

# Maṭhas in the Early Medieval Deccan: Three Examples from the Rāṣṭrakūṭa, Śīlāhāra and Yādava Epigraphical Corpora

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Received 10 October 2024 | Accepted 12 December 2024

## Abstract

This paper will focus on Sanskrit references to *maṭhas* and *maṭhikās* in the early medieval epigraphical corpora of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, Śīlāhāras and Yādavas, ruling in the Deccan from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries. The most prominent evidence is provided by the five famous Chinchani copper-plate charters covering a period from 926 to 1053 CE, when the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and later the Śīlāhāras and their subordinates ruled over the region north of Mumbai. A few late-twelfth-century Śīlāhāra stone inscriptions from Kolhapur in south Maharashtra shed light on the multi-functional character of *maṭhas*. Finally, a Yādava-period stone epigraph from northwestern Maharashtra testifies to the existence of and the endowment for a very special *maṭha* in 1207 CE.

## Keywords

South Asia – Deccan – early medieval – epigraphy – monastic institution – Hindu

## Introduction

In Sanskrit inscriptions, Hindu *maṭhas* are well attested as beneficiaries of endowments. Due to the functional complexity of this type of institution, it is

rather difficult to find a translation for the term *maṭha* that is appropriate in all relevant contexts, and thus this expression is often left untranslated. Was it a hermitage, a monastery, a temple, or rather a kind of college? The project proposal of our DHARMA ERC Synergy Grant describes *maṭhas* as “cenobitic institutions that also received pilgrims, dispensed learning, and sometimes served as hospices”.<sup>1</sup> As there is evidence for cultic as well as educational functions of *maṭhas*, a suitable rendering could be “temple college”.<sup>2</sup>

### Five Chinchani Copper-Plate Charters

In Chinchani (Dahanu taluk, Thane district; see Map 1), five copper-plate charters dating from Śaka 848 to 975 (926–1053 CE) were found in 1955 by a farmer while ploughing his field. The altogether nine plates belonging to the period of Rāṣṭrakūṭa and Śīlāhāra rule in the Deccan are all related to one *maṭhikā* (i.e., a small *maṭha*), dedicated to a goddess named Bhagavati. They shed light on the history of that institution for over one hundred years and its continued support by local elites.<sup>3</sup>

(1) The oldest charter records that a *brāhmaṇa* had founded the *maṭhikā* in the town of Saṁyāna (present-day Sanjan, Valsad district; see Map 1), and that

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- 1 The present contribution is a result of the project DHARMA “The Domestication of ‘Hindu’ Asceticism and the Religious Making of South and Southeast Asia”. This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement no. 809994). I am indebted to Dániel Balogh and Sathyannarayanan Sarma for improving my translations of the Chinchani charters. I would also like to thank Dániel Balogh, Zachary Chitwood, Ryosuke Furui and Samana Gururaja for their comments on this paper.
  - 2 Sears (2014: 4 and 7), discussing early medieval material from Central India, uses the expressions “Hindu monastery” or “monumental monastery”. Slaje (2019: 365), translating the Kashmiri chronicler Kalhaṇa into German, renders *maṭha*, with reference to Bühler, as “Burse bzw. Religionskollegium für Hindus”.
  - 3 These are the Chinchani plates of Śaka 848; the Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, the Chinchani plate of Śaka 956, the Chinchani plates of Śaka 969 and the Chinchani plates of Śaka 975. Sircar (1957–58a and 1957–58b) has published the editions of these charters with facsimiles, but without translations. The three Chinchani plates of Śaka 848 were issued during the reign of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Indra III. The Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III refers to this ruler’s reign and, thus, must have been issued in the mid-tenth century, but is not dated. The Chinchani plate of Śaka 956 refers to the reign of Śīlāhāra Chinturāja (Chittarāja). The two Chinchani plates of Śaka 969 and the two Chinchani plates of Śaka 975 were issued by two subordinate rulers from the Moḍha family, who perhaps also had to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Śīlāhāra dynasty. See also Chakravarti 2001; Schmiedchen 2014: 51–52, 196–198.



MAP 1 Map of find-spots and places mentioned in the inscriptions with their present equivalents; drawn with Datawrapper

in the Śaka year 848 (926 CE), the Tājika king (*nṛpati*) Madhumati Sugatipa,<sup>4</sup> a Muslim subordinate of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Indra III, bestowed the village of Kāṇāḍuka and land in the village of Devihara on the *maṭhikā*. This endowment was meant to provide the means for repairs of the *maṭhikā*, for the sustenance of a group of *brāhmaṇas*, as well as for [the worship of] the goddess Bhagavatī, which was probably a local form of Pārvatī or Durgā. It is also explicitly stated that the grant should serve the continuance of *dharma*.<sup>5</sup>

This charter is remarkable in more than one respect: Endowments in favour of what could be called “Hindu” institutions (temples, *maṭhas*, etc.) were still

4 For *tājika* as derived from middle Persian *tāzīk*, “Arab”, see Pingree 1981–82. “Madhumati” must be “Muḥammad”.

5 Chinchani plates of Śaka 848, lines 29–31: *-maṭhikā-saṃskārārthaṃ tathātra-nivāsi-panca-gau(30)ḍīya-mahāparśado nava-janānām daśamyāś ca bhagavatya varākāra-nyāyena sarvopakaraṇopabhogārthaṃ tathā dharmma-ci(31)ra-sthitaye*. Sircar (1957–58a: 47–48) interpreted the word *daśamī* as another name of the goddess Bhagavatī. But Dániel Balogh has convincingly pointed out to me that it is more plausible to understand the phrase *daśamyāś ca bhagavatya* as referring to Bhagavatī as the tenth recipient after the nine men (*nava-janānām*) mentioned right before in the text.

not very common in tenth-century Gujarat and Maharashtra. Therefore, it is striking that it was a Muslim donor who acted as patron of such an institution in this region.<sup>6</sup> The Tājika ruler called Madhumati obviously imitated Hindu-Brahmanical traditions in form and content. The charter is composed in Sanskrit and engraved on copper plates. The first introductory stanza is dedicated to the Hindu deities Pārvatī and Śiva, and the second one to the goddess Durgā. A traditional *kāvya*-style eulogy (*praśasti*) of Madhumati's overlord, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Indra III, is followed by a description of the Tājika subordinate, who ruled over the area north of present-day Mumbai and issued the Chinchani plates of Śaka 848.

Tājika Madhumati gave the "order" (*ājñā*) for the endowment at the emphatic request<sup>7</sup> of the *brāhmaṇa* who had founded the *maṭhikā* (an "incomparable gem"<sup>8</sup>), and who is described as a friend of a Madhumati's Brahmanical minister Śrī-Puvaiyya.<sup>9</sup> The Tājika ruler, who had been installed in office by Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa II, acted "with the consent" (*anumatena*) of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Indra III, his suzerain. "With the approval" (*anumatena*) of the highest tax collector of Saṁyāna, a clerk composed the text of the copper-plate charter "by order" (*ājñayā*) of the Tājika, who, for his part, is said to have been "instructed" (*anuñāta*) by Indra III.<sup>10</sup>

The Hindu-Brahmanical style of the charter, which consists of three plates, is furthermore underlined by the fact that it contains a lengthy passage on the concept of religious merit (*puṇya*):

But he who, because his eyes are blind due to the veil of ignorance, does not understand that life, which is [determined] by destiny, is transient, short-lived and instable, breakable like a wave in a river lashed by the force of the wind, perishable like the dew clinging to a blade of grass, fluttering like the tip of the ear of an elephant calf, quivering like the neck of a tired bird, [and] appearing [only] for a moment, like the tongue of a furious snake [or] like lightning; who does not take into account that the accumulation of [religious] merit through generosity causes fame and

6 For a discussion of this charter, see also Schmiedchen 2019: 211–213.

7 Chinchani plates of Śaka 848, line 29: *-śrīmad-annammaiyoparodhād eta[t]-kṛta-maṭhikā-saṁskārārtham*.

8 Chinchani plates of Śaka 848, line 26, verse 22d: *saṁyāne maṭhikābhīdhānam atulaṁ yo 'cikaran maṇḍanam*||.

9 Chinchani plates of Śaka 848, lines 24–25, stanza 21.

10 Chinchani plates of Śaka 848, lines 31 and 58–63.

happiness in this world and in the hereafter; and who, as a fool not recognising the invisible results, should take away [the grant] or approve [its] seizure, shall be afflicted with the five major and the minor offences.<sup>11</sup>

