Dániel Balogh

Inscriptions of the Aulikaras and Their Associates
Beyond Boundaries

Religion, Region, Language and the State

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Inscriptions of the Aulikaras and Their Associates

DE GRUYTER
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, Dinesh 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 Mandsaur, 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 Vākāṭakas 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 Viśavavaran), 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 Sulivan 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 Bhanduvaraman), 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 generations;\(^3\) 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 epithet 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 (CI, 76) correctly prints tāntrodḥāṭa 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 tantrodbhūta. 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 through sporadic comments and, lacking English translations, is not as widely accessible as the Corpus volumes.

\(^2\) 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 Siricar’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 most seem either to be unaware of or to ignore the fact that the inscribed spelling is tāntród-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 tantra 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 naganā bush. This grew (apologies for the pun) out of the inscription of the silk weavers (A6), which uses -lavalinaganainakasākhe at the end of a compound in line 18, and -naganainakapratthuṣākhe in a similar position in line 22. Fleet reads naganaika in the first instance and naganaika in the second, emending it to nagaṇāika. He analyses the compound into naganā+eka, translating “the lavalī-trees and the solitary branches of the naganā-bushes” and “the solitary large branches of the naganā-bushes” and explaining naganā as Cardiospermum halicacabum (CII p. 87 and note 4). Bühler’s edition (1890, 95, 96) prints naganaika in both loci and his translation follows Fleet’s interpretation. Siricar (1965b, 305, 306) follows Fleet to the letter, reading n and emending to n in the second instance.

K. M. Shembavnekar (1931, 146) observed that “the word naganā” has caused a “great confusion of the declensions 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, nagaṇa 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 n (CIIrev 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 naganaika 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 (l3, nagāvṛta; l5, nagen-drair) and naika in the sense of “many” one other time (l5, naika-puspa).

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

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-gaṇanāsthitī 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. 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.

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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 shoul-dered 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. I hereby express my heartfelt gratitude to Michael Willis, the instigator and chief principal investiga-tor 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 nationalist 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 facil-itators, 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 Narsinghgarh 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.

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Finally, I express my thanks here to the Western col-leagues who have enriched me through discussing various aspects of my book. I am deeply indebted to Hans Bakker for his sharp-eyed scrutiny of and insightful comments on parts of the manuscript, and to Liz Cecil for many lively discussions about Aulikara inscriptions and material culture. Marc Miyake has helped me with a publication in Japanese, and Gergely Hidas has offered opinions on issues related to Buddhism.

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/
Contents

Preface — V

Acknowledgments — IX

List of Figures — XV

A Concordance of Inscription Titles — XVII

Legend for Editions and Translations — XIX

List of Abbreviations — XXI

Preliminaries — 1

Editorial Conventions — 3
  Transliteration — 3
  Overview Tables — 4
  Descriptions — 4
  Photographs — 4
  Editions — 5
  Text Notes — 5
  References and Cross-references — 5
  Translations — 6

Dates and Dating — 9

Palaeography — 11

Part I: Context

Introduction: The Aulikara Power Network — 17

The Origin of the Aulikaras — 19
  The Mālava People — 19
  Mālavas in Malwa – Aulikaras in Daśapura — 20
  The Name “Aulikara” — 24

The Aulikaras and Their Associates — 27
  The Early Aulikara Dynasty — 27
  The Later Aulikaras — 27
  The Naigamas — 30
  The Mānavāyanis — 30
  The Dynasty of Kumāravarman — 32

Part II: Inscriptions

A Major Inscriptions — 35
  A1 Mandsaur Inscription of the Time of Naravarman — 35
    Description — 35
    Script and Language — 36
A8 Mandsaur Fragmentary Inscription of Gauri — 124
  Description — 124
  Script and Language — 124
  Commentary — 126
  Adityavardhana — 128
  Diplomatic Text — 129
  Curated Text — 130
  Translation — 130
A9 Risthal Inscription of Prakāśadharman — 132
  Description — 132
  Script and Language — 135
  Commentary — 136
  Drapavardhana and Dravyavardhana — 140
  Who Built What Where? — 143
  Diplomatic Text — 146
  Curated Text — 147
  Translation — 147
A10 Mandsaur Inscription of Nirdoṣa — 153
  Description — 153
  Script and Language — 156
  Commentary — 159
  Yaśodharman and Viṣṇuvardhana — 164
  Twists and Turns in Naigama Genealogy — 165
  Diplomatic Text — 167
  Curated Text — 168
  Translation — 168
A11 Sondhni Intact Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman — 175
  Description — 175
  Script and Language — 178
  Commentary — 179
  Diplomatic Text — 184
  Curated Text — 184
  Translation — 184
A12 Sondhni Fragmentary Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman — 188
  Description — 188
  Diplomatic Text — 191
A13 Chittorgarh Inscription Fragment A of the Naigamas — 192
  Description — 192
  Script and Language — 195
  Commentary — 195
  Diplomatic Text — 196
  Curated Text — 196
  Translation — 196
A14 Chittorgarh Inscription Fragment B of the Naigamas — 197
  Commentary — 197
  Diplomatic Text — 198
  Curated Text — 199
  Translation — 199
A15 Mandsaur Fragmentary Inscription of Kumāravarman — 201
  Description — 201
  Script and Language — 204
  Commentary — 205
Reconstructing the Tablet’s Width — 212
Diplomatic Text — 217
Curated Text — 218
Translation — 218

B Minor Inscriptions — 229
B1 Bihar Kotra Graffiti — 229
Diplomatic Text, Graffito 1–5 — 229
B2 Coin Legend of Siṃhavarman — 230
Diplomatic Text — 231
B3 Coin Legend of Naravarman — 231
Diplomatic Text — 230
B4 Signet Ring of Naravarman — 232
Diplomatic Text — 233
B5 Gold Seal of Viṣṇuvarman — 233
Diplomatic Text — 234
B6 Dhamnar Seal of the Candanagiri Monastery — 234
B7 Mukundara Graffiti — 235
B8 Mandsaur Sealings of Prakāśadharman — 235
Diplomatic Text — 236
B9 Sondhni Pillar Graffito — 236
Diplomatic Text — 238
B10 Eran Pillar Graffito N2 — 238
Diplomatic Text — 239

C Unpublished Inscriptions — 241
C1 Narasinghgarh Rock Inscription of Aparājitavardhana — 241
Partial Diplomatic Text — 243
C2 Nagari Inscription of Kṛta 481 — 243
Published Text — 244
Conjecturally Curated Text — 244
C3 Bhanpura Fragmentary Inscription — 244
Published Text — 245
Conjecturally Curated Text — 245
C4 Sawan Sūrya Temple Inscription — 245
C5 Hasalpur Inscription of Nāgavarman — 246
Partial Diplomatic Text — 248
Text Notes — 249

Appendix 1 Prosopography — 253

Appendix 2 Gazetteer — 257

Bibliography — 259
Literary Sources — 259
Epigraphic Sources — 259
References — 259

Index — 267
List of Figures

Figure 1 Some distinctive character forms in rounded and angular scripts. Credits as per the illustrations under each respective inscription. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1796715

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

Figure 3 The territory of the Aulikaras. Topographic base map from maps-for-free.com. River courses overlaid from india-wris.nrsc.gov.in. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1802986

Figure 4 The sculpture of Yamunā on her turtle from the Khilchipura toraṇa. Photo by the author, 2017

Figure 5 Genealogies of Aulikara and associated ruling houses. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1803716

Figure 6 Possible genealogies of the Naigama family. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1803976

Figure 7 Mandsaur stone inscription of the time of Naravarman. Inked rubbing from Shastri (1914). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1804430

Figure 8 Mandsaur stone inscription of the time of Naravarman. Photo by the author. Courtesy of Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1804854

Figure 9 Bihar Kotra stone inscription of the time of Naravarman. Inked rubbing from Bhandarkar (CI3rev Plate 15). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1805948

Figure 10 Bihar Kotra stone inscription of the time of Naravarman. Photo by the author. Courtesy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya. Not to be reproduced without prior permission of the Trustees. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1806160

Figure 11 Bihar Kotra cave inscription of the time of Naravarman. Photo by the author, 2017. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1888312

Figure 12 Bihar Kotra cave inscription of the time of Naravarman. Tracing by the author. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1888390

Figure 13 Gangdhar inscription of Mayūrakṣaka. Inked rubbing from Fleet (CI3 Plate 10). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1888482

Figure 14 Gangdhar inscription of Mayūrakṣaka. Photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Government Museum, Jhalawar. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1888588

Figure 15 Detail of the Gangdhar inscription of Mayūrakṣaka with the date. Photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Government Museum, Jhalawar. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1889066

Figure 16 Mandsaur inscription of Dattabhaṭa. Inked rubbing from Garde (1948). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1913932

Figure 17 Mandsaur inscription of Dattabhaṭa. Photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1914136

Figure 18 Mandsaur stone inscription of the silk weavers. Inked rubbing from Bhandarkar (CI3rev Plate 35). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1914340

Figure 19 Mandsaur stone inscription of the silk weavers. Photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1914511

Figure 20 Chhoti Sadri inscription of Gauri. Inked rubbing from Sircar (1954b). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1914717

Figure 21 Chhoti Sadri inscription of Gauri. Photo by the author, 2018. Courtesy of Government Museum, Udaipur. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1915158

Figure 22 The Bhamwar Mata temple at Chhoti Sadri. Photos by the author, 2018

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. Photo by Wikimedia Commons user Laitche, licence CC-BY-SA 4.0

Figure 24 Mandsaur fragmentary inscription of Gauri. Inked rubbing from Sircar (1954b). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1916082

Figure 25 Risthal inscription of Prakāśadharman. Inked rubbing from Trivedi (2001, Plate 13). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2102211

Figure 26 Risthal inscription of Prakāśadharman. Photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of the Naṭnāgar Śodh Saṃsthān, Sitamau. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2102367

Figure 27 The name of Drapavardhana in the Risthal inscription. Photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of the Naṭnāgar Śodh Saṃsthān, Sitamau. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2102571

Figure 28 Satellite view of Risthal with possible extent of the Vibhiṣaṇa reservoir. Bing™ Maps
aerial view, screenshot 28 May 2018. © 2018 DigitalGlobe © 2018 HERE Microsoft product screen shot(s) reprinted with permission from Microsoft Corporation. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2102899

**Figure 29** Mandsaur inscription of Nirdoṣa. Inked rubbing probably made by Fleet. Courtesy of the British Museum (acquisition number 1880,0.3492). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2103077

**Figure 30** Mandsaur inscription of Nirdoṣa, with the carved back face shown below. Photo courtesy of the National Museum, New Delhi Collection (accession number: 66-1-551). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2543224

**Figure 31** The stepwell next to Mandsaur Fort where Nirdoṣa’s inscription may have been found. Photographs by the author, 2017

**Figure 32** Baori Kalan, the stepwell outside the town where Nirdoṣa’s inscription was probably found. Photographs by the author, 2018

**Figure 33** Sondhni intact pillar inscription of Yaśodharman. Inked rubbing from Fleet (1886c). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2103481

**Figure 34** Sondhni intact pillar inscription of Yaśodharman. Photo by the author, 2017. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2103491

**Figure 35** Sondhni fragmentary pillar inscription of Yaśodharman. Inked rubbing from Fleet (1886d). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2104515

**Figure 36** Sondhni fragmentary pillar inscription of Yaśodharman. Photo by the author, 2017. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2104641

**Figure 37** Shell inscription(?) on the fragmented Sondhni pillar. Photo by the author, 2017. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2104727

**Figure 38** Chittorgarh fragmentary inscriptions of the Naigamas. Inked rubbing from Sircar and Gai (1961). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2105017

**Figure 39** Reconstruction of the Chittorgarh tablet of the Naigamas. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2105173

**Figure 40** Mandsaur fragmentary inscription of Kumāravarman. Inked rubbing from Mirashi (1983). DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2105249

**Figure 41** Mandsaur fragmentary inscription of Kumāravarman. Photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Yashodharman Museum, Mandsaur. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2105413

**Figure 42** Reconstruction of Kumāravarman’s tablet. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2105585

**Figure 43** Bihar Kotra graffito 1. Eye copy by J. D. Tripathi (1996)

**Figure 44** Bihar Kotra graffito 2. Eye copy by J. D. Tripathi (1996)

**Figure 45** Possible Bihar Kotra graffito 3. Eye copy by J. D. Tripathi (1996)

**Figure 46** Bihar Kotra graffito 4. Photo by the author, 2017. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2483263

**Figure 47** Bihar Kotra graffito 5. Photo by the author, 2017. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2483265

**Figure 48** Kotra Mataji temple inscription. Photo by the author, 2017

**Figure 49** Copper coin of Simhavarman. Photos courtesy of Devendra Handa; tracing by the author

**Figure 50** Copper coin of Naravarman. Photo and drawing courtesy of Devendra Handa

**Figure 51** Signet ring of Naravarman. Photo courtesy of Devendra Handa

**Figure 52** Gold seal of Viṣṇuvarman. Photo courtesy of Devendra Handa. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2483303

**Figure 53** Glass sealing of Prakāśadharman. Sketch by V. S. Wakankar. Courtesy of Kailash Chandra Pandey. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2483305

**Figure 54** Graffito on the abacus of the fractured Sondhni pillar. Photo by the author, 2017. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2483309

**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

**Figure 56** View of the Narsinghgarh rock inscription of Aparājitavardhana. Photo by the author, 2018. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2499803

**Figure 57** Sawan Sūrya temple inscription. Photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Yashodharman Museum, Mandsaur. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2499891

**Figure 58** Hasalpur inscription of Nāgavarman. Photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2500083

**Figure 59** Hasalpur inscription of Nāgavarman, detail. Photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.2530693
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 Mandsaur 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Published title</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fragmentary inscription from Chitorgarh</td>
<td>A13, A14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gangdhar (Gangrar, Gangadhar) inscription of Viśvavarman</td>
<td>A4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandasor inscription of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman, the Mālava/Kṛta years 493 and 529</td>
<td>A6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandasor inscription of Mālava samvat 524</td>
<td>A5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandasor inscription of the Mālava years 493 and 529</td>
<td>A6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandasor inscription of Vikrama samvat 589</td>
<td>A10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandasor pillar inscription of Yaśodharman</td>
<td>A11, A12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandasor stone inscription of the time of Prabhākara</td>
<td>A5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandasor stone inscription of Yaśodharman (and Viṣṇuvardhana), the Mālava year 589</td>
<td>A10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Legend for Editions and Translations

Legends

Editions

transliteration
see Transliteration on page 3 for further details

\texttt{x} \quad \text{upādhamāṇīya}
\texttt{f} \quad \text{jīhvāmūlīya}
\texttt{A} \quad \text{in diplomatic editions only, uppercase vowels represent full (initial) vowel forms in the original}
\texttt{T} \quad \text{in diplomatic editions only, uppercase consonants represent final (halanta) consonant forms in the original}
\_ \quad \text{space in original, approximately one character width in extent}
\| \quad \text{generic punctuation character (appearance described under Script and language for each inscription)}
\|\| \quad \text{higher-level punctuation character when more than one type is used in the original (appearance described under Script and language for each inscription)}
\$ \quad \text{other symbol, e.g. siddham sign or ornamental mark (described in note to the text)}

\textbf{structural features}

\[i\] \quad \text{line number, indicates beginning of line}
\[a\] \quad \text{indicates beginning of other physical unit, e.g. fragment}
\(i\) \quad \text{verse number, indicates beginning of verse in diplomatic text shown in curated text as a header, e.g. \langle Verse 1. Metre: anuṣṭubh\rangle}

\textbf{Translations}

\(abc\) \quad \text{Sanskrit words shown in translation for accuracy or to emphasise phonological aspects}
\abc \quad \text{lost text}
\(abc\) \quad \text{words inserted or repeated for clarification or disambiguation}
\(\text{abc}\) \quad \text{translation based on text that is unclear or confidently restored}
\(\text{abc}\) \quad \text{doubtful translation based on text that is unclear and tentatively read, tentatively restored or uncertainly interpreted}
\[abc\] \quad \text{words neither present nor restored in the Sanskrit, tentatively supplied as probable context to the extant words}
\{ab/cd\} \quad \text{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}
\[i\] \quad \text{corresponding verse number in the original}
\[i\] \quad \text{corresponding line number in the original (rough correspondence shown only in translations of prose)}
List of Abbreviations

ARASI  Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India
ARIE  Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy
Bh List  Bhandarkar’s List of Inscriptions
         (D. R. Bhandarkar 1929)
CE  Common Era
CI13  Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum Volume III
         (Fleet 1888)
CI13rev  Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum Volume III,
         revised edition (Fleet and Bhandarkar 1981)
l  line (physical line of an inscription)
GE  Gupta Era
GKA  S. R. Goyal’s Guptakālin Abhilekh (Goyal 1993)
IAR  Indian Archaeology, a Review
IBI  K. Tsukamoto’s Indian Buddhist Inscriptions
         (Tsukamoto 1996)
IEG  D. C. Sircar’s Indian Epigraphical Glossary
         (Sircar 1966)
IGE  P. K. Agrawala’s Imperial Gupta Epigraphs
         (P. K. Agrawala 1983)
MBh  Mahābhārata
ME  Mālava Era
MW  Monier-Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary
         (Monier-Williams 1899), digital resource at
         http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/
         scans/MW72Scan/2014/web/index.php
PRASW  Progress Report of the Archaeological Survey of
         India, Western Circle
PWG  Grosses Petersburger Wörterbuch (Böhtlingk
         and Roth 1855–1875), digital
         resource at http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-
         koeln.de/scans/PWGScan/2013/web/index.php
SI  Select Inscriptions
         (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
         Select Inscriptions)
v  verse
VS  Vikrama Saṃvat
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 r and l (not r and l); 2, the Sanskrit vowels corresponding to Devanagari ए and ओ are transliterated as e and o (not ē and ē); and 3, the anusvāra is transliterated as m (not m).

In addition to conventional IAST characters, I use x to transliterate the jihvāmūlīya and f to represent the upadhmānīya. 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 ē and ē). 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 jihvāmūlīya represents a voiceless velar fricative (IPA x) and the upadhmānīya is a voiceless bilabial fricative (IPA φ).

Throughout my editions and commentary, independent Sanskrit words are separated by spaces unless prevented by vowel samādhi, 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 āksara of the original. As noted above, I do not force segmentation on word boundaries obscured by vowel samādhi, so the only function such a sign would serve is to distinguish final (halanta) and initial (vāmūlīya) 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 āksaras (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 āksara 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 यद or यद्य; 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 सत्न, with a halanta consonant legible before the lacuna, while tasmān [...] corresponds to सत्न, where the final n is a regular āksara 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 एव where an illegible consonant has a legible vowel mark and is followed by a legible vā).

When citing words or phrases from an inscription in an English sentence, I do not necessarily retain the peculiarieties of the original spelling unless a non-standard feature is relevant to the discussion. Thus, for instance, kings whose name has vardhana at the end become vardhana in discussion; upadhmānīya and jihvāmūlīya are consoli-dated 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 yuddhāvitathatām in line 12 of the Risthal inscription (A9) as either yuddhā vitathatām or yuddhā+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 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 “ākṣara” 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

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.

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 \textit{halanta} consonants and initial vowels (see also \textit{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 upacchandasika 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 puṣpitāgrā, both of which were formerly tagged as upacchandasika. 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 \textit{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 \textit{Corpus Inscriptionum} and Sircar’s \textit{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 Kumāravarman.” 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 Gangdhar 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

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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, 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 anuṣṭubh 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. 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 of a tribal community (Peterson 1885; Fleet CII3, 158). Kielhorn (1890b, 56–57) then suggested interpreting gaṇa in the sense of a tribal community (Peterson 1885; Fleet CII3, 158). Kielhorn (1890b, 56–57) then suggested interpreting gaṇa in the sense of a tribal community (Peterson 1885; Fleet CII3, 158). Kielhorn (1890b, 56–57) then suggested interpreting gaṇa in the sense of a tribal community (Peterson 1885; Fleet CII3, 158). Kielhorn (1890b, 56–57) then suggested interpreting gaṇa in the sense of a tribal community (Peterson 1885; Fleet CII3, 158). Kielhorn (1890b, 56–57) then suggested interpreting gaṇa in the sense of a tribal community (Peterson 1885; Fleet CII3, 158).

5 Within this book these include the silk weaver inscription (A6, I23), the Chhoti Sadi (A7, I17) and Risthal (A9, I21) inscriptions, and the inscription of Kumāravarman (A15, I21). The Nagari inscription (C2, I5) is an example of pūrvā used in a date.

6 Specifically, within my present scope, mālavanāṃ gaṇa-sthityā yāte śata-catuṣṭaye tri-navaty-adhike bādanām in line 19 of the inscription of the silk weavers (A6) and pañcasaṃ sāteṣu śaradāṃ yāteṣv ekāmna-navati-sahiteṣu mālava-gaṇa-sthity-vaṣāt kāla-jhānāya 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, l1). 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).

**Rājasthāniya – Chancellor**

The office designated by the word *rājasthāniya* (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.” It appears, mainly on the basis of the Risthal inscription (A9), that in the Aulikara court at least, one of the functions of the *rājasthāniya* was to manage the executive aspect of the king’s undertakings such as constructions. Translations proposed for the word include “viceroy” and “regent” (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 *rājasthāniyas* 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, l19), 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.

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7 Cited from the *Lokaprákāśa* 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 कृत, 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 कृत 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 कार्तिकादि 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-tamāṇa) 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

<table>
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<th>CE max.</th>
</tr>
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<td>−58</td>
<td>−56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown</td>
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<td>−58</td>
<td>−57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Māgha</td>
<td>−58</td>
<td>−56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Phālguna to Āśvina</td>
<td>−57</td>
<td>−56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>−58</td>
<td>−57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current</td>
<td>Kārttika, Mārga, Pauṣa</td>
<td>−58</td>
<td>−57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Māgha</td>
<td>−58</td>
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<tr>
<td>current</td>
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<td>Phālguna to Āśvina</td>
<td>−56</td>
<td>−56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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8 This was first suggested by Peter Peterson (1885, 381). D. R. Bhandarkar (CII3rev 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 Kauśāmbi 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 siddhamātṛkā 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 kuṭila.

While the accuracy and usefulness of the term kuṭila are doubtful (Dani 1963, 115–16), a good case can be made for siddhamātṛkā as the name of a script widely used from the seventh to the tenth century (Salomon 1998, 39), and thus proto-siddhamātṛkā 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 na 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

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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 inscription of Gauri (A7), which follows the rounded model but uses the tripartite northern qa.

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.
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: Mandsaur, Naravarman; A2: Bihār Kotra stone; A3: Bihār Kotra cave; A4: Gangdhar; A5: Dattabhaṭa; A6: Silk weavers; A7: Chholi Sadri; A8: Mandsaur, Gauri; A9: Risthal; A10: Nirdoṣa; A11 and A12: Sondhni; A13 and A14: Chittorgarh; A15: Kumāravarman. 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 ī is as a rule represented by a circle in the rounded form, and ā with a dot or other mark inside the circle. In the angular form, the bottom of the circle is open on the left for ī and on the right for ā, and the vowel mark may have a tail that extended downward. The marks for medial ā, 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 Kumāravarman 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 Šakas 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. 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.

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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-gāya) of the Mālava tribe. This nation originated far to the north, occupying the territory around the river Ravi in the Punjab in Mauryan times and migrating gradually to the south. In the late centuries BCE and the early centuries CE their centre of power was Mālavanagara, modern Nagar in the Bharatpur district of Rajasthan. Their presence here is attested to by numerous coins, many of which bear legends such as mālavānaṃ jayaḥ or mālava-gaṇasya jayaḥ (Jain 1972b, 6). They are also referred to, in the form mālava, in the Nasik Inscription of Uṣavadāta (early second century CE), which mentions Śaka aid to the Uttamabhadra tribe against the Mālavas. 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 Jīvadāman and his uncle Rudrasiṃha 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 (नांदसा, 75°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 (*aikasaṣṭi-rātram atisatram) held by Nandisoma, son of Jayatsena,4 who bore the clan name Sogi or Sogin. It has been suggested (Altekar 1948, 260) that this sacrifice, conducted in the Krta 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 (rājaviṣṇu-mālava-vanśe prasūtasaya), 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, 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 Puṇyasoma and Kumāravarman’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 (बरनाला, 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 Sohartṛ 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 mahāsenapti of the Mokhari family named Balavadhara. 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, bhaṭārakā-amnātiyā ca gato śmiṃ varṣa- ratum mālavehi rudham utamabhādraṃ mocyaitum. Senart (1906, 79) translates, “[a]nd by the order of the lord I went to release the chief of the Uttamabhādra tribe” (Altekar 1948, 260). Nandisoma as belonging to a Mālava dynasty of royal sages (rājaviṣṇu-mālava-vanśe prasūtasaya), 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, 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 Puṇyasoma and Kumāravarman’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 (बरनाला, 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 Sohartṛ 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 mahāsenapti of the Mokhari family named Balavadhara. 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

5 Although a fragmentary yūpa inscription (sans extant date) from the same site speaks of a mahāsenapti 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 Bhṛmarasomas, and his father was Mitrasoma.
7 See page 241 about Aparājitavardhana.
8 The first member of the name is illegible but presumably consists of two aksaras. The title “king” (rāja), also applied to this person’s father, is read only from faint traces in both instances (Altekar 1942, 120 n. 9).
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 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

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9 *MBh* 7.165.115, *mālavasyendravarmanah*.
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*).
12 This inscription has not been published before, and only a preliminary partial edition is included in this book.
local Buddhist monastery by a chieftain (without a royal title) who calls himself Aparājitavardhana 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 Narsinghgarh inscription has no date but was most likely engraved in the late fourth or the early fifth century. If this is so, then Aparājitavardhana flourished in the same geographical area and roughly the same time period as Siṃhavarman and Naravarman. He may have controlled the Narsinghgarh region as a vassal of the early Aulikaras (he acknowledges a parama-bhattāraka in his inscription) or he may have been kin to them, in which case the Aulikaras and the Maukharis share common origins. Finally, it is possible that Aparājitavardhana 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.

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 Uparamāla (Cecil 2016, 110).

Within Avanti proper, the most prominent city was Ujjayini, while Daśapura – modern Mandsaur – was a prominent town on the northward trade route from Ujjayini (and before that, from the port of Bhṛgukaccha) to Mathurā (and onward to the valley of the Ganges). Dašapura 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 Śaka
inscriptions from the early centuries CE. 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 Kumāravarman (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 Ujjayini. According to his reasoning these inscriptions showed that Gauri was in control of 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 Ujjayini, because the Bhatsamhitā of Varāhamihira mentions a King Dravyavardhana of Avanti, “evidently” an Aulikara ruler reigning in Ujjayini. 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, 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 Bhatsamhitā, 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 Ujjayini, 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

14 According to C. B. Trivedi (C. B. Trivedi 1979, 2), an inscription in Anvaleshwar (अन्वलेश्वर, 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 Rajasthani 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 inadequately 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.

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 Risthāl.

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 Ujjayini 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 (मंडसौर, 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 Indraji, 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 Mad, 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 Mad 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 Hośaṅg 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 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

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.

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-vanśo (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 Cli, 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. 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.

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 Kumāravarman (A15) uses the form aulikari in the compound aulika-ri-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 Kumāravarman’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.” 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 (sakalasyaulikarānayasya 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 samdhī with a preceding word ending in a, the isolated form could be olkara 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 olkara to describe Naravarman. The entire text of this epigraph is very similar to that of the stone inscription, but the declension and samdhī of this particular phrase are non-standard here: the text is naravarmmasyolikanaras (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 samdhī after the preceding final a should have been aulikara.

Tallying the known attestations of the name, we thus have olkara twice, and an unequivocal aulikara only once, in Nirdoṣa’s inscription. The variant in Kumāravarman’s inscription is clearly a vṛddhi derivative that may go back to either form, and the instance in Prakāśadharman’s inscription is ambiguous because of samdhī. Going by weight alone, this should tip the balance in favour of the form olkara, 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

20 A very probable epigraphic parallel occurs on a sati stone found in Sangsī (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 śṛ (ṭp)u[?s] p ←–lāñchanaṣya n[ā]pater. The editors of the inscription (Sankalia and Dikshit 1948, 162) translate lāñchana as “crest,” but the lacuna between śṛ and lāñchana must have contained the king’s name.

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 kārsī (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.” 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-ṛājya): 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.

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22 In fact, Śaiva Tantric texts of the eighth century and later, such as the Vāmakeśvarimatatāntara 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 (l4).
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 reported without a recorded provenance. No further 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 Sususia (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 simha-vikrānta-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 simha-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 simha-vikrānta-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

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 Dattabhaṭa (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

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 Raghuvaṃśa 2.30.
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.
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 dharman 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 Kumāravarman’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 Kumāravarman’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. 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 varman 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 hypothesis is based solely on speculation, without any factual evidence.

If we adopt the less fanciful hypothesis that the two lines were separate (though probably related), 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 inscriptive 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. 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 Bṛhatāsamhitā 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, and both epigraphs give him imperial titles (rājādhirāja-paramēśvara in the stone inscription and saṃrāj 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, 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 of Kumāravarman’s dynasty.

The Later Aulikaras

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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 Jayavarman. However, in addition to the total lack of positive evidence, all the later Aulikaras between Jayavarman 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 Kumāravarman (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 Kumārāvarman (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 (rājasthāniya)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 Mandsaur stone records that the founder of the family was a tycoon named Śaṣṭhidatta, who took refuge at the feet of Yaśodharman's ancestors, though this does not necessarily mean occupying the position of rājasthāniya. His son Varāhadāsa is mentioned in the same inscription, as well as (probably) in the Chittorgarh fragment, which also speaks of a man named Viṣṇudāsa who may have been one of Varāhadāsa's sons.37 From the Risthal inscription we learn that Śaṣṭhidatta'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 rājasthāniya also appears in the Chittorgarh fragment, but who it applies to is not clear. Finally, according to the Mandsaur 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 Mandsaur 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 niggama in the sense of a marketplace or merchant group). Fleet (CII3, 152) understood it in the former sense, but since the expression vanijāṃ śreṣṭha, “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 Gaurī.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 Mandsaur (A8) records a shorter genealogy. Only the Chhoti Sadri inscription bears a date (ME 547, ca. 490 CE), which indicates that Gaurī 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 Gaurī's son.

36 See page 8 about the translation of this term.
37 Interestingly, the Pādatāḍitaka of Śyāmilaka (5th century), mentions a minister named Viṣṇudāsa (p. 24, amātya viṣṇudāsah) in the same breath as Rudravarman 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 Gaurī is quite peculiar for a male name. One might be tempted to assume that it is a misreading or erroneous engraving of Saurī, 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 Saurī, 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.
No unequivocal dynastic name is recorded for these rulers, but they are said in the Chhoti Sadri inscription to originate from the Māṇavāyani clan (kula). As Sircar (1954b, 122) notes, the standard spelling would probably be Māṇavāyani, implying descent from Manu Svāyambhuva and reminiscent of the gotra name Mānava, which has been claimed on several occasions by ruling houses presumed to be of non-Aryan origin. 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; mānava, 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 Gujarāt Cālukyas also made this claim around the turn of the 8th century, for example in the Navsari plates of Śryāśraya Śīlāditya (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 Aulikaras and Their Associates

The Dynasty of Kumāravarman

A single fragment of a large stone slab (A15), discovered about the same time as the Risthal inscription, preserves the name of Kumāravarman and his ancestors, none of whom are known from any other source. The single published edition of this Mandasaur stone inscription of Kumāravarman (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 Kumāravarman needs to be revised: there were probably more generations mentioned in the inscribed account than previously assumed. Rather than four generations including Kumāravarman, 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 Kumāravarman and was slain by him. The attacker was quite certainly the Kalacuri Śaṅkaragaṇa, son of Kṛṣṇarāja, who is associated with an inscrptional date of 595 CE. The palaeography of the Kumāravarman inscription matches that period; if I am correct in hypothesising that the commissioner of the inscription was actually Kumāravarman’s son, then its probable date is in the first or second decade of the seventh century.

Kumāravarman’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 Kumāravarman’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 Kumāravarman’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 Kumāravarman’s forebears (Salomon 1989, 15) puts his dynasty’s progenitor (Ya?)jñadeva 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?)jñadeva 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 Kumāravarman’s line, with the implication that Kumāravarman 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 Kumāravarman’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 Kumāravarman 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 Kumāravarman’s dynasty called themselves Aulikaras, then descent from the Mānavāyanis is unlikely. 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 Kumāravarman’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, Kumāravarman’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

<table>
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<th>Substrate</th>
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<tr>
<td>Material</td>
<td>stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions, assembled</td>
<td>width 50 cm height 31 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions, fragment A</td>
<td>width 50 cm height 19 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions, fragment B</td>
<td>width 12 cm height 12 cm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 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) |

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<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>width 48 cm height 31 cm Char size 8 mm Line height 20–30 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date CE</td>
<td>403–405 Basis of dating dated Kṛta 461 (I1–2), Āśvina śukla 5 (I5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>construction of a temple of Kṛṣṇa(?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons mentioned</td>
<td>Jayavarman, Siṃhavarman, Naravarman; Varṇavṛddhi, Jayamitrā, Jaya, Balaśūrā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places mentioned</td>
<td>Daśapura(?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compendia</td>
<td>Bh List 3; CI3rev 14; SI III.51; GKA 341–342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other editions</td>
<td>H. Shastri 1914 (Fragment B only edited in CI3rev)</td>
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</table>

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 (CI3rev 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-
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 Mālavan 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 l6, 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. candramāḥ, l8). 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. odyamāḥ, l6). In the latter lines the body of ma is a triangle with straight sides (e.g. manigal-yah, l13). The shape of dha also changes as the inscription progresses, from a clean oval without a headmark (e.g. adhike, l2; madhu, l7) through slightly angular with a serif on top (dhanaḥ in l9, discernible only in the rubbing) to an oblong quadrangle with altogether straight sides and a prominent headmark (dhanyo, l13). Sa is hooked with an upright leg on the right and na 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” (l4) a cursive bipartite form was engraved, while toyardā (l7) 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. Sa 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 Sarana (l7) is a cursive simplification where the hook continues as the crossbar. A cursive form of ru also occurs (l7, but not in l1). Shastri and Bhandarkar both point out tha in manorahe (l4), 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 seen not to the left leg, but the left leg often bends inward in a small hook, and the form used in Sarana (l7) is a cursive simplification where the hook continues as the crossbar. A cursive form of ru also occurs (l7, but not in l1). Shastri and Bhandarkar both point out tha in manorahe (l4), 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 seen not to the left leg, but the left leg often bends inward in a small hook, and the form used in Sarana (l7) is a cursive simplification where the hook continues as the crossbar. 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 (l9, 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 (l6) and the e of medini (l12) and aprameyam (l18) involves vertical strokes extending below the baseline, while regular e and ā mātrās only angle down for a short length. In manorahe (l2) the right-hand stroke of the o is attached to the body of n, though ā is attached at the head (e.g. nānā, l12). Other instances of variation in form include the ī of kṛṣṇa (l2) which curves in the opposite direction to regular ī marks (l1,3,6), 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. ṛābhyaśāt samvarddhita). 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 l7 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. pandcmyām, l5), but the consonant n is used instead of an expected anusvāra before g (śaraṇaṃ gataḥ, l7) and before h (śītka, twice in l5). Consonants following r are doubled, including th and dh but notably and consistently excluding t (e.g. putra, l5; gotro, l10; possibly mitrayā, l9). Before r, only k is doubled and that only some of the time (śakkrasya, l2; vikrām, l4, but vikrānta l5). Upadhmnīya and jhvanīya do not occur.

