

## Late Kushan Copper hoard (?) from the collection of S.R.O<sup>1</sup> in Directorate of Archaeology and Museums Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Joe Cribb, Fawad Khan and Amanullah

### Abstract

The coins registered under the accession no. S.R.O 2764, along with thousands of other coins and antiquities were received in the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after the Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment of Pakistan. The current paper represents the first batch of the coins after its proper documentation and cataloging (001-213) containing 20 examples of Vasudeva I, 139 of Kanishka II, 41 of Vasishka, 12 of Kushano-Sasanian imitations and a single illegible coin. These coins itself were confiscated at Peshawar airport and therefore it cannot be claimed that it for sure was a hoard however the chronological sequence and continuity in the types suggests that it probably was a hoard which was deposited at the time of Vasishka somewhere in the Peshawar valley, the ancient Gandhara.

Our special thanks are to Dr. Shah Nazar Khan (Director), who permitted us to study and publish these coins. The authors also wish to thank Dr. Gul Rahim Khan and Professor Nasim Khan for their contribution to the research on which this report is based.

### List of Coins

King	Weight in grams	Diameter in centimeters	Control marks	Photo no.
Vasudeva I	9	2.2		115
Vasudeva I	9	2.2	nandipada	010
Vasudeva I	9	2.1	nandipada?	124
Vasudeva I	8	2.2		051
Vasudeva I	8	2.2		064
Vasudeva I	8	2.2		082
Vasudeva I	8	2.2	nandipada	100
Vasudeva I	8	2		071
Vasudeva I	8	2		103
Vasudeva I	8	2		110
Vasudeva I	8	2		032
Vasudeva I	8	2	nandipada	202
Vasudeva I	7	2.2		141
Vasudeva I	7	2.1		136
Vasudeva I	7	2.1	nandipada	097
Vasudeva I	7	2		088
Vasudeva I	7	2		095
Vasudeva I	7	2		153
Vasudeva I	7	2		158

<sup>1</sup> Sub Regional Office Peshawar, Department of Archaeology and Museums, Pakistan.

Vasudeva I	6	2.1	nandipada	025
Kanishka II	10	1.9		042
Kanishka II	9	2.2		119
Kanishka II	9	2.1	Kharoshthi <i>vi</i>	028
Kanishka II	9	2		022
Kanishka II	9	2		086
Kanishka II	9	2		168
Kanishka II	8	2.3		144
Kanishka II	8	2.2		018
Kanishka II	8	2.2		076
Kanishka II	8	2.2		196
Kanishka II	8	2.2	Kharoshthi <i>vi</i>	007
Kanishka II	8	2.2	Kharoshthi <i>vi</i>	130
Kanishka II	8	2.1		020
Kanishka II	8	2.1		026
Kanishka II	8	2.1		043
Kanishka II	8	2.1		047
Kanishka II	8	2.1		048
Kanishka II	8	2.1		053
Kanishka II	8	2.1		073
Kanishka II	8	2.1		133
Kanishka II	8	2.1		149
Kanishka II	8	2.1		155
Kanishka II	8	2.1		159
Kanishka II	8	2.1		162
Kanishka II	8	2.1		209
Kanishka II	8	2.1		210
Kanishka II	8	2.1	Brahmi <i>vi</i>	134
Kanishka II	8	2.1	Kharoshthi <i>vi</i> , circle under arm (G2)	057
Kanishka II	8	2.1	Kharoshthi <i>vi</i>	031
Kanishka II	8	2.1	Brahmi <i>vi</i>	040
Kanishka II	8	2.1	Kharoshthi <i>vi</i>	169
Kanishka II	8	2		019
Kanishka II	8	2		024
Kanishka II	8	2		030
Kanishka II	8	2		037
Kanishka II	8	2		041
Kanishka II	8	2	Brahmi <i>vi</i>	072
Kanishka II	8	2		079
Kanishka II	8	2		089
Kanishka II	8	2		090
Kanishka II	8	2		112
Kanishka II	8	2		128
Kanishka II	8	2		135
Kanishka II	8	2		181
Kanishka II	8	2		193
Kanishka II	8	2		199

