

JOURNAL
OF
THE EPIGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF INDIA
(BHĀRATĪYA PURĀBHILĒKHA PATRIKĀ)

[Being Vol. XXIV of Studies in Indian Epigraphy]

VOLUME TWENTY FOUR : 1998



Published by
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Secretary and Executive Editor

K.V. RAMESH

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*This issue is dedicated to
the memory of*

Dr. B.R. GOPAL

*Retd. Professor of History
S.K. University, Ananthapur and
an eminent Epigraphist*

&

Shri R. TIRUMALAI, I.A.S. (Retd.)

*An eminent Administrator
and Economic Historian*

EDITORIAL

It is with a sense of fulfilment that we are placing in the hands of our members the 24th Volume of our journal on the occasion of the 24th Annual Congress of the Society. That, even in the face of steady increase in the cost of paper and printing, the Society has been able to bring out this annual issue without any break is no mean achievement. This is in no small measure due to the encouragement and support we have received from the members of the Executive Committee as well as the members of the Society.

On behalf of the Society we also express our sincere thanks and gratitude to our respected Vice-chairman Prof. Ajay Mitra Shastri for his generous donation of Rs. 20,000/- which has been kept as an endowment, the interest on which is to be spent in the printing of our journal. Our thanks are also due to Shri N. Sethuraman, Executive Committee member for his generous contribution in the name of 'Raman & Raman Shri. N. Sethuraman Endowment', the interest out of which is utilised for the printing of this issue.

We would like to thank our Treasurer, Shri. P. Natarajan who, ever since he assumed the responsibility, has been presenting us with duly attested and audited statements of accounts. We take this opportunity to thank our Auditor Shri. K.R. Lakshminath of Muthanna & Co.

It is on the occasion of the completion of hundred years of Kerala Epigraphical Studies, that the Society's Annual Congress is being held at Thrissur. We record here the Society's sincere thanks to Dr. Radha Devi, Director of Archaeology, Govt. of Kerala and to Dr. T. Sathyamurthy, Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India for their genuine interest in hosting this academic congress.

We are deeply grateful to our Chairman Dr. S.H. Ritti for his guidance, abiding interest and help. We are extremely happy to place on record our deep sense of appreciation for the academic achievements of Dr. Ajay Mitra Shastri. It is a matter of pride for us that he is participating as an Indian delegate in the World Archaeology Congress being held at Coratia; Besides, Dr. S.H. Ritti had visited Tokyo as an Indian delegate for the celebrations connected with 50 years of Indian Independence and Dr. K.V. Ramesh was in Sri Lanka on an invitation to participate in a multi-disciplinary seminar held in the Peradeniya University, Kandi in February, 1998 to commemorate 50 years of Srilankan Independence. We are equally happy to record our appreciation for the Sriratna award conferred by Shri Subrahmanyam Trust and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on Smt. Lalitha Sethuraman for her dedicated service to the cause of women and for her interest in promoting our Society.

We are extremely thankful to Dr. S.S. Iyer and Shri T.S. Ravishankar for helping us in correcting the proofs of this issue.

We would be failing in our duty if we do not thank Shri. S.K. Lakshminarayana of Readyprint and his staff, particularly Mr. Shyam, Mr. Manjunath and others for accomplishing this job on time.

We conclude as usual with the Society's moto vridhdhir=astu, 'may there be all round progress'.

Mysore
8.5.1998

K.V. RAMESH
Secretary & Executive Editor

M.D.SAMPATH
Editor

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Presidential Address

Madhav. N. Katti

Learned Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I take the opportunity of expressing my deep sense of gratitude to the Office bearers and Members of the Executive Committee of the Epigraphical Society of India for having conferred upon me this honour of presiding over the XXIII Session of the Annual Congress of the Epigraphical Society of India. Established in the year 1974 this Society has the distinction of conducting its annual congresses in various parts of India and bringing out its journal every year without a break. I have also had the privilege of serving the Society in various ways ever since it was founded. I consider it my luck to be the General President of the present session of the Congress as it is taking place at the historic city of Thanjavur which is also blessed with the presence of the deity Bṛihadiśvara, residing in this majestic temple, an architectural marvel and bestowing His divine boons on His devotees. The authorities of the Tamil University under the stewardship of its learned Vice-chancellor Dr. Karunakaran, and those of the Department of Epigraphy with well known epigraphists and scholars like Dr. Y. Subbarayalu and Dr. S. Raju deserve our special appreciation and thanks for organising this unique session in this city, together with the XVII Session of the Conference of the Place Names

Society of India. Interestingly, the presidential address of the last Congress of the Epigraphical Society of India was delivered at Mysore by Dr. Y. Subbarayalu from Tanjavur, while the present address is being delivered at Thanjavur by me coming from Mysore.

It is not a day late to evaluate the position of epigraphical research in the country. India with its rich cultural heritage and interesting history has preserved thousands of epigraphs engraved in different parts of India during the last about two thousand five hundred years. Historically and culturally India has been much larger than its present day political jurisdiction, of which you epigraphists and historians are well aware. While Aśokan inscriptions have been discovered right from Afghanistan to the southern tip of Karnataka, the cultural contacts established by India with various countries, brought to light through epigraphs, coins, architecture, sculpture, literature, etc., have their impact on the international relations even to this day. For practical purposes, the history of the present day India is inseparably intertwined with the history of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and other South and South - East Asian countries.

Though during the last more than

one hundred and fifty years, especially ever since the decoding of the Brāhmī script by James Princep in the year 1838, tremendous progress has been registered in the field of epigraphical study and research and many aspects of Indian history like political, cultural, socio-economic, etc., have been brought to light, there are many more aspects which have to be studied more comprehensively. In the recent years socio-economic history has rightly received much attention of the scholars and it is hoped, in the near future, we will have a fairly exhaustive account of the socio-economic history of India. Likewise, we have to put in more efforts for carrying on research on scientific, literary, architectural including sculpural and iconographic, military, judiciary and other aspects of Indian history, which deserve greater attention of epigraphists, historians, linguists and other experts in various fields.

While a number of research institutions in various parts of India have brought to light hundreds of inscriptions and published results of their study of such epigraphs, the Epigraphy branch of the Archaeological Survey of India has been the premier most institution which has brought to light more than a lakh inscriptions from various places in India, in different scripts and languages, which have been notice in the *Annual Reports on Indian Epigraphy*. I am glad to say, the Reports upto the year 1993-94 are in the press and are expected to be printed off in the near future. Texts of inscriptions have been edited in the *South Indian Inscriptions* and *North Indian Inscriptions*

volumes and a few volumes are nearing completion and one is in the press. A number of very interesting inscriptions have also been critically edited and published in the volumes of *Epigraphia India*, *Epigraphia Indica - Arabic and Persian Supplement* and *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, some of which are in the press. Departments of Archaeology of various Governments, Universities and other research institutions have also brought out a number of epigraphical publications. Of these mention may be made of *Epigraphia Carnatica*, *Epigraphia Andhrica* and publications of the Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamil Nadu and Uttara Pradesh, Government Museum, Bhubaneshwar, etc., which have been regularly bringing out epigraphical publications. The Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, Mythic Society, Bangalore, Indian History Congress, All India Oriental Conference, Asiatic Society of Bengal and Department of Epigraphy, Tamil University, Thanjavur are amongst the other premier institutions which have also given impetus to epigraphical research. For conducting successful research in the field of epigraphy, institutional patronage and Governmental help are often required, as it involves intensive field work followed by a comprehensive research on the subject. Many inscriptions are found in the monuments protected by the Central or State Governments or housed in various Museums under the Governments, Universities and research institutions. It also requires Government help in copying inscriptions located in

inaccessible areas. Therefore, it is necessary to draw a thorough and time bound plan to copy all inscriptions located in different parts of India, in which different institutions can participate in a meaningful way. It can be stated with a sense of pride and, to some extent, satisfaction that the Directorate of Epigraphy with its headquarters office at Mysore, its zonal offices at Jhansi (U.P.) and Chennai (Tamil Nadu) and its Arabic and Persian wing at Nagpur (Maharashtra), has been rendering significant service in the furtherance of epigraphical research, not only being carried out by this branch, but by a number of other institutions in India and abroad. Even today it happens to be the premier most institution in the field, dealing with epigraphs on all India basis. But, unfortunately, the strength of epigraphists has been reduced to less than the barest minimum in this branch as many posts are lying vacant and it has taken years together for the Govt. to streamline the recruitment rules in respect of various posts. Now there is some hope that these posts would be filled up in the near future. However, unless this state of affairs is remedied very soon, it is likely that research in this field, which is already on the decline, may come to a grinding halt in not too distant a future. This devolves on us, the epigraphists who are participating in this Congress, to ensure that we all give a helping hand in successfully conducting the epigraphical research as required. I have, as the head of the epigraphy branch, until very recently, impressed upon the

authorities the need of not only filling up the existing vacancies in the technical cadre, at the earliest, but also of creating atleast one post for each important inscriptional language of India in the headquarters office at Mysore, without which this branch cannot adequately attend to the work of dealing with inscriptions in various languages and scripts and located in different regions of India. Likewise the two zonal offices for Northern and Southern regions already established and two more offices (for western and eastern regions) which are proposed should be provided with sufficient staff strength so as to enable them to conduct survey and research on inscriptions in various languages and scripts. In the same way the Office of the Superintending Epigraphist for Arabic and Persian Inscriptions, Nagpur, which has all India jurisdiction, should have on an average one post at the basic level in respect of each State in India, including the Union territories.

As I stated earlier, it is very much essential to maintain an upto date statistics in respect of the research being conducted at different Universities, State Departments, Museums and other Institutions and see that problem-oriented research is planned without any overlap. It is necessary that the Directorate of Epigraphy is properly strengthened so that it can help in this regard. It can also be hoped that the Epigraphical Society of India will develop the required infrastructure so that it can also help in this cause in the best way possible. In other words there is a need to

establish a close working forum in which, in the Directorate of Epigraphy, various Governmental, public and private Institutions conducting research in the field can participate.

I feel it is time for developing the Directorate of Epigraphy into a full fledged research and teaching institution where Certificate and Diploma courses in Epigraphy, training to inservice personnel and other vocational courses to acquaint select persons from public life with authentic information on the subject can be planned. There is a need of participation of the public at village, taluk, district, state and national levels in the protection of epigraphical wealth spread in various parts of India, as many times it is being destroyed, because of either ignorance or negligence on the part of the villagers or the other administrative agencies. It is therefore very necessary to protect this unique wealth before it is lost in the coming years. To make the public aware of the importance of inscriptions, we may have to establish inscriptional galleries and museums and organise exhibitions at various places. Documentaries on the subject can also be shown to public in order to make them aware of the importance of epigraphs. I personally believe that it is high time that the Epigraphy branch of the Archaeological Survey of India can be developed into an autonomous Institution of the Government with required powers to ensure the protection of epigraphs, with an infrastructure to conduct survey, research and training in the field so

that the next generation of citizens of India can take adequate interest in the protection of the epigraphical wealth of the country. In this respect the epigraphists who have retired from their official service can be of immense help as their experience can be utilised for developing an institution which can encourage documentation, research and training in the field of epigraphy. Only a proper study of these contemporaneous writings can ensure better awareness about our past and thus enable the Society to plan for its future.

So far I have dwelt upon the problems being faced by various institutions, developing a proper infrastructure for enhancing epigraphical research and training comprehensively. Now I will deal with the problem in the study of epigraphs themselves.

We have in India inscriptions in alphabetic scripts dating back to the Aśokan period or a little earlier, the scripts being Brāhmī, Kharōshṭī, Greek, Aramaic and the offshoots of the Brāhmī covering a period of more than two thousand three hundred years and leading to the modern period. The scripts of all Sanskrit and Dravidian languages are the offshoots of the mother-script Brāhmī. We have scripts like Arabic, Persian and Urdu used for writing inscriptions of the medieval and later periods as we all know.

Prior to the Mauryan epoch and after the period of Indus civilization, we have not come across regular inscriptions. Only a few graffiti marks have been found

on potsherds, revealed through various excavations, showing a resemblance to some writings of the Indus period on the one hand and to the Brāhmī letters on the other. As no phonetic values can be assigned to these marks, it is difficult to trace regular transition from Indus script to Brāhmī. We can hope, excavations to be conducted in future may help the study of the scripts of this period. As for Indus Script itself, though many hectic efforts have been made by various scholars in India and abroad, the script has not been deciphered conclusively. Further research is in progress in the field. A major Indus site at Dhōlavāra in Gujarat, being excavated by the Archeological Survey of India, may provide some clue to understand the Indus script better.¹ Amongst the scholars who have recently worked or are presently working on the Indus script, Prof. B.B. Lal, Dr. S.R. Rao, Shri I. Mahadevan, Dr. M.V. Krishna Rao, Dr. Asko Papola, Dr. K.V. Ramesh and Dr. Subbarayappa deserve a special mention.

In the recent years scholars like Dr. B.N. Mukherjee have successfully deciphered a number of Kharōshtī inscriptions discovered in Bihar, Bengal, etc., and added a new dimension to the study of inscriptions in shell characters. It is desirable that more scholars take up the study of these scripts. Regarding the origin of the Brāhmī script and its relation to Tamil Brāhmī a number of inscriptions belonging to 4-3rd centry B.C. discovered recently in the excavations at Anurādhapura

in Sri Lanka are being studied. We may reasonably hope, they may throw some welcome light on the origin of Brāhmī, its relation to Tamil Brāhmī etc. Recent publications on various aspects of epigraphy by Drs. H. V. Trivedi, S.H. Ritti, B.R. Gopal, Ajay Mitra Sastri, R.K. Sharma, I. Mahadevan, N. Sethuraman, R. Tirumalai, R. Nagaswami, P.V. Parabrahma Sastri, Mukunda Rao, Kaul Deambi, I.K. Sarma, K.K. Thaplyal, Devendra Handa, B.K. Rath, Snigdha Tripathi, H.S. Thosar, Somasundara Rao, M.M. Kalburgi, Leela Shantakumari, S.S.R. Murthy, Shadakshariah and others outside the epigraphy branch in India have also added a new dimension to the subject. In the field of Arabic and Persian inscriptions Dr. Z.A. Desai and others continue to render active service. The former Directors of Epigraphy, Chief Epigraphists, other members of the technical staff who earlier served the epigraphy Branch and constitute today almost a greater number than those presently working in the branch can make their experience available to the branch so that epigraphical research may be conducted unthwarted and help those still in service to keep up and enhance the image of this branch.

I may also draw your kind attention to the recent discoveries of a number of Sanskrit and Tamil inscriptions in South-East Asian countries by a team led by Prof. Noboru Karashima of Japan, with Drs. K.V. Ramesh, K.V. Raman, Y. Subbarayalu and P. Shanmugam as members of the team from India. The

inscriptions discovered by this team will help in establishing a very close link with India in the ancient and early medieval periods. A team under the leadership of Prof. Karashima again, with Dr. Subbarayalu, Shanmugam and myself from India and Cynthia Talbot from U.S.A., has taken up a comprehensive study of revenue terms in Vijayanagara inscriptions.

The inscriptions discovered in recent years are similar in their form and content to those discovered during the earlier decades. A number of inscriptions add new dimension to epigraphical study and research.

In the year 1989, while conducting repairs to the Chandralāmbā temple at Sannati in Gulbarga District of Karnataka two edicts of Aśoka were discovered, by chance, on the *pīṭha* slab of the Mahākālī shrine in the temple located at the outskirts of the village.³ These edicts contain the texts of edicts XII and XIV of this emperor found elsewhere.⁴ The epigraphs are partly damaged as the middle portion of the slab is cut for making a hole for setting up the image of Mahākālī, which can be dated to about the 9th century A.D. It is clear that the people who brought the inscribed slab from the nearby regions were not aware of the inscriptions. The second face of the slab contains the major part of the texts of the separate rock-edicts and that way the inscriptions are of considerable importance. Their texts appear to be the regional versions of the two separate rock-edicts from Dhauri and Jaugada in

Orissa.⁵

A few ancient inscriptions in Prakrit language and Brāhmī characters, palaeographically assignable to a period from 3rd century B.C. to 1st -2nd century A.D. have been discovered along with remnants of large *Stūpas* at Satdhārā, Raisen District, Madhya Pradesh⁶. The inscriptions contain important evidence about the donations of architectural members of *Stūpas*. Their study is in progress.

A set of copper plate charters, in Sanskrit language and Vēṅgī characters of 5th century A.D. from the village Babbēpalli,⁷ Prakasham District, Andhra Pradesh belongs to the reign of Pallava Kumāravishṇu. The plates mention the details of date as the fifth day of bright fortnight of the month Mahā-Kārttika in the thirteenth regnal year of the king, the *nakshatra* being Viśākhā and the weekday Thursday.

Five label inscriptions, discovered during excavations at Mahābalipuram,⁸ Kanchipuram Taluk, Chingleput District, are very interesting. The inscriptions are engraved on the semi-circular dressed stone and also on the pedestal of a monolithic boar near the sea-shore temple at Mahābalipuram. All the five inscriptions are in the Sanskrit language and Pallava Grantha characters of about the 8th century A.D. They refer to various titles of Pallava king Narasimhavarman II, i.e., Rājasimha. The first record reads, *Rājsimhō yaḥ kshātra - simha iti viśruta-puṇya - kīrttiḥ jīyāt mahēśvara-sikhāmaṇidīpta - maulir -*

yyuddh = Ārjjuno nikhila-lōka narēn[drah].
The second, third, fourth and fifth inscriptions read respectively, *Śrī - Chitrakārmukah, Śrī-bharah, Śrī - Rājasimhah and Raṇajayah.*

A copper-plate charter, recently discovered at Amrōhā, ⁹ Moradabad District, Uttar Pradesh was issued by Nāgabhaṭa II of the Pratiḥāra dynasty. King Nāgabhaṭa can be identified with his namesake mentioned in the Māldā copper plate charter. Thus these two charters are of great historical importance.

The earliest of the inscriptions from South India which will be covered in the discussions to follow are from the southern part of Tamil Nadu, discovered in different caverns in Madurai, Pudukottai, Tirunelveli and Trichy Districts.¹⁰ The records can be palaeographically assigned to a period from 1st to 3rd century B.C. while the script employed in these inscriptions is of a rudimentary nature and in its early phase. The interesting feature of the early records is the absence of the inherent *a* vowel value in the consonants and the use of two consonants side by side as full letters, instead of their conjunct forms. The additional Dravidian letters like *ṛ*, *ṛ̣* are of the indigeneous variety used in the early records. The medial sign for *a* and *ā* are identical and can be distinguished only by invoking the knowledge of the language. According to some scholars the Tamil cave records can be assigned on palaeographical grounds, to the pre-Aśokan period while according

to others, the records belong to about the 2nd century B.C.

An inscription of Kṛṣṇadēvarāya¹¹ from Hampi in Bellary District, Karnataka, in Kannada language and characters, contains the details of the date of his coronation. The record states that Kṛṣṇadēvarāya made over a grant of the village Siṅganāykanahalli, for the worship of the deity Virūpāksha (Hampi) on the occasion of his coronation, which took place in Śālivāhana Śaka 1430, Māgha śu. 14 of the cyclic year Śukla. The details of date correspond to 1510 A.D., January 24, which was a Thursday. (The Śaka year was a mistake for 1431 expired). It was hitherto presumed that Kṛṣṇadēvarāya had ascended the throne sometime during 1509 A.D. The inscription very clearly mentions that he ascended the throne in the year 1510 A.D. It can, therefore, be presumed that he must have taken charge of the kingdom during 1509 A.D., but that he actually ascended the throne ceremoniously on 24th January 1510 A.D. The inscription, therefore, is very important for the political history of this dynasty.

A number of interesting inscriptions in Arabic and Persian languages and scripts have been discovered in the recent years about which, I am sure, Officers of the Arabic and Persian Inscriptions Branch, Nagpur, will highlight. However I will deal with only two inscriptions here.¹²

An example of communal harmony is highlighted by an inscription of the

time of Aurangzeb (1658-1707 A.D.) from Udbāl in Bidar District of Karnataka. It records that this house, obviously a mosque, was constructed by Rāmchand, son of Pakharmal Kāyath (i.e. Kāyasth) Māthur, the servant of the royal court, in the year A.D. 1072 (1661-62 A.D.)

An inscription from Bārā Baṅki in Uttar Pradesh belongs to the famous Nawwāb Wājid 'Alī Shāh (1847-56 A.D.) of Awadh. This new Persian inscription is of the post deposition period of Wājid, 'Alī Shāh assigning the erection of a mosque to Amīr Maḥal, in A.H. 1285, (1868-69 A.D.), the metrical text having been composed by the Nawwāb himself, pen-named Akhtar.

Amīr Maḥal, the builder of the mosque, was one the secondary wives of Wājid 'Alī Shāh, who entered his harem during his princehood at the age of eighteen. She was a beautiful dancing

girl, with besetting melodious voice, popularly known as Karam Bhakhsh Wali. After his deposition in 1856 A.D., when the Nawwāb left for Calcutta, he offered to divorce those wives who were not desirous of accompanying him. One of them was Amīr Maḥal who remarried the Qāḍī of Bārā Baṅki named Asghar 'Alī and after death she lies buried at Bārā baṅki.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the epigraphical wealth in our country is immense and the knowledge we can gain from it is immeasurable. This occasion has provided an opportunity for us to exchange our thoughts on the subject. We can ardently hope, the academic deliberations we are going to have during the three days of this conference will be highly fruitful.

I once again thank you for the patient hearing.

Notes and References

1. The site is being excavated by Shri. R.S. Bisht, Director, Institute of Archaeology, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi.
2. Shri. I. Mahadevan on the one hand, Shri K.G. Krishnan, Dr. K.V. Ramesh, Dr. M.D. Sampath etc. on the other have different views, on the subject. Further studies, I hope will enable us to have a final picture about the origin of Brāhmī and its relation with Tamil Brāhmī.
3. The inscriptions were copied for the Department by Dr. K.V. Ramesh and Madhav N. Katti, subsequently published by Dr. Ramesh in the periodical of I.C.H.R., *Indian Historical Review*, Vol. XIV pp.38-42.
4. *vide.*, *C.I.I.*, Vol. I, pp.82-89.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 92 ff. and pp. 111 ff.

6. The information is from Dr. R.C. Agarwal, Director, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, to whom thanks are due.
7. *vide.*, *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XLII, pp.48 ff.
8. They were discovered in the course of conducting conservation to the shore temple and are being noticed in the *A.R.Ep.* 1993-94.
9. This has been recently copied by us and is being edited by Madhav N. Katti, Director (Epigraphy) (Retd.) and B.R. Mani, Superintending Archaeologist, Delhi Circle, in the pages of *Ep. Ind.*
10. *vide.*, R. Nagaswamy (ed.) 'Corpus of Tamil Brāhmī Inscriptions' by Iravatam Mahadevan. Published in the *Seminar on Inscriptions*, pp. 69 ff., Nos. 3 and 5.
11. *vide.*, Madhav N. Katti, 'Sankara-Parvati Endowment Lecture' delivered at the Madras University on 25.3.1994.
12. Information from M.I. Quddusi, Superintending Epigraphist for Arabic and Persian Inscriptions, Nagpur, for which my thanks are due to him.

King Svabhāvatuṅga of Sōmakula:¹ Problem of Identity

Ajay Mitra Shastri

Notwithstanding sustained work on what are commonly known as the Later Sōmavamśins of Western Orissa and the adjoining area of Madhya Pradesh several problems of their history including such basic issues as genealogy and chronology continue to baffle historians. We have attempted a reconstruction of their political history and tried to show that their rule in these regions began about mid-ninth century (c.855 A.D.) and ended about early twelfth century A.D. (c.1113 A.D.).² However, the all important question of the identity of king Svabhāvatuṅga with a great bearing not only on the Sōmakulin but also the Bhauma-Kara history has till recently been evading a final satisfactory solution. Recently some clinching evidence has been spotted which enables us to settle the issue once for all. It is proposed to discuss this problem threadbare in these pages.

Svabhāvatuṅga was first brought to historical notice by the discovery of the Paṭnā charter of the Sōmakulin king Mahāśivagupta I Yayāti's eighth regnal year referring to him (Svabhāvatuṅga), in a versified eulogy appended at its end, as a king of Kōsalā and belonging to the Sōmakula.³ A few years later were discovered the two Baud (Phūlbani District, Orissa) copper-plate charters dated in the Bhauma-Kara year 158.⁴ We learn from them that the donatrix

Bhauma-Kara queen Pṛithvīmahādevī *alias* Tribhuvanamahādevī was the (or a) daughter of the Sōmakulin king Svabhāvatuṅga of Kōsalā and his queen Nṛittamahādevī, daughter of one illustrious Yaśovṛiddhi.⁵ We are further told that she (Pṛithvīmahādevī) had ascended the throne owing to the failure of male issue to inherit the kingdom caused by the demise of her husband Kusumahāra *alias* Śubhākara IV and his brother Lalitahāra *alias* Śivakara III sonless.⁶

From these references it was commonly, and rightly, inferred that Svabhāvatuṅga belonged to the Sōma-kula and was amongst its early members, but there existed a divergence of opinion regarding his identity: some identifying him with Mahābhavagupta I Janamējaya and others with his son and successor Mahāśivagupta I Yayāti. D.C.Sircar, while editing the aforesaid Paṭnā plates of Mahāśivagupta I Yayāti, proposed to equate him with this powerful Sōmakulin ruler.⁷ He invited our attention to a charter of the ninth year of the reign of this king purporting to record the grant of the village Chandragrāma situated in the district (*visahaya*) of Maraḍa included in Dakṣhiṇa Tōsali in favour of a brāhmaṇa resident of the village Śilābhañjapāṭī in the Oḍra country.⁸ Dakṣhiṇa Tōsali is known to have formed part of the Kara kingdom. Śilābhañjapāṭī, the village

from which hailed the donee, was apparently established by or named after one of the Bhañja rulers,⁹ called Śilābhañja.⁹ The donated village Chandra-grāma and its district headquarters Maraḍa have been equated with the modern village of Chāndgāon, about thirty-two miles to the north-east of Cuttack, and Baraḍa or Maraḍa Haritharapura in the Cuttack District respectively.¹⁰ Another charter granted in the fifteenth year of the reign of Mahāśivagupta I aims at donating a village included in the Gandhaṭapāṭī (or Gandhaḍapāṭī) *maṇḍala* (tehsil) in Kōsalā.¹¹ Gandhaṭa (or ḍa)pāṭī, as would appear from its name, was either founded by or named after the Bhañja ruler Śatrubhañja I, also known as Gandhaṭa, and finds mention in some records of the Bhañjas as well¹² and has been equated with modern Gandharāḍi, about 12 miles from Baud.¹³ Sircar proposes to interpret the evidence of these epigraphs as pointing to Mahāśivagupta I's triumph over the Bhauma-Karas which resulted into the flight of their Bhañja feudatories from their capital Dhṛitipura in upper Orissa to the Gañjām region where they made the town of Vañjulvaka, their new headquarters. It was further surmised by him that the Sōma-kula king (Mahāśivagupta I) aided his daughter Pṛithvīmahādevī in capturing the Bhauma-Kara throne for herself and it must have been in connection with this episode that he gave away the village of Chandragrāma situated in the Kara kingdom. And, therefore, the dates of the two Baud charters of Pṛithivīmahādevī

and of Mahāśivagupta I Yayāti's aforesaid Paṭṇā plates, that is, the Bhauma-Kara year 158 and the ninth year of Yayāti's reign, were most probably not removed from each other by any considerable gap.¹⁴ And on the basis of certain astronomical data met with in the Daspallā (Puri district) charter of the Bhañja chief Śatrubhañja *alias* Tribhuvanakaśa granted in the year 198, most probably of the Bhauma-Kara era,¹⁵ Sircar favoured 831 A.D. as its epoch.¹⁶ This line of argument has been followed by some other historians also.¹⁷

Sircar's line of arguments, however, militates against some well-known facts, and the serious anachronisms involved in it cannot be set aside easily. To begin with, the Orissa Museum plates, which hitherto form the earliest known record of Mahāśivagupta I Yayāti, for instance, purport to grant a village included in the Gaṇḍitam-vishaya in the Oḍra country.¹⁸ This should suffice to show that Dakṣiṇa Tōsali or coastal Orissa that was earlier included in the Bhauma-Kara kingdom had already passed under Yayāti's control by the fourth year of his reign, if it had not come to him by inheritance. Basing on Sircar's line of argument and equating the fourth year of his reign with the Bhauma-Kara year 158, one will be landing oneself into serious anachronism. If this era commenced in 831 AD as proposed by him, the date of this record would fall around 989 AD, and in case he ruled for about thirty or thirty-five years as looks almost certain,¹⁹ the end of his reign will have to be placed about 1015

or 1020 AD, which is simply impossible in view of the evidence furnished by later discoveries. For, it is known definitely that his son and successor Mahābhavagupta II Bhīmaratha and the latter's sons Mahāśivagupta II Dharmaratha and Indraratha had reigns lasting at least thirteen, eleven and six years respectively,²⁰ Even if one were to ignore the reigns of Nah(gh)usha and Abhimanyu which most probably intervened between those of Mahāśivagupta II Dharmaratha and Indraratha,²¹ one shall have to believe that Indraratha ruled at least upto 1045 or 1050 A.D. And this will militate against known historical facts. For, we learn from Chōḷa records that a commander of the Chōḷa emperor Rājēndra I had vanquished Indraratha and seized his kingdom in or by 1022 A.D. However, if Sircar's equation were to be conceded, Bhīmarathā, and not Indraratha, would have been on the Sōma-kula throne at the time of the Chōḷa incursion.²² We are, therefore, left with no option but to abandon this synchronism.

