

## HERAKLES ON HUVISHKA COINS: A STUDY OF COPPER HOARD FROM SWAT

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A small hoard reported to have been accidentally found by a farmer somewhere in upper Swat District, North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. It was lying buried in a small terracotta pot, in which coins were found in rusted condition. The green patina and general condition of the coins apparently reveal it to be a fresh lot. The hoard came by chance to the observation of the author, who hurriedly took photographs of the coins with the permission of the owner for the purpose of study. Weight and dimension of the coins could not be recorded due to unavailability of relevant equipment at the occasion. It comprises eighteen copper coins of Huvishka, the fifth ruler of the Kushana dynasty. Huvishka succeeded Kanishka-I and ruled over a vast empire stretching from the Oxus Valley (Central Asia) in the northwest down to the Ganges Valley (India) in the southeast including parts of Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and northern India. He ruled for over 35 long years, i.e., from year 28 to year 64 of the Kanishka-I Era corresponding to almost the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

The coins interestingly show some new features of Huvishka coinage, all bearing typical bar like tamga, and belong to the middle stage coinage of the ruler. The certain tamga is identified by means of a horizontal bar added at right angle to the shaft of a four pronged fork that is bifurcated either as an inverted Roman letter 'V' or a small curve. Similarly the usual strokes, one each at the outer sides of the bifurcation, are shown upwardly. The coins are distributed in the following three obverse types with relating reverse varieties:

1.	King riding elephant to right holds spear	
	Ardoxsho	01 coin
	Herakles	09 coins
2.	King reclining on couch to left	
	Mao	01 coin
	Herakles	01 coin
3.	King seated cross-legged with spear in the raised right hand	
	Ardoxsho	01 coin
	Herakles	05 coins

The above-mentioned three types show the major obverse designs, each carrying two different reverses, of the middle stage currency of Huvishka. As a whole three Kushana deities viz. Ardoxsho (2 coins), Herakles (15 coins) and Mao (1 coin) are represented on these coins among which Herakles appears as a principal figure and equally found in all the fore-mentioned three types. The Herakles figure, associated with the middle age, normally occurred on the elephant rider type as R. Göbl rightly classified them in a separate group (group # 4)<sup>1</sup>. In this regard the famous catalogue of Göbl entitled *System und Chronologie der Munzprägung des Kusanreiches*, presents a complete

range of types and varieties of Huvishka along with other Kushana kings. In this catalogue he noticed eleven varieties of Herakles on the reverse of 'king elephant rider' and one on the 'king seated cross-legged' types respectively. In the present hoard the figure of Herakles is found in different styles such as:

No.	Herakles Variety	No. of Coins	Göbl (1984) Ref. No.
a.	Standing front with lowered club in the r. hand and lion skin in the l. arm.	5	886/886A
b.	Standing frontally with raised club in the r. hand and lion skin in the l. arm.	1	889
c.	Standing frontally, crowning himself with r. hand, raised club in crook of left arm and lion skin in the l. hand.	2	892
d.	Standing to l. holds diadem in the advanced r. hand and raised club in the l.	2	890
e.	Standing to r. with raised club in the r. hand and lion skin in the l. arm.	5	888

The first four varieties appeared on the elephant rider type and the fifth one only on the seated cross-legged type. The first variety also appeared on the reclining type. Similarly Ardoxsho has also two varieties: (a) standing to right, holds cornucopia in the left hand and keeps the right one on waist and (b) standing to left, holds diadem in the r. hand and cornucopia in the left one.

In the present hoard the most common variety of Göbl no. 887—which Gardner<sup>2</sup>, Rosenfield<sup>3</sup> and Mitchiner<sup>4</sup> have also referred to—for the elephant rider type is absent. This reverse variety on the seated cross-legged type is extremely rare and, so far, only one specimen is reported by Göbl<sup>5</sup>, but it is commonly found in this hoard. Coins of this variety are in good condition and well executed. The obverse shows straight and well-proportioned upper body of the king with fat legs who holds a sceptre in the right hand. In quantity as well as variety, the seated cross-legged type coins of Huvishka are rare than his other types. A notable variety of Göbl no. 886 or 886A is likewise common in the present hoard. Göbl varieties no. 892 and 890 are represented here each by two coins.

