The Ramtek Inscriptions II*

The Vākāṭaka Inscription in the Kevala-Narasimha Temple

HANS T. BAKKER & HARUNAGA ISAACSON

INTRODUCTION

In *The Ramtek Inscriptions I* (hereafter RI) mention was made of a Vākāṭaka inscription in the Kevala-Narasimha Temple on Ramtek Hill,¹ the discovery of which was reported in IAR 1982–83, 137. The credit for first discussing, as well as editing the text goes to the Director of the Archaeological Survey and Museums of Maharashtra, Dr. A.P. Jamkhedkar. In an article which appeared in 1986 in R. Parimoo (ed.), *Vaiṣṇavism in Indian Arts and Culture* (pp. 335–41),² Jamkhedkar attributed the inscription to Prabhāvatī Guptā (Jamkhedkar 1987a, 340), an attribution for which he adduced arguments in a subsequent article that was published in M.S. Nagaraja Rao (ed.), *Kusumāñjali*, vol. I in 1987 (Jamkhedkar 1987b, pp. 217–23). In the latter publication the text of the inscription was edited and an interpretation of it was given (*op. cit.* 220 f.). In the same year Ajay Mitra Shastri's *Early History of the Deccan* appeared, chapter V (pp. 45–81) of which deals with 'The Vākāṭaka: fresh epigraphic evidence'. This chapter is for the greater part a reprint of the author's earlier publication in the *Nagpur University Journal* (vol. 35 (1984–86), 130–64) with the exception of the *Appendix* (pp. 68–74). The appendix may have been added to the book in a late phase of its production, since the text of the endnotes

* The first version of this article with the title *The Ramtek Inscriptions II* was published in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. LVI, Part 1 (1993), 46–74. A revised version of the Sanskrit text of the inscription by Bakker alone was included in Bakker 1997, *The Vākāṭakas*, 163–67. The inscription was discussed again and new readings were proposed in Bakker 2010c, *A new interpretation of Rāmāgiri evidence (1)* (below, pp. 351 ff.) and Bakker 2012 *A new interpretation of Rāmāgiri evidence (2)* (below, pp. 357 ff.). The present edition reproduces the first edition in the BSOAS, but reference to the revised readings are given in the apparatus between [], footnotes, and through cross-references.

1 Hans Bakker in: BSOAS LII.3 (1989), 468; above, p. 80.

2 According to the title page, this volume was published in Delhi in 1987.

pertaining to it has unfortunately dropped out. In the *Appendix* Shastri analyses the contents of the Ramtek inscription of the time of Prabhāvatī Guptā, but, owing to the omission of the notes, it remains unclear in the majority of cases on which textual reading his interpretation is founded. Since Shastri's interpretation differs significantly from that of Jamkhedkar and the two authors do not refer to each other's publications, we may not be far off the mark if we assume that both archaeologists' treatments of this inscription were written independently at about the same time. Jamkhedkar's text was unfortunately marred by numerous printing errors. A corrected version appeared in Jamkhedkar's contribution to *The age of the Vākāṭakas*, edited by Ajay Mitra Shastri, which was published in 1992 (p. 162). The changes seem to be restricted to corrections of misprints, though a few new ones have crept in.

Whereas Shastri (1987, 68) rightly observed that 'so far as it can be made out, it appears to have been composed entirely in verse', Jamkhedkar, quite astonishingly, seems to have overlooked the metrical nature of the text, proposing numerous readings which must be rejected on metrical grounds. Partly because of this serious oversight, Jamkhedkar's edition is very unsatisfactory. We therefore feel justified in presenting a new edition and a translation of this text,³ which, though tantalising and puzzling in many respects,⁴ is evidently unusual if not unique in character, and of considerable significance for fifth-century Vākāṭaka and Gupta history.

As will be argued below, the inscription was commissioned by a lady, though not Prabhāvatī herself as believed by Jamkhedkar.⁵ She seems rather to have been the beneficiary of the pious activity recorded, which was carried out by one of her children, not however a son as suggested by Shastri,⁶ but a daughter. The inscription refers to events in this daughter's life, in particular to her marriage with her maternal uncle the Gupta prince Ghaṭotkaca, and her

3 When RI was written, Jamkhedkar's edition had been announced but had not yet reached us; now it has, we feel that the reservation made in RI, 468 (above, p. 80) is no longer appropriate.

4 Shastri 1987, 68f.: 'And what little has escaped destruction makes little sense and gives only a faint idea of its likely object. The only thing that can be done under the circumstances is to indicate bits of information that can be made out, sometimes very doubtfully, from the preserved portion.'

5 Jamkhedkar 1987b, 221: 'References to Śrī Rudrasena [...], husband of the celebrated Prabhāvatīguptā, and to Ghaṭotkaca, probably a son of Candragupta himself, all point to the inscription having been caused to be carved by Prabhāvatīguptā herself.' See also the following note.

6 Shastri 1987, 70f.: 'The name of the person responsible for its excavation was also given, but it is damaged. The only thing that can be said with some degree of certitude is that it was a male person as would follow from the word *kārayitṛ* in masculine form (*kārayitā*) (l. 12): he may have been Pravarasena II.' Compare Jamkhedkar 1987b, 221: 'That the present inscription was caused to be written by a lady is clear from the references in line 15 and that she is no other than Prabhāvatīguptā herself is most certain [sic!] from the nail-headed characters in which the inscription is carved.' In his 1992 publication (p. 160) Jamkhedkar seems less certain of the identity of the lady in question. On Shastri's argument from the word *kārayitā* see below, p. 134.

forced return to her ancestral home after his death. Whereas Shastri missed the name ‘Ghaṭotkaca’ and was hence led astray, Jamkhedkar does actually read this name, though the relationship between the persons mentioned—Candragupta, Ghaṭotkaca, Rudrasena and Prabhāvatī and their daughter (see Fig. 1)—epitomized in the word *bhāgineyī* (l. 7)—escaped him too.

Figure 1

*Gupta–Vākāṭaka matrimonial relations*⁷

We shall elaborate on this scheme below on the basis of the text. For the archaeological, religious and cultural context of the present inscription we may refer to several earlier publications.⁸ Some of the references that were made in them to this inscription do not conform with the readings and interpretations now proposed; these preliminary observations should be considered superseded by the present edition.

The inscription is found in the southern wall of the *maṇḍapa* of the Kevala–Narasimha Temple,⁹ and was discovered when the covering plaster was removed during restoration work of the Archaeological Survey, which unfortunately led to severe damage. It is not clear whether the inscription has always been fixed to this spot or was, at a certain time, inserted in the southern wall.¹⁰ When found, it covered principally two slabs of stone, fixed beneath one another. The left and upper sides of both stones are somewhat crumbled off, and the lower slab has been broken vertically in the middle. The three pieces of stone have been fitted again with mortar by the restorers. Twelve lines are carved on the upper slab and three on the lower. The height of both slabs taken together is about 50 cm, and their breadth about 100 cm. The ragged right sides of both

⁷ Names within square brackets do not occur in the legible part of the inscription. For a further elaboration see Bakker 2012, *The Gupta–Vākāṭaka Relationship. A new interpretation of Rāmagiri evidence* (2); below, pp. 357 ff.

⁸ Bakker 1989c, 1990b, 1991, 1992b, 1992c, 1992d (below, pp. 149 ff.).

⁹ For descriptions of the temple see Jamkhedkar 1988 and Bakker 1989c.

¹⁰ This question will be reexamined in Bakker 2010c, 2012, 2013b (see below, pp. 351 ff., pp. 357 ff., pp. 365 ff.).

the upper and lower slab seem to indicate that some portion was broken off which is now irretrievably lost.

Before presenting the edited text and translation and embarking on a line by line discussion of problems and uncertainties, it seems advisable, in view of the fact that the right part of the inscription is totally illegible and partly lost, to attempt to determine what its breadth originally was, i.e. how many verses (syllables) were written on one line. In this we are helped by the fact that the text appears to be totally written in verse. As can be readily determined, the legible portions of lines 2–10 are written in Upajāti metre. Each line begins at the beginning of a pāda, and in almost all of these cases it seems as good as certain that this is also the beginning of a verse. Thus the imagery of verse 5 (line 3) seems too coherent and fitting for it to be in fact parts of two different verses; the first two pādas of line 4 could hardly come elsewhere than at the beginning of a verse; in line 6 it seems highly probable that the genitive *supuṅgavasya* depends on *ghaṭotkaco nāma suto*, etc. And since on several lines, syllables or even words can be made out which clearly come after the fourth pāda of the verse with which the line begins, and these syllables or words can invariably be easily fitted into the Upajāti pattern, we conclude that on each line from lines 2–10 at least two complete verses in Upajāti metre were written. This has an important implication; since the first four pādas of Upajāti already cover approximately four-fifths of the breadth of the stone, at the time the inscription was made either the stone must have been (considerably) larger, i.e. since that time it must have been broken and a large section lost, or the inscription must have been continued horizontally on an adjacent stone or stones, just as we can see that it was continued vertically from the top stone to the bottom one. Assuming that there were two Upajāti verses (88 sylls.) to a line, the inscription would probably have covered a breadth of about 170 cm. This would already make it one of the broadest Gupta or Vākāṭaka inscriptions known. If we were to assume yet one more Upajāti verse per line (as one is tempted to do on the basis of the contents) the breadth would come to approximately 250 cm.

Proceeding on the supposition that in lines 11–15, which can be determined to be in Śloka metre, the scribe would have covered approximately the same breadth of stone as in the lines with Upajāti, one arrives at the approximation that if two Upajātis (88 sylls.) were written there, three Ślokas (96 sylls.) could be written per line. This is borne out by the fact that in line 12 an *akṣara* can be faintly made out that lies beyond where the end of the second Śloka could be, and by the fact that in the Śloka lines the *akṣaras* are written slightly closer to each other. If however we suppose that three Upajātis (132 sylls.) were written, there would have been room for four Ślokas (128 sylls.); even with more economical use of space it is hard to believe that five (160 sylls.) could have been written. The marked attempt in lines 11–15 to write more *akṣaras* in the same space therefore seems to support the first assumption of three Ślokas per line.

Plate 10
Vākāṭaka Inscription in the Kevala-Narasimha Temple (Ramtek)

Palaeography

The inscription is beautifully carved, giving a gentle and rounded impression. The characters may be described as belonging to the southern variety of Brāhmī with, as Shastri remarks, ‘solid triangles, instead of square boxes, on the tops of letters’.¹¹ So bald a description will, however, give little indication of the palaeographic interest of the inscription. The feature to which Shastri has briefly called attention, the solid triangular head-marks, is particularly noteworthy, in view of the fact that for a long time the Poona copperplates of Prabhāvatī Guptā (CII V, no. 2) was the only known Vākāṭaka inscription with triangular (in this case, however, hollow) head-marks.¹² The large majority of known Vākāṭaka inscriptions, with their characteristic hollow square head-marks,¹³ are admittedly on copperplates—a medium whose differences from stone influenced the palaeography to an extent which has not yet been sufficiently evaluated—but also the few Vākāṭaka stone inscriptions published in CII V (those discovered since will be discussed separately below) have square rather than triangular head-marks.¹⁴ On the characters of the Poona Plates Mirashi made the following remarks (CII V, 5).

The characters are mostly of the nail-headed variety, having a triangle with its apex downwards at the top of the letters. A few letters, however, are of the box-headed type in which all other inscriptions of the Vākāṭakas were written. See, e.g. *vākāṭaka*^o in line 1 of the seal and *si* of *siddham* in line 1 on the first plate. It is noteworthy that besides their boxheads, some of these letters (e.g. *v* and *s*) have forms which are different from those noticed elsewhere in the grant. They agree with those in other grants of box-headed characters. It would seem therefore that the scribe began to write the present grant in box-headed characters, but not being accustomed to them, he soon changed over to nail-headed characters with which he was more familiar. He may have hailed from North India where the nail-headed characters were in vogue.