Kanishka II	8	2		206
Kanishka II	8	1.9		044
Kanishka II	8	1.9		061
Kanishka II	8	1.9		065
Kanishka II	8	1.9		075
Kanishka II	8	1.9		093
Kanishka II	8	1.9		099
Kanishka II	8	1.9		104
Kanishka II	8	1.9		152
Kanishka II	8	1.8		012
Kanishka II	8	1.8		077
Kanishka II	8	1.8		151
Kanishka II	8	1.8		160
Kanishka II	8	1.8		165
Kanishka II	7	2.2		003
Kanishka II	7	2.2		038
Kanishka II	7	2.2		046
Kanishka II	7	2.2	Kharoshthi <i>vi</i>	066
Kanishka II	7	2.1		056
Kanishka II	7	2.1		060
Kanishka II	7	2.1		161
Kanishka II	7	2.1		166
Kanishka II	7	2.1		167
Kanishka II	7	2.1		184
Kanishka II	7	2		005
Kanishka II	7	2		006
Kanishka II	7	2		009
Kanishka II	7	2		049
Kanishka II	7	2		059
Kanishka II	7	2		062
Kanishka II	7	2		092
Kanishka II	7	2		094
Kanishka II	7	2		109
Kanishka II	7	2		113
Kanishka II	7	2		120
Kanishka II	7	2		125
Kanishka II	7	2		137
Kanishka II	7	2		143
Kanishka II	7	2		154
Kanishka II	7	2		171
Kanishka II	7	2		191
Kanishka II	7	2	Kharoshthi <i>vi?</i>	013
Kanishka II	7	1.9		015
Kanishka II	7	1.9		035
Kanishka II	7	1.9		050
Kanishka II	7	1.9		068
Kanishka II	7	1.9		096

Kanishka II	7	1.9		117
Kanishka II	7	1.9		129
Kanishka II	7	1.9		170
Kanishka II	7	1.9		179
Kanishka II	7	1.9		188
Kanishka II	7	1.9		211
Kanishka II	7	1.9	Kharoshthi <i>vi</i>	198
Kanishka II	7	1.8		011
Kanishka II	7	1.8		034
Kanishka II	7	1.8		083
Kanishka II	7	1.8		194
Kanishka II	7	1.7		189
Kanishka II	6	2.2		078
Kanishka II	6	2.1		067
Kanishka II	6	2		058
Kanishka II	6	2		070
Kanishka II	6	2		087
Kanishka II	6	2		102
Kanishka II	6	2		105
Kanishka II	6	2		107
Kanishka II	6	2		145
Kanishka II	6	2		146
Kanishka II	6	2		148
Kanishka II	6	2		157
Kanishka II	6	2		178
Kanishka II	6	2		180
Kanishka II	6	2		187
Kanishka II	6	2		204
Kanishka II	6	1.9		021
Kanishka II	6	1.9		063
Kanishka II	6	1.9		091
Kanishka II	6	1.9		116
Kanishka II	6	1.9		197
Kanishka II	6	1.9		200
Kanishka II	6	1.9		201
Kanishka II	6	1.9		207
Kanishka II	5	2.2		186
Kanishka II	5	2.1		182
Kanishka II	5	2		074
Kanishka II	5	2		108
Kanishka II	5	2		140
Kanishka II	5	2		176
Kanishka II	5	2		195
Kanishka II	5	1.9		123
Kanishka II	5	1.8		080
Kanishka II	5	1.7		106
Vasishka	7	2.1	Brahmi <i>chu</i>	039

Vasishka	7	1.9		081
Vasishka	7	1.9		150
Vasishka	7	1.9	Brahmi <i>chu</i>	036
Vasishka	7	1.9	Brahmi <i>chu</i>	085
Vasishka	7	1.9	Brahmi <i>chu</i>	114
Vasishka	7	1.9	Brahmi <i>chu</i>	142
Vasishka	7	1.8		016
Vasishka	7	1.8		139
Vasishka	7	1.8		126
Vasishka	7	1.9		205
Vasishka	6	2.1		175
Vasishka	6	2		127
Vasishka	6	2		156
Vasishka	6	1.9		164
Vasishka	6	1.9		172
Vasishka	6	1.9	Brahmi <i>chu</i>	118
Vasishka	6	1.8		008
Vasishka	6	1.8		017
Vasishka	6	1.8		054
Vasishka	6	1.8		174
Vasishka	6	1.7		004
Vasishka	6	1.7		173
Vasishka	6	1.6		131
Vasishka	5	2	Brahmi <i>chu</i>	001
Vasishka	5	2		213
Vasishka	5	1.9		185
Vasishka	5	1.8		098
Vasishka	5	1.8		111
Vasishka	5	1.8		212
Vasishka	5	1.8	Brahmi <i>chu</i>	052
Vasishka	5	1.8	Brahmi <i>chu</i>	055
Vasishka	5	1.7		045
Vasishka	5	1.7		163
Vasishka	5	1.7		192
Vasishka	4	1.7		069
Vasishka	4	1.7	Brahmi <i>chu</i>	023
Vasishka	4	1.6		029
Vasishka	4	1.6		101
Vasishka	3	1.7		084
Vasishka?	8	1.7		002
Imitation	8	2	triangle+ under left arm	138
Imitation	7	2.1	triangle+ under left arm	190
Imitation	7	2	swastika before king	027
Imitation	7	2	triangle	121
Imitation	7	2	triangle	208
Imitation	7	2	triangle+ under left arm	014
Imitation	6	2	swastika under left arm	132