The language is good Sanskrit with some non-standard features. The use of śrīr instead of śrī in compound (l1, l8) 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 Auli, and the application of standard samādi (i.e. dine śvayu and instead of dine aśvoja) would have produced correct metre with standard language. Metre cannot be the reason for the employment of maghe instead of the etymologically related word mahē (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 bhalaśūrāyā satputro jayamitrayāḥ (l9) 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 Jayamitrāyā. Emending to duhitrā would take care of that problem, but would leave another instance of satputro in the previous pāda redundant. I therefore believe Jayamitrāyā was intended as a genitive, either through inattention or, in case Jayamitrāyāḥ 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 anusṭubh verse. A number of metrical features may be worth noting here. The word simhavarmmaṇas

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1 Gai (1990b) cites additional examples from epigraphy and literature and argues that the use of śrī in compound is correct by Pāṇinian rules.
(v7a) is unmetrical, but simhavarmmasya would have been metrically appropriate, though grammatically risqué. I believe this is what the poet had in mind originally; 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 prānāś 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.

The festival of Śakra referred to is beyond doubt the Indramaḥa, widely celebrated in ancient India during the monsoon. Its timing varied, falling in the bright fortnight of either Bhāḍrapada or the next month, Āśvina. The choice of the month may depend on whether the applicable calendar is amānta or pūrṇimanta. D. R. Bhandarkar (Cl13rev pp. 263–264) convincingly suggests that the reason why the festival is said to be “approved by Kṛṣṇa” (krṣṇasyānumate, 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 Harivamsa, 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. In addition to confirming an Indra festival in early Āśvina with the implicit approval of Kṛṣṇa, this passage of the Harivamsa also includes a description of the beauty of early autumn reminiscent of verse 4 of the present inscription. 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 Harivamsa (62.54) further employs the phrase pravṛtte makheṣu ca, which resembles maghe pravṛtte sakrasya in line 2 of the inscription. If our author did model his work on this Harivamsa 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 Harivamsa 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

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).

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

4 Harivamsa 62.45-46abcd, Indra speaking: ye ceme vārṣikā māṣāś catvāro vihitā mama eṣāṁ ardhaṁ prayacchāmi śarat-kālam tu paścimam| adya-prabhṛti māsu dvau jhāasyanti mama mānaṁvah| varṣārdhe ca dhvajo nityaṁ tataḥ pūjāṃ avāpsyati| ... 62.55a, b, tataḥ pravartasyate punyā śarat suptotthite tvayi| ... 62.56cd, mahendraś cāpy upendraś ca mahiyetāṁ mahitale| 5 Compare Harivamsa, sasasyāyāṃ ca simāyāṁ in 62.53 and phalavatsu ṛṣeṇa ca ikṣumat ca deṣeṇa in 62.54 with the inscription, medini sasya-mālīni in 13 and niṣpanna-vrīhi-yavāsā kāśa-puṣpair alaṁkātā in 14.
these to holidays. Below, I translate that verse as referring to the sleeping Viṣṇu, but the word nidrālu (I1) 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 Viśākharadatta which subsequently became immensely popular judged on the number of citations in subhāṣita anthologies and poetical treatises. If the author had an early-morning Viṣṇu in mind, that would suggest that the Indramaha and the awakening were roughly contemporaneous. The Brhatasmhītā says the festival of Indra commences on the bright eighth of Bhādra. It does not discuss the Bṛhatsaṃhitā and the awakening were roughly contemporaneous. The Viṣṇu in mind, that would suggest that the Indramaha ceremony may take place, primarily in Kārttika but also in Āśvina. Given that various dates have been recorded for his army when Viṣṇu opens his eyes after the nīrājana( ), 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. 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 l14–15), 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 Simhavarman, 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 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 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, udāyama, 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” 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 pama-daṅga. 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 pama-daṅgula, “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

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6 Mudrārākṣasa 3.21; see Balogh (2013, 252) for texts citing this stanza.
7 Brhatasmhītā 42.23, bhādrapada-sukla-paśasasyaṣṭamayam.
8 Brhatasmhītā 43.12, bhagavati jalaḥara-paṃca-kṣapākarārkeksane kamalanābhe unmilayati tuarigama-kari-nara-nirājanam kuryat! dvādaṣṭam asaṃtayām kārtika-suklasva paṃcadaṣṭam vāj āśvayuje vā kuryān nirājana-samjñitāṃ śāntiṃ
9 Madhuca longifolia (J.Koenig ex L.) J.F.Macbr.
meant for the donor and his descendants (the word *putra* survives in l13) is very plausible.

The last extant line mentions something inhabited by Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇenādhyuṣitas*) and the extant text ends with the word *tāvat*, 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. 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.

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**Diplomatic Text**

**Fragment A**

1. (si)ddhaM₁
2. (1) sahasra-śirase tasm(ai) puruṣay(ā)m(i)tām(i)tmane catus-samudra-paryyaṅka-toya-nidrālave namah₂
3. (2) śrī¡r!-mmālava-gaṇāmnāte praśaste kṛta-sa(ṃ)jñite
4. (3) prāvṛ(ṭ)-kāle śubhe prāpte manas-tuṣṭi-kare nṛṇāM
5. (4) maighle pravṛtye śakkrasya kṛṣṇasyānumate tadā
6. (5) niśpanna-vrīhi-yavasā kāśa-puṣpair alaṃkṛtā bhābhir abhyadhikaṃ bhāti medini sasya-mālīnī
dine
7. (6) jAśvoja!-ṣuklasya paṃcamyām atha satkṛte
8. (7) ṛdr-kāla-vare ramye praśāsati vasundharāM
9. (8) prāk-puṇyopacayābhyāsāt saṃvarddhita-manorathe
eyavarmma-narendrasya pautre devendra-vikkrane
10. (9) kṣitiś(a)-siṅ!havarmmaṇas siṅ!ha-vikrānta-
gāmini satputre śrī¡r!-mmahārāja-naravarmmaṇi pārthive
tat-pālana-guṇoddeśād dharmma-
11. (10) niṣpanna-vrīhi-yavasā kāśa-puṣpair alaṃkṛtā bhābhir abhyadhikaṃ bhāti medini sasya-mālīnī
dine
12. (11) jAśvoja!-ṣuklasya paṃcamyām atha satkṛte
13. (12) ṛdr-kāla-vare ramye praśāsati vasundharāM
14. (13) prāk-puṇyopacayābhyāsāt saṃvarddhita-manorathe
eyavarmma-narendrasya pautre devendra-vikkrane
15. (14) kṣitiś(a)-siṅ!havarmmaṇas siṅ!ha-vikrānta-
gāmini satputre śrī¡r!-mmahārāja-naravarmmaṇi pārthive
tat-pālana-guṇoddeśād dharmma-
16. (15) niṣpanna-vrīhi-yavasā kāśa-puṣpair alaṃkṛtā bhābhir abhyadhikaṃ bhāti medini sasya-mālīnī
dine
17. (16) jAśvoja!-ṣuklasya paṃcamyām atha satkṛte
18. (17) ṛdr-kāla-vare ramye praśāsati vasundharāM
19. (18) prāk-puṇyopacayābhyāsāt saṃvarddhita-manorathe
eyavarmma-narendrasya pautre devendra-vikkrane
20. (19) kṣitiś(a)-siṅ!havarmmaṇas siṅ!ha-vikrānta-
gāmini satputre śrī¡r!-mmahārāja-naravarmmaṇi pārthive
tat-pālana-guṇoddeśād dharmma-
21. (20) niṣpanna-vrīhi-yavasā kāśa-puṣpair alaṃkṛtā bhābhir abhyadhikaṃ bhāti medini sasya-mālīnī
dine
22. (21) jAśvoja!-ṣuklasya paṃcamyām atha satkṛte
23. (22) ṛdr-kāla-vare ramye praśāsati vasundharāM
24. (23) prāk-puṇyopacayābhyāsāt saṃvarddhita-manorathe
eyavarmma-narendrasya pautre devendra-vikkrane

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

[Fragment A][1]

(siddhaM)

〈Verse 1. Metre: anuṣṭubh〉
sahasra-śirase tasm(ai)
puruṣāy(ā)m(i)tātmane
catus-samudra-paryānka-
to ya-nidrālave namāh

〈Verse 2. Metre: anuṣṭubh〉
śrī¡r!-mmālava-gaṇāmnāte
praśaste kṛta-sa(ṃ)jñite
[e]ka-ṣaṣṭy-adhike prāpte
samā-śata-catuṣṭaye

〈Verse 3. Metre: anuṣṭubh〉
prāvṛ(ṭ)-kāle śubhe prāpte
manas-tuṣṭi-kare nṛṇām
[gh:h]e pravṛtte śakkrasya
kṛṣṇasyānumate tad(ā)

〈Verse 4. Metre: anuṣṭubh〉
[3]niṣpanna-vrīhi-yavasā
kāsa-puspair alaṃkṛta
bhābhir abhyadhikaṃ bhāti
medinī sasya-mālinī

〈Verse 5. Metre: anuṣṭubh〉
dine ¡āśvoja!-śuklasya
paṃcamyām atha satkṛte
[4]īdṛk-kāla-vare ramye
praśasati 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] prāvṛ[ṭ] Si 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?) megha prañjite. Bh follows S
and dismisses Konow’s suggestion. I concur, though see also the
Commentary.

[2] kṛṣṇa The vowel mark of kr is conspicuously different from
those of kr 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 kāsa, 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-puṇyopacayābhyāṣāt
samvarddhita-manorathe
jayavarma-narendrasya
pautre devendra-vikkrame  

Verse 7. Metre: anuṣṭubh  
kṣitīśa(ā)-siṃhavarmanas
siṃha-vikrānta-gāmini
satputre śrīṛ-mañahārāja-
naravarmanī pārtthive  

Verse 8. Metre: anuṣṭubh  
tat-pālana-guṇoddeśād
dharmma-prāpty-arthha-vistaraḥ
[6]pūrvva-janmāntarābhyāsād
balād ākṣipta-mānasaḥ  

Verse 9. Metre: anuṣṭubh  
sva-yasaḥ-puṇya-saṃbhāra-
vivarddhita-kṛtodyamaḥ
mṛga-tṛṣṇā-jala-svapna-
vid(y)ud-dīpa-śikhā-calam  

Verse 10. Metre: anuṣṭubh  
jīva-lokam imaṃ jñātvā
śaraṇyaṃ śaraṇaṅ gataḥ
tridaśodāra-phaladaṃ
svargga-stri-cāru-pallavam  

[5] kṣitīśa[.] Other editors read kṣitīśe. I think that would be redundant with pārtthive 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, l7). Some, though not all, śa characters have a small headmark (e.g. śakkrasya, l2), so here we may be dealing with a more pronounced headmark, or perhaps a different character was erroneously begun and then changed into śa.  
[6] mānasaḥ[.] As SI observes, mānasaṃ may have been initially engraved, with the anusvāra rubbed out.  
[6] vidyud[.] S and Bh read viddu and emend. The character does look like ddu, but note that the i of the adjacent ddi 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] jāṭāvā[.] jāḥ 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 å mātrā.
Verse 11. Metre: anuṣṭubh

vimānāneka-viṭapaṃ
toyadāṃbu-madhu-sravam
(v)āsudevaṃ jagad-vāsam
aprameyam ajaṃ vibhum

Verse 12. Metre: anuṣṭubh

mitra-bhṛtyārtta-satkarttā
sva-kulasya tha candramāḥ
yasya vittaṃ ca prāṇāś ca
deva-brāhmaṇasā d ga(tā)[ḥ]

Verse 13. Metre: anuṣṭubh

[9]mahā-kāruṇikaḥ satyo
dharmmārjitā-mahādhanaḥ
satputro varṇṇavṛddhes tu
satputro tha jayasya vai

Verse 14. Metre: anuṣṭubh

duhitur bbalaśūrāyāḥ
satputro jayamiti(r)a(y)ā!
gārgāyana-sagotro vai
jāti(ṭ)a[ḥ] [z - - - -]

[8] brāhmaṇasā gatāḥ S emends and restores brāhmaṇasā 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 kṛ. 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.

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

[11] Vāsudeva, the shelter (vāsa) of the world, 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 Varṇṇavṛddhi and a true grandson of Jaya,

[14] a true son of Jayamitrā, daughter of Balaśūrā, of the gotra of Gārgāyaṇa by birth ...

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 Narasimhapuruṣa (64.71, vāsudeva jagad-vāsaḥ purāṇaḥ kavir avayah), 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 (64.72cd73ab, yasmād vā sarva-bhūtānāṃ tattvādyānāṃ yuga-ksaye[ jaśmin nīvāsāḥ 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〉

[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==

〈Verse 16. Metre: anuṣṭubh〉

[15]pure mahati vikhyāte
paṃca-dvig[?uṇa-saṃjñake]
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==

〈Verse 17. Metre: anuṣṭubh〉

[16]... furnished with various trees, creepers and bushes ...

〈Verse 18. Metre: anuṣṭubh〉

[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==

〈Verse 19. Metre: anuṣṭubh〉

[17]... 

〈Verse 20. Metre: anuṣṭubh〉

[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==

〈Verse 21. Metre: anuṣṭubh〉

[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==
[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==[==]==

[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.


[14] kṛṣṇenā°] Bh reads kruṣṇena° 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

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Substrate</th>
<th>Siddham ID:</th>
<th>OB00017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material</td>
<td>stone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object type</td>
<td>slab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>width 35 cm</td>
<td>height 18 cm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discovery before 1938, in the vicinity of Bihar Kotra (23°38'07"N 77°06'33"E)

Current location Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalya, Mumbai (in storage)

Inscription

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Siddham ID:</th>
<th>IN00018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td>width 33 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Char size</td>
<td>15 mm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line height</td>
<td>20–30 mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date CE 417–418

Basis of dating dated (Kṛta) 474 expired, Śrāvaṇa śukla 2 (l2–3)

Topic construction of a well for the Buddhist saṅgha

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, Raigarh district, Madhya Pradesh) by a tourist and collector. The massive escarpment near Bihar Kotra (and the nearby town of Narasinghgarh) 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 koṭara, “cave.”

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 Sangrahalya, 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

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.

23 N. P. Chakravarti says in an editorial footnote to S. N. Chakravar- ti’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 Vishnudhana.” 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.
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.

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
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, na 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, sā (represented only as śrā and ścā, l3 and l5) 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; i 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. Upadhmaṇiya and jihvāmālīya do not occur. Consonants (except for s) are doubled after r; i is also doubled before r (puttreṇa, l4), while satvānāṃ (l5) is spelt with a single t. The language is by and large standard Sanskrit. The word catusaptateṣu (l2–3) may reflect a non-standard form rather than a simple omission of a visarga. Śrī is used instead of śrī in compound (l1), as in other inscriptions of the time of Naravarman (A1, A3).

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 Bhaṭṭī-mahara. Bhandarkar restores tta (for mahattara) at the end of line 3. There is definitely no lost text here, and the bit clipped 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 še, meaning that the date is simultaneously the twentieth (viṃṣe) 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 aksara 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.

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

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.
A2 Bihar Kotra Stone Inscription of the Time of Naravarman

Diplomatic Text

[1] [s]iddhaṃ।M śrī¡r!-mmahārāja-naravarmmaṇaḥ ṣollīkarasya
[2] [sva]-rājya-saṃvatsare catusr-ṣaṣṭeṣu catu
[3] [sa]ptateṣu śrāvaṇa-śukla-dvitiyāyāM bhaṭṭi-maha
[4] ra-satputreṇa virasenenaṇyam udapāṇaḥ khāni
[5] taṣ cāturddiṣaṃ bhikṣu-saṃgham uddīṣya sarvva-saṭṭvānāṃ
[6] ṭṛṣṇā-ṣaṭṭvāyaṇāṃ

Curated Text

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 Śravaṇa,
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 (ṭṛṣṇā27) for all beings.

Footnotes

26 See page 6 about translating siddham as “accomplished.”
27 Note the double entendre in ṭṛṣṇā, 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 (CIll3rev p. 267 n. 11).

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 Śravaṇa,
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 (ṭṛṣṇā27) for all beings.

Footnotes

26 See page 6 about translating siddham as “accomplished.”
27 Note the double entendre in ṭṛṣṇā, 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 (CIll3rev p. 267 n. 11).
A3 Bihar Kotra Cave Inscription of the Time of Naravarman

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, 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). 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 Raghubir 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. 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 Mālavan 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

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28 The photograph labelled “Vigharkotra” inscription (plate 8) on page 163 of this publication shows the Narsinghgarh inscription of Aparājitavardhana (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.
body on the left (l4). Ma has the older or southern looped form (with ḏ 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 na 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 specimen in dāsa (l4) 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. uddīśya, l4) and in the large and unusually formed i 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, l1; pañcamaṃ, l3; saṅghila and saṅga, l4), but anusvāra is used across word boundaries (e.g. layanaṃ kṛtaṃ, l5) and before v (saṁvatsare, l2), and once before a vowel (pañcamaṃ ācārya, l3). Consonants before and after r are usually doubled (e.g. śrīr¬mmahārāja and puttra, l1; ācārya, l3; cāturddiśam, l4; sarvva, l5), but not in candra° (l4) where another consonant is joined to them, nor once for no apparent reason in atra (l5). Satva (l5) is spelt with a single t, as commonly seen in inscriptions of the Gupta period. Retroflex ɳ in place of dental n is used three times (l3–4), and ś appears instead of ś in varśa (l2). As in other Early Aulikara inscriptions,31 śrī is used instead of śrī in compound (l1, twice), and the genitive of Naravarman is formed as if the name were an a-stem (naravarmmasyo°, l2), though his father’s name is treated as an an-stem (siṅhavarmmaṇas, l1). The samdhi 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 samdhi 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 Holī 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 punyam tad bhavatu sarvva-satvānām anuttara-jhānāvāptyaye stu.
Curated Text

[1] śrī|mahārāja-siṅ!havarmmaṇas sat-puttrasya śrī|mahārā
[2] ja-naravarmma¡syo!likarasya sva-rājya-saṃvatsare catu(r)ṣu variš|la-ṣa(te)ṣu
[3] catusaptateṣu ph¡allgu|la-maṣa-bahula-pañcamyāṃ ācaryya-bhadan(t)a
[4] dāsa-śiṣye|la saṅghile|la cāturdiśam āryya-saṅgham u(d)ī|ya candrāditya-sthiti-kā
[5] liyaṇ la(ya)naṃ kṛtaṃ yad atra puṇyaṃ tat sarvva-sa|ṭvānāṃ 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 satputrasya
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 uviṣya and Tripathi’s transcript also has vi here. Scrutiny of the original shows that the con-
sonant 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 adi _śya was necessitated by the subscript y of ācaryya
in the previous line, extending into the body level of this line.
[5] stu bhavatu The character following stu is indistinct and obs-
cured by several irrelevant strokes highlighted in white. Tripathi’s Devanagari transcript has stuvantu, and his eye copy resembles stuna-
vatu, both of which are definitely incorrect. See also the Commentary.
### 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, 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-
Figure 13: Gangdhar inscription of Mayūrākṣaka. Inked rubbing from Fleet (CII3 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 clipped 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 Mālavan late Brāhmī. Ka and ra have elongated descenders, and while ra has a hook at the bottom, ka does not. Na 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. Ėa 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 character. The only independent vowel sign in this long inscription is for initial au (in aupamya, 16), a character very rarely seen in inscriptions. It is unfortunately quite weathered, but seems to be an S shape with two strokes atop 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 śiromātrās, and some are exaggerated in size (see yo in 14, 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, n 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. kusumodaya, 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 jīnai (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, l6; 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; i is a circle with a vertical or diagonal line in the middle, occasionally (diptyā, 18; kīla, 113) executed as a spiral open on the left bottom. An extremely rare sign occurring in this inscription is the medial long ĕ (mātṛṇāḥ, 135). Albeit Fleet reads mātṛṇāḥ (emending tr to ṭr) and Basham (1984, 149) explicitly notes that the short r is a scribal error, the t clearly has two of the usual r 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 samparivarttamaṇā in 116 but samprakīrṇa in 137; other examples include sankrama, 122; ṛṣyārṇāḥ ca, 128; mahiṃ nṛpati, 118; yan dṛṣṭvā 133). The velar ŋ is sometimes used before ś instead of anusvāra (vanśa, 129 and anśumān, 135, but not in vamśa, 12). Similarly, identical consonants may be used instead of visarga before sibilants (e.g. yajñais surān °mānaś śāstrā° before sibilants (e.g. yajñais surān °mānaś śāstrā°), 129). Alternatively, the visarga may be omitted altogether before a sibilant, as (probably) in gāstrai stute, l24 and (positively) in viṣṇo stham, 130. In two further instances there may or may not be a visarga, but there is definitely no double sibilant: sahit(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 jihvāmūlīya is consistently used before velar stops.
Consonants are systematically geminated not only after \( r \), but before \( r \) as well (for example \textit{apparatimesa}, 14; \textit{samaggra}, 14; \textit{vikramena}, 18; \textit{vyabhīho}°, 19). Gemination before \( r \) even occurs in an initial position (e.g. \textit{ppraghīta}, 110; probably \textit{ggraha}, 140; \textit{bhva}, 141), unless a third consonant is involved in the conjunct (\textit{nāsam prayānty}, 15). Consonants are likewise doubled before \( y \) (e.g. \textit{bhṛtya}, 14; \textit{abhhyudayata}°, 115; \textit{vikkhyāpayan}, 126; probably \textit{spprabbhya}, 135) and even \( s \) may be geminated in such a position (\textit{yassya}, 111, 112, 114), though sometimes it remains single (\textit{yasva}, 15, 116). Twice, \( s \) is unexpectedly doubled, in \textit{rājamārggāssaiṇya} (114) and \textit{sītassvādu} (138). In the former case, the composer would have had \textit{rājamārgā} in mind (at the end of a \textit{bahuviśi} compound in the feminine singular agreeing with \textit{bhūr}), but someone else involved in the process of transferring the text to stone probably construed a plural \textit{rājamārgas} and good-naturally “corrected” the text. The latter may also be a case of erroneous emendation by someone who mistakenly understood a nominative \textit{sītas} 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 \textit{ādarśa} (19, 110, 138).

There is some inconsistency in the use of dental \( n \) and retroflex \( ṇ \) (\textit{sīnya}, 113; \textit{saya}, 114 and conversely, \textit{pratissarpamāna}, 127), and in the distinction between \( r \) and \( ri \) (\textit{kria}, 114, 127 and probably 119; \textit{triyāma}, 123; \textit{ākri}, 131 and \textit{ākriśya}, 134; elsewhere \( r \) is used as expected). In addition, there is a scattering of simple “typographic” mistakes, the most common examples of which are the omission of \textit{anuvāra}, \textit{visarga} and of vowel marks or parts thereof (e.g. \textit{marica} for \textit{marici}, 15; \textit{bana} for \textit{bāna}, 121; \textit{vallaher} for \textit{vallabhair}, 130). Other inaccuracies in vowel use might reflect local pronunciation (\textit{ōdupāna} for \textit{ōdapāna}, 122; \textit{ādarś} for \textit{ādarśa}, 132). Consonants are occasionally changed into similar glyphs by the omission or addition of a stroke (\textit{gāstrai} for \textit{śāstrai}, 124; \textit{gya}mo for \textit{šyamo}, 127; possibly \textit{aśṭhasita} for \textit{aṣṭāsita}, 119 and \textit{duṣṭhā}° for \textit{duṣṭā}° in 127).

The whole of the inscription is in verse except for the brief closer \textit{siddhir astu} and possibly an even briefer opening (such as \textit{siddham}) that is now lost. The poetry is decent \textit{kāvya}; the author was fond of hyperbole (\textit{atiśay-ottki}) 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 \textit{samdhī}, a phenomenon that occasionally appears in certain metres and was probably not perceived by a contemporary audience as a mistake. 

\[36\] See my study (Balogh 2017) on slurred caesurae. I have not previously seen this phenomenon in the \textit{mandākrāntā} metre.

\[37\] For instance in \textit{aikasars} 4–7 of \textit{v2c}; compare v6 of the Mandsaur inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10) which has the word \textit{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 Viṣṇavarman’s youth (agre ... vayasi samparivarattamāna, 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 Viṣṇavarma 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 mahīṃ, “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 Gangdhar 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 (CIH, 72 n. 3) that forms of the name recorded on maps include “Gangrar, Gunra, 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 Gargarāṭa (Prakritised presumably to “gaggarāṭa”) 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 Gaṅgâdhara.

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-vaṇīs-kiṛṇyāḥ, 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 (ātma-jaiḥ, 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 Śuryavarman 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 dharmaśāstras. But vaṃśakṣrt and vaṃśakara are well attested in the sense of “founder of a dynasty,” so I believe vaṃśa-kiṛṇyā 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 Viṣṇavarman.

38 A river named Gharharā is mentioned in the Revākhaṇḍa of the Vāyu- or Skanda-purāṇa (3,56, daṇḍakī gaṇḍakī caiva gharharā ca mahānādi), 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 (l19) is problematic on several levels. Fleet’s original reading of the text was yāteṣu caturṣu kriteṣu sateṣu sausaiyāvāśīta-sottarapadesv iha vatsaresu, 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 ṣthā as a possible alternative reading for svā. He reasons (CII3 p. 73–74 n. 1) that since Viśvavārman’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 sausaiyāvāśīta, 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 sausaiyāṣṭhāśīta and emending to saumye ṇaśīta, but rejects this because he expects saumya to be in the locative plural agreeing with vatsaresu. All considered, he translates “when four hundred fully-complete (kṛteṣu) auspicious (saumyeṣv) years, together with (sot­tarapadesu) the eightieth (āśīta) [year], had 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 sottarapadesu 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 sottarapadesu 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 sausaisvāśīta, only points out that it is problematic. For the string caturṣu, he suggests reading catuṣu and proposes to emend to catuṣu. This would require that we posit a new Viśvavārman, 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 Viśvavārman is introduced as a great conqueror and the son of Nara­varman, while the later inscription’s Viśvavārman 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 Viśvarman, but also two Naravarman. 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 Viśvavārman (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 tru 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 sausaiyāṣṭhāśīta. Of the three strokes that may be vowel marks for the conjunct ṣv, only the one starting on the left and curving downward seems

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

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 catuṣu 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.
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 śṭhā against the accepted ṣvā, compare ṣvi near the end of the present line (l19) to śṭhā at the end of line 27 and śṭha in line 33. Subscript v is smaller, much more angular, and is on the right; while subscript ṭh 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 ʿṣṭāśīta­sottarapadeṣu 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 dine in line 20, which is slightly awkward but acceptable.43 Additionally, this reading dispenses with Fleet’s problem that the word for “eightieth” is aṣīta, not āṣīta. 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 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 aṣṭāśīta­sottarapadeṣu 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 aṣīta instead of the cardinal āṣīti 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:

\[
\text{māt}(ṛ:ṝ)ṇāṅ ca \text{[pramu]}\text{[dita-ghanātyarttha-nihṛādininām]}\text{[tāntrodbhūta-prabala-pavanodvartitām]}\text{[bhodhininām]}\]
\[
\text{[gatam idaṃ ḍākinī-}\text{saṃprakīrṇṇam]}\text{[veśmātyuggraṃ \text{[nprati-sacivo} (‘)}\text{[kārayat puṇya-hetoh]}\]
\]

43 Alternative explanations may be possible for saumye. One might supply varṣe (compare sva-rāya-sañvatsare used in conjunction with a plural locative varṣa-ṣateṣu in the two Bihar Kotra inscriptions, A1 and A2, l2) 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 mṛgāśīrṣas. 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 inscriptionsal record of weekdays is the Eran pillar inscription (CII 19, CII3rev 39, SI III.35), dated ca. 485 CE.

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 Chhōti Sadri inscription, yāteṣu paṃcasu ṣateṣv atha vatsaraṇāṃ dve viṁṣati-samadhikeṣu sa-saptakeṣu (A7, l15-16) and the Risthal inscription, sa-dvy-abda-saptati-samā-samudāyavatva pūrṇeṣu pañcavasi ṣateṣu vi-vatsaraṇāṃ (A9 l16), both in vasantatilakā like the present date.

46 Cf. caturṣu varṣa-ṣateṣv catuḥsaptateṣu in both Bihar Kotra inscriptions (A1 and A2, l2) and caturṣu varṣa-ṣateṣv aṣṭāviṅśeṣu in the Bijayagadh yūpa (l1).

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.
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 (nihrād-) 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 māṭṝṇā, a long ṝ mark is actually inscribed (see Script and Language above). The characters ga (in quarter c), tpu and to (in quarter d) are damaged, but can be confidently read. The reading tāṃtrodbhūta is certain.48 pace Sircar (1965b, 405), who prints tantrodbhūta 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 dī, which is indeed in all probability an u māṭra 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

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-ghanātyarttha-nihrādinām, 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 ni-hrād is usually associated with the sounding of percussion instruments, and that ghanā 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 ghanā (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 (daññini) ... these Mothers impel (pracudita) the great (atyartha) booming (nihrād-) of the rain clouds (ghanā) 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 ghanā 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.

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 māṭrā), 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-graṃ as “very terrible abode;” instead, he suggests “most powerful

52 White (2003, 207–8). His texts include the appendix of the Harivaṃśa along with the later Mālatimādhava and Rājatarangini.
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 (atyrhtha) gong-bangers (ghana … nihrād) who are pumped up (udvartita?) to the rain clouds (ambhonidhi) [on] the powerful winds raised by the Tantras [in this context, “ritual practices”].

Bruce M. Sullivan (2007, 11–12) is one of the few authors conscious of Fleet’s reading Śaṅktra, 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 “strunged 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 dākinīs. 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 vīṇā. 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:

For the sake of religious merit, the king’s minister commissioned this very terrifying abode, a place filled with ḍākini-s, and characterised by … An abode of the Mothers, whose thunderous (atyrhtha) cries (nihrād) impel (pracudita) the rain clouds (ghanā), and whose treasure (niḥdi) – the waters (ambhas) – bursts forth (udvartita) with the mighty wind produced by their lyre (tāntra). 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 ni-hṛād (along with ni-r-hṛād) 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 Hariyamśa (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. Moreover, pra-cud may
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)dīta 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: pṛauṇudīta. The word is attested in the sense of “beaten, struck” (MW s. v.) and is thus applicable to gongs. The basic meaning of pṛauṇa is “to push on, in set 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, viṇā (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). While 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 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 ambhdhara 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 mātrganas 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 Saptamāṭ panel inscription from eastern Malwa, 61 and the eighth-century Mālatimādhava of Bhavabhūti mentions a yogini who flies by a tantric practice involving nādis (the vessels of prāṇa) and splits clouds on her way. 62

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.

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, yāsāṃ ārto balaḥair vvalabhi-viharane siddha-gandharva-varggaḥ vāyur yāsāṃ 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 Mālatimādhava 5.2, iyam idānām aham ... nāḍinām udaya-kramaṇa jagataḥ pañcāṃśākṣara-sūnyatā aprapatotpatana-sramā vighāṭayananty agre nabho-‘mhamucat. Her nāḍi control is for the sake of tirelessness, not the splitting of clouds, which may be merely illustrative of her speed.
Diplomatic Text


[3] [---] kāntaś śrīmān babhūva naravarmma-nṛpaḥ prakāśaḥ [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---]

[4] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---] [---]

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Curated Text

(Verses 1. Metre: vasantatilakā)

[Verse 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).

Footnotes

63 The lost parts of the verse probably contained a verbal form with this meaning, e.g. jayati.
(Verse 2. Metre: vasantatilakā)

(p)ra(?kkhy)āta-vīryya-yaśas(sāṃ) kṣitipādhipānāṃ
 vaṃśodbha(v)(e/o) [-] (ga)tivi [-~~~][-] kāntaś

śrimān babhūva naravarma-nṛpaḥ prakāsāḥ

(Verse 3. Metre: vasantatilakā)

yajñais surān muni-gaṇā[nn](i)[ya](m[ai])r udā[aiḥ]

[----] māne[jna bherita-janam apparitimenā loke

yo (ʻ)toṣayat sucaritaiś ca jagat samaggra(ṃ)"

(Verse 4. Metre: vasantatilakā)

hasty-aśva-sādh(a)n[na] [----]

[----][----][----][----] khaḍga-marīc[na] [tsu]‖

saṅgrāma-mūrddhasu mukhaṃ samudīkṣya yasya

nāsām prayānty ari-gaṇā bhaya-na(ṣṭa-c)?ittā‖

(Verse 5. Metre: vasantatilakā)

[tasyātmajaḥ] [----] [gu](n) [n]o mahātmā

budhyā bṛhaspati-samas sakalendu-vaktraḥ

aupamya-bhūta iva rāma-bhagīrathā(bhyaṃ)

r(ā)?jā babhūva [----][----] [bhul]vi viśavarmma

(2) Arising in a dynasty of lords-over-kings of acclaimed valour and glory ... there appeared the handsome and majestic King Naravarman.

(3) He gratified the gods by sacrifices, the hosts of sages by his lofty rules [of self-conduct], ...

his retainers by awarding them honours unparalleled in the world, and the entire world by his good deeds.

(4) The hosts of his enemies perish, terrified (into a stupor) when they glimpse his face at battle fronts where swords are like rays of light, where troops of horse and elephant ...

(5) (His son) Viśvavarman became ... king on earth, an eminent personage of ... quality, who is the equal of Bṛhaspati in intellect, whose face is as the full moon, and who has all but become an ideal even for Rāma and Bhagīratha.

[5] nasīta-citāḥ] F restores nasīta-cesṭāḥ, which is also plausible. I prefer cetāḥ because of my subjective impression that nasīta-cesṭa and nasīta-cetana are frequently used in contexts involving fear, while nasīta-ceṣṭa is primarily associated with predetermined fate.

[5] tasyātmajaḥ] F prints this as an unclear reading at the beginning of the fifth stanza, but it is in fact a conjectural reconstruction of completely lost text. S shows it as such. Other restorations are possible, see the Commentary.

[6] guṇo] F only reads au at the beginning of the line. The reading no is almost certain (the wings at the top of ṅ are clear), so I conjecturally restore guṇo.

[64] Or, with Fleet’s restoration, “terrified into inaction.” See note to line 5 of the text.

[65] The word translated “fronts” (mūrdhasu) literally means “heads” and the verse may have involved double meaning (śleṣa) with battle fronts punningly equated to heads haloed with flashing swords, and horse and elephant troops equated to a lost word with two meanings, one applicable to battles and another to heads. The face on these metaphorical heads would have been the face of Naravarman himself.

[66] Bṛhaspati is the planet Jupiter and the guru of the gods. He is widely believed to have composed a treatise on polity (nīti), see note 163 on page 105. Rāma Dāśarathi needs no introduction as a paragon of the righteous ruler. Rāma’s ancestor Bhagīratha is most famous for performing extraordinary penance to bring the heavenly Ganges river to earth in order to purify the mortal remains of his predecessors, so he was probably named here to imply that Viśvavarman was willing to make sacrifices for the sake of his elders.
Verse 6. Metre: vasantatilakā

dhairyyeṇa merum abhijāti-guṇena vaiṇyam
indu[ṃ] prabhā-samudayeṇa balena viṣṇum]
[saṃva]rtakānalam asahyatamaṇ ca diptyā
yo vikramaṇa ca surāhpati[ṃ] vijijyey

He has surpassed
Mount Meru in firmness,
Vaiṇya 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.

Verse 7. Metre: vasantatilakā

vyāvṛtta-mārgga iva bhā[nur asa]hya-mūrttir
vyabbhodayādhikataroj(j) vala-ghora-diṭṭih]
 yaś śakyate na ripubhir bbhayā-vihvalāksair
u[dv]j[ka]śitum kṣaṇam api ppragṛhitā-śastra[h]]

Like a sun diverted from its course, 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 quavering in
fright, cannot look at him even for a moment.

Verse 8. Metre: vasantatilakā

(nir)bhaṣaṇair avigatāsra-jalārdra-gaṇḍair
vvicchinna-maṇḍanatayo(j) vala-naṣṭa[11][śobhai]ḥ]
 yaṣṣyāri-kāmini-mukhāmburuhair bbalasya
pūrvaṃ pratāpa-cakitaix kriyate praṇāmaḥ

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.

