrections in some details¹¹⁰, is largely valid (as was supported in 1996 by Michael Alram¹¹⁵). Further, the year 227 AD is explicitly outlined in the “*yuga* of Sphujiddhvaja”¹¹⁶ to be the start of the “Kushan Era”.

Frantz Grenet, adopting Kanishka Year 1 in 127 AD, pointed out recently that “the semi-independent dynasty of the Kushanshahs came into power after Bahram I (273-276 AD), maybe shortly afterwards, maybe after the rebellion of the eastern provinces in the early 280s....Peroz I Kushanshah's campaign in Gandhara took place in the early years of the ‘little Kushan’ Vasudeva II (whom Göbl, perhaps rightly, calls Vasudeva III), as the reverse of the victory coin is copied from the first issue of that long-reigned adversary (compare Göbl 1984, coins 555 and 569-70).”¹¹⁷

Kujula Kadphises definitely ruled in the first century AD and was a contemporary of Gondophares the Great. According to the Rabatak inscription he was the great-grandfather of Kanishka I.⁶⁷ Thus, with Case C an enormous time span has to be accomplished which, in principle, is possible if the Kushan emperors adopted a policy to choose their youngest son as successor. Assuming a long life span (for Ch'iu-chiu-ch'ueh identified with Kujula Kadphises the Chinese sources provide information that he died at an age above 80), **Case C (KE1 = 227 AD)** is an attempt to care for this situation (Table 3). Consistency with the established coin sequence is only possible by strongly shifting the Azes Era to c. 5 AD. Consequently the Yona Era, due the fixed time span of 128 years between these two eras, shifts to c. 120 BC, the start of the Maues Era.

¹⁰⁶ Carter 2006, pp. 81-84.

¹⁰⁷ Sims-Williams 2006/7, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰⁸ Sims-Williams 2007/8

¹⁰⁹ Nikolaus Schindel, private communication: Jan. 11th, 2008.

¹¹⁰ Schindel 2005

¹¹¹ Schindel 2004, pp. 245-248.

¹¹² Göbl 1984

¹¹³ Göbl 1993

¹¹⁴ Göbl 1999

¹¹⁵ Alram 1996, p. 124.

¹¹⁶ Falk 2001

¹¹⁷ Grenet, Lee, Martinez, and Ory 2007, n. 16 on pp. 259-260.

With Case C there is no Vasu Deva Kushan emperor in 230 AD, leading to the hypothesis that a high ranking Kushan official carrying the Vasudeva name (maybe a son of Kanishka I) must have visited the Wei¹¹⁸ in China at this time.

But Case C is probably ruled out to be possible with the surprising find of the Sasanian relief at Rag-i Bibi in Northern Afghanistan in 2002 showing a royal hunt of two Indian rhinoceroses with an obviously subordinated Kushan king assisting the horse mounted Sasanian emperor. As pointed out by Frantz Grenet there is very high probability that the royal hunter depicted in this outstanding rock relief is Shapur I (240-272).¹¹⁹ This finding is well in context with the novel Peroz-2 coin² showing on the reverse a Sasanian Oesho / Shiva placing the Kushan crown onto his head while taking off a mural crown to be attributed to Shapur I (Figure 15).

Summarizing, important studies of top numismatic experts still provide astounding substantial uncertainty in the chronology of the Kushan empire. The present study suggests that the uncertainty can be narrowed down between Case A (start of the Unknown Era in c. 245 BC, Yona Era in 186/5 BC, Azes = Vikrama Era in 58/57 BC, Kanishka = Saka Era in 78 AD, Kushan Era in 227 AD) and Case B* (start of the Unknown Era in 208/6 BC, Yona Era in 172/1 BC, Azes Era in 44/43 BC, Kanishka Era in 127 AD).

To gain certainty by “hard facts” is illusionary in the case of the radiocarbon dating of the “Senior scrolls”²: The 2-sigma radiocarbon dating 130 – 250 AD of these scrolls¹²⁰, dated in Kushan Era year (1)12, can be allocated to all three scenarios: for Case A to 78 + (1)12 = 190 AD, for Case B* to 127 + 12 = 139 AD, and for Case C to 227 + 12 = 239 AD. For Case A (Kanishka Year 1 = 78 AD) the Senior scrolls in a pot with inscribed year 12 are dated to 78 + (1)12 = 190 AD, at the very centre of the 2-sigma range of the radiocarbon dating².

As outlined, a start of the Kanishka Era in 127 AD is only possible by shifting the Azes Era from 58/57 BC to 44/3 BC (Case B*, Table 2).

For Case A the Unknown Era starts c. 245 BC where Bactria segregated from the Seleucid empire and major parts of Sogdiana gained (it's first) independence from Graeco-Bactrian supremacy.

As Case B is not consistent, this leaves Case A (Table 1) with a start of the Kanishka Era in 78 AD as the only possibility to keep the Azes Era in 58/57 BC and the Yona Era in 186/5 BC.

Finally, commenting on the rejoinder of Michael Fedorov¹ with respect to the artificial skull deformation of members of the Yuezhi elite and of Kushan emperors, recent excavations at Koktepe, 30km north of Samarkand, have revealed an aristocratic grave of a queen or priestess dated in the first century AD. As Claude Rapin informs: “Michelle Glantz of the University of Colorado could recognize, in the fragments of the back of the skull, that the deceased presented an artificial deformation of the head, a well known feature in nomad burials seen in a geographical-chronological development from Central Asia to early mediaeval western Europe.” In the grave a bronze cauldron was found which “clearly identifies the Scythian origin of the deceased”.¹²¹

Artificial skull deformation was used in Central Asia for many more centuries to come to distinguish the ruling elite as prominently visible on a coin issue (Figure 16) of the Alchon Hun “Khingila” (ca. 430/440-490^{122,123,124}, ca. 460-490¹²⁵).

