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## Chapter Sixteen

# *PĀRATARĀJAS*

# PĀRATARĀJAS (ca. 125-300 CE)

Contributed by Pankaj Tandon

The Pāratas were a tribe who ruled parts of modern day Baluchistan (and perhaps some neighbouring areas) during the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE. They appear to have originated in what is now northern Iraq or Iran, from where they began a slow eastward migration sometime between the 7th and the 4th centuries BCE, arriving in Baluchistan by the 1st century CE. They issued coins for a period of about 175 years from c 125 to 300 CE. Why they migrated is not known.

The tribe is mentioned in a number of Greek sources and also appears in many of the tribal lists in various Indian texts, where it is sometimes called the Pāratas and sometimes the Pāradas. This ambiguity in the spelling of the tribal name is also seen on the coins. On most, the tribe is called the Pāratas but on some coins very late in the series it is called the Pāradas.

Only one king of the Pāratarājas is known from non-numismatic sources. His name is Yolamira and he is known from inscriptions on some potsherds found in the area of Loralai in Baluchistan (Konow). This is also the area where most coins of the Pāratarājas are found.

Yolamira is the first king for whom we have coins. Ten other kings issued coins and, when we include the fathers mentioned on the coins, we can identify a total of fifteen individuals. Of these, thirteen have Iranian names and two have Indian names. Several of the names contain the root word *Mira*, which is clearly a variant of Mithra, the old Persian (or Zoroastrian) deity of Light. Thus it appears that the dynastic family followed the Zoroastrian religion.

## Coinage

E.J. Rapson (1905) was the first scholar to study their coins. B.N. Mukherjee (1972) provided the first historical information on the tribe, and R.C. Senior published many new types in a series of articles in the ONS Journal, consolidated later in his 2001 catalogue of Indo-Scythian coins. The coinage was finally correctly identified and organized by Pankaj Tandon (2006, 2009 and 2010) and Harry Falk (2007).

The coins of the Pāratarājas form two quite distinct series. One series consists of coins exclusively of silver, on which the legends are all in Brāhmī script. The other series consists of coins mostly in copper (with a few in silver), on which the legends are almost all in Kharoṣṭhī script. There is one known coin in this series in which the legend is in Brāhmī. Scholars initially assumed, quite understandably given the

history of Brāhmī replacing Kharoṣṭhī in northern India, that the Kharoṣṭhī series came first and the Brāhmī series followed. However, it is now quite clear, thanks to the evidence of the coins themselves, that this is not the case here and that the Brāhmī series predated the Kharoṣṭhī coins.

The coins were issued by a total of 11 kings, six of whom issued coins with Brāhmī legends and five who issued coins with Kharoṣṭhī legends. Most of the coins feature the bust of the king (or, late in the series, a standing king) on the obverse and a central swastika (sometimes turning right and sometimes left) on the reverse, surrounded by a circular legend. The use of the swastika as a reverse symbol on the coins may be further evidence of the dynasty's allegiance to Mithra, as the swastika was thought to be a symbol in ancient Persia of the revolving sun (*Garduneh-e Khorsbid*) and Mithra's Wheel (*Garduneh-e Mebr*). The legend, whether in Brāhmī or Kharoṣṭhī, identified the king by name, his father via a patronymic, and then his title *pāratarāja*. The legends are almost always in the genitive case and the language is almost always Prākṛit.

One interesting feature of the coin legends is that they are quite often truncated. Almost all the legends follow the same pattern: they start with the name of the king, follow that with the patronymic, and end with the title “king of the Pāratas.” Thus, for example, the full legend on the coins of Yolamira, son of Bagareva, reads: *Yolamirasa Bagarevāputrasa Pāratarājasa*. However, if the die-cutter ran out of room as he carved the circular legend, he would simply truncate the legend at whatever point he finished using up the space. Coins are known with various kinds of truncations, from leaving off the last *sa* to leaving off as much as the terminal *tarājasa*.

Creating a chronological sequence of the coins is of course helped by the use of patronymics, but it is further helped by an unusual feature of the coins of the first seven kings: each successor used an obverse die previously used by his predecessor. Considerations of stylistic evolution help in ordering the remaining kings.