Then, as demonstrated by S.N.Rajaguru,²³ the astronomical details of the date met with in the aforesaid Daspallā grant also agree with March 23, 934 A.D.²⁴ thereby hinting at the likelihood of the epoch of the Bhauma-Kara era lying in 736 A.D. and consequant equation of its year 158 with 894 A.D. As pointed out by Rajaguru, this epoch of the Bhauma-Kara era finds support from the details of the occasion of the donation as set out in Śatrubhañja's Gañjām charter of the (Bhauma-Kara)

year 198²⁵ Whatever that be, Rajaguru's epoch (736 A.D.) looks preferable as it goes well with the known historical facts which would be impossible with Sircar's epoch. And lastly, the equation of king Svabhāvatuṅga mentioned in the Paṭnā grant of Yayāti and the Baud grants of queen Pṛithvīmahādevī with Mahāśivagupta I Yayāti is not supported by the tenor of the description. In the two Baud plates Pṛithvīmahādevī's father Svabhāvatuṅga is described as the 'lord of Kōsala' (*Kōsal-ādhipati*). In the supplemental *praśasti* appended to the Paṭnā grant, he is credited with the protection of Kōsala. It may consequently be asserted that he was regarded primarily as the ruler of Kōsala both by his descendants as well as by other contemporary powers. On the other hand Yayāti's dominions included the twin provinces of Kōsala and Oḍra almost from the beginning of his reign.²⁶ The description of his *Sāndhivigrahika* (minister of peace and war) Simhadatta as attached to Kōsala in the Paṭnā grant of his twenty-eighth regnal year²⁷ should suffice to indicate that the two provinces of Kōsala and Oḍra or Utkala had distinct administrative set up during his reign. And they formed part of his kingdom almost right from the start of his rule, even if he did not inherit Oḍra. And we feel that there is clear evidence to prove that sometime, during his reign, perhaps towards its end, Mahābhavagupta I Janamējaya had inflicted a crushing defeat over the Oḍra king as he is said to have killed him with a spear in the Brahmēśvara

temple inscription of his descendant Mahābhavagupta IV Uddyōtakēsarin's reign.²⁸ Thus it may be reasonably presumed that he (Mahāśivagupta I Yayāti) received it in succession from his illustrious father. It may consequently be concluded that the division of the Sōmakula kingdom into two *rāshṭras* (provinces) of Kōsala and Utkal referred to explicitly in a couple of later records of the dynasty²⁹ had become a reality right from the commencement of Yayāti only as the the lord of Kōsala would have amounted to an under-estimation both by his daughter Prīthvīmahādevī and his own court-poet which they could have ill-afforded. As against this, his father Mahābhavagupta I Janamējaya is explicitly styled Kōsalēndra (lord of Kōsala) in some of his own epigraphs,³⁰ while none of his own records of which we have plenty registers any grant in Odra or Dakṣiṇa Tōsali. And then in the records of his descendants he is the first king to be mentioned, most probably because he was the real founder of the dynastic power. It was, therefore, felt by us that he was identical with Svabhāvatuṅga who, according to the opening stanza of the supplemental eulogy met with in Yayāti's Paṭṇā charter, had become king by dint of his own prowess.³¹ It was, therefore, suggested that the year 158 of the Bhauma-Kara era mentioned in Prīthvīmahādevī's Baud grants fell during Janamējaya's reign.

Such was the scenario till a few years ago when we strongly upheld the Svabhāvatuṅga-Mahābhavagupta I identification which looked most probable

in the light of the evidences then available.³² However, the whole situation has now to be reviewed as a result of the discovery of the Gōpālpur charter issued by Mahābhavagupta I within a short time of his accession. The known allusions in the Sōma-kulin and Bhauma-Kara records could not afford a definite clue to his correct identity and placement in the Sōma-kula owing to the non-availability of any reference to him in a genealogical context even through numerous epigraphs of his descendants were extant.³³ The only thing that could be said with certainty was that he could not be later than Mahāśivagupta I Yayāti.³⁴ But thanks to the discovery of this charter dated in his regnal year 1,³⁵ we are now able to settle this problem once for all. The charter commences with the words *siddham*, expressed symbolically, and *svasti* followed by a stanza invoking god Śiva's favour. Next comes a unique and most valuable *praśasti* of king Svabhāvatuṅga, his queen Sindūragaurī and their son Janamējaya covering six verses (2-7). Unfortunately, two of the stanzas have been left incomplete due to inadvertence which has proved to be greatly detrimental for historical purposes as the information contained in the missing portion is lost irreparably and one may hope to lay hands on it, if only some records containing this portion are spotted by chance in future. But whatever information is available now, is of inestimable value, as it enables one to solve the question at issue with certitude. Three of these verses describe

Svabhāvatuṅga who is said to have been born in the lunar family (Sōma-kula) and to have annihilated his foes by his prowess. The enemy-tree blazed by the fire of his valour, it is stated, does not grow afresh (v.2). What deserves special notice is the use of the root *bhū* in the past perfect tense (*liṭ lakāra*), viz., *babhūva*, indicating events that had happened earlier, showing thereby that Svabhāvatuṅga was not alive at the time of the grant (v.2). The next two stanzas carry his description forward. We are told that nets of tears fell on the breasts of the multitude of his enemies' consorts, apparently because of the death of their royal husbands in wars of hostility (v.3, first half). Unfortunately the second half of this stanza is inadvertently dropped and so is the first one of the next verse. The extant portion of this verse compares him to god Hari (Vishṇu) in his boar incarnation in supporting the earth on his arms. His charming queen Sindūragaurī is likened to moonlight in the star-packed sky in the next verse (5). It is pertinent to note that she is mentioned in the present tense (*laṭ lakāra*) of the root *as* (*asti*), which leaves no doubt that she was living when the charter was issued. Verse 6 refers to the birth of their son named Janamējaya who most probably adopted the style (*viruda*) 'Abode of Fortune'.³⁶ He is juxtaposed to *kalpa-taru* (wish giving tree) and his father (Svabhāvatuṅga) to the Himālaya mountain which is called *ajanman* or unborn. He is again likened to fullmoon in the firmament of his noblesouled mother, which, too, is indicative of her

being alive.³⁷ Later in the formal prose portion, the donor Mahābhavagupta I is introduced as meditating upon the feet of Śivagupta which would establish that Svabhāvatuṅga was the personal name given to him at the time of his coronation. Further, the nature of relationship between Śivagupta and Mahābhavagupta I Janamējaya, which was uncertain till recently, is now definitely known to be that of father and son. This practice was analogous to that followed by his descendants religiously, and while the official names are given in the formal portion recording the grants in question, personal names are met with towards the end while specifying the dates. It is in the latter context that we notice names like Janamējaya, yayāti, Bhīmaratha, Dharmaratha, Indraratha, Chaṇḍīhara, Uddyōtakēsarin and Karṇa. And as the draft of the present charter granted by Janamējaya within a few months of his accession shows a fully developed form, it is very likely that Svabhāvatuṅga, who had adopted Śivagupta as his coronation name, had also issued some charters which may be discovered in future. And as and when they come to light, it is almost certain that his personal name (Svabhāvatuṅga) will be found mentioned in connection with the date.³⁸

This record is also interesting in as much as it supplies us the name of Janamējaya's mother that was Sindūragaurī. He is thus the earliest member of the dynasty, the names of both of whose parents are known, the only other such instance known hitherto being that of Uddyōtakēsarin whose mother's

name (Kōlāvati) is known from her Brahmēśvara temple inscription.³⁹ He was thus the (or a) son of Svabhāvatuṅga from his queen Sindūragaurī.⁴⁰

As we have seen, the above-mentioned Baud grants of the Bhauma-Kara year 158 of the queen Pṛithvīmahādevī *alias* Tribhuvanamahādevī, widowed consort of the Bhauma-Kara monarch Śubhkaṛa IV, inform us that she was the (or a) daughter of king Svabhāvatuṅga of Kōsala belonging to the lunar family. The Sōmakulin monarch Mahābhavagupta I Janamējaya and Bhauma-Kara queen Pṛithvīmahādevī *alias* Tribhuvanamahādevī were thus brother and sister respectively. However, the latter is described as born of Nṛittamahādevī, daughter of Yaśōvṛiddhi, whereas the Gōpālpur charter under reference leaves no doubt that Janamējaya's mother was Sindūragaurī. It would thus follow that Svabhāvatuṅga had at least two queens, viz., Sindūragaurī and Nṛittamahādevī, and that the son and daughter respectively were born of them and consequently they were related to one another as step-brother and sister.

As pointed out earlier, king Svabhāvatuṅga is also known from the supplemental *praśasti* appended to the Paṭṇā grant of Mahāśivagupta I Yayāti issued in his eighth regnal year. The three stanzas forming this eulogy give a vivid description of a very great military achievement of the monarch who is said to have been verily the sun (causing the blossoming) of the lotus flower that was the Sōma-kula

and the moon for the moonlight night that was the protection of the Kōsala country, who vanquished the Chaidya, viz., Kalachuries of Dāhalā,⁴¹ by his own prowess and thereby augmented his prosperity. The text of the following stanza is highly corrupt with its reading not above doubt. But it appears to state that the soldiers of the Chēdi (Kalachuri) king, led by one *Bhaṭṭa* Pēḍi, who was apparently the general in-charge of the operation, raided the Sōmakulin kingdom and carried away some women and thereby earned the favour of their master (king) symbolised by the tying of the headband (*paṭṭa*).⁴² But king Svabhāvatuṅga with the assistance of his general Lakshmaṇa pursued and turned enemies fleeing and recovered all the women, thereby resembling Rāma who, accompanied by his brother Lakshmaṇa, had rescued his spouse by making the bridge (for crossing the sea).⁴³ It is stated in the concluding stanza that Svabhāvatuṅga had a son,⁴⁴ resembling god Vishṇu, who cared too-hoods for the powerful Chaidya monarch Durgarāja, put Dāhalā⁴⁵ aflame which in consequence got depopulated.⁴⁶

This record thus sheds entirely new light on a phase of Svabhāvatuṅga's reign, most probably his closing years. That he was king of Kōsalā is explicitly averred and is known from some other charters to have been a continuing fact during his son and successor Janamējaya's period as well. That he had acquired it by his own valour is certainly much more applicable to Śivagupta *alias* Svabhāvatuṅga than to

his son or grandson who had inherited it from their respective fathers, and cannot be said reasonably to have acquired it by their arms' prowess. According to our chronology, Śivagupta ruled from c.850 to c.880 A.D.⁴⁷ Sometime prior to it (upto end of the eighth century A.D.) his predecessors of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśa or Sōmavaṁśa were ruling over South Kōsalā, and its last known powerful king Śivagupta Bālārjuna closed his long over-57 year reign about the end of eighth century A.D. The period of around half a century thereafter is full of uncertainties. Most probably they (Sōmavaṁśins) were deprived of the western part of Kōsalā corresponding to the Chhattīsgarh region of Madhya Pradesh by the Naḷa king Vilāsatuṅga⁴⁸ and probably also by the ancestors of the Bāṇa king Vikramāditya I *alias* Jayamēru, also called Bāṇa-Vidyādhara (c.870-895 AD),⁴⁹ who was a junior contemporary of Śivagupta Svabhāvatuṅga. The Sōmavaṁśins had, therefore, to move eastwards to the Sambalpur-Bālāṅgīr region of Orissa which formed the eastern part of Kōsalā. Śivagupta had thus to carve out a kingdom by the valour of his own arms as averred rightly by the supplemental eulogy at the end of the aforesaid Paṭṇā charter. The Kalachuris of Tripurī appear to have attempted to meddle in troubled politics of Chhattīsgarh and western Orissa (comprised in Kōsala). The Bilhārī stone inscription of Kalachuri king Yuvarājadeva II informs us that his ancestor Śaṅkaragaṇa *alias* Mugdhatuṅga, also called Prasiddhadhavaḷa, conquered

rows of countries along the eastern coast and also seized the Pāli country from the Kōsalā king.⁵⁰ We also learn from a Prakrit stanza met with in the Banāras grant of Karṇa that Prasiddhadhavaḷa took possession because of their magnanimity.⁵¹ The Kōsalā king from whom Mugdhatuṅga Prasiddhadhavaḷa captured Pāli has been equated with the aforesaid Bāṇa ruler. Consequently the Chhattīsgarh region came under the possession of Mugdhatuṅga. This event had probably its beginnings during the reign of Kōkalla I (c.850-890 A.D.), who was a contemporary of Svabhāvatuṅga, and had only culminated during his son and successor Śaṅkaragaṇa's II reign (c.890-910 A.D.). We are told by several epigraphs of the Ratnapura (Kōsala) branch of the Kalachuris that Kōkalla(I) had eighteen sons; the eldest of them became the ruler of Tripurī and made his younger brothers the chiefs of neighbouring territories. It is likely that these territories were actually annexed during the reign of Kōkalla I himself and probably his son Śaṅkaragaṇa II Mugdhatuṅga participated in these expeditions. It is certain that in the course of these operations the two Kalachuri kings of Tripurī came into conflict with the first known Sōmakulin king Śivagupta. Svabhāvatuṅga which are graphically described in the three aforesaid stanzas met with in the Paṭṇā plates of Yayāti's eighth regnal year. Likewise, Svabhāvatuṅga's son and successor Mahābhavagupta I, Janamējaya also played a pivotal and final role in the hostilities. And the trouble appears

to have centred round the possession of the Chhattīsgarh region though unfortunately the venue (or venues) of this conflict (or conflicts) is (are) not known nor whether the description refers to two separate wars or to an ongoing war with two major phases, one taking place in Svabhāvatuṅga's reign and the other in that of his son Janamējaya, even though the latter appears much more probable. The tenor of the description seems to show that the Kalachuris were the aggressors. Unfortunately again, while there is no doubt that the invaders were the Kalachuri kings of Ḍāhalā, the name of the invading king is given as Durgarāja which is not known from any of the numerous Kalachuri records. It is very likely that it was a *biruda* or secondary name of Śaṅkaragaṇa II who was a contemporary of Janamējaya, while the name of the initial Kalachuri

encroacher, who was most probably Kōkalla, is left unrecorded. The hostilities ended disastrously for the Kalachuris, for Janamējaya is expressly stated to have pursued the enemies to their capital Tripurī (Ḍahālā) itself which he burnt and depopulated. Initially, of course, the Kalachuris appeared to have got some success as they are said to have carried away some women, but the end result was favourable to the invaded. This explains its total boycott by the Kalachuri eulogists.

It would thus be seen that we are now in much better position regarding the Sōmakulin king Svabhāvatuṅga whose identity is finally settled and several details about whom can now be appreciated much better, thanks to the discovery of Janamējaya's Gōpālpur grant of his first regnal year.⁵³

Notes and References

1. This dynastic name is employed in all the official charters of the members of the ruling family, and so this nomenclature is preferable to the 'Later Sōmavāṁśins' or simply 'Sōmavāṁśins' commonly used by historians including us earlier.
2. We have attempted a reconstruction of a historical outline of the dynasty in "Genealogy and Chronology of Later Sōmavāṁśins" (*Archaeology and History, Essay in Memory of Sh.A.Ghosh*, eds. B.M.Pande and B.D.Chattopadhyaya, Delhi, 1987, pp.649-62) and *Inscriptions of the Śarabhapurīyas, Pāṇḍuvāṁśins and Sōmavāṁśins*, Delhi, 1995 pp.172-222.
3. *Ibid.*, part II, pp.229-30. This reference is discussed in greater detail in the sequel.
4. S.C.De, "Two Plates of Tribhuvanamahādevī from Baud", *Ep.Ind.*, Vol.XXIX. pp.210-20.
5. *Sit-āṁśu-vaṁśa-nalina-śrī-vikās-aika-bhāsvataḥ, Rājñah Svabhāvatuṅgasya Kōsal-ādhipatēḥ sutā, Sutāyām śrī-Yasōvṛiddhēr=yasō-vṛiddhi-vidhāyini*,

Śrīman= Nṛittāmahādēvyāñi kṛita-janma-parigrahā.

Śrīmat-Kusumahārasya mahādēvī maharddhikā,

Prithvīm Prithvīmahādēvī chira-kālam=apālayat. - Ibid., p.217, verses 12-14.

6. *Ibid.*, p.217, verses 9-14. As has been pointed out by scholars, the statement regarding the absence of a male heir is not quite correct.
7. *Journal of the Asiatic Society (JAS), Letters*, Vol.XIX, pp.117ff.; *The Indian Historical Quarterly (IHQ)*, Vol.XXIX, p.155; *Ep.Ind.*, Vol.XXIX, p.224; *Orissa Historical Research Journal (OHRJ)*, Vol.I, pp.290-91; R.C.Majumdar and A.D.Pusalkar (eds.), *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol.IV: *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, Mumbai, 1955, pp.148-49.
8. Ajay Mitra Shastri, *ISPS*, part II, pp.234-35, lines 25-26 and 33.
9. There were more than one chiefs called Śilābhañja in the Bhañja dynasty.
10. Binayak Misra, *Dynasties of Mediaeval Orissa (DMO)*, Calcutta, 1933, p.69, No.9.
11. *ISPS*, Part II, pp.240-41, text-lines 4-5 and 16-17 (Nibinnā plates).
12. Binayak Misra, *DMO*, pp. 44-46, Nos.3-4 and 14.
13. *Ibid.*, p.45; K.C.Panigrahi, *Chronology of the Bhauma-Karas and the Sōmavamśīs of Orissa*, Bhopal, 1961, p.32.
14. *IHQ*, Vol.XXIX, p.155; *OHRJ*, Vol.I, p.291; *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, p.149.
15. D.C.Sircar, "Daspalla Plates of Śatrubhañja Tribhuvanamalla", *Ep.Ind.*, Vol.XXIX, pp.189-94. The astronomical details given in text lines 22-23 (p.193) are: pañchamī tithi of Vishuva-saṅkrānti, Sunday, Mṛigaśirsha - nakshatra vide also *IHQ*, Vol.XXIX, pp.189-94; *OHRJ*, Vol.I, pp.208-13.
16. *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, p.150, fn.51; *Ep.Ind.*, Vol.XXIX, pp.191 (footnote 2) and 224.
17. D.K.Ganguli, *Historical Geography and Dynastic History of Orissa*, Calcutta, 1975, p.198; S.R.Nema, *Political History of the Sōmavamśī Kings of South Kōsala and Orissa*, Delhi, 1979, pp.182 ff. We also at the beginning of our study of the Sōmakulin history had followed Sircar's identification "Khāṇḍpārā Plates of Mahāśivagupta Dharmaratha", *Studies in Indian Epigraphy*, I, 1974, p.90).
18. *ISPS*, Part II, p.220, text-line 17.
19. His latest known record (*Ibid.*, pp.251-56) was dated in his twentyeighth regnal year.

20. These happen to be the only (for Dharmaratha and Indraratha) or the latest (for Bhīmaratha) known years of their reigns. In case they ruled for a few years beyond the latest known recorded years, the problem will become even more acute.
21. For a discussion, see *ISPS*, part I, pp.187-89.
22. K.A.Nilakatha Sastri, *The Colas*, 2nd ed., 1955, p.207.
- a) In fairness to Sircar we must admit that the records of Dharmaratha and Indraratha were discovered after he wrote on the problem at issue. Otherwise perhaps he would have modified his views as he was far from being dogmatic about historical matters.
23. "The Daspalla Copper-plate grant of Śatrubhañjadēva", *OHRJ*, Vol.I, pp.209-10.
24. *vide* L.D.Swamikannu Pillai, *Indian Ephemeris*, II, p.210. These details tally with 21st March, 812 AD as well. It would, however, be too early in the present context.
25. "The Gañjam Copper-plate grant of Śatrubhañjadēva, Year 198", *ibid.*, IV, pp.67-76.
26. The earliest extant record of his reign, as noted earlier, aims at registering a grant in the Oḍra country.
27. *ISPS.*, part II, p.254, text-line 69 (*Kōsalīya-sandhivigrahī*).
28. The text reads *yaḥ kunt-āgra-hat-Auḍra-dēśa-nṛipatēr=llakshmīṁ samākṛiṣṭavān*, viz., who had attracted the (*royal*) fortune of the king of the Oḍra country killed by the forepart of (his) spear. *Vide ISPS*, part II, p.2304, verse 2.
29. *Rāshṭra-dvayam Kōsalam=Utkalañ=cha* is the original phrase. *Vide ibid.*, p.287, verse 9 (Bālijharī charter of Uddyōtakēsarin); *vide* also *ibid.* p.305, verse 8 (Brahmēsvara temple inscription) which employs the expression *rāshṭram=ubhayam*, 'both the provinces'.
30. *Ibid.*, part II, p.210, verse 16 (three Chaudwār grants).
31. *So=bhūn-nṛipaḥ Sōma-kul-ābja-bhānuḥ Svabhāvatuṅgō nija-paurushēṇa* (*Ibid.*, Part II, pp.229-30, verse 15) is the wording in the original.
32. *Archaeology and History: Essays in Memory of Sh.A.Ghosh*, pp.654-56; *Early History of the Deccan: Problems and Perspectives*, Delhi, 1987, pp.246-49, 265; *ISPS*, part I, pp.194-96; 201-03.

This view was held earlier by several scholars including S.N.Rajaguru (*Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol.IV, 1966, pp.366-68; "Chronology of the Sōmavamsī Kings of Orissa", *OHRJ*, Vol.VIII, part 2, p.104), K.C.Panigrahi, (*op.cit.*, p.2), S.C.De (*Ep.Ind.*, Vol.XXIX, p.215) and B.K.Rath (*Cultural*

History of Orissa, Delhi, 1583, pp.45 pp.)

33. We have brought together most of these records in our *ISPS*, part II, pp.167-365. After that a few more epigraphs have come to light including three from Gōpālpur.
34. It was in the supplement appended to Yayāti's Paṭnā charter that contained an account of one of his achievements.
35. A paper on this and two other charters of Mahābhavagupta I Janamējaya prepared by us jointly with Dr.Snidha Tripathy, Epigraphist at the Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar, was sent for publication to *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol.XLIII, in late 1992. The paper is still under publication.
36. *Śrīyōvāsa iti prasiddhaḥ*, 'well-known as Śrīyōvāsa' is the expression in the original.

37. The relevant portion of the charter bereft of errors runs as follows:

Yasya pratāp-ānalatō=ti-dagdhaḥ śatru-drumaḥ Sōma-kul-ōdbhavasya, Saurya-ānikuraṁ jātu na muñchat-īha Svabhāvatuṅgaḥ sa nṛipō babhūva. Nṛipasya tasy - āri - vadhū - kadambaka - stānēshu sampātaystō=śru - jālakam, Harēr=mmahākaula - vapur = vidhāriṇō bhujā-sthalasth-ēva virājatē mahī.

Tasya=chchh-rūp=āsti cha dharmmapatnī Sindūragaur-īti vibhūshaṇāya, Anēka - tārā-kula-saṅkulasya sit-āmśu-lēkh-ēva nabhastalasya. Sarvv-ōddhatād=dhaima - nag - ēndra - kalpāj-jītaḥ sutaḥ kalpa - tar - ūpamēyaḥ A-janmanaḥ śrī - Janamējayō=sminn - ēkaḥ Śrīyōvāsa iti prasiddhaḥ. Tasyām viśuddh-ātmani mātara=īttam virājatē sarva-kal-āśrayō=sau Sphurat-prabhā-maṇḍala-rāja-rājaḥ sampūrṇa-chandrō viyat-īva śubhaḥ.

Verses 2-7

38. The case is different with versified lithic records where normally only personal names are mentioned, the coronation names being generally left out.
39. G.C.Patnaik, U.K.Subuddhi and Rajendra Luha of the Department of History, Ravenshaw College, Cuttack have published these three charters in 1991 under the caption *The Sōmavamśis-Rediscovered*. They have, however, totally misunderstood the purport of these stanzas as of several others. They have erroneously taken these stanzas to confirm the theory that Svabhāvatuṅga was the name of Janamējaya whose queen was Sindūragaurī. The name (or better *viruda* according to them) is taken by them to mean 'of a very lofty nature' (its literal meaning actually is 'lofty by nature'). They have argued vehemently that Svabhāvatuṅga-Janamējaya was the father of the Bhauma-Kara queen Pṛithvīmahādevī (*ibid.*, pp.24-25). This only serves to show how poor their knowledge of Sanskrit is. There can be nothing farther from the intended meaning. We propose to examine some of their wild interpretations elsewhere at some length.

40. As will be seen, she was different from the Bhauma-kara queen Pṛithvīmahādevī's mother.
41. Ḍāhala and Ḍabhālā are two other spellings of the name that connoted the Jabalpur region with Tripurī (modern Tewar, near Jabalpur) for its metropolis.
42. It must have been in the nature of the *sēnāpati-paṭṭa* or *prasāda-paṭṭa* described by Varāhamihira in his *Bṛihatsamhitā*. For details, see Ajay Mitra Shastri, *Varāhamihira's India*, I, New Delhi, 1996, pp.226-27. *Paṭṭas* were golden headbands indicating distinction tied round turbans and were worn by high state dignitaries and could also be awarded as a coveted favour by the king.
43. This comparison was evidently suggested by the name Lakshmaṇa.
44. It may have denoted Tripurī, the capital of the Ḍāhala country, and not the country itself.
45. The reconstructed text runs as under:
Sō= bhūn-nṛīpaḥ Sōma-kul= ābja-bhānuḥ Svabhāvatuṅgō nija-paurushēṇa, Yaḥ Kōsalā - palana - kaumud= īndur= vijitya Chaidyān vitatāna Lakshmīm. Rāmā - harānś = Chēdīpa-baddha-paṭṭān sa bhaṭṭa - Pēḍi - prabhṛitīn= upētya Muṇḍam nikṛity= āhṛita-sarvva-rāmaḥ sa-Lakshmaṇō Rāma iv= āpta-sētuḥ. Tasmāt sutō Vishṇur-iv= ājanisṭha sa Durgarājān vikata-pratāpam, Trīṇāya Chaidyam vata manyamānō dagdhvā Ḍahālām vijanāñ= chakāra.
- ISPS*, part II, pp.229-30, vv.15-17.
46. *Ibid.*, part I, p.198 (for genealogical-chronological chart). *Comprehensive History of India*, IV, Part I, eds. R.S.Sharma and K.M.Shrimali, 1992, p.674.
47. He and two preceding generations are known from a lithic record in the Rājīvalōchana temple at Rājīm, about 28 miles south-east of Rāipur. For the inscription, *vide*, V.V.Mirashi, "Rājīm Stone Inscription of the Nala King Vilāsatuṅga", *Ep.Ind.*, Vol.XXVI, pp.49-58.
48. See V.V.Mirashi, *Studies in Indology*, II, 1961, pp.35 ff. *Inscriptions of the Kalachuri-Chedi Era*, CII., Vol.IV, 1955, Introduction, pp.lxxvi-lxxvii, for an account of the Bāṇas in South Kōsala.
49. *Ibid.*, IV, p.211, verse 23.
50. *Ibid.*, p.242, verse 12.
51. *Ibid.*, p.405, verse 6; p.412, verse 5, etc.
52. In the light of the present discussion our account of Śivagupta, Mahābhavagupta I and Mahāśivagupta I in *ISPS*, part I, pp.199-207, needs a slight alteration.

