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Editors

Shakirullah and Ruth Young



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## **Editorial Note**

*Pakistan Heritage* is a double-blind peer-reviewed journal, published annually. This volume included the papers on different aspects of archaeology and history of Pakistan and adjacent regions with subject matter ranging from the Prehistoric to the British Period.

We acknowledge the efforts of the members of the Board of Editorial Advisors, the contributors, the review and colleagues of the Department of Archaeology, Hazara University Mansehra. On the other hand, we are grateful to the worthy Vice Chancellor and management of Hazara University Mansehra for support and encouragement.

## **Editors**

# The Results of four Phase Excavation at Ghundi Sabzabad Archaeological site in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan

SARWAR HEDAYAT AND JAWID MOHSEN ZADA

## Abstract

*Nangarhar, considered one of the richest provinces of Afghanistan, houses the most ancient and historical sites, holding a special significance in terms of history culture, and art. In ancient times, city was one of the most important centers for worship, trade, politics, and culture in Gandhara. With its historical features, climate (suitable environment and natural landscapes), Nangarhar attracted merchants, travelers, artists, and pilgrims from India, China, Central Asia, East Asia, and Europe, as in ancient times, Nangarhar became one of the largest centers for Buddhism in Central Asia. The province's location on the Silk Road has connected the East and West. The Surkh Rod district, which contains a significant portion of the cultural heritage of past peoples, is one of the most important archaeological sites of Ghundi Sabzabad, having played an important role throughout history. Numerous archaeological signs and evidence have been discovered based on recent archaeological research, demonstrating the antiquity and flourishing of a part of the great civilization in Nangarhar.*

**Keywords:** Archaeological Excavations, archaeological site, pottery, coins, Takahoon, Ghundi Sabzabad, Afghanistan

## Introduction

One of the main objectives of archaeology is to discover the locations of lost cities and civilizations, which is why archaeologists often engage in exploration for purpose. One of the archaeological sites that had been forgotten for thousands of years and was eventually through archaeological excavations (Burhani, 2024: P 2) is the archaeological site of Gundi Sabzabad, which due to its geographical location, is considered one of the most important rich areas farther provinces in terms of archaeological findings. As a result of archaeological excavations in the past two decades, a large number of ancient artifacts and structures have been discovered, which possess great cultural, historical, social, and economic significance. The ancient site of Gundi Sabzabad is among those archaeological sites where seasons of archaeological excavations were conducted from 2018 to 2021 (Archaeological Institute of Afghanistan, 2023: p. 2). As a result of the excavations, many movable and immovable artifacts have been uncovered from this site, with immovable artifacts including stone and mud walls, often consisting of thin stones used for building stupas. Movable artifacts include: coins, pottery, fabric from mixed metals, stone fragments, river stones, hand mill fabrics, and broken and decayed bones of various animals (Akbari, 2021: p. 14). It is noteworthy that there are very limited resources regarding the ancient site of Gundi Sabzabad; the research information in this article was collected based on surveys, observations, and archaeological excavations. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues and friends who collaborated in conducting this research.

## **Necessity and Importance of Research**

The fundamental importance of this research is based on new archaeological studies and surveys. Previously, scientific and professional research on the ancient site of Gundi Sabzabad had not been conducted.

## **Research Objective**

In this article, the artifacts and evidence that reflect historical pre-Islamic periods, especially the Kushan period, to the periods after Islam in the existing archaeological sites, which have not previously been presented with coherent information, will be examined in detail based on aerial surveys by comparing ground images and the findings obtained from the archaeological site of Ghundi Sabzabad.

## **Research Method**

The method considered in this article is conducted using field methods (survey, excavation, restoration, and conservation) and a library method has been employed regarding the subject of study related to the history of Nangarhar province and Ghundi Sabzabad archaeological sites.

