



further consolidate this reading, I argue that the style of the coin is too early for a date in the 230's; indeed, even 130 is rather late on account of one feature of the coin, as I will show.

The key aspects of the style are the king's portrait and the reverse devices. Just a simple visual inspection would convince one that the style of the portrait resembles more the style of the coins of Rudrasena I, minted with dates in the 130's, rather than coins of Rudrasimha II, who was minting in the 230's. Figure 3 is a coin of Rudrasena I, dated S. 132 and Figure 4 is an issue of Rudrasimha II, dated S. 230. Even more convincing than the portraits are the reverse devices. The letter forms on the portraits are the reverse devices. The letter forms on the other two coins, the river below the *chaitya* has acquired a slight bowl-like shape and the crescent moons are more stylised. The crescent that should be on top of the *chaitya* has in fact migrated away. So overall the style of the Īsvara-deva coin is much closer to the Rudrasena I coin, thereby strongly supporting the date of S. 13x.

Indeed, there is one aspect of the style of the Īsvara-deva coin that points to an even earlier date. The hills of the *chaitya* are rounded and have small pellets within them, a feature that was common on the coins of Rudradāman and the *Dāmajādasri* legend coins of Dāmazāda<sup>3</sup>, but was last seen on the early coins of Rudrasimha I. It disappeared on the later coins of that ruler and is never seen on the coins of Rudrasena I. Its revival here on the coin of Īsvara-deva is somewhat puzzling and points to a connection between this issue and the early issues of his father, Rudrasimha I.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps this will ultimately serve as a clue to the historical events that surrounded the issuance of the Īsvara-deva coinage.



Fig.3: Silver drachm of Rudrasena I, dated S. 132



Fig.4: Silver drachm of Rudrasimha II, dated S. 230

The history of the Western Kshatrapas around the time of this coin is still not fully understood and it would have been nice if this coin had helped resolve some of the unsettled issues. Unfortunately it does not; rather, it raises new questions of its own. The most vexing question still unanswered relates to the so-called "demotion" of Rudrasimha I. This king issued undated coins naming himself kshatrapa and then dated coins naming himself as mahakshatrapa. The mahakshatrapa coins carry dates for all years from S. 100 to S. 119. In addition, there are coins that name Rudrasimha as kshatrapa again carrying the dates S. 110, 111 and 112! We therefore have the conundrum of a ruler simultaneously claiming the title of mahakshatrapa and also a reduced title of kshatrapa.

I have discussed this problem in detail in a recent paper<sup>5</sup> and have shown that the coins showing Rudrasimha's "demotion" all

carry a different legend than the ones naming him as mahakshatrapa during the same years, and have proposed a hypothesis that the coins were issued at different mints. This would explain the conundrum by saying that Rudrasimha retained his full authority in part of his kingdom, but had a reduced status in another part. Further, there exists a unique coin of Rudrasena I,<sup>6</sup> naming him as mahakshatrapa, dated 112, and having the same legend features as the dated Rudrasimha kshatrapa coins, indicating it was struck at the same mint. Thus it might appear that it was Rudrasena who took the title of mahakshatrapa during the period and in the place of Rudrasimha's "demotion." Why or how he did so (or even whether he did so) is still uncertain.

The Īsvara-deva coin, dated S. 13x, comes too late to shed any light on this question. Indeed, the period S. 121-144 seemed relatively unproblematic in Western Kshatrapa history. Rudrasena I seemingly had a rather peaceful reign, with only a brief period of possible unrest in S. 124, when Satyadāman issued a brief coinage. As he names himself only as kshatrapa on his coinage, Satyadāman does not automatically appear as a rebel. He could well have been operating under the suzerainty of Rudrasena I. But perhaps the Īsvara-deva coin suggests that Satyadāman's "reign" was not as benign as might have appeared. Since both Satyadāman and Īsvara-deva appear to have had very short reigns, as evidenced by the facts that their coinage is very rare and each king has coins of only one known date, perhaps they were both rebels who were quickly subdued by Rudrasena I.

Thus the Īsvara-deva coin presented here, while attesting to a previously unknown Western Kshatrapa ruler, creates additional uncertainty regarding the political history of that dynasty and the reign of Rudrasena I in particular. The basic outline of events can perhaps be best presented in the form of a short chronology:

S. 100-119	Reign of Rudrasimha I s/o Rudradāman
S. 119-121	Reign of Jivadāman s/o Dāmazāda, Rudrasimha's (older) brother
S. 121-144	Reign of Rudrasena I s/o Rudrasimha I
S. 124	"Rebellion?" of Satyadāman s/o Dāmazāda and brother of Jivadāman
S. 13x (130?)	"Rebellion?" of Īsvara-deva s/o Rudrasimha I and brother of Rudrasena
S. 144	Reign of Prithvisena s/o Rudrasena I
S. 144-158	Reign of Dāmasena s/o Rudrasimha I and brother of Rudrasena

Dāmasena's reign was also punctuated by probably at least two rebellions, those of Samghadāman and Dāmajādasri II.

Western Kshatrapa political history therefore seems to involve considerable jockeying for power among family members, and the Īsvara-deva coin presented here adds to the list of possible rebellions against the main central power.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank Shailendra Bhandare for many useful discussions on Western Kshatrapa coinage.

<sup>2</sup> Amiteshwar Jha and Dilip Rajgor: *Studies in the Coinage of the Western Kshatrapas*, Nashik: Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies, 1992, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> I have argued in a recent paper that the kings commonly known as Dāmajādasri I and Dāmāghsada II were in reality one and the same person, whose name was Dāmazāda. See Pankaj Tandon: "The Western Kshatrapa Dāmazāda," *Numismatic Chronicle* 169, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> I should point out that the obverse portrait has a feature that would rule out a dating much earlier than S. 130. The lips are shown as two dots, something not seen until the later coins of Rudrasena I, whose early coins always show the lips as lines rather than dots.

<sup>5</sup> Pankaj Tandon: "A Simple Two-Mint model for Western Kshatrapa coinage," unpublished manuscript, September 2009.

<sup>6</sup> See R. C. Senior: *Indo-Scythian Coins and History* (3 volumes), London and Lancaster, PA: Classical Numismatic Group, 2001, type 339.60AD.