

Origin Gems®

Heritage Since 1875

Swat Emerald's: Exclusive Mine Access

This exclusive field account presents a brief overview of the emerald deposits of the **Swat Valley, Pakistan**, based on direct, on-ground documentation by the **Origin Gems®** team. Over several expeditions, our gemologists and geologists have surveyed all major deposits in **Swat and Shangla**, including **Mingora, Shamoza, Charbagh, Makhad, Gujar Killi (Amni), and Bazar Kot**. Our team maintains **direct access** to multiple **mine leaseholders** and continues to document both the geological formations and the cultural traditions surrounding Swat's emerald trade. The Swat Valley represents not only one of the **world's oldest emerald-producing regions** but also a living link between ancient civilisations and modern gemology. For a comprehensive account, detailed data, and extended photographic documentation, refer to **Gem Trails of Pakistan — Volume 1**.

October 27, 2025

All the photographs are our own and are copyright © protected by Origin Gems®. This is an exclusive access brief field account of Emeralds from the Swat Valley. For a comprehensive account with multiple photographs, consider purchasing a copy of our book, Gem Trails of Pakistan - Volume 1.

The Swat Valley has become almost a second home for our team. We have been to the mining sites, undertaking many, many expeditions to all the deposits in Swat and Shangla, and are also involved in new explorations of deposits in Shangla. This is a brief field account; we have a lot of data that will be available in our upcoming Book Gem trails of Pakistan and Docuseries. For our team, not only the Emeralds but the people have a real personal connection to the land. We have direct access and direct contact with multiple leaseholders and miners.



Figure 1. A very large crystal of Emerald that hasn't been cleaned, over 200-300 cts. Behind is one of our very good friends, Mr. Haider, who has been the backbone of our Swat expeditions and has held senior roles in the Swat Gems Merchants Association. Origin Gems® Photo.

As a group of gemologists and geologists, our main mission is to promote the trade, bringing transparency and awareness to the world, break down stereotypes, and also further explore Pakistan's vast gem reserves. We are one of the very few groups of people in all of Pakistan specialising in this.

There are multiple mining deposits within the Swat Valley that include the biggest mine sites in Mingora, as of 2025, having 49 active mines, Shamozaï, Charbagh, Makhad (which is currently not being mined), and in the Shangla district, Gujar Killi (Amni), and the deposit near Bazar Kot, which is currently being surveyed and studied by our teams. We have been to all mine.



Figure 2. The signboard leading to the Swat Valley. Welcome to Swat Valley, the Switzerland of Pakistan. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 3. The Swat Valley is a beautiful place full of lush green alpine trees and breathtaking scenes. This photograph was taken in winter in the upper Swat Valley during the winter snows, a magical place many have never seen. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 4. An Archaeological site of an ancient Buddhist Stupa. The civilisations of Swat have been mining emeralds since ancient times and have provided great civilisations such as the Romans, to even been adorned by Alexander the Great, Greeks, Gandhara, Mughal, and many other civilisations. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 5. A drone shot of the Locals washing through the emerald mine debris from the Swat emerald mines at the Swat River. Origin Gems® Photo.

The practice of giving the debris to the local people dates back many years. The local people who buy the auctioned and mine tailings sacks bring them to the Swat river for processing the already sorted tailings by the miners. This tradition of selling material to the people of Swat goes back many years. In around 1972, the then contractor, caused a big riot when he said famously, "the Emerald lottery is over", referring to the practice of selling the tailings to the local people. Well, thankfully, the people are still able to earn a living by finding small crystals and sometimes get lucky getting a larger crystal. Much of this production is sold at auctions in the nearby open auction buildings. Much of the higher-quality production has already been removed by the miners and leaseholders.



Figure 6. An elderly man sifting through the mine debris in search of emeralds at the Swat River. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 7. Some of the emeralds the locals have sifted through the mine debris. Note that the debris has already been mostly cleaned by the miners before. Anything left over is for the locals to keep. Sometimes, good quality emeralds have been missed by the miners, and one can find a bargain deal from these local people. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 8. In winter, the glacial cold water calms down and allows the crossing of horses. In summer, the river is impossible to cross like this. Origin Gems® Photo.