## **The historical background of Nangarhar province**

At the first time, references to Nangarhar province were made by Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hien and Xuan Zang (Hiuan-tsang) during their journey through the territory of (Na-ki-Luo), where one of its major cities was "Nagarahara", still exists as (Nagar) and includes Hadda and Xuan Zang (Hiuan-tsang) extensively discussed Hadda and its surroundings in his notes, as well as the things he saw inside and outside the temples. He referred to this area as (Nagar) and wrote: "The high and difficult mountains surround this area on all sides. Its climate is mild, and its inhabitants are brave, good-natured, and relatively wealthy." (Akbari, 2021: p. 14). At that time, Gandhara served as an important center for division of Buddhism; in Gandhara, in terms of cultural authenticity, was the cradle of civilization and culture of local people, possessing a high standard of culture and art comparable to Buddhist civility. The culture and civilization of Gandhara developed in these lands over many years, and along with trade caravans on the Silk Road, this culture's wonders were transferred to Central and Southern Asian regions. The dissemination of art and Buddhist practices from these areas to the lands of China, Japan, and various parts of the world can be considered evidence of the rich and unique culture and civilization of this area (Shibli, 2012: p. 8). The Gandhara region, which was a suitable ground for nurturing this religion, transformed into one of the important centers of this belief, and to prove this claim, can mention the famous temples of this area. Among the most notable centers of this religion on Afghan soil, Hadda and other locations can be mentioned (Shibli, 2012: p. 17).

## **Geographical Location of Nangarhar**

Nangarhar province is located in the east of Afghanistan at 70 degrees and 28 minutes east longitude and 33 degrees and 56 minutes north latitude, with an elevation of 599 meters above sea level. Its area is 7,916 square kilometers, and its center of this Province is Jalalabad city. Nangarhar province, with its historical features, suitable climate for fruits, crops, and natural scenery, has drawn attention of many tourists. Nangarhar province shares borders to the west with Kabul and Logar provinces and to the south in Spinghar region with Paktia and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This province is surrounded by mountain ranges, with the

northern part featuring a subordinate range of Hindu Kush that begins at the Pordam Pass and ends at Gambari Desert. In the latter parts, it is referred to as Kuz Kunar and the foothills of Kashmund. The Spinghar mountain range is to the south, Torkham range to the west, and to east are districts of Kama, Goshta, Lalpur, and that subordinate range of the Hindu Kush in Momand region across the Durand Line<sup>1</sup>, which starts from Diwana Baba in eastern Nuristan and continues to Lwarghi Has (Ahmadzai, Akbari, and Ahmadi, 2019: P. 1). In addition to these important areas, many ancient and historical sites from Kushan period have remained in the Gandhara basin.

### **Ancient sites and historical monuments of Surkhrud District**

Surkhrud District is one of the most important basins that part of today's Nangarhar province. In this basin, there are ancient sites such as: ancient temples, stupas, caves of Bahar Abad (Fil Khana), Chahrbagh Safa, Babur's Throne, rah kalan (the Great Road), the shrine of Shah Faizullah Agha, Najm al-Din Akhundzada, Ghochak temples, Dronta temples, and such other places available in this province. Also, the shrine of Dulki Baba, shrine of Miaaly, Akhund Musa Batti Kooti, Miasharaf, Gardi Ghaous, Siraj ul-Imarat, tomb of Ghazi Amanullah Khan, shrine of Pachaana, and such other shrines are present in this province (Pajhwok internet site), among which one of the ancient sites related to the Kushan period is archaeological site of Khaja Lahorri<sup>2</sup> (Ghundi Sabzabad) which, located in Sabzabad village.

