

Śiva, Bull, Trident and Phallus – Numismatic Evidence

Devendra Handa

Śiva is one of the most influential members of the orthodox Brahmanical triad and his worship is traced to very old times in India. The so-called Paśupati of the Harappan seal and the Vedic Rudra are regarded as his prototypes. In the *Rgvedic* hymns, Rudra is usually said to be armed with bow and arrow¹ which continued to be associated with him even in the *Mahābhārata* as is evident from his epithets Dhanvī, Pinākadhṛt, Pinākagoptā, Pinākahasta, Pinākapāṇi and Pinākī. The *Śatarudrīya* text of the *Śukla Yajurveda* of the *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā* also refers to his bow and arrows and at many places in the *Atharvaveda* he is called an archer. Once in the *Rgveda* (II.33, 3) he is said to have held the thunderbolt in his arm. Elsewhere in this and other later Vedic texts his bow, arrow, bolt, or club are frequently referred to.² Epithets like Bhava, Śarva (arrow-wielder or tormenter of misery), Paśupati (lord of animals), Ugra (terrific), Mahādeva (the great god) and Īśāna assigned to him in the *Atharvaveda* presuppose his rise to the position of the supreme god. The *Śatapatha* and *Kauśītaki Brāhmaṇas* add Aśani to these epithets indicating his association with the thunderbolt. One hundred names of Rudra enumerated in the *Śatarudrīya* mention him as Giritra 'one living in the hills', Kṛttivāsa 'having animal hide as his garment', Kapardī 'having the crown of snail-shell like matted locks on the head' (*kapardo'sya jaṭājūṭaḥ*, *Amarakoṣa*), Śatadhanvan 'having hundred bows', Sudhanvan 'good bowman', Iśumat 'possessing arrows', Bilmin 'helmeted', Niṣaṅgin 'having a sword', Śiva 'auspicious' (*kalyāṇarūpaḥ*), Śaṅkara 'causing worldly happiness', Śaṁbhu 'one who causes good or happiness' (*śaṁ sukhān bhāvayatīti Śaṁbhuḥ*), etc. which characterize his personality.³

It is well known that art activities dwindled after the decline of the Harappan or Indus-Sarasvatī Culture. For many centuries after the depiction of Śiva's prototype Paśupati on the Harappan seals we don't have any evidence of his portraiture in art. With the evolution of second urbanization during the first millennium BCE we again find flourishing of art during the Mauryan period which has left for posterity some notable terracotta figurines and lithic examples, Aśokan monolithic pillars with their capitals in particular. Portraits or reliefs of deities in terracotta and stone belonging to a period earlier than second century BCE are not known though their existence in perishable materials cannot be denied altogether. Another important innovation of the second urbanization sometime towards the close of the first half of the first

millennium BCE was the evolution of coinage the earliest examples of which show certain naturalistic, geometrical, floral, faunal and very rarely anthropomorphic marks as the insignia of the issuing authorities. The earliest of them were probably issued by the *Ṣoḍaśa* (sixteen) *Mahājanapadas*, ‘great states/tribes’, of Buddha’s time, and also probably by some lesser important Janapadas. Even with the coming into existence of the Magadhan empire during the rule of Ajātaśatru and its expansion during the reign of the Śiśunāgas, Nandas and Mauryas, symbolic representations continued though sometimes we do find some human figures on them. Early Indian art is basically symbolic in nature and some scholars believe that deities and scenes from the life of Buddha were represented by symbols: lotus may have represented Brahmā; Buddha was represented by a *caitya*-tree, umbrella, feet, etc.; different deities by certain animals; and so on.⁴

The earliest portraiture of deities in anthropomorphic form seems to have started during the second half of the first millennium BCE on silver punch-marked coins (known as *kārṣāpaṇas*), well before they were carved on stone. Of a total of 625 symbols including sun, six-armed marks, arches, animals (bull, elephant, dog, deer, lion, camel, horse/donkey, etc.), birds, aquatic beings, beetles, insects, squares, wheels, etc. we get a number of human figures (Fig.1) punched on these coins which

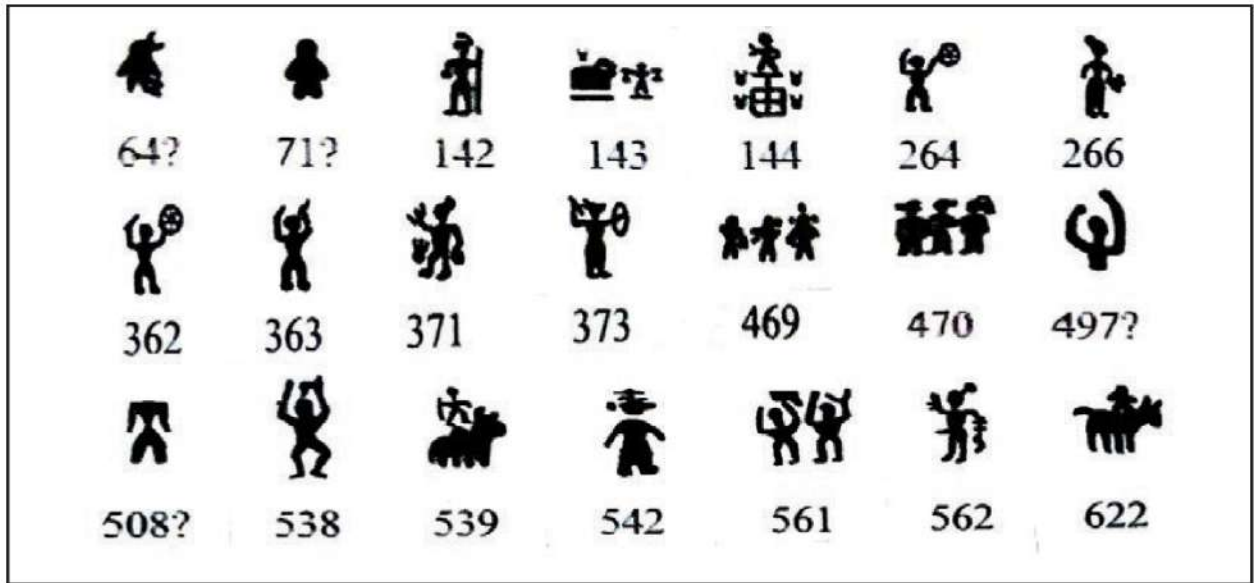


Fig.1 : Anthropomorphic figures on Punch-marked Coins

have been classified by Gupta and Hardaker into nine series (Series 0-VIII) : Series 0 associated with Bimbisāra or the period of the *Mahājanapada* states; I/II-IV with Nandas; Va and VIa with Candragupta Maurya’s accession; Vb, VIb and VII with Aśoka’s accession and VIII with post-Mauryan states. Coins of Series 0 bear one to four marks while subsequent Series bear five symbols and a weight standard of 32 *rattis* (approximately 3.6 g).⁵