Māṛavarmaṇ Kulaśēkhara Pāṇḍya I (1268-1318) and Ceylon

N. Sethuraman

The most celebrated Tamil king of the 13th century was Māṛavarmaṇ Kulaśēkhara Pāṇḍya I who ruled from 1268 to 1318 A.D. In his Sērmādēvi inscription year 11 dated 1279 Kulaśēkhara claims to have conquered Malaināḍu (Kēraḷa), Sōṇāḍu (Chōḷa kingdom), the two Koṅgu and Īḷam (Ceylon)¹. The object of this article is to investigate how far these claims are true. Kulaśēkhara should have been successful in these compaigns prior to 1279, the date of his Sērmādēvi record.

His predecessors Māṛavaraṇ Vikrama Pāṇḍya I of accession 1250, younger brother Śaḍaiyavarmaṇ Sundara Pāṇḍya II of accession 1254 captured Chōḷa - maṇḍalam, Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam, the two Koṅgu countries and brought all these territories under the Pāṇḍyan banner. It was a neatly drafted plan and the three brothers gradually annexed these territories in the period from 1256 to 1262. They also invaded Ceylon in 1256. There were two Ceylon kings, one was Chandrabānu, a prince who came from Jāva and started a parallel government in north Ceylon. The other was Parākramabāhu II (1236-71) of the regular Sinhalese royal family. Vīra Pāṇḍya killed Chandrabānu, spared the life of his son and sent him to Anurādhapura to mount his father's throne. He collected tributes from Parākramabāhu. In view of these

victories Vīra Pāṇḍya adopted the title "who was pleased to take Sōṇāḍu, Īḷam and the crown and crowned head of the Savagan (prince of Jāva ruling in Ceylon)". After consulting the Tamil *praśasti* of Vīra Pāṇḍya and Ceylonese sources Selvi Thangeswari (Batticaloa Sri Lanka) says that the Pāṇḍyas invaded Ceylon at the request of Parākrama Bāhu II who faced internal trouble from Chandrabānu. The Pāṇḍyas did not establish their rule in Ceylon. Their mission was to help the Ceylon king Parākramabāhu II.²

In 1279 which was the 11th year of Kulaśēkhara's Sērmādēvi record, the Pallava ruler Kōpperuñjiṅga of Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam and the last Chōḷa king Rājendra met the natural death and the Pāṇḍyas became the masters of the Tamil country. This could have prompted Kulaśēkhara to boast himself of having taken these two areas. In fact it is only an inheritance of the past glory. The same thing applies to his Koṅgu conquest because as early as, 1262 A.D. Śaḍaiyarvarman Sundarapāṇḍya I of accession 1250, father of Kulaśēkhara, killed the Hoysala king Vīra Sōmēśvara and brought the Koṅgu-maṇḍalam under the Pāṇḍyan rule.

As far as Kēraḷa was concerned, though it was captured by his prodecesors, Kulaśēkhara was forced to undertake

another expedition to reestablish the Pāṇḍyan rule there. A record of Kulaśēkhara coming from Pāpāṅkuḷam, Tirunelveli District⁴, is in year 8, month Tulā corresponding to October 1275 A.D. It mentions Sēraṇaivenṇṇaṅ (he 'who conquered the Chēra king', of Malaināḍu in Kēraḷa). The date is 1275 prior to 1279 when Kulaśēkhara boasts of having conquered Kēraḷa. His Tirunelvēli record year 23, dated 1291 A.D. mentions a brahmin colony called Kollamkoṇḍa (who took Quilon) - chaturvēdimāṅalam in his name⁵. These two records confirm Kulaśēkhara's successful campaign against Kēraḷa. An undated inscription of Kulaśēkhara from Tirunelvēli states that he built the *prākāra* walls of the temple from the booty collected after defeating Kēraḷa, Chōḷa and Hoysala kings.⁶

Chūlavamśa, the Ceylonese chronicle, says that in the reign of the Ceylon king Bhuvanēkabāhu I (1273-84), the Pāṇḍyan army commanded by the able Damila (Tamil) officers Kāliṅgarāyan and Chōḷagaṅgadēva invaded Ceylon, but they were driven back by the Ceylon king.⁷ How far the Ceylon king was successful, we do not know because we shall see below another successful Pāṇḍyan invasion some years later. The fact remains that the Pāṇḍyan army invaded Ceylon in the period 1273-84. We have to identify Kāliṅgarāyaṅ and Chōḷagaṅgadēvaṅ the powerful officers who commanded the Pāṇḍyan army.⁸

Arupppukkōṭṭai records⁹ of *A.R.Ep.*1914:

Record No.413 states that a certain

Chōḷagaṅgadēvaṅ consecrated the image of god Aḷagiya Ālvār in Śaka 1090 corresponding to 1168 A.D.

Record No.414 belongs to Śaḍaiyavarmaṅ Kulaśēkhara I of accession 1190 year 15 dated 1205 A.D. In the record an officer called Tiruvalavāy-uḷaiyāṅ Chōḷagaṅgaṅ Aḷagiyaḥperumāḷ *alias* Vikrama Pāṇḍya figures. Probably he served under Vikrama Pāṇḍya (1181-90) father of Kulaśēkhara and continued to serve under the son.

Record No.403 belongs to the same Kulaśēkhara year 18 dated 1208 A.D. It states that among the Kaikōḷars, (soldiers) who are living in the *Tirumadaivilāgam* (street around the temple tank) Kulaiṅjan Śaṅkan put up the stone entrance in the *maṅḍapa*.

Record No.402 belongs to Māṇavarmaṅ Sundara Pāṇḍya I of accession 1216 (son of Kulaśēkhara of the above record), year 5 dated 1221 A.D. It states that the oil merchants agreed to supply oil one measure of *mutṭai* per *chekku* (local machine used for crushing oil seeds) to a certain Pillai Viṭaṅkaṅ, a Kaikōḷar (soldier) of the temple. In turn he agreed to supply the entire oil collected from the merchants to the temple. It is also said that the temple was under the protection of the Kaikōḷars (the soldiers).

Record No.406 belongs to Māṇavarmaṅ Sundara I year 8, dated 1224 A.D. It states that Sēkal Sēvakadēvaṅ *alias* Iluppaiyūr - kilāvan Arundavamseydāṅ a member of the Teṅ-llaṅgai-Valāṅjiyar, merchants (cum soldiers) of southern

Laṅka living in the street called *Vikrama Pāṇḍya Perun-teruvu*, consecrated the stone image of the goddess.

Record No.407 belongs to the same king dated 1224 A.D. It states that the same Sēvakadēvaṅ member of the *Teṅ-Ilaṅgai-Valaṅjiyar* consecrated the image of Liṅga Purāṇadēva (Liṅgōdbhava).

Record No.409 is the order (*ōlai*) of Chōḷagaṅgadēva. His full name is Enakku Nalla Perumāl *alias* Chōḷagaṅgadēvaṅ. It states that this is the order of Chōḷagaṅgadēva made in the 11th year (1249) of Māṇavarmaṅ Sundara Pāṇḍya II of accession 1238 A.D. As per his order lands were gifted to the temple for meeting the expenses during the festivals when the images of god and goddess were taken in procession.

Record No.410 is also the order (*ōlai*) of another Chōḷagaṅgadēvaṅ made in the 18th year of Māṇavarmaṅ Kulaśēkhara I (1286 A.D.) His full name is Arulāḷaṅ Aḷagaṅ *alias* Chōḷagaṅgadēvaṅ. The record registers some grants of lands to the temple. The details of the lands and

the boundaries are also given. One of the lands is called *Teṅ Ilaṅgai Nāḍāḷvāṅ land* (land belonging to the chieftain of southern Ceylon).

The above records reveal that in the 13th century in Aruppukkōṭṭai, south of the Pāṇḍyaṅ capital Madurai, there were soldiers and the place was a military centre. The Pāṇḍya chieftains and soldiers had contacts with Ceylon and some of them hailed from southern Ceylon. Very powerful Pāṇḍyaṅ officers had the traditional family title *Chōḷagaṅgadēvaṅ*. They even made independent orders on behalf of the kings. Probably they were the trusted officers of the Pāṇḍyaṅ kings. In certain records their names appear in the beginning of the record as *ōlai*(order) and the name of the king and his regnal year are quoted in the body of the inscription. Some of the officers hailing from Ceylon had lands in this village. From the provenance of the names of the Chōḷagaṅgadēvas and the dates of the kings, we can construct the genealogy of Chōḷagaṅgadēvas as follows:

- 1) Chōḷagaṅgaṅ existed in 1168.
- 2) Tiruvāḷvaiudaiyāṅ Chōḷagaṅgaṅ Aḷagiya Perumāl *alias* Vikrama Pāṇḍya existed in 1205. Served under Māṇavarmaṅ Vikrama Pāṇḍya (1181-90) and his son Śadaiyavarmaṅ Kulaśēkhara (1190-1218)
- 3) Enakku Nalla Perumāl *alias* Chōḷagaṅgadēvaṅ existed in 1249 served under Māṇavarmaṅ Sundarapāṇḍya II 1238-55.
- 4) Arulāḷaṅ Aḷagaṅ *alias* Chōḷagaṅgadēvaṅ existed is 1286 served under Māṇavarmaṅ Kulaśēkhara I (1268-1318)

The above genealogy reveals that No.4. Chōḷagaṅgadēva, who was a powerful officer under Māṛavarmaṇ Kulaśēkhara could have invaded Ceylon. He could be the same Chōḷagaṅgadēva who according to *Chūlavamśa* raided Ceylon in the reign of Bhuvanēkabāhu (1273-84). The event should have taken place prior to 1279, the date of Kulaśēkhara's Sērmādēvi record in which he claims to have conquered Ceylon.

We have to search the other Pāṇḍyan officer Kāliṅgarāyaṇ who accompanied the above Chōḷagaṅgadēva in the Ceylon campaign. Kulāśēkhara's Ālyār Tirunagari record¹⁰ is in year 4 dated 1272 A.D. It refers to his throne called Kāliṅgarāyaṇ probably in the name of his minister or a powerful officer. (This practice was common among the Tamil kings). His Chidambaram record¹¹ is in year 29 dated 1297 A.D. It registers the order of Kāliṅgarāyaṇ and provides for offering to god Kulōttuṅgaśōḷa-vināyaka. It also refers to *Ellāntalaiyānaṇperumāl-ṣandhi* (service in the temple) in the surname of Śaḍaiyavarmaṇ Sundarapāṇḍya I, father of Kulaśēkhara. This officer Kāliṅgarāyaṇ should have accompanied the above Chōḷagaṅgadēvaṇ.

Buddha's Sacred Tooth Relic:

Chūlavamśa, the Ceylonese chronicle says, "Once when (here in Laṅka), a famine arose, there landed sent with an army by the five brothers, the kings who held sway in the Pāṇḍu (Pāṇḍya) realm, a Damila (Tamil) general known by the name of Āryachakravarttin who though he was no Ariya was yet a great dignitary

of great power. He laid waste the kingdom in every direction and entered the proud stronghold, the town of Subhagiri. The Sacred Tooth Relic (of Buddha) and all the costly treasures there, he seized and returned with them to the Pāṇḍu kingdom. There he made over the Tooth Relic to king Kulaśēkhara who was as the sun for the lotus blossom of the stem of the great kings of the Pāṇḍus.

Here upon the son of the Bōdhisattva Vijayabāhu and grandson of the mighty king Parākramabāhu II, Parākramabāhu (III) by name became king and raised aloft as if to fend off like a cloud, the heat from the people who dwelt in Laṅka - the Umbrella (of dominion) the emblem of its proud kings - fair through the cool shade (it gave) and like to the disk of the full moon. And he reflected "That Tooth Relic which was taken to the Pāṇḍu kingdom - that relic of the prince of the wise, our highest protecting deity, worthy of veneration by our race, how shall I bring it back from there". And as the ruler, saw no other means but friendly negotiation, he set forth in the company of several able warriors, he took himself to the Pāṇḍu kingdom and sought the ruler of the Pāṇḍus. By daily conversation he was inclined to, receive from the hands of the king the Tooth Relic, returned to the island of Laṅka and placed the relic in superb Pulatthinagara in the former relic temple....."¹²

Parākramabāhu III ruled from 1284 to 1291 A.D. In this period he got back the Tooth Relic from Kulaśēkhara. But when did Āryachakravarti invade

Ceylon? The accounts given by *Chūlavamśa* are not clear. This much is certain that it could have been prior to 1279 A.D., when Kulaśekhara claims to have conquered Ceylon. The sacred Tooth Relic was in the safe custody of the Pāṇḍya king for a brief period of minimum six or seven years. A record of Kulaśekhara coming from Śrīraṅgam¹³ is in his 10th year and it is dated Monday the 6th December 1277. It registers a gift of land by purchase, by Matituṅgaṅ Taṇiṇiṅruveṅṅa Perumāl *alias* Āryachakravarti of Chakravartinallūr in Sevvirukka-nāḍu for supplying garlands to the god on the days of his natal star Tiruvādirai (Ārudra) and on other specified festival days.

Matituṅgaṅ Taṇiṇiṅruveṅṅa Perumāl means 'highly intellectual lord who stood alone, (fought the battle) and won'. This title applied to Āryachakravarti and that too in 1277 prompts us to surmise that he should have conducted the Ceylon campaign, successfully and brought the Tooth Relic from there (incidentally the *Chūlavamśa* also praises Āryachakravarti as a great dignitary of great power). However, when the Ceylon king met Kulaśekhara at Madura after 1283 and requested for the return of the Tooth Relic, the generous Pāṇḍya king acceded to his request and personally gave it to him.

A certain Dēvar Āryachakravartigaḷ

figures in Māṇavarmaṅ Kulaśekhara's 5th year records coming from Chaturvēdimāṅgalam (290 of 1928) and Śivapuri (21 of 1929). The records do not contain any distinguishing epithet or *prasasti*. Both contain the same astronomical data, month Kaṅṅi, Sukla tritīya, Wednesday and Anusha. *A.R.Ep.*, 1927-28 states that the data do not produce any date either in the reign of Māṇavarmaṅ Kulaśekhara I or II of accession 1314. It suggests that the intended date could be 9th September 1271 and the star should be Viśākha. The date falls in the 4th year of Māṇavarmaṅ Kulaśekhara I and not the 5th year. *A.R.Ep.*, 1928-29 suggests 5th September 1274 and corrects the star as Svāti. The date falls in the 7th year and not in the 5th year. Both the suggestions are against the regnal years quoted in the records. In the case of Māṇavarmaṅ Kulaśekhara II, the data produces the date 27th September 1318, but it was a day of either Svāti or Viśākha. (In the constellations Anusha comes after Viśākha). Probably this could be the intended date because the same officer, Dēvar Āryachakravartigaḷ figures in the Tiruppullāṅi record¹⁴ of Māṇavarmaṅ Kulaśekhara I, year 37 month Kaṅṅi dated August/September 1304. Earlier scholars surmised that this officer could have conducted the Ceylon campaign.¹⁴ It no longer holds good in view of the Śrī Raṅgam record discussed above).

Notes

1. Sērmādēvi *A.R.Ep.*, 1916 No.698. By mistake K.A.N. Sastri quotes 692 of 1916 which is in year 20 and it does not contain these claims. (K.A.N.Sastri, *The Pandyan Kingdom*, p.161). The first edition was published in 1929 and the reprint in 1972 without any revision.

2. N.Sethuraman, *Pandiyar Varalaru* (History of Pandyas- Tamil edition) 1989 - Selvi K.Thangeswari, Cultural Officer, Kachcheri, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka compared the detailed accounts given by me in my book *Pandiyar Varalaru* with scores of Ceylonese source materials and identified the Javanese prince Chandrabānu killed by Vīra Pāṇḍya and the Ceylon king Parākramabāhu II (1236-71) on whose cause the Pāṇḍya invaded Ceylon. See her monumental work *Mākōn Varalāru* (History of King Mākōn-Tamil, edition), 1995 published by Anbu Publications, Tavapati, Arayampati, Sri Lanka. She has cleared many doubts concerning the history of Ceylon in the 13th Century and also the relationship between the Ceylon and Pāṇḍya kings.
3. N.Sethuraman *Pandiyar Varalaru*.
4. *S.I.I.*, Vol.XXIII, No.125
5. *A.R.Ep.*, 1926-27, p.90
6. *Ibid.*, No.29
7. *Chūlavamśa* by Wilhelm Geiger, part II page 203 edition 1992 published by Asian Educational Services, New Delhi.
8. K.A.N.Sastri, *The Pandyan Kingdom* - In page 162 Sastri has given a brief account of the Ceylon episode. In this paper I have given more details and consulted later discoveries of inscriptions.
9. I am thankful to Sri.Madhav N.Katti, Director of Epigraphy and Dr.M.D.Sampath, Chief Epigraphist who sent me the transcripts of the Aruppukōṭṭai records.
10. *S.I.I.*, Vol.XXVI, No.489
11. *A.R.Ep.*, 1913, No.366
12. *Chūlavamśa*, part II, edition 1992, p.204
13. *S.I.I.*, Vol.XXIV, No.204; *A.R.Ep.*, 1937, No.7 Also see part II, para 40
14. K.A.N.Sastri, *The Pandyan Kingdom*
15. *A.R.Ep.*, 1903, No.110; *S.I.I.*, Vol.VIII, No.396.

The Special Features of Chēra Inscriptions

M. G. S. Narayanan

Compared to the neighbouring states of Tamilnadu and Karnataka, the number of medieval inscriptions is very limited in Kēraḷa¹. Does it mean that there were only a small number of gifts to be recorded on temple walls and copper-plates? This is not necessarily the case.

The usual practice in all these countries of South India was to keep records of transactions on palm leaves. It was only on special occasions, either because of the importance of the document to the parties, or because of the egoism and passion for propaganda on the part of ruler, that it was transcribed on stone or copper.² Therefore, the actual number of gift records in all these countries must have been much more than what you see today on temple walls and copper plates. We have to look for the circumstances under which some records came to be transcribed and preserved in this manner while others were lost irretrievably.

In Kēraḷa the scarcity of high quality granite for temple construction is an obvious factor that reduced the number of such inscriptions. Most of the old temples are constructed with granite foundations and some granite pillars for the *garbhagriha* and *mukhamanḍapa*, while the rest of the building including walls and roofing is made of bricks, timber and laterite stone. Inscriptions are often

found on the granite portions of the old temples or on separate granite slabs planted in the courtyards.³

It is also possible that since *Vatṭeḷuttu* gave place to Grantha script by about the 16th century, people who found the old records illegible and useless, threw the inscribed granite slabs away during the time of the renovation of temples. There are some instances in which such slabs have been retrieved recently from temple compounds where they lay neglected as they had been placed upside down or were buried in the soil or used as pedestals or stepping stones.⁴

The example of Tiruvalla temple in central Kēraḷa is relevant when we discuss the paucity of inscriptions in temples. It is a collection of hundreds of gift records, belonging to the period between c.800 and c.1200 A.D., compiled on copper plates. They must have been written originally on palm leaf and copied in this manner sometime in the 12th century for better preservation.⁵ Tiruvalla is one of the *grāmakshētras* belonging to the group of the original 32 Brahmin *grāmas* or settlements of Kēraḷa.⁶ It is quite possible that some of the other prosperous temples of this group like Tirumūḷikaḷam, Airānikuḷam, Paravūr, Iriñjalakuḍa, Chokiram, Panniyūr, Perumchellūr, etc. were as rich and powerful as Tiruvalla. All of

them must have received hundreds of gifts and recorded them on palm leaf, but those records have not been preserved. Till recently they owned vast landed properties in different parts of Kēraḷa, evidently through donations from devotees at different times.

There is a difference between the Chēra kingdom and other early South Indian states, and this too may have a bearing on the number and character of inscriptions of Kēraḷa. The central authority of the Chēra Perumāl was almost nominal and formal, acknowledged only by the reference to their regnal years in the statement of the date of deeds when *Naḍuvaḷis* granted charters or gifted lands, or temple councils passed resolutions.⁷ The *Perumāls* did not own many royal temples outside the capital city of Mākōtai.⁸ Most of the temples were either *grāmakshētras* or their subsidiaries. Therefore, the inscriptions happened to be just matter of fact official documents which did not display the egoism of the ruler through *prasastis* or *meykīrttis* listing all the royal titles and exploits, real as well as imaginary. Thus the associated urge for transcribing the records in stone or copper also was largely conspicuous by its absence.

The Syrian Copper plates of 849 A.D. granted to Mar Sapir Iso, the Christian merchant chief of *Maṇigrāmam* at Kollam, by Ayyan Aḍigaḷ, Naḍuvaḷi of Vēnād, and the Jewish Copper plate of 1000 A.D., granted to Joseph Rabban, the Jewish merchant chief of *Añjuvaṇṇam* at Mahōdayapuram by Bhāskara Ravi, the

Chēra *Perumāl*, bring out another aspect of the problem.⁹ They demonstrate the practice of transcribing royal orders in copper plates for better preservation. Then how and why did similar land grants and charters to Brahmin leaders, which brought into existence the great 32 original Brahmin settlements called *gramas* in Kēraḷa (the counterpart of *Agrahāras* and *Brahmadēyas* in other South Indian states) remain without copper plates?

One possible explanation is that those *grāma* gifts occurred before the establishment or revival of the Chēra dynasty at the beginning of the 9th century. They must have received their lands from petty local chieftains who did not possess the tradition of issuing such orders in the form of copper plates. This is likely since the Chēra *Perumālship* itself, with its nominal and formal sovereignty over the many *Naḍuvaḷis*, appears to have been the creation of the Brahmin oligarchy that wielded its power through the instrumentality of *Nālu Taḷi*, composed of the nominees of the four Brahmin *grāmas* around the capital of Mākōtai.¹⁰ Even if the Brahmin *grāma* possessed charters in palm leaf or copper plate, there is another possibility that they did not care to preserve them since they did not feel any sense of insecurity among the natives. They became closely integrated with the local community through the custom of *sambandham*, a form of Brahmin-non Brahmin marriage in which the Brahmin males cohabited with females of Kshatriya and Nayar matrilineal families.¹¹

On the other hand, the foreign merchants in the ports of Kēraḷa and the Brahmin settlers in many other parts of South India had reason to feel insecure without the shield of a royal charter, since they remained separate islands in the midst of an ocean of natives who could sometimes be hostile to the claims of special privileges which they enjoyed. Perhaps both the reasons proposed above were operative at the sametime, and they were causally related too. It was probably the absence of a powerful sovereign benefactor who could guarantee protection to them, that induced the Brahmin settlers in Kēraḷa to establish the practice of *saribandham* with local ruling families.

There were not many royal temples outside the capital city of Mākōtai, and not many royal epigraphs either¹². Most of the Chēra inscriptions are in the form of temple council resolutions recording gifts of land or gold to the temples.¹³ They are called Chēra inscriptions only in the sense that they belong to the Chēra period and territory. Though they are documents of local bodies, they maintain a uniform pattern in the arrangement of material and the use of script, phraseology and language. The items which ordinarily go to make up a Chēra inscription may be listed here:

- a) They usually start with a brief invocation like 'svasti śrī'
- b) This is followed by the simple monosyllabic title 'kō' and the name and regnal year of the

Chēra *Perumāḷ*, with or without the coronation title. Sometimes astronomical details like the position of Jupiter, the position of the Sun(month), date, asterism, weekday etc. are also mentioned. The regnal year is usually broken up into two or three segments.

- c) It is then recorded that the members of the council of such and such *ūr*(village), the *Paradai* (judicial committee?), and *Poduvāḷ* (secretary) met in the presence of the *Naḍuvali* (chief of the *Nāḍu*) in the premises of the *mukkālvattam* (temple) and made the (*kachcham*) (agreement) as narrated.
- d) Then came the details of the agreement, with the name or names and whereabouts of the donor or donors, the names and boundaries of land donated, etc. If the gift took the form of gold, the amount was mentioned, and it was stated that the temple trustees invested it in land, of which the details were furnished.
- e) Sometimes the names of tenants, the conditions of tenure, the portion of produce set apart as gift, the form in which and the purpose for which it is to be handed over to the authorities of the temple, the taxes and dues to be paid and the punishment

for delay or non-payment are stated.

f) In many cases there is another punishment prescribed for the *Ūrālan* who acted alone in violation of the *kachcham*, entered and obstructed the property and seized the contents or molested the tenants in some way or other. The standard terminology employed runs as follows: "*Ūrālan vevvērru va-gaiyāl pukku viḷakkavum poruḷ kavavum ikkuḍigalai valiḷyē cheyyavum...*" The punishment is nothing short of excommunication for the concerned individual and all members of the family, and confiscation of property along with cancellation of all rights and privileges. Sometimes the whole thing is compressed into a statement saying that the culprit shall be treated as one who committed a *mahāpātaka* or violated a *kachcham* like that of *Mūlikālam*.

g) There is a practice of providing a list of witnesses who vouch for the authenticity of the document by attaching their signature. If it is a royal document, the king's feudatories or the officers and heads of trade guilds appeared as witnesses. If it is a local document the members of the village council were listed.

h) The name of the scribe is mentioned at the end of the deed.

This arrangement is quite logical, and mostly in conformity with that of the inscriptions of other contemporary powers in South India. The only question is how a common pattern came to be followed by all the *grāmas* in the absence of the central power of the state regulating and imposing a pattern through its officers and formulaic expressions. The possible explanation lies in the high level of Brahmin scholarship in their *grāmas*, combined with the co-ordination of such activity by the Brahmin oligarchy in the state.

The long historical introductions, known as *praśasti* or *meykīrtti* and useful to historians and language scholars in many ways, are conspicuous by their absence. This is explained by the scarcity of royal grants, the relative weakness of the central power, and the complicated system of inheritance which led to the succession of distant relatives from other maternal branches of the ruling dynasty.¹⁴

The positive special features of the Chēra inscriptions from Kēraḷa may be enumerated here and the inferences arising out of such a situation may be discussed :

a) **Segmentation of the Regnal Years:** The habit of recording the regnal year in two or three segments was not exclusive to the Chēra inscriptions. It is found in some Pāṇḍya and Āy inscriptions also.¹⁵ Sometimes the figure is segmented into two parts and sometimes into three parts, but occasionally the single figure is given straight away.¹⁶ No common rule or logic governing the break up has been noticed.¹⁷ The same ruler's regnal years are sometimes broken up in different ways in different records.¹⁸ We may perhaps assume that this whimsical behaviour was the product of a mannerism related to some superstition about stating the year as a whole.

b) **Reference to the Position of Jupiter:** This is certainly more interesting because it is unique. Every temple in every *grāma* must have had expert astronomers who could calculate the position of planets accurately, but the statement of Jupiter position is not found elsewhere. It is almost universal in the Chēra records. Most probably it was related to the traditional twelve-yearly festival of *Mahāmakha* or *Māmaka*, celebrated at Tiruṇāvāye on the banks of river Pērār (Chūrṇī) on

the basis of the Jupiter cycle.

