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No. 3

**SOME MORE COINS OF THE MAHISHA
DYNASTY**

From

Maski and Kondapur Excavations

By

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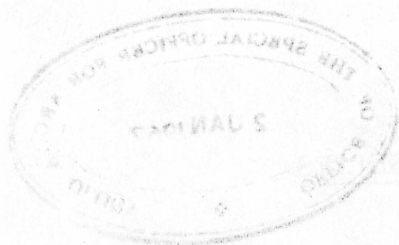




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KHWAJA MUHAMMAD AHMAD



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SOME MORE COINS OF THE MAHISHA DYNASTY.

In the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXII, pp. 24 ff. I published two copper coins (Pl. II, 3-4) of the Śaka king Māna of the Mahisha dynasty. Recently Shri Khwaja Muhammad Ahmad, Curator of the Hyderabad Museum, favoured me with the photographs of two other coins which also belong to that dynasty, as I shall attempt to show in this article. The coins are published here with the kind permission of Shri Ahmad.

The first of these coins (Pl. II. a. 1) was found during the excavations at Kondapur in the Hyderabad State, where extensive remains of the Sātavāhana age have been discovered. The coin is of lead and roundish in shape, with a diameter of .75". Its weight is 72.5 grains. The obverse shows clearly an incuse made by the striking of the die. It has the figure of a lion with the tail upraised. The legend which is fragmentary runs round the edge at the top. The reverse is more worn out. It has the so-called Ujjain symbol imperfectly preserved with a pellet in each orb.

The existing legend reads —*ṇa Mahasasa[sa]*. The vertical of *ṇa* is split into two lines, as noticed occasionally in inscriptions of the Kushāṇa age¹; *ma* consists of an open square above a circle; *ha* has a short vertical on the left, but its right limb is still horizontal. These characters show that the coin is of about the second or third century A.D.

The legend being fragmentary can be completed only conjecturally. There are very faint traces of an *akshara* like *mā* in the beginning. So the legend may have been *Māṇa-Mahasasa sa*—. It may have commenced with *raṁṇo*

1. Bühler, *Indian Palæography* (Eng. Tr.), p. 41.

siri, but how it ended or what the *aksharas* following *sa* were, cannot be determined. This coin, like the two coins referred to above, appears to have been struck by the Śaka king Māna, though its type is different from that of the latter coins.¹

As I have shown elsewhere,² the elephant type coins of the Śaka king Māna were imitated from Sātavāhana coins, current in the Deccan. These coins were of copper. The present coin, which is of lead, is also imitated from earlier Sātavāhana coins of the lion type. See, for instance, the coins G. P. 2 and G. P. 3 in Pl. V of Rapson's *Coins of the Andhras*. These coins are round in shape and have the figure of a lion on the obverse and the Ujjain symbol on the reverse. The legend runs along the edge. Rapson attributed them to some king whose name ended in *svāmi*.³ As he could read the *akshara pu* on G.P. 3, he conjecturally identified him with Vāsiṣṭhīputra Śrī-Puḷumāvi. As I have already shown elsewhere,⁴ *svāmi* on these and other coins was not the name of any king, but was a royal title, meaning *rājan*. Just as some Sātavāhana coins have *rañño* or *raṇo* (Sanskrit, *rājñāḥ*) before the name of a king, others have *sāmisa* (Sanskrit, *svāmīnaḥ*) meaning 'of the king.' A close examination of G.P. 2 and G.P. 3 shows that the latter was struck by Puḷumāvi and the former by Yajña Sātakarṇi. Rapson could read only *pu* on G. P. 3, but the facsimile of the coin published by him shows more or less clearly the *aksharas si [ri] Pu [lu] ma*—. So there is no doubt that the coin was issued by Puḷumāvi, the son of Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi. The other coin (G.P. 2) has the legend *Samasa sara [Ya]*—[*sāmisa siri Ya*—, with the vowels restored) and clearly belongs to Yajña Sātakarṇi. There is therefore no doubt that the lion-type coins were issued by the Sātavāhana kings Puḷumāvi and Yajña Sātakarṇi. Whether

1. The name of the king appears here as Māna, not Māna as on the copper coins.

2. *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, Vol. XXII, p. 35.

3. Rapson, *Coins of Andhras*, etc., p. 24.

4. *J.N.S.I.*, Vol. III, p. 44.

the type was continued by the successors of these kings cannot be determined at present. According to Rapson these coins were found in the Andhra-deśa.¹

The coin No. 1 of Māna Mahisha resembles these coins with only this difference that the lion faces left, not right. It was, therefore, clearly imitated from the earlier Sātavāhana coins.

The second coin (Pl. II. a 2) sent by Shri Ahmad is also of lead. It was found at Maski, a village in the Lingsugur *tālukā* of the Raichur District of the Hyderabad State, well-known as the place of one of the Minor Edicts of Aśoka. This coin also is roundish in shape, but is much larger in size, having a diameter of 1.05". Its weight is 210 gr. It has on the obverse the figure of a horse facing right with the *svastika* and a tree in railing in the field at the top. On the reverse is seen within a rectangular enclosure of double lines, a hill of 10 arches with a pellet in each arch, surmounted by the crescent between two symbols like the Brāhmi letter *ga*. There is a wavy line at the bottom and also at the top of the enclosure. This shows that the wavy line did not symbolise a river below the hill as was supposed by some scholars, but was meant for decoration.

