

A Copper Hoard of the Great Kushans from Jamrud (Khyber Agency), Pakistan

Gul Rahim Khan and Muhammad Naeem Qazi

Abstract: Copper hoards with small quantity of coins particularly of the Kushan period are not often appreciated for publication. But when such a parcel of coins is known from proper context then it is well praised by the scholars. Moreover, when such a collection containing coins of some interest then it is a noteworthy piece of evidence and always contributes something new to the site and history of that period. The present lot which is small but yields many things of interest like its provenance, the Buddhist site near Peshawar, and bearing two coins of the Buddha image.

Keyword: Kushans, Kanishka, Huvishka, Ardoxsho, Huvishka.

A small hoard of copper of the Kushan period was reported to the authors about nineteen years ago. This parcel of coins was unearthed by a local person from a Buddhist site lying to the west of Zor Gudar, a small village at Jamrud, Khyber Agency on the west of Peshawar. The said village is located about 2.5 km to the north west of the famous Jamrud fort and 6.0 km northwest of the modern town of Hayatabad in Peshawar. On Google earth the said village lies 34°01'29.36"N and 71°02'45.13"E. The co-author had taken this opportunity to visit the said site personally after the hoard was discovered there. He was invited there by his friend (Mr. Akhtar Amin) of that locality and thus able to observe there archaeological remains like stupa foundation with base mouldings, fallen structures including votive stupas, fragments of schist and lime sculptures, potsherds etc. The site obviously belongs to the Buddhist era and many important sites like Shah-Ji-Ki-Dheri (Spooner 1912; Hargreaves 1914), Tahkal Stupas (Errington 1987) and Shpola Stupa (Aiyer 1990; Errington 2007) are well reported and excavated in the vicinity of Peshawar. The Shpola stupa lies on main Peshawar-Torkham road and merely a few kilometres to the west of this Buddhist settlement. The site under discussion was badly disturbed by the robbers

and local people. During his visit the author got some photographs of the site and other antiquities but they disappeared few years back due to the shifting of his residence to the University campus. However, the principal author recently found a set of photographs along with hand written description of those coins when they were first discovered and handed over to him for study in 1996. Now the authors get this opportunity to publish this parcel of coins in the interest of scholars and students. One negligence was made from our side that the weight of these coins was not recorded, however, they all are of large size and full unit as evident from the nature of coins and the size of their photos. It is a small parcel of coins as known by the number of pieces but its context and contents both are interesting and worth of publication.

This lot comprises three coins of Kanishka, twelve of Huvishka and three of Vasudeva I. Looking to the collection it is ranging from the later days of the first ruler to the mature phase of the third ruler of the hoard. In this way it covers a span of about 80 years of the issuing period of these coins. The ruling period of these monarchs is altogether hundred years i.e. from 127 to 226/27 CE.

Kanishka I

This ruler shares three coins and all are of heavy weight (tetra-drachm unit). The obverse design of these coins is the same showing king standing at altar to left and their reverses have two main varieties (a) Nana standing to right and (b) seated Maitreya Buddha in abhayamudra. Due to the position of tamga and disposition of legend, coins of the second variety are further classified into two sub-varieties (nos. 2 and 3). The coins depicted with Buddha images are not common and said to have issued in the later phase of Kanishka I rule.

Huvishka

As mentioned above, Huvishka is represented by twelve coins and thus the major collection of the hoard belongs to this ruler. Due to the coin design and types they seem to be struck in reduced tetra-drachm, i.e. 12 gm. The reduced weight coins displaying barred tamga were usually issued in the later phase of Huvishka's reign. These coins are known in two obverse with many reverse designs. Types, combination of the reverse figures, varieties of tamga and their styles divide these coins into two main groups. These groups are mainly marked by reverse figures: (a) the two-armed Oesho and (b) Ardoxsho, Pharro and others. The first group comprises seven coins and the second five examples. The coins of first group are known in one design while the coins of second exhibit different designs of obverse and reverse. The execution period of both the series is the same but they were issued from two different mints. The coins of two-armed Oesho series seem to be issued from the main mint (mint-A, Bactria mint) and the coins of Ardoxsho-Pharro series from a subsidiary mint (mint-B, so-called Gandhara mint) (Khan 2009: 75-125; 2011: 209-234; 2013: 59-113). The coins of first group as dominant in the hoard are common but the coins of second group are not very common. The latter

coins always display a large number of reverse figures in several varieties. It is worth to mention here some of the coins of the second group of the king under discussion.

