

Dániel Balogh

Inscriptions of the Aulikaras and Their Associates

Beyond Boundaries

Religion, Region, Language and the State

Edited by
Michael Willis, Sam van Schaik
and Lewis Doney

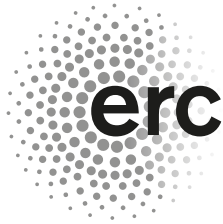
Volume 4

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Preface

So, here is another book on the timeless theme of “Inscriptions of [insert your preferred obscure dynasty here].” Almost all of the inscriptions gathered in this volume have been edited and published before, some more than a century and a quarter ago and many by such demigods of Indic epigraphy as John Faithfull Fleet, Dines Chandra Sircar and Vasudev Vishnu Mirashi. More recently, Aulikara inscriptions have been surveyed and discussed in articles such as one by Joanna Williams (1972, 50–52) on the art of Mandasaur, which focuses on nine inscriptions out of those known at the time; and Richard Salomon’s (1989) seminal treatise on epigraphic sources for Aulikara history, which discusses twenty-two inscriptions commissioned by Aulikaras, their possible affiliates, and Hūṇas. N. K. Ojha (2001) has even written a monograph on the Aulikaras and their inscriptions. Moreover, Hans Bakker has re-translated several of these inscriptions and discussed them with a fresh eye for a compendium of sources relevant to the study of Asian Huns, currently in preparation (Balogh forthcoming).

This being the case, is there really a point to the compilation of a book on Aulikara inscriptions? Needless to say, my own answer to my rhetorical question is of course a resounding “yes.” My personal fascination with the Aulikaras started while I was researching the textual and historical context of Viśākhadatta’s play the *Mudrārākṣasa* for my doctoral thesis (Balogh 2015). But subjective matters aside, I primarily see two – interconnected – sets of reasons why such a book can be a useful addition to the body of scholarship at the present time.

The first set has to do with what might be termed a paradigm shift in the study of Indian history and cultural history and the role of epigraphy on this stage. Major powers, such as the imperial Guptas and the Vākātakas in the Gupta period or Harṣavardhana shortly afterward, have been examined and re-examined from an endless number of angles: first with political history – rulers, dates, conquest and succession – as the primary focus; then, increasingly, with an interest in less tangible facts such as ideology, political structures and overarching cultural frameworks. With the rising trend of studies in fringes and plurality, and with a view of history as a dialogical process in which a large number of agents of varying complexity mutually determine themselves and one another, comes a shift in focus from superpowers to their lesser contemporaries. Dynasties in the Gupta penumbra, such as the rulers of Valkhā, the Aulikaras and the Maitrakas, are being increasingly subjected to scrutiny thanks partly

to this shift, and partly to the fact that ample inscriptional and material evidence of their doings remains for us to study productively. But when even the “maps and chaps” building blocks of historical research are equivocal – as is definitely the case with the Aulikaras – it is essential that further research, even (or especially) of highly abstract ideas, rest on as solid a foundation as can be obtained in order for us to be able to “tease out what we can from the admittedly slim corpus of material that survives” (Talbot 2001, 11). Such a foundation, in the present case, consists largely in the nitty-gritty epigraphy, and this brings us to the second set of my reasons for undertaking this book.

As noted above, some Aulikara inscriptions have been known for a long time and edited by great scholars. Further inscriptions have come to light time and again, and these subsequent discoveries clarified some aspects of the context of the earlier ones. Thus, the first Aulikara inscription known to scholarship was the Gangdhar inscription of Mayūrākṣaka (A4; usually referred to as an inscription of Viśvavarman), but nobody at the time was aware of it being an Aulikara inscription, or indeed of the existence of a family named Aulikara. Fleet learned of this inscription as early as 1883, but did not hasten to publish it. He did include an edition in his *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* volume III, and the text did receive considerable scholarly attention in the century-and-a-third since then, yet no-one in all this time has ventured to re-edit this voluminous and important epigraph. Other early discoveries received a larger share of immediate attention. In 1879, Arthur Sullivan chanced upon one of Yaśodharman’s victory pillars in Sondhni, and sent a copy of their inscription to Alexander Cunningham. The drawing reached Fleet in 1883, and the men he sent to the site in 1884 not only obtained good rubbings of both the intact and the broken pillar inscription (A11 and A12), but also discovered the inscription of the silk weavers (A6; often misleadingly called an inscription of Kumāragupta and Bandhucharman) in the process. Peter Peterson only refrained from editing the latter out of respect for Fleet, who duly published his own editions of both these epigraphs in 1886 and re-published both in the *Corpus* two years later; after another two years Georg Bühler came out with another edition of the silk weaver inscription.¹

¹ See the Description of each inscription in Part II for details and bibliographic references; and in particular, page 87 for Peterson’s words about the silk weaver inscription.

The fourth early bird was the Mandsaur inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10, usually called an inscription of Yaśodharman or of Yaśodharman and Viṣṇuvardhana), which came to Fleet's attention in 1885 and was published by him in 1886 (and then again in the *Corpus*). It was in this inscription that the name Aulikara was first read by modern eyes, but Fleet (or anyone else) did not know this was a proper name and believed it to be a word for the emblem of the dynasty.²

Next, discovered in 1912, the Mandsaur inscription of the time of Naravarman (A1) provided the first genealogy of the Early Aulikaras spanning more than two generations³; but only after the discovery of the Bihar Kotra stone inscription (A2) in 1938 did it become known that Aulikara (or Olikara) was a family name used in this dynasty. The realisation that the later ruler Yaśodharman must have been connected in some way to this Aulikara dynasty inevitably brought about a revision of the fifty-year-old hypothesis that *aulikara* was a common noun describing a family emblem.⁴ As for Yaśodharman himself, scholars continued to view him as an isolated entity, since nothing was known about his antecedents apart from the vague connection by name to the Early Aulikara rulers. The prevailing opinion about him became that “[h]e rose and fell like a meteor between A.D. 530 and 540” (Majumdar 1954, 40). Indeed, the term “meteoric” remained in vogue as a sort of *epitheton ornans* for Yaśodharman right until 1983. In that year the Risthal inscription (A9) was unearthed, bringing with it a long genealogy of kings calling themselves Aulikara culminating in Prakāśadharman, who cannot have preceded Yaśodharman by long and was most probably his father.

While the necessity of revising some earlier hypotheses has usually been pointed out simultaneously with or shortly after the publication of each successive piece of the puzzle, the original editions remain unchanged. Even today, when scholars of religious studies, social history or economics – essentially, of any specialisation other than Aulikara history – wish to look up one of the long-known Aulikara inscriptions for their own research, it is the “vulgate” edition that they will pick off the shelf: most conveniently Fleet's *Corpus* or Bhandarkar's revised *Corpus*.⁵ In other words, they very often base their own

research on a commentary and translation written over a century ago, and in many details outdated for several decades. Yet in order to be able to engage in “informed speculation” (Inden, Walters, and Ali 2000, 14) about the way texts articulate history and engage in discourse and polemics, we need not only to learn as much as possible about their historical and textual context but to have the groundwork in place about the texts themselves. Due to the relatively small size of the epigraphic corpus and the almost complete lack of a living tradition supplementing these texts, this is a particularly important point in the case of inscriptions.

Even accomplished Sanskritists who reach to a published edition and draw their own conclusions from the primary source rather than from the accompanying translation and introduction, may occasionally be misled by the occasional error in the original edition. Like Homer, even Fleet and Sircar nod every now and then. It is also sometimes the case that the great scholars of old did not have the facility to study an epigraph first-hand and had to rely on inked impressions. While a good rubbing can often reveal details of an inscription that are hard to discern in a gloomy museum storeroom (and even harder on a photograph taken in unfavourable light conditions), one can also distort reality, for instance by hiding the distinction between a carefully incised grapheme and a shallow scratch or crack on the surface. However, the nimbus surrounding the editors of these inscriptions is such that their readings are hardly ever questioned. While it is indeed extremely rare for Fleet or Sircar to print an erroneous reading pertaining to matters they deemed historically significant (such as kings and dates), they do sometimes err in or gloss over matters that were probably second-rate to them, but which may become points of focus for modern researchers.

A good case in point is verse 23 of the Gangdhar inscription (A4), which uses the word *tāntra* in connection to a temple of the mother goddesses (*mātṛ*).⁶ Fleet (CII3, 76) correctly prints *tāntrodbhūta* in his edition of the text and translates (*ibid.*, 78) “rising from the magic rites of their religion” without any further comment. However, Sircar's edition (1965b, 405) has *tanthrodbhūta*. Sircar tends to note where he differs from previous editors but does not do so here, so this may be a typographic error in his book. Yet his footnote (*ibid.*) repeats the word *tantra*, translating it as “spell” and noting that the temple described in this stanza

² See page 24 for further details.

³ Previously, the Gangdhar inscription had revealed that Viśvavarman was the son of Naravarman, while the inscription of the silk weavers showed that Bandhuvarman was Viśvavarman's son.

⁴ See also page 24.

⁵ Sircar's *Select Inscriptions* is of course also very widely consulted, but it improves upon Fleet's readings and interpretations only

through sporadic comments and, lacking English translations, is not as widely accessible as the *Corpus* volumes.

⁶ See page 61 for context and diverse interpretations.

“indicates the influence of the Tantra cult.” The spelling *tantra* is thus probably one of Sircar’s rare oversights; *tā* is quite clear in the inscription, though slightly ambiguous in Fleet’s rubbing. Subsequently, a fair number of authors discussed whether or not this epigraph may be considered evidence for the fifth-century presence of Tantrism as we know it, and most⁷ seem either to be unaware of or to ignore the fact that the inscribed spelling is *tāntrod-bhūta*. Regardless of one’s stance on Tantric religion in the fifth century, any discussion of this piece of epigraphic evidence should account for (or provide a reason for disregarding) the use of *tānttra* where the prosodically equivalent word *tantra* could have been employed just as easily if that concept had been intended.

Another apt illustration, though one with an even smaller share of the elixir called historical significance, is the case of the elusive *nagaṇā* bush. This grew (apologies for the pun) out of the inscription of the silk weavers (A6), which uses *-lavalīnaganaikaśākhe* at the end of a compound in line 18, and *-naganaikapṛthuśākhe* in a similar position in line 22. Fleet reads *nagaṇaika* in the first instance and *naganaika* in the second, emending it to *nagaṇaika*. He analyses the compound into *nagaṇā+eka*, translating “the *lavalī*-trees and the solitary branches of the *nagaṇā*-bushes” and “the solitary large branches of the *nagaṇā*-bushes” and explaining *nagaṇā* as *Cardiospermum halicacabum*⁸ (CII3 p. 87 and note 4). Bühler’s edition (1890, 95, 96) prints *nagaṇaika* in both loci and his translation follows Fleet’s interpretation.⁹ Sircar (1965b, 305, 306) follows Fleet to the letter, reading *n* and emending to *ṇ* in the second instance.

K. M. Shembavnekar (1931, 146) observed that “the word *nagaṇa*” has caused a “great confusion of the decipherers of epigraphs,” and that such a plant is “never mentioned by any of the *Kośas*” and “unknown, not only to the poets but even to lexicographers.” Instead, he suggested that *gaṇa* here means *gaṇanā* (counting),¹⁰ and consequently *nagaṇa* means “countless.” Pandit Jagannath (J. Agrawal 1939) devoted an entire, if brief, paper to this issue, contending that Shembavnekar was quite mistaken

in his assertion that the word is not known to lexicographers. In fact, says Jagannath, *nagaṇā* in the meaning *Cardiospermum halicacabum* is attested in H. H. Wilson’s *Dictionary in Sanskrit and English* and the PWG, both of which were first published before the silk weaver inscription was known and thus cannot have been influenced by Fleet’s translation of it; instead, they derive this meaning from the lexicon *Ratnamālā*. He also notes that “countless” makes little sense in combination with *eka*, “one” (which is a fair point that Fleet’s laboured “solitary” does not entirely mitigate); and that in the second instance there is no substantive that “countless” could qualify. In the revised *Corpus*, Bhandarkar correctly points out that the stone in fact has dental *n* in both loci, yet still emends both instances to retroflex *ṇ* (CII3rev p. 326 and n. 11; p. 327 and n. 7). Aware of Shembavnekar and Jagannath, he revises Fleet’s translation in the first instance to “the solitary branches of myriads of the *lavalī* creepers” (ibid. 330 and n. 2), while retaining Fleet’s English rendering of the second instance (ibid. 332). It seems that the deeply-sunk rut continued to guide his interpretation even after he had corrected the reading, and he stuck to construing *nagaṇa+eka* even though this required repeated emendation. From the spelling *nagaṇaika* it should be obvious that the string resolves into *naga+naika* without emendation: the text simply means “the many branches of the *lavalī* tree” and “the many expansive branches of trees.” Incidentally, this also eliminates Fleet’s forced “solitary branches,” which strike me as a bit of a self-contradiction. That *naga+naika* is the correct analysis is made all the clearer by the occurrence of *naga* in the sense of “tree” two other times in the same inscription (13, *nagāvṛta*; 15, *nagendrait*) and *naika* in the sense of “many” one other time (15, *naika-puṣpa*).

Hypotheses that go askew because of a minor oversight in their fundament teach an additional lesson: it never hurts to go back to basics. It is for this reason that I have compiled a new collection of all known inscriptions pertaining to the Aulikaras and their close associates. While I do believe that I have corrected many small mistakes in the readings of previously published inscriptions, I make no claim of surpassing Homer or Fleet. I may well have perpetuated some old errors and introduced new ones of my own. To mitigate the impact of these, I have striven to make my work as transparent as possible, so that scholars relying on my work may verify or falsify my readings and interpretations. I thus point out uncertain readings and discuss possible alternatives to my reading or interpretation. In addition, I present the text of each inscription on multiple levels. Farthest removed from the original is the English translation, the primary purpose of which is readability, relegating accuracy to a close second

7 Prominent examples include M. C. Joshi (1983, 79), A. L. Basham (1984, 149), J. N. Tiwari (1985, 171), David Lorenzen (2002, 30, 2006, 71), David Gordon White (2003, 321 n. 69) and Shaman Hatley (2012, 111).

8 Sometimes called the balloon vine in English, *Cardiospermum halicacabum* L. is in fact a creeper. For *lavalī*, see note 166 on page 107.

9 “[D]ie einzeln stehenden Zweige der *Lavalī* und des *Nagana*” and “die einzeln stehenden, breiten Zweige des *Nagana*” (Bühler 1890, 24, 26).

10 Shembavnekar had ulterior motives here. The idea that *gaṇa* can be equivalent to *gaṇanā* is in fact the point he was desperate to prove in order to support his interpretation of the phrase *mālava-gaṇa-sthiti* used in dates (q.v. page 7).

place. A “curated text” presents the inscription as an abstract textual entity independent of its physical manifestation, and a separate “diplomatic text” is included to furnish an accurate transcript of the text as inscribed, with a minimum of editorial intervention.¹¹ Finally, wherever possible, I include both a reproduction of an old inked rubbing and a recent digital photograph, so that my claimed readings can be verified from the original. To facilitate this, high-resolution files of the inscription images featured in this book are available for download (open access) in the online repository Zenodo; see the List of Figures (page XV) for the DOI of each image.

This compilation makes up the second – larger and more important – part of this book. It is subdivided into three “chapters,” with the first one comprised of inscriptions in the usual sense of the word, the second of minor inscriptions such as graffiti, coin legends and seal inscriptions, and the third part containing information about and partial texts of unpublished inscriptions that may be relevant to the Aulikaras. Every chapter consists of sections for individual inscriptions, with subsections under each major inscription for the description of the inscribed object and the palaeography of the inscription, a running commentary, an edition of the text presented in a diplomatic and a curated version, an accompanying apparatus of textual

notes, and an English translation. Minor inscriptions and unpublished inscriptions have fewer subsections, while some of the major inscriptions come with extra subsections that discuss a particular historical or textual problem pertaining to the inscription under scrutiny.

The first part of the book (after the preliminaries where I set out some conventions I follow in my approach and define some terms) presents a very brief survey of the historical context of Aulikara inscriptions. I do not attempt in this volume to rewrite the history of the Aulikaras. Even the little that we think we know of their doings may need to be revised in many details. At this moment, having completed a critical revision of their epigraphical testimony, I find the new questions to be much more numerous than the answers. At many points in the discussion of the inscriptions (or appended to them) I challenge established views and engage in speculation. Most of my alternative hypotheses require proof that may never be obtained and many may eventually turn out false. I hope that I shall have the opportunity to continue working on this intriguing part of history, and that other scholars who do likewise will find the present volume a useful companion to their research, primarily because of the carefully re-edited inscriptions collected here, but partly also because of the novel ideas proposed.

¹¹ See the section on Editorial Conventions (page 3) for details of my approach to translation, curated text and diplomatic text.

Acknowledgments

This book would never have seen the light of day had it been for its author alone. First and foremost, I would like to emphasise the importance of the labours of scholars who have studied the Aulikaras and their inscriptions and on whose writings I have relied incessantly. Even where I argue, now and again vehemently, against their opinions, I remain fully aware of the magnitude of their work, all the more admirable because most of it was accomplished in a time without email, digital photos and online libraries. Second, there is no end to the thanks due to my family and friends who supported my work and tolerated me in the process. Most of all, my wife Eszter has willingly shouldered innumerable burdens to enable me to concentrate on my research and writing.

All of my efforts toward the creation of this volume, in the field and at the desk, have been carried out under the auspices of *Beyond Boundaries: Religion, Region, Language and the State*. This is a Synergy project supported by the European Research Council under the EU's 7th Framework Programme.¹² I hereby express my heartfelt gratitude to Michael Willis, the instigator and chief principal investigator of this project, for inviting me to collaborate and for welcoming me to the British Museum and being always ready with friendly advice.

During my journeys in India to seek out relevant inscriptions in museums and in situ, I was constantly delighted by the helpfulness of people I encountered. I was as a rule allowed into museum storerooms with no greater hurdles than the occasional form to fill out, and in rural areas there were always people eager to lead me to historic sites. It warms my heart to see that India's pride over its heritage consists in much more than nationalistic bombast on the government level: there is also the far more important grassroots pride that allows people who face hardships day after day to nevertheless remain aware of, take care of, and take an interest in the physical remnants of a distant past scattered all around them and under their feet. Most of my fieldwork was enhanced by one of two able, knowledgeable and well-connected facilitators, Prithviraj 'Bablu' Ojha in Rajasthan and western

Madhya Pradesh, and Muzaffar 'Kalley Bhai' Ansari in other parts of Madhya Pradesh. Without their tireless support my trips would surely have yielded far less fruit than they have.

I am grateful to Shri Kailash Chandra Pandey of Mandsaur, whom I unfortunately only met for a brief time appearing on his doorstep out of the blue, but who was nevertheless willing to share with me some of his vast experience and knowledge of the local history of Daśapura as well as some crucial publications known to few scholars outside India. My meeting with Shri Jitendra Datt Tripathi of Narsingharh was likewise impromptu and similarly heartening. My acquaintance with Devendra Handa has been restricted to telephone and email, yet he has been willing to offer advice and images essential for this book.

I would also like to thank everyone else who helped me in India. In addition to the many whose name I never asked or was callous enough to forget, especial thanks are due – in no particular order – to the following people: Aparna Bhogal of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Museum in Mumbai; Komal Pandey at the National Museum in New Delhi; J. P. Sharma at the Yashodharman Museum in Mandsaur; Neeraj Kumar Tripathi at the Government Museum in Ajmer; Vinit Godhal, Mubarak Husain and Babu Hemant Singh at the Government Museum in Udaipur; Muhammad Arif and Sandeep Singh at the Government Museum in Jhalawar.

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In spite of all the good intentions of my helpers and my own best efforts, there will inevitably be mistakes in this book. These, of course, are entirely my own, along with any misrepresentations of the opinions of others, for which I offer my apologies in advance.

¹² ERC grant agreement no. 609823. For further details see <https://asiabeyondboundaries.org/about/>

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A Concordance of Inscription Titles

Many of the inscriptions collected here have been published or referred to under a different title or under multiple titles. While my use of modern Anglicisations of place names (such as Mandasaur instead of the formerly popular Mandasor) should not prevent anyone looking for a particular inscription from finding it, my reference to inscriptions by the name of the person who actually commissioned them (if known), rather than by that of a king who is mentioned in them but was not involved in their creation, may cause some confusion. For clarity's sake I provide the list of previously used inscription titles and their correspondence to section numbers in this book.

Published title	Number
Fragmentary inscription from Chitorgarh	A13, A14
Gangdhar (Gangrar, Gangadhar) inscription of Viśvavarman	A4
Mandasor inscription of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman, the Mālava/Kṛta years 493 and 529	A6
Mandasor inscription of Mālava <i>saṃvat</i> 524	A5
Mandasor inscription of the Mālava years 493 and 529	A6
Mandasor inscription of Vikrama <i>saṃvat</i> 589	A10
Mandasor pillar inscription of Yaśodharman	A11, A12
Mandasor stone inscription of the time of Prabhākara	A5
Mandasor stone inscription of Yaśodharman (and Viṣṇuvardhana), the Mālava year 589	A10

Legend for Editions and Translations

Legends

Editions

transliteration

see Transliteration on page 3 for further details

x *upadhmaniya*

f *jihvamuliya*

A in diplomatic editions only, uppercase vowels represent full (initial) vowel forms in the original

T in diplomatic editions only, uppercase consonants represent final (*halanta*) consonant forms in the original

– space in original, approximately one character width in extent

| generic punctuation character (appearance described under Script and language for each inscription)

|| higher-level punctuation character when more than one type is used in the original (appearance described under Script and language for each inscription)

§ other symbol, e.g. *siddham* sign or ornamental mark (described in note to the text)

structural features

[^l] line number, indicates beginning of line

[^A] indicates beginning of other physical unit, e.g. fragment

[^v] verse number, indicates beginning of verse in diplomatic text shown in curated text as a header, e.g. (Verse 1. Metre: anuṣṭubh)

() unclear text: some damage to substrate or unusual or erroneous shape

(abc) unclear but confidently read in context

(?abc) unclear and tentatively read

(a/b) unclear text with ambiguous readings deemed possible

[] lacunae: characters illegible due to damage, or substrate altogether lost

× lost consonant (or conjunct) followed by a legible or restored vowel

[...] lacuna of unknown extent

[1] lacuna, extent stated in number of characters lost

[?] lacuna, extent stated in approximate number of characters lost

[~-~] lacuna, metre of lost text indicated in prosodic notation

[abc] lacuna, text confidently restored by editor (obvious from context or parallel text)

[?abc] lacuna, text tentatively restored by editor (conjecture)

editorial intervention

¡abc! sic: erroneous, non-standard or uninterpreted language marked by editor

{abc} superfluous text deleted by editor in curated text flagged as sic in diplomatic text

<abc> text omitted by scribe and added by editor to curated text not shown in the diplomatic text

<ab:cd> emendation, text *ab* corrected or standardised to *cd* by editor in curated text only the original reading is shown in diplomatic text, flagged as sic

Translations

(abc) Sanskrit words shown in translation for accuracy or to emphasise phonological aspects

... lost text

[abc] words inserted or repeated for clarification or disambiguation

abc translation based on text that is unclear or confidently restored

(abc) doubtful translation based on text that is unclear and tentatively read, tentatively restored or uncertainly interpreted

[abc] words neither present nor restored in the Sanskrit, tentatively supplied as probable context to the extant words

{ab/cd} alternative translations of bitextual phrases (*śleṣa*) the two layers of meaning may appear separately as {ab} and {cd} when the structure of the translation requires this

[⁽¹⁾] corresponding verse number in the original

[⁽¹⁾] corresponding line number in the original (rough correspondence shown only in translations of prose)

List of Abbreviations

ARASI	<i>Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India</i>	MBh	<i>Mahābhārata</i>
ARIE	<i>Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy</i>	ME	Mālava Era
Bh List	Bhandarkar's <i>List of Inscriptions</i> (D. R. Bhandarkar 1929)	MW	Monier-Williams, <i>A Sanskrit-English Dictionary</i> (Monier-Williams 1899), digital resource at http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/MW72Scan/2014/web/index.php
CE	Common Era	PRASW	<i>Progress Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, Western Circle</i>
CIIB	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum Volume III</i> (Fleet 1888)	PWG	<i>Grosses Petersburger Wörterbuch</i> (Böhtlingk and Roth 1855–1875), digital resource at http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/PWGScan/2013/web/index.php
CIIBrev	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum Volume III</i> , revised edition (Fleet and Bhandarkar 1981)	SI	<i>Select Inscriptions</i> (Volume I), (Sircar 1965b) (in the critical notes to some inscriptions, SI denotes Sircar's edition of the text concerned, whether or not that edition is published in <i>Select Inscriptions</i>)
l	line (physical line of an inscription)	v	verse
GE	Gupta Era	VS	Vikrama Saṃvat
GKA	S. R. Goyal's <i>Guptakālin Abhilekh</i> (Goyal 1993)		
IAR	<i>Indian Archaeology, a Review</i>		
IBI	K. Tsukamoto's <i>Indian Buddhist Inscriptions</i> (Tsukamoto 1996)		
IEG	D. C. Sircar's <i>Indian Epigraphical Glossary</i> (Sircar 1966)		
IGE	P. K. Agrawala's <i>Imperial Gupta Epigraphs</i> (P. K. Agrawala 1983)		

Preliminaries

Editorial Conventions

Transliteration

The transliteration system used in this book is based on the IAST convention and will be essentially familiar to all scholars who have worked with Sanskrit or related languages in a Romanised script. The main difference between IAST and the other widely used standard, ISO15919, can be summarised as follows: 1, sonant *r* and *l* are transliterated as *r̄* and *l̄* (not *r* and *l*); 2, the Sanskrit vowels corresponding to Devanagari ए and ओ are transliterated as *e* and *o* (not *ē* and *ō*); and 3, the *anusvāra* is transliterated as *m̄* (not *m̐*).

In addition to conventional IAST characters, I use *x* to transliterate the *jihvāmūliya* and *f* to represent the *upadhmāniya*. These are alternatives to the *visarga* used in some inscriptions before velars and labials respectively. The IAST standard does not cover them, but in general practice they are usually transliterated as *h* with some diacritic or another (most commonly *h̄* and *ḥ*). The use of *x* and *f* to represent these characters is not unprecedented and more intuitive than the use of diacritical marks otherwise not employed in the transliteration of Sanskrit, since the *jihvāmūliya* represents a voiceless velar fricative (IPA *x*) and the *upadhmāniya* is a voiceless bilabial fricative (IPA *ɸ*).

Throughout my editions and commentary, independent Sanskrit words are separated by spaces unless prevented by vowel *saṃdhi*, and compound members are hyphenated where possible, except in proper names and some closely-knit compounds such as *mahārāja*. I do not use the hyphen for any other purpose in my text editions; thus, contrary to common practice, I forgo hyphens at the ends of physical lines falling inside a word. The reader is advised to bear in mind that all spacing and hyphenation is editorial (the rare spaces in the original inscription are indicated in the editions with an underscore), and as such, extraneous to the epigraph and potentially incorrect.¹

To reduce confusion, I have opted not to use the “double hyphen” (equal sign) employed especially in older editions of Indic epigraphs when the addition of a space to the transliterated text would split an *akṣara* of the original. As noted above, I do not force segmentation on word boundaries obscured by vowel *saṃdhi*, so the only function such a sign would serve is to distinguish final (*halanta*) forms of consonants from consonants in ligatures. For this purpose – in diplomatic editions, but nowhere else – I use

the uppercase forms of some consonants to transliterate a *halanta* grapheme. Similarly, uppercase vowels in my diplomatic editions represent vowel *akṣaras* (initial vowels). All hyphens and spaces being editorial, any lowercase consonant preceding a space or hyphen is to be understood by default as part of an *akṣara* with the consonant or vowel following that space or hyphen. Uppercase consonants – and, if applicable, vowels – clearly set apart the rare cases where an inscription employs hiatus for segmenting the text into semantic or prosodic units (e.g. *yad atra* might be written as यदत्र or यद्अत्र; both would be spaced in my editions, but the latter would be transcribed in the diplomatic edition as *yaD Atra*). This system has an added advantage over the use of the double hyphen: it comes in useful where legible text meets a lacuna (e.g. *tasmāN [...]* represents तस्मान्, with a *halanta* consonant legible before the lacuna, while *tasmān [...]* corresponds to तस्मान्, where the final *n* is a regular *akṣara* that may have had a now illegible vowel component; conversely, [...]*Eva* means that एव starts with an initial vowel after a lacuna, while [...]*eva* corresponds to ेव, where an illegible consonant has a legible vowel mark and is followed by a legible *va*). In the former case, the use of uppercase for both final consonants and initial vowels is redundant, but still helpful when, for instance, an initial vowel is separated from a final consonant by a line break.

I use the abbreviation circle (degree symbol, °) at the beginning or end of a cited Sanskrit fragment that is merged in vowel *saṃdhi* with its original context, so a hypothetical °*aivā*° might refer to the word *eva* in the string *caivābhavat*.

When citing words or phrases from an inscription in an English sentence, I do not necessarily retain the peculiarities of the original spelling unless a non-standard feature is relevant to the discussion. Thus, for instance, kings whose name has *varddhana* at the end become *vardhana* in discussion; *upadhmāniya* and *jihvāmūliya* are consolidated into *visarga*; *avagraha* is supplied; nasal consonants may be standardised to *anusvāra* or vice versa; and emendations marked as such in the edition are silently adopted.

When I cite readings or miscellaneous Sanskrit terms from other editors, I standardise their transliteration as above, and where applicable, also transform their notation of uncertain readings and lacunae to the conventions of this book. I do, however, retain the original transliteration used by earlier scholars in direct quotations of passages written in English with some Sanskrit interspersed in it.

¹ An excellent example of this is the possibility of construing *yudhāvitathatām* in line 12 of the Risthal inscription (A9) as either *yudhā vitathatām* or *yudhā+avitathatām*; see page 138.

For modern proper names such as geographical names and author names, I use the common fully Anglicised spelling, except when an author's name appears in their publications with diacritical marks. When a modern proper name is not widely known, such as that of a village where an inscription was found, I note the Devanagari spelling at a crucial occurrence of the name, for instance in the description of the inscription.

Overview Tables

Each section about a major inscription begins with a table that presents the basic facts about that inscription and the object on which it is inscribed. The table includes the Siddham identifiers for each object and inscription. Siddham is a freely accessible online epigraphic database whose initial development took place in the framework of the ERC project Beyond Boundaries with an interface for viewing and searching inscriptions and inscribed object. A Siddham ID consists of the letters OB for object and IN for inscription, followed by a five-digit number.²

The overview table includes brief data about object and inscription dimensions, information about the item's discovery and current location, the topic and date of the inscription, and the personal and geographical names appearing in it. These proper names are also compiled in Appendices 1 (Prosopography) and 2 (Gazetteer). The table further shows abbreviated references to the major epigraphic compendia and lists that include the inscription, and full references to other published editions of the text. All of the information extracted into these tables is also found, more verbosely, in the description and commentary of the epigraph that follows the table.

Descriptions

When discussing the layout of a surface, including surfaces with figurative carving, the terms “left” and “right” always refer to the viewer's orientation unless explicitly designated as “proper left” and “proper right.” In

² As this book goes to press, Siddham can be accessed at <https://siddham.network/> but if the URL should change in the future, web search will locate the site. The webpage for each object or inscription may be found using the search box on the site or directly at a URI suffixed with `/inscription/IN#####` or `/object/OB#####`; for instance, the Mandsaur inscription of the time of Naravarman is at <http://siddham.uk/inscription/IN00017> and the stone that bears it is at <http://siddham.uk/object/OB00016>.

palaeographic descriptions I have attempted to be clear and consistent, and to limit the details to possibly significant features. In describing individual character forms, I generally follow the terminology proposed by Ahmad Hasan Dani (1963, 273–89). Where I deviate from these terms, I hope my choice of descriptive words will be self-evident. I use the terms “character” and “*akṣara*” interchangeably. I refer to open-ended lines as a limb or more specifically as a foot, an arm or a tail depending on which bodily metaphor seems most apt. I employ the word “baseline” to refer to the imaginary horizontal ruler connecting the bottoms of characters without a descender, and the term “headline” for the similar imaginary ruler connecting the tops of characters without an ascender. The former term is borrowed from Western typography; the latter might be called the mean line, but “mean” is a factual description for a modern Roman script (where all uppercase characters and many lowercase ones reach the higher capline), while it would be inappropriate for a Brāhmī-type script, in which few characters have ascenders in their default form. The character sizes I report for inscriptions are the average height of normal-sized character bodies, i.e. the distance between the baseline and the headline.³ The line heights I report are the leading distance, i.e. the average vertical distance between the baseline of one line and that of the next line.

Photographs

Many of the photo illustrations provided for inscriptions are digital composites. Lacking the resources for advanced solutions such as reflectance transfer imaging, my preferred technique for taking photographs of inscriptions was to use a small linear light source held close to the inscribed surface and illuminate the inscription with grazing light. After taking a number of photos with various segments of the inscription lit in this way, I enhanced the detail and contrast of images and stitched them together, cherry-picking closeups so that each part of the text was presented in the resulting image in the best possible light. This is the reason for the uneven appearance of the photos. The individual images were cut and patched along carefully selected lines so as to minimise the disruption of characters by the stitching process. Different detail

³ General practice in Indic epigraphy seems to be inconsistent in this respect. Some editors appear to use a consolidated approach similar to mine, while others prefer to report a range without making clear whether this implies a variation in character height or simply the difference between a squat character and a high or deep one.

photos needed slightly different enhancements and most required some distortion to compensate for variance in camera angle and lens distortion. In most cases, a rubbing or a photo of the entire inscription was used as a template to which I fitted the individual snippets. Aside from enhancement and distortion of each snippet as a whole, no particular details were manually retouched, altered or enhanced in any of the photos presented here.

Editions

The text of each major inscription is presented in two forms: a diplomatic edition and a curated edition. I trust that this will not be viewed as a waste of space, but that at least some of my readers will find it useful to be able to consult either an easy-to-read presentation of the text as text in the abstract sense, or a fairly accurate representation of the text as inscribed. Both editions include, and clearly flag, characters that are unclear in the original and those that are lost or illegible in the original and have been supplied by the editor. The diplomatic edition is segmented according to the physical lines of the original epigraph, with superscript labels indicating the beginning of each stanza where the inscription is in verse. The diplomatic text is as found in the original, without emendations (but with the loci that may require emendation flagged). This rendering uses uppercase letters to distinguish *halanta* consonants and initial vowels (see also *Romanisation* above). Conversely, the curated edition is segmented primarily into stanzas (or paragraphs, where the text is in prose), with superscript labels indicating the beginning of each line of the original. The curated text includes editorial emendations (with the pre- and post-emendation version shown one after the other), additions and deletions.

Diverging from widespread practice, I do not add verse punctuation or verse numbers unless these are also found in the original. Editorial verse numbering is always shown at the beginning, not the end, of a stanza, and always in a label that clearly sets it off from the original text. Editorial verse punctuation, always flagged as such, is only added if an inscription uses verse punctuation with some consistency but omits it now and again.

The stanza labels in the Curated Text include the name of the stanza's metre. While the identification of metres is straightforward unless the text is very heavily damaged, the associated terminology has some ambiguities. Many earlier editors prefer to use the labels *aupacchandasika* and *vaitāliya* for stanzas composed in metres that are actually stricter, fully syllabo-quantitative instantiations

of the partly mora-based metres that these names refer to. I thus prefer to name the specific metre in each case; for instance, the Risthal inscription (A9) includes several verses in *mālabhāriṇī* and *puṣpītāgrā*, both of which were formerly tagged as *aupacchandasika*. Conversely, where a stanza or two in pure *indravajrā* or pure *upendravajrā* appears amidst a string of *upajāti* verses, I prefer to classify each as *upajāti* on the assumption that the author was composing in *upajāti*, and some of his verses fortuitously turned out to conform to one of the stricter requirements. Stanzas are only labelled as *indravajrā* or *upendravajrā* when several of the same pure metre occur together or when a single one appears in a sequence of varied metres.

Text Notes

The apparatus below the curated text summarises details such as unusual character forms, reading difficulties and alternative readings by other editors. Some of the notes are further elaborated in the commentary above the editions. The text notes are not intended to be a full critical apparatus of all previously published editions. Where my edition differs from what I consider to be the primary previous edition of an epigraph, I do as a rule note all such deviations including minor ones such as the use of *anusvāra* versus *m* or probable typographic mistakes in the previous edition, but I have not made it a point to highlight one hundred percent of such details. For texts that have been edited by several scholars, I always indicate differences of opinion where they may have an impact on the interpretation of the text, but usually do not do so for orthographic minutiae.

Each entry in the apparatus begins with a superscript label identifying the line of the original text to which that item refers. The label is followed by a lemma in bold face and delimited by a] sign. The note that follows is in plain English, with previous editors identified by sigla resolved at the beginning of each set of notes.

References and Cross-references

Citations of scholarly literature are handled as author-date references throughout the book; the full bibliographic details of each such publication are listed under References in Appendix 3. To reduce clutter and conserve space, I omit author-date references in certain particular cases. I use abbreviated titles to refer to epigraphic compendia such as the *Corpus Inscriptionum* and Sircar's *Select Inscriptions*; these abbreviations are resolved on

page XXI. Throughout the discussion of an inscription I often refer to the opinions of previous editors simply by the name of the editor. The author-date citation for these editions is listed in the overview table at the head of each section.

Primary sources are referred to by title; for literary sources this is a widely used literary title, while for inscriptions it is a standard reference usually starting with a place name, such as “Mandsaur inscription of Kumāvarman.” Primary sources mentioned only in passing in the body of the book are accompanied by a reference to the scholarly work where they are edited or cited; primary sources that I cite directly or discuss in some detail are listed in Appendix 3 by title, with a pointer to their edition(s) and, if applicable, their Siddham IDs. For many of the inscriptions edited herein, I use a revised title rather than that by which they were published earlier. This results partly from my adoption of the present official spelling Mandsaur to replace the older Mandasor, but more importantly from my practice of naming inscriptions after the person who actually commissioned them (if the name of this person is known) in preference to the ruler during whose reign they were made. For instance, I thus refer to the Gandhar inscription (A4) as one of Mayūrākṣaka, not as one of Viśvavarman. To facilitate looking up an inscription in this book, I include a concordance of inscription titles next to the table of contents (page XVII), listing titles under which the epigraphs edited here had been published earlier. Inscriptions compiled within this volume are referred to by their number (such as A1) and, usually, by their title which may be abbreviated.

Translations

In my translations of the epigraphs featured here, I have attempted to dance the fine line between inaccurate paraphrase and unreadable sophistry. Various scholars have drawn this line across varying points of the continuum. The primary audience of my translations, I believe, will be scholars and students of disciplines such as history, in other words people whose forte is not Sanskrit. My aim was therefore not to create a reader of Epigraphic Sanskrit for self study, but to produce reasonably palatable English prose while representing as much of the original content as possible. I thus emphatically did not attempt to replicate the syntactical details of Sanskrit, striving instead to produce syntax closer to natural English. (I did, however, try to replicate cases where a key word or phrase is placed very early or very late in a long sentence to heighten its poetic effect.) I also did not hesitate to employ loose

English equivalents for some technical terms often left untranslated (such as official ranks and plant names) and to deploy multiple words to translate a single Sanskrit word; but I did avoid modern colloquial expressions unless one happened to be very similar to the original in literal meaning. Being a non-native speaker of English with a penchant for ponderous language, I am aware that some of my translations will not really look like “natural English.” The only mitigating factor I can plead is that many previously published translations are even more cumbersome to read.

The flip side of the coin is that while my translations are reasonably accurate, they inevitably alter, obfuscate and create some nuances of meaning. Caveat emptor: the translation is a modern product. Hypotheses founded on any particular word or phrase must first be verified against the original text. To facilitate this, superscript labels in the translations point to verses of the original inscription. There are, however, no pointers to line numbers, since stanzas usually comprise semantic units while inscribed lines do not, and none of the inscriptions compiled herein include long prose sections. Some inscriptions use extremely long and complex sentences, which have on occasion necessitated jumping to and fro between lines or even verses to produce intelligible English, so the stanza labels are not necessarily in a linear order. To make complex syntactic or semantic structure easier to overview and navigate, I also use indenting of varying depth.

There are a number of recurring terms in the body of inscriptions treated in this book, and where the context permitted, I have tried to use the same, or least a related, English word for each occurrence. In addition, I diverge from convention in my translation of a few recurring technical terms. My reasons for doing so are briefly explained below for some terms that recur in several inscriptions. Other choices of terminology that may not be obvious (for instance “loyalty” for *anurāga*) are defended in footnotes.

Siddham – Accomplished

The word *siddham* appears in a formulaic manner at the beginning of many inscriptions over a wide spatial and temporal range.⁴ It is my impression, which I hope to explore further and support with evidence in the future, that *siddham*, at least in a fair number of early inscriptions including most of those collected herein, was in

⁴ A presumably equivalent symbol often replaces *siddham*, and it may also alternate with the expression *siddhir astu* (Sircar 1965a, 92–94, 127), to which the reasoning presented here does not apply.

fact functional rather than formulaic. To wit, I believe that it is a factual record that the construction described in an inaugural inscription or the donation recorded in a copper plate grant was completed or executed. In many cases, often but not only on copper plates, the body text was evidently engraved at an earlier time, and *siddham* was added subsequently either in the margin or in a space formerly left blank in the first line. In other cases, presumably when the full inscription was engraved a posteriori, *siddham* is an organic part of the text, and the word (or an equivalent auspicious symbol) may subsequently have become no more than a formula to be used at the beginning of epigraphs.

Pūrvā – Preamble

The use of the word *pūrvā* (literally, “earlier, previous”) in some inscriptions has caused scholars many sleepless nights. Discussing verse 44 of the inscription of the silk weavers (A6), Fleet (CII3, 87–88 n. 10) suggested that it qualified the implied substantive *praśasti* and hence meant “this [eulogy] that precedes.” On the basis of this, Bühler (1890, 9–10, = 1913, 138) went so far as to see the word *pūrvā* in the present inscription as evidence that its genre was called *praśasti* at the time. In many other epigraphic settings the word seems to mean a date or to qualify one, perhaps implying that the substantive *tithi* should be supplied. D. R. Bhandarkar (1981, 241 n. 1) has argued at some length that *pūrvā* itself must be understood as a substantive in both of these contexts, and that its meaning is “detailed description or specification.”

The suggestion is worth considering, especially in view of the fact that *pūrvā* is very often preceded by the deictic pronoun *iyam*. However, there is no clear path of derivation from the core meaning of the word to Bhandarkar’s proposed translation, which he obviously worked out by seeking a sense that would be equally applicable to dates and to epigraphic compositions. I prefer to believe, with Sircar (1954b, 123, 1965b, 307 n. 2), that these two uses of *pūrvā* are, or at least were originally, separate. I think that in contexts not involving a date,⁵ *pūrvā* is a substantive meaning something like a “[description of the] precedents” of an undertaking, a sense that can be better explained by extension of the original meaning of the word. The *pūrvā*, I offer, would originally have meant

a text (perhaps not necessarily an epigraphic one) that described a donor and his resolution to create something eternal, culminating in a grand donation or construction. The sentiment has much in common with the preamble of many a modern-day treaty and act of law, but whereas those provide an introduction to the enacting terms laid out next, the ancient *pūrvā* may also (when not inscribed on copper plates and followed by an enacting section) be a metaphorical preamble to the physical monument upon which it is engraved.

A possibly important detail within the Aulikara corpus seems to support my view. The poet Vāsula composed two of the inscriptions treated here and hallmarked them with an *anushtubh* verse that is almost identical in the two texts, except that in the Risthal inscription (A9, v29) it refers to the body text as a *pūrvā*, while in the Sondhni pillar (A11 and A12, v9) it simply uses the word *ślokāḥ*, “verses.” Now the Risthal inscription is a standard example of a donative record with all the accoutrements of the genre such as an invocation, a genealogy of the ruler intertwined with the praise of his and his ancestors’ deeds, a date, a description of the donor and his pedigree, a description of the edifices constructed, and a final prayer for the endurance of the construction. Conversely, the Sondhni epigraph, though it definitely qualifies as a *praśasti* (eulogy) and records a construction, is not about the establishment of a public utility. It is a victory pillar (and, probably, a *dhvaja-stambha* associated with a temple), inscribed with a victory inscription that lacks all these standard items. It therefore appears that Vāsula’s respective use of the terms *pūrvā* and *ślokāḥ* in these two cases was not a question of random choice between two roughly synonymous words, but a conscious employment of a technical term where it applied, and its avoidance where it did not.

Mālava-gaṇa-sthiti – Convention of the Mālava Community

A peculiarity of some inscriptions dated in the Mālava Era (q.v. page 9 below) is the use of the phrase *mālava-gaṇa-sthiti* or an equivalent.⁶ This was originally understood to mean that the era is reckoned from the establishment of the Mālava tribal community (Peterson 1885; Fleet CII3, 158). Kielhorn (1890b, 56–57) then suggested interpreting *gaṇa* in the sense

⁵ Within this book these include the silk weaver inscription (A6, 123), the Chhoti Sadri (A7, 117) and Risthal (A9, 121) inscriptions, and the inscription of Kumāvarman (A15, 121). The Nagari inscription (C2, 15) is an example of *pūrvā* used in a date.

⁶ Specifically, within my present scope, *mālavānām gaṇa-sthityā yāte śata-catuṣṭaye tri-navaty-adhike ’bdānām* in line 19 of the inscription of the silk weavers (A6) and *pañcasu śateṣu śaradām yāteṣv ekānna-navaty-sahiteṣu mālava-gaṇa-sthiti-vaśāt kāla-jñānāya likhiteṣu* in line 21 of the inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10).

of *gaṇanā*, “counting,” and *sthiti* as the establishment of a certain number by counting. The suggestion found some support (Shembavnekar 1931), but an alternative solution proposed by D. R. Bhandarkar (1913, 162) appears to be far more likely. According to Bhandarkar, *gaṇa* must, after all, be understood to refer to the tribe or community, while *sthiti* in this context means a “settled rule or usage.” The expression thus parallels the phrase *mālava-gaṇāmnāte* in the Mandsaur inscription of the time of Naravarman (A1, 11). Although R. G. Bhandarkar (1913) continued to argue for the event of the constitution of the Mālava *gaṇa* as the starting point of the era, D. R. Bhandarkar’s new interpretation has been endorsed by Altekar (1948, 259) and Sircar (1965b, 306 n. 1), and I follow it herein by rendering *mālava-gaṇa-sthiti* as “the convention of the Mālava community.” For a more verbose overview of the topic and further references, see D. R. Bhandarkar’s astute summary in CII3rev (pp. 188–193).

Rājasthānīya – Chancellor

The office designated by the word *rājasthānīya* (and some closely related terms such as *rājasthāna*) is mentioned in several epigraphic sources, but not clearly

understood (see IEG s.v.). The word suggests someone who acts in place of the king, a sort of royal lieutenant. According to a mediaeval definition, he is someone who “carries out the object of protecting subjects and shelters them.”⁷ It appears, mainly on the basis of the Risthal inscription (A9), that in the Aulikara court at least, one of the functions of the *rājasthānīya* was to manage the executive aspect of the king’s undertakings such as constructions. Translations proposed for the word include “viceroys” and “regents” (CII3 p. 157 n. 1), but both of these terms primarily imply a person representing a king in his absence, the former because he is not physically present and the latter because he is incapable of ruling. The *rājasthānīyas* of the Aulikaras evidently functioned side by side with a king in full possession of his faculties, so neither of these translations is appropriate. For this reason, and because the term *amātya* (minister, counsellor) is used as a synonym for this office (A9, 119), I have settled on the English word “chancellor,” intended to conjure associations of the Grand Chancellor of historical China rather than of various chancellors of modern Europe.

⁷ Cited from the *Lokapraśāsa* of Kṣemendra by Bühler (1876, 207).

Dates and Dating

All of the dated inscriptions treated in this volume employ the era now best known by the name Vikrama Era. In the earliest inscriptions this era is frequently indicated by the use of the term *kṛta*, while many of the later ones use the name Mālava to designate it. As Sircar (1954a, 373) pointed out, the Aulikaras were probably instrumental in the initial spread of this era and may have been the “lords of Mālava” whose name it bore for a considerable time. Although the word *kṛta* used in such a sense was a puzzle to early editors, it has now been established beyond doubt that these three terms mean, for all practical purposes, the same era.⁸ That is to say, their epoch is the same year, though there remains the possibility suggested by D. R. Bhandarkar (1917, 192–94) that some of these terms signify differences in reckoning, for instance the month in which the new year begins or the phase of the moon at which a new month begins. Due to the small number of early inscriptions dated in an era identified as Kṛta or Mālava paired with a general lack of corroboration (such as weekday names) it is not possible to determine this.

In converting dates to the Common or Christian Era (CE) in this book, my rule of thumb for general purposes is simply to render a date in the Mālava Era (ME) as circa 57 years earlier in the CE. For computing epigraphic dates with slightly more accuracy, I assume by default that the year associated with all these dates is a *kārttikādi* one like the standard northern Vikrama year of later times, i.e. that the new year begins in the month of Kārttika (September–October). I ignore the day of the month since there is no way of knowing whether the months were *amānta* or *pūrṇimānta*, and disregard the exact astronomical calculations for the

phases of the moon in a given year. Instead, I simply assume the months Kārttika, Mārgaśīrṣa and Pauṣa to belong to the Christian Old Year (hence CE = ME – 58), the month Māgha to straddle the Old and New Year, and all other months to belong to the Christian New Year (hence CE = ME – 57). If the month is Māgha or not recorded, then a ME current (*var-tamāna*) year will be equivalent to 58 to 57 years earlier in the CE. If the year is stated to be expired (*gata*), then the current year is one higher, so the CE equivalent date will also be one higher, and if the inscription records no information about the reckoning of the year count, then another degree of freedom enters the formula. Table 1 below presents an overview of the year equivalencies in all possible situations.

Table 1: Working equivalencies of CE to Mālava/Vikrama year 0

Reckoning	Month	CE min.	CE max.
unknown	unknown	–58	–56
unknown	Kārttika, Mārga, Pauṣa	–58	–57
unknown	Māgha	–58	–56
unknown	Phālguna to Āśvina	–57	–56
current	unknown	–58	–57
current	Kārttika, Mārga, Pauṣa		–58
current	Māgha	–58	–57
current	Phālguna to Āśvina		–57
expired	unknown	–57	–56
expired	Kārttika, Mārga, Pauṣa		–57
expired	Māgha	–57	–56
expired	Phālguna to Āśvina		–56

⁸ This was first suggested by Peter Peterson (1885, 381). D. R. Bhandarkar (CIIBrev pp. 187–201) provides an excellent overview of the evidence and the reasoning behind the conclusion.

Palaeography

There exists no standard terminology for the classification of the writing styles of Gupta and early post-Gupta Mālava. Before acceptable terms can be established, an overarching palaeographic analysis needs to be carried out. Early giants such as Georg Bühler have done much of the groundwork for this, while A. H. Dani has added copious detail but was reluctant to coin a nomenclature for script varieties beyond a separation of a Malwa, Mathurā and Kauśāmbī style. Sushil K. Bose (1938, 325–32) has presented a detailed palaeographic study of inscriptions from Mandsaur, noting (p. 325) that the Malwa region was “scornfully overlooked” from a palaeographic point of view, but he too preferred to retain the basic distinction of “northern” versus “southern” scripts and suggested a revision of the criteria for categorisation rather than the introduction of new categories. It is my hope that the burgeoning of electronic resources such as Siddham, IndoSkript and READ⁹ will in the near future facilitate further analysis and, ultimately, a more accurate and meaningful classification.

For the present time, however, I have chosen to apply a simplistic and somewhat subjective classification of the palaeography of the inscriptions treated in this volume, which fall quite naturally into two basic types of script within the generic category of Mālavan Late Brāhmī. I provisionally name these the rounded and the angular variety on the basis of the generic shape of characters, which is apparent at a glance. The rounded form would be classified as a specimen of the western variety of the southern alphabets by Bühler (1896, 61–62, 1904, 62–64) and as subtype ii of Group B.IV – the proto-regional scripts of Malwa and Rajasthan – by Dani (1963, 157–58). Fleet (CII3) and Sircar (1965b) describe most of the inscriptions I assign to this type as “southern class,” and Bose (1938, 325–27) does likewise. The angular form, in turn, would probably be called a variety of or a precursor to the acute-angled or *siddhamāṭṛkā* script by Bühler (1896, 50, 1904, 49–50). Bose (1938, 330) assigns it to the western variety of the northern alphabet. Dani (1963, 157–58) would call it subtype iii or iv of the same Group

B.IV, whereas G. H. Ojha (1959, 62) would call it *kuṭīla*. While the accuracy and usefulness of the term *kuṭīla* are doubtful (Dani 1963, 115–16), a good case can be made for *siddhamāṭṛkā* as the name of a script widely used from the seventh to the tenth century (Salomon 1998, 39), and thus *proto-siddhamāṭṛkā* may be a good term for my angular Mālavan Late Brāhmī.

In addition to the overall ductus of the characters, salient distinguishing features of the two script varieties include the following (see Figure 1 for specimens). The principal test letters are *ṇa* and *ma*: the former is always looped in the rounded and open-mouthed in the angular form,¹⁰ while the latter consistently has the archaic looped form in the rounded variety,¹¹ but is always open-mouthed in the angular variety, where it may or may not have a tail and its left limb may be straight or bent. The verticals of *ka*, *ra* and initial *a* are also quite distinctive: they are extended and almost always hooked in the rounded form, while in the angular form they never have a hook (though they often end in a knob) and are often, especially in the later specimens, quite short. In addition, the lower left limb of initial *a* curves inward in the rounded, and outward in the angular script. In the rounded variety, *bha* is of the broad type, with the two legs roughly equal in length, while the angular variety's *bha* has a shorter left leg with a footmark, which joins the right leg at an acute angle. The body of *da* is more pronounced in the rounded type, typically bent twice to form a rectangle or a rounded rectangle open on the right; the angular *da* has a triangular body with a single sharp bend that may sport a pronounced tail. A very similar distinction applies to *ca*, whose body resembles a broad quadrangle in the rounded variety (rounded on the bottom left and beaked at the top left corner), and a triangle (usually with a tail on the single left corner) in the angular variety. *Dha* is less distinctive, but it is generally oval (sometimes pointed) in the rounded alphabet, while in the angular form the right and top sides tend to be straight, with an acute angle at the bottom right corner. The tail of *la* is normally elongated and curves to the left and down in both scripts, but in the rounded form this curve is flatter and

⁹ See page 4 about the epigraphic database Siddham. IndoSkript is a palaeographic tool developed by Harry Falk and Oliver Hellwig, initially as standalone software and recently as an Internet resource (<http://www.indoskript.org>). READ, short for *Research Environment for Ancient Documents*, is a software toolkit for epigraphical and manuscript research, developed primarily by Stefan Baums, Andrew Glass, Ian McCrabb and Stephen White and available as open-source software (<https://github.com/readsoftware/read>).

¹⁰ Except the Chhoti Sadri inscription of Gauri (A7), which follows the rounded model but uses the tripartite northern *ṇa*.

¹¹ Actually, looped *ma* appears to be of two types: in some inscriptions the arms start from two separate points of the circle, while in most the character forms a single loop, with the arms starting from one point. A variety of this more common form appears to be drawn as a pinched shape (an hourglass open at the top) rather than as an actual loop, and this form may be transitional to the open-mouthed *ma*.

	a	ā	i	ī	u	e	o	au	ka	ca	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa	da	dha	na	bha	ma	ya	ra	la	śa	ṣa	sa	ha	variants	
A1																											
A2																											
A3																											
A4																											
A5																											
A6																											
A7																											
A8																											
A9																											
A10																											
A11 A12																											
A13 A14																											
A15																											

Figure 1 : Some distinctive character forms in rounded and angular scripts. Snippets of photographs and rubbings standardised to uniform height. Image credits as per the illustrations under each respective inscription. **A1:** Mandasaur, Naravarman; **A2:** Bihar Kotra cave; **A3:** Bihar Kotra cave; **A4:** Gangdhar; **A5:** Dattabhata; **A6:** Chhoti Sadri; **A7:** Mandasaur, Gauri; **A9:** Risthal; **A10:** Nirdoşa; **A11** and **A12:** Sondhni; **A13** and **A14:** Chittorgarh; **A15:** Kumāvarman. Inscription labels shaded in grey indicate scripts I assign to the rounded variety.

may extend down to the baseline or beyond it to the left of the body, while in the angular form the curve is a high arch that does not go further back than the left side of the body, and may be replaced by a simple vertical extension of the stem or, especially in later inscriptions, by a short stem. In the rounded form *sa* has a separate left leg, but in the angular form the left leg is cursively simplified into a small triangle.

Medial *i* is as a rule represented by a circle in the rounded form, and \bar{i} with a dot or other mark inside the circle. In the angular form, the bottom of the circle is open on the left for *i* and on the right for \bar{i} , and the vowel mark may have a tail that extended downward. The marks for medial \bar{a} , *e* and *o* are normally slanting lines above the character body in the rounded variety; in the angular variety, horizontal marks bending downward at a 90° angle alternate with slanting marks or replace them entirely.

In spite of numerous such differences, the two scripts also share a number of features. Both usually employ wedge-shaped headmarks (nail heads), though these may be inconspicuous in both varieties; or, in the rounded variety, they may also be exaggerated, or may alternate with box heads or knobs within a single inscription. *Ya* as a primary consonant is always tripartite in both scripts and may or may not have a loop on the left limb. However,

its bottom is straighter in the angular form, often with an acute angle at the bottom right; and if the loop is present, it is upright, whereas it lies horizontally in the rounded form. *Pa* is angular in both forms, without a rounding of the bottom corners, and with the left arm bent optionally in the rounded form, and always in the angular form. The rounded variety is on the whole the more conservative of the two and has more in common with southern scripts of the period, while the angular variety is more innovative and shares more with northern scripts. There is, however, no clear temporal or geographic boundary between the two styles. In the sample set discussed in this book, the angular style's prevalence increases with time (becoming exclusive in the sixth century) and, geographically, it is more common in the northwest (the Mandsaur region and modern Rajasthan). There may be dynastic associations as well: the Later Aulikaras, the Naigamas and Kumāra-varman employ an angular script, while the Early Aulikaras and Gauri, along with Dattabhaṭa and the silk weavers, favour the rounded one. However, even this limited sample affords clear evidence that the two varieties could coexist in time and space. Of the two Bihar Kotra inscriptions of the time of Naravarman, created in the same year at the same site, the cave inscription (A3) is a perfect example of the rounded style, while the stone inscription (A2) has most of the hallmarks of the angular style.

Part I: **Context**

Introduction: The Aulikara Power Network

As I have noted in the Preface above, this book is not meant to present a new history of the Aulikaras, though it may perhaps be an important foundation stone for one. It is, however, not easy even to define a “history of the Aulikaras.” There was no single and uninterrupted line of kings who bore this family name: there is epigraphic evidence for at least two, possibly three such dynasties, which were presumably related through collateral descent and/or intermarriage, yet none of their presently known members provide a direct link to another of these dynasties. Part of their history appears to be closely intertwined with two other potent families who shared in, and contributed to, their power in a subordinate position. Aulikara rule was geographically localised in the northwestern part of present-day Malwa, particularly around the town of Mandsaur (at the time called Daśapura), which was their capital at least from the early fifth century onward. Most of the relevant inscriptions come from the vicinity of this place, with some of the earlier ones originating further east (see Figure 3). This stretch of territory was controlled and contested by various superpowers in the course of time, such as the Śakas before Aulikara days, then the

Guptas, later the Hūṇas, possibly the Vākāṭakas and – at the end of the present book’s timeframe – the Kalacuris. It is thus impossible to conceptualise “Aulikara history” in isolation.

Richard Salomon (1989, 11–30) has given an excellent overview of the internal and external relations of the dynasties concerned, which frees me from the burden of needing to do so here.¹ A freely available PhD thesis by Naval Kishore (1999) provides a good review of various opinions offered (especially by Indian scholars) on aspects of Aulikara history. More recently, Elizabeth Cecil (2016, 117–20) has emphasised the importance of investigating Daśapura around the turn of the sixth century in terms of political networks. For the purposes of this book, I define the Aulikara power network or “the Aulikaras and their associates” as members of prominent lineages who occupied positions of power in and around Mandsaur from the early fifth to the late sixth century. Since I am concerned with inscriptions commissioned by or under these rulers and governors, I can conveniently ignore the threads of the network that lead outside this conglomeration, except for briefly taking note of where an inscription indicates such a thread.

¹ Mirashi (1980, also published as 1982a, 98–120) has also discussed Aulikara power relations in detail, but his treatise must be read in juxtaposition to other relevant literature, since some of his hypotheses are far-fetched, while others have been falsified by the discovery of the Risthal inscription.

The Origin of the Aulikaras

The Mālava People

The Aulikaras, as well as most or all of the associated lineages, probably started out as hereditary leaders among the warrior communities (*kṣatra-gaṇa*) of the Mālava tribe. This nation originated far to the north, occupying the territory around the river Ravi in the Punjab in Maurya times and migrating gradually to the south.² In the late centuries BCE and the early centuries CE their centre of power was Mālvanaḡara, modern Nagar in the Bharatpur district of Rajasthan. Their presence here is attested to by numerous coins, many of which bear legends such as *mālavānām jayaḡ* or *mālava-gaṇasya jayaḡ* (Jain 1972b, 6). They are also referred to, in the form *mālaya*, in the Nasik Inscription of Uṣavadāta (early second century CE), which mentions Śaka aid to the Uttamabhadra tribe against the Mālavas.³ This inscription does not say what area the Mālavas and Uttamabhadras inhabited, but it does mention Uṣavadāta bathing at Pushkar afterwards, so their territory must have been near modern Ajmer.

The end of the second century CE saw a protracted war of succession in the Śaka kingdom between Jivadāman and his uncle Rudrasimha I (Majumdar and Altekar 1954, 31–32). This probably provided an opportunity for the Mālava tribes to increase their territories and level of independence. From the third century onward, inscribed sacrificial pillars (*yūpa*) commemorate Mālava chieftains both in the south and north of modern Rajasthan (to the southwest and northeast of Nagar). The earliest of these are the *yūpas* of Nandsa (नान्दशा, 25°14'56"N 74°16'49"E, Bhilwara district, Rajasthan; Figure 2), which preserve two copies of an inscription (one of the copies being written lengthwise, the other crosswise on the same pillar) commemorating a tremendous sixty-one day sacrifice (*°aikaṣaṣṭi-rātram atisatram*) held by Nandisoma, son of Jayasoma, grandson of Bhṛguvardhana, great-grandson of Jayatsena,⁴ who bore the clan name Sogi or Sogin. It has been suggested (Altekar 1948, 260) that this sacrifice, conducted in the Kṛta year 282 (ca. 225 CE), was in celebration of a victory against a Śaka ruler. Whether or not this is correct,

the *yūpa* is definitely a testimony of Mālava power and confidence. It is also noteworthy that the inscription speaks of Nandisoma as belonging to a Mālava dynasty of royal sages (*rājarṣi-vaṃṣe mālava-vaṃṣe prasūtasya*), which may be indicative of a major shift in at least some Mālava tribes from an oligarchic (or “republican”) *gaṇa* system of society to a kingdom. However, as already pointed out (Venkataramayya 1953, 82; Altekar 1948, 260), neither Nandisoma nor his ancestors bear any royal, feudatory or military title,⁵ so *rāja* may simply indicate a *kṣatriya* status rather than kingship in the established sense.

The names ending in *soma* are reminiscent of Gauri’s ancestor Puṇyasoma⁶ and Kumāravarma’s ancestor Virasoma. The name of Bhṛguvardhana, in turn, evokes the *vardhana* names of the Later Aulikaras, as well as that of Aparājitavardhana of the Mukhara *gotra*.⁷ Another very early pair of inscribed *yūpa fragments*, dated ca. 227 CE (Kṛta 284), was found in Barnala (बडनाला, 26°22'44"N 76°28'19"E, Sawai Madhopur district, Rajasthan). The mutilated inscription of one of these mentions a king whose name ends in *vardhana*,⁸ apparently of the Soharta *gotra*. Yet another inscribed *yūpa* (ca. 238 CE, Kṛta 295), one of four recovered from Badwa (बडवा, 25°05'42"N 76°20'26"E, Baran [formerly Kota] district, Rajasthan), mentions a *mahāsenāpati* of the Mokhari family named Balavardhana. Finally, a later (ca. 371 CE, Kṛta 428) *yūpa* from further northeast in Bijayagadh (around 26°53'32"N 77°16'20"E, close to Bayana, Bharatpur district, Rajasthan) commemorates a king called Viṣṇuvardhana, son of Yaśovardhana, names that seem to be echoed in the name of Yaśodharman Viṣṇuvardhana. Though this resonance of early Mālava names with those used later on by the Aulikaras and their associates does not necessarily prove a familial connection, it does at least suggest a shared heritage of naming practice. Interestingly, no names in *varman* are found on any of the known *yūpa* inscriptions, though this was an ending much favoured by the Early Aulikara

2 Sircar (1954a, 371–73) and Mirashi (1980, 417–20, 1982b, 110–12) both provide good summaries of the early history of the Mālavas.

3 Line 3, *bhaṭṭarakā-amñātiyā ca gato smiṇ varṣā-ratuṃ mālaye-hi rudham utamabhādraṃ mocayituṃ*. Senart (1906, 79) translates, “[a]nd by the order of the lord I went to release the chief of the Uttamabhadras, who had been besieged for the rainy season by the Mālayas.”

4 Readings corrected by Venkataramayya (1953); Altekar’s (1948) original versions of the names (Śrisoma instead of Nandisoma and Jayanartana instead of Bhṛguvardhana) are occasionally used in historical literature, but these readings can now be rejected.

5 Although a fragmentary *yūpa* inscription (sans extant date) from the same site speaks of a *mahāsenāpati* named Bhaṭṭisoma, who was also a Sogi like Nandisoma.

6 In addition, the commissioner of the Chhoti Sadri inscription (A7, also composed under Gauri) was named Bhramarasoma, and his father was Mitrasoma.

7 See page 241 about Aparājitavardhana.

8 The first member of the name is illegible but probably consisted of two *aṣṣaras*. The title “king” (*rājñō*), also applied to this person’s father, is read only from faint traces in both instances (Altekar 1942, 120 n. 9).



Figure 2: The Nandsa *yūpa* of Nandisoma. Photo by the author, 2018.

rulers. There is, however, a reference in the *Mahābhārata* to a presumably early Mālava chief with a *varman* name.⁹

Mālavas in Malwa – Aulikaras in Daśapura

In the early fifth century CE, the Mālavas make their appearance in the region that today bears their name (see the map in Figure 3). A *yūpa* fragment found in Nagari near Chittorgarh¹⁰ may indicate their presence close to Daśapura at an early time, but the fragmentary state of this *yūpa* inscription does not allow the drawing of any concrete conclusions.¹¹ Their earliest datable records are those of the early

⁹ *MBh* 7.165.115, *mālavyasyendravarmaṇaḥ*.

¹⁰ Nagari is the site of the ancient town of Madhyamikā, which was evidently under Aulikara and/or Naigama control in the early sixth century. It is the findspot of the Nagari Inscription of Kṛta 481 (C2) and the presumed place of origin of the Chittorgarh inscriptions of the Naigamas (A13, A14).

¹¹ The fragment was found and reported by D. R. Bhandarkar (1920, 120). All he could decipher from the text is the term *yūpa* and the mention of a *vājapeya yajña* performed by somebody's sons (*putrair*).

Aulikaras, beginning with the Mandsaur inscription of the time of Naravarman (A1), dated in the year 461 of the Mālava Era (ca. 404 CE). The name Aulikara (or Olikara, see page 24) is first attested in the Bihar Kotra stone and cave inscriptions of the same ruler (A2 and A3), both dated ME 474 (ca. 417 CE). Bihar Kotra lies directly to the north of Bhopal and is also the location of some graffiti (B1) that may – just possibly – indicate the presence of some of Naravarman's ancestors in the area. The Gangdhar inscription (A4) of the time of Naravarman's son Viśvavarman was also found east of Mandsaur, about a third of the way from there to Bihar Kotra. These provenience data suggest that the initial heartland of the Early Aulikara family may have been within or adjacent to the region of Daśārṇa or Ākara.

Another inscription possibly relevant to the earliest history of the Aulikaras is the Narsinghgarh rock inscription of Aparājitavardhana (C1).¹² Narsinghgarh is a town on the northern side of the same rock massif as Bihar Kotra, and the inscription concerns a donation to the

¹² This inscription has not been published before, and only a preliminary partial edition is included in this book.

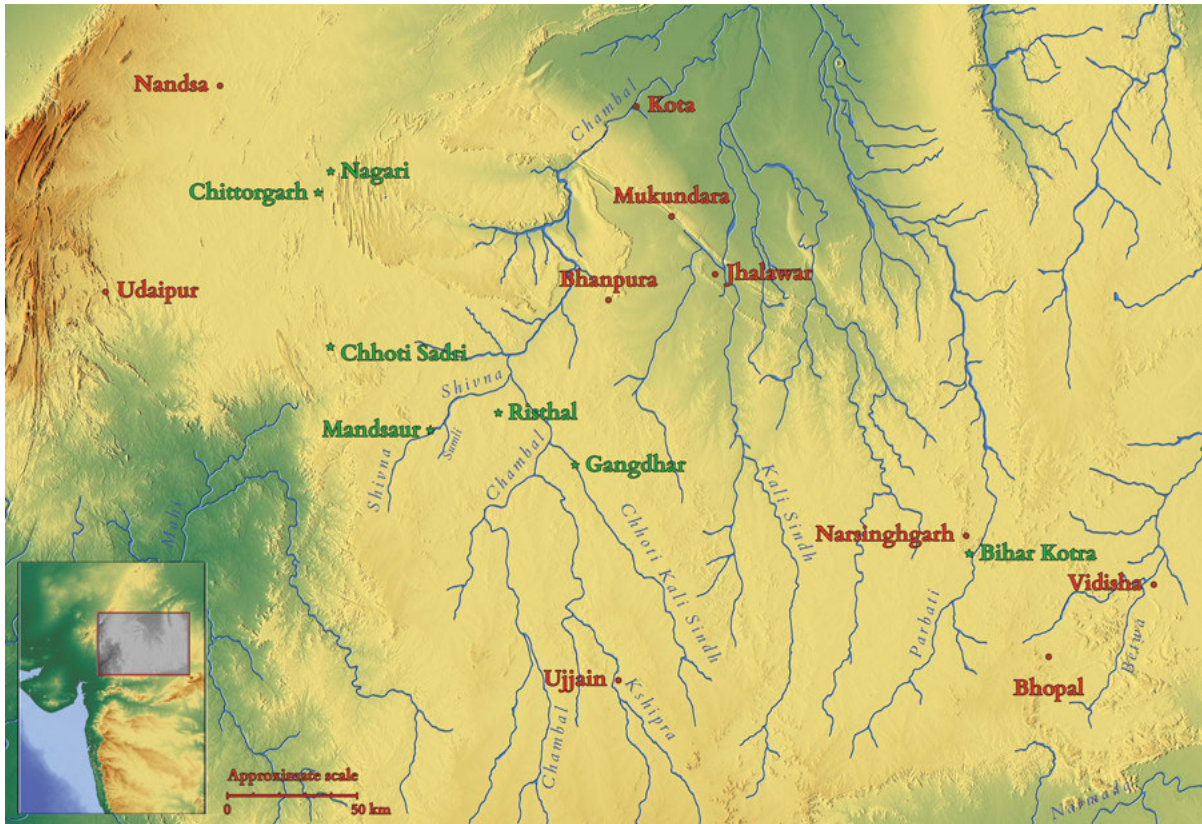


Figure 3: The territory of the Aulikaras. Findspots of Aulikara and associated inscriptions shown with green labels; other sites relevant to the Aulikaras or helpful for orientation shown in red. Topographic base map from maps-for-free.com; river courses overlaid from india-wris.nrsc.gov.in.

local Buddhist monastery by a chieftain (without a royal title) who calls himself Aparājītavardhana of the Mukhara gotra. As noted above, third-century Mālava *yūpa* inscriptions include a record of a leader with a *vardhana* name belonging to the Mokhari family. The Narsingharh inscription has no date but was most likely engraved in the late fourth or the early fifth century. If this is so, then Aparājītavardhana flourished in the same geographical area and roughly the same time period as Siṃhavarman and Naravarman. He may have controlled the Narsingharh region as a vassal of the early Aulikaras (he acknowledges a *parama-bhaṭṭāraka* in his inscription) or he may have been kin to them,¹³ in which case the Aulikaras and the Maukharis share common origins. Finally, it is possible that Aparājītavardhana is considerably earlier or later than my above estimate of his date, in which case he may have been a Gupta or Vākāṭaka feudatory at a time when the Aulikaras did not exercise power over this region.

¹³ The name Aparājītavardhana closely resembles Ajītavardhana, a member of the Later Aulikara family whose projected date is the middle of the fifth century. But the assumption that the two were brothers or other close kin would require stronger evidence.

Whether the earlier Aulikara homeland was further to the east or not, Naravarman's domain evidently included Mandsaur, his son Bandhuvarman probably had his seat there, and all other Aulikara-related epigraphs hail from Mandsaur or nearby. The country of the Aulikaras was thus, at least from the time of Naravarman onward, located in the land known as Western Malwa in modern terms and Avanti by its ancient name. In the days of the Later Aulikaras and the Naigamas, they also controlled lands in the southeastern stretches of modern Rajasthan, which were probably not included in the traditional definition of Avanti and may have been referred to historically as Pāriyātra (see page 162) or perhaps as Upamāla (Cecil 2016, 110).

Within Avanti proper, the most prominent city was Ujjayinī, while Daśapura – modern Mandsaur – was a prominent town on the northward trade route from Ujjayinī (and before that, from the port of Bṛh̥gukaccha) to Mathurā (and onward to the valley of the Ganges). Daśapura certainly predates the Aulikaras by a long stretch. Legends about it in Jaina canonical literature (K. K. Shah and Pandey 1989, 473) suggest a very early habitation, though the first solid witnesses of its existence are Śāka

inscriptions from the early centuries CE.¹⁴ The Nasik inscription cited above for its reference to the Mālavas lists Daśapura as one of the places where Uṣavadāta constructed facilities, while Nasik inscription 26 (Senart 1906, 95) mentions this town as the residence of the scribe.

Daśapura clearly continued to flourish under Aulikara rule. The *Meghadūta* of Kālidāsa, presumably roughly contemporaneous with Naravarman's reign, mentions its women (1.50, *daśapura-vadhū*) but reveals no other information about the city. The inscription of the silk weavers (A6, verses 7 to 14) speaks in glowing – if stereotypical – terms about its lakes and parks, its beautiful ladies and its luxurious mansions. From the time of the Later Aulikaras, the Risthal inscription lists several buildings in the town, constructed by Chancellor Doṣa¹⁵ acting on orders from Prakāśadharman. On a darker note, the silk weaver inscription also describes an interregnum (see page 95) early in the second half of the fifth century CE, implying that this was the cause of damage (wilful or arising from neglect) to the temple whose restoration is the topic of that inscription. And the last epigraphic document treated herein, the inscription of Kumārarman (A15), even in its fragmentary state clearly bespeaks of a twilight of the city, showing glimpses of a king captured by an enemy (but then heroically escaping), of a reconquest of Daśapura from ferocious enemies referred to as *dasyus*, and of an official charged with curbing bandits and rogues, possibly in the city itself.

In spite of the prominence of Daśapura in Aulikara inscriptions, the location of the Aulikara capital was the subject of a heated debate between V. V. Mirashi and D. C. Sircar. After Sircar (1954b) published the inscriptions of Gauri (A7, A8), Mirashi (1957, also published as 1960, 206–12) put forth the hypothesis that the later Aulikara kings ruled from Ujjayinī. According to his reasoning these inscriptions showed that Gauri was in control of

¹⁴ According to C. B. Trivedi (C. B. Trivedi 1979, 2), an inscription in Anvaleshwar (अंबलेश्वर, 24°02'32"N 74°53'10"E, about 20 kilometres west of Mandsaur) mentions Daśapura by name and may date around the first century CE. I am not aware of an edition of this inscription, but R. V. Somani (1976, 21 n. 19) says one was published in the Rajasthan journal *Varadā*, first in volume 13 by J. C. Joshi and then with corrections by Somani in volume 14. Transcripts of two inscriptions from this site are also included in Wakankar's posthumous (and ineptly curated) collection of inscriptions (2002, 20–21), one of which indeed mentions Daśapura as a person's birthplace. The date and the details of the text await verification through further research. I have not visited the site personally, but was informed in both Ujjain and Mandsaur that the inscription is not accessible without lengthy preliminary arrangements through the ASI.

¹⁵ See page 8 about my translation of *rājasthāniya* as chancellor, and page 165 about my preference for Doṣa rather than Bhagavaddoṣa.

Daśapura in the late fifth century, therefore his overlord Ādityavardhana, who was an Aulikara, must have reigned someplace else. He also saw Nirdoṣa's gubernatorial status in Daśapura (inferred from Nirdoṣa's inscription, A10) as further proof that his overlord Yaśodharman must have had his seat in another place in the second quarter of the sixth century. This place, then, must have been Ujjayinī, because the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* of Varāhamihira mentions a King Dravyavardhana of Avanti, "evidently" an Aulikara ruler reigning in Ujjayinī. Soon afterward, Sircar (1959, 1960b) belligerently but soundly refuted all of Mirashi's alleged evidence. In quick succession, Mirashi (1959, also published as 1961, 180–84) countered this with increasingly weak and irrelevant arguments, which Sircar demolished in due turn (1960a). Mirashi offered no further dispute, but he did reiterate his claim (without reasoning) a long while later (1980, 410, also published in 1982a, 103). However, after the discovery of the Risthal inscription he suddenly changed his mind, announcing that "there is no doubt that Daśapura or Mandasor was the capital of the *vardhana* branch" [i.e. of the Later Aulikaras].¹⁶

Rather than recount every slash and parry of this exchange here, I only present a quick overview of the most important points against Mirashi's hypothesis, all of which and more were also made by Sircar during the debate. Whether or not Ādityavardhana was an Aulikara (see page 128), the Mandsaur inscription of Gauri (A8) proves beyond reasonable doubt that he, and not Gauri, ruled over Daśapura (see page 126 and note 199 there). Yet Gauri could very well have commissioned the construction of a well in his liege lord Ādityavardhana's capital,¹⁷ and the same applies to Nirdoṣa's well in his king Yaśodharman's capital. There is thus no explicit indication whatsoever that any Aulikara king reigned from a place other than Daśapura. As for Dravyavardhana of the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, Mirashi offers no proof that he was an Aulikara. I personally believe that he was (see page 140 for my reasoning), but the fact that Varāhamihira calls him an Āvantika need not imply that he ruled in Ujjayinī, merely that he ruled in the land of Avanti, i.e. western Malwa. In this connection Sircar (1960b, 206) makes the highly relevant point that Paramāra kings such as Bhoja were called kings of Avanti, but their capital was at Dhārā. Finally, most of the known

¹⁶ In the same paper he also contends that the seat of the rulers of this branch before Prakāśadharman had been Risthal. This unlikely hypothesis is probably based largely on the mistaken notion (see page 143) that several of the grand facilities whose construction is mentioned in the inscription were constructed in Risthal.

¹⁷ In the less likely case that Gauri and Ādityavardhana were the same person (see page 128), Mirashi's objection would be void to begin with.

Aulikara inscriptions hail from Mandsaur or its close vicinity, and none of those that originate further away were found in Ujjain, nor even on the way there from Mandsaur.

Since the close of the Ujjayinī debate, Wakankar's exploratory excavation in Mandsaur fort has uncovered remains of what he considered to be a royal palace (Wakankar 1981, 278; Wakankar and Rajpurohit 1984, 11, 14), and while this identification is contestable and requires further excavations to confirm, the recovery of Prakāśadharman's glass sealings (B8) from this place provides fair corroboration. It can thus be taken as established that Daśapura was the primary seat of the Aulikara kings at least from Naravarman onward. Some members of one line or the other may, at some point, have reigned from another town, but we have no explicit knowledge of any such details.

The modern name Mandsaur (मन्दसौर, usually Anglicised as Mandasor in earlier scholarly literature) clearly preserves the name Daśapura in the vernacular form *dasaur* (via an intermediate **dasa-ura*). The origin of *man* in the name is uncertain. Fleet (1886a, 195) seems to conditionally accept an explanation suggested to him by Bhagwanlal Indrajī, according to which the name is a contraction of *manda-daśapura*, interpreted as “distressed Daśapura” and thought to preserve a memory of the havoc the Muslims had wrought there. D. R. Bhandarkar (1981, 262) suggests a more likely origin of the name: a local Brahmin told him in 1897 that there used to be a village called Man nearby, and the two names may have combined into Mandsaur.¹⁸ This village Man may be identical to Maḍ, which according to Fleet (1886a, 195) was an alternative name of the present-day settlement of Afzalpur, 20 kilometres to the southeast of Mandsaur. Fleet, however, does not connect this Maḍ to the name of Mandsaur.

Little in the present day remains in Mandsaur of the works of the Aulikaras.¹⁹ The fort in the town is said to have been founded by ‘Alā’ ud-Dīn Khiljī (r. 1293–1316) and considerably extended by Hoṣaṅg Śāh of Malwa (r. 1405–1434), and incorporates many old carved stones (Luard and Sheopuri 1908, 266; Garde 1948, 12 n. 5), some of which evidently originated in buildings of the Aulikara period. The fort of Chittorgarh, about 100 kilometres to the north-northwest, possibly founded in the 8th century, also incorporates many older stones that come from the

¹⁸ There is also a popular “folk” etymology found in the present day on several websites and in local publications of Mandsaur. This derives Mandsaur from *manda saura*, understood to mean “faltering sun” and to be connected to the location of the town close to the Tropic of Cancer.

¹⁹ See N. K. Ojha (2001, 99–104) for an overview of architectural and sculptural monuments.

town of Madhyamikā, some of which must have belonged to Aulikara monuments (Cecil 2016, 116–17; Bakker and Bisschop 2016, 222). The temple of Mukundara (see also page 235), about 120 kilometres northeast of Mandsaur, may also have a connection to the Aulikaras (Mankodi 2015, 311), and the recently discovered brick temple of Khanderia (Greaves 2017) also seems to be a potential Aulikara product. Villages outside the modern town and located across the river Shivna on its south bank – in particular, Afzalpur, Khilchipura and Sondhni – have yielded several impressive pieces of sculpture that are certainly Aulikara products (Williams 1972, 2004; K. K. Shah and Pandey 1989); see Figure 4 for a glimpse. The location of

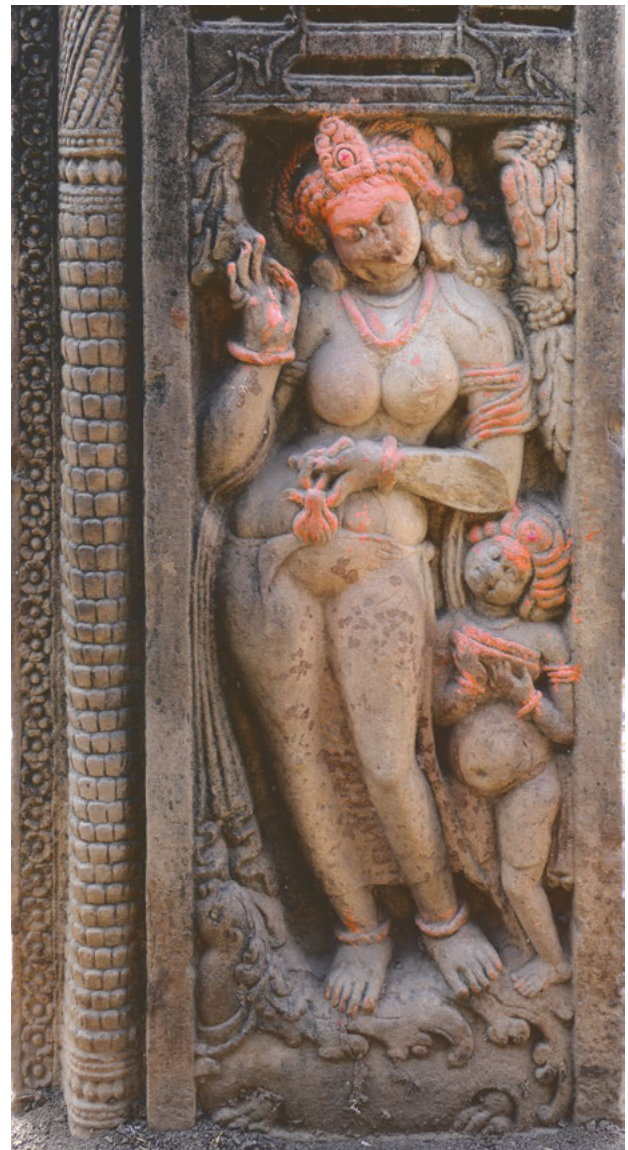


Figure 4: The sculpture of Yamunā on her turtle from the Khilchipura *torana* (now displayed in Mandsaur fort). Photo by the author, 2017.

these finds, coupled with the silk weaver inscription's (A6, verse 13) description of Daśapura as located between two rivers, may indicate that the ancient settlement was on the south bank of the Shivna, with only the royal palace and/or fort at the site of the modern town.

The Name “Aulikara”

Modern scholarship first encountered the term *aulikara* after Fleet read it in the Mandsaur inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10), where it is featured in a description of Yaśodharman's dynasty in the phrase *prakhyāta aulikara-lāñchana ātma-vaiśo* (15–6). Since the word was impossible to interpret on its own, Fleet had to rely on the context. Given that the primary meaning of *lāñchana* is a mark or sign, and that this word is also used in a more specific technical sense of a royal sigil, he (1886b, 223, 1886b, 226 n. 1, reprinted in CII3, 151, 151–52 n. 4) came naturally to the conclusion that an *aulikara* was a thing featured in the emblem of Yaśodharman's family. Now *kara*, meaning “ray” among other things, is frequently used in compounds with words meaning “hot” to produce kennings for the sun, and with words meaning “cold” in kennings for the moon. Fleet therefore went further out on a limb and surmised that *auli* might be an unusual word signifying either “hot” or “cold,” and that the sigil of this royal family would have been the sun or the moon.

The second occurrence of this word to become known was in the Bihar Kotra stone inscription of the time of Naravarman (A2). First published in 1942, this epigraph uses the form *olikara*, which stands simply in apposition to the king's name (*naravarmmaṇaḥ olikarasya*, 11). With this additional piece of evidence, the interpretation “sun” or “moon” must be discarded, along with any other interpretation as a physical object that may be represented in an emblem. It is beyond question that *Olikara* is a name associated with Naravarman, and thus in Nirdoṣa's inscription *lāñchana* must mean “name,” which is an acceptable connotation for the word.²⁰ Nonetheless, the now baseless concept “Aulikara crest” is still met with occasionally in more recent scholarly literature (e.g. Goyal 1967, 360), but if such a thing existed, we have no epigraphic evidence for it.

²⁰ A very probable epigraphic parallel occurs on a *sati* stone found in Sangsi (Maharashtra, Kolhapur district) and probably engraved in the sixth century. The fragmentary text records that the stone is a memorial to the wife of a king described as *śrī (?p)u[?ṣ] p --~lāñchanasya nṛpater*. The editors of the inscription (Sankalia and Dikshit 1948, 162) translate *lāñchana* as “crest,” but the lacuna between *śrī* and *lāñchana* must have contained the king's name.

The meaning of *aulikara/olikara*, however, remains unexplained, and it is also not clear whether these are two related yet separate words, or whether one is an alternative (or erroneous) spelling of the other. Today, we have three additional epigraphic attestations of varying form. Discovered in 1978, the Mandsaur inscription of Kumāravarmān (A15) uses the form *aulikari* in the compound *aulikari-pradhāna* (110). The wider context is lost, so we do not know whom this compound describes, but it is definitely a person (a king or other leader, and in my view most likely a member of Kumāravarmān's dynasty; see page 207 for my reasoning). In the immediate context, *aulikari* clearly signifies a group among whom that person is foremost. Morphologically, the word is a valid derivation meaning “descendant of *Olikara/Aulikara*.”²¹ Next came the Risthal inscription of Prakāśadharman (A9), discovered in 1983. This describes the Later Aulikara family's progenitor Drapavardhana as the ornament of the entire Aulikara dynasty (*sakalasyaulikarānvayasya lakṣma*, 12). This use of the term clears any remaining doubt about Aulikara being a dynastic name. The spelling, however, remains a moot point: since it is in *saṃdhi* with a preceding word ending in *a*, the isolated form could be *olikara* as well as *aulikara*. Finally, the Bihar Kotra cave inscription of the time of Naravarman (A3), not edited before now in any internationally accessible publication, also uses the form *olikara* to describe Naravarman. The entire text of this epigraph is very similar to that of the stone inscription, but the declension and *saṃdhi* of this particular phrase are non-standard here: the text is *naravarmmasyolikarasya* (12). It is as if the scribe of the inscription had taken particular care to show that the name was *Olikara* even though the form used in *saṃdhi* after the preceding final *a* should have been *aulikara*.

Tallying the known attestations of the name, we thus have *olikara* twice, and an unequivocal *aulikara* only once, in Nirdoṣa's inscription. The variant in Kumāravarmān's inscription is clearly a *vrddhi* derivative that may go back to either form, and the instance in Prakāśadharman's inscription is ambiguous because of *saṃdhi*. Going by weight alone, this should tip the balance in favour of the form *olikara*, and if further evidence should surface, the common usage of this dynastic name may need to be revised. My intuition, however, is that both forms are correct and mean different things. It seems likely that

²¹ As the word is in compound, the stem might also be *aulikarin*, which would mean someone who possesses, or is characterised by, *aulikara*. Since we know *aulikara/olikara* to be a name, this derivation is unlikely. Moreover, the same inscription probably also uses the analogously derived word *kārṣṇi* (18) signifying “son of Kṛṣṇa.”

Olikara was a personal epithet of Naravarman; all the later occurrences, including the ambiguous one in the Risthal inscription, are then indeed of the form Aulikara, used as a dynastic name and formed as a *vṛddhi* derivative of the *biruda* of their claimed ancestor. In other words, Aulikara means “descendant of Olikara.”

The vexing question still remains: what might *olikara* mean? We may never learn the truth, but I would like to put forth a new hypothesis. It seems to me that *oli* could be a vernacular form cognate to Sanskrit *āvali*, a word frequently used in the sense of “dynasty.”²² Thus, *olikara* could be synonymous to *vaṃśakara*, “founder of a dynasty.” Although Naravarman mentions two generations of his ancestry, we have no inscriptions issued by either of these rulers and no record of their deeds in their descendants’ inscriptions. It is perfectly conceivable that they were local chieftains of little consequence (perhaps in the lands around Bihar Kotra, see page 20 above), and that Naravarman was the first of the line to attain a position of substantial power (possibly by taking control of Daśapura), and to optimistically proclaim himself the

progenitor of a dynasty. This possibility ties in attractively with several other points, though none of these are strong enough to serve as evidence for the hypothesis. First, it may not be a mere turn of speech that both of Naravarman’s Bihar Kotra inscriptions give the date in a year of his “own reign” (*sva-rājya*)²³: mayhap this is a proud assertion that Naravarman is an independent king. Second, if Aparājitavardhana (see pages 20–21) was a relative of the Early Aulikaras, then Naravarman himself would have belonged to the Mukhara *gotra*. It is possible that his descendants started referring to themselves as Aulikaras (and stopped mentioning their *gotra* in their inscriptions) in order to distinguish themselves from other chieftains of that *gotra* including the Maukhari rulers. And third, the projected date of Drapavardhana (the progenitor of the Later Aulikara line) is very close to that of Naravarman (see Figure 5 on page 28). If Naravarman was indeed the original Olikara, it may be that the two Aulikara bloodlines split immediately after him, i.e. that Drapavardhana and Viśvavarman were both Naravarman’s sons.

²² In fact, Śaiva Tantric texts of the eighth century and later, such as the *Vāmakeśvarīmatatantra* 1.10 (ed. Kaul Shastri 1945) and the *Nityāhnikatilaka* (NGMPP manuscript Access 3/384, Reel A 41/11; fol. 16r, 17r, 29r, 90r) sometimes use the words *oli* and *auli* (and, more commonly, *ovalli*) for an initiatory lineage. I am indebted to Csaba Kiss (personal communication, October 2018) for this information.

²³ Naravarman’s Mandsaur inscription does not employ this phrase, but it does say Naravarman rules the earth, *praśāsati vasundharām* (14).

The Aulikaras and Their Associates

The Early Aulikara Dynasty

The ruling houses participating in the Aulikara power network begin with the dynasty of Jayavarman, commonly referred to as the Early Aulikaras. Direct epigraphic evidence is extant for three successive kings of this dynasty, beginning with Naravarman around 404 CE. Naravarman's two inscriptions from Bihar Kotra (A2, A3) name his father Siṃhavarman, and his Mandsaur inscription (A1) further reveals that his grandfather was named Jayavarman. It is possible, pending further research, that some graffiti in Bihar Kotra (B1) refer to these predecessors; and a single copper coin with Siṃhavarman's name (B2) has been reported without a recorded provenance. No further facts are known about the forebears of Naravarman. Haraprasad Shastri (1914) has suggested that Siṃhavarman may be identical to another Siṃhavarman, the father of Candravarman whose brief rock inscription has been found in Susunia²⁴ (Bankura District, West Bengal), but this identification is unlikely in view of the geographical distance and the lack of positive evidence.

D. R. Bhandarkar (1913, 162 and CII3rev p. 263) attempted to prove that one of the terms of adulation applied to Naravarman in his Mandsaur inscription means that Naravarman professed fealty to Candragupta II. The expression *siṃhāvīkrānta-gāmin* (I5), meaning “moving with the bold stride of a lion,” is laden with a secondary meaning according to Bhandarkar: Candragupta II is known from coins to have used the epithet *siṃha-vikrama*, so the epigraph implies that Naravarman “goes [for refuge] to the person [Candragupta] with the bold advance of a lion.” While it does seem possible that Naravarman was a subordinate ally to Gupta power (and perhaps obtained Daśapura as a result of his aid rendered to the Guptas against the Śakas), the inscription is not sufficient evidence to infer this. The reason for the author's choice of the compound *siṃha-vīkrānta-gāmin* was clearly to echo the name of Naravarman's father Siṃhavarman introduced in this verse, in close parallel to the way he plays in the previous stanza by describing the grandfather Jayavarman as a *narendra* (an Indra among men, i.e. a ruler), then comparing Naravarman's valour to that of *devendra* (the Indra of the gods).²⁵

²⁴ Reported by Vasu (1895) and re-edited by Haraprasad Shastri (1915).

²⁵ Jagannath Agrawal (cited, probably from personal communication, by A. Agrawal 1989, 262 n. 6) further noted a literary parallel: the adjective *mṛgendra-gāmin*, “moving like a lion,” is used innocuously in *Raghuvamśa* 2.30.

The Gangdhar inscription of Mayūrākṣaka (A4) was composed during the reign of Naravarman's son Viśvavarman – probably 431 CE²⁶ – and the Mandsaur inscription of the silk weavers (A6) mentions that Viśvavarman's son Bandhuvarman was ruling in Daśapura in 436 CE. We thus know about five successive kings, descended father to son, in the Early Aulikara house, but after Bandhuvarman this line disappears from view. Curiously, the silk weaver inscription says nothing about the ruler in the year 473 CE, when this inscription was created. This, along with other allusions in that inscription, suggests troubled years in Daśapura and the North Indian world at large; see page 95 for a brief overview. The Mandsaur inscription of Dattabhaṭṭa (A5), dated ca. 467 CE (and thus preceding the silk weaver inscription only by five years) records a king named Prabhākara allied to the Guptas. Prabhākara may have been a descendant of the Early Aulikara house but, as discussed on page 81, it seems more likely that he had no ties to this dynasty. The *Pādatāḍitaka* of Śyāmilaka, datable to sometime in the fifth century,²⁷ mentions a man of Daśapura named Rudravarman, whose name suggests that he may be a ruler of the Early Aulikara family. Sadly, there is no way of telling whether he was a purely literary figure or a historical one, and the play at one point describes him as a poet,²⁸ so the *varman* name may be serendipitous.

The Later Aulikaras

In the early sixth century Prakāśadharman and his (probably immediate) successor Yaśodharman attained great power, claiming to have defeated the Hūṇa invaders Toramāṇa and Mihirakula in turn. Yaśodharman has long been known to scholarship as an Aulikara, and when the same name became attached to Naravarman (see page 24), the assumption followed naturally that Yaśodharman was a scion of Naravarman's dynasty (e.g. Majumdar 1954, 39; Sircar 1965b, 413 n. 1).²⁹ The discovery of the Risthal

²⁶ The generally accepted date of this inscription is ca. 424 CE. See page 60 for my arguments for a revised date.

²⁷ See Dezső and Vasudeva (2009, xvii–xix) for a summary of opinions about this play's date.

²⁸ *Pādatāḍitaka* p. 24, *dāśerako rudravarmā*; p. 156, *anena kavinā dāśerakeṇa rudravarmaṇā*.

²⁹ It was in fact even suggested (D. Sharma 1943) that his true name was Yaśovarman, and the *v* in his name was mistakenly engraved (or read) as *dh*, since the two characters have a similar appearance. Given that the spelling *dharmān* is attested in four instances in three separate inscriptions (counting the two copies of

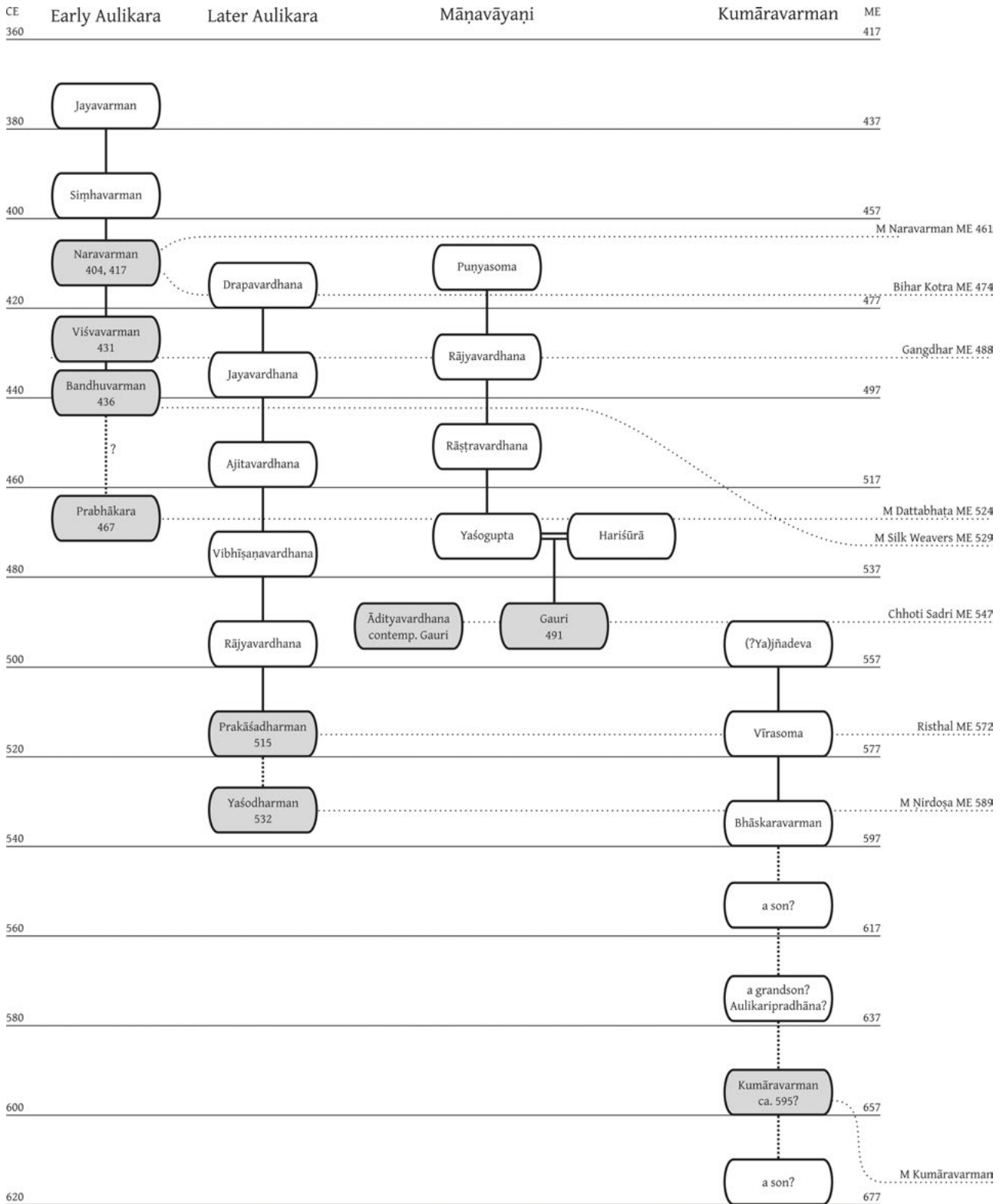


Figure 5: Genealogies of Aulikara and associated ruling houses.

Approximate dates shown in CE on left and ME on right, datable inscriptions labelled on far right. Rulers whose reign is mentioned in an inscription are shown in shaded fields, connected by dotted lines to the inscriptions mentioning them. The reigns of rulers in white fields are estimated, assuming 20 years per generation. Solid vertical lines indicate father-to-son descent, dotted lines show uncertain descent.

inscription (A9) in 1983 put an end to such hypotheses, since it belongs to Prakāśadharman (another king with a *dharman* name) and recounts five generations of ancestors before him. Hence these rulers have come to be labelled the “Later Aulikaras,” while Naravarman and his kin are now named “Early Aulikaras.” I retain this convention here, though if it should ever be proven decisively that Kumāravarma’s dynasty was also an Aulikara one, the name “Later Aulikara” would better apply to them. To prevent a confusing scenario like that involving the Later Guptas and Latter Guptas, we should perhaps call Yaśodharman’s line the Great Aulikaras or even Imperial Aulikaras, and reserve the tag Later Aulikara for Kumāravarma’s dynasty.

The two Aulikara lines overlap in time: Bandhuvarman predates Prakāśadharman by about eighty years, corresponding to three or four generations (see Figure 5), but none of Prakāśadharman’s five predecessors have names that satisfactorily match Early Aulikara names. It thus appears that the Later Aulikara line was not directly descended from the Early one, though the possibility cannot be excluded altogether. We now know that Yaśodharman definitely bore the additional name Viṣṇuvardhana.³⁰ It is conceivable that other members of the dynasty likewise used two (or more) names, and only the paucity of epigraphic evidence is to blame for our lack of information. Thus, the *varmans* of the Early Aulikara dynasty might have had alternative names in *vardhana*, and Drapavardhana, the progenitor of the Later Aulikara line, might have been identical to one of the Early Aulikara rulers. However, any such hypothesis³¹ is based solely on speculation, without any factual evidence.

If we adopt the less fanciful hypothesis that the two lines were separate (though probably related³²), then an explanation needs to be found for the fact that ancestors of Prakāśadharman – who must have coexisted with some Early Aulikara kings – are nonetheless given royal titles in the Risthal inscription. As Salomon (1989, 22–23) points out, the actual inscriptional dates of kings do not overlap at any point, so it is safe to assume that the rulers

whose inscriptions are known from any particular period were dominant at the given time. In other words, the early members of the Later Aulikara dynasty were petty local rulers or subordinate governors in the days of Naravarman, Viśvavarman and Bandhuvarman.³³ In a similar vein but with a different focus, Joanna Williams (2004, 133; probably influenced by Mirashi 1984a, 317) suggests that the two Aulikara houses might have been geographically separate at this time.

Nothing particular is known about the first five rulers of the Later Aulikara house, though the founder Drapavardhana may be identical to a king mentioned by the name Dravyavardhana in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* of Varāhamihira; see page 140 for a discussion of this issue. Prakāśadharman, the first of these kings of whose reign we actually have epigraphic evidence, expresses great pride over his victory against Toramāṇa in his Risthal inscription (dated ca. 515 CE), and also boasts of several great construction projects carried out in the city of Daśapura.

As for Yaśodharman, we have his own undated pillar inscription (inscribed in duplicate) from Sondhni (A11, A12), commemorating another victory against the Hūṇas represented this time by Mihirakula; and a stone inscription of his reign dated ca. 532 CE, by the Naigama potentate Nirdoṣa (A10). According to the inscription of Nirdoṣa, Yaśodharman bore the alternative name Viṣṇuvardhana,³⁴ and both epigraphs give him imperial titles (*rājādhirāja-parameśvara* in the stone inscription and *samrāj* in the Sondhni pillar). We have no record of Prakāśadharman’s relation to Yaśodharman, but, as Salomon (1989, 12) notes, there is “absolutely no doubt” that they belonged to the same line,³⁵ and it is “beyond reasonable doubt” that the former is the latter’s immediate predecessor and most probably his father. In addition to their proximity in time and the fact that they are the only two known Aulikara rulers with names in *dharman*, they are also linked by their courtiers. The poet Vāsula composed both the Risthal inscription and the Sondhni inscription, while Prakāśadharman’s chancellor Doṣa (alias Bhagavaddoṣa, see page 165) was the uncle

the Sondhni pillar inscription separately), this suggestion may be safely disregarded.

³⁰ Perhaps as a regnal name distinct from his birth name, see page 164.

³¹ One may for instance be tempted to put an equal sign between the Early Aulikara Jayavarman and the Later Aulikara Jayavardhana. However, in addition to the total lack of positive evidence, all the later Aulikaras between Jayavardhana and Prakāśadharman would have had to reign for tremendously long periods (and beget heirs at very advanced ages) for this to be possible.

³² As I suggested above (page 25), Drapavardhana may have been one of Naravarman’s sons.

³³ Salomon’s reasoning also extends to Gauri, who he suggests was dominant around 491 CE, and to Kumāravarma (see page 32). The former presupposes the identity of Gauri and Ādityavardhana, which is highly doubtful (see page 128).

³⁴ Some scholars including Fleet himself (e.g. CII3, 155 n. 5) have understood the inscription to mean that Yaśodharman and Viṣṇuvardhana were separate personages. This hypothesis is extremely unlikely and can safely be discarded; see page 164 for a discussion.

³⁵ Formerly, Williams (1972, 51) had proposed that Yaśodharman was an offspring of a union of the Early Aulikara house with the Mānavāyanis, but this may be discarded in light of the Risthal inscription.

(or father) and predecessor in office of Yaśodharman's chancellor Dharmadoṣa.

After Yaśodharman, the Later Aulikara dynasty disappears from view. There is a slight possibility that the dynasty of Kumārarvarman (page 32) is a continuation of this line, but there are at present more indications against this than for it.

The Naigamas

The Later Aulikaras were closely associated with another powerful family, widely referred to as the Naigamas, who provided hereditary chancellors (*rājasthānīya*)³⁶ to the Later Aulikara royalty. We have abundant information about members of this lineage, mostly from the Mand-saur stone inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10), but also from the Risthal inscription (A9) and the Chittorgarh fragment (A13, A14). The inscriptions, unfortunately, do not make Naigama family relations sufficiently clear (see Figure 6 for the generally accepted interpretation and an alternative reconstruction of the genealogy, and page 165 for a discussion), but the fact that several generations of Naigamas have served several generations of Aulikara kings in a ministerial function is certain. The Mand-saur stone records that the founder of the family was a tycoon named Ṣaṣṭhidatta, who took refuge at the feet of Yaśodharman's ancestors, though this does not necessarily mean occupying the position of *rājasthānīya*. His son Varāhadāsa is mentioned in the same inscription, as well as (probably) in the Chittorgarh fragment, which also speaks of a man named Viṣṇudatta who may have been one of Varāhadāsa's sons.³⁷ From the Risthal inscription we learn that Ṣaṣṭhidatta's grandson (or great-grandson depending on how the genealogy is reconstructed) Doṣa³⁸ was Prakāśadharman's chancellor, and that Doṣa's father was also chancellor to a predecessor of Prakāśadharman. The word *rājasthānīya* also appears in the Chittorgarh fragment, but who it applies to is not clear. Finally, according to the Mand-saur inscription, Doṣa's successor in office was his younger brother Abhayadatta, who in turn was

succeeded by Doṣa's son (or, in the conventional interpretation, niece) Dharmadoṣa.

The family's appellation is drawn from lines 10–11 of the Mand-saur inscription, which speaks of a "dynasty of Naigamas" (*anvavāyo ... naigamānām*). The word may mean either an interpreter of scripture (from *nigama* in the sense of a Vedic text), or a merchant (from *nigama* in the sense of a marketplace or merchant group). Fleet (CII3, 152) understood it in the former sense, but since the expression *vaṇijām śreṣṭho*, "best of merchants," is applied in the Chittorgarh fragmentary inscription to a member of (almost certainly) the same family, Sircar and Gai (1961, 54 n. 3) have pointed out that the latter is far more likely to be correct, and this has become the generally accepted view (Salomon 1989, 33 n. 11). The Naigamas thus started out as men of commerce, and *naigama* may simply be a description of the family profession. However, since we have no record of any other proper name for them, I continue here the widely adopted practice of using Naigama as their family name. Whether they had a different family name or not, the appellation *naigama* has an interesting corollary that to my knowledge has not been raised before: it seems possible that the Naigama chancellors were descendants of the silk weavers who, according to their inscription of 473 CE (A6) moved to Daśapura from the land of Lāṭa and then diversified into a variety of occupations. See page 98 for further discussion.

The Mānavāyanis

This dynasty is known through two inscriptions of a single ruler named Gauri.³⁹ A complete and fairly long inscription found in Chhoti Sadri (A7) preserves his genealogy to four generations of ancestors, and a fragmentary epigraph from Mand-saur (A8) records a shorter genealogy. Only the Chhoti Sadri inscription bears a date (ME 547, ca. 490 CE), which indicates that Gauri flourished in the interregnum during which "other kings" ruled Daśapura according to the inscription of the silk weavers (A6). The same inscription also mentions a *rājaputra* Gobhaṭa, who may have been Gauri's son.

³⁶ See page 8 about the translation of this term.

³⁷ Interestingly, the *Pādatāḍṭitaka* of Śyāmilaka (5th century), mentions a minister named Viṣṇudāsa (p. 24, *amātyo viṣṇudāsaḥ*) in the same breath as Rudravarma of Daśapura (q.v. page 27 with note 28); and a person named Varāhadāsa at another place (p. 130). Either or both of these may be coincidental similarities.

³⁸ Referred to as Bhagavaddoṣa elsewhere in scholarly literature. See page 165 for my reasons to understand only Doṣa as his name.

³⁹ Gauri is quite peculiar for a male name. One might be tempted to assume that it is a misreading or erroneous engraving of Śauri, since ś differs from g only in a small detail in the script of the pertinent inscriptions. The report of the Chhoti Sadri inscription (IAR 1953–54, 13) already suggested emendation to Śauri, but g is distinctly clear in both of the inscriptions that record this name. A misreading can thus be ruled out, and the chance that the same scribal mistake was committed in two separate inscriptions is negligible.

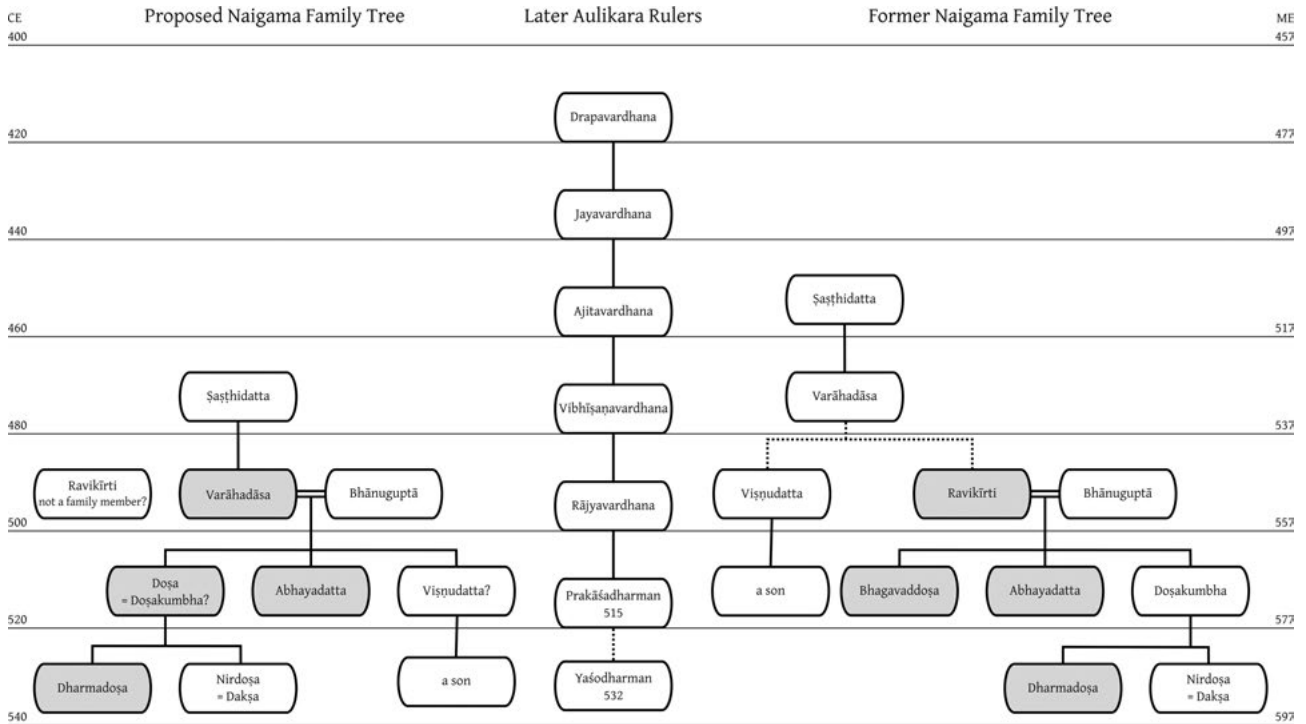


Figure 6: Possible genealogies of the Naigama family.

Approximate dates shown in CE on left and ME on right. The tree to the left of the Later Aulikara line shows my proposed reconstruction (discussed on page 165); the tree on the right shows a conventional reconstruction. Persons described as *rājasthāniya* or *amātya* in inscriptions are shown in shaded fields. Dates of the ancestors of Doṣa/Bhagavaddoṣa are estimated assuming 20 years per generation. Solid vertical lines indicate father-to-son descent, dotted lines show uncertain relations.

No unequivocal dynastic name is recorded for these rulers,⁴⁰ but they are said in the Chhoti Sadri inscription to originate from the Mānavāyaṇi clan (*kula*). As Sircar (1954b, 122) notes, the standard spelling would probably be Mānavāyani, implying descent from Manu Svāyaṃbhava and reminiscent of the *gotra* name Mānavya, which has been claimed on several occasions by ruling houses presumed to be of non-Aryan origin.⁴¹ The incompletely preserved characters *māna* in the Mandsaur fragment may also be an indication that they professed to be of the Mānava *gotra* (what remains of the context implies a *gotra* or family name here; *mānavya*, however, would be metrically impossible).

⁴⁰ G. H. Ojha (1930, 2) believed that the name of the dynasty was Gaura. I fully agree with Sircar (1954b, 122) in rejecting this and interpreting the word *gaura* (A7, line 4) simply as “bright” in the sense of prestigious.

⁴¹ Most notable among such dynasties are the Kadambas, but closer to Daśapura, the early Gujarat Cālukyas also made this claim around the turn of the 8th century, for example in the Navsari plates of Śryāśraya Śilāditya (Mirashi 1955, 123–27).

Gauri’s ancestry includes two men with names ending in *vardhana*, but the line does not appear to be connected to that of the Later Aulikaras. The name of Gauri’s great-grandfather is Rājyavardhana, which is also the name of Prakāśadharman’s father. However, since Gauri’s clearly legible date precedes Prakāśadharman’s equally clear date by twenty-four years, the two Rājyavardhanas cannot have been identical. Another of his ancestors has a name ending in *soma*, which may link Gauri’s family to the Nandsa *yūpa* inscriptions (see page 19) and to the predecessors of Kumāravarman (see below). The use of a shared name ending does not, of course, prove a direct connection, but it does imply that Gauri’s family was likewise of Mālava extraction rather than an outsider clan.

Gauri’s Mandsaur fragment mentions a king named Ādityavardhana, whose identity is uncertain. It is possible that Ādityavardhana was another name of Gauri, but what appears more likely is that he was a sovereign ruler to whom Gauri owed allegiance, possibly a member of an Aulikara family. This question is discussed on page 128.

The Dynasty of Kumārarvarman

A single fragment of a large stone slab (A15), discovered about the same time as the Risthal inscription, preserves the name of Kumārarvarman and his ancestors, none of whom are known from any other source. The single published edition of this Mandasaur stone inscription of Kumārarvarman (Mirashi 1983) heavily underestimated the amount of lost text at the beginning of each line of the epigraph, as a result of which the accepted genealogy of Kumārarvarman needs to be revised:⁴² there were probably more generations mentioned in the inscribed account than previously assumed. Rather than four generations including Kumārarvarman, the long *praśasti* in my opinion records the deeds of no fewer than five, and probably as many as seven generations of rulers (see Figure 5 on page 28).

The epigraph has no extant date, but it mentions a certain “son of Kṛṣṇa” who attacked Kumārarvarman and was slain by him. The attacker was quite certainly the Kalacuri Śaṅkaragaṇa, son of Kṛṣṇarāja, who is associated with an inscriptional date of 595 CE. The palaeography of the Kumārarvarman inscription matches that period; if I am correct in hypothesising that the commissioner of the inscription was actually Kumārarvarman’s son, then its probable date is in the first or second decade of the seventh century.

Kumārarvarman’s *praśasti* mentions Daśapura in a context that, though partly lost, implies that it was the royal seat of this dynasty (verses 29–30). It also mentions someone who was foremost among Aulikara descendants (*aulikari-pradhāna*, see also page 24 above), but the context of this word is even less well preserved. It has been suggested that a member of Kumārarvarman’s dynasty defeated this Aulikara scion (Mirashi 1983, 71), or that he pleased the

Aulikara lord as a vassal (Sircar 1984b, 392). In my opinion the most likely restoration is that he sired a son who was foremost among the Aulikara progeny, but Sircar’s suggestion cannot be ruled out. See page 207 for my reasoning.

It follows from this that Kumārarvarman’s house was connected to the Aulikaras not only by the fact that they ruled Daśapura after Yaśodharman’s time, but by blood as well. The conventional count of Kumārarvarman’s forebears (Salomon 1989, 15) puts his dynasty’s progenitor (Ya?)jñādeva in the same rough time bracket as Yaśodharman, in the second quarter of the sixth century. But if my estimate of the number of generations for whom we have no extant names is correct, then (Ya?)jñādeva instead flourished two generations earlier, in the last quarter of the fifth century or about the same time as Gauri.

By this count then, there is a temporal overlap between the Later Aulikaras and Kumārarvarman’s line, with the implication that Kumārarvarman cannot have been a descendant of Yaśodharman since the names in the two genealogies do not match. Not only are there no exact matches or close resemblances, there is not even a name ending in *vardhana* among Kumārarvarman’s ancestors; nor would it be likely for a descendant of Yaśodharman not to include his glorious ancestor in his *praśasti*. There are, however, two *varmans* in his genealogy (including Kumārarvarman himself), and there is also a *soma*, which may imply kinship with the line of Gauri. However, if I am correct in assuming that the kings of Kumārarvarman’s dynasty called themselves Aulikaras, then descent from the Mānavāyani line is unlikely.⁴³ It does, however, seem possible that these kings were direct descendants of the Early Aulikara line, which favoured names in *varman* and disappeared from our sights before the emergence of Kumārarvarman’s earliest recorded ancestor.

⁴² See my commentary on the inscription for details, and page 212 for the thought process that led me to the conclusion that the original stone had been much wider than assumed.

⁴³ Complex hypothetical scenarios can, of course, be drawn up but would require further evidence. For example, Kumārarvarman’s dynasty may have descended from the Mānavāyanis along the male line but from the Later Aulikaras along the maternal line, and appropriated the name Aulikara after the waning of the Later Aulikaras.

Part II: **Inscriptions**

A Major Inscriptions

A1 Mandsaur Inscription of the Time of Naravarman

Substrate				Siddham ID:	OB00016
Material	stone		Object type	slab consisting of two fragments, incomplete	
Dimensions, assembled	width	50 cm	height	31 cm	
Dimensions, fragment A	width	50 cm	height	19 cm	
Dimensions, fragment B	width	12 cm	height	12 cm	
Discovery, fragment A	1912 Mandsaur (around 24°03'22"N 75°05'30"E), found in a field				
Discovery, fragment B	1922–23 Mandsaur (around 24°03'22"N 75°05'30"E), circumstances not reported				
Current location	Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior (on exhibit)				
Inscription				Siddham ID:	IN00017
Dimensions	width	48 cm	height	31 cm	Char size 8 mm Line height 20–30 mm
Date CE	403–405	Basis of dating		dated Kṛta 461 (11–2), Āśvina śukla 5 (15)	
Topic	construction of a temple of Kṛṣṇa(?)				
Persons mentioned	Jayavarman, Siṃhavarman, Naravarman; Varṇavṛddhi, Jayamitrā, Jaya, Balaśūrā				
Places mentioned	Daśapura(?)				
Compendia	Bh List 3; CII3rev 14; SI III.51; GKA 341–342				
Other editions	H. Shastri 1914 (Fragment B only edited in CII3rev)				

Description

The inscription is on a stone slab split into at least three fragments, of which two are extant. Fragment A is a full-width rectangular piece of the upper portion of the stone, 50 centimetres wide and 31 centimetres high. It was found in 1912 while ploughing in a field owned by Lala Jayashankar near the Fort Gate of Mandsaur and close to the bank of the Shivna in the vicinity of Todi village (टोडी, 24°03'22"N 75°05'30"E, i.e. on the southern bank). It was moved first to Jayashankar's house, then to the residence of the local governor. Fragment B, discovered in 1922–23, is a smaller piece 12 centimetres wide at the top and 9.5 centimetres wide at the bottom; its height is 12 centimetres. The circumstances of its finding are not reported; the stone may have been discovered in the course of trial excavations conducted by Garde (ARASI 1922–23, 185) or found earlier by locals and come to Garde's attention at this time. The thickness (depth) of the slab is not reported and cannot be measured at present.

The discovery of fragment A was reported in PRASW 1913, 58–59 and by D. R. Bhandarkar (1913), and immediately commented on in the same volume of *The Indian Antiquary* by R. G. Bhandarkar (1913) and Haraprasad Shastri (1913). It was first edited (from the original stone and from inked impressions produced by D. R. Bhandarkar)

by Shastri (1914). The discovery of fragment B was reported by M. B. Garde in ARASI 1922–23, 187. D. R. Bhandarkar presumably began editing the new addition soon after this, but to my knowledge this was never published separately, only seeing the light of day in his full edition of this epigraph in the revised *Corpus Inscriptionum* (pp. 261–266). It appears that no facsimile of this fragment has ever been published. The text presented below has been re-edited from photographs of the original stone taken at the Gujri Mahal Museum of Gwalior in January 2017.

The inscription consists of nine full lines of text on fragment A and five more lines, of which only about the first quarter is extant, on fragment B. It is certain that no text has been lost above the top of fragment A, and it is likely, though not entirely certain, that fragment B fits directly below the end of the first fragment. D. R. Bhandarkar (CII3rev p. 261) observes that the bottom edge of the upper fragment was purposely and neatly cut. Judging from the rubbing, this cut only affected some descending strokes of the last line. The top edge and the slanting right-hand edge of the lower fragment appear to be even straighter, but there is no way to ascertain whether the two fragments dovetail together, since at present both are cemented to a panel and the grout between them is partially filled up. Due to careless reassembly, mortar now covers much of the last line of frag-

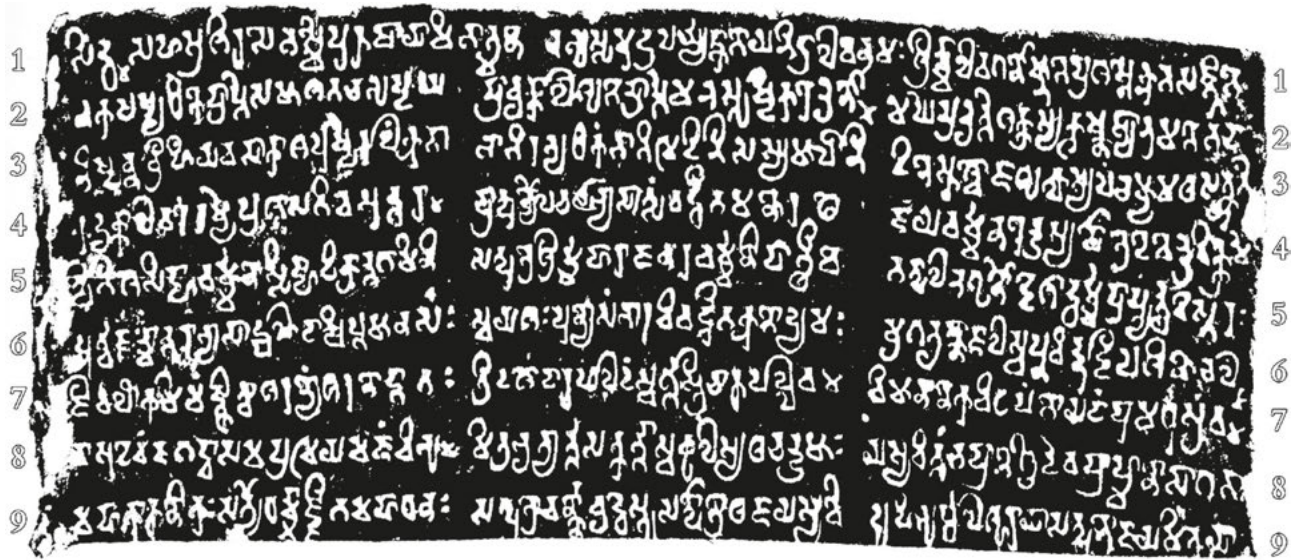


Figure 7: Mandsaur stone inscription of the time of Naravarman. Inked rubbing from Shastri (1914).

ment A and slightly obscures some portions of all other edges. The outer edges of the reassembled panel have also been painted over with whitewash that was applied to the museum wall without protecting the exhibited item. Aside from the breakage and modern-day abuse, the epigraph is in an excellent condition: the surface is smooth and the lettering is clearly incised.