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 nirbhaṣaṇa and vicchin-
na-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
(vicchīna) by the tears on their cheeks.
Verse 10. Metre: vasantatilakā

bhūr uddhārātā-vrata-vikampita-sāila-kila-
viśtrasta-vidruta-mṛga-dvija-sū(ṇ:ṇ)n ya-gu[14]māll][imāll]
yāssyānottara-praviṣa(mī)kṛiti-rājamārggā
s(s)aj(ṇ:ṇ)n ya-prayāna-samaye vinimajjatīvā

Verse 11. Metre: vasantatilakā

prattiyasta-mauli-15[ma(ṇi)-raśmi-nakha-
prabhāndhair
dhhyudatāhjalitāya śābalāgraṇḍaih]

Verse 12. Metre: vasantatilakā

agre (')pi y(o)tayasi samparivarttānaṁ
śāstrānusāra-parīvardhita-śuddha-buddhiḥ‖

Verse 13. Metre: vasantatilakā

tasmin pra[16][sāsa](ti)mahiṣin nṛpati-pravīre
svarggaṁ yathā sura-pat(ā)v amita-prabhāve]

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.

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

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 (ajālī), the rays
from the gems in their diadems are reflected back from
their fingernails to dazzle them and dapple their muzzles.71

Even at an early age his clear mind was enriched by
following the precepts (sāstra), 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).

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 (adharma), taken to
vice (vyasana) or lost his happiness.

[16] *rājamārggāssaiṇya] The superfluous s may be the result of
an incorrect “emendation” by an ancient editor, see Script and Lan-
guage.
[16] *syādarād] F prints syādarād, but this does not seem to be the case
here.
[17] vidhīm] F and S print vidhīm, but the stone has vidhīm, 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 ... śaṭṭhāṣṭra] F’s emended reading is yāṭeṣu caturṣu
kṛteṣu sateṣu saumyeṣv aṣīta. See page 60 for the complex problem
of the date.

70 Fleet translates kīla as “lance” and Sircar also specifically sug-
ests 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 at-
tested 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 tram-
ping (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 trans-
lates “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 Duḥṣanta (or Duṣyanta)
and Śakuntalā, whose story is told in the Ādi Parvan of the Mahā-
bhārata (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(?r)ṣu kṝ[ṣita]śateṣu sau(s:m)y(e)

(‘)ṣ((t);t;[ā]sita-sottarapadesv[ha vatsa[30][reṣu]])

śukle tr[yo]daśa-dine bhuvī kārttikasya

māsasya sarvva-jana-citta-sukhāhavasya[)]

〈Verse 15. Metre: vasantatilakā〉

nilotpala-pra[20][ṣṛta-re]ṅv-aruṅ(āmbu)-kirṇge

bandhūka-b[a:ā]ṇa-kusumo[j]vala-kānanānte

nīlotpala-prāpāya-samaye madhusūdanaṣya

kā[20][la-prabud]da-kumudāgara-suddha-tāre

〈Verse 16. Metre: vasantatilakā〉

vāpi-taḍāga-sura-sadma-sabhot<ulpāna-
nāṇā-vidhopavana-saṅkrama-dirghikā[23][bhīḥ]]

(ḥu)ṣṭāṃ ivāhārana-jātiḥbir āṅganāṃ svāṃ


〈14〉When four hundred Kṛṣṇa years have passed on this earth along with an additional (eighty-eight),73 on the auspicious bright thirteenth day of Kārṇika, 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 bāṇa75 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 Gargarāṭa 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;

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

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

[23] tuṣṭāṃ F reads seṣṭāṃ and emends to īṣṭāṃ; S reads īṣṭāṃ, which is a bit surprising semantically. Looking at photos of the stone, īś seems impossible and 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 ।. Reading tuṣṭāṃ here also makes sense of sakalā in the next quarter (see below), which F has to emend heavily-handedly. The position of īva is admittedly problematic with my reading, as it must obviously understood to go with āṅganāṃ. But our poet does stumble occasionally, and I think a bit of syntactic awkwardness is not too surprising here.

[24] sakalāṃ F and S read sakkalāṃ and emend to samalāṃ. 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 sakalāṃ; if sakkalāṃ was engraved, sakalāṃ is still a minor emendation. My reading tuṣṭāṃ (see previous note) can be construed in apposition to āṅganāṃ with cakāra as the verb, eliminating the need for Fleet’s emendation samalaṅcakāra.

[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 sugar-cane’s sprays (one of the possible meanings of bāṇa) also feature in the description of the beginning of autumn in verse 4 of the Mandāsaṃ 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)

rājhas triitiyām iva caṅsur udā[24][ra-][?dṛṣṭi](r)
(dde)va-dvijāti-guru-b(a)ndhava-sā[26](duh)-bhaktah
g:Ś(a)str(ai)(b) (st)ute (c)a v(inaya-yyavahāra-hine
yo pakṣa-pāta-rahito! nida(dh)[?a][25][?tī kāryyā)m]

(Verse 18. Metre: vasantatilakā)

sarvvasya jīvitaṃ anityam asāravac ca
dol(a:ā)-cal(ā)m anuvicintya tathā vibhūtim
nyāyāga[26][tena vi]bhavena parānī ca bhakti(m)
vikkhyāpayann upari cakkra-gadā-dhara(s)yā]

(17) who, being devoted to the gods, Brahmins, elders (guru),
kṣma(n) pakṣapāta-rahito! nida(dh)[?a][25][?tī kāryyā)m

(18) who, having contemplated the fact that everyone's life

[24] --[ F restores vṛttir. This is plausible but any number of other
resorations are also possible, so I prefer to show no restoration in
line 24. My personal preference would be to restore drṣṭir.
[24] gāstrai F reads sāstrai, emending to sāstraiḥ. 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 syāmo.
are unclear in many places, but are nonetheless almost certain. F
agrees on the text but emends vinaya to vinaye and supplies an av-
agraha 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 compos-
er'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 yoh
pakṣapāta-rahito or yo pakṣapāta-sahito. The former of these would
have been more natural, but the latter could easily have been misun-
derstood 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 conclu-
sion 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 cītām
would still possible with my nidadhāti, but in light of my interpreta-
tion 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 ankitah] I retain Fleet's restoration, but it is dubious.
The g 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 dif-
fferently 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” (ClI3 p. 78). I find his interpretation
tenuous, especially his translation of vyavahāra as “litigation,” un-
derstood 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 record-
ed in the sense of “eyelash” (PWG s. v.), the very closely related pa-
ḵṣma(n) primarily means just that, and pakṣapāta is attested as
“closing of the eyes” in the Raghuvaṃśa (MW s. v.). My restoration
udāra-drṣṭir 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-vyāyāta-vṛtta-lambi-subhujax
khaḍga-vrān((ʔ)ai)\[31\][ʔ]aṅ\[31\]i\[31\](t)aḥ\[31\]
karnānta-pratisārpaṃpān-ṇaśnayana-
(g:\)yām\(\)a (\')vādāta-chchavīḥ

darpāvīṣıkṛita-(gh)ora-ṣaṭṭru-mathano
du(\(\)t)\(\)t\(\)t(\(\)a)\(\)a-\[24\][ʔ]a\[24\][ʔ]a-\[24\][ʔ]a--\[24\][ʔ]a\(\)bh\[24\][ʔ]h\[24\][ʔ]c\[24\][ʔ]h\[24\][ʔ]a\(\)d\(\)a(rmm\(\)a)\rthā-kā(m)odita(h)"

(Verse 19. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita)

prajñā-śauryya-kulodgato dīśi\[29\][dīśi]\nprakkhyāta-viryya vaśī\nputtṛ viṣṇubhaṭe tathā haribhaṭe
sambaddhava-vaṃśa-kriyāḥ\]

t\[30\][t pāpa]-pathāvarodhi vipula\(\)śrī.\[30\][śrī.]
śyāmāvadāta
puttre viṣṇubhaṭe tathā haribhaṭe

(Verse 20. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita)

prajñā-śauryya-kulodgato dīśi\[29\][dīśi]\nprakkhyāta-viryya vaśī\nputtṛ viṣṇubhaṭe tathā haribhaṭe
sambaddhava-vaṃśa-kriyāḥ\]

t\[30\][t pāpa]-pathāvarodhi vipula\(\)śrī.\[30\][śrī.]
śyāmāvadāta
puttre viṣṇubhaṭe tathā haribhaṭe

[27] gyāmovadāta [ Fleet reads gyāmovadāta, emending to śyāmovadāta. Gyā is clear and śyā was obviously intended (cf. gāstrai in l24 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 a, 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 sāru. The character does not quite resemble s (while the o mātra is clear). It is most likely go, with a faint central prong.

[29] duṣṭhātma [ F reads duṣṭhāśva, emending to duṣṭāśva. Sircar offers the conjecture yanti for the lacuna, commenting that duṣṭāśva means duṣṭa-jana-rāpasva, i.e. that “wicked horses” should be understood metaphorically as “wicked men.” The reading śiṣṭa and the emendation to śiṣṭa 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. jētā or hantā could be supplied; Sircar’s yanti 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] pratimāsya yasa [ F prints pratimāsya yassya, probably a typo.
Verse 22. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita

causative

While F reads saṃrajyā° saṃrabbhyā° saṃkucya°, emending to ⟗, is not normally prefixed to ni be possible, though correspondingly shorter word; for instance, atiśaṅkino or and the object a so perhaps the participle was ⟧

Verse 21. Metre: vasantatilakā

tṝ tṛ ⟧ to F reads mātṝṇāñ mātṛṇāñ, which is the expected reading. tṝma, which is the expected reading. The second character seems to be tṛpā, not tṛta. I agree with the emendation, but his unemended ⟧, emending to kuṭṭalan F reads kuṭmalan kuṭpalan (understood to stand for ), understanding this to prāsāda in l39), or a masculine object such as needs to be understood.

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 prattyāvarttana 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.

[33] yān F reads yān, understanding it to stand for yāṃ. This would refer to ākṛti (em. ākṛtiṃ) 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 yāṃ. This is still problematic, as sthāna is normally neuter; either this is a solecism on the part of the composer (compare kāpam caīta in l39), or a masculine object such as prāśa needs to be understood.

[34] prṛṣṭhaṃ F reads prṛṣṭha-ksanam, 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 supply a =s anusvāra to obtain prṛṣṭhaḥ produces a sentence with smooth syntax.

[34] prṛṣṭhaṃ F reads prṛṣṭha-ksanam, 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 supply a =s anusvāra to obtain prṛṣṭhaḥ produces a sentence with smooth syntax.

[35] samrabhya] F reads samrajya°, emending to samkucya°. While samkucya would make sense in the context, it is a rather heavy-handed emendation; also, samkuc- is normally intransitive, so the causative samkocyā would be expected. The unemended reading jyā is also problematic. I am fairly certain the character is in fact bbhya; bh is also geminated before y in line 15 (though probably not in l6).

[35] kutpalan F reads kuṭṭalan, emending to kuṭmalan (understood to stand for “lanjī). I agree with the emendation, but his unemended reading seems to be inaccurate. For ku instead of kū, compare kumudā° in l22 and kulo° 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 tpa, not tta; it may in fact be a clumsily executed tma, which is the expected reading.

[35] māṭṛṇāñ F reads māṭrṇāñ, emending tr to tī. See Script and language.
Verse 23. Metre: mandākrāntā

mātṛṇā ca [36]ṣpraṇi(ṣ)ūta-ghanātyarthanihārodinām
	 tántrodbhūta-prabala-pavanodvarittāmbhonidhinām

[37]---- ⫸(ga)tam idaṃ dākini-sampakirṇam

Veśmātuyagram ṛṣpati-sacivo ( trustworthy kāraya(t p)nuyahē(t)oh)

Verse 24. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita

pātāl(o) [38]--- srutibhir

g(g)uptaṁ bhuaṅgo(ta)maih

śīta-s(s)vādu-viśuddha-bhūri-salachā
sopān(ṭa)-mālo(j)valam

(?)pu[39]--- [84]gahanāṃ kṣīrodadhi-sparadhinam

cūpapuṇya-kārayad guṇa-nidhi(h)

Ṣrī)mān ma(y)ūrākṣakaḥ

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 dākinis – in order to [acquire] merit.85

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)\[40\] [\- - - \-] (sā)garā ratnavanto
nānā-gulma-druma-avana\(\text{-}t\) yāvad urvvi sa(śai)lā]
yāvac cendu-ggraha-gaṇa-citaṃ vyoma (?sā) [41][\- - - \-]
[tā(va)t kīrttir bhhavatu vipulā
śri-mayūrākṣakasye(?)d)i]ti

siddhir astu(\[]

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.

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

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[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 ggr. 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 *syā syād iti. This is unlikely; while it is not uncommon for a closing iti to join in saṅdhi 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 \(d\) is an aborted first attempt at engraving \(t\), which became misshapen and was re-engraved without smoothing out the erroneous character. Fleet does not print the double datā. 

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A5 Mandsaur Inscription of Dattabhaṭa

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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 Mand-saur, 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 Mālavan 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 ga are looped; subscript na has a cursive ornamental form with a curling tail (‘ṛṇṇavā, l9). 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 sa 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 ā attach vowel marks at the head. Medial i is a closed circle, while i 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. dukkha li), but there is no upadhmāniya; instead, regular visarga is consistently used before labials (e.g. bhuvah patiṇām, i3). 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 Dattabhata. Inked rubbing from Garde (1948).
Figure 17: Mandasaur inscription of Dattabhaṭa. 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 *danḍa*, and the double vertical closer as a double *danḍa*.

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 *śubhra bbhra*. *Anusvāra* use is close to standard, with a slight preference for nasal conjuncts (for instance *ādiṅ guṇa, 16; sambhāvayāṃ, 18; svesām balāṇāṃ, 18; śītaḷaṇ ca, 110; vaṇśa, 111*) which seems to be random (compare *nirmmalam ca* a few words after *śītaḷaṇ ca* and *vaṃśya* in 13 as opposed to *vaṇśa*).

Likewise, sibilants are occasionally preferred to *visarga* (*tanayais sarūpam 14, pratāpaiś śirobir 14*). The language is standard Sanskrit, correctly and confidently used even where the syntax is complex. The use of the middle perfect form *prajātiṅ* (l4) is not quite standard:*90* one would expect a causative in periphrastic perfect, which the composer does use elsewhere (*janayāṃ babhūva*). 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 *ārāma*). The poetry is of good quality and bespeaks technical skill in poetic devices (*alaṃkāra* of *ārāma*). The poetry is of good quality and bespeaks technical skill in poetic devices (*alaṃkāra* of *ārāma*).

Commentary

The subject of the inscription is the dedication of a *stūpa* accompanied by a well, a drinking fount or water dispensary (*prapāda*) 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 Daśapura*91* and is also sometimes simply called the Mandsaur inscription of Mālava Saṃvat 524, but I prefer to name it after Dattabhā, the person who commissioned it.

The text begins with an invocation to the Buddha (referred to as *sugata*). The word *tripadika*, 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 *chadhdhātura*. Sirca (1965b, 406 and n. 4) suggests the emendation *tripadiko*, 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 (budha, dharma and saṅgha)*, or three stages on the path to Nirvāṇa (*sotāpatti, sakadāgāmi and anāgāmi*), or else the three principles *aniya, duḥkha* and *anātman*. Sirca (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 *tripadika* 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.

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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 *prthvī*.

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 *Nībbānakanḍa* of the *Simavisodhanipāṭha*, 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-padam jānapattassa*). 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
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 (dīty-ādityos tanayais sarāpam, 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 Dattabhāṭa from a princess of a northern dynasty (udīcyā-bhāḥbṛṭ-kulacandrīkāyāṃ... rājaputryāṃ, 16). There is, unfortunately, no further information about the origin of this princess. Dattabhāṭa’s generosity, intelligence and martial and amorous exploits are praised in verse 9, and verse 10 tells us that king Prabhākara appointed Dattabhāṭa 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.

The eleventh verse reveals that Dattabhāṭa had a well constructed out of gratitude toward his departed parents, whose salvation (subha-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, an 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-dosāḥ sarvva-kiyā-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,

94 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.
95 nādyāpyi mokṣam samupaiti yena sva-vamśya-pāsair avapaśita bhāḥ, 13. The phrasing is reminiscent of verse 2 of the Mehrauli iron pillar inscription of Candragupta II and also written posthumously (Santaseva mahā-vane hutabhujo yasya pratāpo mahān nādyāpy utsṛjati prāṇāśita-ripor yyatnasya śeṣaḥ kṣitim, 16). 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.
96 Interestingly, the phrase guptānvayāri-drūma-dhāmaketuḥ (18) very strongly resembles kopasya nanda-kula-kānana-dhāmaketoh 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. Dhāmaketu, literally “smoke-crested,” is a common kenning for fire, but the use of the same term in a similar metaphor still suggests intertextuality.
97 See note to line 13 of the text.
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 bahu-vṛtiḥ 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. jagati). 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 kṛto 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 kṣayā 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 kṣaya is the only śliṣṭa word in the stanza, since applying aneka-sarid-ānanga-paribhoga-nyitotsavo 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-ānanga is probably an upamāsāmāsa 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-ānanga 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 lokottara, 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

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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.

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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({})

(Verses 1. Metre: vasantatilakā)

ye(n)edam udbhava-nirodha-paraṃprāyāṃ
magnaṃ jagad vividha-dukhha-nirantarāyām
titrāsunā tripadī(ṛk)o niradesi dharmanas
tasmai namo (’stu sugatā(ya gatāya) śāntim

(Verses 2. Metre: upajāti)

guptānvaya-vyomani candrakalpaḥ
śrī-candragupta-prathitābhidhānaḥ
āsin nrpo loka-vilocanānāṃ
navoditaś candra ivāpaharttā

(Verses 3. Metre: upajāti)
bhuvah pati(nāṃ bhu)vi (bhū)paititvam
ācchidyā[1]dhi-vikkrama-sādhanaena
nādyāpi mokṣaṁ samupaiti yena
sva-vamśya-pāśair avapāśitā bhūḥ

(Verses 4. Metre: upajāti)
govindavat khyāta-guṇa-prabhāvo
govindaguptorjji(ta)-nā(ma-dhe)yam
vasundhareśa[4]s tanayaṁ prajajñe
sa dity-adit(y)os tanayais sarūpam

(Verses 5. Metre: upajāti)
yasmin nrpair astam-ita-pratāpaś
śirobhir āliṅgita-pāda-padme|
vicāra-dolā(ṃ) vibudhādhipo (’)pi
śaṅkā-paritaḥ[5]samupāruroha

Translation

Accomplished.101

(1)
Let obeisance be made to him who has gone well
(sugata), who has gone to tranquillity: he taught the
Doctrine (dharma) 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
captured 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 Sir-
car’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] tripadīro 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.
A Major Inscriptions

〈Verse 6. Metre: upajāti〉

sen(ā)patis tasya babhūva nāmnā
vāyv-ādinā rakṣita-paścimena
yasyāri-se(nā)s samupetya senāṃ
na kasyacī locana-mārggam īyuḥ

〈Verse 7. Metre: upajāti〉

śaucānu[rā]ga-vya{ṃ}vasāya-medhā-
dākṣya-kṣamādiṅ guṇa-rāśim ekaḥ
yaśaṣ ca yaś candra-marici-gauraḥ
dadhāra dhārādhara-dhīra-ghoṣaḥ

〈Verse 8. Metre: upajāti〉

udīcya-bhūbhṛt-kula-candrikāyāṃ
sa rā(ja)putryā(m) [janayāṃ babhūva(l)]
nāmnātmajaṃ dattabhaṭaṃ guṇānāṃ
kīrtte ca yo (’) bhūn nilayaḥ pī(te)va(l)

〈Verse 9. Metre: upajāti〉

dāne dhānesaṃ dhīyi vāci ceṣaṃ
ratau smaraṃ sanṣyati pāsa-pāṇim
yam arthī[8]vidvat-pramādāri-varggās
sambhāvayāṃ cakkur anekadhaikam

〈Verse 10. Metre: upajāti〉

guptānvayārī-druma-dhūmaketuḥ
prabhākaro bhūmipatir yyam enam
sveṣām balāṇaṃ baladeva-vīryyaṃ
guṇā[9]nurāgād adhipaṃ ca kāra|

〈Verse 6. Metre: upajāti〉

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.

〈Verse 7. Metre: upajāti〉

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.

〈Verse 8. Metre: upajāti〉

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.

〈Verse 9. Metre: upajāti〉

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.

〈Verse 10. Metre: upajāti〉

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.

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[7] janayāṃ G and SI read jaṃnayāṃ 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 danda 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 Vāyurākṣita 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 dhīyi vāci ceṣaṃ 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 l6; silk weaver inscription, A6, l13; Nirdoṣa’s inscription, A10, l17).

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)
yasmi10 suhṛt-saṅgama-śītalañ ca
mano muninām iva nirmmalaṃ ca|
vaco gurūnām iva cāmbu patthyaṃ
pepyamānaḥ sukham eti lokaḥ|

(Verse 13. Metre: upajāti)
śaran-niśā-nātha-karāmalāyā
[vikkhyāpake mālava-vañña-śa-kīrtteḥ]
śarad-gaṇe pañcaśate vyatīte
tri-ghātitaśābhyaadhihe kkrameṇa|

(Verse 14. Metre: upajāti)
bhṛṅgāṅga-bhārālasa-bāla-padme
kāle prapanne ramaṇīya-sāle|
gatāsu deśantarita-priyāsu
priyāsu kāma-jvalanāhutitvam|

(Verse 15. Metre: upajāti)
nātyuṣṇa-śītānila-kampiteṣu
pravṛtta-mattāryabhṛta-svā(t:n)eṣu
priyādharoṣṭhāruṇa-pallaveṣu
[16] kāntim va(ha)tsūpavaneṣu kāntim

(Verse 16. Metre: upajāti)
yo dhātu-mātre hata-dhātu-doṣaḥ
sarvva-kriyā-siddhim uvāca taṣya|
kundendu-subhro (') bhbra-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

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10 G and SI read “āmalāyāḥ. I would expect sandhi 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 G and SI prints an original double danda here, which must be a typo. There is only a khalanta m (with a line above it). Garde prints neither original nor supplied punctuation.

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.
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.

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

Composed by Ravila.

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

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

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<tr>
<td>Object type</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current location</td>
<td>Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior (in storage)</td>
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<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date CE</td>
<td>473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis of dating</td>
<td>dated Mālava 529 expired, Tapasya śukla 2 (l39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons mentioned</td>
<td>Kumāragupta, Viśvavarman, Bandhuvarman, Vatsabhāṭṭi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places mentioned</td>
<td>Daśapura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compendia</td>
<td>CII3 18; CII3rev 35; Bh List 6 &amp; 8; SI III.24; GKA 352–355; IGE 40</td>
</tr>
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<td>Other editions</td>
<td>Fleet 1886a; Bühler 1890, 91–96</td>
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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 Mahâdêva (Śiva) at the Mahâdêva-Ghât, which is on the south bank of the river, just opposite the fort, and I think, in the limits of the hamlet of Chandrapurâ” (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 discovered object is a sandstone slab about 80 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: Mandasaur inscription of the silk weavers. Inked rubbing from Bhandarkar (C13 rev Plate 35).
Figure 19: Mandsaur inscription of the silk weavers. Composite digital photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Gujji Mahal Museum, Gwalior.
R. G. Bhandarkar (1889, 94–97), Franz Kielhorn (1890a), Pandit Durgaprasad (Durgāprasad 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 Mālavan 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 ġa and the looped ma, and the bent left arms of pa, ba and sa (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 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 ṇa 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. According to Bose (1938, 327) the inscription employs two varieties of kha, 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 diaritical 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 i is a circle with a small vertical stroke at the centre of its bottom. U and ā take various forms depending on the character they are attached to. M and n attach their vowel strokes at the body, though n can also take ā at the top, with a dip to separate the vowel mark from the right wing of the character (e.g. vibhūṣanāyuḥ, 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 r; it is likewise cut short and ends in a serif when combined with e which in this case is a slanting śiromātra, while lo has the cursive looped form standard in southern scripts.

Jīhvāmūliya (resembling ma) and upadhmāniya (box with a cross) are both used repeatedly, e.g. jagatay 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. bhugnaik kvaicit, 15; gabbasītibhī pravistai puṃsāti, l2. 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 danda) and a short double vertical (transcribed as a double danda). 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, l1; āstī [14]). When visarga appears in conjunction with a punctuation dash, the latter may appear between the visarga’s dots (yogibhiḥ, l1) or after them (vakaṣṭaḥ, l22). 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, l1; compare harmya, l17). Occasionally, however, consonants remain single after r (e.g. vidur brahma), l2; *ānair mdubhir, l11; bhūtaír mukta, l11). Conversely, gemination of consonants before r is rare (e.g. sitābhbra, 16; yatra, 17; vicitra, 19; roddhra, 118; roddhre, l22). Even more rare is gemination before y, which only happens to th and dh (svāddhya, 18 and patthyaṃ, 19; *bhir ddhyānai in l1 may also be driven by the following y
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. prithiviṁ, I13; smrītvā, I16).

Visarga before s alternates with s (e.g. gaṇais siddhais, I1; naraśaṃsūtīyate, I2; compare e.g. hamsaṁ sva, I5; parinisīdhitāḥ sucarita, I9) in addition to its alternation with jihvāmūlīya before velars and upadhīmānīya 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. kṣībāṅganā, I2; sīnduvarā, I21; daṁṭura-kāṃta, I22; also bandhur, I15, but bandhur three times in the same stanza and again bandhur in I16). Conversely, homorganic nasals are sometimes used instead of anusvāra before dental and velar consonants (puran tilaka, I4; saṅgatair, I8; saman nayanā, I17; sāśvatana tavad, I23), 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 (bhāṣītum, I9; gṛham, I120; dvītiyāyaṁ, I121; madayaṃtikānāṁ, I121; jataṇāṁ, I123). When the anusvāra belongs to an akṣara with an i or i mātrā, the dot representing the anusvāra is engraved to the right of the vowel mark. Thus vimṣatī (I21) is transcribed as viṣaṁty and emended to viṃṣatī by all previous editors except Bühler. However, compare sīnduvarā a little further on in the same line and prithiviṁ in I13, which only differ from vimṣatī in that the anusvāra is more evidently connected to the akṣara with the i mark.

The language is decent standard Sanskrit. The spelling is usually neat with very few errors. Interesting among these is saridvayena instead of sarid-dvayena (I7) 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, sprśanm in v38, which should be neuter to agree with gṛham 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, 166), 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, while at other times his phrasing is redundant. His imagery is often repetitive, sometimes down to the words expressing those images. All that said, there are some saving graces in the composition in the form of creative ideas elegantly expressed.

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. 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 Rūtsaṁhāra, 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 Rūtsaṁhāra verses, in the choice of words as well as in meaning, is

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115 In verse 4, for instance, the only thing that passes for a subject is prathita śīpoh, “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 tulyopamānī 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-tarvura), 6 (puṣpāvanam-ra-tara) and 9 (sva-puṣpa-bhārāvanatain magendrāin), with lotuses bent down by the weight of their filaments added for good measure in verse 8 (sva-kesarodāra-bharāva-bhūghaḥ ambaraḥ). 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-vatāyana-mandirodaraṃ hutāśano bhūhunato gabhastayaḥ gurūni vāṁsyām abalāḥ sayavānāḥ praṇāiḥ kāle tra janasva seyavatam| na candanaṃ candra-maricī-sītalau na harmaya-prṣṭham sarad- indu-nimaram| na vāyavah śandra-tuṣāra-śītalā janasya cītamaḥ ramayanti sāmpratam|
indeed striking enough to indicate that Vatsabhaṭṭi probably drew on that text.121 In general, however, most of his Ṛtusaṃhāra pākaṃ vrajantī hima-śīta-śīta-vrājā (rather reminiscent of branch shaken by a wintry wind (see note 166 on page 107) is also indeed striking enough to indicate that Vatsabhaṭṭi probably drew on that text.121 In general, however, most of his Ṛtusaṃhāra pākaṃ vrajantī hima-śīta-śīta-vrājā (rather reminiscent of branch shaken by a wintry wind (see note 166 on page 107) is also

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 Ṛtasaṃhāra 4.10 (pākaṃ vrajantī hima-śīta-pātār aḍhānyamānā satataṃ marudbhīḥ priye priyānguḥ priya-viprayuktā vipāṇḍutāṃ yāti viśātiniva f), though the details of the image differ.

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.

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 Somli (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 (pranayin) may have been Brahmans 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 (Durgāprasād 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 (sva-kula-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-saḍilāśvādiya-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 pṛthivīṃ praśāsati, 113) and the local reign of Bandhuvarman (baṃdhuvarmmany ... 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

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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.\footnote{128} In verse 26 we come to Bandhuvarman, who is also described as a formidable warrior and a benefactor to his kinsmen (\textit{bandhu}) and the populace at large. Stanzas 27 and 28 lavish further praise on him, emphasizing 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 Śūrya. The thirtieth stanza describes the wide and tall spires of this gleaming white edifice.\footnote{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 \textit{gaura} as “pale-red,” which has prompted Vidya Dehejia (1986, 44) to speculate that the temple was a brick building. While \textit{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 (\textit{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.\footnote{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,\footnote{131} 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 (\textit{yāte}, l19). 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 at 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 (\textit{eka-ḍeśa}) tumbled down, but the guild renovated it all around.\footnote{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 (\textit{yāteśy}, l21), 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 (\textit{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,\footnote{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 (\textit{vijṛmbhita}) 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 (\textit{ketaka}, in particular, flowers during the

\textit{CII3rev pp. 329–330 n. 2.}

\textit{CII3rev pp. 329–330 n. 2.}

\textit{Note 171 on page 109 for identifications.}

\textit{Note 20 on page 21 of the text.}

\textit{Note 20 on page 21 of the text.}

\textit{Note 20 on page 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. Büehler 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 one 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 Büehler (1890, 29) who calls him a private scholar who did not disdain the occasional bit of gold earned by writing poetry on commission. Büehler (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. 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.” 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.” The thread of chronology, as discussed above, is rather tangled: Bandhuvarman’s father Viśvavarman is introduced parenthetically after mentioning Kumāragupta as the reigning emperor, 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 years...

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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 (l13) ... bandhuvarmmany ... daśapuram ... pālayati (l16) ... bhavanam ... kāritaṃ ... dīptaraśmeḥ (16-17).

137 bahunā samatītena kālenānyaiś ca pārththivaiḥ vyāśrayati... ka-deśo sya (l19-20) ... adhunā ... saṃskāritam idaṃ bhāyaḥ (l20).

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

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 vyāśīryata and the instrumental anyaiś ca pārthivaiḥ. Since the root śṝ 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 (CIIJrev p. 331 n. 1), is inconsequential since śṝ 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

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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.

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 pratimānītāḥ pramudātī nyavasanta sukham 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 nirantara-saṅgatair ahar-ahaḥ pravi-jṛmbhitā-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, CI3 p. 85)

Then having come in contact with constant meetings, and with cordiality augmenting day by day... (Bhandarkar, CI3rev 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 pranay-inām upaktāra-daksāvisrambha-pūrvam apare drṛha-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 (*vanjām 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 Madhyamikā 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 (*dhanīśvaras*). 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 dharāyāṃ* 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 identification 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, Śaṣṭhiradatta, would have flourished around 460 CE by my reconstruction of the genealogy and around 440 CE by the conventional reconstruction, both of which fall in the turbulent years of “other kings” (436 to 473 CE) recounted in the inscription of the silk weavers. If Śaṣṭhiradatta 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.

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 pratimā;niñatāḥ pramuditā nyavasanta sukhaṃ pūrvvāṃ (16)śravaṇa-(su)bhaṅge(g)e gāndharvve nye dṛḍhaṃ parinīṣhtīḥ sacurita-śatāsāṅgāx kecī(ḍ) vīcitra-kathāvidāḥ(ī) vinaya-nibhṛtās samyag dharmma-praṣaṅga-parāyaṅ(ṅ)ḥ priyam aparuṣaṃ patthyaṃ cārṇy kṣamā bahu bhāṣitūṃ!]

[10] (kecī) svā-karmmān adhikās tāthānayār vijīyāyate jyotिषām ātmavaddbhīḥ Adyāpyā āṃcā samarapraglabhāḥ kurvventy arīṃṇaḥ ahitaṃ prasahayaḥ (18)prājñā manojoja-va(pu)ṣaḥ praṭhitou vamāṃ vamsānutraḥ ca parītābharaṇāḥ tāthāyē satya-vratāḥ prāṇayātmānām upākāra-dakṣā visrambhaḥ pūrvaṃ āṃpare dṛḍha-sauhṛdāḥ ca(ī) viṣīṣṭā-vaśīṣṭaḥ dharmma-śailā tāthānayār mṛjutubhī adhikā-saṭvīḷai(ṛ) l(o)vāyayāt paṭṭaṃ vikāraḥ muktakāraṃ prāthitom vamāṃ vamsānutraḥ ca parītābharaṇāḥ tāthāyē satya-vratāḥ prāṇayātmānām upākāra-dakṣā visrambhaḥ.

[11] [pūrvvāṃ] ape dṛḍha-sauhṛdāḥ ca(ī) viṣīṣṭā-vaśīṣṭaḥ dharmma-śailā tāthānayār mṛjutubhī adhikā-saṭvīḷai(ṛ) l(o)vāyayāt paṭṭaṃ vikāraḥ muktakāraṃ prāthitom vamāṃ vamsānutraḥ ca parītābharaṇāḥ tāthāyē satya-vratāḥ prāṇayātmānām upākāra-dakṣā visrambhaḥ pūrvaṃ āṃpare dṛḍha-sauhṛdāḥ ca(ī) viṣīṣṭā-vaśīṣṭaḥ dharmma-śailā tāthānayār mṛjutubhī adhikā-saṭvīḷai(ṛ) l(o)vāyayāt paṭṭaṃ vikāraḥ muktakāraṃ prāthitom vamāṃ vamsānutraḥ ca parītābharaṇāḥ tāthāyē satya-vratāḥ prāṇayātmānām upākāra-dakṣā visrambhaḥ.

Curated Text

Verse 1. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita

accomplished.144

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!

Verse 2. Metre: śārdūlavikrīḍita

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]!

Verse 3. Metre: vasantatilakā

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!

Verse 4. Metre: āryā

[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 blanket ed in greenery.

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 blanket ed in greenery.

Footnotes

144 See page 6 about translating siddham as “accomplished.”
145 As R. G. Bhandarkar (1889, 94) points out, sāpa-prasāda is a dvandva compound and Fleet had been wrong to interpret it as countering 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-pārtthiva-guṇāpahṛtāḥ prakāśam
addhvādi-jāny aviralaśaḥ asukhaḥ
jātādarā daśapuraṃ prathamaṃ manobhir
anv āgatāś sa-suta-bandhu-janās sametya

Verse 6. Metre: vasantatilakā

mattebha-gaṇḍa-taṭa-vicyuta-dāna-bindusiktopalācala-sahasra-vibhūṣaṇāḥ
puṣpāvanamra-taru-ṣaṇḍa-vataṃsakāyā
bhūmeś puraṇī tilaka-bhūtam idaṃ krameṇa

Verse 7. Metre: upendravajrā

taṭottha-vṛkṣa-cyuta-ṇaika-puṣpavicitra-tīrānta-jalāni bhānti
praphulla-padmābharaṇāni yatra
sarāṃsi kāraṇḍava-saṃkulāni

Verse 8. Metre: upendravajrā

vilola-vići-calitāravinda-patad-rajaḥ-piṇjartaitaiḥ ca hamsaiḥ
sva-kesarodāra-bharāvabhugnaḥ
kvacit sarāṃsya amburuahī ca bhānti

Verse 9. Metre: upendravajrā

sva-puṣpa-bhāravananatair naṅgendrair
mmada-pragalbhāli-kula-svanaśī ca
ajasra-gābhiś ca purāṅganābhir
vvanāni yasmin samalaṃktāni

Verse 10. Metre: upajāti

calat-patākāny abalā-sanāthāny
atyartha-śuklāny adhikonnatāni
taḍil-latā-citra-sitābbhra-kūṭa-
tulyopamānāni gṛhāṇi 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—

(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 strolling 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,

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[F] and Bh construe anvāgatāḥ. See note 149 to the translation.