The characters show an admixture of northern and southern peculiarities, the former predominating over the latter.

It is therefore with these plates that one might reasonably first compare the palaeography of the inscription published here. But in contrast with the Poona Plates, we here find exclusively southern forms, as far as the shape of the letters is concerned. The difference can be clearly illustrated by the *ma* for example; our inscription showing the looped southern form as opposed to the open and

11 Shastri 1987, 68; Jamkhedkar 1987b, 220 contents himself with speaking of ‘the nail-headed characters of the Gupta times’.

12 Dani 1963, 173: ‘all their [i.e. the Vākāṭakas] inscriptions are written in this style [i.e. with square head-marks at the top left of the verticals], except the Poona copperplate which has hollow triangular head-marks.’

13 Cf. Dani 1963, 175.

14 CII V, nos. 1, 20–21, 22, 25, 26 and 27. Of these, it is worth noting that only no. 1, the *Deotek Inscription of Rudrasena I*, belongs to the Eastern Vākāṭakas. Nos. 20–21 and 22 have hollow square head-marks, the others solid.

tailed variety of the Poona Plates. The only ‘northern’ feature is therefore the head-marks.

One more characteristic that differs from the majority of hitherto known Vākāṭaka inscriptions is the form of the medial *i/ī*, for which the circle type, with an additional curve inside for the *ī*, is used; a form which, according to Dani, ‘though known in the inscriptions of Malwa and Gujarat in the fifth century AD, was not used in this region in the Vākāṭaka records’ (Dani 1963, 176). This remark must definitely be qualified: Dani appears to have overlooked the inscription of Varāhadeva in Ajanta Cave XVII, in which the circle type is found (in combination with solid square head-marks), and the Ghaṭotkaca Cave inscription of the same.¹⁵ Furthermore, several copperplate inscriptions use the circle type, sometimes together with the looped kind.¹⁶ None the less it is true that the circle type is rarer in Vākāṭaka inscriptions.

The particular combination of features here—solid triangular head-marks, exclusively southern forms of the letters, and the circle type of medial *i/ī*—seems to agree most closely with some specimens of Malwa epigraphy; a good example which is somewhat similar to our inscription is the famous *Mandasor Stone Inscription of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvarman* of AD 437/473 (CII III (1888), no. 18). In comparison with that inscription, however, we here find e.g. the *pa* with practically equal arms, instead of the form with its left arm bent.

Other points which should be briefly noted are the use of the *jīhvāmūliya*, here transliterated as *ḥ* (l. 4), and the *upadhmānīya*, transliterated *ḥ* (ll. 4 and 5, both somewhat damaged), as well as the *halanta* forms, which consist of a small version of the letter written slightly below the line (*n* in l. 8, *t* in l. 10, *m* in ll. 12, 13 and 14). The only punctuation mark visible, a double *daṇḍa*, is found in l. 13, after verse 27 (printed in bold-face in the text). At a number of places, e.g. l. 8, after verse 15, it can be clearly seen that no punctuation mark was used but some extra space was given between the verses.

Some remarks should now be made as to the relation of the palaeography of our inscription with that of the other Vākāṭaka stone inscriptions discovered and published since the appearance of CII V. The first among these is the Hisse–Borala inscription of Devasena, which has been the subject of several publications since its discovery.¹⁷ In his discussion of the palaeography of this inscription Kolte wrote (1965, 374):

Most of the copperplates and stone inscriptions of the Vākāṭakas discovered so far are written in box-headed characters. The present inscription is an exception to this. The letters in it have neither the headline nor any boxes at the top of the

15 CII V, no. 26; though the plate published in CII is poorly legible, and Mirashi does not make any remark on the shape of the medial *i/ī*, it seems to be circular.

16 See especially the *Ramtek Plate of Pravarasena II*, CII V, no. 16, pl. XVI.

17 Kolte 1965; Gokhale 1967–68; Gai & Sankaranarayanan 1967–68; Shastri 1970; Shrimali 1987, 81. The sole photograph published so far is that in Gokhale 1967–68, this photograph is the basis for the remarks made here.

daṇḍa ... However, the letter *c* seems to be an exception to this. The *c* in line 3 has been incised with a head line.

Gokhale on the other hand wrote that ‘the characters of the epigraph ... resemble those of the Ghaṭotkaca Cave Inscription of Vyāghrasena.¹⁸ They are not box-headed as found in many copperplate grants of the Vākātakas’ (Gokhale 1967–68, 2).

On the basis of the photograph published by Gokhale these observations can be corrected and rendered more precise on a few points. Many of the letters indeed appear to have no head-mark. The *ca*, which occurs twice in line three, has a solid triangular head-mark (particularly clear in the second example). Occasionally other letters too seem to have been written with headmarks, e.g. the *sa* which in line 2 appears once with apparently a solid triangular head-mark (in *sudarśanaṃ*) and once with a solid square or rectangular head-mark (in °*satva*°). This inscription therefore actually appears to mix forms without head-marks, with triangular head-marks and with square or rectangular head-marks. Though the shapes of the letters can be described (with Gokhale 1967–68, 2) as southern, several, most noticeably the *da* (curved instead of angular) and the *pa* (which has a bent left arm), differ significantly from those found in our inscription.

The other two, admittedly very short, Vākāṭaka stone inscriptions published in recent years are the two graffiti found in the very same temple as the inscription at issue and published in RI. The first of these (RI, pl. II (a); above, Plate 6) was there described as being ‘written in Deccani style characters with solid triangular head-marks’, while the second (RI, pl. II (b); above, Plate 7) has ‘a mixture of solid triangular and block [i.e. square] head-marks’ (RI, 469; above, p. 81).

Of these two graffiti, the second need not occupy us long here; it may suffice to draw attention to the *ra* with its extended lower curve and the very square *tha*, two features that distinguish it clearly from our inscription. The first graffito, on the other hand, is of interest here, since its letters can be seen to bear a certain resemblance to those of the large inscription. None the less, the appealing theory that the engraver of the latter carved his own name onto a pillar during an idle moment, must no doubt be rejected, as can be determined already by a study of the first letter of the graffito (*śrī*). As can be clearly seen in the published photograph (Plate 6), the medial *ī* is of the curved rather than the circular type, and the top of the *śa* is rather broader and definitely flat, another characteristic which may suggest ‘northern’ influence. Finally the *da* is round, resembling the *ḍa* rather than the *da* of the inscription published here.

To conclude this note on palaeography, we believe that in this respect too this inscription proves itself to be unusual, showing a combination of characteristics which has not yet been found in any other Vākāṭaka inscription. The present

18 Sic: meant is the inscription of Varāhadeva, CII V, no. 26, which has square head-marks.

state of our knowledge of Indian palaeography is not, however, so far advanced as yet that one can, in our opinion, draw any conclusions from these facts as to the provenance of the engraver or other possible implications.

Note on the edition and translation

The edition presented here is based primarily on photographs we made in November 1989 (of which the photograph published here (Plate 10) is a composite). Since the individual photos overlap to some extent, it was possible to make use of stereoscopy for considerable portions of the text.¹⁹ In addition, photographs kindly supplied by the American Institute of Indian Studies (Ramnagar/Varanasi) were consulted.²⁰

While we have spared no pains in our efforts to establish the text from these photographs, it may be worthwhile to repeat the warning recently made by K.R. Norman with particular reference to Aśokan studies (Norman 1991, 245).

One problem which bedevils inscriptional studies ... is that what is legible on one set of photographs may for various reasons, including perhaps the skill of the photographer, the lighting, the shadows, etc., be doubtful or even completely illegible on another. Even in the case of identical photographs, variations in the printing process can lead to variations in the quality of the print of the photographs.

It is in part such problems as these that have led us to give here, in addition to the text and translation, a relatively detailed commentary touching on both palaeographical and philological problems, and a separate section setting out our interpretation and its historical implications at some length. More importantly, however, this was done from a conviction that it is in these respects that much of the work done in inscriptional studies so far could be improved; and even if part of what follows may seem unnecessary, plodding or self-evident, our aims will have been fulfilled if with its help other scholars can more easily locate our mistakes and improve on them.

Those conjectures of which we felt relatively certain, that is, for which we could think of no other possibility that was at all plausible, have been placed in ⟨angular brackets⟩ in the text. Others, which seemed attractive but were less compelling, have been suggested in notes below the text, while a few more suggestions have been tentatively made in the annotation. We are of course aware of the subjective element involved in this procedure—what seems compelling to us may appear implausible to others—but feel none the less that at

19 The use of this technique was first suggested to us by Mr. M. Albers. We are also grateful to J.P. Posthumus (MA) for technical assistance.

20 The four photographs (nos. 580.60–63) were placed at our disposal thanks to the kind offices of F.H.P.M. Janssen (MA). The photographs published in Jamkhedkar (1987b) and Shastri (1987) are of too poor quality as printed to be of much help.

- 2 𑀧 – (pra)bhāvodgata(pā)da(pī)⟨tha-⟩,
 (pra) – (dh)ṛti(sthā)lana – (ñc)i – – |
 yasyottamāṅgair bbalayo kriyant⟨e⟩,
 (pā)de ⟨sa⟩cūḍamaṇibhir nṛ(pāṇām) ||3||
- ta(s)yodadhiprānta 𑀧 la 𑀧 – 𑀧, 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 |
 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧, 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 ||4||
- 3 𑀧 ⟨d⟩(e)vateva pratipūjya⟨mān⟩(ā),
 pitur gr⟨he⟩– (pra)ti(ṣ)i 𑀧 – 𑀧 |
 𑀧 – ⟨yay⟩au vṛd(dhi)ka(m) ⟨cāna⟩lasya,
 prājyājyasiktasya śikheva – 𑀧 ||5||
- tām 𑀧 – nābhyunnata – 𑀧 – 𑀧, 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 |
 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧, 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 ||6||
- 4 tayoḥ kramād āhatala(kṣaṇeṣ)u,
 jāteṣu – – 𑀧 – nvite(ṣu)|
 y⟨aviya⟩sī candra(ma)saḥ (p)ra(bh)⟨eva⟩,
 𑀧 muṇḍanāmnī tana(yā) (ba)⟨bhūva⟩ ||7||
- 𑀧 – 𑀧 (lekhā)mi 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧, 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 |
 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧, 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 ||8||
- 5 sadaiva devas trisamudranāthas,
 sa candragup(t)a(ḥ paripū)rṇṇa⟨v⟩(ṛ)ttaḥ |
 𑀧 – 𑀧 – nām adhi(pa)s su(tām tā)m̄,
 śrī(ru)⟨dra⟩senāya (g)⟨u⟩ṇā 𑀧 – 𑀧 ||9||
- (ve) – 𑀧 – (lī) 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧, 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 |
 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧, 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 ||10||
- 6 sudurvvaḥām rājyadhuraṃ samagrām̄,
 dhurandharasy(e)⟨va⟩ supuṅgavasya |
 𑀧 – 𑀧 – (syā) 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧,
 ⟨gha⟩to⟨tka⟩co nāma suto 𑀧 – 𑀧 ||11||
- 𑀧 m āṅganāpā 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧, 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 |
 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧, 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 ||12||
- 7 tām bhāḡineyīm atha rājarājo,
 dr̥(ṣ)⟨tvā⟩ 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 veśmalakṣmī⟨m⟩ |
 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 – 𑀧 (d)y⟨◇⟩,
 ⟨u⟩pāsya pāṇigrahaṇaṃ cakāra ||13||