The legend is fragmentary. It seems to have commenced at iii. The first few *aksharas* of it have been damaged along with the forepart of the horse.² There are faint traces of *sara* (*siri* with the vowels restored) in front of the horse's breast. Two more *aksharas* which followed have also left faint traces, but they are illegible. Then are seen lower portions of seven *aksharas* which I read as —*yasasa Mahasa*—[*sa*]. The last *akshara sa* which appears just above the tree in railing is very faint. The legend can thus be partially restored as *siri* —*yasasa Mahasasa*. The name of the king

1. *Coins of the Andhras*, etc., p. 24.

2. The figure is of a horse and not of a lion. The animal appears tame and his tail is hanging down.

ended in *yasas*,¹ but its initial portion is unfortunately lost. That he belonged to the Mahisha dynasty founded by Māna is certain.

Horse-type lead coins had been issued before Māna by Yajña Sātakarṇi. They had the figure of a horse with a wheel in front and a symbol resembling Brāhmī *yya* in the field above on the obverse and the Ujjain symbol on the reverse.² The type was imitated by the kings of the Sebaka dynasty who, however, substituted a *chaitya* or a hill within a rectangular border in place of the Ujjain symbol on the reverse.³ The present coin (Pl. II. a 2) does not exactly resemble any coin of the Sātavāhana or the Sebaka dynasty. It has no doubt the figure of a horse on the obverse, but it has besides, two more symbols, the *svastika* and a tree within railing. The reverse shows a hill within a rectangular double border as on the coins of the Sebakas, but the hill has not one, but ten arches, each with a pellet and is surmounted by a crescent and two other symbols. This reverse type shows affinity with the obverse of the lead coins of Vāsishṭhīputra Viḷivāyākura and Maṭharīputra Śivalakura found at Kolhapur.⁴ Like the latter the present coin has a hill of ten arches in four tiers, surmounted by a crescent, but unlike them it has no tree on the right or the left.

I have shown elsewhere⁵ that Māna who struck these coins was a great Emperor with an extensive dominion; for he is one of the few rulers of the historic period, who finds mention in the Purāṇas. He is mentioned therein as of Śaka extraction and of the Mahishya dynasty.⁶ Like Sātavāhana

1. The Purāṇas mention a king named Nandiyāśas, who flourished in an earlier age. Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p. 49.

2. Rapson, *Coins of the Andhras*, p. 38.

3. *J.N.S.I.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 107 f.

4. Rapson, *Coins of the Andhras*, pp. 5 f., Pl. II.

5. *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, Vol. XXII, pp. 35 f.

6. I then called this dynasty *Mahishya* as that name occurs in a MS. of the Vāyupurāna. See Pargiter, *Dynasties, etc.*, p. 51, n. 11.

and Sebaka, who founded dynasties ruling over the Deccan, he also was the progenitor of a royal family which held sway over some part of the Deccan for a few generations.

The royal name Mahisha (or Mahishya) was probably derived from the country of Māhishaka or Mahisha-maṇḍala where this family was ruling. In my previous article on the coins of this Śaka King Māna, I followed Rapson¹ in supposing that Māhishaka was the country round Māhishamatī, modern Onkār Māndhāta in the Nemad District of the Central Provinces. Since then the provenance of these coins has become known. As stated before, they were found in the excavations at Kondapur and Maski in the Hyderabad State. The country under the rule of the Mahisha dynasty seems therefore to have been the southern portion of the Hyderabad State. The references to the Māhishaka country occurring in the Purāṇas and the Epics also suggest that it was situated in Southern Deccan. The *Vāyupurāṇa*, for instance mentions Māhishaka together with Mahārāshṭra and Kaliṅga among the Janapadas of the South.² The *Rāmāyaṇa* couples it with Vidarbha and Ṛishika, as a country of the south, to which Sugrīva directed the monkeys to go in search of Sītā.³ The *Mahābhārata* contains several references to the Māhishakas. The Bhīshmaparvan mentions their country with Draviḍa and Kerala among the countries of the south.⁴ The Karṇaparvan states that like the inhabitants of Kaliṅga and Kerala, the

1. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, p. 603.