The lines are horizontally uneven, tending to rise slightly in the middle and then dip down again near the end. They are spaced about 2.5 centimetres one below the other with some variance; characters are on average 8 millimetres tall. The text is arranged in three columns of slightly uneven width, with a space of 1–2 character widths between columns. Lines are to be read across the columns. Except for the word *siddham* at the beginning, the entirety of the extant text is in the *anuṣṭubh* metre, with one half-stanza in every column. Thus, every even line ends at a verse end, while odd lines end at half-verse ends. The beginning of the text on fragment B looks like it may be the continuation of the half stanza up to the end of line 9. I therefore edit the inscription as a single unit of text, numbering lines and stanzas contiguously. The possibility cannot, however, be excluded that one or more full lines have been lost between the fragments. If this were the case, then the second half of my verse 14 would be lost, and the numbering of all subsequent stanzas would need to be shifted forward. If an odd number of lines were lost, then the stanza boundaries would also shift by one half-verse, i.e. the fragments I interpret as quarters *ab* would turn out to be quarters *cd* and vice versa. Additional lines may also have been lost after the bottom of the

second fragment, but from what can be understood of the surviving text, this was probably not the case; rather, the original epigraph was complete in 14 lines.

Script and Language

The script is essentially the rounded variety of Mālavān late Brāhmī, with some tendencies toward the angular form. The angularity of the letters becomes more prominent in the last two lines of the first fragment and the whole of the second fragment: nail heads become more pronounced, and acute angles at the bottom right and left take over from rounded corners. *Ra*, *ka* and initial *ā* have elongated stems, with a hook at the bottom of *ra* and *ā*, but no hook on *ka*. *La* has an extended tail curving back over the top and *lo*, occurring only in 16, is cursive. *Ma* is looped, but only rarely takes the typical rounded form, with curved arms starting from two separate points on a nearly circular loop (e.g. *candramāh*, 18). More often, the arms are straighter and start from a single point, suggesting a cursive ductus where the character was not executed as a loop, but as a pinched hourglass shape (e.g. *°odyamaḥ*, 16). In the latter lines the body of *ma* is a triangle with straight sides (e.g. *maṅgalyaḥ*, 113). The shape of *dha* also changes as the inscription progresses, from a clean oval without a headmark (e.g. *adhike*, 12; *madhu*, 17) through slightly angular with a serif on top (*dhanaḥ* in 19, discernible only in the rubbing) to an oblong quadrangle with altogether straight sides and a prominent headmark (*dhanyo*, 113). *Sa* is hooked with an upright leg on the right and *ṇa* has the looped southern



Figure 8. Mandsaur stone inscription of the time of Naravarman. Composite digital photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior.

form; *bha* is likewise of a southern, broad type, but *ca* is narrow and beaked. *Ya* is as a rule tripartite with a loop on the left arm, though in °*opacayā*° (14) a cursive bipartite form was engraved, while *toyadā*° (17) may be viewed as either a pinched bipartite form, or as a tripartite one with the left arm merged in the loop. *Da* is rounded, with a fairly small body. *Śa* is also rounded with equal legs, and has this basic shape throughout the inscription. Its crossbar does not reach the left leg, but the left leg often bends inward in a small hook, and the form used in *śaraṇa* (17) is a cursive simplification where the hook continues as the crossbar. A cursive form of *ru* also occurs (17, but not in 11). Shastri and Bhandarkar both point out *tha* in *manorathe* (14), which (as often seen further to the south) has a small ring inside the bottom of the body instead of the crossbar. This, however, is just another cursive variation; no two specimens of *tha* are wholly identical in the inscription (see *atha* in 13 with a dot, *atha* in 18 with a short curved line on the right, and for subscript *tha*, *arttha* in 15 with a short line at top left and *pārthive* in 15 with an almost vertical crossbar that is clearly a cursive extension of *t* above).

The attachment of vowel marks varies. Some of the variation must be governed by the consonant, for instance *ā* always attaches to *m* on the body. The combination *du* (19, only discernible in the rubbing) is unusual in that the *u mātrā* curves up on the right and extends all the way to the headline (similar forms occur in some Valkha and Valabhi plates). Some variation may be calligraphic in nature. The *ā* of *saṃbhāra* (16) and the *e* of *medinī* (12) and *aprameyam* (18) involves vertical strokes extending below the baseline, while regular *e* and *ā mātrās* only angle down for a short length. In *manorathe* (12) the right-hand stroke of the *o* is attached to the body of *n*, though *ā* is attached at the head (e.g. *nānā*, 112). Other instances of variation in form include the *ṛ* of *kṛṣṇa* (12) which curves in the opposite direction to regular *ṛ* marks (11,3,6), perhaps constrained by available space.

There are neither punctuation marks, nor any other non-alphabetic symbols in the inscription. Initial long *ī* in line 4 is a rare character. Initial *e* also occurs (line 2), with a stem on the right. It cannot be seen in the original at present, but the old rubbings clearly show that its form is a vertical stroke with a hook at the bottom and a dot on each side. Medial *i* is represented by a closed circle, while the older symbol for *ī* has been cursivised into a spiral that is consistently open on the bottom left. *Halanta* consonants (*m* only) are consistently used at the ends of half and full stanzas, but not at the ends of quarters (e.g. °*ābhyāsāt saṃvarddhita*). The final *m* has no line above it, but it is as a rule reduced in size and complexity and inscribed lower than regular characters (though e.g.

pallavam in 17 only differs from the *ma* above it in that it has no headmark).

The use of *anusvāra* is inconsistent: it is occasionally employed where a nasal consonant would be expected (e.g. *paṃcamyām*, 15), but the consonant *ṇ* is used instead of an expected *anusvāra* before *g* (*śaraṇaṇ gataḥ*, 17) and before *h* (*siṅha*, twice in 15). Consonants following *r* are doubled, including *th* and *dh* but notably and consistently excluding *t* (e.g. *putro*, 15; *gotro*, 110; possibly *mitrayā*, 19). Before *r*, only *k* is doubled and that only some of the time (*śakkrasya*, 12; *vikkrame* 14, but *vikrānta* 15). *Upadh māṇīya* and *jihvāmūliya* do not occur.

The language is good Sanskrit with some non-standard features. The use of *śrīr* instead of *śrī* in compound (11, 18) is worth noting. This usage may be grammatically acceptable, but it is definitely unconventional. However, it seems to be standard in, yet not limited to, inscriptions of the Early Aulikaras (also occurring in the Bihar Kotra stone, A2; the Bihar Kotra cave, A3; and possibly in Bihar Kotra graffiti, B1).¹ The inscription uses some non-standard forms of words, which are probably vernacularisms. The spelling *āśvoja* (13) instead of *āśvayuja* may also have been motivated by the metre, but the use of the equivalent word *aśvayuja* and the application of standard *saṃdhi* (i.e. *dīne śvayuja* instead of *dīne āśvoja*) would have produced correct metre with standard language. Metre cannot be the reason for the employment of *maghe* instead of the etymologically related word *mahe* (or *makhe*, see the Commentary below), so this is either a spelling that reflects local pronunciation at the time, or a simple mistake. The grammar of the phrase *duhitur bbalaśūrāyā satputro jayamitrayā* (19) is problematic. Sircar restores a *visarga* at the end and emends to *jayamitrāyāḥ*, but this would render the *pāda* unmetrical. Bhandarkar translates “son through Jayamitrā,” implying that he accepts the instrumental, but in doing so disregards the fact that *duhitur* does not agree with *jayamitrayā*. Emending to *duhitrā* would take care of that problem, but would leave another instance of *satputro* in the previous *pāda* redundant. I therefore believe *jayamitrayā* was intended as a genitive, either through inattention or, in case *jayamitrayāḥ* was originally inscribed as Sircar believes, as a conscious alteration of the word for the sake of the metre. There are also a few simple mistakes of omission, possibly by the engraver.

As noted above, almost all of the inscription is composed in *anuṣṭubh* verse. A number of metrical features may be worth noting here. The word *siṃhavarmmaṇas*

¹ Gai (1990b) cites additional examples from epigraphy and literature and argues that the use of *śrīr* in compound is correct by Pāṇinian rules.

(v7a) is unmetrical, but *siṃhavarmmasya* would have been metrically appropriate, though grammatically risqué. I believe this is what the poet had in mind originally,² and the text was subsequently corrected for grammar at the detriment of metre. The first quarter of v9 ends in a light syllable. While theoretically the last syllable of every *pāda* counts as prosodically heavy even when it is in fact light (*brevis in longo*), in my experience poets rarely avail of this licence at the ends of odd quarters of short metres. Another type of licence (*muta cum liquida*) is used in v12c, where the *ca* is counted as prosodically light before the conjunct *pr* (the sequence --- for *ca prāṇāś* would be permissible in a *ma vipulā*, but the initial part of the quarter does not conform to the pattern expected in that variant metre). This licence is permitted by some authorities on *chandas*, but is rarely met with in poetic practice.

Commentary

Usually referred to as an inscription of Naravarman, this is in fact an inscription of some other personage, made during the reign of Naravarman. Most of the extant text is concerned with the glorification of Naravarman and the donor, who is not introduced by name in the extant portion of the inscription. The original purpose of the epigraph is now lost, but it seems to commemorate the foundation of a public building, most likely a temple to Kṛṣṇa.

The inscription (v2) bears a date expressed in words: the year 461 of the Mālava Era. The day is the fifth *tithi* of the month of Āśvina (*āśvoja*, 13; see also Script and Language above). The text (v3) also tells us that the rainy season had come and that the festival of Śakra approved by Kṛṣṇa had begun. D. R. Bhandarkar (1981, 265 n. 3) argues that *prāpte*, qualifying the year in line 2, must mean that the year is elapsed, because the same word is applied in the next verse to the rainy season, while the inscription is dated five days after the end of the rainy season. Thus, according to Bhandarkar, *prāpte* must have been intended in the (rare but attested) meaning “completed.” In my opinion the author was not so pedantic and may well have spoken of the arrival of the rainy season even after its passing. Moreover, even if *prāpta* should mean “completed” in the second verse, there is no compulsion for it to be used in the same sense in the first. The number may thus be that of the current year as well as that of elapsed years, so the equivalent year is 403, 404 or 405 CE.

² Compare *naravarmmasya* in line 2 of the Bihar Kotra Cave Inscription (A3), and similar endings in the seals of Naravarman (B4) and Viṣṇuvarman (B5).

The festival of Śakra referred to is beyond doubt the Indramaha, widely celebrated in ancient India during the monsoon.³ Its timing varied, falling in the bright fortnight of either Bhādrapada or the next month, Āśvina. The choice of the month may depend on whether the applicable calendar is *amānta* or *pūrṇimānta*. D. R. Bhandarkar (CII3rev pp. 263–264) convincingly suggests that the reason why the festival is said to be “approved by Kṛṣṇa” (*kṛṣṇasyānumate*, 12) is the story of the rivalry of Kṛṣṇa and Indra, which culminated in Kṛṣṇa’s lifting of Mount Govardhana and Indra’s admission of defeat. According to the *Harivaṃśa*, Indra at this point relinquished half of the original four months of the rainy season to Kṛṣṇa: after the first two months (i.e. at the beginning of the month of Āśvina) Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu would waken from his annual slumber, the festival of the flag (*dhvaja*) would be celebrated in honour of both Kṛṣṇa and Indra, and then the rains would subside, autumn would begin and Kṛṣṇa would take over as predominant.⁴ In addition to confirming an Indra festival in early Āśvina with the implicit approval of Kṛṣṇa, this passage of the *Harivaṃśa* also includes a description of the beauty of early autumn reminiscent of verse 4 of the present inscription.⁵ It is thus possible that the author of the inscription had not only the same story in mind, but the specific text as well. The *Harivaṃśa* (62.54) further employs the phrase *pravṛtṣu makheṣu ca*, which resembles *maghe pravṛtte śakkrasya* in line 2 of the inscription. If our author did model his work on this *Harivaṃśa* passage, then perhaps *maghe* should be emended to *makhe* instead of *mahe*.

The connection between Indra’s feast and Viṣṇu’s ritual awakening may be worth exploring further. I shall not attempt to resolve the problem here, only sketch a vague outline of it. Viṣṇu normally spends four months sleeping in the summer and awakens on the 11th day of Kārttika *śuklapakṣa* (see e.g. Willis 2009, 31), but the *Harivaṃśa* seems to say here that he is henceforth to awaken after only two months. The fact that the present inscription begins with an invocation to Viṣṇu on his couch of waters (v1) may also imply a connection between

³ See Raghavan (1979, 117–55) for a detailed overview.

⁴ *Harivaṃśa* 62.45–46abcd, Indra speaking: *ye ceme vārṣikā māsās catvāro vihītā mama| eṣām ardham prayacchāmi śarat-kālam tu paścimam|| adya-prabhṛti māsau dvau jñāsyanti mama mānavāḥ| varṣārdhe ca dhvajo nityam tataḥ pūjām avāpsyati| ... 62.55ab, tataḥ pravartsyate puṇyā śarat suptothite tvayi| ... 62.56cd, mahendraś cāpy upendraś ca mahīyetām mahītale||*

⁵ Compare *Harivaṃśa*, *sasasyāyām ca sīmāyām* in 62.53 and *phalavatsu tṛṇeṣu ca| ikṣumatsu ca deṣeṣu* in 62.54 with the inscription, *medinī sasya-mālinī* in 13 and *niṣpanna-vrihi-yavasā kāśa-puṣpair alamkṛtā* in 14.

these to holidays. Below, I translate that verse as referring to the sleeping Viṣṇu, but the word *nidrālu* (11) also, and perhaps primarily, means “drowsy.” It is thus not impossible that the invocation is to a Viṣṇu who has just awakened from (two months of) sleep: that theme was elaborated in a stanza in the *Mudrārākṣasa* of Viśākha-datta which subsequently became immensely popular judged on the number of citations in *subhāṣita* anthologies and poetical treatises.⁶ If the author had an early-morning Viṣṇu in mind, that would suggest that the Indramaha and the awakening were roughly contemporaneous. The *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* says the festival of Indra commences on the bright eighth of Bhādrapada.⁷ It does not discuss the awakening of Viṣṇu, but only mentions it in passing to say that the king should perform a lustration ceremony (*nirājana*) for his army when Viṣṇu opens his eyes after the monsoon, and then lists a variety of dates when this latter ceremony may take place, primarily in Kārttika but also in Āśvina.⁸ Given that various dates have been recorded by authorities for both of the festivals here, the possibility that they overlapped in certain sets of customs cannot be excluded. However, all that can be definitely established on the basis of the present inscription is that when and where it was produced, the Indra festival began (probably shortly) before the bright fifth of Āśvina, and that its connection with the awakening of Viṣṇu is tenuous at best. It is also worth noting that according to the closely related Gaṅgdhār inscription (A4 114–15), the awakening of Viṣṇu took place on or near the bright thirteenth of Kārttika.

Having recorded the date, the inscription turns to the reigning king Naravarman (v6–7). He is introduced as the grandson of Jayavarman and son of Siṃhavarman, and praised in vague superlatives. Verses 8 to 14 describe the donor in similar terms of generic flattery, interspersed with the statement that he has recognised the transitory nature of the material world and sought refuge with Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa. We learn that his grandfather’s name was Jaya and his father’s Varṇavṛddhi (v13), and that his maternal grandmother was called Balaśūrā and his mother Jayamitrā (v14; see also Script and Language above). Bhandarkar believes the donor’s own name was Satya, but I see no reason to concur; *satya* in v9 is more likely another laudatory adjective like those around it, and the donor’s name would have been recorded in the

6 *Mudrārākṣasa* 3.21; see Balogh (2013, 252) for texts citing this stanza.

7 *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* 42.23, *bhādrapada-śukla-pakṣasyāṣṭamyām*,

8 *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* 43.1-2, *bhagavati jaladhara-pakṣma-kṣapākārārkeṣane kamalanābhe| unmīlayati turaṅgama-kari-nara-nirājanaṃ kuryāt| dvādaśyām aṣṭamyām| kārttika-śuklasya pañcadaśyām vā| āsvayuje vā kuryān nirājana-saṃjñitām śāntim|*

lost portion of the text, presumably in verse 15. If he had any titles or offices, they are likewise lost; the surviving text implies that he was a wealthy merchant (v9 mentions his enterprises, *udyama*, and v13 talks about his legally obtained wealth). According to the first line preserved on fragment B (v14cd), he belonged to the Gārgāyaṇa *gotra* and in addition, a caste or clan may have been specified according to Bhandarkar’s understanding of the text, by which the word *jātitaḥ* belongs semantically with the lost portion of the verse. I, however, prefer to construe *jātitaḥ* with the extant part, i.e. simply meaning “of the Gārgāyaṇa *gotra* by birth.”

Within the donor’s introduction, a stanza and a half (v10cd-11) are dedicated to a metaphor of Vāsudeva as a tree, with features of the (super)natural world likened to its parts. There is no word explicitly meaning “tree” in the text, and Bhandarkar assumes that this is to be supplied. I prefer to interpret *madhu-srava* in verse 11 as a double entendre, meaning “trickling nectar” on the one hand and “mahua tree”⁹ on the other. Although this specific meaning is only known from lexicons (see MW s. v.), it is appropriate to the context and fits in with the author’s style of putting the subject at the end of long passages. The mahua is a tree of many uses, most famous of which is the alcoholic beverage made from its flowers. This may be a hint at Kṛṣṇa’s intoxicating nature, but may also simply imply his sweetness. The fruit(s) of the tree are equated to *tridaśa*, which both Shastri and Bhandarkar understand as “heaven.” What they had in mind was probably that one goes to heaven as a result of worshipping Vāsudeva, not that heaven is a part of Vāsudeva as fruits are parts of a tree. Admittedly, *phala* is commonly used in the sense of “result.” However, “heaven” is a very uncommon meaning for *tridaśa*. Moreover, the other three descriptions directly equate a part of the tree to a celestial thing. Ultimately, I (agreeing with Sircar) prefer to see here an expression of the idea that the sundry gods are all outcroppings of Vāsudeva.

The remaining fragments of text on the second stone fragment reveal some additional details. Verse 16 mentions a great and famous city, and its extant part ends with *pañca-dvig*. As proposed already by Garde (ARASI 1922–23, 187) and accepted by all scholars who worked on this inscription after him, this must be a remnant of *pañca-dviguṇa*, “five twice,” alluding to Daśapura. Verse 17 mentions plants, which may be part of a description of the town or of the environs of the ostensible building that was sponsored by the donor. Verse 19 appears to be a prayer for blessings; Bhandarkar’s suggestion that this is

9 *Madhuca longifolia* (J.Koenig ex L.) J.F.Macbr.

meant for the donor and his descendants (the word *putra* survives in I13) is very plausible.

The last extant line mentions something inhabited by Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇenādध्यūṣitas*) and the extant text ends with the word *tāvāt*, which calls to mind a benediction frequently used at the end of dedicatory inscriptions, praying that the building in question stand as long as the

Moon and stars remain. In my opinion this justifies the hypothesis that the inscription commemorates the erection of a temple to Kṛṣṇa.¹⁰ It also implies that there were no additional lines after the last extant one. The remainder of the fourteenth line would have consisted of one more stanza or some prose, perhaps recording the name of the poet and the artisan.

Diplomatic Text

[Fragment A]

- [1] (si)ddhaM⁽¹⁾ sahasra-śirase tasm(ai) puruṣāy(ā)m(i)tātmane catus-samudra-paryyaṅka-toya-nidrālave
namaḥ⁽²⁾ śrīṛ!-mmālava-gaṇāmnāte praśaste kṛta-sa(m)jñīte
- [2] (E)ka-ṣaṣṭy-adhike prāpte samā-śata-catuṣṭaye⁽³⁾ prāvṛ(ṭ)-kāle śubhe prāpte manas-tuṣṭi-kare nṛṇāM
ma;gh!e pravṛtte śakkrasya kṛṣṇasyānumate tad(ā)
- [3] ⁽⁴⁾ niṣpanna-vrīhi-yavasā kāśa-puṣpair alaṃkṛtā bhābhir abhyadhikaṃ bhāti medinī sasya-mālinī⁽⁵⁾ dine
jĀśvoja!-śuklasya paṃcamyām atha satkṛte
- [4] Īdṛk-kāla-vare ramye praśāsati vasundharāM⁽⁶⁾ prāk-puṇyopacayābhyāsāt saṃvarddhita-manorathe
jayavarmma-narendrasya pautre devendra-vikkrame
- [5] ⁽⁷⁾ kṣitīś(a)-si;ñ!havarmmaṇas si;ñ!ha-vikrānta-
gāmini satputre śrīṛ!-mmahārāja-naravarmmaṇi pārtthive⁽⁸⁾ tat-pālana-guṇoddeśād dharmma-
prāpty-arttha-vistaraha
- [6] pūrva-janmāntarābhyāsād balād ākṣipta-mānasaḥ⁽⁹⁾ sva-yaśaḥ-puṇya-saṃbhāra-vivarddhita-
kṛtodyamaḥ mṛga-tṛṣṇā-jala-svapna-vid(y)ud-d(i)pa-śikhā-cala(M)
- [7] ⁽¹⁰⁾ jīva-lokam imam jñātvā śaraṇyaṃ śaraṇaṃ gataḥ tridaśodāra-phaladaṃ svargga-strī-cāru-pallavaM⁽¹¹⁾
vimānāneka-viṭapaṃ toyadāmbu-
madhu-sravaM
- [8] ⁽¹³⁾ (v)āsudevaṃ jagad-vāsam aprameyam ajaṃ vibhuM⁽¹²⁾ mitra-bhr̥tyārtta-satkarttā sva-kulasya!tha
candramāḥ yasya vittaṃ ca prāṇās ca deva-brāhmaṇasā ga(tā)[ḥ]
- [9] mahā-kāruṇikaḥ satyo dharmmārjita-mahādhanah satputro varṇnavṛddhes tu satpauto tha jayasya vai
⁽¹⁴⁾ duhitor bbalaśūrāyā satputro jJayamit(r)a(y)ā!

[Fragment B]

- [10] gārggāyaṇa-sagotro vai jāti(ta)[ḥ] [√ √ √ √]⁽¹⁵⁾ [√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √]
- [11] ⁽¹⁶⁾ pure mahati vikhyaṭe paṃca-dvig[?uṇa-saṃjñake] [√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √]⁽¹⁷⁾ [√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √]
- [12] nānā-vṛkṣa-latā-gulma-saṃpra[yukta] [√ √ √ √]⁽¹⁸⁾ [√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √]
- [13] ⁽¹⁹⁾ dhanyo (bha)vatu maṅgalyaḥ pu(trā)[?-pautra-samanvitaḥ] [√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √]⁽²⁰⁾ [√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √]
- [14] kṛṣṇenādध्यūṣitas tāva(t) [√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √]⁽²¹⁾ [√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √]

¹⁰ Bhandarkar cautiously translates “Permeated by Kṛṣṇa” and ignores *tāvāt*. Since the context is lost, my more specific translation “inhabited” is not entirely certain, but more than likely.

Curated Text

[Fragment A][1]

(si)ddhaM

⟨Verse 1. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩
 sahasra-śīrase tasm(ai)
 puruṣāy(ā)m(i)tātmane
 catus-samudra-paryyañka-
 toya-nidrālave namaḥ

⟨Verse 2. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩
 śrīṛ!-mmālava-gaṇāmnāte
 praśaste kṛta-sa(ṃ)jñīte
^[2](e)ka-śaṣṭy-adhike prāpte
 samā-śata-catuṣṭaye

⟨Verse 3. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩
 prāvṛ(ṭ)-kāle śubhe prāpte
 manas-tuṣṭi-kare nṛṇām
 ma(gh:h)e pravṛtte śakkrasya
 kṛṣṇasyānumate tad(ā)

⟨Verse 4. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩
^[3]niṣpanna-vrīhi-yavasā
 kāśa-puṣpair alaṃkṛtā
 bhābhir abhyadhikaṃ bhāti
 medinī sasya-mālinī

⟨Verse 5. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩
 dine jāśvoja!-śuklasya
 pañcamyām atha satkṛte
^[4]idṛk-kāla-vare ramye
 praśāsati vasundharām

Translation

[Fragment A]

Accomplished.¹¹

⟨1⟩
 Homage to that thousand-headed Person (*puruṣa*) of
 immeasurable essence who slumbers¹² in water on a
 couch that is the Four Oceans.

⟨2⟩
 When four centuries and then sixty-one years have come
 to pass according to the laudable [reckoning] designated
 as Kṛta, handed down in the majestic Mālava confederacy;

⟨3⟩
 when the pleasant time of the monsoon has come,
 bringing contentment to the minds of men;
 when the festival of Śakra has begun as approved by
 Kṛṣṇa;¹³ then

⟨4⟩
 the fat land burgeons with paddies and grasses, bears
 sprays of wild sugarcane¹⁴ flower as ornaments and crops
 as garlands, and shines more than ever with lights.¹⁵

⟨5⟩
 At such a delightful good time, on the celebrated day
 that is the fifth lunar day of the bright half of the month
 of Āśvina, while the earth is controlled by ⟨7⟩His Majesty
 King Naravarman,

Text Notes

Alternative opinions cited below are from Bhandarkar's edition in CII3rev (Bh) and, for the first fragment only, from those of Shastri (S) and Sircar in SI.

[2] *prāvṛṭ*] S and Bh read *prāvṛk* and emend. I agree with SI that the character is the expected *ṭkā*, though not a well-formed one.

[2] *maghe*] The reading is absolutely clear in the stone. S emends to *mahe*. Sten Konow (editorial footnote, H. Shastri 1914, 320 n. 5) suggests emending to (or reading?) *meghe pranṛtte*. Bh follows S and dismisses Konow's suggestion. I concur, though see also the Commentary.

[2] *kṛṣṇa*] The vowel mark of *kṛ* is conspicuously different from those of *kṛ* in lines 1, 3 and 6: those are a regular curly diagonal attached to the stem of *k*, while this one curves the other way. This unusual form was probably engraved because the preceding *sya* was perceived to be in the way.

Footnotes

11 See page 6 about translating *siddham* as “accomplished.”

12 See the Commentary for the possibility of a slightly different translation.

13 See the Commentary.

14 Wild sugarcane translates *kāśa*, probably *Saccharum spontaneum* L. The flowers are large, light and airy tufts resembling reed panicles.

15 The reason why the land shines more than ever may simply be that the clouds have dispersed and the air is clear after the rain; in this case *bhābhir*, “with lights” means the rays of the sun and/or moon. The brightness of the moon at the beginning of the autumn is a conventional theme in Sanskrit poetry. Alternatively, the lights may be lanterns for the festival mentioned in the previous stanza.

⟨Verse 6. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

prāk-puṇyopacayābhyāsāt
saṃvarddhita-manorathe
jayavarmma-narendrasya
pautre devendra-vikkrame

⟨Verse 7. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

^[5]kṣitīś(a)-siṅ!havarmanṇas
siṅ!ha-vikrānta-gāmini
satputre śrīr!-mmahārāja-
naravarmmaṇi pārthhive

⟨Verse 8. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

tat-pālana-guṇoddeśād
dharmma-prāpty-arttha-vistaraḥ
^[6]pūrvva-janmāntarābhyāsād
balād ākṣipta-mānasaḥ

⟨Verse 9. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

sva-yaśaḥ-puṇya-saṃbhāra-
vivarddhita-kṛtodyamaḥ
mṛga-tṛṣṇā-jala-svapna-
vid(y)ud-d(ī)pa-śikhā-cala(m)

⟨Verse 10. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

^[7]jīva-lokam imaṃ jñātvā
śaraṇyaṃ śaraṇaṃ gataḥ
tridaśodāra-phaladaṃ
svargga-strī-cāru-pallavam

⟨6⟩

whose desires have grown to completeness thanks to the merits he had habitually piled up previously;¹⁶ who, being the grandson of Jayavarman, an Indra among men, is valiant as Indra of the gods;

⟨7⟩

who, being the trueborn son of King Siṃhavarman, moves with the bold stride of a lion (*siṃha*), [the donor¹⁷],

⟨8⟩

who has achieved a proliferation of legitimately acquired¹⁸ wealth thanks to the exemplar that was the excellence of his [Naravarman's] governance; who, through habitual practice in previous lives has forcibly subjugated his mind;

⟨9⟩

whose ventures are successful and enhanced by the accumulation of his own prestige and virtue,

⟨10⟩

having realised that this world of the living ⟨9⟩ is as volatile as the water of a mirage, as a dream, as lightning, or as the flame of a lamp, ⟨10⟩ has gone for refuge to him who extends refuge:

[5] *kṣitīśa*] Other editors read *kṣitīśe*. I think that would be redundant with *pārthhive* in the fourth quarter, and the syntax is also cleaner with my reading. There is a small stroke at the top left of *śa*, but it is not a full-fledged *e mātrā* (which should look like the left-hand component of *śo* in *tridaśodāra*, 17). Some, though not all, *śa* characters have a small headmark (e.g. *śakkrasya*, 12), so here we may be dealing with a more pronounced headmark, or perhaps a different character was erroneously begun and then changed into *śa*.

[5] *satputre*] Bh prints *satpure*, typo.

[5] *dharmma*] Bh prints *dharmma*, typo.

[6] *mānasaḥ*] As SI observes, *mānasaṃ* may have been initially engraved, with the *anusvāra* rubbed out.

[6] *vidyud*] S and Bh read *viddud* and emend. The character does look like *ddu*, but note that the *ī* of the adjacent *ddī* extends far down on the left-hand side. I am convinced the intended word was *vidyud*, and the error is the engraver's, based on a smeared template, which resulted in the right-hand part of the subscript *y* becoming detached from the left-hand part (leaving it resembling a subscript *d*), and erroneously connected to the vowel mark of *dī*.

[7] *jñātvā*] *jñā* has a strange shape, possibly a cursive and/or calligraphic variant; more likely a case of the engraver being unable to interpret a slightly unclear template.

[7] *sravam*] S and Bh read *srāvam* and emend. The stone is clear, there is no *ā mātrā*.

16 I.e. in previous lives; cf. verse 8.

17 The description of the donor begins at this point, but his name presumably appeared only later on and is now lost. See also the Commentary.

18 I am confident this is the intended meaning of the text, though the reading is *prāpti* where *prāpta* would be more appropriate. Compare also *dharmmārjita-mahādhanah* in v. 13.

⟨Verse 11. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

vimānāneka-viṭapam
toyadāmbu-madhu-sravam
[8](v)āsudevam jagad-vāsam
aprameyam aṣam vibhum

⟨Verse 12. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

mitra-bhṛtyārta-satkartā
sva-kulasy(a:ā)tha candramāḥ
yasya vittam ca prāṇās ca
deva-brāhmaṇasā(d) ga(tā)[ḥ]

⟨Verse 13. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

[9]mahā-kāruṇikaḥ satyo
dharmmārjjita-mahādhanah
satputro varṇavṛddhes tu
satpautro tha jayasya vai

⟨Verse 14. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

duhitur bbalaśūrāyā(ḥ)
satputro jayamit(r)a(y)ā!
[B][10]gārggāyaṇa-sagotro vai
jāti(ta)[ḥ] [≡-≡-≡]

⟨11⟩Vāsudeva, the shelter (*vāsa*) of the world,¹⁹
immeasurable, unborn and all-pervading—

[Vāsudeva who is like] a {honey tree}
{trickling nectar} which is the water of the
clouds,

⟨10⟩bearing magnificent fruits which are the
thirty gods,

with lovely tender fronds that are heavenly
maidens,

⟨11⟩with many branches that are celestial
mansions.

[He, the donor is]

⟨12⟩

a benefactor to his friends, retainers and the afflicted,
a veritable moon to his own family,
who has dedicated not only his wealth but his very life
to the gods and Brahmins,

⟨13⟩

greatly compassionate, honest, possessed of great
wealth lawfully earned,
a true son of Varṇavṛddhi and a true grandson of Jaya,

⟨14⟩

a true son of Jayamitrā, daughter of Balaśūrā,²⁰
[Fragment B] of the *gotra* of Gārgāyaṇa by birth ...

[8] *brāhmaṇasā gatāḥ*] S emends and restores *brāhmaṇasāt kṛtāḥ*. SI approves, but also suggests *brāhmaṇa-saṃgatāḥ*. Bh emends and restores *brāhmaṇasād gatāḥ*, which is definitely preferable. The character *ga* is clear in the stone; it is not the top part of *tkṛ*. *Tā* is indiscernible in the object as it is presently exhibited (being covered with cement and whitewash in addition to being damaged), but clear in the rubbing.

[9] Much of line 9 (especially in the first column, v13ab) is smeared with cement in the present state of the inscription. In the rubbing, everything except the bottom of subscript characters is clear.

[9] *bbala*] Bh prints *bala*, typo.

[9] *jayamitravā*] see comments under Script and Language.

[10] *jātitaḥ*] Bh prints *jñātitaḥ*, though he translates “and by caste” so this is probably a typo. *Jā* is unambiguous in the stone.

19 Bhandarkar translates *jagad-vāsa* as “whose abode is the world.” Interpreting the compound as “who is the abode [i.e. the shelter] of the world” seems more logical to me. *Jagad-vāsa* occurs as an epithet of Kṛṣṇa in some texts of the *Harivaṃśa* (critical edition Appendix I, 13.78, *deva-deva jagad-vāsa sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇa*), but the context is just a series of words of praise for him and offers no clue to the exact meaning. But it is also found in the *Narasimhapurāṇa* (64.71, *vāsudevo jagad-vāsaḥ purāṇaḥ kavir avyayaḥ*), where a verse very close by gives a *nirukti* for the name Vāsudeva, explaining that the world takes shelter in him during the absorption and re-creation of the world (64.72cd-73ab, *yasmād vā sarva-bhūtānām tattvādyānām yuga-kṣaye|| tasmin nivāsaḥ saṃsarge vāsudevas tatas tu saḥ*).

20 This must be the intended meaning, but the text is grammatically incorrect and emendation is problematic; see Script and Language.

⟨Verse 15. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩ [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ]	⟨15⟩...
⟨Verse 16. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩ [11] pure mahati vikhyāte paṃca-dvig[?uṇa-saṃjñake] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ]	⟨16⟩ In the great and renowned city <u>named two times five</u> ²¹ ...
⟨Verse 17. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩ [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [12] nānā-vṛkṣa-latā-gulma- saṃpra[yukta] [ॐ ॐ ॐ]	⟨17⟩ ... <u>furnished</u> with various trees, creepers and bushes ...
⟨Verse 18. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩ [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ]	⟨18⟩...
⟨Verse 19. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩ [13] dhanyo (bha)vatu maṅgalyaḥ pu(tra)[?-pautra-samanvitaḥ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ]	⟨19⟩ May he be fortunate and blessed (<u>along with his</u>) <u>son(s</u> <u>and grandsons</u>) ...
⟨Verse 20. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩ [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [14] kṛṣṇenāddhy(u)ṣitas tāva(t) [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ]	⟨20⟩ <u>[May this temple]</u> inhabited by Kṛṣṇa <u>[stand]</u> as long
⟨Verse 21. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩ [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ] [ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ ॐ]	⟨21⟩...

[13] *bhavatu*] *Bha* was probably intended, but there is an erroneous connecting stroke at the bottom of the character, so that it too looks like *va*.

[13] *pautra-samanvitaḥ*] Restoration originally suggested by Bhandarkar.

[14] *kṛṣṇenā*] Bh reads *kruṣṇenā*^o and emends. The character is definitely *kṛ*, of which the same form occurs repeatedly in the first fragment, though a different form is used in l2 in *kṛṣṇasya*.

[14] *tāvat*] At the end, most of a regular (i.e. not *halanta*) *t* is visible. If correctly read, then there must be another consonant subscript to it, but only indistinct vestiges remain.

21 I.e. Daśapura. See the Commentary.

A2 Bihar Kotra Stone Inscription of the Time of Naravarman

Substrate				Siddham ID:		OB00017		
Material	stone		Object type	slab				
Dimensions	width	35 cm	height	18 cm	depth	22–27 cm		
Discovery	before 1938, in the vicinity of Bihar Kotra (23°38'07"N 77°06'33"E)							
Current location	Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai (in storage)							
Inscription				Siddham ID:		IN00018		
Dimensions	width	33 cm	height	17 cm	Char size	15 mm	Line height	20–30 mm
Date CE	417–418	Basis of dating		dated (Kṛta) 474 expired, Śrāvaṇa śukla 2 (12–3)				
Topic	construction of a well for the Buddhist <i>saṅgha</i>							
Persons mentioned	Naravarman; Bhaṭṭī-mahara, Virasena							
Places mentioned	—							
Compendia	CII3rev 15; SI III.51A; GKA 343; IBI 95.Bihār Kotra.1							
Other editions	Chakravarti 1942							

Description

This inscription occupies one face of a stone block 35 centimetres wide and 18 centimetres tall. The block is roughly rectangular but the back (the side opposite the inscription) is angled so that the stone's depth is 27 centimetres on the left and only 22 centimetres on the right. The left-hand side is irregularly broken, affecting the inscribed face and extending all the way to the back. The stone was probably a building block²² incorporated in the well described in the inscription. The angled back side would thus not have been visible; or it (possibly along with the left-hand side) may have been cut for reuse in a later building.

The stone was found some time before 1938 at the village of Bihar Kotra (बिहार कोटरा, Rajgarh district, Madhya Pradesh) by a tourist and collector. The massive escarpment near Bihar Kotra (and the nearby town of Narsinghgarh) must have been a significant Buddhist site, with numerous natural and excavated rock shelters, the remains of at least two small *stūpas* atop the plateau, a multitude of sculptural remains and several epigraphs (A2, A3, B1 and C1). There is also a sizeable artificial cave with Jaina sculpture that may date from the eighth century. The name of Bihar Kotra (often also Kotra Bihar) evidently derives from the Sanskrit words *vihāra*, “monastery” and *koṭāra*, “cave.”

²² Chakravarti (1942, 130) describes the stone as a slab, which is misleading. Bhandarkar's index (CII3rev p. 368) refers to it as a pillar inscription, which is a mistake.

The exact location and circumstances of the discovery of the stone inscription are not reported. The collector offered it for purchase to the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay. As G. V. Acharya (1939, 12) relates in the Report of that museum, they had just recently opened an Epigraphical Gallery but possessed no original inscriptions of the Gupta period and were happy to leap at this opportunity to acquire one. Acharya's note, accompanied by a rubbing (*ibid.*), is the first report of the inscription.²³ The text was edited by S. N. Chakravarti (1942) and re-edited by D. R. Bhandarkar in the revised *Corpus Inscriptionum* (pp. 266–267). The stone is still kept, though no longer on exhibit, at the same museum, now called Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai (acquisition number SI-8). I re-edit the text here on the basis of the original, which I studied and photographed in January 2018 with the kind permission and help of Aparna Bhogal.

The inscribed area is about 33 centimetres wide and 17 centimetres high, covering the entire front of the block except for a margin of about two centimetres on the right. Vowel marks in the first line extend almost to the top edge, and subscript characters in the last line almost to the

²³ N. P. Chakravarti says in an editorial footnote to S. N. Chakravarti's edition of the text (1942, 130 n. 9), “This inscription has been noticed by me in An. Rep. A. S. R. 1938-39 where I have discussed in detail the question of Naravarman's successors including Vishnuvardhana.” I have not been able to trace this publication; the *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India* appears to have ended with the year 1937–38, so perhaps it was never printed or did not circulate widely.



Figure 9: Bihar Kotra Stone Inscription of the Time of Naravarman. Inked rubbing from Bhandarkar (CIIR Plate 15).

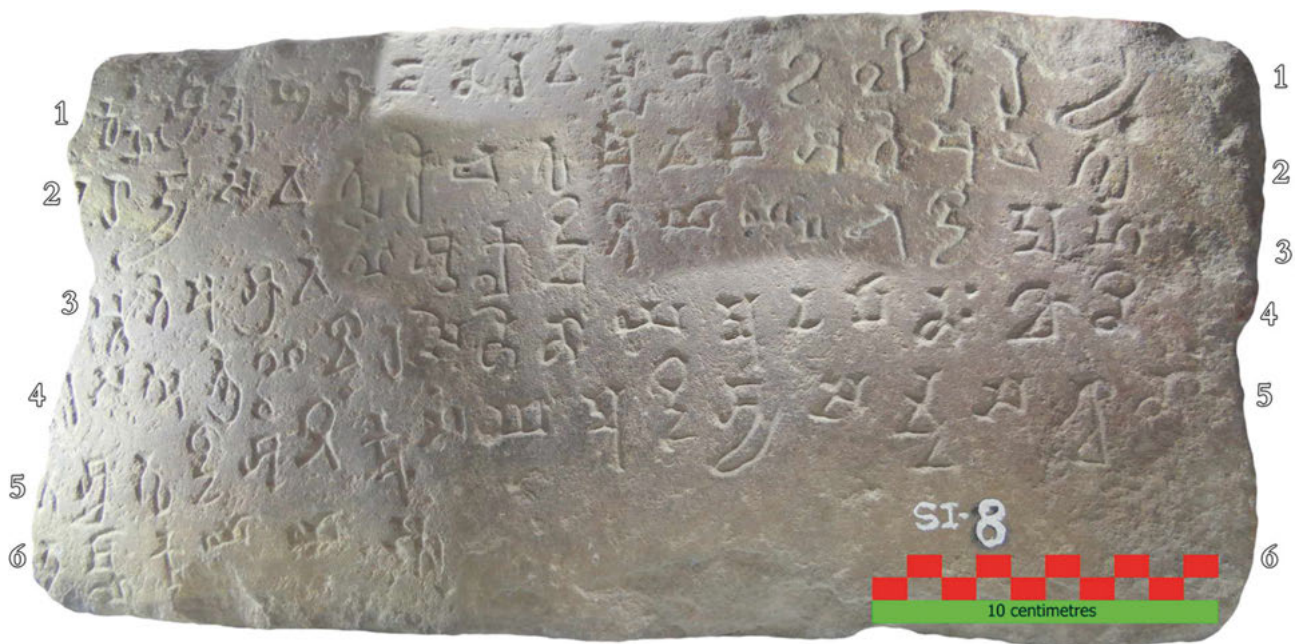


Figure 10: Bihar Kotra Stone Inscription of the Time of Naravarman. Composite digital photo by the author, 2018. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya. Not to be reproduced without prior permission of the Trustees.

bottom edge. The fracture of the left-hand edge has resulted in the loss of one character each from the first three lines. The inscription consists of six lines, the last of which extends to less than half the width of the stone. Lines and

margins are slightly irregular, but the individual characters are neatly, boldly and deeply engraved. The height of their bodies is about 1.5 centimetres, and the lines are spaced 2–3 centimetres apart.

Script and Language

The inscription is an early specimen of the angular form of the Mālava script. The characters have nail heads of varying size. *Ra* has a long, hooked stem in the southern style; the single specimen of *ka* without a subscript conjunct lacks a hook on its long stem, and other letters follow essentially northern forms.²⁴ Notably, *ṇa* is open-mouthed and *ma* is open and has a tail; its angularity is further emphasised by a sharp bend in its left arm, which almost gives it the appearance of a conjunct character. *Bha* is of the angular type, with the legs meeting at an angle at the head. *Da* is also angular or, in Dani's terminology, double-curved. *Śa* is also notably angular with a flat top and an outward curve in the left leg; the right leg is slightly elongated. *Ca* is a broad oblong with a pronounced beak. The sign of medial *e* is always a *śiromātrā*, but medial *ā* is sometimes shown as a horizontal stroke bending downward. The choice of sign may be driven by the consonant, though with such a small sample, the correlation may well be random. All instances of *tā* (represented in the conjunct *tvā*), *nā*, *rā* and *hā* take the horizontal stroke; *khā* and, surprisingly, *śā* (represented only as *śrā* and *ścā*, 13 and 15) have a downward-slanting vowel mark attached to the body on the right; *nā*, *pā* and *yā* have their vowel signs on the top. The sign for medial *i* is a circle or spiral open at the bottom on the left side; *ī* is its mirror image, open on the right. *Halanta m* (a simplified form of *ma* without the break in the left arm, in a subscript position) is used twice; in both instances an *anusvāra* would be expected, and the *halanta* consonant must have been employed as a substitute for a punctuation mark. Elsewhere, *anusvāra* is used in a standard manner, with one redundant *anusvāra* before a *halanta m* in line 1. *Visarga* use is slightly irregular, with a redundant *visarga* in line 1 and an omitted one at the end of line 2. *Upadhmāniya* and *jihvāmūliya* do not occur. Consonants (except for *ṣ*) are doubled after *r*; *t* is also doubled before *r* (*puttreṇa*, 14), while *satvānāṃ* (15) is spelt with a single *t*. The language is by and large standard Sanskrit. The word *catusaptateṣu* (12–3) may reflect a non-standard form rather than a simple omission of a *visarga*. *Śrīr* is used instead of *śrī* in compound (11), as in other inscriptions of the time of Naravarman (A1, A3).

²⁴ Sircar (1965b, 399), however, describes the script as "late Brāhmī of the southern class," which shows how imprecise such a southern/northern classification scheme is.

Commentary

The epigraph records the donation of a well (*udapāna*) to the Buddhist community. The donor, whose rank or occupation are not revealed, was Virasena, son of Bhaṭṭi-mahara. Bhandarkar restores *tta* (for *mahattara*) at the end of line 3. There is definitely no lost text here, and the bit chipped off at the beginning of the next one is probably (though not beyond doubt) too narrow to have accommodated a lost character. I therefore retain Chakravarti's reading *mahara* (though *tta* may have been omitted). The inscription was made in the year 474 during the reign of Naravarman the Olikara. The spelling may be the engraver's mistake for Aulikara,²⁵ but it is also possible that Olikara was an epithet or name of Naravarman (see the discussion on page 24), so I do not emend the reading. The era is not specified, but is evidently the Kṛta (Vikrama) Era. The day is the second in the bright fortnight of Śrāvaṇa, i.e. only seven months before or five months after the cave inscription at the same site (A3), depending on whether the calendar year began in Kārttika or Caitra. The equivalent date in the Common Era would be early summer in 417 or 418. Although the years are not explicitly said to be expired, this is implied by the use of the locative plural; however, the use of the ordinal *-saptateṣu* and the singular form *saṃvatsare* may on the contrary indicate that the year is the current one. If this is the case, the equivalent date is 416 or 417 CE. Bhandarkar restores a supposedly lost character *viṃ* at the end of the first line, claiming it is "fairly clear in one estampage" (CII3rev p. 267 n. 5). He theorises that the character lost at the beginning of the second line would have been *śe*, meaning that the date is simultaneously the twentieth (*viṃśe*) year of Naravarman's reign. His editor (Gai or Chhabra) suggests *vijaya* would be a more plausible restoration. There is, however, no trace of *vi* (or any other character) at the end of line 1. The *akṣara* of which only the top right corner remains at the beginning of line 2 was in all probability *sva* on the basis of the newly edited cave inscription (A3). This means that there is no basis for assuming that Naravarman's reign commenced in 397–398 CE.

²⁵ S. N. Chakravarti in fact reads *aulikara*, arguing that the symbol (a mirrored S shape, see Figure 1 on page 12 for an illustration) in fact stands for initial *au*. N. P. Chakravarti, the editor of his article in *Epigraphia Indica*, disagrees (Chakravarti 1942, 131 n. 9), and D. R. Bhandarkar also interprets the symbol as *o*. I concur; this exact form is attested in Ikṣvāku inscriptions for *o*, while *au* should have an additional stroke.

Diplomatic Text

- [1] [si]ddhaṃ!M śrīr!-mmahārāja-naravarmmaṇaḥ ḥlikarasya
 [2] [sva]-rājya-saṃvatsare caturṣu varṣa-śateṣu catu
 [3] [sa]ptateṣu śrāvaṇa-śukla-dvitiyāyāM bhaṭṭi-maha
 [4] ra-satputtreṇa vīrasenenāyam udapānaḥ khāni
 [5] taś cāturddiśaṃ bhikṣu-saṃgham uddiśya sarvva-sajtv!ānām
 [6] tṛṣṇā-kṣayāyāstu

Curated Text

[1][si]ddha{ṃ}m⟨|⟩

śrīr!-mmahārāja-naravarmmaṇaḥ ḥlikarasya^[2][sva]-
 rājya-saṃvatsare caturṣu varṣa-śateṣu catu⟨ḥ⟩^[3][sa]
 ptateṣu śrāvaṇa-śukla-dvitiyāyāM⟨|⟩ bhaṭṭi-maha^[4]
 ra-satputtreṇa vīrasenenāyam udapānaḥ khāni^[5]
 taś cāturddiśaṃ bhikṣu-saṃgham uddiśya sarvva-
 sajtv!ānām^[6]tṛṣṇā-kṣayāyāstu⟨|⟩

Text Notes

Alternative opinions cited below are from Bhandarkar's edition in CII3rev (Bh) and from that of Chakravarti (Ch).

[1] *siddham*] Bh reads *siddhaye* at the beginning and says it “seems to have been engraved later and slantingly between lines 1 and 2 about the beginning” (CII3rev p. 267 n.1). According to his editor (i.e. Gai or Chhabra, *ibid.*), this is incorrect; he says, “The reading is *siddham*, where the final *m* is written in a diminutive form below the line.” Ch also reads *siddham* and notes that it stands in front of and between lines 1 and 2. The correct reading is in fact *ddhaṃM* (*si* being wholly lost), with a superfluous *anusvāra* before the *halanta m*, which Bhandarkar saw as *ye*. The *halanta* character is lowered as usual, but this does not mean that this word is engraved at a slant or between the first two lines; *ddha* is aligned perfectly with line 1, and the lost *si* would have been level with this. The redundant *anusvāra* is a dot like the one in *saṃgha* (15), but unlike that in *cāturddiśaṃ* (also 15), which is a circle.

[1] *olīkarasya*] Ch reads *aulīkarasya*; see the Commentary.

[2] *sva*] Bh restores *viṃśe*; see the Commentary.

[3] *saptateṣu*] Bh reads *saptatiṣu*. Ch has the correct reading, which is definitely *te*, as in the cave inscription (A3).

[3] *mahara*] Bh restores *mahattara*. See the Commentary above.

[5] *satvānām*] Bh prints *satvānaṃ*, emending to *sattvānām*. Tsukamoto (IBI p. 609) reads *sātvānām*, emending likewise. Ch gives the correct reading, which is clear.

[6] *kṣayāyāstu*] The first *yā* is vertically compressed and raised. Below it, a large chip has split off the edge of the stone. This defect must have been present before the inscription was created; the bottom right corner of *kṣa* was actually engraved over the edge of the defect. The second *yā* is also slightly raised and compressed, but the defect does not extend this far; this character was engraved in this position to let the line curve back gently to the regular level.

[6] There is a pair of curved horizontal lines after the last character. Ch notes these may be either a punctuation mark or just a pair of scratches. I am certain that they are the latter: it is evident in the stone that they have hardly any depth.

Translation

Accomplished.²⁶

In the year of His Majesty King Naravarman the Olikara's
own reign,

when four hundred years and seventy-four [had
elapsed],

on the bright second lunar day of Śrāvaṇa,
 Vīrasena, the true son of Bhaṭṭi-mahara, has had this
 well excavated for the sake of the universal noble
 congregation (*saṅgha*).

May it exist for the elimination of thirst (*tṛṣṇā*²⁷) for all
 beings.

Footnotes

²⁶ See page 6 about translating *siddham* as “accomplished.”

²⁷ Note the double entendre in *tṛṣṇā*, meaning literal thirst which the well helps quench, and metaphysical thirst as the prime cause of suffering in Buddhist thought. This was also pointed out by Bhandarkar (CII3rev p. 267 n. 11).

A3 Bihar Kotra Cave Inscription of the Time of Naravarman

Substrate		Siddham ID:		OB00206				
Material	stone	Object type	rock shelter wall					
Dimensions	not recorded							
Discovery	before 1982, in a cliff face (23°37'31"N 77°05'02"E) near Bihar Kotra							
Current location	in situ							
Inscription		Siddham ID:		IN00224				
Dimensions	width	58 cm	height	25 cm	Char size	15–20 mm	Line height	40–50 mm
Date CE	417–418	Basis of dating	dated (Kṛta) 474 expired, Phālguna <i>kṛṣṇa</i> 5 (12–3)					
Topic	construction of a rock shelter for the Buddhist <i>saṅgha</i>							
Persons mentioned	Siṃhavarman, Naravarman; Bhadantadāsa, Saṅghila							
Places mentioned	—							
Compendia	—							
Other editions	Wakankar 2002, 27							

Description

This inscription is located in a rock shelter, one of several in the face of a north-facing cliff above a small lake about 1.5 kilometres west of the village of Bihar Kotra (बिहार कोटरा), Rajgarh district, Madhya Pradesh. The cave can be accessed by climbing to the Kotra Mataji temple and following a ledge to the right along the cliff. Shaped like a rough quarter sphere, the shelter has probably been enlarged artificially, but the surfaces are not even and there are no carved architectural elements nor any decorative carving. The inscription is about 150 centimetres above the floor on the right-hand side of the back wall. The inscribed area, 58 centimetres at its widest and 25 centimetres high, is not marked off from the wall surface in any way.

It was first studied by Jitendra Datt Tripathi and reported, with a synopsis of the contents, in IAR 1982–83, 121, 135,²⁸ and by K. V. Ramesh (1985, 7). Tripathi (1997, 64) subsequently published an eye copy and a Devanagari transcript (both inaccurate) in a Hindi article. V. S. Wakankar's reading of the inscription, much better but still inaccurate, has been published posthumously (Wakankar 2002, 27 and photograph on p. 44).²⁹ The text was edited in 2018 in

a digital medium (the Siddham database) by the present author, and the first rigorous printed edition is the one published here. I visited the site in January 2017 and took photographs of the inscription. I hereby express my thanks to the sarpanch Jwala Prasad Bundela for allowing this, and my heartfelt gratitude to Raghbir Kushvah and Raju Kevat for guiding me to this cave and others and boosting me up a cliff wall which seemed insurmountable to me but which they, shod in flip-flop chappals, negotiated with the nonchalant grace of mountain goats. I can only hope the monks who once resided here had ladders.

Both the left and the right margins are uneven and the length of lines varies between 42 and 58 centimetres. The inscription consists of five fairly straight horizontal lines, with characters 1.5 to 2 centimetres tall spaced 4–5 centimetres one below the other. The engraving is weathered but generally well preserved. The lettering has been enhanced in recent times with a white substance, probably by Tripathi.³⁰ This is generally helpful and accurate, but in some places the chalked lines obscure the original. On the whole, the inscription is in very good condition.

Script and Language

This epigraph is in the rounded form of the Mālavān alphabet. *Ra*, *ka* and initial *a* have an elongated stem with a hook at the bottom. *La* has an extended, curving tail, which is truncated when *i* or *ī* is attached, while *e* attaches to the

²⁸ The photograph labelled “Vigharkotra” inscription (plate 8) on page 163 of this publication shows the Narsinghgarh inscription of Aparājītavardhana (C1). The date is given on page 121 as VS 4784, which is mistyped. These errors have already been pointed out by Richard Salomon (1989, 33 n. 14).

²⁹ This compilation of Wakankar's inscription readings evidently lacked a competent curator. Many of the mistakes in the texts are clearly the result of misread Devanagari, presumably introduced in the process of transferring Wakankar's handwritten transcripts to print. If the manuscripts are still available, a re-publication would

be desirable provided that an editor who actually knows something about Sanskrit and epigraphy could be found.

³⁰ The white substance may be toothpaste; see note 430 on page 241.

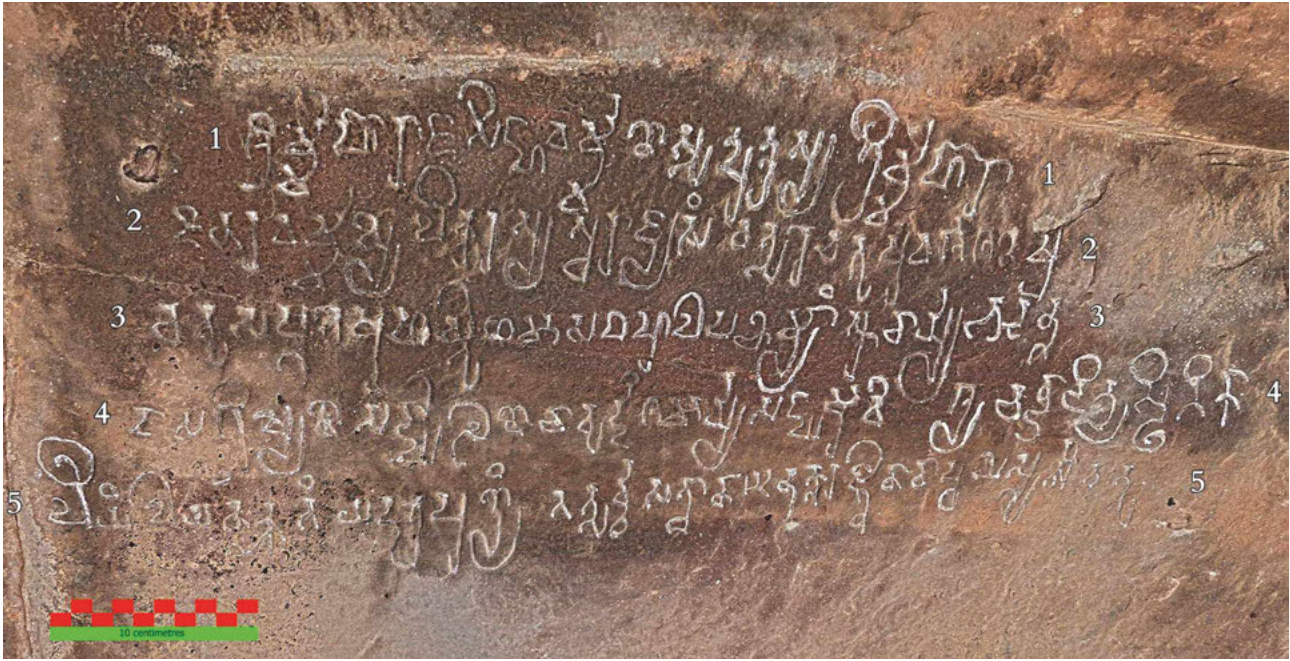


Figure 11: Bihar Kotra Cave Inscription of the Time of Naravarman. Photo by the author, 2017.

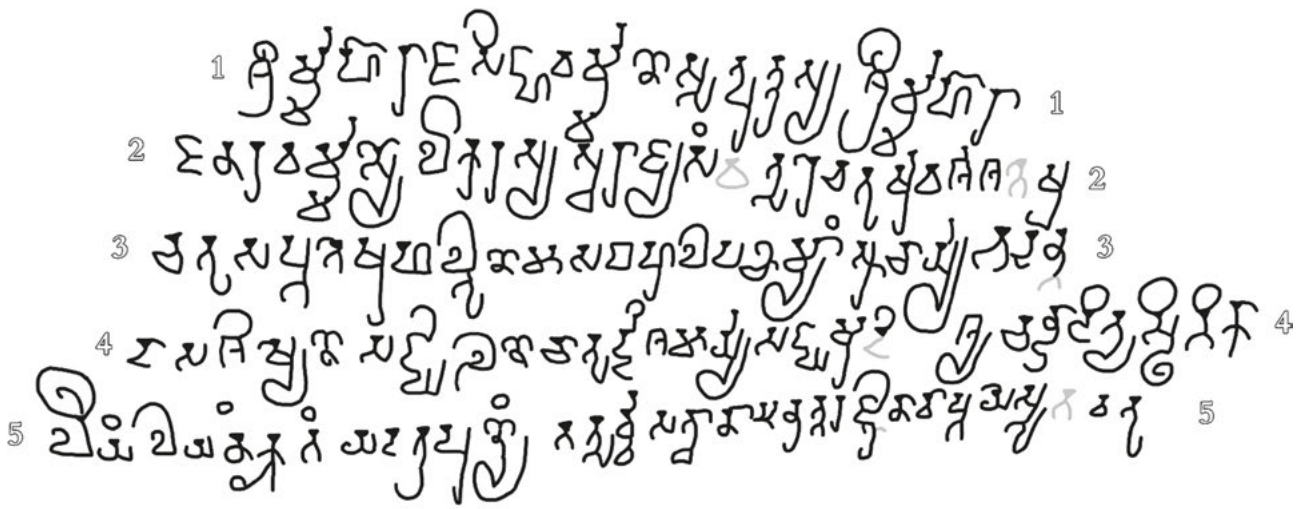


Figure 12: Bihar Kotra Cave Inscription of the Time of Naravarman. Freehand tracing of photograph, 2018. Unequivocal lines in black; unclear lines in grey.

body on the left (14). *Ma* has the older or southern looped form (with *ā* attached to the body except in the ligature *myā* in line 3), except one instance of a northern-type tailed *ma* in line 5. *Ca* is also a northern form, triangular with a rounded bottom and a pronounced beak. *Ya* is consistently tripartite and never has a loop on the left arm. *Sa* is hooked, with an upright leg on the right-hand side, and *ṇa* is of the looped southern type. The broad *bha* and the rounded *da* are also southern features, although when *da* is not part of a conjunct, its body is small and quite angular; the speci-

men in *dāsa* (14) could be described as a “northern” double-curved *d*. *Śa* is rounded in shape with equal legs, but may have a flat top; its cross-stroke slants or bends down from the right leg and does not touch the left leg. Some characters have prominent nail heads. A degree of calligraphic ornamentation is apparent in the shape of most subscript *y*-s (e.g. *uddiśya*, 14) and in the large and unusually formed *ī mātrā* at the beginning of line 5. There are neither *halanta* consonants, nor punctuation marks or other symbols in the epigraph.

Ligatures with nasal consonants are preferred to *anusvāra* before palatals, velars and *h* (*siṅha*, 11; *pañcamyāṃ*, 13; *saṅghila* and *saṅgha*, 14), but *anusvāra* is used across word boundaries (e.g. *layanam kṛtam*, 15) and before *v* (*saṃvatsare*, 12), and once before a vowel (*pañcamyāṃ ācāryya*, 13). Consonants before and after *r* are usually doubled (e.g. *śrīr-mmahārāja* and *puttra*, 11; *ācāryya*, 13; *cāturddīśam*, 14; *sarvva*, 15), but not in *candrā*^o (14) where another consonant is joined to them, nor once for no apparent reason in *atra* (15). *Satva* (15) is spelt with a single *t*, as commonly seen in inscriptions of the Gupta period. Retroflex *ṇ* in place of dental *n* is used three times (13–4), and *ś* appears instead of *ṣ* in *varśa* (12). As in other Early Aulikara inscriptions,³¹ *śrīr* is used instead of *śrī* in compound (11, twice), and the genitive of Naravarman is formed as if the name were an *a*-stem (*naravarmmasyo*^o, 12), though his father's name is treated as an *an*-stem (*siṅhavarmmanas*, 11). The *saṃdhi* applied in *naravarmmasyolikarasya* is also non-standard.

Commentary

The inscription is very similar in purport to the Bihar Kotra Stone Inscription of Naravarman (A2). The spelling Olikara is reiterated here, even though *saṃdhi* with the preceding non-standard genitive ending would require *au*; see page 24 for a discussion. In addition to the current ruler's name, the present inscription also records the name of Naravarman's father, Siṃhavarman (as known

also from the Mandsaur Inscription of the time of Naravarman, A1). The year (474, clearly of the Kṛta Era) is the same as that of the stone inscription, specified with the exact same words (down to the omission of a *visarga*). The day, Phālguna *kṛṣṇa* 5, is about seven months later or five months earlier than the stone inscription depending on whether the calendar year began in Kārttika or Caitra; the CE equivalent being the late winter or early spring of 417 or 418, possibly 416 if the number of years stated in the inscription are meant to be current, not elapsed. Notably, the day falls in the dark fortnight of the month, while inscriptions commemorating auspicious occasions are almost always dated in the bright fortnight. In modern times, Phālguna *kṛṣṇa* 5 is Raṅg Pañcamī, the final day of the Holi festivities. The day may have been included in the Vasantotsava celebrations of Naravarman's time too and could thus have been regarded as auspicious in spite of being in the *kṛṣṇapakṣa*, or it may have had some other significance for the local community. The donor is named Saṅghila, and we learn nothing else about him except that he was a disciple of Bhadantadāsa. The item donated is a shelter (called a *layana*), presumably the very cave in which the text is engraved. The blessing at the end is different from the one at the end of the stone inscription from the same site, but is likewise a stock formula. The fact that it was used mechanically as a closing phrase is further emphasised by the redundant verbs [*a*]stu *bhavatu*, one of which was presumably perceived as the actual verb, the other one being just part of the formula by rote.³²

³¹ The Bihar Kotra stone (A2), the Bihar Kotra cave inscription (A3) and perhaps some Bihar Kotra graffiti (B1). See also note 1 on page 38.

³² The same redundancy occurs in some other donative inscriptions including the Bodhgaya Image Inscription of Mahānāman: *yad atra puṇyaṃ tad bhavatu sarvva-satvānām anuttara-jñānāvāptaye stu*.

Diplomatic Text

- [1] śrī;r!-mmahārāja-si;ñ!havarmmaṇas sat-puttrasya śrī;r!-mmahārā
 [2] ja-naravarmma;syo!likarasya sva-rājya-saṃvatsare catu(r)ṣu var;ś!a-śa(te)ṣu
 [3] catusaptateṣu ph;a!lgu;ṇ!a-māsa-bahula-pañcamyāṃ ācāryya-bhadan(t)a
 [4] dāsa-śiṣye;ṇ!a saṅghile;ṇ!a cāturddiśam āryya-saṅgham u;(d)!i_śya candrāditya-sthiti-kā
 [5] liyaṃ la(ya)naṃ kṛtaṃ yad atra puṇyaṃ tat sarvva-sa;tv!ānām anuttara-jñānāvāptaye stu (?bha)vatu

Curated Text

[1]śrī;r!-mmahārāja-si;ñ!havarmmaṇas sat-puttrasya
 śrī;r!-mmahārā [2]ja-naravarmma;syo!likarasya sva-
 rājya-saṃvatsare catu(r)ṣu var(ś:ś)a-śa(te)ṣu [3]catu(ḥ)
 saptateṣu ph;a!lgu(ṇ:n)a-māsa-bahula-pañcamyāṃ
 ācāryya-bhadan(t)a [4]dāsa-śiṣye(ṇ:n)a saṅghile(ṇ:n)a
 cāturddiśam āryya-saṅgham u((d):dd)iśya candrāditya-
 sthiti-kā [5]liyaṃ la(ya)naṃ kṛtaṃ (|)

yad atra puṇyaṃ tat sarvva-sa;tv!ānām anuttara-
 jñānāvāptaye (')stu (?bha)vatu(|)

Translation

In the year of His Majesty King Naravarman the Olikara's
 own reign, who is a true son of His Majesty King
 Siṃhavarman,

when four hundred years and seventy-four [had
elapsed],

on the dark fifth lunar day of the month of Phālguna,
 Saṅghila, a disciple of the teacher Bhadantadāsa, has
 made for the sake of the universal noble congregation
 (*saṅgha*) a shelter that shall endure as long as the moon
 and sun remain.

What merit there is in this, may it be for the obtainment
 of unsurpassed insight by all beings.

Text Notes

[2] *saṃvatsare*] while Tripathi's highlighting seems to show a slightly distorted *va* to the right of the subscript *u* of *satputtrasya* above, the originally engraved *va* in fact seems to be directly below *tpu*, pushed slightly out of alignment with the rest of this line. Which ever the case, *va* is certain at this point.

[2] *varśa*] the erroneous spelling is clear in the original stone and not an artefact of Tripathi's chalking.

[4] *udiśya*] The white tracing shows *uviśya* and Tripathi's transcript also has *vi* here. Scrutiny of the original shows that the consonant is most likely a single *d* (and definitely not *dd*), erroneously closed into a triangle in chalk (or toothpaste), just as the subscript *t* of *jñānāvāptaye* in line 5 has been closed into the shape of a *v*. The space within *udi_śya* was necessitated by the subscript *y* of *ācāryya* in the previous line, extending into the body level of this line.

[5] *stu bhavatu*] The character following *stu* is indistinct and obscured by several irrelevant strokes highlighted in white. Tripathi's Devanagari transcript has *stuvantu*, and his eye copy resembles *stunavatu*, both of which are definitely incorrect. See also the Commentary.

A4 Gangdhar Inscription of Mayūrākṣaka

Substrate		Siddham ID:		OB00069	
Material	stone	Object type	stela		
Dimensions	width 72 cm	height 200 cm	depth 27 cm		
Discovery	1883, about 1.5 km north of Gangdhar (23°56'31"N 75°37'14"E)				
Current location	Government Museum, Jhalawar (in storage)				
Inscription		Siddham ID:		IN00076	
Dimensions	width 62 cm	height 112 cm	Char size 12–15 mm	Line height 30–40 mm	
Date CE	431	Basis of dating	dated Kṛta 488 expired, Kārttika śukla 13 (119–20)		
Topic	construction of a temple of Viṣṇu, a temple of the Mothers and a well				
Persons mentioned	Naravarman, Viśvavarman, Mayūrākṣaka, Viṣṇubhaṭa, Haribhaṭa				
Places mentioned	Gargarātaṭapura				
Compendia	Bh List 4; CII3 17; SI III.52; GKA 344–348				
Other editions	—				

Description

This inscription was discovered for scholarship in 1883, when Colonel W. Muir, the political agent at Kota, called Fleet's attention to it. Fleet at first received a photograph, and subsequently procured a rubbing to edit the inscription from, along with a drawing of the stone. His edition was first published in the *Corpus Inscriptionum* (CII3 pp. 72–78). Fleet apparently never studied the original object, which was at this time standing under a tamarind tree about a mile north of the village of Gangdhar (गंगधार, 23°56'31"N 75°37'14"E), in the present-day Jhalawar district of Rajasthan. Fleet (CII3, 72) describes the object as “a stone-tablet” and says there is a carving of what seems in the drawing to be a waterlily with sixteen petals on its top part. The stone was removed from its original site in 1905–06 (PRASW 1906, 56), possibly to Jhalrapatan. It is presently kept in the storeroom of the Government Museum in Jhalawar (acquisition number 63), where according to museum records it arrived on 18 March 1917. This is where I had the opportunity to study and photograph the inscription in January 2017 with the kind permission of Muhammad Arif and Sandeep Singh to whom I wish to express my thanks here. Unfortunately, the conditions of the storeroom did not permit moving the object or cleaning it beyond a few licks of a broom that did little more than smooth the dust and fill the air with it. I was told that the museum staff are aware of the significance of this artefact and have plans to put it on exhibit. Although some details of the inscription have received considerable

attention (see below), no-one has undertaken to re-edit the text since Fleet,³³ though Sircar has suggested some improvements in his *Select Inscriptions* (pp. 399–405). My edition below draws on their accomplishment and attempts to improve on it on the basis of Fleet's rubbing and my photographs of the original.

The inscribed stone is in fact a massive stela about two metres tall (including the rough-hewn base which would have been fixed in a pedestal). The body of the stela is rectangular, roughly 120 centimetres tall by 72 wide by 27 thick. The vertical sides of this rectangle are bevelled on the front except at the top and the bottom, so that it resembles a flattened octagonal pillar in shape. Above this section there is a circle about 60 centimetres in diameter and the same thickness as the rest of the stela; the neck connecting it to the rectangular section is about 40 cm wide. The emblem on the circle is in all probability Viṣṇu's *cakra*, though its spokes (which are indeed 16 in number) do resemble petals. The stone could not be moved when I studied it, therefore no information about the back side is available. The most likely guess is that the *cakra* emblem is carved on that side too, while the flat face of the rectangle is probably smooth and blank.

I have also attempted to locate the original site of the stela in Gangdhar. With the help of a crowd of local chil-

³³ Strangely, even D. R. Bhandarkar omitted it from his revised *Corpus* even though he did include two other Early Aulikara inscriptions discovered after Fleet's time and discussed some implications of this one in his introduction (CII3rev p. 137).

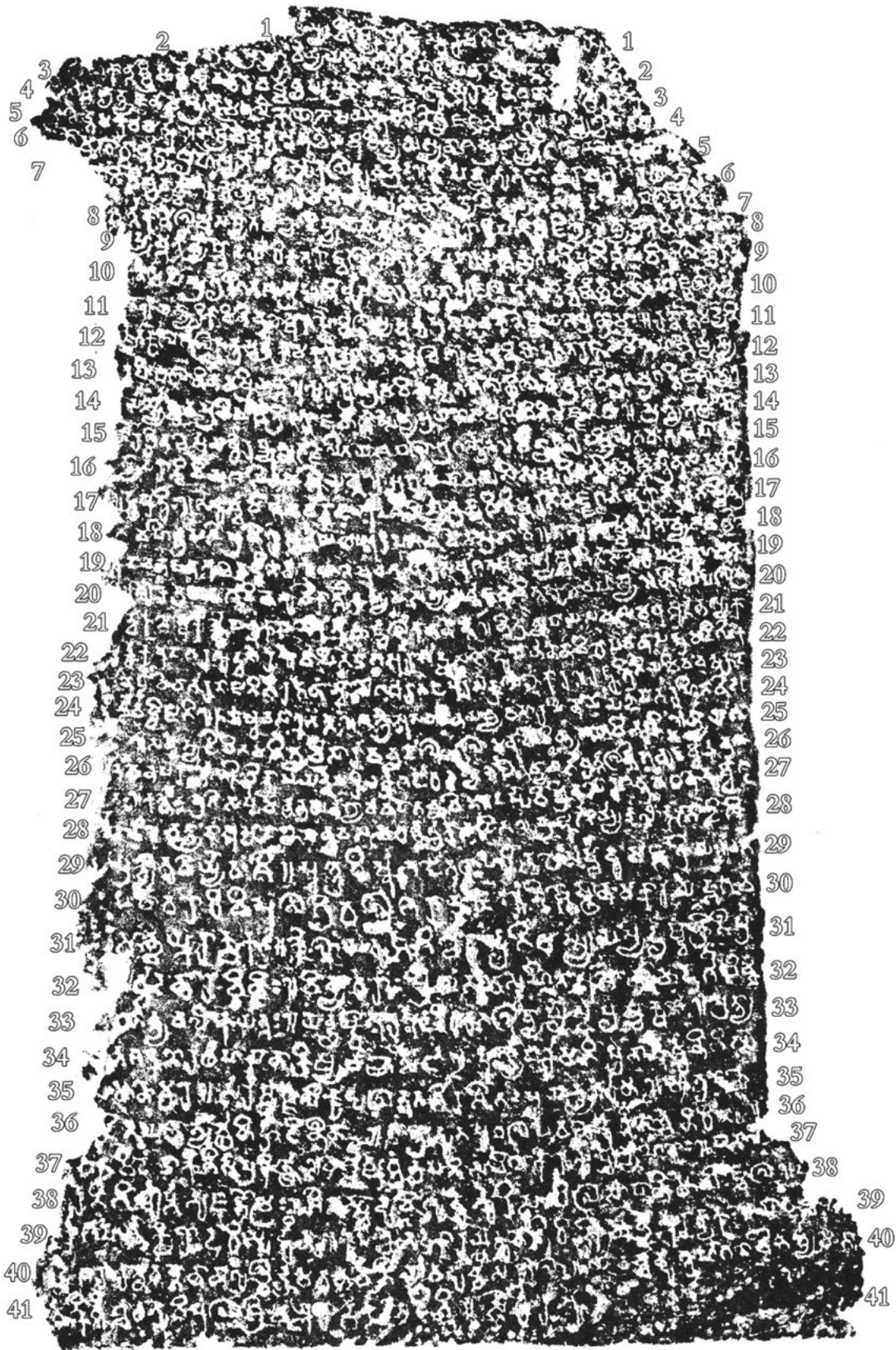


Figure 13: Gangdhar inscription of Mayūrākṣaka. Inked rubbing from Fleet (CI3 Plate 10).

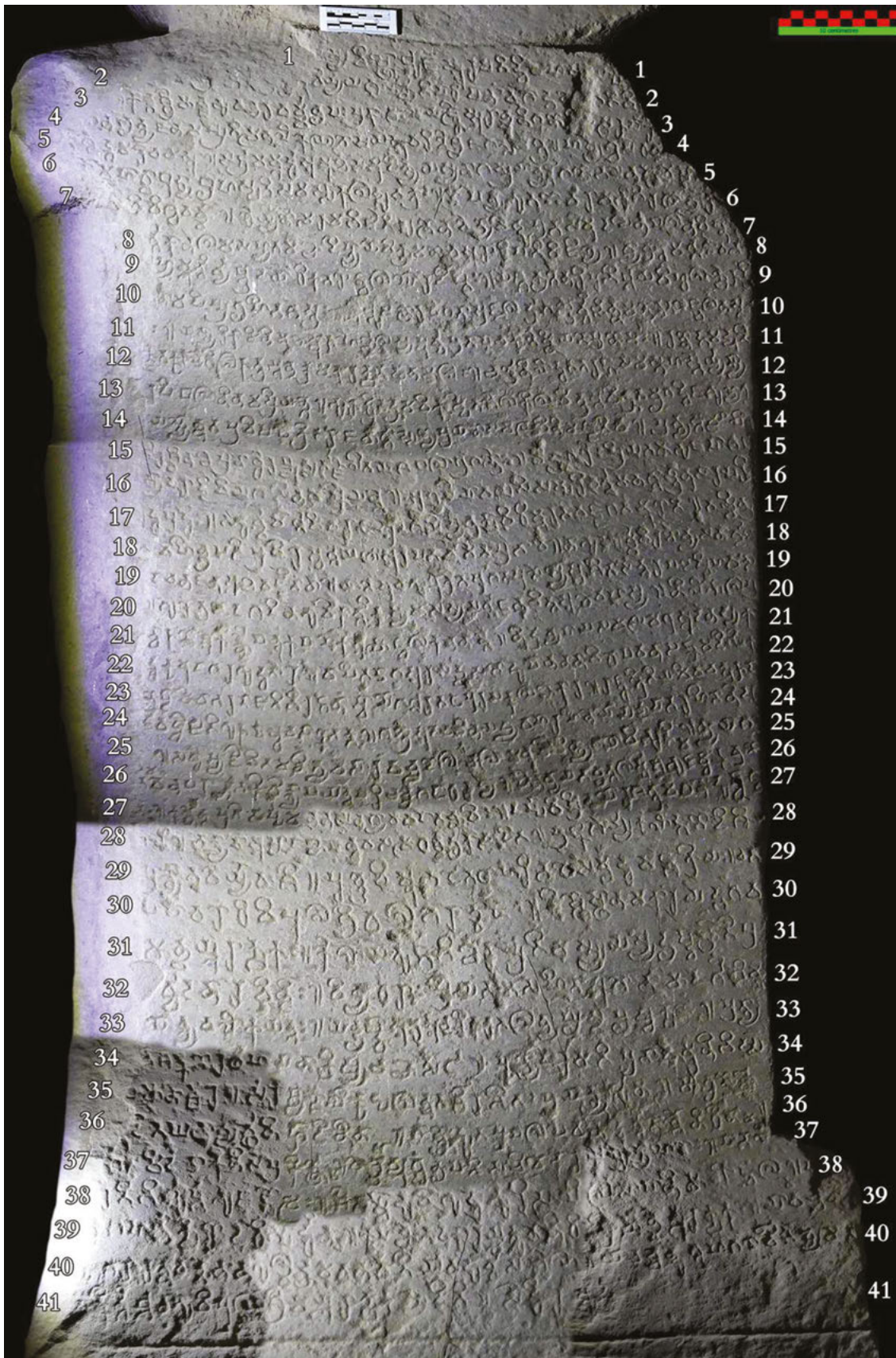


Figure 14: Gangdhar inscription of Mayūrākṣaka. Composite digital photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Government Museum, Jhalawar.

dren we did find an enormous tamarind tree in what may be the correct area, and below it a modern *cabūtrā* with fragments of ancient sculpture found nearby, but no other trace of what could have been “evidently ... the site of an old ruined temple” (Fleet, *ibid.*; I do not know if Fleet’s agents reported a ruin or if he was guessing). However, this spot is only about 300 metres north of the old fort in the village, so the stela may have been in a different place.³⁴

The inscription of 41 densely written lines covers most of the rectangular face, starting directly below the wheel emblem and continuing almost all the way to the rough-hewn bottom, with a total area about 62 centimetres wide and 112 centimetres high. The lines tend to dip in the middle and rise again towards the end. Character bodies are 12 to 15 millimetres high, and the lines are spaced at 4–5 centimetres. The left edge and the top left and right corners of the inscription are chipped off. The characters are fairly deeply engraved, but the surface of the stone is weathered to a varying degree; in some places it seems to have been abraded so that the incised strokes are now shallow, and in many places it is pitted or flaked. Most of the text is clearly legible, but the small size of the lettering combined with the roughness of the surface causes difficulties in many places.

Script and Language

The Gangdhar inscription is a specimen of the rounded variety of Mālavān late Brāhmī. *Ka* and *ra* have elongated descenders, and while *ra* has a hook at the bottom, *ka* does not. *Ṇa* has the looped form. *Ma* is likewise looped, with the arms usually – but not always – starting from a single point on the loop. *Da* is rounded and *dha* is an elongated oval. *Bha* and *ca* are of the broad type. *Śa* is also rounded with equal legs; its crossbar usually connects the two legs but sometimes does not reach the left leg. *La* has an elongated tail that curves back not only over the top, but down to the baseline on the left of the body. The only independent vowel sign in this long inscription is that for initial *au* (in *aupamyā*, 16), a character very rarely seen in inscriptions. It is unfortunately quite weathered, but seems to be an S shape with two strokes atop

³⁴ The boys in Gangdhar said there was a very old inscription further north on the riverbank, but after a few enthusiastic questions on my part they revealed the additional information that this very old inscription was in English and said “fishing is prohibited.” Seeing the disappointment on my face, they added that it said the same in Hindi too, but still failed to persuade me to visit it.

it (resembling an *o mātrā*); one of these strokes curves backward and down, while the other slants forward and up.³⁵ Vowel marks for *ā*, *e* and *o* are generally horizontal with a downward bend, but some are curving *śīromātrās*, and some are exaggerated in size (see *yo* in l4, with two strokes that start upward, then bend down on both sides of the character and extend beyond the baseline). Certain consonants attach their vowel marks at places other than the top. Thus, *ṇ* attaches *e* and *ā* on the body (e.g. *guṇena*, 17; *praṇāma*, 111). *M* does likewise (e.g. *śrīmān*, 13; *appratimena*, 14), with the marks for *o* on both sides of the body (e.g. *kusumojvala*, 121) and *au* on two sides of the body and the top of the left arm (*mauli*, 114). *Jā*, as is often seen, attaches *ā* to the middle prong, and the vowel mark bends up and backward. In *jñai* (13), the vowel marks are attached at the top left, curving left and down, and left of the body, curving down and back to the right. When attached to *l*, *ā* comes at the top right as expected, but *e* and *ai* are represented by a single or double horizontal stroke inside the curling tail (unclear in *sakalendu*, 16; *balena*, 17 and *mālaiḥ*, 112; clear in *tālair* 112), while *lo* has the cursive form with a loop in the tail. The mark for medial *i* is a circle; *ī* is a circle with a vertical or diagonal line in the middle, occasionally (*dīptyā*, 18; *kīla*, 113) executed as a spiral open on the left bottom. An extremely rare sign occurring in this inscription is the medial long *ṛ* (*māṭṛṇāñ*, 135). Albeit Fleet reads *māṭṛṇāñ* (emending *ṭṛ* to *ṛ*) and Basham (1984, 149) explicitly notes that the short *ṛ* is a scribal error, the *t* clearly has two of the usual *ṛ* marks attached to its right leg: one tends toward the horizontal while the other is angled more steeply downward.

The use of *anusvāra* is close to standard, with some preference for nasal conjuncts where an *anusvāra* would be expected (for instance *samparivarttamāna* in l16 but *samprakīrṇa* in l37; other examples include *saṅkrama*, 122; *āsuhṛdāñ ca*, 128; *mahīn nṛpati*, 118; *yan dṛṣtvā* l33). The velar *ṇ* is sometimes used before *ś* instead of *anusvāra* (*vaṅśa*, 129 and *aṅśumān*, 135, but not in *vaṅśo*, 12). Similarly, identical consonants may be used instead of *visarga* before sibilants (e.g. *yajñais surān*, 13; *°mānaś śāstrā*, 116). Alternatively, the *visarga* may be omitted altogether before a sibilant, as (probably) in *gāstrai stute*, 124 and (positively) in *viṣṇo sthānam*, 130. In two further instances there may or may not be a *visarga*, but there is definitely no double sibilant: *sahitā(h) suśobham*, 132 and *nidhi(h) śrīmān*, 139. Such elision of the *visarga* is optionally permitted by grammarians (SI p. 404 n. 7) and need not be regarded as a mistake. Instead of the regular *visarga*, the *jihvāmūliya* is consistently used before velar stops;

³⁵ See Figure 1 on page 12.

in shape it usually resembles a looped *ma* (e.g. *xkri*, 111; *xkha* 126), but it may instead resemble *ṣa* (*xkri*, 113). The *upadhmānīya* does not occur; the regular *visarga* is used repeatedly before *p*. *Halanta* consonants are consistently used in a final position before a punctuation mark. The only such consonant occurring is *m*, which is reduced in size and positioned very low, but in shape resembles a full *ma*, including the headmark. Punctuation marks are employed with fair consistency at the ends of half-verses and full stanzas (though apparently not at the end of verse 1), and after every quarter of some longer verses near the end (v22 onward). All are double verticals with a hook at the top left of the first one, and are transcribed in the edition below as double *daṇḍas*. Entitled by the consistent appearance of these marks, I supply identical punctuation at lost verse and half-verse ends.

Consonants are systematically geminated not only after *r*, but before *r* as well (for example *appratimena*, 14; *samaggra*, 14; *vikkrameṇa*, 18; *vyabbhro*^o, 19). Gemination before *r* even occurs in an initial position (e.g. *ppragṛhita*, 110; probably *ggraha*, 140; *bbhavatu*, 141), unless a third consonant is involved in the conjunct (*nāśam prayānti*, 15). Consonants are likewise doubled before *y* (e.g. *bhr̥t̥tya*, 14; *abbhyudyatā*^o, 115; *vikkhyāpayan*, 126; probably *saṃrabhya*, 135) and even *s* may be geminated in such a position (*yassya*, 111, 112, 114), though sometimes it remains single (*yasya*, 15, 116). Twice, *s* is unexpectedly doubled, in *rājamārggāssaiṇya* (114) and *śītassvādu* (138). In the former case, the composer would have had *rājamārgā* in mind (at the end of a *bahuvrīhi* compound in the feminine singular agreeing with *bhūr*), but someone else involved in the process of transferring the text to stone probably construed a plural *rājamārgās* and good-naturedly “corrected” the text. The latter may also be a case of erroneous emendation by someone who mistakenly understood a nominative *śītas* instead of the stem in compound required by the syntax; or the gemination may have been driven by the presence of *v* after *s*. However, there are no other instances of doubled consonants before *v*; instead, a single consonant is used in place of a standard double in *oḥvala* (19, 110, 138).

There is some inconsistency in the use of dental *n* and retroflex *ṇ* (*śūṇya*, 113; *saiṇya*, 114 and conversely, *pratisarppamāna*, 127), and in the distinction between *r* and *ṛ* (*kṛita*, 114, 127 and probably 119; *tritiyam*, 123; *ākṛiti*, 131 and *ākṛiṣya*, 134; elsewhere *r̥* is used as expected). In addition, there is a scattering of simple “typographic” mistakes, the most common examples of which are the omission of *anusvāra*, *visarga* and of vowel marks or parts thereof (e.g. *marīca* for *marīci*, 15; *baṇa* for *bāṇa*, 121; *vallabher* for *vallabhair*, 130). Other inaccuracies in vowel use

might reflect local pronunciation (*°odupāna* for *°odapāna*, 122; *ādarṣi* for *ādarṣa*, 132). Consonants are occasionally changed into similar glyphs by the omission or addition of a stroke (*gāstrai* for *śāstrai*, 124; *gyāmo* for *śyāmo*, 127; possibly *aṣṭhāṣita* for *aṣṭāṣita*, 119 and *duṣṭhā*^o for *duṣṭā*^o in 127).

The whole of the inscription is in verse except for the brief closer *siddhir astu* and possibly an even briefer opening (such as *siddham*) that is now lost. The poetry is decent *kāvya*; the author was fond of hyperbole (*atiśay-okti*) and complex metaphorical images and very imaginative in his application of these, but his technical skill in tying his creativity to syntax and metre seems to be short of the mark. It may be worth noting that in the first two quarters of verse 23 the caesura is obscured by vowel *saṃdhi*, a phenomenon that occasionally appears in certain metres and was probably not perceived by a contemporary audience as a mistake.³⁶

Commentary

This is a dedicatory inscription commemorating the construction of a temple to Viṣṇu, a subsidiary temple to the mother goddesses (*mātṛ*), and a well. Although it is usually called an inscription of Viśvavarman, its issuer was in fact Viśvavarman’s minister Mayūrākṣaka. The text opens with a badly effaced invocation to Viṣṇu, or perhaps just to Viṣṇu’s arm. After this, King Naravarman is introduced in another damaged stanza. The extant text does not say he was an Aulikara or Olikara, but the name could easily have been accommodated in the lacuna.³⁷ The inscription lauds Naravarman in generic terms of flattery as a dutiful ruler and a fearsome warrior.

Next, King Viśvavarman is introduced as the successor of Naravarman. The word(s) expressing their relationship are irretrievably lost at the end of line 5. The context and the metre suggest the restoration *tasyātmajaḥ*, “his son,” but *tasyānujaḥ*, “his younger brother,” would also be plausible and other reconstructions may be possible. Viśvavarman receives much more flowery praise than his predecessor. His awesome appearance in battle and the prowess of his hosts are described at length. The statement that the oceans pay homage to his hosts (v9) may be an indication that at one point he conquered land as

³⁶ See my study (Balogh 2017) on slurred caesurae. I have not previously seen this phenomenon in the *mandākrāntā* metre.

³⁷ For instance in *akṣaras* 4–7 of v2c; compare v6 of the Mandsaur inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10) which has the word *aulikara* at this point in a stanza of identical metre.

far as a seacoast; if so, this was most likely the Gulf of Khambhat. Verse 12 mentions Viśvavarman's youth (*agre ... vayasī samparivarttamāna*, 116) and the main verb of the stanza (*karoti*, 117) is in the present imperfect. It is thus possible that he was still young at the time the inscription was composed. However, given that by my revised date only five years separate the present text from the reign of Bandhuvarman recorded in the inscription of the silk weavers (A6), it is more likely that there is a gap of time between the first and second halves of the verse. The message is thus that Viśvavarman was already wise at a tender age, and is even more so at the present.

The thirteenth stanza describes his reign as a halcyon time. Although the verse is a complete sentence on its own, the locative absolute *tasmin praśāsati mahim*, "while he was ruling the earth," is obviously to be understood simultaneously as the beginning of the section of the inscription that declares the date. This section, up to the end of verse 22, may be viewed as a single, highly complex sentence with convoluted and somewhat loose syntax. The two Bihar Kotra inscriptions (A2, A3) show the same basic structure (viz. reigning king – date – donor – facility constructed) with an absolute minimum of added detail, while the Mandsaur inscription of the time of Naravarman (A1) approaches the present one in complexity but also follows a very similar pattern so far as it is extant.

Verse 14 gives the year, which has generally been understood as 480 but which I prefer to read as 488 (see page 60 below for my reasoning), then specifies the day as the bright thirteenth of Kārttika. Verse 15 describes the beauties of the autumn season, including a reference to the ending of Viṣṇu's sleep. This is also mentioned in the Mandsaur inscription of Naravarman (see page 39), but possibly timed about one month earlier in the year.

After the date, the donor Mayūrākṣaka is introduced, but he is only named in verse 20 (near the end of the complex sentence that winds through most of the inscription), while verses 16 to 20 contain a eulogy to him. The stanzas describing him include several problematic spots and I disagree with Fleet's reading, restoration or interpretation on several counts; see the notes to this part of the text and the translation. He is said to have been a patron of numerous public works in a place called Gargarātaṭapura (i.e. "the town on the bank of the Gargarā"). The river flowing by Gaṅgdhār is in our days called the Chhoti Kali Sindh, but in antiquity Gargarā must have been its name or one of its names.³⁸ The name is clearly connected to the

present-day name Gangdhar, as already observed by Fleet, who adds (CII3, 72 n. 3) that forms of the name recorded on maps include "Gangrar, Gungra, and Gungurar." It has also been reported that an inscription dated 1251 CE refers to this town as Gargarāta (Jain 1972a, 137), but I have not been able to verify this. These variants appear to be a plausible bridge between Gargarātaṭa (Prakritised presumably to **gaggarāḍa*) and modern Gangdhar. The Anglicisation Gangadhar (frequently used in secondary literature mentioning this inscription) should thus be avoided, as it falsely implies that the name is derived from Sanskrit Gaṅgādhara.

Mayūrākṣaka is further said to be a dutiful and fair-minded minister. His countless good qualities include some that indicate he was, or had formerly been, a military man. None of his forebears' names are recorded, but he appears to be spoken of as the founder of a lineage (*puttre ... sambaddha-vaṅśa-kriyaḥ*, 129³⁹) and names two of his descendants. Viṣṇubhaṭa is the name of his son; Haribhaṭa is most probably another son, but *puttre* (129) syntactically only applies to the former name, so Haribhaṭa may have been a grandson or even a niece or a son-in-law. Mayūrākṣaka put his sons in charge of the construction, and these sons are referred to in the plural (*ātmajaiḥ*, 130) which may mean that he had more than two; or sons and grandsons may be meant here. Whichever the case may be, it is implied that Mayūrākṣaka was old at the time.

After the donor's introduction, the end of verse 20 records the construction of a temple to Viṣṇu, and the next two stanzas are an ingeniously fanciful description of this temple (about parts of which I again disagree with Fleet). Verse 23 says that in addition to the main temple, a shrine of the mother goddesses was also built. I discuss this separately on page 61 below. Finally, verse 24 records a third building donated by Mayūrākṣaka, which is a well. The final stanza, more damaged than those in the middle section, is a prayer for Mayūrākṣaka's fame to endure.

scription of Sūryavarman mentions a settlement called Gargarākaṭa (very clearly legible) as the residence of the composer. The inscription's editor Hirananda Sastri (1918, 114–15) opines that Gargarā in that name must refer to the river Ghaghra, which is not far from the findspot of the inscription. If his plausible identification is correct, then Gargarākaṭa must be different from Gargarātaṭa.

³⁹ The expression is slightly opaque. Fleet translates "has accomplished the duty of [continuing his] lineage." The siring of successors is indeed the duty of a man according to the *dharmasāstras*. But *vaṃśakṛt* and *vaṃśakara* are well attested in the sense of "founder of a dynasty," so I believe *vaṃśa-kriyā* here simply means the foundation of one. Another possible interpretation of the expression is that he has consigned his familial duties on his son(s), which in turn may imply that Mayūrākṣaka's family were hereditary ministers to the family of Viśvavarman.

³⁸ A river named Ghargharā is mentioned in the *Revākhaṇḍa* of the *Vāyu-* or *Skanda-purāna* (3.56, *daṇḍakī gaṇḍakī caiva ghargharā ca mahānadi*), but the text says nothing specific about it. The Haraha in-

Which Year?

The date of the Gangdhar Inscription is expressed in words only (lines 19–20), and the year (119) is problematic on several levels. Fleet’s original reading of the text was *yāteṣu caturṣu kriteṣu śateṣu sausyaiṣvāśīta-sottarapadeṣv iha vatsareṣu*, where *reṣu* is supplied for text lost at the beginning of line 20. Fleet’s edition shows the *r* of *caturṣu* as unclear. He emends *kriteṣu* to *kṛteṣu* and gives *ṣṭhā* as a possible alternative reading for *ṣvā*. He reasons (CII3 p. 73–74 n. 1) that since Viśvavarman’s son Bandhuvarman was alive in ME 493 (see the silk weaver inscription, A6), the number of centuries in the present date must be four. The reading *caturṣu* is thus probably correct even though it is blatantly unmetrical (the required prosodic pattern at this point would be ---). Fleet’s problem was further compounded by the difficulty of interpreting the word *kṛteṣu* in the date, for which he offered several ingenious ideas and also consulted R. G. Bhandarkar on the matter. However, with a larger number of known inscriptions using this word in the dating formula, we can now be certain that *kṛta* qualifying the years refers to a particular reckoning of time which is for our purposes equivalent to the Mālava Era.⁴⁰ For the string *sausyaiṣvāśīta*, he (CII3 p. 75 n. 4) puts his vote on the emendation *saumyeṣv āśīta*, noting that *āśīta* is morphologically incorrect, as the word should be *aśīta* (but that in turn would be unmetrical here). He also considers the possibility of reading *sausyaiṣṭhāśīta* and emending to *saumye ṣṭhāśīta*, but rejects this because he expects *saumya* to be in the locative plural agreeing with *vatsareṣu*. All considered, he translates “when four hundred fully-complete (*kṛteṣu*) auspicious (*saumyeṣu*) years, together with (*sottarapadeṣu*) the eightieth (*āśīta*) [year], had here gone by” (CII3, 77; parenthetical Sanskrit words are my additions), concluding that the inscription was engraved in ME 480 expired, which he equates to 424–425 CE (current).

Haraprasad Shastri (1914, 319–20) further suggested that the compound *sottarapadeṣu* means one quarter (of a year) expired in addition to the number expressed. This does not change Fleet’s understanding of the date as 480 expired (i.e. 481 current), only specifies that the precise date would be about three months into that year. Shastri mentions this inscription apropos of attempting to prove that *kṛta* is not used as the name of an era, but as a technical term for the first year in a four-year Vedic cycle. I find this interpretation of *sottarapadeṣu* unlikely: since the inscription is dated in the month of Kārttika, this would

put the beginning of the year in Śrāvaṇa, which would require substantial evidence from other sources.

The next scholar to pick up the date issue was H. B. Bhide (1921). He offers no new solution for *sausyaiṣvāśīta*, only points out that it is problematic. For the string *caturṣu*, he suggests reading *catuṣu* and proposes to emend to *catrīṣu*. This would require that we posit a new Viśvavarman, who lived about a century earlier than the father of Bandhuvarman known from the silk weaver inscription (A6). Bhide does just that, reasoning that the present Viśvavarman is introduced as a great conqueror and the son of Naravarman, while the later inscription’s Viśvavarman was a feudatory without any named ancestors. His deduction cannot be accepted even though it would produce a correct prosodic pattern for this segment. As pointed out by S. N. Majumdar Sastri in his remarks (1921) printed adjacent to Bhide’s paper, we know a date for Naravarman from the Bihar Kotra stone (A2; now also from the cave inscription at the same site, A3). Bhide thus implicitly posits not only two Viśvavarmans, but also two Naravarmans. We have no evidence whatsoever for a Naravarman in the third century of the Mālava Era, whereas if we retain the reading *caturṣu* in the present inscription, the date of Viśvavarman (ME 480) falls precisely between the known dates of his father Naravarman (ME 474) and his son Bandhuvarman (ME 493). Sastri adds that palaeographically the inscription does not seem to belong to the early fourth century, and that praise of a king’s conquests or lack thereof cannot be used to prove the separateness of two rulers.

Subsequent scholars⁴¹ have generally accepted Fleet’s date of ME 480. My re-examination of the stone has shown that the reading *catu* is practically certain (see Figure 15). The character *tu* is clear; reading it as *tri* is impossible.⁴² There is a deep pit in the surface above *ṣu*, so the presence or absence of a superscript *r* cannot be established with certainty, but the left-hand vertical of *ṣ* seems to be taller than the right-hand one, so there was likely a *repha* on top of this stroke. This would mean that the text is at least lexically, if not metrically, correct. For the second problematic part of the date, I prefer to read *sausyēṣṭhāśīta*. Of the three strokes that may be vowel marks for the conjunct *sy*, only the one starting on the left and curving downward seems

⁴¹ Such as Sircar (1965b, 402 n. 1) and Salomon (1989, 14).

⁴² A curving mark to the left of the descending part of the *u mātrā* may, perhaps, be interpreted as a subscript *r*. The reading *catrīṣu* would be metrically correct, but not attested anywhere that I know of. Moreover, *tru* ought to comprise a large subscript *r* to the side of which a smaller *u* mark is attached, while here the *u* is the large “well” used in conjunction with *t*, and the apparent *r* is a small stroke. Finally, this mark is shallow, so it is probably a product of damage, not part of the original engraving.

⁴⁰ This was first pointed out by D. R. Bhandarkar (1913, 163). See also page 9.



Figure 15: Detail of the Gangdhar inscription of Mayūrākṣaka with the date. Photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Government Museum, Jhalawar.

Above: Composite of multiple closeup photos with grazing light. Below: Eye tracing; clear lines shown in green; less distinct strokes in blue; restoration in red.

to be originally engraved. The one at the top, curving left, is very shallow, while the one on the right seems to be too large and crude, so I attribute both to damage. For *ṣṭhā* against the accepted *ṣvā*, compare *ṣvi* near the end of the present line (119) to *ṣṭhā* at the end of line 27 and *ṣṭha* in line 33. Subscript *v* is smaller, much more angular, and is on the right; while subscript *th* is more circular and is positioned below the centre of the primary consonant.

For the whole phrase specifying the year I propose to emend and restore *yāteṣu caturṣu kṛteṣu śateṣu saumye 'ṣṭāśīta-sottarapadeṣv iha vatsareṣu*, which is by and large the same as the reading and emendation preferred by Fleet except for one significant detail: I read the year as 488 rather than 480. As pointed out above, Fleet had actually considered this possibility and rejected it because it would produce the locative singular form *saumye*, which has no part to play in the syntax of this phrase. In my opinion the most parsimonious way to interpret it is to construe it with *dīne* in line 20, which is slightly awkward but acceptable.⁴³ Additionally, this reading dispenses with Fleet's problem that the word for "eightieth" is *aśīta*, not *āśīta*. Moreover, the end of the word *saumye* falls at the boundary between the first and second quarter of a stanza. While vowel *saṃdhi* is by convention always applied at the ends of odd *pādas*, and

⁴³ Alternative explanations may be possible for *saumye*. One might supply *varṣe* (compare *sva-rājya-saṃvatsare* used in conjunction with a plural locative *varṣa-śateṣu* in the two Bihar Kotra inscriptions, A1 and A2, 12) or *kāle* and understand *saumye* as qualifying that omitted word. Further out on a limb, *saumya* may perhaps be used not in the generic sense of "auspicious" but in a more technical one. Several attested meanings (see MW s. v.) may be relevant in the context, e.g. "Mercury" for Wednesday, or a specific year in the 60-year Jovian cycle, or the asterism *mṛgaśīras*. However, any of these interpretations would require further circumstantial evidence, as no such details are given in any related inscription. According to Salomon (1998, 175), the earliest known inscriptional record of weekdays is the Eran pillar inscription of the time of Budhagupta (CII3 19, CII3rev 39, SI III.35), dated ca. 485 CE.

thus the elision of the initial *a* of *aṣṭāśīta* is normal, Fleet's version cuts off the locative ending from the stem (*saumye/ṣvāśīta*). Such cutting occasionally occurs at caesurae,⁴⁴ but is hardly ever met with at *pāda* boundaries. Syntactically, I construe *aṣṭāśīta-sottarapadeṣu* with *caturṣu śateṣu*, literally "four hundreds with the word 'eighty-eight' [inserted] after them," and assume that the circumlocution was used for the sake of metre.⁴⁵ The use of the ordinal *°aśīta* instead of the cardinal *°aśīti* is non-standard, but this usage appears to be a quirk of expression not uncommonly associated with the Kṛta Era.⁴⁶

The Goddess Temple

Another part of the Gangdhar inscription that has attracted much scholarly attention is the damaged stanza recording the construction of a temple of the mother goddesses, evidently a subsidiary shrine accompanying the Viṣṇu temple. Fleet's reading and translation of verse 23 (with editorial notation and segmentation altered to the conventions of this book) was as follows:

*māt(ṛ:ṛ)ṇāñ ca [pramu]dita-ghanātyartha-nīhrādininām||
tāntrodbhūta-prabala-pavanodvartitāmbhonidhīnām||
[----]gatam idaṃ ḍākinī-saṃprakīrṇam||
veśmātyugraṃ nṛpati-sacivo (^)kārayat puṇya-hetoḥ||*

⁴⁴ See my study (Balogh 2017).

⁴⁵ Several of the inscriptions treated in this book use similarly convoluted expressions to fit dates to a metre. Compare especially the Chhoti Sadri inscription, *yāteṣu pañcasu śateṣv aṭha vatsarāṇām dve viṃśati-samadhikeṣu sa-saptakeṣu* (A7, 115-16) and the Risthal inscription, *sa-dvy-abda-saptati-samā-samudāyavatsu pūrṇṇeṣu pañcasu śateṣu vatsarāṇām* (A9 116), both in *vasantatilakā* like the present date.

⁴⁶ Cf. *caturṣu varṣa-śateṣu catuḥsaptateṣu* in both Bihar Kotra inscriptions (A1 and A2, 12) and *caturṣu varṣa-śateṣv aṣṭāvīṃśeṣu* in the Bijayagadh *yūpa* (11).

Also, for the sake of religious merit, the counsellor of the king caused to be built this very terrible abode, ... [and] filled full of female ghouls, of the divine Mothers, who utter loud (*ghana?*) and tremendous (*atyartha*) shouts (*nīhrād-*) in joy (*pramudita*), [and] who stir up (*udvartita*) the [very] oceans (*ambhonidhi*) with the mighty wind rising from the magic rites of their religion.⁴⁷

The text itself is quite securely established; on the basis of my autopsy of the stone I can make the following statements. In *mātīṇāñ*, a long *ī* mark is actually inscribed (see Script and Language above). The characters *ga* (in quarter *c*), *ṭpu* and *to* (in quarter *d*) are damaged, but can be confidently read. The reading *tāntrodbhūta* is certain,⁴⁸ *pace* Sircar (1965b, 405), who prints *tanthrodbhūta* and the numerous authors who cite this spelling.⁴⁹ As for Fleet's restoration *pramudita*, a vertical engraved stroke below the baseline is visible before the character *di*, which is indeed in all probability an *u mātrā* attached to the preceding consonant. Above and to the left of this, the surface has flaked off, so *pram* is entirely conjectural.

M. C. Joshi (1983, 79, 2002, 48) saw this verse as evidence of left-hand Tantrism, further claiming that the lacuna before *gatam idam* "appears to" have included additional evidence for this in the form of terms such as *śava* (corpse), *kuṇapa* (corpse) and *muṇḍa* (skull). In spite of Joshi's implication that his suggestions are based on vestiges, the missing characters here are lost for good without any trace whatsoever and the proposed terms have no basis aside from wishful thinking. Joshi goes so far as to suggest the possibility "that the damaged section of the inscription mentions chanting the *mantras* for Cāmuṇḍā with her corpse that were revealed to the *ḍākinīs*," but does not say how this meaning or the suggested words would have fit into the metre or the syntax of the verse. The only specific conjecture he offers is *cāmuṇḍārcā kuṇapa-gatam idam* (1983, 79, absent from his 2002 paper), which is hypermetrical and, to me at least, syntactically unintelligible. He does not attempt to translate the stanza as a coherent whole, but does make some speculative comments on its implications.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Sanskrit words in parentheses are my additions.

⁴⁸ There are several marks next to the consonant *t*, including an almost vertical one above it. The stroke going right and curving down appears to be genuinely engraved (i.e. an *ā mātrā*), while the others are later scratches.

⁴⁹ See page VI for comments on this.

⁵⁰ To wit, Joshi suggests that the *ḍākinīs* of the temple would have been offered *bali*, and their joy over the offering would have manifested (or would have been thought to manifest) as a gust of wind. He also has a bone to pick with Fleet's translation of *veśmātyug-gram* as "very terrible abode;" instead, he suggests "most powerful

Arthur L. Basham's (1984, 149) interpretation of the passage has a rather sounder basis. He observes that since the inscription's site is far from any sea, *ambhonidhi* in the text should not be understood as oceans, with which the locals would not have been familiar, but as clouds. He proceeds to suggest that the Mothers (though they did have a sinister aspect) would have been primarily involved in rainmaking. Rituals (*tantra*) would have compelled or persuaded them to produce winds (*pavana*) that would in turn make the clouds swell or burst (*udvartita*). Basham also cautions that *tantra* in the inscription does not necessarily refer to the magico-religious texts we know by this name. Finally, he reinterprets the compound *pramudita-ghanātyartha-nīhrādininām*, which he says "is generally taken to mean that these goddesses shout with joy in the thick darkness" (I have not been able to trace this particular interpretation to a publication). Basham observes that the verb *nī-hrād* is usually associated with the sounding of percussion instruments, and that *ghana* is attested in the meaning of "gong" or "cymbal," and therefore suggests the translation "beating extremely [loudly] the rejoicing cymbals" for the phrase.

David Lorenzen agrees with Basham that the verse refers to rainmaking, but rejects his interpretation of the words *ambhonidhi* and *ghana* (2002, 35 n. 18, 2006, 71 n. 8), preferring to understand the former as "ocean" (with Fleet), and the latter as "cloud" (which is one of the most common meanings of the word). He also suggests restoring *pracudita* instead of *pramudita*, and thus arrives at the following translation:

For the sake of religious merit, the king's minister had them construct this terrifying home of the Mothers, filled full of female demons (*ḍākinī*) ... these Mothers impel (*pracudita*) the great (*atyartha*) booming (*nīhrād-*) of the rain clouds (*ghana*) and rouse the ocean (*ambhonidhi*) with the mighty wind that arises from the Tantras.⁵¹

David Gordon White (2003, 207–10) has also reinterpreted this piece. He agrees with Basham's interpretation of *ghana* as "gong" and cites convincing literary evidence (along with a later sculpture) for associating the Mothers with loud percussive music.⁵² However, he dismisses the idea of rainmaking and argues that the verse instead refers to "a female figure's flight through the clouds afforded by the pumping of her wind or breath channels

or effective shrine where desires get accomplished easily," which is quite a mouthful for two words.

⁵¹ Lorenzen (2002, 29–30, 2006, 71). Sanskrit words in brackets are my additions except for *ḍākinī*.

⁵² White (2003, 207–8). His texts include the appendix of the *Harivaṃśa* along with the later *Mālatīmādhava* and *Rājatarāṅginī*.

and a cacophony of percussion instruments” (ibid., 210). He translates as follows:

Also, for the sake of religious merit, the king’s minister caused to be built ... this most terrible abode, strewn with a multitude of [images of] Ḍākinīs [i.e.,] of the Mothers, that drove of joyous (*pramudita*) over-the-top (*atyartha*) gong-bangers (*ghana* ... *nīhrādininām*) who are pumped up (*udvartita?*) to the rain clouds (*ambhonidhi*) [on] the powerful winds raised by the Tantras [in this context, “ritual practices”].⁵³

Bruce M. Sullivan (2007, 11–12) is one of the few authors conscious of Fleet’s reading *tāntra*, which he employs to argue that the stanza has nothing to do with Tantrism. The translation he offers is almost verbatim the same as Lorenzen’s (thus he tacitly accepts Lorenzen’s restoration *pracudita*). The only substantial difference is that he puts “*tāntras*” in place of “Tantras,” remarking that the word should be understood in its usual meaning, which is “stringed instrument.” Sullivan emphasises that he understands the verse to refer to “climatic effects ... caused by music (accompanied by booming clouds),” i.e. neither quite by magic rites as understood by Fleet, nor by Tantric texts as implied by Lorenzen. He does, however, accept the stanza as evidence of “a tantroid theology embodied in a tradition of tantroid practices,” primarily because of its reference to *ḍākinīs*.⁵⁴ Michael Willis (2009, 179) accepts and reiterates Sullivan’s views and notes in this connection that a fifth-century panel depicting goddesses (though not quite the standard Saptamātṛkās) includes a seated figure holding a *viṇā*.⁵⁵ Willis also introduces an additional revision of Fleet’s interpretation. He suggests understanding *ambhonidhi* in its literal sense as “treasure which is water” and offers this translation:

53 White (2003, 207). Sanskrit words in brackets are my additions. I do not know what, if anything, in the texts corresponds to White’s “drove” (he may simply be emphasising the plural in the Sanskrit). I am also sceptical about his bracketed “i.e.” equating the Mothers to the *ḍākinīs*.

54 Although dating from a much later time, the Mohaj Mata temple in Terahi (Shivpuri district, Madhya Pradesh; 25°02’45”N 77°56’58”E) may be a surviving example of a goddess temple “liberally sprinkled” with *ḍākinīs*, though Garde (1938, 6–7), describes the sculpted figures as “goblins (male and female).” See http://dsal.uchicago.edu/images/aiis/aiis_search.html?depth=large&id=49369 as well as other images in the AIIS collection. My thanks to Muzaffar Ansari for telling me about this temple.

55 This is the Satmarhia relief panel at Ramgarh (near Badoh-Pathari and Eran in eastern Malwa). See Casile (2007, 36) for further details, and Figure 37 of Willis’s book (2009, 180) and http://dsal.uchicago.edu/images/aiis/aiis_search.html?depth=large&id=48053 for an illustration. The instrument player is the third figure from the right.

For the sake of religious merit, the king’s minister commissioned this very terrifying abode, a place filled with *ḍākinī*-s, and characterised by ... An abode of the Mothers, whose thunderous (*atyartha?*) cries (*nīhrād-*) impel (*pracudita*) the rain clouds (*ghana*), and whose treasure (*nidhi*) – the waters (*ambhas*) – bursts forth (*udvartita*) with the mighty wind produced by their lyre (*tāntra*).⁵⁶

From my perspective as a philologist, this profusion of interpretations hinges on the various possible ways of interpreting a few words of the text. Working from the bottom up, I wholeheartedly agree with Basham’s observation that *nī-hrād* (along with *nir-hrād*) refers to the booming sound of percussion instruments. Closely connected to this verbal form in the text is *ghana*, and I submit it is no accident that this word has two meanings relevant to the context: “cloud” and “gong.” Other meanings that have been proposed are both less likely and less relevant. In Fleet’s translation cited above, the word intended to render *ghana* must be “loud”, although the dictionary meaning (MW s. v.) closest to that sense is “coarse, gross.” As for “darkness,” which Basham reports as a prevailing opinion before his commentary of the subject, it is true that the adjective *ghana*, “thick,” is very commonly used to qualify substantives meaning darkness (e.g. *andhakāra*, *timira*), and it may also mean “dark” when used to qualify a colour. However, I would not expect it to be used as a substantive meaning “thick darkness” on its own. Conversely, the meaning “gong” or “cymbal” is attested not only in several lexicons, but also in the *Harivaṃśa* (PWG s. v.).

I thus propose to read this stanza as a *śliṣṭa* sentence with two layers of meaning superimposed on some of the words, and shall continue its interpretation with this in mind. The first published conjecture for the damaged word in the first quarter was *pramudita*. Fleet’s (and Joshi’s) interpretation of shouting in joy is syntactically only slightly awkward (and continues to be so if “shouting” is replaced with “clanging”), but it does not seem very relevant. Basham’s metonymic “rejoicing cymbals” seems unlikely to me, while White’s translation “joyous ... gong-bangers” is a stretch of compound interpretation. The second conjecture, *pracudita*, is also a bit problematic. The verb *cud* does mean “impel,” but its perfect passive participle should be *codita* (which would be unmetrical here), not *cudita*.⁵⁷ Moreover, *pra-cud* may

56 Willis (2009, 179), with minor editorial changes not affecting the substance.

57 The form *pracudita* is attested in the *Mahābhārata* (MW s. v.), probably used instead of *pracodita* for the sake of the metre. Therefore I cannot rule out that the same has been done here, but I find this rather unlikely.

apply to clouds but does not work well with gongs, which is why Lorenzen, Sullivan and Willis all understood it “impelling rain clouds.” As I have noted above, (*u*)*dita* is legible in the stone, but the preceding characters are altogether lost. The prosody tells us that the first of the two lost *akṣaras* is a conjunct consonant with a short vowel, and the second, whose vowel seems to be *u*, has a single consonant. I propose a third conjecture for this locus: *praṇudita*. The word is attested in the sense of “beaten, struck” (MW s. v.) and is thus applicable to gongs. The basic meaning of *pra-ṇud* is “to push on, set in motion,” so although the participle has not been recorded in such a sense, it can very well mean “impelled” when applied to clouds. The Mothers are thus said to jangle with struck gongs on one level, and to rumble with clouds set in motion on another.

The word *tāntra* was also, in my opinion, deployed for the sake of its double meaning. If only ritual had been intended, the prosodically equivalent *tantra* would have been a better choice, while if only a stringed instrument had been intended, *vīṇā* (or *tantrī* or *vādyā*) would have fit the bill admirably. I thus concur with Basham that a musical instrument was meant here. It may be relevant in this context that sets of Saptamātṛkā sculptures are frequently accompanied by a lute-playing male figure (*vīṇādhara*), probably a form of Śiva.⁵⁸ However, I disagree with Sullivan and Willis about excluding a verbal connection to Tantra, and believe that the “tantroid” features Sullivan points out in this verse should definitely include the word *tāntra*. Continuing the interpretation, *pavana* also seems to be a loaded word: in addition to meaning “wind” in the weather of the world, it is a common technical term for vital breath (*prāṇa*). White does not explicitly make this connection in his translation, but strongly implies it in his subsequent discussion of “wind or breath channels.” Coming to *ambhonidhi*, the meaning “ocean” is widely attested and almost certainly present in this case. Basham’s objection that the inscription’s site is in the middle of the continent and the locals would never have seen an ocean is irrelevant; the concept of the sea would have been very familiar to the intended audience from common lore and literary works, and verse 9 of this

⁵⁸ See e.g. Meister (1986, 235–36) and Hatley (2012, 103). The lute-bearer figure becomes common in the sixth and seventh centuries, but he may have accompanied the Mothers as early as the second half of the fifth century (Harper 1989, 81–83), though Schastok (1985, 68–69) disagrees. See also note 55 on page 63 above about a fifth-century sculpture of goddesses accompanied by a player of a stringed instrument.

very inscription is clearly about the ocean too. “Cloud,” however, is a less secure meaning: *ambhonidhi* is not attested in this sense, only in that of “ocean.” While some compounds consisting of words for “water” and “holder” (such as *ambhodhara* and *payodhara*) are known to mean “cloud,” it appears that no word ending in *nidhi* means “cloud,”⁵⁹ perhaps because *nidhi* implies a place or vessel that *receives* something, while clouds are primarily perceived as vessels that *release* water. For this reason, I prefer to understand the second level of meaning in *ambhonidhi*, with Willis, as “treasure which is water,” tacitly assuming that rainwater is meant, as suggested by *ghana*, which I took to mean “clouds” on this level.

To sum up my interpretation, on one level the Mothers are pictured as generally boisterous goddesses reminiscent of the *mātrgaṇas* described in the *Śalyaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*,⁶⁰ who make a great racket banging their gongs and who stir up the oceans with a powerful wind arising from their (or perhaps their male companion’s) lute. On another level, they are described as specifically involved in rainmaking: they boom with the thunder of clouds set in motion and, deploying their powerful vital breaths generated by *tāntra*, make the treasured waters burst forth. In this sense I understand *tāntra* to mean “something connected to *tantra*,” where “something” may be “power” or “ritual” or some other concept. I do not presume to determine exactly what *tantra* this would be, preferring to leave the details of the matter to Tantric specialists. I do, however, share Lorenzen’s (2002, 71) impression that in this second sense an established set of (not necessarily written) texts governing ritual practice is meant. The connection of the mother goddesses to violent atmospheric phenomena is also suggested in the unpublished fifth-century Badoh-Pathari Saptamātṛ panel inscription from eastern Malwa,⁶¹ and the eighth-century *Mālatīmādhava* of Bhavabhūti mentions a *yoginī* who flies by a tantric practice involving *nāḍīs* (the vessels of *prāṇa*) and splits clouds on her way.⁶²

⁵⁹ All my claims for attestation or lack thereof are based on the PWG.

⁶⁰ *MBh* 9.45. See Harper (1989, 57–58) for a discussion.

⁶¹ Lines 4–5, *yāsām ārtto balaughair vvalabhi-viharaṇe siddha-gandharvva-varggaḥ vāyur yyāsām javena druta-ratha-tarasā...* This part of the inscription is badly damaged and most of the reading cited here is tentative and partly conjectural. See my recent edition (Balogh 2019) for further details.

⁶² *Mālatīmādhava* 5.2, *iyam idānim aham ... nāḍīnām udaya-krameṇa jagataḥ pañcāmṛtākaraṣaṇād aprāptotpatana-śramā vighaṭayanty agre nābho-mbhomucaḥ*. Her *nāḍī* control is for the sake of tirelessness, not the splitting of clouds, which may be merely illustrative of her speed.