Mingora Emerald Deposit:



Figure 9. A drone view of the Emerald Mingora deposit mines. Note the local houses and graveyard right in front of the mine sites. Taken during winter, in summer the landscape becomes even more lush. Origin Gems® Photo.

The Mingora emerald deposit is the largest deposit of Emeralds currently being mined. As of 2025 has 49 mines working, with the biggest lease holder working the deeper deposit. The deposit is not exhausted but is worked through small-scale mining operations. The deposit has been mined for more than 2000 years, supplying better-quality emeralds to civilizations around the world, such as the Romans to ancient Egyptians. Isotope studies paired with gemological tests on important historical artefacts once thought to be Columbian or Egyptian revealed they actually originated from the Mingora deposit of the Swat valley.



Figure 10. The founders of Origin Gems® doing drone documentation of the Mingora Emerald deposit, in red is the head of security at the Mingora Emerald deposit. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 11. A controller of the pully system, a bell signals when the miners are ready to send material up or come up themselves. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 12. A pulley system inside one of the Emerald mines in Mingora, the ore is being cleared from the cart, so our team can go deeper into the mine. Before sitting, the owner of this mine's lease told us that we are responsible if anything happens in terms of safety. Mining emeralds in this environment is risky, especially as the host rock is softer and usually saturated with water. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 13. The mining crew on shift that day, they are digging deeper in search of Emeralds. Promising signs as emerald mineralisation is seen. Origin Gems® Photo.

