A New Hoard from Tibba Pīr Abdul Rehman, Jhang (Punjab), Pakistan: A Preliminary Report

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Abstract: A hoard consisting of 180 gold and 65 silver coins along with two gold ornaments has recently been reported from Pīr Abdul Rehman, an old village in Ahmadpur Siāl Tehsil, district Jhang, Punjab (Pakistan). It is an interesting and valuable discovery made in this part of Punjab. It represents the coins of five dynasties of different origin. Most of these dynasties were contemporaries, while the Late Kushans were somewhat earlier. In this respect, it helps to know about the sequence and chronology of various dynasties. The coins obviously indicate its deposition during the later decades of the 5th century CE.

Keywords: Pīr Abdul Rehman, Ahmadpur Siāl, Jhang, gold coins, silver coins, hoard, Later Kushans, Kidarites, Alchano Huns, Guptas, Sasanians

Site and its Location

A hoard of gold and silver coins was accidentally found a few years back at Tibba Pīr Abdul Rehman. This Tibba (an archaeological mound) is located in the old village generally known after the name of famous saint Pīr Abdul Rehman who lies buried on the western side of mound. The village of Pir Abdul Rehman (Fig. 1) is located about 15 kilometres north of the Tehsil headquarters Ahmadpur Siāl and on the right bank of river Chenab in District Jhang. The mound of Pir Abdul Rehman comprises an area about 19.30 hectares (47.69 acres) or 0.193 square kilometres. The mound (Fig. 2) is rectangular in shape, measuring 495 metres east to west and 390 metres north to south and the maximum height from the surrounding field is 18 metres. In geographical coordination the site is positioned at 30°44'55.91" N and 71°49'16.47"E.

This archaeological site has been known to the author since 1994 when he visited the mound during his archaeological survey of Punjab (Mughal 1996: 245, No. 552). The surface of the mound is uneven and littered with potsherds. These potsherds show a close resemblance to the pottery reported from the site of Tulamba (Mian Channu). The main series of Tulamba pottery belongs to the Indo-Scythian and Kushan periods (Mughal 1948). Besides pottery, some structural remains have also been exposed due to the illegal activities of treasure hunters on the mound of Pīr Abdul Rehman. Similarly, some bastions made of mud and burnt bricks are visible in the northeast area of the mound.

The huge archaeological mound of Shorkot is located about 30 km east of Pīr Abdul Rehman on the left bank of the River Chenab. Hence these two mounds (Pir Abdul Rehman and Shorkot) are situated in close vicinity. The Shorkot mound has been reported by many scholars who paid visits to the archaeological sites in the area. This site was first visited by Burnes who describes 'a mound of earth' surrounded by bricks and standing so high as to be seen from a circuit of six or eight miles. Alexander Cunningham found the Shorkot mound to be larger than Sehwan but much smaller than Harappa and considered it equal to the size of the Akbar mound (on the Sahiwal-Gogera road). He also found this mound was higher than the other mounds and estimated the size of Shorkot as 2000 feet long and 1000 feet wide. He further explained that the Shorkot mound is surrounded by a fortification wall of large sized bricks, which obviously indicated its antiquity (Cunningham 1881: 205-07).

The Discovery of Hoard

The finder of the hoard Haji Muhammad Ramzan, s/o Haji Sultan of the Jatt Chauhan caste, resident of the village of Pīr Abdul Rehman, Tehsil Ahmedpur Sial, District Jhang, filed a case at the local police station. The case reports the discovery of this coin hoard, unearthed from his land at Pīr Abdul Rehman. According to his statement the applicant owns agricultural land at Pīr Abdul Rehman where one portion of the land occupying by the mound was not in use by him. Some people of the village approached him for extraction of earth from the mound portion of his land for filling their plot located in the same vicinity. Haji Muhammad Ramzān allowed them to take earth from the mound area. After getting permission, the applicant and his friends started excavation, removing earth from the said mound with the help of tractors, on June 4, 2012. In the meanwhile, a tractor hit a terracotta pot which was filled with gold and silver coins. This event was seen by a young boy who disclosed this matter to the people of village and to the owner of the land. On the discovery of these finds, Muhammad Ramzān (landowner) warned the owner and driver of the tractor to keep this treasure safe as antiquities are state property and the concerned authorities should decide about its ownership. Those who found this hoard not only threatened the landowner, but distributed these finds among themselves.