One coin (no. 15) depicts the figure of king reclining on couch on the obverse and standing deity. The reverse figure needs some explanations. If the reverse figure is identified as Pharro then it seems to be a new variety in respect of this obverse combination. Göbl has reported many examples of god Pharro shown on the copper of Huvishka who normally appears with the obverse design of elephant-rider or seated cross-legged position of the king (Göbl 1984: nos. 862-66). Hence the couch design of obverse is not common in the so-called Gandhara or Ardoxsho-Herakles-Pharro mint (Khan 2009: 92). The figure of Pharro standing to left, holding a diadem in the right hand is one of his gesture of the four varieties in which he carries a staff in raised left hand with different objects in the right such as (a) flames, (b) a purse, (c) a diadem and (d) a club as exhibited on the late Gandharan issues of Huvishka (Khan 2009: 93; 2011: 217; 2013: 66, 85, no. 161). In addition two more varieties of the same figure (Pharro) are also recently reported hence the number of these varieties is increased to 6, i.e. (e) Pharro standing to right with a purse in the left hand and a staff in raised right and (f) the same figure standing to left with a purse in the right hand and a staff in the left as var. b, but the inscribed legend is MAO instead of Φ APPO and the right arm is slightly bent (Khan 2013: 65, 88, nos. 154-55; Göbl 1993: no. 349). Many hybrid figures like this example are seen on this group of Huvishka copper (Khan 2009). In other option the reverse figure which is not sure might be associated with sun-god (Miuro) as often depicted on such coins. Accordingly the round object below right hand of the figure likely to be a dot above tamga instead of a purse as described above for god Pharro and hence the

figure can be known as Miirō under this explanation.

As far as the figure of Ardoxsho is concerned, this design is commonly exhibited on the late phase of the copper coins of Huvishka. The figure is shown standing in three different poses: (a) facing right with cornucopia in both hands, (b) facing left with cornucopia in both hands and (c) facing left with diadem in the right hand and cornucopia in crook of left arm (Khan 2009: 93). In view of these varieties two coins (nos. 11-12) belong to the first variety and one (no. 13) to the third variety of Ardoxsho series.

Vasudeva I

Three coins belong to Vasudeva I, last ruler of the hoard and also the last king in the list of the great Kushans. Of these, one coin (no. 16) obviously belong to the early issues of the king. The early coins of this king are identified by the absence of a trident behind altar in the left field. Apart from this, certain coins also exhibit pennants attached to the outer shaft of the trident held by the king in his left hand and the letters of Bactrian legend are characteristically short, point and often blundered. The remaining two coins seem to be the issues of mature phase of Vasudeva I. They are finely executed but don't bear any additional symbol on the obverse like Soter Megas tamga or nandipada symbol in the right field, bar to the trident in the left field, semi-circle of dots to the trident in the right field etc., as usually seen on the late copper issues of this ruler.

Conclusion

In view of the contents of above-mentioned coins, it is a small hoard or combination of two hoards which comprises copper coins of the three major rulers of the Great Kushans. This deposit of coins indicate that the collection was either began during the later period of Huvishka as it contained coins of the late phase of this

ruler or perhaps in the reign of Vasudeva I where the coins of predecessors like the Buddha images of Kanishka and the late issues of Huvishka were still in circulation. The hoard doesn't yield any example of the late issues of Vasudeva I or his successors and thus it would be ceased and buried during the late phase of Vasudeva I's reign or just before the rule of Kanishka II (227 CE). The hoard contents show a new phenomenon that this kind of Kushan hoards are not well known. However, the assemblage of Ranighat hoard comprising coins of Wima Kadphises, Kanishka I, Huvishka and Vasudeva I bears close resemblance with the hoard under discussion (Robert hoard no. 70, <http://kushan.org>). Most importantly this numismatic evidence confirms a substantial period of the Great Kushans with terminus post-quem period of Vasudeva I at the Buddhist site in Khyber Agency.

The presence of two Buddha coins in the parcel recovered from the Buddhist site may get attention of the scholars that what kind of hoard is this? It is either a saving hoard or a donative hoard because this kind of contents is not reported before this. It is difficult to explain here because it was found long ago in the process of illegal diggings and merely mentioned by the owner that the coins were found in a small terracotta pot. It is possible that the coins of this collection were picked up separately from two different contexts of the site; (a) the Buddha coins deposited in Buddhist relics in the time of Kanishka and (b) the remaining coins of a currency hoard belonged to the period of Vasudeva I. Later on the coins of these deposits were mixed up by the owner when he found during unscientific excavations. If this statement is correct that all such coins were found together then it suggests that the Buddha coins were re-deposited with a group of contemporary issues of Vasudeva I being circulated in the first quarter of the 3rd century.