It is mainly the clear involvement of *brāhmaṇas* that distinguishes the description of this *maṭhikā* from contemporary epigraphic depictions of temples in the Deccan. Annaiya (or Annammaiya), the founder of the *maṭhikā*, is said to have belonged to the Bhāradvāja *gotra* and to have been affiliated to the Maitrāyaṇī branch (of the Black Yajurveda).<sup>12</sup> The Brahmanical beneficiaries of the endowment are not explicitly labelled as *brāhmaṇas*, but described as the “nine members of the *pañca-gauḍīya* congregation (*mahāparśad*) residing there (i.e., in the *maṭhikā*).<sup>13</sup> The classification as *pañca-gauḍīya* indicates a clearly North Indian background of these Brahmanical beneficiaries.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, in the fourth introductory stanza of this charter, this congregation is portrayed as originating from Āryadeśa:

May the great assembly (*mahāparśad*) from Āryadeśa be victorious through [its] blameless and reconciliation-producing virtues such as decency, morality, goodness and ethics.<sup>15</sup>

Although the *brāhmaṇa* called Annaiya (or Annammaiya) is explicitly mentioned as the founder of the *maṭhikā* in the main part of the charter, this foundation is attributed to three people jointly at the end of the inscription:

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- 11 Chinchani plates of Śaka 848, lines 45–50: *yas tv ajñāna-ṣaṭalāndhita-dṛṣṭir anilabalāhata-sa(46)rit-taraṅga-bhaṁguraṁ tṛṇāgra-lagnāvaśyāyānavasthi[t]aṁ kari-kalabha-karṇṇāgra-lolaṁ śrānta-vihaga-gala-capalaṁ (47) prakupita-bhujagajihvā-taḍit-kṣaṇa-diṣṭaṁ naṣṭaṁ pratikṣaṇam anavasthitaṁ gati-jī(vi)tam anālocya ihā(48)mutra ca ya(ś)ah-saukhya-nidānaṁ dānāt puṇya-saṁcayam anādṛtyādṛṣṭa-phalānabhijño durmmatir ācchi(49)ndyād ācchidyamānaṁ vānumodeta sa paṁcabhīrmmahāpātakais sopapātakais ca saṁnyu(50)kta[h] syād.*
- 12 Chinchani plates of Śaka 848, lines 27–29. This reference is interesting, because so far Maitrāyaṇī *brāhmaṇas* are not among the attested recipients of Rāṣṭrakūṭa endowments. *Brāhmaṇas* affiliated to this Vedic school had, however, received grants from the Maitrakas and the Bādāmi Calukyas.
- 13 Chinchani plates of Śaka 848, lines 29–30: *tathātra-nivāsi-pañca-gau(30)dīya-mahāparśado nava-janānām.*
- 14 For this classification as of North Indian origin in contrast to *pañca-drāviḍa*, see Deshpande 2002.
- 15 Chinchani plates of Śaka 848, lines 4–5, stanza 4: *jayatām ārya-deśīyā mahā-parśad aninditaiḥ|vinayācāra-saujanya-dharmmopaśamibhir guṇai(5)h||*. For a related reference to Agastya, see lines 3–4, stanza 3 and Sircar 1957–58a: 46.

... Through this monument (*kīrtana*) which conquers the three worlds due to the grace of the goddess, Annaiya, Revāṇa and Kautuka, all three together, may reside on the excellent mountain of the gods.<sup>16</sup>

Since this institution is referred to as Kautukamaṭhikā in all the four younger Chinchani copper-plate charters, Kautuka may well have been its actual main founder. This fact perhaps got sidelined in the title-deed of Śaka 848, because the endowment recorded by the Tājika king appears to have been initiated by a request of Annaiya alone, the other two having no stake in it.

(2) The second Chinchani charter was also issued in Rāṣṭrakūṭa times, but does not bear a date. As the inscription refers to the reign of Kṛṣṇa III, a nephew of Indra III, it may be assumed that it is a few decades younger than the first one and can be attributed to the mid-tenth century. In contrast to the four other epigraphs from that locality, this single copper plate does not record a grant or endowment, but an agreement (*vyavasthā*) to settle a quarrel between the *maṭhikā* and a Viṣṇu temple,<sup>17</sup> or, in the understanding of the text, between the goddess Bhagavatī and a god with the name Bhillamāladeva Madhusūdana. The deed was apparently issued on the direct initiative of the party which represented Bhillamāladeva Madhusūdana's interests, and one copper-plate copy of it must have been provided for the records of the opposite party, i.e., Bhagavatī's *maṭhikā*.<sup>18</sup> A *praśasti* for Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III in ten stanzas is followed by a three-stanza portrayal of the god Bhillamāladeva Madhusūdana.<sup>19</sup> The charter contains an even more elaborate description of the goddess and the *maṭhikā*. It already begins with an invocation to Bhagavatī (*bhagavatyai namaḥ*|) and an introductory stanza for her:

May Bhagavatī, the destroyer of [the demons] Śumbha and Niśumbha, who is praised by the best gods, by Asuras, Kinnaras, Nārada, etc. as the wish-fulfilling demolisher, suffice for you to destroy your fear of existence.<sup>20</sup>

16 Chinchani plates of Śaka 848, lines 64–65, stanza 35cd: ...| *annaiyaḥ kīrttanena* (65) *tribhuvana-jayinā revaṇaḥ kautukaś ca sārddham devyāḥ prasādād amaragiri-varasthāyukāḥ sa{m}nt(u) sarvve*||.

17 It has to be noted though that a temple or shrine of this god is not explicitly mentioned in the charter. See below.

18 At least this is the most plausible way to explain why this copper plate made its way into the series of *maṭhikā*-related charters from Chinchani.

19 Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, stanzas 2–11 and 12–14.

20 Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, lines 1–2, stanza 1: *bhagavatī bhavatām bhava-bhī-bhīde bhavatu śumbha-niśumbha-vināśanī* (2) *sura-varāsura-kinnara-nārada-prabhṛtibhir vvinutā varadābhavā*||. It is remarkable that this deed, which was apparently set up by the representatives of Bhillamāladeva Madhusūdana, does not contain an introductory stanza for Viṣṇu or Madhusūdana, but merely one for Bhagavatī.

The reference to Śumbha and Niśumbha again indicates an affiliation of the goddess Bhagavatī with Pārvatī or Durgā. Five stanzas of the *vyavasthā* provide a description of the *maṭhikā* which is more comprehensive than the information from all the four other Chinchani charters even if taken together. The *vyavasthā* illustrates the very close connection of the *maṭhikā* with Vedic learning, and describes it as being inhabited by scholars proficient in Vedic texts:

Here is a noble, faultless *maṭhikā*, the work of Kautuka, which [is] provided with ramparts difficult to cross,<sup>21</sup> free from [the clutches of] the Kali [age], full of countless [people] reciting [scripture], who – since [their] intelligence has been honed by [their] realisation of the substance of all texts – [are] astute, skilled in all fields [and] adept at the essence of the meaning of the Veda. Moreover, [the *maṭhikā* is] delightful with flawless people who have studied the arts; [it is] heaped with stocks of very precious local commodities; [and] it shines through very wise men, as if [it were] an abode of the gods.

In the [*maṭhikā*], the goddess Bhagavatī [is] being worshipped by gods and demons, also granting boons to the humans, like a wish-yielding tree.<sup>22</sup>

At the gates, the [*maṭhikā* is] ornamented by thousands of people busily entering and leaving through the restricted entryway [and] with gate towers at the tip of whose lofty pinnacles shreds of white cloud become momentary banners.

The [*maṭhikā* is] inhabited by billions of gems acquainted with the Veda – also [called] the faultless congregation – who have overcome illusion, are devoid of pride, honourable [and] unblameable gods on earth (i.e., *brāhmaṇas*) focussing on the Vedas.<sup>23</sup>

21 The compound *durlaighya-śāla-kalita* cannot only be understood figuratively, but also in its literal sense, alluding to the bone of contention, a plot of land owned by Bhillamāladeva, but located within the walls of the *maṭhikā*; see below.