Of the human representations on punch-marked coins catalogued by Allan in 1936, he identified the helmeted figure (142) as Kārttikeya (with the possibility of its being

Śiva also).⁶ Gupta and Hardaker had identified the figure wielding the wheel (264) as Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa in 1985. In the revised edition of their work, they have observed recently that “Apart from the Donkey Rider (622) and a few rather doubtful ‘figures’ in Series I (64, 71, 497, 508), this subject [of human representation] is avoided until Series Va, i.e. the beginning of the Mauryan period. Many different marks depict human figures in Series V and VI (marks 142, 143, 144, 264, 266, 362, 363, 371, 373, 469, 470, 538, 539, 561, 562). Probably all are intended to represent deities rather than living individuals, and as we have seen one of them may be Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa. Another (142) has been identified as Kārttikeya or Śiva. Mark 266, showing a female with a small child, suggests a mother goddess.”⁷











































Fig	GH Type	Observe Symbols	Reverse
a	566	     	
b	605	     	
c	606	     	
d	607	     	
e	608	     	
f	614	     	
g	622	     	

Fig.2 : Human figures on Punch-marked coins

It may be mentioned here that symbol 142 occurs for the first time on Type 566 of Series VIb (Pl.I.1; Fig.2a) associated with the accession of Aśoka indicating that the

deity was depicted in human form for the first time sometime during the reign of Aśoka. The bull did not figure on this type. This figure is found on the base metal/brass punch-marked coins of Malwa region also which issued abundant copper coinage based on Type 566 in the post-Mauryan period (GH Types 613-15, Fig.2f), sometime with bull as one of the five marks (GH Types 621-622, Fig.2g). The bull occurring on the Ujjain coins with helmeted figure, however, cannot be regarded as associated with the god. Type 496-496a show the figure holding wheel (identified as Vāsudeva/Kṛṣṇa) with camel and elephant and horse respectively and Type 497-499 depict a bull and bull and horse with a figure wielding plough and pestle (Saṅkarṣaṇa-Balarāma).

Coins of Series VIII (Types 604-608, Fig.2b-e) also show a bull with these deities. So the animal symbol on these punch-marked coins cannot be associated with the gods figuring on these *kārṣāpaṇas*.

Copper coins of Ujjain too show the helmeted figure (Pl.I.2-3). Bewildering number of varieties of Ujjain copper coins which continue to betray Mauryan legacy show numerous variations in the depiction of the god. The different types of matted locks; tight-fitting hemmed upper garment; the size, angle and position of attributes in his hands (Pl. II.1-6) are indicative of the large number of dies used for striking these coins and the huge corpus produced over a long period of time. The raised platform (Pl. II.12) or the lotus seat on which the god is sometimes shown as standing (Pl.II.1) or sitting (Pl.II.13) indicates the divinity of the figure. Wilfried Pieper⁸ has rightly observed that "It is not impossible that the Ujjain copper coinage had already started when the region was still a province of the Mauryan Empire, providing the people of Ujjain with small copper currency, urgently



Pl.I : Various forms of Śiva

needed in such a commercially active community for day to day transactions and local trade affairs..... The great numbers of Ujjain copper coins and the multitude of different types found in Ujjain and the surrounding area, make it impossible for

us to assign a short-lived existence to this coinage. It must have been issued over a considerable period, which probably ended when the mighty Sātavāhanas incorporated Malwa into their expanding empire in the first half of the last century BC."

Allan noted six variants of symbol 142 on Ujjain coins (Fig.3a-f) and identified all of them as Kārttikeya since he holds a spear :

About the three-headed figure depicted on these coins (Fig.3d, Pl.II.7) he stated that "the other three heads are behind and naturally not represented because they cannot be seen, so that he is six-headed – which identifies him as Kārttikeya". He also observed that "The possibility that he is Śiva, whose plurality of heads



Pl.II : Śiva without and with the bull

would be indicated in the same way, must not be overlooked; the absence of the trident or other symbol of Śiva, and the fact that he has only two arms – although this need not be stressed – is against this. The importance of the cult of Śiva Mahākāla at Ujjayinī is well known; it is of course not impossible that, as on the coins of the Yaudheyas, both deities are represented".⁹

Allan however seems to have been oblivious of the fact that what he identified as spear (the attribute of Kārttikeya) could be a *śūla*, 'spike, lance', which was the weapon of Śiva as

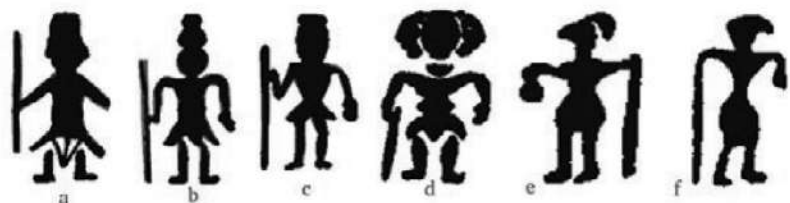


Fig.3 : Human Figures on Ujjain Coins

indicated by his names/epithets like Śūlabhṛt, Śūladhara, Śūladhṛk, Śūlahasta, Śūlāṅka, Śūlapāṇi & Śūlī occurring in the great epic.¹⁰ A coin in the collection of Dr. D. L. Neema of Indore points towards this possibility (Pl.III). As far as the multi-headed form



Pl.III : Śiva holding a śūla



Pl.IV : Tricephalous Śiva on Ujjain coin

is concerned, Cunningham had suggested that the 3-headed standing figure "is probably intended for the Brahmanical god *Mahākāla*, who had a famous temple at Ujjain".¹¹ It has to be noted that the additional faces are shown only in profile leaving the possibility of there being only one more face at the back. So the number of faces could only be four and not six. For the figure having six faces the other three faces could be shown above or around the natural head which is not the case. So the multi-headed figure occurring on coins under discussion could only be Śiva and not Kārttikeya. After a close examination of quite a few specimens of this type I feel that the portraiture of the faces is also different as we find the depiction of Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva, Aghora, Tatpuruṣa and Īśāna in stone sculptures. A coin from the collection of Dr. Pieper is illustrated here for the consideration of scholars (Pl.IV).