[4] saṇḍa] F reads maṇḍa. RGB suggested reading khaṇḍa. Bü was first to point out that the actual text is saṇḍa, endorsed by JA, SI and Bh.


[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 prathamaḥ, 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

kau:ai lāsa-tunga-śikhara-pratimāṇi cānyāny ābhānti dīrggha-valabhīni sa-vedikāni
gāndharvva-śabda-mukharāni ni viṣṭa-citra-karmāṇi lola-kadali-vana-śobhitāni

Verse 12. Metre: upajāti

prā(s)āda-mālābhir alaṃkṛtāṇi dharāṃ vidāryyeva samutthitāni
vimāna-mālā-sadṛśāni yattra grhaṇi pū(rṇṇe)ndu-karāmalāni

Verse 13. Metre: āryā

yad bhāty abhiramya-sari(d)-dvayena capalormmiṇā samupagūḍhaṃ
[prāsāda] Bh reads prāsāda and emends. In the rubbing, the character looks like s, but in the stone it does indeed resemble ̣ very much. I give the engraver the benefit of doubt.

Verse 14. Metre: vasantatilakā

satya-kṣamā-dama-śama-vrata-śauca-dhairyya-svā(ddhyā)ya-vṛtta-vrata-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] Priti 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.

¹⁵² In my translation “roof vaults” and “balconies” render valabhī 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 valabhī 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 gāndhara-vva 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.
So [these craftsmen] entered a covenant\textsuperscript{155} 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.

Some [of them became] firmly established in music,\textsuperscript{156} pleasant to the ear; some, attached to hundreds of [accounts of] goodly deeds, [became] erudite in various stories;\textsuperscript{157} [those] intent upon discipline [became] entirely dedicated to topics of law (\textit{dharma}),\textsuperscript{158} others [became] able to say much that is kind and inoffensive, yet salutary.

Some are now outstanding in their own profession,\textsuperscript{159} while others, spiritually minded, are knowledgeable in astrology; yet others, intrepid in fighting, do harm to enemies by main force.

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.

\textsuperscript{155} Fleet and Bhandarkar translate this stanza, and particularly the word \textit{sametya} ("entered a covenant" in my translation) in vague and general terms. See page 96 for a discussion.

\textsuperscript{156} Literally, the thing [i.e. art] belonging to the Gandharvas. See also note to line 9 of the text.

\textsuperscript{157} The word \textit{āsaṅgāḥ} ("attached to" in my translation) is somewhat opaque. Bhandarkar (CII3rev p. 329 n. 1) may be right to take it in a highly specific meaning "[taking] pride in authorship." He also translates \textit{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.

\textsuperscript{158} Alternative interpretations are again possible. Both Fleet and Bhandarkar prefer to understand \textit{dharma} as religion and to construe \textit{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."

\textsuperscript{159} I agree with Fleet in understanding \textit{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 ddharmma-śīlais tathānyair
mṛdubhir adhika-sātvair lokayātrā-paraś ca![1]!
sva-kula-tilaka-bhūtair mukta-rāgair udārair
adhikam abhivibhāti śreṇir evaṃ-prakāraiḥ‖

Verse 20. Metre: vasantatilakā

tāruṇya-kānty-upacito (') pi suvarṇṇa-hāra-
tāṃbūla-puṣpa-vidhinā sama[12][lāmkṛ][to (')pi(?!)]
nārī-janaḥ śriyam upaiti na tāvad agryām
yāvan na paṭṭamaya-vastra-y(u)gāni dhatte‖

Verse 21. Metre: āryā

spa(r)śavatā va(rṇṇ-ān)tara-vibhāga-cittreṇa netra-
(subha)gena(yai)s sakalam idaṃ kṣiti-talam alaṃkṛtaṃ
paṭṭa-vastreṇa‖

[11] lokayātrā-paraś. F, Bü, SI read lokayātrāmaraiś. The correction to "paraś" 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 "lōkayātrā paraś" (implying that he construed lokayātrā+aparaś), 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 Bü and endorsed by JA, SI and Bh. In the stone, gryā is clear while śri is not entirely clear but still certain.

[12] sparsāvatā. 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 sparsājāta 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 sparsāvatā as the most likely conjectural reading.

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

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

[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.

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: vasantālilākā〉
vidyādhāri-rucira-pallava-karṇapūra-
vāterīśthirataranam pravincintya [11][lo]kaṃ?[!]
mānusyaṃ artha-nicāyaṃ ca tathā viśālā(n)!
(t)esāṃ subhe (ma)tir abhūd acal(ṣe ca) (ta) s(?min)]]

〈Verse 23. Metre: vaṃśastha〉
catus(s)a(mud)r(ā-)(?mbu)-vilola-me(kha)l(ām)
sumer(u)-kailāsā-brhat-pa(yo)dharā(m)
vanānta-vānta-sphuṭa-puspa-hāsinīṃ
kumāragupte pṛthivīṃ prāsāsitā]

〈Verse 24. Metre: upendravajrā〉
samāna-dhīṣ śukra-bṛhaspatibhyāṃ
lalāma-bhūto bhuvī [16][pārthivānāṃ(()
raṇeṣu yaḥ pārthīsa-maṃsa-(ka)ṛṃmā
babhūva gopā nṛpa-viśvavarmmā()]

[13] viśālān ṛṣaṃ] F, SI, Bū read viśālāṃ ṛṣaṃ, while Bh reads viśālān ṛṣaṃ and emends to correct the samādiḥ. I agree that this is the most likely reading.

[13] śubhā ... tasmā] F and SI read śubhā matir abbrev acalā tatas tu. Bū differs in reading śubhe. Bh agrees on śubhe and also changes the end to tatas taliḥ. The stone is unclear, but after scrutinising my photographs I believe that acalā is unlikely. There is no discernible a mātrā attached to the h; 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 188). The next character is probably not ta but ca or possibly va. Thus, the first three akṣaras give acale ca, or perhaps acalva 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 tasmin at the end of the verse, though tasmā may also be possible. Semantically, acule is better than acalā (including acalva 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 taliḥ, 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.

udrāṃbu is more likely. The problematic character does not seem to be a conjunct, but it may well be b (compare brhat a little later on), possibly with u below it and an anusvāra before it. I thus opt to tentatively read samudrāṃbu, 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.

〈Verse 23. Metre: vaṃśastha〉
catus(s)a(mud)r(ā-)(?mbu)-vilola-me(kha)l(ām)
sumer(u)-kailāsā-brhat-pa(yo)dharā(m)
vanānta-vānta-sphuṭa-puspa-hāsinīṃ
kumāragupte pṛthivīṃ prāsāsitā]

〈Verse 24. Metre: upendravajrā〉
samāna-dhīṣ śukra-bṛhaspatibhyāṃ
lalāma-bhūto bhuvī [16][pārthivānāṃ(()
raṇeṣu yaḥ pārthīsa-maṃsa-(ka)ṛṃmā
babhūva gopā nṛpa-viśvavarmmā()]

[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 (niti) and/or law. According to the Śāntiparvan 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 Āśvaghoṣa (1.41) also mentions Śukra and Bṛhaspati as authors of treatises on statecraft (rājāstātra). The Arthaśāstra of Kautilya 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〉

*din-ānukaṃpana-paraḥ kṛpaṇ-ārtta-vargga-
sāntva-prado (*)dhika-dayālur anātha-nāthaḥ(?)
kalpa-drumaḥ praṇayinām abhayam-pradaś ca
bhitasya yo janapadasya ca bandhur āsī(t)

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.

〈Verse 26. Metre: indravajrā〉

tasyātmajaḥ sthairyya-nayopapanno
bandhu-priyo [15]bandhur iva praśānām()
bamdhv-artti-harttā īrpa-bandhuvarmmā
dvi(ḍ-dr)pta-pa(kṣa-kṣa)pāṇaika-dakṣāḥ|

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

〈Verse 27. Metre: vasantatilakā〉
kānt(o y)vā raṇa-paṭur vvinayānvitaś ca
rājāpi sann upasṛto na madaiḥ smayādyai(ḥ)
śṛngāra-mūrttir abhībāty analamkṛto (‘)pi
rūpeṇa yax kusumacāpa iva dvitiyaḥ]

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].

〈Verse 28. Metre: upajāti〉

vaidhavya-tvra-vyasana-kṣatānāṃ
[16]smṛītvā yam adyāpy ari-sundarīṇāṃ()
bhayād bhavaty āyata-locānāṃ
ghana-stanāyāsa-karaḥ prakampaḥ‖

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.

〈Verse 29. Metre: mandākrāntā〉

tasminna kṣitipati-v¡ri!ṣe baṃdhuvarmmā
samya(k-s)pīta dhana-samudayaiḥ
paṭṭa-vā(ayair u)dāraṃ
śre(ṇ)ībhūtair bbhavanam atulaṃ
dīpta-raśmeḥ‖

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].

[16] *kampana* Bh prints *kampana*, typo.
[16] sāntva] F, SI read sandhā; the correct reading was first proposed by RGB and adopted by Bū and Bh.
[16] sundarīṇāṃ] SI believes a halanta m was inscribed and then deleted after sundarīṇāṃ. I believe a punctuation dash and some damage below it are more likely, but if Sirca is correct then the anusvāra over ṅā 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-tunga-śīkharāṁ śīkharī-prakāśam
abhuyudgaten-vamala-raśmi-kalāpa-gauraṁ(?)
yad bhāti paścima-purasya nīvīṣṭa-kānṭa-
cūḍāmaṇi-pratīsamaṇī! nayanābhīrāmaṁ!

〈Verse 31. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

rāmā-sanātha-(bha)van(o)dara-bhāskarāṁśu-
vahini-pratāpa-subhage jala-lina-mine|
candrāṁśu-harmya-tala-108 candana-tālavynta-
hāropabho(g)a-rahiite hima-dagdha-padme|

〈Verse 32. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

roddhara-priyaṅgu-taru-kunda-latī-viśka-
puşpā(sa)va-pr(a)(m)u(d)i(t)āli-k(u)(ā)bhirāme|
kāle tuṣāra-kaṇa-karkkāsa-sīta-vāta-
vega-pranṛṭta-lavali-naga-naika-śākhe||

[17] bhavanodara] F reads racane dara, accepted by SI. RGB corrects to bhavane dara, which Bü 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 intellegible in the context. On the basis of my photos of the stone, I deem racane impossible, while bhavane and bhavana seem equally feasible. However, the parallel Rūtusaṁhāra passage cited by Kielhorn (see note 120 on page 91) speaks of māndirodara and, separately, of bhānumato gabhastayah, which correspond exactly to bhavanodara and bhāskarāṁśu. Moreover, the phrase pramadā-sanātha-dhārā-ghrodara is featured in line 17 of the Risthal inscription (A9). These textual parallels confirm that the correct reading is indeed bhavanodara.

[18] *bhodha] F, SI read *bhodha. Bh reads *bhoda. Both, of course, emend to *bhoga, which was clearly intended and which Bü prints as an original reading. In the rubbing, the character appears to be a neat rectangle, resembling dh much more than it resembles h. 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.

[19] kulā] F, SI read kalī. PD conjecturally corrects to kalā, which Bü 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 kalā on the one hand because joyous swarms of bees have been mentioned once before in the inscription (mada-pragalbhāti-kula, 16–7), and on the other hand because kula is primarily an adjective meaning “soft” applicable to sound, and only uncommonly a substantive meaning “soft sound.”

[18] naga-naika] F, SI, Bü read naganāika. Bh notes that the correct reading is naganāika but emends to naganāika. All previous editors construe naganāika+eka, interpreting naganā as either the name of a plant or a term meaning a very high number, while in fact the inscribed spelling naganāika needs no emendation and resolves to naga+naika. See also page VII of the preface.

〈Verse 31. Metre: vasantatilakā⟩

rāmā-sanātha-(bha)van(o)dara-bhāskarāṁśu-
vahini-pratāpa-subhage jala-lina-mine|
candrāṁśu-harmya-tala-108 candana-tālavynta-
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[18] naga-naika] F, SI, Bü read naganāika. Bh notes that the correct reading is naganāika but emends to naganāika. All previous editors construe naganāika+eka, interpreting naganā as either the name of a plant or a term meaning a very high number, while in fact the inscribed spelling naganāika 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 nīvīṣṭa, “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 (Calliarpa macrophylla Valil). 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 (Burn.m.) Andrews). “Gooseberry tree” translates lavali, 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.
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,

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,

on the celebrated thirteenth day of the bright [fortnight] of the month Sahasya this temple was established according to the prescribed rites of inauguration.

With the passing of a long time and other kings, one section of this edifice tumbled down, and now,

to heighten their own prestige, the magnificent guild has refurbished this magnificent house of the Sun [God] (all around)—

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—

when five hundred years plus twenty, and nine years more had passed, on the bright second of the pleasant month of Tapasya,

167 See page 7 about the phrase mālavānāṃ 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.

[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 sarvam 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] spṛśann] the word ought to be spṛṣad to agree with gṛhaṃ, but that in turn would be unmetrical. Fleet proposes emending to spṛṣātiva, while Sircar offers spṛṣat 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.
Verse 40. Metre: vasantatilakā
spaṣṭair aśoka-taru-ketaka-siṃduvāra-
lolātimuktaka-latā-madayaṃtikānāṃ|
puspodgamair abhinavair adhigamyā nūnam|
aiṅyaṁ viṅḍbhita-śare hara-pūta-dehe

Verse 41. Metre: āryā
madhu-pāna-mudita-madhukara-kulopagīta-naga-
naika-prthu-śākhe(l)
kāle nava-kusumodgama-daṃtura-kāṃta-pracura-
roddhre

Verse 42. Metre: āryā
śaśineva nabho vimalaṃ kaus(tu)bha-maṇineva|
śārṅgiṇo vakṣaḥ|
bhavana-vareṇa tathaḥ puram akhilam alaṃkṛtam|
udāraṃ

Verse 43. Metre: mālinī
amalina-śaśi(ṃ)-da(m)turaṃ piṅgalānāṃ|
parivahati samūhaṃ yavad iṣo jaṭānāṃ|
vikaṭa-kamala-mālāṃ aṃsa-saktāṃ ca śārṅgi|
bhavanam idam udāraṃ śāsvataṃ tāvad astu

Verse 44. Metre: anuṣṭubh
srey-ādeśena bhaktyā ca|
kāritaṃ bhavanaṃ raveḥ|
pūrvvā ceyaṃ prayatnena|
racitā vatsabhaṭṭinā|| svasti kartṛ-lekhaka-śrotṛbhyaḥ|| siddhir astu

Fleet emends to dhūta, which PD accepts but Bühler 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.

naga-naika All previous editors read or emend to nagaṇaika as in line 18, see note there.

Verse 40. When the arrows of [Kāma the god of love] whose body was purged by Hara [Śiva] unfurl, 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;

Verse 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.

Verse 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.

Verse 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.

Verse 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.

Salutation to those who composed and who engraved it, to those who read it out and who listen to it. May there be perfection.
A7 Chhoti Sadri Inscription of Gauri

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). 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.

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 (भंवर माता) temple, 3.5 km south of the village of Chhoti Sadri (छोटी सादडी) 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 Mālavan late Brāhmi, 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
Figure 20: Chhoti Sadri inscription of Gauri. Inked rubbing from Sircar (1954b).
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 *kīrttim*, l4), but a short and hooked form of *ra* also occurs (*śekharasya*, l2). 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*, l9; *dayālur*, l9; but also *lakṣmīr*, l13).

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 *ṣa* 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

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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 ahām, 13 and iha, 19).

Medial i is a closed circle which may be open on the left; i 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 l13) 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 samdhī 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 priyāṅgu twig (see note 166 on page 107 about the priyāṅgu 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 bhūśitā, 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 (itisyāpi dharmma, 18, where ddha makes the preceding syllable unmetrical; kunda-ddhaivalo, 116, again unmetrical; saḥ ssarva, 111; the spelling jivaddharaṇa in l17 may also be an example of this phenomenon). Medial ṛ interchanges freely with ri; the latter seems to be generally preferred even where it would be, strictly speaking, unmetrical; conversely, once ṛ is inscribed instead of an expected ri (adyaḥ for adṛi, 113), which is also unmetrical by the regular rules of scansion. Dental n and retroflex ŋ also replace one another in some words (e.g. mānaṅvayaṇi, 14; vardḍhaṇa, 16; tenāpi, 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. šrimaṃ yasaṅgha, 15; idaṃ, 115; punyāṃ iha in l14 may have been used for the sake of the metre, with yaṃ scanned as a long syllable) and vice versa (makuṭāṇśu, 11; śhinghgra, 11; kirttim ūbhāṃ, 14 mayin nṛpaṅāṃ, 14; ayam deyyāḥ in l14 is across a caesura, so the resolution of saṃdhī may be deliberate here). Anusvāra is frequently used for pre-nasalisation (e.g. bhaṃga, 12; vamṛśa, 14; jayamṛṇa, 17; damṛṇa, 110 etc.) and once superfluously before a visarga (tasyāṃ, 13). The spelling amṛṣu (for aṣu, 112) may reflect a nasalised vernacular pronunciation (compare Hindi आंसू). 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 ssarva, 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...
siṣicu, 112) but conversely, visarga saṅdhi is repeatedly resolved at the end of odd pādas (pakṣaḥ jāṭaḥ, 17; cakraḥ nāmaṇa, 17–8; mūrtiḥ yajña, 18; gaṇḍaḥ āṛtta, 111) and once even at an inline caesura (nah māṭa, 116). Upadhmāniya and jihvāmāliya 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 t instead of th; occasionally i replaces another vowel: ghaṭibhiṣekaḥ, 15 and śrīṅgiva for śrīṅgeva, 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-krita-mūrddhni-ghaṭibhiṣekaḥ (v4; emend to mūrddha [or was perhaps a non-standard mūrdha intended?] and ghaṭā-) was apparently intended to mean something like yasya mūrdhni rāja-sabdena ghaṭenevābhiṣekaḥ kṛtaḥ, and āhava-gajendra-sadarp-pa-harttā (v9) probably resolves to āhave śatror gajendrān tasyaiva darpeṇa saha harati yah. Nominal stems ending in a sibilant are turned into -a stems (yaśa instead of yaśas, l5, l9, l10, l13; vakṣa instead of vakṣas, l10; vapuṣa instead of vapus, l13). Grammatical gender is sometimes problematic, notably in prāsādo ... kritam ayam (l14). Non-standard words include svākya (l3) meaning svaka or svakiya and probably employed for the sake of the metre (though even this word requires a licence). Darśana for darśana (l14) is probably a product of dictation at some point in the process of transferring the text to the stone, since it is hypermetrical. For nyāpyate (l15), 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 jhāpyate, 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 l3 and l8, pr in l3 and l4, sn in l3, ks in l5). 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 yāva-śṛṅgiva (for yāpa-śṛṅgeva) in l12 scans as ~ ~ ~ ~; adṛ (for adṛi) in l13 scans as ~; and iti nrpenduḥ in l10 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 (l12), 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 Devī 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,” 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-sinха-yuktātivāhāṃ.
chart 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 (ksātre pade), which, in conjunction with the next stanza, probably indicates that they originated as oligarchic leaders in a warrior community (ksatra-gana).

Verse 4 introduces the glorious progenitor Puṇyasoma (the spelling is punyasoma, 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 (ksatra-ganasya 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).

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-sutta, 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 srāgdrāha, 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 (kṛatu), 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 nah must refer to the patron rather than to the poet here, but I disagree with

175 See Yokochi (2004, 117 n. 98) for details and further references.
176 Early Skandapurāṇa verse 116, bhavasyārdhā-dehāsrītē… sarva-lokasya cādyāraṇīṃ...
cādyāraṇīṃ.
177 The spelling is in fact Māṇavāyaṇi. 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 dvīḍ-dṛpta-pakṣa-kṣapana-ika-dakaḥ in verse 26 of the silk weaver inscription (A6).
179 Pace Sircar, who prints rājyavardhāna in bold in his edition and even suggests emending to “vardoḥano in spite of this being unmetrical (of which he is aware).
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 end 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-piṭhīyāṁ* is to be construed with *bhavatu* as the theme (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 viṃśati* appear to be a dual nominative, yet the following *samadhikesu* 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 Jīvadharaṇa; another is named Aparājita. Bhramarasoma is credited with “the work” (*kṛtiḥ*), while Aparājita is the one who wrote (*likh*) the text of the inscription (*pārvita*). 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. 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. 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, it is also possible that the link between Bhramarasoma’s name and the temple is genuine and original. Finally, a certain prince (*rajaputra*) Gobhaṭa is mentioned as the person by whom Aparājita was deliberately selected (*anuddhāyita*) 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

2. *bhrū-bha+jm|nga-dṛ+iṣṭi-vinipāta-nivīṣa-roṣāḥ!* (2) *bhūyo pi sā Jayatasya yā śaśi-śekharasya dehārdham udvahati bhaktatāya harasya|
3. *yā bhakta-vatsalatayā prabhīrtti lokāN mā(te)va śvākya-suta-preṃṇa-vidvīrdhī ddha-snehā* (3) *tasyām!ḥ praṇamya prakaromy aham eva jasraṃ*

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182 The spelling of the last name is Jīvaddharaṇa. Given that *dh* is repeatedly doubled in the text (*ddha|vato* just above in 117, and *ddharma* in 17), the standardisation is warranted. Sircar understands the text to mean that Jīvadharaṇa 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 Jīvadharaṇa was a more remote ancestor, in which case *samutpannasya* qualifies *bhramarasomasya* in flawless syntax.

183 See page 7 about this word.

184 Sircar (1956b, 123, 127 n. 2) says that he drew the characters on the stone for the engraver. I prefer to think he was the stoncutter 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 kṛtiḥ* 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.
A Major Inscriptions

Verse 1. Metre: vasantatilakā

devi jayaty asura-dāraṇa-tīkṣṇa-śūlā|
prodgīrṇṇa-ratna-makuṭā¡ṅ!śu-cala-pravāhā(|)
si¡ṅgh!ogra-yukta-ratham āsthita-cana-vegā{ḥ}|
[1]bhūr-bha{m}ṅga-d(ri:ṛ)ṣṭi-vinipāta-niviṣṭa-rosā{ḥ}|

Alternative opinions are cited from the edition of Sircar (SI187).

[1] siddham{ḥ}|

(Verse 1. Metre: vasantagealā)
deva jayaty asura-dāraṇa-tīkṣṇa-śūlā|
prodgīrṇṇa-ratna-makuṭā¡ṅ!śu-cala-pravāhā(|)
si¡ṅgh!ogra-yukta-ratham āsthita-cana-vegā{ḥ}|
[1]bhūr-bha{m}ṅga-d(ri:ṛ)ṣṭi-vinipāta-niviṣṭa-rosā{ḥ}|

Translation

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.”

In these notes SI denotes Sircar 1954b, not Select Inscriptions.
Verse 2. Metre: vasantatilakā
bhūyo (‘)si pā jayati yā śaśi-śekharasya
dehārddham udvahati bhaktatayā harasya|
[10]yā bhakta-vatsalatayā prabhibhātī lokān
mā(te)va śvākya-suta-premṇa-viv(ṛ)ddha-sneḥā|

Verse 3. Metre: vasantatilakā
tasyāḥṃḥ praṇamya prakaromy aham eva jasṛṃḥ
[10]kīrtti¡m! śubhāṃ guṇa-gaṇ(o:au)gha-mayiṃ! nṛpāṇāṃ|
(ye) māṇavāyaṇi-kulodbhava-va[m]ṇśa-gaurāḥ
kṣātre pade satata-dīkṣita-yuddha-śauṇḍāḥ

Verse 4. Metre: vasantatilakā
prāk (pu)(n:n)naskoma iti kṣatra-gaṇasya maddhye
yo rāja-śabda-ṛ-ta-¡mūrddni-
(gha)ṭi:ā bhi[6]ḥsekaḥ

The reading (originally suggested to Sircar by Chhabra)
is unambiguous in the stone in spite of some damage and the strange-
ness of the word. I agree with Sircar that it is derived from svaka
and must be understood as svakīya.

SI prints no original punctuation here, but there is a
clear horizontal stroke at headline height.
The redundant amvaśa appears to be genuine, not
damage.

SI reads grīmān. The cross-stroke is indeed invisible in
the rubbing, but it is quite clear, though faint, in the stone.
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.

SI reads vaksāḥ and emends. The ā mātrā is probably
present, though quite small.

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 pā an emends. It is completely different
from the mātrā of pā in pūrṇṇendu, 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 punyaṃ, l14, is again
unlike any of the above.

I follow Sircar’s reading and agree with his emendation
to ghāṭa°. 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-makuto-mails-dipta-mūrttiḥ
pūrṇendu-maṇḍala-mayūkha-vibhūti-vaktraḥ
s(ū)nur bhabhūva kila rājya-jita-pratāpo
yo rājya-varddhah(ṇ:ṇ)a-189 guṇaiḥ k(ṛi:ṛ) ta-nāma-
dheya(ā:ā)/ḥ

Verse 6. Metre: vasantatilakā

t(ṛ)nāpi corjita-jitāri-jaya|m}nta-pakṣaḥ!
jātaḥ sut(ō:ah) kari-karāyatadirggha-bāhuḥ
yas cāri-rāṣṭra-mathanodyata-dipta-cakṛaḥ!
190 nāmnā sa rāṣṭra iti proddhata-pu(ṇ:ṇ)/ya-kīrt(t)iḥ

Verse 7. Metre: vasantatilakā

ttasyāpi dharmma-suta-svabhāva-mūrt(i)ḥ!
yajña-kri(yā)-satata-dikṣita-dāna-dakṣaḥ
āhvāna-saṅkita-surādhipatiś ca yasya
lebhe na śarmma punar-āgamanāya śa(kra)ḥ

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).

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.

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 snūr As SI also notes, sū has a superfluous ā mātrā. This effec-
tively 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
pumya in 15 above and darppa in 110 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 kirūtiḥ.
Compare ttasyāsu in 110.

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, dipta-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 Sir-
car’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 (‘)yaṁ! yāṣābharaṇa-bhūṣita-sarvva-gātraḥ
proṭphulla-paṅkaja-(sa)māyata-cāru-netraḥ
dakṣo dayālur iha 10 śāsita-śatru-paṅkṣaḥ
kṣmā-śāsitā sa yāṣāgupta iti nṛpenduḥ

Verse 9. Metre: vasantatilakā

ttasyaiṣa āhava-gajendra-sadarppa-harttā|
mattebha-daṃnta-vinipāta-vibhinna-vakṣ(ā:ā)ḥ
(?)yūpeṣu ya(sya)§ 10 mada-ni(ḥ)s(ri:ṛ)ta-bhinna-ganḍāḥ!
ārttā drutaṃ śara-nipāta-hatā vrajaṃnti|

10 I agree 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) yūheṣu 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 vakṣaḥ 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

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.292

Verse 11. Metre: sragdharā

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.

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).

[1] *satātā*ː SI reads *vitatā*. The character SI reads as *v* 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.

[2] *kumudo*ː SI reads *kamudo* and emends, but *ku* is clear in the stone.

[3] *niśāmya*: SI emends to *niśamya*, but this is unnecessary.

[4] *sriyo* SI reads *striyo* with an unclear *t*, but there is definitely no *t* component in the character.

[5] *śrīṇigiva*ː The vowel mark on *ṅg* may have been intended for *e*, but it exactly resembles the preceding *i*.

[6] *prāsā*ː 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).

[7] *śubhrair dvija*ː 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 *rvvī*, a little further on, is similar but not so extreme.

[8] *vapuṣa*ː SI reads *vapuṣaḥ*. The stone is chipped off beyond the top right-hand edge of *sa* is lost, but in Sircar’s rubbing the chip seems to be smaller so he may indeed have read, not just restored, this *visarga.*
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 jasmine 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.

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 Jīvadharaṇa.

And this preamble was written by Aparājita, who was appointed by the illustrious Prince Gobhaṭa.

Here and in the next verse, jasmine translates kunda, in all probability meaning the star jasmine (Jasminum multiflorum (Burm.f.) Andrews).

See the Commentary for some ambiguous details of this stanza, and Script and Language about the word nyapate.

See page 7 about the word pūrya.

See the Commentary about what Bhramarasoma and Aparājita may have been responsible for.
A8 Mandsaur Fragmentary Inscription of Gauri

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**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 near Mandsaur and moved to a shed or, according to Trivedi (1956, 95), incorporated into the stone foundation of a mud hut. 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 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 na and la with a tail elongated vertically and ending in a curve but not bending back to the left of the body. The descendents 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 vertically. The mā and a has the a mātrā attached at the top). Vowel marks likewise with the vowel attached to the body (l7) is spelt with a single t. Anusvāra use is largely standard except for certain consonants that attach vowels distinctively, such as the cursive lo (l11), je with the vowel attached to the body (l17) and me likewise with the vowel attached to the body (l9; however, mā has the a mātrā attached to the top).

The orthography shows a regular assortment of epigraphic peculiarities. Consonants are gminated after r and, occasionally, before r (vyāgghre, I3; but putrah, l4) and before y (vīkhyātā, 16; samkkhe in l2 must also have been meant for samkkhyey). Datvā (l7) is spelt with a single t. Amusāra use is largely standard with the sole exception of divān gatā in l8. Visarga use is also largely standard except for khānitaṃs sarvva in l10 and the resolved samdhī at the end of an even pāda in verse 3 (putrah yaśogupta, l4).

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 horizontal 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-raṭha (lI) 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-raṭha 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 puram 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 aksara as di and restores daśādi, while Sadhu Ram (1957, 64) reads hva and suggests daśāh-vayam. Both seem possible from the rubbing (in which I see no discernible trace of the character following daśā), but daśāh-vayam strikes me as semantically more plausible. However, Sircar (1960b, 206) reiterates that di is legible in the stone and that “the damaged aksara at the end of the first half of this stanza is certainly kaṁ,” so the issue remains open. Additionally, Mirashi (1959, 256) criticises Sircar’s restoration as unmetrical and suggests pura-desādikāṃ 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.

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199 Ādityavardhana’s name is in the locative case, evidently forming a locative absolute construction with a lost participle. This locative absolute was evidently not meant to specify the time for the verb āsit 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.

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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 Rāṣṭravarudhana (as in the Chhoti Sadri genealogy).

Verse 4 names Gauri, bearing the title māhārāja. He is probably introduced as Yaśagupta'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 particle 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 anuvāra (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 aksaras 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 aksaras.
continue in a different metre. Though Sircar and Sadhu Ram agree on pra, I wonder if the word containing the clear p could in fact be puyam (there is a dot above the second character, though neither editor reads an anusvāra 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, 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 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. 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.

203 Wakankar (2002, 30) also prints pradaṃ, 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.

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.
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) 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. [?jitam bhaga](vatā te)na īgarutma!-ratha-yāyinā| trailokyā(ama)(?a)(?l)(a)(?i)(?e) [?]
2. [cakra-]pāṇinā‖
3. [praśāsatil]| na[ra-(v)yāgghre narendra][dityavarddhane|] [asīn māna[va-g]o[tra][?]
4. [va]ṛddhān[ha]ḥ rāṣtravardhān[a]-sat-putr[ah]! yaśogupto narā(?dh)ipah[?]
5. [?praśī][sati]| na[rav]yāgghre narendra[?a]-vardhana| [aśīn māna[va-g]o[tra][?
6. [va]ṛddhān[ha]ḥ rāṣtravardhān[a]-sat-putr[ah]! yaśogupto narā(?dh)ipah[?]
7. [s]a[m]āsādya taptvā tapam anuttamaṇ dāt[tvā] danaṃ dvie(bhyā)="ś ca"
8. [va]ṛddhaye| khānita[ṃ]s![sar](a-sa[tv]ā)nāṃ sukha-pe(yo ja)lā[?]śa]
10. [yena k(ū)pās taṭh[ā]kāni maṇḍapā[ḥ ca mano(?h)]
11. [vṛddhy-artthaṃ grāmeṣu nagareṣu ca] [tenedaṃ nagarābhīyā(śe)

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

![garutma!-ratha-yāyinā]

trailokyā(ma)?(la) ×(?i)×(?e) [=]
[2][?cakra-]pāṇinā]

Verse 2. Metre: anuṣṭubh

jitvā ripu-balaṃ sam(kkh:khy)e

ramyaṃ pura(ṃ) daśā[hvayaṃ]
[3][?praśāsati] [na]ra-(v)yāgghre

narendrādityavarddhane‖

Verse 3. Metre: anuṣṭubh

āsīn māna(va-g)oro[tra][=]
[4][= = = = = = = = = = =]

(va)ndha(ṇ:ṇ)aḥ

rāṣṭravarddhha(ṇ:ṇ)a-sa-putraḥ!

yaśogupto nar(ā)[dh][iṇ:i]l]

Verse 4. Metre: anuṣṭubh

[5][=?ta]([?nū])([?)na

śri-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,
Verse 5. Metre: anuṣṭubh
yasya mātāmahāḥ śr(ī)[mān]
[6][×××]=|(?))[prat]āpavā(ṇ)n
hari(śū)reti vikhyātā
janani ca pativara(tā)(j)

Verse 6. Metre: anuṣṭubh
[×××][×××]=(sa)māsādya
taptvā tapam anuttamaṃ
daṭya(ā) dānāṃ dvijebhaya(ṇ)?ś ca
[8][×××]=|[d]ivaṅ gatā

Verse 7. Metre: anuṣṭubh
yena k(ū)ṇpās ta(ṭh:ṭ)ākāni
manḍapās ca mano(?harāḥ)[j]
[9][×××××]-vṛddhy-artthaṃ
grāmeṣu nagaresu ca

Verse 8. Metre: anuṣṭubh
tenedaṃ nagarābhīyā(ṣe)
[10][×××××]-vṛddhyay
khānitaṃḥ sarv(v)ā-saṭyvā(ā)nāṃ
sukha-pe(yo ja)lā[?śa][11][yah]

[4] p(rod)ad(?)m[?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 Hariṣūrā,

(6) after attaining (widowhood), she practiced unsurpassed
austerities, gave gifts to Brahmans, ... 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) ...
A9 Risthal Inscription of Prakāśadharman

### 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. 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 importance.

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208 I summarise the circumstances of discovery from the report of Wakankar and Rajpurohit (1984, 14–15). I am indebted to Kailash 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.
Figure 25: Risthal inscription of Prakāśadharman. Inked rubbing from Trivedi (2001, Plate 13).
Figure 26: Risthal inscription of Prakāśadharman. Composite digital photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of the Naṭnāgar Śodh Saṃsthān, Sitamau.
implications in detail. My present edition is based on photographs of the stone taken at the Naṭnāgar Śodh Saṃsthān 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 ья and راء 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 ȧ, ḳa and ṝa 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 go) 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. Na has the open-mouthed northern form. Ya is tripartite with a large upright loop on left arm, but when conjoined with a prṣṭhamātrā (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 (śikharaig gghana*, 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 ḍ a 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 ā̄, 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 n and s. Ai has a horizontal and an oblique stroke when attached to r, but two obliques when joined to n. 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 āḍadhātu, 11; kusumodgama, 17). N, 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. kiranās, 15; əsmāna, 19; s thyās, 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 ḳa and ṝa 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 Adityasena. 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, l6; jyotsnā, l12). This form is not ubiquitous and is often replaced by a right-curving śiromātrā without the dip (e.g. gajā, l13; dhvajā, l14; pārvvajā, l19).