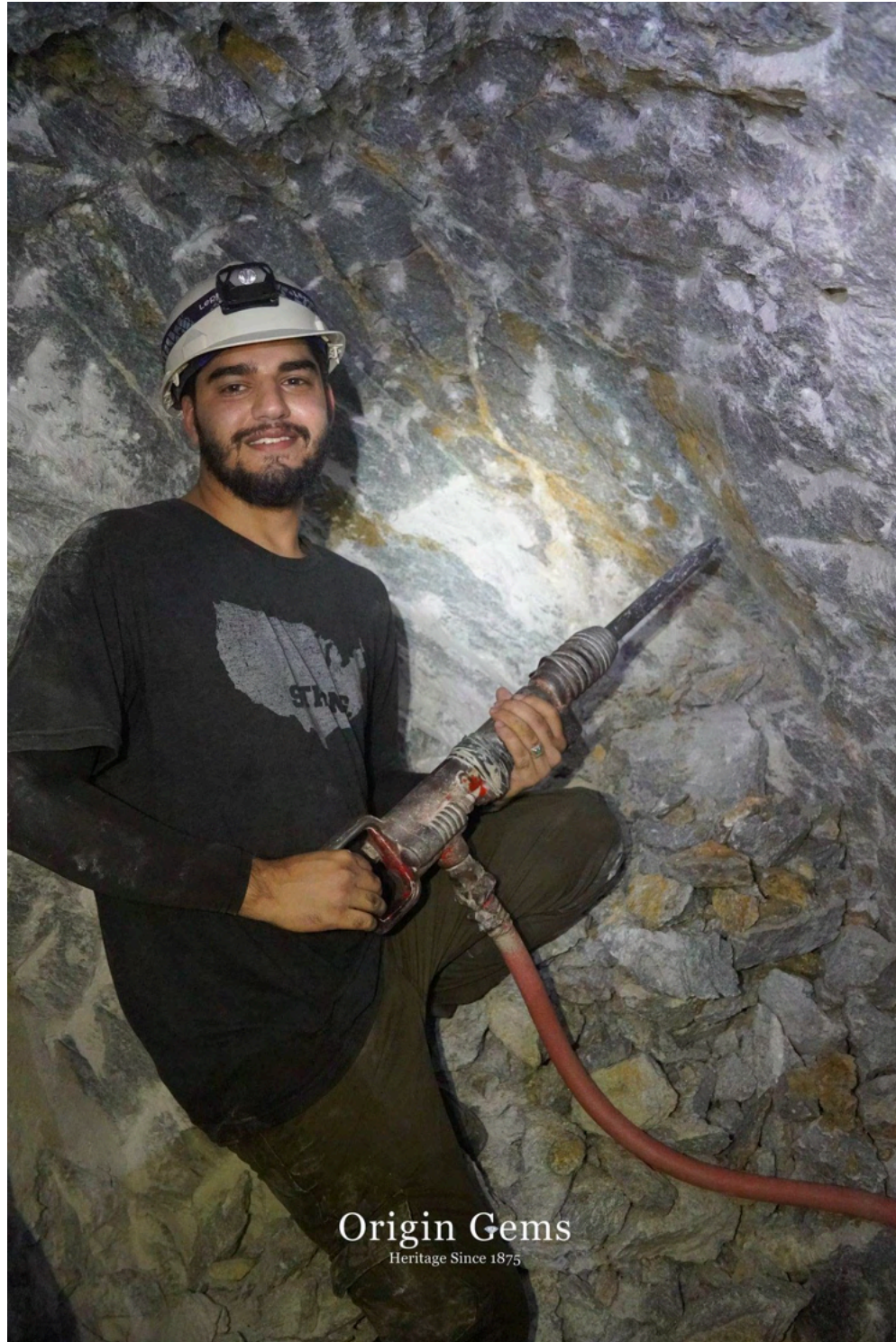


Figure 14. One of the founders of Origin Gems® holding the Jack hammer inside the Mingora Emerald mines. Origin Gems® Photo.