¹¹⁸ Pulleyblank 1968

¹¹⁹ Grenet, Lee, Martinez, and Ory 2007, pp. 257-261.

¹²⁰ Allon, Salomon, Jacobsen, and Zoppi 2006

¹²¹ Rapin 2007, p. 30.

¹²² Melzer 2006, pp. 258-260.

¹²³ Vondrovec 2005, pp. 251-253.



Figure 15: AE coin^{2,126} of Peroz 2 / Shapur I,
Ø 20/21.5mm



Figure 16: Drachm¹²⁷ of the Alchon Hun
Khingila, NumH 43¹²⁸,
Ø 28/29mm

Referring to the *Weishu* chap. 102, p. 2275, *Zhoushu* chap. 50, p. 918, *Beishi* chap. 97, pp. 3230-31; and *Suishi* chap. 83, p. 1854: all wrote that the Hephtalites (Yada in the *Weishu*, the *Zhoushu*, and the *Beishi*, Yida in the *Suishi*) “are a branch of the Da Yuezhi”. But Étienne de la Vaissière points out that “the description of the Hephtalites as a branch of the Da Yuezhi is convincingly interpreted by K. Enoki¹²⁹ as meaning only that in the sixth century they occupied the former territory of the Da Yuezhi, that is Bactriana and Tokharistan”. Furthermore in the *Tongdian*, summarizing the original *Weishu*, there is the statement: “Yada country is said to either be a division of the Gaoju or of Da Yuezhi stock. They originated from the north of the Chinese frontier and came down south from the Jinshan mountain. They are located west of Khotan”. Thus, Étienne de la Vaissière concluded that “the link established by the original *Weishu* between the Hephtalites and Gaoju may mean that the Hephtalites were a Turkish tribe and, more precisely, an Oghuric one”.¹³⁰

Concerning the statement of Michael Fedorov about the “elementary blunder which started the belief in a Saka conquest of Greek Bactria”¹ there are the archaeological results from the cities of Ai Khanum and Samarkand paralleled by Claude Rapin: “The eastern part of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, around the city of Ai Khanum is probably the first to have been overrun by nomads, seen in the evidence of two successive events of pillaging in the ruins of the royal treasury...each event corresponds to a different foreign group...The first invasion was by nomads of Scythian origin, as in 145-144 BC one of them left in the treasury a silver ingot bearing an inscription of runic type...similar to an older found in the Issyk kurgan, in Semirechie...A few years later, a second wave of nomads, which corresponds to the Yuezhi (Yüeh-chih) of the Chinese sources (the Tochari of the later classical sources), followed the same road and put a definitive end to urban life in the Hellenistic city of Ai Khanum...the invaders of the region of Samarkand after 145 BC differ from the first nomads of Ai Khanum...It is usually accepted that this branch of the nomad migration should be attributed to the Sacaraucae of the Graeco-Roman historians, or to a group close to them”.¹³¹

¹²⁴ Vondrovec 2007

¹²⁵ Grenet 2002, p. 221.

¹²⁶ Obtained from antiquarian and numismatics expert Stefan Nebehay, Vienna, Austria (August 2005).

¹²⁷ Obtained from Senior Consultants (Butleigh Court, Somerset, UK, List Winter 2001, #172).

¹²⁸ Göbl 1967, NumH 43 = Emission 43.

¹²⁹ Enoki 1970

¹³⁰ Vaissière 2007, pp. 120 and 121.

¹³¹ Rapin 2007, p. 50.

Future research and archaeology will show if the Yuezhi in 130/129 BC conquered Daxia and former Graeco-Bactria from the east (via Comedai down the Oxus) as well as from the west (after passing the Zerafshan and Kashka-Darya valleys in Sogdiana), in analogy to the prior conquests of the Saka tribes in 145-140 BC.

Acknowledgements:

First of all, the author thanks Michael Fedorov for his rejoinder which stimulated these notes. Furthermore, the author thanks Claude Rapin, Nikolaus Schindel, Robert C. Senior, Nicholas Sims-Williams and Klaus Vondrovec for valuable discussions and for providing pre-prints and copies of publications. The critical reading of the manuscript by Robert C. Senior is greatly acknowledged. Claude Rapin provided most important improvements of the manuscript and information on recent publications of Osmund Bopearachchi and Frantz Grenet. Klaus Vondrovec supported the author by providing a large number of publication copies otherwise inaccessible, in particular to recent publications of Gudrun Melzer and Étienne de la Vaissière. The critical reading and improvements of the final manuscript by Robert Bracey are greatly acknowledged. The author could not follow his suggestions to shorten the manuscript in order to allow publication in the Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society (ONS). The author thanks Stan Goron, editor of the ONS Journal, to make the full length manuscript available on the ONS website (www.onsnumis.org).