### **Introduction to the Ghundi Sabzabad Archaeological Site**

Ghundi Sabzabad archaeological site located approximately 400 meters east of main Kabul-Jalalabad highway, along two villages of Sabzabad and Ghula Tapa, in a rectangular shape, bordered to the east and north by agricultural lands, to the south by agricultural lands, and to the west by main highway and agricultural lands. This site is situated at geographical coordinates 34 degrees 26 minutes and 53.9 seconds north latitude and 070 degrees 23 minutes and 40.9 seconds east longitude, with an elevation of 597 meters above sea level. (Ahmadzai, Akbari, and Ahmadi, 2019: P. 1). Historical sources quote a Chinese pilgrim in the book "Caves and Temples of Basawal, Jalalabad, and Kabul in Southern Afghanistan," surveyed by Kiyotai printing team in 1965, mentioning the archaeological sites of Nagara and Ghundi Sabzabad as Temple of Heaven Hill and Khwaja Lahori<sup>3</sup>.

"Amidst the ruins of this ancient city lies a large hill that the villagers call Ghundi Shah Nasr Aqa (this hill belongs to Mr. Shah Nasr). It is likely that this hill is the same one referred to by Charless Masson. Perhaps the Heavenly Stupa mentioned is the same. To the west and further away from this hill, there is a larger hill called Khwaja Lahori with stone fortifications on top of it, said to have been constructed by King Ashoka at this location." (Mizuno, 1971: P 112-113).

### **Survey and Excavations in Nangarhar Province**

For the first time, archaeological surveys in Nangarhar Province were conducted by Chinese pilgrims, Fa-Hien and Xuan Zang (Hiuan-Tsang) during their journey passing through the territory of (Naki-Lo-Ho), one of the major cities of which is "Nagarahara," still present in the form of (Nangarhar) and encompassing

<sup>1</sup> The Durand line is the name of international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed upon by Emirate of Afghanistan (during the rule of Amir Abdurahman Khan) and the British Indian Empire in 1893.

<sup>2</sup> Wariq ball, Gazitar of Afghanistan, P

<sup>3</sup> The name of khaja Lahory mentioned in the book of Gaziter of Afghanistan.

Hada and Jalalabad. Hiuan-Tsang elaborately noted in his writings about Hada and its surroundings, as well as the things he observed inside and outside of the temples, referring to this place as (Nagar) and writing: "The high and difficult mountains surround this location on all sides. Its weather is mild, and its inhabitants are brave, good-natured, and relatively wealthy."

Later, between 1926 and 1927, the cultural institution of France (DAFA) conducted surveys, and subsequently in the 1970s, the Archaeological Institute of Afghanistan, and also between 2015 and 2017 by professional staff of Archaeological Institute of Afghanistan (AIA), the archaeological sites in the Surkhrod district of Nangarhar Province, including the archaeological site of Ghundi Sabzabad and other archaeological Sites of this province, underwent scientific surveys.

Additionally, several archaeological sites are located a few kilometers east and south of Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar Province, whose wealth and strategic value are due to its control of the main road leading to India through the Khyber Pass.

This collection of Buddhist temples covered an area of approximately 4 to 5 square kilometers, surveyed between 1926 and 1927 by DAFA under the supervision of Jules Bardaux, and then in 1965 by excavation team of Kito University, Japan, led by Professor Mizuno Sandaji. Later, in the 1970s, it was explored by the Archaeology Institute of Afghanistan (AIA) under the directorship of Zemaryali Tarzi (Mestamandi, 1350: p. 21).

### **Illegal excavations in the historical area Ghundi Sabzad**

Ghundi Sabzabad has been subjected to numerous illegal excavations in the historical site, especially during the forty years of civil wars. Signs and indications of unauthorized activities have been observed in the historical site, which, like other historical sites of country, has not been immune from hands of antiquities stragglers (Akbari, 2021: p. 5).

### **Scientific excavations in Ghundi Sabzabad**

The Archaeological site of Ghundi Sabzabad was first subjected to independent excavations by professional staff of Archaeology institute of Afghanistan (AIA). The results obtained from these excavations will be described and elaborated upon.