Diplomatic Text

- [1] ⁽¹⁾ [-----] (ma)sya viṣṇor bbhujas sura-pati-dvi(pa)-has[ta]-(?dīrggha)[ḥ] [-----]
- [2] [-----] (?p)r(?ajānā)[?m] ⁽²⁾ (p)ra(?kkhy)āta-vīryya-yaśa(sām) kṣitipādhipānām vaṃśodbha(v)(e/o) [~] (ga)tivi [-----] [-----]
- [3] [~] kāntaś śrīmān babbhūva naravarmma-nṛpaḥ prakāśaḥ ⁽³⁾ yajñais surān muni-gaṇā[n n](i)[ya]m(ai)r udār[aiḥ] [-----]
- [4] [māne]na bhṛtya-janam appratimena loke yo toṣayat sucaritaiś ca jagat samaggra(ṃ) ⁽⁴⁾ hasty-aśva-sādha(na) [-----]
- [5] [~] khaḍga-mariḥ;a!ma(tsu)ḥ saṅgrāma-mūrddhasu mukhaṃ samudikṣya yasya nāśam prayānty ari-gaṇā bhaya-na(ṣṭa-c)(?ittā)[ḥ] ⁽⁵⁾ [?tasyātmajaḥ] [-----]
- [6] [gu](ṇ)o mahātmā buddhyā bṛhaspati-samas sakalendu-vaktraḥ ⁽⁶⁾ Aupamyā-bhūta iva rāma-bhagīrathā(bhyām) r(ā)[?jā] babbhūva [~]
- [7] [~] [bhu]vi viśvavarmmā ⁽⁶⁾ dhairyyeṇa merum abhijāti-guṇena vaiṇyam indu prabhā-samuda(ye)na balena vi(ṣṇuṃ) [-----]
- [8] [saṃva]rttakānalam asahyatamañ ca dīptyā yo vikkrameṇa ca surādhipati(ṃ) vijigye ⁽⁷⁾ vyāvṛtta-mārgga iva bhā
- [9] [nur asa]hya-mūrttir vyabbhodayādihikatarojvala-ghora-dīptiḥ ⁽⁸⁾ yaś śakyate na ripubhir bbhaya-vihvalākṣair u(dv)ī
- [10] [kṣituṃ kṣa]ṇam api ppragrḥita-śāstra(ḥ) ⁽⁸⁾ (nirb)bhūṣaṇair avigatāsra-jal(ā)rdra-gaṇḍair vicchinna-maṇḍanata(yo)jvala-naṣṭa
- [11] [śobhai]ḥ ⁽⁹⁾ ya;ss!yāri-kāmini-mukhāmburuhair bbalasya pūrvvaṃ pratāpa-cakitaix kriyate praṇāmaḥ ⁽⁹⁾ ratnodgama-dyuti
- [12] [vira](ṇji)ta-kūla-tālair uttrasta-nakkra-makara-kṣata-ph(e)na-māl(ai)ḥ ⁽¹⁰⁾ caṇḍāniloddhata-taraṅga-samasta-hastair yya;ss!yā
- [13] [rṇṇavai]r api balāni namax-kriyante ⁽¹⁰⁾ bhūr uddh;ri!ta-druma-vikampita-śaila-kīla-vittrasta-vidruta-mṛga-dvija-śū;ṇ!ya-gu
- [14] [lmā]ḥ ⁽¹¹⁾ ya;ss!yonnata-praviṣa(mi)k;ri!ta-rājamārggā !s!sai;ṇ!ya-prayāṇa-samaye vinimajjati ⁽¹¹⁾ prattyasta-mauli-
- [15] [ma](ṇi)-raśmi-nakha-prabhāndhair abbhyudyatāñjalitayā śabalāgragaṇḍaiḥ ⁽¹²⁾ vidyādharaiḥ priyatamā-bhujā-pāśa-(ba)
- [16] [ddhair yya]syādarād divi yaś[āṃ]si namax-kriyante ⁽¹²⁾ agre pi y(o) vayasi samparivarttamānaś śāstrānusāra-pari
- [17] [varddhitā-ś](u)ddha-buddhiḥ ⁽¹³⁾ sad-dharmma-mārggam iva rā(ja)su (da)ṛśayiṣyan rakṣā-vidhim bharatavaj jagatax karoti ⁽¹³⁾ tasmin pra
- [18] [śāsa](ti) mahī;ṇ! nṛpati-pravīre svarggaṃ yathā sura-pat(ā)v amita-prabhāve ⁽¹⁴⁾ nābhūd adharmma-nirato vyasanānvi(to)
- [19] [vā] loke ka[dā]cana janas sukha-varjjito vā ⁽¹⁴⁾ yāteṣu catu(?r)(ṣu) k;ri!teṣu śateṣu sau;s!y(e) ṣi(ṭh)!āśīta-sottarapadeṣv iha vatsa
- [20] [reṣu]ḥ ⁽¹⁵⁾ śukle tra(yo)daśa-dine bhuvī kārttikasya māsasya sarvva-jana-citta-sukhāvahasya ⁽¹⁵⁾ nilotpala-pra
- [21] [sṛta-re]ṇv-aruṇ(āmbu)-kīrṇe bandhūka-b;ja!ṇa-kusumojvala-kānanānte ⁽¹⁶⁾ nidrā-vyapāya-samaye madhusūdanasya kā
- [22] [la-prabu]ddha-kumudāgara-śuddha-tāre ⁽¹⁶⁾ vāpī-taḍāga-sura-sadma-sabhod;u!pāna-nānā-vidhopavana-saṅkrama-dīrgghik[ā]
- [23] [bhi]ḥ ⁽¹⁷⁾ (?tu)ṣṭām ivābharaṇa-jātibhir aṅganām svām yo garggarā-taṭa-pura(ṃ) sa(ka)lañ-cakāra ⁽¹⁷⁾ rājñas t;ri!tīyam iva cakṣur udā
- [24] [ra][--](r) (dde)va-dvijāti-guru-b(ā)ndhava-sā(dhu)-bhaktaḥ ⁽¹⁸⁾ !g!(ā)str(ai) (st)ute (c)a (v)inaya-vyavahāra-hīne !yo pakṣa-pāta-rahito! nida(dh)[?ā]
- [25] [?ti kāryya]M ⁽¹⁸⁾ sarvvasya jīvitam anityam asāravac ca dol;ja!-cal(ā)m anuvicintya tathā vibhūtiM ⁽¹⁹⁾ nyāyāga
- [26] [tena vi]bhavena parāñ ca bhakti(ṃ) vikkhyāpayann upari cakkra-gadā-dhara(s)ya ⁽¹⁹⁾ pīna-vyāyata-vṛtta-lambi-subhujax khaḍga-vraṇ(?ai)

- [27] [ʔr aṅki](t)ah|| karṇṇānta-pratarppamā;n!a-nayana-ig!yāmo vadāta-cchaviḥ|| darppāviṣk;ri!ta-(gh)ora-
śatru-mathano du(ṣ)ḥ!(th)!(ā)(?tm)a-
- [28] [--](ba)li|| bhaktyā cāsuhṛdāñ ca b(ā)ndhava-samo dha(rmmā)rttha-kā(mo)dita(h)|| ⁽²⁰⁾prajñā-śauryya-
kulodgato diśi
- [29] [diśi] prakkhyāta-vīryyo vaśi|| puttire viṣṇubhaṭe tathā haribhaṭe sambaddha-va;n!śa-kriyah|| Eta
- [30] [t pāpa]-pathāvarodhi vipula śrī-vallabh!e!r ātmaj(ai)h|| (v)iṣṇo sthānam akārayad bhagava
- [31] [taś śrī]mān mayūrākṣakaḥ|| ⁽²¹⁾kailāsa-tuṅga-śikhara-ppratima;ss!ya yasya dṛṣṭvāk;ri!ti pra
- [32] [muditai]r vvadanāravind;i!h|| vidyādharāḥ ppriyata(mā)-sah;i!tā(h) suśobham ādarś;i!-bimba
- [33] [m iva] yānty avalokayantaḥ|| ⁽²²⁾ya;n! dṛṣṭvā sura-sundarī-kara-tala-vyāghṛṣṭa-pṛṣṭha kṣa(ṇā)T|| prattyā
- [34] [ʔdhāva](ʔna)-śaṅkino ratha-hayān āk;ri!ṣya cañcat-saṭā(N)|| puṇyodarka-mati-prabhāva-munibhis sam
- [35] [stū](ya)māno mbare|| samra(bbh)yāñjali-kuṭ;(p)!ala;n! nata-śirā bhītaḥ prayāṭty a;n!śumāN|| ⁽²³⁾mātṛṇāñ ca
- [36] [ʔpraṇ](u)dita-ghanātyarttha-nihṛādīnīnām|| tāntrodhbhūta-prabala-pavanodvarttitāmbhonidhīnām||
- [37] [----](ga)tam idaṃ ḍākīni-samprakīrṇṇaM|| veśmātyuggraṃ nṛpati-sacivo kāraya(t p)uṇya-he(t)oḥ||
⁽²⁴⁾pātāl(o)
- [38] [----](?)ratibhir g(g)uptaṃ bhujāṅgomaiḥ|| śīta-ṣ!svādu-vīśuddha-bhūri-salilaṃ sopān;i!-mālojvalaM||
(?pu)[--]
- [39] [----]gahanaṃ kṣīrodadhi-sparddhinaM|| kūpañ caitad akārayad guṇa-nidhi(h śrī)mān ma(y)
ūrākṣakaḥ|| ⁽²⁵⁾yāva(?d bhānor bha)
- [40] [ʔvati][----] (sā)garā ratnavanto nānā-gulma-druma-vanavati yāvad urvvi sa(śai)lā|| yāvaca cendu-ggraha-
gaṇa-citaṃ vyoma (?sā)
- [41] [---] [tā](va)t kīrttir bhavatu vipulā śrī-mayūrākṣakasye;(ʔd)i!ti|| siddhir astu

Curated Text

⟨Verse 1. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

[1][-----](ma)sya

viṣṇor bbhujas sura-pati-dvi(pa)-has[ta]-(?dirggha)[h]

[-----]

[---][2][-----] (?p)r(?ajānā)[?ṃ]

Translation

⟨1⟩

[Victorious is]⁶³ the arm of Viṣṇu, which is (long) like the trunk of the elephant of [Indra] the lord of gods
[engaged in the protection] (of creatures/subjects).

Text Notes

Alternative opinions cited below are from Fleet's edition in CII3 (F) with occasional reference to Sircar (S) where he differs from Fleet.

[1] **dirgghaḥ**] F reads *sarppa*, showing only *sa* as unclear. Most of the character he saw as *sa* is obliterated by a gouge in the stone, but it may have had an *i* or *ī* mark over it. In the last character, subscript *p* is possible, but the left-hand part of a subscript *gh* is equally feasible, and the main component seems to be *g*. Compare the expression *dirnāga-hasta-dirgho ... bāhur* in *Harṣacarita* 3 (Führer 1909, 161–62). It is also conceivable that the text was *lamba*, which I find less likely on the basis of the vestiges than *dirggha*, but possible in the context (compare *lambi* in verse 19, describing Mayūrākṣaka's arms). Sircar restores a *visarga* at the end. F does not do so, but in my opinion the half-verse would not have ended with an unfinished compound, so whatever the dubious word was, a *visarga* is very likely.

[1] The position of the line break with respect to the metre of the lost text cannot be determined precisely. Here and below, I largely adopt F in my estimate.

[2] **prajānām**] F reads nothing at this point; my reading of the vestiges is tentative. There is no discernible trace of a punctuation mark, although one would be expected here.

Footnotes

63 The lost parts of the verse probably contained a verbal form with this meaning, e.g. *jayati*.

⟨Verse 6. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

dhairyyeṇa merum abhijāti-guṇena vaiṇyam
 indu(ṁ) prabhā-samuda(ye)na balena vi(ṣṇuṁ)[||]
^[8][saṁva]rttakānaḥ asahyatamañ ca dīptyā
 yo vikrameṇa ca surādhipati(ṁ) vijigye||

⟨Verse 7. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

vyāvṛtta-mārgga iva bhā^[9][nur asa]hya-mūrttir
 vyabbhrodyaḍhikataroj(j)vala-ghora-dīptiḥ||
 yaś śakyate na ripubhir bbhaya-vihvalākṣair
 u(dv)ī^[10][kṣitum kṣa]ṇam api ppragṛhīta-śāstra(ḥ)||

⟨Verse 8. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

(nirb)bhūṣaṇair avigatāśra-jal(ā)rdra-gaṇḍair
 vicchinna-maṇḍanata(yo)j(j)vala-naṣṭa^[11][śobhai]ḥ||
 yaḥss!yāri-kāmini-mukhāmburuhair bbalasya
 pūrvvaṁ pratāpa-cakitaix kriyate praṇāmaḥ||

[8] *saṁvarttakā*⁹] F prints the restored *saṁ* at the end of 17, but in my opinion it must have been at the beginning of 18. S prints *va* as unclear rather than restored, but the place where this character would have been is chipped off.

[8] *°tamañ*] F prints *°tamāñ*, probably a typo. S gives the correct reading.

⟨6⟩

He has surpassed
 Mount Meru in firmness,
 Vainya⁶⁷ in innate excellence,
 the moon in abundance of brilliance,
 Viṣṇu in strength,
 even the most unendurable doomsday fire in
 effulgence,
 and the overlord of the gods in boldness.

⟨7⟩

Like a sun diverted from its course,⁶⁸ its awesome
 effulgence made even fiercer by rising in a cloudless
 place, his appearance when he brandishes his weapons
 is so unendurable that his enemies, eyes quivering in
 fright, cannot look at him even for a moment.

⟨8⟩

Shocked well in advance by his armies' prowess, the
 lotus faces of his enemies' wives bow down, bereft of
 jewellery, cheeks moist with tears that do not dry up,
 their beauty, [once] glamorous, [now] lost because their
 makeup has run.⁶⁹

67 Pṛthu Vainya is famed in many sources as an ideal king and culture hero responsible for the commencement of agriculture. His name is attested as early as the *Rgveda* (as a seer, e.g. 8.9.10). According to canto 59 of the *Śāntiparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, his ancestor was created by Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu) from his mind when the gods begged him to create a worthy ruler for mortals (*MBh* 12.59.94). The compound *abhijāti-guṇena* may be understood as “the quality of his [high] birth,” referring to descent from Viṣṇu, but I believe the author would not have claimed that Viśvavarman descended from someone more illustrious than Viṣṇu. Also, Vainya's immediate predecessors were of questionable quality; indeed, his father Vena was such a dastard that his outraged Brahmin subjects slew him with blades of sacrificial grass (*MBh* 12.59.100). More likely, in my opinion, is that the compound is to be understood as “quality [obtained] through his [high] birth.” Vainya was born equipped with the knowledge of the Vedas, Vedāṅgas, archery and judicial law (*daṇḍanīti*), and had a keen mind for the fine points of morality and economics (*MBh* 12.59.105-106). The story of his birth is similarly told in canto 5 of the *Harivaṁśa*.

68 Fleet translates “like a sun, which, turning back upon (its) course.” I do not see why the sun would turn back or why that would be relevant to its brilliance if it did, and prefer to understand the phrase as a (second) sun that is here on earth rather than following a celestial course.

69 The stanza describes the women as both *nirbhūṣaṇa* and *vicchinna-maṇḍana*, which seem to mean very similar things. The apparent redundancy (which Fleet's translations “destitute of ornaments” and “having the wearing of adornments stopped” retain) can be removed by understanding *maṇḍana* as makeup (presumably eyeliner and perhaps designs painted on the cheeks), which has been damaged (*vicchinna*) by the tears on their cheeks.

⟨Verse 9. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

ratnodgama-dyuti^[12][vira](ñji)ta-kūla-tālair
uttrasta-nakkra-makara-kṣata-ph(e)na-māl(ai)ḥ||
caṇḍānilodhdhata-taraṅga-samasta-hastair
yya;ss!yā^[13][rṇṇavai]r api balāni namax-kriyantel||

⟨Verse 10. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

bhūr uddh;ri!ta-druma-vikampita-śaila-kīla-
vittrasta-vidruta-mṛga-dvija-śū(ṇ:n)ya-gu^[14][lmā]||
ya;ss!yonnata-praviṣa(mī)k;ri!ta-rājamārggā
s{s}ai(ṇ:n)ya-prayāṇa-samaye vinimajjatiṅva||

⟨Verse 11. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

prattyasta-mauli.^[15][ma](ṇi)-raśmi-nakha-
prabhāndhair
abbhyudyatāñjalitayā śabalāgragaṇḍaiḥ||
vidyādharaiḥ priyatamā-bhuja-pāśa-(ba)^[16][ddhair]
[yya]syādarād divi yaś[ām]si namax-kriyante||

⟨Verse 12. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

agre (')pi y(o) vayasi samparivarttamānaś
śāstrānusāra-pari^[17][varddhita-ś](u)ddha-buddhiḥ||
sad-dharmma-mārggam iva rā(ja)su (da)rśayiṣyan
rakṣā-vidhim bharatavaj jagatax karoti||

⟨Verse 13. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

tasmin pra^[18][śāsa](ti) mahi;ñ! nṛpati-pravīre
svarggaṃ yathā sura-pat(ā)v amita-prabhāve||
nābhūd adharmma-nirato vyasanānvi(to)^[19][vā]
[loke ka]dācana janas sukha-varjjito vā||

[14] *°rājamārggāssainya*] The superfluous *s* may be the result of an incorrect “emendation” by an ancient editor, see Script and Language.

[15] *priyatamā*] F prints *ppriyatamā*, but the *p* is single.

[16] *°syādarād*] F prints *ssyā*, but this does not seem to be the case here.

[17] *vidhim*] F and S print *vidhim*, but the stone has *vidhim*, the *m* forming a ligature with the following *bha*.

[19] *kadācana*] F and S print *ka* as extant and clear, but there is no trace of this character in the stone: the edge is chipped off just to the left of *dā*. This was probably the same in Fleet’s time. His rubbing shows a vertical line before *dā*, which could be taken for the descender of *ka*, but it is probably not an engraved line.

[19] *caturṣu ... śṭhāśita*] F’s emended reading is *yāteṣu caturṣu kṛteṣu śateṣu saumyeṣv āśita*. See page 60 for the complex problem of the date.

⟨9⟩

The very oceans pay homage to his hosts with waves whipped up by fierce winds into joined hands bearing garlands of foam rent by startled crocodiles and sea monsters, and bringing up gemstones whose glow tints the palm trees of the shore.

⟨10⟩

When his armies march forth, the earth, whose royal highways are rugged with elevations, seems to sink down. Her groves are emptied of beasts and birds that flee, scared up as trees are uprooted and her roof posts the mountains are shaken.⁷⁰

⟨11⟩

Vidyādharas fettered in the embrace of their lovers reverentially pay obeisance to his glories in the sky. As they raise their [hands in a] gesture of respect (*añjali*), the rays from the gems in their diadems are reflected back from their fingernails to dazzle them and dapple their muzzles.⁷¹

⟨12⟩

Even at an early age his clear mind was enriched by following the precepts (*śāstra*), and he [now] goes about his charge of protecting the world as Bharata⁷² did, as if intending to show [all] kings the path of true dutifulness (*dharma*).

⟨13⟩

While that champion among kings has been governing the earth as [Indra] the immeasurably mighty lord of gods [governs] Heaven, nobody among the people has ever found pleasure in immorality (*adharmma*), taken to vice (*vyasana*) or lost his happiness.

70 Fleet translates *kīla* as “lance” and Sircar also specifically suggests this meaning in a note. I disagree: *kīla* is only known to mean “lance” from lexicons, while “roof post” or “tent pole” is a widely attested meaning for the word, and the earth is conventionally described as having mountains for its *kīlas*. Moreover, the lances of a marching army would not uproot trees even in poetic fancy, while their trampling (which Fleet connects only the flattening of the highways) might.

71 I understand *agra-gaṇḍa* to mean “muzzle” here, implying that the composer conceived of Vidyādharas as horse-headed. Fleet translates “the upper parts of ... cheeks” but I find this unlikely, and the literal translation would rather be “the fore-parts of cheeks.”

72 The Bharata of legends was the son of Duṣṣanta (or Duṣyanta) and Śakuntalā, whose story is told in the *Ādiparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (*MBh* 1.62-69) and famously dramatized by Kālidāsa as the *Abhijñānaśākuntala*. He grew up to be a great conqueror, a universal sovereign (*cakravartin*) who performed many Brahmanical sacrifices (*MBh* 1.69.46-50). He sired the dynasty whose rival branches provide the central plot of the *Mahābhārata*, and lent his name to the Indian subcontinent, called Bhāratavarṣa to this day. See also line 3 of the Sondhni pillar inscriptions (A11, A12), where Bharata is one of four mythical kings to whom Yaśodharman is likened.

⟨Verse 14. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

yāteṣu catu(?)ṣu) kṛiṭteṣu śateṣu sau(s:m)y(e)
(')ṣ((ṭh):ṭ)āśīta-sottarapadeṣv iha vatsa^[20][reṣu]||
śukle tra(yo)daśa-dine bhuvī kārṭtikasya
māsasya sarvva-jana-citta-sukhāvahasya||

⟨Verse 15. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

nīlotpala-pra^[21][ṣṛta-re]ṅv-aruṅ(āmbu)-kīrṅṅe
bandhūka-b(a:ā)ṅa-kusumoj(j)vala-kānanānte||
nidrā-vyapāya-samaye madhusūdanasya
kā^[22][la-prabu]ddha-kumudāgara-śuddha-tāre||

⟨Verse 16. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

vāpī-taḍāga-sura-sadma-sabhod;u!pāna-
nānā-vidhopavana-saṅkrama-dīrghik[ā]^[23][bhiḥ]||
(?tu)ṣṭām ivābharāṇa-jātibhir aṅganām svām
yo gargarā-taṭa-pura(m) sa(ka)lañ-cakāra||

[21] *kāla-prabuddha*] F restores *kāle prabuddha*, translating *kāla* as “season” and apparently interpreting *nidrā-vyapāya-samaye* as a *bahuvrīhi* qualifying *kāle*. Both our restorations are entirely conjectural but to me the sentence feels more fluid with *-samaye* as the only adverb of time.

[22] *°odupāna*] As an alternative to the emendation *°odapāna*, F suggests *°oḍupāna* but offers no interpretation for this reading. S notes that *udupāna* is a known Prakrit form.

[23] *tuṣṭām*] F reads *seṣṭām* and emends to *iṣṭām*; S reads *śiṣṭām*, which is a bit surprising semantically. Looking at photos of the stone, *śi* is impossible and *se* is extremely unlikely. I believe the correct reading is *tu*; the right-hand side of the *u mātrā* is faint but visible to the left of the following subscript *ṭ*. Reading *tuṣṭām* here also makes sense of *sakala* in the next quarter (see below), which F has to emend heavy-handedly. The position of *iva* is admittedly problematic with my reading, as it must obviously understood to go with *aṅganām*. But our poet does stumble occasionally, and I think a bit of syntactic awkwardness is not too surprising here.

[23] *sakalañ*] F and S read *sakkalaṃ* and emend to *samalaṃ*. But inscribing *kka* instead of *ma* is an outrageously unlikely mistake. What looks like a second crossbar is probably just a scratch, and the inscribed text is in fact *sakalaṃ*; if *sakkalaṃ* was engraved, *sakalaṃ* is still a minor emendation. My reading *tuṣṭām* (see previous note) can be construed in apposition to *aṅganām* with *cakāra* as the verb, eliminating the need for Fleet’s emendation *samalañcakāra*.

⟨14⟩

When four hundred Kṛta years have passed on this earth along with an additional (eighty-eight),⁷³ on the auspicious bright thirteenth day of Kārṭtika, the month which brings joy to everyone’s heart,

⟨15⟩

at the time when Madhusūdana’s sleep ceases,⁷⁴ when the edges of woods are ablaze with hibiscus and *bāṇa*⁷⁵ and besprinkled with water tinged reddish by pollen shed by blue waterlilies, when the stars are as bright as a cluster of white night lotuses blossoming at the [same] time,⁷⁶

⟨20⟩

His Highness Mayūrākṣaka,

⟨16⟩

who has indulged⁷⁷ the entire town of Gargarātaṭa with wells, ponds, temples, rest-houses,⁷⁸ water dispensaries, diverse parks, embankments and tanks as if [he were indulging] his own woman with various kinds of ornaments;

73 See page 60 for the interpretation of the multiply problematic phrase expressing the year.

74 Madhusūdana is a name of Kṛṣṇa/Viṣṇu. He sleeps during the four months of the monsoon and is ritually awakened at the beginning of the autumn. See also page 39.

75 Hibiscus translates *bandhūka*, which is in all probability *Pentapetes phoenicea L.*, a plant of the mallow family (though not precisely a hibiscus) with crimson flowers. The meaning of *bāṇa* is uncertain; it may refer to a species of *Barleria*, but most of these have white or blue flowers, which does not seem very appropriate to the image. It may also mean the purple *Tephrosia purpurea (L.) Pers.*, or it may refer to some species of reed (the most common meaning of the word). Reed tufts, when backlit, may resemble bright flames, and the wild sugarcane’s sprays (one of the possible meanings of *bāṇa*) also feature in the description of the beginning of autumn in verse 4 of the Mandasaur inscription of Naravarman (A1; see also note 14 on page 42).

76 Fleet restores the lacuna at the beginning of line 22 slightly differently, but this affects only the structure of the sentence and not its purport; see note to line 21 of the text. Sircar accepts Fleet’s readings but interprets the compound differently and takes *āgara* to mean the new moon day (*amāvasyā*), translating “adorned with blossomed lilies and shining stars of the new moon.” I agree with Fleet that the compound likens night-blooming white waterlilies (in a dark pond) to the stars in a black sky. With the departure of the monsoon, the permanent haze is gone from the air and the stars thus appear especially bright (see also note 15 on page 42).

77 See notes to line 23 of the text.

78 Instead of “temples, rest-houses,” Fleet translates *sura-sadma-sabhā* as “temples and halls of the gods.” I prefer to understand only *sadma* with *sura*.

⟨Verse 17. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

rājñas t̄ri!t̄iyam iva cakṣur udā^[24][ra-][?d̄ṣṭi](r)
 (dde)va-dvijāti-guru-b(ā)ndhava-sā(dhu)-bhaktaḥ||
 ⟨g:ś̄⟩(ā)str(ai)(ḥ) (st)ute (c)a (v)inaya-vyavahāra-hīne
 iyo pakṣa-pāta-rahito! nida(dh)[?ā]^[25][?ti kāryya]m||

⟨Verse 18. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

sarvvasya jīvitam anityam asāravac ca
 dol(a:ā)-cal(ā)m anuvicintya tathā vibhūtim||
 nyāyāga^[26][tena vi]bhavena parāñ ca bhakti(m)
 vikhyāpayann upari cakkra-gadā-dhara(s)ya||

⟨17⟩

who, being devoted to the gods, Brahmins, elders (*guru*), kinsmen and gentle people (*sādhu*), administers his duties like a {never-blinking} third eye of the king {with an elevated view}, {looking magnanimously} [and] {without partiality} on [a man] praised in the *śāstras* as well as on one lacking an education and a profession;⁷⁹

⟨18⟩

who, having contemplated the fact that everyone's life is transient and insubstantial and that prosperity is as precarious as a swing, now uses his lawfully obtained wealth to proclaim on high his absolute devotion to [Viṣṇu] the bearer of the discus and the mace;

[24] --r] F restores *vṛttir*. This is plausible but any number of other restorations are also possible, so I prefer to show no restoration in line 24. My personal preference would be to restore *dṛṣṭir*.

[24] *gāstrai*] F reads *śāstrai*, emending to *śāstraiḥ*. I agree on the emendation (though see also Script and Language), but the first character lacks the cross-stroke that would produce *śā*; compare line 27, *gyāmo* (read as *g* by Fleet too) for *śyāmo*.

[24] *vinaya-vyavahāra-hīne yo pakṣapāta-rahito*] The readings are unclear in many places, but are nonetheless almost certain. F agrees on the text but emends *vinaya* to *vinaye* and supplies an *avagraha* to read '*pakṣapāta*. I cannot accept his interpretation of the text (see note 79 to my translation) and find the double negative in *apakṣapāta-rahita* particularly unlikely. I believe the composer's intent had been to say that Mayūrākṣaka performed his duties impartially regardless of whether he was dealing with a worthy or a lowly person. The intended phrasing would have been either *yaḥ pakṣapāta-rahito* or *yo 'pakṣapāta-sahito*. The former of these would have been more natural, but the latter could easily have been misunderstood by a good-natured ancient official who saw a manuscript of the text and, not realising that *yo pakṣapāta-* implies an *avagraha*, believed that the draft erroneously called Mayūrākṣaka prejudiced. This hypothetical gentleman would have jumped to the conclusion that *sahito* was in fact a scribal mistake for *rahito* and, patting himself on the shoulder, "corrected" the text.

[24] *nidadhāti kāryyam*] F restores *nidadhau sva-cintām*. However, as the left-hand edge of *dh* is visible at the edge of the stone, at least part of an *au mātrā* should also be visible if there had ever been one. Thus, *nidadhāti* is a more plausible restoration and in my opinion the imperfect also suits the context better than the perfect. Of his *sva-cintām*, only the *halanta m* is extant. Restoring *cintām* or *cittam* would still be possible with my *nidadhāti*, but in light of my interpretation of the passage (see previous note), I prefer *kāryyam*.

[25] *nyāyāgatena*] F puts the restored *te* at the end of l25, but I do not believe there would have been room for it there. Only the barest edge is lost at the end.

[26] *vraṇair aṅkītaḥ*] I retain Fleet's restoration, but it is dubious. The *ṅ* at the end of l26 has no visible vowel mark on top; it may have an *e mātrā* attached to its body on the left, but it may as well have an *ā mātrā* attached to its body on the right.

79 Fleet restores the lacunae at the beginnings of lines 24 and 25 differently than I do (see my notes to line 24 of the text), and interprets many of the words differently, translating "and who, [by nature] not free from partiality [for this particular virtue], has [always] applied [his] thoughts to courteous behaviour, destitute of litigation, which is applauded by the sacred writings" (CII3 p. 78). I find his interpretation tenuous, especially his translation of *vyavahāra* as "litigation," understood in the context as "squabble". While *vyavahāra* can mean "litigation," it cannot mean "squabble" — this would be comparable to interpreting English "procedure" as a synonym of "squabble." My own interpretation also requires emendation, but produces a much more coherent sentence. Furthermore, I feel that *pakṣapāta* in this context has a double meaning: blinking (of the metaphorical eye) in addition to partiality. Although *pakṣa* does not seem to be recorded in the sense of "eyelash" (PWG s. v.), the very closely related *pa-kṣma(n)* primarily means just that, and *pa-kṣmapāta* is attested as "closing of the eyes" in the *Raghuvamśa* (MW s. v.). My restoration *udāra-dṛṣṭir* also invites a bitextual interpretation: "an elevated view" for the king's metaphorical eye and a magnanimous attitude in Mayūrākṣaka himself.

⟨Verse 19. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita⟩

pīna-vyāyata-vṛtta-lambi-subhujax
khaḍga-vraṇ(?ai)^[27][?r aṅki](t)aḥ||
karṇṇānta-pratisarppamā;n!a-nayana-
⟨g:ś⟩yāmo ⟨'⟩vadāta-cchaviḥ||
darppāviṣk;ri!ta-(gh)ora-śattru-mathano
du(ś)⟨(t)h⟩(t)⟨(ā)⟩(?tm)a^[28][--](ba)li||
bhaktyā cāsuhṛdāñ ca b(ā)ndhava-samo
dha(rmmā)rttha-kā(mo)dita(h)||

⟨Verse 20. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita⟩

prajñā-śauryya-kulodgato diśi^[29][diśi]
prakhyāta-viryyo vaśi||
puttre viṣṇubhaṭe tathā haribhaṭe
sambaddha-va;ñ!śa-kriyaḥ||
eta^[30][t pāpa]-pathāvarodhi vipula(m)||
śrī-vallabh(e:ai)r ātmaj(ai)ḥ||
(v)iṣṇo(h) sthānam akārayad bhagava^[31][taś
śrī]mān mayūrākṣakaḥ||

⟨19⟩

who is a powerful man marked with scars of the sword, with handsome arms that are muscular, long, rounded and pendulous, dark in his eyes which extend to his earlobes [but] fair of complexion,⁸⁰ a crusher of vile foes who put [themselves] forward in their arrogance and a (slayer of those whose souls are wicked),⁸¹ [yet who is] – because of his affectionate nature – as [well disposed as] a kinsman even to his enemies; who is highly accomplished in morality (*dharma*), prosperity (*artha*) and pleasure (*kāma*),⁸²

⟨20⟩

outstanding in intelligence, bravery and pedigree and famed in every direction for his valour [but nonetheless] modest – [this Mayūrākṣaka], having established a dynasty through his son Viṣṇubhaṭa and Haribhaṭa,⁸³ has had his descendants, who are [themselves] {favoured of fortune/ the beloved of Śrī [i.e. Viṣṇu]}, make this great temple of the Lord Viṣṇu, which is an impediment to the path of sin.

[27] *gyāmavadāta*] Fleet reads *gyāmāvadāta*, emending to *śyāmāvadāta*. *Gyā* is clear and *śyā* was obviously intended (cf. *gāstrai* in 124 above). However, the second character is in my opinion *mo*: there is a small additional vowel mark attached to the left-hand side of the body of *m*, faint but clear in the stone (the right-hand mark, which on its own would signify *ā*, is likewise faint). I therefore supply an *avagraha* to read *śyāmo* 'vadāta which, I feel, is not only more accurate but also semantically more appropriate than Fleet's reading; it does, however, break the pattern in the other three quarters of the stanza, where a compound in the nominative qualifying Mayūrākṣaka ends at the caesura. See also note 80 to the translation.

[27] *ghora*] F reads *sora*, emending to *sāra*. The character does not quite resemble *s* (while the *o* *mātrā* is clear). It is most likely *gho*, with a faint central prong.

[27] *duṣṭhātma*] F reads *duṣṭhāśva*, emending to *duṣṭāśva*. Sircar offers the conjecture *yantā* for the lacuna, commenting that *duṣṭāśva* means *duṣṭa-jana-rūpāśva*, i.e. that "wicked horses" should be understood metaphorically as "wicked men." The reading *ṣṭhā* and the emendation to *ṣṭā* are probably correct, but *duṣṭāśva* is extremely unlikely and Sircar's metaphorical interpretation is tenuous. In the rubbing, the last character seems to have a rounded top and a crossbar, so *ś* is plausible. But no crossbar is evident in my photographs, while there is definitely a headmark, so *t* is much more likely for the primary consonant. The restoration of the following lacuna invites conjecture, e.g. *jetā* or *hantā* could be supplied; Sircar's *yantā* is also plausible, but – with horses erased from the picture – perhaps less likely.

[30] *vipula*] F reads the word in compound with the following *śrī*. I prefer to supply an *anusvāra* and construe it as qualifying *sthānam*.

[31] *ppratimasya yasya*] F prints *ppratimasya yassya*, probably a typo.

80 Fleet reads/emends *śyāmāvadāta* (see note to *gyāmavadāta* 127 of the text) and takes *śyāmā* in the sense of "girl," translating "who is possessed of a clear skin like that of a young woman of tender age." This way, the description of his eyes is semantically unconnected to the rest of the quarter, which would be awkward since Fleet reads it as a single compound. I feel the poet would not have chosen a word literally meaning "black" to use in a description of the whiteness of Mayūrākṣaka's skin. Instead, I prefer to read/emend *śyāmo* 'vadāta and believe the intent was to generate poetic effect by stating "he was black," but specifying, "[only] as far as his eyes are concerned, but fair otherwise."

81 Fleet reads, restores and translates differently (see notes to line 27, *ghora* and *duṣṭhātma*).

82 "Morality, prosperity and indulgence" (*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*) are the three traditional aims of worldly life (*puruṣārtha*). The implication may be that he is already accomplished in these, and is now setting his eyes on transcendent aims (the fourth *puruṣārtha*) by funding the construction of temples.

83 Haribhaṭa was probably another son but this is not clearly stated. See the Commentary.

⟨Verse 21. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

kailāsa-tuṅga-śikhara-ppratima:ss!ya yasya
 dṛṣṭvākṛi!ti(ṁ) pra^[32][muditai]r
 vvadanāravind(i:ai)ḥ||
 vidyādharaḥ ppriyata(mā)-sah(i:i)tā(ḥ) suśobham
 ādarś(i:a)-bimba^[33][m iva] yānty avalokayantaḥ||

⟨Verse 22. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita⟩

ya;n! dṛṣṭvā sura-sundarī-kara-tala-
 vyāghṛṣṭa-prṣṭha(ṁ) kṣa(nā)t||
 prattyā^[34][?dhāva](?na)-śaṅkino ratha-hayān
 ākṛi!ṣya cañcat-saṭā(n)||
 puṇyodarka-mati-prabhāva-munibhis
 saṁ^[35][stū](ya)māno (')mbare||
 saṁra(bbh)yāñjali-kuṭi(p)!{=m=}ala;n! nata-śirā
 bhītaḥ prayāṭty a;n!śumān||

[33] *yan*] F reads *yān*, understanding it to stand for *yāṇ*. This would refer to *ākṛti* (em. *ākṛtīm*) in verse 21, but this construction is somewhat awkward, as one would expect the relative pronouns in verses 21 and 22 both to refer to *viṣṇo sthānam* in verse 20. As for the reading, *ya* does not seem to have an *ā mātrā* in the original, so the intent would have been *yāṇ*. This is still problematic, as *sthāna* is normally neuter; either this is a solecism on the part of the composer (compare *kūpaṁ caitad* in l39), or a masculine object such as *prāsāda* needs to be understood. [33] *prṣṭha kṣaṇāt*] F reads *prṣṭha-kṣaṇam*, understanding this to mean “at the moment when the surface (of the roof) has been polished.” The interpretation seems forced, and an examination of the stone shows that the *halanta* character is not *m* but probably *t*. *Halanta n* would also fit what is visible, and Sircar actually notes the reading may be *kṣaṇān*. However, I see no way to construing the sentence with *kṣaṇān*, while reading *kṣaṇāt* and supplying an *anusvāra* to obtain *prṣṭham* produces a sentence with smooth syntax.

[33–34] *pratyādhāvana*] F restores *pratyāvarttana*, but his interpretation of the text with this word is absurd (see note 84 to the translation). I believe my tentative restoration suits the context much better; *pratyāyodhana* or *pratyādharaṣaṇa* may also be possible. In addition, the first partially extant character in l34 may be *ta*, *nī* or *tī* instead of *na*, so perhaps the participle was *atiśaṅkino* or *niśaṅkino* and the object a correspondingly shorter word; for instance, *pratyārohi-niśaṅkino* may be possible, though *nī* is not normally prefixed to *śaṅk*.

[35] *saṁrabbhyā*] F reads *saṁrajyā*^o, emending to *saṁkucyā*^o. While *saṁkucya* would make sense in the context, it is a rather heavy-handed emendation; also, *saṁkuc-* is normally intransitive, so the causative *saṁkocya* would be expected. The unemended reading *jyā* is also problematic. I am fairly certain the character is in fact *bbhyā*; *bh* is also geminated before *y* in line 15 (though probably not in l6).

[35] *kuṭpalan*] F reads *kūṭṭalan*, emending to *kuṭmalan* (understood to stand for *ṭlam*). I agree with the emendation, but his unemended reading seems to be inaccurate. For *ku* instead of *kū*, compare *kumudā*^o in l22 and *kulo*^o in l28. Fleet’s rubbing has a horizontal bar on the right, between the crossbar of *k* and the hook of *u*, but in the photos it is clear that this is a shallow indentation, not an engraved line. The second character seems to be *ṭpa*, not *ṭṭa*; it may in fact be a clumsily executed *ṭma*, which is the expected reading.

[35] *māṭṛṇāñ*] F reads *māṭṛṇāñ*, emending *ṭr* to *ṭr̄*. See Script and language.

⟨21⟩

When Vidyādharaḥ see the form of this [temple] which resembles the towering peak of Mount Kailāsa, their lotus faces become delighted and they come with their lovers to gaze at it as though at the brightly gleaming face of a mirror.

⟨22⟩

When the Sun God in the sky glimpses it, with its surface polished [to a mirror shine] by the [fondly stroking] palms of celestial maidens, he at once reins back the horses of his chariot who toss their manes in apprehension of a (countercharge), hastily joins [his hands in] a budlike gesture of homage (*añjali*), and approaches in dismay with a bowed head, cheered on by sages whose mental power is a result of religious merit.⁸⁴

84 The stanza is complex and somewhat elliptical. I agree with Fleet on the outline of the meaning, which is that when the Sun god sees the reflective surface of the temple, he becomes apprehensive of a powerful rival. However, I disagree with some of his readings, restorations and interpretations; see notes to line 33 of the text. In particular, his restoration *pratyāvarttana* in the second quarter of the verse, and the accompanying translation according to which the horses believe “that they are returning towards [themselves]” is preposterous. I also think that the god does not run away, as Fleet would have it, but proceeds (which is the basic meaning of *pra-yā*) with great humility and caution. My translation “cheered on” is rather loose (the sages are said to be praising the sun), but since the poet has dedicated almost a quarter of the stanza to them, I do not think they are mentioned only incidentally and this is the only way I can see them as an integral part of the vignette.

⟨Verse 23. Metre: mandākrāntā⟩

māṭṛṇāñ ca ^[36][?praṅ](u)dita-ghanātyarttha-
nīhrādininām||
tāntrodbhūta-prabala-
pavanodvarttitāmbhonidhinām||
^[37][----~] (ga)tam idaṃ ḍākinī-saṃprakīrṇam||
veśmātyuggraṃ nṛpati-sacivo (')kāraya(t p)uṇya-
he(t)oḥ||

⟨Verse 24. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita⟩

pātāl(o) ^[38][~---~]ratibhir
g(g)uptaṃ bhujāṅgo(tta)maiḥ||
śīta-s{s}vādu-vīśuddha-bhūri-salilaṃ
sopān(i:a)-māloj(j)valam||
(?pu)[--]^[39][~---~]gahanaṃ kṣīrodadhi-sparddhinam||
kūpañ caitad akārayad guṇa-nidhi(ḥ
śrī)mān ma(y)ūrākṣakaḥ||

[36] *praṇudīta*] F restores *pramudita*. See the Commentary above.

[36] *tāntrodbhūta*] S prints *tantrodbhūta*. Fleet's reading is the correct one. See page 61ff for a discussion.

[37] ----~] The amount of lost text required by the metre seems too long for the size of the lacuna, unless the beginning of line 37 was engraved on the widening base section of the stone. At the other edge, the end of this line is still in the narrower section, though l38 definitely begins on the wider part. Also, the lines are not quite straight and the stela may not have been perfectly symmetrical, so it is plausible to assume that line 37 did begin on the edge of the wide base.

[37] *gatam*] Fleet's reading is almost certain, but there is a slight possibility that the first character is *śa*, *gi* or *śi* instead of *ga*.

[37] *pātālo*] F reads *pātāle*, but in that case the extended tail of *l* ought to be visible (compare *le* in l6 and l7). Instead, there is a loop over the body, so the character must be *lo* (cf. e.g. l33), possibly for *pātālogra* or perhaps *pātālauka*. Fleet puts three lost characters after this word at the end of line 37, but this is not possible, as the surface ends here cleanly. All the lost *akṣaras* must have been at the beginning of the next line, where the base widens.

[38] *bhujāṅgomaiḥ*] F emends the hypometrical and meaningless reading to *bhujāṅgopamaiḥ*, which I find awkward; *bhujāṅgottamaiḥ* suits the context better. See also note 86 to the translation.

[38] *ssvādu*] F prints *svādu*, but the stone clearly has *ssvā*. See also Script and Language.

[38] *pu*] F reads a tentative *da* here; I am almost certain the character is *pu*, with the right-hand part gone except for part of the *u mātrā*. The restoration *puṇya* suggests itself. Fleet puts four additional lost syllables in l38, which seems a bit too many; I prefer to distribute the *akṣaras* so that the number of lost syllables at the beginning of l39 is identical to that in l38 and l37.

[39] *caitad*] F reads *cainam*, but the *caitad* is clear in the stone, even though *kūpa* normally ought to be masculine.

[39] *yāvad bhānor bha*] F reads only *yāvacc* (S: *yāvacca*) at the end of the line. The reading is not impossible, but the *akṣara* after *va* may also be *dbh* and probably has an *ā mātrā*. The following character is almost certainly *no* or *ṇa*, and there seems to be partially extant *bh* after that. Hence, I very tentatively read and restore *yāvad bhānor bhavati*. It is also logical for the sun to be mentioned in this verse in addition to the moon, stars, earth and sea.

⟨23⟩

And for the Mothers who boom loudly with {struck gongs/clouds set in motion} and who make {the ocean heave/the treasured water burst forth} with the powerful {wind/vital breath} arising from {the lute/ritual procedure}, the minister of the king has had this formidable shrine built – ... [and] thoroughly sprinkled with *ḍākinīs* – in order to [acquire] merit.⁸⁵

⟨24⟩

His Highness Mayūrākṣaka, being a storehouse of virtue, has also had this well built, with plenty of cool, delicious and clean water, guarded by superb snakes⁸⁶ (who delight in) ... the underworld, resplendent with a garland of stairs, abounding in (auspicious) ... and rivalling the Ocean of Milk.

85 This stanza is also difficult to interpret and its content has attracted much scholarly attention. See notes to lines 36-37 of the text and, in particular, the commentary and alternative translations on page 61ff.

86 Fleet restores an omitted syllable differently than I do (see note to line 38 of the text), so in his translation the well is guarded by something that is comparable to snakes. The well was obviously decorated with sculptures of serpents (who are associated with the underworld and with water, and who often appear as guardians). But sculptures of snakes would not be described as “comparable to snakes,” so “superb snakes” seems much more likely, and the fact that they are sculpted does not need to be stated explicitly.

⟨Verse 25. Metre: mandākrāntā⟩

yāva(?d bhānor bha)^[40][?vati][~~-] (sā)garā ratnavanto
 nānā-gulma-druma-vanavatī yāvad urvī sa(śai)lā||
 yāvaca cendu-ggraha-gaṇa-citaṃ vyoma (?sā)^[41][-~-~]
 [tā](va)t kīrttir bbhavatu vipulā
 śrī-mayūrākṣakasye{(?d)i}ti||

siddhir astu⟨||⟩

⟨25⟩

May the fame of His Highness Mayūrākṣaka remain great
 as long

as (the sun has)...

as the oceans have gems,

as the earth, full of diverse bushes, trees and forests,
 has mountains,

and as long as the sky, studded with the moon and

the host of stars, [has] ...⁸⁷

May there be perfection.

[40] *gulma*] The *akṣara lma* is shaped with the *l* component raised and the *m* component barely below standard height. This was probably done to make sure there is room left below for one more line.

[40] *cendu-*] F reads *cendur*, but there is no superscript *r* in *gga*. One could be supplied, but as *g* may be doubled before *r*, it is not required, and the syntax seems plausible with *indu* in compound.

[40] *vyoma sā*] F reads *bhā* at the end, restoring *bhāsikaroti* (with *indur* as the subject, see previous comment). I find *bhā* unlikely; the vestiges suggest *sā*, or at least *s*. Given that all the subordinate clauses seem to follow a pattern of something possessing something, the sky was probably also said to be *sa-* something.

[41] *°syediti*] F notes that it is probably a conflation of *°syeti* with *°sya syād iti*. This is unlikely; while it is not uncommon for a closing *iti* to join in *saṃdhi* with a verse, I would not expect any other words here; also, *bhavatu* within the stanza would make *syād* redundant. More likely, in my opinion, is that what looks like *dī* is an aborted first attempt at engraving *tī*, which became misshapen and was re-engraved without smoothing out the erroneous character. Fleet does not print the double *daṇḍa*.

87 Again, some of my readings and restorations differ from Fleet's, see notes to lines 39 and 40.

A5 Mandsaur Inscription of Dattabhaṭa

Substrate		Siddham ID:		OB00058	
Material	stone (sandstone)	Object type	slab		
Dimensions	width 40 cm	height 23 cm	depth	?	
Discovery	1923, built into the inner face of the east wall of Mandsaur fort				
Current location	Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior (on exhibit)				
Inscription		Siddham ID:		IN00064	
Dimensions	width 38 cm	height 20 cm	Char size	0.5–0.7 cm	Line height 1–1.5 cm
Date CE	467–468	Basis of dating	dated Mālava 524 expired (I11)		
Topic	construction of a <i>stūpa</i> , a well, a water dispensary and a rest-house				
Persons mentioned	Candragupta (II), Govindagupta, Vāyurakṣita, Dattabhaṭa, Prabhākara, Ravila				
Places mentioned	Lokottara monastery				
Compendia	Bh List 7; SI III.52A; GKA 349–351; IGE 39; IBI 108.Mandasor.1				
Other editions	Garde 1948				

Description

The inscribed stone is an intact slab 40 centimetres wide by 23 tall. Its thickness has not been reported and cannot be measured at present. It was discovered by M. B. Garde in the summer of 1923, at which time it was built into the inner face of the east wall of the mediaeval fort at Mandsaur, which incorporates many cut stones from earlier periods. It is now exhibited in the Gujri Mahal Museum of Gwalior. A considerable time after reporting its discovery (ARASI 1922–23, 187) in very little detail, Garde eventually published the edition of the text (Garde 1948). Here I re-edit it from Garde’s rubbing and photographs of the original stone taken in January 2017.

The inscribed area is about 38 centimetres wide and 20 centimetres high. The epigraph consists of fifteen lines spaced slightly irregularly, 1 to 1.5 centimetres one below the other. The lines are straight and the margins on the left and right are also mostly straight and perpendicular to the lines. Character bodies are 5 to 7 millimetres tall; horizontally, the characters are crowded very close to each other. The inscribed surface is smooth and polished, but now worn in places. The engraving is quite shallow and is thus not quite clear in the weathered regions, but on the whole the inscription is in a very good condition except that the slab has been smeared with cement along the edges, which obscures parts of the text especially at the bottom and the right-hand side.

Script and Language

The alphabet is the rounded variety of the Mālvāvan script. Most characters have triangular headmarks, some of which

are flattened into serifs. Initial *a* as well as *ra* and *ka* have long stems with a hook at the bottom. *Ma* and *ṇa* are looped; subscript *ṇa* has a cursive ornamental form with a curling tail (°*ṇṇavā*, 19). *Ya* is tripartite, usually with a loop on the left limb, though the loop is not always closed. The tail of *la* is extended backwards above the body but does not curve down in front of the character. *Bha* is broad, while *ca* is quite broad in outline, but generally triangular with a pronounced beak. *Da* is double-curved and quite broad. No specimen of *tha* is quite clear, but there seem to be a smaller circle inside the lower part of the body rather than just a dot or a cross-stroke.⁸⁸ *Dha* is vaguely elliptical, but the bottom is usually narrowed and can be quite pointed. *Ga* and *śa* are both rounded; the former has a headmark, but the latter does not. Initial *i* is a double arch over two dots, while initial *u* is a mirror image of *ra*. Vowel marks for *ā*, *e* and *o* are usually horizontal, bending down at a ninety-degree angle, but may also be oblique. *Lo* is cursive and *le* has the *mātrā* inside the curve of the consonant, but other consonants including *m* and *ṇ* attach vowel marks at the head. Medial *i* is a closed circle, while *ī* looks like a circle with a vertical line in the middle of its lower part, probably formed as a spiral continuation of the outer circle.

The script includes *jihvāmūliya* (which resembles *ma* in shape, e.g. *duxkha* 11), but there is no *upadhmanīya*; instead, regular *visarga* is consistently used before labials (e.g. *bhuvahṣṭinām*, 13). The *halanta* form of *m* is slightly smaller and simpler in shape than a regular *ma*; it is lowered, and consistently has a line above it. Punctuation marks in the

⁸⁸ Bose (Bose 1938, 329) deems the *tha*-s of this inscription to be a transitional stage between the form with a crossbar and the one with a ringlet inside the bottom of the body.

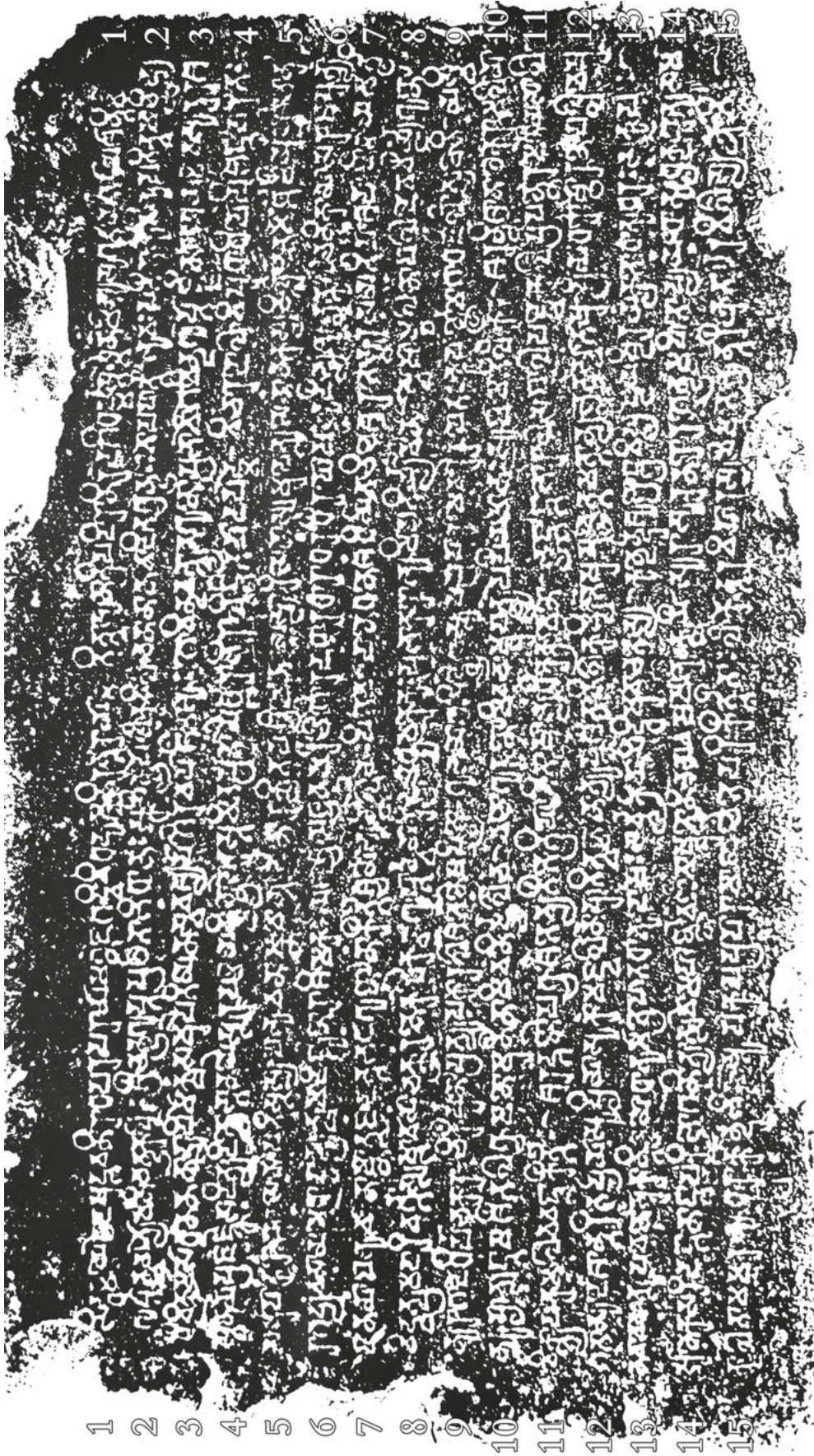


Figure 16: Mandsaur inscription of Dattabhaṭa. Inked rubbing from Garde (1948).



Figure 17: Mandosaur inscription of Dattabhata. Composite digital photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior.

shape of short horizontal lines (sometimes slightly convex on top) occasionally appear at the ends of both half and full stanzas, but their usage is inconsistent. They never appear after a *halanta* *m*, so it seems that the line above that character doubles as a punctuation mark. They are also rarely used in conjunction with a *visarga*, but occasionally do appear after one. The very end of the inscription is marked with a double vertical sign. The horizontal punctuation marks are transcribed in my edition as a single *daṇḍa*, and the double vertical closer as a double *daṇḍa*.

Consonants are, as expected, doubled after *r*, but gemination does not take place before *r* except one case of *bbhr* in line 13, which curiously stands right next to a single *bhr* in the phrase *śubhro bbhra*. *Anusvāra* use is close to standard, with a slight preference for nasal conjuncts (for instance °*ādiṅ guṇa*, 16; *sambhāvayāṃ*, 18; *sveṣām balānām*, 18; *śītalañ ca*, 110; *vaṅśa*, 111) which seems to be random (compare *nirmmalaṃ ca* a few words after *śītalañ ca* and *vaṃśya* in 13 as opposed to *vaṅśa*). Likewise, sibilants are occasionally preferred to *visarga* (*tanayais sarūpam* 14, *pratāpaiś śirobhir* 14). The language is standard Sanskrit, correctly and confidently used even where the syntax is complex. The use of the middle perfect form *prajajñe* (14) is not quite standard:⁸⁹ one would expect a causative in periphrastic perfect, which the composer does use elsewhere (*janayāṃ babhūva*, 17). The inscription is in verse throughout (except for *siddham* at the beginning and the two-word “signature” of the composer at the end). The poetry is of good quality and bespeaks technical skill in poetic devices (*alaṃkāra* of *śabda* and *artha*) without overdoing them. It may be worth noting that in verse 17 caesurae are slurred in vowel *saṃdhi* in the odd quarters. The stanza is in the *pr̥thvī* metre, in which some poets do not use a caesura at all. In this particular case, however, the *yatis* are clear-cut in the even quarters, so the poet probably did observe the caesura in this metre, yet found a *saṃdhi* fusion acceptable at this point.⁹⁰

Commentary

The subject of the inscription is the dedication of a *stūpa* accompanied by a well, a drinking fount or water dispensary (*prapā*) and a lodging house for wayfarers or pilgrims (*ārāma*). It is often referred to as an inscription of (the time of) Prabhākara, who appears to have been the

reigning monarch at the time in Daśapura⁹¹ and is also sometimes simply called the Mandsaur inscription of Mālava Saṃvat 524, but I prefer to name it after Dattabhaṭa, the person who commissioned it.

The text begins with an invocation to the Buddha (referred to as *sugata*). The word *tripadīro*, said of the doctrine (*dharma*) taught by the Buddha, is problematic. As Garde (1948, 15 n. 4) observes, it is “an unfamiliar” word in Sanskrit and suggests for comparison the allegedly attested word *chaddhātura*. Sircar (1965b, 406 and n. 4) suggests the emendation *tripadīko*, which is more than plausible, as it allows us to read a regularly derived word at the cost of assuming only that a small cross-stroke was omitted by the engraver. I cannot, however, exclude the possibility that we are facing a Prakritism, though this would be passing unusual as the whole of the inscription attests to a good command of standard Sanskrit. As Tsukamoto (1996, 637) points out, *-ira* is a common Prakrit dialectal suffix forming words that mean something that has the root word as its characteristic.⁹² Whatever the intended spelling, the meaning is clearly that *dharma* has or consists of three *padas*, which Garde (ibid.) translates “consisting of three steps (stages)” and further comments that these may mean the three *śaraṇas* (*buddha*, *dharma* and *saṅgha*), or three stages on the path to Nirvāṇa (*sotāpatti*, *sakadāgāmi* and *anāgāmi*), or else the three principles *anitya*, *duḥkha* and *anātman*. Sircar (ibid.) endorses the first of Garde’s suggested interpretations, with the slight difference that he sees the *dharma* as standing on these three, which implies that he understands *pada* as “leg.” However, the logical hitch in the claim that one of the *dharma*’s legs or components is the *dharma* itself rules this interpretation out in my opinion. Nor do the three stages leading up to the stage of *arhat* seem very likely. I do, however, find Garde’s third suggestion quite plausible. I believe, in addition, that *pada* in *tripadīka* is more likely to mean “word” than “stage” or “leg,” and the *lakṣaṇas* of *anitya*, *duḥkha* and *anātman* are three simple keywords that sum up the Buddhist doctrine clearly.⁹³ My interpretation and translation are offered tentatively, inviting experts on Buddhism to improve on them.

⁹¹ His identity is discussed separately on page 81 below.

⁹² §596 in Pischel’s Prakrit Grammar (1900, 404, 1957, 408 in Jha’s English translation).

⁹³ A story in the *Nibbānakaṇḍa* of the *Śiṃvisodhanipāṭha*, an extra-canonical text, tells of a prince who offered a reward to someone who can teach the *dharma* in no more than four *padas* (*ekapadikaṃ vā dvipadikaṃ vā tipadikaṃ vā catuppadikaṃ vā dhamma-padaṃ jānantassa*). The summary he eventually receives (while plummeting, as it happens, from a high cliff into the mouth of a wise but hungry *rākṣasa* to whom he has offered his flesh in exchange for the teaching) is expressed in the form of a verse (*gāthā*) of four quarters. The moral

⁸⁹ Sircar (1965b, 407 n. 1) also notes this is not quite correct and cites some parallels from inscriptions.

⁹⁰ I have written elsewhere about the phenomenon of the slurred caesura (Balogh 2017). See also Ghosh (1978) for the caesura in *pr̥thvī*.

The second and third stanzas introduce and describe the Gupta emperor Candragupta II. He is praised in general terms, but the description of the outcome of his conquests may have a barb in it. It is hard to believe that the statement “[Candragupta] so fettered the earth with the fetters of his progeny that even today she [the earth] cannot attain deliverance” was indited out of heartfelt admiration.⁹⁴ More likely the poet, and possibly his king Prabhākara too, was unhappy with Candragupta’s progeny in control of their corner of the earth. Verses 4 and 5 imply that this progeny was Govindagupta, who is also described here as a great conqueror. He is said to resemble the sons of Diti and Aditi (*dity-adityos tanayais sarūpam*, 14) i.e. the demons and the gods. Garde (1948, 16 n. 3) notes that he would have resembled the former in physical strength and the latter in spiritual virtues, but again, the inscription does not actually say that in so many words, so one is left to wonder whether this is a veiled hint at Govindagupta’s demonic aspect.

Verse 6 introduces Vāyurakṣita, the ever victorious general of Govindagupta, while the seventh verse praises him without saying anything particular. The next stanza describes the birth of Vāyurakṣita’s son Dattabhaṭa from a princess of a northern dynasty (*udīcyā-bhūbhṛt-kulacandrikāyāṃ ... rājaputryāṃ*, 16). There is, unfortunately, no further information about the origin of this princess. Dattabhaṭa’s generosity, intelligence and martial and amorous exploits are praised in verse 9, and verse 10 tells us that king Prabhākara appointed Dattabhaṭa to be his general. Prabhākara is likened to a forest fire burning up trees that are the enemies of the Gupta dynasty,⁹⁵ which not only indicates that he owed fealty to the Guptas, but also strongly implies that he was a willing vassal. See page 81 for further discussion of Prabhākara.

of the story, for my present purposes, is that *pada* may also mean a unit of speech larger than a word. My thanks to Gergely Hidas for pointing to this story.

⁹⁴ *nādyāpi mokṣaṃ samupaiti yena sva-vaṃśya-pāśair avapāśitā bhūh*, 13. The phrasing is reminiscent of verse 2 of the Mehrauli iron pillar inscription of Candra, all but certainly in praise of Candragupta II and also written posthumously (*śāntasyeva mahā-vane hutabhujō yasya pratāpo mahān nādyāpy utsrjati praṇāśita-ripor yyatnasya śeṣaḥ kṣitim*, 14). There, however, it is a remnant of the king’s own efforts that does not release the earth, likened to the residual heat after a forest fire has died down.

⁹⁵ Interestingly, the phrase *guptānvayāri-druma-dhūmaketuḥ* (18) very strongly resembles *kopasya nanda-kula-kānana-dhūmaketoḥ* in verse 1.9 of the *Mudrārākṣasa* where Cāṇakya’s anger is said to be a fire to the forest that is the Nanda family, i.e. the dynastic enemy of Candragupta Maurya whom Cāṇakya serves as advisor. *Dhūmaketu*, literally “smoke-crested,” is a common kenning for fire, but the use of the same term in a similar metaphor still suggests intertextuality.

The eleventh verse reveals that Dattabhaṭa had a well constructed out of gratitude toward his departed parents, whose salvation (*śubha-yoga*, literally “union with the auspicious”) he desires to promote. The *stūpa*, water dispensary and rest-house are only briefly listed in verse 11 as accompanying the well, which is the grammatical subject of a sentence that continues all through the next verse, a eulogy to the well’s water.

Stanza 13 records the number of elapsed years as five hundred increased by three times eight, the complicated expression probably serving no other function than to fill out the metre of the verse. The date is by the Mālava reckoning, and this is expressed by saying that the host of elapsed years proclaim the glory of the Mālava dynasty. The month and day are not specified. Instead, verses 14–15 describe the season, which is probably the spring as both Garde (1948, 13) and Sircar (1965b, 409 n. 1) observe. To this it might be added that it seems to include characteristics of both ends of the spring spectrum: while tender lotus buds and renewed forests with young leaves suggest the end of winter, the crying cuckoos and the women pining for their lovers (who have been away on long errands but must return before the beginning of the rains) are more suggestive of the beginning of the hot season. The reference to the pleasantness of sal trees may also be an indication of late spring. As best I could ascertain, these trees blossom at the end of spring, being briefly covered by a frothy mass of small, scented flowers. In drier areas they also shed their leaves by the end of winter and grow new foliage at the end of spring. The description of the spring is thus not intended to refer to any particular time within that season.

Verse 16 states that the *stūpa* is dedicated to the Buddha. At this point, the *stūpa* is spoken of as primary and the well as an accompaniment to it, as opposed to verses 11–12 above. The word for *stūpa* is *dhātu-dhara*,⁹⁶ “holder of a relic,” and the description of the Buddha uses the word *dhātu* twice more, exploiting its polyvalence:⁹⁷ *yo dhātu-mātre hata-dhātu-doṣaḥ sarvva-kriyā-siddhim uvāca* (113). Garde translates “who, having overcome the evil influences of all the elements, explained (preached) the accomplishment of all actions,” to which his editor (probably B. C. Chhabra, perhaps L. N. Rao) adds that this refers to the *Nidānasūtra* where the Buddha taught the theory of cause and effect (Garde 1948, 17 and n. 5). Tsukamoto (1996, 638) understands the phrase to mean that the Buddha eliminated elements (*dhātu*) of error (*doṣa*) that are present in all bodies (*dhātu*), which Kano (2017, 36) elaborates,

⁹⁶ See note to line 13 of the text.

⁹⁷ See (Edgerton 1953, 282–84) for an overview of meanings in various contexts.

pointing out that *dhātu-doṣa* refers to a pathological condition of the body. In my own view, the idea expressed here is that the Buddha succeeded in overcoming the failings of the physical substrate even while existing in nothing but a physical substrate. Note that *dhātumātre* is a *bahuvrīhi* compound (since *mātrā* is normally feminine), so it must be understood as qualifying an object that needs to be supplied, such as the body (e.g. *śarīre*) or perhaps the physical world (e.g. *jagatī*). In my translation of the inscription I have chosen to understand *dhātumātre* as referring to a body consisting of the physical elements, and *dhātudoṣa* as the erroneous perception of the six senses which must be replaced with a correct understanding.⁹⁸ Sticking to this interpretation of *dhātumātre*, it would also be possible to understand *dhātudoṣa* as the flaws of this sphere of existence or of the human character. Along a different line, the intended meaning may have been that the Buddha eliminated the ill effects of the basic elements right down at the stage of the basic elements, that is, by not letting them proliferate into various consequences.⁹⁹ This, or a similar interpretation, is probably what Garde's editor had in mind when he wrote that the text implicitly referred to the *pratītya-samutpāda*. The question is by no means closed and should be explored by scholars of Buddhism. Another fine point in this stanza is that the word *kriyā* should probably be understood not in a general sense (success in mundane activities not being a primary objective of the Buddha's teaching), but specifically as "ritual action." Ritual actions include the establishment of *stūpas*, and the fact that the building of this particular *stūpa* is indicated by the word *krto* in this stanza is probably what connects the two halves of the verse: not only was a *stūpa* consecrated to the Buddha, but the consecration itself was a ritual act such as those taught by the Buddha.

The seventeenth verse expresses the donor's wish that the well last as long as the ocean. There is probably some degree of double entendre (*śleṣa*) in its words that may qualify either the well or the ocean, but the extent and precise details of this are uncertain. Garde's interpretation is that the ocean "enjoys the constant festivity of union with many rivers [who are, as it were,] his wives," and the well likewise enjoys union with "the bodies of many women [who go to bathe there]." Garde's editor in *Epigraphia Indica* (Garde 1948, 17 n. 6; probably B. C. Chhabra) opines that *kṣayī* also has a double meaning. He explains that *kṣaya* can mean consumption (presumably tuberculosis), which is believed to result from overindulgence in sexual pleasure, and that the ocean is a well-

known exception from this. I have adopted this thought, changing tuberculosis to "the clap," which may not be a medically accurate translation of *kṣaya* but is more likely to be a consequence of promiscuity. It is possible that *kṣayī* is the only *śliṣṭa* word in the stanza, since applying *aneka-sarid-aṅganāṅga-paribhoga-nityotsavo* to the well is difficult, while rivers are conventionally perceived as wives of the ocean. Garde's translation simply omits *sarit*, "river," and I find the idea that the well enjoys sex with actual women a bit disturbing. If this compound was intended on a separate level of meaning in the context of the well, then *sarid-aṅganā* is probably an *upamāsamāsa* whereby the women visiting the well are likened to rivers, perhaps in their sinuous beauty. Although *paribhoga* is only attested in the sense of enjoyment and consumption, the prefixed root *pari-bhuj* can mean simply "encircle," so I prefer to see the well as "surrounded" by women. It is also possible that the well's women are not actual townswomen at the well but sculpted nymphs, in which case *sarid-aṅganā* may mean an *apsaras*.

Verse 18 is a brief administrative note clarifying that all the buildings inaugurated in the inscription are on the grounds of the Lokottara *vihāra*. The spelling of the name in the inscription actually appears to be *lokontara*, but Garde's emendation *lokottara* must be correct, and the implication is that the monastery belonged to the Lokottaravādin community. An even briefer note appended in prose to the end records that the author of the text was named Ravila.

Prabhākara

All we learn about Prabhākara from Dattabhaṭa's inscription is that he was a king (*bhūmipati*) and that he destroyed enemies of the Gupta dynasty. His pedigree is not recorded, nor is there any further factual information such as where he reigned. The provenience of the inscription implies that Daśapura was under Prabhākara's control in 467–468 CE, but his royal seat may have been in another city. Dattabhaṭa served Prabhākara in the capacity of general, while Dattabhaṭa's father Vāyurakṣita had been Govindagupta's general. Prabhākara thus must have been on good terms with the Guptas, though given that Govindagupta does not otherwise feature in Gupta records, his relations may have been with a faction within the Gupta dynasty that ultimately lost its power.

With this meagre evidence, the question of whether or not Prabhākara was an Aulikara can only be answered speculatively. Sircar (1965b, 406 n. 1) felt there was "little doubt" that he was a successor of Bandhuvarman, and

⁹⁸ As listed in *Samyuttanikāya* 35.1.13.

⁹⁹ As discussed in *Samyuttanikāya* 14.1.1-10.

several other scholars including Mirashi (1980, 409, 1984b, 104–5) thought likewise. Others such as Jagannath Agrawal (1946a, 290, = 1946b, 82) and Garde (1948, 15), professed that Prabhākara cannot have been an Aulikara and that he may have been placed in control of Western Malwa by the Guptas. Richard Salomon gives a concise overview of hypotheses and arguments (1989, 20 q. v. for further references) and points out that the name Prabhākara may be short for Prabhākaravardhana.¹⁰⁰ He concludes by saying it is “safer” to agree with Sircar and others supporting the view that Prabhākara was an Aulikara. My personal

impression is that without any positive evidence, it seems more likely that Prabhākara, ruling in the interregnum described in the inscription of the silk weavers (A6), was not the scion of a local dynasty and the suggestion that he was a figurehead for the (or some) Guptas fits the available data well. Hans Bakker (2006, 170–72, 2014, 34), thinking along similar lines, has proffered an imaginative but plausible scenario for the political situation surrounding Prabhākara. However, verses 2 to 5 of the inscription (see the discussion above) may suggest, between the lines, that Gupta rule was not seen in an altogether positive light.

Diplomatic Text

- [1] siddhaM ⁽¹⁾ye(n)edam udbhava-nirodha-paramparāyāṃ magnaṃ jagad vividha-dukhā-nirantarāyāM
tittrāsunā tripadiṃro niradeśi dharmmas tasmai namo stu sugatā(ya gatāya) śāntiM ⁽²⁾
- [2] guptānvaya-vyomani candrakalpaḥ śrī-candragupta-prathitābhīdhānaḥ āsīn nṛpo loka-vilocanānāṃ
navoditaś candra ivāpahartā ⁽³⁾bhuvāḥ pati(nāṃ bhū)vi (bhū)patitvam ācchidya
- [3] dhī-vikkrama-sādhanena nādyāpi mokṣaṃ samupaiti yena sva-vaṃśya-pāśair avapāśitā bhūḥ ⁽⁴⁾
govindavat khyāta-guṇa-prabhāvo govindaguptorjji-nā(ma-dhe)yaM vasundharaśa
- [4] s tanayaṃ prajāñe sa dity-adit(y)os tanayais sarūpaM ⁽⁵⁾yasmin nṛpair astam-ita-pratāpaiś śīrobhir
āliṅgita-pāda-padme| vicāra-dolā(ṃ) vibudhādhipo pi śānkā-paritāḥ
- [5] samupāruoha ⁽⁶⁾sen(ā)patīs tasya babhūva nāmnā vāyv-ādinā rakṣita-paścimena yasyāri-se(nā)s
samupetya senāṃ na kasyacil locana-mārggam iyuḥ ⁽⁷⁾śaucānu
- [6] rāga-vyaṃ!vasāya-medhā-dākṣya-kṣamādiṃ guṇa-rāśim ekaḥ yaśaś ca yaś candra-marīci-gaurāṃ
dadhāra dhārādharā-dhira-ghoṣaḥ ⁽⁸⁾Udicya-bhūbhṛt-kula-candrikāyāṃ sa rā(ja)putryā(ṃ)
- [7] janayāṃ babhūva(l) nāmnātmajāṃ dattabhaṭaṃ guṇānāṃ kīrtteś ca yo bhūn nilayaḥ pi(te)va(l) ⁽⁹⁾dāne
dhaneśaṃ dhiyi vāci ceśaṃ ratau smaraṃ saṃyati pāśa-pāṇiM yam artthi-
- [8] vidvat-pramadāri-varggās sambhāvayāṃ cakkrur anekadhaikaM ⁽¹⁰⁾guptānvayāri-druma-dhūmaketuḥ
prabhākaro bhūmipatir yyam enaM sveśāṃ balānāṃ baladeva-vīryaṃ guṇā
- [9] nurāgād adhipaṃ cakāra| ⁽¹¹⁾cikīrṣuṇā pratyupakāra-leśaṃ tenaiśa pitroḥ śubha-yoga-siddhyai| stūpa-
prapārāma-varair upetaḥ kūpo ṃṇavāgādha-jalo (n)yakhāni| ⁽¹²⁾yasmi
- [10] n suhṛt-saṅgama-śītalañ ca mano munināṃ iva nirmmalaṃ ca| vaco gurūṇāṃ iva cāmbu patthyaṃ
pepiyamānaḥ sukham eti lokaḥ| ⁽¹³⁾śaran-niśā-nātha-karāmāyā
- [11] vikkhyāpake mālava-vaṃ!śa-kīrtteḥ| śarad-gaṇe pañcaśate vyatīte tri-ghātītāṣṭābhyadhike kkrameṇa| ⁽¹⁴⁾
bhṛṅgāṅga-bhārālasa-bāla-padme kāle prapanne ramaṇīya-sāle|
- [12] gatāsu deśāntarita-priyāsu priyāsu kāma-jvalanāhutitvaM ⁽¹⁵⁾nātyuṣṇa-śītānīla-kampiteṣu pravṛtta-
mattānyabhrta-svaḥ!eṣu| priyādharoṣṭhāruṇa-pallaveṣu
- [13] navāṃ va(ha)tsūpavaneṣu kānti(M) ⁽¹⁶⁾yo dhātu-mātre hata-dhātu-doṣaḥ sarvva-kriyā-siddhim uvāca
tasya| kundendu-śubhro bbhra-vighṛṣṭa-yaṣṭir ayaṃ kṛto dhātu-dharaḥ sa-kūpaḥ| ⁽¹⁷⁾
- [14] Aneka-sarid-aṅganāṅga-paribhoga-nityotsavo mahārṇṇava Ivāmbuḥ!o nicaya Eṣa mā bhū kṣayī|
surāsura-naroragendra-mahito py ayaṃ dhātu-dhṛk paraitu sama-
- [15] kālatām amara-bhūdharārkendubhiḥ| ⁽¹⁸⁾stūpa-kūpa-prapārāmā ye caite parikīrtitāḥ lokoḥ!n!tara-
vihārasya simni te bhyantarīkṛtā|| ravilasya kṛtīḥ|

¹⁰⁰ As Prakāśadharman is shortened to Prakāśa in line 2 of the Risthal inscription (A9) and Rāṣṭravardhana to Rāṣṭra in line 8 of the Chhoti Sadri inscription (A7).

Curated Text

^[1]siddham⟨|⟩

⟨Verse 1. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

ye(n)edam udbhava-nirodha-paramparāyāṃ
magnaṃ jagad vividha-dukkha-nirantarāyāṃ
tittrāsunā tripadi⟨r:k⟩o niradeśi dharmmas
tasmai namo ⟨'⟩stu sugatā(ya gatāya) śāntim

⟨Verse 2. Metre: upajāti⟩

^[2]guptānvaya-vyomani candrakalpaḥ
śrī-candragupta-prathitābhīdhānaḥ
āsīn nṛpo loka-vilocanānāṃ
navoditaś candra ivāpaharttā

⟨Verse 3. Metre: upajāti⟩

bhuvaḥ patī(nām̐ bhū)vi (bhū)patitvam
ācchidya ^[3]dhī-vikkrama-sādhanena
nādyāpi mokṣaṃ samupaiti yena
sva-vaṃśya-pāśair avapāśitā bhūḥ

⟨Verse 4. Metre: upajāti⟩

govindavat khyāta-guṇa-prabhāvo
govindaguptorjji⟨ta⟩-nā(ma-dhe)yam
vasundhareśa ^[4]s tanayaṃ prajājñe
sa dity-adit(y)os tanayais sarūpam

⟨Verse 5. Metre: upajāti⟩

yasmin nṛpair astam-ita-pratāpaiś
śīrobhir ālīngita-pāda-padme|
vicāra-dolā(m̐) vibudhādhipo ⟨'⟩pi
śaṅkā-parītaḥ ^[5]samupāuroha

Translation

Accomplished.¹⁰¹

⟨1⟩

Let obeisance be made to him who has gone well (*sugata*), who has gone to tranquillity; he taught the Doctrine (*dharmā*) of three (words)¹⁰² desiring to save this world floundering in a continuous sequence of production (*udbhava*) and cessation (*nirodha*) full of assorted kinds of suffering (*duḥkha*).

⟨2⟩

There was a king known far and wide by the name “His Majesty Candragupta,” who was virtually a moon (*candra*) in the sky of the Gupta dynasty and who captivated the eyes of people like a newly-risen moon.

⟨3⟩

Having by means of his intellect and valour snatched away the status of “earth-lord” from the lords of the earth on earth, he so fettered the earth with the fetters of his progeny that even today she [the earth] cannot attain deliverance.¹⁰³

⟨4⟩

That lord of the bountiful earth, whose qualities and might were as famous as Govinda’s, sired a son bearing the august name Govindagupta, who was comparable to the sons of both Diti and Aditi.¹⁰⁴

⟨5⟩

As kings whose splendour had dwindled pressed their heads close to his lotus feet, even [Indra] the overlord of the gods ascended the swing of vacillation, overcome by misgivings.

Text Notes

Alternative opinions are cited from the edition of Garde (G) and Sircar’s SI.

[1] *siddham*] The invocation is inline and not separated from the rest of the text by space or punctuation other than the *halanta m* character.

[1] *tripadiro*] The emendation *tripadiko* was suggested by Sircar; see also the discussion on page 79.

Footnotes

101 See page 6 about translating *siddham* as “accomplished.”

102 Or three parts. See the discussion on page 79.

103 The translation “Having snatched away the sovereignty of the rulers of the land in the world...” would be less awkward and no less accurate, but the repetition of “earth,” “lord” (and “fetter”) in my translation reflects the original phrasing. See the Commentary about the less-than-flattering tone of this stanza.

104 The sons of Diti are the Daityas or demons; Aditi’s sons are the Ādityas, in this context meaning the gods in general. See also the Commentary.

⟨Verse 6. Metre: upajāti⟩

sen(ā)patīs tasya babhūva nāmnā
vāyv-ādinā rakṣita-pāścimena
yasyāri-se(nā)s samupetya senām
na kasyacil locana-mārggam iyuh

⟨Verse 7. Metre: upajāti⟩

śaucānu^[6]rāga-vya{ṃ}vasāya-medhā-
dākṣya-kṣamādiṅ guṇa-rāsim ekaḥ
yaśāś ca yaś candra-marīci-gauram
dadhāra dhārādhara-dhīra-ghoṣaḥ

⟨Verse 8. Metre: upajāti⟩

udicya-bhūbhṛt-kula-candrikāyām
sa rā(ja)putryā(m)^[7]janayām babhūva(l)
nāmnātmajam dattabhaṭam guṇānām
kīrtteś ca yo (<')bhūn nilayaḥ pi(te)va(l)

⟨Verse 9. Metre: upajāti⟩

dāne dhaneśam dhiyi vāci ceśam
ratau smaram saṃyati pāśa-pāṇim
yam arthi-^[8]vidvat-pramadāri-varggās
sambhāvayām cakkrur anekadhaikam

⟨Verse 10. Metre: upajāti⟩

guptānvayāri-druma-dhūmaketuḥ
prabhākaro bhūmipatir yyam enam
sveśam balānām baladeva-vīryyam
guṇā^[9]nurāgād adhipam cakāra

⟨6⟩

He had a general whose name began with Vāyu and ended with Rakṣita.¹⁰⁵ Enemy hosts that encountered his army were never seen by anyone again.

⟨7⟩

He, whose voice was orotund like the rumble of a thunderhead,¹⁰⁶ in one person carried an assemblage of virtues such as purity, faithfulness, perseverance, intelligence, aptitude and clemency combined with glory bright as moonbeams.

⟨8⟩

On a princess, the moonlight of a family of northern kings, he begat a son whose name is Dattabhaṭa and who, like his father, is an abode of both virtues and renown.

⟨9⟩

Though he is but one man, the classes of clients, intellectuals, ladies and enemies have conceived of him in manifold ways: [Kubera] the lord of riches in largesse, [Bṛhaspati] the lord of eloquence in intellect,¹⁰⁷ [Kāma the god of] love in bed and the noose-bearer [Yama, the god of Death] in battle.

⟨10⟩

Vigorous as Baladeva,¹⁰⁸ he is the one whom King Prabhākara, a bonfire to the trees that are the enemies of the Gupta dynasty, has made the commander of his forces (*bala*) out of regard for his qualities.

[7] *janayām*] G and SI read *janayām* and emend. The dot appears to be a fault of the rubbing; no *anusvāra* is visible on the stone.

[9] *cakāra*] G and SI print an original double *daṇḍa* after v10, but the punctuation mark is single and identical to those at other verse and half-verse ends.

[9] *nyakhāni*] G reads *vyakhāni* as clear; SI prints *vya* as unclear. I believe *nyakhāni* is a more likely reading of the sign and more appropriate in context.

105 The reason the poet does not simply say his name was Vāyurakṣita is that the name cannot be fitted to the metre.

106 Note how in the original the consonance of *dadhāra dhārādhara-dhīra-ghoṣaḥ* evokes the rumble of thunder.

107 The phrase *dhiyi vāci ceśam* is not straightforward. As Garde (1948, 15 n. 8) points out, Pāṇini (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 2.3.39) permits the locative as well as the genitive in phrases meaning “lord of something.” Therefore the phrase can mean “and [they conceived of him as] the lord of speech in intellect.” Sircar (1965b, 408 n. 2) disagrees and avows that the meaning is “Īśa [Śiva] in talent and speech.” I see no reason, and Sircar gives none, why Śiva could be an apt model in talent and speech, whereas Bṛhaspati, the lord of speech, is a standard exemplar of intellectual prowess not only in literature in general, but also specifically in Aulikara inscriptions (Gangdhar inscription, A4 16; silk weaver inscription, A6, 113; Nirdoṣa’s inscription, A10, 117).

108 Baladeva or Balarāma is the elder brother of Kṛṣṇa famed among other things for his physical strength.

⟨Verse 11. Metre: upajāti⟩

cikīrṣuṇā pratyupakāra-leśaṃ
tenaiṣa pitroḥ śubha-yoga-siddhyai|
stūpa-prapārāma-varair upetaḥ
kūpo ⟨'⟩rṇṇavāgādha-jalo (n)yakhāni|

⟨Verse 12. Metre: upajāti⟩

yasmi^[10]n suhṛt-saṅgama-śītalañ ca
mano muninām iva nirmmalaṃ ca|
vaco gurūṇām iva cāmbu patthyam
pepīyamānaḥ sukham eti lokaḥ|

⟨Verse 13. Metre: upajāti⟩

śaran-niśā-nātha-karāmalāyā
^[11]vikkhyāpake mālava-vaṅ!śa-kīrtteḥ|
śarad-gaṇe pañcaśate vyatīte
tri-ghātitaśṭābhyadhike kkramaṇa|

⟨Verse 14. Metre: upajāti⟩

bhṛṅgāṅga-bhārālasa-bāla-padme
kāle prapanne ramaṇīya-sāle|
^[12]gatāsu deśāntarita-priyāsu
priyāsu kāma-jvalanāhutitvam

⟨Verse 15. Metre: upajāti⟩

nātyuṣṇa-śītānila-kampiteṣu
pravṛtta-mattānyabhr̥ta-sva ⟨t:n⟩eṣu|
priyādharoṣṭhāruṇa-pallaveṣu
^[13]navām va (ha)tsūpavaneṣu kānti(m)

⟨Verse 16. Metre: upajāti⟩

yo dhātu-mātre hata-dhātu-doṣaḥ
sarvva-kriyā-siddhim uvāca tasya|
kundendu-śubhro ⟨'⟩bbhra-vighṛṣṭa-yaṣṭir
ayaṃ kṛto dhātu-dharaḥ sa-kūpaḥ|

⟨11⟩

This well, holding water deep as the ocean and supplemented with a superb *stūpa*, water dispensary and rest-house, was excavated by him to help his parents attain union with the auspicious in hopes of returning a smidgen of their goodness.

⟨12⟩

Here people attain bliss as they drink and drink the water which is refreshing like a meeting with friends, pure like the minds of sages and wholesome like the words of elders (*guru*).

⟨13⟩

When a host of five hundred autumns and three times eight more have passed one after the other, proclaiming the Mālava dynasty's fame which is immaculate like the rays of the autumn moon,

⟨14⟩

when that season has arrived in which tender lotus flowers droop with the weight of the bodies of bumblebees, in which sal trees¹⁰⁹ are pleasant, in which loving women whose lovers have gone abroad become a burnt offering in the fire of desire,

⟨15⟩

in which the groves take on a renewed grace as they sway in a wind neither too hot nor too cold, as they resound with the commencing calls of amorous cuckoos and as their shoots turn red like the lips of the beloved,

⟨16⟩

[then] this reliquary [i.e. *stūpa*] – which is bright as jasmine¹¹⁰ and the moon and whose [parasol's] shaft is rubbed by clouds – was made (*kṛta*) along with the well for [the honour of] him who has taught the perfection of all [ritual] actions (*kriyā*) once he had disposed of the flaws [inherent] in [our] senses (*dhātu*) even while being in [a body] consisting of nothing but constituent elements (*dhātu*).¹¹¹

[10] *°āmalāyā*] G and SI read *°āmalāyāḥ*. I would expect *saṃdhi* to be applied at this point, and the faint dots in the rubbing are no different from any number of random specks. In the original stone, part of *lā* and everything after it is now obscured by tile adhesive, so the reading cannot be ascertained.

[13] *kāntim*] SI prints an original double *danḍa* here, which must be a typo. There is only a *halanta m* (with a line above it). Garde prints neither original nor supplied punctuation.

[13] *dhātu-dharaḥ*] SI reads *dhātu-varaḥ* and comments that the compound really means the relics of the Buddha, but here refers to a *stūpa* built on such relics, normally called *dhātu-garbha*. Garde has the correct reading, which is clear in the stone and eliminates the need for Sircar's explanation by paronomasia.

109 The sal (*Shorea robusta* Gaertn.) is an important timber tree. See also the discussion of the date in the Commentary.

110 Jasmine translates *kunda*, in all probability meaning the star jasmine (*Jasminum multiflorum* (Burm.f.) Andrews).

111 My interpretation of what the verse says about the Buddha is tentative and differs from that of Garde. See page 81 for a discussion.

⟨Verse 17. Metre: pṛthvī⟩

^[14]aneka-sarid-aṅganāṅga-paribhoga-nityotsavo
mahārṇṇava ivāmbu⟨t:n⟩o
nicaya eṣa mā bhū⟨t⟩ kṣayī|
surāsura-naroragendra-mahito ⟨'⟩py ayaṃ dhātu-dhṛk
paraitu sama-^[15]kālatām
amara-bhūdharārkkendubhiḥ|

⟨Verse 18. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

stūpa-kūpa-prapārāmā
ye caite parikīrtitāḥ
loko⟨n:t⟩tara-vihārasya
sīmni te ⟨'⟩bhyantarīkṛtā⟨ḥ⟩||
ravilasya kṛtiḥ|

⟨17⟩

May this reservoir of water, which is eternally {festive because it is surrounded by the bodies of many riverlike women}, never {become exhausted} just as the great ocean, which eternally {revels in bodily union with many women who are rivers}, yet never {contracts the clap}.¹¹²

As for this reliquary celebrated by gods, demons (*asura*), men and serpent kings, may it endure as long as [Meru] the mountain of the immortals, the sun and the moon.

⟨18⟩

The *stūpa*, well, water dispensary and rest-house described here are encompassed within the perimeter of the Lokottara monastery.

Composed by Ravila.

[15] Most of the beginning of this line and the lower parts of the characters later on are smeared with mortar at present.

112 The basic purport of this stanza is clearly a prayer that the well should be as inexhaustible as the ocean, which is constantly replenished by countless rivers which are conventionally thought of as the personified Ocean's wives. The finer details are uncertain; see page 81 for a discussion.

A6 Mandsaur Inscription of the Silk Weavers

Substrate		Siddham ID:		OB00036	
Material	stone (sandstone)	Object type	slab		
Dimensions	width 80 cm	height 44 cm	depth	12 cm	
Discovery	1884, built into steps by a temple of Śiva in Mandsaur (probably near 24°03'20"N 75°04'23"E)				
Current location	Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior (in storage)				
Inscription		Siddham ID:		IN00040	
Dimensions	width 78 cm	height 40 cm	Char size	6 mm	Line height 15–18 mm
Date CE	473	Basis of dating	dated Mālava 529 expired, Tapasya śukla 2 (139)		
Topic	renovation of a damaged Sun temple by the guild of silk weavers who were also the patrons of the original construction of the temple 36 years earlier				
Persons mentioned	Kumāragupta, Viśvavarman, Bandhuvarman, Vatsabhaṭṭi				
Places mentioned	Daśapura				
Compendia	CII3 18; CII3rev 35; Bh List 6 & 8; SI III.24; GKA 352–355; IGE 40				
Other editions	Fleet 1886a; Bühler 1890, 91–96				

Description

The inscribed object is a sandstone slab about 80 centimetres wide by 44 tall and approximately 12 centimetres thick. The slab is rectangular, but the sides are roughly cut and not quite straight, nor do they meet at exact right angles. It was discovered by J. F. Fleet's agents sent to Mandsaur to procure a rubbing of the Sondhni pillar inscription (A11, A12) that had been reported earlier, and to look for other objects of interest in the vicinity. At this time it was "built into the wall on the right hand half-way down a small flight of steps leading to the river in front of the mediaeval temple of the god Mahādēva (Śiva) at the Mahādēva-Ghāt, which is on the south bank of the river, just opposite the fort, and I think, in the limits of the hamlet of Chandrapurā" (Fleet 1886a, 195). This place is probably the site of the modern Pasupatinath temple at 24°03'20"N 75°04'23"E.

The stone is currently kept in a storeroom at the Gujri Mahal Museum of Gwalior, where I was allowed to see and photograph it in January 2017. Unfortunately, the weight of the slab and the darkness and clutter of the storeroom prevented close study or the taking of clear photos. The inscription was probably moved to this museum by M. B. Garde, and traces of mortar along the bottom edge of the inscribed surface (but outside the inscribed campus) indicate that it was probably exhibited at some point in a manner similar to how other inscriptions are currently exhibited at the museum. In view of its extraordinary importance, I hope that the inscription will once again be displayed to the public in the near future.

The inscribed area covers almost the whole front of the stone, about 78 centimetres in width and 40 centimetres in height, with a slightly wider margin at the bottom. The text comprises 24 lines spaced 1.5 centimetres or a little more apart, with character bodies about 6 millimetres tall. The face of the stone was polished, but is now quite weathered in places which, combined with the shallowness of the engraving, impedes reading the text at some points. There are also a number of shallow scratches, mostly horizontal, which may have been caused by objects hauled down to the river along the *ghāṭ* where the slab was installed. Parts of the surface also appear to have been worn smoother than they should have been when the inscription was fresh, possibly by the hands of the devout touching the inscription over the course of centuries. Finally, some chipping along the edges has caused the loss of a few characters at the beginnings of lines 1 and 11 to 13.

The discovery of the inscription was first reported by Peter Peterson, who mentioned it in his discussion of another epigraph and, admirably, remarked that "I should very much like to publish it in full. But my friend Mr. Fleet ... destines the inscription for his forthcoming Gupta volume: and in deference to whatever may be his rights of treasure-trove in the matter I willingly refrain from doing more now than adducing what is necessary to the matter in hand" (Peterson 1885, 380 n. 2). Fleet (1886a) published the edition in the *Indian Antiquary* before the appearance of the *Corpus Inscriptionum*. Subsequently Georg Bühler (1890, 91–96) also edited the text and several scholars proposed improvements to its reading, including

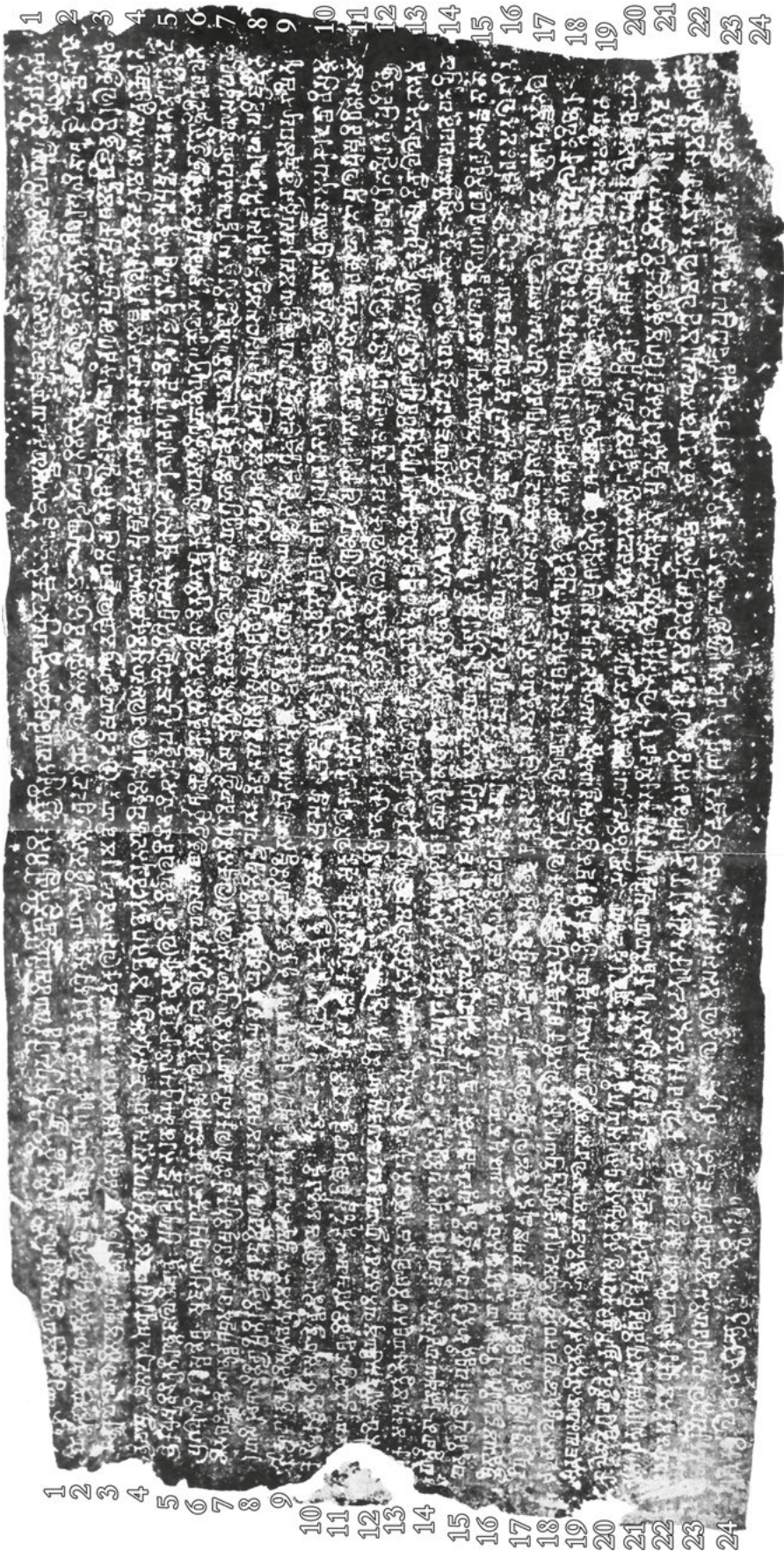


Figure 18: Mandsaur inscription of the silk weavers. Inked rubbing from Bhandarkar (CI13rev Plate 35).



Figure 19: Mandsaur inscription of the silk weavers. Composite digital photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior.

R. G. Bhandarkar (1889, 94–97), Franz Kielhorn (1890a), Pandit Durgaprasad (Durgâprasâd and Parab 1892, 107–12 no. 26), Panna Lall (1918, 15–18) and Jagannath Agrawal (1941, 60, 1986a, 1986a, 79–86).

Script and Language

The script of this epigraph is of the rounded variety of Mālavān late Brāhmī, but the ductus seems to have been influenced by the angular style. Characters tend to be quite narrow in comparison to other rounded scripts. There is also a noticeable tendency to transform curves into right angles, for which the flat bottoms of the tripartite *ya* and the looped *ma*, and the bent left arms of *pa*, *ba* and *ṣa* (resembling the forms used in the box-headed script of the Deccan) are good illustrations. Acute angles, however only appear in a few characters, notably *ca* (beaked as in other rounded scripts, but also acute angled at the bottom instead of rounded) and *bha* (in which the angular left arm attaches to the middle of the slightly right-slanting leg). The triangular headmarks are often flattened, resembling serifs.

Other hallmarks of the rounded variety include the long, hooked verticals of *a*, *ka* and *ra* as well as the looped *na* and the curled tail of *la*, which can take a gamut of shapes from a high vertical curling left only above the top of the body, to a low vertical curling over the body and down on the left. *Ga* and *śa* are rounded at the top; their outline may be barrel-shaped or oblong. *Da* has a quadrangular body, from which *ḍa* is distinguished by a rather triangular or rounded body and a tail pointing down and right. Several specimens of *ḍha* also occur, which have a flat bottom ending in a large loop so that the character closely resembles *pha*.¹¹³ According to Bose (1938, 327) the inscription employs two varieties of *kha*,¹¹⁴ but this does not seem to be the case to me; all instances of *kha* have a quadrangular base, executed with a slightly varying degree of cursive rounding. Apart from *a*, which has the standard Gupta form, initial vowels are represented by *i*, formed of a double arch over a pair of dots. Among diacritical vowels, *ā*, *e* and *o* are consistently horizontal, bending down at a right angle; only *ai* and *au* include a slanted stroke above the body. *I* is a closed circle, while *ī* is a circle with a small vertical stroke at the centre of

its bottom. *U* and *ū* take various forms depending on the character they are attached to. *M* and *ṇ* attach their vowel strokes at the body, though *ṇ* can also take *ā* at the top, with a dip to separate the vowel mark from the right wing of the character (e.g. *vibhūṣaṇāyāḥ*, 14). *L* changes its shape when vowels other than *ā* attach to it: its tail is cut short if *l* is combined with *i* or *ī*; it is likewise cut short and ends in a serif when combined with *e* which in this case is a slanting *śiromātrā*, while *lo* has the cursive looped form standard in southern scripts.

Jihvāmūliya (resembling *ma*) and *upadhmanīya* (box with a cross) are both used repeatedly, e.g. *jagatax kṣayā°* and *°udayayof pāyāt*, both in line 1. Rather than a superscript above the following consonant, they are level with regular characters and force the following consonant to a subscript position. Their use is inconsistent and the regular *visarga* seems to replace them randomly (e.g. *bhugnaiḥ kvacit*, 15; *gabhastibhiḥ praviṣṭaif puṣṇāti*, 12. *Halanta* forms of *t*, *n* and *m* occur and, where clear, they are all reduced subscript forms with a horizontal line above them. Two punctuation marks are used: a short horizontal line (transcribed in the edition below as a single *daṇḍa*) and a short double vertical (transcribed as a double *daṇḍa*). Although their use is not entirely consistent, most half-verses are closed by the horizontal mark (though it is repeatedly omitted), while most full-verse ends are marked by the double vertical (though some only have the single horizontal and verse 3 has no mark at the end). In fact, this inscription is probably the earliest known use of this two-tiered verse punctuation that is the norm to this day (Bühler 1896, 85, 1904, 89). Most, but not all, of the half or full verses that lack punctuation end in a *visarga* or a *halanta* character, so these may, to some degree, double as punctuation marks. However, actual marks do occur in combination with both (e.g. *yogibhiḥ|*, 11; *āsīt||* 114). When *visarga* appears in conjunction with a punctuation dash, the latter may appear between the *visarga*'s dots (*yogibhiḥ|*, 11) or after them (*vakṣaḥ|*, 122). The double mark is also used after the brief prose benedictions at the very end of the text.

As regards orthography, consonants are as a rule doubled after *r*, and this gemination may even take place when the conjunct has an additional member (e.g. *°bhir ddhyānai°*, 11; compare *harmya*, 117). Occasionally, however, consonants remain single after *r* (e.g. *vidur brahma°*, 11; *°ānyair mṛdubhir*, 111; *bhūtair mukta*, 111). Conversely, gemination of consonants before *r* is rare (e.g. *sitābbhra*, 16; *yattra*, 17; *vicitra*, 19; *roddhra*, 118; *roddhre*, 122). Even more rare is gemination before *y*, which only happens to *th* and *dh* (*svāddhyāya*, 18 and *patthyam*, 19; *°bhir ddhyānai°* in 11 may also be driven by the following *y*

¹¹³ Fleet (1886a, 195–96) points out these forms of *ḍa* and *ḍha* as distinctly northern in a script that otherwise has mostly southern characteristics.

¹¹⁴ Namely, one with a square base in *lekha* (123) and one with a triangular base in *skhalitā°* (12), *asukhā°* (13) and *lekhaka* (124).

rather than by the preceding *r*). The vowel mark for sonant *r* alternates randomly with *ri*, although some or all of the instances of *ri* where *r* is expected may in fact consist of the *mātrā* for *r* (rather than a subscript *r*) combined with *i* (see e.g. *prithivīm*, 113; *smritvā*, 116).

Visarga before *s* alternates with *s* (e.g. *gaṇais sid-dhaiś*, 11; *narais saṃstūyate*, 12; compare e.g. *hamsaiḥ sva*, 15; *pariniṣṭhitāḥ sucarita*, 19) in addition to its alternation with *jihvāmūliya* before velars and *upadhmaniya* before labials described above. The use of *anusvāra* is close to standard but there are occasional deviations. *Anusvāra* may randomly appear where a nasal conjunct is expected (e.g. *kṣībāṃganā*, 12; *siṃduvāra*, 121; *daṃtura-kāṃta*, 122; also *baṃdhv*, 115, but *bandhu* three times in the same stanza and again *baṃdhu* in 116). Conversely, homorganic nasals are sometimes used instead of *anusvāra* before dental and velar consonants (*puran tilaka*, 14; *saṅgatair*, 18; *saman nayanā*, 117; *śāśvatan tāvad*, 123), but there are no instances of a nasal consonant before sibilants or *h*. The use of *anusvāra* instead of a *halanta m* also occurs at the ends of full or half-verses, and this appears to be much more frequent near the end of the inscription (*bhāṣitum*||, 19; *grhaṃ*||, 120; *dvitīyāyāṃ*||, 121; *madayaṃtikānāṃ*||, 121; *jaṭānāṃ*||, 123). When the *anusvāra* belongs to an *akṣara* with an *i* or *ī mātrā*, the dot representing the *anusvāra* is engraved to the right of the vowel mark. Thus *viṃśaty* (121) is transcribed as *viśaṃty* and emended to *viṃśaty* by all previous editors except Bühler. However, compare *siṃduvāra* a little further on in the same line and *prithivīm* in 113, which only differ from *viṃśaty* in that the *anusvāra* is more evidently connected to the *akṣara* with the *i* mark.

The language is decent standard Sanskrit. The spelling is unusually neat with very few errors. Interesting among these is *saridvayena* instead of *sarid-dvayena* (17) which, instead of the omission of a component of the ligature, may be an extension of the non-standard (but epigraphically very common) practice of spelling *tattva* and *sattva* with a single *t* (instances in this inscription are found in lines 2 and 11). As for grammar, the text has few downright mistakes (for instance, *spṛśann* in v38, which should be neuter to agree with *grham* in gender), but there are many spots where the syntax is awkward. Bühler has analysed the poetry at length (1890, 9–29, translated to English in 1913, 137–48) and pointed out specific problems with the grammar (1890, 27–28, = 1913, 146–47). His overall impression (1890, 10, 20, = 1913, 138, 146), with which I agree, is that the author Vatsabhaṭṭi attempted to follow the standards of high *kāvya* at a level that exceeded his technical skill. His metaphors and similes are in many places forced, and even where his ideas are impressive, they are not elegantly expressed by his language. Sometimes

crucial words are missing and need to be supplied,¹¹⁵ while at other times his phrasing is redundant.¹¹⁶ His imagery is often repetitive, sometimes down to the words expressing those images.¹¹⁷ All that said, there are some saving graces in the composition in the form of creative ideas elegantly expressed.¹¹⁸

Bühler also highlights some points of resemblance to Kālidāsa's poems. Most particularly, he suggests (1890, 18) that verse 10 of the inscription may be an attempt to outdo Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* 65 where the lofty houses of the city of Alakā with charming women residing in them are likened to the cloud messenger with its lightning, while in Vatsabhaṭṭi's verse women inside and pennants outside the cloudlike houses of Daśapura are simultaneously likened to lightning. Bühler also feels that verse 11 recycles all details of Kālidāsa's verse not used in verse 10, though this claim involves a bit of a stretch.¹¹⁹ Kielhorn (1890a, 253) in turn points to verse 31, describing the comforts to be enjoyed in winter and the hot-season comforts to be avoided at this time, saying it is based on verses 5.1–2 of the *Ṛtusamhāra*,¹²⁰ which is commonly (though probably incorrectly) attributed to Kālidāsa (Lienhard 1984, 107–8). Bühler (1890, 24) notices this parallelism too, while Basham (1983, 93, 96) goes so far as to say that the inscription's best stanzas are plagiarised from Kālidāsa, though he does not feel the need to support this claim with specific evidence. The parallelism with the *Ṛtusamhāra* verses, in the choice of words as well as in meaning, is

115 In verse 4, for instance, the only thing that passes for a subject is *prathita-śilpāḥ*, "having a famous craft," and the verb only comes at the end of the following verse.

116 For example, *°ekāgra-parair* in verse 1 and *tulyopamānāni* in verse 10 say essentially the same thing twice.

117 Thus trees bent down by the weight of their flowers are mentioned in verses 4 (*kusuma-bharānata-taruvara*), 6 (*puṣpāvanamra-taru*) and 9 (*sva-puṣpa-bhārāvanatair nṅgendrair*), with lotuses bent down by the weight of their filaments added for good measure in verse 8 (*sva-kesarodāra-bharāvabhugnaiḥ... amburuḥaiś*). The sentence at the core of both verses 7 and 8 is *sarāṃsi ... bhānti*, "the lakes ... shine;" these two stanzas also mention lotuses no less than three times. Swarms of bees drunk on honey are referred to in stanzas 32 and 41.

118 These, by my subjective taste, include verse 13 comparing Daśapura between two rivers to the god Kāma lying between his two wives; and verse 20, an aphorism that says women need to be dressed in silk to attain their full beauty.

119 See also my translation and the next note for a possible second layer of meaning in verse 11.

120 *niruddha-vātāyana-mandirodaraṃ hutāśano bhānumato gab-hastayah| gurūṇi vāsāṃsy abalāḥ sayauvanāḥ prayānti kāle tra janasya sevyatām| na candanaṃ candra-marīci-śitalaṃ na harmya-pṛṣṭhaṃ śarad-indu-nirmalam| na vāyavaḥ sāndra-tuṣāra-śitalā janasya cittaṃ ramayanti sāmpratam|*

indeed striking enough to indicate that Vatsabhaṭṭi probably drew on that text.¹²¹ In general, however, most of his imagery is commonplace and probably not based on a particular text, though Bühler is clearly right to say that he must have been familiar with many works of classical poetry.

Bühler (1890, 11) further criticises the poet for frequently employing “der schwachen Pause,” an in-compound word boundary (rather than a boundary of independent words) at the ends of the odd quarters of some *upendravajrā* and numerous *vasantatilakā* stanzas. I prefer to consider this a permissible licence, and note that although the phenomenon has not, to my knowledge, been studied statistically, such “weak caesurae” are in my experience not uncommon after the odd *pādas* of *vasantatilakā* and *triṣṭubh*-class metres. That said, Bühler (ibid.) may be right, along with Sircar (1965b, 300), in flagging verse 33 (an *āryā* stanza) as defective, since it has a compound that carries over from the first half-verse to the second. Note, however, that this does occur occasionally in *anuṣṭubh* (though I know of no examples in *āryā*), and that the entire verse is a single compound. Sircar (1965b, 305 n. 5) sees this as yet another score against the poet, though it may in fact be a playful exercise emphasised by the lack of a proper break at the half-verse point. The deliberate transgression of poetic rules or conventions for heightened effect is sadly understudied in Sanskrit poetry. In this particular case, it is perhaps relevant that the stanza is not a conventional (*pathyā*) *āryā* but a *vipulā* one, lacking a caesura after the third foot of the first half. This variation of the *āryā* pattern is definitely sanctioned by convention. Vatsabhaṭṭi must have been aware of this and in fact seems to have winked at his reader by using the word *vipula* in the first half-verse as a hint. Sircar (1965b, 300) also notices a faulty caesura in verse 39, but to me it seems like just another *vipulā* (this time with the caesura missing in the second half). Moreover, it even adheres to the additional convention that the sixth foot of the first half, when consisting of four short syllables, must contain an extra caesura after the first of those syllables – and the two caesurae in the first half correspond perfectly to the members of the addition required to obtain the date. To continue with unusual caesurae, verse 16 in the *hariṇī* metre has a slur at the first caesura of the second *pāda*,

¹²¹ Verse 32 of the inscription, describing berries rattling on a branch shaken by a wintry wind (see note 166 on page 107) is also rather reminiscent of *Ṛtusaṃhāra* 4.10 (*pākaṃ vrajanti hima-śīta-pātair ādhūyamānā satataṃ marudbhiḥ| priye priyaṅguḥ priya-viprayuktā vipāṇḍutām yāti vilāsinīva ||*), though the details of the image differ.

while verse 38 (*āryā*) has an obscured caesura in the second half.¹²²

Commentary

This inscription is frequently referred to as one of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvārman, and it is also known as the inscription of the Mālava years 493 and 529. Both are misleading, since the inscription is a single text composed and engraved in ME 529, as Fleet himself emphasises (1886a, 196, CII3, 80–81). At this time Kumāragupta I was history. The king currently reigning in Daśapura, if there was one, is not named and had no involvement in the inscription (see page 95 below for further discussion), which was commissioned by the guild of the silk weavers. Its subject is the restoration of a damaged temple to Sūrya, originally commissioned in ME 493 by the same guild.¹²³

After an opening *siddham*, the first three stanzas praise the sun god (asking for his blessings in the first and third and paying homage to him in the second). Verse 4 introduces a group of men who originally hailed from the country of Lāṭa, while verse 5 relates that they became charmed by the land and rulers of Daśapura and migrated here with their families. At this moment these men are only spoken of as *prathita-śilpāḥ*, people widely known for their craft, or possibly, practitioners of a famous craft. The fact that their craft was silk weaving is only revealed much later, in verse 21. Lāṭa is the historic name for the region of southern Gujarat and the northern Konkan. The extent of the country is uncertain,¹²⁴ but it probably centred on the city of Bharukaccha (modern Bharuch), a famous trading port of great antiquity. Basham (1983, 95) suggests that the silk weavers of Lāṭa would have depended on maritime export for their livelihood, and the drop in trade resulting from the decline of the Roman empire may have been the cause of their migration to Daśapura. He also observes (ibid. 104) that the attacks of the Hūṇas on India proper may have been a factor.

Stanzas 6 to 14 are dedicated to a description of Daśapura, consisting mostly of poetic clichés. Of possible historical interest is the word *krameṇa* in verse 6, which, unless it is just a metre filler, implies that the town had gradually (and, presumably, quite recently) become

¹²² See my study (Balogh 2017) on slurred caesurae. I have not noticed the phenomenon in *āryā* elsewhere.

¹²³ It is tempting to speculate that a half-lifesize sculpture of the sun god, broken but exquisite, found in the river Shivna (Williams 2004, 137, K. K. Shah and Pandey 1989, 476) originally belonged to this temple.

¹²⁴ See Law (1954, 287–88) for a summary.

an ornament on the face of the earth. Verse 13 speaks of two rivers enclosing the city. One of these is of course the Shivna; Fleet (CII3, 85 n. 1) identifies the other river as the Sumli (nowadays more commonly spelt Somli), which joins the Shivna six kilometres to the northeast (upstream) of the present-day fort of Mandsaur. The Somli runs into the Shivna from the south, which implies that historic Daśapura was (mostly) situated on the right bank of the Shivna, opposite the modern Mandsaur. This tallies with the fact that most known Aulikara sites in the neighbourhood are on the south bank.

The second half of verse 15 is clear: it says that the craftsmen lived happily in the city, cherished like sons by the local rulers. The second half is vaguer, but in my opinion means that the weavers formed a covenant with the kings of Daśapura; see page 96 for further details. Verses 16 to 19 describe the diversification of the original craftsmen into a staggeringly wide gamut of trades from performing arts to law, astrology to the military. Apart from being an indication that social mobility was far from impossible at this time in this place,¹²⁵ this also implies that the original silk-weavers' guild became a veritable syndicate with an interest in – and presumably an influence over – practically all sectors of the local economy. Verse 18 says some of them were active as patrons; their clients (*praṇayin*) may have been Brahmins or, perhaps more likely in this context, entrepreneurs. The same stanza also refers to the firmness of their friendship preceded by or based on trust – this may be another indication of their covenant with the rulers mentioned in verse 15, or it may refer to their business relations.

The nineteenth stanza, last in this series, is again rather vague. It certainly speaks of some men in terms of highest praise, though it is not clear if these men are the guild in general or one or more subsets. It is also certain and noteworthy that many of these terms are of a flavour that is generally applicable to Brahmins: they have overcome sensual attachments and renounced passion, they are skilled in *dharma* and full of *sattva* (spiritual essence, purity, goodness). However, they are also dedicated to worldly affairs. The word *lokayātrā-paraiś* was misread by Fleet (see note to line 11) and not corrected by Bühler, Sircar or Basham; the correct reading was first suggested by Pandit Durgaprasad (Durgâprasâd and Parab 1892, 109) and verified by Bhandarkar in his edition. This reading is certain, but it is slightly puzzling next to all the spiritual qualities. It is possible that the stanza makes a binary distinction between the active economic players

described in the preceding verses, who earn and dole out money, as opposed to others devoid of mundane attachment and accomplished in spirituality, hence deserving as much praise as the businessmen if not more. It is also possible that all the adjectives in the stanza are freely applicable to the guild members on a pick and choose basis: some are like this and others are like that. These possibilities notwithstanding, I prefer to understand the stanza as referring to a single subset of the descendants of the original guild, the most exalted among them all (*svakula-tilaka-bhūtair*), who are simultaneously Brahmanical in quality and worldly in activity. That is to say, the verse in my opinion implies, though without saying it in so many words, that some members of the original guild had branched out into politics and now have offices at court.

Verse 20 is an epigram to the effect that feminine beauty cannot be complete unless accoutred in silk. It is not syntactically connected to the rest of the inscription but seems to be included as a sort of motto for the silk weavers' guild. Verses 21 and 22 together say that the guildsmen, here at last referred to as the people who have beautified the world with silk, came to the resolution that material wealth is ephemeral, and thus decided to invest in something permanent and auspicious. This, of course, refers to patronage of a temple, but we only come to that in verse 29.

The intervening six stanzas are a detour whose purpose is to record the king and emperor reigning at the time the temple was founded. Verse 23 says Kumāragupta was ruling the earth, which is personified as a lady with various natural phenomena corresponding to features of her anatomy and the water¹²⁶ of the four oceans to a girdle around her waist. This latter is probably an allusion to the epithet *catur-udadhi-salilāsvādita-yaśas* borne by several Gupta emperors, Kumāragupta included.¹²⁷ The next two stanzas introduce King Viśvavarman, praising him as a shrewd politician and an able warrior, but most of all as a supporter of his subjects and an uplifter of the downtrodden. Although the most straightforward reading of this part of the inscription would be that Viśvavarman was a contemporary of Kumāragupta, this is certainly not the case. Rather, the imperial reign of Kumāragupta (*kumāragupte prithivīm praśāsati*, 113) and the local reign of Bandhuvarman (*bandhuvarmany ... daśapuram ... pālayaty*, 116) give the temporal frame of the construction of the temple, and Viśvavarman is only spoken of (in square brackets as it were, within the already parenthetical passage on

¹²⁵ An implication of this inscription that K. K. Shah (1993, 219, 222) feels has not been emphasised enough in earlier literature.

¹²⁶ Or, possibly, the coastline. See note to line 13 of the text and footnote 162 on page 105.

¹²⁷ In line 2 of the Karamdanda *liṅga* inscription.

reigning kings) as the father of Bandhuvarman.¹²⁸ In verse 26 we come to Bandhuvarman, who is also described as a formidable warrior and a benefactor to his kinsmen (*bandhu*) and the populace at large. Stanzas 27 and 28 lavish further praise on him, emphasising his beauty and modesty and indicating his prowess by describing how the widowed wives of his enemies still recall him with terror.

Verse 29 brings the two threads together by clearly stating that while Bandhuvarman was ruling in Daśapura, the silk weavers funded the construction of a temple to Sūrya. The thirtieth stanza describes the wide and tall spires of this gleaming white edifice.¹²⁹ Pisharoti (1936, 73) believed that the building was constructed of red sandstone, because it is likened to the rays of the rising sun. But the temple is in fact likened to the rising moon, which poetic convention associates with whiteness or colourless brightness even though in the physical world it may be reddish. Bhandarkar actually translates *gaura* as “pale-red,” which has prompted Vidya Dehejia (1986, 44) to speculate that the temple was a brick building. While *gaura* can mean a reddish colour, I maintain that the idea here is whiteness and brightness (as translated by Fleet and Bühler); and even if built of brick, the temple would probably have been coated with white plaster, as Dehejia herself notes (1986, 56 n. 3). The text refers to the temple as a turban jewel of the western city (*paścima-purasya*). Fleet and Basham understand this as “city of the west,” interpreting the phrase as an epithet of Daśapura signifying that it was the, or at least a, major centre of western India. Bühler also understands it to mean a city in the west. Bhandarkar, however, translates “western ward (of the town),” which seems equally plausible. I do not think the question can be resolved unless further evidence comes forth, and my translation “western city” is intended to preserve the ambiguity.¹³⁰

Verses 31 to 35 give the date of the original construction. The first four stanzas of this passage are mostly dedicated to a description of the season, which is early winter. The year 493 of the Mālava Era is recorded in the fourth,¹³¹

¹²⁸ This is also the opinion of Fleet (CII3 p. 86 n. 3) and Bhandarkar (CII3rev pp. 329–330 n. 2).

¹²⁹ Or perhaps just one spire; but verse 38 clearly says that the refurbished temple, at least, had several. Pisharoti (1936, 73) suggests on this basis that the temple may have had more than one sanctum, but this is uncertain.

¹³⁰ Kishore (1999, 167) observes that a sun temple should be situated in the eastern quarter of the town (and hence the interpretation “city of the west” must be correct), but even if such a precept was actually in existence in 5th-century Daśapura, it may well have been ignored for practical reasons.

¹³¹ The date involves the problematic expression *mālavanām gaṇa-sthityā*; see page 7 for a brief discussion.

while the last stanza of the passage names the month Sahasya and the day, which is the thirteenth of the bright fortnight. Sahasya is equivalent to Pauṣa, falling in late November to early December, and the year is clearly said to be expired (*yāte*, 119). Therefore, the equivalent date in the Common Era is late in the year 436.

The subsequent passage is about the restoration of the temple, which is the occasion for installing the inscription. Stanza 36 notes that as time passed and “other kings” ruled, part of the temple became dilapidated. The implications of this statement are discussed separately on page 95 below. According to verse 37, the entire edifice was then renovated by the guild. This appears to be a proud contrast to what the preceding verse said: only one portion of the temple (*eka-deśa*) tumbled down, but the guild renovated it all around.¹³² Verse 38 describes the restored glories of the temple, while 39 records the year 529 of the Mālava Era along with the date, the bright second of the month of Tapasya. Finally, verses 40 and 41 again contain a poetic description of the season, this time the late winter. This date too is explicitly expired (*yāteṣv*, 121), and Tapasya is Phālguna, late January to early February. The equivalent date is thus early in the year 473 CE.

While elaborating the beauties of the season, verse 40 mentions flowers starting to bloom and the arrows of the love god Kāma. Both Fleet’s and Bhandarkar’s translations are vague and seem to imply that it is Kāma himself who attains unity (*adhigamya ... aikyaṃ*) with the flowers, though Fleet does emphasise that his arrows are five in number. Indeed, Kāma has five arrows and these are often said to be flowers. Both ideas are so fundamental to his identity that various synonyms for “the one with five arrows” and “the one with flower arrows” are frequently used to designate this god. In my view it is clearly these arrows which, having been annihilated by Śiva,¹³³ now become manifest as the five flowers listed in the verse. This is also how Bühler (1890, 26) understands the verse. The arrows are said to unfurl or swell (*viṛṃbhita*) which, in addition to suggesting the blooming of the flowers, probably carries sexual overtones. Some texts list the five species of flowers that comprise Kāma’s arrows, but the lists vary. The present one, being a very early epigraphic witness, may deserve further attention. To the best of my knowledge, the flowers named here (see note 171 on page 109 for identifications) do not all bloom at the end of the winter (*ketaka*, in particular, flowers during the

¹³² This contrast is stronger with my reading *sarvva-dikṣu* (see note to line 20 of the text) than with *sarvvaṃ* read by previous editors.

¹³³ The verse refers to Kāma as the one whose body was purged (that is, burnt) by Śiva; see also the note to line 21 of the text.

monsoon), so this may be a conventional list of the five flower arrows rather than a list of the harbingers of spring.

The last three strophes wind up the inscription. Verse 42 lauds the temple once again, while 43 expresses the donors' wish that it remain in perpetuity. The forty-fourth and last stanza records the name of the composer of the text who was also in charge of the construction work. The epigraph ends with a brief prose section which extends a greeting to the people involved in its creation, as well as to those who read it or have it read to them.

The Author Vatsabhaṭṭi

Fleet understood verse 44 to say that Vatsabhaṭṭi was only the composer of the inscription, and no person in charge of the construction is named. Bühler and Basham followed Fleet in this. I fully agree with D. R. Bhandarkar (CII3rev p. 332 n. 1) that Vatsabhaṭṭi's name is to be linked both to the temple work and to the text. This was first proposed by Pisharoti (1936, 70), who also suggested that the poor quality of his poetry (see Script and Language above) is explained by the fact that he was an architect, not a poet. It is, however, much more likely that he was not an architect but, as Bhandarkar (ibid.) believes, an agent entrusted with the management of the construction work. Bhandarkar also notes that in inscriptions not far removed in time and space from the present one¹³⁴ the word *kārāpaka* (literally, "one who causes [something] to be made") is sometimes used to denote a person in this function, but neglects to call attention to the fact that the present inscription employs the verb *kāritaṃ*, "caused to be made," which on the one hand shows that Vatsabhaṭṭi was not the architect himself, and on the other hand presents a link to the term *kārāpaka*.

This conclusion lays at rest Basham's allegation (1983, 93, 105) that he was just "a local hack poet" who "turned out verses at so much a stanza." Basham probably draws on Bühler (1890, 29) who calls him a private scholar who did not disdain the occasional bit of gold earned by writing poetry on commission. Bühler (ibid.) is right to point out that if Vatsabhaṭṭi had been a royal poet, or indeed if he had had any connection at court, he would have asserted this in the inscription. This, however, is rendered more or less irrelevant by identifying him as the guild's agent in charge of the entire temple operation. Given how the original weavers' guild had branched out into multiple sectors of commerce, I would suggest (as a possibility that cannot

be proven or rejected at the moment) that Vatsabhaṭṭi himself may have been a member of that illustrious guild.

Bhandarkar (CII3rev pp. 329–330 n. 2) believes that Vatsabhaṭṭi had also been the overseer of the original construction of the temple, while Mankodi (2015, 306) accepts this assertion and builds on it.¹³⁵ On this point I must disagree with Bhandarkar. The possibility cannot be ruled out, but it seems unlikely that a person who was once in charge of a major enterprise would still be active thirty-six years after the completion of that undertaking. The inscription is silent on the matter: even though the word *kāritaṃ* in line 16 refers to the original building of the temple, it is logical to understand the same word in line 23 to mean the redecoration. If Vatsabhaṭṭi had indeed been in charge of both operations, he would have said so clearly, with justifiable pride.

A Long Time and Other Kings

The inscription of the silk weavers says that in ME 493 (ca. 436 CE) "while Kumāragupta was ruling the earth ... while Bandhuvarman was protecting Daśapura ... a temple of the sun was made."¹³⁶ Then, in ME 529 (473 CE), the inscription was engraved to commemorate that "with the passing of a long time and other kings, a section of [the temple] broke apart," wherefore "it was now refurbished."¹³⁷ The thread of chronology, as discussed above, is rather tangled: Bandhuvarman's father Viśvavarman is introduced parenthetically after mentioning Kumāragupta as the reigning emperor,¹³⁸ and descriptions of kings, seasons and the town interrupt the sequence of events. The epigraph's failure to mention any ruler, local or universal, at the time of the reconstruction is also peculiar, and thirty-six years¹³⁹

¹³⁵ In fact, Bhandarkar wants to see Vatsabhaṭṭi in charge of both undertakings in order to establish that the inscription primarily commemorates the original construction and consecration of the temple. This in turn he uses to explain why the emperor and king reigning at the time of the renovation is not named. See also page 96 below.

¹³⁶ *kumāragupte prithiviṃ praśāsati* (113) ... *baṃdhuvarmany ... daśapuram ... pālayati* (116) ... *bhavanam ... kāritaṃ ... dipta-raśmeḥ* (116-17).

¹³⁷ *bahunā samatitena kālenānyaiś ca pārthivaiḥ vyaśīryyataika-deśo sya* (119-20) ... *adhunā ... saṃskāritaṃ idaṃ bhūyaḥ* (120).

¹³⁸ Incidentally, this reference to Kumāragupta in a record dated in the Mālava Era has been very helpful in ascertaining that this era has the same epoch as the Vikrama Era (see also page 9). Since Fleet's days this problem has been compounded by the existence of a second, and possibly a third, Kumāragupta. P. L. Gupta (Gupta 1974, 213–16) gives a good overview of possibilities and the relevant evidence.

¹³⁹ The CE equivalent dates are thirty-seven years apart, but that is because the earlier one falls at the end of a Western year and the latter at the beginning of one.

¹³⁴ Such as line 9 of the Vasantgadh inscription of Varmalāta (D. R. Bhandarkar 1908) and line 15 of the Kanaswa inscription of Śivagaṇa (Kielhorn 1890b).

is not exactly “a long time” in the normal lifespan of architecture built to last as long as the moon and stars.

For these reasons the above understanding of the chronology has been called into question. Panna Lall (1918, 19–22) suggested that the emperor and king were in fact recorded for the time when the temple was rebuilt, and the Kumāragupta mentioned in the text was Kumāragupta II. Diskalkar (1925, 64, 1926, 178) took the hypothesis one step further, believing that the reference to Kumāragupta was a clever stroke on the part of the poet, implying Kumāragupta I at the time of the original construction and Kumāragupta II at the refurbishment. These interpretations are unlikely,¹⁴⁰ the first because it necessitates the introduction of what even Lall (1918, 20) admits is “a rather long parenthesis” into the already winding narrative of the inscription, and the second because it assumes even greater complexity than the first.