Bibliography

- Abdullaev 2003 Kazim Abdullaev, “Nana in Bactrian Art – New Data on Kushan Religious Iconography based on the material of Payonkurgan in Northern Bactria”, *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* No. 9, pp. 15-38 (The Institute of Silk Road Studies, Kamakura, Japan, 2003)
- Abdullaev 2007 Kazim Abdullaev, “Nomad migration in Central Asia”, pp. 73-98 in “After Alexander: Central Asia Before Islam”, edited by Joe Cribb and Georgina Herrmann (The British Academy of Sciences, 2007)
- Allon, Salomon, Jacobson and Zoppi 2006 Mark Allon, Richard Salomon, Geraldine Jacobsen, and Ugo Zoppi, “RADIOCARBON DATING OF KHAROSHTĪ FRAGMENTS FROM THE SCHØYEN AND SENIOR MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS”, presented at the International Association of Buddhist Studies Conference, London, England, Aug. 31st, 2006.
- Alram 1986 Michael Alram, “NOMINA PROPRIA IRANICA IN NUMMIS – Materialgrundlagen zu den iranischen Personennamen auf antiken Münzen”, *IRANISCHES PERSONENNAMENBUCH* Band IV, edited by Manfred Mayrhofer and Rüdiger Schmitt (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna, 1986)
- Alram 1996 Michael Alram, “Die Geschichte Ostirans von den Griechenkönigen in Baktrien und Indien bis zu den iranischen Hunnen (250 v. Chr. – 700 n.Chr.)”, p. 124, in: “Weihrauch und Seide”, Wilfried Seipel ed., (Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna, 1996)
- Benjamin 2007 Craig G.R. Benjamin, “THE YUEZHI – Origin, Migration and the Conquest of Northern Bactria”, *Silk Road Studies* XIV (Brepols, 2007)
- Bernard 2006 Paul Bernard, “La colonie grecque d’Ai Khanoum et l’hellénisme en Asie centrale”, pp. 55-67 in “Afghanistan, les trésors retrouvés” (Musée national des Arts d’asiatiques - Guimet, Paris, France, 2006)
- Bopearachchi 1991/2 Osmund Bopearachchi, “The Euthydemos’ Imitations and the Date of Sogdian Independence”, in *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* Vol. 2, pp. 1-21 (The Institute of Silk Road Studies, Kamakura, Japan, 1991/2)
- Bopearachchi 2007 Osmund Bopearachchi, “Some Observations on the Chronology of the Early Kushans”, pp. 41-53 in “Des Indo-Grecs aux Sassanides: données pour l’histoire et la géographie historique”, *Res Orientales* Vol. XVII (Le Groupe pour l’Étude de la Civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 2007)
- Bracey 2004 Robert Bracey, “Short topics and Kushan History / Is the Azes Era to be dated to 58BC? / A new discovery and a new problem”, published on the website: www.kushan.org
- Carter 2006 Martha L. Carter, “Notes on Kusana Chronology and the Bactrian Era”, *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology* Vol. 1, edited by Lilla Russel-Smith and Juditha A. Lerner (Produced by the Circle of Inner Asian Arts for Brepols, 2006)
- Cribb 1992 Joe Cribb, “Numismatic Perspectives on Chronology in the Crossroads of Asia”, paper at the Crossroads of Asia Conference, Cambridge, October 1992, published in “Studies in Gandharan and Kushan Art: East-West Encounters at the Crossroads of Asia”, edited by E. Errington.
- Cribb 1993 Joe Cribb, “The ‘Heraus’ coins: their attribution to the Kushan king Kujula Kadphises, c.AD 30-80”, pp. 107-134 and Plates XXIII-XXVII in “Essays in Honour of Robert Carson and Kenneth Jenkins”, Eds. Martin Price, Andrew Burnett and Roger Bland (Spink, London, 1993)
- Cribb 1999 Joe Cribb, “THE EARLY KUSHAN KINGS: NEW EVIDENCE FOR CHRONOLOGY – Evidence from the Rabatak Inscription of Kanishka I”, pp. 177-205, in “Coins, Art and Chronology – Essays on the pre-Islamic History of the Indo-Iranian Borderlands”, Eds. Michael Alram and Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter (Österreichischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, Vienna, Austria, 1999)
- Cribb 2005 Joe Cribb, “The Geek Kingdom of Bactria”, pp. 207-225 in “Afghanistan, ancient carrefour entre l’est et l’ouest”, eds. Osmund Bopearachchi and Marie-Françoise Bousac (Brepols, Turnhout, Belgium, 2005)
- Cribb 2007 Joe Cribb, “Money as a Marker of Cultural Continuity and Change in Central Asia”, pp. 333-375 in “After Alexander: Central Asia Before

“Notes on the Yuezhi - Kushan Relationship and Kushan Chronology”, by Hans Loeschner