### **Topographic studies of Ghundi Sabzabad**

Before commencing archaeological activities, each Archaeological site should first be studied from a topographic perspective. Surveying, planning, and mapping prior to excavations are among the most important parts of archaeological research. Therefore, the Archaeological site of Ghundi Sabzabad was initially studied regarding its topography and general conditions, and topographic maps and square divisions of site were prepared by professional members of site survey and excavation department. Subsequently, based on the prepared plans, archaeological excavations commenced from the eastern side of the Archaeological site of Ghundi Sabzabad according to studies and evaluations of site.

### **First phase Excavations**

The first phase of excavations in the Archaeological Site of Ghundi Sabzabad, Nangarhar province, was launched in fall of 2018 AD under the supervision of archaeologists Ruhollah Ahmadzai, Mobin Akbari,

and Abdullah Noor Ahmad, with the main aim of these excavations being to prevent illegal and unscientific excavations, destruction, and land usurpers in this Archaeological Site. In this context, an area of 600 meters of Ghundi Sabzabad was surrounded by wire and metal pillars. The second goal of this excavation was to conduct new scientific research in accordance with the law for preservation of archaeological artifacts and cultural heritage, using modern principles and techniques of archaeology to enrich and strengthen museums and publish scientific magazines and articles (Ahmadzai, Akbari, and Ahmad, 1397: p. 3).

### **Second phase Excavations**

The second phase of archaeological excavations in the Archaeological Site of Ghundi Sabzabad was initiated in 2019 AD under the supervision of aforementioned archaeologists, continuing the excavations with the aim of furthering archaeological research in this Site (Ahmadzai, Akbari, and Ahmad, 2019: p. 2).

### **Third phase Excavations**

The third phase of archaeological excavations in 2020 AD was conducted under the supervision of archaeologists Mohammad Mobin Akbari, Abdul Jalil Nasiri, and Mohammad Yousuf Yousufi, aiming primarily to advance documentation, record-keeping, and excavation plan of third phase in the Archaeological Site of Ghundi Sabzabad, focusing on scientific and archaeological research in this ancient site (Akbari, Mubariz, Nasiri, and Yousufi, 2020: p. 1).

### **Fourth phase Excavations**

The fourth phase of archaeology excavations in 2021 AD was carried out under the supervision of archaeologists Javid Mohsenzadeh, Mohammad Mobin Akbari, and Mohammad Hassan Mubariz, with the main aim being to promote restoration activities and the examination of artifacts, as well as field research in the Archaeological Site of Ghundi Sabzabad, focusing on scientific and archaeological studies in this site. (Akbari and Mubariz, 2022: p. 1).

### **Excavated Monuments of Ghundi Sabzabad**

The artifacts and evidence obtained from archaeological excavations in the archaeological site of Ghundi Sabz Abad, Nangarhar province, from the beginning of scientific excavations in 2018 AD include both immovable and movable artifacts, which we will briefly describe and explain.

### **Monuments**

During scientific research and excavations in the archaeological site of Ghundi Sabzabad, in some Trenches of excavation was done to a depth of 40 centimeters and in other Trenches to a depth of 2 meters, resulting in a total of 6 rooms discovered, whose excavations have not yet been completed. There is not much information available about the discovered rooms regarding the purpose for their construction; however, one of the rooms, designated as (Room No. 2 and Context No. 19), will be detailed here (Ahmadzai, Akbari, and Ahmadi, 1397: p 2).

### **Room (possibly a prison)**

Excavations conducted in 2018 AD in Ghundi Sabzabad revealed five buildings of various types, exposed at a depth of 50 centimeters, and after careful study, excavations continued (Akbari, 2020: p. 5). Among the discovered rooms, one room measures (260x210cm) in length and width and has a height of (230cm), with its excavations not to be completed yet. This place was likely used as a prison since the room had no entrance door on any side; probably, the entrance to this room may have been from the top, where some parts had been destroyed. The building materials of this room consisted of medium-sized pebbles and clay, and wall decorations were arch-shaped or semi-circular, with signs of degradation observed on them, after which initial restoration and refilling with industrial materials (clay and pebbles) were carried out (Ahmadzai, Akbari, and Ahmadi, 1397: p. 2).