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 i 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 i is not a curler 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, l4 and ačkarat, l19), which may be a precursor to the modern subscript halanta sign. There is neither upadhmānīya nor jīhvāmālīya 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 aksara (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, l2; varṣasya, l17). Some of the exceptions may occur because there is a word boundary after the r (nprāi dhuram, l18; nprāter nṛpa, l12; śntar brahmaṇaś, l18). However, consonants before r are as a rule not geminated, except for t which usually is (e.g. yattra, l3; śattru, l4; but śatrū, l10). A single consonant is used where a double would be standard in uvāla, l7.

The visarga is rarely used before sibilants (śadāḥ sṛphanīyatāṃ, l4; yāḥ svānvaya, l11); a conjunct consonant is preferred much more often (e.g. pīnākīnaś sānti, l1; bhūyassu, l1; vaś śivam, l1; setus sakala, l2; didhitīś śasāṅkah, l3; etc.). Anuvāra use is close to standard, though velar ṅ is sometimes preferred before sibilants (vanśa, l3; tamānśi, l8; ṣṭīśu, l15) and palatal ṅ before palatalas (vyattīnaḥ ca, l118; ṣvavasathaṇ ca, l18).

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. 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-gandhāmoda-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 mālabhārīṇi and pramitākṣara.

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 āryāgiti, and that of verses 11 and 12 as gīti. The former are in pramitākṣaras and the latter are in viyogini.
involves double entendre, so that Śiva has in fact made a ritual prostration to the morning or evening twilight, and it is only Pārvati’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 vāmētara, 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 Pārvati 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 inventicals 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 Drapavarda- na’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 Vibhīṣaṇavardhana 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

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212 Mudrārākṣasa 1.1, dhanyā keyam śhitā te śirasi śaśikalā kīṃ nu nāmaavad asyā nāmaśvāyas tad etat paricitam api te vismṛtaṃ kasya hetobh nārīṃ prychāmī nendum kathayatu vijayā na pramāṇaṃ yadīnāṃ asyā nāmaivāsyāḤ tad etat paricitam api te vismṛtaṃ kasya. “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.”

213 Compare Rāṣṭravardhana, referred to as Rāṣṭra in the Chhiot Sarā inscription (A7); the Vibhīṣaṇa-saras mentioned in the present inscription and named after Vibhīṣaṇavardhana 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 160 for a discussion of alternative readings of the name and the identification of Dravapardhana with Dravyavardhana mentioned in the Bhātasyamhitā.

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.\(^2\)

Stanza 15 further claims that the royal title, conferred on him by a father overwhelmed by his virtues,\(^2\) 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 Toramāṇa, the word *adhīrāja* was rendered factual in the battle.

They interpreted the preposition *ā* with the ablative to mean “from Toramāṇa onwards” (ibid. 97), read *piṭhām* 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 *piṭhāt*.\(^\) 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.”\(^\) 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*.\(^\) In the compound *loka-prakāśa-bhuja-vikrama-cīhna* (l14) I understand *loka-prakāśa* to qualify *cīhna*, 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,\(^\) 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
ladies to a temple, Prakāśadharman deliberately advertised to a wide public his success against Toramāṇa.222

Exactly what this 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 Hūṣa 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 Hūṣas 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 Viṣṇuṣaṇa after Prakāśadharman’s grandfather Viṣṇuṣaṇavaradhana, 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-dōṣeṇa 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 (Bhārata-varṣa)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 Śāṅkhya 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

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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 bhārata-varṣasya 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 avasatā as a synonym of dharmaśālā (IEG s.v.), but dharmaśālā 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 avasatā almost certainly means a shelter or soup kitchen here. Since no god by the name of Bujjukā 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 Brhatasamhitā of Varāhamihira. They believed that the two may have been identical, and Dravyavardhana may have changed in the transmission of the Brhatasamhitā to the lectio facilior Dravyavardhana.

Varāhamihira says in the Brhatasamhitā 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 (1949, 6), discussing the predecessors of Varāhamihira, remarked that “[i]t would be very useful if antiquarians can find out this king Dravyavardhana of Ujjayinī,” 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 Viṣṇupuravarāhāra among the rulers of Daśapura, demonstrating that the Puṣyabhūtis 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 Rishṭhāl 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

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 ... jākā 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 Rishṭhāl inscription, only pointing to evidence that names closely resembling Bujjukā have been borne by learned women.

231 Brhatasamhitā 85.2–4, bhāradvājā-matam dṛṣṭvā yac ca śri-drayavarāhānāhī āvantikāh prāha nṛpo mahārajaḥ jihirājakaḥ ... tānī dṛṣṭvā cakāreamaṃ sarva-śākuna-samgraham varāhamihiraḥ prītyā śiṣyānāṃ jaḥanam uttamam।

232 The issue is intertwined with two other problems: the identity of Ādityavardhana (for which see page 128) and Mirashi’s theory that Ujjainī 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 began 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) revives contemporary kings, which he would not have done if his father had been a mahārajaḥ jihirājakaḥ. His arguments are invalidated on the one hand by the Rishṭhāl 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 *drumavarddhana* 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.* 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 matra* 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 māṣaṃ kuryāc chando-bhaṅgaṃ vivarjayet* is widely quoted, but examples of its application in actual poetic praxis are rare and would not expect a poet as skillful as Vāsula to do so. However, he does use the word *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 thesaursi (PWG s. v. *tala* 7), but literary attestations are rare.

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*

235 Kishore may be repeating the opinion of his doctoral supervisor Ashvini Agrawal here, who (1989, 254) adopts the reading *dru- mavarddhana* 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.”

237 The only one I know of (thanks to MW s. v.) is *Viddhasālabhañjikā* 2.13, *itaḥ śravaṇa-pāśataḥ 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 *mahārājādhirājaka*. The expression in *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* 85.22 is *nrpo mahārājādhirājakaḥ*, so the actual title the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* allots to Dravyavardhana is *nrpa*, which is barely more glamorous than *senāpati*. Shastri, along with everyone else who reiterated his arguments, seems to have implicitly understood *mahārājādhirājakaḥ* to mean *mahārājādhirājyaḥ*. This, however, makes *nrpo* 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, *mahārājādhirājakaḥ* 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 Utpala\(^{239}\) 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 possibly means that he speculate 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, mahārājādhirāja* and *nrpa*, 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...
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 Ujjayini 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 mahārājādhīrāja 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 āvantikaḥ … nṛpo mahārājādhīrājakah 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 Brhatasamhitā 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 Bhātasaṁhitā manuscripts but in general knowledge too, already the period intervening between his lifetime and that of Varāhamihira.

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 (samakhiṃi, 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-ksītah, “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 doṣena 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

245 For instance, Hans Bakker (personal communication, August 2018) accepts the identification of Drapavardhana with Dravyavardhana, but suggests that mahārājādhīrājaka should be understood as a governor installed in Ujjayini 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 form future editors.” Nonetheless, he (ibid., Appendix p. 63) does report a “doubtful” (ibid., Preface p. 51 n.) variant, vardhamānakah 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 drapavardhanah, here.
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.\textsuperscript{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 Vibhiṣaṇa 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.\textsuperscript{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-kiṣṭaḥ (v22) as referring to Vibhiṣaṇavardhana, 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.

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.\textsuperscript{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 Vibhiṣaṇa lake and the adjoining Śiva temple were located at present-day Risthal.\textsuperscript{251}

\textsuperscript{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).

\textsuperscript{249} The temple of Manorathasvāmin in the Chittorgarh fragment (A16) was evidently a pre-existing building like the Prakāśeśvara in the present inscription.

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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 Vibhiṣaṇa 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 रिष्ठल) from raṇasthala, “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 Vibhiṣaṇavardhana. (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.

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252 A potential double entendre in verse 28 of the inscription furnishes additional circumstantial evidence for this hypothesis. See note 266 on page 152.

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derives from the name Vibhiṣaṇa-saras mentioned in the inscription. This information, however, has negligible weight as evidence.
A Major Inscriptions

Diplomatic Text

[1] vāmena sandhyā-prāṇi-pāta-kopa-praṣaṅgāndhena vighaṭṭyamāṇaM pinākinaś śānt(?)i-v[ī](dh)[e] (yam a)[r](d)ha[m] v[ā]m[etara[m] vaś śivam ādadhātu‖  
[2] kārmukam ātata-jyamāna mahīṃ paritaḥ parivṛṇvatā jálamuceva viyaT  
[5] bhuvana-sāti-vadhā-đhāmar(ṃ)uṃ setus sakalasya-śiva-sāndhānaś śānti-vadhā-đhāmar(ṃ)uṃ setus sakalasya-śiva-sāndhānaś śānt(?)i-v[ī](dh)[e] (yam a)[r](d)ha[m] v[ā]m[etara[m] vaś śivam ādadhātu‖  
[6] rāṇeṣu bhūyassu bhu(vo) mahīṃ paritaḥ parivṛṇvatā jálamuceva viyaT  
[7] rāṇeṣu bhūyassu bhu(vo) mahīṃ paritaḥ parivṛṇvatā jálamuceva viyaT  
[8] bhuvana-sthiti-goptṛbhir nnṛpair dhuram ādyair vvidhṛtāṃ babhāra yaḥ| sva-kulocita-rājya-varddhanā‖  
[9] bhuvana-sthiti-goptṛbhir nnṛpair dhuram ādyair vvidhṛtāṃ babhāra yaḥ| sva-kulocita-rājya-varddhanā‖  
[10] svānavejāṃ prabhāva-dhāmnāṃ sakala-jagan-mahanīya-pauruṣāṇāM Avitatha-janatānurāga-bhājaṃ sthiti-padavīm anuyāti yo gurūṇāM‖  
[12] śvāsāṅkaḥ nija-vañ!śa-lalāmni yattra senā-pana-core pārivaśya pratibhavate pratiṣṭhitārāti-baliloṃ naṃ ādadhātu‖  
[14] śvāsāṅkaḥ nija-vañ!śa-lalāmni yattra senā-pana-core pārivaśya pratibhavate pratiṣṭhitārāti-baliloṃ naṃ ādadhātu‖  
[16] śvāsāṅkaḥ nija-vañ!śa-lalāmni yattra senā-pana-core pārivaśya pratibhavate pratiṣṭhitārāti-baliloṃ naṃ ādadhātu‖  
[17] śvāsāṅkaḥ nija-vañ!śa-lalāmni yattra senā-pana-core pārivaśya pratibhavate pratiṣṭhitārāti-baliloṃ naṃ ādadhātu‖  
[18] śvāsāṅkaḥ nija-vañ!śa-lalāmni yattra senā-pana-core pārivaśya pratibhavate pratiṣṭhitārāti-baliloṃ naṃ ādadhātu‖  
[19] śvāsāṅkaḥ nija-vañ!śa-lalāmni yattra senā-pana-core pārivaśya pratibhavate pratiṣṭhitārāti-baliloṃ naṃ ādadhātu‖  
[21] śvāsāṅkaḥ nija-vañ!śa-lalāmni yattra senā-pana-core pārivaśya pratibhavate pratiṣṭhitārāti-baliloṃ naṃ ādadhātu‖
Curated Text

(Verse 1. Metre: upajāti)

vāmena sandhyā-praṇipāta-kopānāyāṁ
pinākinaś Śānt(?)i-v[ə][j][dh][e][yam a][r][d]h[ā[m]
vaś śivam ādadhātu‖

(Verse 2. Metre: upajāti)

raṇeṣu bhūyassu bhuv(vo) mahimne
bibhartti yaḥ kārmukam ātata-jyam
jayaty asau svasya kulasya ketur
līla(lā)ma rājñāṁ bhagavat-prakāśaḥ‖

(Verse 3. Metre: mālabhāriṇī)

bhuvana-sthiti-dhāma dhar(mm)a-setus
sakalasyaulikarānvayasya lakṣmā
drapavarddhana ity abhūt pra[b]hāva-
śkapitārāti-balonnatir nnarendraḥ‖

Translation

(1) May that {right/not female/not adverse} half of Pinākin [Śiva\textsuperscript{254}] 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).\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{256}

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.

\textsuperscript{[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 n. The reading śānta cannot be dismissed, but I believe śānti works better in the context.

\textsuperscript{[2]} bhūyas bhuv(vo)\ RT, M: bhūyas sa bhuv(vo); SI: bhūyas subhuv(vo); S: bhūyas bhuv(vo) (tyto for bhūyas bhuv(vo)). The bottom of the subscript s is extended and hooked so it must be su. Compare su in 16, \textsuperscript{2}vardhhanas sutah. Construing bhūyas bhuv(vo) is better than bhūyas subhuv(vo).

\textsuperscript{[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.

\textsuperscript{[2]} dhāma\ All previous editors construe this word in compound. The possibility cannot be excluded, but I prefer to see it as 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-dhāmnāṃ).

Footnotes

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{255} The stanza refers to the Ardhanārī 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.”

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{253} In these notes SI denotes Sircar 1984c, not Select Inscriptions, which was published before the discovery of the Risthal inscription.
A Major Inscriptions

Verse 4. Metre: mālabhāriṇī
śirasīva pinākinas tuṣāra-

sruti-śītāmala-dīdhiti śasāṅkaḥ
nija-vaṭāla-lālāmi yatra senā-

pati-sabdaḥ ṣpṛhaṇyatām jagāma

Verse 5. Metre: pramitākṣarā
sunayā(va)lamana-
dṛḍhīkṛtayā

bala-sampadā prathitayā bhujayoḥ
udapādi tena ṣṛta-ṣatru-jayo

jayavardhana-kṣitipatis tanayāḥ

Verse 6. Metre: pramitākṣarā
bahalena yasya sakalāṃ paritaḥ

parivṛṇvatā jalamuceva viyat

[5th] bala-reṇunā karabha-kaṇṭha-rucā
sthagitā babhur nna kiraṇās savituḥ

Verse 7. Metre: vaṃśastha
kirīṭa-ratna-skhalitārkka-dīptiṣu

pratiṣṭhitājñaḥ pratirāja-mūrddha(s)u|
balena tasyājita-pauruṣaḥ parair

bbabhūva [6th] rājājivarddhanas sutaḥ

Verse 8. Metre: vaṃśastha
makheṣu somāsava-pāna-lālase

samāgate yasya muhur ādha-patau|
tatāma hastāgra-niveśitānanā

viyoga-cintākula-mānasā śacī

Verse 9. Metre: drutavilambita
śruta-vivikta-manāḥ [7th] sthitimān balī

sphuṭa-yaśaḥ-kusumodgama-pādapaḥ|
jagati tasya sutaḥ prathito gūṇaṅg

kula-lālāma vibhiṣaṇavarddhanah

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].

After consolidating his wealth – the famous strength of his arms – by exercising good policy, a son was begotten by him: King Jayavardhana.

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.

He had a son, King Ajitavardhana, whose prowess was never forcibly defeated (ajita) 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.

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.

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.

[6] viyoga] Sl: viyoga 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. pṛṣṭha, 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-udayaḥ pravikāsibhiḥ uj(j)valair | 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
| avihata-prasaraḥ | 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
| su-caritaḥ kiraṇaḥ iva bhānumān |
| kṣata-tamāṁ!si jaganti cakāra yaḥ||

Verse 11. Metre: viyoginī

| bhuvana-sthiti-gopīrbhir nṛnpair | 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.
| dhuram ādyair vvidhṛtāṃ babhāra yaḥ| (11)
| sva-kulocita-rājya-varddhanas tanayas tasya | (12)
| su-caritaiḥ kiraṇair iva bhānumān | Their minds seared by the heat of his power, the graceful womenfolk of his enemies wailed, swooned, palpitated, sighed and passed out senseless.
| kṣata-tamāṁ!si jaganti cakāra yaḥ||

Verse 12. Metre: viyoginī

| vilalāpa mumoha vivyathe | 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.
| viniśaśvāsa visaṃjñatāṃ yayau| (13)
| upatapta-manā baloṣmaṇā dviṣatāṃ yasya vilāsinī-janaḥ||

Verse 13. Metre: puṣpitāgrā

| kṣitipati-tilakasya tasya bā(h)u-draviṇa-nipīta-samagra-śatru-dīptiḥ | 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.
| sucarita-ghaṭita-prakāśa-dharmmā nṛpati-lalāma sutaḥ prakāśadharmmā||

Verse 14. Metre: puṣpitāgrā

| amalina-yāśasāṃ prabhāva-dhāmnā | 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-udayaḥ and subha-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-udayaḥ 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 subha-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.
| sakala-jagan-mahanīya-pauruṣāṇām avitatha-janatānurāga-
| bhā(j)āṃ sthitimān | 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 padavi and anu-yā used together is unlikely to mean anything other than “follow a path.” Sthitī-padavi is hard to interpret if padavi is to mean “path,” but it can work as a locative tatpuruṣa, sthitau padavi 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 sthitām in v9 may be shorthand for the same concept).
| bhā(j)āṃ sthitimān |}

| sthitimān |
Verse 15. Metre: vasantatilakā
yaḥ svānvaya-krama-paramparapayātām
āropitāṃ guṇa-rasāpahṛtena pittrā
lokapākāra-vidhaye na sukhodayāyā
rāja-śriyaṃ [12]su(bha-pha)odayiniṃ bibharttī]

Verse 16. Metre: vasantatilakā
ā toramāṇa-nṛpater nṛpa-mauli-ratna-
joyotsnā-pratāṇa-śābalikṛta-pāda-pīṭhā(t)
hūṇādhipasya bhuvi yena gataḥ pratiṣṭhāṃ
nīto yudhā vitathatām adhirāja-śabdaḥ]

Verse 17. Metre: vasantatilakā
[13]saṃgrāma-mūrddhani vipāṭha-nipātitāṃ
tasyaiva yena mada-vāri-mucāṃ 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‖

[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.
[13] 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).
[15] vviśrāṇitā  M: ā(bhānti); SI: āf–f. 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 clipped-off part.

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.

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.

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.

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.

It was he by whom this wide Vibhīṣaṇa Lake – a mirror image of the Bindusaras – was excavated, dedicating the massive product of merit from this laudable undertaking to his grandfather King Vibhīṣaṇavardhana.

See the Commentary and the notes to line 12 of the text for some of the problems associated with this stanza.

“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.

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: vasantatilkā

etac ca nṛtta-rabhasa-skhalitendu-lekhā-vāntā!ṣu-vicchurita-mecaka-kaṇṭha-bhāsaḥ

sthāṇos samagra-bhuvana-ttraya-ṣrṣṭi-hetoḥ
prāleya-saila-taṭa-(ka)pm akāri sadma

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.

Verse 21. Metre: vasantatilkā

sa-dvy-abda-saptatī-samā-samudāyavatsu

pūrṇeṣu pañcasu śateṣu vivatsarāṇām

[grīme (')]rkka-tāpa-mṛdita-pramadā-sanātha-dhārā-ghrodara-vijṛmbhita-puṣpaketau

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,

Verse 22. Metre: anuṣṭubh

lakṣma bhārata-varṣasya

nideśāt tasya bhū-kṣitaḥ|
akārayad daśapure

prakāśeśvara-sadma yaḥ‖

[Chancellor Doṣa,]

who has had the Prakāśeśvara temple, a beauty mark of Bhāratavarṣa, constructed in Daśapura at the order of that ruler,

Verse 23. Metre: anuṣṭubh

tasyaiva ca purasyā(n)tar

brahmaṇaś cāru mandiram

unmāpayad iva vyoma

śikharair gghana-rodhibhiḥ‖

and also, in that same city, a graceful temple of Brahmana which seems to take measure of the sky with its cloud-impeding spires,

Verse 24. Metre: anuṣṭubh

āśrayāya yatīnāñ ca

sāṃkhya-yogābhiyog(in)ām

vyadhatta kṛṣṇāvasathaṃ

bujjukāvasathaṃ ca yaḥ‖

and who has ordained the [building of the] Kṛṣṇa Lodge and the Bujjuka Lodge to shelter ascetics committed to Sāṃkhya and Yoga,

Verse 25. Metre: anuṣṭubh

sabhā-kūpa-maṭhārāmān

yo (')nyāṃs cānyāya-vimukho
deya-dharrmnān acikaraṭ‖

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 donated—

[18] śikharair gghana] Sī: 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.”
that very Lord Doṣa, the chancellor (rājasthānīya) who adheres to incorruptibility (adoṣa), son of the minister (amātya) to the predecessor of that king,

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.

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.

This preamble267 was composed by Vāsula son of Kakka out of a desire to laud that king of meritorious acts.

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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 (AA, 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**

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<th>Material</th>
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<th>Object type</th>
<th>slab</th>
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<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>width 58 cm</th>
<th>height 47 cm</th>
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**Discovery**

before 1885, in the vicinity of Mandsaurw

**Current location**

National Museum, New Delhi (in storage)

**Inscription**

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**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, Viṣṇuvardhana, Śaṣṭhidatta, Varāhadāsa, Raviṅkirti, Bhānuguptā, Doṣa, Abhayadatta, Doṣakumbha, Dharmadoṣa, Daḵsa, Nirdoṣa, Govinda

**Places mentioned**

Vindhya mountains, Ganges, Himalayas, Revā river, Pāriyātra mountain

**Compendia**

Bh List 9; CII 35; SI III.53

**Other editions**

Fleet 1886b

**Description**

This inscription occupies the front of a stone slab 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 cāmaras 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 be established that the carving postdates the inscription, probably by a long time. 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 memory the inscription was recovered from another stepwell across the Shivna, from the locality

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268 Fleet says the material may be slate; quartzite is perhaps more likely.

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 कुंड, “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.
Figure 29: Mandsaur inscription of Nirôśa. 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 torana now installed in Mandsaur fort\(^{271}\)) 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 Nirdoṣa’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 to chipping along the edges, particularly at the ends of the inscription facing inward. A few characters are lost

The inscription of Nirdoṣa also has instances of regular 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 Ša 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, 110; miliam, 111). 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, 18; compare e.g. yenā°, 12; vidhṛtaye, 12). A bipartite form of y not found in the Risthal inscription occurs in the conjunction rye (kāreyśv, 125) 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. paryāvṛtta, 19). Other unusual ligatures are tpa (samapatti, 11–2), which is combined almost horizontally with the p component’s left arm completely merged in the t component’s right leg; and the conjunct rño (varṇa°, 117; utkīrṇṇā, 125), in which both the repha and the a mātrā are attached to the upcurving end of the right limb of n. The reason for this strange shape may in both cases be the presence of subscript characters close above the n, 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 (ajjjanat in 113 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, 19; naigamānām, 111; yam, 123) 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.

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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 Mālavan script. Acute angles are conspicuous at the bottom right corners of many characters, though they alternate with right angles in the same position (see patīḥ 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.

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.

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\(^{271}\) See Williams (1972, 58–61) for a description and Figure 4 for a partial illustration.
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, I5). 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 descendents extending to or beyond the baseline on the left (e.g. visamtvādītā, I12–13). 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. kāntīh, I1; 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 vijīta, I8; varṇināṃ, I17). 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, I10; ajījanat, I13), mirroring the horizontally elongated form of ī. Finally, the ornamental form (e.g. kīrtīh, I9) 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 jihvāmūlīya 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, I2; yaśānsi, I4; vaṁśo, I6; ćaṁśu, I9; vaṁśa, I9; etc., but tanayāms trīn, I13; saṁskṛta, I14; āsān-karaṃ śaṅta, I17; manāmsi, I22). On a single occasion (jagātiḥ punaḥ, I5) a consonant replaces anusvāra before a stop, while in two cases anusvāra is used instead of a nasal consonant (dhimāṃs cakṣo and hṛimāṃs cchāuro, both I25). 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, I4; yaśasāṃ, I11; dhārāyāṃ, I12, 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, I14; havirbhuya, I13; arthe, I18; ratnair bhuya, I19; but varṛdhana, I5) or a conjunct with a third consonant (mūrdhnām, I3; vartmasu, I13), with a small assortment of odd cases (sūnur guru, I18; bhurtur, I18; kāryesyv, I25).

Gemination before r, however, does not occur with any consonant except t, yet for t it seems to be the rule (e.g. sattru, I4; kālattrǎt, I11; dhārityāṃ, I15; etc.) to which exception is taken only when a third consonant precedes the t in the conjunct (tanayāms trīn, I13; anugantrā, I15). Similarly, consonants are normally not doubled before y, except for dh which is geminated before y (“āddhyāsītā, I16–17; dhāvany, I18) unless preceded by another consonant or appearing in a word-initial position (vindhyaḍrī, I8; dhyāmaṃ, I9; vindhyasyavandhya, I16). The absence of gemination before y extends to vṛtyā (I17), where tt would be expected.
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; prathīyān, v11b), but they cannot replace the double vertical mark (e.g. viśvaml, v1d; aijjamat, 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 nīṃ at the end of the following line. To accommodate nīṃ, 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 caesurae in the text, occurring in mālinī (v30, v20a), at the first caesura in sragdharā (v8b, v26a) 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 rājasthānyā 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 Pīnākin 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 smita-rava-giatan, 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 sphaṭayati ... 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 (kleśā). 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, 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 (payasāṃ 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. The implication of the verse is that while your average socialite would stroll into a park and pull lianas

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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 (kṛtī, also feminine) is also often likened to a spreading creeper not only in literature but also in visual media in the form of kirtimukha 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.  

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-yaśodharmanma-nāmā*). The parallel construction of the first quarters and the connective *atha* show that these two stanzas are a matched pair.  

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 Vindhayas on the way from Daśapura to the Betwa valley. If this is indeed the case then *vinḍhyādṛi* in the inscription is used in a loose sense of “central Indian hills” rather than for the principal range of the Vindhayas; but if such a loose sense is accepted  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 Śaṣṭhidatta, a pious and wealthy  man said to have  

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276 For scars ornamenting the body of the king, compare *vaṇa-śatāṅka-śobhā-samudayopacita-kāntataravarṣmaṇaḥ* in line 18 of the Allahabad *prāsasti* 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 ... rājādhirājāḥ*). The Risthal inscription is less formulaic, but also addresses Śiva in its first verse and calls for the king’s victory in the second.
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 Vindhyas, 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 Narmada;²⁸² the Abhidhānacintāmanī 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-tuṅgaṃ is quite opaque, hence Kiellhorn (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 Kiellhorn’s suggestion as an emendation, but I find even this unnecessary. 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 sukṛti+viṣayin+tuṅgaṃ 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” (sukṛtayāḥ punya-kṛtya, tāsām viṣayāḥ kṣetra 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 dhārāyāṃ 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-bhaṅgāṃ 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 Bhānugupta 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

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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 somodbhāvā mekala-kanjakā. However, the commentary of Sarvānanda ad loc. says the name applies to the Narmada because it was brought down to earth by Purūravas of the Lunar Dynasty (soma-vaṁśyena purūravasā avatārī tatvāt somodbhāvā).
²⁸² Raghuvamśa 5.59, somodbhāvāyāḥ sarito, earlier referred to as narmadā in 5.62.
²⁸³ See page 96.
²⁸⁴ Siddham IN00050; CII3 20; CII3rev 43.
²⁸⁵ See page 8 about my translation of rājaśthāṇya as chancellor.
his relatives as Uddhava was to the Andhakas. The Andhakas are the Yadavas, 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 Yadavas, but a gifted minister who had learned the craft from Bhṛaspati himself. 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 Yadava royal line, being the son of Devabhāga, who was the brother of Vasudeva. In other words, Uddhava was cousin to Kṛṣṇa. The stanza thus strongly implies that the Naigamas 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 udayai), 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. Once again, Fleet sees only vague flattery here, to the effect that Abhayadatta’s “eyes of intellect ... served him like the eyes of a spy,” 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 nīja ... 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 nīja) seem much more likely than the chancellor’s own men (a very common extended meaning of nīja).

The text enumerates three boundaries for the realm: the Vindhya mountain, the Pārīyātra 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 Pārīyātra 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 Aravalī range. Now it is unlikely that Vindhya in the present case means only the central Vindhyan mountains, which lie too far east of Daśāpurā to be relevant. Therefore Pārīyātra is in all probability used here to designate only the Aravalīs, 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 following a single stanza describing two separate people in the inscription, while in the similarly structured verse 20 the syntax is unambiguous.

Fleet’s translation apparently omits the word anugantrā, or perhaps takes it to mean “imitating,” rendered by “like.” 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.

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286 The Harivaṃśa says the Yadus prospered because they relied on the political expertise of Uddhava (Harivaṃśa Appendix I.31.98, ... udhhavam nītimattaram| yasya nītiṃ samāśritya jīvanti yadavah sukham).  
287 See for example the Adīparvan of the Mahābhārata (1.213.26, ... udadhava ca mahā-yaśāḥ| sāksād bhṛaspatēḥ śiśyo mahā-buddhir mahā-yaśāḥ).  
288 Harivaṃśa 24,25, udhavaḥ devabhāgasya mahā-bhāgah 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 of 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 rāja-sthānīya 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 dimba in the kingdom. Dimba 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 dharma. 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 ślesa. 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-gaṇa-sthīti-vaśāt kāla-jiśānāya likhītesu, 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 puspa-samaya and puspa-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-ni 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 saudhā, 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 Viṣṇuvardhana

Verses 6 and 7 of the Mandsaur stone inscription of Nirdoṣa describe Viṣṇuvardhana as a victorious personage of the Aulikara dynasty and associate him with the titles narādhipati and rājādhirāja-paramēśvara, 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 Viṣṇuvardhana. 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 Viṣṇuvardhana’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 Viṣṇuvardhana and the titles rājādhirāja and paramēśvara. 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 Viṣṇuvardhana at least as the more probable alternative. R. G. Bhandarkar (1902, 392) proposed an even more improbable third alternative, namely that Viṣṇuvardhana 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 Viṣṇuvardhana, 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 Viṣṇuvardhana since it is “most improbable” that the Sondhni pillar inscription (A11 and A12) commemorating that victory 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 Viṣṇuvardhana’s courtier who commissioned the Mandsaur stone inscription.

292 It may even be possible to interpret the whole of the compound saudhānta-lekha-valaya-parigatatin 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 Viṣṇuvardhana 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 Viṣṇuvardhana 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 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 Viṣṇuvardhana 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 Viṣṇuvardhana 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.

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Directly after introducing Varāhadāsa, the inscription praises the brilliance of someone named Raviṅkirti 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 Raviṅkirti was a bright light to the Naigama clan. Sircar and Gai (1961, 54 n. 4) express uncertainty as to whether the names Varāhadāsa and Raviṅkirti referred to the same person, or whether the latter was the former’s son or brother. Salomon (1989, 16, 18) prefers the interpretation that Raviṅkirti 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 Raviṅkirti had been Varāhadāsa’s son or brother. There is yet another option in addition to the three mentioned by Sircar and Gai: Raviṅkirti may have been someone unrelated to the family, such as a poet patronised by Varāhadāsa who brightened the family with his talent (kulam svātma-bhūtyā ... suprakāśam vyadhatta, 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 Raviṅkirti 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 Raviṅkirti was none other than the poet Bhāravi, whom the later Raviṅkirti mentions by name, and who is said to have introduced Daṇḍin’s grandfather to a King Viṣṇuvardhana, 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. But Bhāravi aside, I think that Raviṅkirti 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 Raviṅkirti, 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 Bhagavadoṣa 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-dōṣa. 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
A Major Inscriptions

were to say nothing about his own father beyond naming them. But it would be even more peculiar if the donor in the text after explicitly saying that there were three of Abhayadatta, in whose memory he constructs a well. It is describing Nirdoṣa’s own lineage and that of his uncle.

inscription is concerned at this point with two things: the notion of the inscription as (bhadra-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 the third brother is neglected because he is not relevant to Nirdoṣa’s purpose with the inscription. Finally, the Chittor fragment (A/4, 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.

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 rājasthānīya 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 daksiṇa, 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] siddhaM¹⁰ sa jayati jagatāṃ paṭijī pināki smita-rava-gitiṣu yasya danta-kāntih dyutir iva taḍītāṃ niṣī sphuranti tirayati ca sruṭhayati adāś ca viṣvaM²⁰ svayambhū bhūtānāṃ śiṣṭi-laya-[samu]

[2] tpati-vidhiṣu prayukto yenājñāṃ vahati bhuvanānāṃ vidhiṣayē piṭṛvam cānito jagati garimāṃ

[3] nī-dūravānam vṛṣṭgahati rucam indor mmaṇḍalaṃ yasya mūṛdhānMa sa sīraśi vinibadhanaṃ
randhirīṃ asṭhi-mālaṃ śrūṣṭa bhava-srō vaḥ kīśa-bhaṇgaṃ bhuaṅgahāḥ [⁴ṣaṭ(yā) saha(s)raīḥ

[4] sgaratmājnāṃ khāta[h]

[5] kha-tulyāṃ rucam ādadhānaḥ| Asyodapānādhipateś cirāya yaśāṃsi pāyaṃ vidhiṣayē vahati bhuvanānāṃ

[6] yadā nṛpati-veṣaṃ kevalaṃ lakṣma-māttrāṃ

[7] valinam iva vilambaṃ kambalaṃ bāhuleyaḥ‖

[8] upahita-hita-rakṣaṇaṃ jātī-rakṣānaṃ bhuvah bhavati

[9] valinam iva vilambaṃ kambalaṃ bāhuleyaḥ‖

[10] vṛṣṭgahati rucam indor mmaṇḍalaṃ yasya mūṛdhānMa sa sīraśi vinibadhanaṃ

[11] randhirīṃ ashttī-mālaṃ śrūṣṭa bhava-srō vaḥ kīśa-bhaṇgaṃ bhuaṅgahāḥ [⁴ṣaṭ(yā) saha(s)raīḥ

[12] sgaratmājnāṃ khāta[h]

[13] kha-tulyāṃ rucam ādadhānaḥ| Asyodapānādhipateś cirāya yaśāṃsi pāyaṃ vidhiṣayē vahati bhuvanānāṃ

[14] yadā nṛpati-veṣaṃ kevalaṃ lakṣma-māttrāṃ

[15] valinam iva vilambaṃ kambalaṃ bāhuleyaḥ‖
168   A Major Inscriptions

   sa jayati jagatām patiḥ pinākī
   smita-rava-gitiṣu yasya danta-kāntiḥ
   dyutir iva taḍitāṃ niśi sphuranti
   tirayati ca sputatayati adāś ca viśvaṃ

[22] sa jayati jagatām patiḥ pinākī
   smita-rava-gitiṣu yasya danta-kāntiḥ
   dyutir iva taḍitāṃ niśi sphuranti
   tirayati ca sputatayati adāś ca viśvaṃ

[23] priyatama-kupitānāṃ r(ā)maya(n) baddha-rāgaṃ kisalayam iha mudham mānasam
   māniniṇāM Upanayati nabhasvān māna-bhaṅgāya yasmin kusama-samaya-māse tattra nirmpāpito yaM

[24] priyatama-kupitānāṃ r(ā)maya(n) baddha-rāgaṃ kisalayam iha mudham mānasam
   māniniṇāM Upanayati nabhasvān māna-bhaṅgāya yasmin kusama-samaya-māse tattra nirmpāpito yaM

[25] priyatama-kupitānāṃ r(ā)maya(n) baddha-rāgaṃ kisalayam iha mudham mānasam
   māniniṇāM Upanayati nabhasvān māna-bhaṅgāya yasmin kusama-samaya-māse tattra nirmpāpito yaM

Curated Text

[1] siddham()

(Verse 1. Metre: puṣpitāgrā)
   sa jayati jagatām patiḥ pinākī
   smita-rava-gitiṣu yasya danta-kāntiḥ
   dyutir iva taḍitāṃ niśi sphuranti
   tirayati ca sputatayati adāś ca viśvaṃ

(Verse 2. Metre: śikhariṇi)
   svayambhūr bhūtānāṃ
   sthi-ti-laya-[samu]21 [patti-vidhiṣu
   prayukto yenājāṃm vahati bhuvanānāṃ vidhiṣaye]
   pitṛtvāṃ cānito jagati garimāṇaṃ gamayatā
   sa śambhur bhūyāṃsi
   pratidiśatu bhadrāṇī bhava[tām]]

(Verse 3. Metre: mālinī)
   phaṇa-maṇi-guru-bhā(r)ākk[ā][ā]nti-duṛvaṇamaraṃ
   sthagayati rucam indor
   mmaṇḍalam yasya mūrdhnām
   sa śirasī vinibadhan mandhriṇim asthi-mālāṃ
   sṛjatu bhava-sṛjo vah kleśa-bhaṅgaṃ bhujāṅghaḥ]

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
   succurse 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.
A10 Mandsaur Inscription of Nirdoṣa

May the god Ocean who disposes over waters, who was dug out by the sixty thousand sons of Sagara and who is suffused with lustre comparable to that of the sky, long preserve the magnificence of this lordly well.