- Islam“, edited by Joe Cribb and Georgina Herrmann (The British Academy of Sciences, 2007)
- Cunningham 1893/4 Sir A. Cunningham, “Later Indo-Scythians“, Numismatic Chronicle 1893-1894 (reprint: Complete Works of Alexander Cunningham, No. 11, edited by Prof. A.K. Narain, Indological Book House, Varanasi, India, 1962)
- Enoki 1970 K. Enoki, “The Liang chih-kung-t’u on the Origin and Migration of the Hua or Epthalites”, pp. 37-45 in Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia Vol. 7.1 (1970)
- Falk 2001 Harry Falk, “The *yuga* of Sphujiddhvaja and the era of the Kusānās”, Silk Road Art and Archaeology Vol. 7, pp. 121-136 (2001)
- Fedorov 2008 Michael Fedorov, “A rejoinder to the article of Dr. Hans Loeschner”, to be published in ONS Journal 195 (Oriental Numismatic Society, Spring 2008)
- Francke 1914 A.H. Francke, “Antiquities of Indian Tibet”, Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, Vol. XXXVIII (Calcutta, India, 1914)
- Gardner 1886 Percy Gardner, “The Coins of the Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India in The British Museum” (The British Museum Catalogue, London, 1886)
- Ghose 2006 Madhuvanti Ghose, “Nana: The ‘Original’ Goddess on the Lion”, pp. 97-112 in the Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology Vol. 1, edited by Lilla Russel-Smith and Juditha A. Lerner (Produced by the Circle of Inner Asian Arts for Brepols, Turnhout, Belgium, 2006).
- Göbl 1967 Robert Göbl, “DOKUMENTE ZUR GESCHICHTE DER IRANISCHEN HUNNEN IN BAKTRIEN UND INDIEN“ (Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, Germany, 1967)
- Göbl 1978 Robert Göbl, “Antike Numismatik“ (Battenberg, Munich, 1978)
- Göbl 1984 Robert Göbl, “MÜNZPRÄGUNG DES KUŠĀNREICHES“ (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna, Austria, 1984)
- Göbl 1993 Robert Göbl, “Donum Burns: Die Kušanmünzen im Münzkabinett Bern und die Chronologie“ (Fassbaender, Vienna, 1993)
- Göbl 1999 Robert Göbl †, “THE RABATAK INSCRIPTION AND THE DATE OF KANISHKA”, pp. 151-175, in “Coins, Art and Chronology – Essays on the pre-Islamic History of the Indo-Iranian Borderlands”, Eds. Michael Alram and Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter (Österreichischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, Vienna, Austria, 1999)
- Grenet 2002 Frantz Grenet, “Regional interaction in Central Asia and Northwest India in the Kidarite and Hephthalite periods”, pp. 203-224 in “Indo-Iranian Languages and Peoples”, edited by Nicholas Sims-Williams, Proceedings of the British Academy Vol. 116 (Oxford University Press, 2002)
- Grenet 2006 Frantz Grenet, “Nouvelles Données sur la Localisation des Cinq *Yabghus* des Yuezhi: L’Arrière Plan Politique de L’Itinéraire des Marchands de Maès Titianos”, pp. 325-341, Journal Asiatique 294.2 (2006)
- Grenet, Lee, Martinez and Ory 2007 Frantz Grenet, Jonathan Lee, Philippe Martinez, and François Ory, “The Sasanian relief a Rag-i Bibi (Northern Afghanistan)”, pp. 243-267 in “After Alexander – Central Asia Before Islam”, eds. Joe Cribb and Georgina Herrmann (Published for The British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2007)
- Grenet and Rapin 2001 F. Grenet, C. Rapin, “Alexander, Ai Khanum, Termez: Remarks on the Spring Campaign of 328”, pp. 79-89 in “Alexander’s Legacy in the East. Studies in Honour of Paul Bernard, eds. O. Bopearachchi, C.A. Bromber, and F. Grenet. Bulletin of the Asia Institute Vol. 12 (2001)
- Harmatta 1994 János Harmatta, “Languages and Literature in the Kushan Empire”, pp. 417-440 in “History and Civilizations of CENTRAL ASIA Vol. II – The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250”, Ed. János Harmatta with Co-Eds. P.N. Puri and G.F. Etemadi (UNESCO Publishing, Paris, France, 1994)
- Hill 2003 John E. Hill, “The Western Regions according to the *Hou Hanshu*, The *Xiju juan* – ‘Chapter on the Western Regions’ from *Hou Hanshu 88*”, Section 13 “The Kingdom of the Da Yuezhi / the Kushans (University of Washington, USA, Second Edition, September 2003), Section 13 “The Kingdom of the Da Yuezhi”.

“Notes on the Yuezhi - Kushan Relationship and Kushan Chronology”, by Hans Loeschner