The conclusion that no king or emperor is recorded for the actual date of the inscription remains by far the most likely unless further evidence should surface against it, though serendipitously it happens to be the case that Kumāragupta II was indeed probably reigning as Gupta emperor at that time. The reason for this lack of contemporary ruler names, and for describing thirty-six years as a long time, is probably that the period was politically turbulent both locally and globally, as implied by the inscription’s reluctance to name the “other kings” who ruled in the intervening time. It is undeniable, as pointed out among others by R. D. Banerji (1919), that succession in the Gupta empire was a turbulent affair in the mid-fourth century. A quick alternation of kings and pretenders may have contributed to the perception of thirty-six years as a long time and easily explains the lack of a reference to a sovereign ruler in 473 CE: the local elite in Daśapura may not have known who the legitimate emperor was, or may have judiciously preferred not to endorse any contender. D. R. Bhandarkar (CII3rev p. 329–330 n. 2) also subscribes to this view but further propositions that the reason why the present rulers are not mentioned is that the inscription’s primary objective was to commemorate the original construction of the temple and that the composer Vatsabhaṭṭi was also the original architect, which I find unlikely (see page 95). He also suggests that Bandhuvarman too may have remained alive and on the throne throughout this timespan, which is even more improbable

¹⁴⁰ Not to mention the scenario suggested by Pisharoti (1936, 69 n. 10), who believes that 529 is not the date of the inscription but the number of years elapsed between ME 493 and the creation of the inscription. As D. Sharma (1939) has summarily pointed out, this is palaeographically impossible to begin with.

unless Prabhākara (ruling Daśapura in 467 CE according to Dattabhaṭṭa’s inscription, A5) was identical to Bandhuvarman.¹⁴¹

Although no positive evidence is available, it is logical to assume that the Gupta succession struggle precipitated a change of power (or several) in Daśapura too, and this may in fact have been the time when the Later Aulikara dynasty took the mantle from the Early Aulikaras. This hypothesis appears to have been first proposed by Wakankar (Wakankar and Rajpurohit 1984, 13), and Mankodi (2015, 307–9) has recently argued plausibly for it. It is nonetheless also possible that an outside power was involved in the fall of the Early Aulikaras.

Such a power may have been the Vākāṭaka dynasty (Majumdar and Altekar 1954, 108–9; Mirashi 1957, 318; Jain 1972b, 256) or the Hūṇas. Dasharatha Sharma (1937) was the first to advocate this latter view, with arguments hinging upon the passive verb *vyāśiryata* and the instrumental *anyaiś ca pārthivaiḥ*. Since the root *śṛ* is normally used in the active, he reasoned, its passive must mean “was destroyed,” hence the nameless “other kings” must be the grammatical agents of this destruction. The grammatical argument, as pointed out by D. R. Bhandarkar (CII3rev p. 331 n. 1), is inconsequential since *śṛ* with the prefix *vi* is often used in the passive voice in literature in the sense of “dwindle” or “decompose,” rather than as a true passive of a transitive verb. Other arguments brought forth against Sharma’s hypothesis of Hūṇa vandalism include the remark that if Hūṇas had wanted to destroy a temple, they would have done a better job than breaking only a section of it (Bhandarkar, *ibid.*) and that the Hūṇa rulers Toramāṇa and Mihirakula are both known to have tolerated the construction of Brahmanical temples (J. Agrawal 1986a, 56). While in my opinion none of these arguments are strong enough to exclude vandalism, the temple could just as well have been damaged incidentally in war (Basham 1983, 103–4); and even if its dilapidation was due to some other factor (Bhandarkar, *ibid.*, suggests lightning), Hūṇas may have assaulted Daśapura in these decades and contributed to the power change (Sircar 1984a, 15).

The Guildsmen and their Covenant with Kings

Although the silk weavers of Daśapura evidently took enough pride in their original profession to celebrate

¹⁴¹ Bhandarkar’s suggestion is based on verse 28 of the inscription, which says that the widows of Bandhuvarman’s enemies still flinch when they remember him. The statement probably has more to do with poetic fancy than with Bandhuvarman’s lifespan.

silken cloth in a full stanza of their inscription (verse 20), it is just as evident that most of them were not, *ipso facto*, silk weavers. In fact, not until verse 20 do we hear of silk at all, and the guildsmen are only clearly revealed as silk weavers in verse 21. Since verses 16 to 19 describe a wide range of professions – from music to law to warcraft – into which the original guild has branched out, it seems likely that at the time the inscription was made, “silk weaver” was more of a nostalgic badge for most of the guildsmen than their actual occupation.

It also seems likely that the immigrant weavers were not merely accepted into Daśapura by the local rulers to live there happily ever after (v15cd, *nṛpatibhis sutavat pratimānitāḥ pramuditā nyavasanta sukhaṃ pure*), but formed a close association for mutual benefit with those rulers (presumably the predecessors of Bandhuvarman, by whose time the guild had become prosperous enough to fund the construction of a temple). Clues to this are found, first of all, in the stanza just cited, the first half of which (v15ab, *atha sametya niranantara-saṅgatair ahar-ahaḥ pravijmbhita-sauhṛdāḥ*) is less clear than the second. Its difficulty hinges on the words *sametya* and *saṅgatair* (both of which are derivatives of verbs meaning “come together”), and on how best to construe the nouns in the instrumental case. Previous translations are vague:

So assembling together, [and] day by day received into greater friendship by [their] constant associates... (Fleet, CII3 p. 85)

Then having come in contact with constant meetings, and with cordiality augmenting day by day... (Bhandarkar, CII3rev p. 328)

So, all together, through constant association their friendship expanding from day to day... (Basham 1983, 97)

Bhandarkar and Basham essentially say that the craftsmen were increasingly cordial to one another because they kept meeting one another. This may be all that was intended by the author, but it does strike me as a rather pointless thing to say. Fleet adds some “constant associates” to the scenario, but finds no information in the text about who these associates may have been. I submit that the instrumental *saṅgatair* is in apposition to *nṛpatibhis* (in *pāda c*). That is to say, the craftsmen’s waxing friendship was *with the rulers* of Daśapura. To refine the picture, *saṅgata* also means “allied with, friendly toward.” *Sametya* in turn may simply mean “collectively,” as it does in verse 5 of the inscription and as Fleet and Basham translate here, but with so many instrumentals in the context, it is much more likely to mean “having come together with,” or, in a more specialised (but widely attested) sense, “having come to an agreement (*samaya*) with.” I am thus quite certain that the stanza’s intended message is a specific

one: instead of blandishments about intra-community happiness it relates how the craftsmen established a contract with the kings who in turn were favourably disposed towards them; and how, as time went on, the good relations between the court and the guild became ever tighter. The original agreement may have involved, for instance, property grants and/or tax exemptions in exchange for the boost to commerce that their specialised skills brought.

Part of verse 18 of the inscription (*satya-vratāḥ praṇaya-inām upakāra-dakṣāvisrambha-pūrvam apare dṛḍha-sauhṛdāś ca*) may refer to the same matter. I understand this sentence to mean that (at least some, *apare*) guildsmen continued to respect the vows (*satya-vratāḥ*) they or their ancestors had made to the kings: having received the rulers’ trust in advance or having first gained their trust (*visrambha-pūrvam*), they held fast to their friendship with them and, rising to positions of power, became in turn supporters of those who came to them for aid.

Moreover, it seems possible that the generations-long covenant of the businessmen who originated as silk weavers from Lāṭa with the Aulikara kings of Daśapura continued well beyond the time of the present inscription. Although everything from this point on is wholly speculative, I believe that the Naigama family that provided the hereditary chancellors (*rājasthānīya*) of the Later Aulikaras was descended from the original silk weavers. The name (if a name it is, see page 30) probably means people belonging to a commercial corporation, and a person who is in all probability a member of this family is described in the Chittorgarh fragment (A13) as the best of traders (*vaṇijāṃ śreṣṭho*). This fragmentary inscription was in all probability moved (as building material) to Chittorgarh from Nagari, the site of ancient Madhyamikā, and it explicitly mentions that someone (presumably of the same family) governed both Daśapura and Madhyamā as chancellor. Another inscription from Nagari (C2), never published in an accessible edition, apparently records the construction of a temple around 424 CE by three brothers who are said to be magnates (*dhanīśvarair*). Although the parts of the inscription that have been reported refer neither to the silk weavers nor to the Naigamas, it may be that these brothers also belonged to that guild at the early stage of its proliferation, 12 years before the construction of the temple about whose restoration the silk weaver inscription tells us. The town of Madhyamikā may thus be a link between the silk weavers and the Naigamas. Another tenuous link may be hidden in the phrase *rūḍha-mūlaṃ dharāyām*, applied to the Naigama family in verse 12 of the Mandsaur inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10). There may be a variety of reasons why a family is said to have “roots grown into the earth,” but one of these is that the family in question had not always lived in the land they inhabit now, but has by the present time

become well established there. In other words, this may imply that the Naigamas originated from another country, just as the silk weavers had.

Elizabeth Cecil (2016, 120) has emphasised how an alliance between the Naigamas and the Later Aulikaras would have been beneficial to both, with the businessmen gaining political influence with the increasingly powerful new rulers and the latter in turn receiving help in economic control. If my understanding of the silk weaver inscription is correct, then that guild had entered a thoroughly similar alliance with the Early Aulikaras precisely at the time when this dynasty made its first (attested) appearance in Daśapura: the silk weavers built their sun temple in ME 493 ca. 436 CE), thirty-two years after the date of the Mandsaur inscription of Naravarman. And if my identifi-

cation of the Naigamas as descendants of the original silk weavers has any truth to it, then the family repeated their political gambit when the winds changed and the Later Aulikaras became dominant. The first named ancestor of the Naigama family, Ṣaṣṭhidatta, would have flourished around 460 CE by my reconstruction of the genealogy¹⁴² and around 440 CE by the conventional reconstruction,¹⁴³ both of which fall in the turbulent years of “other kings” (436 to 473 CE) recounted in the inscription of the silk weavers. If Ṣaṣṭhidatta was a prominent member of the guild, which was still powerful in 473 CE, then he may indeed have been of substantial help to the Later Aulikaras, and may in turn have gained great power for himself and his descendants by swearing allegiance at an early point to the dynasty that ultimately came out on top.

Diplomatic Text

- [1] [sid]dh[a]m ⁽¹⁾y[o bh]ṛ(ty-art)tham upāsyate sura-gaṇ(ais) sid(dhaiś ca) siddhy-artthibhir ddhyānaikāgra-parair vvidheya-viṣayair mmokṣ-ārthibhir yyogibhiḥ| bhaktyā tivra-tapodhanaiś ca munibhiś śāpa-prasāda-kṣamair hetur yyo jagatax kṣayābhyudayayof pāyāt sa vo bhāskaraha| ⁽²⁾ta;tv!a-jñāna-vido pi yasya na vidur brahmaṣa
- [2] yo bhyudyatāx kṛtsnaṃ yaś ca gabhastibhiḥ pravivṛtaif puṣ(ṇ)āti loka-trayaM gandharvvāmara-siddhakinna-narais saṃstūyate bhyutthito bhaktebhyāś ca dadāti yo bhila(ṣ)itaṃ tasmai savitre namaḥ| ⁽³⁾yaf pratyaham pravivbhāty udayācalendra-vistīrṇa-tuṅga-śikhara-skhalitāṃśu-jālah kṣibāṃga(n)[ā]-
- [3] (ja)na-kapo(la)-talābhītāṃraf pāyā(t sa vas s)u-k[ī]raṇābha(raṇo) vivasvā(N) ⁽⁴⁾kusuma-bhar(ā)nata-taruvara-devakula-sabhā-vihāra-ramaṇiyāT lāṭa-viṣayān nag(ā)vṛta-śailāj jagati prathita-śilpāḥ(ḥ) ⁽⁵⁾te deśa-pārthiva-guṇāpahṛtāḥ prakāśam addhvādi-jāny aviral(ā)ny asukhā
- [4] ny apāsyā(ḥ) jātadarā daśapuram prathamam manobhir anv āgatās sa-suta-bandhu-janās sametya|| ⁽⁶⁾mattebha-gaṇḍa-taṭa-vicyuta-dāna-bindu-siktopalācala-sahasra-vibhūṣaṇāyāḥ puṣpāvanamra-taru-ṣaṇḍa-vatāṃsakāyā bhūmef puraṇ! tilaka-bhūtam idaṃ krameṇa|| ⁽⁷⁾taṭottha-vṛkṣa-cyuta-
- [5] naika-puṣpa-vicitra-tīrānta-jalāni bhānti(ḥ) praphulla-padmābharaṇāni yatra sarāṃsi kāraṇḍava-saṃkulāni|| ⁽⁸⁾vilola-vīci-calitāravinda-patad-rajah-piñjaritaiś ca hamsaiḥ sva-kesarodāra-bharāvabhugnaiḥ kvacit sarāṃsy amburuhaiś ca bhānti| ⁽⁹⁾sva-puṣpa-bhārāvanatair nnagendrait mmada-
- [6] pragalbhāli-kula-svanaiś ca| Ajasra-gābhīś ca purāṅganābhir vvanāni yasmin samalaṃkṛtāni|| ⁽¹⁰⁾calat-patākāny abalā-sanāthāny atyarttha-śuklāny adhikonnatāni| taḍil-latā-citra-sitābbhra-kūṭa-tulyopamānāni gṛhāni yatra|| ⁽¹¹⁾kjau!lāsa-tuṅga-śikhara-pratimāni cānyāny ābhānti dirggha-valabhī
- [7] ni sa-vedikāni| gāndharvva-śabda-mukharāṇ! ni niṣṭa-citra-karmāni lola-kadali-vana-śobhitāni|| ⁽¹²⁾prā(s)āda-mālābhir alaṃkṛtāni dharāṃ vidāryyeva samutthitāni| vimāna-mālā-saḍṛśāni yatra gṛhāni pū(rṇṇe)ndu-karāmalāni|| ⁽¹³⁾yad bhāty abhīramya-sari-dvayena capalormmiṇā samupagūḍham
- [8] rahasi kuca-śālinibhyāṃ prīti-ratibhyāṃ smarāṅgam iva|| ⁽¹⁴⁾satya-kṣamā-dama-śama-vrata-śaucadhairyā-svā(ddhyā)ya-vṛtta-vinaya-sthiti-buddhy-upetaiḥ| vidyā-tapo-nidhibhir asmayitaiś ca viprair yyad bhrājate graha-gaṇaix kham iva pradīptaiḥ|| ⁽¹⁵⁾Atha sametya nirantara-saṅgatair ahar-ahaḥ pravijṛmbhita-

142 See Figure 6 on page 31 for the family tree and page 165 for a discussion.

143 Extrapolated by assigning 20 years to a generation and assuming Doṣa to have been slightly older than King Prakāśadharman whose advisor he was.

- [9] sauhṛdāḥ nṛpatibhis sutavat pratimja!nitāḥ pramuditā nyavasanta sukhaṃ pure|| ⁽¹⁶⁾śravaṇa-(su)bhag(e) gāndharvve nye dṛḍhaṃ pariniṣṭhitāḥ sucarita-śatāsaṅgāx keci(d v)icitra-kathāvidāḥ(l) vinaya-nibhṛtās samyag dharmma-prasaṅga-parāya(ṇā)f priyam aparusaṃ patthyaṃ cānye kṣamā bahu bhāṣituḥ||
- [10] ⁽¹⁷⁾kecit sva-karmmaṇy adhikās tathānyair vviṅṅāyate jyotiṣam ātmavadbhiḥ Adyāpi cānye samara-pragalbhāx kurvanty arīṇām ahitaṃ prasahya|| ⁽¹⁸⁾prājñā manojña-va(puṣ)ah prathitoru-vaṃśā vaṃśānurūpa-caritābharaṇās tathānye| satya-vratāḥ praṇayinām upakāra-dakṣā visrambha-
- [11] [pūrvva]m apare dṛḍha-sauhṛdās ca|| ⁽¹⁹⁾vijita-viṣaya-saṅgair ddharmma-śilais tathānyair m[ṛ]dubhir adhika-sa;tv!ai(r l)(o)kayātrā-paraiś ca(?) sva-kula-tilaka-bhūtair mukta-rāgair udārair adhikam abhivibhāti śreṇir evaṃ-prakāraiḥ|| ⁽²⁰⁾tāruṇya-kānty-upacito pi suvarṇṇa-hāra-tāmbūla-puṣpa-vidhinā sama
- [12] [lamkṛ]to pi(?) nārī-janaḥ śriyam upaiti na tāvad agryāṃ yāvan na paṭṭamaya-vastra-y(u)gāni dhatte|| ⁽²¹⁾spa(r)śa(?vatā) va(rṇṇ-ān)tara-vibhāga-cittreṇa netra-su(bha)gena (yai)s sakalam idam kṣiti-talam alaṃkṛtaṃ paṭṭa-vastreṇa|| ⁽²²⁾vidyādharī-rucira-pallava-karṇṇapūra-vāteritāsthiritaram pravicitntya
- [13] [lo]kam(?) mānuṣyam arttha-nicayāṃś ca tathā viśālā;(n t)!eṣāṃ śubhe (ma)tir abhūd acal(?e ca) (ta) s(?miN)|| ⁽²³⁾catus-(s)a(mud)r-(ā)(?ṃbu)-vilola-me(kha)l(ām) sumer(u)-kailāsa-bṛhat-pa(yo)dharā(M) vanānta-vānta-sphuṭa-puṣpa-hāsinīm kumāragupte pīri!thivīm praśāsati|| ⁽²⁴⁾samāna-dhīś śukra-bṛhaspatibhyāṃ lalāma-bhūto bhuvī
- [14] pārtthivānām(l) raṇeṣu yaḥ pārttha-samāna-(ka)rmma babhūva goptā nṛpa-viśvavarmma(ḥ)|| ⁽²⁵⁾dīn-ānukampāna-paraḥ kṛpaṇ-ārtta-vargga-sāntva-prado dhika-dayālur anātha-nāthaḥ(?) kalpa-drumaḥ praṇayinām abhayaṃ-pradaś ca bhītasya yo janapadasya ca bandhur āsī(T)|| ⁽²⁶⁾tasyātmajaḥ sthairyā-nayopapanno bandhu-priyo
- [15] bandhur iva prajānām(l) baṃdhv-artti-harttā nṛpa-bandhuvarmma dvi(d-dṛ)pta-pa(kṣa-kṣa)paṇaika-dakṣaḥ| ⁽²⁷⁾kānt(o y)u(vā) raṇa-paṭur vvinayānvitāś ca rājāpi sann upasṛto na madaiḥ smayādyai(h) śṛṅgāra-mūrttir abhibhāty analaṃkṛto pi rūpeṇa yax kusumacāpa Iva dvitīyaḥ|| ⁽²⁸⁾vaidhavya-tivra-vyasana-kṣatānām
- [16] sm;ri!tvā yam adyāpy ari-sundarīnām(l) bhayād bhavaty āyata-locanānām ghana-stanāyāsa-karaḥ prakampaḥ|| ⁽²⁹⁾tasminn eva kṣitipati-v;ri!ṣe baṃdhuvarmmaṇy (u)dāre samya(k-s)phītaṃ daśapuram idam pālayaty unnatāṃse| śilpāvāpt(ai)r ddhana-samudayaiḥ paṭṭa-vā(yair u)dāraṃ (ś)re(ṇ)ībhūtair bbhavanam atulaṃ kāritaṃ
- [17] dīpta-raśmeḥ|| ⁽³⁰⁾vistīrṇṇa-tuṅga-śikharam śikhari-prakāśam abhyudgatendv-amala-raśmi-kalāpa-gauram(?) yad bhāti paścima-purasya niviṣṭa-kānta-cūḍāmaṇi-pratisamaḥ! nayanābhirāmaḥ|| ⁽³¹⁾rāmā-sanātha-(bha)van(o)dara-bhāskarāṃśu-vahni-pratāpa-subhage jala-līna-mīne| candrāṃśu-harmya-tala-candana-tālavṛnta-hāropabho(g)a-rahite hima-dagdha-padmell|| ⁽³²⁾roddhra-priyaṃgu-taru-kunda-latā-vikośa-puṣpā(sa)va-pra(m)u(di)tāli-k(u)l(ā)bhīrāme| kāle tuṣāra-kaṇa-karkkaśa-śīta-vāta-vega-pranṛtta-lavalī-naga-naika-śākhell|| ⁽³³⁾smara-vaśaga-taruṇa-jana-vallabhāṅganā-vipula-kānta-pīnoru-|
- [19] stana-jaghana-ghanāliṅgana-nirbhartsita-tuhina-hima-pāte|| ⁽³⁴⁾mālavānām gaṇa-sthityā yāt(e) śata-catuṣṭayel tri-navaty-adhike bdānām ;ri!tau sevya-ghana-stanel|| ⁽³⁵⁾sahasya-māsa-śuklasya praśaste hni trayodaśe maṅgalācāra-vidhinā prāsādo yaṃ niveśitaḥ|| ⁽³⁶⁾bahunā samatītena
- [20] kālenānyaiś ca pārtthivaiḥ| vyaśīryyataika-deśo sya bhavanasya tato dhunā|| ⁽³⁷⁾sva-yaśo-(v);(r)!iddhaye sa(?rvva-dikṣ)(ūd)āram udārayā| saṃskāritam idam bhūyaḥ (śre)ṇyā bhānumato gṛhaṃ|| ⁽³⁸⁾Atyunnatam avadātaṃ nabha ;spṛśann! iva manoharaiś śikharaiḥ(l) śaśī-bhānvor abhyudayeṣv amala-mayūkh-āyatana-
- [21] (bhū)taṃ|| ⁽³⁹⁾vatsara-śateṣu paṃcasu viṃśaty-adhikeṣu navasu cābdeṣu| yāteṣv abhiramya-tapasya-māsa-śukla-dvitīyāyām|| ⁽⁴⁰⁾spaṣṭair aśoka-taru-ketaka-siṃdūvāra-lolātimuktaka-latā-madayamtikānām| puṣpodgamair abhinavair adhigamya nūnam aikyaṃ vijṛṃbhita-śare hara-pūta-dehel||
- [22] ⁽⁴¹⁾madhu-pāna-mudita-madhukara-kulopagīta-naga-naika-pṛthu-śākhell|| kāle nava-kusumodgama-daṃtura-kānta-pracura-roddhrell|| ⁽⁴²⁾śaśīneva nabho vimalaṃ kaus(tu)bha-maṇineva śārṅgiṇo vakṣaḥ| bhavana-vareṇa tathedaṃ puram akhilam alaṃkṛtam udāraṃ|| ⁽⁴³⁾Amalina-śaśi-
- [23] le(khā)-da(m)turaṃ piṅgalānām parivahati samūhaṃ yāvad iśo jaṭānām| vikaṭa-kamala-mālām aṃsa-saktāṃ ca śārṅgī bhavanam idam udāraṃ śāśvataḥ! tāvad astu|| ⁽⁴⁴⁾sreṇy-ādeśena bhaktyā ca kāritaṃ bhavanam raveḥ| pūrvvā ceyaṃ prayatnena racitā vatsabhaṭṭinā||
- [24] svasti kartṛ-lekhaka-vācaka-śrotṛbhyah|| siddhir astu||

Curated Text

^[1][sid]dh[a]m(\\)

⟨Verse 1. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita⟩

y[o bh]ṛ(ty-art)tham upāsyate sura-gaṇ(ais)
sid(dhaiś ca) siddhy-artthibhir
ddhyānaikāgra-parair vvidheya-viṣayair
mmokṣārtthibhir yyogibhiḥ|
bhaktyā tīvra-tapodhanaiś ca munibhiś
śāpa-prasāda-kṣamair
hetur yyo jagatax kṣayābhuyadayayof
pāyāt sa vo bhāskaraḥ|

⟨Verse 2. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita⟩

ta;tv!a-jñāna-vido (‘)pi yasya na vidur
brahmaṛṣa^[2]yo (‘)bhuyadyatāx
kṛtsnaṃ yaś ca gabhastibhiḥ pravisṛtaif
puṣ(ṇ)āti loka-trayam
gandharvvāmara-siddha-kinnara-narais
saṃstūyate (‘)bhuyutthito
bhaktebhyaś ca dadāti yo (‘)bhila(ṣ)itaṃ
tasmai savitre namaḥ|

⟨Verse 3. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

yaf pratyaham prativibhāty udayācalendra-
vistīrṇa-tuṅga-śikhara-skhalitāmśu-jālaḥ
kṣībāṃga(n)[ā]^[3](ja)na-kapo(la)-talābhitāmraf
pāyā(t sa vas s)u-k[i]raṇābha(raṇo) vivasvā(n)

⟨Verse 4. Metre: āryā⟩

kusuma-bhar(ā)nata-taruvara-devakula-sabhā-
vihāra-ramaṇiyāt
lāṭa-viṣayān nag(ā)vṛta-śailāj jagati prathita-śilpāḥ(\\)

Text Notes

The restorations adopted in my edition were originally proposed by Fleet unless otherwise noted. Alternative readings and conjectures are cited from the editions of Fleet in CI3 (F), Bühler (Bü), Bhandarkar in CII3rev (Bh) and Sircar in SI. I also refer to corrections proposed by R. G. Bhandarkar as RGB, the conjectures of Pandit Durgaprasad as PD, and the opinions of Jagannath Agrawal as JA. Agrawal mostly repeats suggestions made by others but may have arrived at these independently.

[1] **bhṛty-artham**] F, Bü, SI read *vṛty-artham* em. *vṛtṭy-artham*. Bh reads *dhṛty-artham*. All show the first consonant as an unclear reading, not as a restoration. In the rubbing and the stone, only the *ṛ mātrā* and a vertical stem are visible; I see no trace of a character body, but the bottom part of the body should be extant if it had been *v* or *dh*. Hence my restoration *bh*, which I deem slightly more likely than the other alternatives.

Translation

Accomplished.¹⁴⁴

⟨1⟩

He who is devoutly worshipped for (sustenance) by the hosts of gods and by magical beings (*siddha*) seeking accomplishment (*siddhi*), by yogis who strive for liberation (*mokṣa*), single-mindedly engaged in meditation (*dhyāna*) and in control of their sense-objects (*viṣaya*), and by hermits rich in rigorous austerity (*tapas*) who have the power to curse and to pardon;¹⁴⁵ he who is the motivator of both the decay and the generation of the world¹⁴⁶ – may that Light-maker [the Sun] protect you!

⟨2⟩

He whom Brahmin sages versed in the knowledge of truth could not understand [no matter how] they tried; and who nourishes the entire trio of worlds with his effusing rays; who, when he has risen, is praised by Gandharvas, gods, magical beings (*siddha*), Kinnaras and men;¹⁴⁷ and who gives his devotees what they desire – homage to that Enlivener [the Sun]!

⟨3⟩

He who shines forth every day, blushed like the surface of the cheeks of tipsy ladies when his mesh of rays spills from the broad and lofty summit of Mount Sunrise – may that Blazing One [the Sun] protect you!

⟨4⟩

[There were some men] widely known for their craft [who came] from the province of Lāṭa which is delightful because of its superb trees bent down by the weight of flowers, its temples, meeting halls and parks,¹⁴⁸ and where the mountains are blanketed in greenery.

Footnotes

144 See page 6 about translating *siddham* as “accomplished.”

145 As R. G. Bhandarkar (1889, 94) points out, *śāpa-prasāda* is a *dvandva* compound and Fleet had been wrong to interpret it as counteracting curses.

146 It is also possible that *jagat* in this context means the totality of living beings.

147 “Men” is the primary meaning of *nara*, but the word may also mean a class of supernatural beings. Fleet understands it in that sense here and Bhandarkar endorses his interpretation, while Bühler prefers to understand the word as “men.” The issue cannot be decided definitively and the text may have been ambiguous to its original audience as well, but since mortal men do praise the risen sun, I prefer to stick to the more mundane meaning.

148 *Vihāra* may mean (Buddhist) monasteries in addition to the less specialised sense of parks or pleasure grounds.

⟨Verse 5. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

te deśa-pārthiva-guṇāpahṛtāḥ prakāśam
addhvādi-jāny aviral(ā)ny asukhā^[4]ny apāsyā(ḥ)
jātādarā daśapuram prathamam manobhir
anv āgatās sa-suta-bandhu-janās sametya||

⟨Verse 6. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

mattebha-gaṇḍa-taṭa-vicyuta-dāna-bindu-
siktopalācala-sahasra-vibhūṣaṇāyāḥ
puṣpāvanamra-taru-ṣaṇḍa-vataṃsakāyā
bhūmef puraṅn! tilaka-bhūtam idaṃ krameṇa||

⟨Verse 7. Metre: upendravajrā⟩

taṭṭha-vṛkṣa-cyuta-^[5]naika-puṣpa-
vicitra-tīrānta-jalāni bhānti(ḥ)
praphulla-padmābharaṇāni yatra
sarāṃsi kāraṇḍava-saṃkulāni||

⟨Verse 8. Metre: upendravajrā⟩

vilola-vicī-calitāravinda-
patad-rajah-piñjaritaiś ca hamsaiḥ
sva-kesarodāra-bharāvabhugnaiḥ
kvacit sarāṃsy amburuhaiś ca bhānti|

⟨Verse 9. Metre: upendravajrā⟩

sva-puṣpa-bhārāvanatair nṇagendair
mmada-^[6]pragalbhāli-kula-svanaiś ca|
ajasra-gābhiś ca purāṅganābhir
vvanāni yasmin samalaṃkṛtāni||

⟨Verse 10. Metre: upajāti⟩

calat-patākāny abalā-sanāthāny
atyarttha-śuklāny adhikonnatāni|
taḍil-latā-citra-sitābbhra-kūṭa-
tulyopamānāni gṛhāni yatra||

⟨5⟩

They were obviously enthralled by the excellence of [this] land and [its] kings and having first conceived an admiration [for it] in their minds, they then teamed up with their sons and families, spurned the incessant discomforts arising from travel and suchlike, and came to Daśapura—¹⁴⁹

⟨6⟩

this city which has gradually become a forehead ornament of the [lady] Earth, whose jewels are thousands of mountains the stones of which are sprinkled with drops of rut fluid dripped from the sloping cheeks of elephants in musth, and whose ear dangles are thickets of trees bowed down with flowers—

⟨7⟩

where the lakes adorned with blooming lotuses teem with ducks and twinkle as the water along their edges takes on diverse colours from the many flowers fallen from trees growing on the shore—

⟨8⟩

and where the lakes also shine here and there with swans rouged by pollen falling from lotus flowers set asway by rolling waves, and with lotuses bent down by the magnificent weight of their own filaments—

⟨9⟩

where copses are adorned by stately trees bowed down by the weight of their own flowers, by the sound of swarms of bees emboldened by intoxication, and by perpetually strolling¹⁵⁰ ladies of the town—

⟨10⟩

where the excessively white and extremely high houses populated by tender women practically resemble, with their fluttering pennants, banks of white clouds coloured by streaks of lightning,¹⁵¹

[4] *anv āgatāḥ*] F and Bh construe *anvāgatāḥ*. See note 149 to the translation.

[4] *ṣaṇḍa*] F reads *maṇḍa*. RGB suggested reading *khaṇḍa*. Bū was first to point out that the actual text is *ṣaṇḍa*, endorsed by JA, SI and Bh.

[4] *puran*] F, Bū, SI read *paran*. Bh feels the reading is clearly *puran*, though his translation is for *paran*. The vowel mark for *u* is indeed quite clear.

149 Fleet and Bhandarkar construe *anvāgatāḥ*, “followed,” and understand the verse to mean that they first came to Daśapura with their minds and then followed bodily. I find this construction very awkward, since in this reading there is no verb equivalent to “came” in the Sanskrit, and *anvāgatāḥ* has Daśapura as its primary object (i.e. they followed the city). I therefore prefer to see *anu* as an independent adverb paired with *prathamam*, rather than as a preposition to the verb. The ultimate meaning does not change except that there is no mental travel involved in my interpretation.

150 Or possibly perpetually singing, as translated by Fleet.

151 This stanza (and, to some extent, the next one) are closely reminiscent of *Ṛtusamhāra* 5.1–2. See page 91 and note 120 there.

⟨Verse 11. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

k(au:ai)lāsa-tuṅga-śikhara-pratimāni cānyāny
ābhānti dīrggha-valabhi^[7]ni sa-vedikāni|
gāndharvva-śabda-mukharā⟨n:ṇ⟩i niviṣṭa-citra-
karmmāṇi lola-kadalī-vana-śobhitāni||

⟨Verse 12. Metre: upajāti⟩

prā(s)āda-mālābhir alamṅkṛtāni
dharāṃ vidāryyeva samutthitāni|
vimāna-mālā-sadṛśāni yattra
gṛhāṇi pū(rṇṇe)ndu-karāmalāni||

⟨Verse 13. Metre: āryā⟩

yad bhāty abhiramya-sari⟨d⟩-dvayena capalormmiṇā
samupagūḍham
^[8]rahasi kuca-śālinibhyāṃ prīti-ratibhyāṃ smarāṅgam
iva||

⟨Verse 14. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

satya-kṣamā-dama-śama-vrata-śauca-dhairyya-
svā(ddhyā)ya-vṛtta-vinaya-sthiti-buddhy-upetaiḥ|
vidyā-tapo-nidhibhir asmayitaiś ca viprair
yyad bhrājate graha-gaṇaix kham iva pradiptaiḥ||

⟨11⟩

while other [houses] with their long roof vaults and their balconies¹⁵² appear to be likenesses¹⁵³ of the rugged peaks of Kailāsa: they are clamorous with the sound of {music/Gandharvas}; {paintings are laid down [on their walls]/wondrous deeds are performed [on them]}; and they are beautified by {groves of billowing plantains/woods where the deer are skittish}—

⟨12⟩

where houses¹⁵⁴ immaculate as the rays of the full moon are decorated with rows of pavilions and seem to have burst up splitting the earth, looking like rows of heavenly chariots (*vimāna*)—

⟨13⟩

[this city] which, being enclosed by a pair of lovely rivers with wiggling waves, appears like the body of [the god of] Love embraced in privacy by [his wives] Prīti and Rati who are well endowed with breasts—

⟨14⟩

which, like the sky with the shining hosts of planets, is aglitter with Brahmins possessed of truthfulness, patience, self-control, tranquillity, vows, purity, steadfastness, recitation, comportment, discipline, stability and intelligence, who are storehouses of scholarship and ascetic power (*tapas*), yet free from conceit.

[7] *prāsāda*] Bh reads *prāśāda* and emends. In the rubbing, the character looks like s, but in the stone it does indeed resemble ṣ very much. I give the engraver the benefit of doubt.

152 In my translation “roof vaults” and “balconies” render *valabhi* and *vedikā* respectively, but exactly what architectural features these words refer to is uncertain. R. G. Bhandarkar (1889, 94–95) has pointed out that Fleet’s initial translation “other long buildings on the roofs of houses, with arbours in them” was inaccurate and, in addition to pointing out the correct way to construe the sentence, suggested translating *valabhi* as “rooms on the roofs.” Bühler (Bühler 1890, 18) offers “Söllern und Steinsitzen,” while D. R. Bhandarkar’s translation has “terraces and rail mouldings.”

153 The resemblance to Kailāsa may simply be in implied height and whiteness. However, I am quite certain that the vaults and balconies (for which see also the previous note) are mentioned because they were perceived to resemble features of a mountain landscape (perhaps ridges and bluffs), and that the ambiguous word *gāndharva* implies supernatural musicians in the context of the mythical mountain. My alternative interpretations for the other adjectives as applicable to the mountain are a bit awkward and may not have been intended by the composer.

154 This stanza may in fact continue to elaborate the idea that the houses resemble Mount Kailāsa. Construing verses 11 and 12 as a single sentence would eliminate the need to supply “houses” in verse 11. However, verse 12 is in a different metre than the previous one and does not use paronomasia, so I prefer to see it as only loosely connected to all the rest of the description of the houses.

⟨Verse 15. Metre: drutavilambita⟩

atha sametya nirantara-saṅgatair
ahar-ahaḥ pravijṛmbhita-^[9]sauhṛdāḥ
nṛpatibhis sutavat pratim(a:ā)nitāḥ
pramuditā nyavasanta sukhaṃ pure||

⟨Verse 16. Metre: hariṇī⟩

śravaṇa-(su)bhag(e) gāndharvve (')nye
dṛḍhaṃ pariniṣṭhitāḥ
sucarita-śatāsaṅgāx keci(d v)icittra-kathāvidaḥ(l)
vinaya-nibhṛtās samyag dharmma-
prasaṅga-parāya(ṇā)f
priyam aparusaṃ patthyam cānye
kṣamā bahu bhāṣituḥm!||

⟨Verse 17. Metre: indravajrā⟩

^[10]kecit sva-karmmaṇy adhikās tathānyair
vviṅṇāyate jyotiṣam ātmavadbhiḥ
adyāpi cānye samara-pragalbhāx
kurvvanty ariṇām ahitaṃ prasahya||

⟨Verse 18. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

prājñā manojña-va(puṣ)ḥ prathitoru-vaṃśā
vaṃśānurūpa-caritābharaṇās tathānye|
satya-vratāḥ praṇayinām upakāra-dakṣā
visrambha-^[11][pūrvva]m apare dṛḍha-sauhṛdās ca||

⟨15⟩

So [these craftsmen] entered a covenant¹⁵⁵ with the kings [of Daśapura] who were constantly well disposed toward them. Day after day their amity burgeoned, and being cherished like sons [by the kings], they resided in the city in joyful complacency.

⟨16⟩

Some [of them became] firmly established in music,¹⁵⁶ pleasant to the ear; some, attached to hundreds of [accounts of] goodly deeds, [became] erudite in various stories;¹⁵⁷ [those] intent upon discipline [became] entirely dedicated to topics of law (*dharmma*);¹⁵⁸ others [became] able to say much that is kind and inoffensive, yet salutary.

⟨17⟩

Some are now outstanding in their own profession,¹⁵⁹ while others, spiritually minded, are knowledgeable in astrology; yet others, intrepid in fighting, do harm to enemies by main force.

⟨18⟩

Others are clever, have handsome bodies and a famous, extensive lineage, and their ornaments are deeds befitting their lineage. Yet others are true to their vows, adroit in fostering their clients and steadfast in sodality once confidence has been established.

[9] *subhage gāndharvve nye*] F, SI read *subhagaṃ dhānurvvaidyam*. The correct reading was first pointed out by RGB and adopted by Bū and Bh. Note that the word *gāndharvva* is also used in line 7.

[10] *jyotiṣam*] SI reads *jyotimam* and emends. The consonant does look rather like *m*, but its body is not triangular like *m*'s and was definitely meant to be *ṣ*.

[10] *vapuṣaḥ*] F, SI read *vadhavaḥ*. RGB offered the conjecture *vapuṣaḥ* or, less likely, *vibhavāḥ*. Bū adopted *vapuṣaḥ*; JA agrees and claims to have verified this reading from the original stone. Bh says the impressions have *vadhuṣaḥ*, which he emends to *vapuṣaḥ*. The top of the second character is wide and seems to have two separate points, and its subscript *u* is practically clear, so *vapuṣaḥ* is the most plausible restoration.

155 Fleet and Bhandarkar translate this stanza, and particularly the word *sametya* ("entered a covenant" in my translation) in vague and general terms. See page 96 for a discussion.

156 Literally, the thing [i.e. art] belonging to the Gandharvas. See also note to line 9 of the text.

157 The word *āsaṅgāḥ* ("attached to" in my translation) is somewhat opaque. Bhandarkar (CI3rev p. 329 n. 1) may be right to take it in a highly specific meaning "[taking] pride in authorship." He also translates *sucarita* more specifically than I do, as "excellent biographies" rather than "[accounts of] goodly deeds." These guildsmen may have become authors (though whether of fact or fiction cannot be decided, if the distinction is meaningful at all in Sanskrit culture), but it is also possible that oral performers are meant.

158 Alternative interpretations are again possible. Both Fleet and Bhandarkar prefer to understand *dharmma* as religion and to construe *samyak* in compound with the following words. Fleet moreover combines this quarter-stanza with the next one, translating "and others, unassuming in [their] modesty [and] devoted to discourses of the true religion, [became] able to say much that was free from harshness [and yet was] salutary." Bhandarkar separates the two quarters and translates the present one as follows, "[others], filled with humility, are absorbed in excellent religious discourses."

159 I agree with Fleet in understanding *sva-karman* to refer to these people's original profession, namely silk weaving. Bhandarkar understands it to mean "their own religions rites."

⟨Verse 19. Metre: mālinī⟩

vijita-*viṣaya-saṅgair* ddharma-*śīlais* tathānyair
m[ṛ]dubhir adhika-saṅtv!ai(r
l)(o)kayātrā-*paraiś* ca(?)
sva-kula-tilaka-bhūtair mukta-rāgair udāir
adhikam abhivibhāti śreṇir evaṃ-prakāraiḥ||

⟨Verse 20. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

tāruṇya-kānty-upacito ⟨'⟩pi suvarṇṇa-hāra-
tāṃbūla-*puṣpa-vidhinā sama*^[12][lamkṛ]to ⟨'⟩pi(?)
nāri-janaḥ śriyam upaiti na tāvad agryāṃ
yāvan na paṭṭamaya-*vastra-y(u)gāni* dhatte||

⟨Verse 21. Metre: āryā⟩

spa(r)śa(?vatā) va(rṇṇ-ān)tara-vibhāga-cittreṇa netra-
su(bha)gena
(yai)s sakalam idaṃ kṣiti-talam alaṃkṛtam
paṭṭa-vastreṇa||

⟨19⟩

And the guild shines ever more brilliantly thanks to yet others: [men] of such a sort who have overcome their attachment to sense objects and are adept in morality (*dharma*), who are placid and rich in spiritual essence (*sattva*), yet are dedicated to worldly affairs – forehead ornaments of their clan who have cast off passion and are generous.¹⁶⁰

⟨20⟩

Replete though they may be with tender youth and grace and resplendent with golden necklaces, betel [mouth scent] and [carefully] arranged flowers, not unless they put on a pair of silk garments do womenfolk attain the peak of their glamour.¹⁶¹

⟨21⟩

[Those men] who have beautified the entire surface of this earth with silken cloth, soft to the touch and pleasing to the eye, colourful with designs of various hues,

[11] *lokayātrā-paraiś*] F, Bū, SI read *lokayātrāmaraiś*. The correction to *paraiś* was first proposed by PD as an emendation. Bh adopts this and avers that the impressions confirm it. I agree and add that the original stone also confirms this reading. Bh segments the words as “*lōkayātr-āparaiś*” (implying that he construed *lokayātrā+aparaiś*), but this is probably a typographic mistake.

[12] *śriyam ... agryāṃ*] F reads *priyam* and emends *agryāṃ* to *aśryāṃ*. The correct reading was first pointed out by Bū and endorsed by JA, SI and Bh. In the stone, *gryā* is clear while *śri* is not entirely clear but still certain.

[12] *sparsavatā*] The reading is badly effaced but all editors agree on it. JA proposes to read *sparsāj jāta*, claiming that the character read as *va* is a conjunct and its lower component is probably *j*, though admitting that the rest of the character is unclear. As SI points out, JA's conjecture is unmetrical (and none too intelligible). He notes that *sparsā-jāta* would fit the metre, but does not adopt this reading which is irrelevant at any rate, since the only basis for JA's suggestion is an apparent subscript *j*. In the rubbing of the inscription there does seem to be a subscript component to the third character, but any ligature here would be unmetrical and in my photos of the stone this appears to be no more than shallow damage. I retain *sparsavatā* as the most likely conjectural reading.

160 It is not clear whether this stanza describes all of the guildsmen in terms of generic adulation, a single most exalted subgroup, or multiple subgroups. See page 93 for a discussion.

161 A pair of garments refers to the two unstitched lengths of cloth traditionally worn: one wrapped around the lower body and another draped on the upper body.

⟨Verse 22. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

vidyādhari-rucira-pallava-karṇṇapūra-
vāteritāsthirataramaṃ pravacintya ^[13][lo]kaṃ(?)
mānuṣyam arttha-nicayāṃś ca tathā viśālā;(n)!
(teṣāṃ śubhe (ma)tir abhūd acal(?e ca) (ta)
s(?min)||

⟨Verse 23. Metre: vaṃśastha⟩

catus-(s)a(mud)r-(ā)(?ṃbu)-vilola-me(kha)l(āṃ)
sumer(u)-kailāsa-bṛhat-pa(yo)dharā(m)
vanānta-vānta-sphuṭa-puṣpa-hāsinīm
kumāragupte pṛi!thiviṃ praśāsati||

⟨Verse 24. Metre: upendravajrā⟩

samāna-dhiś śukra-bṛhaspatibhyāṃ
lalāma-bhūto bhuvī ^[14]pārthivānām(!)
raṇeṣu yaḥ pārthva-samāna-(ka)rmā
babhūva goptā nṛpa-viśvavarmā(||)

⟨22⟩

having contemplated how the [material] world, along with the human condition and massive piles of wealth, are as exceedingly unsteady as Vidyādhara women's graceful sprig ear-ornaments swaying in the wind, set their minds on (that) [which is] propitious and stable.

⟨23⟩

While Kumāragupta was ruling the earth, whose swaying girdle is the (water) of the four oceans, whose great breasts are Mount Sumeru and Mount Kailāsa, whose smile is the full-blown flowers cast forth on the verges of forests,¹⁶²

⟨24⟩

there was a ruler, King Viśvavarman, a forehead ornament among monarchs on [this] earth, whose intellect was the equal of Śukra and Bṛhaspati¹⁶³ and whose deeds in battle were the equal of [Arjuna] the son of Pṛthā.

[13] *viśālān teṣāṃ*] F, SI, Bū read *viśālāṃs teṣāṃ*, while Bh reads *viśālān teṣāṃ* and emends to correct the *saṃdhi*. I agree that this is the most likely reading.

[13] *śubhā ... tasmīn*] F and SI read *śubhā matir abhūd acalā tatas tu*. Bū differs in reading *śubhe*. Bh agrees on *śubhe* and also changes the end to *tatas taiḥ*. The stone is unclear, but after scrutinising my photographs I believe that *acalā* is unlikely. There is no discernible *ā mātrā* attached to the *l*; however, there may be an *e mātrā* either at the left of the body (as in *kāle* in 122) or inside the curl of the stem (as in *kāle* in 118). The next character is probably not *ta* but *ca* or possibly *va*. Thus, the first three *aḥśaras* give *acale ca*, or perhaps *acaleva* or *acalaiva*. The following *ta* and the *s* in the upper part of the ligature which follows that are quite clear. The subscript component of this ligature is wholly illegible, but there seems to be an *i mātrā* over it. At the end of the stanza, a *halanta* consonant (with a line above it) is much more likely than a *visarga* (as read by Bh) or nothing (as read by F). Combining these, I tentatively read *tasmīn* at the end of the verse, though *tasmāt* may also be possible. Semantically, *acale* is better than *acalā* (including *acaleva* and *acalaiva*), because the sentiment is that the guildsmen bent their minds to something stable in contrast to the ephemeral things of the world, not that their intentions were firm. The connective *tatas* read by previous editors would point forward to v29, the link being even stronger with Bhandarkar's reading *taiḥ*, which must be construed as the agent of *kāritaṃ* in v29. The intervening stanzas are undeniably a detour and the narrative dropped here is picked up in v29, but this feels less jarring with my reading, where both v22 and v29 are complete sentences in their own right.

[13] *samudrāmbu*] F, Bū, SI read *samudrānta*. Bh avers that *samudrāmbu* is more likely. The problematic character does not seem to be a conjunct, but it may well be *b* (compare *bṛhat* a little later on), possibly with *u* below it and an *anusvāra* before it. I thus opt to tentatively read *samudrāmbu*, which may actually be what Bhandarkar intended (see lines 14 and 15 for two other instances where he prints *m* instead of *anusvāra*). See also note 162 to the translation.

162 Instead of "water," the verse may have referred to the shores of the oceans (see note to line 13 of the text). I disagree with Bühler (1890, 22) who feels that *anta* in his reading *samudrānta* is redundant or even nonsensical. If the original text were *samudrānta*, the meaning would be the littoral zone with its breakers, not, as Bühler assumes, the actual shore which is indeed part of the land itself and does not resemble a swaying girdle. Bühler (ibid.) also thinks that *anta* in *vanānta* is redundant and the compound simply means a wooded region. I differ again: bright flowers at the edge of a dark forest (rather than inside a forest) are an apt metaphor for gleaming teeth partially obscured by dark lips.

163 Bṛhaspati is the planet Jupiter and the guru of the gods; Śukra is the planet Venus and the guru of the Asuras. They, or people bearing their names, are widely credited with the authorship of ancient and lost treatises on polity (*nīti*) and/or law. According to the *Sāntiparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (*MBh* 12.59.28–29 and 90–91), the god Brahmā had written a massive treatise on polity, which was abridged several times, resulting ultimately in two epitomes by Bṛhaspati and Uśanas, the latter being often identified with Śukra. The *Buddhacarita* of Aśvaghōṣa (1.41) also mentions Śukra and Bṛhaspati as authors of treatises on statecraft (*rājasāstra*). The *Arthasāstra* of Kauṭilya as we know it begins with an invocation to Śukra and Bṛhaspati, and the body of the treatise repeatedly quotes the opinions of the schools of both Uśanas and Bṛhaspati.

⟨Verse 25. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

dīn-ānukampana-parah kṛpaṅ-ārtta-vargga-
sāntva-prado (')dhika-dayālor anātha-nāthaḥ(?)
kalpa-drumaḥ praṇayinām abhayaṃ-pradaś ca
bhītasya yo janapadasya ca bandhur āsī(t||)

⟨Verse 26. Metre: indravajrā⟩

tasyātmajaḥ sthairyya-nayopapanno
bandhu-priyo ^[15]bandhur iva prajānām(l)
baṃdhv-artti-harttā nṛpa-bandhuvarmmā
dvi(ḍ-dṛ)pta-pa(kṣa-kṣa)paṇaika-dakṣaḥ|

⟨Verse 27. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

kānt(o y)u(vā) raṇa-paṭur vvinayānviśā ca
rājāpi sann upasṛto na madaiḥ smayādyai(h)
śṅgāra-mūrttir abhibhāty analaṃkṛto (')pi
rūpeṇa yax kusumacāpa iva dvitīyaḥ||

⟨Verse 28. Metre: upajāti⟩

vaidhavya-tivra-vyasana-kṣatānām
^[16]smṛi!tvā yam adyāpy ari-sundarīnām(l)
bhayād bhavaty āyata-locanānām
ghana-stanāyāsa-karaḥ prakampaḥ||

⟨Verse 29. Metre: mandākrāntā⟩

tasminn eva kṣitipati-vṛi!ṣe baṃdhuvarmmany (u)dāre
samyā(k-s)phītaṃ daśapuram idaṃ
pālayaty unnatāṃse|
śilpāvāpt(ai)r ddhana-samudayaḥ
paṭṭa-vā(yair u)dāram
(ś)re(ṇ)ībhūtair bbhavanam atulaṃ
kāritaṃ ^[17]dīpta-raśmeḥ||

⟨25⟩

Extremely charitable, he was the patron of those without a protector: full of compassion for the afflicted, giving comfort to legions of the miserable and the distressed, a wish-fulfilling tree to supplicants and a grantor of security to the frightened – a [veritable] kinsman (*bandhu*) to the populace.

⟨26⟩

His son was King Bandhuvarman, gifted with steadfastness and political sense, beloved of his kinsmen (*bandhu*), like a kinsman to his subjects, the dispeller of the woes of kinsmen, and exclusively dextrous in extirpating ostentatious antagonistic factions.¹⁶⁴

⟨27⟩

Handsome, young, crafty in battle and imbued with discipline, he was never assailed by depravities such as arrogance even though he was a king. He was sensuality made flesh, whose beauty was such that even without ornaments he looked like a second wielder of the flower bow [Kāma].

⟨28⟩

Struck down by the vicious calamity of widowhood, even today the long-eyed, beautiful women of his enemies recall him with a fear that makes them tremble, their firm breasts heaving.

⟨29⟩

While this same bull among kings, the magnificent Bandhuvarman of prominent shoulders was protecting this absolutely thriving [city of] Daśapura, the silk weavers who had formed into guild used the accumulated funds obtained from their craftsmanship to construct a unique and magnificent home for the blazing-rayed [Sun God].

[14] **kampana*] Bh prints **kampana*, typo.

[14] *sāntva*] F, SI read *sandhā*; the correct reading was first proposed by RGB and adopted by Bū and Bh.

[15] *kṣatānām*] Bh prints *kṣatānām*, typo.

[16] *sundarīnām*] SI believes a *halanta m* was inscribed and then deleted after *sundarīnām*. I believe a punctuation dash and some damage below it are more likely, but if Sircar is correct then the *anusvāra* over *ṇā* may be just damage.

164 Note the repetition of *bandhu*, “kinsman,” playing on the king’s name, and the abundance of harsh consonant clusters in the last quarter of the verse, to which my far more laboured English rendering does not really do justice.

⟨Verse 30. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

vistīrṇa-tuṅga-śikharaṃ śikhari-prakāśam
 abhyudgatendv-amala-raśmi-kalāpa-gauram(?)
 yad bhāti paścima-purasya niviṣṭa-kānta-
 cūḍāmaṇi-pratisamaṇ! nayanābhirāmaṃ||

⟨Verse 31. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

rāmā-sanātha-(bha)van(o)dara-bhāskarāṃśu-
 vahni-pratāpa-subhage jala-līna-mīne|
 candrāṃśu-harmya-tala-^[18]candana-tālavṛnta-
 hāropabho(g)a-rahite hima-dagdha-padme||

⟨Verse 32. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

roddhra-priyaṃgu-taru-kunda-latā-vikośa-
 puṣpā(sa)va-pra(m)u(di)tāli-k(u)l(ā)bhirāme|
 kāle tuṣāra-kaṇa-karkkaśa-śīta-vāta-
 vega-pranṛtta-lavalī-naga-naika-śākhe||

[17] *bhavanodara*] F reads *racane dara*, accepted by SI. RGB corrects to *bhavane dara*, which Bū adopts. Kielhorn (1890a, 252) suggests *bhavanodara* instead, which JA and Bh endorse. Bh notes that *gamanādara* is also permitted by the vestiges, but this is not intelligible in the context. On the basis of my photos of the stone, I deem *racane* impossible, while *bhavane* and *bhavano* seem equally feasible. However, the parallel *Ṛtusamhāra* passage cited by Kielhorn (see note 120 on page 91) speaks of *mandirodara* and, separately, of *bhānumato gabhastayaḥ*, which correspond exactly to *bhavanodara* and *bhāskarāṃśu*. Moreover, the phrase *pramadā-sanātha-dhārā-gṛhodara* is featured in line 17 of the Risthal inscription (A9). These textual parallels confirm that the correct reading is indeed *bhavanodara*.

[18] *°bhoga*] F, SI read *°bhodha*, Bh reads *°bhoba*. Both, of course, emend to *°bhoga*, which was clearly intended and which Bū prints as an original reading. In the rubbing, the character appears to be a neat rectangle, resembling *dh* much more than it resembles *b*. But in my photos of the stone the connecting stroke at the bottom does not seem to be an engraved line but rather a spot of damage between the feet of *g*, so I give the engraver the benefit of doubt.

[18] *kulā*°] F, SI read *kalā*°. PD conjecturally corrects to *kulā*°, which Bū feels is confirmed by the facsimile. Bh, however, rejects the correction believing it is based on a fault in Fleet's plate (however, he retains Fleet's translation "swarms of bees"). Indeed, while *ku* appears quite clear in the rubbing, the possible vowel mark is indistinct in my photos. The readings are both permitted by the evidence and both make sense in the context. I prefer to read *kulā*° on the one hand because joyous swarms of bees have been mentioned once before in the inscription (*mada-pragalbhāli-kula*, 16–7), and on the other hand because *kala* is primarily an adjective meaning "soft" applicable to sound, and only uncommonly a substantive meaning "soft sound."

[18] *naga-naika*] F, SI, Bū read *nagaṇaika*. Bh notes that the correct reading is *naganaika* but emends to *nagaṇaika*. All previous editors construe *nagaṇa+eka*, interpreting *nagaṇa* as either the name of a plant or a term meaning a very high number, while in fact the inscribed spelling *naganaika* needs no emendation and resolves to *naga+naika*. See also page VII of the preface.

⟨30⟩

Resembling a mountain (*śikharin*) with its broad and lofty spires (*śikhara*) and bright like an immaculate spray of beams from the [newly] risen moon, it shines just like a lovely turban jewel set in the Western City, delighting the eye.¹⁶⁵

⟨31⟩

[At the time] which is enjoyable because the interiors of houses are cosy with the women at home, and because of sunbeams and the heat of fires,
 when the fish lie low in the water,
 when moonbeams, rooftop terraces, sandalwood,
 palm leaf fans and garlands are no longer pleasing,
 when frost nips the lotuses,

⟨32⟩

at the time which is delightful thanks to the swarms of bees overjoyed by the nectar of the blooming flowers of *rodhra* and beautyberry trees and jasmine vines,
 when the force of the wind, cold and sharp with flakes of frost, makes the many branches of the gooseberry trees dance,¹⁶⁶

165 The syntax is awkward as the participle *niviṣṭa*, "set down," makes one expect a locative somewhere, but we only have the genitive *paścima-purasya*. The intent was probably along the lines of "a lovely turban jewel set [on the crest] of the Western City." See the Commentary for other issues raised by this stanza.

166 *Rodhra*, more commonly spelt *lodhra* is a small tree bearing clusters of white flowers (*Symplocos racemosa* Roxb.). "Beautyberry" translates *priyaṅgu*, a large shrub bearing clusters of scented, bright purple berries that remain on the branch well into the winter (*Calli-carpa macrophylla* Vahl). If this identification is correct, then these conspicuous berries, rather than flowers, may be what the poet had in mind, and their juice (rather than nectar) may be what attracts bees. "Jasmine" translates *kunda*, in all probability meaning the star jasmine (*Jasminum multiflorum* (Burm.f.) Andrews). "Gooseberry tree" translates *lavalī*, which is probably the tree called Malay gooseberry (and many other variations on gooseberry) in English (*Phyllanthus acidus* (L.) Skeels; shown in dictionaries as *Averrhoa acida*). The hard yellow berries of the tree apparently ripen in January in north India, and are strung densely along the branches on short stems. When the wind shakes the branch, the berries may be reminiscent of the bells tied to a dancer's ankle, though perhaps simply the swaying of the branches is meant by dancing. See also page VII of the Preface about the persistent misunderstanding of the words *naga-naika*.

⟨Verse 33. Metre: āryā⟩

smara-vaśaga-taruṇa-jana-vallabhāṅganā-vipula-
kānta-pīnoru-|
[19]stana-jaghana-ghanāliṅgana-nirbhartsita-tuhina-
hima-pāte||

⟨Verse 34. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

mālavānām gaṇa-sthityā
yāt(e) śata-catuṣṭaye|
tri-navaty-adhike (‘)bdānām
;ri!tau sevya-ghana-stane||

⟨Verse 35. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

sahasya-māsa-śuklasya
praśaste (‘)hni trayodaśe
maṅgalācāra-vidhinā
prāsādo yaṃ niveśitaḥ||

⟨Verse 36. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

bahunā samatītena
[20]kālenānyaiś ca pārtthivaiḥ|
vyaśīryataika-deśo (‘)sya
bhavanasya tato (‘)dhunā||

⟨Verse 37. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

sva-yaśo-(v);(r)!ddhaye sa(?rvva-)
(?dikṣ)(ūd)āram udārayā|
saṃskāritam idaṃ bhūyaḥ
(śre)ṇyā bhānumato gṛhaṃ||

⟨Verse 38. Metre: āryā⟩

atyunnatam avadātaṃ nabha(ḥ) ;sprśann! iva
manoharaiś śikharaiḥ(!)
śāśi-bhānvor abhyudayeṣv amala-mayūkh-āyatana-^[21]
(bhū)taṃ||

⟨Verse 39. Metre: āryā⟩

vatsara-śateṣu paṃcasu viṃśaty-adhikeṣu navasu
cābdeṣu|
yāteṣv abhīramya-tapasya-māsa-śukla-dvītīyāyāṃ||

⟨33⟩

when young men in the clutches of love flout the fall of
frost and snow by closely embracing the ample, lovely
and plump thighs, bosom and hips of their beloved
mistresses,

⟨34⟩

in the season when firm breasts are to be enjoyed,
when by the convention of the community of the Mālavas
four hundred and ninety-three more years had passed,¹⁶⁷

⟨35⟩

on the celebrated thirteenth day of the bright [fortnight]
of the month Sahasya¹⁶⁸ this temple was established
according to the prescribed rites of inauguration.

⟨36⟩

With the passing of a long time and other kings, one
section of this edifice tumbled down, and now,

⟨37⟩

to heighten their own prestige, the magnificent guild has
refurbished this magnificent house of the Sun [God] (all
around)—

⟨38⟩

[this] very tall and bright [temple] which all but touches
the sky with its alluring spires and has become a resting
place for the immaculate rays of the moon and sun when
they rise—

⟨39⟩

when five hundred years plus twenty, and nine years
more had passed, on the bright second of the pleasant
month of Tapasya,¹⁶⁹

[19] *stane*] F reads *svane*. PD suggested *stane*, which Bühler saw confirmed in the rubbing. SI and Bh accept *stane*. While Fleet’s rubbing is ambiguous, *sta* is indeed clear in the stone.

[20] *sarvva-dikṣūdāram*] all previous editors read *sarvvam atyudāram*. But from the stone, *ma* is unlikely and the subscript component of the next character is not a subscript *y* with *u*, but almost definitely *ū*.

[20] *sprśann*] the word ought to be *sprśad* to agree with *gṛhaṃ*, but that in turn would be unmetrical. Fleet proposes emending to *sprśatīva*, while Sircar offers *sprśat tv iva*. Both are metrically and grammatically correct, but Fleet’s is awkward (a finite verb is not expected in the context), while Sircar’s added *tu* is inelegant. I prefer to accept the solecism as the original intent of the poet.

167 See page 7 about the phrase *mālavānām gaṇa-sthityā*.

168 The month Sahasya essentially corresponds to the lunisolar month Pauṣa, falling early in the winter.

169 The month Tapasya corresponds to Phālguna, at the end of the winter.

⟨Verse 40. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

spaṣṭair aśoka-taru-ketaka-siṃduvāra-
lolātimuktaka-latā-madayamṭikānām|
puṣpodgamair abhinavair adhigamya nūnam
aikyaṃ vijṃbhita-śare hara-pūta-dehe||

⟨Verse 41. Metre: āryā⟩

^[22]madhu-pāna-mudita-madhukara-kulopagīta-naga-
naika-pṛthu-śākhe(|)
kāle nava-kusumodgama-daṃtura-kāṃta-pracura-
roddhre||

⟨Verse 42. Metre: āryā⟩

śāśineva nabho vimalaṃ kaus(tu)bha-maṇineva
śārṅgiṇo vakṣaḥ|
bhavana-vareṇa tathedaṃ puram akhilam alaṃkṛtam
udāraṃ||

⟨Verse 43. Metre: mālīnī⟩

amalina-śāśi-^[23]le(khā)-da(m)turaṃ piṅgalānām
parivahati samūhaṃ yāvad īso jaṭānām|
vikaṭa-kamala-mālām aṃsa-saktām ca śārṅgī
bhavanam idam udāraṃ śāśvataḥ! tāvad astu||

⟨Verse 44. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

sreṇy-ādeśena bhaktyā ca
kāritaṃ bhavanam raveḥ|
pūrvvā ceyaṃ prayatnena
racitā vatsabhaṭṭinā||

^[24]svasti karṭṛ-lekhaka-vācaka-śrotṛbhyaḥ|| siddhir astu||

[21] *pūta*] Fleet emends to *dhūta*, which PD accepts but Bü dismisses. Bühler remarks (1890, 25 n. 1) that Śiva being the holy of holies, he would have hallowed Kāma by killing him, and that *pūta* may also allude to the fire (*pāvaka*) by which Śiva destroyed Kāma's body. SI mentions F's emendation but does not endorse it, and Bh also rejects it as unnecessary. I agree with Bühler and Bhandarkar.

[22] *naga-naika*] All previous editors read or emend to *nagaṇaika* as in line 18, see note there.

⟨40⟩

when the arrows of [Kāma the god of love] whose body was purged by Hara [Śiva] unfurl,¹⁷⁰ having obviously become one with the newly conspicuous blooming of the *aśoka* tree, the kewra, the chaste tree, the waving honeysuckle and the wild jasmine;¹⁷¹

⟨41⟩

in the season full of lovely *rodhra* trees spiked with the growth of new flowers, when the many expansive branches of trees hum with swarms of bees gladdened by the honey they have drunk.

⟨42⟩

As the clear sky by the moon, as the chest of [Viṣṇu] the wielder of the Śārṅga bow by the Kaustubha jewel – so is this entire magnificent city decorated by [this] superb edifice.

⟨43⟩

May this magnificent edifice be perpetual, [remaining] as long as Īśa [Śiva] bears a mass of tawny dreadlocks spiked with the spotless crescent moon, and as [Viṣṇu] the wielder of the Śārṅga bow [bears] a bulky lotus garland hung on his shoulders.

⟨44⟩

At the order of the guild as well as out of [his own] devotion, Vatsabhaṭṭi has had [this] mansion of the Sun constructed, and painstakingly composed this preamble.¹⁷²

Salutation to those who composed and who engraved it, to those who read it out and who listen to it.

May there be perfection.

170 Śiva purged Kāma's body by burning it to cinders with the fire of his third eye (see also note to line 21 of the text). Kāma, like Cupid, carries a bow and arrows, which in this verse manifest as flowers (see also the Commentary).

171 The *aśoka* (*Saraca asoca* (Roxb.) Willd.) is a small tree bearing clusters of intensely red, fragrant flowers. Kewra translates *ketaka* (*Pandanus odorifer* (Forssk.) Kuntze), a large shrub also known in English as screw pine. Its efflorescence, resembling a spiny corncob, has an extremely powerful, sweet smell. Chaste tree translates *siṃduvāra* (*Vitex negundo* L., or another species of *Vitex*), an aromatic shrub with sprays of pale lavender flowers. Honeysuckle is a botanically very inaccurate rendition of *atimukta* (*Hiptage benghalensis* (L.) Kurz or a related species), a woody creeper producing clusters of scented, pinkish white flowers with yellow spots. Wild jasmine here translates *madayantikā*, which may be a variety of jasmine (Fleet translates “wild jasmine” and MW gives “Arabian or wild jasmine”) or (according to the Pandanus database) the henna plant (*Lawsonia inermis* L.).

172 The interpretation of the word *pūrvvā* is discussed separately on page 7 above.

A7 Chhoti Sadri Inscription of Gauri

Substrate				Siddham ID:		OB00189		
Material	stone		Object type	slab				
Dimensions	width	45 cm	height	35 cm	depth	10 cm		
Discovery	around 1930, Bhamwar Mata Temple, Chhoti Sadri (24°21'02"N 74°41'35"E)							
Current location	Government Museum, Udaipur (in storage)							
Inscription				Siddham ID:		IN00203		
Dimensions	width	43 cm	height	29 cm	Char size	8 mm	Line height	18 mm
Date CE	490–491	Basis of dating		dated (Mālava) 547 expired, Māgha śukla 10 (115–16)				
Topic	construction of a temple to the Goddess							
Persons mentioned	Puṅyasoma, Rājyavardhana, Rāṣṭra(vardhana?), Yaśagupta, Gauri, Bhramarasoma, Mitrasoma, Jīvadharāṇa, Aparājita, Gobhaṭa							
Places mentioned	—							
Compendia	—							
Other editions	Sircar 1954b, 120–27							

Description

This inscription is engraved on a slab of yellowish-brown stone (probably a dense sandstone or quartzite), approximately 45 centimetres wide by 35 centimetres tall and about 10 centimetres in thickness. The surface is smooth, but the edges and the back are roughly cut and the corners are broken off unevenly. It was first discovered by G. H. Ojha around 1930, who made a rubbing for the Rajputana Museum of Ajmer. The discovery was reported by Hirananda Sastri (ARASI 1929–30, 187) and by Ojha himself (1930, 2).¹⁷³ His partial decipherment of the inscription produced a ruler named Yaśagupta and an elaborate theory about the “early kshatriya family known as Gaura,” to which other scholars apparently paid scant attention. Pandit A. K. Vyas subsequently rediscovered the epigraph in 1952, and another “first” report appeared in IAR 1953–54, 13. Vyas had the stone moved for safekeeping to the Victoria Hall Museum of Udaipur on 3 January 1953, where it was cleaned of oil residue and a clear estampage was made. This served as the basis for the epigraph’s first edition by D. C. Sircar (1954b, 120–27). The tablet remains in storage (acquisition number 116/1065) at the same museum, now called Government Museum and housed in the Lake Palace of Udaipur. This is where I was permitted in February 2018 to study the original and to take the photographs on the basis of which I re-edit the text here.

¹⁷³ Reports also appeared in the *Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Patrikā* and in the Bengali journal *Pravāsī* (see Sircar 1954b, 121 for accurate references).

At the time of its discovery the slab was built into a niche above a ventilator (see Figure 22) in the left wall outside the sanctum of the Bhamwar Mata (भँवर माता) temple, 3.5 km south of the village of Chhoti Sadri (छोटी साद्री) near Neemuch in the Pratapgarh district of present-day Rajasthan. The temple (located at 24°21'02"N 74°41'35"E) is a modern structure believed to be built on the ruins of an old shrine. Nothing on the exterior bespeaks an ancient monument, but the threshold of the sanctum is definitely much older than the other visible elements of the construction. Since the topic of the inscription is the inauguration of a temple dedicated to the Goddess, it stands to reason that the present temple is the successor of that earlier temple, standing on the same site and incorporating some of its construction materials including the inscribed slab and probably the threshold.

The inscribed area covers about 43 by 29 centimetres, occupying most of the face of the slab. It consists of 17 lines of text engraved in fairly even lines and with largely straight margins. There are a number of small pits gouged in the stone scattered over the central region, but otherwise the inscription is in an excellent condition.

Script and Language

The script is essentially of the rounded variety of Mālavān late Brāhmī, but influences of the angular variety can be perceived in its ductus and in some character forms. On the whole, it greatly resembles the script used in the Mandsaur inscription of the silk weavers (A6), but the

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Figure 20: Chhoti Sadri inscription of Gauri. Inked rubbing from Sircar (1954b).

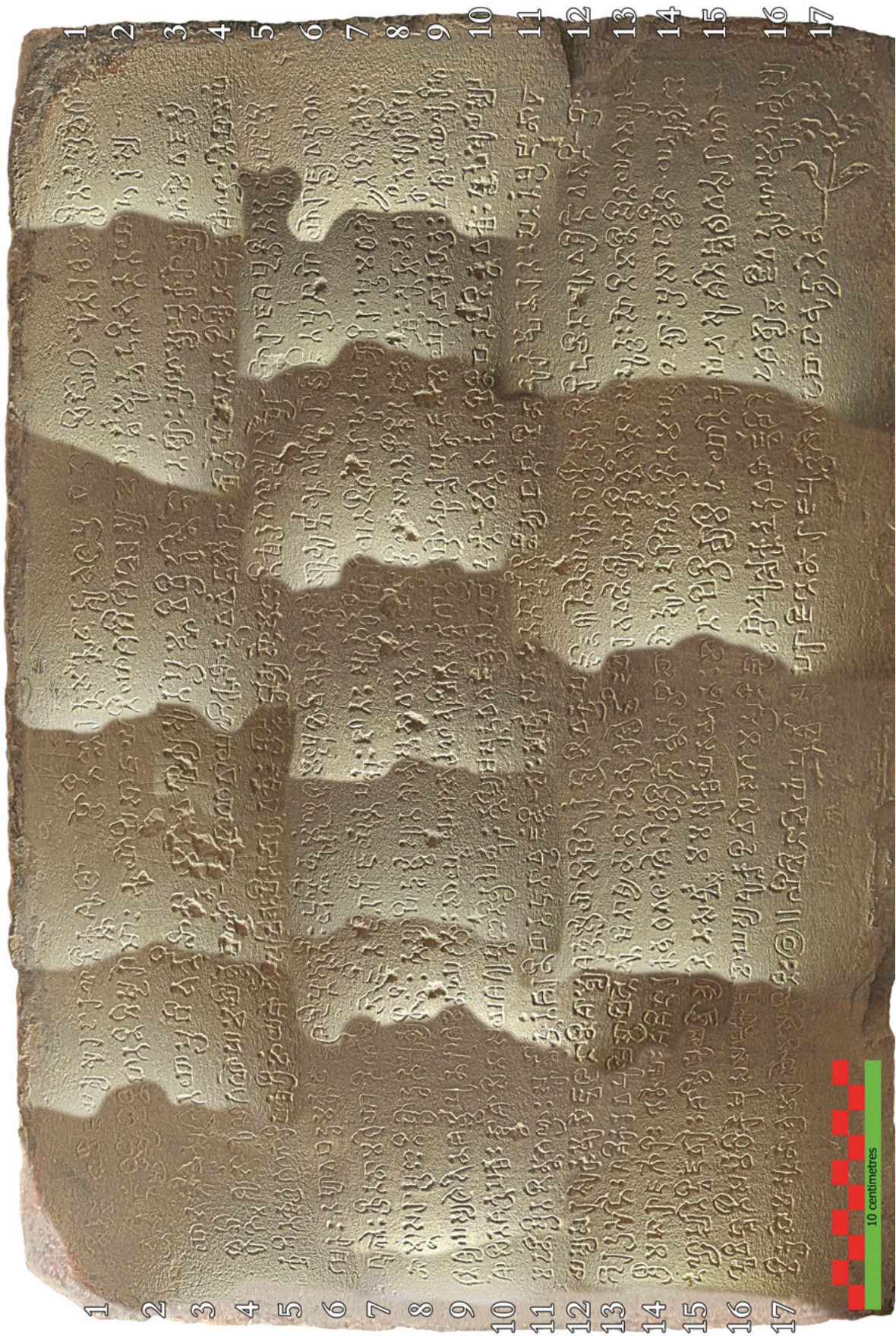


Figure 21: Chhoti Sadri inscription of Gauri. Composite digital photo by the author, 2018. Courtesy of Government Museum, Udaipur.

angular/northern influence is even more prominent in this case.

Ka and *ra* have long stems ending in a hook; the hook of *ka* may come up almost to the left arm (as in *kīrtim*, 14), but a short and hooked form of *ra* also occurs (*śekharaśya*, 12). Initial *a* also has a hooked stem and its lower left limb turns inward. *Ma* consistently has the looped southern form. *La* typically also takes the southern or rounded form, with the elongated stem curling back and even under the character, sometimes wholly encircling it. However, a short-stemmed variety also occurs, especially in combination with a subscript consonant or vowel mark, but also on its own (*protphulla*, 19; *dayālor*, 19; but also *lakṣmīr*, 113).

Other features characteristic of the rounded style include the form of initial *i*, which is a double curve with two dots below; the shapes of *ca*, *bha* and *śa* are also generally of the rounded type, but often executed with a more angular ductus.

A few characters are definitely borrowed from the angular script. These include, most prominently, *ṇa*, which is always of the tripartite “northern” type. The form of *da*, with one acute angle rather than two rounded right angles, is also closer to the angular type, and *ṣa* is drawn with an angular outline and without the bulge on the left-hand side that usually occurs in the rounded script. Unusually for an inscription of Malwa, the horizontally-oriented



Figure 22: The Bhamwar Mata temple at Chhoti Sadri. Below left: the threshold of the sanctum. Below right: tablet in the niche installed in place of the inscription. Photos by the author, 2018.

form of *ha* alternates with the narrow, vertically-oriented form that Dani terms the hooked variety. This form may be the default in the present inscription (e.g. *pravāhā*, 11), and the expected horizontal form is chiefly (though not exclusively) used where the character includes a subscript vowel or consonant (e.g. *bāhuḥ*, 17; *āhvāna*, 18; though also *aham*, 13 and *iha*, 19).

Medial *i* is a closed circle which may be open on the left; *ī* is likewise a closed circle with a smaller closed circle inside the bottom, which may be simplified into a slanting stroke that splits off a rough oval inside the right-hand side of the circle. Some consonants attach their vowels in unique ways. Notably, *lo* is drawn cursively, while *le* (e.g. *śailendra*, 114) has its stem cut off slightly above headline height, ending in a serif to which the *e mātrā* is attached, so the overall effect is that of *la* with a curling tail and a short cross-stroke. *J* attaches *ā* to the middle prong, and the vowel mark is extended into an inverted U-shape. However, unlike the general practice of rounded-script inscriptions, *m* attaches *ā* and *e* simply to the top of the right limb rather than to the body.

Subscript *r* is always a curve (often with an extra bend in the vertical stroke that attaches it to a consonant), and never a slanting line joined at an angle as in the angular script. The ligature *śca* has a large, cursively smoothed subscript component resembling the form typically found in Vākāṭaka (but also in Maitraka) copper plates, sometimes (e.g. in 113) actually appearing like *śya*. The conjunct *rggha* (17) has some damage, but it is clearly a horizontally composed character, with the right leg of *g* coinciding with the left arm of *gh*. This form has a parallel in line 18 of the Risthal inscription (A9).

Halanta forms of consonants are always small and lowered, with a horizontal line above them. Their shapes are not as a rule simplified, thus *halanta m* clearly has serifs on both arms, and the rare *halanta k* is likewise fully formed with a headmark, though without a hook on its leg.

Punctuation marks are occasionally used to demarcate verse quarters, without any evident regularity. The most common symbol is a horizontal dash at a varying height between headline and baseline. The elevation of the stroke does not conform to any pattern I can discern, so I assume it to be irrelevant and transcribe all forms of this sign in the edition below as a single *daṇḍa*. The punctuation dash may appear at the end of any *pāda* including even ones, yet it is usually used only once, and never more than twice, per stanza. In a single instance (verse 10 in line 12), a double vertical mark with a hook atop the left-hand stroke is used at the end of a stanza (transcribed as a double *daṇḍa*). Occasionally *saṃdhi* is not applied between *pādas* even in the absence of a punctuation mark

and even at the juncture of quarters *ab* or *cd* (e.g. v6a and c, v7a, v9c). The end of the executive part of the inscription is marked by a double concentric circle, vertically centred and slightly larger than the average character body, followed by a double vertical without a hook. At the very end of the epigraph (after the name of the engraver) there is a large figural ornament depicting a branch with leaves and many round fruits or stylised flowers. It lies horizontally, extending for 6–7 character widths to the right margin with leaves and fruits branching off up and down. I believe the sketch may represent a *priyaṅgu* twig (see note 166 on page 107 about the *priyaṅgu* plant, and Figure 23 for an illustration), but I am not aware of any particular significance of this.

Consonants after *r* are generally doubled (though not in *sthāpitair bhūsitā*, 113), but consonants followed by *r* (including e.g. *kṣatra*, 15 and *putra*, 113) never are. Gemination before *y* occurs in *maddhye* (15), while a single instead of the standard double consonant is used before *v* in *°ojvala* (16, 112). Initial consonants are sometimes doubled for no apparent reason (*ttasyāpi ddharmma*, 18, where *ddha* makes the preceding syllable unmetrical; *kunda-ddhavalō*, 116, again unmetrical; *saḥ ssarvva*, 111; the spelling *jivaddharaṇa* in 117 may also be an example of this phenomenon). Medial *r* interchanges freely with *ri*; the latter seems to be generally preferred even where it would be, strictly speaking, unmetrical; conversely, once *r* is inscribed instead of an expected *ri* (*adr* for *adri*, 113), which is also unmetrical by the regular rules of scansion. Dental *n* and retroflex *ṇ* also replace one another in some words (e.g. *māṇavāyaṇi*, 14; *varddhaṇa*, 16; *teṇāpi*, 17; but *punya*, 15, 18, 114).

The use of *anusvāra* is inconsistent. In addition to standard usage, there are instances of *anusvāra* replacing an expected nasal conjunct or *halanta* form (e.g. *śrīmāṇ yaśaugha*, 15; *idaṃ*, 115; *punyaṇ iha* in 114 may have been used for the sake of the metre, with *yaṇ* scanned as a long syllable) and vice versa (*makuṭāṅśu*, 11; *siṅghogra*, 11; *kirttim śubhāṃ*, 14 *mayin nṛpāṅāṃ*, 14; *ayam devyāḥ* in 114 is across a caesura, so the resolution of *saṃdhi* may be deliberate here). *Anusvāra* is frequently used for pre-nasalisation (e.g. *bhaṃṅga*, 12; *vaṃṅśa*, 14; *jayaṃnta*, 17; *daṃnta*, 110 etc.) and once superfluously before a *visarga* (*tasyāṃḥ*, 13). The spelling *aṃṅśru* (for *aśru*, 112) may reflect a nasalised vernacular pronunciation (compare Hindi अँच्). *Visarga* is sometimes omitted, but may appear superfluously (perhaps for the sake of metre in *eṣaḥ śaśi*, 114). *Visarga* before *s* may assimilate to *s* (*sarassu*, 112; both appear in *saḥ ssarvva*, 111, perhaps to hyper-emphasise that the syllable *sa* is meant to be prosodically long). Final *o* is occasionally used instead of *aḥ* (*suto kari*, 17; *striyo*

siṣicur, 112) but conversely, *visarga saṁdhi* is repeatedly resolved at the end of odd *pādas* (*pakṣaḥ jātaḥ*, 17; *cakraḥ nāmnā*, 17–8; *mūrttiḥ yajña*, 18; *gaṇḍāḥ ārttā*, 111) and once even at an inline caesura (*naḥ mātā*, 116). *Upadhmaniya* and *jihvāmūliya* do not occur.

In addition to the oddities of orthography, there are a large number of mistakes attributable to the scribe or the stonecutter (e.g. *ā* instead of *a* or the other way round, *e* and *o* instead of *ai* and *au*, *v* instead of *p*, *p* instead of *ph* and *ṭ* instead of *ṭh*; occasionally *i* replaces another vowel: *ghaṭibhiṣekaḥ*, 15 and *śriṅgiva* for *śriṅgeva*, 112).

As implied by the above, language use is in general sub-standard. In Sircar’s (1954b, 122) words, “the author’s style is weak ... his knowledge of the Sanskrit language and skill in handling the metres were both very poor. ... numerous ... attempts of a desperate and ludicrous nature to save the metre at the cost of grammar.” Syntax is imprecise with the result that the meaning is often vague. Compounds are also handled with a cavalier attitude, for instance the phrase *yo rāja-śabda-kṛita-mūrdhni-ghaṭibhiṣekaḥ* (v4; emend to *mūrdhna* [or was perhaps a non-standard *mūrdhna* intended?] and *ghaṭā-*) was apparently intended to mean something like *yasya mūrdhni rāja-śabdena ghaṭenevābhiṣekaḥ kṛtaḥ*, and *āhava-gajendra-sadarpa-harttā* (v9) probably resolves to *āhave śatror gajendrān tasyaiva darpeṇa saha harati yaḥ*. Nominal stems ending in a sibilant are turned into *-a* stems (*yaśa* instead of *yaśas*, 15, 19, 110, 113; *vakṣa* instead of *vakṣas*, 110; *vapuṣa* instead of *vapus*, 113). Grammatical gender is sometimes problematic, notably in *prāsādo ... kṛitam ayam* (114). Non-standard words include *svākya* (13) meaning *svaka* or *svakīya* and probably employed for the sake of the metre (though even this word requires a licence). *Dariśana* for *darśana* (114) is probably a product of dictation at some point in the process of transferring the text to the stone, since it is hypermetrical. For *ṇyapyate* (115), Sircar (1954b, 126 n. 1) suggests that “An expression like *khyāpyate* is apparently intended; but it does not suit the metre.” Rather than assuming such an utter blunder, I believe the poet’s intent may have been *jñāpyate*, and the odd spelling may again be a product of dictation.

Prosody is handled with a great amount of licence. Certain initial consonant combinations are freely treated as single consonants in that they, *muta cum liquida* style, do not produce a long syllable with the preceding short vowel (e.g. *sv* in 13 and 18, *pr* in 13 and 14, *sn* in 13, *kṣ* in 15). Both *ri* and *ṛ* (which, as noted above, interchange freely) may behave in scansion as a vowel or as a consonant followed by a vowel, thus *yūva-śriṅgiva* (for *yūpa-śriṅgeva*) in 112 scans as *---*; *adr* (for *adri*) in 113 scans as *--*; and *itriṇpenduḥ* in 110 scans as *---*. The instrumental ending



Figure 23: Above: detail of the Chhoti Sadri inscription of Gauri. Photo by the author, 2018 (courtesy of Government Museum, Udaipur). Below: a branch of *Callicarpa macrophylla*, possibly a close relative of the *priyaṅgu* plant (original photo by Wikimedia Commons user Laitche, licence CC-BY-SA 4.0).

-bhir is truncated to *-bhi* for the sake of prosody twice in verse 10, and in the first of these instances the dative would be expected. In spite of all such machinations, the metre remains lame in *yasya sarassu* (112), where the second syllable needs to be long.

Commentary

The inscription, after the word *siddham*, begins with a stanza invoking the Goddess who is simply referred to as *devī* without any particular name. She is described in a fierce aspect, frowning furiously and wielding a sharp spear (*śūla*) against demons. Interestingly, she rides a chariot drawn by lions. As Joshi (1983, 78) remarks, this is not a feature of known Devi iconography. However, Yokochi (2004, 117–21) draws attention to a description of the Śaiva goddess Vindhyavāsini in the early *Skandapurāṇa*, where her “superior vehicle is drawn by big lions,”¹⁷⁴ and theorises that the “kshatriyaisation” of the goddess witnessed by that text must have begun by the early fifth century when this inscription was created. Additionally, the lion-drawn

¹⁷⁴ Early *Skandapurāṇa* verse 116, *mahā-siṃha-yuktātivāhām*.

chariot may be an influence of the iconography of the goddess Cybele.¹⁷⁵

The second stanza is also in honour of the Goddess, who is here unambiguously identified as the one who shares half of Śiva's body, and in this aspect described as a tenderly loving mother of the world. It may not be irrelevant that the early *Skandapurāṇa* also mentions these characteristics in the immediate vicinity of the reference to the lion-drawn chariot.¹⁷⁶

In verse 3 the poet turns to the dynasty of his patron king, identified as the Mānavāyani clan (*kula*).¹⁷⁷ They are also said to have been eternally consecrated (*dīkṣita*) to the status of warriorhood (*kṣātre pade*), which, in conjunction with the next stanza, probably indicates that they originated as oligarchic leaders in a warrior community (*kṣātra-gaṇa*).

Verse 4 introduces the glorious progenitor Puṇyasoma (the spelling is *puṇyasoma*, but I standardise the name without qualms since *puṇya* is used instead of *puṇya* throughout the inscription). Although the syntax of the latter part of the stanza is vague, it is certain that this man was consecrated to kingship amidst a community of warriors (*kṣātra-gaṇasya maddhye*), and the apparent claim that his anointment (*abhiṣeka*) took place through the word “king” (*rāja-śabda*) may imply that he was elected for his post in a sort of public vote. He is credited with destroying the enemies of this warrior community.¹⁷⁸

In verse 5 we meet Puṇyasoma's successor, a conqueror who was named for his competence in increasing the kingdom: to wit, his name was in all probability Rājyavardhana, though the inscription does not say so outright.¹⁷⁹ Verse 6 introduces the next king, praised in even vaguer terms than his predecessors. He too is said to have defeated enemies, and his name is recorded as Rāṣṭra, which is in all likelihood shorthand for Rāṣṭravardhana (compare verse 3 of the Mandsaur fragmentary inscription of Gauri, A8).

175 See Yokochi (2004, 117 n. 98) for details and further references.

176 Early *Skandapurāṇa* verse 116, *bhavasvārdha-dehāśritā... sarva-lokasya cādyāraṇiṃ*.

177 The spelling is in fact Mānavāyaṇi. See also page 31.

178 Sircar says that he extirpated “the enemy's partisans among the” warrior community, but I find this too drastic. *Ari-pakṣa* here simply means inimical groups, who may have been outside powers or possibly supporters of rival claimants to leadership. Compare the use of *pakṣa* in verses 6 and 8 of this same inscription (in both of which cases Sircar translates “partisans”) as well as *dviḍ-ḍṛpta-pakṣa-kṣapaṇaika-dakṣaḥ* in verse 26 of the silk weaver inscription (A6).

179 Pace Sircar, who prints *rājyavardhana* in bold in his edition and even suggests emending to *varddhano* in spite of this being unmetrical (of which he is aware).

Verses 7 and 8 describe the next ruler in the sequence, Yaśogupta. The spelling of his name is Yaśagupta in this inscription, in accordance with the consistent use of the stem *yaśa* instead of *yaśas*, but the standard form Yaśogupta is confirmed by the Mandsaur fragmentary inscription (A8 v3). Though he too is glorified for his prowess in war like his forebears, unlike them, he is further described as a devout performer of sacrifices (*yajña*) and as a serene and compassionate ruler comparable to Yudhiṣṭhira. The term for the latter is *dharmma-suta*, which Sircar translates as “virtuous son.” This, however, would require a nominative ending, which in turn would be unmetrical. While the poet's meagre skill means that Sircar's interpretation cannot be wholly excluded on the basis of grammar, I find it much more likely (both semantically and syntactically) that Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of the god Dharma is meant here. Sircar rejects this possibility because it necessitates supplying “son” as the subject of the sentence. However, he has no objection to supplying “son” in verse 9 (from verse 11, which has no direct syntactical link to verse 9).

The next three stanzas are dedicated to the current ruler, Gauri. Verse 9, rather unintelligibly,¹⁸⁰ extols his wartime feats. The first half of verse 10 describes his generosity and compassion, while the second half, again in an opaque way,¹⁸¹ seems to hint again at his being a terror to his enemies. Verse 11, a *sragdharā*, breaks the hitherto continuous stream of *vasantatilakā* stanzas and, like a crescendo drumroll, indicates that we are approaching a crux in the text. The name of Gauri comes, like a clash of cymbals topping the drumroll, at the very end of this verse. He is said here to be a true son, presumably with a loose syntactical link to *tasya* in verse 9, meaning that he was Yaśogupta's son. The contents of the verse are commonplace: Gauri has performed innumerable sacrifices (*kratu*), handed out donations to Brahmins, and decorated the face of the earth with temples (*prāsāda*, possibly meaning palaces but given the similarity of the terminology to that applied to the temple in the next verse, temple is the more likely purport).

In verse 12 we learn that it was he, Gauri, who sought to obtain the favour of the goddess by building (i.e. commissioning) this temple, described as brilliant white and lofty as a mountain peak. The second half of the stanza expresses the wish that the merit arising from the construction should go to the patron's mother and father. I agree with Sircar that the words *mama* and *naḥ* must refer to the patron rather than to the poet here, but I disagree with

180 See note 191 on page 121 of the translation for a discussion of the details.

181 See note 192 on page 122 of the translation.

his opinion that the merit is to go to him *and* his parents. In spite of the location of *mama* in the sentence, in view of similar requests at the ends of many donative inscriptions I think *mama* must be understood to belong to the theme of the sentence (“my merit” i.e. the merit that is due to me as the constructor), and only *naḥ mātā-pitṛbhyām* is to be construed with *bhavatu* as the rheme (may that merit become my mother’s and father’s).

The thirteenth stanza records the date, which is the tenth day of the bright fortnight of Māgha in the (expired) year 477, evidently of the Mālava Era. The year is given as a rather complex calculation (five hundred increased by twice twenty and seven), yet the result is beyond doubt in spite of the awkward syntax where *dve viṃśatī* appear to be a dual nominative, yet the following *samadhikeṣu* must inevitably be understood as in compound to this phrase.

A brief prose passage commemorating the people involved in the process closes the epigraph. One of these people is Bhramarasoma, son of Mitrasoma and descendant of Jivadharāṇa;¹⁸² another is named Aparājita. Bhramarasoma is credited with “the work” (*ḥṛtiḥ*), while Aparājita

is the one who wrote (*likh-*) the text of the inscription (*pūrvā*¹⁸³). Sircar is probably right in assuming that Bhramarasoma was the poet who composed the text, while Aparājita was involved in transferring it to the stone.¹⁸⁴ We cannot, however, exclude the possibility that Bhramarasoma was a high-ranking official who may have composed the inscription but, more importantly, was the royal agent (*kārāpaka*) in charge of the entire construction process.¹⁸⁵ This may be indicated by *soma* in his and his father’s name (which may imply kinship with the royal family) and, more importantly, by the fact that the temple is to this day named Bhamwar Mata, corresponding to Sanskrit *bhramara-mātā*. Although K. C. Jain’s (1972a, 137) hypothesis that posterity mistook the name of the poet for the name of the temple is quite feasible,¹⁸⁶ it is also possible that the link between Bhramarasoma’s name and the temple is genuine and original. Finally, a certain prince (*rājaputra*) Gobhaṭa is mentioned as the person by whom Aparājita was deliberately selected (*anuddhyāta*) for his task. Since no further information is revealed about the prince, it can only be assumed that he was the son and, probably, heir of Gauri.

Diplomatic Text

- [1] siddhaM ⁽¹⁾devī jayaty asura-dāraṇa-tikṣṇa-śūlā| prodgīrṇṇa-ratna-makuṭāḥ!ṅ!śu-cala-pravāhā(!)
siṅgh!ogra-yukta-ratham āsthita-caṇḍa-vegāḥ!|
- [2] bhrū-bhaḥ!ṅga-dṛi!ṣṭi-vinipāta-niviṣṭa-roṣāḥ! ⁽²⁾bhūyo pi sā jayati yā śāsi-śekharaśya dehārdham
udvahati bhaktatayā harasya|
- [3] yā bhakta-vatsalatayā prabibhartti lokāN mā(te)va ḥsvākya!-suta-premṇa-vivṛi!ddha-snehā| ⁽³⁾tasyāḥ!ḥ
praṇamya prakaromy aham eva jasraḥ
- [4] kīrtti!M! śubhāḥ guṇa-gaṇo!gha-mayīḥ!ṅ!ṅpāṇāḥ! (ye) māṇavāyaṇi-kulodbhava-vaḥ!ṅ!śa-gaurāḥ kṣātre
pade satata-dikṣita-yuddha-śauṇḍāḥ ⁽⁴⁾teṣāḥ ayaḥ
- [5] kṣapita-kṣatra-gaṇāri-pakṣa śrīmāḥ!ṅ! yaśaughā-suvibhūṣita-cāru-vakṣ(ā)ḥ prāk (pu)ḥ!ṅ!yasoma Iti kṣatra-
gaṇasya maddhye yo rāja-śabda-kṛi!ta-ḥmūrdhni!-(gha)ḥ!ḥ!bhi

¹⁸² The spelling of the last name is Jivaddharāṇa. Given that *dh* is repeatedly doubled in the text (*ddhavalō* just above in 117, and *ddhamma* in 17), the standardisation is warranted. Sircar understands the text to mean that Jivadharāṇa was the father of Mitrasoma, which is quite possible despite the slight awkwardness of the genitive *samutpannasya* qualifying *mitrasoma* in compound. It is, however, also possible that Jivadharāṇa was a more remote ancestor, in which case *samutpannasya* qualifies *bhramarasomasya* in flawless syntax.

¹⁸³ See page 7 about this word.

¹⁸⁴ Sircar (1954b, 123, 127 n. 2) says that he drew the characters on the stone for the engraver. I prefer to think he was the stonemason himself, since the name of the engraving artisan is frequently recorded at the end of inscriptions, albeit the standard verb in that sense is *ut-kṛ* rather than *likh*.

¹⁸⁵ That is to say, his role would have been similar to that of Vatsabhaṭṭi vis-à-vis the silk weaver inscription; see page 95. There is also a slight possibility that Bhramarasoma was only the royal agent, and the text was composed by Aparājita, but *likh* in the sense of “compose” would be strange usage in fifth-century India.

¹⁸⁶ One may hypothesise that mediaeval temple priests could, laboriously, read *bhramarasomasya kṛitiḥ* near the end of the text but dismissed the complex preamble with the feeling we now summarise as TLDR. As a result, the temple would have become known as the Goddess temple of Bhramara.

- [6] ṣekaḥ ⁽⁵⁾tasyāvabaddha-makuṭojvala-dīpta-mūrttiḥ pūrṇṇendu-maṇḍala-mayūkha-vibhūti-vaktraḥ s(ū)
nur bbabhūva kila rājya-jita-pratāpo yo rājya-varddhaṅ!a-
- [7] guṇaiḥ kṛi!ta-nāma-dheyā! ⁽⁶⁾teṅ!āpi corjjita-jitāri-jayaṅ!nta-pakṣaḥ! jātaḥ sut;o! kari-karāyata-
dirggha-bāhuḥ yaś cāri-rāṣṭra-mathanodyata-dīpta-cakṛ!aḥ!
- [8] nāmnā sa rāṣṭra Iti proddhata-puṅ!ya-kīrt(i)ḥ ⁽⁷⁾t!t!asyāpi j!d!dharmma-suta-sānta-svabhāva-mū(r)tt(i)ḥ!
yajña-kri(yā)-satata-dikṣita-dāna-dakṣaḥ Āhvāna-śaṅkita-surādhipa
- [9] tiś ca yasya lebhe na śarmma punar-āgamanāya śa(kra)ḥ ⁽⁸⁾so yaṅ!M! yaśābharaṇa-bhūṣita-sarvva-gātraḥ
protphulla-paṅkaja-(sa)māyata-cāru-netraḥ dakṣo dayālur iha
- [10] śāsita-śatru-pakṣaḥ kṣmā-śāsītā sa yaśagupta Iti nṛpenduḥ ⁽⁹⁾t!t!asyaiśa Āhava-gajendra-sadar(p)pa-
harttā| mattebha-daṅ!nta-vinipāta-vibhinna-vakṣa!ḥ (?yūp)eṣu ya(sya) ṣ
- [11] mada-nisṛi!ta-bhinna-gaṇḍā;ḥ! Ārttā drutaṅ śara-nipāta-hatā vrajaṅ!nti| ⁽¹⁰⁾sa;ḥ ssa!rvva-sa(t)(va)-(?)sa
tatārtthi;ḥ! nitya-dātā dīnānuka;ṅ!mpana-rataḥ satataṅ prajānām
- [12] yasya sarassu kumudojvalatām niśāmya śatru-sriyo! siṣicur jaṅ!nśrubhi! vaktra-padmāN|| ⁽¹¹⁾teneyam
bhūta-dhātṛi kratubhir iha citā yū;v!a-ś;ri!ṅgi!va bhāti| prā[sā]
- [13] dair adṛ!-tuṅgaiḥ śaśi-kara-vapuṣai sthāpitair bhūṣitā;ś! ca nānā-dānen(d)u-śubhraiḥ dvija-vara-
bhavanair yyena lakṣmī(r) vvibhaktā| sa(t)-putraḥ so timānī sita-yaśa-vapuṣa
- [14] śrī-mahārāja-gauriḥ ⁽¹²⁾ten;e!ṣaḥ śaśi-hāra-kunda-dhavalah śailendra-ś;ri!ṅgonnata prāsādo dbhuta-
da;riśa!naḥ kṛi!ta;ṅ!m! aya;M! devyāḥ prasādārtthinā| yat p(u);n!ya;ṅ!m! I
- [15] ha ṅyapyate! dvija-varaiḥ śās(t)reṣu yac cocyate(?) tat sarvva;M! mama Akṣayam bhavatu n;ḥ! mātā-
pitṛi!bhyaṅ!m! idam| ⁽¹³⁾yāteṣu paṅcasu śateṣv atha vatsarāṅ!m!
- [16] dve vi;ṅ!śati-samadhikeṣu sa-saptakeṣu māghasya śukla-divase sa gamat pratiṣ;ṭ!ām prot;p!ulla-kunda-
j!d!dhavalajvalite daśamyām jīva;ddha!raṇa-samutpannasya
- [17] mitrasoma-sūno bhramarasomasya kṛi!tiḥ ṣ|| likhitā ceyam pūrvvā aparājītena| rājaputra-gobhaṭa-
pādānuddhyātena ṣ

Curated Text

[1]siddham{}

⟨Verse 1. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

devī jayaty asura-dāraṇa-tikṣṇa-śūlā|
prodgīrṇṇa-ratna-makuṭā;ṅ!śu-cala-pravāhā{!}
si;ṅgh!ogra-yukta-ratham āsthita-caṇḍa-vegā{ḥ}|
^[2]bhrū-bha{ṅ!m}ṅga-d{ri;ṛ}ṣṭi-vinipāta-
niviṣṭa-roṣā{ḥ}

Text Notes

Alternative opinions are cited from the edition of Sircar (SI¹⁸⁷).

[1] **śūlā**] SI reads a superfluous *visarga* between this word and the following punctuation mark. Though *pādas* c and d of the stanza end with superfluous *visargas*, that is not the case here; the two minuscule and shallow dots above and below the *ā mātrā* do not resemble a proper *visarga*, compare *roṣāḥ* in 12.

[1] **pravāhā**] SI prints no original punctuation here, but there is probably a high horizontal punctuation mark in the stone.

[1] **āsthita**] SI notes that there may be a superfluous *anusvāra* above *ta*, though it may also be just a flaw in the stone. The dot is clear and quite deep in the original, but it is high above the character so it is probably not part of the writing.

¹⁸⁷ In these notes SI denotes Sircar 1954b, not *Select Inscriptions*.

Translation

Accomplished.¹⁸⁸

⟨1⟩

Victorious is the Goddess (Devī) whose spear is sharp to rend demons (*asura*), who emits a rippling torrent of rays from her jewel crown, who rides at a vicious pace on a fearsome lion-drawn chariot, whose fury is manifest in the fall of her knit-browed glance.

Footnotes

¹⁸⁸ See page 6 about translating *siddham* as “accomplished.”

⟨Verse 2. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

bhūyo ⟨'⟩pi sâ jayati yâ śaśi-śekharaśya
dehârdham udvahati bhaktatayâ harasya|
^[3]yâ bhakta-vatsalatayâ prabibhartti lokân
mâ(te)va ;svākya!-suta-premṇa-
viv⟨ri:ṛ⟩ddha-snehâ|

⟨Verse 3. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

tasyâ{ṁ}ḥ praṇamya prakaromy aham eva jasraṁ
^[4]kīrtti;ṁ! śubhāṁ guṇa-gaṇ⟨o:au⟩gha-mayī;n|
nṛpāṇāṁ|
(ye) māṇavāyaṇi-kulodbhava-va{ṁ};ñ!śa-gaurāḥ
kṣātre pade satata-dikṣita-yuddha-śauṇḍāḥ

⟨Verse 4. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

teṣām ayaṁ ^[5]kṣapita-kṣatra-gaṇāri-pakṣa⟨ḥ⟩
śrīmā⟨ṁ:n⟩ yaśaugha-suvibhūṣita-cāru-vakṣ⟨ā⟩ḥ
prāk⟨pu⟩⟨n:n⟩yasoma iti kṣatra-gaṇasya maddhye
yo rāja-śabda-k⟨ri:ṛ⟩ta-;mūrdhni!-
(gha)ṭ⟨i:ā⟩bhi^[6]ṣekaḥ

⟨2⟩

Then again, victorious is she who is so devoted to Hara [Śiva] that she bears half the body of the Moon-crested [Śiva] and who so cherishes her devotees that she sustains the worlds like a mother, with tenderness grown out of her love for her own sons.

⟨3⟩

Having venerated her, I continue by acknowledging in my paltry way the bright renown, replete with a thronging legion of virtues, of the kings who glow brightly in a dynasty arising from the Māṇavāyaṇi clan and who are adept at warfare because they are consecrated in perpetuity to the status of warriorhood (*kṣātre pade*).

⟨4⟩

There was among them a long time ago this majestic one called Puṇyasoma, for whose handsome chest the deluge of his glory was decoration enough. He wiped out the factions of the warrior community's (*kṣatra-gaṇa*) enemies and was anointed amidst the warrior community with the word "king" as if by applying [ointment from] a jar to his head.

[3] *svākya*] The reading (originally suggested to Sircar by Chhabra) is unambiguous in the stone in spite of some damage and the strangeness of the word. I agree with Sircar that it is derived from *svaka* and must be understood as *svakīya*.

[3] *snehā*] SI prints no original punctuation here, but there is a clear horizontal stroke at headline height.

[3] *tasyāṇḥ*] The redundant *anusvāra* appears to be genuine, not damage.

[5] *śrīmān*] SI reads *grīmān*. The cross-stroke is indeed invisible in the rubbing, but it is quite clear, though faint, in the stone.

[5] *ghaṭābhiṣekaḥ*] The character *gha* is malformed, drawn as a double curve (like an inverted lowercase m) instead of a straight bottom and three prongs. Compare *gha* in line 16. The intent, however, was definitely *gha*.

[5] *vakṣāḥ*] SI reads *vakṣaḥ* and emends. The *ā mātrā* is probably present, though quite small.

[5] *punya*] *p* in fact looks like *b* or *pā* and may be a correction from either of these. (Compare *sūnur* in l6 and *darppa* in l10.) The *u mātrā* is also unclear; SI reads it as *pū* and emends. It is completely different from the *mātrā* of *pū* in *pūrṇendu*, l6, as well as from that in *pūrvvā*, l14 (nor are these latter two alike). I accept the present one as an awkward *u*, though the vowel mark in *yat punyam*, l14, is again unlike any of the above.

[5] *ghaṭi*⁹] I follow Sircar's reading and agree with his emendation to *ghaṭā*⁹. The vowel mark is definitely a full circle, identical to that of the following *bhi*, so it is very unlikely that this is an unusual way of attaching *ā* to *ṭ*. It may, however, be an engraver's mistake for an *ā mātrā* curling up and slightly backward, as attached to *ṭ* for instance in some Valabhi plates.

⟨Verse 5. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

tasyāvabaddha-makuṭoj(ḥ)vala-dīpta-mūrttiḥ
pūrṇṇendu-maṃḍala-mayūkha-vibhūti-vakraḥ
s(ū)nur bbabhūva kila rājya-jīta-pratāpo
yo rājya-varddha(ṇ:n)a-^[7]guṇaiḥ k(ri:ṛ)ta-nāma-
dhey(ā:a)⟨ḥ⟩|

⟨Verse 6. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

te(ṇ:n)āpi corjjita-jitāri-jaya{ṃ}nta-pakṣjah!
jātaḥ sut(o:aḥ) kari-karāyata-dīrggha-bāhuḥ
yaś cāri-rāṣṭra-mathanodyata-dīpta-cakrjah!
^[8]nāmnā sa rāṣṭra iti proddhata-pu(ṇ:n)ya-kīrt(t)ih

⟨Verse 7. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

t{t}asyāpi {d}dharmma-suta-śānta-svabhāva-mū(r)tt(i)ih!
yajña-kri(yā)-satata-dikṣita-dāna-dakṣah
āhvāna-śaṅkita-surādhipa^[9]tiś ca yasya
lebhe na śarmma punar-āgamanāya śa(kra)ḥ

⟨5⟩

He had, so we hear, a son of brilliant appearance blazing with the crown attached [to his head], whose face had the splendour of the rays of the disc of the full moon. His power had conquered kingdoms and he obtained his name for his skills in increasing the kingdom (*rājya-vardhana*).

⟨6⟩

He in turn produced a son with long arms as extensive as the trunk of an elephant, who with his prowess defeated the swaggering enemy parties. His blazing discus was poised to blast the realms (*rāṣṭra*) of his enemies,¹⁸⁹ and he attained high-rising virtuous fame by the name Rāṣṭra.

⟨7⟩

His [son] in turn was as tranquil in nature and mien as [Yudhiṣṭhira] the son of Dharma, perpetually consecrated for the rite of sacrifice and deft in donation. Even Śakra [Indra], the overlord of the gods, found no respite from the apprehension of being challenged by him to return [to battle].¹⁹⁰

[6] *sūnur*] As SI also notes, *sū* has a superfluous *ā mātrā*. This effectively connects the end of the *ū mātrā* to the headmark and may be a correction from *ā* to *ū*, or possibly a calligraphic design. Compare *punya* in l5 above and *darppa* in l10 below.

[8] *ttasyāpi*] SI's reading seems to be correct. To the right of the head of the lower *t* there is a stroke curving down as if it were *tā*, but such a composite character is of course impossible. The ligature is definitely not *sta*, which would not be too surprising after *kīrttiḥ*. Compare *ttasyaiśa* in l10.

[9] *śakraḥ*] As SI notes, *kra* is malformed. *śa* and *kra* are very close together; the *k* component seems to lack a vertical stem between the arms and the subscript *r*, and the subscript *r* has a serif at the end. All characters are nonetheless unambiguous.

189 Sircar translates, "whose excited army was active in destroying the kingdoms of enemies." While *cakra* can mean "army" without any particular stretch, *dīpta-cakra* as "excited army" seems very unlikely. I believe that the primary senses of each word were intended, giving a "blazing discus" that is, of course, mentioned figuratively.

190 I differ from Sircar's translation in understanding *dharmma-suta* to mean Yudhiṣṭhira (see the Commentary for details) and that I take the dative *āgamanāya* as going with *āhvāna* in the previous quarter. This is indeed rather a stretch grammatically, yet still less awkward than Sircar's stretch of meaning by which he obtains "did not feel happy at [the possibility of] coming again [to the earth from his heavenly abode]."

⟨Verse 8. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

so ⟨'⟩yaꣳm! yaśābharaṇa-bhūṣita-sarvva-gātraḥ
 protphulla-paṅkaja-(sa)māyata-cāru-netraḥ
 dakṣo dayālur iha ^[10]śāsita-śatru-pakṣaḥ
 kṣmā-śāsītā sa yaśagupta iti nṛpenduḥ

⟨Verse 9. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

t{t}asyaiṣa āhava-gajendra-sadar(p)pa-harttā
 mattebha-da{ṁ}nta-vinipāta-vibhinna-vakṣ(a:ā)ḥ
 (?yūp)eṣu ya(sya)ṣ ^[11]mada-ni(ḥ)s(ri:ṛ)ta-bhinna-
 gaṇḍā;ḥ!
 ārttā drutaṁ śara-nipāta-hatā vraja{ṁ}nti|

⟨8⟩

He is this one: the adroit and compassionate ruler of the earth who has subjugated the factions inimical [to him], the moon of kings called Yaśagupta, who is decorated in every limb by the ornament that is glory, and whose eyes are wide and lovely like full-blown lotuses.

⟨9⟩

His [son] is this one with a chest rent by the impact of the tusks of raging elephants, who in battle seizes the elephants [of his enemies] along with [their] pride. Hurt by arrow strikes, their cheeks split and run out of rut-fluid, the stricken [enemy elephants] hurriedly come [of their own accord] to his stakes.¹⁹¹

[10] *iti*] SI reads *itī*, assuming a *metri causa* lengthening, but *itī* is clear in the stone in spite of being metrically inappropriate. See also the end of the Script and Language section.

[10] *ttasyaiṣa*] Compare *ttasyāpi* in l8.

[10] *sudarppa*] SI emends to *sudarppa*, but I find this unnecessary. See also note 257 on page 164. The top of *ppa* is closed and the *repha* is attached on the right, so the character looks like *rbpa*. The intent was probably to draw a curved *repha* (cf. *śubhrāir dvija* in l13) starting on the left, though compare *punya* in l5 and *sūnur* in l6.

[10] *yūpeṣu*] SI reads *vyuḥeṣu* and emends to *vyūheṣu*. *Yūpeṣu* is perhaps more likely both in context (see note 191 to the translation) and from the stone. In particular, the second character's consonant is quite unlike any other *h* in the inscription (see also Script and Language). However, the first character seems to have its headmark at the left and looks rather different from *yū* in *yūva* (erroneous for *yūpa*) in line 12, so Sircar's reading cannot be excluded.

[10] *ṣ*] There is a straight vertical sign, from headline to baseline or slightly above, at the end of the line. It may have been meant for a space filler, but the right margin is not very even so one does not seem to be warranted.

191 Again, I differ considerably from Sircar who translates, “This is his [virtuous son] who humbled the great arrogance of the best of war-elephants; whose rutting elephants tore asunder by the strokes of their tusks the chests [of the war-elephants of the enemies]; the temples [of the enemies' elephants] were split open for the exudation of ichor, [and] they, when struck by the fall of arrows [discharged by Yaśogupta and his men], became distressed [and] returned to the battle-arrays [of the enemies].” I believe that the core of my interpretation, namely that Gauri captured enemy elephants, provides a more coherent framework and requires far less interpretive addition. See also verses 17–18 of the Risthal inscription (A9) for a similar concept with some similar words: it is possible that both these inscriptions draw upon some earlier text. Part of my disagreement with Sircar stems from the fact that he emends *sadarppa* to *sudarppa* and reads (with emendation) *vyūheṣu* where I tentatively read *yūpeṣu* (see notes to line 10 of the text). Even if he is correct about the latter of these loci, my interpretation would still work; in this case the enemy elephants would come to join Gauri's battle lines instead of coming to be tied at his posts. Finally, I prefer to understand the second quarter of the stanza as qualifying Gauri, who proudly bears the scars obtained in his glorious battles. This presumes that the composer used the stem *vakṣa* instead of the regular *vakṣas*, a solecism paralleled by the repeated use of *yaśa* instead of *yaśas* in the inscription. Sircar assumes, in addition to the non-standard morphology, a scribal mistake: he needs to emend *vakṣaḥ* to *vakṣāḥ* to obtain a plural form qualifying the enemy elephants. I cannot exclude the possibility that this is indeed what the composer had in mind.

⟨Verse 10. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

sajḥ ssa!rvva-sa(t)(t)(va)-(?)sa)tatārtthiḥbhi! nitya-dātā
 dīnānuka{ṃ}mpana-rataḥ satataṃ prajānām
^[12]yasya sarassu kumudoj(j)valatāṃ niśāmya
 śatru-s(t)riy(o:aḥ) siṣicur jaṃśrubhi!
 vaktra-padman||

⟨Verse 11. Metre: sragdharā⟩

teneyam bhūta-dhātī kratubhir iha
 citā yū(v:p)a-ś(ri:r)ṅg(i:e)va bhāti|
 prā[sā]^[13]dair ad(ṛ:ri)-tuṅgaiḥ śāsi-kara-vapuṣai(ḥ)
 sthāpitair bhūśitā[ś] ca
 nānā-dānen(d)u-śubhrair dvija-vara-bhavanair
 yyena lakṣmī(r) vvbhaktā|
 sa(t)-putraḥ so (ʻ)timānī sita-yaśa-vapuṣa(ḥ)^[14]
 śrī-mahārāja-gauriḥ

⟨10⟩

He is an eternal grantor to all beings who constantly seek [boons]. He constantly engages in compassion toward the needy among his subjects. When the women of his enemies glimpsed his night-lotus-like brightness in [their] pools, they watered their day-lotus-like faces with their tears.¹⁹²

⟨11⟩

He has so covered this earth here with sacrificial rites (*kratu*) that it seems to have sprouted horns that are in fact sacrificial posts (*yūpa*), and decorated it with temples he commissioned, lofty as mountains and resembling the rays of moon in appearance. He has distributed largesse through [building] residences for outstanding Brahmins, which gleam like the moon with diverse gifts. He is this true son [of Yaśagupta]: His Majesty the greatly esteemed King Gauri, the image of bright glory.

[11] *satatā*^o] SI reads *vitatā*^o. The character SI reads as *vi* is unidentifiable (the preceding *tva*, especially its *v* component, is also faint), but it definitely does not include an *i mātrā*. The only way I can interpret it is to assume that it is a very small *sa* (about half the height of the following *ta*, but comparable to the *t* component of the preceding *tva*) with some damage, plus a dot below it that is also damage.

[11] *prajānām*] There is no punctuation mark after the *halanta* character, though Sircar prints one as original.

[12] *kumudo*^o] SI reads *kamudo*^o and emends, but *ku* is clear in the stone.

[12] *niśāmya*] SI emends to *niśāmya*, but this is unnecessary.

[12] *śrīyo*] SI reads *striyo* with an unclear *t*, but there is definitely no *t* component in the character.

[12] *śriṅgiva*] The vowel mark on *ṅg* may have been intended for *e*, but it exactly resembles the preceding *i*.

[12] *prāsā*] SI prints *sā* at the end of the line as an unclear reading rather than a restoration, but the edge of the stone is chipped off here and there is no trace of this character, except possibly the tip of the *ā mātrā*. The chipping may, however, have been slightly smaller when Sircar's rubbing was taken (compare *vapuṣa* in the next line).

[13] *śubhrair dvija*] The *repha* of *rdvi* is practically horizontal, going right from the headmark. This is probably to squeeze in the *repha* and *i mātrā*, which together would not have fit between *d* and the descenders of *ktra* above. The character *rvvi*, a little further on, is similar but not so extreme.

[13] *vapuṣa*] SI reads *vapuṣaḥ*. The stone is chipped off beyond the top right-hand edge of *ṣa* is lost, but in Sircar's rubbing the chip seems to be smaller so he may indeed have read, not just restored, this *visarga*.

192 Sircar translates the second half as “having noticed the splendour of the water-lilies in his tanks, the wives of his enemies drenched their lotus-like faces with tears.” I find it unlikely that the enemy ladies came to tears with jealousy over Gauri's lotuses like suburban citizens over the neighbour's lawn and prefer to opt for a less straightforward interpretation: the cause for the ladies' tears was the sight of Gauri's lotus-like face reflected in the pools of his enemies (after he invaded them).

⟨Verse 12. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita⟩

ten(e:ai)ṣaḥ śāśi-hāra-kunda-dhavalah
 śailendra-ś(ri:ṛ)ṅgonnata(ḥ)
 prāsādo (')dbhuta-da(riśa:rśa)naḥ k(ri:ṛ)taḥm!
 ayaḥm! devyāḥ prasādārtthinā|
 yat p(u)(n:n)yaḥm! i^[15]ha ṛṇyapyate! dvija-varaiḥ
 śās(t)reṣu yac cocyate(?)
 tat sarvvaḥm! mama akṣayaḥ bhavatu njaḥ!
 mātā-pit(ri:ṛ)bhyām idaḥm|

⟨Verse 13. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

yāteṣu pañcasu śateṣv atha vatsarāṇām|
^[16]dve viḥṇ!śatī-samadhikeṣu sa-saptakeṣu
 māghasya śukla-divase sa gamat pratiṣ(ṭ:ṭh)ām
 prot(p:ph)ulla-kunda-{d}dhavaloj(j)valite
 daśamyām

jīvaḥddha!raṇa-samutpannasya^[17]mitrasoma-sūno(r)
 bhramarasomasya k(ri:ṛ)tiḥ §||
 likhitā ceyaḥ pūrvvā aparājitenā| rājaputra-gobhaṭa-
 pādānuddhyātena §

⟨12⟩

It is he who, seeking the grace of the Goddess, built this temple of amazing appearance, lustrous like the moon or a pearl necklace or jasmine¹⁹³ and towering like the summit of the lord of mountains [the Himalaya]. Whatever merit accrues from this according to the great Brahmins and the words of scriptures, may all that imperishable [merit] of mine go to my mother and father.¹⁹⁴

⟨13⟩

It [the temple] was established when five hundreds of years had passed, augmented by two twenties and seven more, on the bright tenth day of Māgha made white and luminous by the blooming jasmine.

This is the work of Bhramarasoma, son of Mitrasoma descended from Jīvadharāṇa.

And this preamble¹⁹⁵ was written by Aparājita, who was appointed by the illustrious Prince Gobhaṭa.¹⁹⁶

[14] *punya*] SI reads *pūnya* and emends the *ū* as well as the *n*. I believe *u* is more likely, though the identification is problematic; see note on *punya* in 15.

[15] *ṛṇyapyate*] The word is clear. See Script and Language.

[15] *cocyate*] SI does not print original punctuation here, but there may be a dot or a very short horizontal dash at the end of the *pāda*.

[16] *sa gamat*] SI suggests emending to *tv agamat*. I believe *sa* was intended as a pronoun to serve as a subject for the sentence (and point back to *prāsāda* in the preceding verse); *gamat* must have been meant for an aorist. Alternatively, perhaps *agamat* (with an initial *a*) had been intended and incorrectly engraved, in which case the *saṃdhi* would be non-standard but there would be no serious grammatical error.

[16] *protphulla*] SI reads *protphulla*, but the character is *tpu*, perfectly identical to the one in *yat punya* in 114.

[17] §||] The first ornamental glyph consists of two concentric circles, the outer one slightly larger than an average character body. The following punctuation mark is a double plain (unhooked) vertical.

[17] §] The closing ornament is a branch with leaves and many round fruits. See Script and Language for details.

193 Here and in the next verse, jasmine translates *kunda*, in all probability meaning the star jasmine (*Jasminum multiflorum* (Burm.f.) Andrews).

194 See the Commentary for some ambiguous details of this stanza, and Script and Language about the word *ṛṇyapyate*.

195 See page 7 about the word *pūrvvā*.

196 See the Commentary about what Bhramarasoma and Aparājita may have been responsible for.

A8 Mandsaur Fragmentary Inscription of Gauri

Substrate				Siddham ID:		OB00190		
Material	stone		Object type	fragment of pillar(?)				
Dimensions	width	28 cm	height	38 cm	depth	28 cm		
Discovery	1946, in a field near Mandsaur (around 24°03'56"N 75°04'49"E)							
Current location	unknown							
Inscription				Siddham ID:		IN00204		
Dimensions	width	23 cm	height	25 cm	Char size	8–10 mm	Line height	18–22 mm
Date CE	ca. 500	Basis of dating		conjecture				
Topic	construction of a tank or well							
Persons mentioned	Ādityavardhana, Rāṣṭravardhana, Yaśogupta, Gauri, Hariśūrā; maternal grandfather of Gauri (name lost)							
Places mentioned	Daśapura							
Compendia	SI III.52B							
Other editions	Sircar 1954b, 127–32; Sadhu Ram 1957							

Description

This inscription is on a stone that Sircar (1954b, 127) calls a slab, but which Trivedi (1956, 95) and Sadhu Ram (1957, 62) describe as the upper part of a pillar, square in cross-section. The inscription is on one face. Above it there is a relief of a spoked wheel with a diameter of 24 cm. According to Sadhu Ram (*ibid.*) this is “obviously” Viṣṇu’s *cakra*, but if the identification of the object as a pillar fragment is correct, then perhaps a lotus medallion is more likely. The discus or medallion is iterated on all four faces of the pillar. The stone’s dimensions have not been reported; on the basis of the rubbing and the published inscription dimensions the width and depth of the fragment can be estimated at around 28 centimetres, and its height at 38 centimetres if the top of the wheel design is broken off where the estampage ends; more if the estampage does not cover the entire front face.

The fragment had presumably been lying under shallow soil until a flood of the river Shivna in 1946 uncovered it. It was then found in a field in the vicinity of Mandsaur¹⁹⁷ and moved to a shed or, according to Trivedi (1956, 95), incorporated into the stone foundation of a mud hut.¹⁹⁸ It was eventually moved to the Government Intermediate College of Mandsaur where a small museum had been recently started. The photographs reached the office of the

¹⁹⁷ Wakankar (2002, 30) calls this epigraph the Kalakhet (कालाखेत) inscription. Kalakhet is an area of Mandsaur north and northwest of the fort.

¹⁹⁸ No more information on the location is available, but the field at this time belonged to a Mirza Naim Beg. Trivedi (1956, 95) reports finding the base of this pillar “imbedded in the same platform” (presumably of the mud house) and searching in vain for further fragments.

Government Epigraphist in 1954, and in 1955 Sircar studied the original stone in Mandsaur. The discovery was reported in ARIE 1953–54, 44 (B. 120) and in Sircar’s edition (1954b). It was also reported by Trivedi (1956), who may have been unaware of Sircar, and reported and edited again, probably unaware of both Sircar and Trivedi, by Sadhu Ram (1957). The object was not found in the storeroom of the Yashodharman Museum when I enquired there in February 2017 and I have not been able to trace its present location. The text I publish here therefore relies on the editions of Sircar and Sadhu Ram, checked against the rubbing published with Sircar’s edition.

The inscribed area is about 23 centimetres wide by 25 centimetres high; the figures reported by Sircar and Trivedi are slightly at variance. Eleven lines of writing are preserved; several more may be lost at the bottom, but the first extant line is clearly the first line of the original epigraph. Two or three characters at the end of each line are illegible due to damage, and slightly more (probably two to five) are lost at the beginning of each line where the left edge of the block appears to be chipped off in addition to erosion of the surface near the edge. Estimated on the basis of the rubbing, character bodies are 8–10 millimetres tall and the height of the lines is 18 to 22 millimetres. The lines are quite straight and the lettering is quite neat, but due to the close line spacing complex characters appear to tangle with those above or below them.

Script and Language

The inscription is executed in a script of the rounded type with a slight influence of the angular type. The general

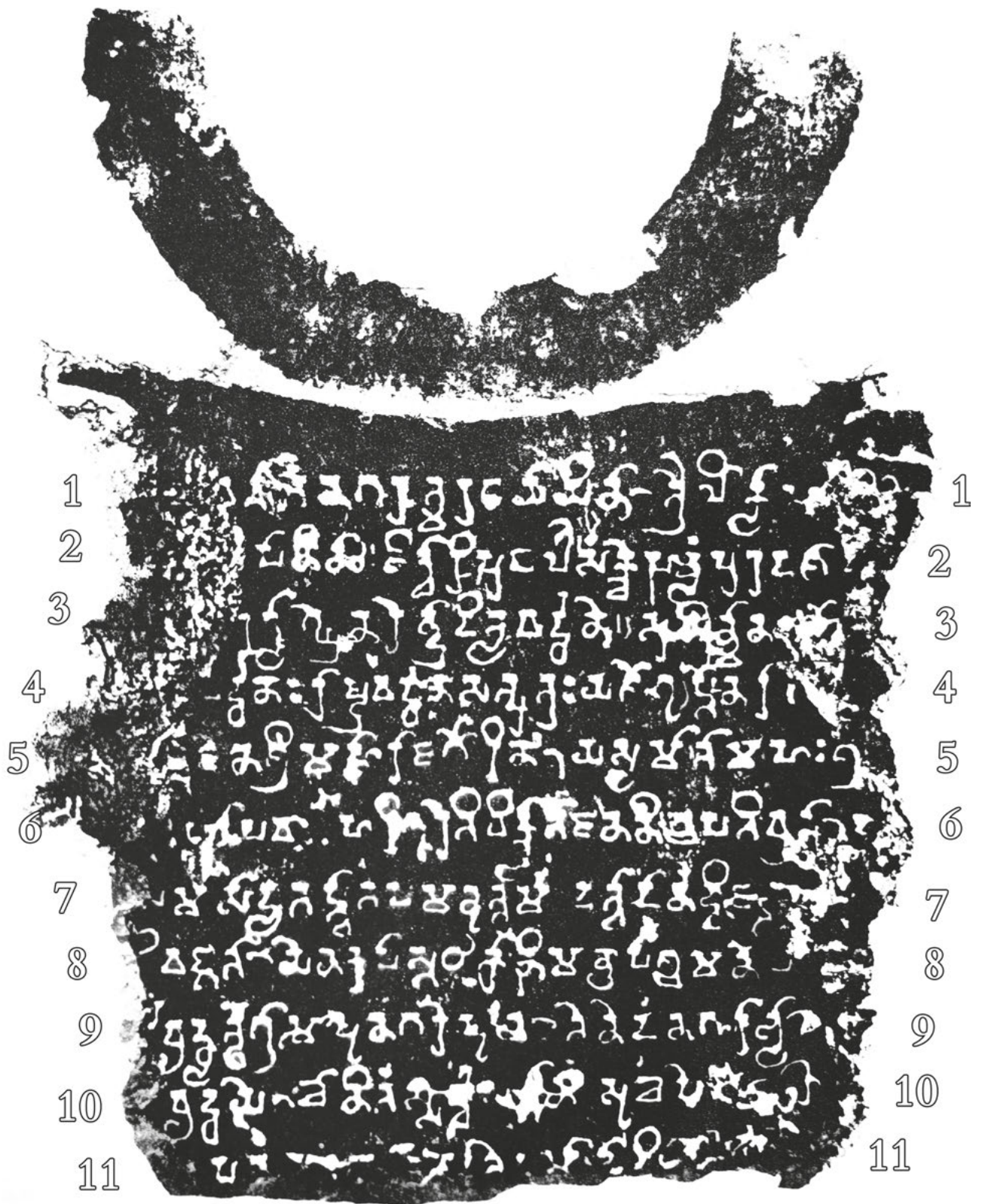


Figure 24: Mandsaur fragmentary inscription of Gauri. Inked rubbing from Sircar (1954b).

appearance greatly resembles the inscription of the silk weavers (A6), which is a closer match to the present script than the Chhoti Sadri inscription. This may indicate that the Mandsaur inscription of Gauri is earlier than his dated inscription, but it would be going too far to accept this as a fact merely on the basis of palaeography.