Next, victorious is the lord of men 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.

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, 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.”

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 allot 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] vinamya] F reads vināmaya and SI follows suit. There is definitely no vowel mark to the right of n. Though the stone is damaged above n, á is nowhere else attached to n as a śiromaṇḍa in this inscription, so the actual reading is quite certainly vinamya. The intent, however, must have been vinamya even though according to SI the use of this form instead of vinamaya is “not grammatically happy.” A short vertical mark in the left margin may indicate a correction to ná, 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.
As his troops proceed across wastelands with standards held aloft, the trunks of their raging elephants toss lodhra\(^\text{301}\) 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.

The kings who sired the dynasty of that lord had, it is said, an affluent\(^\text{302}\) 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].\(^\text{303}\)

Like the torrent of the Ganges [flowing both] high and low from the Himalaya [and] like the copious mass of the water of the Revā\(^\text{304}\) from the moon, a lineage of Naigamas – pure and absolutely worthy of being approached – comes down from this [man] of high-rising dignity.\(^\text{305}\)

He had a son who took after him, a generator (\(\text{prasūti}\)) of glory born (\(\text{prasūta}\)) of a wife of good family. Known as Varāhadāsa, he was masterful and worthy of esteem (\(\text{varārha}\)) like a partial emanation of Hari [Viṣṇu].\(^\text{306}\)

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\(^\text{301}\) Lodhra is a small tree bearing clusters of white flowers (\(\text{Symplocos racemosa}\) Roxb.).

\(^\text{302}\) Fleet translates \(\text{vasīyān}\) as “very excellent.” See also note 279 on page 160.

\(^\text{303}\) The six enemies are emotions or states of mind that need to be overcome. See note 384 on page 207 for details.

\(^\text{304}\) Revā is another name for the river Narmada; see also the Commentary.

\(^\text{305}\) “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” (\(\text{turiga-namraḥ}\)) may imply “prominent, yet humble,” and “copious” may suggest that the family is extensive or influential.

\(^\text{306}\) Varāha, the Boar, is an incarnation of Viṣṇu; the verse says that like his namesake, Varāhadāsa was as superhuman as a partial incarnation (\(\text{amśa}\)) of Viṣṇu.

\(^{[9]}\) dhūsareṇa\] F reads dhūmāreṇa. The reading dhūsareṇa was first proposed by DP and approved by K. The stone definitely has sa.

\(^{[9]}\) paryāyṛtta\] F and S print paryāṛtta, which must be a typo.
With the marvel of his character Ravikīrti 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.

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.

As though engendering three sacrifices from a fire, the good lady Bhānuguptā conceived three sons from him, who shook off the darkness enveloping the brilliance of [their] intellect.

The first was Lord Doṣa, a prop to his kinsmen on the ways of their duty, like Uddhava to the Andhakas.

A savant of the many procedures of polity, he – like Vidura – 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.

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[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] visamvādātā: F reads visamvādātā and emends to visamvādātā, where the second a is probably a typo for ā. I consider sanbāvā an unlikely solecism, whereas samvāvā 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 l13), 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 adhvārin 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 havir-bhujaḥ 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 Dṛḍtarāṣṭra 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

pranādhi-dṛg-anugantrā yasya bauddhena cākṣṇā
na niṣi tanu daviyo vāsty adṛṣṭaṃ dhārītrāyām
padam udaiyā dadhāno (‘)nantaraṃ tasya cābhūt
sa bhayam abhayadatto
nā(ma)16(v)il[?ghna](?n) p(t)ajānāṃ

Verse 21. Metre: mālinī

Verse 19. Metre: sragdharā

Verse 20. Metre: mālinī

or character is almost certainly praṇī, while the third is quite certainly cī which SI adopts. No vestige of the second character survives; the first
instead, pelt it) the fear of (his) subjects(?). K suggests restoring vighnān instead of vighna directly. The clearly better reading

The character ṣūci-sacivāddhyāśāṃ, typo.

Verse 22. Metre: mālinī

vihita-sakala-(v)arṇāsaṅkaraṃ sānta-dimbam
kṛta iva kṛtam etad yena rājyaṃ nirādhi
sa dhurum ayam idānīṃ varṇa-sacivāddhyā§

Verse 23. Metre: mālinī

sva-sukham anabhivā(cːn)chan
durgame (‘)dhvany asaṅgāṃ
dhurum atiguru-bhārāṃ yo dadhad bhartur arthe|
vahati nrpati-veṣam kevalaṃ lakṣma-māṭṭraṃ

valinam iva vilambaṃ kambalam bāhuleyaḥ||

[16] vighnān F restores cīvan, translating “collecting (in order to dis-

pel it) the fear of (his) subjects(?).” K suggests restoring vighnān instead, which SI adopts. No vestige of the second character survives; the first
character is almost certainly vi or ci, while the third is quite certainly praṇī with n or t prefixed to it. The restoration vighnān is extremely plausible.

was evidently tp.

[18] sahelaṃ] So read by F, while SI reads sahela-. The anusvāra is

clear in the stone.

[19] sacivāddhyā§] There is a small vertical mark at the end of the
line, probably functioning as a space filler. See Script and Language
for details.


[21] anabhivācchan] The character ccha is clear; possibly vāmc-

chan had been intended. For the prefix, F reads atī. The clearly better reading abhi was suggested by K and endorsed by SI.

[22] Fleet restores cīvan at the beginning of line 16 (see text note to that
line), translating accordingly. He understands dhārītrāyām, “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 Sir-
car (1965b, 415 n. 2). For my more consequential disagreements with

Fleet, see the Commentary.

[23] Fleet translates asaṅgāṃ 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 durgame dhvani. As an alter-
native, Hans Bakker (forthcoming and personal communication)

suggests “independently,” implying that he is not hindered in his
work by people placed above him.

[24] Fleet (CII, 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, bahulāḥ kṛttikā gāvo).
A10 Mandsaur Inscription of Nirdoṣa

(Verse 22. Metre: mālinī)
upahita-hita-rakṣā-maṇḍano jāti-ratnair
bhujā iva prthulāṃsas tasya dakṣaḥ kaṇiyāṁ
mahād idam udapānāṁ khānāyām āśa bibhra\[20]\c
(ch)(u)ti-hṛdaya-nitāntānandī nirdoṣa-naṁ

(Verse 23. Metre: śikhariṇī)
sukhāśreyam cchāyām pariṇatī-hita-svādu-phala-dāṁ
gajendrenāruṇaṁ draham iva kṝ̄ntena balināḥ
piṭriyaṁ praddhiśya
priyaṁ abhayadattaṁ pṝ̄ṭhu-dhiyā
prathiyas tenedāṁ kuśalam iha karmmaparacītaṁ|

(Verse 24. Metre: āryā)
paṅcasu śateṣu śaradāṁ yāteṣv
ekāṁa-navaṭi-sahiṭeṣu
mālava-gaṇa-sthiti-vaśāt mālava-gaṇa-sthiti-vaśāt kāla-jñāṇaṁ

(Verse 25. Metre: mandākrāntā)
yā\[22]\smīṁ kāla-mṛdu-girāṁ kokilānāṁ pralāpā
bhindantiva smara-śara-nibhāḥ
prōṣitānāṁ manāṁsī
dhṛṅgālīnāṁ ḍhavanir anu-vanaṇaṁ
(t)a-ra-mandaś ca yasmin
ādhūṭa-ja-yāṃ dhanur iva nadac
chrūyate puṣpa\[23]\ketoḥ|

(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 koels\[316\] 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],\[317\]

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[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 bhṛṅgālīnāṁ 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.
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.

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.\(^{318}\)

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 (\(\text{dharma}\) \(\text{as Nirdoṣa/unfailingly}\)).\(^{319}\)

Engraved by Govinda.

\(^{23}\) I believe Fleet is right that \textit{muṇḍa-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 \textit{saudhānta-lekhā-valaya-parigatiṃ} as “a circle of fluting on its stucco cornice” is conjectural.

\(^{24}\) My translation “as Nirdoṣa” 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 Nirdoṣa […] safeguard lawfulness for a long time” is equally feasible.
A11 Sondhni Intact Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman

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Description

Yaśodharman’s victory pillars were discovered for scholarship in 1879 by Arthur Sulivan 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 Sondhnī321 (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

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320 These agents, incidentally, discovered the silk weaver inscription (A6).
321 The name of the hamlet is spelt सोंधनी on several boards and signs in the area, but several different Romanisations are current in literature, including Sondni, Sondani, Sondhani, Soṇḍnī and Soṅgnī (as well as Sonḍ(a)ṇī), probably introduced by Luard (1908) who may have intended the न 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 Yosodharman. Inked rubbing from Fleet (1886c).

Figure 34: Sondhni intact pillar inscription of Yosodharman. 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 kirtimukha 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 top of the bell capital, 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, 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, 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 Garuda, faces temples of Viṣṇu.) Secondly, the inscription itself opens (v1) with a description of the extremely tall (drāghiṣṭha) 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.

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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 toraṇa 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-lītīga 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 prāsaṭṭi (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 弭, isEqualTo isEqualTo, and some vowel marks rise from the consonant body, then descend toward the left.326 In sāmantair yaśya the use of this form may have been driven by calligraphy, as a regular ryo would have been very hard to fit (and awkward-looking) between the subscript parts of nta and saya, whereas this ryo ligature allows plenty of space to develop those characters. There is, however, no such constraint whatsoever in vīryāvaskamma. The inscription includes examples of ̀a and dха; the former is distinguished from ̀a by a narrower shape and a tail that extends downward and curves to the left, while the latter builds on ̀a by the addition of a large loop at the end. The outline of dха conspicuously slants downward, so it differs from phu 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 simplified subscript character with a line above it. There is one instance of the upadhmnīya (śikharaṇaf paścimād, 15), which is not quite clear but resembles two slightly curved loops placed side by side. Elsewhere, the regular visarga is used instead of the upadhmnīya (e.g. madaīḥ pādayor, 15) as well as instead of the jīh-vāmūliya (e.g. drṣḍaḥ kandārā, 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 ŋ, and connects to the top of f and n (in śrṅgā, 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.
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 laushiya (l5), 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 Mandsaur 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 aksāra. 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 āvibrāhāta, l2; dhana[r]-jyā, l2; girir durgga, l6). Some consonants are also doubled before r (ākṛanti, l4; cakkravālam, l7; satru in l1 but sattru in the same locus in the duplicate inscription A12, and mātra in l3). Gemination before y occurs in aāḍḍhyāsini (l4), but a single consonant is used instead of the standard double in vṛtyā (l3). The use of anusvāra is close to standard, with some preference for the velar ni before sibilants (tejā̄̄śi, l1; pānsu, l3; vanše, l8; but deśāms, l4). In one case, anusvāra appears at the end of a verse with a punctuation mark (yugmanḍi, l6). 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 sragdhāra 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 sāmādi in the eight sragdhāra 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 Mandsaur 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 Mandsaur 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 Mandsaur 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

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328 Though there exist recitation modes of sragdhāra 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, 4abcd, 5a, 6cd and 7bcd; see my earlier study (Ballogh 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-krīḍā, 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 (uksan), then adds a further hint: this bull bears the mark of the hand of Pārvati (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 (aśīrvāda) 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 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.

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 Harsacarita.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 śabdhah, “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 Hūnas. What is not quite clear

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331 Sara Schastok (1985, 47) observes an “interest ... in expressing the violent potential in divine personality” in the art of Mandsaur (and Shamalajj). 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.

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 saŋghašīrā metre: vārāhīn ātmayones tanun atanu-balām āśīrvādagurumupāṣya yasya prīk potra-koṭiŋ pralaya-parigatā śiśiyē bhīta-dhātri mlecchaudvejyāmēśa bhujayugam adhunā pivaraṁ rāja-mūtey sa śrīmad-bandhu-bhṛtyāś ciraṁ avatu māṁ māṁ pāṛthvaś candraguptaś.

336 Harsacarita 4, cāpa-guṇa-kīṇa-lekhayāṅka-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 (Harsacarita 5, p. 233, dhanur-guṇa-kīṇa-kalanka-kālīkṛta-prakoṣṭhasya).
is whether this is about his conquests or about defending his homeland. The ambiguity is heightened by the compound *sva-grha-parisaravājñayā*, 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. Contrarily, Mirashi (1980, 412) points out that the verb *bhunakti* in the verse in question is active, while according to Pāṇini 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 Puraṇas 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-rājñaḥ*, “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.

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.

337 For instance Sircar (1965b, 419 n. 1 and n. 4), Williams (1972, 52).

338 *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.3.66, *bhuto 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.

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-grha-parisaravājñayā* 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. The first Indian inscriptions that employ this image may be engaging in intertextual dialogue by appropriating the propagandistic language of their Hūṇa adversaries, just like

340 If so, the image may originate in an Iranian idea of the transfer-ence of *xaranaḥ*, “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 vaṭṭikara-śabāla 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 the known world is determined by the river Lauhitya, a widely attested name for the Brahmaputra that also features in the

342 Raghuvaṃśa 4.84 in Vallabhadeva’s version, cakampe tīrṇa-lauhitye tasmin prāgjyotiṣeyarṣaḥ tad-gajāldānāṁ prāptaḥ saha kālāguru-drūmaiḥ (Verse 4.81 in the redaction of Mallinātha, text identical.)

343 Bhṛhatasaṁhitā 16.15, lohiyaḥ sindhunadaḥ sarayāḥ... and 14.5–6, atha pūrvasyāṁ... prāgjyotiṣa-lauhitya-kṣīroda-samudra-puruśaṅgāḥ

344 Raghuvaṃśa 4.40 in Vallabhadeva’s version (4.39 in Mallinātha’s version).
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, CI13, 147–48), which remained the only published full translation for over a century and a quarter, gives the incorrect interpretation.

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, 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. The second item of interest is that he professed to be a Śaiva bardic songs, letters conveyed orally or written on perishable 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 last long 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, 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, 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 stonecutter 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 pūrva, while the present one refers to it simply as “verses” (ślokāḥ). In the artisan’s signature, the participle utkīrnā may be a feminine singular, in which case pūrva is probably to be supplied; but as Sircar (1965b, 420 n. 2) notes, it may also be a masculine plural (in samādhī with the following word) agreeing with ślokāḥ in the author’s signature. In view of my understanding of pūrva as the standard preamble to a donative inscription (see page 7), this latter is much more likely.

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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 ‘bhango yah 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 (CI13, 162 n. 6) already noted, an antithesis to abhaṅga. Sircar (1965b, 425 n. 6) has suggested arcayaṭi, 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: l29, kiritim itas tridāśa-pati-bhavana-gamanāvāpta-laṭīta-sukha-vicaraṇām ācaksāṇa iva bhuvau bāhur ayam ucchrītaḥ stambbhaḥ.
Diplomatic Text

[1] vepante yasya bhīma-stanita-bhaya-samudbhṛanta-daiyā digantāḥ śṛṅgāghātaiḥ sumeror vv(i) ghaṭita-drṣadaḥ kandarā yaḥ karoti| Ukṣaṇaṁ taṁ dadhānaḥ kṣiṭidhara-tanayā-datta-(pañcāṅgula)ṅkaṁ drāghiṣṭhaḥ śūlapāneḥ kṣapayatu bhavatāṁ śatru-tejāj|iṣi ketuḥ|
[3] nindyācāreṣu yo (s)min vinaya-muṣi yuge kalpanā-ṝṛṣṭi-vṛtyā rājasv anyeṣu pāṅśuṣy iva kusumabalir ṇnābabhāse prayuktāḥ| sa śreyo-dhāmni samrāḍ iva śatru-tejāṣi kyetaḥ| kṣitidhara-tanayā-datta-(pañcāṅgula)ṅkaṁ drāghiṣṭhaḥ śūlapāṇeḥ kṣapayatu bhavatāṁ śatru-tejāj|iṣi ketuḥ|
drāghiṣṭhaḥ śūlapāṇeḥ kṣapayatu bhavatāṁ śatru-tejāṣi kyetaḥ| kṣitidhara-tanayā-datta-(pañcāṅgula)ṅkaṁ drāghiṣṭhaḥ śūlapāṇeḥ kṣapayatu bhavatāṁ śatru-tejāj|iṣi ketuḥ|
[5] āvirbhūtāvalepair avinaya-paṭuḥbir llaṅghitācāra-(mā)ṛggair mmoḥād aidamyuninār apaśubha-ratibhiḥ piḍyamānā narendraiḥ| yasya kṣmā śārgagapānēra iva kāṭhina-dhanur-jā-kiṅāṅ(ṅka)-prakoṣṭha(m) bāhumā lokopākāra-vrata-saphala-parispaṃ-pāvaṃ prapannā|
[6] nindyācāreṣu yo (s)min vinaya-muṣi yuge kalpanā-ṝṛṣṭi-vṛtyā rājasv anyeṣu pāṅśuṣy iva kusumabalir ṇnābabhāse prayuktāḥ| sa śreyo-dhāmni samrāḍ iva śatru-tejāṣi kyetaḥ| kṣitidhara-tanayā-datta-(pañcāṅgula)ṅkaṁ drāghiṣṭhaḥ śūlapāṇeḥ kṣapayatu bhavatāṁ śatru-tejāṣi kyetaḥ| kṣitidhara-tanayā-datta-(pañcāṅgula)ṅkaṁ drāghiṣṭhaḥ śūlapāneḥ kṣapayatu bhavatāṁ śatru-tejāj|iṣi ketuḥ|

Curated Text

Verse 1. Metre: sragdharā

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!
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.

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

[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
From the banks of the Brahmaputra to Mount Mahendra with its foothills dense with palm thicketsto 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.

[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.

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.

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**[6]** F prints prāpitaṃ, but his rubbing shows prāpitaṃ, which is what is required by the syntax. Pathak (1908b, 97) suggests emending to prāpitaṃ, but ā is probably just a typo in Fleet’s text. SI prints prāpitaṃ.

**[7]** F tentatively reads (or restores) gām evomātum, 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 irdhvam with vigaṇayitum after the caesura). But compare unmanpayad iva vyoma in verse 23 (l18) of the Risthal inscription (A9): the present phrase should probably also mean “to measure the sky.” Fleet’s gām ... irdhvam 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.

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**357** The word *tala* is used as an alternative to *tāla* for the sake of prosody (see also page 161 about this). It may mean a palm tree in general or, in particular, the palmyra (*Borassus flabellifer* L.).
Verse 8. Metre: sragdharā

[8] śāghye jāṃmāsya vajñilśe
caritam agha-haraṁ drṣyate kā(n)tam asmin
dharmmasyāyaṁ niketaś
calati niyamitaṁ nāmunā loka-vṛttam
ity utkarṣaṁ guṇānāṁ
likhitum iva yaśodharmmaṇaś candra-bimbe
rāgād utkṣipta uccair
bhuja iva rucimān yaḥ prthivyā vibhāti|

Verse 9. Metre: anuṣṭubh

[9] ti tuṣṭūṣayā tasya
vāsulenoparacitāḥ
ślokāḥ kakkasya sūnunā
utkīrṇā 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 (dharma). 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

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<tr>
<td><strong>Dimensions</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>height 13.5 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>depth 120 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shaft diameter 105 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discovery</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current location</strong></td>
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<td>Line height 35–40 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date CE</strong></td>
<td>ca. 533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basis of dating</strong></td>
<td>see commentary on the primary pillar, A11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic</strong></td>
<td>eulogy of Yaśodharman</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Persons mentioned</strong></td>
<td>Gupta rulers, Hūṇa rulers, Mihirakula, Yaśodharman, Vāsula, Kakka, Govinda</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Places mentioned</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Compendia</strong></td>
<td>CII3 34</td>
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<td><strong>Other editions</strong></td>
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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, CII3, 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 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 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 Yaśodharmarāja. Composite digital photo by the author, 2017.
There is an ensemble of sweeping curved lines that may be an eroded shell (śanṭhālīpi) 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-s(a)mudbh)r(ā)nta-(d)ai(t)y[ā di]gan[tāḥ] śṛṅgāghātaiḥ sumero[r v]g[haṭa-dṛṣa]d[andarā yaḥ karot]i Ukṣaṇaṃ tam dadhānaḥ kṣiṭiḍhara-tanayā-da[l](ttapañ)cāṅgulāṅkam drāṅghīṭḥaḥ śūlapaṇeḥ kṣapaṭatu bhavatāṃ satru-tejāṃṣi ketuḥ


[8] ⟨8⟩[ślāghye jāmāṣya vaṃśe caritam agha-haraṃ dṛṣya kāntam asmin dharmasyāyaṃ niketaḥ calati niyamitaṃ nānuma loka-ṛvytaṃ] ity utkāraṃ gunānāṃ likhitum iva yaśodharmanṃaṇaḥ candra-bimbe rāgād utkṣipta Uccair bhūja lva rucmāṇ yaḥ pṛthivyā vibhitā

[9] ⟨9⟩[Ity tusṭiṣayā tasya nṛpatheḥ puṇya-karmmanḥḥ vāsuloparacitaḥ ślokāḥ kaljakasya sūnunā] Utkīrṇṇā govdrena]
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.
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
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

Figure 39: Reconstruction of the Chittorgarh tablet of the Naigamas. Vertical scoring shows an average character width.
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 inscriptions\textsuperscript{360} 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 emphasise several differences in character shapes, but I feel that some of these are due to stochastic variation in a very small sample.\textsuperscript{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 shallowl y. Both, especially inscription B, closely resemble the script of the Sondhni pillar inscription,\textsuperscript{360} and 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 $matra$ for $\dddot{a}$ (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 also attaches to some characters in a special form (e.g. $m\dddot{a}$ in 13 and 14 of B; $n\dddot{a}$ in 14 of B). The novel form of the conjunct $y$ – 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 ($virya$, 12 of B; for the regular form compare $viryyo$ 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 $anuv\ddot{a}tu$ appears in line 1 of A, and a double (and apparently short) vertical at the end of a full $upaj\ddot{a}ti$ 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 $kiritiri$ $bhuvi$ in 15 of B and $virya$ in 12 of B, noted above for the $r$ ligature), and occasionally before $r$ ($yattra$, 11 of A) and before $y$ as well ($maddhyama$, 13 of B). The small sample includes no $upadh\ddot{a}mya$ or $j\ddot{h}v\ddot{a}m\ddot{u}liya$ (nor any phonetic contexts where one of these would be expected), and $anusv\ddot{\acute{a}}ra$ is employed in a standard manner (except possibly in $\dddot{a}\dddot{n}ca$, 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 $brahma$.\textsuperscript{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 Brah\m\m{\textaccentium}, whom the Naigamas may have held in especial regard. This is implied by the record of Do\sha’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 Brah\m\m{\textaccentium} and that of the Naigama chancellor in Nirdoṣa’s inscription (A10 v2). It is, however, also possible that the invocation was addressed to Vi\sha or Śi\va, both of whom may be described in similar terms.

\textsuperscript{360} Siddham IN00010, IN00011, IN00021, IN00030, IN00058, IN00059; CI13 7, 8, 9, 64; CI13rev 8, 17, 26.

\textsuperscript{361} For example, they note that the $matra$ 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 $i$ $mat\ddot{a}\ddot{s}$, none of which are vertically extended, this is not evidence for a systematic difference.

\textsuperscript{362} For a close parallel, Sircar and Gai (1961, 54) cite $Kenopani\acute{s}ad$ 3, $na$ $tatra$ cak\m\m{\textaccentium}$gacchati$ $na$ $v\ddot{a}g$ $gacchati$ $no$ $manah$. 
Verse 2 definitely introduced a king, presumably the one reigning when the inscription was created. Judging by the compound -vaṅśa-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. (na) yāti (dh)īr yyattra ma(n)o na bhāra(t)i (p)araṃ vapu[ ... ]
2. [ ... ]vañśa-je mahīṃ sapatna-nārī-jana-vibhra(ma)[ ... ]
3. [ ... ]dyate[ ... ]

**Curated Text**

(Verse 1. Metre: vaṃśastha)

[ ... ]

(Verse 2. Metre: vaṃśastha)

[ ... ]vañśa-je mahīṃ sapatna-nārī-jana-vibhra(ma)[ ... ]

(Verse 3. Metre: anuṣṭubh)

babhūva vañijā(ṃ) śreṣṭho viṣṇudatto vicakṣa(ṇa)[ḥ]

**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 marīgala symbol or the word siddham.

[3] dyate] SG tentatively restore vidyate or prapadyate. Any number of other restorations may be possible.
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 loyalty of the subjects. Verse 3 obviously introduced a current or erstwhile chancellor, as it includes the word rājasthānīya 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.

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 ⏓-⏑-- 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 toyaṃ harati raśmi raṣmībhīḥ taithā haret karaṃ rāṣṭrān nityaṃ arka-vrataṃ hi tatā The same passage has a few other metaphors that may be applicable here. The “vow of the wind” (Manusmṛti 9.306, vratam ... mārum) 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 ⏓-⏑--. The “vow of the moon” (Manusmṛti 9.309, cāndravratako) expresses the ability to arouse gladness in subjects just
Viṣṇudatta was himself a rājasthāniya, being able to work in this way may have been perceived as a mark of excellence.

Of verse 6 only four akṣaras remain, three of which mean “of him there was.” The seventh verse speaks of the birth of a virtuous son. Sircar and Gai restore sajjanat, “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 jjanat, “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 grandson, is 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 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 saṃdhī 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, ottarasyām 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,” 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 anuvṛtta 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 upaṭṭita 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] [×i×] [?v]y[ā]ṃ [a]m āpiṅga-bhaṅgura-jaṭā-caya-lina-candra(M) anyac ca di(pta
[2] [×i×××××] [v]i[vr]vyo ripu-vrivy-aṅga-bhaṅgibhir jjanānurakta-kṣiti-pālanodbhaye[ai[h]]
[3] [×i×××××] [y](s)y(ā)jñayā daśapuraṃ maddhyamāḥ diṅ-maṇḍanāca[ṇ]gaṇvitaḥ rājasthān[ya]
[4] [×i×××××] [b]h[?]uṣaṇaḥ varāha-nāmāloke smin suhṛd-āmoda-v[ā]rddhanaḥ [a]mca dīpta(m) anyac
[5] [×i×××××] [k]ara-savratatvād vikhyāta-kīrtir bhuvi viṣṇudattah[6] asyaḥbhūn
[6] [×i×××××××] [a]syaḥbhūn
[7] [×i×××××] [sājī]janat sutam udāra-guṇa-pracāram ācāra-sīlam ane[×××××] [a]mca
[8] [×i×××××] [m]anorathasvāmi-gṛhottarasyāṃ diṅ-maṇḍanā[ca] dīpta(m) anyac
[9] [×i×××××××] [n]āṃ [a]mca diṅ-maṇḍanā[ca] dīpta(m) anyac

366 The syllable mau, the only remainder of v6 beyond “of him there was,” may perhaps be the beginning of the word mauḥi, “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.”
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**Curated Text**

(Verse 1. Metre: vasantatilakā)

\[1\] \[\text{[Victory to Śiva who has] the moon concealed in the mass of [his] curling, reddish dreadlocks and moreover ... (brilliant) ...} \]

(Verse 2. Metre: vaṃśastha)

\[2\] \[\text{... [of renowned] valour, ... with [his] ... which shattered the valour of his enemies ... arising from [the fact that] his reign over the earth enjoyed the devoted loyalty of the populace ...} \]

(Verse 3. Metre: anuṣṭubh)

\[3\] \[\text{By whose command the virtuous ... [governed] both Daśapura and Madhyama [as] chancellor (rājasthānīya) ...} \]

(Verse 4. Metre: anuṣṭubh)

\[4\] \[\text{... called Varāha in this world, an increaser of the happiness of [his] friends ... ornament ...} \]

(Verse 5. Metre: upajāti)

\[5\] \[\text{... Viṣṇudatta, renowned in the world because he followed the vow of ...} \]

**Translation**

(1) [Victory to Śiva who has] the moon concealed in the mass of [his] curling, reddish dreadlocks and moreover ...

(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 Madhyama [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 ...

**Footnotes**

368 See the Commentary on a possible interpretation of this phrase.
He had a [son/wife]...

[He begat / She conceived] a son of habitual decorum in whom noble virtues were manifest ...

In the northern [direction from] the house [i.e. temple] of Manorathasvāmin ... an ornament of [all] the directions ... this bright ...

... 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.

[sājījanat] SG print ji 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.

[guṇa] SG call attention to an unnecessary mark above na. This must be damage as it does not resemble any legitimate grapheme (a dot or diamond shape touching the left arm of na).

[anace] 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.

[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.

[kirttim] SG read nothing before kirttim. In the lacuna there is definitely an i mātra, followed by an ā mātra, then perhaps two more characters before kirttim. I tentatively read the first as ṣa; what looks like a second character is probably damage (or an aborted character or superfluous punctuation), since two aksaras after xi by a would be unmetrical.

[9] Only a few vestiges remain of this line. The ā mātra is below spha, and the anusvāra is below and to the right of te.
A15  Mandsaur Fragmentary Inscription of Kumāravarman

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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 danda (without flagging them as editorial) as well as silently deleting an original single danda 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 (रूणवाल) was at this time a doctoral student in Ujjain (probably supervised by Wakankar) and a resident of Mandsaur.
Figure 40: Mandsaur fragmentary inscription of Kumāravarman. Inked rubbing from Mirashi (1983).
Figure 41: Mandsaur Fragmentary Inscription of Kumāravarman. Composite digital photo by the author. 2017. Courtesy of Yashodharman Museum, Mandsaur.
expressed in characters varies from under 20 (lines 6, 8 and 12) to around 50 (lines 18, 19 and 21). 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 (varnāvṛttta), and the inscription consistently marks the ends of stanzas with a double daṇḍa, 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. 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. 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 appendix to this section (page 212). My revised genealogy, with more generations than the conventional family tree of Kumāravarman, is illustrated in Figure 5 on page 28.

Script and Language

The script employed in Kumāravarman’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 siddhamātṛkā 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 na 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 inscriptions of Yaśodharman’s time, the lithography ry is composed of a short r as the main component, to which a subscript (bipartite) y is attached (e.g. vīryaśva and vīrya, 14; sūryō, 110; viśīryāmāna, 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 (pārthiva, 17; ārtha, 19; pārthiva, 19; no instances of rth with superscript repha or rth) and optionally in rgg (durgga, 13; but not so in e.g. vargga, 14).

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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 malabhirī 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 (bhogārṇavo 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.
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, vedopaveda (l1) 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 pā 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 ṣ 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. Śhatāpi, l14).

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 ṭīa 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 Upadhmānīya and jīhvāmūliya 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 danḍa. The same sign is used at the end of the inscription. Half-verse points are marked by short horizontal dashes, transcribed as single danḍas. 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 ārya verse (after tarayena, 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 damage, though the horizontal one is quite certainly engraved. The closer symbol (at the end, following the final punctuation mark) is a vertically oriented śankha 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 (kkatu, 19; ākkrama, 112; pāttaram, l20). Sonant r is once replaced by ri (bhartry, l21; the spelling is bharty a few words later on, so bhartry may be hypercorrection of the samdhi). Conjuncts with nasal consonants are preferred to anusvāra whenever permitted by the phonological context, including instances where complex ligatures result from this (e.g. mpṛā, 16; niku and nkr, l7), though this preference is not absolute (thus vikāran na gatam kadātic, 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 samnyuktah svayam, l19, includes both); only visarga occurs before an initial s.

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:varttinīṣv; 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.

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376 Close parallels to the present form appear, for instance, in the Sumandala plates dated 569 CE (Sircar 1950).

377 For instance, danḍanatorjita-ripu-shhira-dharmma-buddheḥ (l15) could very well have been written as danḍanatorjita-ripoh, eliminating the complication of compounding two already complex bahuvrihis.

378 A topic I have discussed elsewhere (Balogh 2017).

379 Q.v. note to rūpa-guṇānvayair aḥinām in line 5 of the text.
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 krśnasūnu in verse 18 (see the discussion below) indicates that Kumāravarman 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 Kumāravarman, and I implicitly endorse this by continuing to refer to it as an inscription of Kumāravarman for the sake of consistency, but emphasise here that the king reigning at the time was more likely Kumāravarman’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 Vaishnava 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 aksaras 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 Kumāravarman’s line, but unfortunately only the last three aksaras of this stanza remain. On the basis of the surviving characters jñādevaḥ, 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, 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 aksaras of verse 8 are extant and their purport is vague. I read abhyudgaman tasya and interpret it as equivalent to abhyudgaman 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

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380 By my reconstruction this stanza was probably an upajāti like the following one. The surviving fragment does not, however,

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 samiṇa or viṣṇa 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 Kuṭṭanāmata, whose wife committed sutee 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 Kaṃarūpa (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 (varam 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-varṛgam), 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 object \(^{385}\)) 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 Kumāravarman’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 Kumāravarman’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 aulikari (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 Kumāravarman 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-ṣaṭ-varṛgam, which is a recognition of the object’s spiritual accomplishment rather than of his prowess. The phrase varam 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 babhāva 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 Kumāravarman 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 Kumāravarman by Sircar’s count and two generations before him by mine.

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\(^{383}\) The enemies are compared to deer fleeing at the sight of a lion, which calls to mind Bāṇa’s description of Harṣa’s father Prabhākaraavaradhana as a lion to the Hūṇa deer (Harṣacarita 4, p. 174, hūṇa-hariṇa-kesarı).

\(^{384}\) The Arthaśāstra identifies these as lust, anger, greed, pride, passion and exhilaration (1.6.1, kāma-kroṭha-loḥha-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 virāyaṇi/upendra-vīryam suggests that the compound with ajitā- was similarly juxtaposed to jitāri-ṣaṭ-varṛgam and thus qualified the subject, not the object.

\(^{386}\) See also page 26.

\(^{387}\) This technique is described for instance in Kāvyādarśa 1.22, vamśa-vīrya-śrutādī ni varṇayīta ripor aṭī jiayān nāyakotkaraṁ varṇanaṇaṁ 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 Kumāravarman) to Upendra.
Verse 11 is entirely lost; judging from the estimated length of the lacuna it may have been either an upajati like the preceding stanzas, or a mālabhārini 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: Kumāravarman. 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 Kumāravarman 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 Kumāravarman 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 Kumāravarman's virtues and reveals that he became yuvarāja 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 praharṣini stanza like the preceding and following one.