After Muhammad Ramzān's report, Assistant Director, sub-Regional office (Multan), Department of Archaeology, Government of the Punjab, visited the site on July 2, 2012 and investigated the matter from local people. The locals revealed the whole story of the coin hoard found at Pir Abdul Rehman as reported by the land owner. They also informed on the status of coins which were still in the possession of the accused group. The Assistant Director registered the case against the accused personnel in the Ahmedpur Siāl Police Station under section 5A (i) and (ii) and 13A of Antiquities Act, 1975 (Amendment Act 2012). Then the police arrested the six accused persons under section 34 of the Antiquities Act and recovered from them 180 gold and some silver coins along with gold jewellery from the hoard. The case is still under

A. Gold Coins

investigation and the said antiquities are now lying under the custody of the local police and will be handed over to the Department of Archaeology as per the Antiquity Act. The Assistant Director (Curator of Harappa Museum) counted and confirmed the number of coins, took their general photographs and recorded the accumulated weight of the gold coins for check and safety measures. The silver coins are not in good state of preservation as many are known to be in broken pieces.

Analysis and Contents of the Hoard

In view of the place of find, material and contents of the hoard, this discovery is very important for understanding the sequence and chronology of the various dynasties represented in the coin deposit. This is a preliminary report of the coin hoard because the photographs of some coins are missing and individual weights of these coins have not yet been taken. The available photographs particularly of the silver coins are not good enough to understand the situation with entire satisfaction. The final report of this discovery will be published when weight, measurement and quality photographs of all images are obtained.

The hoard consists of coins from five dynasties, i.e. Late Kushans, Kidarite Huns, Guptas, Alchano Huns and Sasanians. Hence the summary of 160 gold and 65 silver coins based on the available photographs is as follows:

Dynasty	King	Coins
Later Kushans	Shaka (c. 310-340 CE)	5
Kidarites (c. AD 357-460)	Kirada (c. 350-360 CE)	131
	Piroyasa (c. 360-365 CE)	4
Guptas	Samudragupta (c. 335-380 CE)	1
	Chandragupta II (c. 380-414 CE)	12
	Kumaragupta I (c. 414-450 CE)	4
	Chandragupta III or Purugupta (c. 450-455 CE)	3
Uncertain	Photographs pending	20
Total		180

B. Silver Coins

Dynasty	King	Coins
Alchano Huns	Javukha (c. 450 CE)	1
Sasanians	Yazdegard II (438-457 CE)	5
	Peroz I (457-83 CE), phase 2 (459–466 CE)	37
Uncertain		22
Total		65

This summery shows that the gold coins belong to the 4th and 5th centuries while the silver coins to the second half of the 5th century. The contents of the hoard show great consistency of coin accumulation after the Later Kushans as the coins of late rulers except the Hun Javukha are found in appropriate number. The hoard seems to have built up during the 5th century while some coins of the Late Kushans were still in circulation along with the Kidarites. In view of the recent containing silver coins of the Sasanian emperor Peroz I from his second phase of coinage (459–466 CE), the hoard seems to have buried during the second half of the 5th century CE.

This hoard deposited after the Kidarites reveals the reign of three contemporary dynasties. Accordingly, the Guptas established their rule in the east (Central India) and the Sasanians in the west (Iran and part of Afghanistan) while the Huns held territory between these two (i.e. in Pakistan and Afghanistan). The last two rulers of the Gupta dynasty and the second last of the Sasanians of the hoard were contemporary to some extents. However, Peroz I, the last Sasanian ruler of the hoard is apparently later than all the others represented in the hoard. The coins of this monarch are also very common, and the coins of his third phase of coinage are the commonest. The apparent absence of the third phase coin suggests it was deposited before they were widely available from AD 467. In view of this, the latest date for the deposition of the hoard was probably during the rule of Peroz I (457-83 CE).