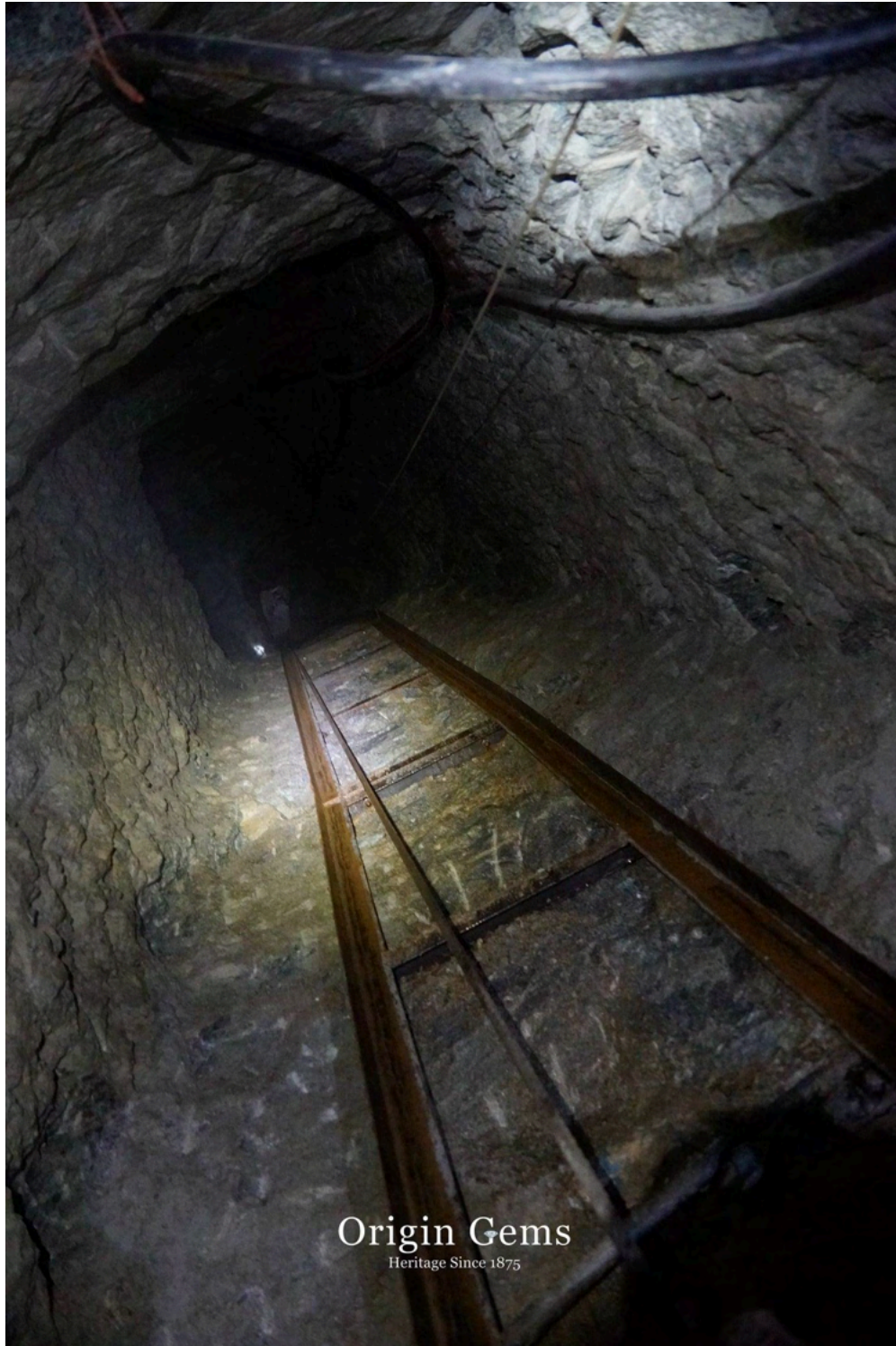


Figure 15. A very steep track. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 16. A miner inside an Emerald mine in the Mingora deposit. After the ore is brought up to this level, it is wheelbarrowed out another couple of metres until the surface. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 17. Mining Engineer with Origin Gems®, leading Advisor, Mr. Syed Nohman Gilani, outside a new mine development site at Mingora, Swat Emerald mines. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 18. A new mine site being developed in the Swat Valley, Mingora Emerald Deposit. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 19. An old man holding an Emerald crystal at the Emerald trading centre in Mingora, outside the Swat Emerald Mines. Origin Gems® Photo.