[3a *tikṣṇa*° conj. Bakker 1997, 163] 3b *prabhā*° [4a °*palāyamānām* conj. Bakker 1997, 163] 5a *sā devateva*, [*yā devateva* conj. Bakker 1997, 164] [5b *pitur gr̥hītā* conj. Bakker 1997, 164, but rejected in Bakker 2010c (below, n.1 on p.352); *pratiśiddhaśakteḥ* conj. Bakker 1997, 164] [5c *kanyā yayau* conj. Bakker 1997, 164] [5d *śuddhā* conj. Bakker 1997, 164] 7b *putreṣu guṇānviteṣu* [7d *sā muṇḍa*° conj. Bakker 1997, 164; I now conjecture: *yā muṇḍa*°] 9c *dadau* – nām, [*dadau prajānām* conj. Bakker 1997, 164] 9d *guṇākarāya* [11c *prajādhīpasyā*° conj. Bakker 1997, 164] 11d *suto babhūva*

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Translation

- 1 He is victorious, whose <colour resembles> the depths of a water-laden rain-cloud, who [...] clarified butter in a stream [...], whose [...] limbs are swollen at the occasion of a sacrifice <that is the battle>, and who is looked at with gazes that tremble with fright [...].²¹
- 2 [...] royal seer of [...]. [*one verse possibly lost*]
- 3 To whose feet the crowned heads of kings pay tribute: [...] whose [...] receptacle for holding <the lustre> from (his) footstool, (a lustre) that arises from (his) might [...].
- 4 To him [...] the edge of the ocean [...]. [*one verse possibly lost*]
- 5 <She>, being worshipped in the residence of her father like a deity [...], grew up like a [...] flame of a fire in which abundant ghee has been poured.
- 6 Her [...] raised [...]. [*one verse possibly lost*]
- 7 After (a number of) <sons> had been born to them in succession, famous and furnished <with virtues>, [...] a daughter called MUṆDĀ, resembling the lustre of the moon, was born as (their) younger sister.
- 8 [...] streak [...]. [*one verse possibly lost*]
- 9 At all times the conduct of this King (*deva*), CANDRAGUPTA, Lord of the three oceans, was perfect: the sovereign <gave> his daughter to the illustrious RUDRASENA, <a mine of> virtues. [*one verse (10), possibly two, lost*]
- 11 To (this) [...] great hero, who was like a beast of burden, (carrying) the entire burden of (his) kingdom which was very difficult to bear, [...] a son named GHATOTKACA <was born>.
- 12 [...] woman [...]. [*one verse possibly lost*]
- 13 Then, after he had seen that niece (of his) [...], who was a palace Lakṣmī, [...] (this) king paid his respects (to her) and married her.
- 14 The lord of the gods [...] <minister> [...]. [*one verse possibly lost*]
- 15 <He pleased> the minds of wise men with refined language, [...] of [...] whose eyes were like <blue> lotuses [...], mendicants with floods of wealth and the peoples with (his) fame.
- 16 He [...] king [...]. [*one verse possibly lost*]
- 17 When at a certain time [...] he of desirable appearance [...] by/with Indra, [...] (her) brother brought the proud woman [...], back to his own residence with force. [*one verse (18), possibly two, lost*]
- 19 There, whatever [...], <increasing *dharma*>, the king's daughter performed, of those [...] this share [...]. [*one verse (20), possibly two, lost*]
- 21 And she <then respectfully> caused to be made the Lord of the Earth and Master of PRABHĀVATĪ for the sake of everlasting merit [...].

21 For a translation of the restored verse see below, p. 353.

- 22 [...] the origin of the world [...]. [one verse (23), possibly two, lost]
- 24 After she of extreme ⟨lustre⟩, had made in the village KADALĪVĀṬAKA a water reservoir SUDARŚANA (‘lovely to behold’) and (installed) the beautiful (*sudarśana*) god,
- 25 [...] whose hair is yellow, for the sake of merit [...]. [one verse (26), possibly two, lost]
- 27 Half of the merit assigned to the gods, for (her) father and mother [...] accruing from the deed [...].
- 28 Of (him) of infinite might who is the cause of the sustenance and destruction of the world, the [...] of the (Vedic) seers [...]. [one verse (29), possibly two, lost]
- 30 Reflecting that that temple for her beloved ⟨begetter⟩ is transitory, she free of sins, for the sake of a mass of merit for her mother alone,
- 31 [...] stone [...], resembling stone [...], for a long time [...]. [one verse (32), possibly two, lost]
- 33 By him, who was chosen by her and is carrying out her orders, (about) to proclaim this fame that will last so long as there is light,
- 34 a great *kāvyā* [...]. [one or two verses possibly lost]

Annotation

LINE 1 Though much of the opening verse has been lost, enough remains to be able to determine with a high degree of certainty that the metre employed was Puṣpitāgrā. The fact that the fourth pāda seems to end at approximately the same place as the fourth pādas of lines 2 and 3 is consistent with the observation that the *akṣaras* are written somewhat more closely together in line 1.

The first legible *akṣara* we read as *ya*; the left tip of the *ya* can be clearly seen though the connexion with the centre vertical is no longer visible. This leads us to the natural conjecture *sa jayati* for the opening words. Judging from the place where all the succeeding lines begin, there might have been room for one more *akṣara* before this, e.g. OM. It should however be noted that neither the Ajanta Cave Inscription of Varāhadeva (CII V no. 25) nor the Ghaṭotkaca Cave Inscription of the same minister (CII V no. 26) has any benedictory syllables or formula before the first verse.²² For a metrical Gupta inscription which opens with a Puṣpitāgrā verse see CII III (1888) no. 35, the *Mandasor Stone Inscription of Yaśodharman and Viṣṇudharman* (beginning with the words *sa jayati jagatām patiḥ pinākī*).

22 These two inscriptions, together with the inscription in Ajanta Cave XVII (CII V no. 27), are in some ways the most appropriate for purposes of comparison with our inscription, since they are the only other known Vākāṭaka stone inscriptions written entirely in verse.

At the end of the first pāda we tentatively propose restoring *sa-jalāmbudodarābhaḥ*,²³ which would be a suitable enough adjective to describe Viṣṇu. It cannot however be determined with certainty to what (manifestation of a) divinity this *maṅgala* verse is addressed. As it is found in a Narasiṃha temple one certainly could expect Viṣṇu, perhaps even in his man-lion incarnation. This would accord well with *bhayaḥloladr̥ṣṭidr̥ṣṭaḥ*, our reading in the fourth pāda; but the comparison with a dark rain-cloud would then be inappropriate. Also °*makhasamayaidhitāṅga*°, if this reading is correct, does not seem particularly suited. The tentative suggestion *raṇamakhasamayaidhitāṅga*° would be more appropriate for a god doing battle in human form, e.g. Kṛṣṇa or Rāma.

For the second pāda of the first verse we can offer no compelling restoration. In our translation we have chosen to interpret °*rasarājya*° as containing the word *ājya* (also found in verse 5) rather than *rājya*, and this has led us to propose reading °*prasarājya*°. The syllables *miti* preceding this could, e.g. be part of the word *samiti*, but since interpretation of the pāda and indeed the whole verse is problematic, the possibility that one should rather divide the words °*m iti prasarājya*° can not be completely ruled out.²⁴

The second verse clearly cannot be in Puṣpitāgrā metre, since the fifth syllable *ja* must be heavy, as the following *akṣara* is certainly a ligature. The sixth syllable is somewhat problematic; though we read *r(ṣ)i*, it must be admitted that the ligature *rṣ* would in that case have here a form rather different from that which one would expect and which is indeed found in line 13.²⁵ On the basis of our proposed reading, we restore the word °*rājarṣi*°. Unfortunately, the word preceding it does not appear to be any name that is familiar to us.²⁶

LINE 2 The main construction of verse 3 is to be found in pādas c and d, and is fortunately clear. It is unlikely that the verse also contained a correlative for *yasya*, and this in turn implies that the verse is a description of a king who was already mentioned.²⁷ The first two pādas apparently contained a long compound, the precise sense of which is difficult to make out, especially since

23 Since the following syllable is lost, and we do not have a compelling restoration, it is obviously impossible to guess what the precise form would be after application of the rules of sandhi.

24 Cf. below, p. 353.

25 The other main candidate, the ligature *rm* seems, however, still less acceptable; the two arms visible do not really resemble those of the looped *ma*, and moreover there appears to be a short vertical connecting them with the lower part of the letter.

26 One possible restoration of the first three syllables would be *mureṇa*, which at least has the advantage that the cerebral *ṇ* would be explained. On the other hand, this would suggest that the content of the verse is again mythical rather than historical, as one would expect from the word *rājarṣi* and from the fact that verse 3 seems to imply that a king or royal family had already been mentioned before.

27 Also possible, though to our minds rather less likely, is that the king is first named in the following verse which begins with *tasya*.

the termination has been lost, so that we cannot be certain who or what it qualified or described. For the first two syllables of pāda b we propose the reading °*prabhā*°; this provides assonance with °*prabhāvo*° in pāda a and would be consonant with the frequent usage of (*pra*)√*bhā* and its derivatives in the inscription.

Verse 4 no doubt told something further of this king, though its contents are practically lost. In pāda a one thinks of the possibility of restoring *tasyo-dadhiprāntabalasya*, ‘of him, whose power/army [extended to] the edge of the ocean(s)’, but this is palaeographically quite unlikely. The seventh syllable appears to have taken up quite a lot of space vertically, and may have had the vowel *i*.

LINE 3 The main image of verse 5, that of a young girl growing up and increasing in brightness like a flame shooting up from a fire on which ghee has been poured, is fortunately clear. For the word in pāda b which apparently begins with *pratiṣṭ*° we have no particularly convincing suggestion; it might be a bahuvrīhi adjective of the girl with *pratiṣiddha* as its first member.²⁸ Pāda d one would rather expect to end with an adjective qualifying in the first place *śikhā*, and implicitly also the girl who is the *upameya*; just one possibility, though an appealing one, would be *śuddhā*, which would continue the series of sibilants.

Of verse 6 far too little is preserved to be able to arrive at any certainty as to its syntax or contents. The first syllable *tām* no doubt refers to the girl described in verse 5. Whether *nābhyunnata*° contains the negative particle *na* or whether this is instead the termination of a word in the instrumental case, or even an a-stem which is the prior member of a compound, cannot be determined.

LINE 4 Of considerable interest in verse 7 is the word *āhatalakṣaṇeṣu*, which, although the last three *akṣaras* are somewhat damaged, and although it was misread by Jamkhedkar, can in our opinion be read with certainty in pāda a. This word was hitherto chiefly known from lexicographical works, its earliest and most important occurrence being in the *Amarakośa* (AK 3.1.10): *guṇaiḥ pratīte tu kṛtalakṣaṇāhatalakṣaṇau*.²⁹ At least one commentator of Amara, the southern author Bommagaṇṭi Appayārya (most probably to be dated towards the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century), seems also to have known a reading *kṛtalakṣaṇāhitalakṣaṇau*.³⁰ The word *āhitalakṣaṇa*

28 Less likely, though perhaps not impossible, is *pratiṣikta*°; the passive participle of √*sic* also occurs in pāda d, and, as far as we can judge, the use of this root with the preposition *prati* is rather uncommon.

29 Amara teaches the use of the words *kṛtalakṣaṇa* and *āhatalakṣaṇa* in the sense of ‘one who is known on account of his virtues’, obviously the sense in which the latter is used by the author of the inscription. Other early occurrences of the word are found in MBh 2.48.36, 3.247.4, 7.19.63.

30 AK 16. Note that MS K₅ of Liṅgayasūrin’s commentary on the AK adds *āhitalakṣaṇa iti vā pāṭhaḥ* (AK₁ 16). The other commentaries available to us all read °*āhatalakṣaṇau*.

occurs in apparently the same sense in *Raghuvamśa* 6.71, where it is noteworthy that Mallinātha (also a southern writer) glosses it with *prakhyātāgunah*, and supports this by quoting Amara with the °*āhitalakṣaṇau* reading.³¹ In the present state of Kālidāsa studies it is, however, impossible to have any certainty about such textual details, and without a thorough study of the manuscript traditions of the *Raghuvamśa* it would be rash to maintain that Kālidāsa must have used the word in the form *āhita*° rather than *āhatalakṣaṇa*. Indeed, Rāyamukṣa (AD 1431/32), in his commentary on AK 3.1.10, quotes the relevant pāda from the *Raghuvamśa* with the reading *āhatalakṣaṇo 'bhūt* (AK₂ 9).