The hoard also shows some interesting facts about its ownership. This treasure seems to have the personal property of a rich merchant of the site who used to travel to remote areas i.e. east (Gupta) and west (Sasanian). Basically, he had accumulated his wealth in gold as it comprised the coins from the time of Late Kushans and then a lot of Kidarite Huns and contemporary reigning dynasty of the Guptas. Apart from coins, this hoard also contains his personal jewelry such as gold chain and bracelet. For business as well as daily transactions, he retained some silver coins of the contemporary rulers of the Alchano Huns and Sasanians. The owner had concealed his treasure due to some unprecedented situation in the region and then he never returned to collect it or he died suddenly and left the untold treasure buried.

Whatever the situation prevailed at that time, the hoard remained buried in the same place for more than sixteen hundred years until it was discovered by the labourers in 2012.

CATALOGUE

A. Gold Coins

1. Later Kushans

1.1. Shaka

- **1.1.1.** standing king and enthroned Ardoxsho, Brahmi letters: Shaka, sya, bha
- *Obv.* King standing frontally with head in profile to left, right hand making an offering over a small altar and left hand holding a sceptre. A trident bound with fillet stands behind altar in the left field. Brahmi letters Shaka inscribed vertically are in the right field, sya with a circle below underneath the left arm of the king and bha between his right leg and the altar.
- *Rev.* Ardoxsho seated on a throne with feet resting on a mat. She holds a diadem with long ribbons in the right hand and cornucopia over left shoulder in the left. Four pronged tamga is in the left field and Brahmi legend in the right off flan.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 594; Oddy & Cribb 1998: no. A45

Coin nos. 1-5

2. Kidarites

2.1. Kirada/ Gadahara

- 2.1.1. standing king and enthroned Ardoxsho; Brahmi letters: gadahara, kirada, kapana/ ta
- *Obv.* As 1.1.1., but Brahmi letters gadahara (vertically) in the right field, kirada underneath left arm of the king and kapana between right leg of the king and altar.
- *Rev.* As 1.1.1., but Brahmi letter na is in the right field.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 610a; Oddy & Cribb 1998: no. A56; Cribb 2010: B6, fig. 32

Coin nos. 6-47

- 2.1.2. standing king and enthroned Ardoxsho; Brahmi letters: gadahara, kirada, kapana/ yasha
- **Obv.** As 2.1.1.
- *Rev.* As 2.1.1., but letter ta in the right field is replaced with letter yasha.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 609; Oddy & Cribb 1998: no. A55; Cribb 2010: B3, fig. 30

Coin nos. 48-108

- 2.1.3. standing king and enthroned Ardoxsho; Brahmi letters: gadahara, kirada, kapana na/yasha
- *Obv.* As 2.1.1., but letter na is added with kapana between right leg of the king and altar.
- *Rev.* As 2.1.2., but letter yasha is not clearly visible.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 607; Oddy & Cribb 1998: no. A53; Cribb 2010: A2, fig. 28

Coin nos. 109-111

- **2.1.4.** standing king and enthroned Ardoxsho; Brahmi letters: gadahara, kirada, kapana ma/....
- *Obv.* As 2.1.1., but Brahmi letter na is replaced with letter ma.
- *Rev.* As 2.1.1., but no use of Brahmi letter.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 605; Oddy & Cribb

1998: no. A52; Cribb 2010: A3, fig. 29

Coin nos. 112-132

2.1.5. standing king and enthroned Ardoxsho; Brahmi letters: gadahara, kirada, kapana/....

Obv. As 2.1.1.