There is thus no doubt that Śiva has been depicted on Ujjain coins. On a coin type of Bhūmimitra found from Ujjain, Mahidpur, Mandsaur, and the region around the deity holding a short staff (*lakuṭa*) in the right hand and water-pot in the left is shown as seated in meditative pose on a lotus seat and has been identified as La(/Na)kuliśa by some scholars.¹² Some other coins without or obliterated legend also show the deity depicted similarly (Pl.V). Some square copper coins show the god seated on a lotus seat holding the small staff in his right hand and a pot (manuscript-like object according to some scholars) in the left with a bull to right on his right. Other subsidiary symbols may also be seen in the field above the bull and to the left of the god.

Lakuliśa is regarded as the twenty-eighth and last incarnation of Śiva that took place at Kāyārohaṇa or Kāyāvatāra, which is generally identified with Kārvān in the Dabhoi taluk of Baroda (now Vadodara) and grew in the first quarter of the second century CE.¹³



Pl.V : Lakuliśa

Iconographic-texts prescribe lakula, 'staff', & citrus in the hands of Lakuliśa who should be ūrdhvamedhira, 'ithyphallic', but I think that the god depicted here predates the textual prescriptions and is the earliest example of the depiction of Lakuliśa.

It may be mentioned here that a punch-marked coin brought to light recently shows a figure holding the two attributes in his two hands tentatively identified as *ḍamaru*, 'dumb-bell', and deer and has been identified as ūrdhvamedhira Śiva, i.e., Śiva with phallus erectus (GH Type 608 reverse, Fig. 2e, Pl.I.4).¹⁴

To me it seems to be a case of mistaken identity. The phallus as felt by Paul Murphy himself seems to be over-emphasized. In slightly later examples of the depiction of ūrdhvamedhira Śiva on

the coins of Wima Kadphises the erect phallus is always shown as pointing upwards or slightly slanting upwards and not in a horizontal position from the loin. Mr. Girish Sharma of Indore possesses an un-inscribed Ujjain copper coin where Śiva holding staff and water vessel has been depicted similarly but clearly showing the hem of the garment extending horizontally on one side (Pl.I.5) just as in the punch-marked coin illustrated by Paul. The figure referred to by Paul and under discussion here should better be identified as Śiva rather than Lakuliśa though the latter too is only a form or incarnation of Śiva.

Another piece from Ujjain (Pl.I.6) brought to light by H. Pathak and R. C. Thakur shows on the obverse the human figure holding staff in his right hand and water-pot in the left (not *gadā*, 'club', as identified by the two authors) standing by the side of a railed tree balancing the body on his right leg with left one folded back slantingly towards the pubes, with Ujjain symbol having *svastikas* in the orbs

on the reverse.¹⁵ The authors read the Brāhmī legend of circa 3rd century BCE at 3 o'clock position as (U)*jayani* which is not visible in the illustration. The figure has been identified as that of Mahākāleśvara Śiva but seems to be Śiva standing in penance as mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* (XIV.8, 1).

Dr. Wilfried H. Pieper has published a variety of Ujjain coins showing a human figure in dancing pose (Fig.4y).¹⁶ Kothari too has illustrated a similar piece as well as another variety showing the figure as holding a staff also in his right hand (Fig.4z).¹⁷ Bhaskar Chattopadhyay is of the opinion that "The human figure dancing with his two knees slightly bent and two hands upraised seems to be a common art-motif recruited from daily life without any religious significance."¹⁸

The staff held in the right hand of the second figure illustrated above, however, indicates that the figure is not different from the deity depicted on Ujjain coins. I, therefore, feel that the deity depicted here in the dancing pose is Śiva, i.e. Naṭarāja. Staff held in the right hand may be seen in some other coins also. In the large collection of Ujjain coins belonging to Prof. Neema and Girish Sharma quite a few pieces, both of round and square shapes, also show this motif (Pl.I.10-12). A square coin with one corner broken depicts the god dancing by the side of a railed tree and another counter

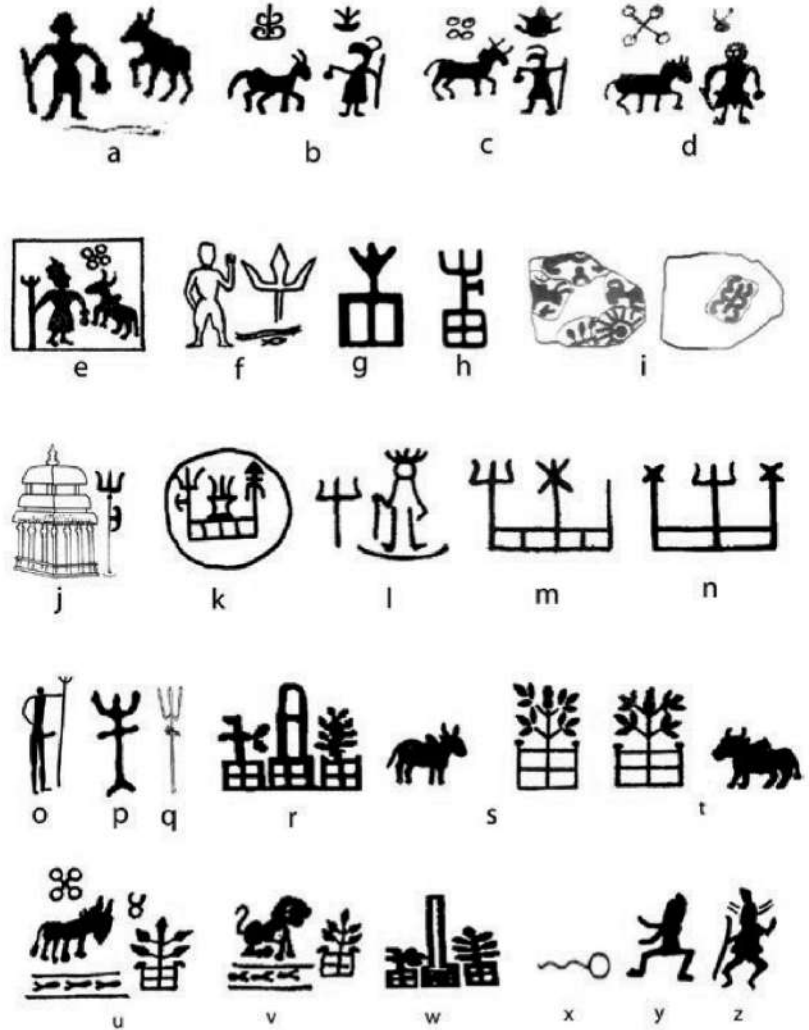


Fig.4 : Śiva, Bull, Trident and Liṅga

struck round piece shows perhaps a trident with a curved shaft in his right hand.¹⁹ It may be recalled that C. Sivaramamurti had identified the representation on a unique Śuṅga terracotta of unknown provenance as that of Śiva, the Lord of Music and Dance.²⁰