22 The phrase used here is redundant, as *ānghri-pa* as well as *taru* mean “tree”.

23 Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, lines 27–35, stanzas 15–19: *astīha kautuka-kṛtir (m)maṭhikānaghāryyā durlam(28)ghya-śāla{m}-kalitā kalinā vimuktā| svādhyāyikair akhila-vānmaya-tatva-bodhād udbhūta-buddhi-(29)paṭubhiḥ sakalārthadaksaiḥ|| vedārtha-sāra-nipunair amitaiḥ paritā {||} lokair vilokita-ka(30)(l)air amalaiś ca ramyā| deśyaiś ca bhāṇḍa-nicayair nicitātisārair yā deva-bhūmir iva sadvibu(31)dhair vibhātī|| yasyām bhagavatī devī deva-dānava-pūjitā| varadā mānavānām tu kalpānghri(32)pa-tarūpamā|| virājitā dvāri ghana-praveśa-vinirga(m)āyāsita-lokalakṣair[||] yā gopurai(33)r ucchrita-kūṭa-koṭi-kṣaṇa-dhvajī-bhūta-sitā{m}bhra-bhaṅgaiḥ|| adhiṣṭhitā koṭi-sahasra-ratnaiḥ śrutā(34)nvitai{h}ś cānagha-parṣadā vā| vimukta-māyair amadair udārair yā bhū-surair veda-parair anindyai(35)h||*

Both, the *maṭhikā* as well as the congregation (*parśad*) residing therein are labelled as “faultless” (*anagha*). The *anagha-parśad* of this *vyavasthā* can most probably be identified with the *pañca-gauḍīya-mahāparśad* mentioned in the Chinchani plates of Śaka 848 (see above).

The bone of contention was a piece of land, which, although belonging to Bhillamāladeva, was located on the territory, literally “within the walls”, of the *maṭhikā* of Bhagavatī and, therefore, not (easily) accessible for those acting in the name of the god. The agreement proper, subsequent to Bhillamāladeva’s description, stipulates that those who were acting on behalf of the *maṭhikā* had to regularly pay compensation in cash to the god:

And the above-mentioned Śrī-Bhillamāladeva, who is attended by [his] managers (*vārika*), offers the [following] agreement, provided with a charter, to this *maṭhikā* accompanied by [its Vedic] scholars: In connection with our small plot of land, located in the northern part of the *maṭhikā*, within [its] existing walls, there are to be given to us by the *maṭhikā*, at the end of each of the [annual] festivals of lights, forty *drammas* of the excellent merchant and trader Gambhuvaka as *śrotaka* – in figures: *dra* 40.<sup>24</sup>

This proposal is remarkable for its use of the technical term *śrotaka*<sup>25</sup> to denote the remuneration and for the fact that only coins of a particular trader seem to have been accepted for the payment.<sup>26</sup> Whereas the *maṭhikā* of the goddess is referred to in this inscription several times, the institution behind Bhillamāladeva is not explicitly mentioned. The location of the two counterparties is also not revealed. It is only said that Bhillamāladeva had been installed by traders from Śrī-Bhillamāla, which has been identified as Bhinmal

24 Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣtrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, lines 35–39: *sa ca pūrvvoktaḥ śrī-bhillamāladevo vārika-purassaras tasyāś ca śrī-mahāparśat-svā(36)dhyāyika-sameta-śrī-maṭhikāyāḥ śāsana-pū(rvā)ṃ vyavasthāṃ prayacchati||yathā maṭhiko(37)ttara-dig-bhāge sthīta-prākārābhyantare ’smadyā kiyan-mātrā bhūmir yā praviṣṭā ta(38)t-saṃbandhe maṭhikāyā ’smākāṃ prati-dīpotsava-bhaṅga[m] vyāvahār(i)ka-śreṣṭha-gaṃbhuvaka-drammāḥ śrota(39)ke deyā[h] catvāriṃśad aṅkato ’pi dra 40|. I take *vyāvahārika* and *śreṣṭha* (for *śreṣṭhin*) as quasi synonyms.*

25 Sircar’s (1966: 321) entry for *śrotaka* has “a kind of rent”, and refers to *śrotra* on the same page, which he renders as “probably a tax in kind collected from the farmers by a lessee of State lands; same as Marāṭhī *śilotara*, *śilotarī* or *śilotrī*”. Tulpule and Feldhaus (2000: 785) give the meaning of Old Marāṭhī *śrotra*, with reference to Sanskrit *srota[s]* and Old Marāṭhī *srota* or *svotrā*, as “a continuous flow (of income)”. For attestations of *śrotra*, see Schmiedchen 2014: 380, 409.

26 I am following here the interpretation of Sircar (1957–58a: 57; 1967–68). See also *Lekhapaddhati* 2.32.1; 2.33.1; 2.35.1.



(Jalore district, Rajasthan). On the basis of the Chinchani plates of Śaka 848, we can conclude that the *mathikā* was situated on the territory of present-day Sanjan (in south Gujarat), some 40 km north of the find-spot of the five Chinchani charters (in northwest Maharashtra). It is highly probable that Bhillamāladeva's sanctuary was also located in the ancient city of Saṃyāna, which served as district headquarters in the tenth century.

More detailed than the text of the actual agreement are the stipulations for its protection. Violations by both parties should be punished. "Fraud through increasing the compensation fee" (*śrotaka-saṃvardhana-vyāja*) as well as "the tearing down of the walls" (*prākāra-bhañjana*) were declared offences on Bhillamāladeva's side; on the *mathikā*'s side, "fraud through non-payment of the compensation fee" (*śrotakollaṅghana-vyāja*) is equated with "land grab" (*bhūmy-apahāra*).<sup>27</sup> For both parties, the main penalty consisted of social ostracism: Someone who committed suicide in order to change the agreement was "even if dead, to be regarded as dog, donkey or Cāṇḍāla".<sup>28</sup> It is explicitly stated that through seizing Bhillamāladeva's plot, the party of Bhagavatī would have taken on the guilt of the five major and the minor offences<sup>29</sup> – as is usual in cases of land grabs. Since on Bhillamāladeva's side not only temple *brāhmaṇas* (*devakīya-vipra*) and temple managers (*deva-vārika*), but also merchants are seen as potential actors, a worldly punishment is added for them, namely, the confiscation of their entire property (*sarva-svāpahaṛaṇa*) by the royal family (*rāja-kula*).<sup>30</sup> Among the members of the [Brahmanical] congregation (*parśan-madhya-vartin*) belonging to the *mathikā*, two groups are explicitly mentioned: those who granted access to the complex and those who were responsible for the worship of the goddess Bhagavatī.<sup>31</sup>

All these stipulations are summarised with the sentence: "According to that regulation, this agreement is to be adhered to by both parties for as long as the moon and the sun exist."<sup>32</sup> It is also said that the content of the charter expressed the opinion of the initiator of the agreement,<sup>33</sup> who was

27 Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, lines 39–40 and 45.

28 Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, line 41: *sa mṛto 'pi śva-garddabha-cāṇḍāla-vad draṣṭavyah*; see also line 44. For this punishment, see the phrase *garddabha-cāṇḍāla-nyāyena* in the *Lekhapaddhati* (2.39.1, 3; 2.41.1, 2).

29 Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, lines 45–46: *sa (46) paricabhīr mmahāpātakair upapātakais ca saṃpṛkto bhavet*.

30 Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, lines 39–42.

31 Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, lines 42–43: *mathikā-dvāraṃ (43) dadatām bhagavat(yai) vā pūj(y)ān vīda(dh)atām parśan-madhya-vartty anyo vā*.

32 Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, lines 44–45: *anayā sthityā vyavastheyam ācandrārka-kālaṃ yāvad ubhaya-va(45)rgenāpi pālanīyā*.

33 Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, lines 46–47: *yathā caitat tathā vyavasthā-(47)dātā sva-mataṃ āropayati*.

Bhillamāladeva.<sup>34</sup> In the final stanza, however, the scribe (*kāyastha*) provides the information that he drew up the charter (*śāsana*) “with the approval” (*anumatena*) of both sides.<sup>35</sup>

(3) According to the testimony of the third Chinchani charter, which, again, consists of one single copper plate, a certain Cāmuṇḍarāja, a subordinate of the Śilāhāras of North Konkan, ruled over Saṁyāna after having fought against the Lāṭa kings and been installed by Śilāhāra Cintarāja. Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Cāmuṇḍarāja bestowed an oil-mill (*ghāṇaka*) on the Kautukamaṭhikā in the Śaka year 956 (1034 CE), along with the oil and the oil cake produced in the oil-mill there.<sup>36</sup>

This endowment was to be used for the specific purpose of the (constant) burning of a lamp in front of the goddess Śrī-Bhagavatī<sup>37</sup> as well as of putting ointment on the feet of the (resident) Vedic scholars (*svādhyāyika*) and the *brāhmaṇas* coming as guests and visitors (*āgatābhyāgata*).<sup>38</sup> The oil-mill was handed over with a libation of water to the person henceforth in charge of this object, namely, a *svādhyāyika* named Cīhaḍa.<sup>39</sup> As the Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III shows, the *brāhmaṇa* scholars (*svādhyāyika*) belonged to the congregation (*mahāparśad*) permanently affiliated to the *maṭhikā*. This body is not explicitly mentioned in the stipulations related to the endowment of the Chinchani plate of Śaka 956, but some of the addressees of the princely order are labelled as *mahāpārṣika* (for *mahāpārśadaka*).<sup>40</sup>

(4–5) Through the Chinchani charters of the Śaka years 969 (1048 CE) and 975 (1053 CE) of two copper plates each, the *maṭhikā* received additional

34 Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, line 47: *mataṁ mama śrī-bhillamāladevasya vārika-purassarasya*. For the concept of deities as juristic personalities, see Sontheimer 1965.