This study has brought forth few new reverse varieties in addition to the known obverse-reverse combinations. In this connection the obverse designs with corresponding reverses, i.e., coins no. 12 and 13 are reported here for the first time. The reverse of coin no. 12 usually bears a standing figure of Herakles with head turned to left holding a club in the right hand and lion skin in the left and always appear on the reverse of elephant-rider type. In this hoard the deity is exhibited on the reverse of reclining (king) type. This obverse (king reclining to left) is certainly new with the combination of Herakles reverse. Another new variety represents the Ardoxsho reverse with the obverse combination of king seated cross-legged. Ardoxsho like Mao is normally standing to left with cornucopia in the left hand and diadem in the right, as it is commonly found on the reverse

of elephant-rider type. It is noteworthy to mention that this reverse (Ardoxsho) constitutes a new type with the obverse design of seated cross-legged in which the king is facing to left and holds spear in his raised right hand and the left hand rests on his waist.

In general appearance the figure of Ardoxsho (coin no. 13) has close resemblance and syncretism with the figure of Herakles (coin nos. 9-10). Accordingly, the standing pose of the style of attributes of both the figures are similar. In attributes, Ardoxsho normally holds a diadem and cornucopia where the latter has close analogy with the Herakles club. On the other hand, club and lion skin are the usual attributes of Herakles but here he holds a diadem in extended right hand and the club in the left. Simultaneously this pose of Ardoxsho and the same pose of Herakles are unusual and extremely rare (Rev. M. Mitchiner 3288). It is significant to note that this hoard contains novelties of both, i.e., coin nos. 9-10 for Herakles and coin no. 13 for Ardoxsho. On some coins of the same class Nana is also represented in the same way<sup>6</sup>.

The study of this hoard is very important for understanding the typology, mint analysis and coin design of Huvishka. In this respect, as mentioned earlier, the hoard presents exclusively some new varieties of this ruler. It is interesting to mention that the hoard yields coins of one king only and further within this frame these coins belong to a specific series of issues. These characteristics obviously indicate that they were struck in a particular period and were issued from a single mint. The figure of has syncretism with the figure of Oesho was introduced to substitute the normal style of Oesho figure in the main sequence. In meanwhile the two-armed Oesho figure appeared on a large scale production of coins from a separate mint (subsidiary to the main mint) that was practised parallel with the Herakles issues. A certain mint might have been in existence somewhere in the northwest region of Pakistan.

### **Herakles after Indo-Greeks**

Kujula Kadphises, the first Kushana king, basically imitated Hermaeus coinage and retained the bust portrait and Greek legend of Hermaeus on the obverse and replaced the Kharoshthi name and title of Hermaeus with his own. Later on Kujula Kadphises inscribed his name on the obverse in Greek as well. On the reverse he replaced Zeus with Herakles, the Greek deity, which is commonly depicted on his coins of the Hermaeus type. The figure is naked, having muscular body normally standing frontally with head turned to left, holds lowered club in the right hand and lion's skin in the left arm<sup>7</sup>. On some of these coins the figure is standing with same attributes but facing to right<sup>8</sup>. The figure of Herakles standing facing with the same attributes also appeared on the reverse of some of the small coins of *Yue-zhi* chiefs. The obverse of these coins represents bearded head portrait to right and their reverse reveals names like Pseigacharis and Pabes inscribed in Greek legend.<sup>9</sup> After Kujula Kadphises the figure of Herakles disappears from the coins of Wima Takto, Wima Kadphises and Kanishka I. But it was in the middle phase copper coins of Huvishka that it reappeared and depicted in various styles on his three major types. The reappearance of Herakles in this phase of Huvishka coinage is of great significance.

The representation of Oesho (known as Śiva) on Wima (II) Kadphises coins both in gold and copper is the monotonous reverse design. The figure is represented in three different varieties: standing alone, standing with his bull or shown by his attribute, i.e., a trident with a battle-axe. These designs are found on his gold coins, whereas the last one is rare and the copper coins of all denominations

uniformly show one variety of standing Oesho with bull. On the coins of Kanishka-I, the occurrence of Oesho (without bull) is common with the range of other deities of different pattern. On these coins the said deity is usually appeared with four arms. The same reverse pattern, i.e., the image of Oesho with other deities was retained in the first phase of Huvishka coins. The second phase except the omission of Oesho figure remains shows varieties of reverse deities. This change is of great importance where the Oesho figure was intentionally replaced and substituted for Herakles<sup>10</sup>. With these arrangements two subsidiary mints have been traced out. Of which one mint was specified for the production of Oesho reverse coins whereas in the main series his position was allotted to the new deity (Herakles). The certain mint later on also became an important mint of the copper coins of Vasudeva I. The second subsidiary mint depicted the Vishnu figure in Oesho style (old) and inscribed with the Kharoshthi legend *Yodhavade* instead of the usual Bactrian name of the deity<sup>11</sup>. In the meanwhile the figure of Vishnu retaining the Kharoshthi legend *Yudhavade* appeared with six arms.