- La Vaissière 2007 Étienne de La Vaissière, "Is there a "Nationality of the Hephtalites"?", pp. 119-131 in BAI.
- Leriche 1988 P. Leriche, "Bactria in the Pre-Islamic Period", pp. 339-343 in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, New York, vol.III (1988)
- Loeschner 2007 Hans Loeschner, "A new Oesho/Shiva image of Sasanian 'Peroz' taking power in the northern part of the Kushan empire", *ONS Journal* 192, pp. 22-24 (Oriental Numismatic Society, Summer 2007)
- Liu 2001 Xinru Liu, "Migration and Settlement of the Yueshi-Kushan: Interaction and Interdependence of Nomadic and Sedentary Societies", *Journal of World History* Vol. 12, No.2, pp. 261-292 (University of Hawai'i Press, 2001)
- Lu 2002 Enguo Lu, "The Podboy Burials found in Xinjiang and the Remains of the Yuezhi", *CIAA Newsletter* No. 15 (Circle of Inner Asian Art, SOAS, London, June 2002)
- Mallory and Mair 2000 J.P. Mallory and Victor H. Mair, "The Tarim Mummies" (Thames & Hudson, London, 2000)
- Mattingly 1928 Harold Mattingly, "Roman Coins – From the earliest times to the fall of the Western Empire" (Methuen & CO Ltd., London, 1928, reprint 1962)
- Melzer 2006 Gudrun Melzer, "A Copper Scroll Inscription from the Time of the Alchon Huns", pp. 251-314 and Plates XXXIII-XXXVIII in "Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection, Buddhist Manuscripts, Volume III", ed. Jens Braavig (Hermes Publishing, Oslo, Norway, 2006)
- Mukhamedjanov 1994 A.R. Mukhamedjanov, "Economy and social system in Central Asia in the Kushan Age", pp. 265-290 in "History and Civilizations of CENTRAL ASIA Vol. II – The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250", ed. János Harmatta with co-eds. P.N. Puri and G.F. Etemadi (UNESCO Publishing, Paris, France, 1994)
- Narain 2000 A.K. Narain, "The Tokharians" (Shillong, 2000)
- Pugachenkova 1966 Galina A. Pugachenkova, "Zur Ikonographie des Herajos (Zu einigen Fragen der Fühgeschichte der Kuschandynastie), *Bibliotheca Classica Orientalis*, Heft 4, (Berlin, 1966)
- Pugachenkova, Dar, Sharma, and Joyenda 1994 G.A. Pugachenkova, S.R. Dar, R.C. Sharma, and M.A. Joyenda, "KUSHAN ART", pp. 331-395, in "History and Civilizations of CENTRAL ASIA Vol. II – The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250", Ed. János Harmatta with Co-Eds. P.N. Puri and G.F. Etemadi (UNESCO Publishing, Paris, France, 1994)
- Pulleyblank 1968 E.G. Pulleyblank, "Chinese Evidence for the Date of Kanishka", Seminar on the Date of Kanishka, University of London, April 1960, published in "Papers on the Date of Kanishka", Ed. A.L. Basham (Leiden, Netherlands, 1968)
- Puri 1994 P.N. Puri, "THE KUSHANS", pp. 247-263, in "History and Civilizations of CENTRAL ASIA Vol. II – The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250", Ed. János Harmatta with Co-Eds. P.N. Puri and G.F. Etemadi (UNESCO Publishing, Paris, France, 1994)
- Rapin 1992 Claude Rapin, *La Trésorerie du palais hellénistique d'Aï Khanoum. L'Apogée et la chute du royaume grec de Bactriane, Fouilles d'Aï Khanoum VIII, Mémoires de la Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan XXXIII* (Paris, 1992)
- Rapin 2007 Claude Rapin, "Nomads and the Shaping of Central Asia: from the Early Iron Age to the Kushan Period", pp. 29-72, in "After Alexander – Central Asia Before Islam", eds. Joe Cribb and Georgina Herrmann (Published for The British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2007)
- Rapin, Baud, Grenet and Rakhmanov 2006 Claude Rapin, Aymon Baud, Frantz Grenet, Sh.A. Rakhmanov, "Les recherches sur la région des Portes de Fer de Sogdiane: bref état des questions en 2005", *IMKU* Vol. 35, pp. 91-101 (Taschkent, 2006).
- Rapin and Rakhmanov 2002 C. Rapin and Sh. Rakhmanov, "Alexandre le Grand aux Portes de Fer en Sogdiane", pp. 45-49 in *Shakhrisabz Shakhinning Zhakhon Tarikhida Tutgan Ūrni* (Tashkent, 2002, in Russian).
- Rtveladze 1997 Eduard V. Rtveladze, with contributions from V.A. Livshits and Iu.G. Vinogradov, "On the Interpretation of the Words Σαναβ and ΑΥΤΕΙΧ on

“Notes on the Yuezhi - Kushan Relationship and Kushan Chronology”, by Hans Loeschner