The Bull

J. N. Banerjea observed that “Śiva appears for the first time in an anthropomorphic form on the coins hailing from Ujjayinī and its environs. The single standing figure on many of these coins can be definitely identified with him.... Any doubt whatsoever is set at rest by the testimony of another variety of the same series of coins which show a bull slightly prancing up and looking at the deity” (Fig.4a), *devavikṣaṇtatparaḥ* as described in the *Matsyapurāṇa*.²¹ Banerjea has thus identified all the varying figures holding *daṇḍa*, ‘staff’, and water vessel, with or without the vehicle bull, with Śiva (Pl.II). Most of the scholars now follow Banerjea. After a sustained study of Ujjain coins, Wilfried Pieper has also observed recently that “The deity most frequently encountered is Śiva, the presiding and most popular deity of the city of Ujjain. On some of the coins Śiva appears single-headed, on others three-headed”.²²

We have noted above that Śiva came to be represented in human form on silver punch-marked coins of Type 566 of Series VIIb during the third century BCE but the bull was not associated with the god. The bull does not figure even amongst the five distinct species of animals – kine, horses, men, goats and sheep – marked off as belonging to Paśupati. GH type 566 was imitated on the base metal or brass punch-marked coins of Ujjain which were probably meant for local trade and transactions. The god continued to be represented on Ujjain copper coins of regional types in various forms (including the helmeted and multi-headed ones) during the second and first centuries BCE as noted above.

The bull which became almost invariable and popular adjunct of Śiva’s figures later was shown as one of the five marks on copper/brass imitations of Type 566 and belongs to Series VIII (Fig.2d) which has been dated to second century BCE. Die-struck copper coins continue to represent Śiva sometimes with bull or horse or donkey (Fig.4b-d) indicating that the bull was not recognized essentially as the vehicle of the god. Some other varieties which show the figure accompanied by bull (Pl.II.8-13) may belong to second century BCE (if not earlier) and in no way later than this. It may thus be concluded that the bull came to be finally recognized as the vehicle of Śiva in central India during the second century BCE and that the bull symbol occurring on any series of coins or sculptures earlier than this cannot be regarded as the theriomorphic representation of Śiva or Nandi. Soon, however, it seems that the bull represented Śiva himself also as indicated by a unique gold coin of an uncertain Indo-Scythian king bearing the figure of Greek city-goddess clad in chiton and peplos, wearing mural crown and holding poppy-head with partly visible Kharoṣṭhī legend (*....didevatā?*) on one side on the obverse and Greek legend *Taurus* above the humped bull to right and Kharoṣṭhī *uṣabhe* below it on the reverse.²³

In the *Rāmāyaṇa* (VIII.16, 14) Nandi is referred to not as a bull but a monkey having a terrific look, dwarfish size, short arms and very strong.²⁴ He is said to be the second Śaṅkara (*dvitīyamiva Śaṅkaraḥ*). These references thus belong to a period prior to first century BCE when the bull had certainly come to be associated with the god. According to the *Mahābhārata* (XIII.77, 27-28), Dakṣa Prajāpati gave to Śiva a bull

which became his mount and banner-mark. The epic refers to Śiva as Govṛṣāṅka, Govṛṣa-dhvaja, Govṛṣottama-vāhana, Ṛṣabhaketu, Vṛṣa, Vṛṣāṅka, Vṛṣa-dhvaja, Vṛṣaketana, Vṛṣavāhana, Vṛṣabha, Vṛṣabhāṅka, Vṛṣabha-dhvaja, Vṛṣabhaketans, Nandiśvara, etc.²⁵ indicating that by the time of the great epic, the bull had firmly been associated with Śiva as his banner-mark and mount. Naturally the related verses belong to a period posterior to the above said date.

Wema (Vima) Kadphises (CE 100/105-127) issued during his reign two-armed mono-cephalous, bi-cephalous and tri-cephalous Śiva type coins (ithyphallic in many cases), without and with Nandi, holding a long-handled trident or trident-battleaxe and *kamaṇḍalu*/animal skin (Pl.VI.1-13). His devotion to Śiva is confirmed by the legend '*maharajasa rajadirajasa sarvaloga ishvarasa mahishvarasa Vima Kapthishasa tratara(sa)*' as found on some of his coin types.²⁶ Multi-armed and nimbate figure of Śiva makes its appearance on the coins of Kaniṣka.²⁷ Kuṣāṇa coins show various forms of Śiva indicating not only the emergence but also the development of iconographic forms.²⁸



Pl.VI : Śiva Nandi on Kuṣāṇa Coins

Neither the horizontal third eye on the forehead which appears in some images in the Kuṣāṇa period nor the *membrane virile* as seen on the coins of Wema Kadphises is to be seen in the depiction of Śiva on Ujjain coins.