Rev. As 2.1.1., but Brahmi letter is not traced. *Reference:* Göbl 1984: no. 609 or 610A Coin nos. 133-136

2.2. Piroyasa/ Gadahara

- 2.2.1. standing king and enthroned Ardoxsho; Brahmi letters: gadahara, piroyasa, kapana/sha
- *Obv.* As 2.1., Brahmi letter gadahara (vertically) in the right field, piroyasa underneath left

arm and kapana between right leg of the king and altar.

Rev. As 2.1., but Brahmi letter sha in the right field.

Reference: Göbl 1984: no. 608 and 610; Oddy & Cribb 1998: no. A62; Cribb 2010: B6, fig. 36 Coin nos. 137-140

3. Guptas

1. Samudragupta (c. AD. 335-80)

- **3.1.1.** standing king and enthroned Ardoxsho
- *Obv.* King standing frontally with head in profile to left, right hand sacrificing over altar and holding a scepter or javelin in the left hand. Bird standard (Garuda) stands behind altar in the left field. King's name Samudra in Brahmi is inscribed vertically underneath left arm and fragmentary legend (Samaraśatavatata vi)jayo jita ri(purajitro divam jayati) on the right margin.
- *Rev.* Female figure seated on a high-backed throne with feet resting on ornate mat. She holds a diadem in the right hand and a cornucopia in the left. Four pronged tamga is in the left field and Brahmi legend Parākramaḥ in the right.

Reference: Mitchiner 1978: nos. 4773-80; Altekar 1957: pl. I, no. 14

Coin no. 141

3.2. Chandragupta II (c. AD. 380-414)

- 3.2.1Aa. standing king and enthroned Lakshmi
- *Obv.* King standing frontally with head in profile to left, holding an arrow in the right hand and a long bow by its top in the left. Garuda standard stands before king in the left field. King's name Chandra(gupta) inscribed vertically underneath left arm and Brahmi legend Deva Śri Mahārājādhirāja Śri Chandragupta at 1:00 o'clock.
- *Rev.* Lakshmi seated cross-legged on a lotus throne with head turned to left, holding a diadem in the right hand, left hand perhaps holding a stalk of lotus resting on her left

thigh and thus lotus flower in the crook of left arm. Four pronged tamga in the left field and Brahmi legend Śri Vikramaḥ in the right.

Reference: Mitchiner 1978: nos. 4796-1807; Altekar 1957: pl. IV, no. 13

Coin nos. 142-145

3.2.1Ab. standing king and enthroned Lakshmi

Obv. As 3.2.1Aa.

Rev. As 3.2.1Aa, but the deity holds a lotus flower in her raised left hand.

Reference: Mitchiner 1978: no. 4807; Altekar 1957: pl. IV, no. 14

Coin nos. 146-150

3.2.1B. standing king and enthroned Lakshmi

- *Obv.* As 3.2.1Aa, but the name Chandra is inscribed vertically within string of bow shown underneath left arm of the king. Legend same as above
- *Rev.* The deity seated on a high-backed throne as appeared on Samudra coins, holding a diadem in extended right hand and a cornucopia in the crook of left arm. Four pronged tamga is in the left field and Brahmi legend Śri Vikramaḥ in the right.

Reference: Mitchiner 1978: no. 4808; Altekar 1957: pl. IV, no. 10

Coin no. 151

3.2.1C. standing king and enthroned Lakshmi

Obv. As 3.2.1Aa, but the king's head without halo shown in profile to right, holding an arrow in the right hand and a bow in the raised left. Legend same as above

Rev. As 3.2.1Aa.

Reference: Altekar 1957: pl. V, no. 3

Coin no. 152

- **3.2.2.** king slaying lion and Lakshmi seated on lion
- *Obv.* King standing facing to left and shooting an arrow at fallen lion on his right. The king holds a bow in his right hand and stretching an arrow with his left and targets the lion. The legend on this

coin is fragmentary but usually reads as Narendrachandra prathatarano rane jayatyajeyo bhuvi sinha-vikramah.