Prominent features of the script include the looped *ma*, the southern *ṇa* and *la* with a tail elongated vertically and ending in a curve but not bending back to the left of the body. The descenders of *a*, *ka* and *ra* are hooked and the left limb of *a* bends inward. *Bha* is of the broad type, and *ca* is also broad with a beak. Vowel marks attached at the top are always above the character bodies, never starting out horizontally to the left or right, except for certain consonants that attach vowels distinctively, such as the cursive *lo* (11), *je* with the vowel attached to the body (17) and *me* likewise with the vowel attached to the body (19; however, *mā* has the *ā mātrā* attached to the top).

The orthography shows a regular assortment of epigraphic peculiarities. Consonants are geminated after *r* and, occasionally, before *r* (*vyāgghre*, 13; but *putraḥ*, 14) and before *y* (*vikkhyātā*, 16; *saṃkkhe* in 12 must also have been meant for *saṃkkhye*). *Datvā* (17) is spelt with a single *t*. *Anusvāra* use is largely standard with the sole exception of *divaṅ gatā* in 18. *Visarga* use is also largely standard except for *khānitaṃs sarvva* in 110 and the resolved *saṃdhi* at the end of an even *pāda* in verse 3 (*putraḥ yaśogupto*, 14).

There seem to be at least three kinds of punctuation marks in the inscription. Many of them are unclear and the fact that stanza boundaries are ambiguous from verse 4 onward (see the Commentary below) makes it impossible to tell whether half-verses and verse ends are distinguished in punctuation with any consistency. The mark with the highest number of instances is a single horizontal line with a slight curve that raises the middle above the ends. This mark is found at several half-verse points as well as at some points that are probably verse ends, and is transliterated in the edition below by a single *daṇḍa*. A distinct type of mark is a double vertical line without a hook, found at the end of verses 1 and 2 and transliterated as a double *daṇḍa*. Finally, there are ambiguous marks which may be single verticals with a hook at the top left, or single horizontals with an exaggerated curve. These too are transliterated below as double *daṇḍas*, but this editorial decision has been influenced by their location at points that I, following Sircar, take to be verse ends.

As far as it can be told from the fragmentary inscription, the language is much closer to standard Sanskrit than the language of the Chhoti Sadri inscription. There are a small number of scribal mistakes in addition to

the orthographic peculiarities mentioned above. Gender agreement is problematic in verse 8 (see the Commentary), and the compound *garutma-ratha* (11) may indicate that the composer believed the stem to be *garutman* rather than *garutmat*, though it may also be a scribal error since the expected *garutmad-ratha* suits the metre equally well.

Commentary

The inscription begins with an invocation to Viṣṇu, which may have been preceded by a *maṅgala* symbol, but nothing longer than that. The verse is badly effaced but the reference to Garuḍa makes it clear that it is addressed to Viṣṇu, which renders the restoration *cakra-pāṇinā* at the end of the stanza very plausible.

The second stanza in all probability introduces a king named Ādityavardhana who is reigning in Daśapura. Only *puraṃ daśā* is legible in the epigraph, but this string is clearly the beginning of a circumlocution for Daśapura employed for the sake of the metre. Sircar (1954b, 129, 132n.8) reads the next *akṣara* as *di* and restores *daśādikaṃ*, while Sadhu Ram (1957, 64) reads *hva* and suggests *daśāhvayaṃ*. Both seem possible from the rubbing (in which I see no discernible trace of the character following *daśā*), but *daśāhvayaṃ* strikes me as semantically more plausible. However, Sircar (1960b, 206) reiterates that *di* is legible in the stone and that “the damaged *akshara* at the end of the first half of this stanza is certainly *kaṃ*,” so the issue remains open.¹⁹⁹ Ādityavardhana’s name is in the locative case, evidently forming a locative absolute construction with a lost participle.²⁰⁰ This locative absolute was evidently not meant to specify the time for the verb *āsīt* that begins the next stanza but, in spite of being syntactically inelegant, provides the setting for the inscription as a whole, specifically for the participle *khānita* in verse 8. That is to say, this Ādityavardhana was not a contemporary of Gauri’s father Yaśogupta, but of Gauri himself. His identity remains shrouded in mystery, but (as discussed on page 128) most probably he was the suzerain of Gauri and an Aulikara, perhaps a member of the Later Aulikara line.

¹⁹⁹ Additionally, Mirashi (1959, 256) criticises Sircar’s restoration as unmetrical and suggests *pura-deśādikaṃ* instead. Mirashi’s ulterior motive here is to prove that Ādityavardhana did not rule from Daśapura (see page 22), and as Sircar (1960a, 193) aptly retorts, it is in fact Mirashi’s restoration that is unmetrical, while Sircar’s one conforms perfectly to the rules of the *anuṣṭubh* metre.

²⁰⁰ Which can with fair confidence be restored as *praśāsati*, see note to line 3 of the text.

The third verse probably introduced the family of Gauri: in light of the name Mānavāyani in the Chhoti Sadri inscription, the fragment *māna* in the present epigraph can with reasonable confidence be restored to *mānava-gotra* (see also note to line 3 of the text). The stanza introduces Yaśogupta (whose name is spelt Yaśagupta in the Chhoti Sadri inscription), describing him as the son of Rāṣṭravardhana (as in the Chhoti Sadri genealogy).

Verse 4 names Gauri, bearing the title *mahārāja*. He is probably introduced as Yaśogupta's son (which he was, as we know from Chhoti Sadri), but most of the first *pāda* of the stanza is lost. The name of Gauri is in the instrumental, which eventually turns out to be the agent of *khānita* in the last stanza, picked up there by the demonstrative pronoun *tena*, while the relative pronouns in the intervening verses show that the clauses in these stanzas qualify Gauri.

From this point onward, *śloka* boundaries are uncertain. I adopt the structure that Sircar imposed on the text, according to which verse 4 consists only of two *pādas*, while the preceding and following stanzas have the regular four *pādas*. It is my impression that the text after verse 8 cannot be fitted to the *anuṣṭubh* pattern, although due to its extremely fragmentary state this is no more than an impression. If correct, then the total number of *anuṣṭubh pādas* is not divisible by four. Longer texts in *anuṣṭubh* often include verses of two or six *pādas* or, perhaps more accurately, may be said to consist of a certain number of *pādayugas* rather than a certain number of stanzas. Be that as it may, in accordance with modern editorial conventions I prefer to retain the stanza as the basic unit and to number the stanzas for ease of reference. The original composer may have had a different arrangement in mind, and unfortunately the disparate shapes of the punctuation signs (see Script and Language above) and their bad state of preservation do not help in divining that arrangement. I therefore retain Sircar's division in order to avoid confusion.

Verse 5 introduces Gauri's mother and maternal grandfather. The grandfather is described as a valiant and majestic (*śrīmat*) person, the latter of which may imply that he was royalty. His name, apparently consisting of four syllables, is unfortunately lost. Sadhu Ram reads its last character as *ptaḥ*, restoring *-guptaḥ*, while Sircar believes the name may have ended with *nta*. I cannot discern any recognisable trace in the published rubbing. The mother's name was Hariśūrā.

The whole of verse 6 is devoted to Hariśūrā, describing how she performed great austerities and handed out gifts to the twice-born. The verse, with only the merest shadow of doubt, ends with her death and, according to

Sircar's very plausible restoration, begins with her becoming a widow. Sircar further theorises, again very credibly, that the reason she is given so much attention at this point is that the tank whose excavation the inscription records was dedicated to her.

The seventh verse returns to Gauri himself, claiming that he commissioned many wells, ponds and pavilions. Finally, with verse 8, we come to the purpose of the epigraph: Gauri has had a tank excavated in the neighbourhood of the city. The word for "tank" at the end of the stanza is partly lost, but the restoration *jalāśayaḥ* (proposed both by Sircar and Sadhu Ram) is quite certain. However, the gender seems to shift in the course of the sentence: the neuter pronoun *idam* is clear at the beginning of the stanza, while *jalāśayaḥ* at the end would have been masculine (as indicated both by the regular gender of the word, and by the adjective *sukha-peyo*) and is qualified by the masculine adjective *sukha-peyo* (though the ending is unclear in the rubbing). In between, the participle used in place of a verb seems to read *khānitaṃs*. Since the final *s* is part of a ligature with the following consonant, it was evidently part of the originally inscribed text. The *anusvāra* (which Sadhu Ram does not read, though at least in the rubbing the dot is conspicuous) may have been added subsequently because of the proximity of *idam*. However, given that *ayam* would have been equally suitable to the metre, the reason why *idam* was inscribed in the first place remains uncertain. It might have been meant to be in compound with *nagara* (meaning "in the vicinity of this city"), or used in an adverbial sense ("here/now" or "in this way"). Neither of these are common usage, but I believe that Sircar's emendation to *ayam* is unwarranted and one of the senses suggested here had been intended by the author; most probably the last: he has had many utilities built and, *in the same manner*, has now caused this tank to be excavated.²⁰¹

Only vestiges remain of the last extant line. Sircar reads "... .. *prada* *teva mātā-pitro*;" Sadhu Ram reads fewer phonemes but those are all consistent with Sircar's reading. The *p* at the beginning of this string is clear, and *mātā-pitro* at the end is very plausible. However, Sircar's dotting implies only two illegible *akṣaras* between the purported *prada* and *teva*, which is impossible. As noted above, the vestiges do not seem to conform to the *anuṣṭubh* metre.²⁰² The text may be prose from this point on, or

²⁰¹ The weak point of this stance is that *tenaivaṃ* would have served the purpose even better.

²⁰² An *anuṣṭubh* cannot, however, be excluded with certainty, especially if some of what seem to be vestigial characters are in fact space fillers or deleted *akṣaras*.

continue in a different metre. Though Sircar and Sadhu Ram agree on *pra*,²⁰³ I wonder if the word containing the clear *p* could in fact be *punyam* (there is a dot above the second character, though neither editor reads an *amusvāra* here). This might have been preceded by *yad atra*, resulting in the meaning that the merit arising from the construction should go to the donor's mother and father.

Ādityavardhana

Verse two of the Mandsaur fragmentary inscription of Gauri mentions a king (*narendra*) Ādityavardhana who, as discussed above, apparently ruled in Daśapura in the same time when Gauri flourished, i.e. at a time not far removed from 491 CE, the date furnished for Gauri by his Chhoti Sadri inscription. Since Ādityavardhana is mentioned in the Mandsaur fragment after the deity invoked at the beginning and before the donor's ancestors, the natural conclusion is that Ādityavardhana was Gauri's suzerain. However, the possibility that Ādityavardhana and Gauri are identical cannot be discarded definitively. Sircar (1954b, 130–31) himself prevaricates in his edition between the two hypotheses and refrains from offering a final opinion; likewise, Salomon (1989, 17) first says Gauri “evidently bore the alternative name Ādityavardhana,” but then (*ibid.*, 21) elaborates the issue that he describes as “problematic” and also desists from making a decision.

It seems to me that the principal reason why Sircar and Salomon consider the possibility that the two names may refer to the same person is that according to the inscription Gauri built a tank in the environs of Daśapura. This would imply that Gauri controlled Daśapura, but as the inscription also says that the city was ruled by Ādityavardhana, the two names must mean the same person. I see no other hint in the inscription that this was the case,²⁰⁴ while the structure of the text favours the overlord hypothesis. Now a vassal king may well have funded a public utility in his suzerain's capital, so there is no

²⁰³ Wakankar (2002, 30) also prints *pradam*, but I am not sure if this is an independent reading.

²⁰⁴ Sircar points to two further items of note: that the Chhoti Sadri inscription does not mention an overlord, and that Gauri's ancestors include people with *vardhana* in their names, so Gauri may be an Aulikara. The fact that Gauri comes from the Mānavāyani lineage counterindicates the latter, and with the Risthal inscription (A9) now available, it seems even more unlikely: since Gauri's line overlaps in time with both the known Aulikara houses without matching in any name, he probably belonged to some other dynasty. As for the former, it is not too strange that a sovereign ruler is mentioned in Gauri's inscription installed in the sovereign's capital, but not in another inscription in a laid-back area probably under Gauri's direct control.

strong argument for identity. Sircar (1954b, 130) further remarks that it was customary to excavate a tank where a deceased person was cremated, and Gauri's mother (to whom the tank commemorated in our inscription was probably dedicated) may have died in her son's overlord's capital. Finally, it is also entirely possible that Gauri's own capital was Daśapura after all, and that the overlord to whom he owed fealty controlled Daśapura but had his seat at another place that was not named in the inscription. With all these considerations in mind, I am strongly inclined to reject the identity of Gauri and Ādityavardhana and to endorse the hypothesis that the latter was the former's suzerain.

The identity of Ādityavardhana remains shrouded in mystery. All we know about him is his name and that he ruled Daśapura after defeating enemies in battle. The Mandsaur fragment (verse 2) implies (but comes short of proving) that he had not ruled Daśapura before this victory, in other words that he conquered the city from some other ruler.²⁰⁵ Sircar (1954b, 131) notes that Ādityavardhana may have been a Hūṇa ruler or an Aulikara one and that his name implies the latter. Mirashi (1980, 407–8, also published as 1982a, 101–2) takes this for granted and adds that Ādityavardhana's capital must have been Ujjayinī (see also page 22), with Gauri controlling Daśapura as his vassal. Conversely, Bakker (2017, 12–13) feels quite certain that Ādityavardhana was a Hūṇa (possibly Toramāṇa himself) or, at least, a ruler subordinate to the Hūṇas. He suggests that Gauri had been an independent ruler at the time of the Chhoti Sadri inscription, but was subsequently conquered by Ādityavardhana, as a consequence of which he had to acknowledge Ādityavardhana in the Mandsaur inscription and also had to replace his devotion to the Goddess expressed in the Chhoti Sadri inscription with devotion to Viṣṇu. Such a possibility cannot be excluded, but I find the evidence insufficient. There is an even chance that either of these two inscriptions predates the other, and obeisance to the Goddess and the construction of her temple need not mean that Gauri was not a devout Vaiṣṇava throughout his life.

All in all, on the basis of his *vardhana* name and the fact that he ruled over (and presumably from) Daśapura, the assumption that Ādityavardhana was an Aulikara appears likely to be correct. It has been suggested that he was a successor of Prabhākara and a possible link between the Early Aulikaras and Yaśodharman (Jain 1972b, 254), or at least a predecessor of Yaśodharman

²⁰⁵ Alternatively, it may be possible that he reconquered the city after foreign occupation, or that the fact that he defeated enemies was not a precondition for his rule in Daśapura.

(Goyal 1967, 361). Ajay Mitra Shastri (1990, 9–10) submitted that he may have been the brother of Rājyavardhana (Prakāśadharman's father) and the first Aulikara to declare independence from the Guptas. A more recent suggestion made by Ashvini Agrawal (2002)²⁰⁶ is that Ādityavardhana was none other than Prakāśadharman. The idea is definitely attractive and needs to be kept in mind, though it is supported only by indirect evidence: all known Later Aulikara rulers have names in *vardhana* except Prakāśadharman; Yaśodharman has a name in

vardhana and another in *dharman*, so it stands to reason that Prakāśadharman likewise had a *vardhana* name. A gap of 25 years separates Ādityavardhana in Gauri's Chhoti Sadri inscription from Prakāśadharman in the Risthal inscription, so it is easily conceivable that he was already reigning in the days of Gauri (keeping in mind that the Mandsaur inscription of Gauri may be later than the Chhoti Sadri one). Based on the currently available evidence, this is the most likely hypothesis about the identity of Ādityavardhana.

Diplomatic Text

- [1] ⁽¹⁾[?jitaṃ bhaga](vatā te)na iḡarutma!-ratha-yāyinā| trailokyā(ma)(?la) ×(?i)×(?e) [=]
 [2] [=][cakra-]pāṇinā|| ⁽²⁾jitvā ripu-balaṃ saṃjkkh!e ramaṃ pura daśā[hvayaṃ|]
 [3] [?praśāsati] [na]ra-(v)yāggre narendrādityavarddhane|| ⁽³⁾āsīn māna[va-g]o[tra][=]
 [4] [=][=][=][=] (va)rddhaṃ!aḡ rāṣṭravarddhaṃ!a-sat-putraḡ! yaśogupto narā(?dh)[ipaḡ||]
 [5] ⁽⁴⁾[=][=][=][=][?ta](?nū)(je)na śrī-mahārāja-gauriṇā(ḡ) ⁽⁵⁾yasya mātāmahaḡ śr(ī)[mān]
 [6] [=][=][=][=](?ḡ) (prat)āpavā(N) hari(śū)reti vikkyātā janani ca pativra(t)ā(ḡ) ⁽⁶⁾[=][=]
 [7] [=](sa)māsādyā taptvā tapam anuttamaṃ da;tv!ā dānaṃ dvije(bhya)[?ś ca]
 [8] [=][=][=][=][d]ivaṃ gatā| ⁽⁷⁾yena k(ū)pās ta;ḡh!ākāni maṇḡapās ca mano(?harāḡ)||
 [9] [=][=][=][=]vṛddhy-artthaṃ grāmeṣu nagareṣu ca| ⁽⁸⁾tenedaṃ nagarābhyā(śe)
 [10] [=][=][=][=]vṛddhaye| khānita;ṃs! sar(v)v(a-sa;tv!)ā(nāṃ) sukha-pe(yo ja)lā[?śa]
 [11] [yaḡ||] [?4] p(?radaṃ) [?6] (?teva) (m)ā(?t)ā-(?p)i(?t)[?r](o) [?4]

²⁰⁶ I have not been able to trace a copy of this publication and only know of Agrawal's hypothesis through a summary by Kishore (1999, 56), who was Ashvini Agrawal's PhD student at the time.

Curated Text

⟨Verse 1. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

^[1][?jitaṃ bhaga](vatā te)na
 ḡgarutma!-ratha-yāyinā|
 trailokyā(ma)(?la) ×(?i)×(?e) [≡]
^[2][≡≡≡][?cakra-]pāṇinā||

⟨Verse 2. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

jītvā ripu-balaṃ saṃ(kkh:khy)e
 ramaṃ pura(ṃ) daśā[hvayaṃ|]
^[3][?praśāsati] [na]ra-(v)yāggre
 narendrādityavarddhane||

⟨Verse 3. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

āsīn māna[va-g]o[tra][≡]
^[4][≡≡≡≡] (va)rddha(ṃ:n)aḥ
 rāṣṭravarddha(ṃ:n)a-sat-putrjaḥ!
 yaśogupto narā(?dh)[ipaḥ||]

⟨Verse 4. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

^[5][≡≡≡≡][?ta](?nū)(je)na
 śrī-mahārāja-gauriṇā(||)

Translation

⟨1⟩

That lord (has triumphed) who rides a chariot that is Garuḍa, ... (spotless) ... the three worlds ... (who holds the discus in his) hand.

⟨2⟩

While King Ādityavardhana, a tiger among men, is (ruling) the pleasant town (whose name is) Daśa, having defeated the forces of his enemies in battle—

⟨3⟩

(In) the Mānava lineage (*gotra*) there was King Yaśogupta, a true son of Rāṣṭravardhana and an augmenter (*vardhana*) of ...

⟨4⟩

... his son His Majesty King (*mahārāja*) Gauri,

Text Notes

Alternative opinions are cited from the editions of Sircar (SI²⁰⁷) and Sadhu Ram (SR).

While the sum of characters lost at the end of a line and the beginning of the next can be deduced confidently from the metre, the position of the original line break with respect to the lost text can only be estimated.

[1] **trailokyāmala**] SI reads only *trailokyāma*; I adopt SR's reading including the vowels attached to illegible consonants. This seems possible but very far from certain on the basis of the rubbing.

[2] **pāṇinā**] SI and SR agree on restoring *cakra-pāṇinā*, which SR actually prints as an unclear reading, though his intent may have been to indicate a conjecture. SI further suggests restoring the first three syllables as *viṣṇunā*.

[2] **daśāhvayaṃ**] I adopt SR's restoration (in which he prints *hva* as clear and *yaṃ*, with *anusvāra*, as unclear). SI restores *daśādikam*. Whatever the word, a *halanta m* is of course also possible in place of the *anusvāra*. See the Commentary for more details.

[3] **praśāsati**] SI suggests *pālayati* or *praśāsati* for the lacuna. The former is unmetrical, but the latter is plausible.

[3] **nara**] Both SI and SR print *na* as an extant reading (SI shows it as unclear), but no vestiges are discernible in the rubbing.

[3] **mānava-gotra**] SI restores *mānava-gotrasya*. Since the *o* is quite clear (though shown as a restoration by SI), I adopt *mānavagotra*, though I prefer to omit the case ending since alternatives such as *gotrotthaḥ* or *gotre smin* are also possible.

[4] **varddhanah**] SI says the character before *va* may be *sya*. Only traces of *va* are visible in the rubbing, and nothing of *sya*. My preferred restoration would be *sva-kulānanda-varddhanah*, but this is of course mere conjecture.

[5] **tanūjena**] SI proposes to restore “something like” *tasyānena tanūjena*. I find *tanūjena* plausible, but the rest is wholly conjectural.

207 In these notes SI denotes Sircar 1954b, not *Select Inscriptions*.

⟨Verse 5. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

yasya mātāmahaḥ śr(ī)[mān]
^[6][𑀭𑀮𑀮][𑀮](?ḥ) (prat)āpavā(n)
 hari(śū)reti vikkhyātā
 jananī ca pativra(t)ā(ḥ)

⟨Verse 6. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

[𑀮𑀮]^[7][𑀮𑀮](sa)māsādyā
 taptvā tapam anuttamaṃ
 da;tv!ā dānaṃ dvije(bhya)[?ś ca]
^[8][𑀮𑀮𑀮𑀮][d]ivañ gatā

⟨Verse 7. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

yena k(ū)pās ta(ḥ:t)ākāni
 maṇḍapās ca mano(?harāḥ)[ḥ]
^[9][𑀮𑀮𑀮𑀮]vṛddhy-artthaṃ
 grāmeṣu nagareṣu ca

⟨Verse 8. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

tenedaṃ nagarābhyā(śe)
^[10][𑀮𑀮𑀮𑀮]vṛddhaye
 khānitaṃs! sar(v)a-sa;tv!ā(nāṃ)
 sukha-pe(yo ja)lā[?śa]^[11][yaḥ]

[?4] p(?radaṃ)[?6](?teva) (m)ā(?t)ā-(?p)i(?t)[?r](o)[?4]

⟨5⟩

whose maternal grandfather is the majestic and valorous
 ... and whose mother, devoted to her husband, is widely
 known to be Hariśūrā,

⟨6⟩

after attaining (widowhood), she practiced unsurpassed
 austerities, gave gifts to Brahmins, ... went to Heaven;

⟨7⟩

and who [has constructed] wells and tanks and alluring
 pavilions for the sake of increasing ... in villages as well
 as towns;

⟨8⟩

in the same vein, in order to augment (his mother's
merits) he has ordered the digging of a tank in the
 vicinity of the city, from which all beings can drink at
 their pleasure.

... (producing) (mother and father) ...

[6] **pratāpavān**] See the Commentary for the name that the lacuna must have contained. The *halanta n* is indiscernible in the rubbing but the space after *vā* easily permits it. There is also a mark above this space that does not seem to be part of either l5 or l6 (unless the correct reading is *śrīr mmahārāja* in l5, but this is not likely from the traces).

[7] **samāsādyā**] SI tentatively restores the preceding lacuna as *vaidhavyaṅ ca* or *vārdhakaṅ ca*.

[7] **dvijebhyaś ca**] SI reads *dvijebhyaḥ* and suggests *sā* for the illegible character. SR reads *dvijebhyo* and offers no restoration. I think *dvijebhyaś ca* is the most likely since the vestiges of the last character seem quite complex, indicating a ligature.

[8] **taḥākāni**] SI and SR both read *taḥākāni*, but *ḥ* seems clear in the rubbing.

[9] **vṛddhy-artthaṃ**] SI tentatively restores *kāritā puṇya-vṛddhy-artthaṃ* (sic, obviously intending *kāritāḥ*; his *rtha* must also be a typo since *rttha* is clear in the rubbing). The character before *vṛ* seems to have had a superscript *repha*, so *dhamma* or *sarvva* may be more likely than *puṇya*; *kāritāḥ* is plausible.

[9] **ābhyāse**] SI reads *ābhyāse*. The rubbing is inconclusive, but I adopt SR's reading as perhaps more likely.

[10] **vṛddhaye**] SI suggests the restoration *mātuḥ puṇyābhivṛddhaye*. The latter part is very likely; the former is plausible in view of the mother's mention in verses 5 and 6, but *pitroḥ* or *ātma-* may also be possible.

[10] **khānitaṃs**] SR does not read an *anusvāra* here. See the Commentary.

[10] **sukha-peyo jalāśayaḥ**] I adopt SI's restoration. SR "reads" *sukha-hetor jalāśa(yaḥ)*, but *pe* is quite clear in the rubbing and *rja* does not seem possible. See also Script and Language about the gender problem in this stanza.

[11] In the last line, SR reads * * *pra* ... * *e* * *mā* * *ā* * *i* * ... while SI reads *prada* *teva mātā-pitro*. See the Commentary for further details and speculation.

A9 Risthal Inscription of Prakāśadharman

Substrate		Siddham ID:		OB00089	
Material	stone	Object type	slab		
Dimensions	width 47 cm	height 40 cm	depth 24 cm		
Discovery	1983, dug up from the ground in Risthal (probably 24°07'46"N 75°19'50"E)				
Current location	Naṭnāgar Śodh Saṃsthān, Sitamau (on exhibit)				
Inscription		Siddham ID:		IN00098	
Dimensions	width 44 cm	height 33 cm	Char size 6 mm	Line height 15 mm	
Date CE	515–516	Basis of dating	dated (Mālava) 572 expired, summer (116–1)		
Topic	construction of a water reservoir dedicated to the memory of Vibhīṣaṇavardhana and a temple of Śiva				
Persons mentioned	Prakāśadharman, Drapavardhana, Jayavardhana, Ajitavardhana, Vibhīṣaṇavardhana, Rājyavardhana, Doṣa, Vāsula, Kakka				
Places mentioned	Daśapura				
Compendia	GKA 363–365				
Other editions	Ramesh and Tewari 1983; Mirashi 1984a; Sircar 1984a; Salomon 1989				

Description

The inscription is on a thick slab of dense and hard, dark grey stone (possibly quartzite), approximately 47 centimetres wide by 40 high and 24 deep. Its shape is rectangular, but the edges are roughly cut and there is some chipping at the centre and right-hand side of the top edge. The bottom right corner of the slab is also missing, but this does not affect the inscription and the stone may have been shaped in this way to begin with. The inscribed surface is smooth and may have been polished, but all other faces of the rock are very rough, so the slab was probably built into a wall with only the front visible.

The inscribed area is about 44 by 33 centimetres, in 21 lines spaced at an average 15 millimetres one below the other. Character bodies are about 6 millimetres tall. The engraving is quite shallow, possibly because of the hardness of the stone. However, it was executed with great care, and the surface is in excellent condition (again, perhaps thanks to the hardness of the stone), so most of the characters are perfectly preserved and the small spots of damage do not impede reading to any great degree. The lines are perfectly straight and spaced quite evenly, character size is even, the left margin is also very straight, and the right margin comes close.

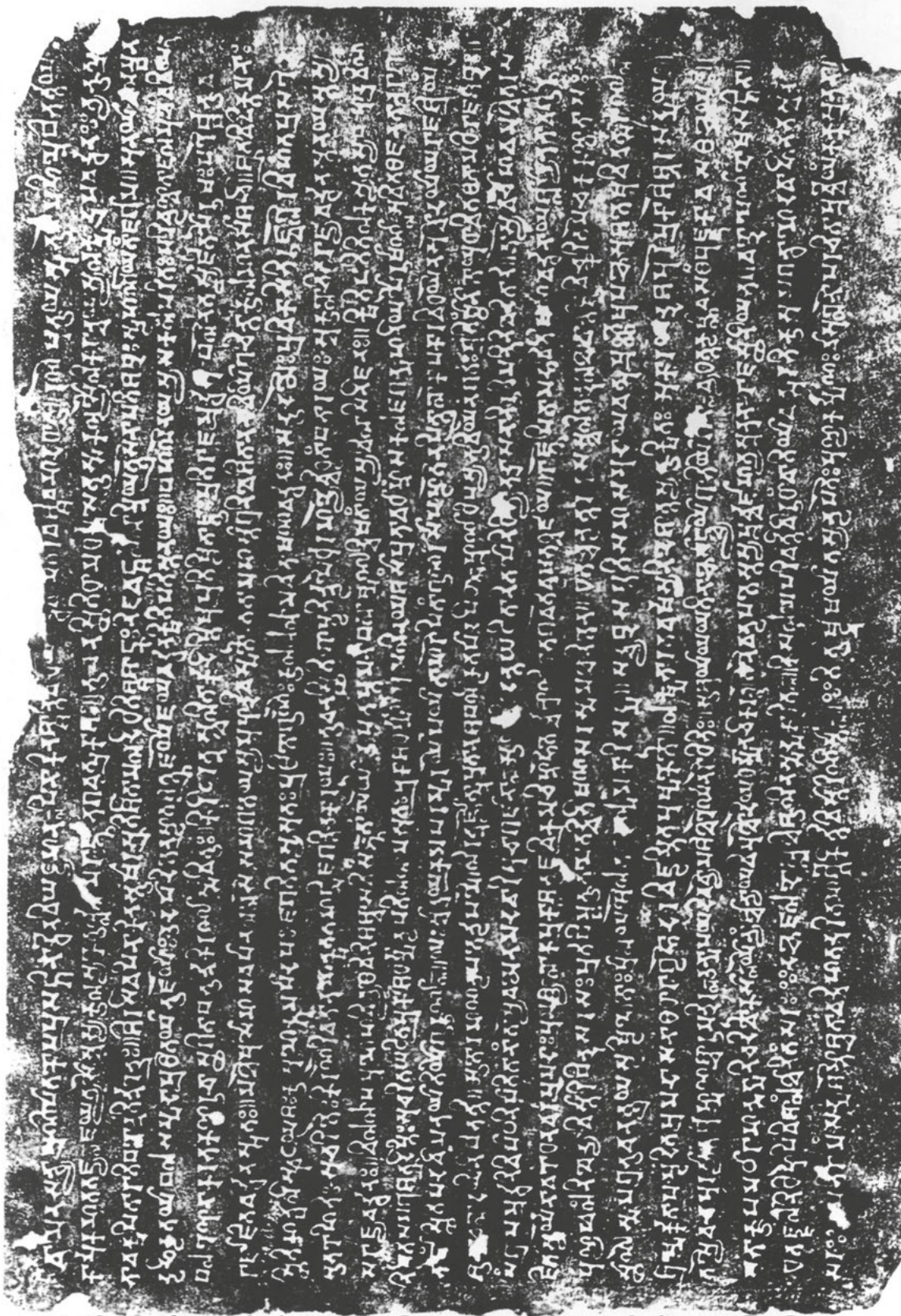
The stone was discovered in 1983 while digging the foundations for a building in the village of Risthal (रीस्थल, probably 24°07'46"N 75°19'50"E), about 27 kilometres east-northeast of Mandsaur.²⁰⁸ The remnants of a baked

brick wall were also unearthed at this time, but no sculpture or any other object of interest has been reported. On 18 September 1983 the slab was moved to the Naṭnāgar Śodh Saṃsthān in Sitamau, where it is still held, exhibited in the library. Photographs were immediately sent to V. S. Wakankar, V. V. Mirashi and D. C. Sircar. Recognising a trove of historical information in the text, each scholar promptly responded with an edition and there ensued a general flare of interest in the Risthal stone. The first edition, along with a rubbing, was published by K. V. Ramesh and S. P. Tewari (1983). Sircar's report (1984a) and detailed commentary (1984c) followed, simultaneously with Mirashi's edition (1984a, also published as 1984b, 27–41) who also added a new rubbing. Also simultaneously, Wakankar's edition appeared in Hindi (Wakankar and Rajpurohit 1984). Jagannath Agrawal published a third inked impression (J. Agrawal 1986b, 91–94, also published as J. Agrawal 1990) along with his suggestions to correct some readings and translations of the inscription, then continued to discuss its import (1989). Finally, Richard Salomon (1989) re-edited the text using all published facsimiles and discussing its historical

Chandra Pandey for showing me this article in the journal of the Mandsaur Government College, which is as far as I know the only scholarly account by a person who has actually been to the site. In addition to the exact date, which Mirashi (1984a, 27) wrongly reports as December 1983, Wakankar and Rajpurohit also give some additional details such as whose tractor was used to transport the stone. I have also relied on their description of the location of Risthal, since I have not visited the village and its location is not shown accurately in online maps. The coordinates I give seem to mark the most likely spot, but may be slightly off. See also Figure 28 on page 145.

²⁰⁸ I summarise the circumstances of discovery from the report of Wakankar and Rajpurohit (1984, 14–15). I am indebted to Kailash

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

Figure 25: Risthal inscription of Prakāśadharmān. Inked rubbing from Trivedi (2001, Plate 13).



Figure 26: Risthal inscription of Prakāśadharmān. Composite digital photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of the Natnagar Śodh Samsthān, Sita māu.

implications in detail. My present edition is based on photographs of the stone taken at the Naṭnāgar Śodh Saṁsthān in January 2017.

Script and Language

The writing is in the angular variety of the Malwa script. In addition to the overall neatness of the execution, there is also a pervasive, though modest, level of calligraphic ornamentation. This includes a variance of line thickness: apart from the clearly defined nail heads or serifs present in every character that affords them, most endpoints are also widened. The effect is that the majority of strokes are tapered triangles rather than lines. Subscript *ya* and *ra* are often ornamentally enlarged, sometimes extending back beyond the preceding character. Just as conspicuous are the vowel *śiromātrās* which are typically exaggerated in size and their ends are decorated by a bladelike widening with a barb. The variation in the positioning of vowel marks (horizontal or overhead or a combination) seems to be driven by no factor other than an aesthetic sense. The inscription was obviously “typeset” with attentive foresight, and some characters shift to make room for another one that follows them.

The stems of *a*, *ka* and *ra* are only slightly elongated; occasionally, when a large subscript consonant of the following character needs to be accommodated, they do not even extend below the baseline. They have no hooks, but widen calligraphically at the bottom, so they resemble a narrow triangle with the base slanting down on the right.²⁰⁹ The right leg of *śa* and *ta* (but not *ga*) is occasionally also extended, as in northern scripts, but this extension is very slight. *Ma* is open with a prominent tail and straight sides sloping inward; the left arm may be slightly bent. *Ṇa* has the open-mouthed northern form. *Ya* is tripartite with a large upright loop on left arm, but when conjoined with a *pr̥ṣṭhamātrā* (*udayaiḥ*, 17; *yena*, 113), it takes a bipartite form with a large loop. There are two forms of *la*, one with a short stem ending in a serif (which makes the character a mirror image of *ha*) and another with a vertically elongated stem that tapers to a point without bending to the left at all (e.g. *kula-lalāma*, 17). The choice between the two forms may be partly governed by vowel attachment, since *le* and *lo* always use the short

form, but *la* and *lā* take either form apparently randomly. The short form predominates in the first few lines, but the long one takes precedence later on. *Ca* is triangular with a prominent beak and a sloped bottom. *Bha* is of the angular variety; its arm widens at the end like most open-ended strokes. *Tha* has a horizontal crossbar, but when used as the subscript component of a conjunct, the entire character changes its orientation, becoming wider than it is tall, with a vertical crossbar and the outline notched above and below the crossbar so that the grapheme looks like *cha*. Another curiosity is the horizontal composition of *rggha* (*śikharair gghana*^o, 118): *g* and *gh* are placed side by side and merged so that the right leg of *g* is the left arm of *gh*. Moreover, the *repha* is attached to the central limb of *gh* instead of the top of *g*, much as in horizontally composed modern Devanagari conjuncts. Since the left arm of the *g* component is very close to the preceding character, it is possible that *rggha* was first engraved and the unusual form is a product of ingenious correction to *rggha*. It is also worth noting that subscript *r* is not a gentle rounded curve but begins with a straight vertical (or even right-slanting) line, which turns left and slightly up at an acute angle and extends quite far back in a line that curves slightly down, then at the very end curves up or turns upward at an angle.

The inscription includes several initial vowels. *A* and *ā* have a hook turned to the left, so *a* essentially looks like the Devanagari form. *I* is composed of three circles, two above and one below. *U* again resembles Devanagari, looking essentially like a figure 3 with a large serif replacing the top prong. *E* is triangular with the point downward. Vowel marks for *ā*, *e*, *ai*, *o* and *au* can appear as horizontal strokes turning downward at a right angle, as sloping *śiromātrās*, or a combination thereof. Their variation, as noted above, is probably driven by calligraphy. The general tendency seems to be a preference for horizontal marks when and only when these do not interfere with the consonant body, and for overhead marks in other cases. Thus, for instance, *ā* appears as an oblique *śiromātrā* when conjoined with *p* or *s*; *e* is a *śiromātrā* when attached to *ṇ* and *s*. *Ai* has a horizontal and an oblique stroke when attached to *r*, but two obliques when joined to *ṇ*. Some consonants combine with the right-hand horizontal stroke of *ā* and *o* to produce special forms. In this form of *m* the right arm curves down on the right, making the character very similar to *ha* (e.g. *vighaṭṭyamānam*, 11; *śivam ādadhātu*, 11; *kusumodgama*, 17). *Ṇ*, when combined with these vowels, has its right leg turned up in a curve, which rises above the headline and bends to the right there (e.g. *kiraṇās*, 15; *oṣmaṇā*, 19; *sthāṇos*, 116). However, *pauruṣāṇām* in 110 has a regular *śiromātrā* instead of the special form, which may be calligraphic variation or may indicate that the *ā*

²⁰⁹ Bose (1938, 330) points out the angular protuberances at the bottom of *ka* and *ra* as an innovation in the Sondhni pillar (A11, A12), which becomes the rule in the Gaya inscription of Mahānāman and even more prominently in the Apsad inscription of Ādityasena. This widening is evidently the same phenomenon at an earlier date.

was omitted at first and added when the *halanta m* was already in place. In the case of *j*, the special form consists in an extension of the top (not the middle) prong, which first dips, then rises quite high, and finally curls to the right (e.g. *rājā*, 16; *jyotsnā*, 112). This form is not ubiquitous and is often replaced by a right-curling *śiromātrā* without the dip (e.g. *gajā*, 113; *dhvajā*^o, 114; *pūrvvajā*^o, 119). Notably, *lo* does not have a special cursive form; instead, all instances use two plain horizontal marks attached to a short-stemmed body. The sign for medial *i* is a curve open on the bottom left; medial *ī* is its mirror image open on the right. The descending end of these curves may be quite vertical and may extend very slightly below the headline, but only rarely does so. Medial *ṛ* is not a curlier likeness of subscript *r*, but a C-shaped sign as in Devanagari.

The *halanta* forms of consonants (*t*, *n* and *m*) are simplified versions of the full forms, slightly lowered and always with a horizontal line above. *Halanta m* begins with a curl at the top left (so the character resembles a reduced *la*), while *halanta t* has an additional curl at the bottom resembling an *u mātrā* (see *viyat*, 14 and *acikarat*, 119), which may be a precursor to the modern subscript *halanta* sign. There is neither *upadhmaniya* nor *jihvamūliya* in the inscription; the *visarga* is consistently used before labials and velars.

As in the inscription of the silk weavers (A6), a two-tiered system of punctuation is used. The ends of half-verses are marked with a short horizontal dash (transcribed below as a single *daṇḍa*), while full verse ends have a plain double vertical line (transcribed as a double *daṇḍa*). The half-verse dash is never employed after a *halanta* consonant, so the horizontal line marking *halanta* forms clearly doubles as a punctuation mark. The sign is also occasionally omitted after a *visarga*, but more often both appear in conjunction. Only in one instance is the half-verse sign omitted after a regular *akṣara* (v15b; also, the sign in v19b is small and not quite certain). The double vertical is consistently used at the end of every verse, including after a *halanta* consonant or a *visarga*.

Consonants are doubled after *r* with very few exceptions (e.g. *kārmukam*, 12; *varṣasya*, 117). Some of the exceptions may occur because there is a word boundary after the *r* (*nṛpair dhuram*, 18; *nṛpater nṛpa*, 112; ^o*āntar brahmaṇaś*, 118). However, consonants before *r* are as a rule not geminated, except for *t* which usually is (e.g. *yattra*, 13; *śatru*, 14; but *śatru*, 110). A single consonant is used where a double would be standard in *ujvala*, 17.

The *visarga* is rarely used before sibilants (*śabdaḥ sprhaṇīyatām*, 14; *yaḥ svānvaya*, 111); a conjunct consonant is preferred much more often (e.g. *pinākinaś śānti*, 11; *bhūyassu*, 11; *vaś śivam*, 11; *setus sakala*^o, 12; *dīdhitiś*

śasāṅkaḥ, 13; etc.). *Anusvāra* use is close to standard, though velar *ṅ* is sometimes preferred before sibilants (*vaṅśa*, 13; *tamāṅsi*, 18, ^o*āṅśu*, 115) and palatal *ṅ* before palatals (*yatināṅ ca*, 118; ^o*āvasathaṅ ca*, 118).

The language is standard Sanskrit used eloquently and elegantly. The poet, Vāsula the son of Kakka, was obviously a talented man even if he was not in the first rank of poets.²¹⁰ His language is rarely awkward (though for instance he seems overly fond of the word *lalāman*, “ornament,” and three of the five words in the compound *surabhi-kusuma-gandhāmōda-vāhi*, verse 28, mean “scent” or “scented”). His meanings are usually clearly expressed, and he uses devices of sound and meaning in a manner and quantity as pleasing to a modern European reader as it, presumably, was to the audience of the period. The inscription is in verse throughout, and Vāsula shows off his skill by employing a wide variety of metres including some that rarely appear in inscriptions of the Gupta period, such as *mālabhāriṇī* and *pramitākṣarā*.²¹¹

Commentary

The purpose of the Risthal inscription is to record the construction of a lake and a temple to Śiva by the Aulikara king Prakāśadharman. Its outstanding historical significance is due to the fact that it contains this ruler’s genealogy, which is the only presently known testimony for the Later Aulikara line.

There is no opening formula or symbol, but the first character is indented from the margin by about one character width. The surface of the stone is smooth here: there is definitely no *maṅgala* symbol, but perhaps the intent had been to carve one here after the inauguration of the temple. The blank space may thus be an indication that the construction was never completed (see also page 6 about the opening formula *siddham*).

The opening stanza is a prayer to the Ardhanārīśvara form of Śiva. In it the goddess, though united in body with her husband, is in a fit of pique because he has shown respect to another lady, namely the twilight, which is sometimes personified as the goddess Sandhyā (who in turn is occasionally spoken of as Śiva’s consort). The verse

²¹⁰ No composition of his has been preserved in manuscript form, nor are any verses attributed to him in *subhāṣita* anthologies that I am aware of, though the first stanza of this inscription (see the Commentary below) would in my opinion stand its ground with the best of them.

²¹¹ Ramesh and Tewari incorrectly identify the metre of verses 5 and 6 as *āryāgīti*, and that of verses 11 and 12 as *gīti*. The former are in *pramitākṣarā* and the latter are in *viyogīni*.

involves double entendre, so that Śiva has in fact made a ritual prostration to the morning or evening twilight, and it is only Pārvatī's jealous mind that perceives this as an act of unfaithfulness. At any rate, she is at the moment not amenable to requests. The male half, however, remains unruffled and kindly even while being physically split from his better half, hence the prayer is addressed to him. The word *vāmetara*, primarily describing the male half as “not left” i.e. the right-hand one, is probably also intentionally polyvalent: its additional meanings “other than a woman” and “not adverse” are both greatly applicable to the context. The situation described in the verse is reminiscent of the opening verse of the *Mudrārākṣasa*, a dialogue in which Pārvatī is jealous of the Gaṅgā, a feminine being that has the great honour of being on Śiva's head, while Śiva obstinately misunderstands her probing questions.²¹²

The second verse is in honour of the reigning king, Prakāśadharman, described as one who fights battles for the betterment of the world. He is referred to as *bhagavat-prakāśaḥ*, which is in all probability not to be understood to constitute an alternative name interchangeable with Prakāśadharman (“he whose essential nature is radiance”) and meaning “the radiance of the Lord.” Rather, Prakāśadharman has been truncated to Prakāśa,²¹³ and *bhagavat* is prefixed to it as an honorific.

Verses 3 to 12 enumerate the genealogy of Prakāśadharman, starting with Drapavardhana.²¹⁴ Stanza 3 calls him an ornament of the entire Aulikara lineage who defeated his enemies, while the following verse says he was a warlord (*senāpati*) of such stature that his title became desirable. This is clearly an account of the founder of the dynasty, a chieftain carving out a kingdom for himself. For this reason I believe that the first half of the fifth stanza also

refers to Drapavardhana, since it appears to be a continuation of this story: after taking control by main force, he consolidated his rule by wise policy. I interpret the instrumentals here as expressing the circumstances or conditions of the finite verb *udapādi*. Salomon understands the first half to describe the son Jayavardhana, but in addition to being less likely in the context, this requires construing the instrumental with the participle *hṛta* in compound, which is more awkward than the parsing I suggest.²¹⁵

Still in verse 5, we learn of the birth of Drapavardhana's son Jayavardhana. Verse 6 describes Jayavardhana's tremendous armies which, unless this is but stereotypical adulation, implies that he extended the realm of his father. The name Jayavardhana, “increaser of victory,” may be suggestive of the same, provided that it was not his birth name but a *biruda* adopted in the course of his reign. Stanzas 7 and 8 describe Ajitavardhana, the son of Jayavardhana who was never vanquished by enemies but asserted his power over other kings. The eighth verse describes in a charming piece of poetic fancy the Vedic sacrifices performed by Ajitavardhana. If this genealogy has any trace of a factual chronicle to it, then the narrative is that by his time the Later Aulikara realm had been consolidated: he did not concern himself with expansion, but successfully defended the territory owned by his forebears and prospered in it. In the ninth stanza Ajitavardhana's son Vibhiṣaṇavardhana makes his appearance. This verse and the next one praise his shining good deeds without any particulars. The following pair of stanzas are about his son Rājyavardhana. Verse 11 says he was truly, and not just in name, an increaser of the kingdom (*rājya-var-dhana*), and that he bore the burden that had been borne by the preservers of the world's stability in olden days. Wakankar and Rajpurohit (1984, 17) believe this refers to the Gupta emperors, but this seems unlikely to me. Either mythical kings of yore are meant or, more likely, the earlier kings of the Aulikara dynasty. Verse 12 indicates his victories in battle by describing the distress of his enemies' wives. The theme is banal, but its implementation is given a fresh intensity by the string of finite verbs in the perfect tense. These two verses may indicate that Rājyavardhana did indeed add new lands to the ones he had inherited.

Verse 13 introduces the reigning king, Prakāśadharman as the son of Rājyavardhana and true to the name “he whose essential nature is radiance.” The fourteenth strophe says he is a successor worthy of his great predecessors, who had all enjoyed the unfeigned loyalty (*avitathānurāga*) of

212 *Mudrārākṣasa* I.1, *dhanyā keyaṃ sthītā te śīrasi śaśikalā kiṃ nu nāmaitad asyā nāmaivāsyaś tad etat paricitam api te vismṛtaṃ kasya hetoh| nārīṃ pṛcchāmi nenduṃ kathayatu vijayā na pramāṇaṃ yadīndur devyā nihnotum icchor iti surasaritaṃ śāṭhyam avyād vibhor vaḥ||* “Who's the privileged lady on your head?” “Moon Sliver.” “Is that her name?” “Of course it's her name. What makes you forget even though you know it?” “It's a woman I have in mind, not the Moon.” “Vijayā can confirm it if you don't trust the Moon.” Thus the Lord hopes to conceal the Divine River from the Goddess—may his chicanery guard you.

213 Compare Rāṣṭravardhana, referred to as Rāṣṭra in the Chhoti Sadri inscription (A7); the Vibhiṣaṇa-saras mentioned in the present inscription and named after Vibhiṣaṇavardhana may also show that the former member of these compound names was viewed as primary, with the latter member perceived as something like a family name.

214 See also page 140 for a discussion of alternative readings of the name and the identification of Drapavardhana with Dravyavardhana mentioned in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*.

215 Ramesh and Tewari read the first word incorrectly and thus translate differently, but they also understand the first half-verse to refer to Drapavardhana.

the populace. This is interesting on the one hand because it allows that some kings only get disingenuous loyalty from their subjects, and on the other because *anurāga*, meaning “love” in many contexts, is a technical term in the *Arthaśāstra* meaning loyalty toward the sovereign and said on two occasions to encompass all royal strategies.²¹⁶ Stanza 15 further claims that the royal title, conferred on him by a father overwhelmed by his virtues,²¹⁷ was only accepted by Prakāśadharman because it was his duty to foster the subjects, not because he enjoyed kingship.

Stanzas 16 to 18 concern Prakāśadharman’s victory over the Hūṇa ruler Toramāṇa and have for this reason elicited much attention. While the basic message, namely that Prakāśadharman claims to have defeated Toramāṇa in battle, is clear, the literal meaning of verse 16 has been slightly problematic. Ramesh and Tewari (1983, 101) translated,

By him, who had established himself in the kingdom of the Hūṇa ruler through his foot-stool being flooded with the brightness of the gems of the kingly crown of the king Tōramāṇa, the word *adhirāja* was rendered factual in the battle.

They interpreted the preposition *ā* with the ablative to mean “from Toramāṇa onwards” (ibid. 97), read *pīṭhām* at the end of the second quarter, and construed *yudhā + avitathatām* in the fourth quarter. Both Sircar (1984a, 15) and Mirashi (1984b, 38 n. 3) construed *yudhā + vitathatām*, which improves the sense greatly, so that the stanza actually says the Hūṇa ruler’s imperial title was rendered false by Prakāśadharman. Jagannath Agrawal (1986b, 93, 1990, 130) made the same point and also suggested reading or emending to *pīṭhāt*.²¹⁸ Mirashi (1984b, 38) moreover corrected the interpretation of the *ā* plus ablative construction, which is much more likely to mean “up to [the time of] Toramāṇa.”²¹⁹ The translation offered by Salomon

(1989, 8) respects all these considerations and is essentially identical to my translation below. However, he also notes (ibid. 10, 27–28) that the verse is still ambiguous, and the word *hūṇādhipasya* is particularly problematic since, being a genitive, it cannot stand in apposition to *toramāṇa-nṛpater* (an ablative), yet it is also singular, so it cannot refer to Hūṇa kings in general. I believe Salomon is overly cautious and our present understanding of this stanza is as close to certain as it is possible to be in any matter involving language. The singular number of *hūṇādhipa* can be explained by taking it to mean the king of the Huns at any particular time, which is semantically equivalent to Toramāṇa in this context, but not syntactically connected to the word *toramāṇa-nṛpater*, which is in a subordinate clause. Finally, by translating the *ā* plus ablative phrase as “by the time of Toramāṇa,” we can soften the implication that Toramāṇa had been preceded by several other Hunnic rulers who claimed an imperial title on Indian soil. This latter is what Mirashi (1984a, 321–22, 1984b, 38) deduced from this stanza, and the text may imply it, but Salomon (1989, 27) is right to emphasise that it is far from being a certain conclusion.

The next two stanzas detail how Prakāśadharman disposed over the spoils of his victory. According to verse 17, he had the tusks of slain elephants made into thrones which he donated to Brahmins, while verse 18 says he captured the women of Toramāṇa’s harem and offered them to Śiva, which presumably means that they became temple servants, *devadāsīs*.²²⁰ In the compound *loka-prakāśa-bhuja-vikrama-cihna* (114) I understand *loka-prakāśa* to qualify *cihna*, meaning “a symbol ... visible to the world.” Others (Ramesh and Tewari 1983, 101; Salomon 1989, 8) have understood *loka-prakāśa* as “illuminating the world” and construed it as modifying Prakāśadharman’s valour (*vikrama*), which is syntactically and semantically plausible, but quite irrelevant. Sircar (1984c, 169–70) on the other hand believes Lokaprakāśa is an alternative name of Prakāśadharman,²²¹ which again cannot be excluded but does not seem warranted. While the term *prakāśa* is pregnant with allusion to Prakāśadharman, the most likely meaning of the compound in context is that by giving the

216 *Arthaśāstra* 7.5.14 and 8.2.24, *anurāge sārvaḡuṇyam*.

217 Statements of this sort are conventional and intended to emphasise the legitimate succession of a chosen heir. Still, the verse is perhaps particularly reminiscent of verse 2 of the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta which also mentions the father’s emotions and the fact that he discerned the virtues of the son (18, *sneha-vyāluṭitena bāṣpa-guruṇā tattvekṣiṇā cakṣuṣā*). Both, perhaps, imply that the appointed heir had strong contenders for the status of *yuvārāja*, for instance because he was not the eldest son.

218 In fact, I am quite certain that *pīṭhām* was first engraved, but this was already corrected to *pīṭhāt* by an ancient editor. See note to line 12 of the text.

219 The preposition *ā* with a noun in the ablative indicates a boundary in space or time, either meaning “from” or “up to” a certain point (Speijer 1886, 122 §168). See also verse 5 of the Sondhni pillar inscription (A11, A12) for the use of this construction. Since it is clear from the following stanzas of the present inscription that Prakāśadhar-

man claims victory over Toramāṇa, the intended meaning here must be “up to,” not “from” Toramāṇa.

220 On temple girls dedicated to Rudra, see the recent work of Dominic Goodall (2018).

221 Hans Bakker (forthcoming and personal communication, August 2018) agrees with Sircar’s opinion on the grounds that otherwise *bhuja* is bereft of a possessor. I see no problem with this; for a parallel one need not go farther than verse 5 of the same inscription where *bhuja* is likewise without a possessor. The agent (logical subject) of the sentence is to be understood there and, in my opinion, here.

ladies to a temple, Prakāśadharman deliberately advertised to a wide public his success against Toramāṇa.²²²

Exactly what his success consisted in is impossible to determine. Mirashi (1984b, 38), weaving a narrative of national heroism around the Aulikaras, goes so far as to say, “Prakāśadharman deprived Toramāṇa and other Hūṇa kings of their Imperial title and made them his feudatories.” Salomon (1989, 27) takes the other extreme and remarks that our inscription’s claim “proves nothing more than that the two came into conflict, and that Prakāśadharman was not conquered by the Hun.” Sircar (1984c, 174–76) proposes a more complex plot according to which the Hūṇas had conquered Daśapura from another branch of the Aulikaras,²²³ and Prakāśadharman ousted them from the city and took up residence there. Verses 19 and 20 come to what is technically point of the inscription: the construction of a reservoir and a temple to Śiva, who is referred to by the name Sthāṇu and said to be the cause of the creation of the entire world in verse 20. The name of the temple is not recorded; the reservoir was named Lake Vibhiṣaṇa after Prakāśadharman’s grandfather Vibhiṣaṇavardhana, to whom the king dedicates the merit arising from the construction.

Verse 21 gives the date as Mālava Era 572 expired, expressing the number in slightly complicated phrasing to fit the requirements of the metre.²²⁴ It also specifies the season as the summer, with a long compound describing that season but without a month or day.

Verses 22 to 27 tell us that the lake and the temple were constructed by Chancellor (*rājasthānīya*)²²⁵ Doṣa, who is the son of the minister to Prakāśadharman’s father (Rājyavardhana).²²⁶ The chancellor is named in the phrase *bhagavad-doṣeṇa* in verse 26, and his name has generally been understood to be Bhagavaddoṣa, but in my opinion *bhagavat* is an honorary prefix and the name is just Doṣa; see page 165 for my arguments in favour of this. He was also responsible for a number of construction works in the city of Daśapura, foremost of which is the temple of Prakāśeśvara (i.e. of Śiva named in honour of

Prakāśadharman²²⁷), which is described as an ornament of the whole of India (Bhāratavarṣa)²²⁸ and was probably the primary royal temple of the capital. Doṣa also constructed a temple to Brahmā in Daśapura (verse 23), and a number of gathering halls (*sabhā*), wells, Brahmanical monasteries (*maṭha*) and miscellaneous temples (verse 25).

Sircar (1984c, 171–72) points out that temples dedicated solely to Brahmā were rare in ancient India (as they are today). Bakker (forthcoming) therefore proposes that *brahmaṇaḥ ... mandiram* may mean a mansion for the Brahmin priesthood. I believe a Brahmā temple is more likely in spite of being something of a curiosity. Verse 2 of Nirdoṣa’s inscription (A10) implies that the Naigamas’ paid special respect to Brahmā and may draw an analogy between the roles of Brahmā and the chancellor, and verse 1 of the first Chittor fragment (A13) may also be an invocation to Brahmā. Moreover, a sizeable Gupta-period sculpture of a four-faced Brahmā carved in the round has been recovered from the sands of the Shivna (K. K. Shah and Pandey 1989, 476 and plate 117) and is presently on display at the Yashodharman Museum. This image may very well have belonged to Doṣa’s temple in Daśapura.

His constructions mentioned in verse 24 are more enigmatic. These are the *kṛṣṇāvasatha* and the *bujjukāvasatha*, described as shelters for ascetics practising Sāṃkhya and Yoga, perhaps respectively in these two institutions. The term *avasatha* or *āvasatha* is ambiguous. Mirashi (1984b, 30) understands these to be shrines with Kṛṣṇa and Bujjuka as their respective deities, assuming that the latter is a local god. Salomon adopts this interpretation, observing (1989, 10 n. 18) that he could not trace any attestation of the name Bujjuka. However, Sircar (1984c, 171) suggests that the buildings were abodes for ascetics and were named after two ladies, Kṛṣṇā and Bujjukā about whom nothing is known but who may have been Prakāśadharman’s queens. Willis (2009, 105–6) has shown that *avasatha* can be used as a synonym of *sattra*, meaning “a place where food, clothing, and medicine were distributed [to] brāhmaṇas, wandering mendicants, and the needy” (ibid. 225), which fits eminently in the present context. Finally, Cecil (2016, 123 n. 273) proposes to interpret the term as “college” or “learned institution”²²⁹ and believes that Kṛṣṇa and Bujjuka may have been head

222 Mirashi may have held the same view as he comments that this was “a novel way of proclaiming one’s victories” (1984b, 29).

223 Sircar believes these Aulikara rulers of Daśapura would have included Ādityavardhana (see page 128) and Dravyavardhana (see page 140), and seems to say that they did not belong to the Early Aulikara house but represented yet another line.

224 Sircar’s commentary (1984c, 169) says the date is ME 570 or 512 CE. He apparently did not read the words *sa-dvy-abda* at the beginning of this stanza.

225 See page 8 about my translation of *rājasthānīya* as chancellor.

226 See also below (page 143) for a discussion of who built what where.

227 See also Bisschop (2010, 482) about the ideology involved in this name and for further references.

228 Salomon (1989, 8) translates the expression *lakṣma bhāratavarṣasya* as “symbol of Bhāratavarṣa.” This is slightly misleading, as it implies that the temple is a symbol representing the concept of India as a united country, while the inscribed text simply means an auspicious symbol beautifying the face of the land.

229 Following a verbal suggestion of Hans Bakker.

teachers or administrators of these institutions. Her interpretation stems from seeing *avasatha* as a synonym of *dharmasālā* (IEG s.v.), but *dharmasālā* too is much more likely in the present context to mean an institution of the type described by Willis, not a college. The issue remains unresolved without further evidence, but in my opinion *avasatha* almost certainly means a shelter or soup kitchen here. Since no god by the name of Bujjuka is known, it is quite likely that both the names refer to human beings, who may have been heads or founding patrons of the two institutions. Sircar's suggestion that one or both may have been female (and perhaps queens) is worth keeping in mind.²³⁰

Finally, verse 28 expresses the customary wish that the lake and the temple remain an everlasting testimony to the glory of the builder, and verse 29 is a signature of the composer Vāsula, who is also the author of the Sondhni pillar inscription (A11/A12). He records the name of his father, Kakka, but reveals no other information about himself except that he composed the text out of a desire to praise the king.

Drapavardhana and Dravyavardhana

When Ramesh and Tewari edited the Risthal inscription, they observed (1983, 102–3) that the name of Drapavardhana (which, as they explicitly noted, was clear in the epigraph) was probably a non-Sanskritic name, but it closely resembled the name Dravyavardhana mentioned in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* of Varāhamihira. They believed that the two may have been identical, and Drapavardhana may have changed in the transmission of the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* to the *lectio facilior* Dravyavardhana.

Varāhamihira says in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* that he wrote his own compendium on omens (*śakuna*) after consulting a number of earlier works including an epitome by His Majesty Dravyavardhana the king of Avanti who in turn had consulted the teaching of Bharadvāja.²³¹ P. V. Kane

²³⁰ Verses attributed to a poetess named Vijjikā, Vijjakā or Vijjākā are preserved in several anthologies (Warder 1983, 421–27), and the play *Kaumudimahotsava* may have been written by a lady called ... *jakā* who according to Warder (ibid. 428) was not identical to the former poetess. Neither of these authors has been identified satisfactorily and I am not proposing to equate either to Bujjukā of the Risthal inscription, only pointing to evidence that names closely resembling Bujjukā have been borne by learned women.

²³¹ *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* 85.2–4, *bhāradvāja-mataṃ dṛṣṭvā yac ca śrī-dravyavardhanaḥ| āvantikaḥ prāha nṛpo mahārājādhirājakaḥ|| ... tāni dṛṣṭvā cakāremaṃ sarva-śakuna-saṃgraham| varāhamihiraḥ prityā śiṣyāṇaṃ jñānam uttamam||*

(1949, 6), discussing the predecessors of Varāhamihira, remarked that “[i]t would be very useful if antiquarians can find out this king Dravyavardhana of Ujjayini,” and very tentatively noted that he may be connected to Harṣavardhana. Subsequently, the discovery of the Mandasaur fragment of Gauri (A8) added the name of Ādityavardhana to that of Yaśodharman Viṣṇuvardhana among the rulers of Daśapura, demonstrating that the Puṣyabhūti were not the only rulers with recurring names ending in *vardhana*. At this time V. V. Mirashi (1957, 316) came up with the suggestion that Dravyavardhana too may have belonged to the circles of the Aulikaras. Specifically, he proposed that Dravyavardhana was a contemporary of Varāhamihira (who flourished around 505 CE), and thus a successor of Ādityavardhana and predecessor of Yaśodharman.²³² To this D. C. Sircar (1960b, 208) quickly retorted that it was “impossible, without further evidence, to prove whether Dravyavardhana ruled in the fifth or sixth century A.D. or whether he was a predecessor or successor of Ādityavardhana.” Buddha Prakash (1965, 94–96) and Goyal (1967, 359), who preferred to understand 505 CE as Varāhamihira's birthdate,²³³ believed that Dravyavardhana was a successor of Yaśodharman,²³⁴ while Jain (1972b, 255) preferred the earlier dating of Varāhamihira and suggested that Dravyavardhana was the successor of Gauri and of Gauri's son Gobhaṭa.

In other words, most scholars attempting before the discovery of the Risthal inscription to locate Dravyavardhana placed him within a generation (or at most two) of Yaśodharman on either side. This may be the principal reason why Ramesh and Tewari's tentative identification with Drapavardhana was received with mixed feelings ranging largely from indifference to dismissal, since that would put him six

²³² The issue is intertwined with two other problems: the identity of Ādityavardhana (for which see page 128) and Mirashi's theory that Ujjayini was the capital of the Aulikaras for at least some time (discussed briefly on page 22).

²³³ The year 505 CE is associated with Varāhamihira because in another of his works, the *Pañcasiddhāntikā*, he uses Caitra śukla 1 of the Śaka year 427 as the epoch of astronomical calculations. This probably means that he begun or completed the book in that year, but because of a dubious tradition according to which Varāhamihira died in 587 CE, some scholars have assumed that 505 CE is the date of his birth. See A. M. Shastri's overview (1991, 3–5) for further details.

²³⁴ Buddha Prakash (1965, 92, 93–94) further argued that Yaśodharman's predecessor cannot have been a great ruler (as Dravyavardhana was supposed to be), since Malwa was first under Gupta, then under Hūṇa control, and since Yaśodharman's Sondhni inscription (A11/A12, verses 2–3) reviles contemporary kings, which he would not have done if his father had been a *mahārājādhirāja*. His arguments are invalidated on the one hand by the Risthal inscription itself, and on the other by my reasoning (below) about the alleged imperial title of Dravyavardhana.

generations before Yaśodharman (or more in the unlikely case that Yaśodharman was not Prakāśadharman's immediate successor). Mirashi (1984a) simply ignored the matter, reading *drumavarddhana* in the epigraph and never commenting on the possibility of a connection to Dravyavardhana. In a similar tack, Sircar (1984c) read the text as *dramavarddhana* and did not discuss the identification, only remarking (ibid. 175) that Dravyavardhana may have been a predecessor or successor of Ādityavardhana, not an ancestor of Prakāśadharman. Mirashi's view was accepted by several Indian scholars including Jagannath Agrawal (1989, 97) and Ashvini Agrawal (1989, 254). More recently Naval Kishore (1999, 66–67) has claimed explicitly that a “close examination of the estampage” shows that the correct reading is *drumavarddhana*.²³⁵ Salomon (1989, 19) endorsed *drapavarddhana* but with his customary caution concluded that the identification of this king with Dravyavardhana “must be considered tentative at best,” partly because there is no direct evidence that the latter was an Aulikara.

I have now ascertained that the Risthal inscription clearly and unambiguously has *drapavarddhana* near the end of line 2 (see Figure 27 for a closeup photograph). Whatever the various rubbings may hint at, in the actual stone there is not the slightest indication of an *u mātrā* attached to the ligature *dra*. *Pa* is likewise certain; the character superficially resembles *ma* throughout the inscription, but is clearly distinguished by its vertical sides (whereas *ma* has slanting sides, narrowing toward the bottom) and the lack of a tail (which is always present in *ma*).

The meaning of *drapa* must remain a mystery for the present. Ramesh and Tewari are likely correct in assuming that it is a non-Sanskritic name. To this I would add that the Sanskrit *vardhana* may have been tagged on to an original and wholly non-Sanskritic *Drapa* as a sort of family name by his descendants, though it is of course equally possible that he bore the full name *Drapavardhana* in his lifetime. Another, entirely hypothetical, possibility is that the name was in fact *Darpavardhana*, “increaser of pride,” which was altered by the poet to fit the metre. The maxim *māṣam api maṣam kuryāc chando-bhaṅgaṃ vivarjayet*²³⁶ is widely quoted, but examples of its application in actual poetic praxis are rare and one would not expect a poet as skilful as Vāsula to do so. However, he does use the word

²³⁵ Kishore may be repeating the opinion of his doctoral supervisor Ashvini Agrawal here, who (1989, 254) adopts the reading *drumavarddhana* but does not, to my knowledge, argue for it explicitly in print.

²³⁶ Freely, “Say bins for beans if you must, but don't you break the metre.”



Figure 27: The name of *Drapavardhana* in the Risthal inscription. Below: five instances of *ma* (top row) and *pa* (bottom row) for comparison. Detail of digital photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of the Naṭnāgar Śodh Saṁsthān, Sitamau.

tala in the Sondhni pillar inscription (A11, A12), where the usual form, *tāla*, would be prosodically unsuitable. The former is attested as an alternative to *tāla* in several thesauri (PWG s. v. *tala* 7), but literary attestations are rare.²³⁷ Be that as it may, *Dramavardhana* is equally unintelligible, while *Drumavardhana*, “tree grower,” seems more apt for a gardener than for a warlord, so it is also unlikely that *drapa* is a scribal mistake for *drama* or *druma*. The question of the reading laid at rest, there remains the issue of identity.

Ajay Mitra Shastri hypothesised that Dravyavardhana was Varāhamihira's personal Maecenas and a successor of Yaśodharman, mustering his arguments in an article (1989) which he re-published as a chapter of his book on Varāhamihira (1991, 43–58). He claimed here that the identification of this king with *Drapavardhana* was “simply impossible for a variety of reasons” (1989, 168, 1991, 49). I find his arguments entirely unconvincing and hold that, while there is no direct evidence for the identification of *Drapavardhana* with Dravyavardhana, there is also no compelling evidence against it; and it is the most parsimonious interpretation of the facts we possess.

The crux of Shastri's argument against the identification is that while *Drapavardhana* was merely a warlord (*senāpati*) according to the Risthal inscription, Dravyavardhana bore the imperial title *mahārājādhirāja*

²³⁷ The only one I know of (thanks to MW s. v.) is *Viddhaśālabhañjikā* 2.13, *itaḥ śravaṇa-pāśataś ca tala-patram āste cyutam*. Here too the word is used in syllabo-quantitative verse and may have been shortened *metri causa*. Moreover, the locus is philologically problematic; reported variants include *talaja-patram* and *calita-patram*.

according to the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*. Salomon (1989, 19) also makes note of this difference to emphasise that the identification must not be taken for granted. The point would be important were it not for the simple fact that Varāhamihira does not call Dravyavardhana *mahārājādhirāja*. The expression in *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* 85.2 is *nṛpo mahārājādhirājakaḥ*, so the actual title the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* allots to Dravyavardhana is *nṛpa*, which is barely more glamorous than *senāpati*. Shastri, along with everyone else who reiterated his arguments, seems to have implicitly understood *mahārājādhirājakaḥ* to mean *mahārājādhirājaḥ*. This, however, makes *nṛpo* redundant and is, in addition, stylistically questionable. Varāhamihira is generally recognised as a poet of great technical skill, among others by Shastri himself (1991, 2), so it is hard to conceive that in a metre as simple as *anuṣṭubh* he would have resorted to using the suffix *-ka* for *pādapūraṇa* and simultaneously added a superfluous word. Much more likely is that *-ka* is a meaningful formative suffix here, employed to form an adjective expressing relationship.²³⁸ That is to say, *mahārājādhirājaka* means “connected to the emperor” or “belonging to the emperor,” where “the emperor” must refer to the sovereign ruler of Varāhamihira’s days, and a king described as “connected to him” is most likely one of his ancestors. A further point in favour of my interpretation is that it also happens to be how the commentator Utpala²³⁹ understands this passage. Shastri cites Utpala’s commentary on several points but ignores it here, though it clearly interprets *mahārājādhirājakaḥ* to mean “born in the dynasty of the [or: of an] emperor.”²⁴⁰ If Utpala had had access to historical information lost to us, he would probably have named some names here; the fact that he does not probably means that he speculates just as I do. He is therefore not necessarily correct, yet it is reassuring that he is on the same track.²⁴¹

Shastri claims that Dravyavardhana was the patron of Varāhamihira or, “[e]ven if this conclusion is for

some reason not found acceptable, it can definitely be averred that he was a contemporary of Varāhamihira” (A. M. Shastri 1989, 164). His primary reason for this opinion is what he perceives as Varāhamihira’s “highly reverential attitude towards Dravyavardhana” (ibid.), supposedly evidenced by the use of the words *śrī*, *mahārājādhirājaka* and *nṛpa*, and by the fact that Dravyavardhana receives credit before many great authors. I do not notice a particularly reverential attitude here and even conceding the point I fail to see why this would even hint that the author and the king were contemporaries. Any respect shown by Varāhamihira can be equally explained by the hypothesis that Dravyavardhana was an ancestor of the current ruler. Moreover, Varāhamihira evidently had not seen a first-hand work of Bharadvāja. If Dravyavardhana had been Varāhamihira’s personal patron and had had access to an authority as momentous as Bharadvāja, then surely Varāhamihira himself would have studied the original treatise and not an epitome. All in all, the available evidence does not prove the contemporaneity of Dravyavardhana and Varāhamihira and in fact hints that the former preceded the latter by some time. This renders invalid Shastri’s additional argument that Dravyavardhana cannot be identical to Drapavardhana because they lived in different times. Incidentally, the exact date of Varāhamihira also becomes irrelevant.

There remains the question of geography. Varāhamihira introduces himself as *āvantika*²⁴² and uses the same adjective for Dravyavardhana. The name Avanti can signify the city of Ujjayinī or the country surrounding it; in the latter sense the word is essentially synonymous to the later term Mālava (Dey 1979 s. v.). Mirashi (e.g. 1957) attempted to prove on the basis of this *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* passage that the Later Aulikaras ruled from the city Ujjayinī,²⁴³ while Shastri (1989, 171) asserted that Dravyavardhana had his seat there, though Aulikara rulers before him did not. I find their arguments unconvincing and agree with Sircar (Sircar 1959, 74) that *āvantika* can refer to a person belonging to Avanti country, not only to a denizen of the city itself.²⁴⁴ I would

²³⁸ The likewise common pejorative function of *-ka* can be ruled out in the context.

²³⁹ Utpala or Bhaṭṭotpala is the author of the earliest extant commentary on the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*. He lived in tenth-century Kashmir (Kane 1949, 22–23; Pingree 1981, 74).

²⁴⁰ Utpala *ad loc.*: **yac ca śākunaṃ bhāradvājākhyasya muner mataṃ dṛṣṭvāvalokya śrī-dravyavardhanākhyo mahārājādhirāja-vaṃśa-prasūta āvantika ujjayinīyā nṛpo rājā prāhoktāvan.** Bold emphasis on *pratīkas* mine.

²⁴¹ Likewise, three of the manuscripts used by Kern (1865, Appendix p. 63) have the text *mahārājādhirāja-jaḥ* which, assuming it is a variant introduced by copyists who had access to historical information about Dravyavardhana, may offer some support for the hypothesis I am about to advance here. (One MS reads *mahārājādhirājāḥ*, but this is apparently hypometrical and must thus be discarded.)

²⁴² *Bṛhajjātaka* 28.9, *āvantiko ... varāhamihiro* (cited by Mirashi 1957, 316; A. M. Shastri 1991, 5).

²⁴³ See page 22 for details.

²⁴⁴ Varāhamihira himself may corroborate this when he talks about *āvantikā janapadāḥ* (*Bṛhatsaṃhitā* 5.64). Although *janapada* may mean the people of a city, it seems to me that *janapadāḥ* in the plural would not be used for the inhabitants of a single city but must mean either the countries or the peoples of the land of Avanti. Mirashi (1959, 256–57 n. 7) further deploys Pāṇini in an attempt to prove that *Āvantika* must mean “of the city” and not “of the country,” but the citation (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 4.1.171 and 174) is irrelevant to the point. Shastri’s (1989, 163–64) observation that at one point Varāhamihira uses the name Ujjayinī in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (12.14), while a parallel pas-

further emphasise that even if it were proven through some new evidence that Varāhamihira was a resident of the city, this would still not guarantee that the word applies in the same narrow sense for Dravyavardhana. The Later Aulikaras, at least from Prakāśadharman onward, must have controlled most of Avanti country including Ujjayinī itself, but all available evidence indicates that their capital remained Daśapura throughout.

Shastri (1989, 163) further points out that Varāhamihira does not name a patron in any of his works, which in his opinion makes the only time he refers to a king – that is, Dravyavardhana in the passage discussed here – all the more significant. It is perhaps more likely that Varāhamihira did not have a royal patron and did not even live in a royal capital. Nonetheless the *mahārājādhirāja* ruling over his home was almost certainly an Aulikara: namely Prakāśadharman, Yaśodharman or an unknown successor of Yaśodharman. With this background, the scholar could well have used *āvantikah ... nṛpo mahārājādhirājakaḥ* to describe Drapavardhana, an ancestor of his sovereign. This is certainly not the only way the meagre evidence can be interpreted,²⁴⁵ but the points I have made above conjoined with the consonance of the names of Drapavardhana and Dravyavardhana definitely indicate that the two are probably one.

Unfortunately, no rigorous critical edition of the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* is available, and the editions that I have consulted show no variance in the word *dravya*. The presence of reported variants might make a good case for my identification, but their absence in a limited survey of manuscripts is at best circumstantial evidence against it.²⁴⁶ Reverse-engineering the process, it is very easy to speculate that the reading *dravya* arose from a mediaeval hyparchetype which had *drappa*. Equally feasible is the scenario that Drapavardhana was changed to Dravyavardhana not only in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* manuscripts but in general knowledge too, already the period intervening between his lifetime and that of Varāhamihira.

sage of his *Samāsasaṃhitā* has *avanti* in the same context is much more pertinent, but entirely inconclusive.

245 For instance, Hans Bakker (personal communication, August 2018) accepts the identification of Drapavardhana with Dravyavardhana, but suggests that *mahārājādhirājaka* should be understood as a governor installed in Ujjayinī by the (Gupta) emperor of Drapavardhana's times.

246 Kern (1865, Preface p. 64) calls his own pioneering work “an essay of an edition, rather than an edition which would require but few occasional corrections from future editors.” Nonetheless, he (*ibid.*, Appendix p. 63) does report a “doubtful” (*ibid.*, Preface p. 51 n.) variant, *vardhamānakaḥ* in one MS of Utpala's commentary. The fact that corruption is present at this locus may indicate that the urtext had a difficult word, such as *drapavardhanaḥ*, here.

Who Built What Where?

In spite of the degree of attention and level of scrutiny this inscription has attracted, the issue of “who built what where” seems to have been persistently misinterpreted or glossed over by other scholars. Richard Salomon (1989, 8) appears to understand the text as I do, and Ajay Mitra Shastri (1989, 166–67) definitely does, but neither of them discuss the details. I feel that such a discussion is warranted to clear up any remaining doubts about the interpretation. Constructions mentioned in the inscription comprise:

- (1) The Vibhīṣaṇa lake (v19) and a temple to Śiva (v20). The construction of these is expressed with passive verbs (*samakhāni*, v19 and *akāri*, v20), the agent of which is *tena* (v19), which clearly picks up the multiple instances of *yaḥ* and *yena* in verses 14 to 18, referring to Prakāśadharman.
- (2) The Prakāśeśvara temple (v22) and the Brahmā temple (v23) in Daśapura, along with two *avasathas* (v24) and further halls, wells, monasteries and temples (v25). These constructions are indicated with active verbs (*akārayat*, v22 and *acikarat*, v25) the subject of which is again a relative pronoun, *yaḥ* (v22 and v24). The phrase *nideśāt tasya bhū-kṣitaḥ*, “at the instruction of that king” (v22) refers to Prakāśadharman, so these edifices were constructed by someone else at Prakāśadharman's behest. That person's identity is revealed in verse 26, where an emphatic *tenaiva* means Chancellor Doṣa, who is named in the same verse. While *doṣeṇa* in that stanza is the agent of the participles in verse 27, the function of *tenaiva* is evidently to pick up the instances of *yaḥ* in verses 22 and 24. If this were not the case, then not only would the verbs in verses 22 and 25 remain without an expressed agent, but also *tenaiva* would be reduced to the status of a definite article, which would make for poorer style than the poet shows throughout the inscription.²⁴⁷
- (3) “this lake” and “this temple” (v27). Their creation is referred to with passive participles (*khānitam* and *kāritam*, v27), and the agent of these is clearly Chancellor Doṣa (v26).

It is thus beyond doubt that the gist of the inscription is as follows. Items (1) and (3) are identical, and the inauguration of the tank and the temple are the objective of the inscription. The first time they are mentioned as

247 The deeds and previous donations of Mayūrākṣaka are similarly described before introducing him in verses 16 to 20 of the Gangdhar inscription (A4).

commissioned by Prakāśadharman, while the aim of the second mention of the same tank and temple is to state that they were actually built by Doṣa. This clearly means that once the king had given the order, the practicalities of the construction were handled by the chancellor.²⁴⁸ Just as Prakāśadharman's introduction is preceded by a description of his lineage and fame, Doṣa's description is preceded (beside his introduction as a hereditary minister) by a description of the many other undertakings that he had executed as the hand of Prakāśadharman. The facilities in item (2), including the Prakāśeśvara temple, have no other connection to the Vibhīṣaṇa lake and its Śiva temple than that they were built by the same chancellor acting at the behest of the same king, and are only mentioned here to emphasise Doṣa's magnificence. The lake and temple described in (1) and (3) were probably constructed close to the findspot of the inscription. The buildings in (2), on the other hand, are clearly said to have been created in the town of Daśapura (*daśapure*, v22 and *tasyaiva ca purasyāntar*, v23). A corollary of this analysis is that the Risthal temple has no name, or rather that its name is not recorded in the inscription. I do not think this weakens my conclusion in the slightest: as a matter of fact, none of the temples whose construction is commemorated in the inscriptions collected in this book have a recorded name.²⁴⁹

Contrary to this, Ramesh and Tewari (1983, 96, 98, 101) and Mirashi (1984b, 30–31) believe that the inscription talks of two lakes and two Śiva temples in addition to the sundries in (2), with the lake/temple pair in (1) commissioned by Prakāśadharman and the other pair in (3) built by Doṣa acting on his own initiative. Sircar (1984a, 14, 1984c, 170–71) does accept that (1) and (3) are the same, but expresses puzzlement over why their construction is mentioned twice. The reason for his puzzlement may be that he simply takes Prakāśadharman to be the author of all constructions, ignoring the role of Doṣa (though probably assuming implicitly that he was the agent of all three undertakings). To make Prakāśadharman the executor of (2), he interprets *nideśāt tasya bhū-kṣitaḥ* (v22) as referring to Vibhīṣaṇavardhana, deducing that the grandfather was alive and advising Prakāśadharman at the time of the inscription. This is unwarranted, and the interpretation I propose above is much smoother.

²⁴⁸ In other words, Doṣa was the *kārāpaka* for this construction just as Vatsabhaṭṭi was for the building of the Sun temple of the silk weavers (page 95).

²⁴⁹ The temple of Manorathasvāmin in the Chittorgarh fragment (A14) was evidently a pre-existing building like the Prakāśeśvara in the present inscription.

More recently, Bisschop (2010, 481) implies that the Prakāśeśvara temple is identical to the Śiva temple mentioned in (1) and (2). Cecil (2016, 122 n. 271), reflecting on Bisschop, explicitly says this is “quite likely,” and Bakker (2017, 19) has also accepted this interpretation. But any attempt to equate the Prakāśeśvara to (1) and (2) has to assume a much messier syntactical and semantic structure in the inscription than the one I propose above, and in addition must either interpret *daśapure* in verse 22 to refer to the Daśapura *janapada* instead of the city, or assume that all the facilities mentioned in the inscription were in fact built within the city. The former is ruled out by the phrase *tasyaiva ca purasyāntar* in verse 23, while the latter seems unwarranted without a plausible account of how the inscription ended up in Risthal if it was originally installed in Mandsaur, as it is unlikely that building material was salvaged en masse at a later date from ruins around Daśapura and transported 27 kilometres as the crow flies over rugged terrain.

It is important to note in this connection that Wakankar and Rajpurohit (1984, 15), who may be the only scholars who actually surveyed the site before publishing about the inscription, propose to identify the lake constructed by Prakāśadharman in the immediate vicinity of the findspot of the inscription. Specifically, they report a hill about 500 metres east of Risthal, a lake an acre in extent between the village and the hill, and the remnants of an earthen dike which, when intact, would have extended the lake to include the surrounding fields.²⁵⁰ If my identification of the location of Risthal is correct (see page 132 and note 208 there), then the hill is rather to the southeast of the village. There is no perennial lake in the satellite images, but the dike is clearly discernible between the village and the hill (see Figure 28). A stream runs toward the west from the middle of the dike, and there may be a small periodic lake to the east of this spot. The area to the east of the dike has a higher concentration of wells and trees than the general neighbourhood, while irrigation plumes are absent from it, though a large number of them are visible all around. There was thus evidently a large, artificially enhanced reservoir of water near the findspot, and since there is no reason to assume that the inscription has been moved a long way from where it was originally installed, it is safe to accept that the Vibhīṣaṇa lake and the adjoining Śiva temple were located at present-day Risthal.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ S. R. Goyal (2005, 177) also notes that “the vestiges of the tank” are said to be present in Risthal but does not refer to any source for this. He may have relied on oral communication with Wakankar.

²⁵¹ Wakankar and Rajpurohit (1984, 15) note moreover that according to a village elder the lake is called Bhim-sar, which they believe



Figure 28. Left: satellite view of Risthal. Right: red line shows the place of the dam; light blue shading indicates possible extent of the Vibhīṣaṇa reservoir; dark blue line highlights present-day streambed and pond (seasonal?); dark blue circles highlight wells. Bing™ Maps aerial view, screenshot 28 May 2018. © 2018 DigitalGlobe © 2018 HERE Microsoft product screen shot(s) reprinted with permission from Microsoft Corporation.

The default assumption that the findspot is the original location of the inscription is clearly vindicated by the remains of a lake near the village. There are, however, no clues available at present as to what the significance of the site may have been in Aulikara times. Wakankar and Rajpurohit (1984, 16) believe that this was the spot where Prakāśadharman defeated Toramāṇa, and derive the name Risthal (which they spell रिस्थल) from *raṇa-sthala*, “battlefield.” While this seems to be a long shot, the fact that the inscription talks about the construction of the lake and temple directly after describing what Prakāśadharman did with the spoils may indicate that the site was connected in some way to the campaign against Toramāṇa.²⁵²

There may be other reasons why the lake was created, and the inscription installed, at Risthal. Mirashi (1984b, 36) thinks the place may have been the capital of this branch of the Aulikaras before they took over Daśapura from the Early Aulikaras, while according to Sircar (1984a, 14, 1984c, 170–71) Risthal may have been the residence of Vibhīṣaṇavardhana. (It is not clear if Sircar thinks of it as

a royal capital or as a country mansion used by that king in his old age.) Confirming either of these assumptions would require a thorough site survey followed by excavations, but if Risthal had indeed been a capital city, one would expect more architectural and sculptural remains to be available without excavation.

If the site is, after all, connected to the war against Toramāṇa, then the damming project was probably initiated shortly after Prakāśadharman’s triumph. Combined with the fact that by this time Prakāśadharman had completed several projects in Daśapura, this means that Daśapura must have been his capital for quite some time and not only occupied after successfully repelling Toramāṇa.

derives from the name Vibhīṣaṇa-saras mentioned in the inscription. This information, however, has negligible weight as evidence.

²⁵² A potential double entendre in verse 28 of the inscription furnishes additional circumstantial evidence for this hypothesis. See note 266 on page 152.

Diplomatic Text

- [1] ⁽¹⁾vāmena sandhyā-praṇipāta-kopa-prasaṅginārdhdhena vighaṭṭyamānaM pinākinaś śānt(?)i-v[i](dh)[e]
(yam a)[r](d)dha[m] v[ā]m[e]tara[m] vaś śivam ādadhātu|| ⁽²⁾raṇeṣu bhūyassu bhu(vo) mahimne bibhartti
ya(h)
- [2] kārmukam ātata-jyaM jayaty asau svasya kulasya ketur lla(lā)ma rājñām bhagavatprakāśaḥ|| ⁽³⁾bhuvana-
sthiti-dhāma-dhar(mm)a-setus sakalasyaulikarānvayasya lakṣma| drapavarddhana Ity abhūt pra
- [3] bhāva-kṣapitārāti-balonnatir narendrah|| ⁽⁴⁾śirasīva pinākinaś tuṣāra-sruti-śītāmala-didhitiś śasāṅkaḥ
nija-vaḥ!śa-lalāmnī yattra senā-pati-śabdaḥ sprhaṇiyatām jagāma|| ⁽⁵⁾sunayā(va)lambana-
- [4] dṛḍhikṛtayā bala-sampadā prathitayā bhujayoh| Udadpādi tena hṛta-śatru-jayo jayavarddhana-kṣitipatis
tanayaḥ ⁽⁶⁾bahalena yasya sakalam paritaḥ parivṛṇvatā jalamuceva viyaT
- [5] bala-reṇunā karabha-kaṇṭha-rucā sthagitā babhur nna kiraṇās savituḥ|| ⁽⁷⁾kirīṭa-ratna-skhalitārka-
dīptiṣu pratiṣṭhitājñāḥ pratirāja-mūrddha(s)u| balena tasyājīta-pauruṣaḥ parair bbabhūva
- [6] rājājītavarddhanas sutaḥ|| ⁽⁸⁾makheṣu somāsava-pāna-lālase samāgate yasya muhur ddivas-patau| tatāma
hastāgra-niveśitānā viyoga-cintākula-mānasā śaci|| ⁽⁹⁾śruta-vivikta-manāḥ
- [7] sthitimān balī sphuṭa-yaśaḥ-kusumodgama-pādapaḥ| jagati tasya sutaḥ prathito guṇaiḥ kula-lalāma
vibhīṣaṇavarddhaṇaḥ|| ⁽¹⁰⁾sad-udayaiḥ pravikāsibhir ujalair avihata-prasaraiḥ
- [8] śubha-rohibhiḥ| su-caritaiḥ kiraṇair iva bhānumān kṣata-tamāḥ!si jaganti cakāra yaḥ|| ⁽¹¹⁾bhuvana-sthiti-
gotpṛbhir nṛpāir dhuram ādyair vvidhṛtām babhāra yaḥ| sva-kulocita-rājya-varddhanas tanayas tasya
- [9] sa rājyavarddhanāḥ|| ⁽¹²⁾vilalāpa mumoha vivyathe viniśāśvāsa viśamjñatām yayau| Upatapta-manā
balōṣmaṇā dviṣatām yasya vilāsini-janaḥ|| ⁽¹³⁾kṣitipati-tilakasya tasya b(ā)hu-draviṇa-
- [10] nipīta-samagra-śatru-diptiḥ| sucarita-ghaṭita-prakāśa-dharmmā nṛpati-lalāma sutaḥ prakāśadharmmā||
⁽¹⁴⁾Amalina-yaśasām prabhāva-dhāmnām sakala-jagan-mahaniya-pauruṣāṇām Avitatha-janatānurāga-
- [11] bhā(j)ām sthiti-pada vim anuyāti yo gurūṇām|| ⁽¹⁵⁾yaḥ svānvaya-krama-paramparayopayātām āropitām
guṇa-rasāpahṛtena pitṛā lokopakāra-vidhaye na sukhodayāya rāja-śriyam
- [12] śu(bha-pha)lodayiniḥ bibhartti|| ⁽¹⁶⁾Ā toramāṇa-nṛpater nṛpa-mauli-ratna-jyotsnā-pratāna-śabalikṛta-
pāda-piṭhā(T) hūṇādhipasya bhuvī yena gataḥ pratiṣṭhām nīto yudhā vitathatām adhirāja-śabdaḥ||
- [13] ⁽¹⁷⁾saṃgrāma-mūrddhani vipāṭha-nipātītānām tasyaiva yena mada-vāri-mucām gajānām Āy[ā](m)i-danta-
ghaṭitāni taponidhi(bh)y(o) bhadraśānāni rucimanti niveditāni|| ⁽¹⁸⁾tasyaiva cāhava-mukhe tarasā
- [14] jītasya yenāvarodhana-vara-pramadāḥ pramathya| loka-prakāśa-bhuja-vikrama-cihna-hetor vviśrāṇitā
bhagavate vṛṣabhadhvajāya|| ⁽¹⁹⁾rājñe pitāmaha-vibhīṣaṇavarddhanāya ślāghyānu bhāva-guru-
- [15] puṇya-phalaṃ nivedya(l) vistāri bindu-sarasaḥ pratibimba-bhūtam etad vibhīṣaṇa-saras samakhāni tena||
⁽²⁰⁾Etac ca nṛta-rabhasa-skhalitendu-lekhā-vāntāḥ!śu-vicchurita-mecaka-kaṇṭha-bhāsaḥ|
- [16] sthāṇos samagra-bhuvana-ttraya-sṛṣṭi-hetoh prāleya-śaila-taṭa-(ka)lpam akāri sadma|| ⁽²¹⁾sa-dvy-abda-
saptati-samā-samudāyavatsu pūrṇeṣu pañcasu śateṣu vivatsarāṇām
- [17] grīṣme rkka-tāpa-mṛdita-pramadā-sanātha-dhārā-grhodara-vijṛmbhita-puṣpaketau|| ⁽²²⁾lakṣma bhārata-
varṣasya nideśāt tasya bhū-kṣitaḥ| Akārayad daśapure prakāśeśvara-sadma yaḥ||
- [18] ⁽²³⁾tasyaiva ca purasyā(n)tar brahmaṇaś cāru mandiraM Unmāpayad iva vyoma śikharair gghana-
rodhibhiḥ|| ⁽²⁴⁾Āśrayāya yatīnāḥ ca sāṅkhyā-yogābhiyog(in)ām vyadhata kṣṇāvasathaḥ bujjukāvasathāḥ
ca yaḥ||
- [19] ⁽²⁵⁾sabhā-kūpa-maṭhārāmān sadmāni ca divaukasām yo nyāṃś cānyāya-vimukho deya-dharmmān
acikaraT|| ⁽²⁶⁾tenaiva nṛpates tasya pūrvvajāmātya-sūnunā| rājasthāniya-bhagavad-doṣeṇādoṣa-saṅginā||
- [20] ⁽²⁷⁾Etaj jala-nidhi-hrepi viśālam khānitaḥ saraḥ| Idaḥ ca jaladollekhi śūlinas sadma kāritaM|| ⁽²⁸⁾kisalaya-
parivartti vīrudhām vāti yāvat surabhi-kusuma-gandhāmōdā-vāhi nabhasvāN
- [21] sara I(dam a)bhīramāḥ sadma śambhoś ca tāvad vihata-durita-mārgge kīrtti-vistāriṇī stām|| ⁽²⁹⁾Iti
tuṣṭūṣayā tasya nṛpateḥ puṇya-karmmaṇaḥ vāsulenoparacitā pūrvveyaḥ kakka-sūnunā

Curated Text

⟨Verse 1. Metre: upajāti⟩

^[1]vāmena sandhyā-praṇipāta-kopa-
prasaṅginārddhena vighaṭṭyamānam
pinākinaś śānt(?i)-v[i](dh)[e](yam a)[r](d)dha[m]
v[ā]m[e]tara[m] vaś śivam ādadhātu||

⟨Verse 2. Metre: upajāti⟩

raṇeṣu bhūyassu bhu(vo) mahimne
bibhartti ya(ḥ) ^[2]kārmukam ātata-jyam
jayaty asau svasya kulasya ketur
lla(lā)ma rājñam bhagavat-prakāśaḥ||

⟨Verse 3. Metre: mālabhāriṇī⟩

bhuvana-sṭhiti-dhāma dhar(mm)a-setus
sakalasyaulikarānvayasya lakṣma|
drapavarddhana ity abhūt pra^[3]bhāva-
kṣapitārāti-balonnatir narendrah||

Text Notes

Alternative opinions are cited here from the editions of Ramesh and Tewari (RT), Mirashi (M), Sircar (SI²⁵³) and Salomon (S). This is not a critical edition of previous editions, hence alternative readings are only mentioned here if I consider them significant. When an alternative opinion is mentioned, previous editors not cited separately read as I do. Where I overrule one or more previous editors, I am wholly confident of my readings unless otherwise noted.

[1] *śānti*] M: *śānta*. The top of the character is damaged but there may be a vestige of the end of the tail of *i* in the stone between the *ā* of *śśā* and the headmark of *nt*. The reading *śānta* cannot be dismissed, but I believe *śānti* works better in the context.

[1] *bhūyassu bhuvo*] RT, M: *bhūyas sa bhuvo*; SI: *bhūyas subhuvo*; S: *bhuyassu bhuvo* (typo for *bhūyassu bhuvo*). The bottom of the subscript *s* is extended and hooked so it must be *su*. Compare *ssu* in 16, °*varddhanas sutaḥ*. Construing *bhūyassu bhuvo* is better than *bhūyas subhuvo*.

[2] *drapavarddhana*] M: *drumavarddhana*; SI: *dramavarddhana*. *Drapa* is clear in the stone, which is pristine with no hint of *u* for *dru*. See also page 140 for a discussion of the name.

[2] *dhāma*] All previous editors construe this word in compound. The possibility cannot be excluded, but I prefer to see it is a neuter nominative. *Dharma-setu* is a frequent collocation and I see no way to connect it to the preceding words; Salomon's "a dam of the righteousness that is the source of stability in the world" seems forced to me. *Dhāman* is also used to describe a person as the abode of a positive quality in verse 14 (*prabhāva-dhāmnām*).

253 In these notes SI denotes Sircar 1984c, not *Select Inscriptions*, which was published before the discovery of the Risthal inscription.

Translation

⟨1⟩

May that {right/not female/not adverse} half of Pinākin [Śiva²⁵⁴] which is affable in his serenity [even] while being rent asunder from his {left/adverse} half – which is distracted by anger at his bowing to {the twilight/the goddess Sandhyā}– furnish you with happiness (*śiva*).²⁵⁵

⟨2⟩

Victorious is that Lord Prakāśa, that emblem of kings and banner of his own family who bears a tautly strung bow in many battles for the glory of the world.

⟨3⟩

There was once an ornament of the entire Aulikara lineage: a ruler of men called Drapavardhana, the abode of the stability of the world and the levee of lawfulness (*dharma*), who by his might threw down the surge of the forces of his enemies.²⁵⁶

Footnotes

254 I prefer to leave the name Pinākin, "he who has or bears a *pināka*," untranslated because of its ambiguity. *Pināka* may mean a staff or a bowstave and can, in association with Śiva, refer either to the god's bow or to his trident, and is more commonly translated as the former. However, since the inscriptions of the Later Aulikaras frequently refer to Śiva as the bearer of the trident (Śūlin, Śūlapāṇi), I am inclined to believe that they meant the same weapon by *pināka*.

255 The stanza refers to the Ardhānārī form of Śiva, the right half of which is his own male body, while the left half is the female body of her wife Pārvatī. See the Commentary for details. The alternative reading *śānta-vidheyam*, for which see note to line 1 of the text, makes for a much less striking vignette: with that reading, "affable in his serenity" would change to "obliging to those who are calm."

256 Some of the words in the first quarter are multivalent and their relationship may be understood in several ways; see note to line 2 of the text.

⟨Verse 4. Metre: mālabhāriṇī⟩

śirasīva pinākinas tuṣāra-
sruti-śītāmala-dīdhitiś śāsāṅkaḥ
nija-vaṅṅīśa-lalāmnī yattra senā-
pati-śabdaḥ sprhaṇīyatām jagāma||

⟨Verse 5. Metre: pramitākṣarā⟩

sunayā(va)lambana-^[4]dṛḍhikṛtayā
bala-sampadā prathitayā bhujayoḥ|
udapādi tena hr̥ta-śatru-jayo
jayavardhana-kṣitipatis tanayaḥ

⟨Verse 6. Metre: pramitākṣarā⟩

bahalena yasya sakalaṃ paritaḥ
parivṛṇvatā jalamuceva viyat
^[5]bala-reṇunā karabha-kaṅṭha-rucā
sthagītā babhur nna kīraṇās savituh||

⟨Verse 7. Metre: vaṃśastha⟩

kirīṭa-ratna-skhalitārka-dīptiṣu
pratiṣṭhitājñāḥ pratirāja-mūrdha(s)u|
balena tasyājīta-pauruṣaḥ parair
bbabhūva ^[6]rājājītavardhanas sutaḥ||

⟨Verse 8. Metre: vaṃśastha⟩

makheṣu somāsava-pāna-lālase
samāgate yasya muhur ddivas-patau|
tatāma hastāgra-niveśītānanā
viyoga-cintākula-mānasā śacī||

⟨Verse 9. Metre: drutavilambita⟩

śruta-vivikta-manāḥ ^[7]sthitimān balī
sphuṭa-yaśaḥ-kusumodgama-pādapaḥ|
jagati tasya sutaḥ prathito guṇaiḥ
kula-lalāma vibhīṣaṇavardhanaḥ||

⟨4⟩

The title “warlord” became truly attractive through being [bestowed] on this ornament of his own dynasty, just as the moon, whose radiance is cool and pure like a trickle of snowmelt, [becomes truly attractive through being fitted] on the head of Pinākin [Śiva].

⟨5⟩

After consolidating his wealth – the famous strength of his arms – by exercising good policy, a son was begotten by him: King Jayavardhana.²⁵⁷

⟨6⟩

The rays of the sun shone no more when they were obscured by the copious dust raised by his hosts which, dusky as the neck of a camel, covered the entire sky all around like a cloud.²⁵⁸

⟨7⟩

He had a son, King Ajitavardhana, whose prowess was never forcibly defeated (*ajīta*) by enemies, but who imposed his command on the heads of rival kings the jewels of whose crowns made the rays of the sun stumble.

⟨8⟩

As [Indra] the Lord of Heaven, craving to drink *soma* liquor, came to his sacrifices all the time, [Indra’s wife] Śacī buried her face in her palms and sighed, her mind distressed by the thought of separation.

⟨9⟩

His son was Vibhīṣaṇavardhana, an ornament of his family renowned throughout the world for his virtues, his mind distinguished by Vedic lore, steadfast and strong, a tree covered in the blossom of full-blown glory.

[3] *sunayā*^o] RT: *anayā*^o.

[4] *hr̥ta*] M: *hata*.

[4] *parivṛṇvatā*] SI: *parivṛṇhatā* em. *parivṛṇhatā*.

[6] *viyoga*] SI: *viyogra* em. *viyoga*. There must have been a fault in Sircar’s facsimile; there is nothing resembling a subscript *r* in the stone.

257 The first half of this stanza may refer to Jayavardhana instead of Dravyavardhana. See the Commentary.

258 The cloud of dust is likened to the neck of a *karabha*, which may mean a (young) elephant as well as a camel. The compound was misunderstood by Ramesh and Tewari. Agrawal (1986b, 94) suggested that the dust was dark brown like the neck of a young elephant, while Salomon understands the cloud (the actual one, to which the dust is being compared) to be dark as an elephant’s throat. I prefer to interpret *karabha* as camel because elephants do not have much of a neck and I believe that if the author had intended elephant, he would have picked some other body part (e.g. *pr̥ṣṭha*, *carma*, etc.). It also seems to me that the dust of Malwa is tawny (like a camel) rather than grey (like an elephant), but the fact or poetic convention may be otherwise: verse 9 of Nirdoṣa’s inscription (A10) explicitly describes army dust as grey (*dhūsara*) like a donkey (*bāleya*).

⟨Verse 10. Metre: drutavilambita⟩

sad-udayaiḥ pravikāśibhir uj⟨j⟩valair
avihata-prasaraiḥ ^[8]śubha-rohibhiḥ|
su-caritaiḥ kiraṇair iva bhānumān
kṣata-tamāḥ|ñ|si jaganti cakāra yaḥ||

⟨Verse 11. Metre: viyoginī⟩

bhuvana-sthiti-gopṭṛbhir nnr̥pair
dhuram ādyair vvidhṛtām babhāra yaḥ|
sva-kulocita-rājya-varddhanas
tanayas tasya ^[9]sa rājyavarddhanaḥ||

⟨Verse 12. Metre: viyoginī⟩

vilalāpa mumoha vivyathe
viniśāsvāsa visaṃjñātām yayau|
upatapta-manā baloṣmaṇā
dviṣātām yasya vilāsini-janaḥ||

⟨Verse 13. Metre: puṣpītāgrā⟩

kṣitipati-tilakasya tasya b(ā)hu-
draviṇa-^[10]nipīta-samagra-śatru-dīptiḥ|
sucarita-ghaṭita-prakāśa-dharmmā
nṛpati-lalāma sutah prakāśadharmmā||

⟨Verse 14. Metre: puṣpītāgrā⟩

amalina-yaśasām prabhāva-dhāmnām
sakala-jagan-mahaniya-pauruṣāṇām
avitatha-janatānurāga-^[11]bhā(j)ām
sthiti-padavim anuyāti yo gurūṇām||

⟨10⟩

Like the sun with its rays {whose rising is taking place} and {whose rider is bright}, he annihilated darkness in the worlds with his gleaming good deeds {arising from benevolence} and {mounting in auspiciousness}, their spread unhindered as they shine all around.²⁵⁹

⟨11⟩

His son was Rājyavardhana, the increaser (*vardhana*) of the established kingdom (*rājya*) of his family, who carried the same yoke that had been borne by the kings of yore who protected the stability of the world.

⟨12⟩

Their minds seared by the heat of his power, the graceful womenfolk of his enemies wailed, swooned, palpitated, sighed and passed out senseless.

⟨13⟩

The son of that forehead mark of kings was Prakāśadharman, an ornament of rulers who has drained away all the splendour of his enemies by the power of his arms, whose essential nature (*dharman*) is the radiance (*prakāśa*) comprised of his good deeds.

⟨14⟩

In stability he follows the path of his elders of unsullied honour²⁶⁰ who were abodes of power, whose potency was worthy of the whole world's adoration, and who enjoyed the unfeigned loyalty of the populace.

[8] *vidhṛtām*] RT, S: *vidhṛtam*.

[8] *tanayas tasya*] There seems to be a shallow depression around *sta* in the otherwise level surface. The character may be a correction made after grinding out an earlier character, possibly *sva* (resulting from eyeskip).

[9] *tilakasya tasya*] M: *tilaka-sthitasya*.

[10] *dīptiḥ*] M: *dīpteḥ*.

[10] *nṛpati-lalāma sutah*] RT and M construe *sutah* in compound with the preceding words. SI and S construe it separately (S prints *lālama*, typo), as I do.

[10] *janatānurāga*] M: *jana-cāru-rāga*.

259 All qualifications in the verse apply equally to Vibhīṣaṇavardhana's good deeds and the sun's rays. The sense of most is straightforward and works well literally for the latter and metaphorically for the former. The compounds *sad-udayaiḥ* and *śubha-rohibhiḥ* are, however, quite curious and were in my opinion chosen in preference of simpler expressions because they can be construed differently for the two aspects of the simile. Salomon only translates *sad-udayaiḥ* as "which arose from virtue," while Ramesh and Tewari take it as "well-risen" in the context of the rays and as "ever on the increase" in the context of the deeds. Both published translations give only one meaning for *śubha-rohibhiḥ*, but I believe that in the context of the rays it means "whose rider is bright", alluding to the idea that the rays of the sun are horses who draw his chariot.

260 Salomon translates "He equals the level of stature of his elders," while Ramesh and Tewari translate "Who had come by the royal status of his elders." It is my impression that *padavī* and *anu-yā* used together is unlikely to mean anything other than "follow a path." *Sthiti-padavī* is hard to interpret if *padavī* is to mean "path," but it can work as a locative *tatpuruṣa*, *sthitau padavī* being shorthand for the path (i.e. approach, attitude) used with respect to stability, namely the stability of the world that a king must maintain, as mentioned repeatedly in this inscription (v3 and v11; even *sthitimān* in v9 may be shorthand for the same concept).

⟨Verse 15. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

yaḥ svānvaya-krama-paramarayopayātām
 āropitām guṇa-rasāpahṛtena pittrā
 lokopakāra-vidhaye na sukhodayāya
 rāja-śriyaṃ ^[12]śu(bha-pha)lodayiniṃ bibharti||

⟨Verse 16. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

ā toramāṇa-nṛpater nṛpa-mauli-ratna-
 jyotsnā-pratāna-śabalikṛta-pāda-pīṭhā(t)
 hūṇādhipasya bhuvī yena gataḥ pratiṣṭhām
 nīto yudhā vitathatām adhirāja-śabdaḥ||

⟨Verse 17. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

^[13]saṃgrāma-mūrddhani vipāṭha-nipātītānām
 tasyaiva yena mada-vāri-mucām gajānām
 āy[ā](m)i-danta-ghaṭitāni taponidhi(bh)y(o)
 bhadrāsanāni rucimanti niveditāni||

⟨Verse 18. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

tasyaiva cāhava-mukhe tarasā ^[14]jitasya
 yenāvarodhana-vara-pramadāḥ pramathya|
 loka-prakāśa-bhuja-vikrama-cihna-hetor
 vviśrāṇitā bhagavate vṛṣabhadhvajāya||

⟨Verse 19. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

rājñe pitāmaha-vibhīṣaṇavarddhanāya
 ślāghyānubhāva-guru-^[15]puṇya-phalaṃ nivedya()
 vistāri bindu-sarasaḥ pratibimba-bhūtam
 etad vibhīṣaṇa-saras samakhāni tena||

⟨15⟩

Royal majesty, which brings blessings as its fruit, came down through a succession of generations in his lineage and was invested on him by his father enraptured by the savour of his qualities; and he bears it for the sake of his duty to benefit the populace, not to garner pleasure.

⟨16⟩

By warfare he rendered false the Hun ruler's title "emperor," which had become established on earth by the time of King Toramāṇa, whose footstool was dappled by the effusion of light from the jewels in the crowns of kings.²⁶¹

⟨17⟩

He presented [sages] whose treasure is asceticism with gleaming thrones wrought from the long tusks of the elephants of that same [Toramāṇa], flowing with rut fluid and felled with ballista bolts at the battle front.²⁶²

⟨18⟩

And after vehemently defeating him at the head of a battle, he overwhelmed the most seductive women in the harem of that same [Toramāṇa] and presented them to the bull-bannered lord [Śiva] in order to be a symbol of the prowess of his arms visible (*prakāśa*) to the world.

⟨19⟩

It was he by whom this wide Vibhīṣaṇa Lake – a mirror image of the Bindusaras²⁶³ – was excavated, dedicating the massive product of merit from this laudable undertaking to his grandfather King Vibhīṣaṇavarddhana.

[11] *guṇa-rasāpahṛtena*] RT: *guṇa-rasām ahrtena*; SI: *guṇa-rasām ahrtena* (typo for *ahrtena*?). The problematic character has a stub of a tail but is definitely *pa*.

[12] *pīṭhāt*] RT, M: *pīṭhām*. SI, S: *pīṭhāt*. Agrawal (1986b, 93, 1990, 130) also suggested correcting to *pīṭhāt*. After careful scrutiny I believe both readings are correct in a way: the character has been corrected in the stone from a *halanta m* to *t*. The body of the former *m* may have been chipped off; the body of the *t* is the opening curve of the former *m*, to which a stem has been added, but the *u*-like stroke or *virāma* used in other instances of *halanta t* is missing below it. Also, the resulting *t* is too close to the previous character, and the horizontal line above it is to the right of it, above the original *m*.

[12] *yudhā vitathatām*] RT construed *yudhā + avitathatām*. All other editors construe *yudhā vitathatām*, which yields much better sense, as also pointed out by Agrawal (1986b, 93–94, 1990, 130).

[13] *āyāmi*] M: *ā(bhānti)*; SI: *ā[-]*. The left side and part of the central stem of *y* are clear; the rest of that character is obliterated by flaking. Part of *m* is clear and much of the rest is faintly visible in the chipped-off part.

261 See the Commentary and the notes to line 12 of the text for some of the problems associated with this stanza.

262 "Ballista bolts" may be inaccurate. Dictionaries (e.g. MW s.v.) define *vipāṭha* only as "a kind of large arrow." Although elephants in modern times have occasionally been felled with high-tech bows, I doubt they would have been routinely slain with handheld bows by sixth-century Indian armies. At any rate, *vipāṭha* may have been used simply as an exotic synonym for "arrow," and whether or not Prakāśadharman had anything resembling ballistae, the claim that Toramāṇa's elephants were killed by arrows may be nothing more than poetic fancy.

263 Bindusaras, "Drop Lake" is a mythicised lake in the Himalayas. In the *Sabhāparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (MBh 2.3.8-15) it is described as being north of Kailāśa and a site of many sacrifices performed by various gods.

⟨Verse 20. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

etac ca nṛtta-rabhasa-skhalitendu-lekhā-
vāntājn!śu-vicchurita-mecaka-kaṇṭha-bhāsaḥ|
[16]sthāṇos samagra-bhuvana-ttraya-sṛṣṭi-hetoḥ
prāleya-śaila-taṭa-(ka)lpam akāri sadma||

⟨Verse 21. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

sa-dvy-abda-saptati-samā-samudāyavatsu
pūrṇṇeṣu pañcasu śateṣu vivatsarāṇām
[17]grīṣme (')rkka-tāpa-mṛdita-pramadā-sanātha-
dhārā-gṛhodara-vijṛmbhita-puṣpaketau||

⟨Verse 22. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

lakṣma bhārata-varṣasya
nideśāt tasya bhū-kṣītaḥ|
akārayad daśapure
prakāśeśvara-sadma yaḥ||

⟨Verse 23. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

[18]tasyaiva ca purasyā(n)tar
brahmaṇas cāru mandiram
unmāpayad iva vyoma
śikharair gghana-rodhibhiḥ||

⟨Verse 24. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

āśrayāya yatīnāñ ca
sāṅkhyā-yogābhiyog(in)ām
vyadhatta kṣṇāvasathaṃ
bujjukāvasathañ ca yaḥ||

⟨Verse 25. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

[19]sabhā-kūpa-maṭhārāmān
sadmāni ca divaukasām
yo (')nyāṃś cānyāya-vimukho
deya-dharmmān acikarat||

⟨20⟩

Also [by him] was made this temple resembling the crags of the Snow Mountain [the Himalaya] for Sthāṇu [Śiva], the cause of the emanation of the entire triad of worlds, the peacock-blue gleam of whose throat is sprinkled with rays cast forth by the crescent moon that has slipped [from Śiva's head] in the fervour of his dance.

⟨21⟩

When five hundred years have been completed along with an aggregation of seventy plus two years, in the summer when the flower-bannered [Kāma] swells inside the water chambers populated by seductive women enervated by the heat of the sun,

⟨26⟩

[Chancellor Doṣa,]

⟨22⟩

who has had the Prakāśeśvara temple, a beauty mark²⁶⁴ of Bhāratavarṣa, constructed in Daśapura at the order of that ruler,

⟨23⟩

and also, in that same city, a graceful temple of Brahmā which seems to take measure of the sky with its cloud-impeding spires,

⟨24⟩

and who has ordained the [building of the] Kṣṇa Lodge and the Bujjuka Lodge to shelter ascetics committed to Sāṅkhyā and Yoga,

⟨25⟩

and who, being averse to the improper, has commissioned the construction of meeting halls, wells, monasteries and temples of gods, as well as other items suitable to be donated²⁶⁵—

[18] *purasyāntar*] SI: *purasyante* (typo for *purasyānte*).

[18] *śikharair gghana*] SI: *śikharair yena*. *Rggha* is formed in an unusual way, see Script and language above.

264 See also note 228 on page 139.

265 Though *deya-dharma* is usually translated as “a religious gift,” Willis (2009, 57–58) argues plausibly, partly on the basis of this particular locus, that it should be understood as “something of a nature suitable to be given.”

⟨Verse 26. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

tenaiva nṛpates tasya
pūrvvajāmātya-sūnunā|
rājasthānīya-bhagavad-
doṣeṇādoṣa-saṅginā||

⟨Verse 27. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

^[20]etaj jala-nidhi-hrepi
viśālaṃ khānitaṃ saraḥ|
idañ ca jaladollekhi
śūlinas sadma kāritam||

⟨Verse 28. Metre: mālinī⟩

kisalaya-parivartti vīrudhāṃ vāti yāvat
surabhi-kusuma-gandhāmōḍa-vāhī nabhasvān
^[21]sara i(dam a)bhīrāmaṃ sadma śambhoś ca tāvad
vihata-durita-mārgge kīrtti-vistāriṇī stām||

⟨Verse 29. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

iti tuṣṭūṣayā tasya nṛpateḥ
puṇya-karmmaṇaḥ
vāsulenoparacitā
pūrvveyaṃ kakka-sūnunā||

⟨26⟩

that very Lord Doṣa, the chancellor (*rājasthānīya*) who adheres to incorruptibility (*adoṣa*), son of the minister (*amātya*) to the predecessor of that king,

⟨27⟩

has effected the excavation of this immense lake that puts the ocean to shame, and the construction of this abode of the trident-wielding [Śiva], which scrapes the clouds.

⟨28⟩

May this delightful lake and this abode of Śambhu [Śiva] remain to thwart the paths of sin²⁶⁶ and to propagate [the] fame [of their creators] for as long as the wind blows, swaying the sprigs of herbage and wafting a perfume that is the bouquet of scented flowers.

⟨29⟩

This preamble²⁶⁷ was composed by Vāsula son of Kakka out of a desire to laud that king of meritorious acts.

[21] *vihata*] RT: *vihita*.

[21] *vistāriṇī stām*] RT: *vistāriṇis tām*.

²⁶⁶ If Wakankar and Rajpurohit (1984, 16) are correct in assuming that Risthal was the site of a decisive battle against Toramāṇa, then the compound *vihata-durita-mārgge* is paronomastic, meaning “on the path where evil was thwarted” (as a masculine locative rather than a *bahuvrīhi* in dual neuter nominative) in addition to “to thwart the paths of sin.” My thanks to Hans Bakker for suggesting this. However, compare the similar expression *pāpa-pathāvarodhi* in the Gangdhar inscription (A4, v20), which describes a temple without a secondary meaning (though *pāpa* is a restoration, not an extant reading).

²⁶⁷ See page 7 about the word *pūrvā*.

A10 Mandsaur Inscription of Nirdoṣa

Substrate				Siddham ID:		OB00088		
Material	stone, slate(?)		Object type	slab				
Dimensions	width	58 cm	height	47 cm	depth	6.5 cm		
Discovery	before 1885, in the vicinity of Mandsaurw							
Current location	National Museum, New Delhi (in storage)							
Inscription				Siddham ID:		IN00097		
Dimensions	width	52 cm	height	42 cm	Char size	6 mm	Line height	16–18 mm
Date CE	532–533	Basis of dating		dated Mālava expired 589 (I21)				
Topic	construction of a well dedicated to the memory of Abhayadatta							
Persons mentioned	Yaśodharman, Viṣṇuvarhana, Ṣaṣṭhidatta, Varāhadāsa, Ravikīrti, Bhānuguptā, Doṣa, Abhayadatta, Doṣakumbha, Dharmadoṣa, Dakṣa, Nirdoṣa, Govinda							
Places mentioned	Vindhya mountains, Ganges, Himalayas, Revā river, Pāriyātra mountain							
Compendia	Bh List 9; CI3 35; SI III.53							
Other editions	Fleet 1886b							

Description

This inscription occupies the front of a stone slab²⁶⁸ 58 centimetres wide by 47 centimetres tall and 6.5 centimetres thick. The inscribed face is smooth and was probably polished to a gloss. The sides are cut roughly in straight lines. The back was presumably roughly flattened to begin with, but it now holds a later carving (see Figure 30), executed in simple bas relief with a rough finish and barely any detail within the outlines. This shows two horsemen facing each other inside a scalloped arch, divided vertically at the centre by a long line ending in a sickle-shaped curve, perhaps a pole arm. There is a circle representing the sun in the top left corner, and a divided circle representing the moon in the top right corner. Each rider raises one arm toward the other rider, perhaps fighting with weapons or exchanging gifts. The rider on the viewer's left raises his left arm holding a short, clublike object that Fleet (1886b, 223) believes may be a *cāmara* or a *śaṅkha*; the rider on the right raises his right arm and holds a flowerlike object that may be a flanged mace (Fleet does not attempt to identify it). Each rider's other arm is pulled back to his waist and holds a long and thin object, possibly a sword, extending backward over the rider's shoulder. The awkward execution and unfinished look of the carving are entirely unlike the smooth elegance of the inscription. Moreover, the carving on the back is rotated by 90 degrees as compared to the inscription. It can thus

²⁶⁸ Fleet says the material may be slate; quartzite is perhaps more likely.

be established that the carving postdates the inscription, probably by a long time.²⁶⁹ Originally, the stone would have been incorporated in the masonry accompanying the well whose construction it records. It probably remained at or near the same site till modern times, but at one point of its career it was repurposed as a hero stone, possibly in the form of a composite pillar with one or more similarly sculpted panels on separate stone blocks. Ultimately, presumably coinciding with a reconstruction of the well, it was again built into a wall with the inscription facing inward.

The exact spot and circumstances of its discovery are unknown. Fleet saw it in 1885 among the possessions of Sir Michael Filose (former governor of Malwa) in Ujjain. He was told that it had originally come from an old well “somewhere in the lands of” Mandsaur and believed that this may have been “the large and ancient well, just inside the eastern entrance of the Fort” (Fleet 1886b, 222), by which he probably refers to the stepwell located at 24°03'49"N 75°04'37"E (see Figure 31). It is, however, not certain that Fleet guessed correctly. According to local memory²⁷⁰ the inscription was recovered from another stepwell across the Shivna, from the locality

²⁶⁹ Bakker (2014, 54–55) at first proposed that the back of the stone may depict Aulikara imagery, but he did so on the basis of Fleet's description alone, without having seen the actual carving.

²⁷⁰ Kailash Chandra Pandey, personal communication, February 2018. He also referred to this stepwell as निर्दोष कुूप, “Nirdoṣa's Well,” though this is probably a name recently coined by learned locals on the basis of the inscription rather than a name handed down over generations.

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Figure 29: Mandsaar inscription of Nirdoṣa. Inked rubbing probably made by Fleet. Courtesy of the British Museum (acquisition number 1880.0.3492).

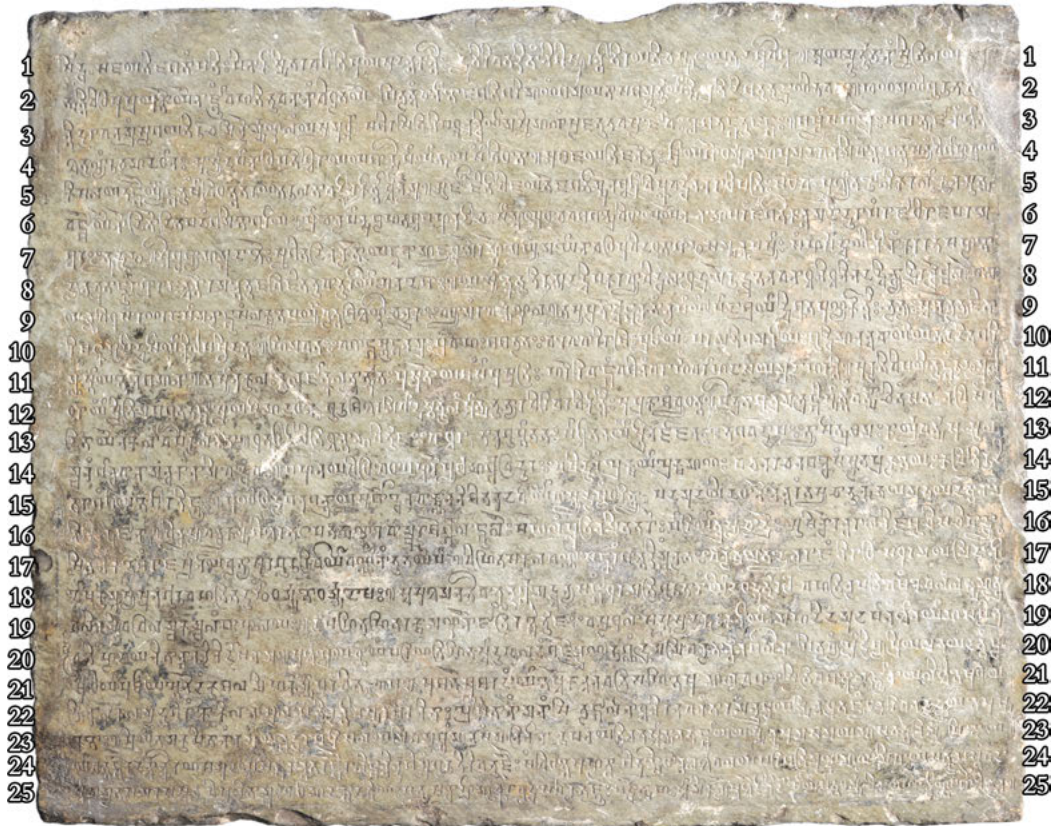


Figure 30: Mandsaur inscription of Nirdoṣa, with the carved back face shown below. Photos courtesy of the National Museum, New Delhi Collection (accession number: 66-1-551).

named Baori Kalan (बावड़ी कलान, “Great Stepwell”) close to Khilchipura (the findspot of several pieces of Aulikara statuary including the outstanding *torāṇa* now installed in Mandsaur fort²⁷¹) and due west of the present-day Yashodharman Museum, at 24°03’49”N 75°04’37”E (see Figure 32). Both wells must of course have been rebuilt repeatedly, and both incorporate ancient carved stones in their masonry, but these are more numerous and include figural sculpture at Baori Kalan. While older dressed stone was surely appropriated for the fort from a wider area, it is unlikely that the blocks employed in Baori Kalan were transported a long distance. Thus, whether or not the latter is the original location of Nir-doṣa’s inscription, it is in all probability an ancient site.