For those wanting to relate these coins to the catalogue published by Senior in his 4-volume series on Indo-Scythian coins, here are the corrected readings of the kings' names:

Senior	Corrected
Ajuna	Arjuna
Bhimajhuna	Bhimarjuna
Maramira	Hvaramira
Miramara	Mirahvara
Spajhana	Kozana
Spajhama/Spajhayam	Koziya
Vhunamtavhaspa	Datarvharna

During the reign of the seventh king, Kozana (c. 200-220), conditions must have deteriorated, as the coinage suffered a significant devaluation. The drachm was reduced in weight to approximately 2.5g, with corresponding reductions in the other denominations as well. His successor, Bhimarjuna, issued only very few silver coins; the coinage was reduced to billon and then, quite rapidly, to copper. The remaining kings issued coins in copper only. It seems quite clear that the Pārata economy suffered a considerable decline. This may have been due to a steep decline in trade, perhaps related to the unsettled conditions in the Roman Empire, and also to military pressure from the newly emerging Sasanian Empire. What we see is a coinage reduced to base metal and a denominational structure suggesting rapid inflation. The coinage disappears c. 300 CE, after having lasted about 175 years.

# Yolamira

Yolamira's coins appear to have been issued in three distinct phases. In the first phase, the king is shown bearded, while in the second and third phases he is shown clean-shaven. Each phase has its own distinct dies and styles.

Yolamira ruled c. 125-150 CE. His name means “warrior Mithra.”

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Arjuna issued coins in two or three phases. In the first phase, he issued drachms and hemidrachms using obverse dies from his father and with the swastika on



Arjuna ruled c. 150-165 CE. The most notable thing about him is that his name is Indian, the name of the well-known Pandava prince from the Mahabharata. It is plausible to infer that his mother was Indian, suggesting that Pārata kings had multiple wives.

[illegible]

### Phase 3

3269. AR, drachm, 3.55g, 17mm



Obv: As 3263, same die as coin 3265

Rev: As 3265, but with swastika turning right

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## Hvaramira

Hvaramira was the third and last son of Yolamira to rule. We know he followed Arjuna because he used the late period drachm die of Arjuna for his earliest coins. As far as we know, he issued only drachms and the one special didrachm issue. It would not be surprising if hemidrachms of this king appeared subsequently. Hvaramira was the only one of Yolamira's sons whose sons in turn ascended to the throne.

Hvaramira issued coins in three phases. In the first phase, he issued coins using the late period die of his brother Arjuna. In the second phase, he issued the special-issue didrachm, along with drachms using a new die. On these issues, the reverse swastika turned right. In the final phase, drachms with yet a new die were issued and the reverse swastika on these coins turned left.

Hvaramira ruled c. 165-175. His name means “the glory of Mithra” or “glorious Mithra.” The root word *hvara* relates to the Persian concept of *khvareno*, which Rosenfield (1967, p. 198) describes as “a supernatural boon which may take the form of fire, a part of the all-illuminating heavenly light which is common to all divinities and which lights a great prince.” In the Kushan pantheon, the personification of this *khvareno* was the deity *Pharro*.

## CATALOGUE

### Phase 1

3270. AR, drachm, 3.70g, 15mm



Obv: Diademed bust of king to right, dotted border around (same die as coins 3265 and 3269)

Rev: Swastika turning right, Brāhmī legend around:  
*Hvaramirasa Yolamiraputrasa Pārata(rājasa)*

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3271. AR, drachm, 3.39g, 14mm



Obv: As 3270 (same die as coin 3270)

Rev: As 3270, but father's name spelled *Yodamira*

### Phase 2

3272. AR, didrachm, 7.53g, 20mm



Obv: As 3271 (same die as coin 3256)

Rev: As 3270

3273. AR, drachm, 3.78g, 15mm



Obv: As 3271 (new die)

Rev: As 3270

3274. AR, drachm, 3.70g, 15mm



Obv: As 3271

Rev: As 3271, but father's name spelled *Yodamira*

### Phase 3

3275. AR, drachm, 3.64g, 15mm





Rev: As 3274, but swastika turning to left

## Mirahvara

Mirahvara's name is made up of the same two elements as that of his father Hvaramira, and therefore could be interpreted as having the same meaning. He ruled c. 175-190 CE.

## CATALOGUE

## Phase 1

Rev: Swastika turning right, Brāhmī legend around:  
*Mirabvarasa Hvaramiraputrassa Pāratarāja(sa)*

[illegible]

Rev: As 3276

Rev: Four line Brāhmī legend: *Mirahvarasa*  
*Hvaramiraputra / sa Pāratarā / jasa*

## Phase 2

Rev: As 3277, but swastika turning to left

Rev: As 3277

3281. AR, drachm, 3.08g, 15mm



Rev: As 3277, but swastika turning to right

3282. AR, hemidrachm, 1.78g, 13mm



Rev: As 3277

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Miratakhma was the second son of Hvaramira to ascend the throne. We know he followed his (presumably older) brother Mirahvara because he used his brother's last drachm die on his first issues. He never used any of his father's dies, indicating that he followed somewhat later. The die he used for his first issues had developed a prominent crack running from top to bottom of the die. The crack must have occurred during the reign of Hvaramira, as coins of his using the cracked die are known.