- the Tetradrachms of Heraios/Hios”, in “Numismatika Tsentral’noï Azii” (Numismatics of Central Asia), 2nd issue (Tashkent, 1997)
- Rtveladze 2007 Edvard Rtveladze, “Monetary Circulation of Ancient Tokharistan”, pp. 389-397 in “After Alexander: Central Asia Before Islam“, edited by Joe Cribb and Georgina Herrmann (The British Academy of Sciences, 2007)
- Salomon 2005 R. Salomon, “The Indo-Greek Era of 186/5 BC in a Buddhist Reliquary Inscription”, pp. 359-401 in “Afghanistan, ancient carrefour entre l’est et l’ouest”, eds. Osmund Bopearachchi and Marie-Françoise Boussac (Brepols, Turnhout, Belgium, 2005)
- Schiltz 2006 Véronique Schiltz, “Tillia tepe, la «Colline de l’or», une nécropole nomade”, pp. 69-80 in “Afghanistan, les trésors retrouvés“ (Musée national des Arts d’asiatiques - Guimet, Paris, France, 2006)
- Schindel 2004 Nikolaus Schindel, “Sylloge Nummorum Sasanidarum Vol. 3, Shapur II. – Kawad I. / 2. Regierung“ (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna, Austria, 2004)
- Schindel 2005 Nikolaus Schindel, “ADHUC SUB IUDICE LIS EST? – ZUR DATIERUNG DER KUSHANO SASSANIDISCHEN MÜNZEN“, pp. 217-242 in Numismatische Zeitschrift Vol. 113/114, (Österreichische Numismatische Gesellschaft, Vienna, Austria, 2005)
- Senior 1997 R.C. Senior, “From Gondophares to Kanishka – A re-interpretation of the chronology based on new numismatic evidence“, pp. 1-33 (R. Senior, Butleigh Court, Glastonbury, Somerset, UK, 1997)
- Senior 2000 R.C. Senior, “The Coinage of Hermaios and its imitations struck by the Scythians“, Classical Numismatic Studies No. 3 (Classical Numismatic Group, Lancaster, Pennsylvania and Londa, 2000)
- Senior 2001 Robert C. Senior, “Indo-Scythian Coins and History“, 3 volumes (Classical Numismatic Group, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA, and London, England, 2001)
- Senior 2004 Robert C. Senior, “The Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian King Sequences in the Second and First Centuries BC“, ONS Supplement to Newsletter 179, pp. 1-24 (Oriental Numismatic Society, Spring 2004)
- Senior 2005 Robert C. Senior, “Maues, the first (Indo-)Scythian king of India [c. 120 - 85 BCE]“, contribution for ENCYCLOPÆDIA IRANICA, Ed. Ehsan Yarshater (2005)
- Senior 2005/6 Robert C. Senior, “INDO-SCYTHIAN COINS AND HISTORY“, Volume IV (pre-publication copy, Oct. 2005, published by Classical Numismatic Group, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA, and London, England, 2006)
- Seipel 1996 “Weihrauch und Seide“, Wilfried Seipel ed. (Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna, 1996)
- Sims-Williams 1998 Nicholas Sims-Williams, “Further Notes on the Bactrian Inscription of Rabatak, with an Appendix on the Names of Kujula Kadphises and Vima Taktu in Chinese“, pp. 79-95 in Proceedings of the Third European Conference of Iranian Studies, Part 1: Old and Middle Iranian Studies (Wiesbaden, 1998).
- Sims-Williams 2002 Nicholas Sims-Williams, “Ancient Afghanistan and its invaders: Linguistic evidence from the Bactrian documents and inscriptions“, pp. 225-242 in “Indo-Iranian Languages and Peoples“, edited by Nicholas Sims-Williams, Proceedings of the British Academy Vol. 116 (Oxford University Press, 2002)
- Sims-Williams 2006/7 Nicholas Sims-Williams, “News from Ancient Afghanistan“, pp. 5-10, The Silk Road Vol. 4, No. 2 (Silkroad Foundation, Saratoga, California, USA, Winter 2006-2007)
- Sims-Williams 2007/8 Nicholas Sims-Williams, “The Bactrian era of 223 C.E. – some numismatic considerations“, t.b.p. in Proceedings of the conference “Coins of the Silk Road“, Shanghai, China, Nov. 2006, private communication Aug. 14th, 2007 and March 13th, 2008 (revised version).
- Sims-Williams and Cribb 1995/6 Nicholas Sims-Williams and Joe Cribb, “A NEW BACTRIAN INSCRIPTION OF KANISHKA THE GREAT“, Silk Road Art and Archaeology No. 4, pp. 75-142 (The Institute of Silk Road Studies, Kamakura, Japan, 1995/96).
- Stawiski 1979 Boris Stawiski, “Mittelasien - Kunst der Kuschan“ (V.E.B. E.A.Seemann Verlag, Leipzig, Germany, 1979)

“Notes on the Yuezhi - Kushan Relationship and Kushan Chronology”, by Hans Loeschner

- Tarn 1951 W.W. Tarn, “The Greeks in Bactria and India”, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1951)
- Thierry 2005 François Thierry, “Yuezhi and Kouchans: Pièges et Dangers des Sources Chinoises”, pp. 421-539 in “Afghanistan, ancien carrefour entre l’est et l’ouest”, eds. Osmund Bopearachchi and Marie-Françoise Boussac (Brepols, Turnhout, Belgium, 2005)
- Torday 1997 Laszlo Torday, “Mounted Archers – The Beginnings of Central Asian History” (The Durham Academic Press, Edinburgh – Cambridge – Durham, USA, 1997)
- Vaissière 2007 Étienne de La Vaissière, “Is there a “Nationality of the Hepthalites”?”, pp. 119-131 in Bulletin of the Asia Institute Vol. 17 (Dec 2007)
- Vondrovec 2005 Klaus Vondrovec, “DIE ANONYMEN CLANCHEFS – DER BEGINN DER ALCHON - PRÄGUNG“, pp. 243-258 in Numismatische Zeitschrift Vol. 113/114, (Österreichische Numismatische Gesellschaft, Vienna, Austria, 2005)
- Vondrovec 2007 Klaus Vondrovec, “Von der Chinesischen Mauer nach Indien – Die Iranischen Hunnen im Lichte ihrer Münzprägung“, lecture for the Austrian Numismatic Society at the “Münze Österreich“, Vienna, Austria, April 18th, 2007 (unpublished)
- Walter 2006 Mariko Namba Walter, “Sogdians and Buddhism“, Sino-Platonic Papers No. 174, pp. 1-63, Victor H. Mair editor (University of Pennsylvania, Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, November 2006)
- Yu 1998 Taishan Yu, “A Study of Saka History“, Sino-Platonic Papers No. 80, Victor H. Mair, Editor (Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Pennsylvania, July 1998)
- Yu 2000 Taishan Yu, “A Hypothesis about the Source of the Sai Tribes“, Sino-Platonic Papers Number 106, pp. 1-200, Victor H. Mair editor (University of Pennsylvania, Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Sept. 2000)
- Yu 2006 Taishan Yu, “A New Theory about Zhang Qian’s Mission to the Western Regions“, pp. 3-17, in “A Study of the History of the Relationship between the Western and Eastern Han, Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties and the Western Regions“, Sino-Platonic Papers No. 173, Victor H. Mair, Editor (Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Pennsylvania, October 2006)
- Zadneprovsky 1999 Yu. A. Zadneprovsky, “Migration Paths of the Yueh-Chih based on Archaeological Evidence“, CIAA Newsletter No. 9 (Circle of Inner Asian Art, SOAS, London, April 1999)
- Zeymal 1999 Evgeny V. Zeymal †, “Tillya-Tepe within the Context of Kushan Chronology“, pp. 239-244 in “Coins, Art and Chronology – Essays on the pre-Islamic History of the Indo-Iranian Borderlands“, Eds. Michael Alram and Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter (Österreichischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, Vienna, Austria, 1999)

