

as *devaputra śāhi kaniṣka*: year 17 (SS #45, reading unreliable)
 as *mahārāja devaputra kaniṣka*: year 4, 12 (SS #18, 39)
 as *mahārāja rājātirāja kaniṣka*: year 5 (SS #21)
 as *mahārāja rājātirāja devaputra kaniṣka*: year 11 (CKI 147)
 as *mahārāja rājātirāja śāhi kaniṣka*: year 7 (SS #29)
 as *mahārāja rājātirāja śāhi kaṇikkha*: year 8 (SS #30)
 as *muroḍa marzaka kaniṣka*: year 11 (CKI 148)

Note ed.: The last given date refers to *rajami*, “reign” and is rather a current year of Kaniṣka III.

Events in the time of Vaskuṣāṇa I

118 – Year AD ±249: Date for Vaskuṣāṇa in inscription: 22

This king is mentioned on just one edifice, a pedestal of a standing Buddha or Bodhisattva, cf. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1949: 313, SS #58, Rosenfield 1967: pl. 34:

/// .. *rājño vaskuṣāṇasya sa 20-2 va 2 di 10*

“(In the year) 22 of the (...) *rāja* Vaskuṣāṇa, in the second month of the rainy season, on day 10.”

Note ed.: This seems to be another king, not a variant name of Vāsiṣka, as maintained by numismatists. Stylistically, on account of the row of beam heads, the piece is in line with a Jina, year 20 (SS #49), and a another Jina, year 22 (SS #54), both legends without the king’s name. Apart from this statue, there are gold coins (Göbl 1984: Tafel 49; Beizeichen Tafel XI) with the legend $\text{BAONANO BAOKOPANO KOPAN}$, on stylistic grounds dated to the time after Kaniṣka III, showing most likely that this name was borne twice, with a few decades in between Vaskuṣāṇa I and II.

The BAZOKOPANO legend occurs on dinars and quarter-dinars alike. The two pieces of quarter-dinars come from a single die, while the six dinars known to Göbl come from at least three. All editions show a Brāhmī monogram *ra+da*. It is hardly credible that the same haplographic mistake (KOPANO KOPAN) was made on at least four dies. In addition, an identical mistake found written in Bactrian letters on coins and again in Brāhmī on a statue made of stone is difficult to accept. The year numbers on plastic art clearly demonstrate the anteriority of Vaskuṣāṇa I over Vāsiṣka; the missing coinage of Vaskuṣāṇa I speaks in favour of an extremely short regnal period. Despite the existing BAZOKOPANO coinage, Vaskuṣāṇa II will not be dealt with in this survey as apart from coinage there are no inscriptional legends available and his place among the numerous post-Kaniṣka III rulers remains unclear. As with “Vāsudeva II” or “Azēs II”, the coin type of “Vaskuṣāṇa II” must not necessarily represent a real person; the name could also have been used as a legitimating device.

119 – Year AD 249: Vehsachan wants to help Khosrow against Artashir I

Moses Khorenats'i; Thomson 1978: 218-220:

“When he [Khosrow] entered Assyria, he heard the sad news of Artavan’s death [by the hands of Artashir ed.] and of the alliance of all the Persian troops and nobles—both of his own family the Parthians and of the Pahlavik’, except for the branch of the Karēn. To the latter he sent messengers and then returned to our country [=Armenia ed.] in great sadness and regret. And immediately he made haste to inform Philip [I, “the Arab”, AD 244-249 ed.], the Roman emperor, seeking help from him. (...)

Having acquired such a multitude [of troops] he [Khosrow] marched against Artashir, and giving battle put him to flight; he took from him Assyria and the other lands where he had a royal residence.

Again he sent through messengers to his own kin the Parthian and the Pahlav families, and to all the forces of the land of the Kushans, that they should come to him and exact vengeance from Artashir.

(...) Then there came to him some of his own messengers who had gone to the more illustrious nation far inland as far as Bahl [=Balkh ed.]. They brought him word that “our kinsman Vehsachan” with his branch of the Karēn Pahlav had not given obeisance to Artashir, but is coming to you in answer to your summons.