### **Fortification Towers**

In the continuation of archaeological excavation in Ghundi Sabzabad, a few meters to the east, adobe flooring was found with size of bricks being (38x38x10) cm, (Akbari, 2020: p. 5). Additionally, from discovered rooms, the structural walls with oval and semicircular fortification towers were also discovered, built from construction materials such as flat shist stone (parchali stone) and clay (Ahmadzi, Akbari, and Ahmadi, 2018: p. 2).

Based on the excavations of test trenches at two points in Ghundi Sabzabad site, stone walls made of sheet stones and parchali stones were discovered. These stone works are part of walls of towers located on both sides of the northern and southern hills of Ghundi Sabzabad. It is likely that Ghundi Sabzabad was a military site during the Kushan period, as archaeological evidence including (arrowheads, metal garment pieces (battle armor) were discovered during the excavations (Akbari and Ahmadi, 2018: p. 1). According to the architectural style of military towers, prisons, and buildings made of sheet stones, as well as military evidence obtained from this site, they testify to dominance of the Kushans in the 3rd to 5th centuries AD. This archaeological site was used as a military base during the Kushan period.

### **Residential Rooms**

In addition of military rooms and towers, a series of non-military buildings were also discovered around the Archaeological Site of Ghundi Sabzabad based on excavations, with these walls built from raw adobe. Most of these rooms were residential, primarily used for the accommodation of inhabitants of this site, especially soldiers of Kushan period. The use of bricks 38x38cm in this building showcases the architectural style of the Kushan period. In some parts of the building walls, sheet stones were also used, which during the Kushan period were frequently employed in the construction of temples and stupas.

### **Architectural System**

At the site, several types of architectural art have been used, with some walls square-shaped, semi-arched, square-shaped, and some buildings constructed in a triangular.

### **Building Materials**

The discovered building evidence in Ghundi Sabzabad indicates that three types of building materials were used in the Archaeological Site of Ghundi Sabzabad, which include:

1. Pieces of flat stone (1-2 cm thick and 10 to 30 cm long), large rocky stones, and other stones (of various sizes) were used for the strength and decoration of the walls. It is noteworthy that there is no schist or slate-type stone quarry near this historical site, and these types of stones were brought from other places for wall construction. It is highly likely that the pieces of thick stones used in the walls were brought from around the Dorunta mountains (connected to the Amarkhil stupa). The reason is that the pieces of stones recovered from the first excavation Archaeological Site of Ghundi Sabzabad are equivalent to the stones of Amarkhil stupa. It should be noted that such stones were generally used in decorations of temples and walls from the first to the 8th century AD.
2. Building materials made of raw bricks measuring (38x38x10 cm) were constructed over the stone foundations. These types of bricks belong to the architectural art of the Kushan period, and their equivalent has been discovered in many ancient sites of Gandhara region and sites related to the Kushan period.
3. Baked clay building materials were used in the walls of discovered regular and irregular bead-like structures of Ghundi Sabzabad in various sizes.

## Discovered Artifacts

The discovered movable artifacts from Ghundi Sabzabad Archaeological Site include: pottery, stone vessels, terracotta figurines, metal tools, coins, and stone artifacts.