35 Chinchani plate of the time of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa III, line 50, verse 20d: ...|... *dha[r]-mmajñāḥ śāsanaṁ drāg alikhad anumatenobhayo[h] spaṣṭam etat*||.

36 Chinchani plate of Śaka 956, lines 19–20: *ghāṇake samutpanna-tail{y}a-samutpanna-ghaṭika-samaṁ mahāmaṇḍale(ś)vāra-śrī-cāmuṇḍarājena (20) ghāṇakaḥ pradattaḥ*. For *ghāṇaka*, see *ghāṇā* in Tulpule and Feldhaus 2000: 219; for *ghaṭika*, see Sircar 1957–58b: 65.

37 Chinchani plate of Śaka 956, lines 17–18: *śrī-bhagavatya 'gre dīpa-prajvalanā(18)rthaṁ*.

38 Chinchani plate of Śaka 956, line 18: *svādhyāyika-āgatābhyāgata-brā(hm)ṇa-pādābhyam(j)anārthaṁ*.

39 Chinchani plate of Śaka 956, line 18. Sircar (1957–58b: 67) read the name as “Cīhaḍa”. Mirashi (1977: 73), however, has “Vīhaḍa”. After checking the published facsimiles, I am following the reading of Sircar.

40 Chinchani plate of Śaka 956, line 13. Listed are the *mahāpārśikas* Agasti, Gavī, Siluva, Bhāskara, Arjuna, Dinakara, De[de]ti, Ā[r]ya, Si[m]dūra und Ā[d]ityavarṇa. After consultation of the published facsimiles, I follow the reading of Sircar (1957–58b: 67) in most cases, except for “De[de]ti”, where Sircar gives “Dede”, omitting the last syllable, while Mirashi (1977: 73) reads this name as “Deveti”.

endowments. Both these title-deeds were issued by a prince named Vijjala/Vijjala, who is described as belonging to the Moḍha dynasty. The relationship between this Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Vijjala and the Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Cāmuṇḍarāja of the previous grant is obscure. In contrast to Cāmuṇḍarāja, the Moḍha prince Vijjala does not mention any overlord, although he must have ruled the territory which he calls Saṁyānapattana-700 during the reign of Śīlāhāra Mummuṇirāja.<sup>41</sup> In Śaka 969, the temple college is called Kavatika-instead of Kautukamaṭhikā; the relevant passage reads:

The *siriḍirkā* of the village of Kaṇāḍḍa, being enjoyed by the Kavatika-maṭhikā, was given with a libation of water to those who are: Bahudhara, the householder (*grhastha*) of the Kavatikamaṭhikā, and Kāṅkua, as well as the Vedic scholar (*svādhyāyika*) Mahādeva and Lakṣmīdhara, for as long as the moon and the sun exist.<sup>42</sup>

The key term for the understanding of this passage is the expression *siriḍirkā*, which is related here to a village already being in the possession of the *maṭhikā*. Kaṇāḍḍa might have been identical with the village of Kāṇāḍḍuka, which was bestowed upon the *maṭhikā* in the Śaka year 848 (see above). This term also occurs in the Chinchani plates of Śaka 975, namely, in the form *śiridikā* in the faulty description of the endowment,<sup>43</sup> in which this expression is related to the village Keṇasā that is also described as “[already] being enjoyed” (*prabhujyamāna*) by the Kautukamaṭhikā. Sircar (1957–58b: 69) has interpreted *siriḍirkā* as “apparently a sort of tax or cess”. In Śaka 975, three *drammas* of *śiridikā* are mentioned, which were to be given annually to certain *svādhyāyikas* and *grhasthas*, very much in the same way as in Śaka 969. Whereas the presence of *svādhyāyikas* in the context of the Kautukamaṭhikā is already attested since the middle of the tenth century, the group of *grhasthas* affiliated to it is only referred to a century later. Although not explicitly mentioned in the relevant charters, these householders may have belonged to a kind of *maṭhikā* committee in a broader sense. It is obvious that they had a stake in the administration of the temple college, or at least in the management of its

41 The fact that the Śīlāhāras are not mentioned in these two charters must be the reason why Mirashi (1977) did not include them in volume 6 of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, which is dedicated to the Śīlāhāra dynasty.

42 Chinchani plate of Śaka 969, lines 13–16: *śrīmat-kavatika-maṭhikā-prabhujyamāna-kaṇāḍḍa-grāma-(14)siriḍirkā śrīmat-kavatika-maṭhikā-grhastha-bahudharaḥ tathā (15) kāṅkuah| tathā s(v)ādhy(ā)y(i)ka(h) mahādevaḥ tathā lakṣmīdharaḥ| ete(16)bhyo hastodakena pradattā ācaṇḍrārkaḥkālāṁ yāva(t).*

43 Chinchani plates of Śaka 975, lines 30–31.

assets. The Chinchani plates of Śaka 969 and 975 seem to exempt the *maṭhikā* from certain payments to the crown, which apparently would have been due from the tax revenue of the villages bestowed upon them earlier. In Śaka 975, the amount of three *drammas* per year was dedicated for a specific purpose, namely, for the regular feeding of 25 *brāhmaṇas*.<sup>44</sup>

Although only the first one records a typical royal land grant, the evidence from all the five Chinchani copper-plate charters when taken together documents a remarkable continuity in the *maṭhikā*'s presence in Saṃyāna and in the patronage to support it. For more than 130 years, regional rulers and local elites fostered this establishment dedicated to the goddess Bhagavatī, which had been founded at the beginning of the tenth century and which functioned, *inter alia*, as a Vedic-Brahmanical educational institution. The addressees of the four royal decrees from Śaka 848, 956, 969 and 975 indicate that different autonomous agents also played an important role in this coastal region north of present-day Mumbai. Not only were certain groups of officials notified of the different endowments, but also specific consortia of traders in Saṃyāna<sup>45</sup> and the so-called Moḍha *brāhmaṇas* of Śrī-Sthāna (present-day Thane, some 100 km southeast of Chinchani and 130 km south of Sanjan; see Map 1) were informed about it.<sup>46</sup>

## Two Kolhapur Stone Inscriptions

At Kolhapur in southern Maharashtra, the ancient Kollāpura (see Map 1), a *maṭha* is mentioned in two stone inscriptions dating from the Śaka years 1104 (1182 CE) and 1112–1115 (1190–1193 CE), i.e., from the rule of king Bhojadeva II of the Śilāhāra branch of Kolhapur. Both the inscribed stones were originally found in close vicinity of the famous Kolhapur temple of the goddess Mahālakṣmī,

44 Chinchani plates of Śaka 975, line 31. The term here is (*bho*)*janākṣayaṇī*, which also occurs in one benedictory stanza for this grant (lines 43–44). Other protective verses use the words *bhojana* and *grāsa* (lines 42 and 46). The expression *akṣayaṇī* must be an abbreviated form of the well-known technical term *akṣayaṇī*.

45 Chinchani plates of Śaka 848, line 32; Chinchani plate of Śaka 956, line 10; Chinchani plates of Śaka 975, line 14. For the relevant terms including the expression *haṇyamana*/*haṇjamana*, see Subbarayalu 1997: 8–9; Schmiedchen 2014: 141, n. 490; 237–238; 280.

