



KADPHISES, KUJULA

KADPHISES, KUJULA, first Kushan king. King Kujula Kadphises was the founder of the Kushan dynasty in Central Asia and India, as indicated by the legend written in Gāndhāri and Kharoṣṭhī on his late coin series: *Kujula kasa kushana Yavugasa dhramatidasa* “of Kujula Kadphises, Kushan chief yagbu, steadfast in the law” (Bopearachchi, 1997, pp. 190-98) or *Kuyula Kadaphasa kushanasa*, “of Kujula Kadaphises, the Kushan” (Mitchiner, 1978, nos. 2880-81).

The Rabatak inscription found in northern Afghanistan, which is no doubt the most informative source of information on the genealogy of the ancestors of the Kushan king Kaniṣka I, records that Kaniṣka’s great-grandfather was king Kujula Kadphises (see Sims-Williams and Cribb, 1996; Fussman, 1998). According to the Chinese annals, *Hou Hanshu*, the yagbu who unified the Kushan empire was called Qiujiuque. There is a general agreement among the historians and numismatists to identify him as Kujula Kadphises, whose name appears on the coins as *kozolo kadaphes* (ΚΟΖΟΛΟ ΚΑΔΑΦΕΣ) or *kozola kadaphes* (ΚΟΖΟΛΑ ΚΑΔΑΦΕΣ) in Greek. According to the same annals, Qiujiuque invaded the kingdom of Anxi (perhaps the possession of the Indo-Parthians south of the Hindu Kush) and captured Gaofu (Kabul), then Puda (Pushkalavati) and Jibin (Kashmir) and died at the age of eighty. According to the *Hou Hanshu*, the second Kushan king, Yangaozhen, was the son of Qiujiuque (Kujula Kadphises), and he is credited with the destruction of Tianzhu (India). Having captured India, Yangaozhen appointed a general there to supervise and govern (see Thierry, 2005, pp. 470-3). When we take into consideration that Kujula died at the age of eighty, his son may have ascended



the throne at quite an advanced age. If we follow the information given in the Rabatak inscription to the letter, Qiujiuque was Kujula Kadphises and Yangaozhen would have been Vima Taktu, the grandfather of Kaniška I, as revealed by the Rabatak inscription.

Kujula Kadphises' reign could be fixed approximately by combining the Chinese sources and the numismatic evidence. Kujula may be responsible for minting some series imitating, at the beginning, the types of the posthumous coins of the Indo-Greek Hermaios in the Arachosia and Paropamisadae regions. This series depicted a crude portrait of Hermaios on the obverse and Zeus seated on a throne on the reverse; it was followed by a series depicting a larger bust of the king on the obverse and, on the reverse, Heracles standing facing and holding a club, struck according to the Indian standard with tetradrachms weighing 8.60 g (Bopearachchi, 1997).

The coin series of Kujula that carry on the obverse a large bust of the king and, on the reverse, Heracles standing, facing, and holding a club are struck according to the Indian standard (tetradrachm weighing 8.60 g). The male portrait on the obverse of a regional issue of Kujula Kadphises has been taken from Roman coinage. When one observes the treatment of details of the profile and the hair in particular, Kujula's portrait most resembles the Roman emperor Augustus (Rosenfield, 1967, p. 13). Likewise the silver denarii of Augustus that were used as a model for the coins of this series give a clear terminus post quem for the dating of these posthumous issues in the name of Hermaios. It is also believed that the seated figure on the reverse of this series, wearing long trousers, a high pointed hat, and boots and carrying a sword, is the depiction of Kujula himself.

A series of overstrikes shows that there was an intermediate period between the bronze posthumous coins of Hermaios and the Kujula Kadphises coins. The first series is that of the Indo-Parthian [Gondophares](#) (ca. CE 21-40) over a posthumous bronze coin of Hermaios. The second series of overstrikes is that of Kujula Kadphises on bronze coins of Gondophares.

With the reign of Kujula Kadphises, lord of the Kushan clan, the Yuezhi came to be known as Kushan (Bopearachchi, 2008, pp. 45-52). The rise of the Kushan empire under Kujula Kadphises in the regions of the Paropamisadae and Gandhāra should be thus placed around the middle of the first century of our era. On the basis of these known data, Kujula Kadphises' reign could be fixed within CE 41-95.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

O. Bopearachchi, "The Posthumous Coinage of Hermaios and the Conquest of Gandhara by the Kushans," in *Gandharan Art in Context. East-West Exchanges at the Crossroads of Asia*, ed. R. Allchin, B. Allchin, N. Kreitman, and E. Errington, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 189-213.

Idem, "Les premiers souverains kouchans: Chronologie et iconographie monétaire," *Journal des Savants*, January-June 2008, pp. 3-56.

G. Fussman, "L'inscription de Rabatak et l'origine de l'ère Saka," *Journal Asiatique*, 1998, pp. 571-651.

M. Mitchiner, *Oriental Coins and Their Values: The Ancient and Classical World 600 B.C.-A.D. 650*, London, 1978.

J. M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967.

R. C. Senior, *Indo-Scythian Coins and History*, London, 2001.

N. Sims-Williams and J. Cribb, "A New Bactrian Inscription of Kanishka the Great," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 4, Kamakura, 1996, pp. 75-142.

F. Thierry, "Yuezhi et Kouchans. Pièges et dangers des sources chinoises," in *Afghanistan, ancien carrefour entre l'est et l'ouest*, ed. O. Bopearachchi and M.-F. Boussac, Indicopeustoi. Archaeologies of the Indian Ocean, Turnhout, 2005, pp. 421-539.

(Osmund Bopearachchi)