The figure of Herakles also appeared on the unique gold coin of Huvishka. The figure of Herakles is shown nude and bearded, standing to left and holds a club in the right hand which rests on the ground and lion's skin over left arm<sup>12</sup>. The obverse design of this coin is also very interesting like copper issues having full length figure of the king, seated cross-legged with flaming shoulders, holds spear in raised left hand and club before him in the right hand<sup>13</sup>.

A similar modification i.e. Oesho with Herakles but of different nature can be seen on two early rare gold coins of Kanishka I. They exhibit the image of Oesho inscribed with his name OHPO in Bactrian legend have clearly traces of the original Greek legend ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ (*Herakles*). It obviously indicates that the first issues of Kanishka I coinage with four-armed Śhiva was inscribed with the Greek name Herakles and then reverted to Oesho<sup>14</sup>. In physical appearance, attributes and character both the Indian Śhiva (Oesho) and Greek Herakles have close association and therefore they bear the evidence of syncretism of Śhiva with the Greek god Herakles to the Kushan god Oesho<sup>15</sup>.

Besides numismatic iconography the figure of Herakles in the Post Indo-Greek period can also be traced in other material of art pieces. One Mathura sculpture of the Kushan period depicts Herakles fighting with the Nemaen lion<sup>16</sup> and similarly there is a Gandharan sculpture represents a *Vajrapani* with Herakles lion's skin headdress<sup>17</sup>. There is also a four-sided seal of Kanishka I period, it exhibits Herakles, Shiva, two human figures (god and goddess) and a princely figure at altar<sup>18</sup>. A round seal of Kanishka III, Later Kushan king, depicting 'Herakles and a Horse of Diomedes', is probably one of the labours of Herakles in which he killed the horse of Diomedes. The seal is inscribed in Bactrian script and the name is read as Kaneshko (Kanishka III) and also bears dynastic tamga of the Later Kushans<sup>19</sup>.

## CATALOGUE

1. **Obv.** King riding on elephant to r. holding spear in his r. hand l. Legend .....KOPANO  
**Rev.** *Ardochsho* standing to r. wearing double robe long dress, holding cornucopia in the l. hand and the r. hand on her waist.

Legend APΔOXPO to l. ↑ & tamga to r.

Göbl. 876

2. **Obv.** King riding on elephant to r., as above. Legend.....PAN.....PO

**Rev.** Herakles standing frontally with head turned to r. holding lowered club in the r. hand and lion skin in the l.

Legend. ..AKIA O.. to l. ↑ & tamga to r. Göbl. 886A

3. **Obv.** King riding on elephant to r., as above. Legend illegible

**Rev.** Herakles standing frontally with head to r., as above.

Legend. ..AKIA O.. to l. ↑ & tamga to r. Göbl. 886A

4. **Obv.** King riding on elephant to r., as above. Legend.....NAONA.....

**Rev.** Herakles standing frontally with head to r. as above.

Legend and tamga invisible Göbl. 886A

5. **Obv.** King riding on elephant to r., as above. Legend illegible

**Rev.** Herakles standing frontally with head to r., as above

Legend off flan & tamga to r. Göbl. 886/886A

6. **Obv.** King riding on elephant to r., as above. Legend ...KOPANO

**Rev.** Herakles standing frontally with head turned to l. holding raised club in the r. hand and lion skin in the l.

Legend ..KIA O.. to r. ↓ & tamga to l. Göbl. 889/1

7. **Obv.** King riding on elephant to r., as above. Legend PA.....PANO.....PANO

**Rev.** Herakles standing facing, crowning himself with r. hand and carrying club and lion skin over l. arm.

Legend KPANA ..KIA O.. to r. ↓ & tamga to l. Göbl. 892

8. **Obv.** King riding on elephant to r., as above. Legend defaced

**Rev.** Herakles standing facing, crowning himself with r. hand, as above.

Legend PAK.... to r. ↓ & tamga to l. Göbl. 892

9. **Obv.** King riding on elephant to r., as above. Legend defaced

**Rev.** Herakles standing frontally with head turned to l., holds diadem in the extended r. hand and raised club and lion skin in the l.