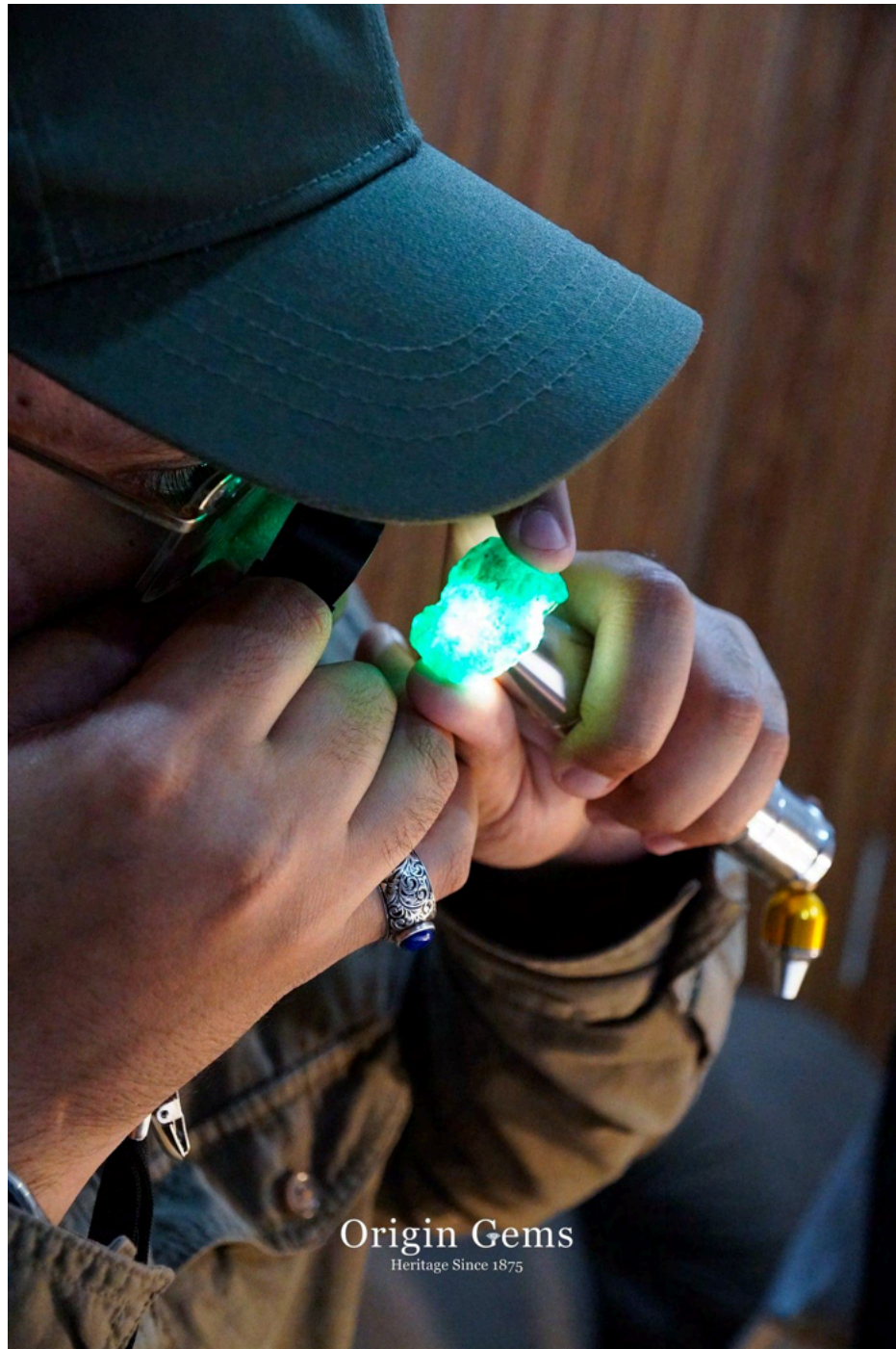


Figure 20. Inspecting an Emerald in the Swat emerald trading centre. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 21. A beautiful Emerald Crystal from Swat Mingora Emerald mines. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 22. The founders of Origin Gems® inspecting Emeralds from Swat Mingora Emerald mines outside mines inside the Emerald trading centre. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 23. A Lapidary in Swat Mingora cutting Emeralds from Swat Mingora mines. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 24. Emerald with stunning gardening (mined from Swat Mingora deposit), outside the Mingora Swat emerald mines. 6ct+ in size. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 25. We've coined the term "Kiwi Emeralds" for these rare, trapiche-like emeralds, featuring a lighter center and darker rim, with magnetite inclusions, appearing similar like the fruit. These emerald 'Kiwi's' are from the Mingora emerald mines. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 26. Emerald from Swat Mingora being used to make pendant. Origin Gems® Photo.

Shamozai Emerald Deposit:



Figure 27. Outside the Shamozai Emerald deposit, a local nomads goat. Origin Gems® Photo.

A lesser-known locality that is hidden in a remote area of Swat, this locality is the second largest deposit of Emeralds after Mingora, following the same geological formation. Much of the production is pocketed yet has the same highly saturated hues as its cousin locality in Mingora. Currently, there are multiple mine tunnels, and all run by a party of different shareholders, and production is auctioned or given on contract.



Figure 28. The leaseholder and his car in the Shamozai Emerald deposit. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 29. An emerald mine in Shamozaï Swat valley. Origin Gems® Photo.