This festival and the grand assembly of the 32 original Brahmin settlements on that occasion to confirm the authority of the *Perumāḷ* or to 'elect' a new *Perumāḷ* are described in the traditional *Kēraḷōtpatti* chronicle.¹⁹ We have no records of the festival or references to it in the Chēra period. But we have detailed accounts by natives and foreigners later, down to the middle of the 18th century. The festival was presided over by the Zamorin of Calicut who had snatched the right sometime in the 15th century from the Chief of Valluvanāḍ who ruled over the area and on whom it was supposedly conferred by the last Chēramāṇ Perumāḷ.²⁰

It is quite likely that the Jupiter festival on the model of the festivals at Ujjain, Prayag and Haridwar had acquired political importance earlier in connection with the relationship between the *Perumāḷ* and his council of *Nālu Taḷi* who represented the oligarchy of Brahmin settlers in Kēraḷa. This might serve as an explanation for the common reference to the position of Jupiter in all the Chēra inscriptions from Kēraḷa.

c) **Ūr as Brahmin Temple Council:** All experts agree that the term *Ūr* is employed to denote the non-Brahmin assembly and the separate term *Sabha* is employed to denote the Brahmin assembly in the Pāṇḍya and Chōḷa inscriptions.²¹ However, the term *Ūr* is continuously employed to denote the hereditary Brahmin Council in charge of the temple in the ChĒra inscriptions of KĒraḷa.²² We do not come across non-Brahmin assemblies in the records in relation to the temples of KĒraḷa.

It is possible that in the countries of the Pāṇḍyas and Chōḷas also the term *Ūr* denoted Brahmin council of landowners and the term *Sabha* was used exclusively to denote the assembly of scholars well-versed in religious literature. However, such a proposition cannot be entertained unless the whole question is re-examined in the light of the evidence available. In the present circumstances we can only assert that among the few ChĒra inscriptions known to us the term *Ūr* generally represents the Brahmin Council of the *Ūr* or *Grāma* (village) in charge of the temple. The term (*chĒrikkaḷ*) is employed to denote 'ordinary' or non-Brahmin villages, and no assemblies are mentioned in

connection with such places.²³

d) **Poduvāl as Secretary of the Ūr:** The *Poduvāl* as the executive officer of the temple council is also a unique feature of the ChĒra inscriptions from KĒraḷa. In some inscriptions the *Vāriyar* or the *Mūttadu* takes his place, but the *Poduvāl* is most commonly mentioned in this capacity.²⁴ This functionary is found in several KĒraḷa temples even today. This might have been the counterpart of the *Madhyasta*, found in the Chōḷa inscriptions, and the substitute for the committee called *Vāriyam*, found in the records of the Chōḷa empire.²⁵

e) **Kachcham as a Model Agreement:** The frequent references in the inscriptions to *kachchams* like the Mūḷikaḷa Kachcham as a model agreement to be followed is another special feature.²⁶ This again reveals the weakness of monarchy and the consequent need for the intervention of the Brahmin oligarchy of 32 settlements for drawing up the code of conduct for *Ūrāḷar* and *Kārāḷar* in the light of *Dharmaśāstra* literature.²⁷ The local Brahmin bodies appear to have been carrying out their own administration with the support and guidance of *Naḍuvaḷis*. Since these regional chieftains could not always

be considered knowledgeable and dependable, the Brahmins themselves might have met in assembly in one of their *grāmas* and prepared the rules in standard form and referred to them as the *kachcham* of such and such place.²⁸

The special features outlined above are additional pointers to the fact that although Kēraḷa shared the same Tamil language and culture with the Chōḷa-Pāṇḍya countries, there were significant differences even during the Chēra period that eventually led to the growth of a separate language and cultural identity in this region. They highlight the peculiarities in the monarchical structure and the distinctive nature and power of the Brahmin settlers of Kēraḷa who followed certain customs

different from those of other Brahmins in India.²⁹

The script of Vaṭṭeḷuttu yielded place to the present Tamil script by about the 10th century in many parts of Tamilnāḍu, but continued in Kēraḷa till the 16th century when it was largely replaced by the present Malayalam script which was formerly called *Grantha* and employed for the Sanskrit language. Again, the Tamil language itself developed by the 14th century into a mixture of Tamil and Sanskrit called *Maṇipravāḷam* in Kēraḷa, and slowly blossomed forth into modern Malayalam language.³⁰ In this context the special features of Chēra inscriptions from Kēraḷa illumine some aspects of the socio-cultural background of these changes.

References

1. The present writer has listed 150 inscriptions of the Chēra period in the Ph.D. thesis on "The Political and Social Conditions of Kerala under the Kulasekhara Empire (c.800-1124 A.D.)", Kerala University, 1973. The Companion Volume of "Index to Chēra Inscriptions" classified these records into three - dated, datable and undatable - and gave details of publication. The text of the thesis has recently been printed for private circulation under the title of *Perumals of Kerala*, Calicut, 1996.
2. K.A.N.Sastri, *The Colas*, Second Edition, 1955, pp.466-70
3. This is the case with 64 of the known ancient temples of Kēraḷa:
Irinjalakuda, Tirunandikkara, Chokkur, Nedumpuram Tali, Avittattur, Triprangode, Porangattiri, Indianur, Trippunittara, Kavuntara, Trikkakara, Manipuram, Tirumuzhikalām, Pantalayini Kollam, Trikkadittanam, Perunna, Pullur Kodavalam, Tiruvangur, Tirumarrakode, Panniyankara, Tazhakkad, Tiruvanchikalām, Trichchambaram, Tiruvannur, Parambam Tali, Nallur, Kollam Rameswaram, Talakkulattur, Chelannur, Muduvallur, Tirunellayi, Tazhakkavu, Raman Tali, Parumala, Kaviyur, Tiruvanvandur, Tiruvadur, Vellur, Trikkulasekharapuram, Kinalur, Kannapuram, Maniyur, Kuttiyattur, Velam, Kaliyampalli, Karikkad, Pulpatta, Ramanattukara, Panniyur, Chokiram, Rayiranallur, Painkannur, Alanallur, Polppully, Godapuram, Triprayar, Kiltolli, Chennamangalam, Airanikulam,

Uliyanur, Kamapuram, Kumaranallur, Navaykulam. See Index to Chera Inscriptions, op.cit.

4. These instances are reported from the following 12 temples:
Indianur, Kavuntara, Pantalayini Kollam, Tirumarrakode, Panniyankara, Tiruvanchikulam, Tiruvannur, Nallur, Muduvallur, Tiruvadur, Kaliyampalli, Airanikalam.
5. *Travancore Archaeological Series*, Vols II and III. Huzur Office Plates of Tiruvalla, pp.130-207. This includes 43 plates with a total of 630 lines, presenting a consolidated list of donations made at different times within a period of 2 or 3 centuries, as indicated by the names of donors like Vīra Chōla and Manukulāditya the Vaṭṭeḍuttu script belongs to the 12th century.
6. *Keralotpatti*, (ed.Gundhert), Basel Mission Press, Mangalore, Third Edition, p.5
7. M.G.S.Narayanan, *Perumals*, op.cit., p.10
8. There were four royal temples in the capital known as Neḍiya Tali, Mēṭali and Siṅgapuram Taḷi. The rest were village temples managed by the Ūrāḷar in the villages. See *Perumals*, op.cit., pp.85-86.
9. M.G.S.Narayanan, *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*, Trivandrum, 1972, pp.23-30 and 31-37 and References and Appendices.
10. See Note 8 above.
11. *Perumals*, op.cit., p.148
12. The only royal charters that have come to light so far are the following:
The Vazhappally Copper Plate of Rājasēkhara; The Syrian Copper Plates of Sthāṇu Ravi; The Jewish Copper Plates of Bhāskara Ravi; The Tiruvanchikulam Stone Inscription of Rājasinḥa; The Perunna Stone Inscription of Kulaśēkhara; The Kollam Ramēswaram Stone Inscription of Kulāśēkhara.
13. Almost all Chēra inscriptions from Kēraḷa except the royal charters mentioned above belong to this category.
14. The Marumakkattāyam system is often understood in simple terms as the succession of the nephew instead of the son. It is not always true. In the big ruling families with several branches, the succession went to the eldest male member among all branches whose relationship to the predecessor cannot easily be traced. See K.V.Krishna Ayyar, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, Calicut, 1938, pp.8-10.
15. *T.A.S.*, Vol.I No.XV. "Some Later Pandya Inscriptions", pp.361-92; No.1, 2 & 3, pp.34-7
16. *Ibid.*, Vol.II No.7. "Some Inscriptions of Bhaskara Ravi Varma", pp.31-51. See pp.34,37,49
17. In the case of some early Chēra Perumāḷs like Rājasēkhara and Sthāṇu Ravi Kulāśēkhara, the practice

of segmentation is not adopted. The method of stating the year opposite the second year is usually followed in others, but other numbers are also employed.

18. See Note 16 above.
19. *Keralotpatti, op.cit.*, pp.17, 44-8
20. *Ibid.*, pp.72-3
21. *The Colas., op.cit.*, pp.492-4
22. *Perumals., op.cit.*, 109-12
23. *Ibid.*, pp.117,138
24. *Ibid.*, pp.111-13
25. *The Colas., op.cit.*, 494-98, 510-11
26. *Perumals, op.cit.*, pp.114-20
27. M.G.Narayanan, "The Socio-Economic Implications of the Concept of Mahapataka", *Indian History Congress Proceedings*, Thirty Seventh Session, Calicut, 1976 pp.111-17
28. M.G.S.Narayanan, "The Impact of Vaishnava Bhakti Movement on Kerala", *Dr.K.V.Ramesh Felicitation Volume*, Mysore, 1997
29. The Kēraḷa Brahmins, known as Nambudiris, claim that they follow the *Śāṅkara Smṛiti*, attributed to Sankaracharya, which enforced 64 *anacharas*, or prohibited customs in their community in Kerala. See Ulloor S.Paameswara Iyer, *Kerala Sahitya Caritram*, I. Kerala University, 1957 pp.104-5
30. Elamkulam P.N.Kunjan Pillai, *Keralabhashayute Vikasa Parinamangal*, Kottayam, 1953.

Contribution of Epigraphy to Historiography

H.S.Thosar

Majority of the historians from Western countries are of the opinion that the ancient Indians lacked historical perspective and most of the Indian historians have also subscribed to this view. It is rather difficult to reject this view totally, because till the establishment of the Asiatic Society in 1784 there was hardly any serious attempt on the part of Indian scholars to record history as it is done now a days. It is also a fact that during the first phase of the beginning of historical research in India, almost all the researchers were foreigners. No Indian Pandit was able to read the Aśokan Brāhmī script and ultimately it was James Prinsep again a foreigner who discovered the key to the reading of this script . The view of the western scholars about the absence of historical perspective among Indians is substantiated even by evidences of the pre -British or medieval period. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Ferojshah Tughluck and Mughal emperor Akbar respectively made attempts to get deciphered the Delhi- Topra and Meerut edicts of Aśoka, but no Indian Pandit could satisfy them. It follows that atleast from the 15th century onwards there was no Indian scholar at Delhi having the knowledge of the earliest Indian scripts. Under such circumstances the general opinion of scholars about the lack of historical outlook among ancient Indian intellectuals cannot be totally refuted at

least at this stage. An inscription of the Vijayanagar period brought to light by Dr. Raghunath Bhat recently, however, gives a contrary evidence. It states that the king was an expert in reading ancient scripts.¹

A question may be asked as to whether the same type of condition prevailed even during ancient times? Investigations in this regard reveal that at least during ancient period of Indian history, intellectuals had not totally ignored the subjects connected with the reconstruction of history, such as preservation of records, reproduction of extinct records, systematic study of old scripts and collecting research data for writing history, though it may not be as perfect as it is today. The following facts shed sufficient light on this subject.

In chronological order the Purāṇas will have to be regarded as the earliest sources for the political history of ancient India. They have preserved the genealogies of the prominent ancient Indian ruling dynasties dating back from the Kaliyuga to the end of the Gupta dynasty. In spite of the lapses and contradictions in these genealogies, there cannot be two opinions about the fact that,they have rendered the major contribution to the reconstruction of the political history of ancient India.

Especially when a foreign scholar like

Pargiter has reconstructed the history of ancient India on the basis of the Purāṇic evidences, the importance of this source cannot be undermined.² Formerly there was a tendency among historians to question the authenticity of the Purāṇas but during last 50 years welcome change is seen in the outlook of historians and consequently atleast the main themes of the epics *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* have been accepted as based on historical incidents.³

The Paurāṇic evidence is getting more and more attention from scholars as it is being corroborated by fresh epigraphic and archaeological data. The Purāṇas have meticulously recorded historical facts about some of the ruling dynasties like the Sātavāhanas. Not only the names and the orders of succession; but reign periods and in some cases political achievements of certain rulers have been mentioned. The Purāṇakāras must have culled this information from records maintained by either the state or such other agency. It then follows that the work of recording political events and maintaining of these records was done in India at least from the first millenium B.C.

The Buddhist works like the *Angut-taranikāya* and *Suttanipāta* though composed during later period, furnish valuable information about the political history of India during the 6th century B.C. This evidence also speaks of the existence of maintaining and preserving these records. In the same way keeping aside the controversy about the oldest

inscriptions in India, it can safely be presumed that the ancient Indians had developed the Brāhmī script long before the beginning of engraving it on stone or such other imperishable material.

Some of the early inscriptions have recorded events which had taken place long before the dates of their issuing. Such events must have been taken from earlier records. Following are some of the inscriptions in chronological order.

The Hāthigumpha inscription of king Khāravēla refers to two earlier events. "In the fifth year (of his reign) he (Khāravēla) arranged to let into the city, a canal from the locality of Tanasuli, excavated three hundred years ago by the king Nanda".⁴ Some scholars have interpreted it as 'one hundred and three'.⁵ Even then its importance cannot be ignored. On the other hand it will have to be regarded as more important, because it gives the precise number of years rather than the approximate figure of three hundred. Recently Kiran Kumar Thaplyal has contradicted the reference to Nandarāja and three hundred years in the said inscription, but his arguments are not convincing.⁶ Moreover, in the same inscription there is another reference to an earlier event which is as under:

"In the eleventh year.... He (Khāravēla) also broke up the confederacy of the Drāviḍa countries which had lasted for one hundred and thirteen years posing a danger to the people"⁷. K.G. Krishnan adds "The meaning one thousand three hundred years is possible

but historically improbable".⁸ Whatever may be the fact there is no doubt that this is another example of citing exact number of years about an event which was atleast older than a century. It certainly presupposes the existence of a system of recording events and preserving those records related even to other countries, powers or kingdoms, besides the concerned kingdom. An inscription of the Kushāṇa period refers to the construction of the Buddhist monastery by Aśoka at Takshaśilā. Here we have an information about an incident which had occurred four centuries earlier.⁹

Another example of such type is the reproduction of the recorded history of the Sudarsana lake near Girinagara in Saurashtra mentioned in the Girnar inscription of Rudradāman.¹⁰

The inscription cited above is dated 150 A.D. and records the events that had taken place atleast 450 years earlier. What is more important that this inscription records the subsequent history of the Sudarsana lake. This could not have been possible without the existence of a systematically recorded history of the lake.

Most of the inscriptions from the 3rd to the 8th century A.D. are silent about mentioning such earlier events. The Sañjan copper plates of Rāshtrakūṭa Amōghavarsha dated 850 A.D. break this mum.¹¹ This inscription makes a vague reference to the Rāmagupta episode occurred about 450 years earlier than this date. Another new information provided by this inscription is that

Indra I, the son of Dantivarman had an epithet or second name as Prachhakarāja. In no other Rāshtrakūṭa record this epithet of Indra has been recorded. Indra flourished during the 6th century A.D., and his hitherto unknown epithet 'Prachhakarāja' has been mentioned in the Sañjan plates of Amōghavarsha issued about three centuries later. This shows that maintaining of records was carried out even during this period, even though on a limited scale.

The tenth, eleventh and the twelfth centuries of the Christian Era seem to have witnessed a resurgence in the field of epigraphical, archieval, and historical research.

The Chālukyas of Kalyāṇa, who came to power in the Deccan during the last quarter of the 10th century A.D. have reproduced a number of earlier incidents in their records. They have not only recorded incidents of their ancestors from Vātāpi but also have mentioned the names of early Rāshtrakūṭa kings such as Kṛishṇa and Indra who were ruling in the Deccan before the advent of the Chalukyas Vātāpi.¹² It shows that records of earlier events were maintained throughout the ancient period. The Chālukyas of Kalyāṇa probably encouraged intellectuals patronised by them and got the information recorded in their inscriptions. The description of the capture of the Rēvati-Dvīpa by Maṅgalēśa and the account about the fierce naval battle fought between him and the Mauryas of Koṅkaṇ is not found in such a detail even in

the records of the Chalukyas of Vātāpi.¹³ It has been described with such minute details that as if it is based on an eye-witness source.

It seems that this was the age in which historical writings received some attention by scholars all over India. Contemporary rulers also encouraged such scholars. The Chālūkyā king of Kalyāṇa Vikramāditya VI was the patron of the Kashmiri poet Bilhaṇa who wrote the *Vikramāṅkadēva Charita* on the life of his patron. Sōmēśvara III was himself an author and had earned the scholastic epithet of 'Sarvajña chakravarti'. The Chālūkyā kings of this line seem to have encouraged the study of archievals and the information of the earlier events in their records is the outcome.

Rulers from other parts of India also did not lag behind in this process. The Paramāras of Mālwa from Central India showed more vigour in such studies even than the Chālūkyas of Kalyāṇa. Kalhaṇa has mentioned the name of Shankuka who wrote the work *Bhuvanābhuyudaya* in 850 A.D., which deals with the history of the Paramāras of Mālwa.¹⁴ Unfortunately the work has been lost. Another writer Padmagupta wrote *Navasāhasāṅkacharita* during the 11th century which is based on the life of the Paramāra king Sindhurāja.¹⁵

Paramāra Bhōja, besides being an author of two Sanskrit works *Saraswati Kanṭhābharāṇa* and *Sṛiṅgāraprakāśa*, was a great patron of scholars and learned men. Recently V. Venkatachalam has published a paper in which he has

pointed out that the king had appointed a committee of expert scholars in ancient Indian scripts for their decipherment.¹⁶ He states "Decipherment of forgotten scripts was not an unknown phenomenon in the cultural milieu of Bhōja's medieval India. Scholars of Bhōja's times did have the onerous experience of deciphering obsolete scripts and that they were alive to the problems that usually go with it". He has further pointed out that "a verse quoted by Bhōja in both of his works of poetics *Sarasvatīkanṭhābharāṇa* and *Sṛiṅgāraprakāśa* which throws much interesting light on the experience of persons struggling with unfamiliar scripts. The term 'Gaṇapathanti' (from these works) indicates that the work of deciphering old unknown scripts was done by Paṇḍitagaṇas i.e., group of linguists".

Curiously enough the Paramāras of Mālwa are known to have been the only invaders in ancient India who made copper plates as a war booty. When Siyaka Paramāra invaded Mānyakhēṭa in 972, he robbed the royal record office of the Rāshṭrakūṭas and carried with him a large number of copper plates.¹⁷ Was the patronage of Paramāras to epigraphists and archievals a factor behind this act?

The real representative from North India of these generations who showed keen interest in historical literature is Kalhaṇa the Kashmiri poet and composer of *Rājataranṅiṇi* who flourished during the 12th century A.D. Before undertaking the actual writing of his work Kalhaṇa claims to have gone

through not only the works of earlier chroniclers, but even inscriptions and copper plates.¹⁸

In the whole realm of Sanskrit literature, Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇi* is the only work which is regarded as a historical chronicle even though to a limited extent. A perusal of the *Rājatarāṅgiṇi* hardly gets the confirmation of the claim made by Kalhaṇa about the study of inscriptions and copper plates. However, we cannot blame Kalhaṇa for this fault, because even in inscriptions and copper plates issued by kings all the facts of their life - particularly those which are unpleasant or humiliating - are rarely mentioned. In almost all the records of the successors of Pulakēśi II his victory over Harshavardhana is mentioned but the same records are silent about his defeat and death at the hands of the Pallavas.

The above discussion will certainly help to disprove the allegation of the absence of historical perspective among the ancient Indian intellectuals, atleast to some extent. Examples are not wanting of preserving copper plate records by ruling dynasties in ancient India even after the loss of power. A hoard of twenty seven copper plates was unearthed from Bāgh in Madhya Pradesh which belongs to the Bhulūṇḍa dynasty.¹⁹ Recent excavations in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra have yielded a number of new copper plates issued by

the Vākāṭaka kings.²⁰

Some of the dynasties had to migrate to distant places due to political upheavals. Even at such calamities these families carried their copper plates along with them. A copper plate from Vāraṇāsi belonging to the Shura dynasty which ruled over the Koṅkaṇ region of Maharashtra during the 5th century A.D is one such.²¹ A set of five copper plates belonging to the Chalukyas of Vātāpi was reported from Nērūr in the Koṅkaṇ region of Maharashtra.²² They must have been brought to this region during the exile of the sons of Pulakēśi II following his death and the temporary loss of power.

The enormity of the loss of records can be gauged from the example of copper plate grants issued by the Rāshtrakūṭa king Indra III at the beginning of the 10th century on the occasion of his *paṭṭabandhōtsava*. Indra is stated to have donated lands to 400 *brāhmaṇas* and issued equal number of *śāsanas* at that time. Out of those only six grants have been reported so far.

Ancient Indians were thus aware of the importance of records and they did preserve and study them despite calamities. After the invasion of the Turks and Afghans this work was discontinued due to changed political condition, which ultimately resulted into ignorance of ancient scripts.

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Harappans Wrote in Vēdic Language

Ramesh Jain

Scholars like Arlane R.K. Zide and Dr. V.C. Shrivastava thought that the Harappans' script is really a hard nut to be cracked. Zide concluded her survey in 1979¹ by stating - "The script of the Indus Valley seals, as we have it, one must conclude, is virtually undecipherable. The task of deciphering an unknown language in an unknown script is, to say the least, formidable." Dr. V.C. Shrivastava concluded his research paper, which he presented at Patna Seminar of 1986 under the title 'Studies on the Indus script : A historiographical critique' by stating "I do not find that these theories of the seventies- eighties after much technological and methodological sophistication, in the study, have gone beyond Marshall's and Mackay's and Rose's attempts in the thirties in respect of the principle, not the details". Similarly the picture of religion that has been evolved by these scholars are simply reflections of their basic linguistic assumptions.

I am concentrating my attention on the illustrated examples of the Harappan inscriptions. By illustrated examples it is meant - the inscriptions which are found on seals, sealings, metal tablets, etc., where there are engravings of some figures of animate, inanimate or geometrical forms on the body of inscribed objects in addition to the

Harappan signs and the so called Field Symbols. These examples are picked up from the available photographs of the inscribed objects, some of them are provided by the National Museum, New Delhi. Another source of such photographs is the book '*The Indus Script*' by Iravatham Mahadevan², where he generally identified such examples in the form of Field Symbols and printed their photographs. This book helped the present writer in a big way, as it broadly printed all inscriptions in positive form. By 'positive form', I mean the inscriptions as they are found on metal tablets, pot-sherds, other assorted objects and the various impressions of the Harappan seals as found on backed clay sealings and burnt clay lumps. This automatically means the reversing of the direction of the inscriptions of the Harappan seals.

After continuously working on such examples, it was noticed that all such Field Symbols and illustrations behave as determinatives to establish the phonetic values and the meanings of the inscriptions. And the moment a word is formed by more than one signs, the direction of reading automatically gets established. In the case of the Harappan script it comes out to be as - From Left to Right Direction.

After firmly establishing the direction of reading, a few examples were attempted

where single signs formed the inscriptions in association with Field Symbols. As a result, there came a few words of Vēdic language deciding the problem of the language of the Harappan texts.

As more and more inscriptions were studied, the number of phonetic structures started coming to surface. Likewise there came to light a whole body of the determinatives which so far remained unnoticed by the scholars.

To give an idea of the phonetic value and its meanings the following sixteen examples of decipherment are being taken up here. In each case, there is given a number which is taken from Mahadevan's above mentioned book. It automatically provides information regarding (a) The type of inscribed object, (b) Its find place, c) the number of sides and lines of the inscriptions and (d) Mahadevan's descriptions of the Field Symbols. As the present writer is not good at Sanskrit language, for establishing the meanings of the

words, Monier- Williams Dictionary³ is universally referred to. In all these examples whose illustrations are separately being provided here, the inscriptions are produced in positive form. The Harappan signs' phonetic values in Indo-Romanic are given in the illustrations. The illustrations are of paramount importance as they stand as proof for the phonetic values and as well as for the meanings of the words so established from the inscriptions. In the text below of the decipherment, again the Mahadevan's inscription-number is given. Here the 'Improved phonetic value' is being provided as words in the Indo-Romanic script. Under which, in each case, is being given the meaning as established on the basis of Monier-Williams dictionary. There is also a column for remarks, where, as and when, found necessary, a comment is given to help the reader to establish the proof of the phonetic values and their meanings.

The Decipherment of the Illustrated Examples:

Inscription Number	Formation of the words from the given basic phonetic values and their meanings as per Monier-Williams Dictionary	Remarks
2133 103603	<i>Sara</i> Water pond/ Water	The Field Symbol 'Gharial' works here as a determinative to establish the meaning of 'Sara' due to its being connected with water.

- 3157 100303 *Sīra* Ploughing
Ox The Field Symbol 'Humped Bull' works here as an illustration of the word meaning but it is confirmed that fundamentally it is only a determinative.
- 5484 318301 *Sāra* Core/Pith The Field Symbol 'Dotted Circle' again works here as an illustration of the word meaning but it should be a determinative.
- 4648 210003 *Taru* Tree
24490 The figure of a tree here, is an illustration of the word meaning.
- 4307 210001 *Ya Rah Gaṇḍah/
Granthi*
Who abandons
(all) attachments
or knots.
25090 The Field Symbol - 'Personage wearing a diadem or a tall head- dress standing under an ornamental arch' works here as an illustration of the intended meaning of the inscription, say *Nirgrantha* or bond-less. Interestingly the formation of the middle sign, in the inscription, reminds to the reader the story of the life of first Jaina *Tīrthankara*, where it is said that *Rishabha* after his renunciation moved around for 6 months with raised hands in *Pratimā Yōga*⁴. It is again worth noting here that the posture of the standing figure on the reverse side is similar to that called by Jains as *Kāyōtsarga* and the 3 pointed diadem may be symbolic of *Ratna-traya*.⁵
- 4318 210001 *Pa Ya Bhara* Who
25090 controls hordings
or
coverings The Field Symbol, 'Personage wearing a diadem or a tall head- dress standing between the two posts works here again as a determinative. The standing figure appears to be bare bodied and it is similar in posture to that of '*Kāyōtsarga* which are special Jain features for their monks.
- 1387 102801 *Bhāla Vasasa Araṇi
Padaga Vṛita* The
(two heads of
the animal are
attached with
foot-region of
the grinder. The Field Symbol, here is in the form of a symmetrical figure engraved on the seal, having Pipal-tree-branch as its upper portion and the two-heads of the Unicorn are joined to its lower portion. The shape and the description of its parts match well with the description of an *Arṇi* as available in Vēdic literature.⁶

- 2234 100201 *Sīṅga Dva Kṛipa* The Field Symbol 'A two horned Unicorn'
 [The Unicorn] stands here as a determinative. It clearly
 longs for two helps to establish the phonetic values of the
 horns. first two signs, as well as it goes well with its
 or meaning.
Sīṅga Dva Kṛi
Pa Both the
 Sīṅgas (the lion
 and the one
 horned Unicorn/Leo
 and the Virgo,
 the Unicorn) rain
 water.
- 7057 1001 '*Brahmaya Sira* The Field Symbol, here, is 'A large device
Śraṅga engraved on the seal below the inscribed
 The face-mask signs'.
 of Brahma's head This device actually appears to be a
 (dramatic face-covering similar to the one generally
 behaviour). used for animals for festive occasion, for
 bride-grooms and tribal-heads as symbols of
 their special position.
- 2641 102711 *Ra Ya Sahavāsa* The Field Symbol 'A head of the Unicorn
Aurva is attached to an uncertain 5 pointed symbol,
Ra (the *Ra*' named it appears to be related with Pauranic story
 fire), connected with the family of the *Rishi-Brīgu*.
 which resides with In the story, *Aurva* is a thigh-borne male
Aurva (having off-spring in the family of *Brīgu*. Due to him a
 the head of a devastating fire was contained and it was cast
 horse). by him into the ocean where it abode with
 the face of a horse.⁷

- 1385 102301 *Ya Kuksha Arina* The Field Symbol 'A Fabulous animal with dotted circles on Its body' appears to be an illustration of the inscription's subject matter. The statement is a good example of 'indirect expression'.
- On whose body (there are) wheels (the wheel-shaped marks)
- The described animal appears to have belonged to the family of giraffes. This identification has been further suggested by the engraver by placing the upper-portion of the 3rd sign, the vertical stroke, before the head of the animal dramatising its long tongue which he shoots to pluck leaves from the high trees.
- 2222 104701 *Ya Śāsana Kartri* The Field Symbol 'Horned personage seated on a pedestal' works here as an illustration of the inscription's subject matter.
- Who [is] the doer [of] punishing/ chastising or instructing.
- It is about a kind of monk-hood, which was achieved by self control and the practice of chastity, etc.
- May be, like the contemporaries of Harappans in Mesopotamia, here too these monks had high positions in the social hierarchy.