The Trident

All depictions of the god on Ujjain coins we have discussed above hold a spike only and not the *triśūla*, 'trident', which is well known as Śiva's attribute par excellence. Śūla and Triśūla find mention as distinct weapons in the *Arthaśāstra* (II.18, 6-7) in the section pertaining to the Superintendent of Armory. The Buddhist text *Mahāvastu*

also mentions these two as different weapons held by the demons of Māra in the episode of āravijaya (*anye asidharā anye Śaktidharā.... anye Śūladharā anye triśūladharā*). The *Rāmāyaṇa* too refers to śūla at umerous places and to *triśūla* at some as different weapons. *Triśūla* as an attribute of Śiva as seen in his hand on the coins of Wema Kadphises has not been mentioned as such in any early text before the great epic which refers to him as Triśūlahasta and Triśūlapāṇi (Mbh.XII.14, 231-33) also. Since *triśūla* does not find mention anywhere in early literature or on Indian indigenous coins as Śiva's attribute, Rosenfield²⁹ held that it has a Graeco-Bactrian provenance, the model clearly being the three-pronged attribute of Poseidon, the Greek god of waters,

who in the Indian context appears as holding a trident on the coins of Indo-Greeks (Pl.VII.1) for the first time and thereafter on the issues of Maues (Pl.VII.2)³⁰ (c. 85 BCE) and Azes (Pl.VII.3) (57 BCE).³¹ The earliest example of mono-cephalic two-handed Śiva holding a trident is generally believed to occur on the coins of the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares (Pl.VII.4-5) who ruled during CE 21-40.³² A. Gail made a very significant observation that "It was only when this weapon was transferred to Śiva that the Indians found a proper name for it : *triśūla*. *Triśūla* is in fact first traceable to the late sectarian text of the *Mahābhārata*.... any Sanskrit text using the term *triśūla* cannot be written before the Kuṣāṇa period".³³ Recently Laura Giuliano³⁴ has also endorsed this view.



Pl.VII : Deities with Trident

Ajay Mitra Shastri³⁵ had pointed out to coins of Allan's Class 2, variety *h* of Ujjain coins, a specimen of which has been drawn by Sethi from his own collection as Fig.4e. So Shastri thought that it is another example which corroborates Banerjea's identification of the human figure on Ujjain coins as Śiva. The attribute in the right hand of the deity seems to be a trident though its exact form cannot definitely be ascertained from the

published specimens of Allan's catalogue. It may be pointed out here that Altekar and Diskalkar too had observed that the deity standing beside a prominent trident (Fig.4f) on a diminutive cast coin (weighing only 8 grains) from Kasrawad hoard of 130 Ujjain coins obtained in the excavations conducted in 1939-40 represented Mahākāla.³⁶ It is regarded as the sure proof of the identity of the figure with Śiva by some scholars.³⁷ The depiction of trident is no doubt very rare on Ujjain coins but a specimen exists in the collection of Dr. Major M. K. Gupta of Burhanpur which shows this weapon in the right hand of the god (Pl.VIII.1) who stands slightly turned to his right with a water pot in the suspended left hand. Another piece is illustrated by Kothari³⁸ on the cover page of his book (Pl.VIII.2). These examples do indicate that it was a known attribute of Śiva during the issuance of Ujjain copper coins in second-first century BCE. A recent acquisition by Shri Girish Sharma of a unique Ujjain coin showing



Pl.VIII : Figures with Tridentaxe

a trident-battleaxe in front of an animal (horse?) in profile to right facing it with traces of some symbols or Brāhmī letters above the animal and river symbol below on the obverse and Ujjayinī symbol on the reverse (Pl.VIII.3) also indicates that in early Indian art it was this symbol with side horns or spikes flaring outward which was associated with or represented Śiva and not the one with a very long shaft having parallel spikes at the top as seen in the hands of the Greek god Poseidon depicted on the coins of Demetrius (Pl.VII.1), Maues (Pl.VII.2) and Azes (Pl.VII.3) as pointed out by Dhaky.³⁹

What looks like a trident placed in railing or on a pedestal (Fig.4g) indicating its venerable nature is found on punch-marked coins, which were dated to the time of Śīsunāga (circa 410-400 BCE) by P. L. Gupta.⁴⁰ The top of the shaft trifurcates

with the side spikes rising obliquely. Such a trident, however, is not met with on early coins or plastic examples and its identification as a trident may be doubtful. The prongs appear to be just like the side of a vajra, 'thunderbolt', which is described in *Aparājitapṛcchā* (235, 33) of Bhuvanadeva (circa late 12th or early 13th century) as consisting of two tridents – *vajraṁ śūla-dvayam*. A Pandyan base silver punch-marked coin (Type 634 of Series VIII of Gupta and Hardaker) also bears a trident-battleaxe on railed pedestal (Fig.4h) as one of the five punches and indicates that even in south India *triśūla-paraśuwa*s well known in the second century

BCE ()⁴¹

Pieper has also published a Mathurā billon punch-marked coin showing sun, six-armed symbol, helmeted Śiva and a bull with trident at the back and taurine below the face on the obverse and a bale mark on the reverse (Fig.4i).⁴² Trident-battleaxe with *ḍamaru*, 'dumb-bell', attached to the filleted shaft appears on the silver coins of Audumbara king Dharaghoṣa.⁴³ The obverse of Dharaghoṣa's silver coins shows the figure of Viśpamitra (Viśvāmitra) as described by the Kharoṣṭhī legend *Viśpa* and *Mitra* across the figure and bear on the reverse trident-battleaxe on a pedestal and a tree in railing (Pl.VII.6). The copper coins of Śivadāsa, Rudradāsa and Dharaghoṣa bear the filleted trident-battleaxe by the side of a Śaiva temple on one side as the important devices (Fig.4j). Audumbara coins are dated to *circa* second-first century BCE. Trident-battleaxe figures as an important device on the silver coins of Vemaki rulers Śivaghoṣa, Rudravarman and Bhavavarman (Pl.VII.7) who were all staunch Śaivas as indicated even by their names and ruled during the first century BCE. Trident with or without battle-axe is depicted on the reverse of the coins of *circa* second-first century BCE of the Pāñchāla ruler Agnimitra, Rudragupta and Dhruvāmītra (Fig.4k-n) also. The trident appears on the top of some temple buildings depicted on Ṣaḍānana-Deer type Yaudheya copper coins as an emblem of Śiva.⁴⁴

Most of the Śaiva clay sealings of early centuries found from various early historic sites of India also show this symbol. On a sealing of Śivarakṣita from Taxila the god is shown holding trident and club (Pl.VII.9). Trident with axe, adze or discus attached to the shaft before the elephant is found on the Mahādeva type silver coins (Pl.VIII.5-7) of Bull/Elephant type issued on the pattern of Vemaka coins in first century BCE.⁴⁵ Citreśvara-Śiva is also depicted as holding long handled trident-battleaxe (Pl.VIII.8). It is interesting, however, to note that on all the indigenous coins cited above the trident having outward curving or flaring side spikes with or without battleaxe attached to its shaft differs in form from the Graeco-Bactrian trident of Poseidon which is marked by parallel spikes on a horizontal bar or shows the central spike as rising above the flanking spikes. On the coins of Kaniṣka and Huviṣka, Śiva is depicted as four-armed too and holds different attributes besides similar trident-axe (Pl.VI.14-18). He also bears a nimbus sometimes.