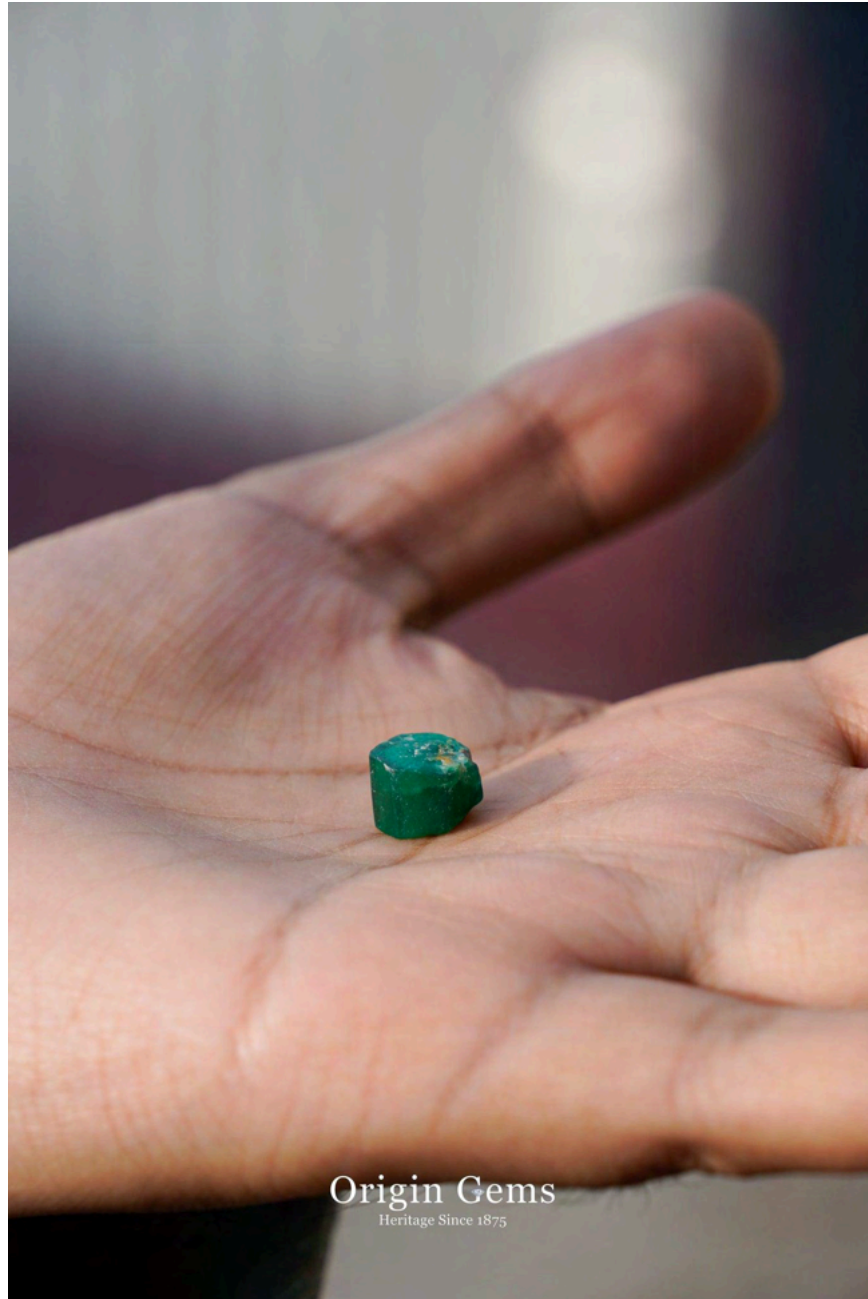
Figure 30. Inside the deep mine tunnel, showing the founders of Origin Gems®, a very tight squeeze, the tunnels are held up by wooden beams, and in places of hard rock, the mining engineer leaves the natural rock carved so as not to damage the stability of the mine tunnel. Very dangerous. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 31. Mining engineer of the Shamozaï emerald mines showing our Origin Gems® team and founders the mines and briefing us about the geology. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 32. Miners cleaning today's Emerald production from the Shamoza Emerald mines under the supervision of the lease holder and security team. Origin Gems® Photo.



*Figure 33. A miner holding an emerald crystal that has been freshly mined out the ground.
Origin Gems® Photo.*



Figure 34. A beautiful Sunset Landscape shot across the Shamoza Emerald Deposit of Swat Valley. Origin Gems® Photo.

Gujar Killi (Amni) Emerald Deposit:



Figure 35. The main mine site, this mine is currently active, taken in December 2024 before the winter snows, a stark contrast to the lush green alpine views in the summer time. Origin Gems® Photo.

The Gujar Killi (Amni) emerald deposit was reportedly discovered around 1981, when an elderly local woman unearthed several crystals while digging a fireplace near her home. Unaware of their value, she took the stones to Mingora, where a Hindu trader recognized them as emeralds, marking the beginning of the deposit's history.

The original Gujar Killi open-pit mine described by Bowersox refers to a different open-pit site that is now inactive. In contrast, the Amni mines, located near Gujar Killi village, continue to be worked on a small scale and have changed hands through several leaseholders over the years. The Lapis magazine publication that references the Gujar Killi occurrence is, in fact, describing this Amni deposit rather than the site documented by Bowersox.