Rev. Lakshmi seated facing on a kneeling lion to right, holds a diadem in the right hand and lotus flower in crook of left arm. Four pronged tamga is in the left field below deity's hand and legend unclear.

Reference: Mitchiner 1978: nos. 4811-13; Altekar 1957: pl. VI, nos. 2-3 Coin no. 153

3.3. Kumaragupta I (c. AD 414-50)

3.3.1. Archer and seated Lakshmi

- *Obv.* King standing frontally with head turned to left, holding a bow in the left hand beside him and an arrow in the right. Garuda standard stands in the left field and Brahmi legend Kumara inscribed vertically in the right field. Legend on the margin is off flan.
- *Rev.* Lakshmi facing seated cross-legged on a lotus flower, holds a diadem in the right hand and lotus flower in the left. Four pronged tamga is in the left field and legend unclear (Śri Mahendrah?) in the right.

Reference: Mitchiner 1978: no. 4829; Altekar 1957: pl. IX, no. 13

Coin no.154

3.3.2a. Horseman and seated Lakshmi

- *Obv.* King riding on horseback to right, Brahmi legend fragmentary perhaps reads as Kshitipatirajito vijayī Kumāragupto divam jayati
- *Rev.* Lakshmi seated to left on a wicker stool, holding a diadem in the right hand and a long-stemmed lotus in the crook of left arm. Four pronged tamga is in the left field and uncertain legend (Ajitamahendrah) in the right.

Reference: Mitchiner 1978: no. 4840; Altekar 1957: pl. X, no. 14

Coin no. 155

3.3.2b. Horseman and Lakshmi

Obv. King riding on horseback to left, perhaps holding a bow in the right hand, Brahmi legend fragmentary

Rev. As 3.3.2a.

Reference: Mitchiner 1978: nos. 4841-42 (Lakshmi feeding peacock); Altekar 1957: pl. X, no. 13

- Coin no. 156
- 3.3.3. Elephant-rider and Lakshmi with peacock
- *Obv.* King riding on caparisoned elephant to right, holding a dagger in raised right hand and attacking on lion; an attendant who is seated behind him holding a parasol over his head. The elephant tramples a lion under left fore-foot in the right field and lion attempts to bite the right fore-leg of the elephant. Brahmi legend fragmentary perhaps reads as Kshataripu Kumāragupto rajatrātā jayati ripun
- *Rev.* Lakshmi standing frontally with head turned to left, right hand extending over a peacock who stands near her on the left and left resting on waist in which she holds a lotus flower. Brahmi legend Śińhanihantā Mahendragajah.

Reference: Altekar 1957: pl. XIII, nos. 2-3 Coin no. 157

3.4. Chandragupta III or Purugupta (c. 450-55 CE)

3.4.1a. Archer and Lakshmi with peacock

- *Obv.* King standing to left, holding a bow in raised left hand and an arrow in the right. Garuda standard stands in the left field whereas a crescent appears between king's head and Garuda. Brahmi legend Chandra is underneath left arm of the king while the margin legend off flan.
- *Rev.* Lakshmi facing seated cross-legged upon lotus flower, holding a diadem in the right hand and a long-stemmed lotus in the crook of left arm. Four-pronged tamga with diamond base in the left field and Brahmi legend Śri Vikramaḥ in the right.

Reference: Tandon 2013: fig. 2 (Crescent variety, diamond symbol); Altekar 1957: pl. V, no. 1

Coin no. 158

3.4.1b. Archer and Lakshmi with peacock

- *Obv.* As 3.4.1a, but there is a chakra instead of crescent between the king's head and Garuda standard in upper left field.
- *Rev.* As 3.4.1a, but four-pronged tamga with circular base in the left field.