The examples cited above are enough to show that the trident, often combined with a battleaxe was used as a popular symbol on ancient Indian coins as far south as the Pandyan territory in second-first centuries BCE if not earlier. The occurrence of trident-like symbols in stone age paintings of central Himalayas, the Harappan pictographs and pottery decorations, South Indian rock paintings at Koppagallu in district Bellary, Karnataka datable to 900-200 BCE (Fig.4o),⁴⁶ Tamil Nadu dolmen art (Fig.4p),⁴⁷ megalithic iron implements (Fig.4q)⁴⁸ and early historic objects bespeak of a long tradition of the use of this form and furnish evidence that Indians were not ignorant of the use of trident. The basic difference between the Greek and the Indian forms as pointed out above lay in the straight and curved or flaring *śṛṅgas*, 'side spikes', flanking the *śūla*, 'central spike'. Rosenfield's suggestion that the trident of Śiva has a Bactrian provenance and Gail's observation that it is not earlier than the Kuṣāṇa period needs careful reconsideration.

The Phallus

Śiva's worship in phallic form is generally believed to have been mentioned in the epics for the first time (*Rāmāyaṇa*, VI.104, 18-21; *Mahābhārata*, Anuśāsanaparva, XIV.227) though the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (IV.11) of circa 4th-3rd century BCE indirectly refers to Īśāna-Śiva as presiding over every yoni (*Yo yonimadhiṣṭhati.... tamīśānam*).

Allan described an un-inscribed copper coin of Ujjain belonging to Class 1, variety e as having *liṅgam* between two different trees in railing with small Ujjain symbol and *svastika* above on the obverse and a bold Ujjain symbol on the reverse.⁴⁹ Allan dates these un-inscribed copper coins of Ujjain to third and second century BCE. Banerjea thinks that the tree by the side of what Allan has described as a *liṅgam* is the *sthala-vṛkṣa* associated with the worship of Śiva. Banerjea has given misleading line-drawings of the *liṅgam* on a pedestal by the side of a tree or between two trees in railing (Fig.4r).⁵⁰ Ajay Mitra Shastri⁵¹ avers that "On the Ujjayinī coins the god Śiva is figured symbolically as well as in anthropomorphic form." He not only endorses Banerjea's view but also holds that there exists a "rather realistic representation of the phallic emblem of the god Śiva placed on the top of a tree in the railing between its two topmost branches". The observation seems to have been based on the drawing of the tree in railing by Allan which sometimes shows even a bull looking at the tree (Fig.4s-t). We have not come across any Ujjain coin showing the phallic emblem. It is doubtful if a *Śiva-liṅga* has actually been depicted on the top of a tree which is a very unusual position and has never been shown similarly anywhere else. As far as the depiction of bull looking at it is concerned we may mention that there are instances where the elephant, or horse/ass (Fig.4u) or lion (Fig.4v) are shown as looking at the *sthala-vṛkṣa*.

Gauri Shankar Bandopadhyaya⁵² has repeatedly mentioned the existence of the phallic emblem on Ujjain coins. We may mention here that Banerjea's drawing appears to have been based on worn out coins or not very clear illustrations of Allan. Coins of this type are quite common and I am illustrating here some good

specimens which clearly show the central device not to be a *liṅgam* but a vertical channel with fishes emanating from a square tank with four fishes (Pl.I.7-8, Fig.4w). Some good specimens preserve below even the legend or a part of it which can be read and restored as *Sidhā(r)tha-madano*.⁵³ Kothari, Pieper and the present writer have made in-depth study of Ujjain coins and have not found even a single instance of the depiction of a *liṅga* on them. This clearly indicates that Śiva's worship in the form of his phallic emblem had not come into being or was not popular in central India at least by about the second century BCE.

Very recently, however, Prashant Kulkarni has brought to light a Magadhan *kārsāpaṇa*, which shows the dotted circular phallus in a squarish *yonipīṭha* with a channel for the lustral water to flow out (Pl.IX).⁵⁴ It firmly establishes the antiquity of phallus worship in the 4th-3rd century BCE corroborating the literary evidence of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*. It is not unlikely that an undercurrent of phallus worship continued in some sections of the society from R̥gvedic (*śiśna-devas*) and Harappan period and when these people were absorbed in the social order of the early historic period Phallus worship was also given religious acceptance. The next depiction of *liṅga* may be seen on the obverse of a Taxilian coin (Pl.I.9) which shows a hill with tree growing from it on the reverse.⁵⁵ Allan has described the symbol as uncertain and was not sure even of its ascription to Taxila. The un-inscribed coin has been dated by Allan to *circa* third-second century BCE. Banerjea has also recognized the symbol on the Taxila coin as a *liṅgam* on a somewhat summarily represented pedestal.⁵⁶ Copper coins of Almora which were issued during or after the later half of the second century BCE by kings popularly bearing Śaivite names like Śivadatta, Śivapālita, etc. show amongst other emblems a bull and a circular symbol connected with a wavy line (Fig.4x). I take this second symbol as Śiva-*liṅga* with a channel of lustral water flowing from it⁵⁷ and regard these coins to be the earliest in the Indian indigenous series to depict the Śiva-*liṅga*. The small mark of a *yonipīṭha* on the back of the bull as seen on a silver coin of Mahādeva type (Pl.VIII.5-5a) furnishes evidence of Śiva-*liṅgas* set up in the *yonipīṭhas* during the first century BCE. An Ārjunāyana copper coin shows a bull to right before a railed tree on the obverse and bull to right before a *liṅga* on the reverse.⁵⁸ A temple depicted on a Ṣaḍānana-Deer type Yaudheya coin also seems to have enshrined a Śiva-*liṅga*.⁵⁹ After a gap of some centuries we find Śiva-*liṅga* on a *yonipīṭha* depicted on the copper coins of Nāga ruler Vibhu of Padmāvati.⁶⁰ The *Liṅgodbhava-mūrti* of Gudimallam and the *Mukha-liṅgas* of Bhita, Mathura, etc. indicate that the *liṅga* form gained popularity only after the second-first century BCE. The representation of the *liṅga*, though quite popular in the plastic art of India, was not common on coins and we have only rare examples like those of



Pl.IX : Magadhan *kārsāpaṇa*

7th-8th century king Vopparāja of controversial identity and much later on the coins of the Marathas, Holkars of Indore, Gaekwads of Vadodara, etc.