We have met with one other significant occurrence of the word. In line 4 of the Ghaṭotkaca Cave inscription of the Vākāṭaka minister Varāhadeva (CII V no. 26) the word *āhitalakṣaṇānām* occurs; as Mirashi however points out in a footnote, earlier editions of the inscription by Pandit Bhagvanlal Indraji and Bühler had read *āhatalakṣaṇānām*.³² The valuable point about the occurrence of the word in our inscription, however, is that there can here be no doubt at all that the form *āhatalakṣaṇa* was used, for the *akṣara ha* is beautifully preserved on an undamaged section of the stone.³³

In 7ab we obviously have an absolute locative, and there can be little doubt that after *jāteṣu* a substantive (masc. pl. loc.) meaning 'son', and another qualification of these sons must have followed. The restoration *jāteṣu putreṣu guṇāviteṣu*, while perhaps not the only metrically correct possibility, seems both simple and plausible. More compelling, to our minds, are the readings proposed in pāda c; *yavīyasī* being the only metrically correct and at the same time both syntactically and semantically natural and convincing restoration. In view of the fact that a simile is clearly intended, *prabheva* at the end of the pāda seems equally certain.

In 7d we find a personal name of a girl as the first member of a compound ending in °*nāmnī*. The name no doubt ended in *muṇḍā*,³⁴ though the first syllable is unfortunately illegible; it may have ended in *ā* (which would suggest Cāmuṇḍā), for what appears to be the right vertical of the *ā* can still be seen, together with the horizontal stroke attaching it to the head-mark. That the vowel is *o* instead is less likely, since the two arms of the *o* are generally curved rather than angular. For further discussion of the name and identity of the girl see below, p. 137.

The few *akṣaras* legible of verse 8 do not of course offer much material for interpretation. We are inclined to think that the verse contains the word

31 Cf. Vallabhadeva's gloss in his *Raghupāñcikā*: *guṇasampadā vikhyātāḥ*.

32 The photograph published in CII V is unfortunately not of sufficiently good quality to confirm whether there really are, as Mirashi claims, traces of a curve above the *ha*, so that here too some doubt remains as to the correct reading.

33 A discussion of the not unproblematic etymology and semantics of *āhatalakṣaṇa/āhitalakṣaṇa* must be deferred to a later occasion.

34 The shortening of the feminine suffix *ā* to *a* is permitted here by P.6.3.36. Cf. also *prabhāvatīsvāmīnam* in verse 21.

lekhā which suggests the possibility that the daughter introduced in verse 7 is described further, and perhaps said to grow in beauty and lustre as the crescent moon; a comparison found in Kālidāsa's description of the young Pārvatī in *Kumārasambhava* (1.25): *dīne dīne sā parivardhamānā labdhodayā cāndramasīva lekhā | pupoṣa lāvaṇyamayān viśeṣāñ jyotsnāntarāñīva kalāntarāñi*. It is not possible to determine whether one should divide *lekhā mi*°, *lekhām i*°, or *lekhāmi*°.

LINE 5 Verse 9 is relatively unproblematic. On the use of the term *trisamudranātha* in pāda a see below, p. 138. The sixth and seventh *akṣaras* of pāda b are very badly damaged, but we are fairly confident of the reading *paripūrṇavṛttaḥ*. The *upadhmānīya* can be made out on the left arm of the *pa*. The word may be taken as containing a (mild form of) *śleṣa*, with a secondary meaning of 'completely full and round', which would be a suitable adjective to describe the moon (*candra*), aside from the meaning 'of perfect conduct', a description of Candragupta.

The verb has been lost, but considerations of syntax and common sense (the presence of a fem. acc. sg. besides a masc. dat. sg.), aside from known historical facts (see below, p. 138), strongly suggest a form of $\sqrt{dā}$ or a verb with the same meaning. This must almost certainly have been at the beginning of pāda c, since the second half of pāda d hardly has space for a verb, and contains instead in all probability an adjective describing Rudrasena, for which we propose *guṇākarāya*. Aside from this verb, the illegible part of pāda c may have contained a gen. masc. pl., the final syllable of which (*nām*) is still legible, depending on the following words *adhipas* and most probably meaning either 'king' or 'man'. The alternative possibility, that °*nām* is to be interpreted as a fem. acc. sg. ending, a further qualification of the daughter, is most unlikely in view of the following *adhipas*. Since the gen. pl. must have taken up at least three syllables,³⁵ only two, at the very beginning of the pāda, remain for the verb. Hence our proposal *dadau*.

Verse 10 must be regarded as completely lost, as far as the extraction of information, or even a single word, is concerned. The second *akṣara* could be a *ta* (vowel uncertain), and two or three syllables after the *li* or *lī* which can with difficulty be made out there seems to be another *ta* (vowel again uncertain).

LINE 6 Verse 11 is again relatively well preserved. The sense seems clear; pāda c no doubt contained at least one more qualification or epithet of the king described in the first two pādas, as appears from the single *akṣara* (*syā*) that can be read. It is plausible that the verb occurred at the end of pāda d, and the most obvious candidate is *babhūva*, as at the end of verse 7.

It does not appear possible to say anything about the text of verse 12. The only point to be noted is that four or five syllables after the last legible *akṣara*

³⁵ The only at all plausible word which could yield a two-syllable gen. pl. with the metrical pattern -- is *nṛ* (*nṛnām*) but this, as well as other words such as *nṛpa*, *nara*, *prabhu*, etc., is impossible in view of the fact that the last syllable is clearly *nām* and not *ṇām*.

(*pā*) what could be the sign for medial *u* can be seen.

LINE 7 Of verse 13, we are fortunate in having the subject, object and verb well preserved, so that the interpretation is clear and unproblematic. Since the main verb is at the end of pāda d, it is highly probable that the *ḍṛṣ* which can be made out at the beginning of pāda b, and of which the *ṣ* appears to be the top part of a ligature, is to be interpreted as *ḍṛṣṭvā*, and this would provide a syntactically smooth construction. Pāda b may also have contained another adjective belonging with the *bhāḡineyī* and perhaps, though not necessarily, an *iva* going with *veśmalakṣmīm*. The contents of pāda c can not be reconstructed.

Little can be said of verse 14. The fourth *akṣara* could have been the horse-shoe type *ga*, but since the lower part is damaged, so that it cannot be determined whether the character has a closed bottom or not, *dha* is an equally likely reading. We have chosen for the latter possibility, simply on the grounds that words beginning with *dhan* are rather more frequent than words beginning with *gan*. In pāda b the opening syllables *amā* suggest, in a royal context, *amātya*.

LINE 8 Of verse fifteen neither subject nor verb has been preserved. The construction clearly involves a series of acc. (pl.) together with instrumentals, both singular and plural, and in pādas a and b also 2 cases of a gen. pl., presumably dependant on an acc. pl. From the general tenor, one expects the verb to have a meaning such as ‘satisfy’, ‘delight’, ‘win over’ or the like, and the subject is no doubt a king. It should be noted that very similar verses are found in two Gupta inscriptions: the *Junāgaḍh Rock Inscription of Skandagupta* (AD 457–58), where we read: *ājyapraṇāmair vibudhān athe-ṣṭvā dhanair dvijātīn api tarpayitvā | paurāṃs tathābhyarcya yathārhamānaiḥ bhrtyāṃś ca pūjyān suhrdaś ca dānaiḥ* || (CII III (1888), 60 (l. 19)), and the *Gangdhar Stone Inscription of Viśvarvarman*, which contains a verse reading *yajñais surān munigaṇān niyamair udāraiḥ* – – – – – | *mānena bhrtyajanam apratimena* (sic) *loke yo [']toṣayat sucaritaś ca jagat samaggram* || (CII III (1888), 74 (ll. 3–4)).

At the beginning of pāda b we read the *akṣara prī*: the left arm of the *pa* and the medial *ī* are clearly visible, and at the bottom left there is a mark which we interpret as the tip of the curved subscript *r*. On the strength of this *akṣara* we propose reading the verb form *prīṇāti* (historical present), and for the two remaining illegible syllables *nīlā°* seems a very plausible reading. This would however mean either that the acc. pl. on which the gen. pl. *nīlāmburuheḥkaṣṇā-nām* depends is in pāda c or that *manāṃsi* in pāda a is to be construed again with this gen. pl. as well as with *viduṣām*. It must also be admitted that a historical present does not seem to occur elsewhere in the inscription, though its durative aspect could be quite appropriate here. The subject must have been given in pāda c, perhaps at the end, for the double *s* (*s sādḥūn*) suggests that the last word of pāda c may have been a nom. masc. sg.

Verse 16 is again almost completely lost. The *akṣaras hīpa* at the end of the

first pāda strongly suggest the word *mahīpa*, probably, given the position, in the nominative, though the precise form taken after application of the rules of sandhi cannot be determined.

LINE 9 The basic outline of verse 17 is in any case clear: the first two pādas must have consisted of an absolute locative construction (on which *purandareṇa* probably depended), while pāda d contains the subject and verb. *ānināya* must govern two accusatives, the second of which (*svaṃ gr̥ham*) is in pāda d and the first no doubt in pāda c, qualified by the adjective *samānām*. The possibility that *samānām* is a gen. pl. rather than an acc. fem. sg. is in this context very unlikely.

LINE 10 The subject of verse 19 is obviously *manujendraputrī*. The reading of this word is not in any doubt, despite the fact that Shastri misread it as *manujendrapurī* (metrically impossible) and took this as a reference to the capital. The *r* visible is definitely in its subscript form, and above it the form of the *t* can still be made out. As for the grammatical construction of the verse, it is likely that *teṣāṃ* in pāda d correlates with *yān yān* of the first pāda. It is unfortunately not quite clear what the princess *akārṣīt* (note the use of the aorist which could point to the actuality of the action); °*savān* in pāda b suggests °*prasavān*,³⁶ and we conjecture that this is the final member of a bahuvrīhi compound meaning in effect ‘producing...’. The *akṣara dha* visible, and in a position where it must be metrically heavy, suggests *dharmaprasavān*.

LINE 11 With this line the metre changes to Śloka. This accompanies a noticeable change in subject matter and style; whereas till now the events related clearly seem to have taken place in a not very recent past and have been narrated, so far as can be judged, with a preponderance of perfect forms and in a fairly developed style with regular use of *alamkāras*, from this point on the events spoken of are evidently those of the very recent past, told without the use of perfect forms and in a simpler style. Verse 19, in the previous line (with the only certain use of the aorist in the inscription), though still in Upajāti metre, may be seen as a transition to the second half of the inscription.

In pāda a of verse 21 (fourth or *ra-vīpulā*) the word *prabhāvatīsvāminam*³⁷ is an apposition to *lokanātham* in the following pāda, which obviously indicates an immediate connexion between Prabhāvatī Guptā and the Vaiṣṇava image/temple spoken of. The sixth syllable of pāda b is here read as *thā*; the curve inside the *th* is not visible, and the letter appears slightly damaged. Possible would also be the reading *dhā*, but we are unable to find a plausible restoration beginning with *adhā*,³⁸ whereas with *athā*° there are a number of

³⁶ *utsavān* is metrically impossible, as well as intrinsically unlikely here.

³⁷ The shortening of *ī* to *i* is again allowed by P. 6.3.36; cf. above, n. 34 on p. 130.

³⁸ The possibility of a form of √*dhā*, such as *adhārayat*, may probably be rejected, since one would then require another object for *akārayat*; also the occurrence of two imperfect forms of causatives at the ends of pādas b and d is not very likely.

possibilities, of which, e.g., *athādarāt* seems appropriate.

Of verse 22 practically all that can be said is that it most probably refers to a god or an image of a god. *jagadutpattinā* could be either an instrumental or part of a longer compound.

