

A Copper Hoard of Mahmud Shah Durrani from Chamkani, Peshawar

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A small hoard of 24 copper coins has been reported from Chamkani village located in the eastern vicinity of Peshawar. This hoard was accidentally found by labourers digging during construction of a building. It was presented to the owner of the property who later on donated it to the SSAQ Museum of Archaeology, University of Peshawar. It was found intact buried in an earthen ware bowl. Most of the coins were in poor state of preservation and broken from edges, therefore only 18 coins are included in this paper.

All the legible coins exhibit the mint name 'Peshawar' so the entire contents of this hoard seem to have been produced from the Peshawar mint. The city of Peshawar played a dynamic role in the time of Durrani rule. There is no doubt about the mint place of Peshawar, as it was being used as main operational mint in this region of the Durrani period. This dynasty also adopted Peshawar as a winter capital (Whitehead 1934: xliii). Ahmad Shah, the founder of the dynasty, like his Persian progenitor (Nadir Shah) carried out his invasions to India through Peshawar. In his early expeditions Ahmad Shah also visited Shaikh Umar, the well known saint, living in the village of Chamkani (Singh 1959: 73-74).

The hoard belonged to the late phase of the Durrani period. The coins usually depict authority name 'Mahmud', fifth ruler of the dynasty, and his titles on the obverse and short legend with mint name on the reverse. The complete legend on such coins is arranged as: (Hijra year) *Mahmud Badshah Ghazi Sikka*

Mubarak on the obverse and *Fulūs Zarab Peshawar* (with regnal year) on the reverse. This legend shows the continuation of the copper coins of Ahmad Shah (Whitehead 1934: no. 264) and Timur Shah (Whitehead 1934: nos. 680-87) that issued from Peshawar mint. The coins of this mint are well known for its good style and workmanship (Dames 1888: 334). In addition, some coins of Timur Shah are richly ornamented with foliage designs. Ayub Shah, last ruler of the Durrani, who issued copper coins from Peshawar, also retained the same kind of legend. The forerunner of this dynasty had developed this pattern from the coins of the Mughal ruler, Shah Alam Bahadur (1707-12). Later on, the Durrani rulers dropped the half portion i.e. *Maimnat Manūs* of the Mughal formula from their coins issued at the mint under discussion. The credit for the establishment of Peshawar mint likely goes to the same ruler of the Mughal dynasty. Besides this one silver coin of Akbar was identified for the same mint but the name of Peshawar as indicated by the author is doubtful (Lane-Poole 1892: no. 177, p.35). As cited above the coins of this hoard are not in good condition and they hardly furnish complete information about legend, date, name of the ruler and name of the mint etc. The weight of intact coins ranges between 10 to 12 gm.

Political career of Mahmud Shah was not very stable and generally known for disputes, revolts and campaigns. Like his predecessor, Shah Shuja, the ruling period of this monarch was also interrupted. In the first period of the reign, he ruled for two years (AD. 1801-03) and in the

second for nine years (AD. 1809-18). Moreover, he possessed his authority at Herat for a longer period (AD. 1801-1829). Launching his rule, Mahmud Shah dethroned and blinded his step-brother Shah Zaman and proclaimed himself as king at Kabul (AD. 1801) and soon expelled Shah Shujah from Peshawar (AD. 1801). But two years later Shah Shujah managed to take the control of Kabul, Peshawar (AD. 1803) and other regions. About six years later, Mahmud Shah regained his kingdom from Shah Shujah and ruled for a long period. Due to disputes and civil wars among the brothers, the vast kingdom of the Durrani was suffered a lot and disintegrated after their father Timur Shah. In this regard the ruling period of these two (Mahmud Shah and Shah Shujah) is known in more than one tenure.

In both phases of his reign, Mahmud shah regularly issued coins from all major mints. His coins are known in gold, silver and copper. Whitehead presented a good number of coins of this ruler. He presented 63 coins struck at the Herat region. All are known in silver only. Similarly, he reported 59 coins of the first reign and 153 coins of the second. In both the reigns 11 coins are known in gold, 168 in silver and 31 in copper. These coins are known from as many as 10 mints. Bahawalpur and Kashmir emerged as the leading mints where each mint is known with more than 2 dozen coins. Gold coins were recorded from three mints i.e. Bahawalpur, Qandahar and Kabul. Silver coins were reported from all (ten) known mints. Copper coins were reported from only three mints: Multan with 19 coins, Kashmir with 11 and Peshawar with a single specimen (Whitehead 1934).

In order to his second accession, some coins of Mahmud Shah issued from Peshawar, Kabul and Derajat mints began to reckon the regnal year as 1224 or 1225 and not 1216, the date of the commencement of his first reign (Dames 1888: 330). The coins of present collection were also struck in the same order. Peshawar had been a prominent mint during the Durrani period and all the dynasty's major rulers frequently issued coins from there. The coins were known to have issued at the said mint from the reign of Ahmad Shah (AD. 1747-72) till the period of Ayub Shah (AD. 1818-29). In view of the gold (20 coins) and silver (106 coins) productions the quantity of copper (12 coins) from this mint is quite low. But the discovery of this new hoard changes the picture derived from previous analysis. This mint produced large number of copper coins as well.