Miratakhma issued coins in three phases. The known coins include drachms and hemidrachms. Because he did issue several phases of coins, it is quite likely that he issued di-drachms as part of his second phase. During this phase, Miratakhma introduced two new drachm dies and, although most of his coins carry the usual Prakrit legends, at least one issue carried a legend in Sanskrit. This is the only known Pāratarājas coin to feature a Sanskrit legend. The rare hemidrachms were also issued during this phase; they used an obverse die originally introduced by Arjuna.

The name Miratakhma introduces a new root word *takhma*, which we see again later in the dynastic series; the name means “heroic Mithra.” Miratakhma probably ruled c. 190-200 CE.

## Phase 1

3283. AR, drachm, 3.39g, 14mm



Rev: Swastika turning right, Brāhmī legend around:  
*Mirataḥmasa Hvaramiraputrassa Pāratarājasa*

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3284. AR, drachm, 3.66g, 14mm



Rev: As 3283

3285. AR, drachm, 3.40g, 14mm



Rev: As 3284, but legend is in Sanskrit:

*Miratakhmasya Hvaramiraputrasya Pāratarāja(sya)*

3286. AR, didrachm, c. 7g, c. 17mm



Obv: As 3283 (same die as coins 3256, 3272 and 3279)



Rev: As 3284

No such coin has been seen, but it is quite possible that Miratakhma issued such a coin and that one might turn up in the future. The image is a synthetic coin using the obverse of coin 3279 and the reverse of coin 3287; if a coin is found, it will likely resemble this, although the reverse might resemble that on coin 3283 or coin 3288. The obverse would certainly use the same die as coin 3279.

**3287. AR, drachm, 3.53g, 14mm**



Obv: As 3283 (new die)

Rev: As 3284

**3288. AR, drachm, 3.93g, 14mm**



Obv: As 3287 (same die as coin 3287)

Rev: As 3287, but swastika turns to left

(Courtesy Classical Numismatic Group)

**3289. AR, hemidrachm, 1.84g, 11mm**



Obv: As 3283 (same die as coin 3268)

Rev: As coin 3287

(Courtesy Parviz Abghari)

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## Kozana

Kozana represents a break in the dynastic series for several reasons. First, he is not the son of any of the previous kings; his coins reveal that the name of his father was Bagavharna. The root word Baga ("god") of course occurred in the previously known names Bagareva (father of Yolamira) and Bagamira, Yolamira's eldest son. The root word *vharna* is

probably related to the root word *hvara*, seen in the names Hvaramira and Mirahvara. We might speculate that Bagavharna was Bagamira's son, thereby making him the nephew of Hvaramira and cousin of Mirahvara. His son Kozana may then have been the oldest scion of Yolamira in his generation.

The second way in which Kozana represents a break is that he was the first king to use Kharoṣṭhī letters on his coin legends. After an apparently very small initial issue that used Brāhmī letters as previous coins did, Kozana's coins switch to using Kharoṣṭhī letters. All subsequent kings in the series continued this usage, although one king (Koziya) introduced a Brāhmī legend on the obverse of his standing king type.

Third, Kozana introduced a monetary reform in that he reduced the weight standard of the coinage, a reflection perhaps of deteriorating economic conditions. This may also be why, after Kozana, the Pāratarāja coinage was quickly reduced to copper.

Kozana's coinage can be divided into three phases. The first, apparently very brief, phase consisted of coinage using Brāhmī letters. We know of only one coin from this phase, a hemi-drachm that used an obverse die introduced by Arjuna but last used by Kozana's predecessor Miratakhma. It is plausible to think drachms may also have been issued during this phase.

In the second phase, the Brāhmī legends are replaced by Kharoṣṭhī letters. During this phase, Kozana used a drachm die previously used by Miratakhma, proving that he succeeded him. He also introduced a hemidrachm die that imitated some unique features of another Miratakhma die.

Finally, in the third phase, Kozana introduced a reduced weight standard, while issuing di-drachms, drachms and hemidrachms. The di-drachms used the same die that had been used by Yolamira, Hvaramira and Mirahvara.

Kozana ruled c. 200-220 CE. We do not know the meaning of his name; Falk speculated that it might be related to the name Kujula, known from the Kushan king.