Imitation	6	1.9	triangle	203
Imitation	6	1.9	triangle+ under left arm	033
Imitation	6	1.8		177
Imitation	5	2.1		147
Imitation	5	1.8	swastika under left arm	183
Illegible	7	2		122

### Weight Ranges

King/ no. of examples	3g	4g	5g	6g	7g	8g	9g	10g	Total	Average weight
Vasudeva I				1	7	9	3		20	7.7g
Kanishka II			10	24	45	54	5	1	139	7.2g
Vasishka	1	4	11	13	11	1			41	5.8g
Kushano-Sasanian imitations			2	4	5	1			12	6.5g
Illegible					1				1	7.0g
Total	1	4	23	42	69	65	8	1	213	6.9g

### Remarks

The hoard represents the last phase of Kushan rule in Gandhara immediately before the Kushano-Sasanians conquered the region during the reign of the Kushan king Vasishka and the Kushano-Sasanian king Peroz I.

If the chronology of the Kushans is based on Falk's fixing of the first year of Kanishka I to c. AD 127, then the probable date of the conquest of Sasanians is about AD 260, late in the reign of Vasishka (c. AD 247–267).

External corroboration of the date of the conquest around AD 260 comes from the inscription of Shapur I, the Sasanian emperor of Iran (AD 240-270) inscribed on the Ka'ba-ye Zardosht at Naqsh-e Rostam in Fars, Iran after c. AD 262 (dated by its reference to the capture of the Roman emperor Valerian in AD 260, and by the rule of Hormizd, Ardashir as king of Armenia from c. AD 262; Huyse, 1999). In this inscription Shapur I states that his empire includes the Kushan kingdom as far as Peshawar. The king's death in AD 270 marks the date before which the inscription was written and therefore

before which the conquest of Peshawar took place. This hoard contains none of the coins issued by the Kushano-Sasanian king Peroz I in his territory south of the Hindu Kush, nor of those issued by the Kushan kings Kanishka III or Vasudeva II who succeeded to the Kushan throne after Vasishka, therefore its deposit should be dated before the conquest by Shapur I, but after the accession of Vasishka, c. AD 247. Allowing enough time for the Vasishka copper coins in the hoard to be issued suggests that the hoard was deposited several years after Vasishka's accession in c. AD 247, therefore the date of the hoard should be c. AD 260.

### Vasudeva I

Copper unit, c. 9-8g (GRK types F3–4)

**Obverse:** King wearing tall crown and armour, full figure standing facing left, halo before head, holding staff in left hand and making offering with right hand at small altar, surmounted by a trident, inscription in Bactrian: *Shaonanoshao Bazodeo Koshano*.

**Reverse:** Oesho, Kushan god of mountains, full figure standing facing in front of bull,

left hand holding trident, right hand holding diadem, tamga in right field, inscription in Bactrian: *Oesho*.

The Vasudeva I coins in the hoard are all worn and slightly underweight, consistent with the length of time they were in circulation. The only discernable variety among them is the *nandipada* symbol in the right field variety (GRK type 4b), issued late in the reign. The other examples may also be of this variety or of other varieties, but they cannot be identified because of their condition.

### Kanishka II

Copper unit, c. 8-6g (GRK types G1-2)

**Obverse:** King in tall crown, overcoat over tunic and leggings, full figure standing facing left, halo before head, holding staff in left hand and making offering with right hand at small altar, surmounted by a trident, inscription in Bactrian: *Shaonanoshao Kaneshko Koshano* (rarely legible).

**Reverse:** Ardochsho, Kushan goddess of good fortune, wearing Greek dress, full figure seated facing on throne, with coins round her feet, tamga in left field, inscription in Bactrian: *Ardochsho* (rarely legible).

The Kanishka II coins vary considerably in quality of design. At the beginning of the reign the coinage was well designed and consistent, with two main varieties, distinguished by the presence of a Brahmi or Kharoshthi control mark, *vi*, in the right field. The design quality of Kanishka II's coinage deteriorated through his reign and the hoard contains many examples of these deteriorated examples. The attribution of Kanishka II's copper coins is largely based on their close similarity to gold coins with his name (G541-554). The use of Brahmi *vi* on gold coins overlaps with the reign of Vasishka (G556), so it remains a possibility that the

later deteriorated copper coins continue into Vasishka's reign.