2316 100101 *Śivā / Śivā Ard-
hah*
The jackal (the
cloud or the
sunshine covers)
half.

The Field Symbol as reported by Mahadevan is 'Unicorn, generally facing a special cult object.'

But in the present case the Unicorn is facing a figure of a jackal, who is standing on the hind-legs facing towards the Unicorn. There is also an attempt to show the unicorn as female.

One association, of the jackal, as known in the Indian folk-life, is with a cloudy day, when it rains in the presence of sun shining here and there. Such a situation is described as 'marriage of the jackals' - *Gīdaḍa Gīdaḍī Kā Byāha*, in Hindi.

There come two things to mind - (a) that the engraver is describing a particular month when there are thin clouds, as and when allowing sun to shine, (b) the so called Field Symbols are not fully standardised. They may be serving various objectives of the engraver by having minor variations in details.

4303 216001 *1st Reading:*
Ka Vasata Ya
27690 *Dvāra Vṛita*
Ka, the Prajāpati
who resides at
the door Circle.

On the two sides of the stamped tablet, there are two different scenes engraved. Mahadevan has identified them under two different Field Symbols.

a(60) - *With the inscriptions:* 'A Person standing at the centre between a two-tiered structure at Right and a short horned bull standing near a trident headed post at Left.

2nd Reading:
Ka Vasata Jaḍa-
vata (Jaḍa - Bharata?) *Ka*, the
Prajāpati resides
 like an inanimate
 being.

b(76) - *Without any inscription:* 'From
 Right - a tiger(?); a goat; a seated personage
 on a pedestal; a person seated on a tree with
 a tiger below.

It seems, in the case of the 1st reading *Ka* stands for *Yama* the 1st sign, which denotes the word *Ka*, this sign is recognised by Mahadevan as a figure of trident forming part of the Field Symbol, is overlapped by the figure of a bison (*Mahisha*) which is named by Mahadevan as a short-horned bull. *Mahisha* happens to be the mount of *Yama*, the *Dvārapāla*. Hence, the Field Symbols stand, in this case, as illustrations of the inscription.

In the case of the 2nd reading there came to the mind, the two stories about *Jaḍa-Bharata*⁸. In one he is made to carry the palanquin of the king of *Sauvīra* who finally became a follower of *Bharata* and so there is justification for the presence of a two-tiered structure on the Right of the central human figure, it being a Palanquin of a king.

The 2nd story has *Bharata*, in his another incarnation, as an ascetic who starts loving a baby down against his ascetic-norms, as its mother died of drowning after getting frightened by a lion. So if the inscription speaks about the inanimate-looking life of *Jaḍa-Bharata*, then the 2nd side of the sealing can be only another illustration of the 2nd reading. Interestingly the word *Jaḍa-Bharata* means - a *Bharata* who is like an inanimate being. It can be further added here that the word '*Jaḍavata*' can be read as *Jaḍa-Bharata* also. However, the name *Jaḍa-Bharata* could be an outcome of *Jaḍavata* due to the long passing of the time.

- 2902 510003 *Ya Hava Vā Śākhin* On the reverse side of the metal-tablet
/ *Sakhī* there is only one sign. Its original phonetic
2001 *Hava* (the fire) sound is *Paṇavah* which means - a *ḍamaru*
which addresses, - like musical instrument. Here the shape
reverentially of the sign, denoting the word *Paṇavah*, is
towards *Śākhin*/ identical with the shape of the instrument
Sakhī (one who *ḍamaru*. Hence, in the absence of any other
dwells on the determinative the engraver provided it to help
tree branch / in reaching the word - *Praṇavah*
one who is a
female companion
Praṇavah
- 2001 *Yuvana Pavitra* The last two signs on the reverse-side give
2905 510001 / *Savitri* / *Śrāvaka* us the word *Śrava* meaning - a hypotenuse
Pure (*Karṇa*) of a triangle. Interestingly it
youth, the virgin corresponds with the shape of the grouping
/ *Savitri*, the of the signs on the obverse-side which are
sun (before rising arranged in a triangular form. Hence, it can
is called so, be assumed that the engraver has provided us
according to a determinative to reach to the pronunciation
Sāyana) *Śrāvaka*, of the intended word and its meaning.
a disciple who
directly listened
the master.
Ya Gaṇḍah Śrava
From whose
female organ flows
(the monthly dis-
charge) / from
whose cheeks flow
light or whose
cheeks sounding
(the coming of
the sun) / who
(has listened)
with the ears
on his head.
- It is further noticed that a similar
sounding word - *Śrava* means the act of
emission or the source of flow and *Śrava*
meaning *Karṇa*, the ear which receives what
is emitted.
- It appears that the object of the
inscription is to suggest the *Brahma* above as
the original source and a source at the middle
level which transmits as do a virgin (*Kanyā*),
Savitri, the sun and a *Śrāvaka* who has directly
received from the source.

Conclusions

In this decipherment of the sixteen illustrated examples only 27 signs are basically involved. Some of the signs are simply variations with phonetic renderings. These Harappan signs are generally from the category of phonetic formations on the lines of ideographic assemblages. The engravers of these inscriptions were conscious of the shortcomings of their writing system. Hence, they relied on their capacity to provide a whole range of determinatives to overcome the difficulties in reading, due to the absence of commas, fullstops and the inherence of vowel-element in each syllable without the provision of any markings to make distinction among the different vowels. Though it seems, the Harappan engraver recognised the whole range of Indian vowel system as we learn from the grammarians. The main characteristics as have come to notice can be enumerated as:

- i) The language of the Harappans - Vēdic.
- ii) The direction of reading - From Left to Right.
- iii) There are no half vowel signs, except $\frac{1}{1} \frac{1}{1} = \bar{i}$
- iv) In the absence of commas, fullstops, and the demarcation of word-limits, the reading always remain fluid.
- v) There are multi-level script structure and determinatives to establish 'reading and its meaning'.
- vi) In the body of literature, there comes nothing to knowledge which is temporary in nature. Almost every information one gets, is of permanent nature.
- vii) The subject matter is Vēdic and Paurāṇic in nature and it covers the whole range of the then Indian social structure. The main thrust of the writings is on astronomical considerations, including the changing hours of the day, months of the year etc. It can be further added here, regarding the subject matter of the inscriptions that it is important to note - "almost every statement falls under the category of 'indirect-expression'. Should not these be taken as examples of '*Paroksha-priyatā*' of the Vēdic Hindus?"

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An Early Inscription from the Langudi Hill Area

B.N. Mukerjee

Recently Mr. D.R. Pradhan of the Orissa State Archaeology noticed a Brāhmī inscription at an archaeological site in the area of the Langudi Hill in the Cuttack District of Orissa. This site has already yielded two early Brāhmī inscriptions.¹ The new inscription, engraved on rock, is being edited here with the help of a photograph kindly supplied by Mr. Pradhan. (Fig. 1).

The inscription consists of one line on the left (from the readers' point of view) and three lines on the right. The characters are not always well formed. The language of the inscription is a form of Prakrit.

The first line on the right can be read as *Śrīma[d]*. The first part of the line on the left can be read as *[Pu]phagririka - k(ā)*. Here *gri* contains the subscript *r* mistakenly or as a phonetic peculiarity of the area, as noticeable in North-Western Prakrit.²

The line on the left seems to be continued through the second line on the right side. The first four letters are *na, na, ha* and *la*. The right end of *ha* almost touches the left side of *la*. The following letter is *ḍha*. One can next notice a straight (or little slanting) line coming up as the continuation of the right hand stroke of *la* of the last line well within the alignment of the line under consideration. So this elongation has

obviously no connection with the line under review. The next character is *ra*, which continues, in its lower part, upto the alignment of the next line. The same may be said about the following character, viz., *ka*. The last letter is *sa*.

The last line on the right side begins with the letter *pa* adorned with a subscript *r* (i.e. *pra*). It is followed by *ra*, the upper part of which touches the bottom of *ha* in the immediately upper line. The next letter is clearly *cha*. We can then notice *va* and *la*. The right hand stroke of *la* is elongated upwards reaching well inside the upper line. The next two characters, *ra* and *ka*, really belong to the upper line with their lower parts elongated well upto the alignment of the line concerned. We have already observed these features. The characters of the last line, to be read after *la*, is a little unusual form of dental *sa*.

In the light of the above discussion we can consider that the inscription really contains three lines.

Accordingly we can read and translate the inscription as follows:

Text

1. *Śrīma[d]*
2. *[Pu]phagriri (i.e.-giri)Ka-K[ā]nana - haladharakasa*
3. *Prarachavalasa*

Translation

“Of Prarachavala, the ploughman of Pushpagiri-Kānana(garden).” The form of the letter *ma* is comparable with one of its forms in the Bhaṭṭiprōlu inscriptions of c. 1st century B.C.³ The position of the lower curved line at the left side of the bottom of the dental *sa* in both the cases may indicate a date between sometime in the period from the late 1st century B.C. to the 2nd or early 3rd century A.D.⁴ But the tendency to elongate the vertical (or nearly vertical) strokes of *ka*, *ra* and *la* precludes a date before 2nd century A.D.⁵ Hence, the inscription can be placed in c. 2nd century A.D.

The letters, as we have remarked above, is not always very well-formed. Nevertheless, the elongation of the lower or upper portions of several letters and the intrusion of a few of them into the upper or lower line indicates a peculiarity in the style of writing. From the calligraphic point of view the inscription is an interesting early specimen.

The additional *ra* (in the form of a subscript *r*) in *g[r]iri* is common in N.W. Prakrit⁶, but not in an eastern dialect. In the case of *ḍha* in line 2 we have an aspirated form of *dha*.

It appears that sometime in the 2nd century A.D. a ploughman called Prarachavala (whose name literally means “a well-formed cloud”) was connected with the Pushpagiri Kānana. The association of a ploughman with a Kānana (literally denoting “a grove” or “a forest”)⁷ becomes meaningful

if the term is equated with *ārāma*, which literally means not only *inter alia* “a grove” or “a garden”, but also signifies a Buddhist monastery situated in such a place.⁸ In the Kosam inscription the famous monastery of Ghoshitārāma is mentioned without specifying it as a *vihāra* or monastery.⁹ The Pushpagiri itself was, according to a local inscription, “laden with flowers”¹⁰. So Pushpagiri-Kānana can denote a monastery situated in that area. Prarachavala was perhaps a ploughman engaged in cultivation of a land donated to the monastery. Similar donation of plots of land to the community of monks is well-known.¹¹ Prarachavala was, from this point of view, connected with the monastery.

The *Ta T'ang Hsi-yü-chi* of Hsüan-tsang (or xuanzang) refers to a monastery “on a mountain” called Pu-sie-p'o-ki-li or Pushpagiri in the south-western section of Wu-t'u (or Ucha), i.e., Oḍra.¹² This establishment is indicated without mentioning its name in the *She Kia Fang Che*.¹³ There is, however, no allusion to it in the “Life” of Hsüan-tsang (*Ta'Tlang Ta tzu-en-ssu san-ts'ang fa-shih Chuan*), prepared by Hui-li and Yen-tsung.¹⁴ But all the three texts locate a port-town near sea called Che-li-ta-lo (or la) on the eastern or south-eastern frontier of Oḍra.¹⁵ It has now been successfully identified with a locality on the Chilka Lake¹⁶, where archaeological excavations have yielded the ruins of an ancient settlement¹⁷. A port on the inside shore of this lake, having an outlet to the Bay of Bengal could indeed have been an

excellent and safe harbour.

To the south-west (or roughly south) of Odra was Kong-yu-t'ō identified with Kongada or the Ganjam district area.¹⁸ To the north-west of Odra was the kingdom of Tan-mo-li-ti (Tāmralipti), which incorporated at least parts of the Midnapore district.¹⁹ So the Pushpagiri monastery, visited by Hsüan-tsang in the second quarter of the 7th century A.D., must have been situated along and the near coast and to the north of the Ganjam district and to south-west of West Bengal. In other words, Odra, where the monastery was located, included roughly the districts of Baleswar, Cuttack and Puri. The Chilka lake (Chi-li-ta-lo) is in the south-western corner of the Puri district. The Pushpagiri monastery must have been somewhere to the north or north-west of Chilka and within the limits of Odra as described here.

There could have been other localities, mountains or monasteries attached to the name Pushpagiri in other parts of India during, before or after the visit of Hsüan-tsang. But no serious scholar can be concerned with any such Pushpagiri while searching for the site of the Pushpagiri monastery, located by Hsüan-tsang in a mountainous region of

Odra.

The ruins of a Buddhist establishment has already been unearthed in the area of the Langudi Hill,²⁰ which was very much within the bounds of Odra of the time of Hsüan-tsang. A local fragmentary inscription deciphered by us, refers to the illustrious Pushpagiri, which name could have been followed by the term *ārāma* or *vihāra* in the now effaced portion.²¹ The present inscription speaks of Pūphagiri or Pushpagiri-kānana, i.e. Pushpagiri *ārāma*. This inference receives support from another fragmentary Brāhmī inscription found by Mr Pradhan in the area concerned. In the readable part of this epigraph we can notice the expression *Pishpasirigiri-vihā[re]*, meaning "in the monastery of the Pishpasirigiri or illustrious Pishpagiri". The reading *pishpa* can be meaningfully emended as *pushpa*. Hence, here we have an almost clear reference to the monastery of Pushpagiri.

There can no more be any reasonable doubt about the location of Hsüan-tsang's Pushpagiri monastery in the Langudi Hill area. The question can be reopened only after the discovery of an inscription of the pre-Hsüan-tsang period or of his age in a different locality within the limits of Odra.

Notes and References

1. B,N, Mukberjee, "Two Early Brāhmī Inscriptions from the Langudi Hill. Area (Orissa)", *The Utkal Pradīpa*, Vol.I, no. 1, 1997, pp. 15-16.
2. S. Konow, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. II, pt.I, *Kharoshthī Inscriptions with the Exception of those of Aśoka*, Calcutta, 1929, p. 17.

3. A.H. Dani, *Indian Palaeography*, Oxford, 1963 pl. VII b, 5; IX b, II.
4. *Ibid.*, pl. VIIIb, 4; IX b 11.
5. *Ibid.*, pl. VIIa, 10; VIIIb. 7, 10 and 11.
6. See above n. 2.
7. M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1960, p.270.
8. T.W. Rhys Davids, *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*, London, p. 108.
9. G.R. Sharma, *Kushāṇa Studies*, Allahabad, 1968, p. 46.
10. See above n. 1.
11. *Ep.Ind.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 77-78.
12. *Ta T'ang Hsi-yü-Chi*, Chuan X; T.W. Watters, *On Yuan Cbwang's Travels in India*, Vol. II, London, 1905, p. 193-195.
13. *She-Kia-Fang Che*, Chuan IV; translated by P.C. Bagchi Santiniketan, 1959, p. 107.
14. *Ta-T'ang Ta tza-en-ssu san-tsang fa-shih Chuan*, Chuan III; *The Life of Hsüan-tsang*, translated by Li Yung-hsi, Beijing, 1959, pp.128-130.
15. See above n. 11-13.
16. H.P. Ray, "Orissa in Chinese Historical Records", *The Utkala Pradīpa*, Vol.I, no.1, 1997 p.3; The original name of the lake could have been Chiraka Taṭāka ("Ancient or Lasting Lake") [*Chilaa-taḍāga* > *Chilā-talaa* > *Chilā-tala* > *Che-li ta-la*]. In the locality concerned the lake is called Chilka, retaining the element *Ka*, used in the sense of "belonging to". So *Chiraka* means "belonging to ancient (time)".
17. *Purātattva*, 1995-96,, no. 26, pp. 120-22.
18. T.W. Watters, *op.cit.*, pp. 196-97.
19. *Ibid.*, p.189-96; Li Yung-tsig, *op.cit.*, p. 130; P.C. Bagchi, *op.cit.*, pp. 106-07.
20. See above. 16, A seal, probably bearing a Buddhist formula, has also been unearthed here.
21. See above n. 1.

Decline and Fall of Vellai Nāḍars

S.D.Nellai Nedumaran and S. Ramachandran

Introduction

During the time of Perumāl rulers in Kēraḷa, the code of Mūlikkaḷattu oḷukkavichchāṅṅōr was accepted as the supreme legal code for the governance of temples and land revenue administration. Many codes or *kachchams* were framed after the model *miḷikkalattuk-kachcham*.¹ That this *mūlikkaḷam* was a Kshatriya sabhai and *miḷikkalattuch-chāṅṅōr*² or *miḷichchāṅās* were the authorities vested with the power of promulgating as well as implementing the *kachcham*.³ Due to the ascendancy of Nambūdiris and Nairs in the socio-political horizon, after 13th century, the supremacy of the original Kshatriyas was challenged, and in due course, was swept away. This probably happened after the Muslim conquest of South India.

Royal Connections of Vellai Nāḍars :

In the South Travancore area, especially in the present day Kanyakumari district and Ambasamudram and Cheranmahadevi Taluks of Tirunelveli District, the Vellaināḍars who were the descendants of the Kshatriyach-chāṅṅōr of Kēraḷa, and who could not adopt themselves to the changed times, found themselves at the receiving end. There was a colony of the Chēra royal household at Maṅṅārkōyil near Ambasamudram, where a shrine was erected for Kulaśēkharapperumāl, the celebrated Vaishṇava

Āḷvār, by Rājasimha, the Chēra ruler in the 11th century A.D. There are references to some personnel, having connections with Kēraḷa, and residing at Maṅṅārkōyil in the inscriptions engraved at the Maṅṅārkōyil temple⁴. When the Tamil monarchy declined and was finally washed away by the Muslim deluge in the 14th century, these royal colonies lingered on as obsolete reminders of a bygone era, surrounded by neo-dominant hostile group.

Life Style of Vellai Nāḍars :

Perhaps, trouble was brewing for some time. The life style of Vellai Nāḍars which had an element of royal pride, had already antagonised the surrounding populace, which was predominantly agriculturists. The male members of Kēraḷa Kshatriya-varṇa who were called Vellai Nāḍars⁵ were as usual polygamous, and without sensing the changed atmosphere, were marrying the Vellāḷa girls of that locality with impunity. Not only that, some male members of the Vellai Nāḍār community were keeping Vellāḷa girls of the Tamil portion of their area as concubines also. This naturally infuriated the younger generation, who were the products of new awakening necessitated by the socio-political changes. And due to the dynastic changes in the Travancore royal household, many Vellāḷas had, in

the meantime attained proficiency in the administration of the state as well.

As a result, the people of the royal pride, had been pushed down to the third place in their social status. This is noted in the inscription of Tuḷuva Vēḷāla at the Parasurama street of Idalākkūḍi, a suburb of Nagercoil town. This inscription is dated 1486 A.D. According to this inscription, one may understand that the Tuḷuva Vēḷāḷars appealed to the Brahmins, Vēḷāḷars and the nobles not to disturb their relatives of that area. From this appeal it is understood that the nobles or the royal people lost their supremacy. Similar instance was also seen in Kallidaikkuṛichchi area.

Decrees against Vellai Nāḍars :

During the latter period of the 14th century A.D., this resulted in an important event at Kallidaikkuṛichchi. Vēḷāḷars assembled, discussed among themselves, and directed that they would no longer tolerate the members of the Vellai Nāḍar community who ventured to marry Vēḷāḷa girls, of the Tamil portion and who interfered in the administration of the country. First, in the year 1380 A.D. they made the decree that Vellai Nāḍars are prohibited from indulging in such activities, but it was no avail. Then, for the second time in the year 1416 A.D., Vēḷāḷars who were Kāraṇavars of traditional joint families, executives and accountants assembled and decreed that those Vellai Nāḍars must be awarded capital punishment. Then, for the third time, in 1453 A.D. the Vēḷāḷars assembled and took a final

decision and got it engraved on the stone slab, set up at a prominent place in Kallidaikkuṛichchi.⁶

The Tiruvitāṅkōḍu Inscription :

An inscription from Tiruvitāṅkōḍu in Kalkulam Taluk, Kanyakumari District states that Tiruvitāṅkōḍu was probably the nucleus of the new state and royal household (Travancore). This inscription, dated 1453 A.D. (Kollam 628) written in Vaṭṭeḷuttu script, mention the name of the individuals.

The Teṅkāśi Temple :

It will be interesting to know that in the same decade, Parākrama Pāṇḍya, was busy in building the Kāśi Viśvanātha temple at Teṅkāśi. The repercussions that came up in the Teṅkāśi Pāṇḍya reign, due to the social ostracism of Vellai Nāḍars have to be studied afresh. As it is not within the scope of this article to probe into that matter, we have not ventured into that area. Suffice it to say, that we have to understand why the endowment made to the Teṅkāśi temple by the Vēḷāḷars of that area, has not been engraved on the temple walls, but inscribed on a separate slab and installed outside the temple.⁷

The Eḍanāḍu Nāḍars :

In the Travancore area inspite of the decree of Vēḷāḷars, Nāḍars of Eḍanāḍu had been receiving taxes from the local population which consisted of 18 castes, and this system caused resentment among some people, the matter was settled by the royal intervention in the

year 1506 A.D.⁸ That the Nāḍars of Eḍanāḍu calimed to be the descendants of Tiruppāppūr royalty is another matter to be noticed.⁹ Similar settlement was reached in 1507 A.D. Mārtāṇḍavarma

and Ādityavarma, the rulers of Chēra land, issued a writ to redress certain grievances of the Nāḍars in the villages between Parali and Tōvāla mountains.

The relevant text of the Kallidaikkurichchi inscription is as follows:

5. *namm - udaiya nā -*
6. *ltil Vellālar ku pilai p -*
7. *pōr silakāriya Vellai - Nāḍari-*
8. *l sōḍiṇai ulliruppa pāsitta -*
23. *kāriyam pilaittavargaḷ mūvarai -*
24. *yum koṇṇu parikāram seyyumā -*
25. *rum Vellai Nāḍarāy - ullavargaḷ*
26. *nammōḍu kūḍi kūlich - chēvagam*
38. *Vellaināḍar Tamil-*
39. *p-pāgattup-peṅkaṭṭa ari-*
40. *deṅṅum kaiyāḷa ariden*

Some names and terms in the inscription need interpretation:

- a) Vellāḷars say that this country is theirs. (*nammudaiya-nāṭṭil* - lines 5-6). This expression is significant, as it shows that the fertile lands irrigated by Tāmbraparaṇī river were in the possession of Vellāḷars, and the land revenue administration has also passed from the hands of Kshatriyas to Vellāḷars. It may also be pointed out here that another name of Kallidaikkurichchi was 'Kshatriya-sikhāmaṇipuram'. This is evident from an inscription belonging to the Kollam era 671 (i.e., 1496 A.D.) which is seen in the Pakalikkūttar temple of Kallidaikkurichchi. It further tells us that royal people of Vellai Nāḍars were authorized to stay at the Viḷaṅkuḷam fort even after the decrees of Vellāḷars. A verse in a 16th century work *Sivalamāraṅ Kathai* says that kings used to stay at Viḷaṅkuḷam, a suburb of Kallidaikkurichchi. This *Sivalamāraṅ Kathai* was written by a Vellāḷa named Chidambaranātha mudaliyar.¹¹ It may be presumed that the emphasis is on Travancore kings.

- b) *Vellālarakkuppilaiippōr* (lines 6-7) means, those who act against the will of Vellālar. This expression implies that the writ of Vellālar was supreme at that time.
- c) Vellai Nāḍar (lines 7, 14, 25, 38 and 62) is mentioned as Vellanāḍar in the Tiruvitāṅkoḍu inscription. The name of the place Vellanāḍu in the Travancore area may be a corruption of Vellai-nāḍu which is derived from Vellaiyūr - nāḍu.¹² Vellai means 'purity'. The rulers related themselves with white as seen in the words *veṅkorakkudai* or *vellaikkudai*, *veṅchāmaram*, *vellaikkutirai*, etc. As such, the ancient Pāṇḍya king claims himself as *Vendērchcheliyaṅ*. Nāḍar means the ruler of a *nāḍu*. People belonging to the Nāḍar community affixed the title Nāḍār as well as Nāḍan after their name.¹³ An occasional song, arranges the land divisions as Mullai, Neytal, Kuriñchi, Marudam and Pālai and assigns five deities - Kōḍākaraṅ, Varuṅaṅ, Kukaṅ, Iriraṅ and Turkkai and five castes - Māḍāyar, Mīṅavar, Vēḍuvar, Nāḍar and Maṅavar respectively.¹⁴

In course of time, the Nāḍar of the wet land (*marudam*) became the ruler of the land. A 17th century copper-plate collected from the Koṅgu country reports the presence of Kō Nāḍaṅ, one of the divisions among Nāḍars.¹⁵ Many terms such as, *Vellaittiruvōlakkam Vellaitiruppōṅakam* or the *Irāchāntiruppōṅakam*¹⁶, *Vellai Vēlāla*¹⁷, *Vellai Vēttuvar*¹⁸, *Vellai Mūppar*¹⁹, show the connection of the word *Vellai* with rulership. *Silappatikāram* uses the term *Vellāni Vilā* for the birthday of the king.²⁰ *Vellārachchāṅāṅ* is a term used in a folk song sung by fishermen in Kanyakumari District.²¹ From these and other references, the term Nāḍar means Nāḍārs and Vellai means rulers or royal significance.²²

- d) *Chōḍiṅnai*, *ulliruppu* and *pāsittalai* (lines 8-9) may be interpreted as superintendence or inspection of revenue accounts, authority to issue search warrant against defaulters and policy duty. *Daṅḍapāsi* is the term used to denote police men under the Vijayanagar a rule.
- e) *Vikkiramaṅ Ādittaṅ* (line 9) is the name of a Vellaināḍar. Some Nāḍars of this area still possess the surname. *Ādittaṅ*. Kōḍai Achchappaṅikkaṅ, Mārttāṅḍappaṅikkaṅ, Ādittavarmappaṅikkaṅ show the association of Vellai Nāḍar caste with kshatriyahood as well as the training of martial arts.²³
- f) *kaṅakku cheygayālum* (lines 14-17) may be interpreted as keeping land revenue accounts in contravention of the earlier decree of Vellālar.
- g) *Kāriyam cheykiṅavar* (lines 18-19) may be interpreted as those Vellālar who were members of the executive staff in the bureaucratic set up.
- h) *kaṅakkelutugiṅavargaḷ* (lines 19-20) may be interpreted as those Vellālar who were engaged as accountants in the revenue bureaucracy.

