



JIHONIKA

JIHONIKA, a ruler in northwestern India known to us from his coins and an inscription. On the obverse of his bilingual coins, his name is written in corrupt Greek legend as Zeiōnisēs. On the reverse, written in clear Kharoshthi letters he appears as the satrap of Chukhsa and son of the satrap Maṇigula. The inscription engraved on a silver vase found by John Marshall at Sirkap (Taxila, Pakistan) in 1926/7 and published by S. Konow (1929, p. 82) also qualifies him as Jihonika the Kshatrapa of Chukhsa, the son of Maṇigula, the brother of the Great King. Though both epigraphic and numismatic evidence points to his paternal ancestry, historians have different views regarding his dynastic affiliation. Though he was considered in the past as a satrap of the Kushans, Indo-Parthians, or Indo-Scythians (qq.v.), he may most probably belong to the clan of Kshaharatas. The Chukhsa satrapy is also known through the Taxila copper scroll of Patika, where Patika's father Liaka Kusuluko is referred as the Kshaharata satrap of Chukhsa. Jihonika seems to have succeeded Patika in Chukhsa.

Although, the Taxila silver vase inscription refers to him as the satrap of Chukhsa, scholars are not unanimous when designating the precise location of the area in question. Jihonika's coins are not attested in the major discoveries made in the Paropamisadae (Kabul-Begram), and very few are found in the Punjab (Peshawar and Taxila). On the contrary, most of his coins are reported from Kashmir and the eastern part of Hazara. Furthermore, designs of his copper coins are closely linked with those of Azes II depicting bull and lion usually found in the Jammu-Kashmir area. Likewise, there are many reasons



today to place Jihonika's kingdom in Kashmir, but not in Taxila or Pushkalavati (Peshawar) as believed by many historians in the past.

The precise chronology of Jihonika's reign is also controversial. Unfortunately, the epigraphic evidence is not of much use in this respect. The inscription engraved on the neck of the silver vase from Taxila bears a numeral 191. This was interpreted as a date in the so-called Old Saka era, the base year of which was proposed to be 155 B.C.E. Thus the reign of Jihonika was placed around 36 C.E. This date would tally with the chronological frame established for Jihonika on numismatic evidence (see below). But the problem remains far from being solved. J. Cribb (1999, pp. 196-97), followed by R. C. Senior (2001, pp. 96), categorically refuses to accept this numeral as a date, and they argue that it represents the weight of the vase. Richard Salomon (2005, pp. 374-75) does not exclude this possibility; however, he more cautiously acknowledges that this hypothesis cannot be tested until the weight of the silver vase is determined. Even if the numeral 191 represents a date, it is impossible to relate it to an era that would be accepted by all the scholars.

The numismatic evidence, on the other hand, is of some use in fixing a relative chronology for Jihonika. The round copper coins of the bull and lion type of Jihonika seem to have been the model for Kujula Kara Kadphises' bull and Bactrian camel coins (MacDowall, 1973, pp. 225-29). Kujula copied not only the denominations and the obverse type of the bull, but the corrupt and misunderstood Greek legend of Jihonika. He was certainly a contemporary of the first Indo-Parthian Gondophares (q.v.). The chronology of Gondophares in relation to Jihonika is revealed by a series of overstrikes by the latter over the former and the former over the latter. In short, according to the numismatic sequence, the reign of Gondophares should be dated ca. 20-46 C.E. and that of Kujula Kadphises ca. 30-80 C.E. Likewise, once the reign of Kujula Kadphises in relation to Gondophares is well established, the reign of Jihonika can be placed between 20 and 40 C.E. (Bopearachchi, pp. 137-39).

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