The regnal year on the legible coins from the hoard is obviously confined to the last three years of Mahmud's reign. The life span of this collection is therefore very short. It was not a traditional type of hoard collected by someone as his life earning saved with the passage of time. The coins of this hoard seem to be fresh money as picked up from a single mint located in the same vicinity. Whatever was the cause of this hoarding, it indicates one thing that these coins were not collected for long term hoarding purpose but were left buried as a brief expedient. Looking to the contents of this hoard it was buried in the last year or just after losing the control of Peshawar by the said monarch. Ayub Shah followed Mahmud Shah at Peshawar and continued to issue the copper coins on conventional style from the said mint but these are missing from the hoard.

References

- Dames, M.L.W. 1888. The Coins of the Durrani. *The Numismatic Chronicle*, Third Series, Vol. VIII, London, pp. 325-63.
- Lane-Poole, R.S. 1892. *The Coins of the Mughal Emperors of Hindustan in the British Museum*, London.
- Singh, G. 1959. *Ahmad Shah Durrani*. (Reprint 1977 Quetta).
- Whitehead, R.B. 1934. *Catalogue of Coins in the Punjab Museum Lahore, Vol. III. Coins of Nadir Shah and the Durrani Dynasty*, Oxford (Repr. 1977, Lahore).

Catalogue of Coins

No.	Weight & Size	Obverse	Reverse
1.	10.98 gm; 22.0x4.4 mm	۲۲ محمود بادشاہ غازے [سکہ مبارک] (122... Mahmud badshah ghazi)	فلوس ضرب پشاور (fulūs zarab Peshawar)
2.	11.46 gm; 23.0x5.0 mm	۲۲ محمود بادشاہ غازے سکہ [مبارک] (12... badshah ghazi sikka)	فلوس ضرب پشاور ۸ (fulūs zarab Peshawar 8)
3.	11.64 gm; 21.8x5.0 mm	۲۲ محمود بادشاہ [غازے] (12... Mahmud badshah)	فلوس ضرب پشاور ۸ (fulūs zarab Peshawar 8)
4.	11.42 gm; 21.7x4.8 mm	[محمود] بادشاہ غازے [سکہ مبارک] (badshah ghazi mubarak)	فلوس ضرب پشاور ۸ (fulūs zarab Peshawar 8)
5.	11.88 gm; 22.0x5.4 mm	محمود بادشاہ [غازے] (Mahmud badshah)	فلوس ضرب پشاور ۸ (fulūs zarab Peshawar 8)
6.	11.42 gm; 20.0x4.8 mm	۲۲ محمود بادشاہ غازے سکہ مبارک (12... Mahmud badshah ghazi sikka mubarak)	فلوس ضرب پشاور ۸ (fulūs zarab Peshawar 8)

7.	12.00 gm; 22.3x6.2 mm بادشاہ [غازے] [سکہ] مبارک (<i>badshah mubarak</i>)	فلوس ب پشاور (<i>fulūs zarab Peshawar</i>)
8.	11.58 gm; 21.5x4.7 mm	محمود بادشاہ [غازے] مبارک (<i>Mahmud badshah mubarak</i>)	فلوس ضرب پشاور (<i>fulūs zarab Peshawar</i>)
9.	11.62 gm; 21.7x5.4 mm	[محمود] بادشاہ غازے [سکہ] مبارک (<i>badshah ghazi mubarak</i>)	فلوس [ضر]ب پشاور ۸ (<i>fulūs zarab Peshawar 8</i>)
10.	11.14 gm; 20.6x4.2 mm	[محمود] بادشاہ غازے [سکہ] مبارک (<i>badshah ghazi mubarak</i>)	فلوس ضرب پشاور ۸ (<i>fulūs zarab Peshawar 8</i>)
11.	9.14 gm; 20.6x4.2 mm	محمود بادشاہ غازے [سکہ مبارک] (<i>Mahmud badshah ghazi</i>)	فلوس ضرب پشاور (<i>fulūs zarab Peshawar</i>)
12.	11.16 gm; 21.4x4.5	محمود بادشاہ غازے (<i>Mahmud badshah ghazi</i>)	فلوس ضرب پشاور ۹ (<i>fulūs zarab Peshawar 9</i>)
13.	10.68 gm; 20.4x4.5 mm	[محمود] غازے (<i>ghazi</i>)	فلوس ضرب پشاور (<i>fulūs zarab Peshawar</i>)

14.	8.10 gm; 10.8x5.5 mm	محمود [بادشاہ] غازے (Mahmud ghazi) پشاور (Peshawar)
15.	7.52 gm; 20.0x3.5 mm	[محمود] بادشاہ غازے [سکہ مبارک] (badshah ghazi)	فلوس [ضرب پشاور] (fulūs)
16.	7.06 gm; 8.3 x4.5 mm	[محمود] [باد] شاہ [غازے] [سکہ مبارک] (shah)	فلوس ضرب پشاور (fulūs zarab Peshawar)
17.	4.64 gm; 20.0x2.2 mm	[محمود] بادشاہ ۵ [غازے] [سکہ مبارک] (badshah)	فلوس [ضرب پشاور] (fulūs)
18.	10.12 gm; 22.5x3.3 mm	۱۲۳۱ محمود بادشاہ غازے [سکہ مبارک] (1231 Mahmud badshas ghazi)	فلوس ضرب ۷ پشاور (fulūs zarab Peshawar)



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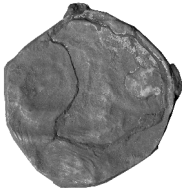
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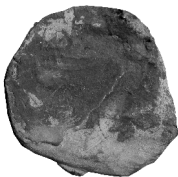
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