## Ceramic Artifacts

Pottery or ceramics is one of the phenomena through which archaeologists can determine and validate the relative history of a place or ancient region based on style, color, thickness, lip, base, and construction technique. Ceramics play a crucial role in illuminating the civilizations and cultures of various periods, hence considered essential (Archaeology Journal, 2016: p. 1)

Pottery, as the oldest industry of inhabitants, holds a special place in archaeological studies across various regions of Afghanistan. Scientific examination of pottery is considered one of the means to understand the settlement period at any archaeological site, in addition to the importance of pottery in archaeology, which has also been introduced as the alphabet of archaeology. Pottery is among the existing evidence for examining technological processes in the past. The ceramic artifacts from the Ghundi Sabzabad archaeological site include terracottas, cooking utensils, bowls, jars, pourers, small bowls, storage vessels, and lamps. The studies conducted on the ceramic artifacts of Ghundi Sabzabad are based on visual description and artistic patterns. In recent decades, advanced tools and techniques for studies were not available to archaeologists; to this day, studies on Afghan pottery remain relatively limited.

Although the few resources and materials, the pottery from the Ghundi Sabzabad Archaeological Site was studied in terms of shape, firing materials, clay composition, and types of decorations. Study results on pottery indicate that ceramics of Ghundi Sabzabad are mostly wheel-made, utilizing fine sand (small stone) and various colored fired clay in their construction, with the pottery industry in Ghundi Sabzabad relating to the pre-Islamic, divided into three categories overall (Mohsenzadeh, Mubariz, 2021: p. 3).

1. **Coarse Pottery:** In coarse pottery, quartz grains are used as the binding material, heat for firing pottery is sufficient, and pottery is sturdy. In coarse pottery, in addition to quartz grains, mechanized grains are also observed. This type of pottery is beige, simple, glazed, and red.

2. **Fine Pottery:** which is divided into several categories including beige, black, brown-glazed, and green pottery, categorized based on color.
3. **Ordinary pottery:** They include pea, glazed, red, orange, gray and polished pottery, which were used by common people.

### **Comparison of Ghundi Sabzabad potteries with its neighboring sites**

Regarding Ghundi Sabzabad vessels has not been worked on before, therefore according to the comparative analysis of the Kushan researches, terracotta vessels such as Khum (big Jar) vessels, jar, oil lamps, etc., are similar to the vessels discovered in the old mosque, Sarukh Kotel, Bagram, Darman tape, etc. took place.

Because the ancient site of Hada Nangarhar is located in the southeast of Ghundi Sabzabad, a few kilometers from the ancient site of Hada, a number of glazed, polished and brown, red, gray colored pottery fabrics were made from the ancient Hoda site. It was not Hada region, but it was brought to this place by traders from other regions. The decorations of the vessels of the ancient site of Hada are mostly qabrghai (like skeletons), leaves, circular seals with spotted flower leaves, circular lines, etc (Kushani research magazine, 1979: p. 77).

Due to the fact that we actually participated in the excavations of Ghundi Sabzabad Archaeological Site, a number of pieces of pottery similar to the pottery of Hada were obtained, as research on the ancient site of Hadah was carried out by internal and foreign teams, and this ancient site belongs to the Kushan period. From here, it can be concluded that the ancient site of Ghundi Sabzabad is also one of the sites related to the Kushan period (Akbari, 2019: p. 8).

### **Embossed pottery**

Among the exposed clay pots of Ghundi Sabzabad, the pattern or lotus flower symbol can be observed on the pottery and pots. The lotus flower represents various symbols, it is common with the beliefs of other nations as well, for example, the symbol of fertility, prosperity, the fertility of the earth, light. is known In Iranian mythology, this flower is a symbol of the goddess Venus, who occupies an important place in ancient Iranian rituals. She has role the goddess of water ([www.mirasehonar.com](http://www.mirasehonar.com)).

In the Egyptian civilization, the lotus flower is a symbol of rebirth, the sun, status, kingship and a characteristic sign of the upper Nile. The lotus is associated with the Nile in the art and life of the Egyptian people. Lotus is a sacred flower in Indian civilization and it has easily penetrated into all the lives of Indians. In India, Indians and Buddhists consider lotus as a valuable symbol. According to Hindu belief, the destiny of man is the lotus. This flower has eight leaves, which are the eight directions of the universe. From that, a ray of divine light was obtained, and a person was found in the flower, who was called Brahma (summarized by Jalali Naini, 2000, p. 202).