- i) *kūlichchēvagam* (line 26) may be interpreted as wage earning policy duty. The word *cēvakam* is connected with either military service or policy service.
- j) *ilaippitu* (line 27) means "should not do".
- k) *dēśam kaiyālukai* (line 30) may be interpreted as administering the territory.
- l) *Vellaināḍār Tamilppākattuppen katta aritu eṇṇum kaiyāḷa aritu eṇṇum* (lines 38-41) may be interpreted as follows: Vellaināḍār caste people who were earlier accustomed to marry girls (as well as keeping girls as concubines) belonging to the Tamil portion of the country under the control of Vellāḷars, are now strictly prohibited from such customs which have become obsolete. In this sense, it will be pertinent to recall here the age old tradition of male members belonging to the royal clan, indulging in polygamy, and marrying at will Vellāḷar girls. These Vellāḷars were defined as *Makatkōtaikkuriyōr* by the 14th Century commentator Nahchchiṇārkkīniyar.²⁴

This system was probably changed topsyturvy by Ādiśaṅkara, if we take the version mentioned by *Kēraḷadēśa Varalāru*²⁵, as authentic. It is mentioned in the book, that before the time of Saṅkarāchārya, the custom of Sūdras keeping Brahmin and Kshatriya ladies in their house was considered as an aberration. Ādi śaṅkara granted legal sanction to such aberrations. An inferior sect among the Nāḍar caste called Koḍikkāl Nāḍārs an offshoot of such mixed marriages, attained supremacy in the Nanguneri area in Tirunelveli district, and some members of that sect were conferred with *kāval kāṇiyāṭci* in that region by the Travancore king in 1500 A.D.²⁶

- m) Twenty three persons belonging to Vellaināḍār caste, (lines 41 to 60), who had contravened the decree and either married or kept as concubines the Vellāḷa girls, were mentioned as proclaimed offenders and were awarded capital punishment.
- n) *nīkki uḷḷa Vellaināḍaraiyum varushattukku nammudaiya nāṭṭil pōka oṇṇāteṇa* (lines 62 - 63) may be interpreted as an ostracism, prohibiting Vellaināḍār caste people even from visiting the areas under the jurisdiction of Vellāḷar for one year.

Conclusion :

One may see confused statements in the note given to the Tiruvitānkoḍu Vaṭṭeluttu inscription published in the *Travancore Archaeological Series*, (p. 90). The note tells us that "there existed sharp differences between the two communities of Vellaināḍar and Vellālar from times earlier than the date of the inscription" and further that the two sects could intermarry before but not to be allowed now to marry girls of the latter by the former. The note further misinterprets that the Vella Nāḍar are different from the present day Nāḍars. It assumes that the Vella Nāḍar may be another sect of Tamil Vellālar who have to be regarded as equal in their social status and as having

marital connections with them prior to the commission of offence. It may be pointed out that the Vella Nāḍars are the royal descendants of Kēraḷa kshatriyas and the term Nāḍar is not different from the present day Nāḍārs. Nachchiṇārkkīṇiyar, in his commentary to *Tolkāppiyam (Poruḷatikāram, Karpiyal)* clearly recorded that the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas are adopting proper marriage ceremonies the Vellālas lack such rites. He further says that, in course of time, when mistakes occurred in the marriages of Vellālas, rules and regulations were enforced and made them to adopt them. From this, it may not be wrong to say that intermarriages between two separate communities such as Vella Nāḍars and Vellālar took place, but were prohibited later.

Notes and References

1. *Kerala State Gazetteer*, Vol.II, Part I, pp.266, 274, 275 and 371. Adoor K.K. Ramachandran Nair, Govt. of Kerala. See also: S.D.Nellai Nedumaran, Sāṇār (Sāṁṇōr) Kāṣu (A New Interpretation).
2. *Travancore State Manual*, Chap:VI p.221, ed. by R.Nagamayya "Drungnyani kola is Brahmana Kulakam" "Muly-kolam is the Kshatriya Kulakam"
3. *T.A.S.*, Vol.III, part II, No.49, pp.195-96.

"Chāṁṇōr Avai" by S.D. Nellai Nedumaran, *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India*, Vol.22, 1996, pp.41-45.
4. R. Tirumalai, *Rajendra Viṇṇagaram*
5. The learned scholar R. Nagamayya has elaborately discussed this matter, and come to the conclusion that Nāḍār caste people belonged to the Chēra dynasty. (*Travancore State Manual* Vol.II,p.393, 1906). Prof. Elankulam Kunjan Pillai (in his work - Anantha Keralam) also states that Nāḍars belonged to the Chēra dynasty.
6. *A.R.E.p.*, of 1916, No.325. We are grateful to the Director of Epigraphy, A.S.I. Mysore, for providing us with the transcript of this inscription.

7. *Travancore Archaeological Series*, Vol.I.
8. *Travancore State Manual*, ed. by R. Nagamayya. See Inscription at the Ādimūlavināyagar temple, Nagercoil, p.197.
9. *Travancore State Manual*, Chap. VI, p.295.
10. *Travancore Census Report*. See also S.D. Nellai Nedumaran, "Kāvāḍikkāṣu." Paper presented at the VI Annual Conference of the South Indian Numismatic Society, Mysore, 1996.
11. *Śivalamāraṇ Katai*, Poem No. 973; p.309, Poem No. 985; p.313,
12. *T.A.S.*, Vols. II and III, p.207.
13. Both the titles *nāḍaṇ* and *nāḍāṇ* are used as a caste title in the Pūntuṛai Nāḍār Copper plate discovered and deciphered by Nellai Nedumaran and S. Ramachandran, Four individuals, use the title *nāḍaṇ* after their names, in their signatures. An 18th century inscription from Tirumākkōṭṭai (Thanjavur dt.) contains the signatures of Alikkōṭṭai Nallavanāḍaṇ and Kalikka Nāḍaṇ-*Tanjai Marāṭṭiyar Kalvēttukal* by S. Irasu. Tamil University, 1987, p.225; The *Sethupathi Ceppetukal* (Ed. S.Irasu. Tamil University, 1994), pp.414-ff includes a copper plate donated to a Nāḍaṇ by Vijaya Raghunātha Sēthupati(1754 A.D.) "Chāṇāḍar"(Nāḍārs hailing from the Chāṇār caste) is a term mentioned in an 18th century copper plate inscription - line 33, studied by S.Krishnamoorthy, Dept. Of Archaeology.
14. *Tanippāḍal-tiraṭṭu*, pt. I,
15. *Koṅgunāṭṭuccamutāya Āvaṇaṅkal* - by S. Irasu, Tamil University, Thanjavur, 1996.
16. Tirumalai Tiruppati Devasthanam's Epigraphical Series, Vol.V, Inscriptions of Sadāśivarāya (No.2/1) See also Nos.11 and 72.
17. *Pōṇavidūtūtu*- International Institute of Tamil studies, Chennai 1980, p.75. Vadamalaiyappa pillai, the cheif pradhani of Tirumalai Nāyak is mentioned as Vēḷḷai Vēḷḷāḷaṅ Viraṅkaraṇaṅ - pillaiyaṅ.
18. S. Irasu, *Ibid.*, see also Kōyilsāsanam I,p.285.
19. S. Irasu, *Ibid.*
 - a) *Āvaṇam* 2, p.10, refers to the presence of a Vēḷḷaikkal in the north east direction of the Nācchiyaṅmaṅ temple; The Tiruppainli inscription (cf. R. Akila, M.Nalini and Kalaikkovan in *Āvaṇam* 2, p.34) refers to a Tiruveḷḷaikkal which is meant for measuring gold.
 - c) *Kadampakkōvai* R.No.434, A Triennial Catalogue of mss. p.1154.
20. *Śilappatikāram*, U.V. Swaminataiyar edition.
21. Dr. Stephen Sam, Kerala University.
22. An inscription belonging to the 11th century A.D. from Vijayamaṅgalam Nāgēsvarasvāmi temple mentions: Vēḷḷāḷak kavuṇḍars A. Swaminathan writes: Marco Polo, in his notes, (13th century A.D.)

that he saw Veḷḷaiyar nobles assembled near the Pāṇḍya king, were the suicide squads when the king died.

23. *Aivar Rācākkal Katai*, ed. by N. Vanamamalai, Madurai University mentions the name Paḷaiya Panikkaṅ, the teacher of martial arts. The teachers of martial arts in order to distinguish themselves from other Paṇikkars, named themselves as vaṇma or Varma Paṇikkars. (Tiruvilaiyāṭal Purāṇam, 35th Aṅkam, poems 1,3,4.)
24. *Tolkāppiyam-Poruḷatikāram* - Naccīṅārkkṇiyar urai,³⁰
25. *Kēraladēśa Varalāru* (Tamil) Ed. by T. Chandrasekaran, Madras, 1960,p.10.
26. *Nadars of Tamil Nadu*, Robert Hardgrave. "The concerned copper-plate grant (i.e., Kalakkāḍu Chidambarapuram plate) has been deciphered and published by late T.G. Selvaraj Nadar of Tenkasi.

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A Bilingual Inscription from Nāgore

M.I. Quddusi

In this paper, I have taken up for study a Perso-Tamil inscription¹, from Nāgore in the Nagapattinam Taluk of Thanjāvur District. This study is mainly based on the Persian text, though Tamil version which is not the exact translation of the Persian text, has also taken into account.

Nāgore is included in the municipality of Nāgapaṭṭinam town (Lat. 10.46 N, Long. 79.53 E)², and a sea-port on the east coast, four miles from the taluk headquarters, chiefly famous for the local Dargāh of Ḥaḍrat Qādir Walī, from where the epigraph under study was copied from a tower.³

This bi-scriptal slab, measuring 37x33 cm, runs into eleven lines in Persian and four lines in Tamil - in all fifteen lines (plate). More than three-fourths of the writing space is occupied by the Persian text, comprising eight lines in prose and three lines in verse. The language used in the Persian text, is not in regular order, even breaching grammatical rules in a place or two. The text is executed in crude *Nasta'liq* characters hinting at the fact that the inscriber (name not mentioned) was not a professional or skilled Calligrapher. Because of crude writing, a few words particularly in the first line, could not be deciphered. The ending words of the two hemistiches in the 10th and 11th lines do not appear

on the estampage as the left margin of the slab is hidden under plaster, but the words needed there have been duly applied befitting the meaning and the metre.⁴ The name of the composer mentioned in the epigraph reads like 'Abdúllāh?

The transliteration of the Persian text is as follows:

- 1) Bismi'lāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm. B'ad Ḥamd-i-Qādir 'Azza wa Jalla wa Nāt-i-sayyidu'l Mursalīn
- 2) Pā'ī Jahān Ārā'i rā bar ān Rauḍa-i-Munawwara-i-Shāh-i-Dhijāh Jahān Panāh Sayyid 'Abdu'l Qādir Mānik-pūrī quddisa.
- 3) Allāhu Sirruh. Makḥfī Namānad Keh ba Niyyat-i-Bahbūd-i-Kaunain, Dā'ūd khān Tājir wald Ismāil.
- 4) Khān, Qabl Mutawaṭṭin shāhjahānpūr, Maḍāf-i-Dāru's Sulṭanat Shahr Dehlī Keh
- 5) dar Maḥmūd Bandar Sākin Shuda, Binā'i īn Manāra-i-Rafī'-u-Manī . . . dar Sanah 1137 Sab'a
- 6) Thalāthīn Māya Alf, Tārīkh-i-īn rā Du Nau' Guftah Shuda ba 'Ibaārat-i-Fārsī, wa Mābain
- 7) Du Tawārīkh⁵ ba A'dād-i-Ḥurūf Tafāwut-i-Sāli Mīnumāyad wa dar Ma'na Mufāṣṣlah pazīr

- 8) Ast Keh ba-Ghurrah Muḥarramu'l
Ḥarām Katb Shuda
- 9) 'bah-Bīn⁶ Nashān-i-Dā'ūd Khān -
1136'.⁷
- 10) 'Imārat 'Alī-u-Maṭbū 'Dargāh⁸
- 11) Nakard Ai Dil Kasi Khushtarḥ
Mīnār 'Binā Dā'ūd Ismāīl Khān(Wār)'-
1137 Raqimahu Faqīr 'Abd'ullāh?

Translation

- 1) In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. After the praise of the Powerful (i.e. God), may He be honoured and glorified, and (after) the praise of the chief of Apostles
- 2-3) . . . to the threshold of the World - adorning on that illuminated tomb of the King (who is) elevated to a place of honour, Asylum of the world, Sayyid 'Abdu'l Qādir Mānikpūrī, may Allāh sanctify his secrets. This fact may not remain hidden that with an intention of the welfare of both kinds of beings (corporeal and spiritual, men and angels) Dā'ūd Khān, the merchant, son of Ismāīl
- 4) Khān, previously a native of Shāhjāhānpūr in the vicinity of the capital city Dehlī, after
- 5) having settled down in Maḥmūd Bandar, (laid the) foundation of this lofty and impregnable tower. in the year (A.H.) 1137, seven,
- 6) thirty, one hundred (and) one thousand. Chronogram for this

(i.e. for the foundation of the tower) was composed in Persian in two ways and between.

- 7-8) the two chronograms there is hinted the difference of an year in the (total) numbers of the letters and the reason for the difference is apparent as it (i.e. the slab) was inscribed on the first day of Muḥarram-u'l Ḥarām

9) 'Look at the mark of Dā'ūd Khān - 1136'.

- 10-11) (It is) an excellent edifice and laudable shrine; near (this) heaven-exalted holy tomb, O heart ! nobody could build an excellent tower 'like the one (constructed) by Dā'ūd Ismāīl Khān'-1137. Its composer (is) the needy 'Abdullāh?

The persons mentioned in the epigraph are Sayyid 'Abdu'l Qādir Mānikpūrī, obviously the reputed saint, Dā'ūd Khān son; of Ismāīl Khān, the builder and 'Abdu'llāh ?, the composer of the Persian text.

To begin with, I would like to say in a nutshell about the renowned saint Sayyid 'Abdu'l Qādir Mānikpūrī⁹ who lies buried at Nāgore. The published literature on the saint is dominated by the description of his miraculous deeds, mixed with facts and fiction. He was popularly known as Mīrān Ṣāḥib and Qādir Walī Ganj Sawā'ī. He was born at Mānikpūr (Lat. 25.46 N & Long. 80.24E) in Pratāpgarh District of Uttar Pradesh on 18th November 1504. His father's name was Sayyid Ḥasan Qudsī and mother's name Fāṭīma both

of whom passed away in 1531. He was the disciple of Shaikh Ghauth of Gwālior (d. 1563) who thoroughly guided him in Shattārī, Qādirī and Chishtī orders.¹⁰ He performed Ḥaj (pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina) in c. 1530-31 and visited various places in 'Irāq, Īrān and India. He is said to have ultimately settled at Nāgore in 1533-34. Until his death on 9th November 1570 he preached Islām in the region as reported in the hagiological work *Mufarriḥu'l Qutūb*¹¹ His death - anniversary (*Ūrs*) is celebrated with great zeal, coinciding with the Kandiri festival - an occasion marked by communal harmony and religious tolerance.¹²

A welcome light is thrown by the epigraph under study about the builder Dā'ūd Khān Tājir son of Ismā'īl Khān (Dāvūdu Isumāyil Kāṇ of the Tamil version) who originally hailed from Shājahānpūr (27.53' N & 79.54' E) in the vicinity of the capital city Dehlī i.e., Delhi and later settled in Maḥmūd Bandar and built a lofty tower in A.H. 1137 (1724) for which obviously the work had commenced in A.H. 1136 (1723-24). The slab recording the event was inscribed on the first day of Muḥarram (A.H. 1137/9 September 1724). The two dates are given both in number and chronogram.

On the basis of this inscription, much can be reasonably inferred about the builder Dā'ūd Khān Tājir son of Ismā'īl Khān.

The epithet *Tājir*, meaning a merchant, appended to the name of the builder Dā'ūd Khān gives a lot of clue to

his professional background originally in his native land Shāhjāhānpūr¹³ in the Rohīlkhand¹⁴ region and later on his migration to the south for settlement in Maḥmūd Bandar i.e., Porto Novo¹⁵ on the east coast in the Arcot region. What else could be the prime reason for the merchant builder other than the economic one, seeking better commercial prospects in the kingdom of the Nawwābs of Arcot (whose territories extended from the Palnad, now in Andhra Pradesh to Kanyakumari, in Tamilnad). As a merchant, his moving to and fro between Maḥmūd Bandar and Nāgore needs no explanation. Political-cum-military turbulence in the Rohīlkhand region following the death of Emperor Aurangzeb seems to have caused him commercial set back, compelling him to migrate elsewhere in search of peace and prosperity. Since Rohīlkhand region including Shāhjāhānpūr was mainly populated by the Rohilla Afghāns belonging to 52 different tribes from Afghānistān, it is not ruled out that the builder of our epigraph was himself a Rohilla Afghān.

In the last decade of Aurangzeb's reign, after the capture of Jingeer in 1698, the emperor made Dhulfiqār Khān¹⁶ viceroy of Carnātic i.e., Arcot. In 1701, Dhulfiqār Khān was succeeded by Dā'ūd Khān Pannī¹⁷ an Afghān, who continued as viceroy till 1710. The latter had good relations with the British in Madrās. It appears that there existed a sizable pocket of Afghān population in the Arcot region and in view of this, the builder Dā'ūd Khān, son of Ismā'īl Khān seems to have chosen Maḥmūd Bandar for his

settlement for peace and tranquillity, so also for carrying on his own commercial activities for economic prosperity.

Another aspect that we have to look into, is the fact that the builder Dā'ūd Khān had great regard and reverence for saints and shrines, and this fact is confirmed by his building activity in Nāgore at the tomb of Sayyid 'Abdu'l Qādir Mānikpūrī. According to Sayyid Muḥammad,¹⁸ the author of *Manāqibu'l Majīd* (Arabic), the builder was a wealthy merchant of Maḥmūd Bandar and staunch and faithful follower of the saint. Very often, he used to visit Nāgore, offering gifts and tributes at the holy shrine. Once at the occasion of 'Urs, he took a vow that if his heart's desire was fulfilled, he would construct a magnificent tower near the tomb of the respected saint. After the conclusion of the 'Urs, he returned to Maḥmūd Bandar where he was jubilant to find his vow fulfilled. Immediately, he came back to Nāgore and with the permission of the spiritual successor of the shrine, erected a high splendid tower in A.H. 1137.

What was the vow of the builder, is not specified in the inscription under study nor in the work of Sayyid Muḥammad quoted above. Most probably, the erection of an excellent tower near the holy shrine was an outcome in fulfillment of his some

specific vow pertaining to his commercial advancement and prosperity, apart from his seeking spiritual blessings and succour of the saint.

In the epigraph under study, where the merchant builder settled, is referred to as Maḥmūd Bandar¹⁹ (in Tamil version Muhammadu Vandar). Here, Maḥmūd Bandar, the epithet is meant and used for the place-name Porto Novo, a sea-port in South Arcot district, 32 miles south of Pondicherry. The Tamil name for it was Paraṅgipēṭṭai, i.e., European town, but Muslims preferably called it Maḥmūd Bandar in the 18th century.²⁰ Under the Nawwābs of Arcot, different epithets were used for various place names, a trend then in vogue, following the examples of erstwhile Muslim rulers in other parts of the country.

In conclusion, it is remarked that the epigraph under study is extremely important as a primary source, for providing us rare pieces of information about the builder Dā'ūd Khān, the merchant, and about whom Sayyid Muḥammad, the author referred to above, is not specific regarding his name and the original place of his settlement in the north, etc. However, it may be added that the work of Sayyid Muḥammad and the valuable epigraph not only corroborate each other but also constitute complements of each other.

Notes and References

1. *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy (A.R.E.p.)*, 1963-64, App.B, No.292; App.D, No.162.
2. *Gazetteer of South India (GSI)*, ed. W. Francis & others, vol.II (Rep. Delhi, 1988), pp.161-63; B.S. Baliga, *Tanjore District Handbook* (Madras, 1957), pp.408-09.

3. There are in all 5 towers in the Dargāh complex. For details, S.M. Ḥusain 'Ālam, *Sawānih Ḥayāt-i-Ḥadīrat Qādir Walī* (Madras, A.H. 1379), pp.251-60.
4. I am highly grateful to Prof. Dr. 'Abdur Rab 'Irfān (retired) of Kamptee, for helping me in the decipherment of the epigraph under reference.
5. When the number *Du* is mentioned, here the word should be *Tārīkh*.
6. Here the word should be *ba-bīn* rather than *bah-bīn* but the latter was used for arriving at the chronogram, yielding A.H. 1136.
7. According to *Abjad* system this chronogram yields A.H.1136 (1723-24 A.D.): 7+62+401+15+651=1136.
8. The metre used in these couplets is *Bahr-i-Hajaz Musaddas Maqṣūr*.
9. His full name was *Shāh al-Ḥamīd Sayyid 'Abdu'l Qādir Mānikpurī*. *AREp.*, 1963-64, App.D, No.161.
10. M.S. Imāmu'd Dīn, *Barakātu'l Auliya* (Delhi, A.H. 1322), pp.75-76.
11. *Ibid.* p.76.
12. *GSI.*, Vol.II, p.162; *The Imperial Gazetteer of India (IGI)*, Vol.XIX Oxford, 1908), p.3.
13. *Shājahānpūr*, after the name of *Shāhjajān*, was founded in 1647. For its history, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (DSUP)*, Vol.XVII. Shahjahanpur (Allahabad, 1910), pp.131-39; *IGI*, Vol.XXII (Oxford, 1908), pp.209-10.
14. The name is applied to the Bareilly division of Uttar Pradesh. It is derived from a Pashtū adjective *rohelah*, formed from *rohu* ('Mountain') Rohīlkhand contained an area of 12,800 square miles, forming a large triangle bounded on the north by the Himālayas, on the south-west by the Ganges, and on the east by the province of Oudh. For the history of Rohillās & Rohīlkhand, Jadunāth Sarkār, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol.I (Calcutta, 1949), pp.25-37; *IGI*, Vol.XXI (Oxford, 1908), pp.304-08; A.C. Majumdār & V.G. Dighe. *The Maratha Supremacy* (Bombay, 1977), pp.133-38.
15. For its history, *Madras District Gazetteers, South Arcot* (Madras, 1962), pp.449-50.
16. *Shāh Nwāz Khān, Ma'āthirul Umarā*, Vol.II (Calcutta, 1890), pp.93-107.
17. *Ibid.*, pp.63-68; N.S. Ramaswami, *Political history of Carnatic under the Nawwabs* (N. Delhi, 1984), pp.2,8,10,13,15-29; M. Arthar 'Alī, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb* (New York, 1966), pp.108-110.
18. Sayyid Muḥammad, *Manāqibu'l Majīd fī Manāqib Shāh al-Ḥamīd* (Madras, A.H. 1346), Urdu tr., S.M. Ḥusain 'Ālam, *op.cit.*, p.257.
19. *Bandar* is a Persian word which means 'a seaport, a harbour'. There used to be the posts of *Mīr-bandar* (Port-Master) and *Shāhbandar* (Harbour-Master) all over the Indian seas.
20. Henry Yule & A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, ed. by William Crooke (Calcutta, 1986), p.727.

Earliest Persian Epigraph from Kanchipuram

G.S.Khwaja

Nearly six years back, here itself, I had presented a paper on two interesting epigraphs of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb from Kanchipuram. ¹ Another epigraph from the same place, which I had copied with great difficulty, is quite important for co-relating the political, religious and cultural history of this region.²

Kanchipuram, the headquarters of the taluk of the same name, and District Chengleput, lying on 12°, 50' N and 79° 42' E, is one of the holiest places in the South and indeed placed among the seven sacred cities of India, as per Hindu religious belief.³

Kanchipuram bears the evidences of different dynasties and rulers, right from Chōlas to Vijayanagar kings, in the form of monuments and epigraphs. This city came under the Muslim occupation very late, i.e. at the close of the 17th century.

The epigraph under study is from the Jāmī Mosque - the first monument ever built by any Muslim chief at this city of temples. It is a brief Persian inscription, fixed above the central *mīhrāb*, comprising only two couplets (*rubā'ī*), written in beautiful Nasta'liq style.⁴ The epigraph is translated as under:

Translation

1. This lion-hearted *Khān*, *Ghaḍanfar Khān*, the destroyer of the

enemy built this mosque.

2. 'Alī tells the date of its construction "This became the beauty of the point of ascent for Allāh's house". A.H.1106 (1694-95 A.D.)

The epigraph is self-explanatory, assigning the construction of a mosque to *Ghaḍanfar Khān*, in A.H.1106 (1694-95 A.D.). The metrical text with chronogram, is composed by 'Alī. The date falls under the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb who directly does not find mention in the epigraph under study.

The important features of this epigraph are its date, the builder, and the composer, which throw welcome light on the political as well as cultural history of the region.

So far as its date is concerned, it is the earliest Perso-Arabic epigraph, set up by any Muslim chief in this sacred city of Kanchipuram and whereby we can trace the history of the penetration of Muslim rulers to this region.

Actually, after the fall of Golconda at the hands of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in his 30th Regnal Year (1686-87 A.D.), Mīr Ḥusainī, the local agent of last Quṭb Shāhi king Abu'l Ḥasan Tānā Shāh at Kanchipuram, automatically became subordinate to Aurangzeb. He was given the *manṣab*

of 6000 with the title of 'Alī Mardān Khān and appointed as the *ta'alugadār* of Kanchipuram. In 1691 A.D. Marathas under the command of Santāji Ghorpade captured Kanchipuram and held it till 1694 A.D. *Dhu'lfaqār Khān*, the Mughal General, while marching towards Jinji, again seized the town from wily Marathas and annexed it to the Mughal Empire.⁵ History chronicles say that *Ghaḍanfar Khān*, a close associate of the General, was appointed as the *nāẓim* (local governor) of Kanchipuram, now raised to the status of the Headquarters of a *sarkār* and *havelī* (a revenue division).⁶ Our record dated A.H.1106/1694-95 A.D. corroborates the re-capturing of the area by the Mughals.

Another importance of this record is its composer Nāṣir 'Alī Sarhindī who adopted 'Alī as his *nom-de-plume*. Nāṣir 'Alī, a celebrated Persian poet of Shahjahan's time, hailed from Sarhind (i.e. Sirhind in Punjab) and enlisted himself under Saif Khān Badakhshī, son of Tarbiyat Khān, the *Bakhshī* (Paymaster) of Emperor Shahjahan. During Aurangzeb's time, 'Alī accompanied Saif Khān when the latter was governor of Kashmir Province. Later, he followed Saif Khān, Nāṣir 'Alī came to Bijapur in A.H.1100 (1689 A.D.). When *Dhu'lfaqār Khān Nuṣrat Jung* - son of Asad Khān, the Prime Minister - marched towards far south to capture Jinji,

'Alī accompanied him. He composed verses eulogising the celebrated Mughal General. The latter bestowed upon him a handsome cash gift and an elephant. 'Alī stayed at Kanchipuram for a certain period. During his stay, he developed faith in a local saint *Shāh Ḥamīd Auliyā* - spiritual successor of *Shāh Amīnu'd-Dīn 'Aalā Bijapuri*, and composed verses, speaking high of the saint. At that time, *Ghaḍanfar Khān*, a subordinate of *Dhūlfāqār Khān*, was the *nāẓim* (local governor) of *sarkār* and *havelī* of Kanchi.⁷ Nāṣir 'Alī developed a close relation with him and when *Ghaḍanfar Khān* erected the said mosque 'Alī composed the verified epigraph, recording the date of that event in a chronogram. It is narrated in history that afterwards Nāṣir 'Alī went back to Delhi and died in A.H.1108 (1697 A.D.). He lies buried near the tomb of *Ḥadrat Khwāja Nizāmu'd-Dīn Auliyā*.