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- <http://kushan.org/sources/coin/copperhoards.htm> (Robert Bracey, hoard no. 70)

Catalogue

1. Kanishska

1.1. Standing King and Nana

Obv. King standing frontally with head in profile to left, wearing crested helmet, kaftan and trousers, and cloak over shoulder; right hand sacrificing over altar in the left field and holds a sceptre in raised left hand.

Bactrian legendNHPKI

Rev. Female (goddess Nana) figure standing to right, wears double robe dress, holding a lion - protome sceptre in the right hand and a bowl in the left, and a sword across her waist. Legend ИАИА vertically down in the left field and *tamga* in the right.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 792,

Coin no. 1

1.2. Standing king and Maitriya Buddha

Obv. As 1.1.

Bactrian legend unclear

Rev. Buddha seated cross-legged on a low throne, facing frontally, wearing jewelry and sanghati, right hand raised before chest in *abhayamudra* and left holding a water flask over his left thigh. Bactrian legend MHTPAYO – BOYΔO begins at 6 o'clock and terminates at 7 o'clock (anticlockwise, read from outside) and four-pronged *tamga* in the right field.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 792, Cribb 1999/2000: nos. 91-96 (Rev. die no. 23, obv. Die x)

Coin no. 2

1.3. Standing king and Maitriya Buddha

Obv. As 1.1.

Bactrian legend ...KA – NHPKI

Rev. As 1.2, Bactrian legend MH[TPAY]O B–OYΔO begins at 6 o'clock and terminates at 5 o'clock (clockwise, read from inside) and four-pronged *tamga* in the left field.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 791, Cribb 1999/2000: nos. 106-15 (Rev. die no. 26, obv. Die z)

Coin no. 3

2. Huvishka

2.1. Elephant-rider and two-armed Oesho

Obv. King riding on elephant to right, wearing diadem, turreted helmet, kaftan and trousers and holds a spear in the left hand.

Bactrian legend illegible

Rev. Two-armed Oesho standing frontally with head in profile to left, wears dhoti and necklace; holds a trident in raised right hand and a water flask in the left in down position. Nanipada symbol in upper right field and four-pronged *tamga* in the left and Bactrian legend OHPO vertically down in the right field.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 855

Coin nos. 4-10

2.2. Elephant-rider and Ardoxsho

Obv. King riding on elephant to right, holding spear in the right hand.

Bactrian legend illegible

Rev. Female figure standing to right, wears long robe, holding cornucopia in both hands. Legend APΔOXPO vertically up on the left and four-pronged *tamga* on the right.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 876

Coin nos. 11-12

2.3. Elephant-rider and Ardoxsho

Obv. As 2.2.

Rev. Female figure standing to left, perhaps right (?) arm extended in which she holds a diadem and carries a cornucopia over her left shoulder. Legend unclear and four-pronged *tamga* in the left field.

Coin nos. 13

2.4. Elephant-rider and Mao

Obv. As 2.2.

Rev. Male figure standing to right wear tunic and mantel, lunar crescent behind shoulders, making two-fingered gesture with right hand and left holding sword near waist. Legend MAO vertically down on the left and four-pronged *tamga* on the left.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 869

Coin nos. 14

2.5. King on Couch and Male Figure (Pharro)

Obv. King reclining on couch with head in profile to left, two lines halo round body, both hands clasped before chest, right leg bent on couch and left lowered on stool.

Rev. Male figure standing frontally with head in profile to left, holding a bag in extended right hand and a long sceptre in raised left. Legend is unclear; perhaps this figure represents to metal god Pharro or sun-god Miiro.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 863-66 (reverse only)

Coin no. 15

3. Vasudeva I

3.1. Standing king and Oesho, no trident in the left field

Obv. King standing frontally with head turned to left, wearing conical headdress, chain mail-dress and trousers, right hand sacrificing over altar and left holds a trident, two pennants attached with the outside of the shaft of trident. Bactrian legend PAO NAN.....

Rev. Two-armed Oesho standing frontally with head turned to left, wears necklace and dhoti, holding diadem in extended right hand and trident in raised left. Behind him bull standing to left, legend OHPO vertically upward in the left field and four-pronged *tamga* in the right.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 863-66 (reverse only)

Coin no. 16

3.2. Standing king and Oesho, perhaps trident in the left field

Obv. As 3.1, perhaps there is a trident behind altar in the left field and pennants disappeared from the shaft of trident in the right field. Bactrian legend unclear

Rev. As 3.1, legend and *tamga* unclear.

Coin nos. 17-18



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