The inscription itself covers about 52 by 42 centimetres, with 25 lines spaced 16 to 18 millimetres one below the other. Character bodies are about 6 millimetres tall. The lines and margins are straight and even, and the characters are very precisely drawn. However, both line spacing and character size diminish ever so slightly toward the end (particularly in the last three lines), evidently because the use of space had not been planned perfectly in advance. The engraving is quite shallow, proportionate to the small size of the script, but due to the tablet’s excellent state of preservation almost all of the text is confidently legible. The near pristine condition of the epigraph is probably due to the fact that it was incorporated into a wall with the inscription facing inward. A few characters are lost to chipping along the edges, particularly at the ends of lines 1 to 3. Fleet also reports a hard encrustation of lime that had filled up all the engraving and could not be completely removed in some places. Two diagonal scratches about a quarter of the tablet’s width from the left, in lines 11–12 and 13–14, are not present in Fleet’s rubbing so these must have been inflicted more recently.

After Fleet’s initial edition (1886b) and its re-publication in the *Corpus Inscriptionum*, some corrections were suggested by Kielhorn (in Fleet 1889, 220), Pandit Durgaprasad (Durgāprasād and Parab 1892, 112–16) and again by Kielhorn (1891, 188–89), who comments on Durgaprasad’s suggestions, so his paper must have been published later in spite of the earlier date of the reference.

The stone is presently in storage at the National Museum in New Delhi (accession number: 66-1-551), where I was permitted to check doubtful readings against the original in February 2017.

Script and Language

The present inscription is very close in script style to the Risthal inscription (A9). Characters exhibit forms typical of the angular variety of the Mālavān script. Acute angles are conspicuous at the bottom right corners of many characters, though they alternate with right angles in the same position (see *patiḥ pinākī*, l1, for both forms side by side). Strokes show a calligraphic variation in their width, generally widening toward endpoints. Subscript *ya* and *ra* display ornamental enlargement, and many vowel marks are likewise extended and decorated in a pattern resembling a barbed blade. In addition to these general characteristics, the following features may be noticed.

Ka is slightly elongated, but the descender of *ra* is always short, usually not extending below the baseline. The right legs of *ga* and *śa* are normally slightly longer than the left. The left limb of *ma* is always bent, sometimes only in a slight curve, but often in a pronounced, angular break. *La* normally has a short stem but (as in the Risthal inscription) also has an alternative form with a decorative vertical extension (*kila*, l10; *mūlam*, l11). *Ya* is tripartite with a loop, but (again like Risthal) may be bipartite when conjoined with the vowel *e* (the single example of this is *yena*, l8; compare e.g. *yenā°*, l2; *vidhṛtaye*, l2). A bipartite form of *y* not found in the Risthal inscription occurs in the conjunct *rye* (*kāryeṣv*, l25) which is composed of a short *r* at the primary level and a slightly subscript *y* that is closer in form to the bipartite *ya* than to the regular subscript *y*. The inscription of Nirdoṣa also has instances of regular *ryy* with a superscript *repha*, a tripartite main *y* and a subscript *y* (e.g. *paryyāvṛtta*, l9). Other unusual ligatures are *tpa* (*samutpatti*, l1–2), which is combined almost horizontally with the *p* component’s left arm completely merged in the *t* component’s right leg; and the conjunct *ṛṇṇā* (*varṇṇā°*, l17; *utkīṛṇṇā*, l25), in which both the *repha* and the *ā mātrā* are attached to the upcurving end of the right limb of *ṛ*. The reason for this strange shape may in both cases be the presence of subscript characters close above the *ṛ*, leaving no room for a *repha* on top.

Halanta forms of *m*, *n* and *t* occur; all of these are small and simplified subscript characters with a horizontal dash above them. As in the Risthal inscription, the *halanta t* has an additional curl underneath its body (*ajjanat* in l13 has a clear specimen), resembling the Devanagari sign for medial *u* and perhaps functioning like a modern *halanta* sign. Some *halanta* consonants (*m* only, e.g. *maṇḍalam*, l9; *naigamānām*, l11; *yam*, l23) are engraved deep below the baseline and occupy almost no horizontal space. Some or all of these may be subsequent insertions, but a calligraphic variation in positioning seems more likely.

²⁷¹ See Williams (1972, 58–61) for a description and Figure 4 for a partial illustration.



Figure 31: The stepwell next to Mandsaur Fort where Nirdoṣa's inscription may have been found. Inset: old carved stone used in the construction. Photographs by the author, 2017.

The inscription includes examples of initial *a*, *ā*, *i*, *u* and *e* as well as the rare initial *au*. The latter has the basic shape of *u* with two additional strokes added to the head, one starting horizontally to the left and then turning down and back in a hook, and the other on the right, starting with a dip and a hooked curve upward (identical to the *mātrā* for *ā* when attached to e.g. *j*; also the right-hand component of *jau* in *ājau*, 15). Dependent vowels show largely the same ornamental variation and the same special cases of attachment to certain consonants as in the Risthal inscription. Medial *i* and *ī* are always represented in the Risthal script by nearly full circles open at the bottom on the left or right respectively, while the present epigraph uses several variant forms in addition to these. Some *i mātrās* have descenders extending to or beyond the baseline on the left (e.g. *visaṃvāditā*, 112–13). An ornamental form of *i*, instead of being a near circle, is extended toward the left into an oval shape, then returns at the bottom with a sinuous curve (e.g. *kāntiḥ*, 11; this form is common throughout the text). Yet another ornamental

type bends to the left at the end of the stroke and may be elongated horizontally (e.g. *ji* of *vijita*, 18; *varṇinām*, 117). There are also several variants and an ornate version of *ī*. The basic almost-closed circle may open toward the bottom or toward the right. The former may stop above the headline or extend shortly below it, though never reaching the baseline as in Devanagari. It may also have a small curl or closed loop inside the primary curve, so the whole of the mark is a dextrorse spiral as in many older inscriptions. The form with an opening on the right may have a horizontally extending tail (e.g. *āsīd*, 110; *ajī-janat*, 113), mirroring the horizontally elongated form of *i*. Finally, the ornamental form (e.g. *kīrttiḥ*, 19) is a curlicue starting upward and to the right but immediately curving sinuously to the left and finally arching back overhead to the right.

Visarga use is entirely standard. The *visarga* does not alternate with homorganic sibilants before sibilant sounds, and neither *upadhmānīya* nor *jihvāmūliya* occur in the text. The use of *anusvāra* is also close to standard. There is a slight preference for nasal consonants before sibilants (e.g. *bhūyānsi*, 12; *yaśānsi*, 14; *vaṅśo*, 16; °*āṅśu*, 19; *vaṅśa*, 19; etc., but *tanayāms trīn*, 113; *saṃskṛta*, 114; °*āsaṅ-karaṃ śānta*, 117; *manāṃsi*, 122). On a single occasion (*jagatīm punaś*, 15) a consonant replaces *anusvāra* before a stop, while in two cases *anusvāra* is used instead of a nasal consonant (*dhīmāṃ dakṣo* and *hrīmāṃ cchūro*, both 125). When *anusvāra* is in combination with an *ā mātrā* of the vertical type, the dot representing the *anusvāra* is placed to the left of the vowel mark (e.g. *bhūṣāṃ*, 14; *yaśasāṃ*, 111; *dharāyāṃ*, 112, etc.).

As usual, consonants are as a rule doubled after *r*, though there are numerous cases where this does not happen. Sibilants are never geminated after *r*, and most of the other exceptions involve aspirates (*artha*, 114; *havīrbhuja*, 113; *arthe*, 118; *ratnair bhujā*, 119; but *varddhana*, 15) or a conjunct with a third consonant (*mūrdhnām*, 13; *vartmasu*, 113), with a small assortment of odd cases (*sūnur guru*, 118; *bhartur*, 118; *kāryeṣv*, 125). Gemination before *r*, however, does not occur with any consonant except *t*, yet for *t* it seems to be the rule (e.g. *śattru*, 14; *kalatṛāt*, 111; *dharitṛyām*, 115; etc.) to which exception is taken only when a third consonant precedes the *t* in the conjunct (*tanayāms trīn*, 113; *anugantrā*, 115). Similarly, consonants are normally not doubled before *y*, except for *dh* which is geminated before *y* (°*ādhyāsītā*, 116–17; *ddhvany*, 118) unless preceded by another consonant or appearing in a word-initial position (*vinḍhyādri*, 18; *dhyāmaṃ*, 19; *vinḍhyasyāvandhya*, 116). The absence of gemination before *y* extends to *vṛtyā* (117), where *tt* would be expected.



Figure 32: Baori Kalan, the stepwell outside the town where Nirdoṣa's inscription was probably found, and a profusion of sculpted stones used in the steps. Photographs by the author, 2018.

Punctuation is two-tiered, as in the inscription of the silk weavers (A6) and the Risthal inscription (A9). Half-verses are demarcated with short horizontal lines (transcribed as a single *daṇḍa* in the edition below), and double verticals (transcribed as a double *daṇḍa*) mark the ends of full stanzas. Unlike the other inscriptions in this book using this system, the double verticals always have a hook atop the left-hand mark. As also noticed elsewhere, *halanta* forms of consonants (with a short line above them) can double as the half-verse punctuation mark (e.g. *mūrdhnām*, v3b; *prathiyān*, v11b), but they cannot replace the double vertical mark (e.g. *viśvam*∥, v1d; *ajījanat*∥, v15d). There seems to be one more non-alphabetic sign in the inscription: a short vertical sign resembling a comma, floating at the mid-level of character bodies at the very end of line 16. It probably functions as a space filler. The preceding *ddhyā* does not extend to the margin, which is

evidently purposeful and shows that the layout had been carefully planned before the text was engraved, as the voluminous subscript part of *ddhyā* would otherwise have left no room for the vowel mark and *anusvāra* of *nīm* at the end of the following line. To accommodate *nīm*, *ddhyā* needed to be adjusted toward the left, and the small sign was apparently added to restore the aesthetic of the sharp margin.

The language is good standard Sanskrit and the inscription is in verse throughout (except for *siddham* at the beginning and *utkīrṇṇā govindena* at the end), employing a variety of metres. There are several slurred caesurae²⁷² in the text, occurring in *mālinī* (v30, v20a), at the first caesura in *sragdharā* (v8b, v24a) and at the second caesura in *sragdharā* (v8c, v19c). The poetry is

²⁷² See my earlier study (Balogh 2017) about the slurred caesura.

ambitious but laboured, giving the impression that the poet's skill was insufficient to carry the amount of frippery he insisted on putting into his composition. Many stanzas employ assonance, elaborate similes and double entendre, but several of these are difficult to understand and involve convoluted or plain incorrect syntax along with words used in unusual meanings (see footnotes to the translation). That said, by my subjective judgement some of the quatrains are good poetry (for instance verse 5), and some of the imagery is quite ingenious (in particular, the sun in a dusty sky likened to peacock feather viewed the wrong side up in verse 9, and the trappings of office compared to a zebu bull's distinctive dewlap in verse 21).

Commentary

The epigraph commemorates the construction of a well by Yaśodharman's Naigama minister Nirdoṣa in memory of his departed uncle Abhayadatta who had also held the office of *rājasthānīya* and was probably Nirdoṣa's mentor.

Like the inscriptions of Prakāśadharman and Yaśodharman, the present text also begins with an invocation to Śiva, referred to as Pinākin just as in the Risthal inscription. The details of the verse are somewhat obscure, but involve a lightning-like brilliance emanating from Śiva's teeth. This light makes its appearance *smīta-rava-gītiṣu*, which Fleet translates "in whose songs, hummed with smiles." I prefer to see these as three different actions that make Śiva's teeth flash. The flashes illuminate the world, as expressed by the paired verb *tirayati ca sphuṭayati ... ca*, which I understand as hiding and showing in quick succession (corresponding to the alternation of absolute darkness and dazzling illumination in a lightning-lit night, emphasised by the participle *sphuranti*), rather than as somehow simultaneous events, as implied by Fleet's "envelops and brings into full view." I am less certain about *adaś ca viśvam*, which Fleet renders with "all this universe." However, *idaṃ* would be expected in that meaning (and would fit the metre perfectly); *adas* would imply the supernatural world. The verse could thus mean that Śiva's grace permits us fleeting experiences of transcendence. However, the position of *ca* after *adas* is problematic for either of these interpretations. I therefore understand this *ca* to be paired with the one after *tirayati* and take *adas* in an adverbial sense, meaning "then" or (with some interpretive elaboration) "in the next moment." The word *adas* is also used in verse 7, where it is either a meaningless space filler or, understood with the main participle of the sentence, an adverb meaning "then, thereafter."

The *jaya* verse is followed by a pair of benedictions, the first of which begs Śiva to favour the reader and expresses the idea that it was Śiva who ordained Brahmā to oversee the affairs of the world. Given the wider context, there is probably an allegorical overtone to this stanza, though this is not expressly indicated by the language: the relation of Brahmā to Śiva is much like that of the Naigama *rājasthānīya* to the Aulikara monarch.

The second blessing, verse 3, rather unusually, asks Śiva's serpent to break the reader's sufferings (*kleśa*). The details of the vignette painted in the verse are again rather vague and elliptical, seeming to lack some critical details while dedicating a whole quarter to describing the apparently irrelevant bending of the snake's heads. In my understanding the situation is that a wreath of bones on Śiva's head has broken,²⁷³ and his snake (who normally rests on his shoulder or around his waist) climbs up to fasten it or perhaps to use his body to restring it, incidentally obscuring the crescent moon that decorates Śiva's head. Fixing a piece of broken jewellery does not seem to be a very apt analogue for breaking suffering. It may, however, be relevant that the serpent Śeṣa, associated with Viṣṇu, is linked in popular lore to Āyurveda and in particular to the medical authority Caraka. It is conceivable that the Śaiva imaginaire attempted to replace Śeṣa with Śiva's snake, who is being invoked here to ward off a particular form of suffering: disease.

The fourth stanza is another unusual prayer addressed to the Ocean personified as a god with power over waters (*payasām vidhātṛ*), but simultaneously perceived as a physical body of water. The verse begs his protection not for the audience of the inscription but for the well itself.

Verse 5 extols the glory of Yaśodharman, depicting him as a mighty warrior in a complex image that equates the fame attached to a hero to a creeper clinging to a tree.²⁷⁴ The implication of the verse is that while your average socialite would stroll into a park²⁷⁵ and pull lianas

273 In Fleet's interpretation the chaplet of bones is described as full of holes (for stringing the bones), but this would be yet another irrelevant detail. I therefore understand *randhrin* in this context as "ruptured," though this is not a straightforward meaning of the word.

274 Creepers (*latā*, feminine) entwining trees (e.g. *taru*, masculine) are a common metaphor for women embracing their beloved. Reputation (*kīrti*, also feminine) is also often likened to a spreading creeper not only in literature but also in visual media in the form of *kīrtimukha* sculptures.

275 Fleet translates *pramada-vana* as "a grove of thornapple-trees." Though the meaning is attested in thesauri (MW s.v.), it is in my opinion clear from the context that the intended meaning was "a pleasure grove," which is also how Bakker (forthcoming) interprets the compound.

off trees to pluck flowers and twigs for body ornaments, Yaśodharman wades merrily into battle, pulls their reputations off heroes, and the ornaments he acquires in the process are florid wounds.²⁷⁶

The stanza's first word, *atha* ("now, thereafter, next") implies that the earthly ruler comes directly after the divine entities in importance. Going even further, the implication may be that he precedes the recipients of the prayers in verses 2 to 4 and comes second only after Śiva: verse 1 calls for victory to Śiva as the lord of [all] worlds (*sa jayati jagatām patiḥ pinākī*), while verse 5 hails Yaśodharman next, as a lord of [all] men (*atha jayati janendraḥ śrī-yaśodharma-nāmā*). The parallel construction of the first quarters and the connective *atha* show that these two stanzas are a matched pair.²⁷⁷

Stanzas 6 and 7 continue with praise of King (*narādhipati*) Viṣṇuvardhana, who attained the title of emperor (*rājādhirāja-parameśvara*). While Fleet (e.g. CII3, 155 n. 5) was certain that Yaśodharman was a tribal chieftain under the sovereign Viṣṇuvardhana, it is now widely accepted, and in my opinion beyond doubt, that the two names mean one and the same person. (Details of the problem and differing views are discussed separately below on page 164.) Moreover, Hoernle (1889, 96) is very probably right to suppose that Yaśodharman assumed the name Viṣṇuvardhana upon becoming emperor. I thus interpret verse 6 of the inscription to mean that Yaśodharman was first victorious in some battles and subsequently, donning the regnal name Viṣṇuvardhana, set out to conquer the entire world. Moreover, the use of the imperfect *vijayate* may imply that, at the moment the inscription was composed, Yaśodharman was in the process of conquering the world but had not yet completed his goal.

Another point on which Fleet's (CII3, 151, 151–52 n. 4) opinion must be considered superseded is his interpretation of the word *lāñchana* as "crest." Unlike Fleet, we now know from multiple sources that Aulikara was the name of the dynasty rather than an otherwise unattested word for their hypothetical blazon, to which no other reference

is known. I therefore understand *lāñchana* as "identification," effectively synonymous with "name" in this verse; for further discussion see page 24.

Verse 7 adds that in the process of becoming emperor Yaśodharman subdued eastern and northern kings by peaceful means and by war (*sāmnā yudhā ca*). As Bakker (2014, 39–40) points out, it is quite possible that directions and approaches are to be understood respectively. If this is so, then one or more Hūṇa rulers must have been prominent among the northern kings defeated in battle, while the eastern kings won over to Yaśodharman's cause by diplomacy may well have included the Maukharis.

Verses 8 and 9 continue to praise Yaśodharman. The first of this pair expresses the idea that the countries he controls prosper due to the fact that they now have a (proper) king. Specifically, as Bakker (forthcoming) points out, it implies that a king's protection results in the achievement of the three aims by the populace: the Brahmins provide *dharma* by conducting sacrifices, which in turn ensure periodic rainfall producing *artha* in the form of plentiful crops, which again affords the people leisure for amorous recreation, i.e. *kāma*. The ninth verse describes Yaśodharman's mighty army and mentions that the troops' clamour reverberates in the gorges (or caves, *randhra*) of the Vindhya mountains. Bakker (2014, 52) sees this as a reference to a specific campaign against the Hūṇas, in which the Aulikara host would have had to cross the Vindhya on the way from Daśapura to the Betwa valley. If this is indeed the case then *vindhyādri* in the inscription is used in a loose sense of "central Indian hills" rather than for the principal range of the Vindhya; but if such a loose sense is accepted,²⁷⁸ then the stanza may also be understood to refer to badlands in general. As it stands, we simply do not possess enough information to know which mountains Yaśodharman crossed for what purpose.

The next section of the inscription describes the lineage of the Naigamas. Verse 10 introduces the progenitor Ṣaṣṭhidatta, a pious and wealthy²⁷⁹ man said to have

²⁷⁶ For scars ornamenting the body of the king, compare *vraṇaśatānika-śobhā-samudayopacita-kāntatara-varṣmaṇaḥ* in line 18 of the Allahabad *praśasti* of Samudragupta.

²⁷⁷ Crying victory first to a chosen god and next to the reigning king is a fairly standard epigraphic convention, at least in the Gupta period. The formula involves some form of the verb *ji-* ("to conquer, be victorious") and a link meaning "after him," often *tad-anu* but in the present case *atha*. The Junagadh rock inscription of the time of Skandagupta is a well-known example (v1, *sa jayati ... viṣṇur*; v2, *tad-anu jayati ... rājādhirājah*). The Risthal inscription is less formulaic, but also addresses Śiva in its first verse and calls for the king's victory in the second.

²⁷⁸ The western extension of the Vindhyan ranges was usually referred to by the name Pāriyātra (P. K. Bhattacharyya 1977, 66–67), and this name is used as distinct from Vindhya in the present inscription (see page 162 of the Commentary).

²⁷⁹ Fleet translates the adjective *vasiṃyān* as "very excellent," and Sircar concurs with this. Durgaprasad (Durgāprasād and Parab 1892, 112–16) suggests reading or emending to *dhrasiṃyān* (i.e. *hrasiṃyān*, "very little"), which Kielhorn (1891, 189) rejects. The reading is definitely *vasiṃyān*, and since we are now quite certain that the Naigamas were, at least originally, a merchant clan (see page 30 for a discussion), the fundamental meaning of the word, "very rich," appears to be perfectly apt in the context.

served Yaśodharman's ancestors. According to verse 11, another complex *śleṣa*, the Naigama family²⁸⁰ originated from him as the Ganges does from the Himalayas and the Revā river from the moon. The same Revā is said in verse 19 to originate in, or at least to fall down from the peaks of, the Vindhya mountains. The name in all probability designates the Narmada river, though some Sanskrit sources make a distinction between Revā and Narmadā (Dey 1979, 168; P. K. Bhattacharyya 1977, 83–84). The physical river Narmada does originate in the Vindhya, in the vicinity of Amarkantak on the present border between Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. I am not familiar with any origin stories linking this river to the moon, but such stories must have been current at some time. The *Amarakośa* lists Somodbhavā (literally, “originating from the moon”) as synonymous with Narmadā and Revā,²⁸¹ and the same name is used in the *Raghuvamśa* for the Narmadā;²⁸² the *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi* of Hemacandra mentions Indujā as a name of this river (Sircar 1967, 104).

Verse 12 says Śaṣṭhidatta had a son named Varāhadāsa from a wellborn mother. Varāhadāsa is lauded in general terms including a hint that he, like his namesake the divine Varāha, was a partial incarnation of Viṣṇu. The subject of verse 13 is Ravikīrti, whose position in the family tree is not revealed. According to the view endorsed by Salomon (1989, 16, 18), Ravikīrti was Varāhadāsa's son or, possibly, his brother. In my view (see page 165 for details) Ravikīrti was more likely to be either an outsider (such as an artist patronised by the Naigama family) or another name of Varāhadāsa, but at present neither of these four alternatives can be corroborated or refuted.

A double entendre was probably intended to carry through all of this verse (see the translation below), though some components have practically the same sense in their separate applications, and the quilt of *śleṣa* is a bit loose at the seams. The compound *sukṛti-viṣayi-tuṅgam* is quite opaque, hence Kielhorn (1891, 189) suggested reading *viṣaya* instead of *viṣayi* (also noting that the final *i* of this word may have been struck out in the inscription, but my autopsy of the stone shows that this is definitely not the case). Sircar (1965b, 414 n. 6) adopted Kielhorn's suggestion as an emendation, but I find even this unnecessary.

²⁸⁰ It is on the basis of this stanza that Naigama is believed to be a proper name for the clan. See also page 30.

²⁸¹ *Amarakośa* 1.10.31, *revā tu narmadā somodbhavā mekala-kanyakā*. However, the commentary of Sarvānanda *ad loc.* says the name applies to the Narmadā because it was brought down to earth by Purūravas of the Lunar Dynasty (*soma-vaṁśyena purūravasā avatāritatvāt somodbhavā*).

²⁸² *Raghuvamśa* 5.59, *somodbhavāyāḥ sarito*, earlier referred to as *narmadā* in 5.42.

The text as we have it is admittedly slightly awkward, but this is often the case when two meanings are forced into the framework of a single string. I believe the best way to derive these is to construe *sukṛtin+viṣayin+tuṅgam* as a compound meaning “preeminent with charitable men of worldly occupation” (*sukṛtinaś ca viṣayinaś ca ye, tais tuṅgam*) for the family, but to construe *sukṛti+viṣayin*, “having sites of pious activity” (*sukṛtayaḥ puṇya-kṛtayo, tāsāṃ viṣayāḥ kṣetrā vidyante 'smin*) as a neuter accusative separate from *tuṅgam*, “tall” in the context of the mountain. The adjectives applied to the family in this stanza may be trivial poetic embellishments chosen merely because they could describe both a family and a mountain, but it is possible that at least some of them hint at events of Naigama history. Thus, *rūḍha-mūlaṃ dharāyām* may imply that the family did not always have roots in the land around Daśapura but has by this time become established in this land;²⁸³ and *apagata-bhaṅgām* may mean that the clan had been divided over some issue before Varāhadāsa's time.

The subject of verse 14 is again (or still) Varāhadāsa by my understanding, but if Ravikīrti was a family member rather than a parenthetical note, then he is the subject instead. Here we learn that he was true to his high birth and followed the path prescribed by traditional scripture (*smṛti*), while the next stanza records the name of his wife and says that she bore him three sons. Since the lady's name was Bhānuguptā, it has been suggested (first by Fleet in CII3 p. 152) that she may have been related to King Bhānugupta, who was alive circa 511 CE (GE 191) according to the Eran pillar inscription of Goparāja²⁸⁴ and who may in turn have been related to the imperial Guptas. However, the combined evidence of the Risthal inscription and the Mandsaur stone tells us that Bhānuguptā's son Doṣa was a minister of Prakāśadharman in 515–516 CE, so if Bhānuguptā was indeed a relative of Bhānugupta, she must have been the older of the two.

Verses 16 and 17 describe the first son, Doṣa. As in the Risthal inscription, he is referred to as *bhagavad-doṣaḥ*, whence all scholars have tacitly assumed that his proper name was Bhagavaddoṣa, but see my discussion on page 165 below. He is praised as a patron of poetry and, chiefly, as a reliable and prescient advisor. We know from the Risthal inscription that he was the chancellor²⁸⁵ of Prakāśadharman, and though the present inscription does not explicitly say so, his position is implied by the mythical figures to whom he is likened. Verse 16 says he was a support to

²⁸³ See page 96.

²⁸⁴ Siddham IN00050; CII3 20; CII3rev 43.

²⁸⁵ See page 8 about my translation of *rājasthāniya* as chancellor.

his relatives as Uddhava was to the Andhakas. The Andhakas are the Yādavas, called by this name after Andhaka, a famous descendant of Yadu and ancestor of Kṛṣṇa. Fleet understands the verse to mean that he was “the prop of his relatives in the paths of religious actions,” but this is too neutral an interpretation. Clearly, *bāndhavānām* refers to the Aulikara rulers, and *kārya* is to be understood as [kingly] duty, not as “religious action.” Uddhava was not a religious guru to the Yādavas, but a gifted minister²⁸⁶ who had learned the craft from Bṛhaspati himself.²⁸⁷ I would also like to emphasise that although *bāndhava* may mean “friend,” the word’s core meaning is “kinsman,” and Uddhava was a collateral relation of the Yādava royal line, being the son of Devabhāga,²⁸⁸ who was the brother of Vasudeva. In other words, Uddhava was cousin to Kṛṣṇa. The stanza thus strongly implies that the Nāigamas not only served the Aulikaras as high officials, but also intermarried with them. Likewise, verse 17 likens him to Vidura, an advisor to the Kuru family of the *Mahābhārata* who, though not explicitly known as a minister, was renowned for his foresight and insight. Fleet again underplays his translation of this stanza, implying that Doṣa was primarily a poet, but given the context, the terms *naya* and *artha* are evidently used in a political sense here. Moreover, Vidura too was a relative of the ruling line, sired by Vyāsa just like Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu, though not on a royal mother but on a maidservant whom one of the widowed queens sent to his bed in lieu of herself.

The next two stanzas, 18 and 19, say that Doṣa was followed by Abhayadatta in “the distinguished position” (*padam udayi*), which must surely refer to the office of chancellor (*rājasthānīya*). I feel justified in rejecting Fleet’s interpretation that he simply followed Doṣa (in order of birth) and held an unspecified high position. Verse 18 further says that Abhayadatta’s mental vision followed the eyes of his secret agents, discovering hidden and minute things in his effort to avert threats to the populace.²⁸⁹ Once again, Fleet sees only vague flattery here,

²⁸⁶ The *Harivaṃśa* says the Yadus prospered because they relied on the political expertise of Uddhava (*Harivaṃśa* Appendix I.31.98, ... *uddhavaṃ nitimattaram| yasya nitim samāśritya jivanti yadavaḥ sukham||*).

²⁸⁷ See for example the *Ādiparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (1.213.26, ... *uddhavaś ca mahā-yaśāḥ| sāksād bṛhaspateḥ śiṣyo mahā-buddhir mahā-yaśāḥ||*).

²⁸⁸ *Harivaṃśa* 24.25, *uddhavo devabhāgasya mahā-bhāgaḥ suto bhavat*.

²⁸⁹ As far as syntax is concerned, the statement about eyes and spies in the first half of the verse might apply to Doṣa, the subject of the previous verse. In agreement with Fleet on this point, I prefer to stick to the slightly more natural interpretation that the whole of this verse applies to Abhayadatta, since there are no clear instances

to the effect that Abhayadatta’s “eyes of intellect ... served him like the eyes of a spy,”²⁹⁰ while I am confident that the context indicates actual secret agents working for Abhayadatta. Verse 19 explicitly calls Abhayadatta a *rājasthānīya* and describes the extent of the territory he controlled. The only point in which I differ from Fleet here is that I take *nija* ... *saciva* as “native governors” who manage the numerous countries incorporated in this territory, not as Abhayadatta’s “own counsellors.” Although *saciva* does not normally mean a governor, it is clear from the context and particularly the participle *adhyāsita* that people functioning as stewards are meant. In the light of this, officials (possibly former kings) native to each land (which is the basic meaning of *nija*) seem much more likely than the chancellor’s own men (a very common extended meaning of *nija*).

The text enumerates three boundaries for the realm: the Vindhya mountain, the Pāriyātra mountain and the ocean. The last of these must refer to the Arabian Sea or more specifically to the Gulf of Khambhat, delimiting the land on the south-western side. The former two evidently mean mountain ranges, not single mountains: the Vindhyas clearly define the southern and south-eastern boundary of this territory, but the case of the Pāriyātra is not so clear-cut. This name (or its variant Pāripātra) generally refers to the western portion of what we now call the Vindhyas, grouped together with the Aravalli range. Now it is unlikely that Vindhya in the present case means *only* the central Vindhyan mountains, which lie too far east of Daśapura to be relevant.²⁹¹ Therefore Pāriyātra is in all probability used here to designate only the Aravalis, demarcating the boundary in the northwest. A boundary on the northeast is conspicuously absent. Although there may be some innocuous reason for this silence, it may very well be an indication that control of lands to the northeast of Daśapura were the subject of (perhaps vehement) dispute at the time the inscription was created. In other words, we may have here an indication that the present epigraph predates Yaśodharman’s final victory over Mihirakula, which probably put an end to Hūṇa rule in central India.

The following pair of verses, 20 and 21, introduce the next, and current, holder of the post of chancellor: Dharmadoṣa the son of Doṣakumbha. The connection to the

of a single stanza describing two separate people in the inscription, while in the similarly structured verse 20 the syntax is unambiguous.

²⁹⁰ Fleet’s translation apparently omits the word *anugantrā*, or perhaps takes it to mean “imitating,” rendered by “like.”

²⁹¹ However, the reference to the source of the River Revā may imply that the eastern stretches of the range are included. My thanks to Hans Bakker for suggesting this.

line of descent is nonetheless uncertain, as Doṣakumbha has not been mentioned before. To the best of my knowledge all scholars so far have assumed that he must be the youngest of the three sons of Bhānuguptā. While this is certainly feasible, I find it very strange that such a detailed account of the family tree could neglect to introduce the man who is father to both the current *rājasthānīya* and to the issuer of the inscription (who, we are told in verse 22, is Dharmadoṣa's younger brother). I am therefore more inclined to believe that Doṣakumbha is the full name of Doṣa, the first of the three brothers (see also page 165), and that the youngest of the three is not mentioned at all in the inscription.

Dharmadoṣa's efficiency and dutifulness are praised in both verses. In this short span, his office is twice referred to as a burden or yoke (*dhur*), once adding that he bears it [only] for the sake of his lord. Likewise, he wears clothing befitting royalty only as a necessary status symbol, and not for personal comfort. He made provisions for preventing the intermixture of social classes (*varṇa-saṃkara*) and calmed down *ḍimbas* in the kingdom. *ḍimba* is a fairly rare and obscure word that may have a variety of meanings, including (according to several Sanskrit thesauri) a brawl or riot, or more generally a calamity. I choose the middle ground with "pacified strife" in my translation, but the intent may have been even more general (he averted misfortunes threatening the kingdom), or possibly more specific (he put an end to a family feud or even prevented an attempted coup).

Verses 22 and 23 pertain to the donor of the well and issuer of the inscription, who is introduced as the younger brother of Dharmadoṣa and seems to have two names, Dakṣa and Nirdoṣa (see page 166 for a discussion). He was probably an assistant to his elder brother the chancellor, since verse 22 likens him to Dharmadoṣa's right arm and verse 28 prays that he may continue to protect *dharmā*. A problematic detail in verse 22 is the simile in the first half of the stanza, which Fleet translates "invested with the decoration of the protection of friends, as if he were [his] broad-shouldered [right] arm [decorated] with choice jewels." Kielhorn (1891, 189) suggested reading *jñāti* in place of *jāti* and offered the translation "by excellent relatives invested, as with a decoration, with the protection of friends, – being as it were [Dharmadoṣa's] broad-shouldered arm, to which excellent relatives had fastened a beneficial ornament to guard (against evil)." However, the reading is definitely not *jñāti* (see also note to line 19 of the text) and in my opinion emendation is not warranted. Given that protective amulets tied on the arm by relatives (*rakṣā-bandhana*) are in vogue to this day in India, Kielhorn's interpretation does seem superior

to Fleet's, but an essentially identical meaning can be arrived at by understanding *jāti-ratna* as "eminent men of [his] clan." I would go one tentative step further and suggest that the verse involves a fully fledged *śleṣa*. Thus, instead of repeating "eminent men of his clan" (as Kielhorn does with "excellent relatives"), I would see a reference to horoscopic birthstones in the term *jāti-ratna* when applied to the metaphorical arm. Further research into relevant literature may corroborate or negate this proposal.

Verse 23 essentially reiterates that he, Nirdoṣa, was the commissioner of the well, but the main topic of this stanza is that the construction is dedicated to the memory of Abhayadatta. The latter is explicitly said to be a paternal uncle of the donor. His death is compared to the felling of a shady and fruit-bearing tree by an elephant, which in all probability implies that Abhayadatta had been a patron of Nirdoṣa while he lived and may also imply that his death was premature.

With verse 24 we come to the date, expressed in words as Mālava Era 589 expired. The expression *mālava-gaṇasthiti-vaśāt kāla-jñānāya likhiteṣu*, applied to the years, has been the subject of much debate, which is briefly summarised on page 7.

Verse 25 describes the season of spring, while verse 26 continues the description and states that this is the time when this, to wit the well, was built. Although the word *māsa* appears in this stanza, it does not seem to indicate any particular month. Accordingly, Fleet interprets *kusuma-samaya-māse* as a *bahuvrīhi* meaning "in which there is the month of the coming on of flowers," qualifying *kāle* in verse 25. This strikes me as a laboured interpretation, since *samaya* primarily means "time" even if it could, with some stretch, be understood as "coming on," and *puṣpa-samaya* and *puṣpa-kāla* are attested as meaning "spring" (MW s. v.). I thus prefer to translate "month of the season of flowers," scil. the spring. *Māsa*, "month," may have been used in a lax sense of "time of the year," but it is also possible that the nature description in these two stanzas actually identifies a single specific month to a mind better acquainted with both the poetic conventions of the age and the annual cycle of nature around Daśapura.

The precise details of the poetic image are again uncertain, partly because of the problematic word I read as *rāmayan* (see note to line 23 of the text for details), and primarily because the main verb *upanayati* apparently lacks an object. Fleet construes it with *māna-bhaṅgāya* and translates "devotes itself to breaking down (their) pride," but to the best of my knowledge *upa-nī* is never used in such a sense. The best way to make the stanza a coherent whole seems to be to supply "people" or

“everyone” for an object, which yields the meaning that the wind guides people toward reconciliation. It is also possible that the poet’s intent was to liken tender sprigs carried by the wind to conciliatory bouquets of flowers, but if so, then the verse is a syntactical failure.

Verse 27 is a prayer for the well to endure as long as the ocean and the moon remain. The stanza mentions the attraction of the ocean to the moon, manifested in high tides. The well’s water is compared to nectar (*amṛta*), which is the substance of the moon. It also describes some sort of circular decoration on the architecture, involving *saudha*, stucco or lime plaster; the word is derived from *sudhā*, which again happens to be a synonym of *amṛta*. These hints, coupled with the inelegance of the compounds in the first and third quarter, may imply that an overarching conceptual framework – linking the natural duo of ocean and moon to an artificial one comprised of the well’s water and its architectural complements – was intended.²⁹² Such a cunning interpretation does not, however, seem possible without much awkwardness, so I prefer to see only a less elaborate parallel between the well with its white circular ornamentation and the moon with its halo of rays.

The last stanza, number 28, is a similar prayer for the donor, who is again referred to both as Dakṣa and as Nirdoṣa. The verse asks the boon that he may continue for a long time to safeguard *dharma*, tireless in the tasks of his master. The master (*svāmin*) may mean his king Yaśodharman, but, as Bakker (forthcoming) also suggests, perhaps more probably signifies his immediate superior, his elder brother Dharmadoṣa, and the word *dharma* may also be a hint at his name.

The name of the engraver, Govinda, is recorded at the very end of the inscription; he is the same person who carved the Sondhni pillar inscriptions (A11, A12).

Yaśodharman and Viṣṇuwardhana

Verses 6 and 7 of the Mandsaur stone inscription of Nirdoṣa describe Viṣṇuwardhana as a victorious personage of the Aulikara dynasty and associate him with the titles *narādhipati* and *rājādhirāja-parameśvara*, just after mentioning Yaśodharman in verse 5. Initially, Fleet (e.g. CII3, 155 n. 5) was convinced that Yaśodharman was a

tribal chieftain under the sovereign Viṣṇuwardhana. The basis of his reasoning was that in verse 5 Yaśodharman’s title is a modest *janendra*, literally “lord of people,” which Fleet interprets as “tribal leader.” Hoernle (1889, 96) preferred to understand the two names as referring to the same person, because of the words *sa eva*, “that same person,” appended to Viṣṇuwardhana’s name in verse 6. He theorised that Yaśodharman’s original titles were *janendra* and *narādhipati*, but he then became an emperor, taking on the name Viṣṇuwardhana and the titles *rājādhirāja* and *parameśvara*. Fleet (1890b, 227) replied that he could not disprove this view but was not ready to accept it because of “the apparently pointed contrast” of *janendra* with *narādhipati*, the use of the expression *punaś ca* in verse 6, and the very words of *sa eva* which he felt should be *sa eṣa* if the two were identical. I fully agree with Hoernle’s rejoinder (1903, 550 n. 1) that the first and third of these objections are insubstantial: *janendra* is essentially synonymous to *narādhipati*, while *sa eva* is an explicit affirmation that the two subjects are identical. I would add that *punaś ca* need not imply a change of subject (as apparently understood by Fleet), but may simply mean “and then” (at a later stage), which accords well with Hoernle’s suggestion.

Since then, most scholars (e.g. Sircar 1965b, 411–12 n. 1; Goyal 1967, 360; Mirashi 1980, 406) have accepted the identity of Yaśodharman and Viṣṇuwardhana at least as the more probable alternative. R. G. Bhandarkar (1902, 392) proposed an even more improbable third alternative, namely that Viṣṇuwardhana was an ancestor of Yaśodharman and the first of his house who rose to emperorhood; while Allan (1914, lvii–lviii) turned Fleet’s alternative inside out and claimed “the natural explanation” was that Yaśodharman was the suzerain of the local chief Viṣṇuwardhana, and Nirdoṣa’s inscription primarily praised the local ruler and only mentioned the overlord Yaśodharman in passing. Since the stone inscription does not touch on Yaśodharman’s victory over Mihirakula, Allan reasoned, this victory cannot have belonged to Viṣṇuwardhana since it is “most improbable” that the Sondhni pillar inscription (A11 and A12) commemorating that victory could postdate the stone. However, the odds for this are even (see page 179), and the fact that the stone does not refer to the defeat of Mihirakula rather tips the balance in favour of the pillar being later. The ultimate point against Allan’s theory is the Risthal inscription, which reveals that Prakāśadharman’s court poet was the same Vāsula who composed Yaśodharman’s Sondhni inscription, while simultaneously Prakāśadharman’s chancellor was an elder relative of Viṣṇuwardhana’s courtier who commissioned the Mandsaur stone inscription.

²⁹² It may even be possible to interpret the whole of the compound *saudhānta-lekhā-valaya-parigatim* as bitextual, describing the moon on one level and the well on another. For such an interpretation to work, the word *bibhrat* would need to be construed as part of the compound since the moon is in the accusative case.

Richard Salomon (1989, 13–17) has also scrutinised the issue and found the identity hypothesis much more likely, with the remark that “the matter is not entirely beyond doubt.” I find this overly cautious and contend that the identity of these two names is as certain as any historical fact can be. The expression *sa eva* in the stone inscription should alone be enough to confirm this, had it not been such an august personage as Fleet who suggested otherwise. Salomon also points to, but perhaps does not emphasise strongly enough, the fact that the Risthal inscription has names in both *dharman* and *vardhana* in the same dynasty. Even though the simultaneous use of two names by any single ruler of this line is not confirmed, this piece of information, not available to the scholars who formed opinions on the matter before 1984, should put an end to any assumptions that Yaśodharman and Viṣṇuwardhana were two separate persons, with one being subordinate to the other. As Salomon (1989, 17) remarks in his role as the devil’s advocate, the use of *dharman* and *vardhana* names in the Risthal genealogy would theoretically permit yet another alternative that had not been previously raised, namely that Viṣṇuwardhana was Yaśodharman’s son. There is, however, no evidence for this, and the available facts are best explained by the hypothesis that the two were, after all, identical.

Twists and Turns in Naigama Genealogy

The extant inscriptions furnish ample data about the Naigama family tree, yet fail to make family relations sufficiently clear (the alternative genealogies in Figure 6 on page 31 may be helpful in following my reasoning here). The Mandsaur stone of Nirdoṣa records that the founder of the family was a tycoon named Ṣaṣṭhidatta, who took refuge at the feet of Yaśodharman’s ancestors. He had a son named Varāhadāsa, who is in all probability the same as the Varāha mentioned in the Chittorgarh fragment. After this point, the tree’s branches begin to tangle.

Directly after introducing Varāhadāsa, the inscription praises the brilliance of someone named Ravikīrti without saying anything about his relation to the former. The central message of the complex simile carried through the stanza, likening the family to a mountain illuminated by the sun (see the commentary on verse 13 above), is that Ravikīrti was a bright light to the Naigama clan. Sircar and Gai (1961, 54 n. 4) express uncertainty as to whether the names Varāhadāsa and Ravikīrti referred to the same person, or whether the latter was the former’s son or brother. Salomon (1989, 16, 18) prefers the interpretation that Ravikīrti was Varāhadāsa’s son, but also provides an

alternative genealogy according to which the two were brothers.

My opinion is that the inscription – long and detailed as it is – would surely have said something to indicate their relationship if Ravikīrti had been Varāhadāsa’s son or brother. There is yet another option in addition to the three mentioned by Sircar and Gai: Ravikīrti may have been someone unrelated to the family, such as a poet patronised by Varāhadāsa who brightened the family with his talent (*kulaṃ svātma-bhūtyā ... suprakāśaṃ vyadhata*, 112). In this case he is not part of the genealogy but a parenthetical note. He may have been famous enough at the time the inscription was composed that the author did not think he needed more of an introduction than his name. He cannot have been the poet Ravikīrti who composed the Aihole inscription of Pulikeśin II, since the latter was active in 634–635 CE (Kielhorn 1901a, 3). However, going out a limb, it may be that our Ravikīrti was none other than the poet Bhāravi, whom the later Ravikīrti mentions by name, and who is said to have introduced Daṇḍin’s grandfather to a King Viṣṇuwardhana, who may have been Yaśodharman (Bakker 2014, 36). Supposing that Bhāravi was quite old in Yaśodharman’s time, he may well have attained Varāhadāsa’s patronage at an early age.²⁹³ But Bhāravi aside, I think that Ravikīrti was most likely an outsider to the Naigama clan; the second most likely possibility is that he was Varāhadāsa by another name. However, in default of positive evidence for either, all four of the above options may be feasible.

Varāhadāsa (or Ravikīrti, as the case may be) had three sons by a lady named Bhānuguptā. The eldest was clearly Doṣa, who according to the Risthal inscription (A9 v26) served Prakāśadharman in the function of *rājasthānīya*, just as his father had been a minister (*amātya*, presumably equivalent in sense to *rājasthānīya*) to a predecessor of Prakāśadharman, presumably Rājyavardhana. Chancellor Doṣa’s name appears as Bhagavaddoṣa in all scholarly discussions of the family. This is indeed possible, and appears to be corroborated by the fact that both known references to him (line 13 of the Mandsaur inscription of Nirdoṣa, A10, in addition to the Risthal stone) speak of him as *bhagavad-doṣa*. However, I feel that *bhagavat* is more likely to be a title than a part of his name. There is no decisive evidence in favour of this, but line 2 of the present inscription refers to Prakāśadharman as *bhagavat-prakāśaḥ*, which shows that *bhagavat* was used at this time and place as an honorific prefix. It may further indicate that Doṣa too had a second member to his name that was dropped here. In addition, in the Risthal inscription the third quarter of a

²⁹³ In fact, could the complexity of this stanza of the inscription be in itself a sort of homage to Bhāravi?

stanza ends after *bhagavat*. While the ends of odd *pādas* in the *anuṣṭubh* metre do sometimes fall inside compounds, a break between a title and a name seems less jarring than one between two components of a single name would.²⁹⁴ It is also worth noting that the chancellor is described as *adoṣa-saṅginā*, “adhering to incorruptibility” or “not inclined toward error.” Several other times in the Risthal inscription the poet employs adjectives that play on the names of the persons they describe, and the fact that only *doṣa* is employed in this playful adjective implies that Doṣa, without *bhagavat*, was indeed the name of the chancellor. Moreover, a *sāmanta* Doṣa, who may be identical to the Naigama chancellor (though there is no positive evidence for this identity), is mentioned in a graffito (B10) engraved on the Eran pillar of the time of Budhagupta (ca. 595 CE). Finally, Bhagavaddoṣa, “the mistake of the Lord(?)” would be a very strange name, though admittedly Doṣa alone is only slightly less strange.

Doṣa’s younger brother has no problematic aspects: he was named Abhayadatta and succeeded Doṣa in the office of chancellor. The identity of the third brother is, however, unclear. The Mandsaur stone of Nirdoṣa introduces and praises Doṣa and Abhayadatta, but then goes on to describe Dharmadoṣa, the son of Doṣakumbha. The text has thus been understood to mean that the youngest of the brothers was called Doṣakumbha, and the commissioner of the inscription (introduced as Abhayadatta’s nephew) was his son. As before, there is not enough evidence to disprove this assumption, but then again, nor is there anything positively in favour of it. I propose a different way to reconstruct this branch of the Naigama tree: Doṣakumbha was in my opinion identical to Doṣa, and the Mandsaur inscription neglects the name of the youngest of the three brothers. Nirdoṣa is Abhayadatta’s nephew because he is the son of the latter’s elder, not younger, brother. My reasons for this hypothesis are as follows. First, as suggested above, Doṣa may have had a second member to his name, analogously to the way Prakāśadharman is referred to as *bhagavat-prakāśa*. Second, Nirdoṣa’s inscription is concerned at this point with two things: describing Nirdoṣa’s own lineage and that of his uncle Abhayadatta, in whose memory he constructs a well. It is indeed slightly peculiar that only two brothers are treated in the text after explicitly saying that there were three of them. But it would be even more peculiar if the donor were to say nothing about his own father beyond naming him. Constituting the family tree by my interpretation, the donor’s father has been discussed at length (as Doṣa), and

²⁹⁴ However, verse 8 of the Sondhni pillar (A11, A12) in fact has a caesura between the members of the name of Yaśodharman.

the third brother is neglected because he is not relevant to Nirdoṣa’s purpose with the inscription. Finally, the Chittor fragment (A14, verses 4 and 5) speaks of a man named Viṣṇudatta immediately after naming Varāha in the previous stanza. The implication is that Viṣṇudatta was Varāhadāsa’s son. Now recall that by the conventional reconstruction of the genealogy, Doṣa and his brothers would be Ravikīrti’s sons, so Viṣṇudatta would be their uncle. But by my reconstruction, Doṣa and Abhayadatta are Varāhadāsa’s sons. It is thus possible that we do have a record of the third brother after all: Viṣṇudatta may have been Doṣa’s youngest brother and may have held an office in Madhyamikā rather than in the capital.²⁹⁵

All of the above must remain speculative for the time being, but this scheme simplifies one more aspect of the picture. With the established understanding of the family tree, the office of *rājasthāniya* passed from Ravikīrti to his eldest son (Bhagavad)doṣa, then to the second son Abhayadatta, and then, unexpectedly, to the youngest son’s son Dharmadoṣa. With my genealogy, however, the succession follows a regular norm: the office goes from Varāhadāsa to his eldest son Doṣa, next to the second son Abhayadatta, and then to the *eldest* son’s son Dharmadoṣa.

Another problematic detail in Naigama family affairs is that Nirdoṣa and Dakṣa both seem to be names of a single person. Either of these terms could, in isolation, be simply an epithet to the person’s proper name: *dakṣa* means “dextrous” or “clever,” while *nirdoṣa* means “faultless” or “blameless.” Fleet takes Dakṣa to be his proper name and translates Nirdoṣa as “the faultless one.” However, Nirdoṣa is explicitly said to be a name (*nāma*) in verse 22, which Fleet apparently understands to mean a sort of nickname. Conversely, Kielhorn (1891, 189) believes the name is Nirdoṣa and translates *dakṣa* simply as “dextrous.” However, Dakṣa is the basis of a pun in verse 22, while in verse 28 it appears next to *dakṣiṇa*, which is also a play on words. This, to my mind, implies that Dakṣa too was a proper name of this gentleman (and thus a cue for wordplay). Verse 28 of the inscription seems to suggest that Dakṣa (appearing at the very beginning of the stanza and associated with the enumeration of his good traits) was his birth name, while Nirdoṣa (appearing at the end and associated with his function as a protector of *dharma*) was a name he wore in office, but this is not explicitly stated.

²⁹⁵ Yet another theoretical possibility is that Viṣṇudatta is in fact the same person as Doṣa. This would bring the count of Doṣa’s names rather high, but it opens up the possibility that Viṣṇudatta was his original proper name (a good match for his brother Abhayadatta), while Doṣakumbha and/or Doṣa may have been a name taken up at a later time, perhaps upon becoming a renunciant or as a sort of atonement for a political blunder.

Diplomatic Text

- [1] siddhaM ⁽¹⁾sa jayati jagatām patih pināki smita-rava-gītiṣu yasya danta-kāntih| dyutir iva taḍitām niśi sphurantī tirayati ca sphuṭayaty adaś ca viśvaM|| ⁽²⁾svayambhūr bhūtānām sthiti-laya-[samu]
- [2] ṭpatti-vidhiṣu prayukto yenājñām vahati bhuvanānām vidhṛtayel piṭṛtvam cānīto jagati garimāṇam gamayatā sa śambhur bhūyān|si pratidiśatu bhadrāṇi bhava[tāM]|| ⁽³⁾phaṇa-maṇi-guru-bhā(r)[ākkr]r[ā]
- [3] nti-dūrāvanamraṃ sthagayati rucam indor mmaṇḍalaṃ yasya mūrhdnāM sa śirasi vinibadhnan randhriṇīm asthi-mālām sṛjatu bhava-sṛjo vaḥ kleśa-bhaṅgaṃ bhujāṅgaḥ|| ⁽⁴⁾ṣaṣṭyā saha(s)raiḥ saagarātmajanām khāta[h]
- [4] kha-tulyām rucam ādadhānaḥ| Asyodapānādhipateś cirāya yaśān|si pāyāt payasām vidhātā|| ⁽⁵⁾Atha jayati janendraḥ śrī-yaśodharmma-nāmā pramada-vanam ivāntaḥ śatru-sainyaṃ vigāhya vraṇa-
- [5] kisalaya-bhaṅgair yyo ṅga-bhūṣām vidhatte taruṇa-taru-latāvad (v)īra-kīrttir vvinja!mya|| ⁽⁶⁾ājau jiti vijayate jagatiṃ punaś ca śrī-viṣṇuvarddhana-narādhipatiḥ sa eva| prakhyāta Aulikara-lāñchana ātma
- [6] vaḥ!śo yenoditodita-padaṃ gamito gariyaḥ|| ⁽⁷⁾prāco nṛpān subṛhataś ca bahūn udīcaḥ sāmānā yudhā ca vaśa-gān pravīdhāya yena| nāmāparaṃ jagati kāntam ado durāpaṃ rājādhirāja-parame
- [7] śvara Ity udūḍhaM|| ⁽⁸⁾snigdha-śyāmāmbudābhāih sthagita-dinakṛto yajvanām ājya-dhūmair ambho meghyaṃ maghonāvadhīṣu vidadhatā gādha-sampanna-sasyāḥ| samharṣād vāṇinīnām kara-rabhasa-hṛto
- [8] dyāna-cūtāṅkurāgrā rājanvanto ramante bhujā-vijita-bhuvā bhūrayo yena deśāḥ|| ⁽⁹⁾yasyotketubhir unmada-dvipa-kara-vyāviddha-lodhra-drumair uddhūtena vanādhvani dhvani-nadad-vindhyādri-randhrāir bbalaiḥ bāle
- [9] ya-cchavi-dhūsaṇa rajasā mandāḥ!śu saṃlakṣyate paryyāvṛtta-śikhaṇḍi-candraka Iva dhyāmaṃ raver mmaṇḍalaM|| ⁽¹⁰⁾tasya prabhor vvaḥ!śa-kṛtām nṛpānām pādāśrayād viśruta-puṇya-kīrttiḥ| bhṛtyaḥ sva-naibhṛtya-jitā
- [10] ri-ṣaṭka Āsīd vasiyān kila ṣaṣṭhidattaḥ|| ⁽¹¹⁾himavata Iva gāṅgas tuṅga-namraḥ pravāhaḥ śāsabhṛta Iva revā-vāri-rāsīḥ prathīyāN param abhigamanīyaḥ śuddhimān anvavāyo yata Udita-gari
- [11] mṇas tāyate naigamānām|| ⁽¹²⁾tasyānukūlah kulajāt kalatrāt sutaḥ prasūto yaśasām prasūtiḥ| harer ivāḥ!śaṃ vaśinaṃ varārhaṃ varāhadāsaṃ yam udāharanti|| ⁽¹³⁾sukṛti-viṣayi-tuṅgaṃ rūḍha-mūlaṃ
- [12] dharāyām sthitim apagata-bhaṅgām stheyasim ādadhānaM guru śikharam ivādes tat-kulaṃ svātma-bhūtyā ravir iva ravikīrttiḥ suprakāśaṃ vyadhata|| ⁽¹⁴⁾bibhratā śubhram abhraḥ!śi smārttaṃ vartmocitaṃ satām na viṣaṃ!vā
- [13] ditā yena kalāv api kulīnatā|| ⁽¹⁵⁾dhuta-dhī-dīdhiti-dhvāntān havirbhujā IvādhvarāN bhānuguptā tataḥ sādhvī tanayāms trīn ajījanaT|| ⁽¹⁶⁾bhagavad-doṣa Ity āsīt prathamāḥ kāryya-vartmasu| Āla
- [14] mbanam bāndhavānām andhakānām ivoddhavaḥ|| ⁽¹⁷⁾bahu-naya-vidhi-vedhā gahvare py artha-mārgge vidura Iva vidūraṃ prekṣayā prekṣamāṇaḥ| vacana-racana-bandhe saṃskṛta-prākṛte yaḥ kavibhir udi
- [15] ta-rāgaṃ gīyate gīr-abhijñāḥ|| ⁽¹⁸⁾prañidhi-dṛg-anugantrā yasya bauddhena cākṣṇā na niśi tanu daviyo vāsty adīṣṭaṃ dhārittryām padam udayi dadhāno nantaraṃ tasya cābhūt sa bhayam abhayadatto nā(ma)
- [16] (v)i[?ghna](?n) p(r)ajānām|| ⁽¹⁹⁾vindhyasyāvandhya-karmā śikhara-taṭa-patat-(p)āṇḍu-revāmbu-rāśer ggolāṅgūlaiḥ sahelam pluti-namita-taroḥ pāriyātrasya cādreh| Ā sindhor antarālam nija-śuci-sacivāddhyāṣ
- [17] sit[ā](n)[e]ka-deśam rājasthāniya-vṛtyā suragurur iva yo varṇṇinām bhūtaye pāT|| ⁽²⁰⁾vihita-sakala-(v) arṇṇāsaṅkaram śānta-ḍimbaṃ kṛta Iva kṛtam etad yena rājyaṃ nirādhi| sa dhuram ayam idāniṃ
- [18] doṣakumbhasya sūnur guru vahati tad-ūḍhām dharmmato dharmmodoṣaḥ|| ⁽²¹⁾sva-sukham anabhivāc|chan durggame ddhvany asaṅgām dhuram atiguru-bhārām yo dadhad bhartur arthe| vahati nṛpati-veṣam kevalam lakṣma-mātraṃ
- [19] valinam iva vilambaṃ kambalam bāhuleyaḥ|| ⁽²²⁾upahita-hita-rakṣā-maṇḍano jāti-ratnair bhujā Iva pṛthulāmsas tasya dakṣaḥ kaniyāN mahad idam udapānaṃ khānayām āsa bibhra
- [20] c (ch)r(u)ti-hṛdaya-nitāntānandi nirdoṣa-nāma|| ⁽²³⁾sukhāśreya-cchāyāṃ pariṇati-hita-svādu-phala-dam gajendreṇarugṇam drumam iva kṛtāntena balinā| piṭṛvyam proddīśya priyam abhayadattaṃ pṛ

- [21] *thu-dhiyā prathiyas tenedaṃ kuśalam iha karmmoparacitaM*|| ⁽²⁴⁾ *pañcasu śateṣu śaradāṃ yāteṣv ekānna-*
navati-sahiteṣu|| *mālava-gaṇa-sthiti-vaśāt kāla-jñānāya likhiteṣu*|| ⁽²⁵⁾ *ya*
- [22] *smin kāle kala-mṛdu-girāṃ kokilānāṃ pralāpā bhindantiva smara-śara-nibhāḥ proṣitānāṃ manāṃsi*||
bhṛṅgālīnāṃ dhvanir anu-vanaṃ (t)āra-mandraś ca yasminn ādhūta-jyaṃ dhanur iva nadac chrūyate
puṣpa-
- [23] *ketoḥ*|| ⁽²⁶⁾ *priyatama-kupitānāṃ r(ā)maya(n) baddha-rāgaṃ kisalayam iva mugdhaṃ mānasam*
mānininām Upanayati nabhasvān māna-bhaṅgāya yasmin kusuma-samaya-māse tatra nirmāpito yaM||
- [24] ⁽²⁷⁾ *yāvat tuṅgair udanvān kiraṇa-samuday(ā)saṅga-kāntaṃ taraṅgair āliṅgann indu-bimbaṃ gurubhir iva*
bhujaiḥ saṃvidhatte suhṛtā(M) bibhrat saudhānta-lekhā-valaya-parigatiṃ muṇḍa-mālām ivāyaṃ sat-
kūpas tāvad ā
- [25] *stām amṛta-sama-rasa-svaccha-viṣyanditāmbuḥ*|| ⁽²⁸⁾ *dhīmā;ṃ! dakṣo dakṣiṇaḥ satya-sandho hrīmā;ṃ!*
cchūro vṛddha-sevī kṛtajñāḥ(!) baddhotsāhaḥ svāmi-kāryeṣv akhedī nirddoṣo yaṃ pātu dharmmaṃ cirāya
Utkirṇṇā govi(nde)na||

Curated Text

[1] *siddham* (|)

⟨Verse 1. Metre: puṣpitāgrā⟩

sa jayati jagatāṃ patiḥ pināki
smita-rava-gītiṣu yasya danta-kāntiḥ
dyutir iva taḍitāṃ niśi sphurantī
tirayati ca sphuṭayaty adaś ca viśvam||

⟨Verse 2. Metre: śikhariṇī⟩

svayambhūr bhūtānāṃ
sthiti-laya-[samu]^[2]tpatti-vidhiṣu
prayukto yenājñāṃ vahati bhuvanānāṃ vidhṛtaye
pitṛtvaṃ cānīto jagati garimāṇaṃ gamayatā
sa śambhur bhūyā;n!si
pratidiśatu bhadrāṇi bhava[tām]||

⟨Verse 3. Metre: mālinī⟩

phaṇa-maṇi-guru-bhā(r)[āk]r[ā]^[3]nti-dūrāvanamraṃ
sthagayati rucam indor
mmaṇḍalaṃ yasya mūrdhnām
sa śirasi vinibadhnan randhriṇim asthi-mālāṃ
sṛjatu bhava-sṛjo vaḥ kleśa-bhaṅgaṃ bhujāṅgaḥ||

Translation

Accomplished.²⁹⁶

⟨1⟩

Victorious is that master of [all] worlds, Pinākin²⁹⁷ [Śiva].
When he smiles, roars and sings, the gleam of his teeth,
like the flare of lightning flickering in the night, now
conceals, then reveals the universe.

⟨2⟩

Appointed by him to the ritual duties of the sustenance,
annihilation and creation of beings, the Self-Existent
[Brahmā] carries out [his] command to manage the
[three] worlds, having become a father to [all] the world
through being elevated [by him] to dignity. May that
Śambhu [Śiva²⁹⁸] ordain many good things for you.

⟨3⟩

Bent far down by the pressure of the ponderous weight
of the gems in his hoods, his array of heads obscures
the sheen of the moon as he secures a ruptured garland
of bones on [Śiva's] head. May that serpent of [Śiva] the
emitter (*sṛj*) of material existence (*bhava*) grant (*sṛj-*) you
surcease from suffering.

Footnotes

²⁹⁶ See page 6 about translating *siddham* as “accomplished.”

²⁹⁷ See note 254 on page 147 about the name Pinākin.

²⁹⁸ Śambhu, etymologised as “existing for welfare,” is a name of Śiva implying a beneficent aspect.

⟨Verse 4. Metre: upajāti⟩

ṣaṣṭyā saha(s)rāiḥ saḡarātmaġānām
khāta[h] ^[4]kha-tulyām rucam ādadhānaḥ|
asyodapānādhipateś cirāya
yaśā;n!si pāyāt payasām vidhātā||

⟨Verse 5. Metre: mālinī⟩

atha jayati janendraḥ śrī-yaśodharma-nāmā
pramada-vanam ivāntaḥ śatru-sainyaḡam vigāhya
vraṇa-^[5]kisalaya-bhaṅgair yyo (')ṅga-bhūṣām vidhatte
taruṇa-taru-latāvad (v)īra-kirttir vvin(a:ā)mya||

⟨Verse 6. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

ājau jiti vijayate jagatīm punaś ca
śrī-viṣṇuvarddhana-narādhipatiḥ sa eva|
prakhyāta aulikara-lāñchana ātma^[6]va;n!śo
yenoditodita-padam gamito garīyaḥ||

⟨Verse 7. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

prāco nṛpān subḥataś ca bahūn udīcaḥ
sāmnā yudhā ca vaśa-gān pravindhāya yena|
nāmāparam jagati kāntam ado durāpam
rājādhirāja-parame^[7]śvara ity udūḍham||

⟨Verse 8. Metre: sragdharā⟩

snigdha-śyāmāmbudābhāiḥ sthagita-dinakṛto
yajvanām ājya-dhūmair
ambho meghyaḡam maghonāvadhiṣu vidadhatā
gāḍha-sampanna-sasyāḥ|
saḡharṣād vāṇinīnām
kara-rabhasa-hṛto^[8]dyāna-cūtānkurāgrā
rājanvanto ramante bhujā-vijita-bhuvā
bhūrayo yena deśāḥ||

⟨4⟩

May [the god Ocean] who disposes over waters, who was dug out by the sixty thousand sons of Sagara²⁹⁹ and who is suffused with lustre comparable to that of the sky, long preserve the magnificence of this lordly well.

⟨5⟩

Next, victorious is the lord of men (*janendra*) named His Majesty Yaśodharman, who plunges into the midst of an enemy host as if [strolling into] a pleasure grove and, pulling their reputations off heroes as though [pulling] tender lianas from trees, decorates his body with plucked sprigs that are [in fact] wounds.

⟨6⟩

That same man, having been victorious in battle, next conquers the [entire] world as His Majesty King Viṣṇuvardhana, who has conveyed his own dynasty with the appellation “Aulikara” to a prestigious status higher than high,³⁰⁰

⟨7⟩

[and] who has imposed his will on the eastern kings and on many, very great northern ones by diplomacy as well as by war, then donned that particular other appellation coveted in the world [but] hard to attain: “King over Kings, Supreme Lord (*rājādhirāja parameśvara*).”

⟨8⟩

Many countries, whose lands have been conquered by his arms, rejoice because they now have a [true] king in his person and [therefore in these countries] the smoke of clarified butter produced by sacrificers obscures the sun like viscous, dark clouds; crops are available in abundance because Maghavat [Indra] regularly allots them the water of the clouds; [and] the hands of sophisticated women thrilled with joy ardently pluck the tips of mango shoots in the parks.

Text Notes

Alternative opinions and translations are cited from Fleet (F), Pandit Durgaprasad (DP), Kielhorn (K) and Sircar’s SI.

[5] *vināmya*] F reads *vināmya* and SI follows suit. There is definitely no vowel mark to the right of *n*. Though the stone is damaged above *n*, *ā* is nowhere else attached to *n* as a *śiromātrā* in this inscription, so the actual reading is quite certainly *vināmya*. The intent, however, must have been *vināmya* even though according to SI the use of this form instead of *vināmya* is “not grammatically happy.” A short vertical mark in the left margin may indicate a correction to *nā*, and the spot above *n* may hide, or be, a *kākapada*.

299 As told in the *Bālakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (1.38–42) and several Puranic sources, the sixty thousand sons of King Sagara dug down to the underworld to attempt to retrieve the stolen sacrificial horse of their father. After Sagara’s remote descendant Bhagīratha brought about the descent of the sacred Ganges from heaven to earth to perform the last rites for the sixty thousand sons who had died in the underworld, the pit they excavated eventually filled up with water and became the ocean known to this day by the name *sāgara*.

300 See the Commentary for a brief summary of where my interpretation of this stanza differs from those of some other scholars, and the sections on page 24 and page 164 for detailed discussions.

⟨Verse 9. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita⟩

yasyotketubhir unmada-dvipa-kara-
vyāviddha-lodhra-drumair
uddhūtena vanādhvani dhvani-nadad-
vindhyādri-randhrair bbalaiḥ
bāle^[9]ya-cchavi-dhūsareṇa rajasā
mandāṅ!śu saṃlakṣyate
paryyāvṛtta-śikhaṅḍi-candraka iva
dhyāmaṇ raver mmaṅḍalam||

⟨Verse 10. Metre: indravajrā⟩

tasya prabhor vvaṅ!śa-kṛtām nṛpāṇām
pādāsrayād viśruta-puṇya-kīrttiḥ|
bhṛtyaḥ sva-naibhṛtya-jitā^[10]ri-ṣaṭka
āsīd vasiyān kila ṣaṣṭhidattaḥ||

⟨Verse 11. Metre: mālinī⟩

himavata iva gāṅgas tuṅga-namraḥ pravāhaḥ
śāsabhṛta iva revā-vāri-rāśiḥ prathīyān
param abhigamanīyaḥ śuddhimān anvavāyo
yata udita-gari^[11]mṇas tāyate naigamānām||

⟨Verse 12. Metre: upajāti⟩

tasyānukūlaḥ kulajāt kalattrāt
sutaḥ prasūto yaśasām prasūtiḥ|
harer ivāṅ!śaṃ vaśinaṃ varārhaṃ
varāhadāsaṃ yam udāharanti||

⟨9⟩

As his troops proceed across wastelands with standards held aloft, the trunks of their raging elephants toss *lodhra*³⁰¹ trees about, the gorges of the Vindhya Hills resound with their din, and the dust they raise, grey like the hide of a donkey, makes the sun's disc seem dim-rayed and sombre like the eye of a peacock feather turned [the wrong way] around.

⟨10⟩

The kings who sired the dynasty of that lord had, it is said, an affluent³⁰² retainer named Ṣaṣṭhidatta, who had by his resoluteness subdued the six enemies, and whose pious fame became widely known as he sheltered at the feet [of those kings].³⁰³

⟨11⟩

Like the torrent of the Ganges [flowing both] high and low from the Himalaya [and] like the copious mass of the water of the Revā³⁰⁴ from the moon, a lineage of Naigamas – pure and absolutely worthy of being approached – comes down from this [man] of high-rising dignity.³⁰⁵

⟨12⟩

He had a son who took after him, a generator (*prasūti*) of glory born (*prasūta*) of a wife of good family. Known as Varāhadāsa, he was masterful and worthy of esteem (*varārha*) like a partial emanation of Hari [Viṣṇu].³⁰⁶

[9] *dhūsareṇa*] F reads *dhūmareṇa*. The reading *dhūsareṇa* was first proposed by DP and approved by K. The stone definitely has *sa*.

[9] *paryyāvṛtta*] F and S print *paryāvṛtta*, which must be a typo.

301 *Lodhra* is a small tree bearing clusters of white flowers (*Symplocos racemosa* Roxb.).

302 Fleet translates *vasiyān* as “very excellent.” See also note 279 on page 160.

303 The six enemies are emotions or states of mind that need to be overcome. See note 384 on page 207 for details.

304 Revā is another name for the river Narmada; see also the Commentary.

305 “High-rising dignity” is applicable to the Himalaya and the moon as well as to Ṣaṣṭhidatta, and likewise, “pure and absolutely worthy of being approached [on a pilgrimage]” applies to the two sacred rivers as well as to the Naigama lineage, whose members are worthy of being approached by prospective clients. “Torrent” and “mass of water” are only required because they are grammatically masculine; the rivers, being feminine, could not themselves be equated to the lineage (masculine). The adjectives qualifying the waters may, but do not necessarily, carry secondary meanings applicable to the Naigamas: “high and low” (*tuṅga-namraḥ*) may imply “prominent, yet humble,” and “copious” may suggest that the family is extensive or influential.

306 Varāha, the Boar, is an incarnation of Viṣṇu; the verse says that like his namesake, Varāhadāsa was as superhuman as a partial incarnation (*aṃśa*) of Viṣṇu.

⟨Verse 13. Metre: mālinī⟩

sukṛti-viṣayi-tuṅgaṃ rūḍha-mūlaṃ ^[12]dharāyāṃ
sthitim apagata-bhaṅgāṃ stheyasīm ādadhānam
guru śikharam ivādres tat-kulaṃ svātma-bhūtyā
ravir iva ravikīrtiḥ suprakāśaṃ vyadhataḥ||

⟨Verse 14. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

bibhratā śubhram abhraṅīśi
smārttaṃ vartmocitaṃ satām
na viṣaṃ{(v)}vā ^[13]ditā yena
kalāv api kulīnatā||

⟨Verse 15. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

dhuta-dhī-dīdhiti-dhivāntān
havirbhujā ivādhvarān
bhānuguptā tataḥ sādhvī
tanayāṃs trīn ajījanat||

⟨Verse 16. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

bhagavad-doṣa ity āsīt
prathamaḥ kāryya-vartmasu|
āla ^[14]mbanaṃ bāndhavānām
andhakānām ivoddhavaḥ||

⟨Verse 17. Metre: mālinī⟩

bahu-naya-vidhi-vedhā gahvare (‘)py artha-mārgge
vidura iva vidūraṃ prekṣayā prekṣamāṇaḥ|
vacana-racana-bandhe saṃskṛta-prākṛte yaḥ
kavibhir udi ^[15]ta-rāgaṃ gīyate gīr-abhijñāḥ||

⟨13⟩

{With the marvel of his character} Ravikīrti³⁰⁷ brought {great fame} to his [Varāhadāsa’s] {dignified} family, which was {preeminent with charitable men of worldly occupation} and, {having grown roots in the land}, {enjoyed a stable high station relieved of division}, just as the sun (*ravi*) {with the power of his own self} [casts] {bright light} on a {massive} mountain peak that is {tall and incorporates sites of pious activity} and, {being firmly rooted in the earth}, {maintains perpetual solidity devoid of fracture}.

⟨14⟩

Cherishing the pure and incorruptible conduct sanctioned by tradition (*smṛti*) as befits good men, he did not renege on his hereditary eminence even in [this age of] Kali.

⟨15⟩

As though [engendering] three sacrifices from a fire,³⁰⁸ the good lady Bhānuguptā conceived three sons from him, who shook off the darkness enveloping the brilliance of [their] intellect.

⟨16⟩

The first was Lord Doṣa, a prop to his kinsmen on the ways of their duty, like Uddhava to the Andhakas.³⁰⁹

⟨17⟩

A savant of the many procedures of polity, he – like Vidura³¹⁰ – saw far ahead (*vidūra-*) with premeditation even when the path to his objectives (*artha*) was tangled. He was a connoisseur of literature whose praises the poets sing passionately in both Sanskrit and Prakrit works of composed speech.

[12] *guru śikharam*] F and S print *guru-śikharam* with a hyphen, but there is no need to construe this as a compound as *śikhara* in the sense of peak is attested (MW s.v.) in both masculine and neuter, and the noun likened to it is *kula*, which is definitely neuter. K prints the words with a space but deems this too trivial to mention it as a correction of his.

[12] *tat-kulaṃ*] I construe these words as a *tatpuruṣa* compound, assuming that Ravikīrti was not a member of the family (see page 165). Fleet hyphenates likewise, though he translates “that family.” If Ravikīrti was another name of Varāhadāsa, then it is better to construe *tat kulaṃ* as separate words.

[12–13] *viṣaṃvādītā*] F reads *viṣaṃvādītā* and emends to *viṣaṃvadītā*, where the second *a* is probably a typo for *ā*. I consider *saṃbvā*^o an unlikely solecism, whereas *saṃvvā* is quite natural. The upper component of the ligature does indeed look rather boxy, but many instances of *v* in the inscription have a fairly wide top (e.g. *ivādhvarān* and *vartmasu* in 113), and this character seems to have serifs on its top, which are absent in *b*.

307 See page 165 about the identity of Ravikīrti.

308 Kielhorn (1891, 189) would prefer to construe *havirbhujāḥ* as an accusative plural, qualified by *adhvarān* in an adjectival sense, proposing to translate “three sacrificial fires” instead of “three sacrifices from fire.” I agree that the sons are compared to sacrificial fires (and, implicitly, their intellects to those fires piercing a mantle of smoke with their brightness), but I find it much better to understand *havirbhujāḥ* as an ablative paralleling *tataḥ* as Fleet had done, meaning a domestic fire from which the fires of three sacrifices were lit.

309 The Andhakas are the Yādavas, the tribe of Kṛṣṇa. Uddhava, a cousin to Kṛṣṇa, served them as an advisor. See the Commentary for more details.

310 Vidura is a famous character of the *Mahābhārata*, half-brother to Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu from a lowborn mother. Widely famed for his wisdom and foresight, he served his brothers and later the Pāṇḍavas in an advisory capacity. Again, refer to the Commentary for more details.

⟨Verse 18. Metre: mālinī⟩

praṇidhi-dṛg-anugantrā yasya bauddhena cākṣṇā
na niśi tanu daviyo vāsty adṛṣṭaṃ dharittryām
padam udayi dadhāno ⟨'⟩nantaram tasya cābhūt
sa bhayam abhayadatto
nā(ma)^[16](v)i[?ghna](?n) p(r)ajānām||

⟨Verse 19. Metre: sragdharā⟩

vindhiasyāvandhya-karmmā śikhara-taṭa-patat-
(p)āṇḍu-revāmbu-rāśer
ggolāṅgūlaiḥ sahelam pluti-namita-taroḥ
pāriyātrasya cādreh|
ā sindhor antarālam
nija-śuci-sacivāddhyāṣ^[17]sit[ā](n)[e]ka-deśam
rājasthāniya-vṛt(t)yā suragurur iva yo
varṇṇinām bhūtaye ⟨'⟩pāt||

⟨Verse 20. Metre: mālinī⟩

vihita-sakala-(v)arṇṇāsaṅkaram śānta-ḍimbaṃ
kṛta iva kṛtam etad yena rājyaṃ nirādhi|
sa dhuram ayam idānim^[18]doṣakumbhasya sūnur
guru vahati tad-ūḍhām
dharmmato dharmadoṣaḥ||

⟨Verse 21. Metre: mālinī⟩

sva-sukham anabhivā⟨c:ñ⟩chan
durggame ⟨'⟩ddhvany asaṅgām
dhuram atiguru-bhārām yo dadhad bhartur arthe|
vahati nṛpati-veṣam kevalam lakṣma-mātram
^[19]valinam iva vilambaṃ kambalam bāhuleyaḥ||

[16] **vighnan**] F restores *cinvan*, translating “collecting (in order to dispel it) the fear of (his) subjects(?)”. K suggests restoring *vighnan* instead, which SI adopts. No vestige of the second character survives; the first character is almost certainly *vi* or *cī*, while the third is quite certainly *pra* with *n* or *t* prefixed to it. The restoration *vighnan* is extremely plausible.

[16] **patat-pāṇḍu**] The character *tp* in fact looks like *tm*. The intent was evidently *tp*.

[16] **sahelam**] So read by F, while SI reads *sahela-*. The *anusvāra* is clear in the stone.

[16] **sacivāddhyāṣ**] There is a small vertical mark at the end of the line, probably functioning as a space filler. See Script and Language for details.

[17] **deśam**] F prints *deśam*, typo.

[18] **anabhivācchan**] The character *ccha* is clear; possibly *vāmcchan* had been intended. For the prefix, F reads *ati*. The clearly better reading *abhi* was suggested by K and endorsed by SI.

⟨18⟩

After him the holder of the distinguished rank became he who wards off threats (*bhaya*) to the populace: Abhayadatta by name. There was nothing on earth – be it at night, minuscule, or ever so far – that was not perceived by the eye of his mind which followed the eyes of his agents.³¹¹

⟨19⟩

Like [Bṛhaspati] the preceptor of the gods, he – whose endeavours were never barren (*vandhya*) in his function as chancellor (*rājasthāniya*) – governed to the advantage of members of the [recognised] classes (*varṇa*) a territory comprised of many countries presided over by virtuous native governors (*saciva*), [extending] up to the ocean from the Revā’s pale mass of water spilling down the slopes of the peaks of the Vindhias [and] from the Pāriyātra mountain whose trees are bent by playfully leaping langurs.³¹²

⟨20⟩

The one who now carries with dignity and in accordance with law (*dharma*) the yoke that had been borne by him is Doṣakumbha’s son Dharmadoṣa, who has (pacified strife) and rendered the kingdom as free from distress and from intermixture in all classes (*varṇa*) as if it were in the Kṛta age.

⟨21⟩

Shouldering – for the benefit of his lord and with no thought of personal comfort – the all too heavy burden of the yoke without snagging on obstacles³¹³ along the difficult road, he dons kingly vestments solely as a token, as a bull [wears his] wrinkled, pendulous dewlap.³¹⁴

[311] Fleet restores *cinvan* at the beginning of line 16 (see text note to that line), translating accordingly. He understands *dharitryām*, “on earth” to go with the high position of Abhayadatta. This is clearly wrong, as also pointed out by Kielhorn (in Fleet 1889, 220) and Sircar (1965b, 415 n. 2). For my more consequential disagreements with Fleet, see the Commentary.

[312] Revā is the river Narmadā. The name Pāriyātra normally means the western range of the Vindhias together with the Aravalli hills. See also the Commentary.

[313] Fleet translates *asaṅgām* as “not shared by another.” I follow Kielhorn’s (1891, 189) suggestion to interpret it, instead, as “meeting with no obstruction,” a meaning that is attested and very apt in the context, especially as a counterpoint to *durggame* ‘*dhvani*. As an alternative, Hans Bakker (forthcoming and personal communication) suggests “independently,” implying that he is not hindered in his work by people placed above him.

[314] Fleet (CII3, 157 n. 3) records that the meaning “bull” for *bāhuleya* was pointed out to him by Pandit Durga Prasad of Jaipur. The word is not elsewhere attested in this meaning, but it makes perfect sense in the context and *bahulā* (literally “plentiful”) is a known, though rare, word for “cow” (e.g. *Amarakośa* 3.3.196, *bahulaḥ kṛttikā gāvo*).

⟨Verse 22. Metre: mālinī⟩

upahita-hita-rakṣā-maṇḍano jāti-ratnair
bhujā iva pṛthulāṃsas tasya dakṣaḥ kanīyān
mahad idam udapānaṃ khānayām āsa bibhra^[20]c
(ch)r(u)ti-hṛdaya-nitāntānandi nirddoṣa-nāma||

⟨Verse 23. Metre: śikhariṇī⟩

sukhāśreya-cchāyaṃ pariṇati-hita-svādu-phala-daṃ
gajendrenārugnaṃ drumam iva kṛtāntena balinā|
piṭṛvyaṃ proddīśya
priyam abhayadattaṃ pṛ^[21]thu-dhiyā
prathiyas tenedaṃ kuśalam iha karmoparacitam||

⟨Verse 24. Metre: āryā⟩

pañcasu śateṣu śaradāṃ yāteṣv
ekāna-navati-sahiteṣu|
mālava-gaṇa-sthiti-vaśāt kāla-jñānāya likhiteṣu||

⟨Verse 25. Metre: mandākṛantā⟩

ya^[22]smin kāle kala-mṛdu-girāṃ kokilānāṃ pralāpā
bhindantīva smara-śara-nibhāḥ
proṣitānāṃ manāṃsi|
bhṛṅgālīnāṃ dhvanir anu-vanaṃ
(t)āra-mandraś ca yasminn
ādhūta-jyaṃ dhanur iva nadac
chrūyate puṣpa^[23]ketoh||

⟨22⟩

His [Dharmadoṣa's] younger [brother] the {wide-shouldered} {Dakṣa} – {whom eminent men of his clan have endowed with the ornament of their benevolent protection} and who is, as it were, [Dharmadoṣa's] {right} arm {thick at the shoulder} and {wearing auspicious protective jewellery composed of birthstones} – has had this great well excavated, bearing the name Nirdoṣa, immensely gladdening to the ear and the heart.

⟨23⟩

That man of vast intellect has constructed this even vaster work of utility here, dedicating it to his beloved paternal uncle Abhayadatta, who was snatched up by forceful Death as a tree whose shade is pleasant to shelter in and which yields fruit that is salutary and sweet when it ripens in due course [might be uprooted] by a mighty elephant.

⟨26⟩

This [well] was built

⟨24⟩

when five hundred departed autumns along with ninety less one have been tallied for the sake of timekeeping in compliance with the convention of the Mālava community,³¹⁵

⟨25⟩

at a time in which the cries of the soft-and-sweet-voiced koels³¹⁶ seem like arrows of Love as they well-nigh pierce the hearts of those away from home, and in which the sound of bumblebees and honeybees, sharp and deep, is heard throughout the wood resonating like the plucked bowstring of the flower-arrowed [love god],³¹⁷

[19] *jāti*] Kielhorn (1891, 189) proposes reading *jñāti* here, saying there may be traces of a subscript *ñ*. The reading can be excluded: there is nothing below *jā* in the stone. For the viability of emending to *jñā*, see the Commentary.

[19] *khānayām*] F reads or at least prints *khātayām*.

[21] *°oparacitam*] F prints an *anusvāra* at the end but the inscription has a *halanta m*.

[22] *tāra*] F reads *bhāra*, translating “sounding low on account of the burden (that they carry).” PD suggests *tāra*, which K rejects and SI also retains *bhāra*. Given that *ta* and *bha* are very hard to distinguish in the inscription (compare *anabhivācchan*, note to 118 above), I consider *tāra* to be much better in context (see note 317 to the translation).

315 See page 7 about the phrase *mālava-gaṇa-sthiti-vaśāt*.

316 The Asian koel (*Eudynamys scolopaceus*) is a relative of the common cuckoo. Its cry, heard most often in the breeding season (spring and summer), is considered pleasant and sexually arousing in Sanskrit literature.

317 I read *tāra* in this stanza where most other editors read *bhāra* (see note to line 22 of the text). I construe *tāra-mandra* as a *dvandva* meaning high- and low-pitched sounds and *bhṛṅgālīnāṃ* as another *dvandva* signifying two species of insect, bumblebees (more precisely, carpenter bees) and honeybees. Although the order of words in these two *dvandvas* are inverted, I am certain that they together refer to the sharp buzz of honeybees and the low hum of bumblebees. Fleet translates “humming of the flights of bees, sounding low on account of the burden [that they carry].” I am not sure how he arrived at “flights of bees;” “burden” comes from the reading *bhāra* and does not seem to fit the context without Fleet’s supplied clarification.

⟨Verse 26. Metre: mālinī⟩

priyatama-kupitānām r(ā)maya(n) baddha-rāgaṃ
kisalayaṃ iva mugdhaṃ mānasaṃ māninīnām
upanayati nabhasvān māna-bhaṅgāya yasmin
kusuma-samaya-māse tatra nirmāpito (‘)yam||

⟨Verse 27. Metre: sragdharā⟩

^[24]yāvat tuṅgair udanvān
kīraṇa-samuday(ā)saṅga-kāntaṃ taraṅgair
āliṅgann indu-bimbaṃ gurubhir iva bhujaiḥ
saṃvidhatte suhṛttā(m)
bibhṛat saudhānta-lekhā-valaya-parigatiṃ
muṅḍa-mālām ivāyaṃ
sat-kūpas tāvad ā^[25]stām
amṛta-sama-rasa-svaccha-viṣyanditāmbuḥ||

⟨Verse 28. Metre: śālinī⟩

dhīmā(ṃ:n) dakṣo dakṣiṇaḥ satya-sandho
hrīmā(ṃ:ñ) cchūro vṛddha-sevī kṛtajñaḥ(!)
baddhotsāhaḥ svāmi-kāryeṣv akhedī
nirddoṣo (‘)yaṃ pātu dharmmaṃ cirāya
utkīrṇṇā govī(nde)na||

⟨26⟩

in a month of [spring,] the season of flowers when the wind – even as it {caresses} {tender} twigs {suffused with a flush [of new growth]} – conducts [people] toward the cessation of wounded pride by {comforting} the {naïve} and {obstinately sentimental} minds of piqued women angered by their lovers.

⟨27⟩

May this fine well, wearing (a circle of fluting on its stucco cornice) like a wreath on the pate, continue to gush with pure water delectable as nectar for as long as the ocean displays affection toward the disc of the moon – which is charming because it is cloaked in a mass of rays – embracing it with lofty waves as though with muscular arms.³¹⁸

⟨28⟩

May this clever, honest, modest and brave {Dakṣa/adroit person} – a man of his word persistent in his efforts, who obeys his elders, remembers his debts and is tireless in the tasks of his master – long safeguard lawfulness (*dharmma*) {as Nirddoṣa/unfailingly}.³¹⁹

Engraved by Govinda.

[23] *rāmayan*] So read by F, without any indication of uncertainty. K proposes reading *kampayan* instead, noting that the rubbing is unclear and pointing out that the sentence needs a verb that works with *kisalaya* as well as with *mānasa*. Sircar adopts *kampayan*, showing it as clear. In the original stone, *ra* and *ma* are completely clear, though the *ā* of *rā* is not certain. The stroke which seems in the rubbing like a crossbar (which would make *k* instead of *r*) is shallower and narrower in the original stone than the engraved strokes, so it must be damage. There is also a bit of damage below *ma*, but this does not seem extensive enough to have obliterated a subscript *p*.

[23] *yam*] F prints *yaṃ*; the stone has a *halanta m*.

[24] *samudayaṃ saṅga*] F reads *samudayaṃ saṅga*, which Sircar retains. The improved reading was first proposed by PD and approved by K. The *ā mātrā* (an upright one) is definitely discernible, though not entirely clear, in the original stone; it is not an *anusvāra*.

[25] *kāryeṣv*] F and S read *kāryeṣv*, but the inscribed character is a conjunct with a single, bipartite *y* (see Script and Language).

318 I believe Fleet is right that *muṅḍa-mālā* is not used here in the Tantric technical sense of “a garland of skulls,” but I cannot exclude the possibility that this meaning was intended. My translation of *saudhānta-lekhā-valaya-parigatiṃ* as “a circle of fluting on its stucco cornice” is conjectural.

319 My translation “as Nirddoṣa” is implied by the structure of the verse (see page 166), but such a strong sense was not necessarily intended by the author. The less loaded translation “May [...] Dakṣa Nirddoṣa [...] safeguard lawfulness for a long time” is equally feasible.

A11 Sondhni Intact Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman

Substrate		Siddham ID:		OB00086	
Material	stone (sandstone)	Object type	pillar		
Dimensions	width 120 cm	height 13.5 m	depth 120 cm	shaft diameter	105 cm
Discovery	1879, in Sondhni (24°02'29"N 75°05'31"E) near Mandsaur				
Current location	in situ				
Inscription		Siddham ID:		IN00094	
Dimensions	width 100 cm	height 34 cm	Char size 8–10 mm	Line height	35–40 mm
Date CE	ca. 533	Basis of dating	see commentary		
Topic	eulogy of Yaśodharman				
Persons mentioned	Gupta rulers, Hūṇa rulers, Mihirakula, Yaśodharman, Vāsula, Kakka, Govinda				
Places mentioned	River Lauhitya, Mount Mahendra, Himalayas, Ganges				
Compendia	Bh List 1870; CII3 33; SI III.54; GKA 366–367				
Other editions	Fleet 1886c				

Description

Yaśodharman's victory pillars were discovered for scholarship in 1879 by Arthur Sullivan who delivered a report and an eye copy of the inscription to Cunningham. Fleet saw this and, intrigued by the name of Mihirakula in it, sent agents in 1884 to explore the area and to obtain a rubbing,³²⁰ then visited the site in person in 1885. The primary pillar was lying in a field to the south of the hamlet of Sondhni³²¹ (24°02'29"N 75°05'31"E), about 4 km southeast of Mandsaur. Upon discovery the pillar lay partly buried, with its head to the north; the bell capital and the lion abacus were lying nearby, along with an identical but more badly broken second pillar with an identical inscription (A12). Subsequently, Garde uncovered two large, flat stone slabs that evidently served as the foundations for the pillars (ARASI 1922–23, 185). The intact pillar is presently assembled and erected in situ,³²² where I studied it in February 2017 and February 2018. The description provided below relies on the details provided in Fleet's original edition (1886c), with some corrections based on my observation of the pillar and inference from components of the

second pillar, which are at present laid out on the ground and thus more accessible. In addition to the two copies of the pillar *praśasti*, there is what appears to be a short shell inscription on the secondary pillar (see Figure 37 on page 191), and a graffito on one of the pillar abaci (edited herein as B9). Further details of the layout of the site and the artefacts found there may be found in the accounts of Fleet, Luard (1908) and Garde (ARASI 1922–23, 185). Recently, Elizabeth Cecil has studied the site in detail and discussed it in several conference papers (2018a, 2018b); an article touching on the topic (Cecil and Bisschop 2019) is soon to see the light of day and more are expected to follow. Scholars who have suggested improvements to readings and interpretation include Kielhorn (in Fleet 1889, 219–20; Kielhorn 1891, 188) and K. B. Pathak (1908b, 96–98).

The pillar was originally assembled from three monolithic sandstone components,³²³ the first of which comprises the base and shaft of the pillar, which together were about 12 metres in height. The lower 135 centimetres are square in cross-section, about 105 centimetres to a side. Above this the shaft of the column is sixteen-sided for a span of about 10.6 metres, where it ends in a flat top with a round projection 28 centimetres in diameter. The diameter of the shaft is about 105 centimetres at the bottom, where

³²⁰ These agents, incidentally, discovered the silk weaver inscription (A6).

³²¹ The name of the hamlet is spelt सोढनी on several boards and signs in the area, but several different Romanisations are current in literature, including Sondni, Sondani, Sondhani, Soṇḍni and Soṅni (as well as Soṇd(a)nī, probably introduced by Luard (1908) who may have intended the *n̄* for an *anusvāra*).

³²² The pieces were assembled in 1925 (Garde 1926, 5) but may have been reconstructed again since then.

³²³ Luard (1908, 107) remarks that the local stone is trap so the stone must have been imported from some distance. I would add, with the caveat that this is an observation by a geologically untrained eye, that the material of the sculptures at Sondhni is different again, probably a variety of limestone that looks very similar to the stone abundant in Nagari near Chittorgarh.

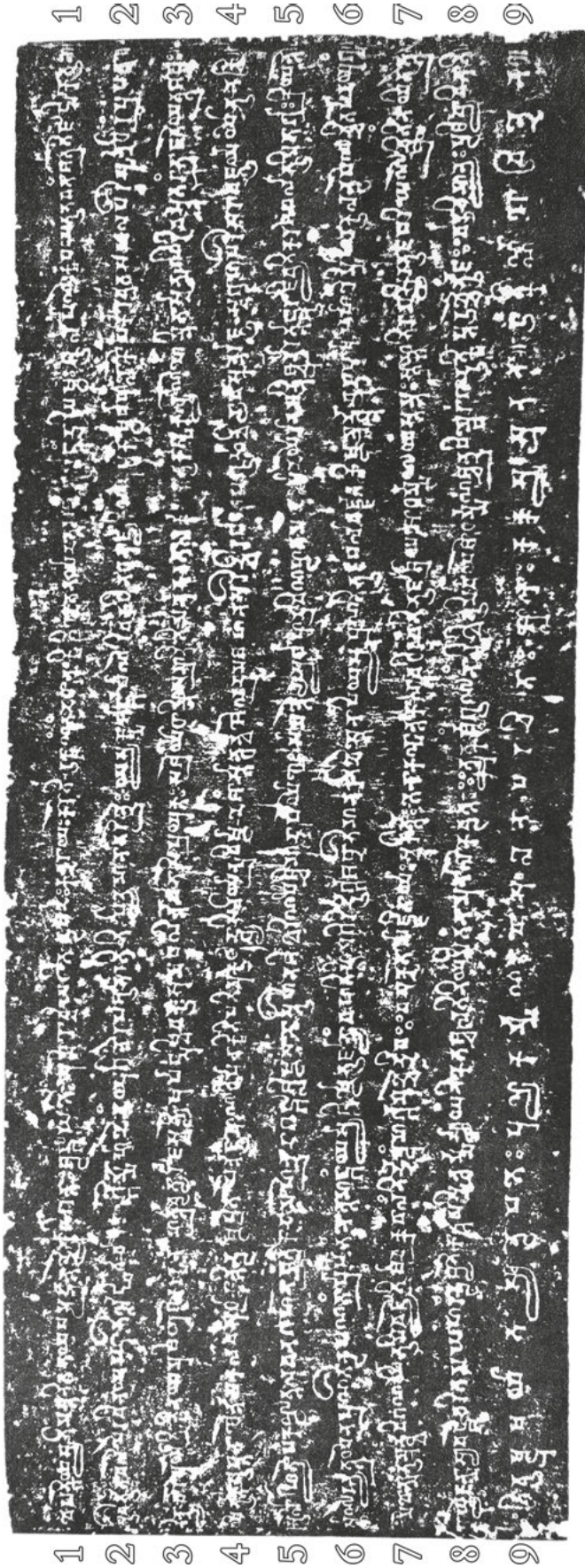


Figure 33: Sondhni intact pillar inscription of Yaśodharman. Inked rubbing from Fleet (1886c).



Figure 34: Sondhni intact pillar inscription of Yaśodharman. Composite digital photo by the author, 2017.

each face is approximately 20.5 centimetres wide. The shaft tapers toward the top, with the faces narrowing to 18 centimetres and the diameter reduced to about 90 centimetres. This first component is broken into two parts, probably a natural fracture caused by the pillar's toppling. The height of the lower fragment comprising the base and the bottom of the shaft is about 6.55 metres (i.e. the shaft length in this fragment is 5.2 metres), and that of the upper fragment (the top of the shaft) is about 5.4 metres.

The second component is a lotus bell capital, about 96 centimetres in diameter and 76 centimetres in height. It has a round mortise socket at the bottom to receive the tenon at the top of the shaft, and a smaller round projection at the top to fit into the next component. This third component is a square abacus about 120 centimetres on each side and 80 centimetres tall. Its sides are carved with a relief of crouching lions, two on each side with the heads at the corner shared by the bodies on the adjacent side, and a fierce *kīrtimukha* at the top centre of each side between the heads of the lions. The bottom of the abacus has a circular mortise hole to receive the top of the bell capital, while at the top there is another circular hole in the centre, surrounded by further sockets arranged in a regular octagon. These additional sockets are rectangular, the ones aligned with the sides being square or only slightly oblong, while those lying on the diagonals are about twice as long as their wide. The combined height of the three components is about 13.5 metres. Assuming that the pillar originally stood with its base sunk and the bottom of the shaft approximately level with the ground, it would have reached a height slightly over 12 metres. Dimensions given in the table above are for the box enclosing the extant parts pillar as a whole.

It was evidently topped by at least one more component,³²⁴ but no clear indication of this has been found. Fleet (1886c, 253–54) mentions that the nearby sculptures – since then identified as *dvārapālas* – may once have topped the pillars, but is himself sceptical about the possibility. Garde (ARASI 1922–23, 185) observes that a double-faced human head found nearby may mean that there were addorsed human figures atop the pillars, resembling the sculpture on the Eran pillar of the time of Budhagupta. Another possibility, suggested by Elizabeth Cecil (Cecil and Bisschop 2019, 389; also in Bakker 2017,

22), is that the image atop the pillar may have been Śiva's bull, who is described in the first stanza of the inscription. This is extremely plausible for two reasons. Firstly, the pillars apparently formed an architectural ensemble with a temple of Śiva,³²⁵ and the practice of placing the temple deity's vehicle on a column facing the sanctum is quite common. (So too the Eran pillar, with an image of Garuḍa, faces temples of Viṣṇu.) Secondly, the inscription itself opens (v1) with a description of the extremely tall (*drāghīṣṭha*) standard of Śiva, which holds a bull, and this may well be a reference to the very object on which it is engraved.

The inscription occupies five faces of the sixteen-sided section of the column, covering an area approximately 1 metre wide by 35 centimetres high. The bottom of the inscription is about 60 centimetres above the present ground level. The text consists of nine lines with each line running across five facets horizontally. Characters are 0.8 to 1 centimetre high, and the lines are spaced about 4 centimetres apart. The lines and margins are ruler straight, the line height fairly even, and the lettering is meticulously neat. The first eight lines have exactly one stanza per line, while in the last line, which contains a shorter stanza and a brief prose closer, the characters are slightly larger and much more widely (and somewhat unevenly) spaced to extend this shorter text to the right-hand margin. The engraving is quite shallow, the lines are thin and the characters are very small relative to the roughness of the stone. I presume that the surface was originally much smoother, possibly even polished to some degree, and in its pristine state the incised text would have been clearly legible. However, exposure to the elements has not been kind to the inscription, which is weathered all over and worn completely smooth in a few places, especially near the edges of facets. Nonetheless, almost all of the text can be read or restored with confidence. Unfortunately, the weathered state and the coloured grain of the stone, the shape of the inscribed surface, the shallowness of the characters and the outdoor setting combined together mean that the inscription does not take well to photography. Figure 34 shows each inscribed face of the pillar with some overlap at the edges and may be useful for ascertaining some details, but for general legibility Fleet's rubbing (Figure 33) serves better by far.

³²⁴ It is not altogether impossible that the pillars supported or were intended to support architecture. Fleet (1886c, 255) rejects this idea on account of the height of the pillars. A building of colossal proportions is indeed improbable, but a *torāṇa* may not be entirely out of the question and the complex mortise on the top of the lion abacus suggests something heavier and more complex than a sculpture.

³²⁵ Fleet (1886c, 254–55) describes a fragment of a decoratively sculpted column 45 metres west of the inscribed pillars, and Garde (ARASI 1922–23, 185) reports excavating a large brick foundation 23 metres to the west, housing a massive *sahasra-liṅga* which is now displayed in situ. It is a natural assumption that the inscribed pillars would have marked the entrance to this.

Script and Language

The inscription is a specimen of the angular Mālava script, written in a style very similar to that of the Risthal inscription (A9) and the Sondhni *praśasti* (A11, A12). Many of the tendencies noticeable in that epigraph become more pronounced in the present one. Because of the overall thinness of the lines no calligraphic modulation of line width is apparent except for the prominent serifs. The ornamental extension of subscript *r* and *y* and of some vowel marks is as conspicuous as in the Risthal inscription, or even slightly more so. Overhead marks for *ā*, *e*, *o*, *ai* and *au* have the same decorative widening resembling a barbed blade, but seem slightly larger on average. As in the Risthal inscription, the layout of the inscription must have been drafted carefully, so calligraphic extensions and subscript components are accommodated by the surrounding characters.

All characters have essentially the same form as those described under the Risthal inscription above, with some partial differences that seem consistent with a gradual evolution of the script toward the *siddhamātrkā* form. While *ka* has an elongated stem, the leg of *ra* is always shorter and in some cases extends no further down than the baseline. Some occurrences of the short *ra* may be driven by the need to accommodate an extended subscript component (e.g. *sthāṇor anyattra*, 16) but in some other cases, and more commonly toward the end of the inscription, a long *r* would have fit comfortably where a short one was used (e.g. *giri*, 16; *ābhirāma*, 17; *caritam agha-haraṇ*, 18). The stems of *ka* and *ra* (as well as the vowel mark for *u* when it is a vertical line) widen towards their ends, sometimes taking the shape of a knob or serif at the endpoint. Bose (1938, 330) points to this phenomenon as an innovation in this inscription, but it is also found (though less conspicuously) in the subsequently discovered Risthal inscription. *La*, which had a short-stemmed and a long-stemmed form in the Risthal inscription and in Nirdoṣa's Mandsaur stone inscription (A10), always has a short stem here. *Ma* occasionally (*bhūmi*, 15; upper *m* of *yaśodharmmaṇā*, 17) has an angular bend in its left limb, which is never seen in the Risthal epigraph. All non-subscript *ya*-s are tripartite,³²⁶ but the conjunct *ry*, occurring only twice in the text, is both times executed in an unusual way (*vīryāvaskanna*, 14; *sāmantair yasya*, 15; note that *ryy* does not occur in this inscription). This form of *ry* is also found in Nirdoṣa's inscription but not in the Risthal one. Instead

of an overhead *repha* joined to a regular *y*, the form used consists of a very short *r* at regular height (i.e. with the head at the headline), joined to a bipartite *y* positioned slightly higher than regular subscript *y*-s and not extended toward the left.³²⁷ In *sāmantair yasya* the use of this form may have been driven by calligraphy, as a regular *ryya* would have been very hard to fit (and awkward-looking) between the subscript parts of *ntai* and *sya*, whereas this *rya* ligature allows plenty of space to develop those characters. There is, however, no such constraint whatsoever in *vīryāvaskanna*. The inscription includes examples of *ḍa* and *ḍha*; the former is distinguished from *da* by a narrower shape and a tail that extends downward and curves to the left, while the latter builds on *da* by the addition of a large loop at the end. The outline of *ḍha* conspicuously slants downward, so it differs from *pha* at the first glance.

Of *halanta* consonants, only *m* occurs in the text. The instance in line 6 is indistinct but seems to be a small subscript character with an elongated stem, in shape resembling *la*. However, the specimen in line 8 is clearly just a small simplified subscript character with a line above it. There is one instance of the *upadhmaniya* (*Ṣikharinaṇ paścimād*, 15), which is not quite clear but resembles two slightly warped oval loops placed side by side. Elsewhere, the regular *visarga* is used instead of the *upadhmaniya* (e.g. *madaiḥ pādayor*, 15) as well as instead of the *jihvāmūliya* (e.g. *ḍṛṣadaḥ kandarā*, 11). Unlike the orthography of the Risthal inscription, the *visarga* is consistently used before words beginning with a sibilant.

The initial vowel marks for *ā* and *i* closely resemble their Risthal counterparts; initial *u* resembles the combination *ru*, comprised of a straight stem with a hook open to the left attached to the bottom. The strokes indicating medial vowels vary in position, as in the Risthal inscription. Their variance is to some extent determined by the side of the consonant body to which they attach, but part of their diversity is evidently whimsical. Some consonants attach their vowel marks in a distinct way. Notably, *ā* joins the bottom right end of the body of *ṇ*, and connects to the top of *ṭ* and *ṇ* (in *ṣṛṅgā*^o, 11) with a dip. Also as in the Risthal epigraph, the vowel mark of *mā* is an extension of the right arm curving down, so the combination resembles *ha*. None of the vowel marks extend downward below the headline to any noteworthy degree except for two instances of *i*. In *govindena* in line 9, this vowel mark rises from the consonant body, then descends

³²⁶ This includes both of the two instances of *ye*. The bipartite *y* used in that combination in the Risthal inscription and the Mandsaur stone does not occur here.

³²⁷ Fleet (1886c, 255) of course also points out this palaeographically interesting phenomenon, and Bose (1938, 330) in all probability refers to these characters when he says there are one or two instances of cursive *ya*.

on the left all the way to the baseline and below, curving back up again under the body. This may be a sort of flourish in the signature of the engraver, or perhaps the wide spacing of the last line called for more elaboration to fill up the vacuum. However, a similar, though less ornate, form of *i* also occurs in *lauhityo*^o (15), where the *i mātrā* descends vertically almost to the baseline after making a small curve above the character, just as in the variant *i* seen in the Mandasaur stone of Nirdoṣa. In this case the form may have been chosen to leave room for the elaborate vowel mark of *lau*. That mark in turn was clearly designed with forethought: the right-hand stroke of *au* is very small and horizontal, while the central stroke is large and ornate, curving to the right, but doing so only at a considerable height to leave space below it for the small *i* mark of the following *akṣara*. A few other *i mātrās* show the sinuous bubble form found in Nirdoṣa's inscription but not in Risthal.

As regards orthography, the common phenomenon of geminating consonants in conjunction with *r* and *y* is observable but inconsistent. Consonants preceded by *r* are not always doubled, even when there is no additional consonant in the ligature (thus the two instances of *ry* noted above; also *āvīrbhūtā*^o, 12; *dhanur-jyā*, 12; *girir durgga*, 16). Some consonants are also doubled before *r* (*ākkrānti*, 14; *cakkravālam*, 17; *śatru* in 11 but *śattru* in the same locus in the duplicate inscription A12, and *mātrā* in 13). Gemination before *y* occurs in *ādhyāsini* (14), but a single consonant is used instead of the standard double in *vṛtyā* (13). The use of *anusvāra* is close to standard, with some preference for the velar *ṅ* before sibilants (*tejāṅsi*, 11; *pāṅsu*, 13; *vanṣe*, 18; but *deśāṅs*, 14). In one case, *anusvāra* appears at the end of a verse with a punctuation mark (*yugmaṅ*||, 16). This may be because the text has reached the margin (and the edge of the pillar facet), and a *halanta* character followed by a punctuation mark would have been hard to fit.

Like the tablet of the silk weavers (A6), the Risthal inscription (A9) and Nirdoṣa's stone (A10), a modern two-tiered system of verse punctuation is used with almost complete consistency. Half-verses are marked with short horizontals (transcribed as | in the edition), while the ends of verses have double verticals (transcribed as ||). The horizontal punctuation mark is omitted after a *halanta m* in the middle of verse 8, but the double vertical does appear after a *halanta m* at the end of verse 6. A third punctuation mark is used at the very end of the inscription: this is a double vertical with a hook atop the left-hand line (also transcribed below as ||).

The text is a truly impressive piece of programmatic poetry. Even the metre of the verses, which is *sragdharā*

throughout except for the author's signature in *anuṣṭubh* and the engraver's signature in prose, has a martial beat to it.³²⁸ Interesting for the study of prosody is the fact that there are no less than 11 caesurae obscured by *saṁdhi* in the eight *sragdharā* stanzas of the inscription.³²⁹ The text contains all the essential parts of a dedicatory inscription except for a date, but does not dwell long on any detail. Couched in florid language, it keeps to the point and for most of its length it continues to emphasise victory in violent conflict and the ensuing glory,³³⁰ but at the end the tone becomes poignantly thoughtful as if to pray, "would that this moment could last forever." My translation does not, of course, do the Sanskrit justice, but I have attempted to preserve something of the style and structure of the original.

Commentary

The inscription is a eulogy (*praśasti*) to King Yaśodharman. As its main focus is Yaśodharman's pride in his victory over the Hūṇa ruler Mihirakula, it is reasonable to assume (with Fleet 1886c, 255) that the columns themselves were erected in celebration of that victory. The epigraph is not dated, so our only certain knowledge of its date is that it was created not too far in time from the Mandasaur inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10) dated 532–533 CE, which was also made during the reign of Yaśodharman and engraved by the same artisan, and that it must postdate the Risthal inscription (515 CE) engraved under Prakāśadharman, but not by a long period since the two were composed by the same poet, Vāsula, the son of Kakka. The relative chronology of the Mandasaur stone and the Sondhni pillars is uncertain. Buddha Prakash (1965, 92) believed that the stone "shows a state of peace, repose and prosperity" implying that the Hūṇas had already been defeated, hence the pillar inscription must be the earlier one. Hans Bakker (2017, 23) argues to the contrary on the grounds that the Mandasaur inscription marks the beginning of the official careers of Dharmadoṣa and Nirdoṣa, while the graffiti on one of the pillar plinths (B9) shows that the two brothers were already in office when the pillars were erected. I have doubts about both of these premises but provisionally assume the stone to predate the pillars because the

³²⁸ Though there exist recitation modes of *sragdharā* that are positively elegiac in mood, others have very little melody and emphasise the contrast of the slightly syncopated marching rhythm of the first colon with the fervid hurry of the second.

³²⁹ In *pādas* 3bc, 4abd, 5a, 6cd and 7bcd; see my earlier study (Balogh 2017, 23) for details.

³³⁰ As Bakker (2014, 37) remarks, "[t]his is the language of war."

former makes no reference to Yaśodharman's victory over Mihirakula, which was also the stance of János Harmatta (1969:400). A *praśasti* which devotes several stanzas to Yaśodharman's conquest of the world would surely have mentioned this event if it had already taken place.

As one starts to read the inscription, the message is not immediately obvious, but the first word – *vepante*, “[they] tremble” – clearly sets the tone for most of the text. The frightful roar of something makes the far corners of the world tremble, it tells us, and the only indication that this may be a good thing is that the demons (*daitya*) inhabiting those far corners are scared of it.³³¹ We then learn that this thing has horns with which it shakes the very Mount Meru, evidently in the action known as *vapra-kriḍā*, which is when bulls playfully butt their horns (or elephants their tusks) against banks of earth. The third quarter turns the hint into fact by revealing that the creature in question is a bull (*ukṣan*), then adds a further hint: this bull bears the mark of the hand of Pārvaṭī (the daughter of the Mountain, *kṣitidhara-tanayā*), so it must be Śiva's animal. But we still have not reached the topic, as the bull is in the accusative case.³³² It is in the last quarter that the first verse turns out to be a blessing (*āśīrvāda*) for the audience, and only the very last word tells us that the stanza is about a standard which bears the bull described above.³³³ Yet the poet does not, in the standard way of such blessings, beg the protection of this standard of Śiva. Much more specifically and forcefully, he commands it (using the imperative rather than the more prayer-like optative or the obsequious precative, both of which are common in such contexts) to destroy the enemies of the readers. The *raudra rasa*, “furious sentiment” pervading the verse is enhanced by the harsh consonants, predominantly dental and velar stops (sometimes conjoined with nasals), evocative of the clanging of weapons or percussion instruments with a counterpoint of rumbling *gh* and *bh*.

Verses 2 to 6 each include a relative pronoun which is not picked up until the third quarter of verse 7. Up till that

³³¹ Sara Schastok (1985, 47) observes an “interest ... in expressing the violent potential in divine personality” in the art of Mandsaur (and Shamalaji). What we have here is a manifestation of the same in poetry.

³³² The trick of delaying a key word or two until the end is a common stock-in-trade of Sanskrit epigrammatic poetry, deployed to great effect in this inscription.

³³³ Though the word used is *ketu*, whose regular meanings include “a trail of smoke” and “the tail of a comet” in addition to “banner,” I am convinced that the object described here is not a fluttering banner but a standard-pole with a solid, three-dimensional device of the Bull atop it. It is this divine emblem that the pillar itself must have been meant to approximate, as Elizabeth Cecil (2018b, 2018a) has argued convincingly.

point, the author leaves the reader in the dark about the identity of the person described (Yaśodharman), building suspense in the same way as within stanza 1, but on a larger scale.³³⁴

The second verse says there is someone in whose arms the earth has found protection from the harassment of brutish and arrogant kings. The implication is of course that the king being described is the opposite of brutish and arrogant; in fact, we are told, his motive is his vow to benefit the world (*lokopakāra-vrata*). His protection is compared to that of Viṣṇu, described in a martial aspect as Śārṅgapāṇi, the wielder of the bow named Śārṅga, the string of which has raised welts on his forearms. The verse has much in common with the concluding strophe of the *Mudrārākṣasa*, which not only compares but actually equates the reigning king to Viṣṇu, protecting the earth with his muscular arms from a flood of barbarian hordes as he had done in his previous incarnation as Varāha, who rescued the earth from the flood of universal destruction.³³⁵ Another detail of this verse, namely ridges of callus raised on the forearms by the bowstring, is echoed in very similar terms in the *Harṣacarita*.³³⁶

Verse 3 elaborates the point by claiming that while other kings have called themselves universal emperors (*samrāj*), this was baseless pretension (*kalpanā-mātra*) on their part, while the as yet unnamed hero of the inscription is of course a worthy receptacle of this title. In this stanza too, the keyword *śabdah*, “title,” is put off until the very end, so the meaning can only be worked out once the entire verse has been read.

The fourth verse begins to reveal some details about the king being described. The essence of the message is that he claims to hold lands that were conquered neither by the Guptas nor by the Hūṇas. What is not quite clear

³³⁴ This technique is again not unique. The actions of a person are frequently described before introducing them in Aulikara (and other) inscriptions, but in many other cases the effect of this seems to be tedium or even confusion rather than aesthetic power. See e.g. verses 22 to 26 of the Risthal inscription (A9) and the discussion of the confusion they created on page 143; also verses 16 to 20 of the Gangdhar inscription (A4).

³³⁵ *Mudrārākṣasa* 7.21, also in the *sragdharā* metre: *vārāhīm ātmanyones tanum atanu-balām āsthītasyanurūpām yasya prāk potra-koṭiṃ pralaya-parigatā śīśriye bhūta-dhātriḥ mlecchair udvejjamānā bhujayugam adhunā pīvaram rāja-mūrteḥ sa śrīmad-bandhu-bhṛtyaś cīram avatu mahīm pārthivaś candraguptaḥ*

³³⁶ *Harṣacarita* 4, *cāpa-guṇa-kiṇa-lekhayānkita-pīvara-prakoṣṭham* (Führer 1909, 179). It is perhaps no accident but a conscious intertextual wink at this very epigraph that Bāṇa uses these words to describe a prince of Mālava, though a very similar compound also qualifies Harṣa later on (*Harṣacarita* 5, p. 233, *dhanur-guṇa-kiṇa-kalaṅka-kālīkṛta-prakoṣṭhasya*).

is whether this is about his conquests or about defending his homeland. The ambiguity is heightened by the compound *sva-gr̥ha-parisarāvajñayā*, which Fleet translates “spurning [the confinement of] the boundaries of his own house.” This rendering, coupled with Yaśodharman’s boast in the following verse that feudatories flock to him from all over the known world, points toward the interpretation that he conquered India, obtaining more territory than the Guptas or Hūṇas had held. Several scholars have implicitly accepted this reading of the inscription by questioning its historical veracity.³³⁷ Contrarily, Mirashi (1980, 412) points out that the verb *bhunakti* in the verse in question is active, while according to Pāṇini³³⁸ the root *bhuj* takes the middle voice in meanings other than “protect.” Therefore, says Mirashi, the message of the stanza is not that Yaśodharman has conquered territories but that he has defended his own heartland in spite of the Guptas’ and Huns’ attempts to conquer it. His rendering of the problematic compound is that Yaśodharman protects his lands “with as little concern as he does the courtyard of his own house.”

Mirashi’s grammatical argument is very weak evidence since, as Salomon (1989, 34 n. 22) points out, there is no reason to believe that the poet cared about such minutiae. There are certainly plenty of occurrences (mainly in Purāṇas and *dharmaśāstras*) of *bhuj* in the active voice meaning “to partake of” food or “to enjoy” someone carnally. More importantly, the sense of “protecting” (*avana*) associated with *bhuj* in the active according to Pāṇini is clearly the broad idea of the function of the king as protector of the kingdom. It is definitely not limited to, and does not even necessarily include, the defence of the land from foes in armed conflict, and therefore “rule” is in many ways a better English rendering of it than “protect.” In addition, the lands are described as *vīryāvaskanna-rājñah*, “the kings of which have been overcome by [Yaśodharman’s] heroism.” This suggests conquest, not the defence of what had been his to begin with.³³⁹

In summary, I feel that the territories Yaśodharman is said to control here do include newly conquered lands. The author thought it important to emphasise that some of his lands were never held by the Guptas or Hūṇas, and it is even possible that this describes his ancestral home as distinct from the territories whose kings he overcame

by his valour. There is, however, no equivalent of “and” to separate the adjectives qualifying the lands, so the assumption that some of the adjectives apply only to some of the set of lands he controls must remain an assumption. As a final detail, I do think Mirashi’s interpretation of *sva-gr̥ha-parisarāvajñayā* is preferable to Fleet’s, and I understand the text to mean that Yaśodharman governs his massive realm as contemptuously (that is to say, with as much indifferent ease) as one might control the plot of land around his own house. My main reason for preferring this interpretation is that an inscription displayed just outside the capital city would not want to insult the locals by saying that their king went gallivanting to other lands because he detested his own home. In addition, an instrumental of mode is more likely in the context than an instrumental of cause: even if Fleet’s understanding of the compound were correct, Yaśodharman’s alleged contempt for his home would not be the logical cause of his control over other lands (which the syntax would require), but of his setting out to conquer them.

The fifth stanza is about vassal kings from all over India coming to pay homage to someone. This someone is probably Yaśodharman, since each of the other stanzas from 2 to 6 are ultimately about him. As far as I know, all scholars who have discussed this inscription have read this verse as describing Yaśodharman’s vassals, but I should note that this is not entirely certain. Out of the three relative pronouns in the following verse, the first two refer to Mihirakula, and only the last to Yaśodharman (see also below). It is thus possible that verse 5 continues to describe Mihirakula. One minor point in favour of this alternative interpretation is the statement that the ground beneath this king’s feet is illuminated by jewels in the crowns of the vassal kings. While vignettes of feudatories bowing at a supreme king’s feet are common in Indian inscriptions and literature (compare for instance the next verse of this very inscription, where flowers from Mihirakula’s headdress are laid at Yaśodharman’s feet), the specific image of light cast on feet from crowns may have been introduced to India by Hūṇa rulers.³⁴⁰ The first Indian inscriptions that employ this image may be engaging in intertextual dialogue by appropriating the propagandistic language of their Hūṇa adversaries,³⁴¹ just like

³³⁷ For instance Sircar (1965b, 419 n. 1 and n. 4), Williams (1972, 52).

³³⁸ *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.3.66, *bhujō ’navane*.

³³⁹ Although it is not impossible that Yaśodharman had to oust another power from Daśapura before establishing himself there, understanding the verse in question to mean this would require too much of a stretch; the implication is rather that he conquered additional lands.

³⁴⁰ If so, the image may originate in an Iranian idea of the transference of *x’arānah*, “royal glory” from the defeated to the victorious. My thanks to Marilyn Edwards Leese (personal communication, August 2017) for this suggestion.

³⁴¹ The earliest occurrence of the image that I know of is verse 16 of the Risthal inscription (A9), where it is applied to Toramāṇa; the second earliest is the present one. It is also used in slightly later inscriptions of the Maitrakas, where Hūṇa influence is also plausible.

verse 6 of the Sondhni inscription, discussed below. That said, I prefer to retain the established interpretation of verse 5 as describing Yaśodharman, and to assume that if this particular type of light imagery is Hunnic in origin, then the poet uses it deliberately for Yaśodharman (see the discussion of verse 6 below).

Another point concerning this vignette is that Hans Bakker (2017, 31 and personal communication) perceives a double entendre or allusion in the expression *vyatikara-śabalā bhūmi-bhāgāḥ*. Thus, in addition to the *prima facie* meaning that the ground at Yaśodharman's feet becomes dappled with the intermingling of rays from his feudatories' crowns, the text may imply actual land divisions becoming mixed up, referring to a radical rearrangement of the north Indian political power network by Yaśodharman. I cannot exclude this interpretation but do not find it very likely; in my opinion *bhāgāḥ* is only included in the phrasing to emphasise that numerous spots on the ground each take on a distinct colour.

As for the description of the furthest reaches of the land from which the vassals come (expressed by nouns in the ablative with the preposition *ā*), I concur with Sircar (1965b, 419 n. 4) and Bakker (2017, 39 n. 99) that it is a conventional definition of the lands ruled by a universal sovereign (*cakravarti-kṣetra*) and thus (regardless of whether they apply to Mihirakula or Yaśodharman) need not be taken entirely literally. The eastern extent of the known world is determined by the river Lauhitya, a widely attested name for the Brahmaputra that also features in canto 4 of the *Raghuvamśa* where Raghu in the course of his conquest of the quarters (*digvijaya*) first subdues the eastern coastal regions, then proceeds clockwise around the compass, finishing in the northeast in the land of Prāgyotiṣa on the banks of the Lauhitya.³⁴² The river is also mentioned in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* by the name Lohitya, while the land around it (or the nation living there) is named Lauhitya and said to be in the east and contiguous with Prāgyotiṣa.³⁴³ The next name in the inscription, Mount Mahendra, in all probability denotes the Eastern Ghats (Dey 1979, 119) and thus defines a southeastern rather than southern boundary. In canto 4 of the *Raghuvamśa*³⁴⁴ Mahendra is mentioned as part of Kaliṅga in the

³⁴² *Raghuvamśa* 4.84 in Vallabhadeva's version, *cakampe tīrṇa-lauhitye tasmīn prāgyotiṣeśvaraḥ| tad-gajālānatām prāptaiḥ saha kālāguru-drumaiḥ||* (Verse 4.81 in the redaction of Mallinātha, text identical.)

³⁴³ *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* 16.15, *lohityaḥ sindhunadaḥ sarayūr...* and 14.5–6, *atha pūrvasyām ... prāgyotiṣa-lauhitya-kṣīroda-samudra-puruṣādāḥ.*

³⁴⁴ *Raghuvamśa* 4.40 in Vallabhadeva's version (4.39 in Mallinātha's version).

east. The *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*³⁴⁵ also puts this mountain in the south, demonstrating that the name does not mean only the northern end of the Eastern Ghats. Another possibility is that Vāsula (and perhaps Varāhamihira too) had another mountain in mind; Fleet (Fleet 1886c, 255 n. 7) remarks that a Mount Mahendra mentioned in an earlier inscription³⁴⁶ is probably somewhere in the Western Ghats, while the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* explicitly puts a mountain named Mahendra in the far south.³⁴⁷ The inscription's list of fringes does not proceed around the compass but jumps at this point to the Himalayas (*tuhina-śikharin*) in the embrace of the Ganges, which demarcate the northern boundary of civilised lands. Finally, it mentions the western ocean (*paścimād ā payodheḥ*) which of course means the Arabian sea and defines the western or south-western boundary.

Once again, the *Mudrārākṣasa*³⁴⁸ offers a close parallel to this stanza in the same metre, there phrased as a benediction offered to the play's hero Candragupta (Maurya). Like the epigraphic verse, it includes the concept of feet illuminated by crown jewels (as well as the word *bhāga* used in conjunction with those feet and the compound *cūḍā-ratnāṃsu* for what illuminates them), employs *ā* plus ablative constructions for the boundaries of land, and mentions the Ganges along with the Himalayas for the northern extremity.

The essence of verse 6 is that Yaśodharman has forced even the invincible Mihirakula into submission. The poet's trick of leaving the identity of the subject to the end is here deployed on two embedded levels: the first two quarters are relative clauses describing Mihirakula, whose name appears in the last quarter, while the relative pronoun in the third *pāda* refers to Yaśodharman, who is not to be named until verse 8. As in the previous stanza (see above), the syntax alone does not tell who each

³⁴⁵ *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* 14.1, *atha dakṣiṇena laṅkā-kālājīna-saurikīrṇa-tālikaṭāḥ| girinagara-malaya-dardura-mahendra-māliṅḍya-bharukacchāḥ||*; 16.10, *uttara-pāṇḍya-mahendrādri-vindhya-malayopagās colāḥ.*

³⁴⁶ The Nasik cave inscription of Vāsiṣṭhiputra Puḷumāvi (Mirashi 1981 no. 18). Mirashi (ibid. 44) apparently identifies this Mahendra as the southern range of the Eastern Ghats.

³⁴⁷ *Rāmāyaṇa* 4.40–41, *agastyenāntare tatra sāgare viniveśitaḥ|| citra-nānā-nagaḥ śrīmān mahendraḥ parvatottamaḥ.*

³⁴⁸ *Mudrārākṣasa* 3.19, *ā sailendrāc chilāntaḥ-skalita-sura-dhūni-śikarāsāra-śītād ā tirān naika-rāga-sphurita-maṇi-ruco dakṣiṇasyārṇavasya| āgatyāgatyā bhīti-praṇata-nṛpa-śataiḥ śaśvad eva kriyantām cūḍā-ratnāṃsu-garbhās tava caraṇa-yugasyāṅgulī-randhra-bhāgāḥ||* The image of illuminated feet also appears in prose after verse 3.17 of the same play, where Candragupta is described as *praṇati-saṃbhrama-calita-bhūmipāla-mauli-maṇi-śikhā-piṣaṅgikṛta-pādmapadma-yugalaḥ.*

pronoun refers to, and Fleet had at first construed all the relative clauses in stanza 6 as describing Yaśodharman. However, once Kielhorn had suggested applying these to Mihirakula, Fleet himself published the correction (Fleet 1889, 219–20) and later Sircar also emphasised the corrected interpretation by adding a translation of this stanza to his edition of the inscription (1965b, 419 n. 4). Nonetheless, the authoritative translation of the inscription (Fleet 1886c, CII3, 147–48), which remained the only published full translation for over a century and a quarter, gives the incorrect interpretation.³⁴⁹

The stanza thus reveals two pieces of information about Mihirakula in addition to the claim that Yaśodharman subdued him. One of these, that the Himalayan region carries the vain title of being inaccessible because Mihirakula guards it,³⁵⁰ is in keeping with our knowledge from several other sources that the heartland of the Indian Hūṇas was in the region of the Panjab and Kashmir.³⁵¹ The second item of interest is that he professed to be a Śaiva and did not bow to anyone but Śiva himself. As Bakker (2014, 39 n. 105) points out, the same claim is recorded in the Gwalior inscription of Mihirakula where, though the locus in question is damaged, a native donor under Hūṇa dominion almost certainly says that Mihirakula was “unbent” yet bowed to Śiva.³⁵² The Sondhni inscription thus deliberately reflects on the rhetoric of Mihirakula’s supporters. This does not necessarily mean that this particular epigraph is answering that particular one; more likely in my opinion is that the slogan “Mihirakula bends to no-one but Śiva” was widely propagated in spoken and written word in multiple languages – for instance via bardic songs, letters conveyed orally or written on perish-

able media and, probably, several other inscriptions on copper and stone – of which the only witnesses available to us are the Gwalior inscription and the present epigraph giving Mihirakula a taste of his own medicine. Needless to say, the riposte too would have been made through many other channels beside the pillar inscription.