### Vasishka

Copper unit, c. 7-5g (GRK type H1)

**Obverse:** King wearing tall crown and armour, full figure standing facing left, halo before head, holding staff in left hand and making offering with right hand at small altar, surmounted by a trident, inscription in Bactrian: *Shaonanoshao Bazeshko Koshano* (normally off flan, only occasional letters detected).

**Reverse:** Oesho, Kushan god, full figure standing facing in front of bull, left hand holding trident, right hand holding diadem, tamga in left field or missing.

The Vasishka copper coins are distinguished from the coins of Vasudeva by their cruder style, lower weight and by the bent form of the king's left arm (Vasudeva I's coins have the king's left elbow bent at right angles). Their inscriptions are rarely visible and never complete. The Brahmi control mark *chu* in the right field is not present on all coins. It links these coins with gold issues made in the reign of Vasishka (G559-568).

### Kushano-Sasanian Imitations

Copper unit c.7-5g (GRK F\*1-2)

**Obverse:** King in tall crown, overcoat over tunic and leggings, full figure standing facing left, halo before head, holding staff in left hand and making offering with right hand at small altar, surmounted by a trident.

**Reverse:** Oesho, Kushan god, full figure standing facing in front of bull, left hand holding trident, right hand holding diadem, tamga in left field or missing.

The imitations are distinguished from contemporary Kushan coins, by the

combination of the obverse design of Kanishka II, i.e. king wearing overcoat, together with the Oesho and bull reverse design used by both Vasudeva I and Vasishka. The obverse design lacks a readable inscription, but is distinguished from its Kushan prototypes by the addition of symbols, a swastika before the king or under his arm, or a triangle under the king's arm, sometimes accompanied by another symbol (a swastika, another triangle or three prongs). After the period of this hoard further imitations continue to be issued, dropping in weight down to about 3g.

The attribution of these imitations to the Kushano-Sasanian conquerors is based on their use of the same swastika and triangle symbols as the gold imitations (G676–698) of Vasudeva I issued in Bactria after the Kushan-Sasanians conquered it from the Kushans at the end of the reign of Vasudeva I. The imitation coppers in this hoard should be dated to the period of the reign of

Vasishka as their weights are based on the standard used by the Kushans early in his reign, c. 7-5g. The imitations were issued in Bactria, so their penetration into Vasishka's territory represents the phase of Kushano-Sasanian issue before the last years of Vasishka's rule in Gandhara.

### Bibliography

- G= R. Göbl (1984). *Münzprägung des Kusanreiches*, Vienna.
- GRK= G.R. Khan (2010). Copper coins of Vasudeva and successors from Taxila, *Gandharan Studies*, 4, 39–161.
- P. Huyse, (1999). *Royal Inscriptions with their Parthian and Greek Versions: Texts I, Die dreisprachige Inschrift Shābuhrs I. an der Ka'ba-i Zardusht (SKZ), Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*, 3,1,1,1.2, London.



Vasudeva I



115



010



092



051



064



082



100



071



103



110



032



202



Kanishka II





086



007



168



130



144



020



018



026



076



043



196



047



048



159



053



162



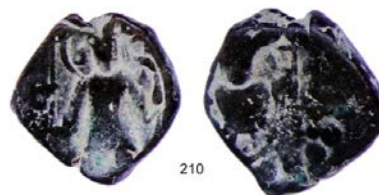
073



209



133



210



149



134



155



057



031



037



040



041



169



072



019



079



024



089



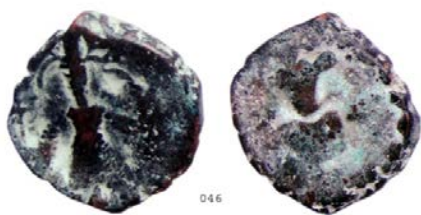
030



090







046



167



066



184



056



005



060



006



061



009



166



049





059



120



062



125



092



137



094



143



109



154



113



171









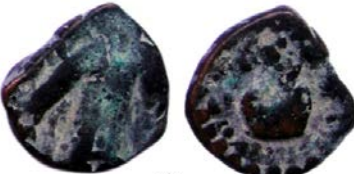
204



197



021



200



063



201



091



207



116



186



Vasishka



039



150



081



036



085



016



114



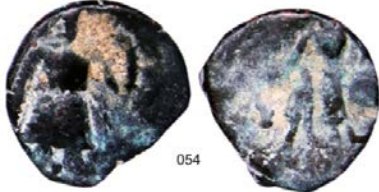
139



142



126







173



111



222



212



001



052



213



055



185



045



098



163



Kushano-Sasanian imitations





Illegible