Legend illegible & tamga to l. Göbl. 890

10. **Obv.** King riding on elephant to r., as above. Legend ÖÖPANO

**Rev.** Herakles standing frontally, with head turned to l., as above.

Legend KP .... to r. ↓ & tamga to l. Göbl. 890

**11. Obv.** King reclining on throne to l. facing frontally, r. leg on throne and l. on low stool, both hands resting on his waist, flaming halo round body. Legend fragmentary

**Rev.** Moon god (*Mao*) standing to l. with r. hand advanced and l. on his waist, crescent behind shoulders.

Legend MAO to r. ↓ & tamga to l.

Göbl. 870

**12. Obv.** King reclining on throne to l., as above. Legend illegible

**Rev.** *Herakles* standing frontally with head turned to l. holding lowered club in the r. hand lion skin in the l.

Legend .....IA O to r. ↓ & tamga to l.

Göbl.886 (Rev.)

**13. Obv.** King seated cross-legged with head turned to r. holding spear in the raised r. hand and the l. hand on his waist. Legend illegible

**Rev.** *Ardoxsho* standing to l. holding diadem in the extended r. hand and cornucopia in the l. hand over shoulder.

Legend .....XPO to r. ↓ & tamga to l.

Göbl. 878 (Rev.)

**14. Obv.** King seated cross-legged with head turned to r., as above. Legend illegible

**Rev.** *Herakles* standing frontally with head turned to r. holding raised club in the r. hand and lion skin in the l.

Legend illegible & tamga to r.

Göbl. 888

**15. Obv.** King seated cross-legged with head turned to r., as above. Legend illegible

**Rev.** *Herakles* standing frontally with head turned to r., as above.

Legend HP ..KI Λ O to l. ↑ & tamga to r.

Göbl. 888

**16. Obv.** King seated cross-legged with head turned to r., as above. Legend illegible

**Rev.** *Herakles* standing frontally with head turned to r., as above.

Legend HP ..KI Λ O to l. ↑ & tamga to r.

Göbl. 888

**17. Obv.** King seated cross-legged with head turned to r., as above. Legend illegible

**Rev.** *Herakles* standing frontally with head turned to r., as above.

Legend HP .... to l. ↑ & tamga to r.

Göbl. 888

**18. Obv.** King seated cross-legged with head turned to r., as above. Legend illegible

**Rev.** *Herakles* standing frontally with head turned to r., as above.

Legend HP ..KIA O to l. ↑ & tamga to r.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> R. Göbl, 1984: 92-93, 4 Gruppe, (Heraklesgruppe) known as 4C with several varieties, Coin No. 886 to 895.

<sup>2</sup> P. Gardner, 1886: 154, Coin No. 145, Pl. XXIX-1.

<sup>3</sup> J. Rosenfield, 1967, Coin No. 92, Pl. V.

- <sup>4</sup> M. Mitchiner, 1978: 434, Coin # 3286-87.
- <sup>5</sup> R. Göbl, 1986: 184, Type No. 4Cd-888.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83, Coin No. 899.
- <sup>7</sup> M. Mitchiner: 1978: 389, 391, 395-96, Coin No. 2844-52; 2861-72; 2897-2910.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 390, Coin No. 2859-60.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 387, Coin No. 2833-34.
- <sup>10</sup> J. Cribb, 1997: 26.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- <sup>12</sup> J. Rosenfield, 1967: 64-65, 77, Coin No. 73, Pl. IV; R. Göbl, 1984: 20, Coin No. 269.
- <sup>13</sup> J. Rosenfield, 1967: 64, Coin No. 73, Pl. IV; R. Göbl, 1984: 20, Coin No. 269.
- <sup>14</sup> J. Cribb, 1997: 22.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- <sup>16</sup> J.C. Harle, 1986: 67-68.
- <sup>17</sup> E. Errington & J. Cribb (ed.), 1992: 132; J. Cribb, 1997: 34, 36, 65, Fig No. 7; W. Zwalf, 2003: 230-31, Fig. No. 293.
- <sup>18</sup> J. Rosenfield, 1967: 103: Seal No. 6, pl. XVI; J. Cribb, 1997: 39, 66, Fig No. 17a & 17-c.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78, 102-103, Fig No. 8. Göbl. 888

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