Figure 36. The village opposite the mine site at Gujar Killi. Taken in December 2024 before the winter snows. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 37. The village opposite the mine site in Gujar Killi. Taken in 2025 during spring time, a stark contrast to the harsh winters. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 38. This mine has been closed for some time; the miners didn't find feasible production in this tunnel, so they had to close and resume operations from a different angle, going deeper in the deposit. Taken in December 2024 at the Gujar Killi (Amni) Emerald deposit site. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 39. One of the mine entrances at the Gujar Killi (Amni) Emerald deposit. All mining is currently done underground through small-scale operations. One of the founders of Origin Gems® is standing next to the mine. You can see the size of the mine entrance, which is barely enough for 1-2 people. It was a challenge getting to this locality to document it. Taken in December 2024 before winter snows. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 40. A group of our main Origin Gems® team of gemologist and geologists inside one of the Gujar Killi (Amni) Emerald mines. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 41. Inside the Gujar Killi Emerald mine tunnels. Flooding is an issue. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 42. Inside the Gujar Killi Emerald mine tunnels, held up by wood. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 43. Inside the Gujar Killi Emerald mine tunnels covered in moss and fungus. Origin Gems® Photo.

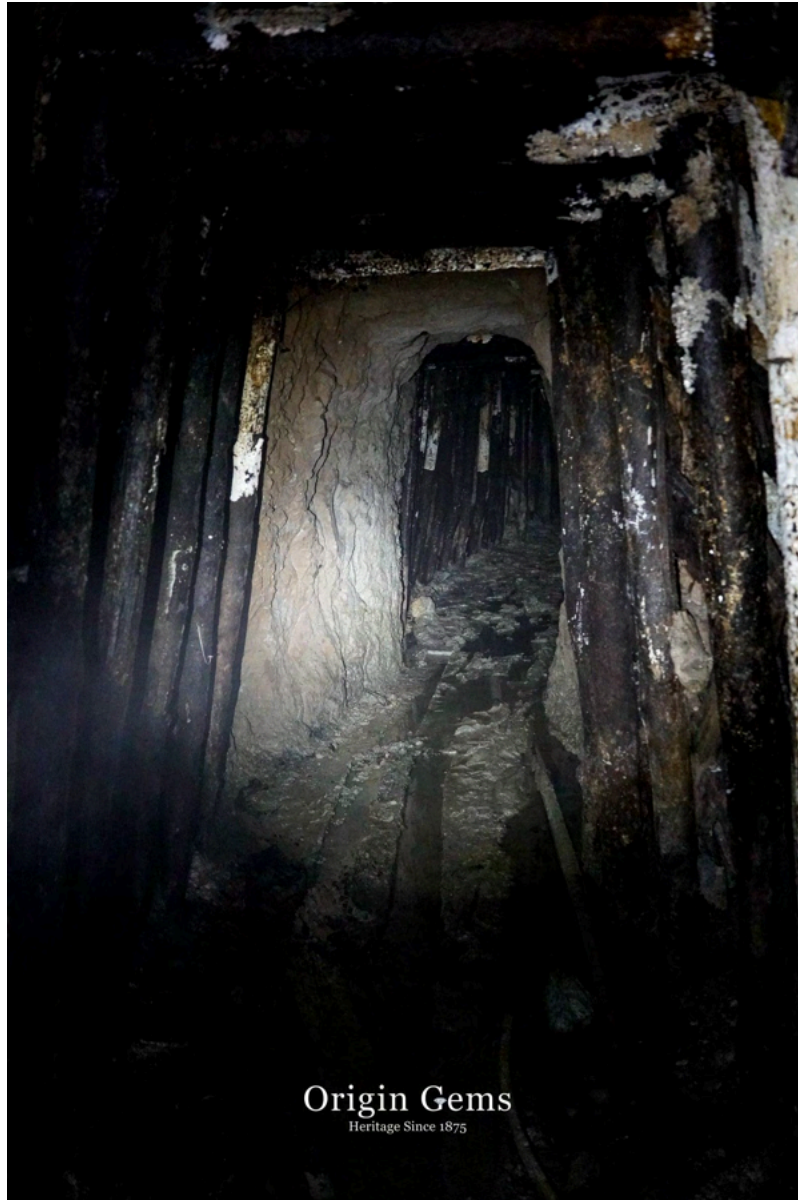


Figure 44. Inside the Gujar Killi Emerald mine deep tunnels. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 45. All over Pakistan, you will see similar compressors for the jackhammers that are used to break through the host rock in search of gemstones, in this case, Emeralds at the Gujar Killi deposit. Origin Gems® Photo.