Verse 17 describes Kumāravarman'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 sarvā 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 Kumāravarman 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 Kumāravarman 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; ativīrya-madena mattato). The object of the sentence is "he" (tam), i.e. Kumāravarman, 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 (narendrā) "a welcome guest of death" (mṛtyoḥ priyātithim ... 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 Kumāravarman and the slain king the son of Kṛṣṇa. There is no question that the successful defender must have been Kumāravarman, 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 rṣnim 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 pārṣnim, which is hard to interpret in context, while Sircar (1984b, 393) restores vrṣnim (ignoring the repha in rṣni389) 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 kārṣnim, 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

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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 vārṣnim here, simplifying it to "[Vṛ]ṣṇi" in his discussion.
Buddharāja was the son of Śaṅkaragaṇa. Of Maṅgaleśa (Fleet 1878), which make it clear that the vanquished inscription. The victory is also mentioned in the undated Nerur plates here is shown by the name Kalatsūri applied to him in the pillar in- at this time. That this Buddharāja is identical to the one discussed Buddharāja, with the implication that Buddharāja was already a king clearly datable to 602 CE (Śaka Era 524), claims that Maṅgaleśa defeated Buddharāja had succeeded him by the early seventh century, 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 yah, implies that a new heir was introduced in verse 21. The tacit assumption of previous scholars that the subject is still Kumāravarman is also disaffirmed by the fact that we have already read about Kumāravarman’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 Kumāravarman. Albeit we have not learned of Kumāravarman’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 yuvārāja. 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. Kumāravarman 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 (daśāhvayaḥ) after overwhelming powerful enemies. The adjective grhyamānam, “being held,” evidently stands in apposition to daśāhvayaḥ, meaning that the enemy who had captured the hero had also occupied Daśapura, but Kumāravarman’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, dasyus-pratāpa-viniyṛtta-sukhaśraya, 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. 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-karaṇa, seems to mean that all his senses were stupefied, possibly by joy. It is possible that the compound originally continued further (i.e. that -karaṇa 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

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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 in- scription. 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 viniyṛtta even further than the other possibilities.
only scholar who ventures an opinion is Wakankar (1981, 279), who suggests that they were Hūnas. 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 Buddharāja returning to avenge Śaṅkaragaṇa’s death?

Any enemy – perhaps a Kalacuri host led by Buddharāja is used here as a generic slur rather than a racial dasyu would have been picked up by the deictic pronoun tena (which I believe to be Kumāravarman’s son), and all of these pronouns would have been picked up by the deictic pronoun tena in verse 42.

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 Kumāravarman’s son), and all of these pronouns 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 dharma. 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 (tārunya-kāla-vidhureṇa). Specifically, he is likened to a kalkali-kṣitipa­candra, 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 ivopanītā, 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 kalka (disposing of the redundant -in394), or kalkila (disposing of -in and replacing -la with -ila395). 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 flying 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 pauṇḍarīka;397 and the last

392 The Harṣacarita does mention Hūnas around this time (see note 383 on page 207), but in lands far to the north.

393 It appears that for this derivation to be legitimate, the word kalka needs to be in the siddhāntī class of words. See Asṭādhyāyī 5.2.96–97.

394 Though kalka is also not attested, its negative akalka is list-ed as an alternative for akalka, “without deceit, honourable” in the lexicon Śabdakalpadruma (PWG s.v.).

395 Possibly permitted by Asṭādhyāyī 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 pauṇḍarīka 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 śrutasūtra 16.32, prajā-kāmā ekādiṣa-rātrīya dīkṣante … athāyaṃ pauṇḍarīka ekādaśa-rātro ‘yuta-dakṣiṇo ‘śva-sahasra-dakṣīnas.) The Bijayagadh yūpa inscription...
quarter of verse 36 reveals that he improved the livelihood of Brahmins (probably meaning a stipend given to court Brahmins, but the expression वृत्तां ... प्रथुतमान आनिष्ट 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 Kumāravarman’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 Kumāravarman’s son, and that his father Kumāravarman was praised at some length but he, the reigning king, 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, 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 prabhuḥ asmi yasmāt is rather vague; yasmāt must, I believe, be understood as iti kārpanāt; 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 vasanta-tilakās to a much longer form that was in all probability sārdūlavikrista, indicates a change of topic: we have now come to the end of the prāsasti 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 Vatsabhāṭṭi 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; upajṭi is a likely possibility, but other metres such as ārya are also easily possible. Since the preceding verse is a mandakrānta and the next one is a sārdūlavikrīḍita, 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 getto aḍhikārini where I read getto aḍ vikārini, while “did his job satisfactorily” must be jana-śāghāspaṇe construed in apposition to getto aḍhikārini. In my reading getto aḍ vikārini (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 Viṣṇuvarthdhanā, an early record of the Mālava people (see also page 19), mentions that the yupa was erected on the completion of a punḍarīka, 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.
read, and both this word and ḫana-śāghāspade must have qualified a lost noun in the locative (probably the city, unless they were meant to qualify ḫtāu 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 sragdhārā, 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-priyatyābhisamīkṣya pātram, is ambiguous. Sircar’s summary says Bhogārṇava was “favoured by the king” with this grant, which must be a rendering of bhogārṇava-priyatyatayā.400 He does not, however, include abhisamīkṣya pātram 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-priyatyatayā 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 Laksmaṇagupta the son of Bhartṛ-ananta (the actual spelling is bhartry-, in samādiḥ). 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). Laksmaṇagupta 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 bhogārṇavam priyatayā, which would unambiguously mean that the text should be interpreted as he does. But there is definitely no anusvāra here and I prefer not to emend.
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 l1 (28 characters out of 56) ends in the extant part of l2 (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 l2 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 \textit{aksaras}) extant in line 3 rhyme with that, which may imply a connection.\textsuperscript{401} However, the metre of the fragment in line 3 is incompatible with \textit{upajātī}, though it does fit the template for \textit{svāgatā}, which is the metre of the following verse. One might assume that the composer availed of licence and broke the \textit{upajātī} metre in order to be able to incorporate the name of Bhāskaravarman, but this is unlikely. An 11-syllable (\textit{tristubh}) \textit{upajātī} may occasionally include 12-syllable (\textit{jagati}) lines, but a line in \textit{svāgatā} would be beyond probability.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{svāgatā}, which then lacks 38 syllables in addition to the 33 characters needed to complete the \textit{upajātī} begun in line 2. It is unlikely that the largely lost verse would have been in a shorter metre: it is definitely not \textit{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 \textit{upajātī} (\textit{indravajrā}), while the extant part of line 4 begins with the second half of a stanza in \textit{vasantatilakā}. The two fragments cannot possibly belong to the same verse, and therefore the lacuna must cover the 38 syllables needed to finish the \textit{upajātī} in addition to the 28 syllables missing from the beginning of the \textit{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 \textit{upajātī} commenced in line 4, and 6 more to begin a \textit{mālabhārini} that ends in line 5. This yields a mere 20 characters for the minimum size of the lacuna, or 79 characters for the full line. Assuming that a whole \textit{mālabhārini} verse is lost, the size of the lacuna comes to 66 characters and the length of the line to 125 characters; if a lost \textit{upajātī} is assumed, the figures are reduced by 2.

The verse fragment at the end of line 5 is in \textit{mālabhārini}. The fragment at the beginning of line 6 was identified by Mirashi as another \textit{mālabhārini}, but this identification is ruled out by the short syllable \textit{ga} legible on the stone before the segment read by Mirashi.\textsuperscript{403} The metre of this fragment is in all probability \textit{praharṣini}, like the following stanza. The lacuna at the beginning of line 6 must therefore cover 70 characters: 27 to finish a \textit{mālabhārini} and 43 more to begin a \textit{praharṣini}. The total length of the line would have been 128 characters. In the unlikely case that the second fragment is \textit{mālabhārini} 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 \textit{praharṣini} stanza with only three syllables lost at the end. The first extant text in line 7 is also in \textit{praharṣini}, 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 \textit{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 \textit{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 \textit{sārdūlavikrīḍita}.\textsuperscript{404} No less

\textsuperscript{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 consists mostly of a dative ending (combined with the suffix \textit{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 \textit{loke}. Nonetheless the number of incidences seems too high to attribute to random chance.

\textsuperscript{402} Mirashi (1983, 73 n. 11) assumes these fragments belong to a single stanza, in “a combination of \textit{indravajrā} and \textit{tāmarasa}.” \textit{Tāmarasa} is an uncommon twelve-syllable metre that I believe very unlikely to occur in combination with \textit{indravajrā}. Mirashi also conveniently ignores the fact that his restoration of the name Yajñadeva transgresses that metre.

\textsuperscript{403} Since \textit{ga} is clear and had been read as such by Wakankar (1981, 279), one wonders if Mirashi’s oversight of this \textit{aksara} is another measure of his to accommodate the text to the “short lacuna” hypothesis.

\textsuperscript{404} The prosodic pattern rules out Mirashi’s identification as \textit{anuṣṭubh} and also rules out \textit{āryā}. The only \textit{varṇavṛtta} metre besides \textit{sārdūlavikrīḍita} that admits this pattern at the end is the relatively rare \textit{kṣamā} (also known as \textit{candrīkā}, \textit{utpalini} and \textit{kutlagati}; 13 syllables per quarter). This, however, has a caesura after the first seven \textit{aksaras}, which would fall at \textit{bhogāṛṇṇava} 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](image-url)

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<th>line</th>
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<th>II. akṣaras required to III. lost akṣaras</th>
<th>IV. total akṣaras</th>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>...āryā 27 (43 morae) ] prose 13</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>Metre</td>
<td>Verse</td>
<td>Metre</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>vasantatilakā</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>vasantatilakā</td>
</tr>
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<td>upajāti?</td>
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<td>indrovaṇā</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>indrovaṇā + tāmarasa</td>
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<td>svāgata?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>svāgata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>?</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>udgata</td>
</tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>mālabhārini</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>udgata</td>
</tr>
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<td>?</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>mālabhārini</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>udgata</td>
</tr>
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<td>19</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>?</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>lacuna</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>vasantatilakā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>vasantatilakā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>lacuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>25</td>
<td>vasantatilakā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>vasantatilakā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mirashi’s problematic or impossible identifications have a grey background.
A15 Mandsaur Fragmentary Inscription of Kumāravarman

217

Diplomatic Text
[1]

[2]

[3]

[4]

[5]

[6]

[7]

[8]

[9]

[10]

[11]

[12]

[13]

[14]

[15]

[16]

[?42] ⟨1⟩[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-](?p)y (apar)itarkkita-kāraṇāya _ vedopaveda-nidhaye sura-sattamāya goptre
namo stu jaga(?ta)[ḥ puru]ṣottamāya‖ ⟨2⟩ajñāna-doṣa-timirākula-dṛṣṭi-mārggās saṃsāra-dharmmapatanaṃ vyasanair (u)petāḥ|
[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨3⟩[?22][|] [?19]jñadevaḥ‖ ⟨4⟩s¡o!myaḥ śarat-soma ivāvatīrṇṇas tasmāt
suto jāyata vīrasomaḥ _ svapne [p](?i ya)(s)y(o)paśama-pradhānañ ceto vikāra¡n! na gataṃ ka(dāc)iT‖ ⟨5⟩
asmin kalāv apy avadāta-karmmā
[⏓-⏑--⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [⏓-⏑--⏑⏑-⏑-⏓⏓-⏑--⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨6⟩[-⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏓-⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏓][|] [-⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏓-⏑-⏑⏑] (i)
bhāskaravarmmā‖ ⟨7⟩yasya bāhu-bala-nirjjita-darppaḥ pradruto ripu-jano gahanāsu| praskhalac-caraṇabha(gn)a-talā(su) bambhramīti giri-durgga-guhāsu‖ ⟨8⟩a(bhy)udgama¡n! tasya
[⏑-⏑-⏓⏓-⏑--⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [⏓-⏑--⏑⏑-⏑-⏓⏓-⏑--⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨9⟩[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] (ja)g(mu)
ḥ praṇāśam arayo bhisamīkṣya vaktra¡n! trāsād dharer iva mṛgā druta-śāba-yū(th)āḥ‖ ⟨10⟩(s)a vīryavān
aulikari-pradhānañ jitāri-ṣaḍ-varggam upendra-vīryaM varaṃ nṛpāṇām ajitā
[⏑-⏓⏓-⏑--⏑⏑-⏑-⏓] ⟨11⟩[?22][|] [?22][‖] ⟨12⟩[⏑⏑-⏑⏑-] [u]dāra-vṛttān dayitāṃ rūpa-guṇānvayair a(h)ī(n)āM
jahṛṣe jita-sarvva-śattru-pakṣo niyataḥ siddhim ivepsitām upetya‖ ⟨13⟩pramadābhimatā ca (sai)va ta(s)ya
dvipadendra-pravarasya
[-⏑-⏓][|] [⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏑-⏓⏑⏑--⏑⏑-⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨14⟩[---⏑⏑⏑⏑-⏑-⏑-⏓---⏑⏑⏑⏑-⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [---⏑⏑⏑⏑-⏑-⏑-⏓---][?ja]ga(t)
i kumāravarmma-nāmā‖ ⟨15⟩bālatve manujapatis sa yauvarājyam prāpyāpi vyapagata-matsarāvale(p)a(ḥ|)
sañjahre bhuvi viduṣām manāṃsi sūryyo bhūtānāṃ rasam iva jaṅgama
[⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨16⟩[?26][|] [?26][‖] ⟨17⟩[---⏑⏑⏑⏑-⏑-](ś/th)i-dhairyyaṅ kurvvāṇaṅ kṛta-yuga-pārthivānukāraM sarvveti
praśamam upetya jīva-lokas sad-dharmmam pratidinam edhayām babhūva‖ ⟨18⟩taṅ kṛṣṇa-sūnur ativīryyamade(na) matto
[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨19⟩[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [--⏑]
[?kā](rṣṇ)im api cāśu cakāra rājā mṛtyoḥ priyātithim upendra-samo narendraM‖ ⟨20⟩jagrāha cāsya madaseka-malāṅka-gaṇḍān nāgān nagendra-śikharāṇy ativarṣmato ye|
[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨21⟩[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑-](?ṣa-)dhārī‖ ⟨22⟩yenāsamāna-niyata-kkratu-dīkṣitena san-mānitā dvija-varā vividhārtha-dānaiḥ| yaḥ
pūrvva-pārthiva-jana-pratimāna-bhūto bhūtopakāra-karaṇeṣv abhava(t p)iteva‖
⟨23⟩
[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓] [|] [--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓] [‖] ⟨24⟩[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-](?tsa)veva prītyā kṣaṇena (v)i(ka)san-nayanā vibhāti sūryodayonmiṣita-padma-vaneva vāpī‖ ⟨25⟩
rūpam mano-nayana-hāri navaṃ vayaś ca rājyam mahad viṣaya-bhoga-ratis samastā|
[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨26⟩[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨27⟩[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 śrīḥ‖
⟨28⟩
[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨29⟩[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑⏑⏑⏑-⏑] ×i (gṛh)ya(m)āṇaM| ākkramya sarvva-bali(no) raṇa-karkkaśena (p)rāpta¡n! daśāhvayam arātijanāpradhṛṣyaM‖ ⟨30⟩dasyu-pratāpa-vinivṛtta-sukhāśrayo hi vyāmugdha-sarvva-karaṇo
[⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨31⟩[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑] [ca](ndra)masaṃ raṇeṣu‖ ⟨32⟩unmārgga-yāna-gamanābhimukhe nṛ-loke sad-dharmma-muktikaluṣī-kṛta-jīva-loke| yaḥ kalkali-kṣitipa-candra iva kṣitīndras tāruṇya-kāla-vidhureṇa
[⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨33⟩[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨34⟩[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑]lopahatāpi la(kṣ)mīḥ| bhrānteva yoṣid avikhaṇḍita-śubbhra-vṛttā gottrāntarān nija-niketam
ivopanītā‖ ⟨35⟩yaḥ pauṇḍarīka-savanopagato mahadbhiḥ
[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨36⟩[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [--⏑⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-]×(?au) vṛttāni veda-mahatāṃ pṛthutām anaiṣīT‖ ⟨37⟩lakṣmī-nidhes tridaśa-nātha-samānaśakter ddaṇḍānatorjjita-ripu-sthira-dharm(m)a-buddheḥ yasyādhipatyam avalokya nivṛtta[-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][‖] ⟨38⟩[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓][|] [--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑-⏑-⏓]
[‖] ⟨39⟩[--⏑-⏑⏑⏑-⏑⏑][?n](?ā)panītā tejaḥ śaśāṅka-vimalaṃ na yaśo bibheda| jātaṃ mano dyutimato na
madāvalipta¡n! dharmyā sthitiś ca mahato pi gatā (na) nāśaM‖ ⟨40⟩kopodbhavena


Curated Text

Verse 1. Metre: vasantatilakā

[Verse 1. Metre: vasantatilakā]

[Verse 2. Metre: vasantatilakā]

Text Notes

Alternative opinions are cited from the edition of Mirashi (M), the commentary of Sircar (SI405), and the report of Wakankar (W).

1[py aparitarkkita] M reads **m aparitarkkita at the beginning. This may be a typo as pari is quite clear. The preceding character may have been pya, in which case an instrumental ending in a followed by api is a likely guess.

1[jagataḥ puruṣottamāya] The restoration is M’s, who prints all of it as clearly read. It is most plausible, but nonetheless partly conjectural.

1[patanam] M reads patana-.

Translation

[Verse 1. Metre: vasantatilakā]

[Verse 2. Metre: vasantatilakā]

Footnotes

406 Given the fragmentary state of the inscription, much of its content is tentatively interpreted and translated. Rather than pointing to problem spots piecemeal in footnotes to the translation, I treat uncertainties and alternatives in the Commentary above.

407 Normally meaning darkness, timirā is also a technical term for the eye problem today known as “floaters,” the presence of debris in the vitreous body in the eye. My translation “dark motes” and my interpretation of doṣa as disease are meant to reflect this meaning.
(Verse 3. Metre: upajāti?)

... ... (Ya?)jñadeva.

(Verse 4. Metre: upajāti)

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)

His actions were pure even in this Kali [age] ...

(Verse 6. Metre: svāgatā?)

Bhāskaravarman.

(Verse 7. Metre: svāgatā)

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] *pi yasyapaśama* 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] *kadācit* the character *dā* may be a correction engraved over something else, possibly *tha* (for *kathācit*?).

[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 *bhūvi* or *jagati*; alternatives such as *ajani* could well be conceived.

[3] *bhagna-tālāsu*] 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)udgamaṃ! tasya \[\text{s][8]\text{]}\]
\[\text{s}[8]\text{]}
\[\text{s}[8]\text{]}

(Verse 9. Metre: vasantatilakā)

[jag(mu)ḥ praṇāśam arayo]

(Verse 10. Metre: upajāti)

(s)a vīryavān aulikari-pradhānañ
jitāri-ṣaḍ-varggam upendra-vīryam
varaṃ nrpaṃ ajita\[\text{[5]\text{]}\]

(Verse 11. Metre: uncertain)

[?11]
[?11][?]
[?11][?]

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-guṇānvayai a(h)ī(n)ām
jahśe jita-sarva-ṣatru-pakṣo
niyataḥ siddhim ivepsitām upetya||

Verse 13. Metre: mālabhāriṇī
pramadābhimatā ca (sai)va ta(s)ya
dvipadendra-pravarasya[6][-----][|][|][|][|][|][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][|--][[--]]

Verse 14. Metre: praharṣiṇī?
[jag]ati kumāravarmma-nāmā||

Verse 15. Metre: praharṣiṇī
bālatve manujapatis sa yauvarājyam
prāpyāpi vyapagata-matsarāvale(p)a(ḥ|)
saṃjahre bhuvi viduṣām manāṃsi sūryyo
bhūtānāṃ rasam iva jaṅgama[7][---][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][||][|] The lacuna at the end of verse 15 may be conjecturally restored as sthirāṇām.

[5] rūpa-guṇānvayair ahinām M reads rūpa-guṇānvayai raḥītām, 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] ca saiva tasya M reads va(saṃ)va(tasya, which seems unintelligible. My reading is certain in spite of some damage to the text.
[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 ści, but the reading ti is nonetheless quite secure.
[7] --|-- The lacuna at the end of verse 15 may be conjecturally restored as sthirāṇām.
Verse 16. Metre: praharsiṇī?

[713]
[713][3]
[713][3]

… … …

Verse 17. Metre: praharsiṇī

[--------]-(š/thi)-dhairyyaṅ
kurvvaṅaṅ kṛta-yuga-pārthivāṅkāram
sarvveti praśamam upetya jiva-lokas
sad-dharmmaṁ pratidinam edhayāṁ baḥhūva||

Verse 18. Metre: vasantatilakā
taṅ kṛṣṇa-sūnur ativīryya-maṅ(na) matto
[8][---------------------]]
[---------------------]]

Verse 19. Metre: vasantatilakā
jagrāha cāsya mada-seka-malāṅkā-gaṅḍān
nāgān nagendra-śikharāṅy ativarṣmato ye||
[9][---------------------]]
[---------------------]]

Verse 20. Metre: vasantatilakā
yenāsamāna-niyata-kkratu-dīkṣitena
san-mānitā dvija-varā vividhārtha-dānaiḥ|
[7][---------------------]]
[---------------------]]

Verse 21. Metre: vasantatilakā?
yenāsamāna-niyata-kkratu-dīkṣitena
san-mānitā dvija-varā vividhārtha-dānaiḥ|
[9][---------------------]]
[---------------------]]

Verse 22. Metre: vasantatilakā
yenāsamāna-niyata-kkratu-dīkṣitena
san-mānitā dvija-varā vividhārtha-dānaiḥ|
[9][---------------------]]
[---------------------]]

The totality of living beings increased day by day in true virtue dharma, since they had attained tranquillity by recognising, “the entire [earth obeys this man who] takes after the kings of the Kṛta age … steadfastness …”

The son of Kṛṣṇa, drunk with pride over his excessive prowess, … him …

… 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.

And he captured his elephants marked on their faces by smears of flowing rut fluid, who [resembled] mountain peaks because of their tremendous bulk …

… holding …

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] sarvveti] M emends to sarvo 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 vrṣṇim, disregarding the probable repha.
[8] narendra] M reads narendraḥ, but SI correctly has narendram, which is clear in the stone.
[9] dhāri] The vestiges before this word indicate sa [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?
[23] … … …

Verse 24. Metre: vasantatilakā
[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
[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
[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 tsā, it may be possible to read it as nma, but I see no meaningful reading with that conjunct. If tsā is correct, utsava comes readily to mind, *mahotsa­veva (assuming a bahuvrihi qualifying the pond or a lost feminine subject likened to the pond) would fit the metre.


[11] tīrvāri-sāgaram aneka-gajendra] Mirashi reads tīrvāri-mār­ga-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-śaktih). 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: vasantatilaśa?〉

[12] [------|------]

[--------]|][[[][[)

[--------]

〈Verse 29. Metre: vasantatilaśa〉

[------]

[--------] xi (grhya(m)aṇam]

ākkramya sarva-balino ṛaṇa-karkkaśena

(p)rāpta¡n! daśāhvayam arāti-janāpradhṛṣyam\[13\]

〈Verse 30. Metre: vasantatilaśa〉

dasyu-pratāpa-vinivṛtta-sukhāśrayo hi

vyāmugdha-sarvva-karaṇo[13][------|][

[--------]|][[[][[)

〈Verse 31. Metre: vasantatilaśa?〉

[------]

[--------]|][[[][[)

[--------]

〈Verse 28. Metre: vasantatilaśa?〉

[12]through 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.

〈Verse 29. Metre: vasantatilaśa〉

With the seat of his pleasure liberated from the ferocity of barbarians (dasyu) ... all his senses bewildered ...

〈Verse 30. Metre: vasantatilaśa〉

... (the moon) in battles.


[12]sarva-balino] M reads sarva balino. W reports sarva-balino, which seems to be correct, though no is damaged and may be a correction from something else.


[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 of the previous character.

[12]dasyu] Mirashi reads tasya. Dasyu is clear and unambiguous in the stone, and is correctly reported by W.


[13]candra(maṃ)raṇeṣu] 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 nr-loke
sad-dharmma-mukti-kaluṣī-kṛta-jīva-loke
yah kalkali-kṣitipa-candra iva kṣitindras
tārūnya-kāla-vidhureṇa [13][14][15][16][17][18][19][20][21][22][23][24][25][26][27][28][29][30][31][32][33][34][35][36]

Verse 33. Metre: vasantatilakā?

... ...

Verse 34. Metre: vasantatilakā

yāḥ pauṇḍarīka-savanopagato mahadbhiḥ
[13][14][15][16][17][18][19][20][21][22][23][24][25][26][27][28][29][30][31][32][33][34][35][36]

Verse 35. Metre: vasantatilakā

... ...

Verse 36. Metre: vasantatilakā

... ...

[14] kalkali] SI’s commentary has kalkali. 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 (ˇ) 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.
[15] 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?
[18] ivopaniṭā] 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
yasāyādhipatyam avalokya nivṛtta.[16]…

〈Verse 38. Metre: vasantatilakā?〉

〈Verse 39. Metre: vasantatilakā〉
tejaḥ šaśāṅka-vimalaṃ na yaśo bibheda|
jātaṃ mano dyutimato na madāvaliptaṁ!
dharmyā sthitiś ca mahato ('piringa) nāśam

〈Verse 40. Metre: vasantatilakā?〉
kopodbhavena[17]…

〈Verse 41. Metre: vasantatilakā〉
naṃ visṛṣṭaṃ na k(opa-v)sa-gaḥ pra(bhur a)smi yasmāt‖

[15] nīdhes tridaśa-nātha-samāna] M reads nīde sthira-mano viṣamāna, 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.

[17] dharmyā] M reads dhairyaya-

[16] na nāśam] M reads (v)nāśanam (unmetrical). The first character is damaged, but it definitely has no i mātrā and is almost certainly na.

[17] nam visṛṣṭam] M reads na visṛṣṭa (unmetrical). The omission of the anusvāras, both of which are clear, may be a typo. There are some traces remaining before nam, but I cannot interpret them.

Possessing such an excess of suitable decorum, he perceived human nature's [proneness to] deterioration in the world, and the ... mind ... of royal fortune ...

... Bhogārṇava had it constructed.

On the arrival of the season when inebriated bees mill around the flowers of the bakula,\textsuperscript{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 ...

[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,\textsuperscript{411} strove – with the course of his thought bent [in this direction] by [his] devotion [to the king] – to accomplish his lord's undertaking.

\textsuperscript{410} The \textit{bakula} (\textit{Mimusops elengi} L.) is a tree with fragrant flowers.

\textsuperscript{411} Instead of “miscreants and rogues,” \textit{duṣṭa-cāṭa} may perhaps mean “corrupt men-at-arms.”
[20] 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-‘nu(kū)lo
datto viśāla-yaśase hari(de)va
M reads svargge kaṭāśa iva temamanena jāle
(provisional). SI also read harideva. Possibly restore nāmne in the following lacuna?

[21] Not read by M, these characters are quite certain, though the ṭ is eroded. If correct, this string would have been preceded by a single syllable and a caesura before that; possibly restore spaṣṭārtha?

[21] bhartṛ-ananta-tanayena| lakṣmaṇaguptena kṛtā p(ū)rveyaṁ! narapatiprityā]

bhartṛ-cella-prakāśa-nāmnā| siddhir astu]


[20] vyaka] The truest of [kings], regarding [him to be] a worthy recipient on account of Bhogārṇava’s fondness [for him], gave that man of great honour [called] Harideva …

… … … … … …

[20] sattamena
bhogārṇava-priyatābhīsamikṣya pāṭram
svarggaika-deśa iva nettra-mano-‘nu(kū)lo
datto viśāla-yaśase hari(de)va

[20] svarggaika-deśa iva nettra-mano-nukālo
datto viśāla-yaśase hari(de)va

(47) The truest of [kings], regarding [him to be] a worthy recipient on account of Bhogārṇava’s fondness [for him], gave that man of great honour [called] Harideva …

delightful to the mind like a corner of heaven.

... ... ... ...

[20] [?92]

[20] [?88]

(Verse 48. Metre: āryā)
[?10] (ṣ)(?ṭ)ār(th)ā bhartry-ananta-tanayena|
(l)akṣmaṇaguptena kṛtā p(ū)rveyaṁ! narapatiprityā]

bhartṛ-cella-prakāśa-nāmnā| siddhir astu]

By him whose (cognomen) is Bhartṛ-cella.

May there be perfection.


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 Narsinghgarh413 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 graffito comprised or included the name of Jayavarman, the father of Śimhavarman.

**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 niha (compare Figure 11 on page 51). It seems therefore that this inscription is not a graffito 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 Kushavh 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 nāṭhula, 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 linga stands, faced by a fragmented Nandi 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 sīre-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.

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413 Raigarh 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 Aparājitavardhana is on the outskirts of Narsinghgarh.
Figure 43: Bihar Kotra graffito 1. 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 45: Possible Bihar Kotra graffito 3. 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”.

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
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

that the coin can be attributed with fair certainty to the Aulikara Siṃhavarman.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Diplomatic Text</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(śrī-sīṃ)hava(r)m(?m)a&lt;sup&gt;414&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>414</sup> Handa suggests that the traces below and to the left of the character *ra* at the end of the name may belong to the genitive ending *syā*. 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.
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(ṛ) mahārāja
2. (na)ravarma

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. The name in its legend had been misread as kuruvarma, but Handa has corrected the reading to naravarman. 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 pūrna-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. This too may be a genuine feature (and attest to a consistent visual programme in royal

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.

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.
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
[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 51: Signet ring of Naravarma. Photo courtesy of Devendra Handa, with hand tracing of mirror image by the author.

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 (in which case 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-viṣṇuvarmmasya kāryahārakasya 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 viṣṇuvarmmasya 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 kāryahārakasya 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 kāryahāraka. 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 kāryahāraka, nor nirvāhaka are attested words to the best of my knowledge. Handa suggests that kāryahāraka 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.

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**Diplomatic Text**

\[1\] viṣṇuvarmma-sya

\[2\] (sya) s(o)mavarm(m)a-put(rasya)

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**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. Some of these monuments may have been created during the reign of the Auliikaras. 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 Auliikaras (Mankodi 2015, 311).

Mathuralal Sharma (2008, 15) reports that the name dhruvasvāmi 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 graffito, 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, chanasikamo 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-

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417 For a description of the site see Cunningham (1871, 270–80) and, somewhat more recently, Luniya (1954) and Mitra (1971, 104–6).

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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 linga in the unfinished Bhojpur temple. She theorises that Acyaṃtadhaja 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.
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.

**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 Mālavan 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(ddo)sah which he did not attempt to interpret. The graffito was largely ignored thereafter, though V. S. Wakankar and his disciples were

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421 The Siddham ID of the epigraph is IN00096; the pillar is catalogued as OB00087.
aware of it. 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).

They assumed the graffito to record the names of two stone-carvers, apparently reading it as namdappah dasapah(?). 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, 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 ṣa; even śrī may not be entirely out of the question, though this would require the presumption that the subscript r and the i 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

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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 adharm-
maḥ nirdoṣoḥ, 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 recalclitant character is śo, in which case the string śodharmaḥ 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 aksara 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, bhādharmmaḥ, 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 Karambāda 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.

B10 Eran Pillar Graffito N2

The pillar at Eran (प्रायः, 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 (sānikhalipi) 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 cursively 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; CI3 No. 19, CI3rev 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.
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 Nagarī 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 likhitah*. 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**

11 s[a]manta-doṣasya nāma

429 See Bakker (2017, 9–19) for the historical circumstances.
C Unpublished Inscriptions

C1 Narasinghgarh Rock Inscription of Aparājitavardhana

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 Aparājitavardhana, 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 Asoka (āsoka-prakālikayānuṣrutsarpaktana-sūnya-vihāreṣu), that it speaks about bhikṣus who are aranya-kāndādhyāyin 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 (sūnya-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 Narsinghgarh, and with his kind help visited the inscription. Aparājitavardhana’s inscription is engraved on the wall of a natural rock shelter at the edge of Narsinghgarh (Raigarh 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 Aparājitavardhana 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 (amudhyātā)431 for his position by a supreme ruler (parama-bhattāraka), but there is no indication whatsoever of whether this sovereign was a Gupta, a Vākāṭaka or some other sovereign. Since Aparājitavardhana himself lacks any title, he was probably a chieftain of a small domain.

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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.”
Aparājitavardhana 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 aśokapraṇālikayaṇusṛta-prāgbhāra-sūnyavihāresu). 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 Ghonḍuṭraṅga432 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 brahma-deya. 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 āraṇya-kaṇḍa (l8–9, provisional reading mahāvihāra-vāsina āraṇya-kaṇḍaddhyāyi-bhikṣus-saṅghasya cāturddīśābhāyagataśya). 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 ṣdu may perhaps be ṣṭu or ṣṭta 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 ṣaṣṭi-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 Prakritisms 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 Prakrit forms. Finally, it seems safe to reaffirm that our rulers belonged to a branch of the Maukhari family. The names of Aparājitavardhana 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 mahā­senāpateḥ) Balavardhana, who erected his yūpa at Badwa in 238 CE. 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-
   bhāṭṭāraka-
   pādānud(dh)yāto
2. aparājitavarddhano mukhara-sagotro trailokyava-
   (?rddha)na-sa(?)tro
3. mā(t)āpiror ātmanaš ca puny(ā)pyāyana-
   ni(mi)t(t)am [3 (n)(āgi)(ni) (?pu)
4. rāharanihi vihārgrāhār(?aṃ) prayaccha(t)i
   śakra-dharmma-pura [5
5-18] [...]

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433 Notably the frequent use of the ending -ehi for the plural instrumental, and the active imperfect participles kṛṣāventā vapāventā bhuiṣjantā (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. 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 findspot (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
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, बिस्सऊ). 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 varṣa-śateṣu ekāśīty-uttareṣv asyāṃ mālavā-pūrvvāyāṃ (400) 80 kārttika śukla-pancamyāmabhyāṃ bhagavāmāhāpurusāpādābhyaḥ prāsādaḥ hitaḥ satyaśūreṇa strugadhena dāsena bhātṛbhir ebhirdhdhanīśvarair jjaya damnāvaiḥ prātisutputrair viṣṇu ca pautre vṛddhī bauddha-prapotre rvvāsū-prasūtaiḥ puṇya yaśo|

Conjecturally Curated Text


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 Bānpura. 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 tacchrenikāyāṃ* 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 Ulilikaryyā tacchreṇikāyāṃ Ubha ... ...
[3]  ... haṭṭamārga Eva caturāya tanopalakṣitaṃ bithyā ... ...
[4]  ... kṛvyā dattā tridammanaṃ karma sade ... na bhūṃjanīyāṃ ...
[5]  ... putra ... prapradohitrena ca bhūṃjanīyā ... ...
[6]  ... masmi ... ...

**Conjecturally Curated Text**

[1]  vīthyāṃ paṇa uttarābhimukha vīthyāṃ vipaṇaḥ yasyāghāṭanā ... ...
[2]  ... baka-gṛha ulilikaryāṃ tac-chreṇikāyāṃ ubha ... ...
[3]  ... haṭṭa-mārga evaṃ catur-āghāṭanopalakṣitaṃ vīthyāṃ ... ...
[4]  ... (?pūrvvā) dattā tri-drammāṇāṃ (?karaṃ) sadai[?va] ... [?]ena bhūṃjanīyāṃ ...
[5]  ... putra[-pautra-]prapautra-dauhitreṇa ca bhūṃjanīyā ... ...
[6]  ... masmi ... ...

**C4 Sawan Śūrya 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 Śūrya 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.\(^4^3^8\) 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 *siddhamātṛkā* resembling the Indragarh inscription of Naṇṇappa\(^4^3^9\) and the Kanaswa inscription of Śivagaṇa,\(^4^4^0\) its classification as “Gupta-Aulikara Brāhmaṇi” 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.\(^4^4^1\) Here too, the date of the inscription is reported as *saṃvat* 703. Wakankar believed that the text mentioned a *rājasthāniya* 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 *vatsara­sateṣu 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.

\(^4^3^8\) Pandey wryly reports that the superintendent archaeologist was also invited from Mysore, but he departed after holidaying for three days in a hotel.

\(^4^3^9\) Dated VS 767; edited by Krishna Deva (1958).

\(^4^4^0\) Dated ME 795, edited by Kielhorn (1890b).