Although Khosrow was greatly delighted at the news of the coming of his kinsmen, yet his joy was short-lived; for the sad news quickly arrived that Artashir himself with his united forces had caught up with them and slaughtered all the branch of the Karenean Pahlav, killing all the males from young men to sucklings, save for one youth whom a friend of his house, Burz by name, had taken in flight to the land of the Kushans and brought to some of his powerful relatives. (...)

But now we [shall tell] of what happened after the slaughter of the family of the Karenean Pahlav, vengeance for which the Armenian king Khosrow was not slow in seeking. Although Philip had died and the Roman empire was in confusion (...) nonetheless Khosrow with his army and other friends (...) was victorious over Artashir and pursued him as far as India. (...)

Now Artashir (...) promised [to the Parthians ed.] to return to them their original home called Pahlav, the royal city Bahl, and all the country of the Kushans [should they help in killing Khosrow by treachery ed.]”

Note ed.: The text locates the events immediately after the demise of Philip the Arab, who reigned AD 244 to 249. It has been argued that Vehsachan was Vāsudeva, or one of the supposedly many Vāsudevas, but there was no Vāsudeva in that period. However, AD 249 was the year of the seemingly shortlived Vaskuṣāṇa I (§ 118). In that case, Vehsachan would be Vaskuṣāṇa I, and Artashir (r. AD 223-240) must have been mistakenly introduced for Shahpur I (r. AD 242-272). In case Artashir was really part of the plot, then his regnal years would partly coincide with those of Vāsudeva (who reigned at least ca. AD 195-225), and Philip the Arab was introduced erroneously. At the

moment there is no further evidence for either of the two possibilities.

Note Grenet: All such Roman synchronisms in this source clearly belong to a late stage of the redaction and are off the mark. What should be followed is only the synchronism between Ardashir and ‘Vehsacan’, which creates no impediment to the latter’s identification with Vasudeva.

Reply ed.: As Vāsudeva’s reign ends around AD 227 he may have faced difficulties with Ardashir I, which would explain his mission to China, in search of help. Vaskuṣāṇa’s date of AD ±249 according to the Sanchi inscription, however, goes well with Philip the Arab. Details are mixed up, but the story as such should be kept in mind.

The time of Vasiṣka

120 – Years AD ±251-±257: Dates for Vasiṣka in inscriptions: 24 to 30

as *mahārāja rājātirāja devaputra sāhi vasiṣka*: years 24, 28 (SS #59, 62)

as *maharaja rajatiraja mahata tratara jayata detriata(?) svayabala maharajasa śpala-sakarita dhramathita devaputra vazeṣka guṣaṇa devamanuṣasamp(u)[j]ita*: year 30 (CKI 230)

Note ed.: The second case from Kamra (CKI 230) is so far the longest list of titles and epithets used by any of the Kushans. It means, “the *mahārāja*, the king over kings, the Great, the saviour, the victorious, *detriata*, he who has strength through himself, who is honoured by the army of the *mahārāja*, who is steadfast in the law, the son of the gods, Vasiṣka the Kuṣāṇa, honoured by gods and humans (...)”. What looks like *detriata* remains enigmatic; **svayambala*, “he who has strength through himself”, has a verbal parallel in a list of royal epitheta at Endere, in southern Xinjiang (Salomon 1999: 5) and can be compared to Kaniṣka being *χοαζαιοαργο* at Rabatak. To avoid two different *mahārājas* I see a phrase *mahārājasya *śpalasatkārīta*, “honored by the Mahārāja’s army”. [Thanks to Stefan Baums for pointing out the parallels to *devamanuṣasampujita*].

The time of Kaniṣka III

121 – Years AD ±257-±268: Dates for Kaniṣka III in inscriptions: 30 to 41

as (?)*[ja t]i [kaniṣka]*: year 30 as above in § 121. This reference is obscure and would provide only a living date, while his father Vasiṣka was ruling.

as *maharaja rajatiraja devaputra kaisara vajheṣkaputra kaniṣka*: year 41 (CKI 158)

as *muroḍa marzaka kaniṣka*: year 11 (CKI 148)

Note ed.: The last case with 11 regnal years is fully covered by the dynastic dates; cf. § 118. A unique **mahākaniṣka* is found on a seal (Sims-Williams & Tucker 2005) and may refer to this king.