It is this epigraph which substantiates the stay of a celebrated Persian poet of Mughal period of Kanchipuram which is indeed an important chapter in the cultural history of the region particularly of Kanchipuram, as 'Alī had composed other works of Persian poetry during his stay there.

As the epigraph under study is executed in an elegant Nasta'liq style, existence of some of the skillful calligraphers at Kanchipuram cannot be denied.

Notes and References

1. G.S.Khwaja, *Two Interesting Inscriptions of Emperor Aurangzib from Kanchipuram - Journal of Epigraphical Society of India*, Volume XVIII (1992, Mysore), pp.99-104.
2. *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy (AREp.,)* 1988-89, Appendix C - No.152.
3. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Volume X (Oxford, 1908) p.377; C.R.Srinivasan, *Kanchipuram Through The Ages*, Delhi, 1979, p.6.
4. *Rubāī* (quatrain) is a format of Perso-Arabic and Urdū poetry in which, a thought or idea is completed in four hemistiches with a particular metre.
5. *Shāhnawāz Khān, Maāthir-u'l-Umarā*, Volume II, Calcutta, 1890, p.824; S.H.Hodivala has discussed the history of Kanchipuram while establishing it as a mint town of Aurangzeb's period. See *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Numismatic Supplement*, No.XXXI, pp.357-62.
6. Ghulām 'Abdu'l Qādir Nāzīr, *Bahār-i-'Azam Jāhī* Madras, 1961, p.204; Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of Mughal Empire*, Delhi, 1982, p.64 (Sheet 16-A).
7. Mīr Ghulām 'Alī Āzād Bilgiramī - *Maāthir-u'l-Kirām*, Volume II, Hyderabad, 1913, pp.129-31.

Perso-Arabic-Urdu Inscriptions of Savanur

M.Y. Quddusi

The Nawabs of Savanur(Shahnur) with their headquarters at Savanur came to power in 1719 A.D. under Abdur Rauf Khan Diler Jang. The family members of Abdur Rauf Khan served under Ali Ādil Shāh II. Abdur Rahim s/o Bahlul Khan served under Ali Ādil Shāh II. Abdur Rahim s/o Bahlul Khan held Kopal as his Jagir. Abdul Karim s/o Abdur Rahim was a minister under the Ādil Shāhis w.e.f. 1675 to 1677 A.D. It is also stated that he received a *sanad* from Sikandar Ādil Shāh by which he got the 22 mahals of the Jagir of Bhankapur. After the conquest of Bijapur by the Mughals, Karim Khan accepted the service under Aurangzeb with a suitable rank and title of Diler Khan Bahadur Diler Jang. His Jagir included the area of Qila Sarkar Torgul, etc. The next among them was Abdur Rauf Khan (1719 A.D.). The other Nawabs were Abdul Ghaffer Khan (1719-25 A.D.), Abdul Majid Khan (1725-54 A.D.) Abdul Hakim Khan (1754-93 A.D.) and Abdul Khair Khan (1793-1827 A.D.). Roughly speaking, the area of Savanur Nawabs extended over the territory between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers under Abdul Ghaffer Khan. Under Abdul Majid Khan their rule extended over the districts of Belgaum, Bijapur, Raichur and Dharwar. In 1756 A.D., Abdul Hakim Khan ceded some territories to the Peshwas.

The source material on the Nawabs of Savanur and their rule over the areas is available in the reference books like *Mathirul-Umara*, *Tadhkiratul Umara*, *Tarikh-i-Diler Jangi*, Marathan records and *Tarikh-i-Deccan*, etc. But the inscriptions of their period are more informative about the building activities. The details therein, are very useful and throw specific light on the society of that period related to religious works, works of public utility, grants of land, upkeep of the forts or demise of important persons including the ruling chiefs. In the course of my tour in 1984, a number of inscriptions were copied. The following inscriptions deserve mention.

I. Inscription dated A.H. 1140(1728 A.D.)

The earliest inscription from Savanur is dated A.H.1140 (1727-28 A.D.). It belongs to the dargah of a local saint known as *Khairullah shah*.¹ Unfortunately, the inscriptional slab is badly damaged. The deciphered portion provides information about some grant of land to the said dargah. The other details like the date of the demise of the saint or builder of his tomb and who donated the land for his tomb are lost.

II. Inscription dated A.H. 1166 (1752-53 A.D.)

The next in chronological order is

from the gateway of the fort at Savanur.² It records the construction of the gateway by Nawwab Abdul Majid Khan entitled Diler Jang in A.H. 1166 (1752-53 A.D.). By this inscription we come to know that the fort at Savanur was repaired and restrengthened by the Nawwab to face any trouble either from the Nizam of Hyderabad or the Marathas who were the powerful neighbours of the Savanur territory.

III. Inscriptions dated A.H. 1208 (1794 A.D.)

This Inscription in the collection is important by which we come to know that Abdul Hakim Khan entitled Diler Khan Diler Jang died on 19th Rajab, 1208 (Feb. 20, 1794 A.D.).³ The metrical text was composed by one Badshah Muhiyud Dīn. No details are available about Muhiyud Dīn, a local poet who most probably was closely associated with the ruling family. Another aspect of the present epigraph is that the rule of Abdul Hakim Khan lasted till Feb. 20, 1794.

IV. Inscription dated A.H. 1223 (1800 A.D.)

This inscription is also very important copied from the tomb of *Shah Kamal* at Savanur.⁴ It provides the specific date of placing of the pinnacle (*kalas*) on the dome of Shah Kamal by Nawwab *Abdul Khair Khan* entitled Diler Khan Bahadur Diler Jang. Its date of placing is Rabi I, A.H. 1223 (1800 A.D., April-May). The Nawwab himself had composed the metrical text. Providing a pinnacle to the

tomb of Shah Kamal may be a part of Nawwab's offering to the saint or a gesture of devotion towards the departed soul.

V. Inscription dated A.H. 1243 (1827 A.D.)

This fifth record is related to the death of Nawwab⁵ Abdul Khair Khan who died of poison in A.H. 1243, Rabi II, 12 i.e. 1827 A.D. Nov.2. The exact date of his death by poison is no doubt recorded but not other details are given in this regard that who were responsible for it.

VI. Inscription dated A.H. 1266 (1849-50) A.H. 1267(1850-51)

The present inscription is from a tank ⁶ at Savanur which refers to the construction of a tank at the instance of the Nawwab is A.H. 1266 (1849-50 A.D.) and a garden which is designated as *Nau Bagh* i.e. new garden in A.H. 1267 (1850-51 A.D.). The text of the record was composed by *Gauthi* i.e. *Ghauth Khan*, the Diwan. The tank with the said garden was an important addition in the history of Savanur. It was so developed and beautified that another source book on the Nawwabs of Savanur written and published, known as *Tarikh-i-Diler Jangi* provides the city map of Savanur with the tank and the garden i.e. *Nau Bagh*.⁷ As far as the tank is concerned, it is still traceable with the inscription but the garden is no more in its vicinity.

VII. Inscription dated A.H. 1272(1855-56)

This inscription dated A.H. 1272 (1855-56 A.D.) records the construction

of a mosque, an inn and a reservoir with a school by one lady Bibi Ahmad at the instance of the Nawwab.⁸ It was a great work by the said lady not only for religious purposes but for the spreading of knowledge and stay for the visitors or students who desired to get benefits at Savanur.

VIII. Inscription dated A.H. 1273 (1856-57 A.D.)

This epigraph is from the Kasi mosque of Savanur.⁹ It records that the old mosque of Kasi was rebuilt by the Nawwab in A.H. 1273/1856-57 A.D. The metrical text was composed by the Nawwab himself. It is to be noted here that the language is Urdu used for

epigraphical purposes. Since 1847-48, we do find that Urdu along with Persian was getting due recognition in Savanur.

In conclusion, we may say that the presence of much epigraphical material at Savanur is very useful for the local history and building activities. The names of the officials like Ghauth Khan and Qadir Khan appear in the text as supervisors of the works. We also come to know that the Nawwabs of Savanur had literary taste and composed verses in Urdu as well as in Persian. The other poets are known only through these epigraphs namely Mir Ahmad Ali Khan, Ghausthi and Badshah Muhiyuddin. In all 21 Perso - Arabic and Urdu Inscriptions have come to light from Savanur.

Notes and References

1. *AREp.*, 1984-85, No. C 116.
2. *Ibid.*, No. 110.
3. *Ibid.*, No. 108.
4. *Ibid.*, 1965-66, No. D 303.
5. *Ibid.*, 1953-54, No. C 109.
6. *Ibid.*, No. C 123.
7. M. Azimuddin, *Tarikh-i-Diler Jangi for city map etc.* (Bombay Uni-library)
8. *AREp.*, 1984-85, No. C 114.
9. *Ibid.*, No. C 115.

A Sanskrit Inscription from Chikka Jainbagi

S.H. Ritti and S.L. Shantakumari

The inscription which is being introduced here, was discovered while digging the earth during the clearing operations for renovating a temple in a place called Chikka Jainbagi in Jamakhandi Taluk in Bijapur District of the Karnataka State. This hitherto unknown stone inscription is in Sanskrit language and Kannada script. It is an important addition to the list of Sēūṇa inscriptions, where stone inscriptions in Sanskrit are few and far between.

The problem that this inscription creates is regarding the genealogy of the family. Indeed, it is well known that the genealogy of the Sēūṇas from the beginning of the dynasty down to the first imperial ruler Bhillama V is a vexed problem. After a thorough study, of all the available material, an attempt was made to fix the genealogy and chronology of the early rulers of the dynasty and the results have been presented in Dr.S.H. Ritti's book on *Sēūṇas or the Yādavas of Dēvagiri*. But this inscription presents a new name, thus disturbing the known genealogy.

Having stated the Vishṇu incarnated himself in the famous Yadu race, the inscription mentions a ruler called Rājama. Next to him came Mallugi and next to him, Bhillama. The latter was followed by Jaitugi and his son was Siṃhaḷa i.e., Siṃghaṇa.

This inscription belongs to this king, who can be very well identified with Siṃghaṇa II, who ruled between 1200 to 1247 A.D. The inscription is dated in his regnal year 30 and also Śaka year 1151 i.e., 1229-30 A.D.

From Rājama to Jaitugi, one is said to have followed the other in the order mentioned above and only Siṃghaṇa is said to have been the son of Jaitugi. But it can be safely presumed that one that followed was the son of his predecessor. Thus, the genealogy as given in the inscription can be shown as below:

Rājama
|
Mallugi
|
Bhillama (Bhillama V)
|
Jaitugi (Jaitugi I)
|
Siṃghaṇa (Siṃghaṇa II)

The genealogy is quite smooth and identical with the known one, from Siṃghaṇa upwards to Mallugi but Rājama is a hitherto unknown name. So far as we know, we have not come across any name of this type in the records known so far, except a Rājugi, ten generations earlier to Mallugi. Mallugi, the father of Bhillama is supposed to have been born to another Mallugi, who is designated as Mallugi I. It is difficult thus to place this Rājama in the known

genealogical table as the grand-father of Bhillama. A chance discovery with more details like the one discovered now, may help us in future.

The inscription creates yet another problem. It mentions three or four names which are familiar to the students of Karnataka history but which cannot be identified with any known contemporary historical figures. They are Kārttavīrya, son of Channarāja, Jhāmpagidēva, son of Rāja Bijjala and Kannaradēva, son of Permādi. The contexts in which they are mentioned is also vague. It looks as though they were holding the *manneya* (may be at different times) of a village Bōḷa Jāmbagi, which was being donated on the date of the record by Sahadēva, a *daṇḍanāyaka* of Singhaṇa II.

One interesting feature of the inscription is that it provides details about the dynasty and the personality of Sahadēva.

In an inscription of 1206 A.D. (*S.I.I.*, XV, No.155), this chief is described as belonging to *Sahavāsa-anvaya* and hailing from Kāsh̄mīra. A community known as Sahavāsi, is found existing even today, in northern parts of Karnataka and Southern Mahārāsh̄tra. They are believed to have come from Kāsh̄mīr. Interestingly, they maintain their distinct identity even today by being unusually fair and handsome as compared to the surrounding local people. It is not known

when they migrated from Kāsh̄mīr to this land. It must have been much earlier than the 13th century, when Sahadēva himself claimed such migration.

In the above mentioned inscription of 1206 A.D., Sahadēva's parents are mentioned as Śrīdhara and Laksh̄mī, while in the present inscription the name of the father is given as Śrīpati and the mother's name remains the same. Obviously, both the names indicate the same person. Sahadēva was the governor of the divisions of Heḍa and Kaṇambaḍe, in addition to the division of Tardavāḍi. His exploits are described in both inscriptions, where he is credited with the conquest of Māḷava, Hoysala and Koṅkaṇa kings. The present inscription credits him with the conquest over Arjuna i.e., the contemporary king of Māḷava, Āndhra and Hoysalas. Added to this, he is stated to have erected a pillar of victory at Sētutīrtha i.e., in far South at Rāmēśvaram.

The immediate purpose of this inscription is to record a grant of the village Bōḷa-Jāmbagi, situated on the northern bank of Kṛishṇā in Tuṅḡlu-12 within Kaṇambaḍe-300 and also a part of another village Ukkadage, also situated on the northern bank of Kṛishṇā in the same divisions, by Sahadēva. The grants were made for the prosperity of his wife Mākalaḍēvi.

Two Seventeenth Century Inscriptions

Anant Kulkarni

1. Introduction :

Rāmatīrth, which is always bracketed with the nearby village Kakmari, is a small temple-centered brahmin village in the north-east of Athani Taluk in Belgaum District. It includes all the taluks constituting a chronically drought-prone, pastoral area, in the rain-shadow zone of the Deccan.

2. Rāmatīrth Inscriptions :

The descriptive list of stone and copper plate inscriptions examined by the Kannada Research Institute, Dharwad, during 1940-41 to 1942-43, contains in all five stone inscriptions from Rāmatīrth (Nos.13, 24, 79, 80 and 81) excluding two large, worn out and hence dead ones. Of the five, two (Nos.13 and 24) are published in the *Karnataka Inscriptions* Vol.2. They are royal charters dated 1115 and 1167 A.D. referring to later Chālukya king Vikramāditya VI and Kaḷachuri king Bijjala II respectively. I have published from my independent copy of No.79, the Amāśvara Temple

Pillar Inscription of 1560 A.D. in the *JESI* Journal Vol.20. It is not necessary here to consider references to the Rāmatīrth temple, from the inscriptions of villages Kōhalli, Balligēri, Umrāṇi and Saṁkh. I have recently discovered three more inscriptions in the Rāmēśvara temple.

3. The Two Inscriptions :

The two inscriptions presented here are inscribed on slabs fixed in the right and left walls of the Pāpanāśi-ghāṭ. These two walls of the *ghāṭ* enclosing the stairs are in front of the cave shrine of the goddess Ānandanāyaki, which is scooped out of the hillock called Ānanda Parvata. This cave shrine is behind the main Rāmēśvara temple which faces east, while the non-perennial stream Pāpanāśi flows east-west and the cave shrine as also the *ghāṭ* faces south. Various spots on the stream are named as different tīrthas.

The following are the texts of the inscriptions which are written in Nāgarī script and Sanskrit verse and are religious in nature.

The record on the right slab is dated and reads as follows:-

1. Śrī Svayambhū Rāmēśvarāya=namaḥ Svasti śrī nṛipa Śālivā -
2. hana Śake 1551 Pravartamāne Śukla nāma saṁvatsarē Uttarāyaṇa -
3. Grīshmarītau Jyēshṭha māsē śukla pakshē pañchamyām Ravivāsare Pu -
4. shyā-nakshtre Dhruvanāma-yōgē Bālavā - kaṇṇē (raṇē) Kṛishṇābhīmā-ma -

5. dhya- dēśē śrī - Svayamībhū - Rāmēśvara - kshētrē Ānanda - parvatē dakṣhiṇa -
dvā -
6. rē-Ānandatīrtha varṇanam nāma || kālatrayē='pi- trai-
7. lōkyō yatra kvāpi nara-ṛishabha | Ānandatīrtha - sadṛisam na
8. bhūtō na bhavishyati || 1 || nitya pāpavināsinīm pravila
9. Satyānandatīrthē narō | yasnāyāt=praṇavēśa pūrṇa - karuṇā pīyu (ū)
10. sha sampūritē || muktaḥ=pāpa - sahasra kōṭi - nichayaḥ pāpādhikō -
11. prayatē | prāṇanām-gaṇa-nāyakaṁ tvam=api sōpy-ānt = ēva śaivam-padam||

The record on the left slab fixed opposite to the first, reads as follows:-

1. Śrī Raghunāthāya=namaḥ | tvam kshētraṁ vayam=ankurā=stvam=avanī - nā
2. thō vayam sēvakā[ḥ*] | stvam tyāgī kavayō vayam Raghupatē dātā='pi pā -
3. tram vayam || tvaṁ mēghō lalitā vyaṁ sumanas=chandras=chakorā vayam
4. | kim vāñch [vāñch]tayā=nayā Raghupatē n=ōpekshaṇīyā vayam || 1 ||
5. Jyānāti Rāma tava nāma kavir=mahēśō | Jyānāti gautama-satī charaṇāravindam
| Jyānā -
6. ti dōrbala - parākramam-īśa-chāpam | Jyānāty=amougha - paṭu - bāṇa - gatim
payōdhim || 2 || Pada ka -
7. maḷa - rajōbhir=mukti - pāshāṇadēhā | ma (a)labhata yad=Ahalyā Gautamō
dharmapatnī || tava charaṇa vi
8. śīrṇa-=grāva - vindhyādri - pādē(dai)ḥ | Kapikathita - vitāpaḥ [apāsta]
bhavataha (vantaḥ)] || 3 || Yat=Kāśīpura
9. nivisṭi - śiddhigamidam kshētraṁ mahā tīrthakamī | yā kulyā bhuvi
pāpāvināstaṇī [stam nīradhī] niśch -
10. yaḥ || yā vāpī bhuvi muktidā pravibudhair=maṇikarnīkā kathya [kathya]tē |
Viśvēśa-nava rāmaliṅga - sadṛisam nischinti śīkshō bhavaḥ || 4 || Śivarāma
kiṅkara murāre ||

The details of date are regular and corresponds to Sunday 17th May, 1629 A.D. The date of the record is in the second regnal year of Mohammed Ādil Shāh of Bijapur (1627-1655 A.D.). It falls only 9 months prior to the date of birth of Śivāji, the great and during this year falls the birth day of Saint Ānandamurti of Brahmanāl, near Saṅgli¹, of Ānanda Sampradāya² and more importantly that it occurs on the eve of the great famine in the Deccan which devastated the social life and lasted till 1632 A.D. Saints of Mahārāshṭra, Samartha Rāmdās and Sant Tukārām have written about this famine in heart-breaking words³ as also Paramānand in his 'Śhiva Bhārat'⁴. This forced streams of southward migration of the families into Karnāṭaka and further south⁵ do not explain the significance of the date recorded in the inscription.

The recently discovered record of Śubhakṛit, Śaka 1286 (i.e.1364 A.D.) specifically states that the re-installation of the Rāmēśvara liṅga as also the renovation of the temple was got done by one Viśvanāth Jaṅgama.⁶ The Amarēśvara temple pillar inscription of 1560 A.D.⁷ clearly states that one Appāji, the son of Benavarasa of Viśvāmitra-gōtra, renovated the temple to the right of Rāmēśvara temple and re-installed the Amarēśvara liṅga on 28th July 1560 A.D.

The purpose is to record that on the said date, Rāmatīrtha came to be called "Svayaṁbhū Rāmēśvara kshētra" in the Krishṇā-bhīma-madhyadēśa on account of the growth of the brahmin village

community around the temple.

In my study of the Śaṅkh Inscription of 1178 A.D.⁸ I have given the line of Pāsupata Śaivāchāryas who governed the Rāmēśvara temple at Rāmatīrth. The last of the said *āchāryas* is Amarēśvara-panḍita. He was attached to the Hemmēśvara temple at Umrāṇi in 1141 A.D., and to the Nārasimhēśvara temple at Balligēri in 1171 A.D.

Due to the disappearance of Pāsupata Śaivism and the fall of the Yādava dynasty at Dēvagiri, we do not know who administered the temple at Rāmatīrth. However, it came under the control of the resident priestly brahmin community. They are Dēśastha brahmins of *Smārta* sect, following Advaita philosophy of Śaṅkara and owing allegiance to Śṛīṅgēri-maṭha.⁹ They were Śaivites in contrast to the Āgamic Pāsupata Śaivites and Śāktas. These brahmins came under the influence of Ānanda-sampradāya.¹⁰

The first Rāmēśvara Mahātmya seem to have influenced the development of temple precincts and the rituals and thus the Ānanda nomenclature was affixed.

The second Rāmēśvara Mahātmya was written in 1753 A.D. by Swāmi Sadānand¹¹ an ascetic from Jamakhaṇḍi (Bijapur District) belonging to the Ānand sampradāya of Raṅganāth Mogarekar preceptor line. He performed penance in the Rāmēśvara temple at Rāmatīrth and attained spiritual realisation.

Sadānanda Ananda had *gurukhūṇa* or the badge of his guru i.e., Ānanda

sampradāya. He impliedly recognised and suggested that Ānanda-tīrtha at Rāmatīrth is the making of Ānanda tradition. Elsewhere he notes that Rāmatīrth' is *apara Kāśī* or *Ānanda vana* which is the other name of Kāśī.

The inscription is quoted from the Rāmēśvara Mahātmya. This one was composed prior to the date of the inscription i.e. 1629 A.D. and it attests to the influence of the temple and the brahmin community there.

The text *kālatrayōpi trailōkyē yatra vāpi nararshabhaḥ* applies to Dāśarathi Rāma about whom *Rāmēśvara Mahātmya* refers. The reference to Kahōḷa is, obviously, derived from an imaginary etymology of the village name Kōhalli quoted in the *Mahātmya*.

The last and the important verse, mentions this *kshētra* as Dakṣiṇa Kāśī where Lord Viśvēśa in his new form as Rāmalinga appears. The verse further equates the *tīrthas* on the

Pāpanāśini to those at Kāśī, particularly, Maṇikarnikā and Kāśī, on the bank of river Gaṅgā. Many Śaiva centres in the south have been described as Dakṣiṇa Kāśī. Dr.Shantakumari, in her article¹² has illustratively discussed the ancient connections of Karnataka with the great Śaiva centre of pilgrimage, Kāśī. The connections of Maharashtra, though not epigraphically recorded, appear to be more so with this Śaiva centre particularly in the post-Jnānēśvar peirod, more so among brahmins.

Śivarāma Kinkara Murāre mentioned in the record is interesting. This seems to be the composer of the records. If so, who is Śivarāma and his disciple Murāri? I have not been able to identify them so far.

Murāri stands for Kṛiṣṇa and Śivarāma for the deity Rāmēśvara. According to the *Mahātmya* Raghupati went to Rāmatīrtha and worshipped Rāmēśvara before he proceeded to Lanākā at the instance of Kahōḷa Ṛishi.

Notes and References

1. D.K.Gosavi, *Śrī Ānandamūrthy Brahmanāḷkar Yānche* Charitra, Pune, 1967.
2. G.S.Ghurye, *Indian Sadhus*, Popular Prakashana, 2nd ed.1964, pp.216-218. Also refer to the *Marathi literary history*, by V.K.Bhave and S.G.Tulpule *Maharāshṭra Sārasvat*.
3. Gosavi, *op.cit.*, pp.7-9.
4. G.S.Sardesai, *Marathi Riyasat*, Vol.I, pp.43-44.
5. One such migration has its importance in the development of Ānanda Parampaṛa in the Ādil Shāhi capital of Bijāpur, which has not yet been noticed by the Marathi Literary history. Refer Chapt.54 of *Rāmēśvara Mahātme of Rāmatīrtha*, by Swami Sadānand of Jamakhandi. (unpublished manuscript).

6. From the estampage.
7. *J.E.S.I.*, Vol.XX, pp.16-18.
8. *Ibid.*, Vol.XXII.
9. J.N.Bhattacharya *Hindu Castes and Sects*, reprinted 1968, pp.296-307.
10. Ghurye, *op.cit.*, pp.216-218; Bhave and Tulpule, *op.cit.*, and C.N.Joshi, *Sridhar-Vyakti āṇi Kāvya Vivechana*, Pune, 1951.
11. V.T.Apte, *Swami Sadānand*, Jamakhandi, 1962.
12. *J.E.S.I.*, Vol. X.

Inscription on Aruṇagirināthar (of Tiruppugaḷ fame?)

K.G. Krishnan

This inscription¹ is engraved on a slab lying near the Gaṅgamman temple close to the fresh-water pond near the village of Mēlpallippaṭṭi in Chengam Taluk in North Arcot District in Tamil Nadu. It is in Tamil language and is written in Tamil characters relevant to its date. It is dated in the reign of Harihara II of Saṅgama dynasty in the year Siddhārthi, Śaka 1301, Makara śu. 6, Saturday and Rēvati yielding the date in Christian era 1380 A.D., January 14.

It is reported that Kañjārukilān Ēvan-tīrttapillai² was in the company of Nāyaka-nāchchiyār, daughter of Uṇṇāmulaināchchiyār, a female-servant (*dēvaraḍiyāl*) (i.e., *dēvadāsi*) residing at (a house in) the east street (probably at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai and that he made a grant of land and house-site to Aruṇagirinādan, son of Vīrabadrar³ among the Vellālar residing at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai.

The question arises why should the donor mention the fact of his being in the company of a *dēvadāsi*, not quite edifying enough generally speaking. There seems to be no apparent necessity to mention this. Therefore, it leads us to think whether Aruṇagirinādan, the beneficiary of the grant had any role in enabling the donor to enjoy the company of the *dēvaraḍiyāl*. It is well known that there was till recently the practice of dedicating girls or women to service in temples.⁴ The names of the fathers of these women are never mentioned. Nāyaka-nāchchiyār's

mother's name is given.

This circumstance lends authority to the view that Aruṇagirinādar was himself leading a life of lust till he reached a stage of health leading to defection and falling from high tower of the Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, only to be rescued by Lord Subrahmanya. It is further held that Aruṇagirinādar became a great devotee of Lord Subrahmanya i.e., Kanda or Muruga. His outpourings arising from such devotion were grouped and is now called Tiruppugaḷ contain frequent diatribes against women causing lust among men leading them to ruin.

On the basis of this reconstruction, we may hold that Aruṇagirinādar lived during the period of this inscription and that he became a staunch devotee of Skanda or Muruga sometime later i.e., about 1400 A.D.

There is no clue as to why this inscription was engraved on a stone now found far away from Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, the treasury of the temple of which place sold the land under gift in auction. The ending portion of this incomplete inscription is not quite clear enough to throw any light on this question.