Stanza 7 at long last reveals that the person whom the numerous relative clauses above describe is Yaśodharman. Here the poet waxes lyrical in describing the supramundane venture of erecting this pillar,³⁵³ which shall remain for ever and ever. The last verse of the *praśasti* continues in the same vein, comparing the pillar to an arm of the earth lovingly raised, as if to engrave Yaśodharman’s many virtues on the surface of the moon itself. The concept that a memorial pillar is like an arm of the earth that channels a king’s glory to the heavens is not unique,³⁵⁴ but I am not aware of any parallels for the intriguing suggestion that the inscribed pillar is itself a scribal instrument for writing on a celestial object.

Finally, the poet Vāsula appends his signature in the form of an *anuṣṭubh* verse, followed by a minimalist prose sentence recording the name of the engraver, Govinda. The same Govinda was also the stonemason who executed the Mandsaur stone inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10), while as noted above, the poet was also the author of the Risthal inscription (A9). His signature stanza is almost word for word the same in the two epigraphs, the only difference being that the former calls the body text a *pūrvā*, while the present one refers to it simply as “verses” (*ślokāḥ*). In the artisan’s signature, the participle *utkīrṇā* may be a feminine singular, in which case *pūrvā* is probably to be supplied; but as Sircar (1965b, 420 n. 2) notes, it may also be a masculine plural (in *saṃdhi* with the following word) agreeing with *ślokāḥ* in the author’s signature. In view of my understanding of *pūrvā* as the standard preamble to a donative inscription (see page 7), this latter is much more likely.

349 To my best knowledge, the first full translation to appear with a correct rendering of the meaning is by Hans Bakker (2017, 30–32).

350 Fleet, at first understanding this line to refer to Yaśodharman, had suggested that *na* in the first quarter should also be understood in the second quarter meaning that Yaśodharman had dispelled this conceit of the Himalaya’s by penetrating into that region. But if the line is understood to refer to Mihirakula, then the syntax works without the need to supply anything.

351 Most recently, Hans Bakker (2018) has proposed to locate their headquarters near Akhnoor in the Jammu district of Jammu and Kashmir.

352 Line 3, *mihirakuleti khyāto ’bhaṅgo yaḥ paśupati(m a)[...]*. The passage is the second half of an *āryā*; the lacuna evidently had a word meaning “bows to” or “worships,” providing, as Fleet (CII3, 162 n. 6) already noted, an antithesis to *abhaṅga*. Sircar (1965b, 425 n. 6) has suggested *arcayati*, but this is unmetrical in the seventh foot and hypermetrical in the last. D. R. Bhandarkar (1929, 295 n. 4) would restore *bheje*, but this does not fit the vestiges well and is not a strong counterpoint to *abhaṅga*. Bakker (2014, 38 n. 105) has recently conjectured *avanataḥ*, which is the most promising restoration on all counts, though *upanataḥ* may also be possible.

353 I restore the first syllable of the stanza differently than Fleet and thus arrive at a slightly different translation of one of the poetic claims. See note to line 7 of the text.

354 Compare the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta: 129, *kīrtim itas tridaśa-pati-bhavana-gamanāvāpta-laṭita-sukha-vicaraanām ācaḡṣāna iva bhuvō bāhur ayam ucchritāḥ stambhaḥ*.

Diplomatic Text

- [1] ⁽¹⁾vepante yasya bhīma-stanita-bhaya-samudbhrānta-daityā digantāḥ śṛṅgāghātaiḥ sumeror vv(i) ghaṭita-dṛśadaḥ kandarā yaḥ karoti| Ukṣāṇaṃ taṃ dadhānaḥ kṣitidhara-tanayā-datta-(pañcāṅgulā)ṅkaṃ drāghīṣṭhaḥ śūlapāṇeḥ kṣapayatu bhavatāṃ śatru-tejāḥ!si ketuḥ||
- [2] ⁽²⁾āvīrbhūtāvalepair avinaya-paṭubhir llaṅghitācāra-(mā)rggair mmohād aidamyugīnair apaśubharatibhiḥ piḍyamānā narendraiḥ| yasya kṣmā śārṅgapāṇer iva kaṭhina-dhanur-jyā-kiṇā(ṅka)-prakoṣṭha(m) bāhuṃ lokopakāra-vrata-saphala-parispanda-dhiraṃ prapannā||
- [3] ⁽³⁾nindyācāreṣu yo (s)min vinaya-muṣi yuge kalpanā-mātra-vṛtyā rājasv anyeṣu pāḥ!suṣv iva kusumabalir nnābhāse prayuktaḥ| sa śreyo-dhāmi samrāḍ iti manu-bharatālarṅka-(māndhā)ṭṭ-kalpe kalyāṇe hemni bhāsvān maṇir iva sutarāṃ bhrājate yatra śabdaḥ||
- [4] ⁽⁴⁾ye bhuktā gupta-nāthair nna sakala vasudhākrānti-dṛṣṭa-pratāpair nnājñā hūṇādhipānāṃ kṣitipati-mukutaḍḍhyāsini yān praviṣṭā| deśāṃs tān dhanva-śaila-druma-ḥ!ahana-sarid-vīra-bāhūpagūḍhān vīryāvaskanna-rājñāḥ sva-gṛha-parisarāvajñayā yo bhunakti
- [5] ⁽⁵⁾ā lauhityopakaṅṭhāt tala-vana-gahanopatyakād ā mahendrād ā gaṅgāśliṣṭa-sānos tuhina-śikhariṇaḥ paścimād ā payodheḥ| sāmantair yasya bāhu-draviṇa-hṛta-madaiḥ pādayor ānamadbhiś cūḍā-ratnāḥ!śu-rāji-vyatikara-śabalā bhūmi-bhāgāḥ kriyantē||
- [6] ⁽⁶⁾sthānor anyatra yena praṇati-kṛpaṇatāṃ prāpitaṃ nottamāṅgaṃ yasyāśliṣṭo bhujābhyāṃ vahati himagirir durgga-śabdābhimānaM| nīcais tenāpi yasya praṇati-bhuja-balāvarjjana-kliṣṭa-mūrdhna cūḍā-puṣpopahāir mmihirakula-nṛpeṇārccitaṃ pāda-yugmaṃ||
- [7] ⁽⁷⁾[?dhā]mevonmātaṃ ūrdhvam vigaṇayitum iva jyotiṣāṃ cakravālaṃ nirddeṣṭum mārggam uccair ddiva Iva sukrṭopārjitāyāḥ sva-kīrtteḥ| tenākālpānta-kālāvadhir avanibhujā śrī-yaśodharmaṇāyam stambhaḥ stambhābhirāma-sthira-bhuja-parigheṇocchritiṃ nāyito ttra||
- [8] ⁽⁸⁾(śl)āghye janmāsyā vaḥ!śe caritam agha-haraṃ dṛśyate kā(n)tam asmin dharmasyāyam niketaś calati niyamitaṃ nāmunā loka-vṛttaM Ity utkarṣaṃ guṇānāṃ likhitum iva yaśodharmaṇāś candra-bimbe rāgād utkṣipta Uccair bhuja Iva rucimān yaḥ pṛthivyā vibhāti||
- [9] ⁽⁹⁾(I)ti tuṣṭūṣayā tasya nṛpateḥ puṇya-karmaṇaḥ| vāsulenoparacitāḥ ślokāḥ kakkasya sūnunā|| Utkirṇṇā govindena||

Curated Text

⟨Verse 1. Metre: sragdharā⟩

^[1]vepante yasya bhīma-
stanita-bhaya-samudbhrānta-daityā digantāḥ
śṛṅgāghātaiḥ sumeror
vv(i)ghaṭita-dṛśadaḥ kandarā yaḥ karoti|
ukṣāṇaṃ taṃ dadhānaḥ
kṣitidhara-tanayā-datta-(pañcāṅgulā)ṅkaṃ
drāghīṣṭhaḥ śūlapāṇeḥ
kṣapayatu bhavatāṃ śatru-tejāḥ!si ketuḥ||

Translation

⟨1⟩
The far horizons tremble, their demons frenzied in fear
of his frightful roar! Rocks tumble down the cliffs of
Mount Sumeru from the impact of his horns! Upholding
such a Bull, branded by the five fingers of [Pārvatī] the
daughter of the Mountain, the colossal standard of the
trident-wielder [Śiva] shall quash the power of your
foes!

⟨Verse 2. Metre: sragdharā⟩

^[2]āvīrbhūtāvalepair
 avinaya-paṭubhir llaṅghitācāra-(mā)rggair
 mmohād aidam̐yuginair
 apaśubha-ratibhiḥ piḍyamānā narendraiḥ|
 yasya kṣmā śārṅgapāṇer
 iva kaṭhina-dhanur-*ḥ*ḥyā-kiṇā(ṅka)-prakoṣṭha(ṁ)
 bāhuṁ lokopakāra-
 vrata-saphala-parispanda-dhiraṁ prapannā||

⟨Verse 3. Metre: sragdharā⟩

^[3]nindyācāreṣu yo ⟨'⟩(s)min
 vinaya-muṣi yuge kalpanā-mātra-vṛt(t)yā
 rājasv anyeṣu pāṅ!suṣv
 iva kusuma-balir nnābabbhāse prayuktaḥ|
 sa śreyo-dhāmnī samrāḍ
 iti manu-bharatālarḥka-(māndhā)ṭṛ-kalpe
 kalyāṇe hemni bhāsvān
 maṅir iva sutarāṁ bhrājate yatra śabdaḥ||

⟨Verse 4. Metre: sragdharā⟩

^[4]ye bhuktā gupta-nāthair
 nna sakala vasudhākrānti-dṛṣṭa-pratāpair
 nnājñā hūṇādhipānāṁ
 kṣitipati-mukutaḍdhyaśinī yān praviṣṭā|
 deśāṁs tān dhanva-śaila-
 druma-⟨ś:g⟩ahana-sarid-vīra-bāhūpagūḍhān
 vīryāvaskanna-rājñāḥ
 sva-gṛha-parisarāvājñayā yo bhunakti

⟨2⟩

Harrowed by the kings of this age – who delight in the unholy, yet in their delusion swagger with audacity and, adept in churlishness, overstep the path of propriety – the earth has found succour in [one man’s] arms – marked on the forearm with calluses from the harsh bowstring and hardened in the fruitful exercise of his commitment to benefitting the world – just as [it finds succour in the likewise marked and hardened arms] of [Viṣṇu] the bearer of the Śārṅga bow.

⟨3⟩

In this decency-devastating age the word “sovereign” (*samrāj*) has, out of mere wishful thinking, been attached to other kings of reprehensible conduct, though it lacked lustre there like a flower offering [cast] into dust. [But,] like a gleaming jewel [set] in fair gold, it glitters all the more [when applied] to him, a vessel of superiority comparable to Manu, Bharata, Alarka and Māndhātṛ.³⁵⁵

⟨4⟩

[Some] realms – protected by deserts, mountains, impenetrable woods, rivers and the brawn of warriors – were not controlled by the lords of the Guptas, though their valour was evident as they had invaded the entire earth; nor were they penetrated by the command of the chieftains of the Hūṇas, though it pressed down on the crowns of kings; yet he, having overpowered their rulers with his prowess, controls these [realms] with the same nonchalance he has for the precincts of his own house.³⁵⁶

Text Notes

Alternative opinions and translations are cited from Fleet (F) and Sircar’s SI.

[2] *parispanda*] SI notes that the original looks like *parispandi* (but retains F’s reading *parispanda*). There is a scratch above *nda*, more perceptible in the rubbing than on the pillar, but it is not an *i mātrā*.

Footnotes

³⁵⁵ Manu is the mythical progenitor and first king of mankind; authorship of the *Mānava-dharmaśāstra* is ascribed to him. The *Śānti-parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (12.67) describes how he was made king in order to prevent anarchy. For Bharata, see note 72 on page 69. Alarka is another mythical king best known for his selfless generosity. Sources that tell about him include the *Rāmāyaṇa* (*Ayodhyākāṇḍa*, 2.12.5); he is also mentioned several times in the *Mahābhārata* and on many occasions in the Purāṇas. Māndhātṛ was yet another mythical king of the lineage of Ikṣvāku (thus an ancestor of Rāma). Accounts of his reign include the *Śānti-parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* (12.64–65) where he learns from Indra about maintaining righteousness and the status quo.

³⁵⁶ The verse has some ambiguities with historical implications; see the Commentary.

⟨Verse 5. Metre: sragdharā⟩

^[5]ā lauhityopakaṅṭhāt
 tala-vana-gahanopatyakād ā mahendrād
 ā gaṅgāśliṣṭa-sānos
 tuhina-śikhariṇaf paścimād ā payodheḥ|
 sāmantair yasya bāhu-
 draviṇa-hṛta-madaiḥ pādayer ānamadbhiś
 cūḍā-ratnāṅṅ!śu-rāji-
 vyatikara-śabalā bhūmi-bhāgāḥ kriyantell

⟨Verse 6. Metre: sragdharā⟩

^[6]sthāṇor anyattra yena
 praṇati-kṛṇatām prāpitam nottamāṅgam
 yasyāśliṣṭo bhujābhyām
 vahati hima-girir durgga-śabdābhimanam|
 nīcais tenāpi yasya
 praṇati-bhuja-balāvarjjana-kliṣṭa-mūrddhnā
 cūḍā-puṣpopahārair
 mmihirakula-nṛpeṇārccitam pāda-yugmam||

⟨Verse 7. Metre: sragdharā⟩

^[7][?dhā]mevonmātum ūrddhvam
 viṅaṇayitum iva jyotiṣām cakkravālam
 nirddeṣṭum mārggam uccair
 ddiva iva sukṛtopārjjitāyāḥ sva-kirtteḥ|
 tenākālpānta-kālāvadhīr avanibhujā
 śrī-yaśodharmanāyām
 stambhaḥ stambhābhīrāma-
 sthira-bhuja-parigheṇocchritam nāyito ⟨'⟩ttra||

⟨5⟩

From the banks of the Brahmaputra to Mount Mahendra with its foothills dense with palm³⁵⁷ thickets, to the Snow Mountain's [Himalaya's] ridges hugged by the Ganges, to the western ocean, vassals robbed of their conceit by the abundant power of his arms bow at his feet, casting manifold hues on spots of the ground with the mingling of prismatic rays from the gems in their diadems.

⟨6⟩

[King Mihirakula,] who had never subjected his head to the ignominy of bowing except to Sthāṇu [Śiva] and the bulwark of whose arms gives the Snow Mountain [Himalaya] the conceited notion of being “inaccessible” – even that Mihirakula has abjectly worshipped [this man's] feet with offerings of flowers from his turban, head aching as he was coerced into obeisance by the strength of his arm.

⟨7⟩

It is he – His Majesty King Yaśodharman, the shafts of whose arms are as elegantly solid as pillars – who has raised up this pillar here, spanning time until the end of the aeon, as if to measure up the realm above, as if to take tally of the conglomeration of the stars, as if to point the way to heaven on high for the reputation accumulated through his good deeds.

[6] *prāpitam*] F prints *prāpitām*, but his rubbing shows *prāpitam*, which is what is required by the syntax. Pathak (1908b, 97) suggests emending to *prāpitam*, but *ā* is probably just a typo in Fleet's text. SI prints *prāpitam*.

[7] *dhāmevonmātum*] F tentatively reads (or restores) *gām evonmātum*, adopted by SI. The character is completely weathered away; neither Fleet's rubbing nor my photos show any recognisable vestige. F translates “as if to measure out the earth” (construing *ūrdhvam* with *viṅaṇayitum* after the caesura). But compare *unmāpayad iva vyoma* in verse 23 (I18) of the Risthal inscription (A9): the present phrase should probably also mean “to measure the sky.” Fleet's *gām ... ūrdhvam* could have that meaning but would require understanding *eva* in the sense of *iva*, which I find stylistically questionable and particularly jarring in juxtaposition to two instances of *iva* proper in the stanza. My restoration is no more based in fact than Fleet's but seems less awkward to me.

357 The word *tala* is used as an alternative to *tāla* for the sake of prosody (see also page 141 about this). It may mean a palm tree in general or, in particular, the palmyra (*Borassus flabellifer* L.).

⟨Verse 8. Metre: sragdharā⟩

^[8](śl)āghye janmāsya vajñ!śe
 caritam agha-haraṃ dṛśyate kā(n)tam asmin
 dharmmasyāyaṃ niketaś
 calati niyamitaṃ nāmunā loka-vṛttam
 ity utkarṣaṃ guṇānāṃ
 likhitum iva yaśodharmaṇaś candra-bimbe
 rāgād utkṣipta uccair
 bhujā iva rucimān yaḥ pṛthivyā vibhāti||

⟨Verse 9. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

^[9](i)ti tuṣṭūṣayā tasya
 nṛpateḥ puṇya-karmaṇaḥ|
 vāsulenoparacitāḥ
 ślokāḥ kakkasya sūnunā||

utkīrṇṇā govindena||

⟨8⟩

[This pillar] appears like a lustrous arm of the earth lovingly raised high to engrave on the disc of the moon the superiority of Yaśodharman's virtues: "His birth was in a commendable dynasty. He displays a charming demeanour that expels sin. He is an abode of righteousness (*dharmā*). The affairs of the world do not go astray while he holds the reins."

⟨9⟩

These verses were composed by Vāsula son of Kakka out of a desire to laud that king of meritorious acts.

Engraved by Govinda.

A12 Sondhni Fragmentary Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman

Substrate		Siddham ID:		OB00087	
Material	stone (sandstone)	Object type	pillar		
Dimensions	width 120 cm	height 13.5 m	depth 120 cm	shaft diameter	105 cm
Discovery	1879, in Sondhni (24°02'29"N 75°05'31"E) near Mandsaur				
Current location	in situ				
Inscription		Siddham ID:		IN00095	
Dimensions	width 33 cm	height 34 cm	Char size 8–10 mm	Line height	35–40 mm
Date CE	ca. 533	Basis of dating	see commentary on the primary pillar, A11		
Topic	eulogy of Yaśodharman				
Persons mentioned	Gupta rulers, Hūṇa rulers, Mihirakula, Yaśodharman, Vāsula, Kakka, Govinda				
Places mentioned	River Lauhitya, Mount Mahendra, Himalayas, River Ganges				
Compendia	CI3 34				
Other editions	Fleet 1886d				

Description

Yaśodharman's Sondhni *praśasti* is engraved in two copies. Since the copies are on largely identical pillars found at the same site and seem to be identical in their text, the second copy, which is only partially extant, is usually not discussed separately. It has, however, been edited as a separate inscription by Fleet (1886d, CI3, 149–50) and is likewise treated separately here. For provenance information, palaeographic description, discussion, curated text and translation, see the primary copy (A11) above.

Like the primary pillar, this one was also assembled from three components. Dimensions given above are for the box enclosing the pillar as a whole, including the lost fragments of the shaft. The largest component, with the base and the shaft, is presently in four fragments with a piece (including much of the inscription) missing. The base with a square cross-section is about 105 centimetres wide, but its length of 120 centimetres is slightly shorter than the base of the first pillar. Only about 33 centimetres of the sixteen-sided shaft are still attached to the base, and the top has been cut off using chisels and wedges. The remainder of the first component is further broken or cut off about 205 centimetres from the top. The upper section of the shaft is intact and has a circular tenon at the top. Like the primary pillar, it tapers slightly, so that the faces are only about 18 centimetres wide at the top. Of the section between the extant base and top,

the upper part has not been recovered. The lower part is extant, but split into two approximately equal halves. One of these is about 275 centimetres long, but a block has been cut off from the bottom of the other, which is thus only about 230 centimetres long. The missing parts were presumably carried away in pre-modern times to serve some other purpose. The second component, the lotus bell, is about 90 centimetres high and 100 centimetres in diameter; the bottom has a round socket to receive the top of the shaft, while the top has another projecting tenon. The final component, the lion abacus sculpted in the same way as that of the primary pillar, is about 90 centimetres tall and 120 centimetres square. The bottom of the abacus has a mortise hole to receive the top of the bell capital, while at the top there is another circular hole in the centre, surrounded by further sockets arranged in a regular octagon. These additional sockets³⁵⁸ are rectangular, the ones aligned with the sides being square or only slightly oblong, while those lying on the diagonals are about twice as long as their wide. The combined height of the extant fragments is slightly over 8 metres, but the height of the pillar including the base would have been around 13.5 metres originally, to match the other pillar.

³⁵⁸ See the description of the primary pillar about what these may have anchored.

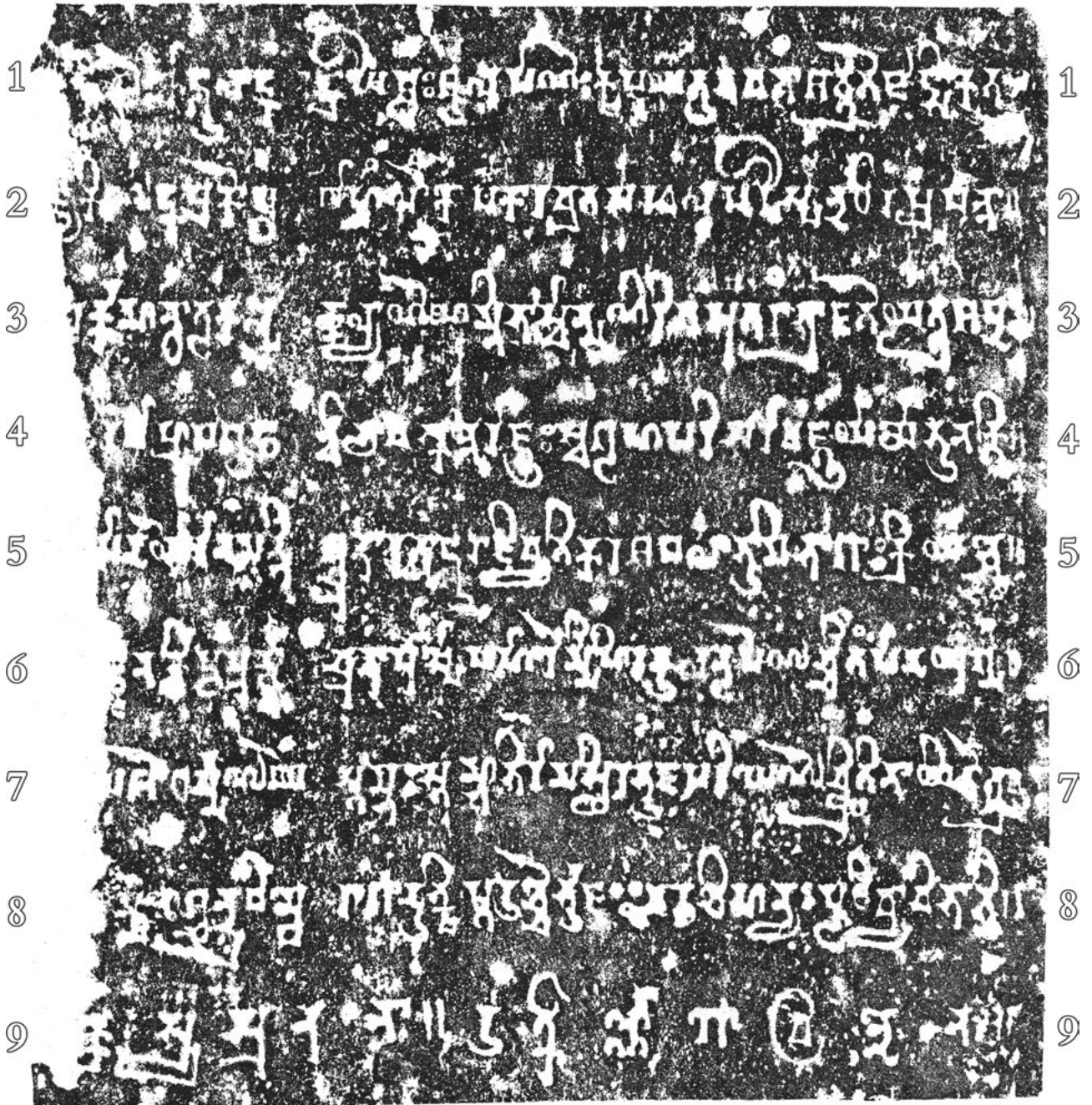


Figure 35: Sondhni fragmentary pillar inscription of Yaśodharman. Inked rubbing from Fleet (1886d).



Figure 36: Sondhni fragmentary pillar inscription of Yaśodharman. Composite digital photo by the author, 2017.

There is an ensemble of sweeping curved lines that may be an eroded shell (*śaṅkhalipi*) inscription on the secondary pillar, above the cut-out part (see Figure 37). The extant part of Yaśodharman's inscription occupies most of two faces of the longer split fragment from the middle of the shaft, plus the beginning of the first line remaining on a little more than two faces of the shorter split fragment. This latter section was not included in Fleet's edition and no rubbing of it has been published.



Figure 37: Shell inscription(?) on the fragmented Sondhni pillar. Photo by the author, 2017. Scale: 5 cm/2”.

Diplomatic Text

- [1] ⁽¹⁾vepante yasya (bh)ī(ma-stanita-bha)[ya-sa](mudbh)[r](ā)nta-(d)ai(t)y[ā di](gan)[tāḥ] [śṛṅgāghātaiḥ sumero](r v)[v](i)[ghaṭita-dṛṣadaḥ kandarā yaḥ karoti] Ukṣāṇaṃ taṃ dadhānaḥ kṣitidhara-tanayā-da)(tapañc)āṅgulāṅkaṃ drāghīṣṭhaḥ sūlapāṇeḥ kṣapayatu bhavatāṃ śatru-tejāṅsi ketuḥ||
- [2] ⁽²⁾[āvīrbhūtāvalepair avinaya-paṭubhir llaṅghitācāra-mārggair mmohād aidamyugīnair apaśubha-ratibhiḥ pīḍyamānā narendraiḥ] yasya kṣmā śārṅgapāṇer iva kaṭhina-dhanur-]jy[ā]-ki(ṅ)āṅka-prakoṣṭhaṃ bāhuṃ lokopakāra-vrata-saphala-(pari)spanda-dhīraṃ prapannā||
- [3] ⁽³⁾[nīndyācāreṣu yo smin vinaya-muṣi yuge kalpanā-mātra-vṛtyā rājasv anyeṣu pāṅsuṣv iva kusumabalīr nnābhāse prayuktaḥ] sa śreyo-dhāmnī samrād iti manu-bharatā)(la)rkka-māndhātṛ-kalpe kalyāṇe hemni bhāsvān maṅir iva sutarāṃ bhrājate yatra śa(bdaḥ)||
- [4] ⁽⁴⁾[ye bhuktā gupta-nāthair nna sakala vasudhākrānti-dṛṣṭa-pratāpair nājñā hūṅādhipānāṃ kṣitipati-mukutaḍdhyāsini yān praviṣṭā] deśāṃs tān dhanva-śaila-druma-gahana-sarid-vī)(ra-bā)hūpagūḍhān vīryāvaskanna-rājñāḥ sva-gṛha-parisarāvājñayā yo bhunakti
- [5] ⁽⁵⁾[ā lauhyopakaṅṭhāt tala-vana-gahanopatyakād ā mahendrād ā gaṅgāśliṣṭa-sānos tuhina-śikhariṇaf paścimād ā payodheḥ] sāmantair yasya bāhu-draviṇa-hṛta-madaiḥ] (p)ādayor ānamadbhiś cūḍā-ratnāṅṅ!śu-rāji-vyatikara-śabalā bhūmi-bhāgāḥ kriyante||
- [6] ⁽⁶⁾[sthāṅor anyatra yena praṇati-kṛpaṇatāṃ prāpitāṃ nottamāṅgaṃ yasyāśliṣṭo bhujābhyāṃ vahati himagirir durgga-śabdābhīmānaM] nīcais tenāpi yasya praṇati-bhuja-balāvarj)(ja)na-kliṣṭa-mūrdhna cūḍā-puṣpopahāir mmihirakula-nṛpeṅārccitaṃ pāda-yugma(ṃ)||
- [7] ⁽⁷⁾[dhāmevonmātum ūrdhvaṃ vigaṇayitum iva jyotiṣāṃ cakkravālaṃ nirdeṣṭum mārggam uccair ddiva Iva sukṛtopārjīṭayāḥ sva-kīrtteḥ] tenākalpānta-kālāvadhīr avanibhujā śrī-)(ya)śodharmanāyāṃ stambhaḥ stambhābhīrāma-sthira-bhuja-parigheṅocchritiṃ nāyito ttra(ḥ)||
- [8] ⁽⁸⁾[ślāghye janmāsya vaṅse caritam agha-haraṃ dṛṣyate kāntam asmin dharmmasyāyāṃ niketaś calati niyamitaṃ nāmunā loka-vṛttaṃ] Ity utkarṣaṃ guṇānāṃ likhitum iva yaśodha)rmmaṅaś candra-bimbe rāgād utkṣipta Uccair bhuja Iva rucimān yaḥ pṛthivyā vibhāti||
- [9] ⁽⁹⁾[Iti tuṣṭūṣayā tasya nṛpateḥ puṇya-karmmaṅaḥ] vāsulenoparacitāḥ ślokāḥ ka)kkasya sūnunā|| Utkīrṅṅā govindena||

A13 Chittorgarh Inscription Fragment A of the Naigamas

Substrate				Siddham ID:		OB00191		
Material	stone		Object type	fragment (of slab?)				
Dimensions	width	18 cm	height	23 cm	depth	?		
Discovery	1958–59, Chittorgarh Fort (24°53'23"N 74°38'51"E)							
Current location	unknown							
Inscription A				Siddham ID:		IN00205		
Dimensions	width	16 cm	height	5 cm	Char size	7–8 mm	Line height	15 mm
Date CE	early 6th c.	Basis of dating		conjecture				
Topic	uncertain							
Persons mentioned	Viṣṇudatta							
Places mentioned	—							
Compendia	—							
Other editions	Sircar and Gai 1961, also published as Gai 1990a, 267–274							

Description

A fragment of an inscribed slab was discovered while clearing debris from an unspecified location in the fort of Chittorgarh (around 24°53'23"N 74°38'51"E). The discovery was reported in IAR 1958–59, 63 (No. 47 and Plate 71), so the stone was found in that season or shortly before. Sircar and Gai (1961) edited the inscriptions soon after the event.

The fragment as we have it is a rough parallelogram spanning about 18 centimetres in width and 23 centimetres in height. The top is quite straight and probably coincides with the top of the original slab. All other sides are broken; the left and right sides slant toward the left from the top down, while the bottom edge slants downward from left to right. The thickness of the stone has not been reported, but Sircar and Gai explicitly describe it as a slab. They also suggest that the inscription was originally installed in Chittorgarh. However, as D. R. Bhandarkar (1920, 131) notes, the stone of the ancient structures of nearby Nagari was quarried for later buildings, and almost all old buildings of Chittorgarh are believed to have been constructed of materials brought from there. Since Nagari is identical to the ancient site Madhyamikā, which is mentioned (as Madhyamā) in the second inscription on this stone fragment, I prefer to assume with Bakker and Bisschop (2016, 222) that the epigraph came to Chittorgarh from Nagari (around 24°58'12"N 74°40'47"E) along with other materials.

When Sircar and Gai edited the text, the stone was kept in an ASI storeroom at Chittorgarh. I have not been able to trace its present whereabouts, but I could spend

only a very brief time there in February 2018, during which I received conflicting information on whether such a storeroom even exists today. The Government Museum in Chittorgarh was at that time closed for renovation, but I was informed that they had no fragmentary inscriptions in storage. It was suggested to me that it may have been moved to the Government Museum at Ajmer or Udaipur, but I could find no trace of it at either of these institutions.³⁵⁹ I can only hope that the epigraph has not been lost for good and will in the future become accessible to researchers. For the present, I re-edit the inscription from the inked rubbing published by Sircar and Gai.

The fragment has eleven partial lines of text on it, with vestiges of a twelfth line at the bottom. As Sircar and Gai observe, there seem to be two separate inscriptions, one (inscription A, number A13) comprising the first three lines and the other (inscription B, number A14) the remaining lines. The uppermost line is probably the original first, since there is more space above it than between regular lines. The line of which only some overhead marks remain at the bottom of the fragment may have been the last, but the inscription may also have continued for several additional lines. The left and right sides are both broken; since both inscriptions are in metrical verse, the extent of lost text on each side can be estimated

³⁵⁹ In Udaipur I was permitted to browse both the accession register and the storeroom, so I am quite confident that the stone is not, and never was, there. There is a slight chance that the slab may be gathering dust somewhere in a basement in Ajmer, but I was told in that recently renovated museum that all their inscriptions are on display in their extensive and impressive epigraphic gallery.



Figure 38: Chittorgarh fragmentary inscriptions of the Naigamas. Inked rubbing from Sircar and Gai (1961).

confidently. Thus 12 to 13 characters have been lost at the beginning of most lines, and 13 to 18 at the ends of lines. The position of the line breaks vis-à-vis the lost text cannot, of course, be determined precisely. But thanks to

the metrical structure, the uncertainty factor is very small, probably no more than two characters to either side of the positions estimated in my edition below. Estimated on the basis of average character width, the original inscription

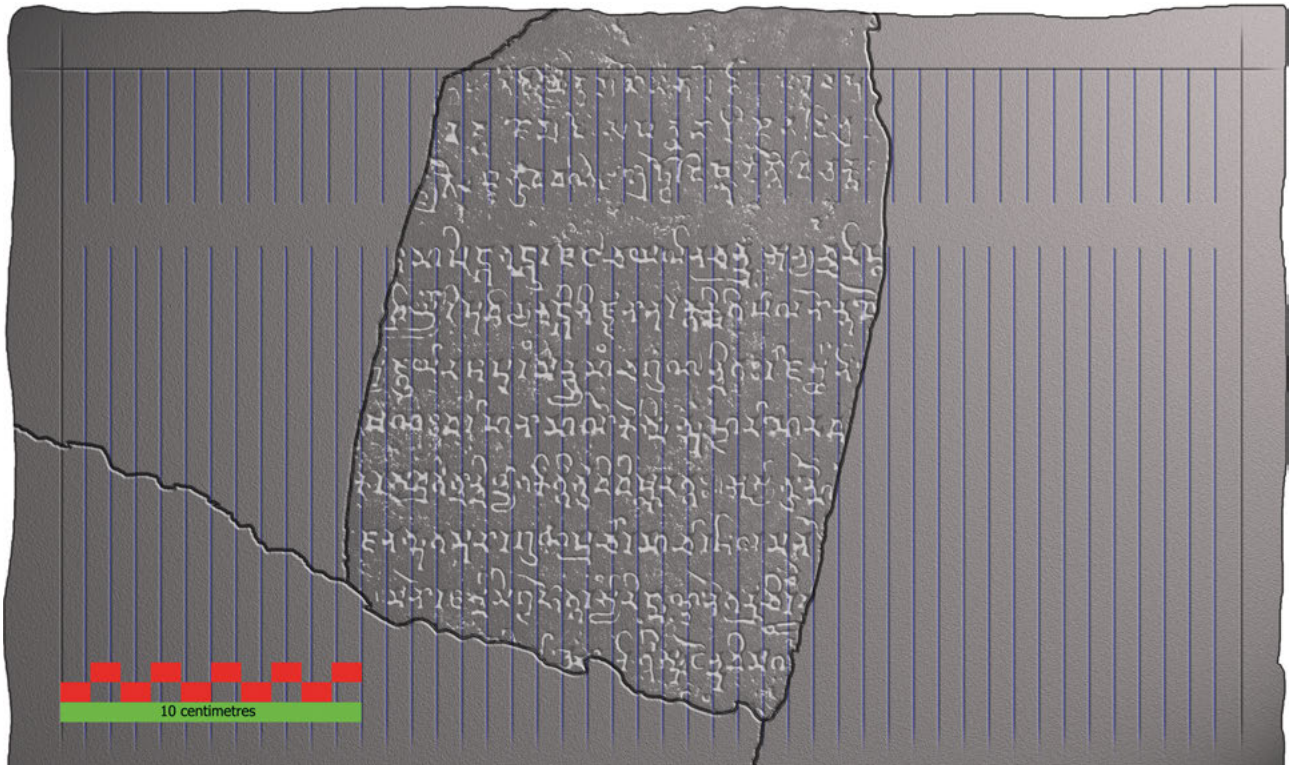


Figure 39: Reconstruction of the Chittorgarh tablet of the Naigamas. Vertical scoring shows an average character width.

would have been 38–40 centimetres wide (see Figure 39 for an approximate reconstruction).

There are some palaeographic differences between the two inscriptions (see below), and the contents also imply two separate texts. In inscription A, line 1 appears to contain an invocation to a deity (thus showing the probable beginning of a text), and line 3 introduces a person named Viṣṇudatta; whereas in inscription B, line 1 seems to have another invocation, and Viṣṇudatta is again introduced in line 5. For these reasons I continue to treat the inscription as two separate texts, which probably, as Sircar and Gai (1961, 53, 57) surmise, record two separate but related pious donations. I do not, however, believe they are correct to suggest that the two inscriptions involve the same donor. Inscription B mentions at least one generation after Viṣṇudatta, while in inscription A, Viṣṇudatta's name only appears in the last verse. This short *anuṣṭubh* stanza must also have included a description of the donation, so it is highly unlikely that a son or descendant of Viṣṇudatta could have fit in it. It thus seems that the inscriptions were engraved some years or even a few decades apart, which would explain the disparity of scripts.

Shortage of space at the end of inscription A, however, is a problematic aspect of this fragment. While 12 to 13 characters have been lost at the ends of the first two lines

(see Figure 39 and the Description above), the *anuṣṭubh* beginning in line 3 requires about 19 characters to finish (including a *visarga* and presumed punctuation marks). It is most unlikely that the inscribed area was wider than I have estimated above, since the remaining fragments seem not only metrically but also semantically coherent, and the number of lost *akṣaras* at the beginnings and ends corresponds to expectations in all other lines. Possibly the characters were made progressively narrower and closer together as the engraver approached the end of the third line, but there is no hint of this in the extant part. Alternatively, the first inscription was perhaps aborted for some reason, and only the second one was meant to be displayed, while the first could have been covered in plaster. Yet this does not seem very likely, so I assume that the text continued somewhere else. A fourth line to inscription A is again unlikely. One may hypothesise a partial fourth line engraved on the fragment that is now lost on the left-hand side, but the space between the two inscriptions is not tall enough to fit an additional line. The only way to conceive of a partial fourth line is that the carver of the second inscription adjusted his margin to accommodate the previous epigraph, which is improbable.

The remaining possibility is that the third line of the first inscription extended, for the space of a few characters

at least, to the side of the block. If the fragment belongs to a fairly thin slab, then the original tablet would probably have been installed in a wall with the sides blocked up. But so long as the thickness is not known, a fatter, free-standing slab (i.e. a stela) or even a pillar cannot be excluded. Such a substrate would also be more suitable than a tablet for receiving more than one inscription: cutting a tablet to a large size and then inscribing it with two different texts on successive occasions is an unlikely scenario. The Gadhwa pillar inscriptions³⁶⁰ may, however, be a good case in point: two known fragments, possibly from a single pillar (though perhaps from separate ones), carry a total of six Gupta donative records spanning at least two successive rulers. Nevertheless, even if my prediction that the fragment belongs to a proper three-dimensional object rather than a tablet turns out to be true, why the artisan of the first inscription continued the text on another surface instead of starting a new line remains a conundrum.

Script and Language

As Sircar and Gai note, the two inscriptions are in a very similar, but not quite identical script. They emphasize several differences in character shapes, but I feel that some of these are due to stochastic variation in a very small sample.³⁶¹ Their observation that *ra* has a barb-like hook in inscription A and a thickened end in inscription B may, however, be relevant. Certainly, the script of B is noticeably neater. The characters of A are slightly larger and more widely (and irregularly) spaced, and they also seem to be engraved more shallowly. Both, especially inscription B, closely resemble the script of the Sondhni pillar inscription (A11, A12); the similarity is perhaps even closer to the Risthal inscription (A9), which was only discovered after Sircar and Gai edited this epigraph. Features common to all three, in addition to specific character forms, include the following. Subscript *y* and *r* are often (especially in B) ornamentally extended; overhead vowel marks are likewise enlarged and decorated with a barbed blade shape. The *mātrā* for *ā* (as Sircar and Gai also note) can take the shape of a horizontal stroke bending down at an angle, or a vertical stroke bending right and down in a hook; it

³⁶⁰ Siddham IN00010, IN00011, IN00021, IN00030, IN00058, IN00059; CII3 7, 8, 9, 64; CII3rev 8, 17, 26.

³⁶¹ For example, they note that the *mātrā* for *i* “generally” comes down to the bottom of characters in A while it stops at the headline in B. In fact, this happens once out of a total of three instances in A, so even though B has multiple *i mātrās*, none of which are vertically extended, this is not evidence for a systematic difference.

also attaches to some characters in a special form (e.g. *mā* in l3 and l4 of B; *ṅā* in l4 of B). The novel form of the conjunct *ry* – composed of a shortened *r* at regular height and a slightly subscript bipartite *y* and found in the Sondhni pillars and in the Mandsaur inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10) – occurs once (*vīrya*, l2 of B; for the regular form compare *vīryyo* at the beginning of the same line).

The punctuation system appears to be two-tiered, as in other inscriptions of the Later Aulikaras. Due to the fragmentary nature of the epigraph the consistency of punctuation cannot be determined. A single horizontal punctuation mark at the end of a half *anuṣṭubh* appears in line 1 of A, and a double (and apparently short) vertical at the end of a full *upajāti* in line 5 of B. The extant part of inscription B includes several half-verse points without discernible punctuation, but all of these have a *visarga* or (once, probably) a *halanta* consonant, both of which are known to double as punctuation marks in related inscriptions.

As expected, consonants are usually doubled after *r* (except *kīrttir bhuvī* in l5 of B and *vīrya* in l2 of B, noted above for the *ry* ligature), and occasionally before *r* (*yattra*, l1 of A) and before *y* as well (*maddhyamā*, l3 of B). The small sample includes no *upadhmaniya* or *jihvamūliya* (nor any phonetic contexts where one of these would be expected), and *anusvāra* is employed in a standard manner (except possibly in °*āñ ca*, read very tentatively in the last line).

Commentary

Verse 1 of the first inscription speaks about something that intellect, mind and speech cannot reach. The expression indicates something supramundane, most likely a supreme being comparable to the Upanishadic *brahman*.³⁶² A theistic approach to this being may be implied in the words *param vapu*, meaning a “supreme body” unless the lost continuation altered the sense. Though a long shot, it is possible that the invocation was to the god Brahmā, whom the Naigamas may have held in especial regard. This is implied by the record of Doṣa’s construction of a temple arguably dedicated to him (A9 v23; see also page 139), and by what may be a parallelism between the position of Brahmā and that of the Naigama chancellor in Nirdoṣa’s inscription (A10 v2). It is, however, also possible that the invocation was addressed to Viṣṇu or Śiva, both of whom may be described in similar terms.

³⁶² For a close parallel, Sircar and Gai (1961, 54) cite *Kenopaniṣad* 3, *na tatra cakṣur gacchati na vāg gacchati no manaḥ*.

Verse 2 definitely introduced a king, presumably the one reigning when the inscription was created. Judging by the compound *-vañśa-je*, his dynastic name was probably also mentioned, but regrettably neither this nor his personal name remains to us.

The third and last verse introduces Viṣṇudatta as the best of merchants and a discerning man. Practically the entire first half of this stanza is extant, so if a donation or construction was mentioned in the inscription, this had to have been in the last half *śloka*.

Diplomatic Text

[1] ⁽¹⁾ [-----] (na) yāti (dh)īr yyattra ma(n)o na bhāra(t)ī | (p)araṃ vapu[-----]
 [2] [-----] [1] ⁽²⁾ [-----] vañśa-je mahīm sapatna-nārī-jana-vibhra(ma)[-----] [-----]
 [3] [-----] dyate|| ⁽³⁾ babhūva vañijā(ṃ) śreṣṭho viṣṇudatto vicakṣa(ṇa)[h] [-----] [1]

Curated Text

⟨Verse 1. Metre: vaṃśastha⟩

^[1] [-----]
 (na) yāti (dh)īr yyattra ma(n)o na bhāra(t)ī |
 (p)araṃ vapu[-----]
 [-----]^[2] [-----] [1]

⟨Verse 2. Metre: vaṃśastha⟩

[-----] vañśa-je mahīm
 sapatna-nārī-jana-vibhra(ma)[-----]
 [-----]^[3] [-----]
 [-----] dyate||

⟨Verse 3. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

babhūva vañijā(ṃ) śreṣṭho
 viṣṇudatto vicakṣa(ṇa)[h]
 [-----]
 [-----] [1]

Translation

⟨1⟩
 ... where neither the intellect, nor the mind, nor speech
 can go ... supreme body ...

⟨2⟩
 [While] ... born in the dynasty ... [was ruling] the earth ...
 [causing] agitation of the womenfolk of [his] enemies ...

⟨3⟩
 There was perspicacious Viṣṇudatta, best among
 merchants ...

Text Notes

Alternative opinions are cited from Sircar and Gai (SG).

The positions of line breaks with respect to the lost text are estimated.

[1] The first stanza may have been preceded by a *maṅgala* symbol or the word *siddham*.

[3] *dyate*] SG tentatively restore *vidyate* or *prapadyate*. Any number of other restorations may be possible.

A14 Chittorgarh Inscription Fragment B of the Naigamas

Substrate				Siddham ID:		OB00191		
Material	stone		Object type	fragment (of slab?)				
Dimensions	width	18 cm	height	23 cm	depth	?		
Discovery	1958–59, Chittorgarh Fort (24°53'23"N 74°38'51"E)							
Current location	Unknown							
Inscription				Siddham ID:		IN00206		
Dimensions	width	18 cm	height	16.5 cm	Char size	7 mm	Line height	18–20 mm
Date CE	early 6th c.	Basis of dating		conjecture				
Topic	probably a construction work, perhaps of a temple							
Persons mentioned	Varāha, Viṣṇudatta							
Places mentioned	Daśapura, Madhyamā							
Compendia	—							
Other editions	Sircar and Gai 1961							

Commentary

For images, provenience information and palaeographic description refer to Fragment A (A13). The second inscription evidently began with an invocation to Śiva, since its first verse mentions the moon hidden in a mass of dreadlocks (*jaṭā*). Just as evidently, the second verse names and praises the reigning king. As in inscription A, his name is not preserved; all that remains is a reference to his valour, to the breaking of the valour of enemies, and to the loyalty³⁶³ of the subjects. Verse 3 obviously introduced a current or erstwhile chancellor, as it includes the word *rājasthānī[ya]* and says that someone did something to Daśapura and Madhyamā by the order of someone. In all likelihood the message was that someone as chancellor governed these cities or lands, appointed by the king introduced above. Madhyamā (more commonly Madhyamikā) is modern Nagari about 11 kilometres north-northeast of Chittorgarh, a site with remains that can quite confidently be attributed to the Aulikaras.³⁶⁴

Verse 4 speaks of a person named Varāha, described as an ornament of something (his lineage), or ornamented with something (virtue, etc.), and a delight to his friends. It is not clear whether *rājasthānīya* in the previous verse applies to this Varāha, to his father, or to some other person. However, as Sircar and Gai note, Varāha is probably identical to Varāhadāsa known from the Mandsaur inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10). The identification

is not watertight, yet it is very plausible given that Varāha belonged to a family that was at least connected to the *rājasthānīyas* of Daśapura in the rough time bracket when Varāhadāsa's family produced several chancellors.

Verse 5 mentions the name Viṣṇudatta, whom inscription A calls a merchant (*vaṇij*). From his position in the structure of this inscription, he must have been Varāha's son, which implies that Varāha too would have been a man of commerce, another tie to Varāhadāsa of a great merchant (*naigama*) family. All that remains for us to read about Viṣṇudatta here is that he was famous because he “followed the same vow” as something ending in *kara*. Following the vow of something (being *savrata*) means acting according to the nature of that something. The string preceding *kara* must conform to the metrical template $\approx\text{---}$ but nothing else is known about it. Entering the realm of utter speculation, the word ending in *kara* may have been *bhāskara*, “sun.” The word *arka-vrata*, literally “the vow of the sun,” is used in a passage of the *Manusmṛti* about the various ways in which a king should behave toward his subjects. One of these, the *arka-vrata*, is to extract taxes in the way the sun dries up the lands in the eight non-rainy months, i.e. presumably in a steady but barely perceptible manner.³⁶⁵ Assuming that

³⁶³ See page 138 and note 216 there for this technical meaning of *anurāga*, used in connection to Prakāśadharman's ancestors in the Risthal inscription.

³⁶⁴ Bakker and Bisschop (2016, 220–23) provide a detailed overview of the site with further references.

³⁶⁵ *Manusmṛti* 9.305, *aṣṭau māsān yathādityas toyam harati raśmi-bhīḥ| tathā haret karaṃ rāṣṭrān nityam arka-vratam hi tat||* The same passage has a few other metaphors that may be applicable here. The “vow of the wind” (*Manusmṛti* 9.306, *vratam ... mārutam*) is the employment of spies as imperceptible as the wind, which immediately calls to mind the all-seeing spies of Abhayadatta in verse 18 of Nirdoṣa's inscription (A10). Unfortunately I know of no word meaning “wind” to fit the frame $\approx\text{---kara}$. The “vow of the moon” (*Manusmṛti* 9.309, *cāndravratiko*) expresses the ability to arouse gladness in subjects just

Viṣṇudatta was himself a *rājasthānīya*, being able to work in this way may have been perceived as a mark of excellence.

Of verse 6 only four *aḥṣaras* remain, three of which mean “of him there was.”³⁶⁶ The seventh verse speaks of the birth of a virtuous son. Sircar and Gai restore *sājī-janat*, “she conceived” at the beginning of this stanza and therefore assume that verse 6 was about Viṣṇudatta’s wife. However, verse 7 could equally well be restored as *so jījanat*, “he begat,” and there is no indication whatsoever of a wife in the extant fragment of verse 6. Nor is there evidence contrary to this assumption, but it must be kept in mind that verse 6 may just as well have introduced Viṣṇudatta’s son, in which case the son mentioned in verse 7, the presumable donor, is Viṣṇudatta’s grandson.

The eighth verse of inscription B speaks about something to the north of the house of Manorathasvāmin. The name in all probability refers to an image of Viṣṇu, so his house would be a temple and it can be reasonably inferred that the stanza records the construction of something (such as a shrine, a well, a pilgrim shelter, etc.) to the north of that pre-existing temple. In accordance with this assumption, the end of this line fragment may be tentatively restored to *vyadhāyi*, “was built/set out” (see also note to line 7). The words *etad ruciraṃ*, “this bright,” probably refer to the presumed building, but the remainder is problematic. Assuming that *saṃdhi* is correctly applied,

the text resolves to *diṅ-maṇḍanā*, a feminine nominative that does not agree with anything in the extant fragment. On the other hand, *ottarasyaṃ* implies the feminine locative *diśi*, which may have been present in the lost part of the stanza or may have remained implicit in the original. The expression *diṅ-maṇḍanā*, “an ornament of the direction,”³⁶⁷ would fit most readily into the text if the verse played on the word *diś* along lines similar to “This [thing], an ornament to the direction [i.e. the region where it is situated], was built in the northern direction from the Manorathasvāmin temple.” However, the feminine of *maṇḍanā* precludes this reconstruction and I am at a loss to produce a better one.

The last partially extant verse, the ninth, mentions fame spotless as the full moon (in the accusative case). This was probably the standard prayer for the building to stand for eternity, propagating the glory of its builder. It follows from this that the text did not continue long after this point. Assuming that the ninth line (of which only an upright *ā mātrā* and an *anusvāra* remain) was the last in the inscription and was filled to the right margin, it would have contained approximately 29 characters beyond the completion of the *upajāti* stanza 9. The most likely conjecture is that the epigraph ended with a tenth verse in *anuṣṭubh* (32 characters plus punctuation), which may have recorded the name of the poet and/or the artisan.

Diplomatic Text

- [1] ⁽¹⁾ [-----] (?t/bh/n) (?ā) m āpiṅga-bhaṅgura-jaṭā-caya-līna-candra(M) anyac ca dī(pta)
[-----]
- [2] [-----] ⁽²⁾ [----] vīryyo ripu-vīrya-bhaṅgibhir jjanānurakta-kṣiti-pālanodbha(v)ai[ḥ]
[-----]
- [3] [-----] ⁽³⁾ [ya](s)y(ā)jñāyā daśapuraṃ maddhyamāṃ ca guṇānvitaḥ rājasthānī[ya] [-----]
[] ⁽⁴⁾ [-----]
- [4] [-----] [bh](?ū)ṣaṇaḥ varāha-nāmā loke smin suhṛd-āmoda-va[rddhanaḥ] ⁽⁵⁾ [-----]
- [5] [-----] [-----] kara-savratatvād vikhyāta-kīrttir bhuvī viṣṇudattaḥ ⁽⁶⁾ asyābhūn
mau [-----]
- [6] [-----] ⁽⁷⁾ [sājī]janat sutam udāra-guṇa-pracāram ācāra-śīlam ana×e [-----]
- [7] [-----] ⁽⁸⁾ manorathasvāmi-gṛhottarasyaṃ diṅ-maṇḍanaitad ruciraṃ (?v)y[a] [-----]
[-----]
- [8] [-----] ⁽⁹⁾ [-----] ×i[?n]ā(?ñ ca) kīrttiṃ sphuṭendu-vima(l)[ā]ṃ [-----]
- [9] [-----] [] [?6] ×ā ×(?a)ṃ [?21]

as people rejoice at the sight of the moon, but words meaning “moon” and fitting the template (*doṣākara*; *uṣākara* in vowel *saṃdhi*) are rare.

366 The syllable *mau*, the only remainder of v6 beyond “of him there was,” may perhaps be the beginning of the word *mauli*, “crown,” used literally or to imply excellence in something.

367 Depending on the lost context, other meanings may be possible, such as “ornament of the sky” or “something that has the directions for an ornament.”

Curated Text

⟨Verse 1. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

[1][-----](?t/bh/n)(?ā)m
 āpiṅga-bhaṅgura-jaṭā-caya-līna-candra(m)
 anyac ca di(pta)[-----]
 [----][2][-----][||]

⟨Verse 2. Metre: vaṃśastha⟩

[--~]vīryyo ripu-vīrya-bhaṅgibhir
 jjanānurakta-kṣiti-pālanodbha(v)ai[h]
 [-----]
 [~][3][-----][||]

⟨Verse 3. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

[ya](s)y(ā)jñayā daśapuram
 maddhyamāṃ ca guṇānvitaḥ
 rājasthānī[ya][--~]
 [~][4][-----][||]

⟨Verse 4. Metre: anuṣṭubh⟩

[~][5][-----]
 [~][6][bh](?ū)ṣaṇaḥ
 varāha-nāmā loke (')smin
 suhṛd-āmoda-va[rddhanaḥ||]

⟨Verse 5. Metre: upajāti⟩

[-----]
 [~][7][-----][||]
 [-----]kara-savratatvād
 vikhyāta-kīrttir bhuvī viṣṇudattaḥ||

Translation

⟨1⟩

[Victory to Śiva who has] the moon concealed in the mass of [his] curling, reddish dreadlocks and moreover ... (brilliant) ...

⟨2⟩

... [of renowned] valour, ... with [his] ... which shattered the valour of his enemies ... arising from [the fact that] his reign over the earth enjoyed the devoted loyalty of the populace ...

⟨3⟩

By whose command the virtuous ... [governed] both Daśapura and Madhyamā [as] chancellor (*rājasthānīya*) ...

⟨4⟩

... called Varāha in this world, an increaser of the happiness of [his] friends ... ornament ...

⟨5⟩

... Viṣṇudatta, renowned in the world because he followed the vow of ...³⁶⁸

Text Notes

Alternative opinions are cited from Sircar and Gai (SG).

The positions of line breaks with respect to the lost text are estimated.

[1] The first stanza may have been preceded by a *maṅgala* symbol.

[3] ~~~vīryyo] The lacuna may be tentatively restored as *prakhyāta* or *vikhyāta*.

[3] *yasyājñayā*] SG propose *tasyā°* or *asyā°*, which cannot be ruled out. Since verse 2 presumably introduced the sovereign, *yasya* is perhaps more likely here.

[v5] The metre may also be pure *indravajrā*.

Footnotes

368 See the Commentary on a possible interpretation of this phrase.

⟨Verse 6. Metre: anuṣṭubh?⟩

asyābhūn mau[~--~]
 [~::~~::~::~::~::]
 [~::~::~::~::~::]^[6][-~]
 [~::~::~::~::~::][||]

⟨Verse 7. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

[sāji]janat sutam udāra-guṇa-pracāram
 ācāra-śīlam ana×e[~--~--~::][||]
 [--~::~~::~~::~~::~~::~~::]^[7][-~]
 [--~::~~::~~::~~::~~::~~:]||

⟨Verse 8. Metre: upajāti⟩

manorathasvāmi-grhottarasvāṃ
 diṅ-maṇḍanaitad ruciraṃ (?v)y[a] [-~][||]
 [~--~--~--~--~]
 [~--~-]^[8][-~--~--~--~][||]

⟨Verse 9. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

[-~--~--~--~--~]×i[?n]ā[?ñ ca]
 kīrttiṃ sphuṭendu-vima(l)[ā]ṃ[~--~--~::][||]
 [--~::~~::~~::~~::~~::~~:]^[9][~~]
 [--~::~~::~~::~~::~~::~~:]||

[?6] ×ā ×(?a)ṃ [?21]

⟨6⟩

He had a [son/wife] ...

⟨7⟩

[He begat / She conceived] a son of habitual decorum in whom noble virtues were manifest ...

⟨8⟩

In the northern [direction from] the house [i.e. temple] of Manorathasvāmin ... an ornament of [all] the directions ... this bright ...

⟨9⟩

... fame, immaculate like the full-blown moon ... (of the ...s) ...

[v6] I accept SG's identification of the stanza as *anuṣṭubh*, but this is not certain, as it would require 31 characters (including a presumed punctuation mark) in the lacuna, whereas the average length of text lost between extant lines is 26–28 characters. The metre may perhaps be *āryā*.

[6] *sājījanat*] SG print *jī* as an unclear reading, but nothing of this character is visible in the rubbing. Still, the restoration *sājījanat* seems very plausible, though *so jījanat* appears equally possible. See also the Commentary.

[6] *guṇa*] SG call attention to an unnecessary mark above *ṇa*. This must be damage as it does not resemble any legitimate grapheme (a dot or diamond shape touching the left arm of *ṇa*).

[6] *ana×e*] SG tentatively restore *anapekṣa*. Several alternatives come readily to mind, including *anapekṣita* and *anapekṣya*; *v* instead of *p* is equally plausible, and other consonants may be possible.

[7] *vya*] SG read an unclear *hya* at the end of the line. Only the left edge remains of the principal consonant, and this is slanted at almost 45°, so *v* is more likely than *h*. One possible restoration would be *vyadhāyi*.

[8] SG read nothing before *kīrttiṃ*. In the lacuna there is definitely an *i mātrā*, followed by an *ā mātrā*, then perhaps two more characters before *kīrttiṃ*. I tentatively read the first as *ñca*; what looks like a second character is probably damage (or an aborted character or superfluous punctuation), since two *akṣaras* after *×i×ā* would be unmetrical.

[9] Only a few vestiges remain of this line. The *ā mātrā* is below *sphu*, and the *anusvāra* is below and to the right of *ṭe*.

A15 Mandsaur Fragmentary Inscription of Kumāravarma

Substrate				Siddham ID:		OB00192		
Material	stone		Object type	fragment of slab				
Dimensions	width	55 cm	height	42 cm	depth	22 cm		
Discovery	1978, in Mandsaur (24°03'38"N 75°04'41"E)							
Current location	Yashodharman Museum, Mandsaur (in storage)							
Inscription				Siddham ID:		IN00207		
Dimensions	width	50 cm	height	36 cm	Char size	4–6 mm	Line height	14–16 mm
Date CE	early 7th c		Basis of dating	palaeography, conjecture				
Topic	probably a construction of some facility							
Persons mentioned	(Ya?)jñadeva, Virasoma, Bhāskaravarman, Kumāravarma, Bhogārṇava, Harideva, Lakṣmaṇagupta, Bharṭṭ-ananta, Bharṭṭ-cella							
Places mentioned	Daśapura							
Compendia	—							
Other editions	Mirashi 1983							

Description

The object bearing this inscription is a slab of dense, even-grained stone (probably quartzite), the left side of which is broken off along a slanting line. The slab is about 22 centimetres thick,³⁶⁹ 42 centimetres tall and 55 centimetres wide at its widest. The narrowest width, at the bottom edge, is about 37 centimetres. The intact edges are straight and meet at right angles, but the sides and back are only roughly chiselled. The inscribed front face is polished flat and smooth.

The slab was found in 1978 while digging the foundation for a building in the Gudri Mohalla district of Mandsaur near the southern gate of the fort (24°03'38"N 75°04'41"E).³⁷⁰ It was then kept for some time at the house of Girija Shankar Runwal in Mandsaur.³⁷¹ The discovery was noticed in 1981 at the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Indore Government Museum by V. S. Wakankar, who also read a paper about it at the Bhopal Session of the Epigraphical Society of India, 1982 (published as Wakankar 1981). Estampages were made by K. V. Ramesh in 1981, and photos were taken by Kailash Chandra Pandey in 1982. The text of the inscription was

edited by V. V. Mirashi (1983), and its contents were discussed by Sircar (1984b) and again by Mirashi (1986). The stone is currently in the storeroom of the Yashodharman Museum in Mandsaur, where I was permitted in February 2017 to take the photographs on which my present edition is based.

The inscribed area is about 36 centimetres high and 50 centimetres wide at the top. The minuscule lettering, with character bodies about 5 millimetres tall, is precise and sharply engraved, though some of the finer details (such as the cross-strokes of *ś* and *th*, as well as *halanta* consonants and horizontal punctuation marks) are shallowly cut. The lines are even, but the right-hand margin is not flush. The text consists of 21 lines spaced about 15 millimetres one below the other, with a sizeable portion lost at the beginning of each line. Whilst editing this inscription, Mirashi (1983) implicitly went along with the hypothesis that the lost text amounts to little as compared to the extant text. To be able to edit the text this way, he had to resort to some Procrustean methods, including some metre identifications that the extant text, even as read by him, belies. He assumes that one of the stanzas is comprised of five *pādas* (his verse 11), while another is a combination of two different metres (his verse 4). He also altered the punctuation, inserting a single and a double *danḍa* (without flagging them as editorial) as well as silently deleting an original single *danḍa* and changing a *halanta m* to *anusvāra* (all in line 20, Mirashi's verse 30). Even with all these gymnastics, the length of the lacunae

³⁶⁹ Sircar (1984b, 391) reports the thickness as 4.6 inches, which is plainly a mistake.

³⁷⁰ The exact location of this building is not recorded. Mirashi (1983, 70) notes that it belonged to the Weavers' Society.

³⁷¹ Runwal (रुणवाल) was at this time a doctoral student in Ujjain (probably supervised by Wakankar) and a resident of Mandsaur.

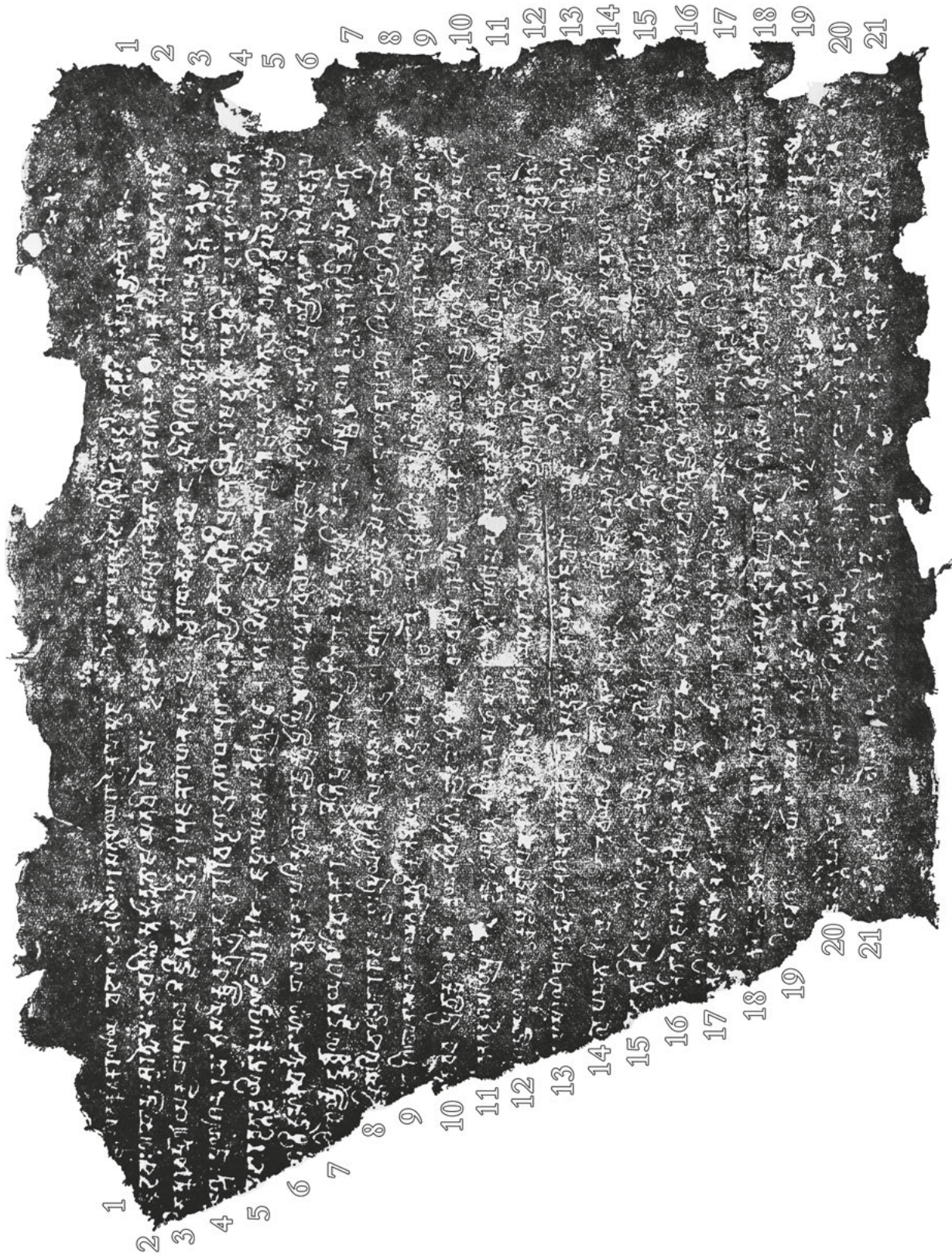


Figure 40: Mandasaur fragmentary inscription of Kumāvarman. Inked rubbing from Mirashi (1983).



Figure 41: Mandśaur Fragmentary Inscription of Kumāravarman. Composite digital photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Yashodharman Museum, Mandśaur.

expressed in characters varies from under 20 (lines 6,³⁷² 8 and 12) to around 50 (lines 18, 19 and 21³⁷³). This disparity is clearly more than variation in character size could account for, nor can it be explained by the gradual narrowing of the extant stone fragment (and corresponding lengthening of the lacunae), since the penultimate line only lacks 24 characters in Mirashi's count.

Almost all of the extant text is in syllabic verse (*varṇavṛtta*), and the inscription consistently marks the ends of stanzas with a double *danḍa*, while usually (though with some exceptions) employing a single horizontal punctuation mark at half-verse points. Taken in combination, these two factors afford a fair appraisal of the metrical structure, and thus the quantity, of text lost with the portion of the stone broken off at the left. Having thoroughly considered all possibilities permitted by the extant parts, I had no choice but to discard Mirashi's "short lacuna hypothesis" in favour of a "long lacuna hypothesis" according to which a substantial amount of text has been lost at the beginning of each line.³⁷⁴ However unexpected, the missing portion must in fact have been as wide as the surviving fragment at its widest point. The original tablet would have been about 110 centimetres wide by 36 centimetres tall; see Figure 42 on page 213 for a sketch.³⁷⁵ This finding casts further doubt on the already dubious historical speculations based on the inscription, as many verses previously thought to be contiguous are in fact separated by entire lost stanzas and are thus less certain to concern the same person or event. For this reason, I record the reasoning that has brought me to the long lacuna hypothesis at some length in a sort of

372 In line 6 he prints only dots, not a precise indication of lacuna length. Yet he shows one stanza spanning from the end of line 5 to the extant part of line 6. The fragments are in the *mālabhāriṇī* metre (though not identified as such by Mirashi), so the assumed single stanza would lack 18 syllables for completeness.

373 The lacuna at the beginning of line 21 is a full 55 characters according to Mirashi. The one in line 18 comes to 49 characters in his edition if we accept his identification of the short verse-final fragment *dhārṇṇavo cīkarat* (*bhogārṇṇavo cīkarat* in my edition) as belonging to an *anuṣṭubh* verse. However, the identification is impossible; the fragment must belong to a longer metre and the lacuna must be correspondingly longer.

374 I cannot, of course, exclude the possibility that the lines were uneven in length. There is, however, no indication that this should have been the case: the stone fragment is the right-hand half of a neatly dressed slab with right angles at the surviving corners, and the right-hand margin is even.

375 Such a wide aspect ratio has some slightly later parallels in the region; for instance, the 8th-century Kanaswa inscription is 137 centimetres wide and 46 centimetres tall (Kielhorn 1890b, 162), and the Sawan Sūrya temple inscription's substrate (C4 in this book) is 74 centimetres wide and 34 tall, but was originally wider as the right-hand edge is broken.

appendix to this section (page 212). My revised genealogy, with more generations than the conventional family tree of Kumāravarmaṇ, is illustrated in Figure 5 on page 28.

Script and Language

The script employed in Kumāravarmaṇ's inscription is of the angular variety, with many features of that style taking on a more extreme form than in any other inscription treated in the book. There is a general tendency for horizontal strokes to slant downward, creating the acute angles typical of *siddhamāṭṛkā* script at the bottom right of many characters. The execution of the characters is elegant and businesslike, with very little calligraphic modulation of line width (which may be explained by the small size of the lettering). Elaborately flourished vowel marks and elongated subscript *y* and *r*, so characteristic of inscriptions of the time of Yaśodharman and Prakāśadharman, are entirely absent.

Conspicuous features typical of the angular script include the tripartite *ṇa* and the likewise tripartite *ya* with a loop on the left limb. A cursive form of *ya* is also used, with its appearance probably governed by the presence of a complex vowel mark (thus *yo*, 14; *yai*, 15; *yau*, 16). In this form the body is reduced in height and drawn as a single line, with the loop continuing into the right-hand limb. The stems of *a*, *ka* and *ra* are elongated, but only to a slight degree (especially in the case of *ra*), and end in a barely perceptible barb rather than a hook or a widening triangle. The vertical of *la* is straight and never extends above the headline. Acute angles are particularly noticeable in *va* and *pa*, which have consistently slanted bottom strokes. The bottom of *ha* also slants slightly downward, and a much more oblique form resembling the *nāgarī ha* occurs in combination with *ā* (*hāri*, 110). *Ma* is of course open-mouthed, always with a prominent tail, and its right-hand stroke is occasionally extended downward as in the *nāgarī* form. The right-hand stroke of *śa* is sometimes similarly elongated.

As in inscriptions of Yaśodharman's time, the ligature *ry* is composed of a short *r* as the main component, to which a subscript (bipartite) *y* is attached (e.g. *vīryavān* and *vīrya*, 14; *sūryo*^o, 110; *viśīryamāṇam*, 117). When the spelling is *ryy*, the traditional form (superscript *repha* with tripartite main *y* and bipartite subscript *y*, e.g. *sūryyo*, 16; *dhairyya*, 17; *vīryya*, 17) is used. The present inscription has additional ligatures composed with a truncated *r* as the main character replacing a superscript *repha*: consistently in *rth* (*pārthivā*, 17; ^o*ārtha*, 19; *pārthiva*, 19; no instances of *rth* with superscript *repha* or *rtth*) and optionally in *rgg* (*durgga*, 13; but not so in e.g. *vargga*, 14).

Vowel marks for *ā*, *ē* and *o* as a rule attach to the tops of consonants horizontally with a short downward extension at a right angle. The *e mātrā* alternates with a left-slanting upward stroke the appearance of which may to some extent be driven by the shape of the consonant, but there is also a degree of arbitrariness in its use; for instance, *vedo-paveda* (11) includes both forms attached to *v*. *Ā* appears as a mirror image of this stroke only in *yā*. Certain consonants attach *ā* (and the right-hand component of *o*) in individual ways: thus *ṅā* is formed by extending the right-hand end of the consonant into a right-slanting upward stroke; *mā* by extending the right limb of the consonant into a downward curve (producing a form closely resembling *ha* as a consequence), while *j* attaches *ā* to the middle prong as a slightly right-slanting upward stroke, optionally bending left at an angle at the top. The marks for *i* and *ī* are often a near circle (open at the bottom on the left for *i* and on the right for *ī*), but *i* frequently descends below the headline in front of the consonant and may go as far down as the baseline (e.g. *°hatāpi*, 114).

Among initial consonants, *a* and *ā* have lower limbs bending outward; *i* consists of three plain dots arranged in a downward-pointing triangle, and *u* has a curved end extended beyond a semicircle, with the upper section also curved, resembling the *nāgarī u*.

Halanta consonants are represented by *t* and *m*. Both are reduced in size and lowered (though sometimes only slightly) and have a horizontal line above them. *Halanta t* resembles a small *tta* ligature rather than a single *ta* in shape. This appears to be an elaboration of the form found in the Risthal inscription (A9) and in the Mandsaur inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10) and may be a precursor to the modern *virāma* sign.³⁷⁶ *Upadhmaniya* and *jihvāmūliya* are not used.

The punctuation system involves two tiers and is applied quite consistently. Verse ends are denoted by a double vertical with a hook on the first stroke, transcribed in the edition as a double *daṇḍa*. The same sign is used at the end of the inscription. Half-verse points are marked by short horizontal dashes, transcribed as single *daṇḍas*. These latter are often faint and sometimes their probable presence is only indicated by a space in the text. They are also sometimes, though not always, omitted after a *visarga* or after a *halanta* consonant. The sign after the first half of the closing *āryā* verse (after *tanayena*, l21) seems to consist of both a dash and a vertical line, forming the top and right sides of a box. One or the other of these strokes may be damaged, though the horizontal one is quite certainly

engraved. The closer symbol (at the end, following the final punctuation mark) is a vertically oriented *śaṅkha* with the mouth and peaked edge pointing downward and the apex upward. A sign that may be a *kākapada* is used once in the text, but its significance is unclear (see note to *kalkali* in line 13 of the text).

The inscription was engraved with great care, as shown by the negligible quantity of scribal mistakes. The orthography conforms to the epigraphic standards of the period. Consonants are consistently doubled after *r* and occasionally before *r* as well (*kkratu*, 19; *ākkramya*, 112; *pāttram*, 120). Sonant *r* is once replaced by *ri* (*bhartry*, 121; the spelling is *bhartṛ* a few words later on, so *bhartry* may be hypercorrection of the *saṃdhi*). Conjunctions with nasal consonants are preferred to *anusvāra* whenever permitted by the phonological context, including instances where complex ligatures result from this (e.g. *mprā*, 16; *ṅku* and *ṅkṛ*, 17), though this preference is not absolute (thus *vikāran na gataṃ kadācit*, 12, uses both methods side by side; there are several other instances of *anusvāra* where a nasal consonant would have been possible). Similarly, final *s* often, but not universally, replaces the *visarga* where possible (thus *yas sanniyuktaḥ svayaṃ*, 119, includes both); only *visarga* occurs before an initial *ś*.

The language is good standard Sanskrit. Some of the compounds are inelegant,³⁷⁷ but there are no grammatical solecisms in the text. The word *kalkali* is non-standard and hard to interpret (discussed below with verse 32). As far as the fragmentary state of the text reveals it, the poetry is neither mediocre nor brilliant, attesting to a skilled but not outstanding author. A minor point of interest is the obscured caesura³⁷⁸ in verse 44 (*salilā:varttiniṣv*; the metre is *mandākrāntā*).

Commentary

Due to the fragmentary state of the inscription, neither its purpose, nor its date, nor its issuer can be determined with any certainty. Wakankar (1981, 279) propositions that the epigraph may commemorate the construction of a well, but he does so on the basis of an erroneous reading.³⁷⁹ A pond (*vāpī*) is mentioned in verse 24, but it is part of a simile rather than a reference to an actual pond.

³⁷⁷ For instance, *daṇḍānatorjjita-ripu-sthira-dharma-buddheḥ* (115) could very well have been written as *daṇḍānatorjjita-ripoḥ*, eliminating the complication of compounding two already complex *bahuvrīhis*.

³⁷⁸ A topic I have discussed elsewhere (Balogh 2017).

³⁷⁹ Q.v. note to *rūpa-guṇānvayair ahinām* in line 5 of the text.

³⁷⁶ Close parallels to the present form appear, for instance, in the Sumandala plates dated 569 CE (Sircar 1950).

The surviving fragment of verse 43 does indicate that some sort of construction is commemorated, but there is no way to infer whether a temple, a water utility or some other edifice was constructed. The reference to a *kṛṣṇa-sūnu* in verse 18 (see the discussion below) indicates that Kumāvarman probably flourished around the turn of the seventh century. The personage who commissioned it and whose *praśasti* takes up most of the text has been universally assumed to have been the king Kumāvarman, and I implicitly endorse this by continuing to refer to it as an inscription of Kumāvarman for the sake of consistency, but emphasise here that the king reigning at the time was more likely Kumāvarman's successor (again, see the discussion below for details). The most probable date of the inscription is thus sometime in the first quarter of the seventh century.

The first (partially) extant verse is a homage to Puruṣottama, and the Vaiṣṇava tenor is reinforced by the *śaṅkha* emblem engraved at the end of the inscription. It is thus a reasonable assumption that no other deities were invoked before this verse. However, on the basis of the estimated length of lines, about 60 characters have probably been lost at the beginning of the first line. 18 of these 60 belonged to the first partially preserved *vasantatilakā* verse, so the remaining gap of roughly 42 *akṣaras* cannot have accommodated a lost stanza in the same metre. It likely contained stanza in *anuṣṭubh* (32 characters) or *upajāti* (44 characters), probably also in honour of Viṣṇu. A longer prose preamble is unlikely, but the word *siddham* (as restored by Mirashi) or an equivalent symbol may well have been engraved at the beginning.

The second stanza speaks of a deterioration of *dharma* in the world, apparently brought about by people blinded by ignorance. The lost subject in the masculine plural was probably something like “kings of the age”. The depravity of these other kings would then have been contrasted – in the present verse or the next – either with the issuer of the inscription or with his dynasty's founder, in a way reminiscent of verse 2 of the Sondhni pillar inscription (A11, A12).

The third verse clearly must have introduced the sire of Kumāvarman's line, but unfortunately only the last three *akṣaras* of this stanza remain. On the basis of the surviving characters *jñadevaḥ*, both Mirashi (1983, 70) and Sircar (1984b, 392) assume that the dynasty must have been founded by a ruler named Yajñadeva. The restoration is plausible both in the context and in the probable metrical scheme of the stanza,³⁸⁰ but alternatives may be possible,

³⁸⁰ By my reconstruction this stanza was probably an *upajāti* like the following one. The surviving fragment does not, however,

and the surviving vestiges of the bottom and right-hand side of the preceding character do not confirm *ya*.³⁸¹

Verse 4 continues the dynasty with the gentle son Virasoma. Of verse 5, only the first quarter remains, which describes someone as immaculate in spite of living in the Kali age. The subject is probably Virasoma, but it is also possible that the description belongs to Virasoma's son (or other successor) introduced in the lost part of the verse. It appears that verses 4 and 5 were in one metre (*upajāti*) and verses 6 and 7 in another (*svāgatā*), which tips the scales in favour of the assumption that verse 5 describes the subject of verse 4.

Just as in the third stanza, verse 6 has been reduced to a name at the very end: Bhāskaravarman.³⁸² This ruler was Virasoma's successor, direct or once-removed depending on whether verse 5 added a generation or merely continued Virasoma's description. Verse 7 lauds Bhāskaravarman's valour through describing his enemies reduced to miserable wanderers. The unconventional image, the rhyming quarters and the metre evocative of hastily staggering feet combine into a verse of considerable poetic merit.

Only the first six *akṣaras* of verse 8 are extant and their purport is vague. I read *abhyudgaman tasya* and interpret it as equivalent to *abhyudgamaṃ tasya* (see also note to line 3 of the text), assuming that the verse spoke of someone politely greeting Bhāskaravarman or receiving him as an honoured guest. It may be that the scene of the greeting led up to an account of Bhāskaravarman's marriage, though any number of other scenarios may be conceived of.

The ninth stanza lacks its first half. It is thus again uncertain whether the extant second half is still about Bhāskaravarman or whether a successor was introduced in the lost text. I deem the latter possibility more likely, since the surviving portion speaks of enemies fleeing at the

exclude the possibility that it is the end of the *vasantatilakā* commenced in line 1, as assumed by Mirashi.

³⁸¹ The reading *ya* is possible on the basis of these vestiges, but the angle at which a slanted stroke seems to join the bottom of a vertical stroke may be more acute than that expected in *ya*. A longer name ending in *saṃjñā* or *vijñā* is conceivable.

³⁸² Sircar (1984b, 392) mentions the possibility of equating Bhāskaravarman to a king of the same name mentioned in verse 561 of the *Kuṭṭanimata*, whose wife committed suttee after his death even though the new king had tried to dissuade her. There is no positive indication of a connection apart from the name, which is probably coincidental. The text is at least as likely to refer to Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa (first half of the seventh century) or to an unknown Bhāskaravarman.

sight of someone's face,³⁸³ and Bhāskaravarman's routed enemies have already been described above in the seventh verse. If my conjecture that verse 8 mentioned Bhāskaravarman's marriage were correct, then that too would indicate that the present stanza is about his successor.

Verse 10 is one of the central conundrums of this inscription. Its verb is lost, its subject is described as a valiant man (*sa vīryavān*), and its object is referred to as an excellent king (*varaṃ nṛpāṇām*) and the foremost Aulikari (*aulikari-pradhānam*), comparable to Viṣṇu in valour (*upendra-vīryam*). He is also said to have overcome the six enemies (*jitāri-ṣaḍ-varggam*), referring to a set of distractive emotions.³⁸⁴ The extant text ends with the fragment *ajitā-*, evidently the beginning of a compound that was probably a *bahuvrīhi* qualifying the subject (or possibly the object³⁸⁵) to the effect that he or a certain quality of his was unvanquished or insurmountable.

The subject of the sentence is evidently a member of Kumāvarman's dynasty: either Bhāskaravarman or, as I surmise above, more probably Bhāskaravarman's heir. As for the object, the word *aulikari* of course means a descendant of someone named Aulikara or Olikara.³⁸⁶ So what could this ruler of Kumāvarman's dynasty have done to a foremost person of Aulikara descent? Wakankar (1981, 279) believes the two were identical, but this rests on his erroneous reading of *aulikarī* (presumably interpreted as a masculine nominative of the stem *aulikarin*) instead of *aulikari* in compound. Mirashi (1983, 71) is quite convinced that the missing verb must have meant "defeated," but offers no evidence in support of this conjecture other than "the tenor of the inscription" and the claim that if the hero himself had been an Aulikara, then that dynasty should have been glorified at the beginning of the text and not only mentioned incidentally at this spot.

This reasoning is flawed: on the one hand, whatever dynasty Kumāvarman hailed from should by the same logic have been glorified at the beginning, yet this is not the case as far as the extant text is concerned; and on

the other hand, the Aulikaras (or another dynasty) may well have been named and lauded in any of the preceding lacunae (considerably larger than Mirashi had supposed), particularly in verse 2 or 3. There is, however, some evidence to the contrary. While eulogies do sometimes extol a defeated enemy to obliquely heighten the praise lavished on their hero,³⁸⁷ I find the quantity of positive qualifications applied to the object in the present stanza too excessive for this sort of device. Indeed, Mirashi (ibid.) himself wonders about the qualification *jitāri-ṣaḍ-varggam*, which is a recognition of the object's spiritual accomplishment rather than of his prowess. The phrase *varaṃ nṛpāṇām* is scarcely more likely to be applied to an enemy, and a comparison of a defeated foe to Viṣṇu would be even more improbable in an inscription commencing with a Vaiṣṇava invocation.³⁸⁸

Given the above, it may be more plausible to go along with Sircar's (1984b, 392) assumption that the hero (whom he believes to be Bhāskaravarman) propitiated an Aulikara ruler as a vassal. Sircar further proposes (on the basis of verse 12) that Bhāskaravarman then married the daughter of his Aulikara liege. I see no reason to reject either of these suggestions, yet feel that the most likely solution of the problem is a third one, namely that the subject (Bhāskaravarman's successor or Bhāskaravarman himself) sired a distinguished son who is here described as the foremost of the Aulikara line (one might thus restore *janayāṃ babhūva* at the very end of verse 10). I have no positive evidence for this hypothesis beyond my own notion of the nebulous "tenor of the inscription" which, in my perception, seems up to this point to consist largely of naming rulers, praising their prowess and recounting their succession. Nonetheless, this would be the simplest way in which the fragments can be complemented, and therefore I submit that the ancestors of Kumāvarman thought of themselves (or, at least, were thought of by their descendants) as Aulikaras. Whichever the case may be, the inscription provides crucial evidence that Aulikaras, or at least rulers claiming descent from the Aulikaras, were still prominent in the mid to late sixth century, one generation before Kumāvarman by Sircar's count and two generations before him by mine.

³⁸³ The enemies are compared to deer fleeing at the sight of a lion, which calls to mind Bāṇa's description of Harṣa's father Prabhākaravardhana as a lion to the Hūṇa deer (*Harṣacarita* 4, p. 174, *hūṇa-hariṇa-kesarī*).

³⁸⁴ The *Arthaśāstra* identifies these as lust, anger, greed, pride, passion and exhilaration (1.6.1, *kāma-krodha-lobha-māna-mada-harṣa...*); some of the terms are open to other interpretations, see e.g. Kangle (1963, 13) and Olivelle (2013, 70–71). A widely cited variant list (e.g. in SI p. 414 n. 4) has passion, delusion and envy (*mada, moha* and *matsara*) for the last three items.

³⁸⁵ The play on similar words in *vīryavān/upendra-vīryam* suggests that the compound with *ajitā-* was similarly juxtaposed to *jitāri-ṣaḍ-varggam* and thus qualified the subject, not the object.

³⁸⁶ See also page 24.

³⁸⁷ This technique is described for instance in *Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.22, *vaṃśa-vīrya-śrutādīni varṇayitvā ripor api| taj-jayān nāyakotkarṣa-varṇanam ca dhinoti naḥ||*

³⁸⁸ Mirashi reads *upendra-vīryaḥ* instead of *upendra-vīryam* and thus takes the phrase to qualify the subject, but this is erroneous. See note to line 4 of the text. It is also worth noting that verse 19 of the present inscription also likens a ruler of this dynasty (namely Kumāvarman) to Upendra.

Verse 11 is entirely lost; judging from the estimated length of the lacuna it may have been either an *upajāti* like the preceding stanzas, or a *mālabhāriṇī* like the following ones. By my conjectural understanding of the narrative, its topic would have been the glory of Bhāskaravarman's grandson (or son) introduced above as the foremost Aulikara scion.

Verse 12, nearly complete except for a few characters at the beginning, relates how this man rejoiced upon attaining a magnificent bride. The story probably continued with the birth of a son in the thirteenth stanza, whose extant beginning speaks of the wife of the king.

Stanza 14 is mostly lost except for the end, which introduces a new name: Kumārarvarman. The surviving syllables before it may perhaps be restored as *jagati*, to the effect that he was known in the world by this name. It is quite certain that Kumārarvarman was the son of the beloved lady spoken of above. While Sircar assumes that the father is Bhāskaravarman and the mother is the daughter of his Aulikara overlord, I find it more likely that Kumārarvarman was Bhāskaravarman's great-grandson. His father, I believe, was the "foremost Aulikari," and we have no record of his mother's name or family.

Verse 15 extols Kumārarvarman's virtues and reveals that he became *yuvārāja* at a very young age (*bālatve*). The sixteenth verse is again wholly lost but may have been about his coronation. From the probable size of the lacuna it was probably a *praharṣiṇī* stanza like the preceding and following one.

Verse 17 describes Kumārarvarman's reign and the flourishing of his kingdom as a consequence of his virtues. The syntax of the part up to *sarvveti* in quarter *c* is equivocal because of the lacuna at the beginning of the stanza. Mirashi emends *sarvveti* to *sarvvo pi*, which does produce a better fit with the immediate context as it matches *jīva-lokas* at the end of the same quarter. However, the alleged gross scribal error seems unlikely in this generally meticulous inscription, and the connection of the effaced first half to the preserved second half remains unclear even with the emendation. I therefore prefer to accept the text as received, in which case the word *sarvvā* must have qualified a lost feminine noun that would have been the subject of the sentence before *iti*. The verb of this hypothetical sentence is also lost. The first half's extant phrases in masculine singular accusative show that the object of that verb's action must have been Kumārarvarman himself. I conjecture that the subject would have been the earth and the verb would have been something to the effect of "obeys" (a possible restoration would be *bhūḥ śuśrūṣaty* at the very beginning of the stanza). The connection between the two halves would then be that

the observation (*iti*) that the entire earth obeys the king reassured the populace that all was well, which in turn resulted in growth and prosperity.

Verses 18 to 20 describe a historical incident in which someone referred to as "a son of Kṛṣṇa" (*kṛṣṇa-sūnu*) attacked Kumārarvarman but was ultimately defeated and killed by the defender. Only the first quarter of verse 18 survives, preserving part of a sentence the subject of which is this son of Kṛṣṇa, described as drunk with pride because of his great prowess (or perhaps, more derisively, maddened by a delusion of being excessively powerful; *ativiryamadena matto*). The object of the sentence is "he" (*taṃ*), i.e. Kumārarvarman, and though everything else is lost, the tone clearly suggests that the verb must have been "attacked." Of the next verse we have a little less than the final two quarters, according to which a king comparable to Upendra (i.e. the divine Viṣṇu) made the mortal king (*narendra*) "a welcome guest of death" (*mṛtyoḥ priyātīthim ... cakāra*). The story is concluded in verse 20, of which the first half is available, recounting that the victor proceeded to capture the vanquished enemy's elephants.

Previous scholars had understood the first two fragments to belong to a single stanza and therefore took it for granted that the victor was Kumārarvarman and the slain king the son of Kṛṣṇa. There is no question that the successful defender must have been Kumārarvarman, but since the fragments belong to two successive verses by my reconstruction, the identity of the latter king is not beyond doubt. A clue may be found in the fragment *rṣṇim* at the beginning of the extant part of verse 19, comprising the end of a word in apposition to the defeated king. Mirashi (1983, 74) reconstructs the word as *pārṣṇim*, which is hard to interpret in context, while Sircar (1984b, 393) restores *vṛṣṇim* (ignoring the *repha* in *rṣṇi*³⁸⁹) and hypothesises that this king's dynasty professed to originate from the Vṛṣṇi tribe. I believe there is a simpler solution to the problem and prefer to restore *kārṣṇim*, a word synonymous to *kṛṣṇa-sūnu* and of a derivation paralleled by *aulikari* in verse 10. If my restoration is correct, then the defeated king is, after all, confirmed to be the son of Kṛṣṇa mentioned in the preceding stanza.

Who then could this Kṛṣṇa have been? Scholars discussing the matter (Mirashi 1983, 72; Sircar 1984b, 392; and more cautiously Salomon 1989, 21–22) are unanimous in identifying him as Kṛṣṇa or Kṛṣṇarāja of the Kalacuri dynasty, whose son Śaṅkaragaṇa issued his Abhona plates from an army camp in Ujjayinī (*vijaya-skandhāvārād*

³⁸⁹ Since Sircar does not give an edition of the text, only summarises its contents in English, it is possible that he in fact reconstructed *vārṣṇim* here, simplifying it to "[Vṛ]ṣṇi" in his discussion.

ujjayani-vāsakāt, 11) in the Kalacuri year 347, corresponding to ca. 595 CE (Pathak 1908a, 296). This shows that Śaṅkaragaṇa conducted at least one campaign into Malwa, so it is a feasible assumption that in the course of this he also confronted a ruler of Daśapura. The possibility that Kumāravarma's foe was another son of Kṛṣṇarāja of whom we have no other record cannot be excluded in theory. It is, however, also known that Śaṅkaragaṇa's son Buddharāja had succeeded him by the early seventh century,³⁹⁰ so Śaṅkaragaṇa may very well have been killed shortly after issuing his Abhona plates, i.e. sometime around the turn of the seventh century, which must then be the date *post quem* for our inscription.

Continuing with the text, verse 21 is again wholly lost except for the word *dhārī* at the very end. Verse 22, however, is fully extant and describes a man using a pair of subordinate clauses. These praise his piety and generosity, including the statement that he followed his father's example in charity. It seems to me that this remark, coupled with the relative pronouns *yena* and *yaḥ*, implies that a new heir was introduced in verse 21. The tacit assumption of previous scholars that the subject is still Kumāravarma is also disaffirmed by the fact that we have already read about Kumāravarma's virtues in verses 15 and 17.

Verse 23 is again completely lost; it was probably a *vasantatilakā* like the surrounding ones. The partially extant verse 24 appears to be a description of a loving lady. The subject is lost, but it appears probable that the verse was the account of a marriage. This is also the opinion of Sircar (1984b, 393), though he believes the groom to be Kumāravarma. Albeit we have not learned of Kumāravarma's marriage from the surviving parts of the text, I find this unlikely for the reasons stated above. It would also be unusual for the king to marry only after his successful martial career, though it could be hypothesised that he led the armies in the status of *yugarāja*. Likewise, the remaining first half of verse 25 speaks of the joys of young adulthood and the sensual enjoyments accompanying power over a great kingdom. Kumāravarma presumably

attained all these at an earlier stage of his life, so it stands to reason that we are dealing with a fresh hero here.

Verse 26 is also missing and was probably another *vasantatilakā*. Verse 27 has been fully preserved except for its first character, which can be restored confidently. The stanza paints a thrilling image of an intrepid escape after being captured by an enemy. Since the enemy is only referred to by the pronoun *tat*, he must have been named, and his assault narrated, in the lost previous verse. The end of the verse implies that the hero achieved a turn of the war's tide by his gambit.

Verse 28 is again lost, but most of verse 29 (except for the first *pāda* and a half) survive. This recounts that the hero seized the city of Daśapura (*daśāhvayam*) after overwhelming powerful enemies. The adjective *gṛhyamāṇam*, "being held," evidently stands in apposition to *daśāhvayam*, meaning that the enemy who had captured the hero had also occupied Daśapura, but Kumāravarma's putative son now reconquered it, restoring its status as a place impervious (*apradhṛṣya*) to enemies. The story apparently continues in verse 30, of which slightly less than the first half remains. This consists of two rather opaque compounds in the masculine singular nominative that must describe the hero. I understand the first of them, *dasyu-pratāpa-vinivṛtta-sukhāśrayo*, to mean that the place where his pleasure resides was freed from the ferocity of barbarous people. This interpretation is something of a stretch both in the meaning of the words and in the structure of the compound, but still seems more likely in the context than any other conceivable interpretation.³⁹¹ The place where the hero's pleasure resides must be the reconquered city Daśapura, while the *dasyus* must mean the enemies ousted from that city. The second compound, *vyāmugdha-sarvva-karaṇo*, seems to mean that all his senses were stupefied, possibly by joy. It is possible that the compound originally continued further (i.e. that *-karaṇo* is not a masculine ending but *karaṇa* in compound, followed by a noun beginning with an *u*) and the continuation clarified the meaning.

If my interpretation is by and large correct, then the text clearly implies that Daśapura was our king's hereditary capital rather than a city he obtained by conquest. Who the barbarous enemies who fleetingly captured the city may have been, it seems impossible to determine. The

³⁹⁰ Buddharāja's Sarsavni plates (Kielhorn 1901b) are dated 609–610 CE (Kalacuri Era 361). Buddharāja is also mentioned in the Mahakuta pillar inscription of Maṅgaleśa. This epigraph (Fleet 1890a), probably datable to 602 CE (Śaka Era 524), claims that Maṅgaleśa defeated Buddharāja, with the implication that Buddharāja was already a king at this time. That this Buddharāja is identical to the one discussed here is shown by the name Kalatsūri applied to him in the pillar inscription. The victory is also mentioned in the undated Nerur plates of Maṅgaleśa (Fleet 1878), which make it clear that the vanquished Buddharāja was the son of Śaṅkaragaṇa.

³⁹¹ The interpretation that the substrate of his well-being was removed from him by the ferocity of barbarians would be in stark contrast with the previous verse, while the idea that it was returned to him thanks to the valour of barbarians (as allies) would require additional evidence and also stretches the meaning of *vinivṛtta* even further than the other possibilities.

only scholar who ventures an opinion is Wakankar (1981, 279), who suggests that they were Hūṇas. The word *dasyu* may well have been applied to these people, but there is no evidence for a powerful Hūṇa presence in Malwa as late as the early seventh century.³⁹² It is more likely that *dasyu* is used here as a generic slur rather than a racial description of any accuracy, and the term may refer to any enemy – perhaps a Kalacuri host led by Buddhārāja returning to avenge Śaṅkaragaṇa’s death?

Verse 31 is lost except for two words at the end, which mention battles and the moon. The stanza may have been about the fear the sight of the hero’s moonlike face struck in the hearts of enemies. From around this point onwards to verse 41, many verses include relative pronouns. Probably every one of this string of stanzas originally contained such a pronoun referring to the hero (whom I believe to be Kumāravarmaṇ’s son), and all of these pronouns would have been picked up by the deictic pronoun *tena* in verse 42.

Verse 32, largely extant except for a few syllables lost at the end that unfortunately included the verb, is mostly about the sorry state of the world that has strayed from the path of *dharmā*. Amidst all this desolation, the hero shines alone like the moon, probably due to some quality or action (wisdom? the bearing of the heavy burden of kingship?) that is not as a rule typical of young men (*tārūṇya-kāla-vidhureṇa*). Specifically, he is likened to a *kalkali-kṣitipa-candra*, where the word *kalkali* is opaque. Mirashi offers no comment on it, while Sircar treats it as a name, translating “comparable to the Kālkali[sic] king” without any further remark. There is a mark below this word (see note to line 13 of the text for its description) that seems to be deliberately engraved and may be a *kākapada*, an editorial mark signifying some sort of post-hoc correction to the text. What the intended correction may have been is unclear: there is no correction written anywhere between the lines or in the margins (though one may, perhaps, have been engraved in the now lost left margin). Nor does it appear that the *kākapada* belongs to the line below, where it is over *vo* in *ivopanitā*, a part of the text that is not problematic at all. It may thus be that *kalkali* was not what the author of the text had had in mind and the erroneously engraved reading was corrected in some way that can no longer be detected, or flagged for correction that never happened.

The received form *kalkali* may stand for *kalkalin* in compound, which in turn may be derived from the substantive *kalka*, meaning an oily residue and generalised

to “filth” in both the physical and the moral sense. The suffix *-la* forms from this a noun or adjective meaning someone who possesses filth or in whom there is filth.³⁹³ The additional suffix *-in* seems to be redundant, since it forms adjectives or nouns with a similar shift in meaning. Nonetheless, this seems to be the most probable derivation of the word in question. If, on the other hand, the mark below it is indeed a *kākapada*, then the intended correction may have been *kalkala* (disposing of the redundant *-in*³⁹⁴), or *kalkila* (disposing of *-in* and replacing *-la* with *-ila*³⁹⁵). That said, my interpretation of *kalkali* remains tentative and may require revision.³⁹⁶ The compound as a whole is still slightly problematic, as compounds with *candra* usually mean the brightest of the bright, that is, the most eminent among a group that is in itself positively perceived; while here it seemingly must be understood to mean a light in the darkness, a moonlike king who stands out against a dark background of begrimed rulers. Given the overall similarity of the stanza’s contents to those of verse 2 of the Sondhni pillar inscription (A11, A12), I believe that my interpretation is by and large correct in spite of its difficulties.

Stanza 33 is again altogether gone, but the final two and a half *pādas* of verse 34 are preserved. These speak of *lakṣmī*, the personification of royal fortune and glory, being returned as a straying woman may be brought home from another family before her purity was compromised. The purport is clearly that the hero’s fortune had a fling with some other ruler but has now been restored to her proper place. This may refer to the previously told story of the hero’s capture, escape and reconquest of his city, to another dip in his career described in the lost preceding stanza, or to the fortune of his dynasty over a more extended period.

Continuing with the hero’s achievements, the surviving first quarter of verse 35 speaks of his attendance of the Soma sacrifice (*savana*) named *pauṇḍarika*;³⁹⁷ and the last

³⁹³ It appears that for this derivation to be legitimate, the word *kalka* needs to be in the *sidhmādi* class of words. See *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 5.2.96–97.

³⁹⁴ Though *kalkala* is also not attested, its negative *akalkala* is listed as an alternative for *akalkana*, “without deceit, honourable” in the lexicon *Śabdakalpadruma* (PWG s.v.).

³⁹⁵ Possibly permitted by *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 5.2.99 or 100, though this seems to be a stretch.

³⁹⁶ The similarity of the word to *kalki(n)* may also be relevant.

³⁹⁷ The *pauṇḍarika* is a grandiose sacrifice lasting eleven days. The client is supposed to donate a thousand cows on each of the first ten days and a thousand horses on the last. It was apparently intended to bring about the birth of sons, though other objectives may well have been possible. (See e.g. *Baudhāyana śrautasūtra* 16.32, *prajā-kāmā ekādaśa-rātrāya dikṣante ... athāyaṇ pauṇḍarika ekādaśa-rātro yuta-dakṣiṇo 'śva-sahasra-dakṣiṇas*.) The Bijayagadh *yūpa* inscription

³⁹² The *Harṣacarita* does mention Hūṇas around this time (see note 383 on page 207), but in lands far to the north.

quarter of verse 36 reveals that he improved the livelihood of Brahmins (probably meaning a stipend given to court Brahmins, but the expression *vṛttāni ... pṛthutām anaiṣīt* is quite vague).

Verse 37, with nearly three quarters extant, contains vague praise of the king's power and righteousness. Since this appears somewhat repetitive, there is a slight chance that yet another generation has been introduced at some point in the last few stanzas, which would by my count mean that the subject is now Kumāvarman's grandson. However, as noted above, there seems to be a long string of connected stanzas (verse 31 or so to 41) with relative pronouns, picked up by *tena* in verse 42. Moreover, it would in my opinion be unusual if the inscription extolled in detail the deeds and qualities of three successive generations of rulers at a similar length. I therefore prefer to retain the hypothesis that the subject is now Kumāvarman's son, and that his father Kumāvarman was praised at some length but he, the reigning kin, receives the lion's share of adulation.

Verse 38 is lost, but most of verse 39 is extant, consisting of a series of statements to the effect that the king's outstanding qualities never make him arrogant or lead him to excesses. The fortieth stanza, largely lost, probably continued in much the same tone,³⁹⁸ since the extant fragment is about something arising from anger: the word qualified may have been rashness or cruelty and the statement would have been that the hero was never subject to such a thing. The preserved end of verse 41 seems to be concerned with a similar topic. The phrase *prabhur asmi yasmāt* is rather vague; *yasmāt* must, I believe, be understood as *iti kāraṇāt*; that is to say, he never succumbed to rage merely because he thought "it is in my power" or "I am powerful."

With verse 42 we come to the pronoun *tena*: it was that king, described in all the above stanzas, who did something recounted in the present one. Since only the first two and a half *pādas* of this verse remain, the action is missing. The extant part mentions the deterioration of the human condition and perhaps something (fickleness?) to do with the mind of Fortune (*lakṣmī*). These notions, taken in combination with the position of the verse after a long description of the king and before what must be the record of a construction, suggest that the lost part of this

verse would have mentioned the ruler's intent of creating a permanent public utility and thus obtaining everlasting merit.³⁹⁹

The next stanza, number 43, is almost wholly lost. The change of metre, from an uninterrupted chain of *vasantatilakās* to a much longer form that was in all probability *śārdūlavikriḍita*, indicates a change of topic: we have now come to the end of the *praśasti* section and reached the executive part. The two surviving words at the end record that someone named Bhogārṇava was the one who had it constructed; the previous three and a half quarters must have been devoted to the specification and description of "it" – a temple, a priestly residence, a pond, or some other salutary construction. Bhogārṇava must have been the *kārāpaka*, the executor of the king's will in this matter, acting in a manner similar to Vatsabhaṭṭi in the case of the inscription of the silk weavers (A6) and Doṣa in the Risthal inscription (A9).

Verse 44 is a description of the monsoon season. This was clearly the preamble to the date of the inscription, which may have been stated in the lost final quarter of this stanza or, more probably, in the wholly lost following stanza. That verse, number 45, must have been in a much shorter metre; *upajāti* is a likely possibility, but other metres such as *āryā* are also easily possible. Since the preceding verse is a *mandākrāntā* and the next one is a *śārdūlavikriḍita*, the shorter (and presumably simpler) metre of the present one also suggests that it may have been entirely devoted to the date, expressed in the form of a complex calculation as in many Aulikara inscriptions.

Verse 46 is about a person who was probably named in the lost first quarter. He is said to have been appointed by the king in person to curb criminals, and to have carried out his lord's work with devotion. Sircar understands this to refer to Bhogārṇava who, he says, "was at first the officer to look after the manufacture of articles and did his job satisfactorily." I cannot fathom what Sircar translates with "manufacture of articles;" his "officer" probably comes from reading *°ādhikāriṇi* where I read *°ād vikāriṇi*, while "did his job satisfactorily" must be *jana-ślāghāspade* construed in apposition to *°ādhikāriṇi*. In my reading *°ād vikāriṇi* (deviating or deteriorating from some state, perhaps from former glory) the vestigial vowel mark and the first full character are unclear but quite confidently

of Viṣṇuvardhana, an early record of the Mālava people (see also page 19), mentions that the *yūpa* was erected on the completion of a *puṇḍarīka*, which probably refers to the same sacrifice.

³⁹⁸ This would tempt one, as it has tempted Mirashi and Sircar, to assume that these two fragments belong to one and the same verse. But my scrutiny of the lacunae shows that this is not possible.

³⁹⁹ Verse 22 of the inscription of the silk weavers (A6) provides a close parallel. It is possible that *vitta* was intended in place of *citta* (see also note to line 17 of the text), in which case the verse probably mentioned some quality (e.g. impermanence) of wealth and fortune rather than the mind of Fortune. This would bring the text closer to my expectations, but *citta* is clear in the inscription.

read, and both this word and *jana-ślāghāspade* must have qualified a lost noun in the locative (probably the city, unless they were meant to qualify *kṛtau* in *pāda c*, with which the latter cannot agree in gender). The topic of the first half of the verse is thus unclear. I do, however, agree with Sircar’s additional hypothesis that (at least some of) the miscreants who needed to be subdued would have been in the city of Daśapura itself. Since the capital was recently retaken after being occupied by an enemy for some time, it stands to reason that civil peace had to be restored by a strong hand. (It is even possible that the first half in fact said so, and the orphaned phrases in the locative qualified the city, describing it as generally admirable but at the moment fallen below its usual standard.) It thus seems that the king had at first appointed Bhogārṇava to the position of a sort of marshal (*daṇḍanāyaka?*), and once he had demonstrated his capability, promoted him to a higher office (perhaps even that of *rājasthānīya?*). It would have been in this latter capacity that Bhogārṇava took charge of the construction commemorated in the inscription.

At this point roughly a hundred or so characters are altogether gone at the beginning of line 20. The last 8 of these characters belonged to the next partially preserved verse. There were probably two full stanzas in the lacuna before this (two *upajātis* would give exactly 92 syllables including punctuation), but a single very long verse (for instance a *sragdharā*, at 86 syllables including punctuation) is also possible. For this reason, I prefer not to numerate the lost stanzas and simply assign the number 47 to the next extant verse.

Verse 47 introduces a new person, called Harideva. He is the recipient of something charming like a section of heaven, probably given to him by the king. Sircar understands the verse to mean that Harideva, who was probably the priest of Bhogārṇava’s temple, was granted a village or group of villages. The suggestion cannot be disproven, but one must keep in mind that neither a temple nor any villages are mentioned in the extant text. I also feel that Harideva’s description as *viśāla-yaśas*, a man of great honour/reputation/glory, does not suggest a priest, since a Brahmin would rather be praised for his learning or intellect than for his *yaśas*. The second *pāda* of the stanza, *bhogārṇava-priyatayābhisamīkṣya pāttram*, is ambiguous. Sircar’s summary says Bhogārṇava was “favoured by the king” with this grant, which must be a rendering of *bhogārṇava-priyatayā*.⁴⁰⁰ He does not, however, include *abhisamīkṣya pāttram* in his paraphrase. The meaning of this phrase is

probably that the king had to reflect on finding a suitable recipient and finally decided that it should be Harideva. If this is so, then *bhogārṇava-priyatayā* is perhaps more likely to mean “because he [Harideva] was dear to Bhogārṇava” rather than “because Bhogārṇava was dear to him [the king].” I would therefore speculate that Harideva was a protégé (and probably a younger relative, perhaps the son) of Bhogārṇava, and the gift he received from the king was a mansion rather than a village or three, which would have been simply a source of revenue, not a corner of paradise. Extending the thread of speculation further, it seems likely that the large chunk of lost text preceding this verse continued the description of Bhogārṇava’s career, which we had left off at his becoming a marshal in verse 46. It may be that Bhogārṇava died during (or shortly after) the execution of whatever construction the present inscription records, and the reward for his service (along, perhaps, with his office) was ultimately presented to his heir.

About 100 characters are again lost at the beginning of the last line. Their content or metrical structure cannot be determined, though their topic may have included Harideva’s virtues and loyalty to the king.

At the very end of the inscription we find an *āryā* verse (number 48, since again I prefer not to assign numbers to hypothetical stanzas in the lacuna). The first 14 morae of this stanza are missing; the extant part tells us that the poet who composed the foregoing text out of affection for the king was Lakṣmaṇagupta the son of Bhartṛ-ananta (the actual spelling is *bhartry-*, in *saṃdhī*). Appended to the verse is an elliptical prose sentence which I take to mean that the poet’s cognomen (*prakāśa-nāman*, “public name”) was Bhartṛ-cella (here correctly spelt *bhartṛ*). Mirashi interprets it as “Prakāśa, the servant of the Lord (i.e. the King),” taking this to be the engraver’s name, but I believe that if the stonemason’s name had been recorded then his function would have been made clear. Moreover, it stands to reason that both the poet and his father would have borne the title Bhartṛ (equivalent to Bhaṭṭi). Lakṣmaṇagupta would thus have been his birth name, used in the verse as a token of humility or simply for the sake of the metre, while Bhartṛ-cella would have been a name received upon initiation or upon his entry into office. The epigraph finishes with the phrase *siddhir astu*, and a representation of a *śaṅkha* (conch shell) marks the end.

Reconstructing the Tablet’s Width

As noted in the Commentary above, Mirashi’s “short lacuna hypothesis” must be discarded in favour of a “long

⁴⁰⁰ Sircar may have read *bhogārṇavaṃ priyatayā*, which would unambiguously mean that the text should be interpreted as he does. But there is definitely no *anuvāra* here and I prefer not to emend.

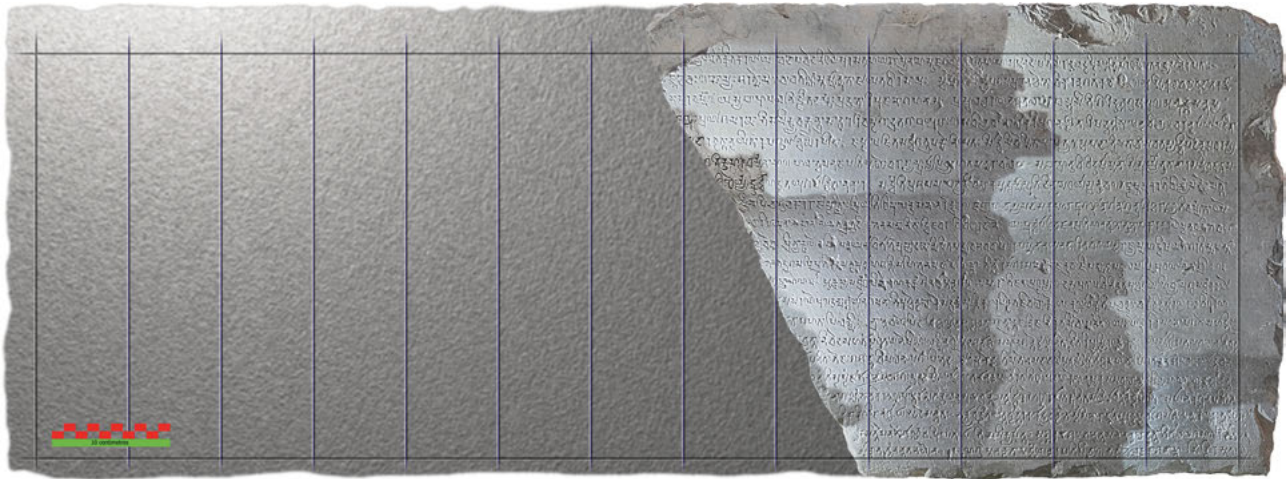


Figure 42: Reconstruction of Kumāvarman's tablet. Vertical scoring shows ten average character widths.

lacuna hypothesis" according to which the quantity of text lost at the beginning of each line is more than that extant at the ends of lines. In order to facilitate the verification or falsification of my deduction, I record the details of my reasoning below. Figure 42 is a schematic of the original inscription as reconstructed here, with vertical lines spaced at 10 average character widths apart.

In the accompanying Table 2, **Column I** details the extant text, first showing how many characters of each line belong to a stanza in what metre, then totalling the number of extant characters in each line. **Column II** shows how the number of missing *akṣaras* pertaining to each line, as deduced from the metres. The heading *end prev* gives the number of characters required to complete the partial verse (if any) begun at the end of the preceding line, obtained by the following calculation: total number of *akṣaras* in a stanza of that particular metre minus number of extant *akṣaras* at the end of the previous line equals number of *akṣaras* required. Likewise, *start next* shows how many characters are required to complete the partial verse ending at the beginning of the extant part of the current line. **Column III** shows the number of characters lost in each line. First the absolute minimum number of lost *akṣaras* is indicated under *min*, as calculated by adding the figures arrived at in the two parts of the preceding column (unless it is theoretically conceivable that the fragment at the end of the preceding line belongs to the same stanza as the fragment at the beginning of the extant part of the current line, in which case the minimum number is the number of syllables in the relevant metre, less the sum of the length of the extant fragments at the end of the preceding line and the beginning of the current one). Second, *est* shows the number of lost *akṣaras* according to my estimate, arrived at by attempting to normalise the length of lines and, where

necessary, assuming wholly lost stanzas, preferably in metres similar to the surrounding extant stanzas. Finally, **Column IV** indicates the total number of characters in each line, first as the absolute minimum required by the metres (obtained by adding the minimum number of lost *akṣaras* to the number of extant ones), second as my estimate (obtained by adding the previously estimated number of lost *akṣaras* to the number of extant ones).

In the first line, the absolute minimum length of the lacuna is 18 *akṣaras* before the extant string of 66 characters, for a total of 84 characters in the line.

In the second line, the number of lost characters is 25 if we assume that the *vasantatilakā* stanza commenced in 11 (28 characters out of 56) ends in the extant part of 12 (3 characters before punctuation). This yields a line of 83 characters including the 58 extant ones. However, the three characters at the beginning of the extant line may belong to a different verse, the metre of which cannot be ascertained from the three characters left to us. The two verse-quarters in line 1 are about the sorry state of the world, while the ending in line 2 is probably the introduction of the author's forefather. It is not inconceivable for both to be part of a single stanza, yet the difference of topic suggests that these fragments belong to separate verses. In this case the length of the lacuna cannot be estimated reliably. If the stanza ending in 12 was another *vasantatilakā*, then 89 characters are lost (total line length: 147 characters); if it was an *upajāti* like the following verse, then the loss is 69 characters (total line length: 127 characters). This latter alternative is more likely on the basis of the length of the neighbouring lines, but a different metre of similar length cannot be ruled out.

Things start to become more interesting in line 3. In line 2 we have the first quarter of an *upajāti* (or *indravajrā*; 11

characters), and the first six syllables (a vowel mark and five *akṣaras*) extant in line 3 rhyme with that, which may imply a connection.⁴⁰¹ However, the metre of the fragment in line 3 is incompatible with *upajāti*, though it does fit the template for *svāgatā*, which is the metre of the following verse. One might assume that the composer availed of licence and broke the *upajāti* metre in order to be able to incorporate the name of Bhāskaravarman, but this is unlikely. An 11-syllable (*triṣṭubh*) *upajāti* may occasionally include 12-syllable (*jagatī*) lines, but a line in *svāgatā* would be beyond probability.⁴⁰² Hence it is practically certain that the two fragments belong to separate verses, and the size of the lacuna must be 71 characters. This is calculated on the assumption that the stanza ending in line 3 is a *svāgatā*, which then lacks 38 syllables in addition to the 33 characters needed to complete the *upajāti* begun in line 2. It is unlikely that the largely lost verse would have been in a shorter metre: it is definitely not *anuṣṭubh*, and other metres with fewer than 11 syllables per quarter are uncommon. A longer metre is theoretically possible, but again, there are no common longer metres that match the prosodic pattern of the fragment. We can thus be quite certain that line 3 was originally 128 characters long (of which 57 are extant).

The situation is similar in the next line. Line 3 ends with the first six syllables of a verse that is (almost certainly) in *upajāti* (*indravajrā*), while the extant part of line 4 begins with the second half of a stanza in *vasantatilakā*. The two fragments cannot possibly belong to the same verse, and therefore the lacuna must cover the 38 syllables needed to finish the *upajāti* in addition to the 28 syllables missing from the beginning of the *vasantatilakā*. Thus 66 characters must have been lost, and the total length of the line would have been 124 characters.

For the fifth line, we need 14 characters to complete an *upajāti* commenced in line 4, and 6 more to begin a *mālabhāriṇī* that ends in line 5. This yields a mere 20 characters

⁴⁰¹ None of the stanzas in the extant part of the inscription rhyme consistently, so the consonance of the line endings need not imply a connection. Nonetheless, there are other instances of sporadic rhyming in the inscription: all three extant quarters of verse 1 rhyme and so do three quarters of verse 7 and two quarters of verse 32. Most of these rhymes are inelegant: in the first instance the rhyme consist mostly of a dative ending (combined with the suffix *tama* in two of the three cases); in the second it is merely a feminine plural locative ending and in the third it is the word *loke*. Nonetheless the number of incidences seems too high to attribute to random chance.

⁴⁰² Mirashi (1983, 73 n. 11) assumes these fragments belong to a single stanza, in “a combination of *indravajrā* and *tāmarasa*.” *Tāmarasa* is an uncommon twelve-syllable metre that I believe very unlikely to occur in combination with *indravajrā*. Mirashi also conveniently ignores the fact that his restoration of the name Yajñadeva transgresses that metre.

for the minimum size of the lacuna, or 79 characters for the full line. Assuming that a whole *mālabhāriṇī* verse is lost, the size of the lacuna comes to 66 characters and the length of the line to 125 characters; if a lost *upajāti* is assumed, the figures are reduced by 2.

The verse fragment at the end of line 5 is in *mālabhāriṇī*. The fragment at the beginning of line 6 was identified by Mirashi as another *mālabhāriṇī*, but this identification is ruled out by the short syllable *ga* legible on the stone before the segment read by Mirashi.⁴⁰³ The metre of this fragment is in all probability *praharṣiṇī*, like the following stanza. The lacuna at the beginning of line 6 must therefore cover 70 characters: 27 to finish a *mālabhāriṇī* and 43 more to begin a *praharṣiṇī*. The total length of the line would have been 128 characters. In the unlikely case that the second fragment is *mālabhāriṇī* and my reading or the inscribed text is incorrect, the short lacuna hypothesis would mean that the fragment in line 6 is the end of the stanza begun in line 5, in which case the lacuna would extend over 18 characters and the entire line would be 76 characters long.

The end of line 6 is a *praharṣiṇī* stanza with only three syllables lost at the end. The first extant text in line 7 is also in *praharṣiṇī*, and lacks ten syllables at the beginning. The short lacuna hypothesis would thus give us merely 13 lost characters from a line 69 characters long. For the long lacuna hypothesis, we must posit a full lost stanza, probably in the same metre, in which case the lacuna is 65 characters in extent and the original line would have been 121 characters long.

At this point there follows a long sequence of *vasantatilakās*, and in each line up to 17 it is likewise possible to assume a short lacuna or a long one. Line lengths calculated with the “short lacuna” hypothesis vary between 70 and 84 characters, while those based on the “long lacuna” hypothesis range from 126 to 141.

Line 18 is again special: 23 characters are missing from a *vasantatilakā* that begins in line 17, but the first seven extant characters of line 18 are the end of a verse that was in all probability a *śārdūlavikrīḍita*.⁴⁰⁴ No less

⁴⁰³ Since *ga* is clear and had been read as such by Wakankar (1981, 279), one wonders if Mirashi’s oversight of this *akṣara* is another measure of his to accommodate the text to the “short lacuna” hypothesis.

⁴⁰⁴ The prosodic pattern rules out Mirashi’s identification as *anuṣṭubh* and also rules out *āryā*. The only *varṇavṛtta* metre besides *śārdūlavikrīḍita* that admits this pattern at the end is the relatively rare *kṣamā* (also known as *candrikā*, *utpalinī* and *kuṭīlagatī*; 13 syllables per quarter). This, however, has a caesura after the first seven *akṣaras*, which would fall at *bho:gārṇava* in our text, a position that is absolutely not permissible.

than 69 characters must have been lost before those seven, bringing the minimum size of the lacuna to 93 characters (and the length of the whole line to 143). Moreover, given that only seven syllables are preserved of a stanza that is definitely not *vasantatilakā*, the number of missing syllables rules out the “short lacuna” hypothesis even if that stanza had been composed in a rare short metre of which I am not aware. Suppose, for argument’s sake, that this was a stanza in a metre with 11 syllables to a quarter: the lacuna must still cover 37 characters of this stanza along with 23 characters of the preceding *vasantatilakā*, i.e. 60 characters altogether, which is more than double the average lacuna length calculated using the “short lacuna” hypothesis.

In line 19, 24 characters are needed to complete a *mandākrāntā* begun in line 18, while the extant part of line 19 is the end of a definite *śārdūlavikrīḍita* stanza, which also lacks 24 syllables at the beginning. The 48-character hiatus is high for the “short lacuna” hypothesis but low for the “long lacuna” hypothesis; the latter can, however, easily be saved by positing a wholly lost stanza of 11 syllables per quarter. This would bring the size of the lacuna to 92 characters, and the total line length to 144, which is consistent with the figures calculated for other lines.

As the end of line 19 coincides with a verse ending, the lacuna in line 20 can only be estimated on the basis of the partial verse found in that line. This lacks 8 syllables at the beginning, a count that is too low even for the “short lacuna” hypothesis. To save it, one must necessar-

Table 2: Estimating the number of lost *akṣaras* in each line.

line	I. extant <i>akṣaras</i>		II. <i>akṣaras</i> required to		III. lost <i>akṣaras</i>		IV. total <i>akṣaras</i>	
	metre	char	end prev.	start next	min	est.	min	est.
1	... <i>vasantatilakā</i> 38] [28 <i>vasantatilakā</i> ...	66	–	56–38=18	18	~60	84	~126
2	...? 3] [<i>upajāti</i> 44] [11 <i>upajāti</i> ...	58	56–28=28	?–3=?	25	?69	83	?127
3	...?svāgatā 6] [<i>svāgatā</i> 44] [7 ? <i>upajāti</i> ...	57	44–11=33	?44–6=?38	?71	?71	128	128
4	... <i>vasantatilakā</i> 28] [30 <i>upajāti</i> ...	58	?44–7=?37	56–28=28	66	66	124	124
5	... <i>mālabhāriṇī</i> 40] [19 <i>mālabhāriṇī</i> ...	59	44–30=14	46–40=6	20	66	79	125
6	...?praharṣiṇī 9] [49 <i>praharṣiṇī</i> ...	58	46–19=27	?52–9=43	18	70	76	128
7	... <i>praharṣiṇī</i> 42] [14 <i>vasantatilakā</i> ...	56	52–49=3	52–42=10	13	65	69	121
8	... <i>vasantatilakā</i> 24] [28 <i>vasantatilakā</i> ...	52	56–14=42	56–24=32	18	74	70	126
9	...? 2] [<i>vasantatilakā</i> 56]	58	56–28=28	?–2=?	26	82	84	140
10	... <i>vasantatilakā</i> 31] [28 <i>vasantatilakā</i> ...	59	0	56–31=25	25	81	84	140
11	... <i>vasantatilakā</i> 55]	55	56–28=28	56–55=1	29	85	84	140
12	... <i>vasantatilakā</i> 33] [22 <i>vasantatilakā</i> ...	55	0	56–33=23	23	79	78	134
13	...? <i>vasantatilakā</i> 6] [51 <i>vasantatilakā</i> ...	57	56–22=34	56–6=50	28	84	85	141
14	... <i>vasantatilakā</i> 35] [14 <i>vasantatilakā</i> ...	49	56–51=5	56–35=21	26	82	75	131
15	... <i>vasantatilakā</i> 15] [40 <i>vasantatilakā</i> ...	54	56–14=42	56–15=41	27	83	82	138
16	... <i>vasantatilakā</i> 46] [5 ? <i>vasantatilakā</i> ...	51	56–40=16	56–40=10	26	82	77	133
17	... <i>vasantatilakā</i> 18] [33 <i>vasantatilakā</i> ...	51	?56–5=?51	56–18=38	33	89	84	140
18	...?śārdūlavikrīḍita 7] [44 ... <i>mandākrāntā</i> ...	51	56–33=23	?76–7=?69	?92	92	143	143
19	...śārdūlavikrīḍita 52]	52	68–44=24	76–52=24	48	92	100	144
20	... <i>vasantatilakā</i> 47...	47	0+[?]	8	8	~100	57	~143
21	...āryā 27 {43 morae} prose 13 END	40	2+[?]	[?]+ ~10	~12	~100	~52	~140

Shaded cells highlight lines that contraindicate the short lacuna hypothesis because the minimum number of lost characters deviates too far in either direction from the average. A question mark before a metre name indicates an uncertain identification; a question mark on its own indicates an unidentifiable metre. A tilde (~) flags lacunae whose size cannot be estimated precisely because they include prose or *mātrāvṛtta*; a question mark (?) flags lacunae whose size cannot be estimated precisely because, though they include only *varṇavṛtta* verse, the metre of some of the lost verse is not certain. See the text for further explanation.