### **The new system of drawing stump pottery (Takahun)**

Decorated or (stamped) on pottery that were found during excavations, some of them were engraved by new system (Takahon) practically on special paper in the following pictures. We learned this drawing method after participating in training program in Japan. Then, we actually used it on patterned pottery in Ghundi Sabzabad Archaeological site.

## Ghundi Sabzabad Coins

Coin is a piece of metal with a specific weight that bears the marks of states or governments. A coin is a reflection that, when examined, reveals the height and decline of nations and countries in terms of civilization, art, and understanding of their social, cultural, political, religious, military situations, and economic conditions. The coin of each period represents customs, script, art, religion, civilization, progress, decline of social status, wealth or bankruptcy, trade relations, and nations, and in fact, it provides an accurate and precise source of information about the ancient world, i.e., from the time coin was created until now (Bayani, 2006: p. 9).

Kanishka was the founder of the second royal dynasty of Kushan period, which in Hindu sources is known as Rao Nau Rao “RAO\_NAO\_RAO” or kings famous in many blessed boxes and inscriptions of Khorasan, India, Mathura, and Nangarhar under the name of Kanishka (Lahzah, 2008: p. 67).

During archaeological excavations in Ghundi Sabzabad from 2018-2022 AD discovered 42 coins include copper and bronze coins with covered with oxidized. The discovered coins represent various shapes, including circular, square, and irregular forms.

Among the discovered coins, there is a copper coin with a diameter of 18 millimeters and a thickness of 4 millimeters, retrieved from square 180/404, on which symbols and signs depicting a human face facing right can be observed. According to the symbols and signs on the mentioned coin, it belongs to the Kanishka, the Great Kushan period. Also, other coins obtained indicate, based on preliminary research and studies, that these coins relate to the Kushan periods between 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

## Miscellaneous Artifacts

Among the dozens of archaeological artifacts obtained from the archaeological excavations of Goundi Sabzabad, the most significant are the coins and pottery, which have been described and explained in previous texts. In addition to the mentioned artifacts, other items that reflect greatness of this site in the past and hold special importance in introducing the historical periods of Goundi Sabzabad include: stone artifacts (beads, crystal, spindle, and ladle), pottery artifacts (terracotta or small human and animal figures, oil lamps, stamps/seals, Dok, spindles, and various types of pottery), metal artifacts (nails, crystal, armor), and bone artifacts (beads and remnants of animal bones).