46 Chinchani plates of Śaka 975, line 15. It is significant in connection with the otherwise not specified Moḍha *brāhmaṇas* that the dynasty of subordinate rulers making this endowment also bore the name “Moḍha”.

which is also called “Ambābāi” by the local people.<sup>47</sup> The Mahālakṣmī temple is already referred to as *śrīmat-kollāpura-mahālakṣmī-devī-devālaya* in the inscription of Śaka 1104; and the grant of Śaka 1112 was made, *inter alia*, to provide the means for regular daily food offerings (*naivedya*) to the goddess Śrī-Mahālakṣmī, which was apparently to be carried out three times per day.<sup>48</sup> A special connection between the Śilāhāra ruler Bhoja II and the goddess Mahālakṣmī can be deduced from his epithet *śrī-mahālakṣmī-devī-labdha-vara-prasāda*.<sup>49</sup> This religious sobriquet characterised Bhoja II – and also some of his predecessors – in a way which has been described by Alexis Sanderson as “a common epigraphical formula in which the king is described as having obtained his sovereignty as the boon of this or that goddess.”<sup>50</sup>

The two Kolhapur stone inscriptions record collective donations made in favour of a *maṭha* which was apparently situated on the premises of the Mahālakṣmī temple complex, to the north of its western gate. Both the epigraphs congruently state that a certain Sahavāsi Lokaṇanāyaka had established the *maṭha*. Grants in favour of the *maṭha* were made by the Śilāhāra ruler Bhoja II, by the *maṭha*'s founder Lokaṇanāyaka, and, after some years, also by the latter's son Kāliyaṇanāyaka.

47 Both stones were in a moderate state of preservation when the estampages were taken. Franz Kielhorn (1894–95: 213), the editor of the Kolhapur inscription of Śaka 1112–1115 reported: “The stone which contains this inscription, was built into the wall of the house of Anṇācārya Paṇḍit, in the enclosure of the temple of Ambābāi, and is now deposited in the town-hall, of the city of Kolhāpur.” Moreswar G. Dikshit (1951–52: 13), in his English edition of the Kolhapur inscription of Śaka 1104, recorded: “This inscription, now preserved in the wall of the Hari-Hareśvara shrine in the compound of the famous Mahālakṣmī temple at Kolhāpur, was first noticed by me in December 1945, when I visited the place for the excavations on the Brahmapuri mound, near Kolhāpur. The stone bearing this inscription is reported to have been found while digging the foundation wall of Mr. Panditrao's house in close vicinity of the temple several years ago and later built into the outer wall of the above-named shrine for the sake of preserving it.” Mirashi (1977: 264 and 258), in his corpus edition of the Śilāhāra inscriptions in *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* 6, gives this information for the Kolhapur inscription of Śaka 1112–1115: “The stone bearing this inscription was found built into the house of Annacharya Panditrao in the enclosure of the temple of Mahālakṣmī at Kolhāpur, and is now deposited in the town-hall of that city;” and for the Kolhapur inscription of Śaka 1104: “The stone bearing this inscription is said to have been found while digging the foundation wall of Mr. Panditrao's house in the enclosure of the temple of Mahālakṣmī at Kolhāpur some years ago, and was then built into the outer wall of the Hari-Hareśvara shrine in the courtyard of the temple for safe preservation. It is now preserved in the Town Hall at Kolhāpur.”

48 For the details, see below.

49 Kolhapur inscription of Śaka 1104, line 18.

50 Sanderson 2007: 289, n. 185. For this type of religious epithets, which was particularly popular among subordinate rulers, see also Schmiedchen 2014: 258–259; 313; 391; 406; 448.

Almost all the individual endowments seem to have been administered by four *brāhmaṇas* who resided at the *maṭha* (*tan-maṭha-niviṣṭa*) and whose names are mentioned in the epigraphs.<sup>51</sup> Two of these administrators were apparently Sahavāsi *brāhmaṇas* like the founder of that *maṭha*. Moreshwar G. Dikshit elaborated on this Brahmanical group in the following way: “The Sahavāsi Brāhmaṇas ... claim to have arrived in the south from Ahichchhatra and Kāshmir. They seem to have been a fairly well settled community in the Deccan and Karṇāṭak as can be gathered from the reference to them in several mediaeval inscriptions of this period. Even now, Kolhapur retains a large population of this class of Brāhmaṇas who are engaged ... in trading and banking activities.”<sup>52</sup> The two Sahavāsi administrators were Ādityabhaṭṭa and Janārdanabhaṭṭa in Śaka 1104, and Ādityabhaṭṭa and Lakṣmīdharabhaṭṭa (who was perhaps Janārdanabhaṭṭa’s son) from Śaka 1112 onwards. The other two Brahmanical administrators of the *maṭha* originated from Karahāṭaka, present-day Karhad (see Map 1), a famous medieval stronghold of learned *brāhmaṇas*, some 70 km north of Kolhapur. Their names are given as Prabhākaraḡhaisāsa and Vāsiyaṇaḡhaisāsa.<sup>53</sup>

(1) According to the Kolhapur inscription of Śaka 1104, king Bhoja II granted, *inter alia*, four “white houses” to the four *brāhmaṇa* administrators, probably as compensation for their duties. These houses were located in the southern part of the residential area (*puravarga*) of the Sahavāsi *brāhmaṇas* (of Kolhapur). The entire donative passage of this inscription stipulates the following:

**Mahāmaṇḍalesvara Śrī-Bhojadeva** [11] ... [bestowed], for the prosperity of his own rule (*nija-rājyābhivṛddhaye*), [a] as storage (*koṣṭhāgāra*) for the *maṭha* which had been erected by Sahavāsi Lokaṇanāyaka on the premises of the Mahālakṣmīdevī *devālaya* in Kollāpura, to the north of the western gate, for Umāmaheśvara in the form of Amṛteśvara and for the feeding (*bhojana*) of *brāhmaṇas*, one house (*grha*) of 12 *hasta* size on the premises of the *maṭha* (*maṭhasyābhyantare*) of this god ..., in the southwestern part;

[b] four white houses (*dhavala-grha*) in the south of the residential area of the Sahavāsis for the *brāhmaṇas* whose heads (*pramukha*) are: Sahavāsi

51 Only the additional endowment of Lokaṇanāyaka from Śaka 1104 (see in the text below) was handed over to two other *brāhmaṇas*, whose names are not mentioned, but who are described as sons of a *mahattara*.

52 Dikshit 1951–52: 14. The two Kolhapur inscriptions mention a quarter of and the feeding of Sahavāsi *brāhmaṇas*.

53 For different interpretations of the epithet *ḡhaisāsa*, see Kielhorn 1905–06: 26, n. 1; Schmiedchen 2014: 263, n. 214.

Ādityabhaṭṭa and Janārḍanabhaṭṭa as well as Prabhākaraghaisāsa and Vāsiyaṇaghaisāsa from Karahāṭaka, etc., [all] residing at that *maṭha*; [c] one flower garden (*puṣpa-vāṭaka*) to the east of Varuṇa for the worship (*pūjā*) of ...;

[d] 450 [*vapyaka*]<sup>54</sup> arable land (*kṣetra*) within the boundaries of the village of Seleyavāḍa, belonging to the *golla* of Paṇaturage, in the northern part, and, connected with that (*tat-pratibaddha*), one house of 12 *hasta* size in the village of Paṇḍarana, [both] for the fivefold worship (*pañcopacāra-pūjā*) of the same god and for the feeding of *brāhmaṇas* – all on the aforementioned [*brāhmaṇas*], with a charter ...

The very same **Lokaṇanāyaka** granted, for as long as moon, sun and stars exist, [e] arable land of 225 *vapyaka* and a house site (*niveśana*) of 12 *hasta* size as well as ... [in] ... [belonging to] Eḍenāḍa, according to the measure of that province [Eḍenāḍa] for the fivefold worship of the same god, for repairs at this *maṭha* and for the feeding of *brāhmaṇas* there, and connected with it ... *nivartana* arable land and a house site of 12 *hasta* size with *aruvaṇa*<sup>55</sup> [and] with the right of eightfold usage to the two sons of Mahattara Mādhavārya [and] grandsons of Uddhavārya of the Kāśyapagotra ... with a charter, after acquiring [the object] from Nemaṇa and Lakṣmaṇa by purchase for a grant.<sup>56</sup>

54 The term is missing here, but attested in line 30. For *vapyaka* as a measurement for sowing, see Sircar 1966: 362.

55 According to Gai (1946: 166), the term *aruvaṇa* denoted a minor tax of 6 *paṇa*; see also Schmiedchen 2014: 258, n. 191.