Acknowledgement

I am thankful to Dr. D. L. Neema and Mr. Girish Sharma of Indore, Drs. Jan Lingen (Netherlands), Osmund Bopearachchi (France/USA), Wilfried Pieper (Germany), M. K. Gupta (Burhanpur, India), Late Shri Narendra Kothari, Dr. Amiteshwar Jha (Anjaneri, Nasik) and Prashant Kulkarni (Nagpur) for the coins illustrated with this article. The line-drawings have been copied and prepared afresh from so many different sources that it is not possible to list all of them. I, however, express my gratitude to all the scholars from whose works they have been taken. Coins illustrated are not to scale.

Endnotes

1. A. B. Keith (1925), *The Religion of the Veda and Upaniṣads*, 2 vols., Cambridge: Harvard Oriental Series, I, p.143.
2. A. A. Macdonell (1971), *Vedic Mythology*, Varanasi-Delhi: Indological Book House (reprint), p.76.
3. C. Sivaramamurti (1976), *Śatarudriya: Vibhūti of Śiva's Iconography*, New Delhi: Abhinav Publications.
4. A. K. Coomaraswamy (1927), *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, New York: Dover Publications, pp.41ff.
5. P. L. Gupta & T. R. Hardaker (2014), *Ancient Indian Silver Punchmarked Coins of the Magadha-Maurya Kārshāpana Series*, Anjaneri (Nashik): IIRNS (revised edition).
6. John Allan (1936), *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India*, London: British Museum (reprint, New Delhi, 1975), pp.xxxvi, xli, 29 and 30, Pls.IV.24, V.1, XLI.7-11.
7. Gupta and Hardaker (2014), p.59.
8. Wilfried Pieper (1994), 'The Local Copper Currency of Ujjain in Ancient Central India (ca. 200 BC – ca. 50 BC)', *ONS Newsletter*, No.142.
9. John Allan (1936), pp.cxliv-cxlv, 245ff., Pl.XXXVIII.11-12, 14; etc.
10. *Mahābhārata kī Nāmānukramaṇikā*, Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2016, p.351. *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa* also mentions *śūla* at numerous places: V.6, 30; 17, 9 & 15; 46, 35; VI.7, 2; 9, 4; 31, 22; 37, 11; 42, 42; 45, 14; 51, 24; 58, 7; 59, 101 & 137; 60, 140; 65, 38; 67, 16; 67, 38; 67, 61; 67, 63-64; 67, 66; 69, 53; 75, 55; 82, 18; 86, 21; 90, 59; 95, 25; VII.32, 34; 61, 6; etc.
11. Alexander Cunningham (1891), *Coins of Ancient India*, London (reprint, Varanasi: Indological Book House 1963), p.98.
12. V. S. Wakankar (1975), 'Coins of Mitra Dynasty from Ujjain', *The Journal of the Numismatic Society of Madhya Pradesh*, Vol.II, p.25, Pl.II.17-20; Chandrashekhar Gupta (2005-2006), 'Coins of Mitra-Bhadra Rulers from Ujjain', *Numismatic Digest*, Anjaneri (Nashik): IIRNS, Vols.29-30, p.50; Kothari, p.102, RB#254. The Mitra-Bhadra rulers of Vidarbha also show on some of their coins Śiva similar to that of Ujjain.
13. D. R. Bhandarkar, B. C. Chhabra and G. S. Gai (1981), *Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol.III (Revised), New Delhi: ASI, pp.133-39. Bhatt feels that Kāyārohaṇa can better be identified with a place near Ujjain [S. K. Bhatt (2009-2010), 'Studies in Indian Numismatic Symbology', *The Journal of Academy of Indian Numismatics & Sigillography*, Indore, Vols.XXIII-XXIV, p.75, fn.78].
14. Paul Murphy (2003-2004), 'A New Punchmarked Hoard from Mathura', *Numismatic Digest*, Vols.27-28, pp.28-29.