Table 1: Kushan Chronology for **Case A** (KE1 = 78 AD) and **Case B** (KE1 = 127 AD), with start of the Azes Era in 58/7 BC

Kushan Ruler	Dates of Inscriptions (in brackets if the name of the emperor is not indicated; underlined if the name of the era is indicated)	Case A KE 1 = 78 AD		Case B KE 1 = 127 AD	
		Era	Reign Period	Era	Reign Period
“The Kushan” (“Heraios”)			c.60BC – c.20BC		c. 10BC – c. 30AD
Kujula Kadphises	<u>103?</u> (<i>discarded for Case A</i>), (122), (<u>136</u>)		c.20BC – c.20AD	AE	c.30 – 78
Wima I Takto / Soter Megas	(270), 279, (299), 299	UE	c.20 – c. 55	YE	78 – 112/3
Wima II Kadphises	(122), (<u>136</u>)	AE	c. 55 – 77		112/3 – 126
	(184/7) (187 not applicable for Case B)	ME		AE	
Kanishka I	<u>1</u> - <u>23</u>	KE = SE	77/78 – c.102	KE	126/ 127 – c.152
Huvishka	<u>26</u> - <u>64</u>	KE	c.102 – 142	KE	c.152 – 191
Vasudeva I *	<u>64</u> - <u>98</u>	KE	142 – c.180	KE	191 – ≥ 230
Kanishka II	(1) <u>05</u> – (1) <u>17</u>	KE	c.180 – c.195	KE	≥ 230 – c.245
Vasishka	(1) <u>22</u> – (1) <u>30</u>	KE	c.195 – c.210	KE	c.245 – c.260
Kanishka III	(1) <u>41</u>	KE	c.210 – 227	KE	c.260 – c.290
Vasu(deva) II **	<u>170</u> (<i>disputed</i>)	KE	227 – c.260	KE	c.290 – c.320
Later Kushan (tentative, additional rulers not included: Mahi “ <i>usurper</i> ”, Gadahara, ...):					
Shaka			c.260 – c.295		c.320 – c.355
Kipunada			c.295 – c. 320		c.355 – c. 375
<p>AE = Azes Era: 58/7 BC; KE = Kanishka Era (Case A: 78 AD, Case B: 127 AD); ME = Maues Era: c.120 BC, SE = Śaka Era: 78 AD, UE = Unknown Era: c. 245 BC; YE = Yona (Greek) Era: 186/5 BC</p> <p>78 AD: Start of the Śaka Era = Start of the Kanishka Era (Case A) 127 AD: Start of the Kanishka / Kushan Era (Case B) 224 AD: Start of Ardashir I Era = Kushano-Sasanian Era 227 AD: Start of the Kushan Era (Case A) *230 AD: Embassy of Vasudeva I to the Wei (Case B) **230 AD: Embassy of Vasudeva II to the Wei (Case A) c.320 AD: Start of the reign of Chandragupta I c.375 AD: Start of the reign of Chandragupta II</p>					

Correction (2014-02-08): In the original 2008-04-15 version there was the typing error

c.320 AD: Start of the reign of Samudragupta I (Comment: there is no Samudragupta II)

The author thanks Ranabir Chakravarti, Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, for pointing to this error: Note 81 on page 65 of “*The Kushanas*”, pp. 35-68 in “*History of Ancient India, Volume IV – Political History and Administration (c. 200 BC – AD 750)*”, edited by Dilip K. Chakrabarti and Makkhan Lal (Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 2014).

Comment: Most but not all scholars are attributing the inauguration of the Gupta era, started according to Al-Biruni (973-1048 CE) 241 years after the 78 CE inception of the Shaka era, to Chandragupta I. Citing the “*The Imperial Guptas - A Political History*” by Kiran Kumar Thaplyal (Aryan Books International, New Delhi 2012) on page 402 (last paragraph), page 403 (last paragraph), and page 404 (first paragraph): “The credit of founding the Gupta era has been given variously to Gupta (the first ruler of the dynasty), Chandragupta I, Samudragupta, and Chandragupta II.If Samudragupta is considered as the founder of the Gupta era, as suggested by some, 18 thenBesides, if Samudragupta is taken as the founder of the Gupta era, then he has to be assigned an unusually long reign of about 55 years - from AD 319 to c. AD 374.”
 18 R.C. Majumdar, in *Comprehensive History of India* III(i), p. 15, n. 44, and p. 36.