## Conclusion

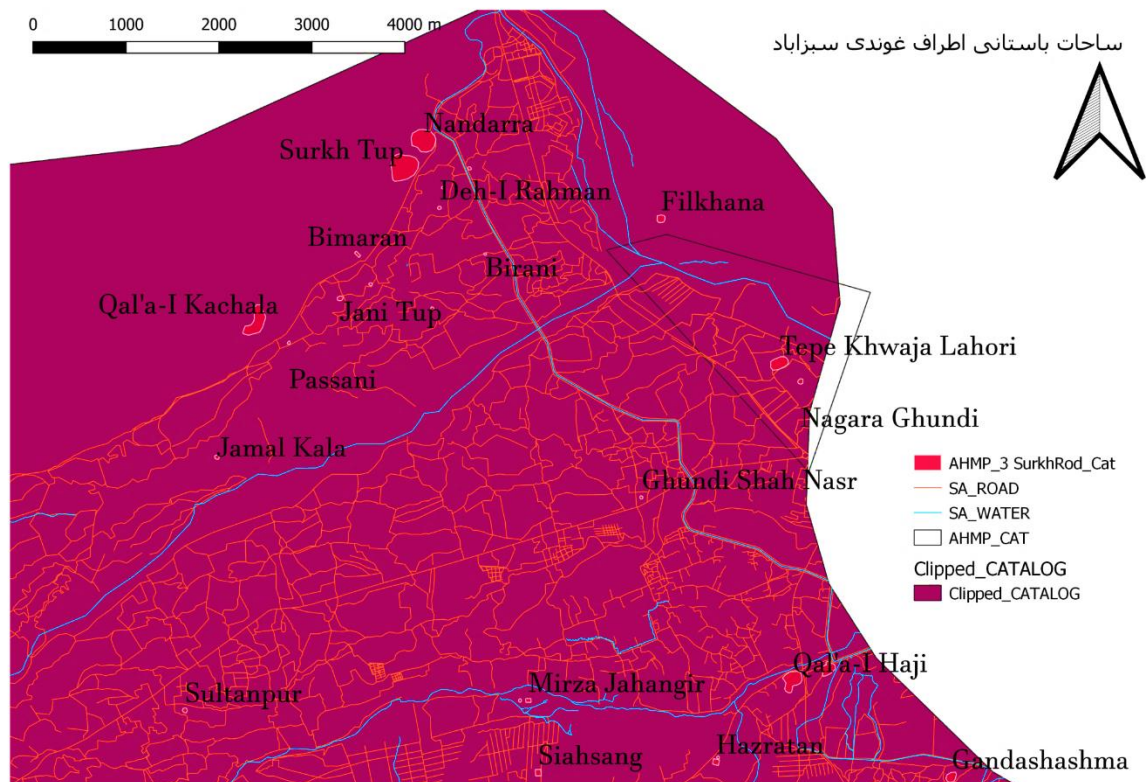
As a result of four phases excavations in Goundi Sabzabad Archaeological Site conducted independently by professional members of Archaeology Institute of Afghanistan (AIA) from 2018 to 2022 AD, it indicates that this site has been an important and strategic location in the present-day Nangarhar province for a long time, serving as a settlement for powerful rulers and kings during the Kushan period. The discovery of defensive walls and military towers made of stone slabs, earthen fortifications with stone foundations, adobe walls, and residential rooms, along with the discovery of movable artifacts, including pottery, terracotta statues or small human and animal figures, metal tools, coins, and stone artifacts, reflects the greatness and authority of this archaeological site. An initial analysis and evaluation of the artifacts and evidence obtained from stratigraphic layers of mentioned site, particularly the architectural artifacts and fragments of pottery, coins, and weapons, has confirmed the existence and establishment of Kushan periods, indicating pre-Islamic periods. In general, it can be said that the four phases of excavations and

archaeological research in Ghundi Sabzabad site, conducted using the latest methods and techniques, have revealed a significant part of obscure history of country, particularly the history of Nangarhar, and paved the way for future research.

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## Figures



**Figure 01:** Map of archaeological sites around Ghoundi Sazabad (Map: AIA)



**Figure 02:** Aerial photo of Ghondi Sabzabad and Negara by drone (Photographer: Shao, Xuecheng: 2024)





**Figure 05:** The general view of the area taken from Google on 03/06/2004



**Figure 06:** General view of the area taken from Google on 02/27/2011



**Figure 07:** General view of Ghondi Sabzabad and Negara by drone after four phases Excavations (Photographer: Shao, Xuecheng: 2024)



**Figure 08:** View of Room possibly a prison (photo: AIA archive )



**Figures 09-10:** Ceramic vessels discovered from Ghundi Sabzabad archaeological site (photo: AIA archive)



**Figure11:** Pottery cloth with lotus flower stamp (photo: AIA archive)



**Figures12-13:** decorated with Daria line on pottery (photo: AIA archive)



**Figures 14-15:** a circular line in the middle with a flower engraved on pottery (photo: AIA archive)



**Figures 16-17:** coins of Ghundi Sabzabad (photo: AIA archive)



**Figures 18-23:** Clay, Metal and Stone Artifact of Goundi Sabzabad (photo: AIA archive)