LINE 12 On Sudarśana as both the name of a water reservoir and an adjective for a god (in pāda a and b respectively of verse 24) see below, p. 144 and n. 72 on p. 145). Pāda d poses a slight problem; the first four syllables appear to read *kārayitā*, and the word was so read by Jamkhedkar and Shastri. The latter drew the conclusion that the subject must have been a man, and put forth the suggestion that he may have been Pravarasena II.³⁹ While it is true that *kārayitā*, if understood as a nomen agentis from the causative of $\sqrt{kr}$, would be a masculine form, this would be in contradiction with the rest of the inscription, where it seems clear that the subject of various deeds is a woman, and even with the end of the same pāda where there is certainly a nom. fem. sg. ($^{\circ}vatī$). Shastri did not apparently consider the possibility that *kārayitā* might be a periphrastic future, in which case it could also be used with a feminine subject. This possibility must, however, also be rejected. A periphrastic future would be highly unexpected in the present context; even more important, however, is the consideration that *kārayitā* is also most unlikely on metrical grounds, since the second and third syllables of a pāda are not allowed to be both *laghu*. No other metrical faults are found in the legible part of the inscription, and it would be very surprising if the author—obviously a well-trained poet—had made one. We are therefore of the opinion that *kārayitā*, in whatever way it is interpreted, cannot after all be the intended word. Fitting, both metrically and otherwise, would be *kārayitvā*,⁴⁰ which we have accordingly restored. It should be mentioned that this would not necessarily mean that we assume the apparently very careful engraver to have made an error here, for immediately underneath the *tā* the stone has been damaged, and in such a way that it is conceivable that the subscript *v*, which would have been attached to the bottom of the right leg of the *tā*,⁴¹ has been effaced.

For the final word in pāda d we propose reading *atibhāvati*: though the *akṣara bhā* cannot be read, it seems at least palaeographically possible. As an epithet, this would continue the numerous light/lustre images; on the possibility that it is a personal name see below, p. 140.

In the first pāda of verse 25 ($^{\circ}$)*pītakeśā* (nom. fem. sg.) must be another epithet of the princess. Rather than assuming that she actually had yellow hair, we are inclined to think of the possibility that this is the second half of a bahuvrīhi compound. *Pītakeśa* might be an epithet of Narasiṃha, though

39 Shastri 1987, 70–71.

40 The absence of a finite verb-form in the verse is not a problem; very likely the construction continues through the next verse.

41 The ligature *tv* does not occur elsewhere in the legible part of the inscription, but cf. the *śv* in line 14.

admittedly not found in dictionaries, so the intended sense could be ‘she who worships Narasiṃha’ or ‘she who had installed/caused to be made [an image of] Narasiṃha’ or something similar.⁴² Finally, it is important to note that at the far right of the slab, well after where one would expect verse 25 to have ended, there appears to be an *akṣara*, probably *pā* or *bā*. While this cannot of course add anything to our understanding of the content of the inscription, it is useful confirmation that there must have been three Ślokas to the line in lines 11–15, and that the inscription must originally have been broader yet.

LINE 13 The verb of verse 27 has not been preserved, but the sense is probably that the daughter assigns half of the merit arising from some deed or rite to the gods,⁴³ and half to her parents. Pāda a is somewhat problematic; first of all one would expect *arddham* to be construed with a genitive (*punṇasya*). One would perhaps have also expected *brahmārpitam*, but, though there seems to be a mark of some kind above the ligature *rpp*, we regard this as damage to the stone and do not think it warranted to read medial *i*. *brahmārppaṇam* must therefore be taken as an apposition to (*arddham*) *punṇam*. In pāda b there no doubt was a nom. fem. sg. qualifying or describing the princess who is the grammatical subject, which might have ended with, e.g. °śālīnī.

While the missing part of pāda c cannot of course be restored with certainty, one metrically correct and rather appealing possibility would be to read *mātā-pitr̥bhyām arddham ca* (a third or *ma-vipulā*). In pāda d we suggest the reading (°)*kriyodbhavam*; admittedly the sign for medial *i* cannot be seen, but the upper part of the character has in any case been completely destroyed. The low position of the arms of the *k* must be caused by the fact that another consonant sign was written above it, i.e. in ligature; this too however is no longer legible. From the point of view of sense, (°)*kriyodbhavam* seems more satisfactory as an adjective of *punṇam* than *kriyodbhavam* (as read by Jamkhedkar) or *vikrayodbhavam*.

Of verse 28 one can do little more than to hazard the suggestion that it described the erection of a temple or the construction of a statue of a god, most probably Viṣṇu, described as ‘the cause of the sustenance and destruction of the world’.⁴⁴ The contents of pādas c and d remain a mystery.

LINE 14 An important crux is presented by the gen. in pāda a of verse 30. The syllables 4 and 5 reading *dayi* practically only allow the word *dayita* (‘beloved’), which one would expect to be used exclusively for close relatives. This is in accordance with syllable 8 °*tur*, which may be a genitive of a nomen agentis or noun of relationship probably different from *mātr̥* found in 30c. A

42 MBh 7.173.22 gives *harikeśa* as an epithet of Śiva.

43 Less probably, to the brahmins.

44 The omission of ‘creation’ is probably merely due to metrical reasons; cf. e.g. MkP 78.53 (cf. Mārkipur. 81.53) in which Viṣṇu’s cosmic sleep is described as the cause of sustenance and dissolution of the world: *viśveśvarīm jagaddhātṛīm sthitisamhārakārīṇīm | staumi nīdrām bhagavatīm viṣṇor atulatejasah ||*

metrically correct conjecture would be *dayitādhātur*: ‘of/for her beloved begetter’.⁴⁵ In pāda b *taṃ* must refer to the *prāsāda* of pāda a, despite the slight awkwardness of expression. Perhaps the temple, which we take to be one erected either by or in memory of the father of the princess, i.e. Rudrasena, was already mentioned before, in verse 29 which is lost. The sentiment expressed in pāda b is unusual, and, to the best of our knowledge, without a close parallel. While royal inscriptions occasionally refer to the transitoriness of life, wealth, etc., and the changeableness of the world,⁴⁶ so specific a remark as that found here, made in regard to a temple (in memory) of a father,⁴⁷ seems only possible if prompted by the actual observation that the temple had fallen into some decay.

Verse 30 contains no finite verb form, and probably formed a syntactic unit with verse 31. The latter probably spoke of the construction of another temple for the sake of the mother of the princess.⁴⁸ The fourth syllable of pāda a appears to be a ligature, with a *ś* or a *g*⁴⁹ partly visible at the bottom right. Also partly visible is what could be the sign for medial *i* above the character, though this seems a little smaller than is usual. *cirāya* in pāda b may be intended to contrast with *vicintya taṃ aśāśvatam* in 30b (cf. below, p. 144).

LINE 15 The syntactical construction of verse 33 is obviously not complete. The instrumentals were most probably the logical subject of a passive construction, which must have been in verse 34. The grammatical subject would have been *kāvyam* in 34a, and the verb form must have meant ‘was made/composed’.

The first word of 33a seems slightly ambiguous. Since *sthāyin(i)* at the end of a compound could already carry the meaning of ‘which is enduring as ...’, ‘which shall last as long as ...’, the meaning might be ‘fame which shall last as long as there is light (*āloka*°)’. Another possibility, however, is that *āloka* is to be interpreted as *ā lokāt* and that the intended sense is ‘fame which shall last as long as the world does’. Such tatpuruṣa compounds with

45 Nomen agentis of $\sqrt{dhā}$ with preposition *ā* in the sense of ‘to impregnate’, ‘to make’. Cf. e.g. BhāṅP 9.24.52: *vasudevaḥ sutān aṣṭāv ādadhe sahadēvayā* || The more usual *pitur* is excluded by the long *ā*’s we read in syllables 6 and 7 and would also yield a metrically incorrect verse, in view of the short fourth syllable. Another metrically possible conjecture *dayitabhrātur* is rejected because 30b seems more appropriate, if we assume that the temple was built already some time ago, *mātur eva* (30c) suggests ‘father’, rather than ‘brother’ and, last but not least, °*bhrātur* is palaeographically almost impossible in view of the absence of the subscript ‘*ra*’ that should have been visible in the undamaged part of the stone below the syllable.

46 And it may be noted that in such cases the verb (*pra*)*vi*- $\sqrt{ci}$ is usually employed. Cf. e.g. the Mandasor Stone Inscription of Kumāragupta and Bandhuvvarman, CII III (1888), 82 (11. 12–13). Such references later grow more and more frequent and are often the subject of elaborate verses.

47 Inscriptions recording the building of a temple regularly express the wish that it be *śāśvata*; e.g. CII III (1888), 277 (1. 14).

48 One might also consider the possibility that instead the repair of the temple mentioned in 30a is spoken of.

49 Less probably, a *t*, since the legs appear wider and more horse-shoe shaped than the *t*.

as their prior member adverbs which are themselves indeclinable compounds with a preposition as their first member, are, while grammatically somewhat problematic, fairly common in inscriptions, and especially in the sort of context that we have here; the proclamation that something will/should last for what is practically an eternity.⁵⁰ In favour of the first of these interpretations is perhaps the fact that the standard expressions used in similar cases (whether with a single compound or a *yāvat . . . tāvat* construction) usually mean ‘as long as the moon and sun last’.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

As emerges from the above, very few things can be derived with certainty as to the content and purport of the inscription. Since it is found in a fifth century Vākāṭaka temple and contains a genealogy featuring, and extending to, the children of Candragupta and Rudrasena (v. 9), it is certain however that the inscription belongs to the fifth century (a date which is also consistent with the palaeography), while the name Rudrasena and the name or title Prabhāvatīsvāmin (v. 21) indicate that we are concerned with a Vākāṭaka inscription, notwithstanding the fact that the dynastic name Vākāṭaka does not feature in the legible part of the text. Comparison with other Vākāṭaka inscriptions makes clear that it does not fall into the category of official royal edicts or land-grants (*śāsana*), the structure and contents of which are very much standardized and completely different from the text under discussion. Rather, the inscription seems to report events that are related to some subordinate member of the royal family and as such is without parallel. The interpretation ventured below, in spite of all uncertainties, can claim no more than to be the most plausible hypothesis that the authors could think of.

Verse 9 tells us that Candragupta gave ‘that daughter’ (*sutām tāṃ*) to Rudrasena and this agrees with the well-known historical fact that the Gupta emperor gave his daughter Prabhāvatī in marriage to the Vākāṭaka king Rudrasena II in the eighth or ninth decade of the fourth century AD. What tends to disturb this interpretation, is the fact that two, possibly three verses earlier a ‘daughter’ (*tanayā*) is mentioned, the name of whom seems to end in °muṇḍā, which could yield Cāmuṇḍā or Gomuṇḍā, names not known from any other Vākāṭaka or Gupta inscription (v. 7). Family or tribal names ending in Muṇḍa are known from some seals found in Basarh (Vaiśālī) and Patna (Pāṭaliputra),⁵¹

50 Cf. e.g. CII V, 13 (1. 28) (*ācandrādityakālīya*). Of course such compounds, though rather rare, also occur in the classical works of Sanskrit literature; cf. e.g. *Raghuvamśa* 1.5.