56 Kollhapur inscription of Śaka 1104, lines 19–33: *śrīman-mahāmāṇḍaleśvaro śrī-bhojadevo ... nija-(rājyā)bhivṛddhaye śrīmat-kollāpura-mahālakṣm(i)-devi-de(22)vālayābhyantare paścimadvārottara+++ (saha)vāsi-lokaṇa-nāyakena aṇṭeśvara-mūrtyi-unāmaheśvarārthaṁ brāhmaṇa-bhojanārthaṁ ca kārīta(sya) (23) maṭhasya koṣṭhāgārthaṁ tad-deva+++++ maṭhasyābhyantare nai;yiri?(ṛ)tya-diśo bhāge dvādaśa-hasta-pramāṇam grham ekaṁ tan-maṭha-niṣiṣṭa-saha(24)vāsy-āditya-bhaṭṭa-janārdana-bhaṭṭa-[karahāṭaka-prabhā]kara-ghaisāsa-vāsiyaṇa-ghaisāsety evaṁ-(pramukha)-brāhmaṇebhyo [saha]vās(i)-da[t]tapuravargga-dakṣiṇa-(di)(25)śi ++ dhavala-grha-catuṣṭayam +++++ pūjārthaṁ (varuṇā)t pūrva-diśi puṣpavāṭakam ekaṁ (tasyaiva devasya pañcopacāra-)pūjārthaṁ brāhmaṇa-bhojanā(26)rthaṁ ca paṇaturage-gollāmtargata-seleyavāḍa-grāma-sīmābhyantaram uttara-diḡ-bhāge ++++ pañcā(ś)ad-adhikaṁ catuḥ-śata-(27)kṣetraṁ tat-pratibaddham paṇḍarana{(n)}-(t)ad-grāmābhyantare dvādaśa-hasta-pramāṇa-grham ekaṁ etat sarvvaṁ purvokta+++++ śāsana-sahitaṁ ... [] tasyaiva devasya (pañcopa)(29)cāra-pūjārthaṁ tan-maṭha-khaṇḍa-sphuṭita-jirṇnoddhārthaṁ (ta)dīya-brāhmaṇa-bhojanārthaṁ ca eḍenāḍa+++ (30) tad-deśa-damḍena pañca-viṁśaty-adhika-dvi(ś)ata-vap(y)akam kṣetraṁ dvādaśa-hasta-vistīrṇam niveśanam ca tathā +++pratibaddham ++ (31) nivarttanam kṣetraṁ dvādaśa-hasta-vistīrṇam niveśanam ca aruvaṇa-sahitaṁ aṣṭa-bhoga-teja-sāmya-(sahitaṁ kāśyapa-)sagotrasya uddhavā(32)ryasya pauṭrābhyāṁ mahattara-mādhavāryasya putrābhyāṁ nemaṇa-lakṣmaṇayor ddatt(a)m tenaiva lokaṇa-nāyakena ... (śāsana-)sahitaṁ dāna-kṛaye(n)a grhitaṁ ācāṁdrārka-tārāsthiraṁ dattaṁ||.*

Hence, different kinds of land – agricultural estates, a flower garden, houses and house sites – were granted for the worship of Umāmaheśvara,<sup>57</sup> the feeding of *brāhmaṇas* and repairs of the *maṭha*.

(2) The second Kolhapur stone inscription contains three dates for consecutive grants:

[Śaka 1112, a] Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara Vīra-Bhojadeva gave, for as long as moon and stars exist, ... for the prosperity of his own rule, for the fivefold worship of the god Umāmaheśvara in the form of Amṛteśvara in the *maṭha* founded by Sahavāsi Lokaṇanāyaka, for the feeding of Sahavāsi *brāhmaṇas*, for the food offering (*naivedya*) to the goddess Śrī-Mahālakṣmī thrice [a day] [and] for repairs of that *maṭha*, a rice field<sup>58</sup> of 550 *vapyaka* size according to the measure of Eḍenāḍa, within the boundaries of the village of Koppavāḍa belonging to Eḍenāḍa, in the eastern part ..., connected with a house site of 12 *hasta* size in this village and connected with a farmyard (*khaḍavalaka*),<sup>59</sup> all that into the hands of four *brāhmaṇas* residing in that *maṭha* who were: Sahavāsi Ādityabhaṭṭa and Lakṣmīdharabhaṭṭa as well as Prabhākaraḡhaisāsa and Vāsiyaṇaḡhaisāsa from Karahāṭaka, with a charter ...<sup>60</sup>

[Śaka 1114, b] Furthermore, ... Kāliyaṇanāyaka, son of this Sahavāsi Lokaṇanāyaka, gave for the feeding of *brāhmaṇas* in the *sa[t]ra* founded by his mother Pomākauvā the *khaddiya*<sup>61</sup> within the village boundaries of the *agrahāra* Pauva belonging to the *kholla* of Tālurage, in the eastern part, which [first] had been acquired by the *mahājanas*<sup>62</sup>

57 For Amṛteśvara, see Sanderson 2004: 229; 239–242; 245; 247–249; 251–256; 260–264; 267; 272–273.

58 The meaning of *khalla* in *śāli-khalla-kṣetra* is unclear. Perhaps this term is related to *khala*, “threshing floor”?

59 For *khaḍavalaka*, see Mirashi 1977: 264, n. 2.

60 Kolhapur inscription of Śaka 1112–1115, lines 1–13: *śrīman-mahāmaṇḍaleśvaro vīra-bhojadevaḥ ... nija-rājyā(4)bhivṛddhaye sahavāsi-lokaṇa-nāyakena kārītasya maṭhasya amṛteśvara-mūrtye-umāmaheśvara-devasya pañcopacā(5)ra-pūjārthaṁ sahavāsi-brāhmaṇa-bhojanārthaṁ śrī-mahālakṣmī-devyās tri-kāla-naivedya-pari(c)āl[an]ārthaṁ tan-maṭha-khaṇḍa-sphuṭi(6)ta-jīrṇnoddhārthaṁ eḍenāḍa{m}ntargata-koppavāḍa-grāma-simābhya{m}ntare pūrva-digbhāge ... e(9)(ḍe)nāḍa-damḍa-mānena vapyakānām pañcāśad-adhikam pañca-śataṁ śāli-khalla-kṣetraṁ tat-pratibaddhaṁ tad-grāmābhiantare dvādaśa-(10)(ha)sta-pramāṇaṁ niveśanaṁ tat-pratibaddhaṁ khaḍavalakaṁ ca|| etat sarvaṁ tan-maṭha-niṣṭa-sahavāsy-āditya-bha(11)ṭṭa-lakṣmīdhara-bhaṭṭa-karahāṭaka-prabhākara-ḡhaisāsa-vāsiyaṇa-ḡhaisāsety evaṁ-niṣṭa-brāhmaṇa-catuṣṭaya-haste śā(12)sana-sahitaṁ ... ācamdrārkasthiraṁ dattavān-||.*

61 The meaning of the term *khaddiya* used here to denote half the *vṛtti* is not clear.

62 This is one of the rare attestations of a clear plural form of the term *mahājana*; see also Schmiedchen 2014: 176–184.



of that village through purchase for a [pious] grant – from the share of Lakhumaṅghaisāsa an ample *nivartana* [and] a scarce *nivartana*,<sup>63</sup> i.e., altogether half of the share –, connected with half of the large house (*uttama-grha*) [and] one medium-size house (*madhyama-grha*) and connected with a farmyard (*khaḍavalaka*), after having acquired all that himself from the *mahājana*(s) of that village through purchase for a [pious] grant, into the hands of the four *brāhmaṇas* mentioned before and residing [there] ...<sup>64</sup>

[Śaka 1115, c]<sup>65</sup> And furthermore, the very same Kāliyaṇanāyaka gave, for as long as moon and sun exist, for the feeding of Veda students,<sup>66</sup> after having acquired from the share of Māyīmkauvā, granddaughter (*dauhitrī* = “daughter’s daughter”) of the Sāmavedin Someśvarabhaṭṭa, within the village limits of the same *agrahāra* Pauva, in the eastern part, the northern half of 1 *nivartana* of the best agricultural land by purchase for a [pious] grant, [this land] into the hands of the aforementioned *brāhmaṇas* residing [there] ...<sup>67</sup>

In both Kolhapur stone inscriptions, the specific selection of the donative objects was apparently directly related to the purposes of these endowments. The garden probably provided the flowers for the *pūjā*. The yields from the allocated fields were meant for the acquisition of the substances required for the god Umāmaheśvara in the form of Amṛteśvara. Food offerings (*naivedya*)

63 Kielhorn (1894–95: 215) and Mirashi (1977: 267) translated the expressions *uttama-nivartana* and *kaniṣṭha-nivartana* as “largest *nivartana*” and “smallest *nivartana*”, respectively.