## CATALOGUE

### Phase 1

**3290. AR, hemidrachm, 1.67g, 13mm**



Bhimarjuna issued, as far as we know, only one coin type: the drachm. However, the metal content of the coins changes over time: starting as silver, then turning quickly to billon, and finally devolving to copper. We can think therefore of the three phases of Bhimarjuna's coinage. The coins listed below do not necessarily reflect all the known obverse dies, but they do represent the three phases quite well.

Apart from the large number of obverse types that he issued, Koziya's coinage is notable for its introduction of the double weight standing king type, which commenced during the first phase and persisted through all three phases. Indeed, this became the standard coinage of the kingdom, as almost all of the coins issued by his two successors were of this type.



## CATALOGUE

## Phase 1

3302. AE, drachm, 1.65g, 15mm



Obv: Diademed bust of king to left, wearing peaked tiara, dotted border around (new die, similar to coin 3301)

Rev: Swastika turning right, Kharoṣṭhī legend  
around: *Koṣṭiyasa Koṣṇanaputra Pāratarāja*

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3303. AE, drachm, 1.47g, 14mm



Obv: As 3302 (new die)

Rev: As 3302

3304. AE, drachm, 1.90g, 12-13mm



Obv: As 3302 (new die, with ear flap)

Rev: As 3302

3305. AE, drachm, 1.61g, 14mm



Obv: As 3302 (new die)

Rev: As 3302

3306. Koziya, AE drachm, 1.89g, 14mm



Obv: As 3302 (new die)

Rev: As 3302

(Courtesy Jan Lingen)

3307. AE, drachm, 1.76g, 13mm



Obv: As 3302 (new die, hair in rows)

Rev: As 3302

3308. AE, didrachm, 3.87g, 21mm



Obv: Standing king turning right, clean-shaven,  
wearing peaked tiara, holding sceptre, Brāhmī  
legend at left: *Koṣṭiṃja*

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Rev: As 3302

## Phase 2

3309. AE, didrachm, 2.62g, 15mm



Obv: As coin 3307 (new die, king with moustache)

Rev: As 3302

3310. AE, drachm, 1.54g, 12-13mm





Obv: As 3309 (new die)  
Rev: As 3302

**3311. AE, didrachm, 3.94g, 19mm**



Obv: As coin 3308 (new die, king with moustache)  
Rev: As 3302  
(Courtesy Wilfried Pieper)

### Phase 3

**3312. Koziya, AE drachm, 1.47g, 13-14mm**



Obv: Diademed bust of king to right, wearing turban and prominent ear-ring, dotted border around (new die)  
Rev: As 3302

**3313. AE, hemidrachm, 0.78g, 11mm**



Obv: As 3312  
Rev: As 3302

**3314. AE, drachm, 1.28g, 12-13mm**



Obv: As 3312 (new die, turban with ear flap)  
Rev: As 3302

**3315. AE, drachm, 1.83g, 12-14mm**



Obv: As 3312, but with sceptre in right field  
Rev: As 3302

**3316. AE, drachm, 1.55g, 12-14mm**



Obv: As 3315 (new die)  
Rev: As 3302, but with swastika turning left

**3317. AE, didrachm, 4.66g, 17-18mm**



Obv: Standing king turning left, with moustache, wearing turban, holding sceptre in right hand, Kharoṣṭhī legend at right: *Koziya*  
Rev: As 3315 (swastika turning right)

**3318. AE, didrachm, 3.29g, 18mm**



Obv: As 3317 (same die)  
Rev: As on coin 3316 (swastika turning left)

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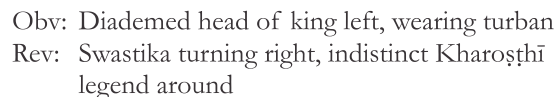
## Datarvharna

Koziya was succeeded by Datarvharna, whose coins closely match the style of Koziya's late coins. As far as we know, he issued only didrachms of the standing king type, although there is a single drachm that may be his also. Since Koziya was issuing drachms and didrachms at the end of his reign, it is plausible to expect that Datarvharna would start out doing the same. The rarity of the drachms, however, suggests that the coinage was reduced to didrachms only very quickly. In all probability, this may have been the result of a high inflation rate, which would perhaps have eliminated the need for lower denomination coins.