51 T. Bloch (*ASI Annual Report* (ASIAR) 1903–04, 113, 116) reports two seals dating from the Gupta period found in Basarh with the legend ‘Gomuṇḍaka’. Thaplyal (1972, 286) lists ‘Muṇḍa’ among the name-endings ‘after races and tribes’, referring to seals found in Basarh (D.P. Spooner in *ASIAR* 1913–13, 131) and Patna (*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* (JBORS) X, 192). In an inscription dating from the reign of

but Prabhāvatī Guptā in her own inscriptions claims descent from a Nāga lineage through her mother Kuberanāgā.⁵² The daughter named [≡]muṇḍā, is praised as resembling the lustre of the moon (*candramasaḥ prabheva*), an apposite pun if the daughter of Candragupta were meant.⁵³ However this may be, in view of the *sutām tām* in 9c, it is certain that the daughter known as Prabhāvatī has been mentioned somewhere before verse 9.⁵⁴

Likewise, the way Candragupta is mentioned in 9b (*sa candraguptaḥ*) implies that he had been mentioned in an earlier verse. This probably was before verse 7, since the initial *tayoḥ* of 7a entails that members of two families had already been introduced: 1) a young girl who ‘grew up like a flame of a fire in which abundant ghee has been poured’ (v. 5); 2) her (future) husband whose lineage may well have been described from v. 2 onwards, the first member being qualified as °*rājaraṣi*. A similar qualification (*rājādhirājaraṣi*) was given to Candragupta II in the Udayagiri Cave inscription by his minister Virasena (CII III (1888), 35 (1.3)). The description in verses 3 and 4 suits the Gupta dynasty well. The imperial status ensues from the tribute (*balī*) paid by other kings, whereas the rule is said to extend to the edge of the ocean, which has also been said of Candragupta II in the Tumain inscription.⁵⁵ The title attributed to Candragupta in verse 9, ‘Lord of the Three Oceans’, is noteworthy in view of the *Poona Plates of Prabhāvatī Guptā* (CII V, 7 (1.5)) where he is furnished with an honorific title generally given to his father Samudragupta, viz. *caturudadhisalilāsivāditayaśas* (‘whose fame has tasted the waters of the four oceans’).⁵⁶ A.M. Shastri argues that the title ‘Lord of the Three Oceans’ is ‘pertinent only in South Indian context’⁵⁷ and ‘indicative of the tremendous

Mahārāja Svāmīdāsa (Kalacuri year 67 = AD 317) a *śāṇḍilyasagotramuṇḍabrāhmaṇa* is mentioned (CII IV, 7 (1.3)). An inscription dating from the 5th regnal year of Rudrasena II is reported by Shastri (1987, 46-8) to have been recently found in Mandhal. According to Shastri it records the erection of a Viṣṇu temple dedicated to Mondasvāmin. One wonders whether there could be a connexion between °muṇḍa and ‘monda’. To be certain we have to wait for the publication of the text. A detailed treatment of this issue will be found in Bakker 2010d, 467–69 (below, pp. 326 ff.).

52 CII V, 7 (ll. 7-8) (*Poona Plates*), 36 (ll. 7-8) (*Ṛddhipur Plates*).

53 This reminds us of a tradition found in the Sthalamāhātmya of Śrīparvata reported by Dubreuil, Lakshman Rao and Altekar (Jouveau-Dubreuil 1920, 73 f.; Rao 1924, 51 ff.; Majumdar & Altekar 1967, 99) and repeated by Sircar (HCI III, p. 179, n. 2) to the effect that Candragupta is credited with a daughter Candrāvatī, who was a devotee of the god Śrīśaila and is by some identified with Prabhāvatī.

54 [I (H.T.B.) now consider it plausible that the *tām* in 9c correlates with a conjectured *yā* in 7d. This would imply that verse 7 is a relative clause, which runs on in verse 8 (cf. above, p. 130) and is concluded by the main clause in verse 9.]

55 *sāgarāntam*, EI XXVI, 117 (l. 1); see below, p. 139.

56 CII III (1888), 26 (l. 2), 43 (l. 1), 49 (l. 15), 53 (l. 1), 256 (l. 2). The same epithet in CII IV, 41, (l. 10), 169 (ll. 5-6). A similar expression (*catuḥsamudraparyantaprathitayaśas*) is found in CII III (1888), 89 (l. 17), 160 (l. 5). Cf. also *catussamudrātīkkrāntakīrttiḥ* in CII III (1888), 220 (l. 1).

57 A similar epithet, *tisamudatoyapītavāhanasa*, found in the Nasik inscription, is given to the Sātavāhana king Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi (SI I, 204 (l. 3)). Sircar (SI I, 203, n. 4)

influence verging on political hegemony wielded by Candragupta II over a large part of the Deccan' (Shastri 1987, 69).

The marriage out of which the 'moon-like' princess named [𑀭]muṇḍā was born in addition to a number of famous and virtuous elder princes (v. 7) must have been mentioned in verse 6 or, if we add one more verse to every line (see above, p. 116), in the verse directly following it (v. 6*). The comparison of the princess named [𑀭]muṇḍā with the lustre (*prabhā*) of the moon and of her mother with a 'flaming fire' make it conceivable that [𑀭]muṇḍā was a maiden name that became substituted by the more illustrious 'Prabhāvatī'.

The Vākāṭaka dynasty, i.e. Rudrasena, must have been introduced in verse 8, or possibly in 8*. And just as the offspring was mentioned directly after the description of the marriage in verse 6 or 6*, the offspring of Rudrasena's marriage with Prabhāvatī might have been mentioned in the following verse 10.

To summarize our analysis of the first ten (partly) legible verses, we would venture the hypothesis that after an introductory verse in Puṣpitāgrā metre eulogizing a deity, probably Viṣṇu, verses 2 to 4 relate to the Gupta dynasty, in particular to Candragupta II, whereas in the second half of verse 4 and possibly in 4* another family is introduced in which a 'flame-like' daughter was born, who in verse 6 (or 6*) was married to Candragupta II. Among the offspring of this couple is a 'moon-like' girl named [𑀭]muṇḍā, who might have been no other than Prabhāvatī Gupta. Verse 8 (or possibly 8*) may then have introduced a third lineage, viz. that of the Vākāṭakas, in particular its king Rudrasena II, to whom Candragupta gave his daughter in marriage, the offspring of that marriage being mentioned in verse 10.

Verse 11 refers to a powerful (*supuṇḡava*) king mentioned earlier. His name might possibly have re-occurred in verse 10* and may be inferred from the name of the son that was born to him, Ghaṭotkaca (11d). Considering the fact that he occurs in the middle of the inscription it is unlikely that the legendary Ghaṭotkaca Gupta, son of Śrīgupta and father of Candragupta I, known from the Gupta genealogies, is meant. Rather it would seem, that we are here concerned with the same Ghaṭotkaca who is known from the *Tumain Inscription*, who was 'of perpetual good character and fame', who 'attained the glory of his ancestors, won by (the prowess of his) arms',⁵⁸ and who descended from Candragupta II, but of whom the fragmentary state of that inscription does not allow us to specify whether he was his son or grandson.⁵⁹ The present context suggests that this Ghaṭotkaca was a later son of Candragupta II, born after several princes and the daughter [𑀭]muṇḍā/Prabhāvatī (v. 7). The phrase describing his father 'who was like a beast of burden, [carrying] the entire

raises the possibility that the epithet may be connected with a *digvijaya*. Cf. *Harṣacarita* 82 (l. 22): *trisamudrādhīpataye sātavāhananāmne narendrāya*.

58 EI XXVI, 117; SI I, 298: *sa pūrvaḥjānāṃ sthīrasatvaktīrtir bhuḥjāṇjītaṃ kīrtim abhiprapadya*.

59 SI I, p. 298 n. 1; EI XXVI, 116.

burden of (his) kingdom, which was difficult to bear' (11ab), may point towards the end of Candragupta's reign. On the basis of the Tumain inscription we may say that Ghaṭotkaca ruled as viceroy in eastern Malwa at the time that Kumāragupta held the imperial office (AD 435–36).⁶⁰ There might not therefore have been too great a difference in age between the children of Rudrasena and Prabhāvatī on the one hand, and their maternal uncle, Ghaṭotkaca, on the other. This observation may serve as a clue for the interpretation of one of the key verses of the inscription, verse 13.

Verse 12 may have said more of Ghaṭotkaca and then, possibly in 12*, his sister's daughter (*bhāgineyī*) may have been reintroduced (as the initial *tām* of 13a seems to suggest), whom the viceroy (*rājarāja*) is said, not to have 'consoled' as Jamkhedkar paraphrases (1987b, 221), but to have actually married (*pāṇigrahaṇam cakāra*), impressed as he was with her Lakṣmī-like qualities.

If our interpretation is correct so far, this niece can have been no other than the daughter born from the marriage between the Vākāṭaka king Rudrasena and his Gupta wife Prabhāvatī. She might have been mentioned in verse 10, and one wonders whether the conjectured reading *atibhāvatī* ('of extreme lustre') in verse 24d could be her personal name.⁶¹ Actually, *bhāgineyī* may here stand for half-niece, since, more likely than not, Ghaṭotkaca and Prabhāvatī had been born of different mothers. Nevertheless this matrimony is at odds with the majority of the Smṛti texts which prohibit intermarriage of cognates in the second remove. The present case, however, corroborates Kane's (II, 467) observation to the effect that 'a very striking instance of the limits of *sapiṇḍa* relationship not being observed is the practice among certain sections of even brāhmaṇa marrying their own sister's daughter'. After the alliance between the Guptas and the Vākāṭakas had first been sealed by the marrying-off of Prabhāvatī, the latter may have wished to confirm the friendship by giving her own daughter in marriage to her (half-)brother (see Fig. 1).⁶²

The following verses (14–16) seem to tell us what a good husband this Vākāṭaka princess married. Then, at a certain time (*kadācit*), something hap-

60 Thaplyal 1972, 66 (cf. Bloch in ASIAR 1903–04, 107), among other scholars, argues in favour of the identify of Ghaṭotkaca of the Tumain inscription with the Ghaṭotkacagupta of the sealing of Basarh. As to his possible identity with the 'issuer of the [gold] coin in the St. Petersburg collection which bears on the obverse the word Ghaṭo beneath the king's arm and the marginal legend ending in (*gu*)pta(h) [and] on the reverse the legend *kramādityah*', Thaplyal is more reserved and numismatists appear divided on the issue.

61 Names to which *ati* is prefixed or in which *ati* replaces another prefix are relatively infrequent, but for an example in a Vākāṭaka inscription see CII V, 125 (l. 7), where the wife of Kṛṣṇadāsa is said to have been named Aticandrā (following Mirashi's reading: Bühler had previously read Sucandrā); unfortunately the name of her father/mother is lost. Such names appear to be most usually given to younger brothers (or sisters), e.g., Māyā – Atimāyā (*Mahāvastu* I, 355), Sudānta – Atidānta (PPL p. 456, v. 38), Datta – Atidatta (PPL p. 455, v. 34), Śulkaḡulma – Atigulma (PPL p. 459, v. 56²), Gaṇḡa – Atigaṇḡa (BrP 165.29), Gambhīrā – Atigambhīrā (BrP 147.11), Balā – Atibalā (Rām. 3.12.12, Crit. App.).

62 Cf. Majumdar & Altekar 1967, 169 f.

pened and the mentioning of Indra in verse 17b suggests that he (*tasmin*), i.e. Ghaṭotkaca, left this world.⁶³ If this conjecture is accepted it would provide the inscription with a *terminus post quem* of AD 435–36, the year the Tumain inscription showed Ghaṭotkaca to be still alive. In the wake of this event the brother of the princess is said to have brought her back to his own residence. Epigraphical evidence has preserved the names of three sons of Rudrasena and Prabhāvatī. As has been discussed elsewhere (Bakker 1992b, 7), it is highly unlikely that Divākarasena was still alive at the time of the present inscription, and of the two remaining brothers, Dāmodarasena and Pravarasena, the latter was the actually ruling king. It therefore seems plausible that the *bhrātā* of 17d is none other than the Vākāṭaka king Pravarasena II, who might have been mentioned along with his sister in verse 10. Anyhow, this must have been an extraordinary deed and the word *balāt* (17d) indicates that it was not done in accord with the people involved, i.e. that it was resisted either by the princess herself, or by her Gupta relatives, or by both (see below). The principal condition on which a widow is allowed to return to her paternal home by traditional law, viz. the absence of any male relative on the side of her deceased husband, (*Nāradaśmṛti* 13.29), was obviously not fulfilled in this case.