Table 3: Correspondence of verse numbers with Mirashi's edition.

Present Edition		Mirashi's Edition		Present Edition		Mirashi's Edition	
Verse	Metre	Verse	Metre	Verse	Metre	Verse	Metre
1	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	1	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	27	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	17	<i>vasantatilakā</i>
2	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	2	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	28	<i>vasantatilakā?</i>	18	<i>vasantatilakā</i>
3	<i>upajāti?</i>			29	<i>vasantatilakā</i>		
4	<i>upajāti</i>	3	<i>indravajrā</i>	30	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	19	<i>vasantatilakā</i>
5	<i>upajāti</i>	4	<i>indravajrā + tāmarasa</i>	31	<i>vasantatilakā?</i>		
6	<i>svāgatā?</i>			32	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	20	<i>vasantatilakā</i>
7	<i>svāgatā</i>	5	<i>svāgatā</i>	33	<i>vasantatilakā?</i>	21	<i>vasantatilakā</i>
8	<i>upajāti?</i>	6	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	34	<i>vasantatilakā</i>		
9	<i>vasantatilakā</i>			35	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	22	<i>vasantatilakā</i>
10	<i>upajāti</i>	7	<i>upendravajrā</i>	36	<i>vasantatilakā</i>		
11	?			37	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	23	<i>vasantatilakā</i>
12	<i>mālabhāriṇī</i>	8	<i>udgatā</i>	38	<i>vasantatilakā?</i>	24	<i>vasantatilakā</i>
13	<i>mālabhāriṇī</i>	9	<i>udgatā</i>	39	<i>vasantatilakā</i>		
14	<i>praharṣiṇī?</i>			40	<i>vasantatilakā?</i>	25	<i>vasantatilakā</i>
15	<i>praharṣiṇī</i>	10	<i>praharṣiṇī</i>	41	<i>vasantatilakā</i>		
16	<i>praharṣiṇī?</i>	11	<i>praharṣiṇī</i>	42	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	26	<i>vasantatilakā</i>
17	<i>praharṣiṇī</i>			43	<i>śārdūlavikrīḍita?</i>	27	<i>anuṣṭubh?</i>
18	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	12	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	44	<i>mandākrāntā</i>	28	<i>mandākrāntā</i>
19	<i>vasantatilakā</i>			45	?	29	<i>śārdūlavikrīḍita</i>
20	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	13	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	46	<i>śārdūlavikrīḍita</i>		
21	<i>vasantatilakā?</i>			lacuna	?	30	<i>vasantatilakā</i>
22	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	14	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	47abc	<i>vasantatilakā</i>		
23	<i>vasantatilakā?</i>	15	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	47d	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	31	<i>vasantatilakā</i>
24	<i>vasantatilakā</i>			lacuna	?		
25	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	16	<i>vasantatilakā</i>	48	<i>āryā</i>	32	<i>upagīti</i>
26	<i>vasantatilakā?</i>						

Mirashi's problematic or impossible identifications have a grey background.

ily assume additional lost text. Since even a lost *anuṣṭubh* would bring the size of the gap up to 40 characters, which is untenable under this hypothesis, an advocate of the short lacuna would further be compelled to assume that the lost text was in prose, which is unlikely. Going with the “long lacuna” option, the length of the gap is expected to be around 100 characters (which would yield a total line length around 143 characters). In this case 92 characters need to be accounted for in addition to the ten missing from the beginning of the stanza in line 20. One may hypothesise a single verse in a very long metre such as *sragdharā* (84 syllables) or two short stanzas (for instance a pair of *upajātis*, at 88 syllables, or a combination such as *anuṣṭubh* and *vasantatilakā*, also at 88).

The lacuna at the beginning of the last line cannot be estimated accurately, since only 2 syllables are needed to finish the almost complete *vasantatilakā* in line 20, and the extant verse end in line 21 is an *āryā*, which lacks 14 morae (roughly 10 characters with some margin of

uncertainty) at the beginning. But as shown above, some of the lines near the end of the inscription must be over 140 characters in length. The number of characters per line follows an increasing trend as we progress downward, but this is probably due to a slightly decreasing character width rather than to an unevenness of the margins. It is thus safe to assume that line 21 also lacks about 100 characters, approximately 12 of which are accounted for by the incomplete stanzas before and after the lacuna. The prosody of the remaining 88 or so characters remains a mystery, but a pair of *upajātis* may again be easily surmised.

In my edition I have assigned numbers in an uninterrupted sequence to stanzas about whose existence and number I feel reasonably certain, skipping lacunae whose metrical structure cannot be reconstructed. Table 3 shows the correspondence of my verse numbering to that of Mirashi's edition, also indicating where Mirashi's identification of metres is problematic.

⟨Verse 3. Metre: upajāti?⟩

[?11]

[?11][[]]

[?11]

[?8]jñadevaḥ||

⟨3⟩

... .. (Ya?)jñadeva.

⟨Verse 4. Metre: upajāti⟩

s(o:au)myaḥ śarat-soma ivāvatīrṇṇas

tasmāt suto (')jāyata vīrasomaḥ _

svapne (')[p](?i ya)(s)y(o)paśama-pradhānāñ

ceto vikāraṇ! na gataṃ ka(dāc)it||

⟨4⟩

From him was born a son, Virasoma, who was gentle (*saumya*) like the autumnal moon (*soma*) incarnate. Not even in his dreams did his preponderantly tranquil mind ever become disfigured.

⟨Verse 5. Metre: upajāti⟩

asmin kalāv apy avadāta-karmā

[3][┘-----┘][[]]

[┘-----┘]

[┘-----┘][[]]

⟨5⟩

His actions were pure even in this Kali [age] ...

⟨Verse 6. Metre: svāgatā?⟩

[------┘]

[------┘][[]]

[------┘]

[------] (i) bhāskaravarmā||

⟨6⟩

... .. Bhāskaravarman.

⟨Verse 7. Metre: svāgatā⟩

yasya bāhu-bala-nirjīta-darppaḥ

pradruto ripu-jano gahanāsu|

praskhalac-caraṇa-bha(gn)a-talā(su)

bambhramīti giri-durgga-guhāsu||

⟨7⟩

Enemies whose pride has been overpowered by the strength of his arms are scattered and wander about in impassable hideouts in mountains and badlands where the ground has been broken by their floundering feet.

[2] *suto*] M prints *tate*; he probably intended *tato*. My reading is certain.

[2] *pi yasyopaśama*] M reads *pi yasyaiva śama*, printing only *pi ya* as unclear. The restoration *pi ya* is quite certain; however, *paśama* is clear and therefore the vowel of *sy* must be *o*.

[2] *kadācīt*] the character *dā* may be a correction engraved over something else, possibly *tha* (for *kathaṃcīt*?).

[3] (i)] Not noted by Mirashi, the obliterated character before *bhā* seems to have included an *i mātrā*. The preceding word may be tentatively restored as *bhuvī* or *jagati*; alternatives such as *ajani* could well be conceived.

[3] *bhagna-talāsu*] M prints *vasrutalākṣo*, which is unintelligible. Neither M nor SI offer a translation that would reveal what they read here. My reading is quite secure, though character I read as *su* looks, at a glance, more like *mro* or *pro*. The strokes that resemble a subscript *r* and an *o mātrā* are probably damage, and the centre of the *s* is weathered.

[3] *durgga*] M reads *dugga*, emending to *durgga*. The *repha* is clear, though its top is level with the headline; the upper *g* is slightly lowered.

⟨Verse 8. Metre: upajāti?⟩

a(bhy)udgamaṅ! tasya ^[4][]
 [-----]
 [-----]
 [-----]

⟨Verse 9. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

[-----]
 [-----]
 (ja)g(mu)ḥ praṇāśam arayo (‘)bhisamikṣya vaktraṅ!
 trāsād dharer iva mṛgā druta-śāba-yū(th)āḥ||

⟨Verse 10. Metre: upajāti⟩

(s)a vīryavān aulikari-pradhānañ
 jītāri-ṣaḍ-varggam upendra-vīryam
 varaṅ nṛpāṅam ajitā^[5][]
 [-----]

⟨Verse 11. Metre: uncertain⟩

[?11]
 [?11][]
 [?11]
 [?11][]

⟨8⟩

... (politely rose to greet him) ...

⟨9⟩

... ... Enemies, upon seeing [his] face, disappeared like deer panicked by a lion, with their young feeling in droves.

⟨10⟩

He, valiant and ... unconquered ..., [begat] ... , who was valiant like Upendra [Viṣṇu], was an excellent king and pre-eminent among the Aulikaris, and who had conquered the group of six enemies⁴⁰⁸

⟨11⟩...

[3] **abhyudgaman tasya**] M reads *abhyudgamann asya*. In addition to the difficulty of interpreting this, the penultimate *aḥsara* is not *na* (compare e.g. *vikāran na*, 12 and *nāgān nagendra*, 18). *Nt* in *ananta* (121) is not quite a match either but seems much more likely. Understand *abhyudgamaṅ tasya*.

[4] **jagmuḥ**] M does not read this word. *Gmu* is practically clear (for the subscript *m*, compare e.g. *tasmāt* in 12), and the top two prongs of the preceding *ja* are visible.

[4] **druta-śāba-yūthāḥ**] M reads *druta-gā bayūdhāḥ* and emends to *druta-gā babhūvuḥ*. My reading is certain. The cross-stroke of *śā* is faint but visible in the original stone; *thā* is malformed (open at the top and lacking a cross-stroke or dot in the centre, cf. *priyātithi* in 18), but it is still definitely *thā*, not *dhā* or *ṭhā*.

[4] **vīryam**] M reads *vīryaḥ*. The *halanta m* is damaged but quite certain in the stone and the accusative is better in context, since it eliminates the repetition of *vīryavān* in *pāda a*.

[4] **ajitā**] M reads *ajito*.

[5] **udāra-vṛttān dayitāṅ**] M prints *udāravṛttānvayitāṅ*, possibly construing *udāra+vṛtta+anvayitāṅ*. The character *nda* is clear and a word straddling the odd *pāda* boundary is improbable. SI specifically mentions *dayitā* as a word of the text. (W's reading *udāra-vṛttā-bhyāryatāṅ* can be dismissed.) I understand *-vṛttān* to be a feminine singular accusative (equivalent to *-vṛttāṅ*), not masculine plural. Vestiges of the top right part of the character preceding *dā* permit an *m*, so there may have been another feminine accusative there, though alternatives cannot be ruled out.

408 The six enemies are emotions or states of mind that must be overcome. See note 384 on page 207 for details.

⟨Verse 12. Metre: mālabhāriṇī⟩

[~~~~~] [u]dāra-vṛttān
dayitāṃ rūpa-guṇānvayair a(h)ī(n)ām
jahṣe jīta-sarvva-śatru-pakṣo
niyataḥ siddhim ivepsitām upetya||

⟨Verse 13. Metre: mālabhāriṇī⟩

pramadābhimatā ca (sai)va ta(s)ya
dvipadendra-pravarasya^[6][~--~][|]
[~~~~~] [~--~]
[~~~~~][|]

⟨Verse 14. Metre: praharṣiṇī?⟩

[-----] [~--~][|]
[-----] [~--~][|]
[-----] [~--~]
[---][?ja]ga(t)i kumāravarmma-nāmā||

⟨Verse 15. Metre: praharṣiṇī⟩

bālatve manuḥjapatis sa yauvarājyam
prāpyāpi vyapagata-matsarāvale(p)a(h)l
sañjahre bhuvī viduṣām manāṃsi sūryyo
bhūtānām rasam iva jaṅgama^[7][~--~][|]

⟨12⟩

[When he gained] a beloved [bride] of noble demeanour, lacking nothing in the way of beauty, virtues and descent, he, the {disciplined man} who had overcome all enemy factions, rejoiced like an {ascetic} when he attains the magical power (*siddhi*) he longed for.

⟨13⟩

And that same cherished lady of that foremost among the kings of bipeds ...

⟨14⟩

... .. named Kumārarman (in the world).

⟨15⟩

Though that lord of human beings became heir-apparent (*yauvarāja*) while still a child, he was devoid of envy and pride and [therefore] attracted the minds of [all] wise people in the world as the sun [absorbs] the moisture of all beings animate [and inanimate].

[5] *rūpa-guṇānvayair ahinām*] M reads *rūpa-guṇānvayai rahitām*, which makes no sense in the context and is also unmetrical. W reads *kūpa-guṇānvayair* and thinks the king's merits are compared to a well. My reading is certain.

[5] *jīta*] M reads *hita*.

[5] *śatru*] M reads *śatru*.

[5] *ca saiva tasya*] M reads *va(saṃ)vatasya*, which seems unintelligible. My reading is certain in spite of some damage to the text.

[5] *pravarasya*] M reads *pracarasya*.

[6] *jagati*] M only reads *ti*, but W correctly reports *gati*. Mirashi may have ignored the clear *ga* in order to fit this fragment to the *mālabhāriṇī* metre, which the string *gati* rules out. My *ja* is conjectural; *ti* appears to have a cross-stroke and may be a correction from *śi*, but the reading *ti* is nonetheless quite secure.

[7] ~--~] The lacuna at the end of verse 15 may be conjecturally restored as *sthiraṇām*.

⟨Verse 16. Metre: praharṣiṇī?⟩

[?13]
[?13][[]]
[?13]
[?13][[]]

⟨16⟩

... ..

⟨Verse 17. Metre: praharṣiṇī⟩

[---]-(ś/th)i-dhairyyaṅ
kurvvāṇaṅ kṛta-yuga-pārthivānukāram
sarvveti praśamam upetya jīva-lokas
sad-dharmmam pratidinam edhayām babhūva||

⟨17⟩

The totality of living beings increased day by day in true virtue *dharmma*), since they had attained tranquillity by recognising, “the entire [earth obeys this man who] takes after the kings of the Kṛta age ... steadfastness ...”

⟨Verse 18. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

taṅ kṛṣṇa-sūnur ativīryya-made(na) matto
[8][---]||
[---]
[---]||

⟨18⟩

The son of Kṛṣṇa, drunk with pride over his excessive prowess, ... him ...

⟨Verse 19. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

[---]
[---]||
[---][?kā](rṣṇ)im api cāśu cakāra rājā
mṛtyoḥ priyātithim upendra-samo narendram||

⟨19⟩

... .. and the king who was the equal of Upendra [Viṣṇu] promptly sent the offspring of Kṛṣṇa, that king of men (*narendra*), to be a welcome guest of Death.

⟨Verse 20. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

jaṅgrāha cāśya mada-seka-malāṅka-gaṅḍān
nāḡān nagendra-śikharāṅy ativarṣmato ye|
[9][---]
[---]||

⟨20⟩

And he captured his elephants marked on their faces by smears of flowing rut fluid, who [resembled] mountain peaks because of their tremendous bulk ...

⟨Verse 21. Metre: vasantatilakā?⟩

[---]
[---]||
[---]
[---](?ṣa-)dhārī||

⟨21⟩

... .. holding ...

⟨Verse 22. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

yenāsamāna-niyata-kkratu-dīkṣitena
san-mānitā dvija-varā vīvidhārtha-dānaiḥ|
yaḥ pūrvva-pārthiva-jana-pratimāna-bhūto
bhūtopakāra-karaṅeṣv abhava(t p)iteva||

⟨22⟩

Being uncommonly disciplined and [always] consecrated for sacrifices (*kratu*), he showed true esteem to the best Brahmins through gifts of various valuables. Being a veritable image of the kings of yore, he took after his father in the practice of charity to living beings.

[7] °*ānukāram*] M reads °*ānukāraḥ*, but the *halanta m* is clear in the stone and an accusative fits the syntax better.

[7] *yuga*] M prints *yugra*, probably a typo.

[7] *sarvveti*] M emends to *sarvvo pi*. See the Commentary on this stanza for my reasons of rejecting the emendation.

[8] *kārṣṇim*] The characters *rṣṇi* are reasonably certain. M restores *pārṣṇim*, while SI offers *vṣṇim*, disregarding the probable *repha*.

[8] *narendram*] M reads *narendraḥ*, but SI correctly has *narendram*, which is clear in the stone.

[9] *dhārī*] The vestiges before this word indicate *ṣa* (restore *veṣa*?) but alternatives such as *sa* or *ma* cannot be excluded.

[9] *yenāsamāna*] M reads *yenāsahasra*, which is not quite intelligible.

⟨Verse 23. Metre: vasantatilakā?⟩

^[10][-----] [-----] [-----] [-----]

⟨23⟩... ..

⟨Verse 24. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

[-----] [-----](?tsa)veva
prītyā kṣaṇena (v)i(ka)san-nayanā vibhāti
sūryodayonmiṣita-padma-vaneva vāpī||

⟨24⟩

... .. (like a festive) ... As her eyes widen momentarily in affection, she looks like a pond with its lotuses bursting open upon the rising of the sun.

⟨Verse 25. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

rūpam mano-nayana-hāri navam vayaś ca
rājyam mahad viṣaya-bhoga-ratis samastā|
^[11][-----] [-----]

⟨25⟩

Beauty pleasing to the mind and the eye, youthful vigour, a great kingdom, consummate enjoyment of sense objects and pleasures ...

⟨Verse 26. Metre: vasantatilakā?⟩

[-----] [-----] [-----] [-----]

⟨26⟩

⟨Verse 27. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

[yā](te)na tad-vaśam api pratik(āra)-mandam
utsāha-śakti-sahitena mahā-mahimnā|
tīrtvāri-sāgaram ane[ka-ga]jendra-vāji-
saṅghaṭṭa-saṅkulam api pravaṇā kṛtā śrīh||

⟨27⟩

Even though he [the hero] had fallen into his [an enemy's] clutches, this man of great magnitude did not lose his mettle⁴⁰⁹ and crossed the ocean of enemies – which, though turbulently teeming with many great elephants and horses, was slow to react – and [thereby] made Fortune (śrī) favourably inclined [toward himself].

[10] *tsaveva*] M only reads *veva*. The preceding character is badly effaced but it seems to be a ligature. As an alternative to *tsa*, it may be possible to read it as *nma*, but I see no meaningful reading with that conjunct. If *tsa* is correct, *utsava* comes readily to mind, °*mahot-saveva* (assuming a *bahuvrīhi* qualifying the pond or a lost feminine subject likened to the pond) would fit the metre.

[10] *vaneva*] M reads *vanena*.

[11] *yātena*] M only reads *na*. *Te* is damaged but reasonably certain. My *yā* is conjectural.

[11] *tīrtvāri-sāgaram ane[ka-ga]jendra*] Mirashi reads *tīrtvāri-mār-ga-ripu-(matta)-gajendra*, which is not really intelligible. The character *ka* and most of *ga* are obliterated by a chip in the stone but can be restored confidently.

409 “Mettle” translates *utsāha-śakti*, a technical term denoting the power inherent in the king’s personal fortitude or boldness (*Arthaśāstra* 6.2.33, *vikrama-balam utsāha-śaktiḥ*). It forms a triad with two other powers, *mantra-śakti* (the power of intelligence and wise counsel) and *prabhu-śakti* (the power of control, specifically over the army and the treasury).

⟨Verse 28. Metre: vasantatilakā?⟩

^[12][---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---]
[---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---]
[---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---]
[---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---]

⟨Verse 29. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

[---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---]
[---] [---] [---] ×i (gṛh)ya(m)āṇam|
ākkrāmya sarvva-bali(no) raṇa-karkkaśena
(p)rāpta;n! daśāhvayam arāti-janāpradhṛṣyam||

⟨Verse 30. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

dasyu-pratāpa-vinivṛtta-sukhāśrayo hi
vāmugdha-sarvva-karaṇo^[13][---] [---] [---] [---]
[---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---]
[---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---]

⟨Verse 31. Metre: vasantatilakā?⟩

[---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---]
[---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---]
[---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---]
[---] [---] [---] [ca](ndra)masaṃ raṇeṣu||

⟨28⟩

⟨29⟩

... .. [though the city was] being held [by enemies],
he – being harsh in battle – overpowered all strong
[opponents] and reached [the city] named Daśa, which is
impervious to enemies.

⟨30⟩

With the seat of his pleasure liberated from the ferocity of
barbarians (*dasyu*) ... all his senses bewildered ...

⟨31⟩

... .. (the moon) in battles.

[12] **gṛhyamāṇam**] M reads *tṛpyamāṇam*. My reading is certain in spite of some damage.

[12] **sarvva-balino**] M reads *sarvvaṃ api te*. W reports *sarva-balino*, which seems to be correct, though *no* is damaged and may be a correction from something else.

[12] **daśāhvayam**] M reads *nṛśāhvayam*. W reads *nṛśāmvayapurāti janān pravaśya*, identifying “Nṛśāmvayapura” as modern Nimbera. SI, correctly, mentions *daśāhvayam* in his commentary. The reading is unambiguous on the stone.

[12] **°āpradhṛṣyam**] M prints °*āpradhṛṣya*. The *halanta m* is clear, though it is in a slightly raised position, possibly because of the tail of the subscript *y* of the previous character.

[12] **dasyu**] Mirashi reads *tasya*. *Dasyu* is clear and unambiguous in the stone, and is correctly reported by W.

[12] **āśrayo**] M reads *āśraye*.

[13] **candramasaṃ**] M reads the first two fully extant characters as *samaṃ*, but the stone clearly has *masaṃ*. The traces of the preceding character indicate *ndra* almost unambiguously, so the restoration is quite solid.

⟨Verse 32. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩
 unmārgga-yāna-gamanābhimukhe nṛ-loke
 sad-dharmma-mukti-kaluṣī-kṛta-jīva-loke|
 yaḥ kalkali-kṣitipa-candra iva kṣitīndras
 tāruṇya-kāla-vidhureṇa^[14][---][---][---]

⟨32⟩
 When humanity is poised to set off and travel down the wrong road, when all living beings are defiled by their abandonment of true morality (*dharma*), this king, like a moon among the (depraved) [other] rulers, ... with a ... averse to the time of youthfulness.

⟨Verse 33. Metre: vasantatilakā?⟩
 [---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---]
 [---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---]
 [---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---]
 [---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---]

⟨33⟩

⟨Verse 34. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩
 [---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---]
 [---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---]
 bhrānteva yoṣid avikhaṇḍita-śubbhra-vṛttā
 gotrāntarān nija-niketam ivopanītā||

⟨34⟩
 ... Royal Fortune (*lakṣmī*), though mauled by ... was brought [back], as an erring woman whose pure virtue is yet unsullied is conducted to her original home from another family.

⟨Verse 35. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩
 yaḥ pauṇḍarīka-savanopagato mahadbhiḥ
^[15][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---]
 [---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---]
 [---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---]

⟨35⟩
 As he attended the *pauṇḍarīka* oblation, ... with great ...

⟨Verse 36. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩
 [---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---]
 [---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---]
 [---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---][---]×(?au)
 vṛttāni veda-mahatāṃ pṛthutām anaīṣit||

⟨36⟩
 (enlarged the stipends) of those accomplished in the Vedas.

[13] *unmārgga-yāna*] M analyses *unmārggayā na*.

[13] *kalkali*] SI's commentary has *kālkali*. There is a dot resembling an *anusvāra* above and to the right of *ka*, which may be what Sircar saw as an *ā mātrā*. This dot is probably a result of damage, but there is also a mark resembling a caron (˘) below and to the right of *ka*, vertically below the dot. This latter mark does not seem to be random damage and may be a *kākapada*, but its function is not clear. See the Commentary.

[14] *lopahatā*] Before *lo*, a vertical stroke belonging to the top right corner of the previous character is preserved. The character might be *ba*, *pa*, *ma* or *sa*; perhaps restore *balopahatā*?

[14] *bhrānteva yoṣid avikhaṇḍita-śubbhra-vṛttā*] M reads *bhrāntaṃ vayo pi bhuvī khaṇḍita-supravṛttā*, unintelligible.

[14] *gotrāntarān*] M reads *bhrāntāntarān*. SI's commentary correctly has *gotrāntara*.

[14] *ivopanītā*] M reads *ivoparīva*. SI mentions a marriage, probably implying that he read this word correctly.

⟨Verse 37. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

lakṣmī-nidhes tridaśa-nātha-samāna-śakter
 ddaṇḍānatorjjita-ripu-sthira-dharm(m)a-buddheḥ
 yasyādhipatyam avalokya nivṛtta-^[16][-=]
 [-----=][[]]

⟨Verse 38. Metre: vasantatilakā?⟩

[-----=]
 [-----=][[]]
 [-----=]
 [-----=][[]]

⟨Verse 39. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

[-----][?n](?ā)panītā
 tejaḥ śāśāṅka-vimalaṃ na yaśo bibheda|
 jātaṃ mano dyutimato na madāvalipta;n!
 dharmyā sthitiś ca mahato (')pi gatā (na) nāśam||

⟨Verse 40. Metre: vasantatilakā?⟩

kopodbhavana^[17][-----=]
 [-----=][[]]
 [-----=]
 [-----=][[]]

⟨Verse 41. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

[-----=]
 [-----=][[]]
 [-----]naṃ viṣṛṣṭaṃ
 jāt(o) na k(opa-va)śa-gaḥ pra(bhur a)smi yasmāt||

⟨37⟩

[He is] a storehouse of royal fortune, equal in power to [Indra] the lord of the thirty gods. With his armed forces he subjugated mighty enemies and his mind was firmly set on righteousness (*dharmā*). Upon seeing his overlordship ... (returned) ...

⟨38⟩

... ..

⟨39⟩

[His] ... does not dispel [his] ...; his fierce bravery does not tarnish his honour, spotless as the moon; though he is brilliant, his mind is not besmirched with haughtiness; though he is great, his stance of morality does not deteriorate.

⟨40⟩

... by ... arising from anger

⟨41⟩

... .. (released). He does not succumb to fits of rage just because it is in his power to do so.

[15] *nidhes tridaśa-nātha-samāna*] M reads *nidhe sthira-mano viśamāna*, with a bracketed question mark. SI's commentary mentions the king's being "an equal to Indra in power," showing that he read *tridaśa-nātha-samāna* correctly.

[16] *nāpanītā*] Before *pa*, a vowel mark slanting to top right is visible. This may have belonged to *o* or *ā*; *ā* is more often horizontal and angled down, but there are also instances of a slanted *ā mātrā*. On the basis of the context I tentatively restore *nāpanītā*.

[16] *dharmyā*] M reads *dhairyya-*.

[16] *na nāśam*] M reads *(vi)nāśanam* (unmetrical). The first character is damaged, but it definitely has no *i mātrā* and is almost certainly *na*.

[17] *naṃ viṣṛṣṭaṃ*] M reads *na viṣṛṣṭa* (unmetrical). The omission of the *anusvāras*, both of which are clear, may be a typo. There are some traces remaining before *naṃ*, but I cannot interpret them.

[17] *vaśa-gaḥ*] M reads *vaśataḥ*.

⟨Verse 42. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩
 tenānurūpa-caritātīśaye(na) loke
 mānuṣyakaṃ samavalokya (v)īśiryamāṇa(m)
 lak(ṣ)myāś ca citta^[18][-----]]
 [-----]]]]]

⟨Verse 43. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita?⟩
 [-----]]
 [-----]]]]]
 [-----]]
 [-----] bh(o)gārṇṇavo (')cīkarat||

⟨Verse 44. Metre: mandākrāntā⟩
 prāpte kāle vakula-kusuma-bhrānta-matta-dvirephe
 dhārā-pāta-kṣubhita-salilāvarttini(ṣ)v (ā)pagāsu(?)
 (me)ghānika-dhvani-parigate^[19][-----]]
 [-----]]]]]

⟨Verse 45. Metre: uncertain⟩
 [?11]
 [?11] []
 [?11]
 [?11]]]]

⟨Verse 46. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita⟩
 [-----]]
 [---]×(ād v)ikāriṇi jana-ślāghāspade sarvvataḥ|
 bhakty-āvarjjita-citta-vṛttir akarod
 yatnaṃ kṛtau svāmino
 rājñā taskara-duṣṭa-cāṭa-śamane
 yas sa(nn)iyu(kta)ḥ s(vaya)ṃ||

⟨42⟩
 Possessing such an excess of suitable decorum, he
 perceived human nature's [proneness to] deterioration in
 the world, and the ... mind ... of royal fortune ...

⟨43⟩
 Bhogārṇṇava had it constructed.

⟨44⟩
 On the arrival of the season when inebriated bees mill
 around the flowers of the *bakula*;⁴¹⁰ when the water of the
 rivers is whipped into whirlpools by torrential rain; when
 ... is pervaded by the sound of an army of clouds

⟨45⟩

⟨46⟩
 [In the city] deviating (from) [its former nature, yet]
 thoroughly worthy of the admiration of the people ...
 he, whom the king had personally appointed to pacify
 bandits, miscreants and rogues,⁴¹¹ strove – with the
 course of his thought bent [in this direction] by [his]
 devotion [to the king] – to accomplish his lord's
 undertaking.

... ..

[17] *tenānurūpa*] M reads *tenā(nya)r(ū)pa*.

[17] *citta*] M reads *vitta*. The stone clearly has *ci*, but *vitta* may have been intended given the topic of the stanza (see also note 399 on page 211 of the Commentary).

[18] *bhogārṇṇavo*] M reads *dhārṇṇavo*. SI correctly read the name as *bhogārṇṇavo*.

[18] *varttiniṣv āpagāsu*] M reads *varttini dvīpagāsu*. The writing is damaged but my reading is certain.

[18] *meghānika*] M reads – – *nāka*.

[19] *ād vikāriṇi*] M reads only *kāriṇi*. Sircar may have read °*ādhikāriṇi* here; see the Commentary. *Dvi* is quite certain, though part of *d* is damaged, and of the subscript *v* only the right-hand vertical survives, with a hint of an angle at the bottom. (*Ddhi* may be possible but does not appear meaningful in the phonetic context.) The preceding vestigial *ā mātrā* is faint but very likely.

[19] *sarvvataḥ*] M prints *sarvvalaḥ*, probably a typo.

[19] *bhakty-āvarjjita*] Alternatively, construe *bhaktyā+āvarjjita*.

[19] *yatnaṃ*] M reads *yuktam*. The stroke slightly resembling an *u* attached to *dy* is in fact part of the subscript *n* in *tna*.

[19] *kṛtau*] M reads *kṛte*.

410 The *bakula* (*Mimusops elengi* L.) is a tree with fragrant flowers.

411 Instead of “miscreants and rogues,” *duṣṭa-cāṭa* may perhaps mean “corrupt men-at-arms.”

[20][?92]

⟨Verse 47. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩
 [--~--~--~] (?vyaka)-sattamena
 bhogārṇṇava-priyatayābhisamikṣya pāttram
 svarggaika-deśa iva nettra-mano-⟨'⟩nu(kū)lo
 datto viśāla-yaśase hari(de)va.^[21][~]|||

[?88]

⟨Verse 48. Metre: āryā⟩
 [?10] (ṣ)(?ṭ)ār(th)ā bhartry-ananta-tanayena|
 (l)akṣmaṇaguptena kṛtā p(ū)rvveya;n! narapatiprītyā||

bharṭṛ-cella-prakāśa-nāmnā| siddhir astu|| §

⟨47⟩

The truest of [kings], regarding [him to be] a worthy recipient on account of Bhogārṇṇava's fondness [for him], gave that man of great honour [called] Harideva ... delightful to the mind like a corner of heaven.

... ..

⟨48⟩

The preamble⁴¹² (with a clear) meaning ... was composed by Lakṣmaṇagupta the son of Bharṭṛ-ananta out of love for the king.

By him whose (cognomen) is Bharṭṛ-cella.

May there be perfection.

[20] *vyaka*] Not read by M, these characters are badly damaged and tentatively read. The first may also be *dhya*, the second *ra*; other alternatives cannot be excluded.

[20] *svarggaika-deśa iva nettra-mano-nukūlo*] M reads *svargge kaṭāśa iva temamanena jāle* (sic, unintelligible).

[20] *datto*] M reads *datte*.

[20] *harideva*] M reads *haritā*. The last character is clearly *va*; the preceding one is damaged but looks like *d*, with traces of an *e mātrā*. SI also read *harideva*. Possibly restore *nāmne* in the following lacuna?

[21] *ṣṭārthā*] Not read by M, these characters are quite certain, though the *ṣ* is eroded. If correct, this string would have been preceded by a single syllable and a caesura before that; possibly restore *spaṣṭārthā*?

[21] *bhartry-ananta-tanayena*] M reads *bhavyā ca nanna-tanayena*, which is impossible. SI's commentary mentions "Lakṣmaṇagupta, son of Bharṭṛ (Bhaṭṭi)-Ananta." He probably read *bhartryananta* correctly, standardising to *bharṭṛ*.

[21] §] The symbol closing the inscription depicts a *śaṅkha*.

412 See page 7 for a discussion of the word *pūrvā*.

B Minor Inscriptions

B1 Bihar Kotra Graffiti

Jitendra Datt Tripathi, who has done extensive field walks in the environs of Bihar Kotra and Narsingharh⁴¹³ in the course of his research on rock art, reports (Tripathi 1996, 141) that a number of short Gupta-period inscriptions can be found in the area, implying that some or all of these are painted rather than engraved. He provides eye copies of some, but most characters are not identifiable in these. I reproduce digital tracings of his eye copies here, along with some comments and tentative readings.

Graffito 1 (Figure 43) is associated with a pair of engraved footprints surrounded by lotus petals, provided that Tripathi's drawing reflects the contiguity accurately. The second and third characters are quite certainly *vuddha*, which is plausible since there was a great *vihāra* in these lands. The footprints thus belong to the Buddha. I have no intelligible reading for the remaining characters. The script seems to be of the rounded type and may belong somewhere in the fifth or sixth century.

Tripathi shows **Graffito 2** (Figure 44) as contiguous with Graffito 3, but this is probably not the case. None of the characters can be identified confidently from the eye copy, but I believe the first four may be *mahārāja*, possibly followed by *jaya*. The script seems to be of a northern or angular style, assuming that my reading of *ma* and *hā* are correct. There is a slight possibility that the original graffiti comprised or included the name of Jayavarman, the father of Siṃhavarman.

Graffito 3 (Figure 45) in fact seems to be the first words of the Bihar Kotra cave inscription of Naravarman (A3), as Tripathi's eye copy reproduces its rounded script style down to some idiosyncratic details like the sinuous line of the *ā mātrā* in *hā* and the shape of the subscript *h* in *riha* (compare Figure 11 on page 51). It seems therefore that this inscription is not a graffiti per se but part of a substantial inscription, erroneously reproduced by Tripathi next to Graffito 2.

During my own quick walk around Bihar Kotra, the helpful Raghbir Kushvah and Raju Kevat showed me some engraved graffiti. I publish these here for the record, but both appear to postdate the Early Aulikaras and I have not been able to read anything significant into either. In addition to graffiti, there are vestiges of a larger but completely

effaced inscription on the sheer cliff face above the Kotra Mataji temple (23°38'06"N 77°06'49"E), shown in Figure 48 below.

Graffito 4 (Figure 46), beginning with a *maṅgala* symbol in the shape of a bass clef, is engraved on a rock face atop the escarpment to the east of Kotra village (around 23°37'58"N 77°06'50"E). The inscription is about 20 centimetres long, with character bodies 3 to 4 centimetres tall. It seems to read *nāthula*, which may be the name of a visitor to the site. The characters are of the northern class and may belong to the sixth to eighth centuries.

Graffito 5 (Figure 47) is engraved on top of a large flat rock at the eastern foot of the escarpment east of Kotra village (around 23°38'10"N 77°07'40"E). Part of the rock's upper surface has been carved into a *pīṭha* in which a plain cylindrical *liṅga* stands, faced by a fragmented Nandī statue. An old villager insisted that in his childhood the entire top of this rock was covered in writing and that it has all been obliterated by the urine of the monkeys who frequent the place. Although the story sounds unlikely in spite of the evidence of plenty of monkey urine, there may once have been more graffiti on this rock. The characters of this one are of a northern or angular type, probably from sometime in the sixth to eighth centuries. The width of this inscription is about 60 centimetres, and the height of the bodies of its characters is about 7 centimetres. My reading *sire-vihārasya* is very tentative; in particular, the character I read as *hā* to coax a meaningful word out of the epigraph seems to have a subscript component and may perhaps be *dvā* or *ddhā* rather than *hā*.

Diplomatic Text, Graffito 1

(?śrī)-vuddha-(?vīdyādhi)[2](?na)

Diplomatic Text, Graffito 2

(?mahārāja-jaya)

Diplomatic Text, Graffito(?) 3

śrīr mmahārāja-siṃhavarmmaṇa[h]

⁴¹³ Rajgarh district, Madhya Pradesh, around 23°38'N 77°06'E. Two inscriptions referring to Naravarman's reign (A2, A3) hail from Bihar Kotra, and the inscription of Aparājītavardhana is on the outskirts of Narsingharh.



Figure 43: Bihar Kotra graffito 1. Digital tracing of eye copy by J. D. Tripathi (1996).



Figure 45: Possible Bihar Kotra graffito 3. Digital tracing of eye copy by J. D. Tripathi (1996).



Figure 44: Bihar Kotra graffito 2. Digital tracing of eye copy by J. D. Tripathi (1996).



Figure 46: Bihar Kotra graffito 4. Photo by the author, 2017. Scale: 5 cm/2”.



Figure 47: Bihar Kotra graffito 5. Photo by the author, 2017. The image on the right shows the end of the inscription, which continues a little beyond the edge of the image on the left. Scale (left only): 5 cm/2”.

Diplomatic Text, Graffito 4

ṣ nā(?thu)la

Diplomatic Text, Graffito 5

si(?r)e-(?v)i(?hārasya)

B2 Coin Legend of Siṃhavarman

Devendra Handa (2016, 79–80) reports a copper coin of Siṃhavarman (Figure 49) seen in a private collection. The coin is oval, with a diameter of 18 to 24 millimetres and a weight of 3.98 grams. The obverse is inscribed with the legend *śrī-siṃhavarmma* below an emblem that Handa describes as a bull facing the right. The reverse shows a *śrīvatsa* symbol. The provenance of the coin is unknown; it was obtained in trade from Indore, so a findspot somewhere in Western Malwa is plausible. Handa believes

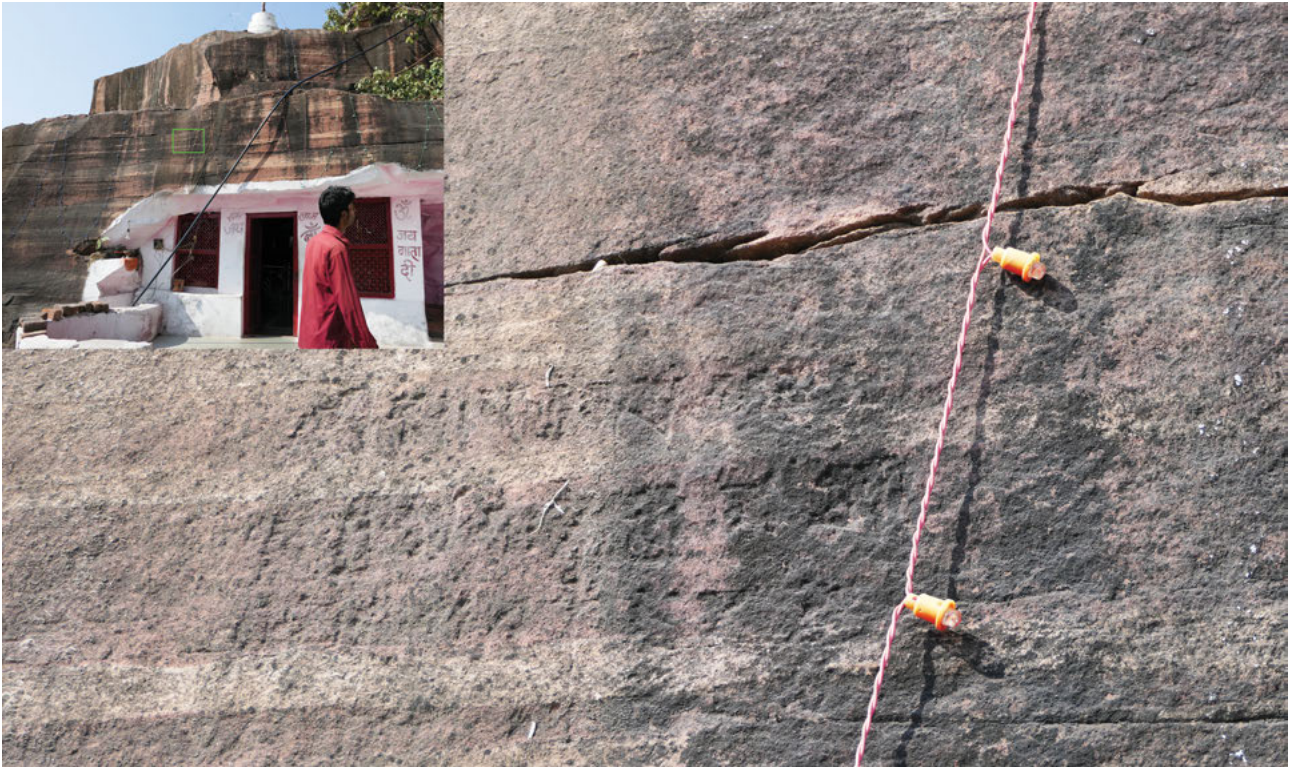


Figure 48: Kotra Mataji temple inscription. Inset shows location on cliff. Photo by the author, 2017.



Figure 49: Copper coin of Siṃhavarman. Photos courtesy of Devendra Handa; tracing by the author. Clear strokes in green; unclear and restored strokes in blue.

that the coin can be attributed with fair certainty to the Aulikara Siṃhavarman.

Diplomatic Text

(śrī-siṃ)hava(r)m(?m)a⁴¹⁴

⁴¹⁴ Handa suggests that the traces below and to the left of the character *rma* at the end of the name may belong to the genitive ending

B3 Coin Legend of Naravarman

Handa (2016, 81–82) also reports copper coin of Naravarman (Figure 50), likewise in a private collection. The provenance is again unknown, but the collector who circulated the coin’s images is a resident of Indore. The circular coin

sya. I think it is more likely to be a subscript *m* attached to the main consonant and pushed to the left to accommodate the curve of the coin.



Figure 50: Copper coin of Naravarman. Photo and drawing courtesy of Devendra Handa.

has a diameter of 12.5 millimetres and weighs 0.78 grams. The obverse shows the name of *mahārāja* Naravarman in two lines below what seems to be a dotted circle but may perhaps be a version of the device featured on the signet ring discussed below. The reverse shows a filleted *cakra* in profile, standing atop a lotus.

Diplomatic Text

- [1] śrī(r) mahārāja
 [2] (na)ravarman⁴¹⁵

B4 Signet Ring of Naravarman

Another discovery of Devendra Handa (2014, 147, 2016, 81) is a copper ring of Naravarman (Figure 51), studied from an image circulated on the Internet. Neither size and weight figures nor provenance data are available for this object.

⁴¹⁵ Here too, Handa supplies *sya* at the end of the name. I find this unnecessary. I also believe that a subscript *m* was never intended here, since the first line seems to read *śrīr-mahārāja* without duplicating the *m*.

The name in its legend had been misread as *kuruvamma*, but Handa has corrected the reading to *naravamma*. An emblem above the legend seems to consist of the lower half of a circle (the moon?) and probably some design inside it (the sun or a star?), the combination resembling a *candrabindu* sign. After *sya* at the end of the inscription there is another symbol which Handa sees as a representation of a *pūrṇa-ghaṭa*, but which I believe is in fact a *visarga*, though the upper circle is not quite clear and a *visarga* is not expected at this point.

Although there is a fair chance that this is indeed a signet of the early Aulikara ruler Naravarman, I feel that judgement of its authenticity should be reserved until and unless the original object can be examined by an expert. For one thing, the idea of a royal signet made of copper is passing strange, though it may conceivably have been used by chancery officers rather than the king himself. For another, the seal bears a striking resemblance to the coin discussed above.⁴¹⁶ This too may be a genuine feature (and attest to a consistent visual programme in royal

⁴¹⁶ However, the seal is probably larger than the coin. Although size data are not available, the ring's diameter seems in the image to be no wider than the seal's diameter. If the signet was ever worn as a finger ring then its seal must have been larger than the 12.5-millimetre coin.



Figure 51: Signet ring of Naravarman. Photo courtesy of Devendra Handa, with hand tracing of mirror image by the author.

emblems), but it also seems possible that the signet is a modern forgery created using a negative cast of a similar coin, or even a composite image that never existed but in the form of pixels.

Diplomatic Text	
[1]	śrī-mahārāja na
[2]	ravarmmasya(?ḥ)

B5 Gold Seal of Viṣṇuvarman

Devendra Handa (2016, 82–85) has published yet one more inscribed object that may have a bearing on the Aulikaras.

This gold seal (Figure 52) was brought to Handa’s attention in July 2015 by S. K. Bhatt, director of the Academy of Indian Numismatics and Sigillography in Indore, to whom it had been brought for identification by “some denizen of Mandsaur.” No additional details of its discovery are reported. The object is a golden prism weighing 14 grams, approximately 2.5 centimetres long and 0.8 centimetres wide on each side. One of the four lengthwise faces is engraved with an inscription in mirror image, indicating that this facet at least was intended for use as a seal. The two narrow ends are punctured by what Handa (2016, 83) describes as “apsidal cuts.” On the basis of the photographs I assume that the entire prism is bored through lengthwise so that it could be threaded on a string or chain. As the holes obliterate part of the inscription, the seal may have been converted into a bead once it was no longer in use.

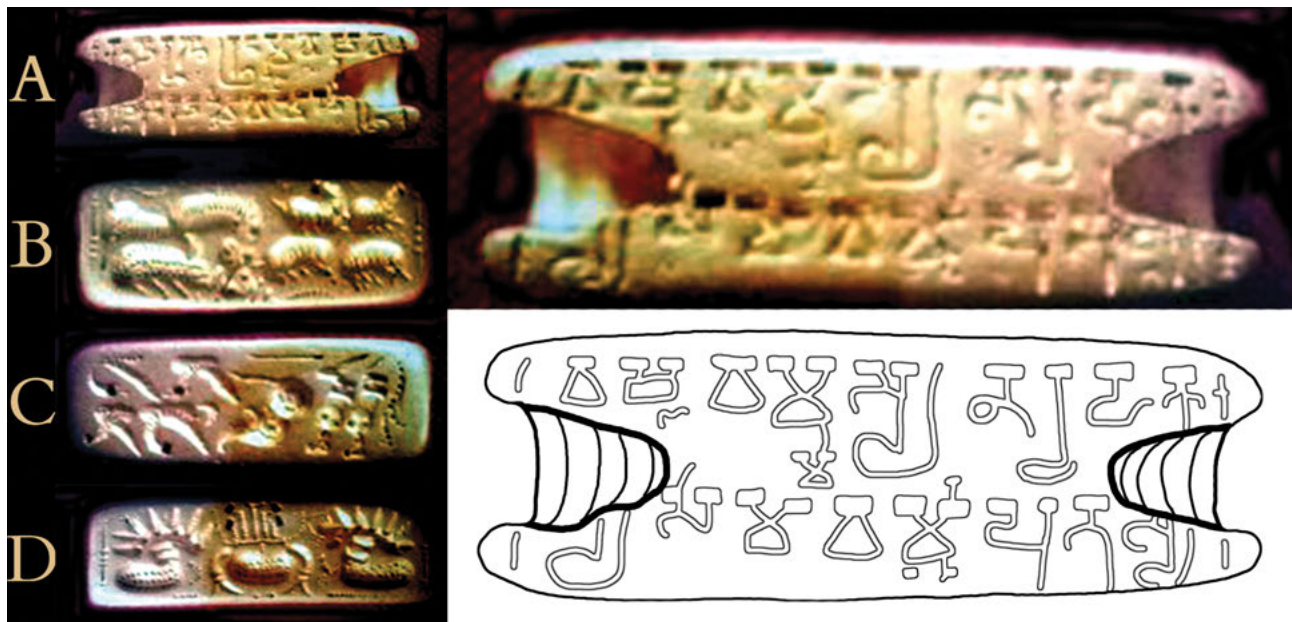


Figure 52: Gold seal of Viṣṇuvarman. Left: four faces of the object. Right: mirror image of inscribed face and hand tracing of inscription. Photo courtesy of Devendra Handa, tracing by the author.

It appears from the photos that the design on every face of the prism is debossed rather than raised, so each of these may have functioned as a seal. The designs on the remaining faces are hard to interpret, and I refrain from speculating about them here. Face B (as numbered in Figure 52 above) shows several animals, possibly five sheep and a tiger (or a horse with a rider cut off at the waist?) grouped around an unidentifiable object. Face C, described by Handa as “one animal, probably a baby elephant, being hunted by an animal-rider assisted by two soldiers” seems, to my eye, to depict a rhinoceros on the right and on the left four characters that may be *śaṅkhalipi* or ornate Brāhmī (in which case the letters may be *nā-ta-tā-nā* and do not seem to be mirrored). Face D probably shows a *pūrṇa ghaṭa* in the centre, flanked by two identical objects that defy identification.

The characters of the inscription are of a box-headed southern style. They most likely date from the fourth or fifth century CE but I see no distinctive features that preclude a dating earlier or later by as much as another century. Handa tentatively reads the inscription as *śrī-viṣṇuvarmasya kāryahāarakasya somavarmma-putrasya* and opines that it is probably followed by a symbol. I believe that the vertical lines visible in all four corners of the inscribed face do not belong to the text; instead, they seem to be part of a border or vertical decoration that would have stretched from top to bottom on both sides. Such vertical decoration is visible in the photographs of faces B and D. Handa’s initial *śrī* and final symbol should therefore, in my opinion, be discarded. I agree with the readings *viṣṇuvarmasya* and *somavarmma-putrasya*, though the vowel marks in the first line are completely indiscernible in the photo (mostly due to wear at the edge of the prism), and some of the outlying strokes of the second line are also lost.

The reading *kāryahāarakasya* does not, however, seem possible. In particular, *kā* can definitely be ruled out: the consonant of the character in question is almost certainly *n*. The following character is of a very unusual shape. Handa’s reading *rya* is possible; the shape calls to mind the *rya* conjunct found in several major Aulikara inscriptions, consisting of an *r* component at regular height and a subscript *y* component. However, that form occurs only in the angular Malwa script, from which the present character set is radically different. It also uses a much shorter *r* and a much wider *y*. In the present inscription too, the other two instances of subscript *y* are wider and their tails return to headline height, whereas the assumed *y* of this character is a nearly closed loop at the bottom of the *r*. (These concerns could, however, be explained by assuming that the engraver of the seal economised on horizontal space.) The following character’s consonant is definitely *h* as read by Handa and the next one after indeed resembles *r*, though *k*

is also possible. The *ka* read at the end of this line by Handa is in my opinion part of the vertical edge decoration. All in all, I tentatively read *nirvāhaka* instead of *kāryahāaraka*. The vowels are conjecturally supplied, and reading the problematic conjunct as *rv* is no more of a stretch than *ry*. The subscript component is not an unambiguous *v*, but it is closer to *v* than to *y*; and the use of a full-length *r* with a subscript *v* may be explained by the fact that the text is at the top edge of the object, and a *repha* combined with a vowel mark would have been very hard to fit in above a regular *va*.

Neither *kāryahāaraka*, nor *nirvāhaka* are attested words to the best of my knowledge. Handa suggests that *kāryahāaraka* would have been an “important executive office,” and I believe *nirvāhaka* to be something similar. The verb *nir-vah* used in the causative commonly means “to bring about, accomplish;” and *nirvāha* is attested epigraphically (though in a different time and location; see IEG s.v.) in the meaning of “manager” or some similar function. I thus believe that Viṣṇuvarman the son of Somavarman may have been either a court official in charge of executive matters, or a sort of building contractor.

Handa believes that the names ending in *varman*, the use of Sanskrit and the palaeography of the seal “leave hardly any doubt” that this seal belongs to a close relative of the ruling Aulikara line and a court functionary under Bandhuvarman or Viśvavarman. While this possibility cannot be ruled out, it must in my opinion be handled with a healthy dose of doubt. The palaeography of the inscription is unlike any known Aulikara epigraph and the seal may predate Aulikara times. As for its provenance, even if it was found in the vicinity of Mandsaur, it may have been taken there in premodern or modern times from somewhere further to the south. Since it is unlikely that a modern finder would have drilled a hole in a golden object, it clearly must have been worn as jewellery at some point before ending up in the hands of a collector, and it may have travelled a long distance as such.

Diplomatic Text

^[1] v[i]ṣ(ṅ)[u]varmasya (n)[?i](?rv)[?ā](haka)

^[2] (sya) s(o)mavarm(m)a-put(rasya)

B6 Dhamnar Seal of the Candanagiri Monastery

The site of Dhamnar (धमनार, Mandsaur district, Madhya Pradesh, 24°11'36"N 75°29'55"E, about 45 kilometres

east-northeast of Mandsaur), has numerous Buddhist cave temples and a monolithic rock-cut Brahmanical temple.⁴¹⁷ Some of these monuments may have been created during the reign of the Aulikaras. A. H. Khan found an inscribed “clay seal” (probably a seal impression) here in 1960–61, in the course of conservation work (IAR 1960–61, 60 No. 38). No image has been published and the whereabouts of the object could not be traced. The legend on the seal reads *candanagiri mahāvihāra* in a script datable to the fifth or sixth century, confirming that this was already a major active Buddhist site in the period.

B7 Mukundara Graffiti

A number of graffiti have been reported from the Gupta-period temple at the village of Mukundara, also known as Dara or Darra (मुकुन्दरा, Kota district, Rajasthan, 24°48'53"N 75°59'09"E, about 120 kilometres northeast of Mandsaur. This temple, described in detail by Michael Meister (1981) who dates it to the early fifth century, may have been patronised, or even constructed, by the Aulikaras (Mankodi 2015, 311).

Mathuralal Sharma (2008, 15) reports that the name *dhruvasvāmī* is engraved in late Gupta script on one of the pillars and claims that the name belongs to a famous warrior who was killed in battle against the Hūṇas. If there is any basis to this report, then the graffiti may be relevant to the study of Aulikara history. However, Sharma does not mention a longer inscription or any other evidence on which he bases his additional claim, and moreover, no other scholar who studied the site has reported this particular graffiti, so even the verity of the name and its palaeographic dating is questionable.

James Burgess (Fergusson and Burgess 1880, 355) does note that a “Gupta inscription has lately been found” in the Mukundara temple, “limiting its date to the fifth century,” but again, no additional data are available about this alleged inscription. D. R. Bhandarkar (PRASW 1905, 45) reports the name of a pilgrim engraved on one of the pillars of the porch, which he believes “cannot be ascribed to any date later than the seventh century” on a palaeographical basis. The next *Progress Report* of the ASI Western Circle (PRASW 1906, 56) gives the text of four items of Mukundara graffiti as 1, *acyaṃtadhaja jogī*; 2, *chaṇasikamo corai*; 3, *golasvāmināma*, in letters of “about the 7th century;” and 4, a 19th-century CE inscription. Finally, V. S. Agrawala (1950, 196–97) reports that the name Gopavar-

man was engraved “in Gupta script” on one of the pillars at the front of the temple, but these pillars were replaced with new ones in the 1940s.

Combining these accounts together, it seems possible that the graffiti *golasvāmi-nāma* may be the basis for the readings Dhruvasvāmin and Gopavarman. This inscription probably did exist on one of the replaced pillars, and only its re-examination (in the unlikely case that the old pillar turned up somewhere) would settle the reading and, perhaps, establish a narrower palaeographic timeframe. At any rate, I could not locate this graffiti when I visited the temple in 2017, and neither could Meister (1981, 196) when he did so; in fact, both he and I found only the name of *acyaṃtadhaja jogī*, written in mediaeval characters.⁴¹⁸

B8 Mandsaur Sealings of Prakāśadharman

In May 1978, V. S. Wakankar conducted some exploratory excavations in Mandsaur, which were reported in *India Today* (Sinh 1978). The subsequent academic reports (Wakankar 1981, 278; Wakankar and Rajpurohit 1984, 11, 14) describe a pit opened between the east wall of the fort and the street uncovering what Wakankar considered to be the remains of the Aulikara royal palace, including a stairway about two metres wide and two rooms connecting to it. An adjoining smaller structure contained two glass sealings (impressions made in softened glass, presumably with a stone seal) inscribed with the name of Prakāśadharman. At this time the Risthal inscription (A9) was yet to be found, hence Wakankar could only hypothesise that this was a hitherto unknown Aulikara ruler.

No acceptable picture of these sealings has, to my knowledge, been published,⁴¹⁹ nor are dimensions or other descriptive data available. I have invested some effort in attempting to locate at least one of them, but to no avail. No such seal is apparently kept in the Yashodharman Museum of Mandsaur, nor at the Vikram University of Ujjain. I believe that the sealing(s), if not lost, will most likely be found at the Wakankar Shodh Samsthan,⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁸ Incidentally, Meister (ibid.) observes that the name *acyaṃtadhaja* is found on a much later temple at Menal, while Vidya Dehejia (Dehejia and Rockwell 2016, 110) reports it inscribed on the pedestal of the *liṅga* in the unfinished Bhojpur temple. She theorises that Ayaṃtadhaja was a guild foreman, but unless the record is of several distinct people, his title *jogī* and the presence of his tag on multiple temples rather implies that he was a wandering mendicant.

⁴¹⁹ The *India Today* report of the discovery (Sinh 1978) apparently included a low-quality photo of the seals, which are now accessible on the paper’s website as a minuscule black-and-white image.

⁴²⁰ Uma Niwas, Madhavnagar, Ujjain 456010.

⁴¹⁷ For a description of the site see Cunningham (1871, 270–80) and, somewhat more recently, Luniya (1954) and Mitra (1971, 104–6).

where much of Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar's legacy is preserved. Unfortunately, this institute is presently in a lamentable state; upon my visit there in February 2018 I learned that the original trustees in charge of it are now mostly deceased, and the heirs lack funds. Nonetheless they have made some progress in cataloguing the amassed objects, and they also have a small and neglected museum in the building, which is accessible upon request. Yet the overwhelming majority of the collection is under lock and key, without any record of what items they have in their keeping and where each may be found. It can only be hoped that the collection, sure to contain many things of interest beyond the seals of Prakāśadharman, will in the foreseeable future be catalogued at least in vague lines and be made accessible to researchers.

Having lost hope of recovering one of these seals, I unexpectedly learned from Kailash Chandra Pandey of Mandsaur that he had in his possession a sketch of one, made by Wakankar after the object was found. He was kind enough to furnish me with a copy, which I reproduce below (Figure 53). It appears from the drawing that the seal matrix was small and square in shape, with the six characters of the legend split into two lines and covering nearly the entire surface of the seal, without any additional device or design.



Figure 53: Glass sealing of Prakāśadharman. Digital tracing of sketch by V. S. Wakankar (dated 28/3/78). Courtesy of Kailash Chandra Pandey.

Diplomatic Text

- ^[1] śrī-prakā
^[2] śadharm(ā)

B9 Sondhni Pillar Graffito

Two words are engraved along one of the upper edges of the lion abacus of the incompletely preserved pillar at Sondhni.⁴²¹ See the description of that pillar (page 188) for details of the object, and the description of the primary pillar (page 175) about the site. The epigraph is a single line, covering about 75 centimetres in breadth with a wide space of about 15 centimetres between the two words. The height of the inscription is about 9 centimetres, which spans most of the border to the figural carving below. Character bodies are about 5 centimetres tall. The engraving is deep, but the characters are clumsily executed, with many distorted strokes.

The inscription, hidden underground when Fleet visited the site, came to light when Garde excavated the fragments of the pillar in 1922–23. The brief epigraph contains no date, but the characters belong to the 5th or 6th century. Assuming that Yaśodharman's project was completed and the pillar was erected during his reign, and further assuming that it did not topple soon afterward, the inscription must have been created at the same time as the monument itself.

Although the small size of the sample does not allow a detailed palaeographic analysis, the script is definitely the angular variety of Mālvāvan late Brāhmī. In particular, it resembles the Bihar Kotra stone inscription (A2) in that it uses a looped *na* that is commonly seen in the rounded or “southern” type, but the other characters are angular in shape. The prominent tail of the open *ma* is noteworthy in this context, as is the acute angle at the right-hand bottom of *sa*. All characters except *dha* have headmarks in the shape of flattened wedges. The sign for medial *i* is identical to the modern Devanagari form, extending all the way to the baseline in front of the consonant sign.

Garde reported the finding (ARASI 1922–23, 187) with the tentative reading *dharmmaḥ ni(ḍo)ṣaḥ* which he did not attempt to interpret. The graffito was largely ignored thereafter, though V. S. Wakankar and his disciples were

⁴²¹ The Siddham ID of the epigraph is IN00096; the pillar is catalogued as OB00087.

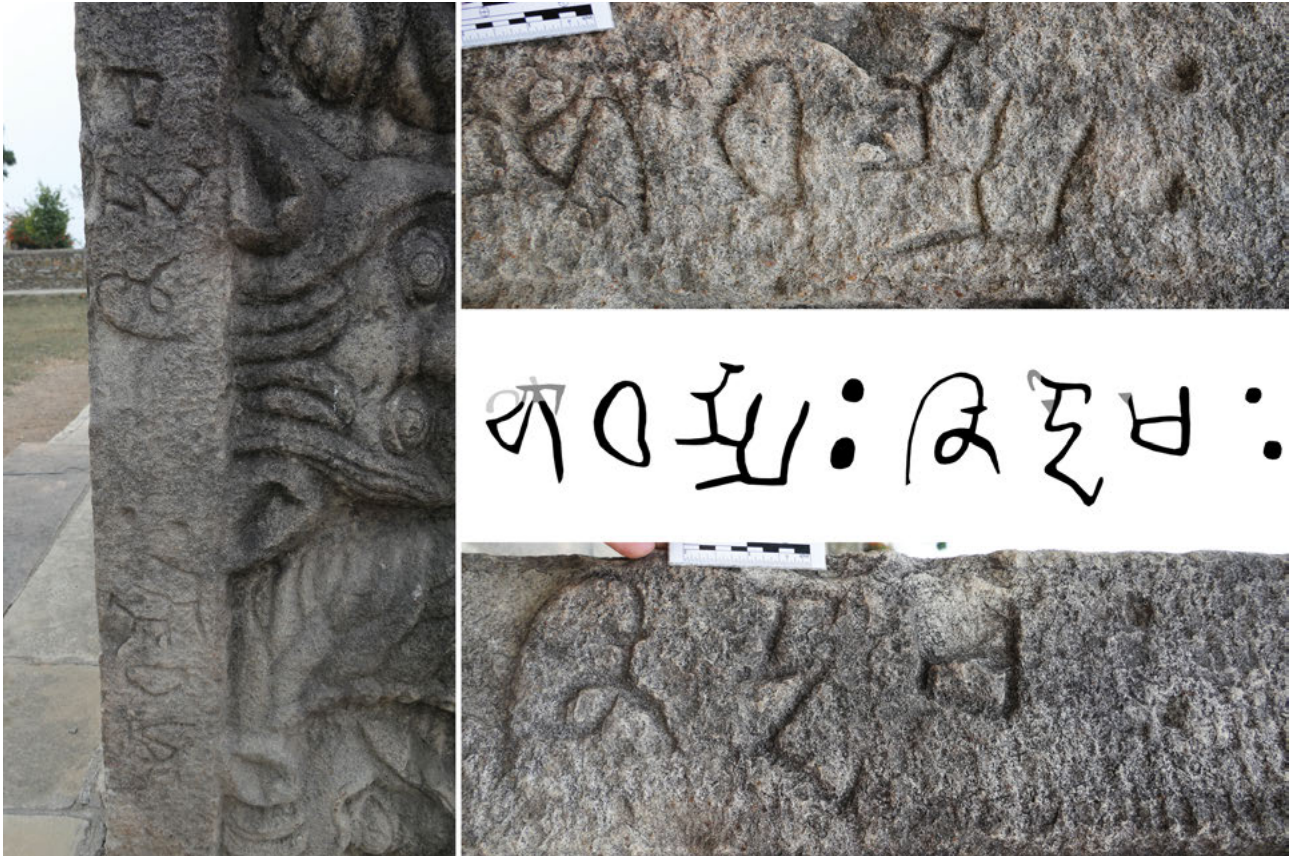


Figure 54: Graffito on the abacus of the fractured Sondhni pillar. Photo by the author, 2017. Scale: 5 cm/2". Left: detail of the abacus as presently exhibited. Right: closeup of the two inscribed words, with freehand tracing by the author. In the tracing grey lines are faint but probably belong to the text; light grey lines are faint and probably irrelevant.

aware of it.⁴²² Hans Bakker (2017, 23) was the first to call wider attention to this epigraph after a visit to the site. He read the text as *sadharmmaḥ nirddoṣaḥ* and noted that it seems on the surface to be a qualification of Yaśodharman, calling him virtuous and without reproach. However, points out Bakker, Nirdoṣa is the name of a prominent official (see inscription A10), who also had an elder brother named Dharmadoṣa. The text could thus be read to mean “Nirdoṣa together with Dharma,” i.e. with Dharmadoṣa. Bakker suggests that “this ambiguity is intentional, a prank on the part of the two high officials, not meant to be read by anyone but the moon” (referring to verse 8 of the pillar inscription).

⁴²² They assumed the graffito to record the names of two stone-carvers, apparently reading it as *namdappaḥ dasapaḥ(?)*. I am not aware of any reference to this in internationally accessible media, but it may have been reported in a local publication. (Kailash Chandra Pandey, personal communication, February and July 2017. Shri Pandey has even been accused of forging this “new” inscription in 1983, which is of course preposterous since Garde had reported it sixty years earlier.)

This ingenious interpretation of the graffito is within the realm of possibility, yet I have some doubts about it. As regards content, the first character (which Garde did not even mention as unread) is unintelligible: it has some bold strokes that do not resemble any letter closely enough to be confidently recognisable, and some fainter strokes near the top (shown in grey in the eye copy in Figure 54). Bakker’s proposed *sa* is based on the assumption that the long, slightly curved, almost-vertical stroke is entirely superfluous,⁴²³ but even if this large and deep line were somehow the product of an accident, the remaining shape (including the faint hook at the top left) is still a badly crippled *sa* at best. The character could just as well be a misshapen initial *a* or a cursive *śa*; even *śrī* may not be entirely out of the question, though this would require the presumption that the subscript *r* and the *ī* were both shallowly engraved and have become indistinct.

My initial inclination was to read the first character as an initial *a*, though admittedly this is only a hair’s breadth

⁴²³ Personal communication, June 2018.

more likely than *sa*. This reading also requires including the faint hook in the figure, yielding a cursive *a* with an exaggerated triangular knot. The message *adharmmaḥ nirddoṣaḥ*, a dignified sixth-century way of saying “Nirdoṣa sucks,” may have been carved by a faction who opposed the power of the Naigama potentates.⁴²⁴

Yet another possibility is that the recalcitrant character is *śo*, in which case the string *śodharmmaḥ* would clearly be part of the name of Yaśodharman (treated as if the stem were *yaśodharma*). There is definitely a hooked stroke at the top right of the character, which may be part of an *o mātrā*; its second stroke may be either the faint line to the left of the head, or the likewise faint vertical line above it. There is, however, no discernible trace of *ya* before this character, nor any indication that an *akṣara* has been obliterated here by damage to the stone surface. Neglecting to engrave the first character of the king’s name sounds like a very bizarre mistake, so emendation is also unwarranted. I therefore think that this possibility must be discarded.

Most recently, Elizabeth Cecil has suggested in an as yet unpublished conference paper (Cecil 2018b) that the problematic character may be *bhā*. The resulting word, *bhādharmaḥ*, could be a Pāśupata initiatory name, possibly of an *ācārya* or *purohita* who collaborated in the creation of the monument with Nirdoṣa. The wide space between the two words also favours the assumption that these are two separate items rather than a phrase. At present I find this reading more likely than any of the above suggestions. The reading *bhā* makes use of all the bold lines in the stone and nothing else, and is therefore quite probable even if this form of *bha* is unusual for the early sixth century.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁴ The crudeness of the stonework may be relevant here. It is easy to imagine (though impossible, of course, to prove) that this is a piece of genuine illegal graffiti, hastily carved on the stone one night shortly before the abacus was installed on top of the pillar, after bribing the chowkidar to look the other way.

⁴²⁵ It appears from the IndoSkript database that *bha* with a filled triangle for the left limb occurs in some early sources such as the Bower and Horiuzi Manuscripts, but the first certain epigraphic attestations are Maukhari inscriptions from the latter half of the sixth century, and the later “open-mouthed” form of *bha* only appears in inscriptions at the very end of that century. IndoSkript shows an open-mouthed *bha* from the Karamdanda inscription of Kumāragupta (436–437 CE), which is presumably the damaged character in the fifth line (in the first occurrence of *bhaṭṭasya*). However, since all the clear *bha*-s in that inscription have a simple left limb with a serif, the outline of this character was probably incorrectly reconstructed. It is nonetheless conceivable that *bha* had already evolved into this shape by the early sixth century in Daśapura.

Diplomatic Text

[¹] (?bhā)dha(r)mmaḥ __ ni(r)dd(oṣ)aḥ

B10 Eran Pillar Graffito N2

The pillar at Eran (एरण, Sagar district, Madhya Pradesh, 24°05'29"N 78°09'54"E) is widely known for the inscription of Mātṛviṣṇu and Dhanyaviṣṇu (often called an inscription of Budhagupta),⁴²⁶ dated ca. 485 CE. The principal inscription is on the western face of the pillar, which is square in cross-section for part of its length close to the ground. All faces bear a number of additional short inscriptions, including several shell (*śaṅkhalipi*) inscriptions of breathtaking exquisiteness (one of which is engraved over a graffito in late Gupta characters), and over ten graffiti in various late Gupta and early post-Gupta scripts. None of these minor inscriptions have been edited, though James Prinsep (1838, 634–35 and plate 31) published eye copies of four along with a transliteration and translation (both inaccurate).⁴²⁷

The graffito that is relevant here (Figure 55) is the second from top on the northern face, hence its designation as N2. It is a single line engraved at eye level (about 1.7 metres above the present level of the pillar’s pedestal) on the right-hand side of the surface. It occupies an area approximately 22 centimetres wide by 3.5 tall, with character bodies around 2 centimetres high. The script is of the angular variety, very similar to that used in the Sondhni graffiti (B9) and probably datable to the sixth century, though a slightly later time cannot be excluded. Its notable features include an open-mouthed *ma* with a prominent acute angle at the bottom right and a tail on the left; and *sa* with the left limb formed as a triangle and, when not in a conjunct, drawn cursorily as a single line with the rest of the body, essentially becoming what Dani terms an open-mouthed *sa*.

The text is *sāmanta-doṣasya nāma*, “the name of *sāmanta* Doṣa,” possibly engraved on the occasion of a visit to the site by an eminent personage.⁴²⁸ Prinsep (1838:635) found this so unusual that he proposed

⁴²⁶ Siddham IN00045; CII3 No. 19, CII3rev No. 39, SI III.35.

⁴²⁷ Improved transcriptions for the better-preserved graffiti will be available online as Siddham IN00226 to IN00230. An article (Shrotriya 2005) discussing at least some of these has been published, but I have not been able to access a copy.

⁴²⁸ One may very well imagine that a local engraver was simply instructed to inscribe *sāmanta* Doṣa’s name and the word “name” ended up being understood as part of the text to be engraved.

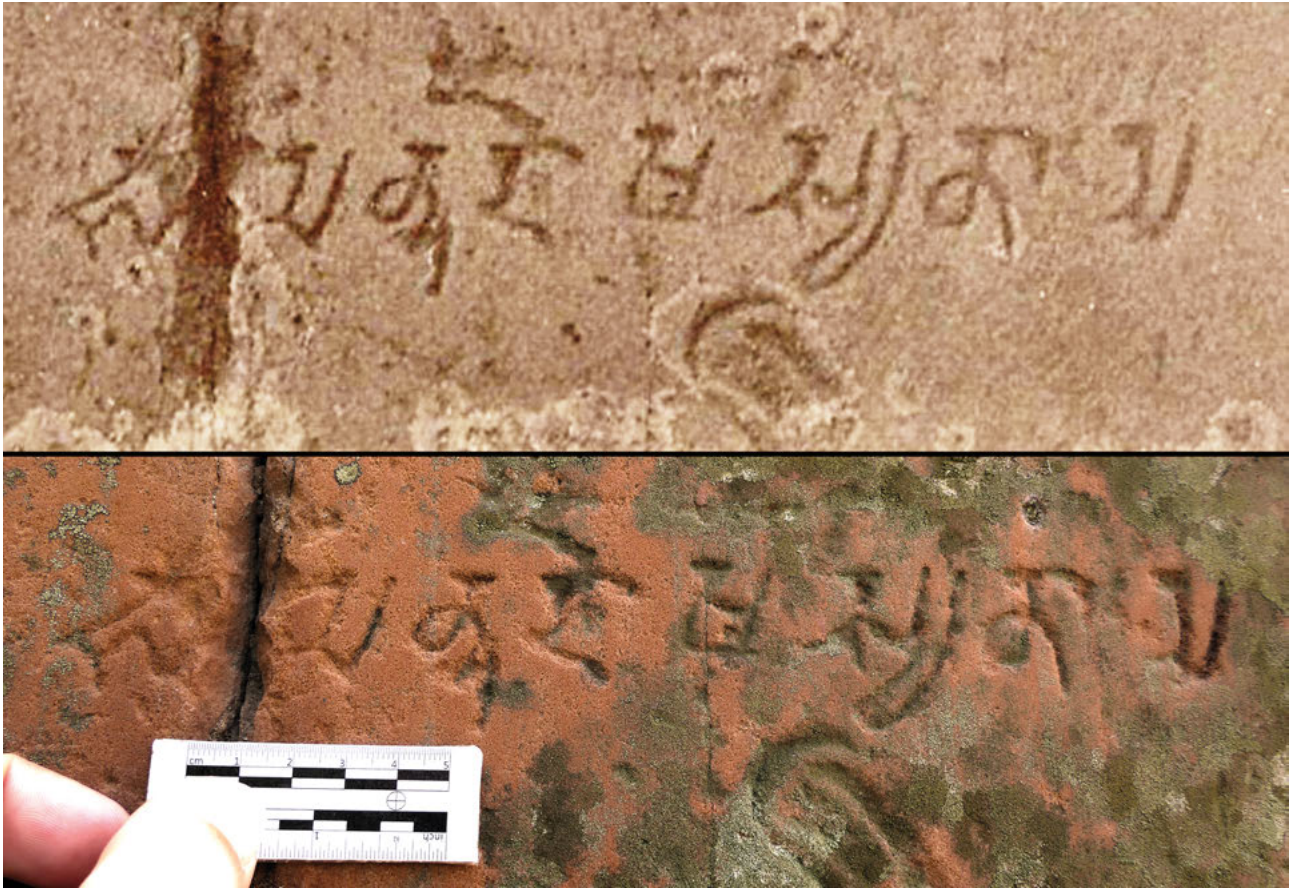


Figure 55: Graffito N2 on the Eran pillar. Above: Photograph taken in 1893 by Henry Cousens. © British Library Board, Photo 1003/(1297). Below: photo by the author, 2017. Scale: 5 cm/2”.

emending *doṣa* to *deva* on the grounds that the former “would hardly be applied as a name,” but we now know of such a name in the Naigama family. In addition, the pillar sites of Sondhni and Eran were apparently in “a monumental dialogue amongst contemporaries and competitors” (Cecil and Bisschop 2019, 387); in other words, the slightly earlier Eran site was known to the creators of the Sondhni pillars. It is thus definitely possible that *sāmanta* Doṣa is none other than Chancellor Doṣa (usually called Bhagavaddoṣa, see page 165) who served under Prakāśadharman and Yaśodharman. Although his title is *rājasthānīya*, while *sāmanta* usually refers to a feudatory ruler, the latter may also be used in the sense of “minister” (MW and IEG s.v.), which is very close to the meaning of *rājasthānīya* (q.v. page 8), and the Risthal inscription even uses *amātya*, a common word for “minister,” as an apparent synonym for *rājasthānīya* (A9, 119). Moreover, the Naigama family probably controlled territories of their own around Nagari and hence may be viewed as feudatories. This brief Eran inscription may thus be a record of a visit by the highest courtier of the Aulikaras to eastern Malwa, in the course of which he would have

seen the newly constructed pillar site that Sondhni subsequently attempted to outdo. The reason for his presence in the region may have been a campaign against Toramāṇa, who took control of Eran sometime close to the turn of the sixth century,⁴²⁹ and whom Prakāśadharman, in whose service Doṣa began his career, claims to have defeated.

Another graffito on the same face of the pillar (N5, Siddham IN00227) reads *sāmanta-raṇesareṇa senānyā likhitaḥ*. The script is very similar to that of N2, possibly executed by the same hand. Raṇesara (evidently a vernacularisation of Raṇeśvara) may have been another commander, perhaps from a different land, participating in the same campaign.

Diplomatic Text

^[1] s[ā]manta-doṣasya nāma

⁴²⁹ See Bakker (2017, 9–19) for the historical circumstances.

C Unpublished Inscriptions

C1 Narasingharh Rock Inscription of Aparājītavardhana

The landscape surrounding modern Bihar Kotra was evidently home to a major Buddhist community, which for at least some of its lifespan operated under the auspices of the Early Aulikaras, as shown by the Bihar Kotra stone and cave inscriptions (A2, A3) and possibly some of the graffiti (B1). One further inscription has been reported from this area, written in late Brahmi of about the 5th century and identified as an inscription of Aparājītavardhana, son of Trailokyavardhana, of the Mukhara *gotra* (IAR 1982–83, 121 and 163, Plate 84 incorrectly labelled as ‘Vigharkotra inscription of Naravarman’). The report adds that the epigraph records the grant of land to a Buddhist *vihāra*, that it mentions rock shelters known to have served as *vihāras* from the days of Aśoka (*aśōka-prakālikayānuśruta-prāktana-śūnya-vihāreṣu*), that it speaks about *bhikṣus* who are *araṇya-kāṇḍādhyāyin* and that the grant is governed by the conditions of *brahma-deya-bhukti*. K. V. Ramesh (1985, 8) repeats some of this information, emphasising the importance of a Gupta-period epigraphic reference to the Mauryan emperor in a historic context and offering some thoughts on the empty monasteries (*śūnya-vihāra*). He notes that the kings mentioned here must be hitherto unknown members of the Maukhari lineage.

Because of the names ending in *vardhana* and the region’s connection to the Aulikaras, it seems possible (Salomon 1989, 34 n. 19) that the rulers mentioned in this inscription belonged to an Aulikara family or to the lineage of Gauri in spite of the latter being of the Mānavāyani clan. Salomon, with characteristic prudence, adds that “[t]he question will have to be deferred until the inscription is published, which to my knowledge has not yet occurred.”

Jitendra Datt Tripathi, the person who first discovered the inscription for scholarship, did ultimately publish an eye copy and a partial Devanagari transliteration (Tripathi 1997, 65), but this appeared in a Hindi publication that circulated only locally, and was also rather inaccurate. In my visit to the region in 2017, I looked in vain for this inscription around Bihar Kotra, but in January 2018 I had the fortune to meet the aged Tripathi Ji in the nearby town of Narsingharh, and with his kind help visited the inscription. Aparājītavardhana’s inscription is engraved on the wall of a natural rock shelter at the edge of Narsingharh (Rajgarh district, Madhya Pradesh), located at 23°41’58”N 77°05’32”E close to the Hinglaj Mata temple.

The inscription consists of 18 lines of irregular length, engraved on the surface of the virgin rock without any previous shaping or smoothing. The first fifteen lines are roughly equal in length, covering a natural alcove in the back wall of the shelter, though occasionally extending to the right-hand side of this alcove and even on to the back of the shallower part of the shelter. Line 16 extends far beyond this limit, stretching across variously angled rock surfaces all the way onto the cliff face to the right of the shelter, while lines 17 and 18 begin far to the left of the previous lines and also extend beyond the right side of the alcove. The last line probably stretched for quite some length beyond this point, but exposure to weather has effaced much of the text here.

My preliminary study of the photographs taken at the site has allowed me to confirm the reading of the names including the Mukhara *gotra*, and to ascertain that the text gives no indication of being an Aulikara document. I therefore present neither a full edition, nor a clear photograph here,⁴³⁰ but publish only a provisional reading of the lines introducing the rulers and a brief summary of the remaining contents, and a wide-angle photo (Figure 56).

The inscription introduces Aparājītavardhana as a *parama-saugata*; some of the characters are unclear, but the reading fits the context and seems most likely from the strokes that can be made out. He is further described as deliberately selected (*anudhyāta*)⁴³¹ for his position by a supreme ruler (*parama-bhaṭṭāraka*), but there is no indication whatsoever of whether this sovereign was a Gupta, a Vākāṭaka or some other sovereign. Since Aparājītavardhana himself lacks any title, he was probably a chieftain of a small domain.

⁴³⁰ I hope I will be able to publish one separately later on. Since the inscription can only be accessed with a ladder (or by someone with superior rock climbing skills) and then studied only from a very close viewpoint while crouched on a narrow ledge, I could only take closeup photos that are impossible to assemble into a flattened composite, as the rock is very uneven. This, combined with the clumsy execution of the characters and the Prakritised language of the inscription, has proven a serious hurdle to my attempts at reading it. To compound the difficulty, some of the incised lines are filled in with a white substance (toothpaste, as I learned from J. D. Tripathi, applied to render the inscription visible for photography), but this highlighting is not always accurate, as already pointed out by Salomon (1989, 34 n. 19) in his comment on the photo published in IAR 1982–83.

⁴³¹ As shown conclusively by Ferrier and Törzsök (2008), the expression *pādānudhyāta* does not mean “meditating on the feet of.”



Figure 56: View of the Narsingharh rock inscription of Aparājītavardhana; inscribed areas emphasised below. Composite digital photo by the author, 2018.

Aparājītavardhana grants land to a Buddhist monastery, possibly in the vicinity of a town called Nāginipura, though the name is very uncertainly read, and I am not certain about the interpretation of *āhāranihi*, though the characters seem clear. The word Śakra-dharmma-pura also appears to be a toponym, but I have not yet obtained a meaningful reading of its context. Lines 5 to 7 speak of the reclamation of abandoned old monasteries overgrown by jungle and inhabited by deer and peacocks. It is in this connection that the name Aśoka crops up, but the context does not seem to be that these old monasteries hail back to Mauryan times; rather, they are on a hillside along which a stream called Aśoka flows (line 7, provisional reading *aśoka-praṇālikayānusṛta-prāgbhāra-śūnya-vihāreṣu*). The stream may, of course, have been named after the emperor as remembered in Buddhist tradition, but this need not mean that the monks of the inscription's days had any factual knowledge about him or that he had any connection to this site. A further toponym occurring several times in the epigraph (l5, l11 and l16), appears to

be Ghoṇḍuстроṇa⁴³² and probably refers to one of the plateaus in the area.

Lines 8 to 10 describe the terms of the grant: the donees are to enjoy the land in perpetuity as a *brahmadeya*. The beneficiaries are identified as the community of monks congregated from the world over and now residing in the monastery (the name of which may be Laṣkagiri *mahāvihāra*) and studying something called the *āraṇyakaṇḍa* (l8–9, provisional reading *mahāvihāra-vāsina āraṇyakaṇḍaddhyāyi-bhikṣu-saṅghasya cāturddiśābhyāgatasya*). The same (or another?) community of *bhikṣus* is described in line 16 as *āraṇyakāddhyāyi*. This phrase was also mentioned in the report in *Indian Archaeology, a Review* (summarised above), but it is not clear whether it refers to a particular text that these monks studied. Lines 11 to 15 list the boundaries of the estate, recording a number of additional toponyms. According to line 16, the villagers living

⁴³² The conjunct *ṇḍu* may perhaps be *ṇṭu* or *ṇṭta* and *stro* may be *skro* or *sro*, but the name sounds no less bizarre either way.

in the estate are to obey the donees and supply the monks with village produce. Lines 17 and 18 contain an exhortation to future kings to respect the grant, and include the two stock verses *śaṣṭi-varṣa-sahasrāṇi...* and *bahubhir vasudhā bhuktā...*

The date of the record remains a matter of guesswork. On palaeographic grounds I would estimate that it was engraved no later than the late fifth century at most, more likely in the early fifth or late fourth century. However, due to the crudeness of the writing, palaeographic dating is even less reliable in this case than usual. The preponderance of Prakritisms⁴³³ in the text may also be indicative of an early date, especially in view of the fact that the Aulikara epigraphs of Bihar Kotra, definitely dated to the early fifth century, are in pure Sanskrit with some grammatical irregularities but no Prakritic forms. Finally, it seems safe to reaffirm that our rulers belonged to a branch of the Maukhari family. The names of Aparājītavardhana or Trailokyavardhana do not occur in the epigraphic records of either of the two known Maukhari lineages; indeed, all known rulers of both houses bore names ending in *varman*. It is, however, possible that our kings were descended from the Maukhari warlord (*mokhareḥ mahā-senāpateḥ*) Balavardhana, who erected his *yūpa* at Badwa in 238 CE.⁴³⁴ A kinship connection to the Aulikaras cannot be ruled out and awaits further research; see page 20 for some preliminary thoughts.

Partial Diplomatic Text

- [¹] svasti pa(?rama)(s)(?auga)(to) parama-
bhaṭṭāraka-
pādānud(dh)yāto
[²] aparājītavarddhano mukhara-sagotro trailokya-
va(?rddha)na-sa(?tpu)tro
[³] mā(t)āpitror ātmanaś ca puṇy(ā)pyāyana-
ni(mi)t(t)aṃ [3] (n)(?āgi)(ni)-(?pu)
[⁴] rāharanihi vihārāgrāhār(?aṃ) prayaccha(t)i
śakra-dharmma-pura [5]
[⁵⁻¹⁸] [...]

⁴³³ Notably the frequent use of the ending *-ehi* for the plural instrumental, and the active imperfect participles *kṛṣāventā vapāventā bhūñjantā* (I10).

⁴³⁴ See page 19.

C2 Nagari Inscription of Kṛta 481

In 1915–16, D. R. Bhandarkar discovered in Nagari village an inscription (listed in D. R. Bhandarkar 1929, 2 No. 5) dated in year 481 of the Kṛta Era (ca. 424 CE). In his discussions of the Kṛta/Mālava Era (e.g. D. R. Bhandarkar 1917, 192–94), he referred repeatedly to the dating formula used in this inscription, and he clearly intended to edit it fully (CII3rev p. 191), but apparently never got around to doing so, even though his revision of the Gupta volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum* would have been the perfect place for it.⁴³⁵ On Bhandarkar's suggestion the inscribed stone was moved to the Rajputana Museum of Ajmer (D. R. Bhandarkar 1920, 4), and its arrival there was duly registered and reported (G. H. Ojha 1916, 2; 5 No. 7). It may still be lying in a forgotten corner at that museum, but neither Hans Bakker in the early 2010s, nor I in 2018 succeeded in turning it up. The museum has recently undergone a thorough renovation which involved the creation of a dedicated epigraphic gallery, and during my visit Neeraj Kumar Tripathi assured me that all the inscriptions in their possession are exhibited in that gallery. It may be that the inscription was moved to another museum and the record of this has been missed; or that it was lent to Bhandarkar (or another scholar) for study and never returned. I summarise here what I could find out about this inscription from published sources, since its date (corresponding to 423–425 CE, in the reign of Kumāragupta I) and its find-spot (ancient Madhyamikā, the probable origin of the Chittorgarh inscriptions of the Naigamas, A13 and A14) make it highly relevant to the history of the Aulikara power network. It is even possible that this is an early record of the Naigama family, members of which subsequently became the hereditary chancellors of the Later Aulikaras.

According to the original report of the find (PRASW 1916, 56), Bhandarkar came upon the inscription in the cold season of 1915–16 in the house of a tanner and was told that the stone originally came from the citadel of Nagari. It was broken into several pieces, but all the text could be read without difficulty except for a few letters at the beginning of the first four lines. It began with a verse in praise of Viṣṇu, which ended in the fourth line. This was followed by the dating formula and an executive part concerning the erection of a temple to Viṣṇu by the three Baniya (possibly translating *vanij?*) brothers named Satyaśūra, Srugandha(?) and Dāsa. Their mother was Vasū and their father's name began with Jaya... (the rest being lost); their grandfather was Viṣṇucara and

⁴³⁵ A fact already pointed out with regret by Hans Bakker and Peter Bisschop (2016, 221).

their great-grandfather Vṛddhibodda(?). To the above, Bhandarkar later (1920, 120–22) added that the inscription was found “not far from the shrine of Mahādeva,” but it is not clear whether this refers to the house of the tanner or to the place where the stone was first found. According to the report of the Rajputana Museum (G. H. Ojha 1916, 5, no. 7), the (presumably assembled) stone’s dimensions are 29 by 32 centimetres.

An edition or transcript of the inscription (or part thereof) was apparently published by R. C. Agrawal in the Rajasthani quarterly journal *Varadā* (published from Bissau, बिसऊ). I have unfortunately not been able to locate a copy of this journal and the closest I could turn up is a reference in a recent book on Rajasthani art (Vashistha 1995, 9 n. 10), according to which this appeared in *Varadā* Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 2–3. I reproduce below the parts of the text quoted by Vashistha (exactly as printed, though transliterated from the Devanagari original), followed by a tentative partial reconstruction based on the segments quoted by Bhandarkar and my own conjecture. No information is available about how the text breaks up into lines, except that according to Bhandarkar’s report cited above, the opening is a verse that fills the first three lines and ends in the fourth. I assume that it is a *hariṇī* stanza (the only common metre that the reported text matches), and on the basis of this estimate the length of lines to be around 20 characters. I further assume that the name of the father, beginning with *jaya* with the end lost, would have stood at the end of a line.

Published Text

jayati bhagavān viṣṇu kṛteṣu caturṣu varṣāśateṣv ekāśi-
tyuttareṣv asyāṃ mālavāpūrvvāyāṃ (400) 80 kārṭika śukla
pancamyāṃ abhyāṃ bhagavānmahāpurūṣapādābhyāṃ
prāsādaḥ hitaḥ satyaśūreṇa strugadhena dāsena bhātr-
bhirebhirddhaniśvarairjjaya sutputrair viṣṇuca pautre
vṛddhi bauddha-prapotre rvvāsūprasūteḥ puṇya yaśo|

Conjecturally Curated Text

[1] jayati bhagavān viṣṇuḥ

[2]

[3]

[4] ... kṛteṣu caturṣu varṣa-śateṣu

[5] ekāśīty-uttareṣv asyāṃ mālava-pūrvvāyāṃ

[6] 400 80 1 kārṭtika-śukla-pañcamyāṃ abhyāṃ

[7] bhagavan-mahāpurūṣa-pādābhyāṃ prāsādaḥ kṛtaḥ
satyaśūreṇa

[8] sruḡaṃdhena dāsena(ḥ) bhātr̥bhir ebhir
ddhaniśvarair jjaya[?2]

[9] satputrair vviṣṇucara-pautrair vṛddhibauddha-
prapautrai

[10] r vvasū-prasūtaiḥ puṇya yaśo-(‘)bhivṛddhaye ...

[11] ?

C3 Bhanpura Fragmentary Inscription

Wakankar (1981, 278) reports an Aulikara-related inscription found around 1979 in Bhanpura near the Hanumān temple of Indragarh from where the inscription of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa Naṇṇappa⁴³⁶ had been recovered. The site is probably near 24°31’12”N 75°41’40”E, in the Mandsaur district of Madhya Pradesh, about 80 kilometres northeast of Mandsaur. According to Wakankar’s report, it is a stone fragment in a badly worn condition; the parts of the text that can be read indicate that it is a donative inscription and it mentions the Aulikara dynasty (*śreṇī*) and the granting of the right to collect a tax of three *drammas* from some bazaars. The purported Aulikara inscription is also mentioned by some subsequent authors (e.g. R. K. Sharma and Misra 2003, 7), and Wakankar’s reading of it has been published posthumously (Wakankar 2002, 34), but the text as printed is unintelligible.⁴³⁷

I have not been able to find any more accurate information about this inscription, nor to trace its present location. H. V. Trivedi (2001, 11 n. 5) mentions in passing “a stone tablet found in a deserted village of the name of Viṭṭhalpur near Bhānpura. It is inscribed in Gupta Brāhmī characters and is now used in the building of a temple.” This, however, has turned out to be a false trail. The ultimate source of Trivedi’s claim seems to be an Archaeological Survey report (PRASW 1920, 87) which does not mention Gupta script but does describe the object, which is in fact a sculpted panel with a short inscription. I have visited the site and located this panel, confirming that it postdates Aulikara times by a long stretch.

Having failed to turn up the putative Aulikara inscription in the museums of Bhanpura, Mandsaur and Ujjain, I believe it is most likely to lie in the lockers of the Wakankar Shodh Samsthan (see page 236 about this institute). Below I reproduce Wakankar’s reading of the text exactly as printed (transliterated here from the Devanagari original), and my attempt to reconstruct parts of it on the basis of my conjectures and the information given by Wakankar. The intelligible fragments indicate that the

⁴³⁶ This inscription, dated VS 767, was discovered in 1954 (Krishna Deva 1958).

⁴³⁷ The volume as a whole is carelessly edited, see note 29 on page 50.

text is a land grant, and if the description of the boundaries demarcating the land begins at the end of the first line, then in all probability there were originally several additional lines above the extant first one. The reading *ulikaryyā tacchreṇikāyāṃ* is more likely to be a feminine locative used in the description of a boundary than a reference to the Aulikara dynasty; it is even possible that the first word is in fact simply *uttarasyāṃ*.

Published Text

- [1] vīthyāpaṇa Uttarābhimukha vīthyā vipaṇaḥ
yasyāyatānā
- [2] baka graha Ulikaryyā tacchreṇikāyāṃ Ubha
- [3] haṭṭamārga Eva caturāya tanopalakṣitaṃ
bīthyā
- [4] kṛvyā dattā tridammaṇaṃ karma sade ... na
bhūṃjanīyāṃ
- [5] putra . . prapotradohitrena ca bhūṃjanīyā
- [6] masmi

Conjecturally Curated Text

- [1] vīthyāṃ paṇa uttarābhimukha vīthyāṃ vipaṇaḥ
yasyāghāṭanā
- [2] baka-gṛha ulikaryyāṃ tac-chreṇikāyāṃ ubha
- [3] haṭṭa-mārga evaṃ catur-āghāṭanopalakṣitaṃ
vīthyāṃ
- [4] (?pūrvvā) dattā tri-drammāṇaṃ (?karaṃ)
sadaī[?va] ... [?te]na bhūṃjanīyāṃ
- [5] putra[-pautra-]prapautra-dauhitreṇa ca
bhūṃjanīyā
- [6] masmi

C4 Sawan Sūrya Temple Inscription

An inscription that may be connected to the Aulikaras has been recovered from the village of Sawan (Neemuch district, Madhya Pradesh, 24°27'26"N 75°04'0"E, about 45 kilometres north of Mandsaur). The find was reported by Kailash Chandra Pandey (Pandey 1988, 77–78), who says that the ruins of a Sūrya temple to the east of the village were demolished to make way for a road in the 1950s. Some of its stones were at that time moved to the local Nāga temple, and these included a broken block of grey limestone carrying a sizeable inscription. Rubbings and photographs were sent to V. S. Wakankar, who was in poor

health at the time and could not work on it.⁴³⁸ The block was moved to the Yashodharman Museum of Mandsaur where it is now kept in storage (accession number 212) and where I was permitted to photograph it in February 2017 (Figure 57). The stone's enclosing dimensions are about 74 centimetres wide, 34 centimetres tall and 34 centimetres deep. The front, top, bottom and the left side meet at right angles, but the front and back faces are both broken off on the right-hand side. The front was polished smooth but is now badly worn; the other unbroken sides are roughly chiselled. The stone was evidently an architectonic block of which only the inscribed face was visible when it was incorporated in the temple.

The inscription covers an area about 52 centimetres wide by 29 centimetres tall, consisting of 19 lines, with the end of each line lost. The engraving is very careful and aesthetically pleasing, but the lines are shallowly cut and the surface has suffered heavily from exposure to the elements. Pandey describes the script as a Western Malwa Gupta-Aulikara Brāhmī of the 5th or 6th century, but he also says that the inscription is dated *saṃvat* 703. Since the script appears to be fully fledged *siddhamāṭṛkā* resembling the Indragarh inscription of Naṇṇappa⁴³⁹ and the Kanaswa inscription of Śivagaṇa,⁴⁴⁰ its classification as “Gupta-Aulikara Brāhmī” must be dismissed. The date 703 (i.e. 645–647 CE) cannot be excluded on palaeographic grounds, but a date in the late 7th or 8th century CE is more likely. As such, the chance that the text could be relevant to the Aulikaras is rather slim.

It turns out that Wakankar was, after all, able to do some work on this inscription, and his transliteration of the text was published by his heirs (Wakankar 2002, 36–37). Unfortunately, the text as printed is unintelligible, partly because the editor of the volume evidently had difficulty with Wakankar's handwriting.⁴⁴¹ Here too, the date of the inscription is reported as *saṃvat* 703. Wakankar believed that the text mentioned a *rājasthānīya* named Yaśopūrṇa, reading the former word at the end of line 9 and the name at the beginning of line 10. He further reads the words *praśramita dāya vaṃśa aulikara* (sic) in line 12; the text *vatsara-sateṣu saptasu semu* (sic) at the end of line 17 (the same string, with some variation, is also printed at the end of line 16, but this is clearly an editorial error); and *daśapurarcite* (em. *°rārcite*) in line 18.

⁴³⁸ Pandey wryly reports that the superintendent archaeologist was also invited from Mysore, but he departed after holidaying for three days in a hotel.

⁴³⁹ Dated VS 767; edited by Krishna Deva (1958).

⁴⁴⁰ Dated ME 795, edited by Kielhorn (1890b).

⁴⁴¹ See note 29 on page 50.



Figure 57: Sawan Sūrya Temple Inscription. Photo by the author, 2017. Scale: 30 cm/12". Courtesy of Yashodharman Museum, Mandsaur.

From my cursory study of the epigraph it appears that the topic is, at least in large part, a land grant. The boundaries of the plot are described in lines 7 and 8, and lines 15–16 contain the standard admonitory verses *ṣaṣṭi varṣa-sahasrāṇi...* and *bahubhir vasudhā bhuktā...* The characters *rājasthānī* are indeed clear at the end of line 9, and line 10 may begin with *ya yaśopūrṇa*, but the text is unclear here and there is no way of telling how many intervening characters have been lost at the end of line 9. Lines 11 and 12 are badly damaged, with strong lines of the stone's grain running parallel to the text lines. I find nothing resembling *vaṃśa aulikara* in the presumable locus where Wakankar reads these characters. At the end of line 17, I can confirm the partial date *vatsara-śate(ṣu) saptasu*, possibly followed by *se*; after the lacuna at the end of this line, the date may end with *reṣu* in line 18, but these characters are tentatively read by me (Wakankar prints *ṣeṣam* here). The inscription was thus created in the seven hundreds of what must be the Mālava/Vikrama Era; I have not been able to fathom what led Wakankar to establish the year as 703. As for the alleged reference to Daśapura, the end of that string seems to be *racite* rather than *rarcite*. The preceding characters, which may thus be the name of the poet, seem to have the consonant values *h-s-p* rather than *d-ś-p*.

Because the inscription is badly effaced and unlikely to be relevant to the Aulikaras, I have not undertaken to edit it for this volume. It would nevertheless be desirable to study this epigraph in depth, as it may hide important information about the post-Aulikara history of Northwestern Malwa. The stone, in need of cleaning by a skilled preservation specialist, is available for study in Mandsaur, and there are also rubbings of it kept at the Wakankar Shodh Samsthan (see page 236) in Ujjain.

C5 Hasalpur Inscription of Nāgavarman

An inscribed obelisk found in Hasalpur (also spelt Hansalpur and Hasilpur; at 25°54'53"N 76°52'09"E, in Sheopur district, Madhya Pradesh) has been known for a long time and discussed occasionally, but the text inscribed on it has never been edited, probably due to its poor state of preservation (Figure 58). Its existence was first reported by Garde (1934, 19), who noted the name of *mahārāja* Nāgavarman in the inscription and dated the obelisk around 550 CE, probably on a palaeographic basis. Garde moved the object to the Gwalior Museum, where it is presently exhibited. It was also listed in ARIE 1952–53, 43 (B. 170), where the find-spot is incorrectly recorded as “Syopur” and dated “about

the seventh century.” Harle (1970) discussed the artwork of the stone in detail and observed that the inscription ought to be edited by an epigraphist. He dates the artwork to the sixth or seventh century. Michael Willis (1996, 111) verified the findspot for his catalogue of inscriptions in the Gwalior region and later (2005, 148) theorised that Nāgavarman may have been a local ruler who participated in the coalition against Hūṇas in the first half of the sixth century. He does not explicitly mention the Aulikaras in this context, yet Yaśodharman must have been a key figure in such a coalition. Indeed, Misra and Sharma (2003, 7) include Hasalpur in a list of findspots of Aulikara inscriptions, but provide neither any further detail, nor a reference to the source of this information. This may imply that an Indian scholar has read the epigraph but did not publish it in internationally accessible media, or may simply be a mistake or a product of fancy.

The sandstone obelisk is about 135 centimetres tall, 30 centimetres wide and 24 centimetres thick. It is topped by the remnants of the head and bust of a male figure, and three of its sides are sculpted with three roughly square panels on each, separated by horizontal friezes. The fourth side (the back according to the orientation of the bust) bears an inscription of fourteen lines and also has a badly weathered relief panel at the bottom. The entire object is split along a roughly vertical line, and the face and the chest of the bust are lost. The imagery of the panels (see Harle 1970 for details and illustrations) clearly suggests that the obelisk is a hero stone carved to commemorate the death of an outstanding personage.

The inscription is in a northern-class alphabet. The letters are awkwardly drawn and shallowly engraved, and the entire surface is heavily worn and in many places flaked off. Many of the characters appear to have been highlighted with chalk or another white substance, but the emphasised lines are not always necessarily the correct ones. Moreover, the clear sections of the text contain definite mistakes (such as *śulka-pakṣe* for *śukla-pakṣe* in line 6); the likely presence of similar mistakes in the unclear sections also hinders reading. Due to all these factors and the limits of my skill, I have not been able to arrive at a meaningful reading for most of the text on the basis of my photographs. Continued first-hand study of the original stone may, however, allow a complete or almost complete decipherment of the text and I hope that someone with easy access to Gwalior will publish an edition in the foreseeable future.

The reason I present a partial, and in large part tentative, reading here is that it seems to mention a *mahārāja* Viṣṇuwardhana immediately before naming *mahārāja* Nāgavarman. This would imply that Nāgavarman was, as

presumed earlier, the local ruler, while Viṣṇuwardhana was his suzerain. I must, however, emphasise that the name is severely damaged and the reading may be wishful thinking on my part.

The first line of the inscription apparently mentions a *gupta-kula*. The second line evidently records the date in words. Unfortunately, most of the characters are equivocal. I tentatively reconstruct this section as *saṃvatsara-śatehi pañcehi sāśitehi*, which would mean that the epigraph was made in the year 580.⁴⁴² Understood as a date in the Mālava/Vikrama Era, this would correspond to 523 CE or thereabouts, which is plausible in light of the fact that Prakāśadharman was still reigning in 515 CE but Yaśodharman bore the crown in 532 CE. A potential fly in the soup, however, is the words *gupta-kula* in the first line, which may imply that the date is given in the Gupta Era. Since GE 580 is equivalent to around 900 CE, which the palaeography and the artwork exclude, this would entail that my reading of the date in line 2 is incorrect. The possibility cannot be discarded but I prefer to hold to the view that the date is ME 580, and that *gupta-kula* is mentioned for some other reason in the first line. It may be part of a place name, since one is often mentioned after the greeting *svasti*; and it is also possible that *gupta* is an incorrect reading. Though most characters in this word are quite clear, the subscript *t* is not. If *gupa* or *gupu* was in fact inscribed, this may be a reference to Gwalior (ancient Gopagiri or Gopapura) or to its ruling family.

After the date, I would restore *śrī-mahārāja-viṣṇuwardhana-rājye*. As noted above, the name Viṣṇuwardhana is tentatively read; see Figure 59 for a closeup. The character *vi* is clear. After it, two roughly vertical strokes may be the sides of *ṣ*, and a subscript *ṇ* (though not an attached *u*) is more or less discernible below these. The third character is all but obliterated and only its headmark is definitely recognisable. The fourth *akṣara* almost certainly has a *repha* attached to its top, but what remains of its body does not readily suggest *dha* (and even less, *ddha*). The last character is quite probably *na*. Taken all together, I deem *viṣṇuwardhana* a very plausible reconstruction.

The fourth line records the name of *mahārāja nāgavarmma*. Only a few sporadic *akṣaras* can be made out in the rest of line 4 and the whole of line 5. Line 6 mentions the *śukla-pakṣa* of a month, probably *kārt-*

⁴⁴² The use of a Prakritic plural instrumental in the date is paralleled in some of the early Mālava *yūpa* inscriptions (q.v. page 19) including those of Nandsa and Badwa, though there the numbers are recorded as numeral symbols, and only the word *kṛtehi* is used in this form.

tika. It may be possible to read the last two characters in this line as *dvitī* or *triti*, but the next line definitely does not begin with *yāyām*. A possible explanation for the separation of the year from the month and fortnight is that the former was recorded, along with the reigning universal and local ruler, for the inscription as a whole, whereas the latter introduces a specific event (presumably in the same year) with which the remainder of the inscription is concerned.

Next, we come to yet another person who is evidently the one whose death (or other action) the stone commemorates. His grandfather and father are named, but their names are unclear and do not seem to be meaningful in Sanskrit. The grandfather may have been called *Kiśīpaṇa*(?), and the father, with even less confidence, perhaps *Kagu-narendra*. I tentatively interpret the following words to mean that this person died in battle for the sake of cows and Brahmins, i.e. for the protection of the Brahmanical order of society. There are, however, several problems with this interpretation. First of all, if my reading *yuddhe* at the end of line 7 is correct, then the hero's own name does not appear to be recorded anywhere (though he may, perhaps, be *Kiśī* the son of *Paṇa* instead of Anonymous the son of *Kiśīpaṇa*). Second, my interpretation of *pañcam pratipannaḥ* as *pañcatvaṃ pratipannaḥ* is quite a stretch. It is possible that, rather than dying the hero's death, this gentleman offered five of something for cows and Brahmins, for instance five gold coins to create an endowment. I nonetheless consider this less likely than my original interpretation, partly because the obelisk itself suggests a dead hero rather than a living financier, and partly because of the fragments discernible in the remaining lines. These seem to belong to a sentence in a more poetic vein (possibly a verse, though I could not identify a metre from the fragments), and probably say either that the hero could not be touched by weapons while he fought, or that he remained undaunted even though weapons did hurt him. (These tentatively read/reconstructed fragments, not shown in the edition below, include *tikṣṇaiḥ śasttra ... °air nna* in line 9; *°air nna gāttraṃ kṣataṃ* in line 10 and *yan na bhugnaḥ* in line 11).

The details, each uncertain on its own, fit together into a coherent whole, which in turn corroborates the interpretation of each detail. It may thus be surmised, pending the recovery of evidence to the contrary, that (1) the Hasalpur stone is indeed a memorial to a hero who fell in a major battle, presumably fought somewhere in the valley of the Chambal near the findspot; (2) that this battle was fought under the imperial banner of Yaśodharman Viṣṇuvardhana in the third decade of the sixth century; and (3) that the enemies who threatened the cows and Brahmins were the Hūṇas.

Partial Diplomatic Text

- [1] § _ svas(t)i gup(t)a-kula [4] (l)
 [2] saṃvva(t)sī(e)!ra-śa(teh)(?i pa)(ñc)(?e)(hi) (?sā)śī
 [3] te(?hi) śrī-isa!(?hā)r(ā)ja-vi(?ṣṇuva)(r)(?dha)na-
 r(?ā)jye
 [4] (ma)h(ā)r(ā)ja-nāgavarm(m)a [?8]
 [5] [...]
 [6] [kārtt](?i)ka-māsa-śuḥka!-pa(kṣe) (?k)i(?ś)ī
 [7] paṇa-pjo!ttra k(ag)(?u-narendra)-pu(ttraḥ) [?1]
 (?yuddhe)
 [8] pa(?ñcam pra)tipanna(?ḥ)
 go-brja!h(m)aṇ(ā)rthe (?ba) [2]
 [9-14] [...]

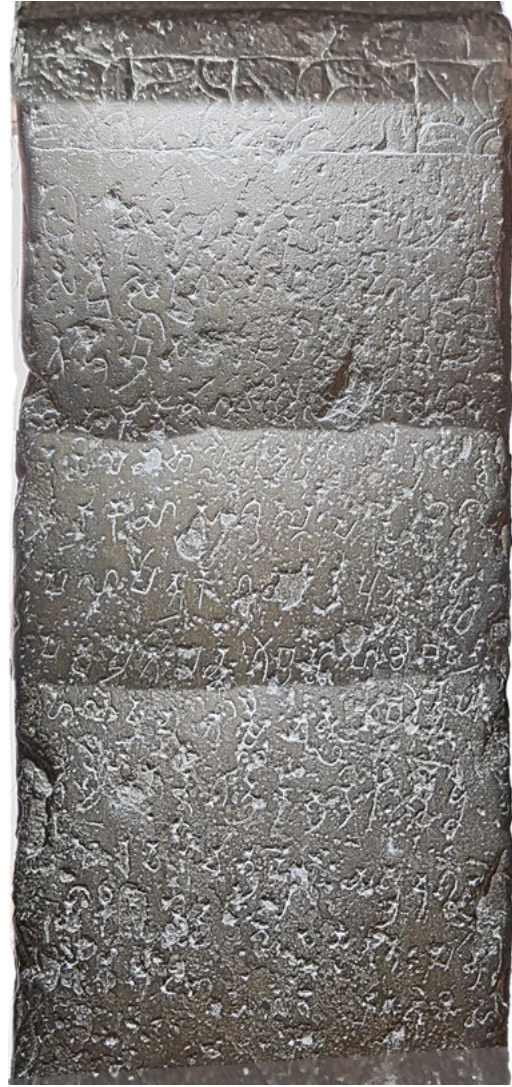


Figure 58: Hasalpur inscription of Nāgavarman. Composite digital photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior.

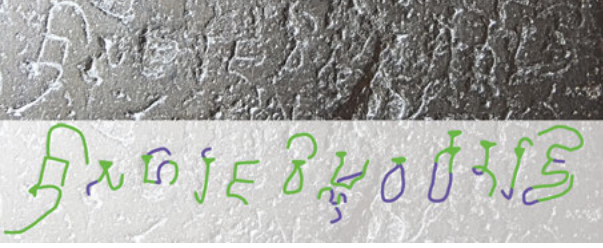


Figure 59: Hasalpur inscription of Nāgavarman, detail with freehand tracing of tentatively read *viṣṇuwardhana*. Clear strokes in green, unclear and tentatively restored strokes in blue.

Text Notes

- ^[1] §] The text begins with a *maṅgala* symbol resembling a mirrored figure 6 (a short sinistrorse spiral). It may be a very distorted *śrī*, but if so, it looks very different from *śrī* in line 3.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Prosopography

The prosopography presented here is a concise summary of the personal names mentioned in the major inscriptions edited above. For more detailed information refer to the inscriptions shown next to each name. No reference is made to the fragmentary Sondhni pillar inscription (A12), the text of which is identical to that of the intact pillar (A11). The prosopography only lists the names of historic personages, not those of mythical beings.

Name	Inscription	Information
Abhayadatta	A10	(probably) the middle son of Ravikīrti and Bhānuguptā; paternal uncle of Dakṣa/Nirdoṣa; used spies to seek and nullify threats to the kingdom; held the position of chancellor (<i>rājasthānīya</i>); governed a great territory (bordered by the Revā, the Pāriyātra and the ocean) through several underlings (<i>saciva</i>); protected the interests of the <i>varṇas</i> ; may have died prematurely
Ādityavardhana	A8	king ruling in Daśapura after defeating enemies
Ajitavardhana	A9	son of Jayavardhana; subjugated enemies; made many Vedic sacrifices
Aparājita	A7	composer of the inscription, or perhaps the person who wrote out the text for the artisan to engrave; appointed for his task by Gobhaṭa
Balaśūrā	A1	maternal grandmother of donor
Bandhuvarman	A6	reigning king; his domain includes Daśapura, son of Viśvarman; loyal to friends and terrible to enemies; handsome and young (in ME 439?)
Bhadantadāsa	A3	Buddhist <i>ācārya</i> , preceptor of Saṅghila
bhagavad-Doṣa		see Doṣa
bhagavat-Prakāśa		see Prakāśadharman
Bhānuguptā	A10	wife of Ravikīrti
Bharṭṭ-ananta	A15	father of Lakṣmaṇagupta
Bharṭṭ-cella	A15	probably an alternative name of Lakṣmaṇagupta; possibly the engraver of the inscription
Bhāskaravarman	A15	probably the son of Virasoma; had some connection to (probably sired, possibly defeated or paid homage to) someone described as the foremost Aulikari; ancestor (grandfather?) of Kumārarman; routed enemies in one or more battles
Bhaṭṭi-mahara	A2	father of Virasena
Bhogārṇava	A15	probably the person in charge of the construction recorded by the inscription; possibly first appointed by the king (Kumārarman or perhaps his son) to deal with bandits and winning his trust by succeeding at this task; may have died before the inscription was written; possibly an elder relative of Harideva
Bhramarasoma	A7	organiser of the building of the Goddess temple, or perhaps the composer of the inscription
Candragupta	A5	the Gupta emperor Candragupta II, a conqueror, father of Govindagupta; put his sons in control of conquered territories

(continued)

Name	Inscription	Information
Dakṣa	A10	younger brother of Dharmadoṣa and thus also a son of Doṣakumbha; also known as Nirdoṣa; probably the assistant of Dharmadoṣa in the office of <i>rājasthānīya</i> ; probably young in 532–533 CE
Dattabhaṭa	A5	donor, son of Vāyurakṣita and the daughter of a northern king, general of Prabhākara, favourably inclined to Buddhism
Dharmadoṣa	A10	son of Doṣakumbha, elder brother of Dakṣa/Nirdoṣa; pacified feuds (?) and prevented intermixture of classes; served as <i>rājasthānīya</i> under Yaśodharman
Doṣa	A9	chancellor (<i>rājasthānīya</i>) to Prakāśadharman; son of minister to Prakāśadharman's father (Rājyavardhana)
	A10	eldest son of Ravikīrti and Bhānuguptā; a wise politician and a patron and connoisseur of poetry
Doṣakumbha	A10	probably identical to Doṣa (but possibly Doṣa's youngest brother); father of Dharmadoṣa (and thus also of Dakṣa)
Drapavardhana	A9	progenitor of Prakāśadharman's dynasty; a conqueror with the title <i>senāpati</i>
Gauri	A7	son of Yaśogupta; captured elephants in war; a liberal donor
	A8	son of Yaśogupta; his mother was Hariśūrā; his mother's father was a valorous man, possibly a king, whose name is lost but possibly ended in <i>pta</i> or <i>nta</i>
Gobhaṭa	A7	a prince (<i>rājaputra</i>), most likely the son of Gauri; he appointed Aparājita
Govinda	A10	the artisan who engraved the inscription
	A11	the artisan who engraved the inscription
Govindagupta	A5	son of Candragupta (II), a conqueror
Gupta rulers	A11	<i>gupta-nāthair</i> , valiant kings who conquered the entire earth
Haribhaṭa	A4	son(?) of Mayūrākṣaka
Harideva	A15	regarded (by the king?) to be a worthy recipient (possibly of the office previously held by Bhogārṇava); possibly a younger relative of Bhogārṇava who had been dear to him
Hariśūrā	A8	mother of Gauri; devoted to her husband; her father's name is recorded but lost, possibly ending in <i>pta</i> or <i>nta</i>
Hūṇa rulers	A11	<i>hūṇādhipānām</i> , conquered many lands and subjugated their kings
Jaya	A1	grandfather of donor, Gārgāyaṇa <i>gotra</i>
Jayamitrā	A1	mother of donor
Jayavardhana	A9	son of Drapavardhana; commanded great armies
Jayavarman	A1	grandfather of Naravarman
Jīvadharāṇa	A7	father or more remote ancestor of Mitrasoma, thus grandfather or ancestor of Bhramarasoma; the actual spelling is Jīvaddharāṇa
Kakka	A9	father of Vāsula
	A11	father of Vāsula
Kumāragupta	A6	Kumāragupta I of the Imperial Guptas, ruling the entire earth

Name	Inscription	Information
Kumāravarman	A15	probably the father of the current ruler (possibly the current ruler) at the time the inscription was made; descendant (probably the grandson, possibly the son or great-grandson) of Bhāskaravarman; possibly the son of someone described as the foremost Aulikari; became heir-apparent (<i>yuvārāja</i>) at a tender age; he (or perhaps his son): was attacked by “a son of Kṛṣṇa” whom he defeated and killed, also capturing his elephants; his successor (or he himself) was probably captured by an enemy from whom he escaped, then reconquered Daśapura from enemies who are probably referred to as <i>dasyu</i> , then performed the <i>pañḍarīka</i> sacrifice and showed favours to Brahmins
Lakṣmaṇagupta	A15	probably the author of the inscription; son of Bhartṛ-ananta
Mayūrākṣaka	A4	donor, minister of Viśvavarman, probably Vaiṣṇava, wealthy, old, probably a former soldier
Mihirakula	A11	never bowed to anyone but Śiva before being defeated by Yaśodharman; he defends the region of the Himalayas
Mitrasoma	A7	father of Bhramarasoma
Naravarman	A1	reigning king, son of Siṃhavarman and grandson of Jayavarman
	A2	reigning king, Olikara
	A3	reigning king, son of Siṃhavarman, Olikara
	A4	father(?) of Viśvavarman
Nirdoṣa	A10	alternative name or epithet of Dakṣa
Prabhākara	A5	king of Dattabhaṭa, probably of a Mālava dynasty
Prakāśadharman	A9	reigning king and donor; son of Rājyavardhana; defeated Toramāṇa in battle and donated spoils of war to Brahmanical institutions
Puṇyasoma	A7	spelt Punyasoma; ancestor of Gauri, of the Mānavāyani clan; became a king in the warrior community (<i>kṣatra-gaṇa</i>) through his heroic acts
Rājyavardhana	A7	probable name of the son of Puṇyasoma conquered new territory
	A9	son of Vibhīṣaṇavardhana, father of Prakāśadharman; a great king
Rāṣṭravardhana	A7	here recorded simply as Rāṣṭra; son of Rājyavardhana; defeated enemies, possibly also conquering new territory
	A8	father of Yaśogupta
Ravikīrti	A10	probably an alternative name of Varāhadāsa (but possibly Varāhadāsa’s younger brother or son); brought fame to his family; married Bhānuguptā; had three sons with her, including Doṣa, (probably) Abhayadatta and (possibly) Doṣakumbha
Ravila	A5	composer of the inscription
Saṅghila	A3	donor, disciple of Bhadantadāsa, Buddhist
Ṣaṣṭhidatta	A10	progenitor of the Naigama clan; an eminent retainer of Yaśodharman’s ancestors; a rich man who had overcome the six enemies
Siṃhavarman	A1	father of Naravarman
	A3	father of Naravarman
Toramāṇa	A9	Hūṇa king, liege of many kings; bore the title of <i>adhirāja</i> which Prakāśadharman rendered false

(continued)

Name	Inscription	Information
Varāha	A14	probably identical to Varāhadāsa; father of Viṣṇudatta; grandfather or great-grandfather of donor
Varāhadāsa	A10	son of Ṣaṣṭhidatta from a wellborn wife
Varṇavṛddhi	A1	father of donor, Gārgāyaṇa <i>gotra</i>
Vāsula	A9	composer of the inscription, son of Kakka
	A11	composer of the inscription, son of Kakka
Vatsabhaṭṭi	A6	composer of inscription and agent appointed to refurbish the temple
Vāyurakṣita	A5	general of Govindagupta, married the daughter of a northern king, father of Dattabhaṭa
Vibhīṣaṇavardhana	A9	son of Ajitavardhana, grandfather of Prakāśadharman; famed for good deeds
Vīrasena	A2	donor, son of Bhaṭṭi-mahara, probably Buddhist
Vīrasoma	A15	son of (Ya?)jñadeva; a ruler of peaceful disposition; probably the father of Bhāskaravarman
Viṣṇubhaṭa	A4	son of Mayūrākṣaka
Viṣṇudatta	A13	a distinguished merchant
	A14	a renowned man; probably son of Varāha; father or grandfather of the donor
Viṣṇuvardhana	A10	an alternative name of Yaśodharman
Viśvarman	A4	reigning king, son(?) and successor of Naravarman, a conqueror, young
	A6	father of Bandhuvvarman, great politician and warrior, very charitable
(Ya?)jñadeva	A15	probably the founder of Kumārarman's dynasty; father of Vīrasoma
Yaśodharman	A10	also known as Viṣṇuvardhana; belongs to the Aulikara dynasty; a great warrior who brought acclaim to his dynasty; acquired the title <i>rājādhirāja paramēśvara</i> ; has taken control of eastern and great northern kings by diplomacy and war (possibly respectively); has conquered many lands where now all things are in good order; his army passed through the Vindhya
	A11	a worthy bearer of the title "universal sovereign" (<i>samrāj</i>); controls lands not conquered either by the Guptas or the Hūṇas; has many feudatories from all over the subcontinent; forced Mihirakula into submission
Yaśogupta	A7	spelt Yaśagupta; son of Rāṣṭravardhana; a peaceful and compassionate ruler but also a mighty warrior
	A8	son of Rāṣṭravardhana; of the Mānava <i>gotra</i> (?)

Appendix 2 Gazetteer

The following gazetteer is a brief overview of the geographical names mentioned in the major inscriptions edited above. For more detailed information refer to the inscriptions shown next to each name. No reference is made to the fragmentary Sondhni pillar inscription (A12), the text of which is identical to that of the intact pillar (A11). The gazetteer does not include mythical toponyms, only the names of actual physical places.

Name	Inscription	Information
Arabian sea	A11	as <i>paścimaḥ payodhiḥ</i> , defines the western or southwestern extent of lands controlled by Yaśodharman
Brahmaputra river		see Lauhitya
Daśapura	A1	site of temple inaugurated in the inscription(?), a great and famous city reconstructed text <i>pure ... paṃca-dviguṇa-saṃjñake</i>
	A6	site of the Sun temple; a thriving and beautiful city with parks and elegant houses; enclosed by two rivers; residence of respectable Brahmins
	A8	referred to as <i>puraṃ daśā[?hvayam]</i>
	A9	site where Doṣa constructed a temple to Brahmā as well as other temples and utilities
	A14	governed by a <i>rājasthāniya</i>
	A15	referred to as <i>daśāhvaya</i> ; probably reconquered from an enemy (who are probably also referred to as <i>dasyu</i>) by Kumāravarma (or his son); probably described as Kumāravarma's (or his son's) seat of pleasure (<i>sukhāśraya</i>), i.e. apparently his original capital
Ganges river	A10	originates in the Himalayas
	A11	embraces the Himalayas
Gargarātaṭa(pura)	A4	site of the temples and well inaugurated in the inscription site of many other public works funded by Mayūrākṣaka
Himalayas	A7	as <i>śailendra</i> , height of temple compared to its peak
	A9	as <i>prāleya-śaila</i> , temple compared to its slopes
	A10	as <i>himavat</i> , place where the Ganges originates
	A11	as <i>hima-giri</i> , defended by Mihirakula; as <i>tuhina-śikharin</i> , adjacent to the Ganges and defining the northern extent of lands controlled by Yaśodharman
Lāṭa	A6	country of origin of the silk weavers, beautiful with forested hills
Lauhitya river	A11	today better known as Brahmaputra; defines the eastern or north-eastern extent of lands controlled by Yaśodharman
Lokottara	A5	a Buddhist monastery, presumably in Daśapura
Madhyamā	A14	governed by a <i>rājasthāniya</i>
Mahendra mountain	A11	defines the southern or southeastern extent of lands controlled by Yaśodharman, has foothills with dense palm (<i>tala</i>) trees
Mandsaur		see Daśapura
Narmada river		see Revā
Pāriyātra mountain		has trees in which langurs live; apparently to the north of the territory administered by Abhayadatta
Revā river	A10	today better known as Narmada; has plenty of pale water; originates from the Moon (v11); originates from or passes through the Vindhya (v19)
Vindhya mountains	A10	Yaśodharman's troops passed through them; they have gorges and <i>lodhra</i> trees; the river Revā originates in or passes through them

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