64 Kolhapur inscription of Śaka 1112–1115, lines 13–19: *anyac ca|| ... tasyaiva sahavāsi-lokaṇa-nāya(15)kasyaputraḥkāliyaṇa-nāyakaḥsva(-mātuḥpomākauvāyāḥ)sa(trebrahma)ṇa-bhojanārthaṁ tālurage-khollā{ṁ}ntarggata-a(16)grahāra-pauva-grāma-simābhya{ṁ}ntare pūrva-dig-bhāge tad-grāma-(ma)hājanaīr ddāna-krayeṇa grhīta(ṁ) kha(ddi)ya(ṁ) lakhumaṇa-ghaisā(17)sasyavṛtti-madhyeuttama-nivartta(namekamkaniṣṭha-ni)varattanam ekaṁ evam arddhā vṛttiḥ tat-pratibaddham u(ttama)-grhasyārdham madhyama-gr(18)ham ekaṁ tat-pratibaddham khaḍavalakaṁ e(tat sarvvaṁ tad-grāma-mahā)jana-hastā(t dā)na-krayeṇa grhītvā pūrvvokta-niṣṭa-brāhmaṇa-catuṣṭaya-haste ... dattavān-||.*

65 The date here is not given in the Śaka era but in the cyclic year Pramādin which corresponds to Śaka 1115; see Kielhorn 1894–95b: 215.

66 The meaning of *khodakā* (<*kṣudra*?) in *vedādhyayana-(kho?)dakācchātra* is not clear.

67 Kolhapur inscription of Śaka 1112–1115, lines 19–23: *anyac ca|| ... (20) ... (tasmīn eva agrahāra-pauva)-grāma-simābhya{ṁ}ntare pūrva-digbhage chaṁdogā-someśvara-bhaṭṭasya(21)dauhitryāmāyīmkauvāyāḥvṛtte(uttama-bhūmeḥnivarttanasyottarārdham sa e)va kāliyaṇa-nāyakaḥ vedādhyayana-(kho?)dakā-(22)cchātra-bhojanārthaṁ tasyās sakā(śād dāna-krayeṇa) grhītvā (pūrvvokta-ni)niṣṭa-brāhmaṇa-catuṣṭaya-haste ... ācāndrārkasthiram dattavān-||.*

for the goddess Mahālakṣmī are also explicitly mentioned. The subsistence of *brāhmaṇas*, partly labelled as *sahavāsi*, was a recurrent purpose in these collective endowments. Kāliyaṇanāyaka had bought some land to provide food, which was to be distributed among *brāhmaṇas* in a *sa[t]tra* hall once founded by his mother. Another donation of Kāliyaṇa was meant for the feeding of Veda students. Both inscriptions stipulate that the endowments by Bhoja II were also to be used for required repairs at the *maṭha*; thus, it is likely that crops were to finance building material and the workforce.

Striking is the frequent mention of houses (*gr̥ha*) and house sites (*niveśana*) – which seem to have had a standard size of 12 *hasta* – connected to the agricultural land. Their purpose is only explicitly defined once, when a building on the premise of the *maṭha* was earmarked as storage for the god Umāmāheśvara and for the feeding of *brāhmaṇas*. The harvest from the scattered plots of land may have been brought to the storage of the *maṭha*. The intention does not seem to have been to settle *brāhmaṇas* in the villages mentioned in the two inscriptions. The village houses might have been used as estate buildings or to accommodate the workforce. The differentiation between *uttama-gr̥ha* and *madhyama-gr̥ha* may reflect a distinction between residential and farm buildings. The four “white houses” allocated to the *brāhmaṇa* administrators of the grant might have been residences, all the more as they were located within the Brahmanical settlement.

Part of the estates which were later transferred for religious purposes had first to be purchased. This applies to the altogether three endowments by the founder of the *maṭha* and his son. Whereas Śilāhāra Bhoja II could probably use crown property, private donors had to buy the land plots from third parties. According to the epigraphical record, this was not at all uncommon in twelfth/thirteenth-century southern Maharashtra. However, the specific circumstances are still remarkable. Kāliyaṇanāyaka acquired land twice in one and the same village, which is described as an *agrahāra* or Brahmanical settlement. Both plots are called *ṽrtti* in Śaka 1114 and 1115, a term which was used in endowments for Brahmanical groups to denote the individual shares of the donees. According to the inscriptional stipulations, such religious grants were supposed to be handed down from one generation to the next, to sons, grandsons, etc. But they were usually not meant to be sold or otherwise alienated.

According to the testimony of the second Kolhapur inscription, however, a *brāhmaṇa* in one case, and the granddaughter of a Sāmavedin in the other case, sold (parts of) their shares from previous religious endowments, shares which they had probably inherited and which once must have been granted to provide the means of subsistence for their ancestors. The phrase *dāna-krayeṇa*

might have been chosen to describe the fact that a *ṛtti* could only be legally sold if this was done for a new religious endowment, thus not fundamentally violating the original intention of the *ṛtti* donor. However, the transaction might also be an indication for the fact that the property rights over the donated assets got stronger over the course of time, after some generations, and developed from “possession” to “ownership”. It is also worth mentioning, that the Brahmanical authorities – the *mahājanas* of the *agrahāra* – had to be consulted or engaged.

### A Patne (Chalisingaon) Stone Inscription of Śaka 1128/29

An early-thirteenth-century Yādava stone inscription from northwestern Maharashtra testifies that a special *maṭha* received a grant on the occasion of a lunar eclipse in Śaka 1128 (1207 CE).<sup>68</sup> Franz Kielhorn reports in his *Epigraphia Indica* edition: “This inscription was discovered by the late Dr. Bhāu Dāji on a stone tablet in the ruined temple of the goddess Bhavānī at Pāṭṇā, a deserted village about ten miles south-west of Chalisingaon in Khandeś.”<sup>69</sup> The inscription begins with an invocation to Gaṇādhipati (Gaṇeśa) and an incompletely preserved stanza on the sun (*divākara*), the moon (*sudhākara*), Mars (*bhūmiputra*), Mercury (*śvetāmśuputra*), Jupiter (*guru*), Venus (*śukra*) and Saturn (*śani*) in the sequence of the weekdays named after them.<sup>70</sup> This is followed by three stanzas on the famous astrologer-mathematician Bhāskara, who had lived in the twelfth century<sup>71</sup> and who is praised as well-versed in astrology and in the philosophical systems of Mīmāṃsā, Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika:

Victorious is Śrī-Bhāskarācārya, whose feet are worshipped by the sages, who was extremely well-versed in the teachings of [the Mīmāṃsā scholar Kumārila] Bhaṭṭa, who was unique in Sāṃkhya [and] an independent thinker in Tantra, who possessed impeccable knowledge in the Veda [and] was great in crafts and other arts, a virtuoso in metrics, knowledgeable in Vaiśeṣika, an enlightening (*prabhākara*) teacher in the teaching system of [the Mīmāṃsā scholar] Prabhākara, a poet in poetry, and like a

68 For the date, which is more likely to have fallen into Śaka 1129, see Kielhorn 1892: 341.

69 Kielhorn 1892: 338; see also Fleet 1878: 30, no. 284. The temple, which is situated ca. 3 km to the south of the village, is now called Pāṭaṇādevī (after the locality) or Candrikādevī.

70 Patne (Chalisingaon) inscription of Śaka 1128/29, line 1, stanza 1.

71 Bhāskara is believed to have been born in Śaka 1036 (1114/15 CE); see Kielhorn 1892: 340.

Trineta (Śiva) in the three branches [of astrology], [namely,] the multifarious mathematics and the others.<sup>72</sup>

The next verses contain the *praśastis* of the Yādavas of Devagiri and their Nikumbha subordinates. Stanzas 17 to 24 praise a father-son-line of nine members of Bhāskara's family up to his grandson:

- Trivikrama, *kavīcakravartin*
- Bhāskarabhaṭṭa, *vidyāpati*
- Govinda, *sarvajña*
- Prabhākara
- Manoratha
- Maheśvarācārya, *kavīśvara*
- **Bhāskara**, *sadvedavidyālatākanda*
- Lakṣmīdhara, *vibudhāgraṇī*
- **Caṅgadeva**, *daivajñavarya*.