The residence to which the princess was taken would probably have been in Pravarasena II's capital Pravarapura, which has been identified by some with present-day Paunar (*pavanār*).⁶⁴ However, as already argued by Jamkhedkar, it is hard to derive Paunar etymologically from Pravarapura.⁶⁵ The rich archaeological findings in Nagardhan (also known as Nandardhan), which is the Vākāṭaka capital Nandivardhana,⁶⁶ do not give any indication that this site had been abandoned in the second quarter of the fifth century. Moreover, when

63 Respectful ways of saying that a king died frequently involve the mentioning of Indra. Cf. CII IV, 10, especially n. 2.

64 Mirashi 1954 and in CII V, xli.

65 Jamkhedkar 1985a, 84: 'The reconstructed Sanskrit form of Paunar should be Padmanagara (through the Prakrit Pomanayara, or Paūmanayara) and not Pravaranagara/Pravarapura. Cf. Skt. *padma-nāla*, Hindi *pau-nār*.' One would expect, however, Skt. *pravara*° to yield *pavar*° or *pabar*°. A not really satisfactorily identified town and district Padmapura occur in the Vākāṭaka inscriptions (cf. Shastri 1987, 74, n. 8); town: CII V, 78 (*Unfinished Durg Plate* or 'Mohallā Plate'); district: in the *Māṇḍal Plates of Vākāṭaka Rudrasena II, Year 5* (Shastri 1987, 48) and the *Māsod Plates of Pravarasena II, Year 19* (Shrimali 1987, 66 (l. 19)). For a discussion of the Mandhal and Mohallā Plates see below, p. 324 ff. According to Shastri 1987, 48 the district 'should be looked for somewhere in the Nagpur–Wardha region'. For an alternative see below, n. 34 on p. 326. Another etymology would derive *pau*° from Prakrit *pavā*, Skt. *prapā* 'watering place'. The ancient site of Paunar is situated at a ford in the River Dhām. In this context it may also be noted that in our view the style of the pieces found in Paunar deviates rather significantly from the Rāmāgiri/Nagardhan sculptures. This evidently also posed difficulties to Joanna Williams when she tried to connect the Paunar findings with other Vākāṭaka sculpture (Williams 1983, 230 f.). Archaeologically it would seem quite possible to date the Paunar site in the post-Vākāṭaka period, i.e. end of fifth century or sixth century (cf. Spink 1981, p. 123 n. 8).

66 Mirashi 1959, 23; Majumdar & Altekar 1967, 114; etc.

the eastern Vākāṭaka kingdom was overrun by the Nalas in the last decade of the fifth century, the victorious king Bhavadattavarman issued a charter from Nandivardhana—rather odd if that place had been deserted as capital for already over half a century.⁶⁷ Pravarapura, on the other hand, was never mentioned again after the death of Pravarasena II. It is therefore quite conceivable that Pravarasena merely had his capital Nandivardhana renamed for the sake of his own glory (the first inscription issued from Pravarapura dates from his 16th regnal year, when Prabhāvatī was still alive and issuing charters from Rāmagiri).⁶⁸ The princess might thus have been brought back to

67 EI XIX, 102. There is uncertainty and hence controversy regarding these kings of the Nala dynasty. The grant recorded in the charter of Mahārāja Bhavattavarman (prakritism for Bhavadattavarman) was made during a pilgrimage of him and his wife to Prayāga, but it was issued from Nandivardhana. The date of the charter (7th of the dark half of Kārttika in the 11th regnal year) seems to correspond with the time the king himself, being in Prayāga, instructed his officer Culla to write it down in private (*svamukhājñ(a)yābhilikhit(ā) rahasi niyukte(n)a cullena*). The charter was (later) engraved on a copperplate by a Mahārāja Arthapati Bhaṭṭāraka, who was ‘favoured by the grace of his grandfather’s feet’ (*āryakapādaprasādānuḡrhitena*), ‘for the sake of the increase in merit and fame of his father and mother’ (*mātāpitroḥ puṇyakīrtti-varhdhana°*). These copperplates were found in Rithapur along with those of Prabhāvatī Guptā. From the *Poḍagaḍh Inscription* (EI XXI, 155 f.) we know that Bhavadatta’s son [Skanda]varman recovered the lost (*bhraṣṭā*) royal fortune of his family and repopulated the capital Puṣkarī. The father of Mahārāja Arthapati might therefore have been [Skanda]varman, who was dead at the time his son published the grant of his grandfather. The expression *āryakapādaprasādānuḡrhitena* probably served to authorize this deed. That king Arthapati reigned after [Skanda]varman also seems to follow from the *Kesaribeda Inscription* (EI XXVIII, 12) dating from his 7th regnal year, which was issued from the capital Puṣkarī (cf. Sircar in HCI III, 188 f.). From this epigraphical evidence we may deduce that the Nala king Bhavadattavarman conquered Nandivardhana of the Vākāṭakas, but soon afterwards was defeated and his own capital destroyed. His son [Skanda]varman succeeded in restoring the power of the dynasty, at least in its traditional homeland. His successor, Arthapati, proclaimed his grandfather’s glory as conqueror of the eastern Vākāṭaka realm. If Sircar is right in dating the *Rithapur Plates of Bhavadattavarman* ‘on grounds of palaeography to the first half of the sixth century’, this would place Bhavadattavarman’s conquest of Nandivardhana at the end of the fifth century. Only two generations later, at the time that the Vākāṭaka power had collapsed completely, Bhavadattavarman’s grandson could publish his grandfather’s grant. This could well imply that the Nalas had again taken possession of Nandivardhana in the first half of the sixth century (Sircar in HCI III, 190). When they finally met defeat at the hands of the early Cālukyas (Kīrtivarman I, c. AD 566–97), their role of suzerain of Vidarbha might have been taken over by the Kalacuris, whose feudatory Svāmīrāja ruled in Nandivardhana in AD 573, according to an inscription dated in Kalacuri Saṃvat 322 (EI XXVIII, 8).

68 CII V, 35; Shastri 1987, 51 f. His grandson Pṛthivīśeṇa II issued charters from various places including Rāmagiri (Shastri 1977–78, 142: Mandhal Plates of his second regnal year). In this connexion it is striking to find that Pṛthivīśeṇa II’s Māhurjharī Plates (dating from his 17th regnal year) were issued from ‘Pṛthivīsamudra’ for the sake of two inhabitants of Pṛthivīpura. Kolte 1971–72, 67 ff. thinks that Pṛthivīsamudra and Pṛthivīpura refer to one and the same place, viz. the capital of Pṛthivīśeṇa, and he assumes that the capital had been shifted again from Pravarapura. Kolte (1971–72) proposes to identify this ‘third capital’ with the modern village of Samudrapura in the

Nandivardhana or Pravarapura, in the vicinity of the temple on the Rāmāgiri in which the present inscription is found.

Back in her ancestral home, perhaps against her will (note *samānām* in 17c), the unlucky (widowed) princess (*manujendraputrī*, 19a) threw herself into charitable and pious activity (verse 19), recorded in verses 21–32 in Śloka metre.

The princess, ‘free of sins’ (30d), and ‘of extreme lustre’ (24d, see above, p. 140) ‘caused to be made the Lord of the Earth’, i.e. an image of Viṣṇu, named ‘Master of Prabhāvatī’, in recognition of her mother’s devotion to that god (21a). Prabhāvatī in her own inscriptions used to refer to the main deity of the hill as Rāmāgirisvāmin (CII V, 35; Shastri 1987, 51). Apparently the image installed is the same as the fifth-century Narasiṃha image of the temple in which the inscription is found, however explicit references to that incarnation are not found in the legible part of the inscription, unless *pītakeśā* (‘whose hair is yellow’) in verse 25a somehow would refer to him.⁶⁹

Another temple (*prāsādaṃ*), the deity of which being possibly described in verse 28 as ‘of infinite might, the cause of destruction and preservation of the world’, is mentioned in verse 30. If we are correct in restoring *dayitādhātur* (see above, p. 135), we are concerned with a temple of/for the beloved father of the princess (i.e. Rudrasena), of which the transitoriness is realized. It has been argued in Bakker (1992b, 12) that the (older) Rudra–Narasiṃha Temple, which stands next to the so-called Kevala–Narasiṃha Temple in which the inscription is found, may have been built in commemoration of Rudrasena in the first part of the fifth century for the sake of his merit (*puṇya*). It seems plausible that the main clause in verse 31 contains a reference to the stone (*śilā*^o) temple that housed the present inscription, built by the princess in emulation of the older Narasiṃha Temple, exclusively (*eva*) for the sake of her mother’s merit.⁷⁰

Hinganghat Taluq of the Wardha District. This is rejected by Shastri (1987, 63) who states: ‘Māhurjharī itself has a strong case for identification with Pṛthivīsamudra. It has even now a large water-reservoir which could be figuratively called *samudra*. It may have been in existence at the time of Pṛthivīśeṇa or may have been excavated and named/*renamed* by him after himself. *The township adjoining it also may have been named similarly.*’ (Italics ours). As we shall discuss below, the present inscription records the building of a water reservoir (Sudarśana) near Nandivardhana. Is it not more plausible to assume that, instead of ever shifting their capital, the Vakāṭaka kings of Nandivardhana, when at the height of their power, simply renamed it after themselves in triumph? Renaming is definitely easier than shifting. The argument advanced by Shastri (1987, 64) to explain why the present name of the village is Māhurjharī and not a derivative of Pṛthivīpura, viz. ‘that more often than not older names persist and survive new names’, would equally apply to Nandivardhana, which the conqueror Bhavadattavarman for obvious reasons did not want to call Pravarapura or Pṛthivīpura. Excavations at Mansar, c. 6 km northwest of Nagardhan/Nandivardhana, have shed new light on this issue. For the identity of Pravarapura with the archaeological site in Mansar see Bakker 2010d, below, pp. 331 ff. (cf. Bakker 1997, 5; Bakker 2008).

69 See above, p. 134. In Bakker 2013b (below, pp. 371 f.) it will be argued that actually the Trivikrama image on Ramtek Hill may have been meant.

70 Cf. however above, n. 48 on p. 136.

Hence the appropriate designation of its image as Prabhāvatisvāmin (21a). The word *cirāya* (31b) may indicate that the princess, aware of the dilapidation of the older Narasiṃha temple, wished this new temple for her mother to be (more) durable.

In addition to the erection of a temple and installation of an image of Viṣṇu (on the Rāmagiri Hill itself), the inscription specifies constructions in the village Kadalivāṭaka ('Plantain Park') (v. 24), which, in all probability, is identical with modern Kelāpur, 2 km north of Ramtek Hill. Of the village Kelāpur very little remains today, since it is situated in the basin (*nālā*) of the rivulet Sura, which is flooded in the rainy season.⁷¹ The Sura flows into the artificial Khindsi Lake or Rām Sāgar a little to the east. This artificial lake, which laps at the northern and eastern foot of the Ramtek Hill, may be the modern successor of the old Sudarśana reservoir (*taḍāga*) mentioned in verse 24 (see below, n. 72 on p. 145). The tradition to name storage reservoirs Sudarśana is summarized by Kolte (1965, 377):

It was the duty of the kings to construct lakes, dig wells, etc. In the Gunda inscription (Śaka 103) of the time of the Śaka Kṣatrapa Rudrasimha I, we come across a mention of such a construction (*vāpī khānitā-bandhāpitā* (sic) *ca sarvasattvānāṃ hitasukhārtham itī*) (SI I, 182). The lakes were generally named as Sudarśana, Priyadarśana, etc. One Puṣyagupta, a Rāṣṭriya of Candragupta Maurya, had constructed a lake at Junagarh (i.e. Girinagara) which he had named as Sudarśana (SI I, 176; EI VIII, 42: *idaṃ taḍākam sudarśanam girinagarād*). [...] Many a time the Sudarśana Lake at Junagarh was washed away by flood and therefore had to be repaired again and again. Puṣyagupta had constructed it originally (SI I, 171). Then the Yavana king Tuṣāspha rebuilt it for Aśoka. Afterwards during Gupta Saṃvat 136–38 (i.e. Śaka 377–79) it was again rebuilt by Cakrapālita, the son of Paṇḍadatta, who was the governor appointed by Skandagupta. It was just at this time (i.e. in Śaka 380) that Svāmīladeva constructed the lake near Washim and probably it was therefore that it was named Sudarśana.

