CHAPTER IV

SOTER MEGAS

Discovery of coins in large numbers in Basara, makes it clear that Wema Kadphises' empire extended up to even Madhyadesa. The seated image of the Kusāṇa emperor (Kuśāṇaputra) Vematalgama at Mathura is supposed to be that of Wema Kadphises.

1. Cunningham ASI Vol II p.186

2. JBOAS Vol VI pp. 12 ff.
The image may not be that of Wema Kadphises, but extension of his empire as far as Mathura or even up to Sarnath cannot be questioned. Possibly, he appointed some one as his viceroy or deputy in that region. The name of the viceroy or deputy has not been mentioned.

This nameless viceroy may be Soter Megas whose coins have been found in Punjab, in Kandahar and Kabul regions and as far as Mathura in the east.

Rapson suggests that the coins of Soter Megas show a symbol of the kind which is a characteristic of the coins of Wema Kadphises.

Whitehead supports Rapson and concludes that the style in the copper coins and the absence of the square form point to a period near about the Kuśāṇa conquest making Soter Megas contemporary of one of the two Kadphises rulers. He further suggests that these coins were struck by more than one ruler and in different localities though such rulers might have been subordinate to a single sovereign.

1. Cunningham NC Vol X for 1890 pp.115 ff
2. Indian coins pp.16 ff
3. PMC pp.160 ff
4. ibid
Sten Konow agrees in taking the letter 'vi' on some coins as denoting the initial letter of the suzerain's name. Here 'vi' stands for Wema Kadphises.

The nameless King (Soter Megas)

We find some coins of a king whose name is not available either on the coins or in the history of the period. No inscription so far discovered is assignable to his period. Nor is it known as to which period he belongs. He is known only from his coins, both silver as well as copper which are found all over the country from Kandahar in the north-west to Mathura in south-east. These coins bear the symbol 𓊫.

Silver Coins

Class I

Horseman and Zeus

Obv. King to right, on horseback, right hand advanced, to right symbol 𓊫. Greek legend 'BACILEYC

BACILEYWN Gp TEPHYIC.'

1. C II Vol II Pt. I p. lxix
2. BMC pl XXIV, 1
Rev. Zeus standing clad in himation, right hand raised, in left hand a sceptre. Kharosthi legend is 'Mahārājasā vaśatirājasā Mahatasa trādātasa.'

Copper Coins

Class II

1 Bust of King and horseman type

Obv. Bust of king to right, diademed, and radiate, in right hand a trident, behind head the symbol \( \Delta \). No legend.

Rev. King, on horseback, to right, diademed, wearing hat, a short weapon in right hand, in right field symbol \( \Delta \). Corrupt Greek legend is \( \text{BACI}\text{EYNC} \) \( \text{BACI}\text{EYWN Cw-TNP-MEIAC.} \)

Class III

3 Bust of King and Zeus type

Obv. Bust of king as in Class II but not radiate symbol in front (in B.M.C. symbol to right)

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1. IMC pl IX No.1; BMC pl XXIV, 2
2. Basileus Basileouon Soter Megas
3. IMC pl IX No.2
4. BMC pl XXIV, 5
Zeus standing to left, facing with head to right, spear or sceptre in left hand, in right hand a thunder bolt. Incomplete Greek legend 'ΛΕΥΒΑΣΙ (alter is on the specimen in B.M. collection).

Class IV

1. Horseman and Zeus type

Obv. Horseman to right, diadem, wearing hat, in right hand a short weapon, symbol ☐ and incomplete Greek legend, 'Βασίλειος Βασίλειον Σωτήρ Μέγας'.

Rev. Zeus standing to right, holding long sceptre; right arm extended, front a plant like object springing from a ball. Kharosthi character 'vi' in left field. Debased Kharosthi legend reconstructed as 'Maharajaçe rajadrajasa Mahatasa tratarasa'.

Class V

2. Uniform Bust and King at altar.

(only one copper coin of this type is available)

Obv. Bust with two faces, wears indo-scythian helmet left face bearded with symbol ☐ in front, right face shaved with symbol ☐. Traces of illegible Greek legend.

Rev. King standing to right, sacrificing at an alter like Wema Kadphises, traces of Kharoshti legend.

1. IMG pl IX No.3
2. NC 3rd Serie Vol XII for 1892 pl XV, 14