We do not know the family relationship of Datarvharna with his predecessors, as his father,

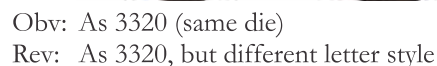
The name Datarvharna consists of the two root words *datar* and *vharna*. We have already seen that the word *vharna*, likely a variant of the root word *hvara*, refers to divine glory. Although we are not sure what *datar* meant, Falk argued that it probably referred to the Creator, making the meaning of Datarvharna to be “the glory of the Creator.” Given his meagre coin output using very few dies, Datarvharna probably had a very short reign, perhaps c. 275-285.

3319. *Datarvharna* (?), AE, drachm, 2.10g, 15mm



Obv: Standing king turning left, with moustache,  
wearing turban, holding sceptre in right hand,  
Kharoṣṭhī legend at right: *Datarvhabarna*  
Rev: Swastika turning right, Kharoṣṭhī legend  
around: *Datarvhabarnasa Datayolaputrasa Pāratarāja*

3321. AE, didrachm, 3.40g, 17mm



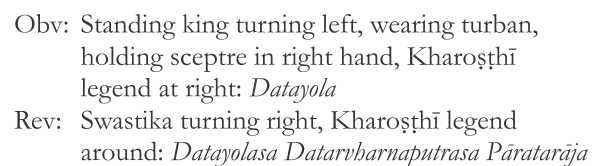
Datarvharṇa was succeeded by his son, Datayola. As Datarvharṇa's father's name was also Datayola, the son could be called Datayola II, but there is no evidence that the older Datayola issued coins. The critical reader might notice that we have two kings: Datarvharṇa, son of Datayola, and Datayola, son of Datarvharṇa. It is not immediately obvious which of the two should be listed earlier. The reason Datayola is listed as the later king is that his coins seem to be of cruder execution and style. The kingdom was probably falling on more and more difficult times and the quality of the coinage suffered as a result. Also, we know of coins of Datayola that are overstruck on coins of the Kushano-Sasanian king Hormizd I. Listing Datayola as the last Pārata king is then more consistent with the absolute chronology of the dynasty.

Apart from the overstrikes, there are two other features of Datayola's coinage that are worth noting. A few of his coins change the spelling of the dynastic title from *Pāratarāja* to *Pāradarāja*. This provides concrete evidence for the fact that the tribe referred to as the *Pāratas* in some Indian sources is the same as the tribe referred to as the *Pāradas* in some other sources.

Further, Datayola introduced a new denomination, the tetradrachm, for the first time in the history of the kingdom. In all likelihood, this is further evidence of inflation, probably caused by difficult economic conditions. All of Datayola's coins are quite rare, but the tetradrachms are particularly so, suggesting that they were introduced quite late in his reign.

Falk has suggested that the name *Datayola* may mean “fighter for the law.” He ruled c. 285–300 CE.

3322. *Datayola*, AE didrachm, 2.40g, 18mm



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3323. AE, didrachm, 4.66g, 17-18mm



Obv: As 3322 (same die)

Rev: As 3322 but swastika turning left

3324. AE, didrachm, 4.42g, 18mm



Obv: As 3322 (new die, overstruck on coin of Hormizd I)

Rev: As 3323 but swastika turning right

3325. AE, didrachm, 3.40g, 17mm



Obv: As 3324 (same die)

Rev: As 3324 but swastika turning left

3326. AE, didrachm, 4.11g, 16-18mm



Obv: As 3325 (overstruck on Hormizd I)

Rev: As 3325 but dynastic title spelled *Pāradarāja*

3327. AE tetradrachm, 7.72g, 21mm



Obv: Diademed bust of king left, holding flower before face

Rev: Swastika turning right, Kharoṣṭhī legend around: *Datayo (lasa Datarv̥harnaṣṭrasa Pārata)rāja*

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## Unknown King

There are certain coins that carry the swastika on the reverse with a circular Kharoṣṭhī legend and apparently come from the same area as other Pāratarāja coins. The legend on these coins, which appears to be in Brāhmī letters, has not yet been read, so there is no certainty that these are indeed Pāratarāja coins. The lunar crescent on the crown suggests a much later date than the coins of Datayola. This feature was first introduced by the Sasanian king Yazdegard I (399-420), and was then copied widely on the coins of the Kushano-Sasanians and the Hephthalites. Thus these coins probably date from the c. 5th century, and could possibly be Hun issues. However, the use of the swastika makes it more likely that they were issued by a dynasty that continued the traditions of the Pāratarājas, whether a continuation or a successor of the dynasty is not clear.

3328. AE, didrachm, 3.18g, 18mm



Obv: Diademed bust of bearded king right, wearing crescented crown, dotted border around

Rev: Swastika turning right, uncertain Brāhmī legend around

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