The last reference is to the Hisse-Borala Inscription (Śaka 380 = AD 458–59), which was discovered near the remnants of a dam near the village Hisse-Borala, c. 10 km south of the capital of the Vatsagulma Branch of the Vākāṭakas (above, p. 119). It dates from the reign of Devasena. The reservoir near Rāmagiri, like the one near Vatsagulma, might indeed have been named after the first

⁷¹ The late *Sindūragirimāhātmya* (SM) knows a Kadalivana, which appears to be a general designation of the area in which the Rāmagiri is located (SM 1.3). A Suranadī with a shrine of Suradevī is mentioned to the east of the hill (SM 2.2, 3.23), whereas a lake (*sarovara*) is said to lie north of it (SM 2.9). In its neighbourhood is a shrine of Hanumat (SM 2.11, 3.24). In the area of Kelāpur there is today still a dilapidated Hanumat temple. The Māhātmya describes a Kapilā river to the north of the hill which flows into the Suranadī. Both rivers and their confluence, but not Kadalivana/vāṭaka, occur in the *Ramtek Stone Inscription of the Time of Rāmachandra* (RI 484 (vv. 72–4), above, p. 100 f. and p. 92). Mirashi thinks that this Suranadī is the same as the river Śūlanadī mentioned in the *Nagardhan Plates of Svāmīrāja* (EI XXVIII, 8–9 (ll. 15–16)).

construction of this sort known to us in Girinagara, and both may have served a similar purpose, viz. a water storage for the nearby capital.

Our inscription informs us that near the reservoir in Kadalīvāṭaka a beautiful (*sudarśana*) image of a god was installed,⁷² and this seems to lend support to a conjecture made by Kolte with respect to the Hisse-Borala reservoir: ‘there may have been a temple near the dam, since old bricks piled upon each other are still found at the place where this inscription was discovered’ (Kolte 1965, 378). The absolutive *kārayitvā* in 24d implies that something more was done, maybe the granting or purchase of a piece of land in the neighbourhood for the maintenance of the god of Rāmagiri (vv. 25–26).

Of all the activities mentioned in these Ślokas the ensuing merit (*puṇya*) is notified; in verse 27 it appears to be divided into two: half of it is assigned to the gods, the other half to the father and mother of the princess, Rudrasena and Prabhāvatī. In verse 30 the merit is exclusively assigned to her mother for reasons explained above. In verses 25 and 21 it is unclear who is the beneficiary of the meritorious deeds, though in verse 21 one would expect the mother again, whose name occurs in the first pāda, whereas *mā* at the beginning of the fourth suggests the reading *mātur*. From all this it ensues that the mother of the princess, Prabhāvatī Guptā, the main beneficiary of the inscription, must have been dead at the time of its composition. Because the last known inscription of Prabhāvatī dates from the 20th regnal year of her son (Shastri 1987, 51), the above reached *terminus post quem* can be adjusted to c. AD 440.

Vākāṭaka Gupta relations

The death of Prabhāvatī might have marked a change in Vākāṭaka Gupta relations. It would seem unlikely that the remarkable event described above would have taken place when the queen-mother was still alive, in view of her strong Gupta feelings and dominating personality. Consequently this episode may be dated between c. AD 440 and 452 († Pravarasena II).⁷³ Admittedly, the present inscription provides no other indications for a deterioration of these relations, but the conclusion that, because the Guptas are extensively mentioned, this relationship remained good may be a fallacy. The princess, who through her

72 *Sudarśana-deva* calls forth an association of Viṣṇu Cakrapāṇi, the tutelary deity of Rudrasena II (see CII V, 12 (1. 13)), whose discus is called Sudarśana. By virtue of this association the Sudarśana reservoir and temple may (later) have become known as Cakra-tīrtha. As such it may have been referred to in the *Ramtek Stone Inscription of the Time of Rāmachandra* v. 68: *śrīcakratīrthamahimānam amānam urvyāṃ gurvī pravaktum api kasya narasya śaktiḥ | yasya svayaṃ bhagavatā hariṇā svacakraṃ rakṣārtham udyatam akalpi sudarśanākhyam* || (RI 484; above, p. 100). The SM locates a Cakra-tīrtha—said to be a great lake (*mahat sarah*), with a shrine of Cakreśa on its bank (SM 7.26-27)—to the east (or north) of the hill; here: *brāhmaṇān bhojayed bhaktiyā prīto ’stv iti sudarśanaḥ* | (SM 7.29ab). Neither Sudarśana nor the Cakra-tīrtha are known today; both may have been obliterated by the Khindsi Lake.

73 On the basis of the legible part of the inscription it is impossible to determine, however, whether her brother (Pravarasena II) was still alive at the time the inscription was made.

marriage had become a member of the Gupta family, showed great pride in her Gupta kinship as is evident from her elaborating on the glory of her in-laws (vv. 2–4, 9–16) rather than on that of the Vākātakas, just as in her mother's inscriptions the Gupta dynasty is eulogized at length while husband Rudrasena is disposed of in one line (see CII V, 7, 36). The daughter may have taken after her mother. But does this also reflect the attitude of her brother, king Pravarasena II, and his successor, her nephew, Narendrasena? The phrasing of verse 17 leads one to doubt it and so does the *Indore Plates of Pravarasena II*.

The latter charter, of which the first plate was recently recovered (Mirashi 1982a), was issued from the king's camp (*vāsaka*) in Tripurī (= Tewar near Jabalpur in Baghelkhand) in the 23rd year of his reign (c. AD 443). Tripurī was traditional Gupta territory and Mirashi (1982a, 67 ff.) has argued that Pravarasena's sojourn there must have implied a military operation on the part of the Vākātakas.⁷⁴ Moreover, Pravarasena's son Narendrasena (AD 452–75), of whom we (significantly) do not possess inscriptions, is not referred to as 'king' in the first charter of his successor, Prṭhiviṣeṇa II (dating from his 2nd regnal year).⁷⁵ The latter even explicitly claims that he has raised his sunken family's fortune, saying that Narendrasena had lost power to his 'agnate' (*dāyāda*), which could well refer to his rival of the Vatsagulma Branch, king Devasena or Hariṣeṇa.⁷⁶ All this points to a serious weakening of the Nandivardhana Branch

74 Mirashi draws attention i.a. to the *Bhitarī Stone Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta*, in which Skandagupta, still during the reign of his father Kumāragupta (i.e. before AD 455), is said to have gained a victory over unspecified enemies (*yuddhy amitrāms*; Fleet and others read *puṣyamitrāms*) whom he identifies with the Vākātakas. This theory is rejected in Shastri 1987, 52–4, but the arguments should be reconsidered in the light of the present inscription. For such a reconsideration see Bakker 2006 (below, pp. 301 ff.).

75 Shastri (1977–78, 163 (l. 15)) where Prṭhiviṣeṇa is called the *satputra* of Narendrasena: *vākātakānām mahārājaśrīpravarasenasya sūnor narendrasenasatputrasya vākātakānām mahārājaśrī[h]prṭhiviṣeṇasya*. According to Shastri 1987, 57 this is due to the fact that 'the post-Pravarasena II *praśasti* or draft was not yet standardized at the time of this charter; alternatively, this omission may have been due to oversight'. In later inscriptions Narendrasena is referred to as *vākātakānām mahārāja* (Shastri 1977–78, 172 (l. 18); CII V, 81 (ll. 29–30)).

76 On the basis of the recently found inscription of Prṭhiviṣeṇa II in Mandhal (dating from his 10th regnal year) Shastri 1987, 60 argues convincingly (against earlier Kielhorn, Mirashi and Kolte) that one should read: *pūrvvādhigataguṇavadd(ā)yādāpahṛta-va[m]śāśrīya[h]* (Shastri 1977–78, 171 (l. 17)), which he analyses as *pūrvam adhigatā guṇavatā dāyādena apahṛtā vaṃśāśrīh yasya tasya*.

[This], if accepted would indicate that Narendrasena had at first succeeded to his family fortune, viz. throne, but was subsequently deprived of it by a *dāyāda* or *dāyādas*. The word *dāyāda* primarily means 'heirs to property', i.e. sons or brothers in relation to each other with a claim to inheritance. [...] *Dāyāda* has, however, a secondary meaning also, viz. a distant relative or kinsman (*Amarakośa* 3.3.89: *dāyādau suta-bāndhavau*), and if this were the intended meaning, it may as well refer to a feud between the two branches (Nandivardhana and Vatsagulma) of the Vākātakas during Narendrasena's reign, in which Narendrasena was defeated and lost the kingdom or a major portion thereof. (Shastri 1987, 60)

In the latter sense, *dāyāda* is often used synonymously with *sapiṇḍa* (Jolly 1896, 84) and

of the Vākāṭakas at the end of Pravarasena's reign in the sixth decade of the fifth century, a decay that might have been triggered off by the disturbance of Gupta Vākāṭaka relations in the fifth decade.

Archaeological data as well point to a shift from Nandivardhana to Vatsagulma in the second half of the century, when under Hariṣeṇa (AD 462–82) the excavation of the Ajanta Caves is started (Spink 1981), whereas, as far as we can judge, no new buildings were erected on the Rāmāgiri Hill.⁷⁷ Craftsmen and engineers in the service of the Nandivardhana Branch may have been drawn to the west. Along with their expertise they might have brought with them the idea to build a water reservoir near the capital. If this hypothesis is correct, the reservoir Sudarśana in Kadalivāṭaka predates the one near Vatsagulma of the same name. This would provide the present inscription with a *terminus ad quem* of AD 458.

The last two legible Ślokas of the inscription contain its conclusion. Unfortunately the name of the *kavi* chosen by the princess has been lost, as well as the date of the composition. On the basis of the arguments advanced above, however, we may tentatively date the inscription about the middle of the fifth century. This would be in agreement with the date proposed for the Kevala–Narasimha Temple on the basis of archaeological and historical considerations in Bakker 1989c, 82–85 and 1992b.

Narendrasena and Devasena/Hariṣeṇa were *sapiṇḍa* relatives in the fifth/sixth remove. Narendrasena might, however, have recovered parts of his kingdom, since the (later) Prṥthivīṣeṇa inscriptions credit him in one and the same breath with the overlordship of Kosalā, Mekalā and Mālavā, though this, as Shastri 1987, 61 remarks, 'looks somewhat boastful'. If true, it certainly would have brought him into conflict with the Guptas as well (cf. HCI III, 184). This claim is also at variance with Prṥthivīṣeṇa's own title: *magnavamśoddhartṛ* (Shastri 1977–78, 172 (l. 21); Kolte 1971–72: (l. 26)). Moreover, Narendrasena's rival, king Hariṣeṇa, is credited by his minister Varāhadeva with the conquest of (Dakṣiṇa) Kosala, which is situated to the east of the traditional Nandivardhana territory (CII V, 108 (l. 14); Spink 1981, 109).

In short, the period after Pravarasena II appears to have been one of (civil) wars, in which, to judge by the archaeological remains, the Vatsagulma Branch was on top. Prṥthivīṣeṇa's later claim to have rescued his family fortune for the second time (*divi-magnavamśoddhartṛ*, CII V, 81 (l. 33), in the unfinished *Bālāghāt Plates*, which must date from after his 17th regnal year) may refer to the incursion of the Nala king Bhavadattavarman (see above, n. 67 on p. 142; cf. Shastri 1987, 61 f.).

⁷⁷ Bakker 1989c and 1992b.