Reference: Tandon 2013: fig. 2 (Chakra variety, circular symbol); Altekar 1957: pl. V, no. 2 Coin nos. 159-160

B. Silver Coins

4. Alchano Huns

4.1. Javukha (?)¹

- 4.1.1. Bust of king and fire-altar with attendants
- *Obv.* Bust of king facing to right, tamga behind head in the left field and chakra in the right. Brahmi legend [ja]vukha(?) begins at 1.00 o'clock, the reset is illegible from the existing photograph.
- *Rev.* Fire-altar flanked by two attendants; one each on either side who hold swords in their raised hands facing towards altar.

Reference: apparently a previously unpublished new type, cf. Vondrovec 2014: Javukha Type no. 50 (for inscription); Khingila Type no. 81 (for chakra device).

Coin no. 181

5. Sasanians

5.1. Yazdegard II (438-57 CE)

- **5.1.1.** Bust of king (three Palmette) and firealtar with attendants
- *Obv.* Bearded bust of king to right, wearing three turrets crown with globe above it. Ribbons of diadem are shown vertically behind bunch of hair of the king. Pahlavi legend KaDi YaZDaKaRTI (right), MaLKAN MALKA
- *Rev.* Fire altar flanked by two attendants who hold spears in their inner hands facing towards it. Flames emanate from the altar. Mint name on the right.

Reference: Mitchiner 1978: nos. 967-71 Coin nos. 182-186 (3 intact, 2 broken)

5.2. Peroz I (457-83 CE), phase 2 coinage, 459–466 CE

- **5.2.1.** Bust of king (two turrets with crescent) and fire-altar with attendants
- *Obv.* Bearded bust of king to right, wearing two turrets crown with an anterior crescent and globe above it. Ribbons of diadem are shown vertically behind bunch of hair of the king. Pahlavi legend KaDi PiRUChI MaLKA
- *Rev.* Fire altar flanked by two attendants who face towards it. Flames emanate from the altar whereas a crescent on the right before right figure and a sun on the left before the left figure. Mint name is on the right and date on the left (from year 3).

Reference: Mitchiner 1978: nos 973-80

Coin nos. 187-223 (29 intact, 8 broken)

5.3. Uncertain (Broken pieces)

5.3.1. Bust of king and Altar

On some pieces obverse and reverse designs are visible but unable to assign to any ruler of the Sasanians.

Coin nos. 224-245 (mostly fragmentary)

C. Jewellery

a. Gold bracelet, weight: 59.8 gm

It is made in circular shape with round section. The ends are flat and broader.

b. Gold chain, Weight: 88.1 + 72.4 = 160.5 gm

It is a medium sized chain perhaps well fitted to the neck or arm of human. It has circular rings with thin rectangular shape which are alternately interconnected in vertical and horizontal form. If the weight of both pieces is correctly recorded then the weight of this chain is much heavy which is equivalent to 20 gold dinars.

Note

 Klaus reported many varieties of the silver coins under the name Javukha and Khingila (Vondrovec 2008; 2014: 183–185; 190– 191). The coin under discussion has close resemblance with Khingila's Type 81 and Type 318 due to the crescent at forehead of the king's portrait and a small wheel placed before the face. The inscription however more closely resembles that of Javukha (Vondrovec 2014: Types 50, 51 and 82). In view of poor quality of photograph, it is difficult to identify the certain type and it appears to be a new unpublished variety. Khingila is known to have the first personal name appeared on the Alchano Hun series and Javukha follows soon after. The various types of these rulers are reported to have issued at different places. The rule of these kings, perhaps as contemporaries, is generally proposed to be during c. 430-492/93 CE (Vondrovec 2014: 184, 223-224). It is also suggested that their rule extended towards Gandhara and Taxila. This coin appears from its design to appear early in their period of rule (Vondrovec 2014: early bust series, 160-163).

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Fig. 1. Location map of the Site (Google Earth, dated 20.01.2018)



Fig. 2. Close-up view of the archaeological mound (Pīr Abdur Rehman) (Google Earth, dated: 20.01.2018)









Bracelet and chain (both are cut into half pieces)

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