15. H. D. Pathak & R. C. Thakur (2006), 'A New Variety of Ujjaini Coin', *Ibid.*, LXVIII, p.35, Pl.I.8.
16. W. Pieper (1993), 'The Ancient Indian Coinage of Eran', *ONS Occasional Paper*, no.30, pp.3-5, coin no.13.
17. Narendra Kothari (2006), *Ujjayini Coins* (Edited by Dilip Rajgor), Mumbai: Reesha Books International, p.71, RB#4* and p.111, RB#307*, respectively.
18. Bhaskar Chattopadhyay (1977), *Coins and Icons – A Study of Myths and Symbols in Indian Numismatic Art*, Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, p.52.
19. See for details Devendra Handa (2013), 'Divinities on Ujjain Coins', *Indian Coin Society Newsletter*, No.51, pp.25-26, Pl.VIII.
20. C. Sivaramamurti (1974), *Naṭarāja in Art, Thought and Literature*, New Delhi, Fig.4.
21. J. N. Banerjea (1956), *Development of Hindu Iconography*, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, p.117.
22. Wilfried Pieper (2013), *Ancient Indian Coins Revisited*, Lancaster/London: Classical Numismatic Group, pp.36-37.
23. Percy Gardener (1886), *The Coins of the Greek and Scythic Kings of Bactria and India in the British Museum*, London (reprinted, New Delhi, 1967), p.162, Pl.XXIX.15.
24. *Rām.*, V.8, 8 : *karāla-kṛṣṇa-piṅgala/vāmano vikaṭo muṇḍī nandī hrasvabhujābalaḥ //*
25. *Mahābhārata kī Nāmānukramaṇikā*, loc.cit. The first Jaina Tīrthaṅkara, 'path-maker', is also known as Ādinatha and Ṛṣabhanatha (which also stand for Śiva) and his emblem is the bull. N. P. Joshi has shown that there is remarkable iconographic closeness between Jaina Ṛṣabha and Śiva as the former is shown with locks of hair dangling down on his shoulders resembling Śiva's matted locks, his *lāñchana*, 'emblem', is bull which is Śiva's mount, his acolyte *yakṣa* is Gomukha, 'bull-faced', resembling Śiva's bull-headed Gaṇa, his *caitya-vṛkṣa*, 'sacred tree', is ficus (*vaṭa-vṛkṣa*) which according to the Purāṇas is a form of Śiva, Ṛṣabha's *nirvāṇa-sthāna*, 'place of emancipation', according to the Digambaras is the mount Kailāsa which is Śiva's abode [For details see N. P. Joshi (1996), 'Teachers of the Heterodox Sects – Buddhism and Jainism – in the eyes of the Purāṇas (Viṣṇu, Śiva and Brhaspati)', *Nirgrantha*, Ahmedabad: Vol.I, pp.57-58]. In Śvetāmbara tradition, the *yakṣa* of the eleventh pontiff Śreyāṃsanātha is Īśvara (which also stands for Śiva) and his vehicle is bull.
26. Gardener, op.cit., pp.124-28, Pl.XXV.6-14; Osmund Bopearachchi (2008), 'Les Premiers Souverains Kouchans : Chronologie et Iconographie Monétaire', *Journal Des Savants*, Paris, Fondé en 1665, pp.1-52.
27. Gardener, op.cit., p.132, Pl.XXVI.13.
28. J. Cribb (1997), 'Shiva images on Kushan and Kushano-Sasanian coins', in K. Tanabe, et.al. (eds.), *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, Special Volume, pp.11-66.
29. J. M. Rosenfield (1967), *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, Berkeley: Los Angeles, p.93.
30. Banerjea (1956, pp.120-21), however, felt that the figure holding the trident on the coins of Maues is 'an undoubted representation of Śiva'.
31. Gardener, op.cit., pp.12, 70-71 & 77.
32. Gardener, op.cit., p.104, Pl.XXII.8; R. B. Whitehead (1914), *Catalogue of Coins in the Punjab Museum, Lahore*, Oxford, Vol.I, Pl.XV.43.
33. A. Gail (1993), 'On the Beginning of Figurative Representations in Indian Art', *South Asian Archaeology*, 1991, Proceedings of the Eleventh International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe held in Berlin 1-5 July 1991, ed. by A. J. Gail, G. J. R. Mevissen, with the assistance of B. Zehmcke, Stuttgart, pp.427-36.
34. Laura Giuliano (2004), 'Studies in Early Śaiva Iconography : the Origin of the Trisūla and Some Related Problems', *Silk Road Art & Archaeology*, Vol.10, p.51.
35. Ajay Mitra Shastri (1968), 'Religious Study of Symbols on the Local Coins of Central India' in Narain, et.al. (eds.), *Seminar Papers on the Local Coins of Northern India : C. 300 B.C. To 300 A.D.*,

Varanasi: Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture & Archaeology, Banaras Hindu University, pp.70-86.

36. A. S. Altekar and D. B. Diskalkar (1946), 'Kasrawad Hoard of Ujjain Coins', JNSI, VIII, p.104, Pl.VI.17.
37. Prashant Srivastava and Deepak Tiwari (1994), 'Śiva on Ujjayinī Coins', JNSI, LVI, pp.5-6.
38. Narendra Kothari (2006), *op.cit.*
39. M. A. Dhaky (1977), 'The Morphology of the "Trident" Weapon', *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, Calcutta, Vol.XIX(1-2), pp.24-32 (reprinted in *Sambodhi*, Vol.XXXIV, 2011, pp.5-16).
40. P. L. Gupta (1992), 'Barwani Hoard of Silver Punch-marked Coins', *Numismatic Digest*, Anjaneri (Nashik): IIRNS, Vol.16, pp.6-28.
41. Gupta and Hardaker (2014), *op.cit.*, p.196.
42. Pieper (2013), *op.cit.*, pp.170-71, no.153.
43. Devendra Handa (2007), *Tribal Coins of Ancient India*, New Delhi: Aryan Books International, p.30, Pls.VII.3-4 & IX.1.
44. *Ibid.*, p.193, Fig.22.20, 31, 35 and 39 & Pls.lx.3, LXI.1.
45. *Ibid.*, p.226.
46. V. S. Wakankar (1991), 'Rock Art of South India', in C. Margabandhu, et.al. (eds.), *Indian Archaeological Heritage (Shri K. V. Soundara Rajan Festschrift)*, Vol.I, Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, pp.63-90, Fig.19 on p.86.
47. D. Dayalan (2002), 'Rock Art and Archaeological Excavations in Tamil Nadu', in C. Margabandhu, et.al. (eds.), *Puratanā Emerging Trends in Archaeology, Art, Anthropology, Conservation and History (in Honour of Shri Jagat Pati Joshi)*, Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, Vol.I, pp.52-70.
48. Bridget and Raymond Allchin (1968), *The Birth of Indian Civilization*, Penguin, p.228, Fig.64.
49. Allan (1936), *op.cit.*, p.243, no.19, Pl.XXXVI.15.
50. Banerjea (1956), *op.cit.*, p.113, Pl.I.10.
51. Shastri (1968), *op.cit.*, pp.71-73.
52. Gauri Shankar Bandyopadhyaya (1990), 'Phallic Symbol on Early Indian Coins', JNSI, LII, pp.88-90.
53. See also Pieper (2013), *op.cit.*, p.222, no.409.
54. The coin was put on view for discussion in the research and discussion group of 'Indian Coin Society Owls' on 29th April 2015. Prashant Kulkarni explained the presence of the headless human figure on this coin as representing a dead person and Śiva-*linga* as Śiva associated with *smaśāna*, 'funerary place'. It is difficult to agree to this.
55. Allan (1936), *op.cit.*, pp.cxxxvii, 233: Taxila, Class 4, variety i, no.154, Pl.XXXV.5. Allan's un-inscribed cast copper of variety b (p.85, Pl.XI.2) which he assigned to circa second-first century BCE also shows a railed tree and *lingam* on a square pedestal on the reverse.
56. Banerjea (1956), *op.cit.*, p.113.
57. Handa (2007), *op.cit.*, p.260.
58. Allan (1936), *op.cit.*, p.121, Pl.XIV.11.
59. Handa (2007), *op.cit.*, pp.193-94, Fig.22.34 & Pl.LX.2.
60. H. V. Trivedi (1957), *Catalogue of the Coins of the Nāga Kings of Padmāvātī*, Gwalior: Department of Archaeology & Museums, pp.xvii, xxxii, 24, Pl.II.36-39.