Text

(The slab bears the sketches of a trident (śūla) flanked by Sun and Moon)

Svasti Śrīman-mahāmaṇḍalēśvaraṅṅ⁵
Harirāyavibāḍaṅṅ⁶ Mūvarāyaraḅaṅṅ

Tribuvaṇa Ariyaṇṇa-udaiyar⁷-pṛithivīlā-
jyampañṇiy-arulāniṇṇa

Śakābdam 1000, 300, ṇ mēṇ-chellā
niṇṇa Siddhārtthi samvatsarattu Makara-
nāyarṇu⁸ pūrva-pakshattu shasṭhiyumi
Rēvatīyumi perṇa Śaṇikkilāmai nāl

Jayaṅkoṇḍasōla-madnalattu Śeṅguṇṇak-
kōṭṭattup-Peṇṇai vaḍagarai Vānakō-
ppādi Aṇṇā-nāṭṭu taṇiyūr⁹ Tiruvaṇṇā-
malaiyil irukkum Vellālaril Vīrabattirar-
kku tamma Kaṇjārūkkilāṇ Malaiyanāyaṇ
Ēvantittapillaiyeṇ ippāḍiyāl kilattēruvil
dēvarāḍiyāril Uṇṇāmulai-nāchchiyār¹⁰
magal Nāyaka-nāchchiyār ennuḍanē iruk-
kaiyil yivar magaṇ Aruṇagirinādaṇṇukku

nān eḷudikkudutta pariśāvadu [/*] Uḍaiyār
Tiruvaṇṇāmalai-udaiya-nāyaṇār paṇḍāra-
ttir Chandēsvarap-peruvilaiy¹¹-āga nāṇ
oṇṇupādiyum Tēvargaṇāyaṇ Aṇṇūrṇu-
ppillaiyum Vaiyaṇṭoludān
ṇṇāḍittārum ivvarum oṇṇupādiyum-āga
koṇḍ ān Āḍaiyūr - nāḍu mēl
- paṇṇu mēlai Vāṇakkāṇapāḍi
kilp vēḍaṇ Kuppaya . . . ṇ-āga
Nāgaḷar-perumāl ēndalil inda
. . . . ā ṇṇupallī muḍakkeṇṇāḍittār
. . . . yākki niṇṇa eṇṇōpādi ivvūrkuḷḷa
nāṅgellaikk-uṭpaṭṭa-naṅchai-puṅchai nār-
pārkkellaiyil kil nōkkina kiṇarum mēl
nōkkina maramu nattamum . . . kkuttil
maṇaiyum maṇaippaḍappaiyum

Notes and References

1. This is noticed as No.272 of 1960-61. I am thankful to the Director and Chief Epigraphist who lent me impression of this inscription.
2. Kaṇjāru is the name of a place. Ēvan-tīrtta means 'one who removes the suffering (of others).'
3. The mention of Vīrabaddirar in the introductory portion with a dative suffix is somewhat parenthetical, though his relationship to Aruṇagirinādar as his father is stated fairly down in the text.
4. It is true that it survives in a few places like Yellamma temple in Siddapur Taluk in Karnataka and at the famous Jagannātha temple at Puri in Orissa.
5. The text given here continuously for convenience is actually engraved in thirtythree lines on the stone. As it is, the inscription is incomplete. It is not known whether the other side of the stone contained the continuation of the text.
6. Harirāya is wrong for arirāye i.e., enemy kings.
7. Harihara is written in various forms including Hariyaṇṇa given here.
8. For *Makara*^o
9. Note the name Aṇṇā-nāḍu which has given rise to the original Tamil name Aṇṇāmalai to modern Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, sanskritised later as Aruṇāchala, Aruṇagiri, etc. The word *taṇiyūr* points to the independent status, the place enjoyed during this period.

10. 'Uṇṇāmulai-nāchchiyār' means a lady whose breasts have not been sucked. The Sanskrit name of the main female deity at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai is Apītakuchāmbālī giving the same meaning.
11. 'Chaṇḍēśvarap-peruvilai' means auction (conducted in the name of Chaṇḍēśvara, a deity personifying the comptroller of Śiva's household.)
12. Incomplete.

Trade and Commerce of the Sātavāhanas

A.K. Ranade

The successors of Mauryas in the Deccan were the Sātavāhanas. This dynasty is the earliest known historical dynasty of Mahārāshṭra. They ruled over the vast territory of Dakṣiṇāpatha and occasionally northern India. The Sātavāhanas described themselves as lords of Dakṣiṇāpatha and their inscriptions are found at Nāsik, Nāṇēghāṭ, Kārle and Kanhēri.¹ The Nāsik cave² inscription of Vāsisthīputra Puḷumāvi, son of Gautamīputra throws light on the extensive territories ruled by his father, Gautamīputra Sātakarni. The members of this family who styled themselves as the lord of Dakṣiṇāpatha, ruled from the 1st quarter of the 1st century B.C. to the 1st quarter of the 3rd century B.C.³

Though the land revenue was the main source of income, the Sātavāhana rulers paid much importance to the trade and industries.

The available epigraphic and literary evidences throw welcome light on the trade and commerce of the Sātavāhanas. The Periplus⁴ throws welcome light on the ports on the western coast and also inland market towns.

The second century was the period of remarkable progress in trade and industry.⁵ This was due to the discovery of monsoon winds by Hippalās in the beginning of Christian era. This discovery accelerated India's trade with Roman empire which brought the flow

of Roman gold coins into India. Due to the discovery of monsoon winds, new Roman traders could leave Egypt in July and reach Indian ports by the end of September. They could sail back about the end of November and could reach there during February. This return voyage became easily possible within a year.⁶ Consequently, the beginning of Christian era was a period when western coastline which was a part of Sātavāhana kingdom witnessed the growth of brisk foreign trade with the Roman empire. There were flourishing trade centres in their empire, such as, Thāna-Kalyāṇ area, Kuda-Mahad-Kōl; port cities like Sōpāra, Kalyāṇ-Semulla etc. Many other market towns such as Nāsik, Gōvardhan, Paiṭhān, Tagar, Junnār, Dhēnukākāṭaka etc. are mentioned in the inscriptions of this period.

From the earliest times, Indians were busy with the sea-going or the maritime activities. There are ample references of the maritime activities in the contemporary literature. Obviously, trade and commerce was the main purpose of these maritime activities. The trade and commerce were not the activities of only merchants and traders, but the state also was deeply involved in this activity.

As the Sātavāhanas were the successors of the Mauryas in Deccan, the systems of mercantile activities as well as

collection of the customs and tolls must have remained unchanged with some minor modifications. While trading the commodities from inland market towns to the port cities, the caravans were taxed by the toll collector of the particular region at octroi posts. One such example of the octroi posts is the stone jar (for the purpose of Octroi collection) at Nānēghāṭ just in front of the Nāne pass which still exists there.

The Sātavāhanas had some special relations with the merchants and traders. They encouraged the industries in their empire and provided facilities to the caravans (i.e., Sārthavāhas)

During the Sātavāhana period, the urban areas were of two kinds, as elsewhere in India. They were Nagaras-cities which could either be capitals of the kingdom or administrative centres of large units.⁷ The others were Nigamas, i.e., market towns. These urban centres were connected with them by well marked roads.⁸ The mercantile interests dominated the life of these market-towns. A great deal of production and exchange of commodities was carried on by the merchants whose caravans traversed the well known trade routes across which straddled a few well-marked passes such as the Nānēghāṭ and Bhorghāṭ.⁹

The existence of Buddhist monuments prove the popularity of Buddhism during the Sātavāhana period.¹⁰ We also come to know that these sites were located on the ancient trade routes. As a matter of fact, the location of monastic establishments at strategic

points along the trade routes of India was a characteristic feature of early history of India.

The Vaiśya community which was engaged in trade and commerce, gave generous endowments to the Buddhist establishments. A large number of inscriptions at Kārle, Junnār, Nānēghāṭ, Kanhēri, Nāsik and many other sites along the trade routes record that the resources for the religious edifices came from 3 categories of donors, the ruling elite, the merchants and other occupational groups and the monks and the nuns.

An inscription from Kārle mentions the endowment of a pillar by Yashovardhan from Dhēnukakaṭaka who was Yavana (i.e. Ionean Greek). Another inscription from the same Chaitya cave refers to the endowment of Isalak. In the inscriptions at Kanhēri¹¹ mention has been made about the traders and other professionals from Kalyān, Chaul, Dhēnukakaṭaka, Nāsik, Sōpāra, etc. who made generous endowments to the religious establishments at Kanhēri.

Four different terms are used to designate the mercantile professions. They are i) Vanija ; ii) Nigama ; iii) Sārthavāha ; iv) Sēṭhi

The term Nigama is recorded in the inscriptions at Kanhēri¹² and Junnār.¹³ Inscriptions at Kanhēri¹⁴ record the donations of Dhama ; Golanaka, Isipala, Punavasu, Pusamita ; Venhunandi - who were Nigamas.

Other professionals such as goldsmiths,

Mithika Blacksmith, heranika, Vaidya, etc. also are recorded in the inscriptions.¹⁵

During the Sātavāhana time, trade was carried on through the *śrēṇis*. As a matter of fact, trade and industrial guilds were a common feature of economic life since very early times.¹⁶ References to such organizations¹⁷ during the Sātavāhana period are found in the inscriptions.

They are : - Dhanikas (traders in corn) ; Gandhikas (sellers of perfumes); Mālakaras (florists); Suvarṇakāras (goldsmith) ; Selvadhakis (stone masons) ; Odayantrikas (manufacturers of hydrolic machines); Tilapishkas (oilmen); Kularikas (potters); Kolikas (weavers), For example, an inscription from Junnār, refers to the guild of corn dealers (*Dhamnika*).

These guilds were engaged not only in the production and transport of merchandise, but also in banking transactions. They used to receive endowments and pay monthly interest on them. The rate of interest then varied from 9 to 12 percent per annum.

The coastal strip belt played an important role for the development of trade and commerce. Ports which served as centres of trade were Broach, Sopāra,

Kalyān and Semylla. Foreign ships used of carry cargo to these ports,¹⁸ from where it was carried to the market towns like Nāsik, Gōvardhana, Karhaṭaka, Tagar, Vaijayanti, Paithān and others. The Buddhist caves excavated on the trade routes attest that they were constantly used by the Sārthavāhas (caravans). There was constant struggle between the Śaka Kshatrapas and the Sātavāhanas for securing control over these ports as Periplus and Ptolemy also throw light on this point.

The Sātavāhana coinage was highly influenced by Graeco Roman coinage. Their coinage was in circulation in the major parts of India, stretching from Vidiśa in the North to Kāñchīpuram in the South and from Arabian sea in the West to the Bay of Bengal in the East. Most of their coins have symbols and the inscriptions give corroborative evidence to the information received from the literary works.

We also find from the coins, etc., about the nature of economic and commercial activities as well as the ancient Indian trade routes, trade centres and the market towns that existed during the Sātavāhana period.

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Two Brāhmī Letters on a Bead-making Mould from Banavāsi

A.V. Narasimha Murthy and T. Dayananda Patel

Banavāsi in Uttara Kannada district (North Canara) of Karnataka is one of the ancient cities in South India. Its earliest mention is seen in *Mahābhārata* as *Vanavasaka*. The two Buddhist chronicles, *Dīpavamśa* and *Mahāvamśa* also mention this place as *vanavasaka*. According to another tradition, it got its name as the Pāṇḍavas were in exile in this forest area. However, the later inscriptions refer to this place as *Vaijayanti*. But more important is the reference to this place in *Mahāvamśa* according to which Aśoka sent missionaries for the propagation of Buddhism to Banavāsi. It also refers to a delegation of Buddhist monks who went from Banavāsi to Ceylon to participate in a function connected with the inauguration of a *Mahāstūpa*. These statements attest to the popularity of Banavāsi as a Buddhist centre during the period of Aśoka Maurya, though no Aśokan inscription has been found here.

Archaeological excavations were undertaken at Banavāsi with the main purpose of finding out the Mauryan connections with Banavāsi as evidenced by the references in *Mahāvamśa*. The excavation was conducted at Banavāsi by the Mysore University Department of Ancient History and Archaeology in collaboration with Karnataka State Department of Archaeology and Museums under the direction of Dr. M. Seshadri.

The two authors of this note had the good fortune of participating in the excavations (1969-72). Recently when the antiquities of Banavāsi were being sorted out for study, the second author showed me this bead-making mould. On a careful examination, this mould was found to contain two Brāhmī letters and the purpose of this note is to bring this important discovery to the knowledge of the scholars.

The mould itself is a unique piece of antiquity because such moulds are very rare. The mould is made of fine grained greyish soapstone. It is rectangular in shape measuring 5.6x4.2x1.4 cms. It has two sides: Side A consists of one half of the depression of a bead. It is bi-conic with ellipsoid in section rounded narrow edges with a broad hole. It has three horizontal ridges of single line each, whereas on either side are dotted parallel two lines on each side. At the top are two notches with a horizontal line so that the bead could be used as a pendant also by passing a thread through it. The other side B has designs for making long tubular beads. Both these sides are meant for manufacturing two types of beads. On the side of the face of the thickness of the mould at the edge are two Brāhmī letters.¹ The incision is not very deep but the letters are very clear. If the mould is held in one position, the letters can be read as *ra ha*. If it is seen

from another position the letters can be read as *khā ra*. As there is no clue to determine the correct side, it is difficult to understand the correct direction and position of the writing.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to understand the stratigraphic position of the site and stratum at which this mould was discovered. It was found in BNV VI, in layer 7 which is characterised by antiquities datable to the Sātavāhana period. This makes it clear that the mould which belonged to the pre-Sātavāhana period was in use for quite sometime upto the Sātavāhana period.

The letters clearly exhibit Aśokan Brāhmī characters and hence the mould may be dated to third century B.C. It may be noted that antiquities like pottery and coin of the Mauryan period have been found below the layer 7 referred to above. Thus the palaeography of the two letters suggest third century B.C. as the date of the mould. In other words, the mould was made in third century B.C and was in continuous use for about three or four centuries and that is the reason

why it has been found in the Sātavāhana levels or post - Mauryan levels. Thus the stratigraphic evidence also conforms to the palaeographic evidence. This is significant indeed.

As already stated the two letters yield the reading *raha* or *khāra*. Obviously, either way they may be taken as the name of the artisan² or the person to whom the mould belonged. In that case the name represents one of the earliest personal names used in Karnataka. *Raha* is very close to *Rāhapa* of the later times.³ *Khāra* brings to our mind the famous ruler Khāravēla. Thus the two letters on the mould are very interesting from the point of view of the personal names of Karnataka as well as the epigraphy of the area of the earlier period.⁴ It also confirms epigraphically the association of Banavāsi with the Mauryan period and is corroborated by numismatic and ceramic evidences as found in the same excavation. So far non-Aśokan Mauryan inscriptions have not been found in Karnataka. Thus the present two-letter inscriptions is unique from that point of view also.

Notes and References

1. The authors are grateful to Dr. K.V. Ramesh for suggested readings and the palaeographical details.
2. Brahmagiri edict of Aśoka mentions Chapaḍa as the engraver of that inscriptions and he may be considered as the first epigraphically recorded artisan in Karnataka.
3. Though of a later date, it may be remembered that Rāshtrakūṭa Kṛishṇa I defeated king Rāhappa and from the last part of the name, Altekar identifies him as a king of Karnataka (*Rashtrakutas and Their Times*, p.43).
4. The mould is now exhibited in the Museum of Art and Archaeology, Department of Archaeology, Manasagangotri, Mysore. The authors are grateful to Dr. M.P. Mahadevai, the Chairman of the Department for permitting them to study and publish this note.

Buddhist communities at Kuḍa and Mahad

Swapna H. Samel

In the present paper efforts have been made to focus on the earlier Buddhist communities at Kuḍa and Mahad in Western Maharashtra. The literary references to the spread of Buddhism in Western India came from *Thera* and *Terigathas*. The Therigatha has verses attributed to three elders Punna, Isidina and Vaddha who were natives of Western India. Punna was native of Supparaka (Sopora in Thane district of Maharashtra). Isidina was a merchant from *Sunaparanta*, Vaddha, a member of *grahapati* family of Broach.¹ Punna and Vaddha were converted by Buddha himself and hence, their conversion may be placed before 486 B.C. If this literary evidence is accepted as reflecting historical events, we may then place the origin of Buddhism in Western India as early as the middle of the 5th century B.C.

The diffusion of Buddhism in Maharashtra may have taken place along three distinct routes i.e., The Ujjeni-Mahisati-Bodhan-Paithan route; Through Nagpur in Vidharbha region of Maharashtra; The third probable route of Buddhism diffusion was Bairal-Broach-Sopara route.² Before 250 B.C. the Buddhist communities in the region of Maharashtra must have been very small. With the regime of Aśhōka and his patronage and the missionary efforts made by Theravada Saṃgha after the Pāṭaliputra council,

Buddhism must have spread rather extensively.³ By 200 B.C. the Buddhist communities began to use excavated dwelling in the Bhor Ghat, the Nasik region and Ajanta.⁴ This activity must be related to the growing needs of the Buddhist communities on the one hand and the availability of patronage, royal and otherwise on the other.⁵

Mr. Balkrishna Gokhale has grouped these monuments in their geographical distribution into six groups *viz.*,

1. Pitaikhōra, Ajanta;
2. Junnar, Nāsik;
3. Bhāja, Karle, Bedsa, Kondana, Shelarwadi;
4. Kanhēri, Magathana, Kōndivale;
5. Kuḍa, Mahad, Kol, Dabhol, Nadsur, Chiplun;
6. Shirwal Wai, Karhad.⁶

Of these groups, the most important is the Kuḍa group, which is chronologically the earliest. Kuḍa lies to the south of Mumbai. Kuḍa must have been a place of some importance in the early historical period, probably due to its location on the creek. The excavations at Kuḍa belongs to the earlier group of rock-cut Chaityas of Hinayanists. The

Mahayana's reoccupation of the site is evident from the image of Buddha carved in the Chaitya VI, sometime in the 6th century A.D.⁷ Various scholars have assigned different dates to them, ranging from 2nd cent. B.C. to 4th cent. A.D.

Almost all the caves at Kuḍa contained inscriptional records. There are altogether 31 inscriptions found at Kuḍa caves.

Chaitya cave IX excavated by a Brahmin lady Bhayila.⁸ She was the wife of Brahman *Upasak Ayitilu*.

Cave XV, I and VI all of which have inscriptions stating that they were excavated when some of the members of the Mamdava family were occupying the position of *mahābhōja*, a feudatory or governor. The inscription in Cave XV records that the shrine *Chetyagraha* and cell *Ovaraka* are the gifts of Ramadata who belonged to the *Adhagachchaka* sect. He was the son of Ahila and the cave was excavated when *Vedidata Kochhiputa* was the *mahābhōja*.⁹ The epigraphical evidence of Cave XV, I and VI which suggests that the time gap between them may not be more than that of a generation.

In Kuḍa inscriptions, we find the names such as - Śivabhūti, Śivdata, Śivama, Śivaghōsa, Śivaprīta. They are the Śaivite names. The names after the constellations are Utaradata, Sitimita, Asalhamita, Pusa, etc. Names indicative of the serpent cult are Nāganika, Sapila, Nāga and Sapa.

Mahad lies in Raigad District. Group

of Buddhist caves were excavated on small hillock called Sonagad in a small village called Gandhaspala, three km. from the town. The caves are 28 in number. It has the usual complex of *Chaityagrahas* and *Vihāras*. The largest among them is Cave No. VIII "combining the characteristics of the flat roofed *Chaitya* and *Vihāras* as at Kuḍa."¹⁰ Except Cave No. 1, all belong to the Hināyana faith. They are dated in the early centuries of the Christian era. The Buddha figure in Cave No. XXI indicates the reoccupation by Mahāyānist, during 5th and 6th centuries. There are only two Chaityas at Cave No. I and VIII in the complex. Chaitya VIII is in the centre of the group. There are three inscriptions engraved in the above complex. The inscriptions refer to gift by Prince Kanabhōja, Vishṇupālita and Vadarsi and an endowment of a *Chaitya*, cell and nearby farms"¹¹.

Vidya Deheja has dated the caves to about 100 A.D.¹² Palaeographically the record in the cave belongs to series III assignable to 90 - 150 A.D. Dr. Nagaraju places it in the late third century, on the grounds of palaeography¹³.

Since the cave marks a further stage of development over Kuḍa Cave No. I and IV, B.G. Gokhale had placed it in the middle of third century.¹⁴ The Mahad Chaitya I appears to be the final logical product of late Hinayāna period. It may perhaps represents the transition from Hinayāna period. It may perhaps represents the transition from Hinayāna to Mahāyāna because it is clear from its

resemblance with the Mahāyāna *Vihāras* at Ajanta. It may, therefore, be dated to the end of third or early fourth century A.D.

In these caves Buddhist monks and nuns pursued their spiritual tasks of seeking *nirvāna*, studying and preserving the Buddhist scriptures and of practising meditations for their intellectual and spiritual growth. The Buddhist monks were supported by people who belonged practically to all sections of the society of the time. There were royal donors, bankers, merchants, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, ironmongers, gardeners,

farmers and carpenters. They paid for the excavation of the caves and cells in them.

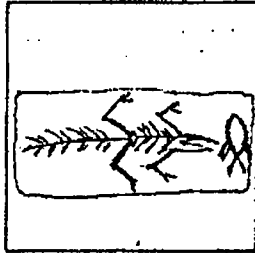
From the names in the inscriptions in these monastic establishment, we may simply observe that the names preserved must be regarded only as a part of a larger Buddhist community once existed in this area. Very few royal donors are Buddhists, many of them were staunch supporters of the Brahmanical persuasion. Their donations may have been inspired by general support which was supposed to give to all religious establishment.

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THE HARAPPAN SCRIPTS WITH
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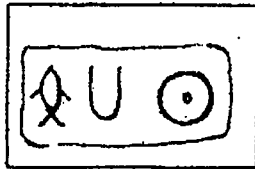
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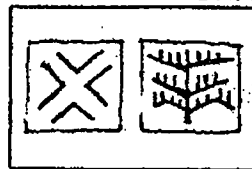
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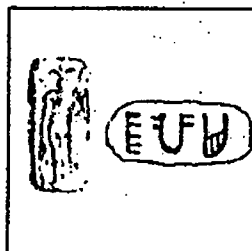
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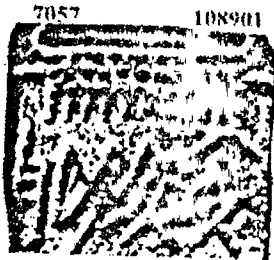
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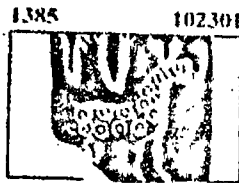
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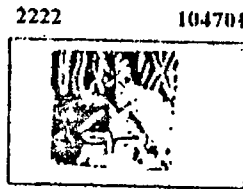
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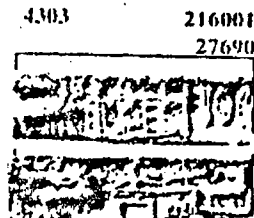
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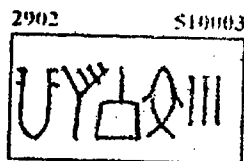
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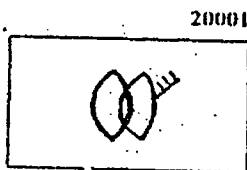
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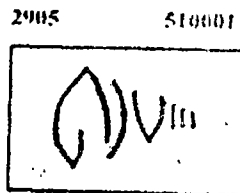
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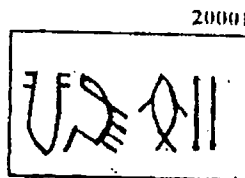
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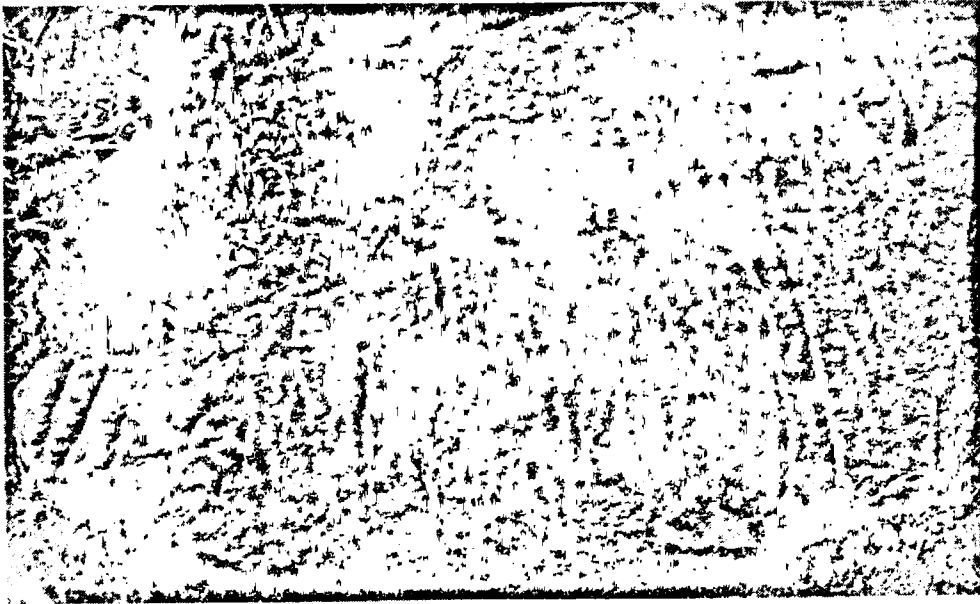
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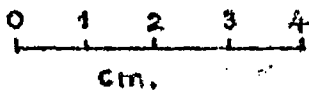
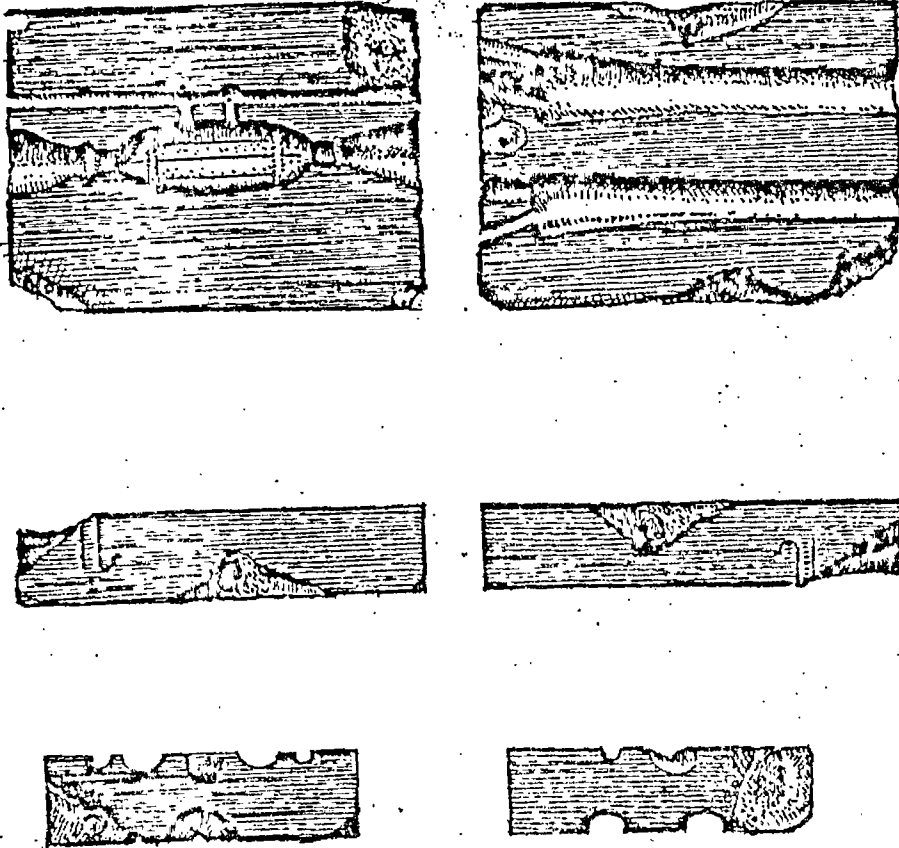
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An Early Inscription from the Langudi Hill Area



A Bilingual Inscription from Nagore, Tamil Nadu



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