Table 2: Kushan Chronology for Case B* (KE1 = 127 AD, and shift of Azes Era to 44/3 BC)

Kushan Ruler	Dates of Inscriptions (in brackets if the name of the emperor is not indicated; underlined if the name of the era is indicated)	Case B*	
		Era	Reign Period
“The Kushan” (“Heraios”)			c.10BC – c.20AD
Kujula Kadphises	<u>103</u> ?	AE	c.20 – c.60
Wima I Takto / Soter Megas	(122), (<u>136</u>)	AE	c.60 – c.95
	(184/7)	ME	
	(270), 279, (299), 299	UE	
Wima II Kadphises			c.95 – 126
Kanishka I	<u>1</u> - <u>23</u>	KE	126/ <u>127</u> – c.152
Huvishka	<u>26</u> - <u>64</u>	KE	c.152 – 191
Vasudeva I *	<u>64</u> - <u>98</u>	KE	191 – ≥230
Kanishka II	(1) <u>05</u> – (1) <u>17</u>	KE	c.230 – c.245
Vasishka	(1) <u>22</u> – (1) <u>30</u>	KE	c.245 – c.260
Kanishka III	(1) <u>41</u>	KE	c.260 – c.290
Vasu(deva) II	<u>170</u> (<i>disputed</i>)	KE	c.290 – c. 320
Later Kushan (tentative, additional rulers not included: Mahi “ <i>usurper</i> ”, Gadahara, ...):			
Shaka			c.320 – c.355
Kipunada			c.355 – c. 375
<p style="text-align: center;">AE = Azes Era: 44/3 BC; KE = Kanishka Era; ME = Maues Era: c.120 BC, UE = Unknown Era: 208/6 BC, YE = Yona (Greek) Era: 172/1 BC</p> <p>78 AD: Start of the Śaka Era 224 AD: Start of Ardashir I Era = Kushano-Sasanian Era *230 AD: Embassy to the Wei c.320 AD: Start of the reign of Chandragupta I c.375 AD: Start of the reign of Chandragupta II</p>			

Correction (2014-02-08): In the original 2008-04-15 version there was the typing error

c.320 AD: Start of the reign of Samudragupta I (Comment: there is no Samudragupta II)

The author thanks Ranabir Chakravarti, Professor of History, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, for pointing to this error: Note 81 on page 65 of “*The Kushanas*”, pp. 35-68 in “*History of Ancient India, Volume IV – Political History and Administration (c. 200 BC – AD 750)*”, edited by Dilip K. Chakrabarti and Makkhan Lal (Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 2014).

Comment: Most but not all scholars are attributing the inauguration of the Gupta era, started according to Al-Biruni (973-1048 CE) 241 years after the 78 CE inception of the Shaka era, to Chandragupta I. Citing the “*The Imperial Guptas - A Political History*” by Kiran Kumar Thaplyal (Aryan Books International, New Delhi 2012) on page 402 (last paragraph), page 403 (last paragraph), and page 404 (first paragraph): “The credit of founding the Gupta era has been given variously to Gupta (the first ruler of the dynasty), Chandragupta I, Samudragupta, and Chandragupta II. ...If Samudragupta is considered as the founder of the Gupta era, as suggested by some, 18 thenBesides, if Samudragupta is taken as the founder of the Gupta era, then he has to be assigned an unusually long reign of about 55 years - from AD 319 to c. AD 374.” 18 R.C. Majumdar, in *Comprehensive History of India* III(i), p. 15, n. 44, and p. 36.

Table 3: Kushan Chronology for **Case C** (KE1 = 227 AD, and shift of Azes Era to c. 5 AD)

Kushan Ruler	Dates of Inscriptions (in brackets if the name of the emperor is not indicated; underlined if the name of the era is indicated)	Case C KE 1 = 227 AD AE = c. 5 AD	
		Era	Reign Period
“The Kushan” (“Heraios”)			c. 5BC – c. 50AD
Kujula Kadphises	<u>103?</u>	AE	c.50 – c.125
	(184/7)	ME	
Wima I Takto / Soter Megas	(122), (<u>136</u>)	AE	c.125 – c.180
	(270), 279, (299), 299	YE	
Wima II Kadphises	(184/7)	AE	c.180 – 226
Kanishka I *	<u>1</u> - <u>23</u>	KE	226/ 227 – c.252
Huvishka	<u>26</u> - <u>64</u>	KE	c.252 – 291
Vasudeva I	<u>64</u> - <u>98</u>	KE	291 – c. 350
Kanishka II	(1) <u>05</u> – (1) <u>17</u>	KE	c. 330 – c.345
Vasishka	(1) <u>22</u> – (1) <u>30</u>	KE	c.345 – c.360
Kanishka III	(1) <u>41</u>	KE	c.360 – c.370
Vasu(deva) II	170 (<i>discarded</i>)	KE	c.370 – c. 375
Later Kushan (tentative, additional rulers not included: Mahi “ <i>usurper</i> ”, Gadahara, ...):			
Shaka			c.375 – c.390
Kipunada			c.390 – c.400
<p>AE = Azes Era: c. 5 AD; KE = Kanishka Era; ME = Maues Era: c. 120 BC, YE = Yona (Greek) Era: c. 120 BC</p> <p>224 AD: Start of Ardashir I Era = Kushano-Sasanian Era 227 AD: Start of the Kushan Era = Kanishka Era * 230 AD: Embassy to the Wei c.330 AD: Division into Northern and Southern Kushan empire c.350 AD: Final loss of Northern Kushan empire to Shapur II c.375 AD: Start of the reign of Chandragupta II</p>			