Research Article

THE NON-SOVEREIGN, NON-VICTORIOUS KĀRDAMAKA: JAYADĀMAN

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INTRODUCTION

The second Kārdamaka king to hold the gubernatorial title of ‘Kshatrapa’ was Chashtaṇ’s son, Jayadāman.3 Chashtaṇ’s promotion to the position of Mahākshatrapa must have prompted Jayadāman’s appointment to the office of Kshatrapa.2 When exactly this assignation was made cannot be ascertained in the absence of needed evidence3 but it would be safe to presume that it must have taken place after the acquisition of some territories from the Sātavāhanas after the death of Gautamiputra Sātakarni. On his coins, Jayadāman uses the title ‘Kshatrapa’ in addition to ‘svāmi’ and ‘rāja’.4 The obverse of his silver coins has his bust greatly resembling the bust on the coins of Chashtaṇ with an unintelligible marginal inscription in Greek, while on the reverse along with the legend Rājīn Kshatrtrapasā Jayadāmasa in Brahmi and Kharosthi, the three-arched hill device along with ancillary symbols sun and crescent was adopted.5 The first variety of his rectangular copper coin has a humped bull to right, facing a combined trident and battle-axe with a legend in degraded Greek characters on the obverse and a six-arched hill topped by a crescent and l., crescent and r., sun and inscription in Brahmi, on the reverse.6 Another variety may be distinguished as having ten-arched hill on the reverse.7 His Shavite leanings betrayed by the use of ‘Rudra’ in his son’s name8 is substantiated by the bull and trident-battle axe coin type.9 A copper coin of the type ‘Elephant r. : Ujjain symbol’ having an incomplete Brahmi legend has also been assigned to Jayadāman.10 He finds mention in a few private records from the domain of the Western Kshatrapas.11 Arguably the most important and definitely the most intriguing epigraph furnishing details about his political narrative comes from the Sātavāhana realm. A panel of the Mahā Stūpa in Kanaganahalli portraying two kings with their retinues, one of whom is pouring holy water from the water pitcher into the outstretched right hand of the other indicating the change of ownership, carries the label epigraph that reads: Rāya Pudumāvi Ajayatasa Ujēni det(12) (King Pulumāvi is handing over Ujjayini to Ajayata). While the identification of King Pulumāvi with Vāsishṭhiputra Pulumāvi, the son and successor of the illustrious Gautamiputra Sātakarni,13 seems axiomatic, discernment of the recipient of the megalopolis of Ujjaiyani requires a novel approach. Ajayatasa cannot be taken as the proper name of the king, for no king of this name existed contemporaneous to Vāsishṭhiputra Pulumāvi. Ajayatasa, as an adjective, also cannot have a positive connotation and mean undefeatable (as given in the memoir)15 or unconquered for the glorification by the Sātavāhanas of any monarch other than their own is impossible. At the risk of hazarding a conjecture we may propose that the inscription uses double entendre (Ślesha) here. The word Ajayatasa contains the name of the king ‘Jaya’, while as an adjective the whole word can be taken

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to describe the recipient king as being ‘non-victorious’. Wordplay is fairly common in ancient epigraphs. An ingenious suggestion had been made by Jagannath Agrawal who pointed out the use of double entendre in the undated Pehowa inscription where the word parâbala can be translated as a common noun meaning ‘the military force of the enemy’, it can be equally well interpreted as a proper noun, referring to the Râshtrakûta feudatory ruling at Malwa.[10] If we accept that the composer of the inscription has coded the name ‘Jaya’ in the word ‘Ajayatasa’ then the identification of the recipient king with Jayadâman remains to be the solitary possibility. The omission of any sort of title for the recipient lends credibility to the fact that he wasn’t Châshâna (the ruling monarch of the Kârdamakas) but Jayadâman who, albeit the de facto king during Châshâna’s later years, did not officially hold the position of a crowned head. Once this identification is accepted, the sequential narrative of his tenure as Kshattrapa can be reconstructed.