2. *Vāyupurāṇa*, Adhyāya 45, v. 125—अथापरे जनपदा दक्षिणापथवासिनः ।
... महाराष्ट्रा माहिषका कलिङ्गाश्चैव सर्वशः ॥

3. *Rāmāyaṇa* (Bombay ed.) Kishkindhākāṇḍa, canto 41, v. 10—
विदर्भानृषिकांश्चैव रम्यान्माहिषकानपि ।

4. *Mahābhārata*, Bhīshmaparvan, Jambūkhanda (Bhandarkar Institute ed.) Chap. 10, vv. 56-57— अथापरे जनपदा दक्षिणा भरतर्षभ ।
द्राविडाः केरलाः प्राच्या मूषिका वनवासिनः । उन्नत्यका माहिषका विकल्पा मूषकास्तथा ॥

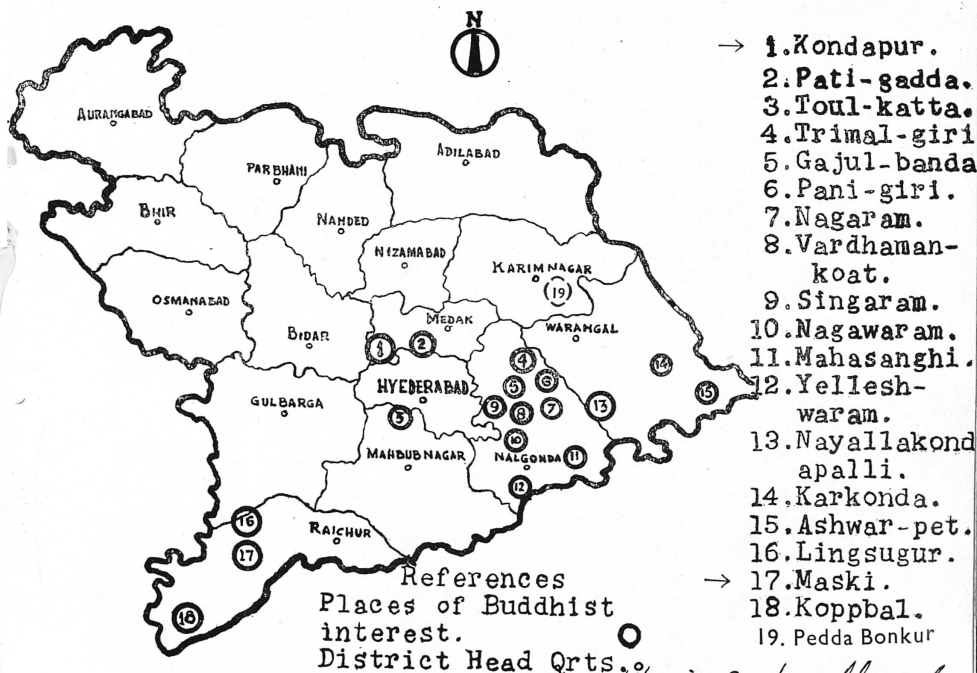
people of Māhishaka were destitute of religion.¹ The Anusāsanaparvan also states that like the Draviḍas and Kalingas the Māhishakas were originally Kshatriyas, but had been reduced to the status of a Vṛishala for want of contact with the Brāhmaṇas.² In the Āsvamedhikaparvan Arjuna is said to have fought with and defeated the fierce Māhishakas as he did the Draviḍas, Andhras and the inhabitants of Kollagiri.³ These references clearly suggest that the Māhishaka country was situated in the south, and the find-spots of coins described in this article indicate that it was identical with the southern portion of the Hyderabad State.

1. Karnaparvan, Chap. 44, v. 43. — कारस्कुरान् माहिषकान्कालिङ्गान्
केरलास्तथा । कर्कोटकान्द्वीरकांश्च दुर्धमैश्च विवर्जयेत् ॥

2. Anusāsanikaparvan, ad. 33, vv. 22-23— द्रविडाश्च कलिङ्गाश्च
पुलिन्दाश्चाप्युशीनराः । कोलिसर्पा माहिषकास्तास्ताः क्षत्रियजातयः ॥ वृषलत्वं परिगता
ब्राह्मणानामदर्शनात् ॥

3. Āsvamedhikaparvan, Chap. 83, vv. 10-12— तत्रापि द्रविडैरान्ध्रै
रोद्रैर्माहिषिकैरपि । तथा कोल्लगिरियैश्च युद्धमासीत्किरीटिनः ॥

MAP OF HYDERABAD STATE SHOWING KONDAPUR
AND OTHER SĀTAVĀHANA SITES



- 1. Kondapur.
- 2. Pati-gadda.
- 3. Toul-katta.
- 4. Trimal-giri
- 5. Gajul-banda
- 6. Pani-giri.
- 7. Nagararn.
- 8. Vardhaman-koat.
- 9. Singaram.
- 10. Nagawaram.
- 11. Mahasanghi.
- 12. Yellesh-waram.
- 13. Nayallakondapalli.
- 14. Karkonda.
- 15. Ashwar-pet.
- 16. Lingsugur.
- 17. Maski.
- 18. Koppbal.
- 19. Pedda Bonkur

Khawaja md. Ahmad
DIRECTOR OF ARCHAEOLOGY.

Coins of the Mahisha Dynasty

OBV.

REV.



a 1

Kondapur Excavations

OBV.

REV.



a 2

Maski Excavations

(Now preserved in Hyderabad Museum)

OBV.

REV.

OBV.

REV.



b

From the Cabinet of Mr. Hurmuz Kaus, Hyderabad-Deccan.