

## The Study of the 'Elephant' from Satavahana Coins

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### ABSTRACT

The Satavahana dynasty became prominent in 3<sup>rd</sup> B.C.E after the fall of the Mauryan Empire and occupied vast territories in Western India and Deccan. Their rule lasted for more than 400 years and they issued a large number of coins which have been discovered from Malwa region, Krishna Godavari river belt and several other places of Deccan and Central India. In South India the Satavahana coins are most widely circulated coins after the punch-marked coins. The issuer of these coins are Sri Pulumavi, Siva Sri Pulumavi, Skanda Satakarni, Sri Yajna Satakarni, Vijaya Satakarni, Pulumavi, Saka Satakarni, and so on of the Satavahana dynasty.

The coins are mostly both lead and copper. In Maharashtra and Vidarbha, a large number of copper or potin coins are also found. The elephant, bull, lion and horse are commonly found on Satavahana coins. The animals sometimes have religious or regional relevance, but the coins mostly shows the spread of the dynasty and the trading and the commercial activities of the dynasty. However, the uniqueness of the Satavahana coins is in their animal motifs, chronology, language, legends and portraiture.

This paper is an attempt to study the depiction of the elephant on the Satavahana coins. In fact the elephant is found on a majority of the Satavahana coins, especially in South India. The elephants figures are variously depicted, facing /walking towards right or left and are widely found with their trunk raised or hanging, with and without the rider with the Ujjain symbol on the obverse. The different minting techniques along with the different place of minting through the centuries is also helpful to understand the different motifs of the elephant.

Thus the study of the elephant from the coins of Satavahana might throw some light on the religious inclination of the Satavahana dynasty according to the chronology and legends, supported by other symbols seen on the coinage.

**Keywords:** *Satavahana Coins. 'elephant', Mauryan Empire*

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