\(^4^4^1\) See note 29 on page 50.
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 vanśa aulikara in the presumable locus where Wakankar reads these characters. At the end of line 17, I can confirm the partial date vatsara-ṣate(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 ṣeṣaṃ 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-s-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 the 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 letters are awkwardly drawn and shallowly engraved, and the whole of line 5. Line 6 contains the word Viṣṇuvardhana immediately before naming a mahārāja Nāgavarman. This would imply that Nāgavarman was, as presumed earlier, the local ruler, while Viṣṇuvardhana 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 samsvātasa-ṣatehi paicēhi 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 Prakāśadharmar 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-viṣṇuvardhana-rāye. As noted above, the name Viṣṇuvardhana is tentatively read; see Figure 59 for a close-up. The character vi is clear. After it, two roughly vertical strokes may be the sides of ś, and a subscript n (though not an attached ā) is more or less discernible below these. The third character is all but obliterated and only its headmark is definitely recognisable. The fourth aksara 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 viṣṇuvardhana a very plausible reconstruction.

The fourth line records the name of mahārāja nāgavarmana. Only a few sporadic aksaras 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-

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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 dviti or triti, but the next line definitely does not begin with yāyāṃ. 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 Kiśi the son of Paṇa instead of Anonymous the son of Kiśīpaṇa). Second, my interpretation of pañcaṃ 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 tīkṣṇaiḥ śastra ... ʾair mna in line 9; ʾair mna gātr̥aṃ kṣatam 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 Viśṇuvardhana 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] ()
2. saṃvva(t)s¡(e)!ra-śa(teh)(?i pa)(ñc)(?e)(hi) (?sā)ši
te(?hi) śri-śa(?(hā)r(ā)ja-vi(?ṣnuva)(r)(?dha)na-
r(?ā)jye
3. (ma)(h)(ā)r(ā)ja-nāgavarm(m)a [?8]
4. [...] [...]
5. [ka)(rt)(t)?i-ka-māsa-śu(?ika)!-pa(kṣe) (?k)i(?š)i
6. pa(ñcaṃ pratipannaḥ) pa(?ñcaṃ pratipannaḥ) pa(?ñcaṃ pratipannaḥ) pa(?n)go-br¡a!h(m)aṇ(ā)rthe (?ba) [2]
7. [9–14] [...]

Figure 58: Hasalpur inscription of Nāgavarman. Composite digital photo by the author, 2017. Courtesy of Gujri Mahal Museum, Gwalior.
Text Notes

[1] § The text begins with a maṅgala symbol resembling a mirrored figure 6 (a short sinistrose spiral). It may be a very distorted šri, but if so, it looks very different from šri in line 3.

Figure 59: Hasalpur inscription of Nāgavarman, detail with freehand tracing of tentatively read viṣṇuvardhana. Clear strokes in green, unclear and tentatively restored strokes in blue.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Inscription</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abhayadatta</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>(probably) the middle son of Ravikīrti and Bhānuguptā; paternal uncle of Daśa/Nirdoṣa; used spies to seek and nullify threats to the kingdom; held the position of chancellor (rājasthānīya); governed a great territory (bordered by the Revā, the Pāriyātra and the ocean) through several underlings (saciva); protected the interests of the varṇas; may have died prematurely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ādityavardhana</td>
<td>A8</td>
<td>king ruling in Daśapura after defeating enemies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajitavardhana</td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>son of Jayavardhana; subjugated enemies; made many Vedic sacrifices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aparājita</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>composer of the inscription, or perhaps the person who wrote out the text for the artisan to engrave; appointed for his task by Gobhaṭa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balaśūrā</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>maternal grandmother of donor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandhuvarman</td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>reigning king; his domain includes Daśapura, son of Viśavvarman; loyal to friends and terrible to enemies; handsome and young (in ME 439?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhadantadāsa</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Buddhist ācārya, preceptor of Śaṅghila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhagavad-Doṣa</td>
<td></td>
<td>see Doṣa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bhagavat-Prakāśa</td>
<td></td>
<td>see Prakāśadharman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhānuguptā</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>wife of Ravikīrti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhartṛ-ananta</td>
<td>A15</td>
<td>father of Lakṣmaṇaḥagupta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhartṛ-cella</td>
<td>A15</td>
<td>probably an alternative name of Lakṣmaṇaḥagupta; possibly the engraver of the inscription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhāskaravarman</td>
<td>A15</td>
<td>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 Kumāravarman; routed enemies in one or more battles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhaṭṭi-mahara</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>father of Virasena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhogārgava</td>
<td>A15</td>
<td>the person in charge of the construction recorded by the inscription; possibly first appointed by the king (Kumāravarman 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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhramarasoma</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>organiser of the building of the Goddess temple, or perhaps the composer of the inscription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candragupta</td>
<td>A5</td>
<td>the Gupta emperor Candragupta II, a conqueror, father of Govindagupta; put his sons in control of conquered territories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Inscription</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakṣa</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>younger brother of Dharmadoṣa and thus also a son of Doṣakumbha; also known as Nirdoṣa; probably the assistant of Dharmadoṣa in the office of rājasthāniya; probably young in 532–533 CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dattabhaṭa</td>
<td>A5</td>
<td>donor, son of Vāyuṣkṣita and the daughter of a northern king, general of Prabhākara, favourably inclined to Buddhism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharmadoṣa</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>son of Doṣakumbha, elder brother of Dakṣa/Nirdoṣa; pacified feuds (?) and prevented intermixture of classes; served as rājasthāniya under Yaśodharman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doṣa</td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>chancellor (rājasthāniya) to Prakāśadharman; son of minister to Prakāśadharman’s father (Rājyavardhana)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doṣakumbha</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>eldest son of Rājyavardhana and Bhānuguptā; a wise politician and a patron and connoisseur of poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drapavardhana</td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>progenitor of Prakāśadharman’s dynasty; a conqueror with the title senāpati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauri</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>son of Yaśogupta; captured elephants in war; a liberal donor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gobhaṭa</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>a prince (rājaputra), most likely the son of Gauri; he appointed Aparājīta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govinda</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>the artisan who engraved the inscription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govindagupta</td>
<td>A5</td>
<td>son of Candragupta (II), a conqueror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gupta rulers</td>
<td>A11</td>
<td>gupta-nāthair, valiant kings who conquered the entire earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haribhaṭa</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>son(?) of Mayūrākṣaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harideva</td>
<td>A15</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hariśūrā</td>
<td>A8</td>
<td>mother of Gauri; devoted to her husband; her father’s name is recorded but lost, possibly ending in pta or nta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hūṇa rulers</td>
<td>A11</td>
<td>hūṇādhipānāṃ, conquered many lands and subjugated their kings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaya</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>grandfather of donor, Gārgāyaṇa gotra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayamitrā</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>mother of donor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayavardhana</td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>son of Drapavardhana; commanded great armies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayavarman</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>grandfather of Naravarman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jīvadharaṇa</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>father or more remote ancestor of Mitrasoma, thus grandfather or ancestor of Bhramarasoma; the actual spelling is Jīvaddharaṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kakka</td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>father of Vāsula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumāragupta</td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>Kumāragupta I of the Imperial Guptas, ruling the entire earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Inscription</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumāravarman</td>
<td>A15</td>
<td>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 (yuvarāja) 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 dasyu, then performed the pauṇḍarīka sacrifice and showed favours to Brahmins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakṣmaṇagupta</td>
<td>A15</td>
<td>probably the author of the inscription; son of Bhartṛ-ananta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayūrākṣaka</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>donor, minister of Viśavarman, probably Vaiṣṇava, wealthy, old, probably a former soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mihirakula</td>
<td>A11</td>
<td>never bowed to anyone but Śiva before being defeated by Yaśodharman; he defends the region of the Himalayas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitrasoma</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>father of Bhramarasoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naravarman</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>reigning king, son of Śiṃhavarman and grandson of Jayavarman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>reigning king, Olikara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>reigning king, son of Śiṃhavarman, Olikara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>father(?) of Viśavarman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirdoṣa</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>alternative name or epithet of Dakṣa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prabhākara</td>
<td>A5</td>
<td>king of Dattabhaṭa, probably of a Mālava dynasty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prakāśadharman</td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>reigning king and donor; son of Rājyavardhana; defeated Toramāṇa in battle and donated spoils of war to Brahmanical institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puṇyasoma</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>spelt Puṇyasoma; ancestor of Gauri, of the Mānavāyani clan; became a king in the warrior community (kṣatra-gaṇa) through his heroic acts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rājyavardhana</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>probable name of the son of Puṇyasoma conquered new territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>son of Vibhiṣaṇavardhana, father of Prakāśadharman; a great king</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rāṣṭravardhana</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>here recorded simply as Rāṣṭra; son of Rājyavardhana; defeated enemies, possibly also conquering new territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A8</td>
<td>father of Yaśogupta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravikīrti</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>probably an alternative name of Varāhādāsa (but possibly Varāhādāsa’s younger brother or son); brought fame to his family; married Bhānuguptā; had three sons with her, including Doṣa, (probably) Abhayadatta and (possibly) Doṣakumbha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravila</td>
<td>A5</td>
<td>composer of the inscription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saṅghila</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>donor, disciple of Bhadantadāsa, Buddhist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ṣaṣṭhidatta</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>progenitor of the Naigama clan; an eminent retainer of Yaśodharman’s ancestors; a rich man who had overcome the six enemies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śiṃhavarman</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>father of Naravarman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>father of Naravarman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toramāṇa</td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>Hūṇa king, liege of many kings; bore the title of adhirāja which Prakāśadharman rendered false</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Inscription</td>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varāha</td>
<td>A14</td>
<td>probably identical to Varāhadāsa; father of Viṣṇudatta; grandfather or great-grandfather of donor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varāhadāsa</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>son of Śaṭṭhīdatta from a wellborn wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varṇavṛddhi</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>father of donor, Gārgyaṇa gotra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vāsula</td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>composer of the inscription, son of Kakka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A11</td>
<td>composer of the inscription, son of Kakka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vatsabhaṭṭi</td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>composer of inscription and agent appointed to refurbish the temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vāyurakṣīta</td>
<td>A5</td>
<td>general of Govinda-gupta, married the daughter of a northern king, father of Dattabhāṭa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vibhīṣaṇavardhana</td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>son of Ajitavardhana, grandfather of Prakāśadharman; famed for good deeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vīrāsaṇa</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>donor, son of Bhaṭṭi-mahara, probably Buddhist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vīrasoma</td>
<td>A15</td>
<td>son of (Ya?)jñādeva; a ruler of peaceful disposition; probably the father of Bhāskaravarman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viṣṇubhaṭa</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>son of Mayūrākṣaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viṣṇudatta</td>
<td>A13</td>
<td>a distinguished merchant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A14</td>
<td>a renowned man; probably son of Varāha; father or grandfather of the donor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viṣṇuvardhana</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>an alternative name of Yaśodharman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viśvarman</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>reigning king, son(?) and successor of Naravarman, a conqueror, young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>father of Bandhuvarman, great politician and warrior, very charitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ya?)jñādeva</td>
<td>A15</td>
<td>probably the founder of Kumāravarman’s dynasty; father of Vīrasoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaśodharman</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>also known as Viṣṇuvardhana; belongs to the Aulikara dynasty; a great warrior who brought acclaim to his dynasty; acquired the title rājāhirāja parameśvara; 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 Vindhyas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A11</td>
<td>a worthy bearer of the title “universal sovereign” (samrāj); controls lands not conquered either by the Guptas or the Hūṇas; has many feudatories from all over the subcontinent; forced Mihirakula into submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaśogupta</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>spelt Yaśagupta; son of Rāṣṭravarman; a peaceful and compassionate ruler but also a mighty warrior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A8</td>
<td>son of Rāṣṭravarman; of the Mānava gotra(?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Inscription</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabian sea</td>
<td>A11</td>
<td><em>as paścimāḥ payodhiḥ</em>, defines the western or southwestern extent of lands controlled by Yaśodharman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmaputra river</td>
<td>see Lauhitya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daśapura</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>site of temple inaugurated in the inscription(?) a great and famous city reconstructed text <em>pure ... paṃca-dviguṇa-saṃjñake</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>site of the Sun temple; a thriving and beautiful city with parks and elegant houses; enclosed by two rivers; residence of respectable Brahmins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A8</td>
<td>referred to as <em>puraṃ daśā[?]hvayam</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>site where Doṣa constructed a temple to Brahmā as well as other temples and utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A14</td>
<td>governed by a <em>rājasthāniya</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A15</td>
<td>referred to as <em>daśāhvaya</em>; probably reconquered from an enemy (who are probably also referred to as <em>dasyu</em>) by Kumāravarman (or his son); probably described as Kumāravarman’s (or his son’s) seat of pleasure (<em>sukhāśraya</em>), i.e. apparently his original capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganges river</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>originates in the Himalayas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A11</td>
<td>embraces the Himalayas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gargarāṭa(pura)</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>site of the temples and well inaugurated in the inscription site of many other public works funded by Mayūrākṣaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himalayas</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td><em>as Śailendra</em>, height of temple compared to its peak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A9</td>
<td><em>as prāleya-Śaila</em>, temple compared to its slopes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A10</td>
<td><em>as himavat</em>, place where the Ganges originates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A11</td>
<td><em>as hima-giri</em>, defended by Mihirakula; <em>as tuhina-sikhārin</em>, adjacent to the Ganges and defining the northern extent of lands controlled by Yaśodharman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lāṭa</td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>country of origin of the silk weavers, beautiful with forested hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauhitya river</td>
<td>A11</td>
<td>today better known as Brahmaputra; defines the eastern or north-eastern extent of lands controlled by Yaśodharman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lokottara</td>
<td>A5</td>
<td>a Buddhist monastery, presumably in Daśapura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhyamā</td>
<td>A14</td>
<td>governed by a <em>rājasthāniya</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahendra mountain</td>
<td>A11</td>
<td>defines the southern or southeastern extent of lands controlled by Yaśodharman, has foothills with dense palm (<em>tala</em>) trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandsaur</td>
<td>see Daśapura</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narmada river</td>
<td>see Revā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pāriyātra mountain</td>
<td>has trees in which langurs live; apparently to the north of the territory administered by Abhayadatta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revā river</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>today better known as Narmada; has plenty of pale water; originates from the Moon (v11); originates from or passes through the Vindhyas (v19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vindhya mountains</td>
<td>A10</td>
<td>Yaśodharman’s troops passed through them; they have gorges and <em>lodhra</em> trees; the river Revā originates in or passes through them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


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Index

Page numbers in *italics* indicate illustrations; page numbers in **bold face** indicate occurrences of the indexed term in the (translated) text of an inscription. See also the Prosopography and Gazetteer above for proper names in the inscriptions.

Abhayadatta 30, 159, 162–163, 166, 172, 173
Abhidhānacintāmaṇi 161
Abhijñānaśākuntala 69
Abhona plates. See Ṣaṅkaragaṇa
Aditi 80, 83
Ādityavardhana 130, 139
– capital 22, 126
– identity 128
– possible cognomen of Prakāśadharman 129
– relationship to Gauri 31, 128
Afzalpur 23
Ajitavardhana 21, 137, 148
Ākara 20
Alarka 185
Amarakośa 161, 172
amātya. See rājasthānīya
Andhakas 162, 171
Aparājita 117, 123
– relationship to Śiva 20
Aparājitavardhana 19, 21, 25, 241.
– possibly related to Aulikaras 21, 243
Arunārādhana 22, 145
Aruṅgavasitha 86, 118
Aulikara 147, 169
– earliest attestation of the name 20
– first discovery of the name VI
– the form Aulikara 24, 25, 207, 220
– the form Olikara 24, 49, 53
– meaning of the name 24–25
Aulikara crest 24, 160
Aulikara inscriptions
– first discoveries V
– further literature about V
– palaeography of 12
Aulikaras. See also Early Aulikaras; Later Aulikaras
– genealogy 28
– instrumental in spread of Mālava Era 9
– literature about power relations 17
– monuments and material remains 23
– originating as Mālava chieftains 19
– possibly related to the Maukhāris 21, 25
– their capital 22–23, 145
– their territory 17, 21
Avanti 21, 22, 142. See also Ujjayinī
avasatha 139–140, 143, 151

Badoh-Pathari Saptamātṛkā panel inscription 64
Baladeva 84
Balasūrā 40, 44
Balavardhana 19
Bandhuvanvarman V, 21, 27, 93, 96, 106. See also Mandsaur,
injection of the silk weavers (A6)
Baori Kālan 156, 158
Betwa river 160
Bhadantādāsa 52, 53
Bhagavaddoṣa. See Doṣa
Bhagiratha 67, 169
Bhanpurā Fragmentary Inscription (C3) 244
Bhānuguptā 161, 163, 165, 171
– connection to Bhānugupta 161
Bharadvāja 140, 142
Bharata 69, 185
Bhāratavarśa 139, 151
Bhāravi 165
Bhartṛ-ananta 212, 228
Bhartr-cellā 212, 228
Bharukacca 92
Bhāskaravarman 206, 207, 219
Bhāṣṭri-mahāra 48, 49
Bhogārṇava 211, 212, 227, 228
Bhramarāsoma 117, 123
Bhṛgukacca 21
Bhṛṣṇavāhana 19
Bihar Kotra 20, 21, 46, 50, 229, 241
– cave inscription of the time of Naravarman (A3) 24, 51, 229
– graffiti (B1) 20, 27, 229, 230
– stone inscription of the time of Naravarman (A2) VI, 24, 47
Bindusaras 150
Brahmā 105, 139, 151, 159, 168, 195
– sculpture of 139
Brahmaputra river 182, 186
Brahmins 44, 71, 93, 100, 102, 139, 160, 248
– gifts to 116, 122, 131, 138, 211, 222
Bṛhaspati 67, 84, 105, 172
Bṛhatāmaṇhitā 22, 40, 140, 142–143, 182
Buddha 79, 80, 83
– footprints of 229
Buddhacarita 105
Buddharāja 209–210
Buddhism 46, 48, 79, 81, 235, 241. See also saṅgha
– Lokottaravāda 81
Budhagupta. See Eran, pillar
Bujjuka/Bujjukā. See avasatha
caesura
– compound split by 72, 92
– obscured by saṃdhi 58, 79, 92, 158, 179, 205
– word split by 61
cakra 54, 120, 124, 130, 232
calligraphy 43, 76, 120, 156, 178, 204
– extension 51, 135, 156, 178, 195
– modulation of line width 135, 156
– variation of vowel marks 38, 135, 157, 178
Candragupta II 27, 80, 83
Candrarvarman 27
Chambal river 248
chancellor. See rājasthānīya
Chhoti Kali Sind river 59
Chhoti Sadri 21, 110, 112
– inscription of Gauri (A7) 30, 111, 112, 115
Chittorgarh 20, 21, 23, 97, 192. See also yūpa; Nagari
– fragmentary inscriptions (A13, A14) 30, 97, 193, 194
coins. See Naravarman; Siṃhavarman

dāityas 83, 180, 184
dākinīs 62, 63, 74
Dakṣa. See Nirdoṣa
dāŋga. See punctuation
Darra. See Mukundara
Daśāpura 17, 92, 98, 101, 106, 197, 199. See also Mandsaur
– before the Aulikaras 21
– as capital of the Aulikaras 17, 22–23, 143
– circumlocations for the name 40, 45, 94, 126, 130, 224
– contemporary description of 22, 91
– location of the ancient town 24, 93
– restored to order by Bhogārṇava 212
– as seat of Kumāravarman’s dynasty 32, 209
– under Ādityavaradhana’s control 126, 128
– under Naravarman 25, 27
– under Prabhākara’s control 81
Daśārṇa 20
dāsyaus 22, 209, 210, 224
dates. See also Mālava Era
– conversion 9
– expressed in complex words 42, 60, 70, 85, 108, 123, 151, 173, 211
Dattabhaṭa 80, 84. See also Mandsaur, inscription
demon. See asuras; dāityas
dedāsī 138
Devi 115, 116, 118, 119, 123, 136
– as daughter of the Mountain 180, 184
Dhammar 234
– seal of the Candenagiri Monastery (B6) 234
dharmas 69, 72, 103, 104, 160, 172, 222, 226
– of the Buddha 79, 83
– deterioration of 206, 210, 218, 225
– maintenance of 147, 174, 187
Dharma (god) 116, 120
Dharmadoṣa 30, 162, 163, 166, 172, 237
dhūtu 80, 85
discus. See cakra
Diti 80, 83
Doṣa 30, 161, 165, 171
– constructing facilities in Daśapura 22, 139, 143, 151
– constructing facilities in Rīsthal 139, 152
– name preferred to Bhagavaddoṣa 165
– possibly identical to Doṣakumbha 163, 166
– sāmanta Doṣa 239
Doṣakumbha 162–163, 166, 172. See also Doṣa
Dravavadhrana 24, 29, 140, 141
– identification with Dravyavadhrana 140–143
– interpretation of the name 141
– relation to Naravarman 25
– styled senāpati 137, 141, 147
Dravyavadhrana 22, 29, 139, 140. See also Dravavadhrana

Early Aulikaras 27
– alliance with the silk weavers 97
– decline 96
– genealogy 28
– as Gupta feudatories 27
– initial territory of 20
– relation to Later Aulikaras 25, 29, 96
Eran 238
– connection to Sondhni 239
– graffito (B10) 166, 238, 239
– pillar inscription of Goparāja 161
– pillar of the time of Budhagupta 177, 238

Fortune (Śrī, Lakṣmī) 72, 210–211, 223, 225

Gadhwa pillar inscriptions 195
gāṇa 7. See also Mālava people; mālava-gāṇa-sthiti
Gandharvas 100, 102
Gandhar 21, 54, 70
– origin of the name 23, 59
Gandhar inscription of Mayūrākṣaka (A4) V, VI, 20, 27, 55, 56, 61
– date 60, 61
Ganges river 21, 67, 161, 169, 170, 182, 186
Gargarā river 59
Gārgāyaṇa gotra 40, 44
Garuda 126, 130, 177
Gauri 22, 29, 30, 116, 122, 127, 128, 130. See also Chhoti Sadri, inscription; Mandsaur, inscription
– not a mistake for Śauri 30
– relationship to Ādityavaradhana 30, 128
Gobhaṭa 31, 117, 123
goddess. See Devī; mother goddesses
Govinda. See also Kṛṣṇa
– an artisan 164, 174, 183, 187
Govindagupta 80, 81, 83
Gujarat 92
Guptas 17, 83, 84, 180, 185, 241
– fighting against Śakas 27
– as overlords of Early Aulikaras 27
Gwalior inscription of Mihirakula 183

halanta consonants 38, 90, 114, 136, 156, 178, 205. See also viśama sign
– punctuation and 48, 58, 79, 90, 136, 158, 179, 195, 205
– transliteration of 3
Hara. See Śiva
Harī. See Viśṇu
Haribhaṭa 59, 72
Harideva 212, 228
Harīsūrā 127, 131
Harivamśa 39, 44, 68, 162
Harpacarīta 66, 180, 207, 210
Haravardhana 140
Hasalpur 246
– inscription of Nāgavarman (C5) 246, 248, 249
herostone 153, 247
Himalayas 123, 151, 161, 170, 182, 186
– guarded by Mihirakula 183, 186
Hūṇas 17, 27, 96, 235. See also Mihirakula; Toramāṇa
– as adversaries of the Later Aulikaras 160, 162, 180, 185, 247, 248
hyphenation, editorial 3
Index

Indra 39, 43, 66, 69, 83, 148, 225
– festival of 39, 40, 42
– as Maghavat 169
– as Śakra 42, 120
Indragarh inscription of Naṇṇappa 244, 245
interregnum between the Aulikara dynasties 22, 30, 82, 94, 95–96, 98, 108
Īśa. See Śiva

Jainism 21, 46
Jaya 40, 44
Jayamitrā 40, 44
Jayasoma 19
Jayatsena 19
Jayavardhana 19
Jayavarman 27, 29, 40, 43, 229
Jīvadharaṇa 117, 123

Kailāsa 73, 102, 105
kākapada. See symbols
Kakka 136, 152, 187
Kalacuris 17, 32, 208, 210
Kali age 171, 206, 219
Kālidāsa 22, 69, 91
kāma 72, 160
Kāma (god) 84, 102, 106, 151, 173
– arrows of 94, 109
– destroyed by Śiva 94, 109
Kanaswa inscription of Śivagaṇa 245
kārāpaka 95, 117, 144, 211
Kaustubha 109
Khanderia 23
Khilchipura 23, 23, 156
Kinnaras 100
Konkan 92
Krṣṇa 39, 41, 42, 45. See also avasatha; Viṣṇu
– approves of Indra’s festival 39
– as Govinda 83
– as Madhusūdana 70
– as Vāsudeva 40, 44
Krṣṇarāja 32, 208
Krṣṇa 172, 222
Krṣṇa Era. See Mālava Era
Kubera 84
Kumāranagupta I V, 92, 93, 95, 105. See also Mandsaur, inscription of the silk weavers (A6)
– Karamdanda inscription of 238
– Kumbhāravarma 22, 208, 209, 221. See also Mandsaur, inscription
Kumāra 84
Kurukṣetra 185

Lakṣmanagupta 212, 228
Lakṣmi. See Fortune
lāṇchana. See Aulikara crest
Lāṭa 30, 92, 97, 100
Later Aulikaras 27–30
– associated with the Naigamas 30, 162
– first discovery of evidence VI
– genealogy 28
– relation to Early Aulikaras 25, 29, 96
Lauhitya. See Brahmaputra river

Madhyam(ik)ā 20, 97, 192, 197, 199. See also Nagarī Madhya Pradesh
– Mandsaur district 234, 244
– Neemuch district 245
– Rajgarh district 46, 50, 229, 241
– Sagar district 238
– Sheopur district 246
– Shivpuri district 63
Mahābhārata 20, 64, 68, 69, 105, 150, 162, 171, 185
mahāvihāra. See vihāra
Mahendra mountain 182, 186
Mālātanātha 64
Mālava Era 9, 42, 85, 95, 108, 173, 244
– designated Kṛta 9, 42, 60, 70, 243
mālava-gaṇa-sthiti 7, 108, 173
Mālavanagara 19
Mālava people 7, 42, 108, 173
– called Mālaya 19
– early history of 19–20
– Mālava dynasty 85
– in Mālava region 20
Mālava region. See Malwa
Malwa
– designated by the name Avanti 142
– inhabited by Mālava people 20
– map 21
– palaeography of 11, 12
Mānava gotra 31, 127, 130
Mānavaṇīyana 30, 119, 127, 241
– genealogy 28
– originating as warrior chiefs 116
Māṇḍhāṭ 185
Mandsaur 17, 21. See also Daśapura
– excavations in 23, 235
– findspot of most Aulikara inscriptions 21
– fort 23, 76, 157
– inscription of Dattabhaṭa (A5) 27, 77, 78
– inscription of Gauri (A8) 22, 30, 125, 128, 140
– inscription of Kumāravarman (A15) 22, 24, 32, 202, 203, 213
– inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10) VI, 24, 29, 30, 153, 154, 155, 157, 158, 162, 164, 179
– inscription of the silk weavers (A6) V, VII, 7, 22, 27, 88, 89
– inscription of the time of Naravarman (A1) VI, 20, 27, 36, 37
– origin of the name 23
– rivers of 93
Māṅgaleśa 209
Manorathasvāmin. See Viṣṇu
Manu 31, 185
Manusmṛti 197
maṭha 139, 151
Mathurā 21
mātṛ, māṭrkā. See mother goddesses
Maukharis 19, 160, 241, 243
– possibly related to Aulikaras 21, 25
Mayūrākṣaka V, 58, 59, 70, 74, 75. See also Gangdhar inscription of Mayūrākṣaka (A4)
Meghadūta 22, 91
Mehrauli iron pillar inscription of Candra 80
Meru 68, 86, 105, 180, 184
metres. See verse
Mihirakula 27, 175, 181. See also Gwalior inscription of Mihirakula
– bowing to no-one but Śiva 183, 186
– defeated by Yaśodharman 29, 164, 179, 182, 186
– guarding the Himalayas 183, 186
– minister. See rājasthānīya
Mitrasona 117, 123
monastery. See maṭha; vihāra
mother goddesses 61, 62, 64, 74
Mudrārākṣasa 40, 80, 137, 180, 182
Mukhara gotra. See Maukharis
Mukundara 21, 23, 235
– graffiti (B7) 235
Nagari 21, 21, 197, 243. See also Madhyam(ikā)
– inscription of Kṛta 481 (C2) 97, 243
– source of building material for Chittorgarh 192
nāga 74, 86
Nāgavarman 246, 247
Naigamas 30, 160, 161, 165–166, 170. See also Chittorgarh,
fragmentary inscriptions (A13, A14); Mandsaur, inscription of Nirdoṣa (A10)
– associated with the Later Aulikaras 98, 162
– genealogy 31
– as hereditary rājasthānīya 30, 166
– honouring Brahmā 139, 195
– linked to Madhyamikā 97, 197
– the meaning of their name 30
– possible connection to the Nagari inscription 97, 243
– possible descendants of the silk weavers’ guild 97
Nandisoma 19
Nandsa. See yūpa
Narwarman 21, 42, 58, 60, 67. See also Mandsaur,
– inscription; Bihar Kotra, cave inscription; Bihar Kotra, stone inscription
– ancestry of 27
– called Olikara 24–25, 48, 49, 52, 53
– copper coin of (B3) 231, 232
– as a feudatory of Candragupta II 27
– first independent ruler of the dynasty 25
– relation to Drapavardhana 25
– signet of (B4) 232, 233
– territory of 21
Narmada river 161, 170, 172
Narsinghgarh 20, 21, 229
– rock inscription of Aparājitavardhana (C1) 20, 242
Nasik inscription of Uśavadāta 19, 22
Nirdoṣa 22, 159, 163, 173, 237. See also Mandsaur, inscription
– called Daḵṣa 166, 174
ocean 58, 64, 69, 74, 85, 152, 162, 164, 172, 174, 182, 186
– four oceans 42, 93, 105
– as a god 159, 169
– of milk 74
– possessing gemstones 75
– with rivers for its wives 81, 86
Olikara. See Aulikara
Pādatāḍitaka 27, 30
Pāryātra 21, 160, 162, 172
Pārvati. See Devi
Pīṇāka 147
Pīṇākin. See Śiva
Prabhākara 27, 79, 80, 84, 128. See also Mandsaur, inscription of Dattabhaṭa (A5)
– in control of Dašapura 81
– relation to the Aulikaras 81
– subordinate ally of the Guptas 80, 81
Prakāśadharman VI, 23, 27, 29–31, 137, 149, 239. See also Risthal,
– commissioning facilities 22, 136, 143
– facilities commissioned by him 144
– Mandsaur sealings of (B8) 23, 235, 236
– possibly called Lokaprakāśa 138
– possibly identical to Ādityavardhana 129
– referred to as bhagavat-Prakāśa 137, 147, 165
– relation to Yaśodharman 29
– victory over Toramāṇa 29, 138–139, 145, 150
praśasti 7, 32, 179, 206
Prīti 102
Prithu Vainya 68
punctuation. See also halanta consonants
– double vertical 58, 79
– editorial 5
– multiple signs 90, 114, 126, 136, 158, 179, 195, 204, 205
– single horizontal 76
– transliteration of XIX
Punyasoma 19, 116, 119
Puruṣottama. See Viṣṇu
pūrvā – as date 7, 245
– translated as preamble 7
Raghuvaṃśa 27, 161, 182
rainmaking 62, 64
Rajasthan 19, 21
– Baran district 19
– Bharatpur district 19
– Bhilwara district 19
– Jhalawar district 54
– Kota district 235
– Pratapgarh district 110
– Sawai Madhopur district 19
rājasthānīya 152, 197, 199, 245
– in charge of construction projects 139, 143
– function analogous to that of Brahmā 159
– governing territories 162, 172, 197
– likened to mythical counsellors 161
– Naigamas as hereditary 30, 166
– possibly referred to as sāmanta 239
– synonymous with amātya 165
– translated as chancellor 8
Rājyavardhana
– ancestor of Gauri 31, 116, 120
– father of Prakāśadharman 31, 129, 137, 139, 149, 165
Rāma (Dāśarathi) 67
Rāmāyaṇa 116, 120, 127, 130
Rati 102
Ravikīrti 161, 165–166, 171
– possibly identical to Bhāravi 165
– relation to Varāhadāsa 165
Ravila 81, 86
Ravi river. See Narmada river
Risthal 21, 22, 132, 145
– inscription of Prakāśadharman (A9) VI, 22, 24, 27, 30, 132, 133, 134, 141
– site of the Vibhīṣaṇa reservoir 144, 145
ṛṣabha. See Śiva, bull of
Ṛtusaṃhāra 91
Rudravarman 27
Śaći 148
ṣad-varga. See six enemies
Sagara 169
Śaivism 25, 115, 159, 183, 238
Śakas 17, 19, 27
Śakra. See Indra
Śambhu. See Śiva
sandhi. See also caesura
– editorial hyphenation and 3
– not applied between verse quarters 114, 126
Śāṃkhya 151
Sandhyā 136, 147
saṅgha 48, 49, 53, 242
Saṅghila 52, 53
Śaṅkaragaṇa 32
– Abhona plates of 208
– occupying Ujjayinī 209
śaṅkhalipi 234, 238
– Sondhni shell inscription 191
Sarsavni plates of Buddharāja 209
Ṣaṣṭhidatta 30, 98, 160, 165, 170
Satyaśūrī 243
Sawan Sūrya temple inscription (C4) 245, 246
sea. See ocean
seals. See Dhamnar; Naravarman; Prakāśadharman; Viṣṇuvarman
Śeṣa 159
Shivna river 23, 35, 92, 93, 124, 139
siddham
– Siddham database 4
– siddham script. see siddhamātṛkā
– translated as accomplished 6–7
siddhamātṛkā 11, 178, 204, 245
signet ring. See Naravarman
silk weavers’ guild 92, 97, 106
– alliance with the Early Aulikaras 97, 103
– possible ancestors of the Naigamas 97
Siṃhavarman VIII, 27, 40, 43, 52, 53
– copper coin of (B2) 230, 231
– father of Candravarman 27
Śiva 109, 137, 139, 152, 159, 168, 197, 199
– as Ardhanārīśvara 116, 119, 136, 147
– bull of 177, 180, 184
– destroyer of Kāma 94, 109
– in Prakāśeśvara 152
– snake of 159, 168
– with the bull as his emblem 150, 177, 180, 184
six enemies 170, 207, 220
Skandapurāṇa, early 115
snake. See nāgas; Śeṣa; Śiva
Sogi clan 19
Somavarman 234
Somīli river 93
Sondhni V, 23, 175
– connection to Eran 239
– pillar graffito (B9) 236, 237
– pillar inscription of Yaśodharman (A11, A12) V, 29, 162, 164, 176, 179, 189, 190
son of Kṛṣṇa 32, 208, 222. See also Śaṅkaragaṇa
spies 162, 172, 197
Śrī. See Fortune
Śhānu. See Śiva
stūpa 46, 79, 80, 85, 86
Śukra 105
Sumeru. See Meru
Sūrya 73, 100, 106
– sculpture of 92
Susunia inscription of Candravarman 27
symbols 126. See also punctuation
– end-marker 114, 115, 123, 205
– kākapada 169, 210, 224
– maṅgala 126, 136, 229, 249
– śrīvatsa 230
tantra VI, 25, 62–64
temple
– Bhamwar Mata 110, 113, 117
– to Brahmadeva in Daśapura 139, 143, 151
– to the Goddess by Gauri 116, 117
– to the Goddesses by Mayūrākṣaka 61, 74
– Hinglaj Mata (Narsinghgarh) 241
– Kotra Mataji 50, 229, 231
– to Kṛṣṇa in Naravarman’s time 39, 41, 45
– to Manorathasvāmin in Nagarī 198, 200
– modern Pasupatinath in Mandsaur 87
– Prakāśeśvara 139, 143, 144, 151
– to Śiva in Risthal 136, 139, 143–144, 151, 152
– to Śiva in Sondhni 177
– to Śiva by the silk weavers 92, 94, 98, 106, 109
– to Viṣṇu by Mayūrākṣaka 58, 59, 72
– to Viṣṇu in Nagarī 243
Toramāṇa 27, 128, 138, 239
– defeated by Prakāśadharman 29, 139–139, 145, 150
Trailokyavardhana 241, 243