Gautamiputra Sâtakarni was the King of Åkarâvanti (Mâlwâ) among other territories as is discernible from the epigraph of his mother belonging to his son’s reign.[17] It is safe to presume that Gautamiputra Sâtakarni held these territories at the time of his death and his son inherited all the provinces from his father. The contemporaneity of Pulumâvi and Châshâna is a well established fact and so is the Kârdamaka control over Ujjain.[18] Châshâna who was a mere Kshattrapa in 89 AD,[19] his elevation to the status of a Mahâkshattrapa must have occurred after the Kârdamakas conquered the Sâtavânâha territories in Gujarat, Rajasthân and Åkarâvanti from Pulumâvi. Jayadâman’s appointment to the office of Kshattrapa would have followed Châshâna’s elevation to the position of Mahâkshattrapa. There was probably a prolonged struggle between Pulumâvi and Châshâna.[20] During the last years of Châshâna’s reign when he must have been extremely old after a lengthy rule he would have been just a nominal monarch. Jayadâman, with his seat in Ujjain, must have held the reins of the administration and led the attack on the Sâtavânâhas. It is possible that Pulumâvi succeeded in gaining an upper hand by temporarily occupying Ujjain but opted for a more practical decision. Knowing that Åkarâvanti proved difficult to hold and for years was the bone of contention between the two powers he agreed for a treaty where he exchanged peace on his left leg.[22] The giving away of Ujjain by Pulumâvi to Châshâna’s son Rudradâman and when his grand-daughter was eligible for marriage. Thus, we can place the bequeathing of Ujjain in c. 125-129 AD. In 130 AD, we find Rudradâman as the co-ruler of Châshâna, denoting the death of Jayadâman before the incision of the Andhau inscription of year 52.[21]

Identification of the recipient king with Jayadâman, contributes not just to the political narrative but to also the art history of Western Kshattrapas. On the Western Kshattrapa coins we only have the bust of the Kshattrapas and Mahâkshattrapas, but here in Kanaganahalli we have a full bodied specimen of a Kârdamaka ruler. The upper register vividly captures highly decked Jayadâman with retinue being received by Pulumâvi along with his retinue. He receives the holy water poured into his outstretched right palm, by holding his sañçopavîta in the left hand.[23] The noble guest wears an elaborate jewelled turban, heavy hooked ear-ornament at distal ends culminating in yet to bloom lotus petal, four-stringed necklace of quality beads with square tracers treated with floral decoration studded with gems, highly ornate keyûra befitting the royal personality fashioned with creeper and nâga hood formation studded with precious stones on both upper arms, wristlets treated with beads and gems, pîthambara tied at waist by fine threaded sash at the loin held by a metal clasp, a fairly large heavy uttarîya tied around the waist the loops of which are drawn to the right and the free end is shown flowing along with the left leg.[24]

References

1. Châshâna started his political career bearing the title of Kshattrapa, as is evident from the Andhau record; an epigraph which attributes no title to his father Ysâmotika. (vide V.V. Mirashi, The History and Inscriptions of the Sâtavânâhas and the Western Kshattrapas, Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture, Bombay, 1981, Part II, p. 116)


3. Ibid.

4. E.J. Rapson, Catalogue of the Coins of the Andhra Dynasty, the Western Kshattrapas, the Traikutaka Dynasty and the “Bodhi” Dynasty, British Museum, London, 1908, p. cvxii

5. A. Jha and D. Rajgor, Studies in the Coinage of the Western Kshattrapas, Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies, Nashik, 1994, p. 31

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Naming his son Rudradâman and using bull and trident-battle axe on his coins, points towards the fact that the acceptance of the Śâivite faith by Kârdamakas like Jayadâman was an integral constituent in the process of Indianization of the Śâkas.

9. A. Jha and D. Rajgor, op.cit.

10. E.J. Rapson, op.cit. p. cvxii

The conquests of territories like Surāṣṭra, Kukura and Anūpa would have preceded that of Ākarāvanti. These territories are mentioned in the Nasik Cave Inscription of Queen Balasirī as being part of Gautamīputra Sātakarni’s empire (Epigraphia Indica, Vol. VIII, p. 61). They find mention again in the Junagarh inscription of Rudradāman as being under the Kārdamaka king (Epigraphia Indica, Vol. VIII, p. 47). These territories must have been annexed while Chashṭana was ruling. After the Kārdamakas had succeeded in conquering Ujjain, it is possible that Jayadāman (the crown prince), was placed in charge of the territory of Ākarāvanti. In later military engagements with Vāsiṣṭhīputra Puḷumāvi, Ujjain could have exchanged hands multiple times. Ultimately, Vāsiṣṭhīputra Puḷumāvi, tired of employing his forces in the northern frontiers, donated Ujjain to Jayadāman and diverted his focus towards the southern dominions.

21. Vāsiṣṭhīputra Sātakarni was a son-in-law of Rudradāman. (vide A.M. Shastri, op.cit., p. 72)
22. The Andhau inscription of year 52 (130 AD) mentions Chashṭana and, associated with him, his grandson Rudradāman. (V.V. Mirashi, op.cit., pp. 116-119) Jayadāman must have died before 130 AD.
23. K.P. Poonacha, op.cit., p. 303
24. Ibid.

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