Figure 46. Several Emerald specimens from the Gujar Killi (Amni) Emerald mines, on a table showing richly saturated hue. Origin Gems® Photo.

Charbagh Emerald Deposit:



Figure 47. Outside the Charbagh Emerald mines in Swat Valley. Origin Gems® Photo.

The Charbagh mine has had some issues with production in the past, but recently, newer material has been found that is of exceptional quality. The locality is closer to Mingora than the other deposits. It is surrounded by beautiful, lush greenery. In the future, as they work at deeper levels, more production will surface, leading to a more better origin recognition worldwide of this deposit.



Figure 48. Inside the Charbagh Emerald mines in Swat Valley holding a jack hammer. Origin Gems® Photo.



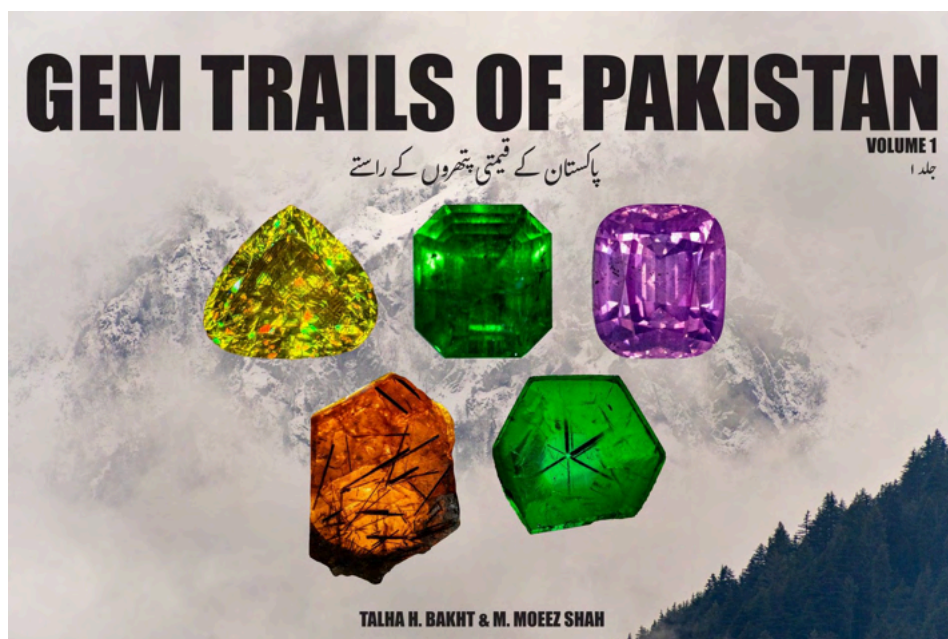
Figure 49. An emerald specimen from the Charbagh mines in Swat valley. Origin Gems® Photo.

Makhad Emerald Deposit:



Figure 50. The Makhad emerald mines entrance Swat valley. Origin Gems® Photo.

The emerald deposit near the Makhad village is currently not being mined. As of now, there is no information about when the deposit will be worked on again. If work starts, we will give an update on this smaller locality.



For more detailed information, stunning photographs, and more, get a copy of our new publication, Gem Trails of Pakistan. Origin Gems® Photo.

If you want to own an authentic Swat Emerald, or if you are a big manufacturing company or jeweller, we can also arrange emeralds on contract. Please do get in contact with our [client advisory team](#).

All Photographs and data are Origin Gems®' own on-ground field accounts, all photographs are copyright © protected.

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