They are described as learned *brāhmaṇas* belonging to the Śāṅḍilyagotra and originally hailing from the territory of the North Indian Paramāra dynasty. Trivikrama, the first in this lineage of knowledgeable men, is described as a poet laureate (*kavī-cakravartin*).<sup>73</sup> His son Bhāskarabhaṭṭa is said to have been honoured by a king named Bhoja, probably the ruler of that name belonging to the Paramāra dynasty of Dhārā (see Map 1),<sup>74</sup> with the honorific title *vidyāpati*, which denoted him as a kind of “main scholar” at the court.<sup>75</sup> The famous astrologer Bhāskara, a son of Maheśvarācārya, another “lord among poets” (*kavīśvara*),<sup>76</sup> is praised (again) in different ways, *inter alia*, as “the root of the creeper which is the true Veda knowledge” (*sad-veda-vidyā-latā-kanda*), and as someone “with whose pupils no disputant is able to [successfully] argue”.<sup>77</sup> The

72 Patne (Chalīsgaon) inscription of Śaka 1128/29, lines 1–3, stanzas 2–4: *udbha(2)ṭa-(bu)ddhir bhṭṭe sām̄khye sām̄khyah̄ sva-tam̄(tra)-dhis tam̄tre | vede nava(dya)-vidyo 'nalpaḥ śīlpādiṣu kalāsu || svaccham̄do yaś cham̄dasi śāstre vaiśeṣike viśeṣa-jñah̄ | yah̄ śrī-prabhākara-guruḥ prabhākara-da(3)rśane kavīḥ kāvyē || (ba)huguṇa-gaṇita-prabhṛti-skam̄d{dh}a-tritaye trineta-samaḥ | vibudhābhivam̄dita-pado jayati śrī-bhāskarācāryah̄ ||*

73 Kielhorn (1892: 340) opined that “there can hardly be any doubt that the *kavīcakravartin* Trivikrama ... is ... the author of the *Damayanti-kathā*, who, in the introduction of his work, describes himself as the son of Nemāditya (or Devāditya) and grandson of Śrīdhara, of the Śāṅḍilya *vaṁśa*.”

74 For another reference to the Paramāra king Bhoja, see Furuī's discussion of the Bangarh stone slab inscription above.

75 Patne (Chalīsgaon) inscription of Śaka 1128/29, lines 14–15, stanza 17.

76 Patne (Chalīsgaon) inscription of Śaka 1128/29, lines 15–16, stanza 19.

77 Patne (Chalīsgaon) inscription of Śaka 1128/29, lines 16–17, verse 20c: *ya(c)-chīṣyaih̄ saha ko 'pi no vivaditum̄ (17) dakṣo vivādī kvacic*.

ancestors of Bhāskara seem to have lived at the least since the mid-eleventh century on the territory of the Paramāra dynasty of Dhārā in Mālava. At the end of the twelfth century, Bhāskara's son Lakṣmīdhara was invited by the Yādava ruler Jaitrapāla, and, hence, migrated to his kingdom in northwestern Maharashtra:

Lakṣmīdhara, head of all sages, who knew the content of the Veda, a king among logicians, acquainted with the essence of the discussions in texts on ritual acts, was Bhāskara's son.

Jaitrapāla, regarding him as conversant with the content of all the *śāstras*, brought him away from this town and made him the chief of the learned [at his court].<sup>78</sup>

The Patne inscription further reports that Lakṣmīdhara' son Caṅgadeva, the court astrologer of the Yādava ruler Siṅghaṇa II, son and successor of Jaitrapāla, had founded a *maṭha* for teaching the astrological theories of his famous grandfather Bhāskara:

To him was born the son Caṅgadeva, the excellent astrologer of king Siṅghaṇa. He founded a college for the dissemination of the expert wisdom compiled by Śrī-Bhāskarācārya:

"The texts composed by Bhāskara, such as the *Siddhāntaśiromaṇi*, and other works of his descendants are to be studied (*vyākhyeyā*) extensively in my *maṭha*."<sup>79</sup>

The description of Bhāskara's lineage up to the foundation of the *maṭha* by his grandson in the early thirteenth century is followed by a stanza which clarifies that the grant was commissioned by the Nikumbha subordinates, not by their Yādava overlords:

78 Patne (Chalisgaon) inscription of Śaka 1128/29, lines 17–18, stanzas 21–22: *lakṣmīdharākhyo 'khīla-sūri-mukhyo vedārtha-vit tārīka-cakravartī| kratu-k(ri)yā-kāṃḍa-vicāra-(18)sāra-viśārado bhāskara-nāmdano 'bhūt-|| sarva-śāstrārtha-dakṣo 'yam iti matvā purād atah| jaitrapālena yo nītaḥ kṛtās ca vibudhāgraṇīh||*

79 Patne (Chalisgaon) inscription of Śaka 1128/29, lines 18–20, stanzas 23–24: *tasmāt sutaḥ siṅghaṇa-cakravartī-(19)daivajña-varyo 'jani caṅgadevaḥ| śrī-bhāskarācārya-niba(d)dha-śāstra-vistāra-hetoḥ kurute maṭham yaḥ|| bhāskara-racita-graṇthāḥ siddhāntaśiromaṇi-pramukhāḥ| tad-vaṃśya-kṛtās cānye vyā(20)khyeyā man-maṭhe nīyamāt-||* In fact, the text uses a present-tense form (*kurute*) when referring to Caṅgadeva's foundation of the *maṭha*. The *Siddhāntaśiromaṇi* is regarded to date from 1150 CE, and Bhāskara is also considered as the author of the *Karaṇakutūhala* of Śaka 1105 (1183 CE); see Pingree 1981: 25–26; 35–36.

Whatever has been given here to the *maṭha* by [the Nikumbha kings] Śrī-Soideva, Hemāḍi and others – land, etc. – all that is to be protected by future rulers for the great increase of [religious] merit.<sup>80</sup>

The specific donative stipulations, which are in contrast to the main part of the text written in old Marāṭhī, are introduced with the following sentence in Sanskrit:

Well-being. In Śaka 1128, in the year Prabhava, in the month of Śrāvaṇa, on the full-moon day, at the time of a lunar eclipse, Śrī-Soideva, in the presence of all people [concerned], bestowed upon the *maṭha* founded by his own teacher, a revenue collection point (*āya-sthāna*) with a libation of water.<sup>81</sup>

The *praśasti* of the Nikumbha dynasty at the beginning of the inscription reports that Soideva had already passed away and had been succeeded by his younger brother Hemāḍideva.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, the epigraph must be a posthumous record of a grant of Soideva, issued by Hemāḍideva. Nikumbha Soideva, who apparently had regarded Caṅgadeva as his spiritual teacher, endowed the *maṭha* with the revenue from a village and with the right to collect certain customs duties.<sup>83</sup>

Unfortunately, nothing is known about the location of this *maṭha*, which was dedicated to the study of Bhāskara's teachings. The find-spot of the stone inscription of Śaka 1128/29, the temple of Pāṭaṇādevī, some 18 km to the south of Chalisgaon in the Jalgaon district and some 75 km to the northwest of present-day Daulatabad, ancient Devagiri, the Yādava capital (see Map 1), may have been the site of this temple college. It seems as if the *maṭha* had been situated on the territory of the Nikumbha dynasty, which is described as “country of 1,600 villages” (*ṣoḍaśa-śa-grāma-deśa*).<sup>84</sup> In the same

80 Patne (Chalisgaon) inscription of Śaka 1128/29, line 20, stanza 25: *śrī-soidevena maṭhāya dattam hemāḍinā kim{c}cid ihāparaiś ca| bhūmy-ādi sarvaṃ pratipālaniyaṃ bhaviṣya-bhūpair bahu-punya-vṛddhyai||*.

81 Patne (Chalisgaon) inscription of Śaka 1128/29, lines 21–22: *svasti śrīśāke 1128 prabhava-saṃvatsare śrāvaṇa-māse paurṇamāsyāṃ caṃdra-grahaṇa-samaye śrī-soidevena sarva-jana-saṃni{d}dhau hastodaka-pūrvvakam nija-guru-racita-maṭhāyāya-sthānam (22) dattam||*. Kielhorn (1892: 346) has translated *āya-sthāna* as “sources of income”.

82 Patne (Chalisgaon) inscription of Śaka 1128/29, line 12, stanza 15. See also Schmiedchen 2014: 370; 384.

83 Patne (Chalisgaon) inscription of Śaka 1128/29, lines 25–26. The term *sūmka* must be derived from Sanskrit *śulka*.

84 Patne (Chalisgaon) inscription of Śaka 1128/29, line 12, stanza 15.

village, at the Mahādeva temple, another stone epigraph of the Nikumbhas, the Patne (Chalisgaon) inscription of Śaka 1075 (1153/54 CE) has been found, which records the construction of a Śiva temple (*harmya*) by Indrarāja and the bestowal of a village on that temple by his son Govana III (the later father of Soideva and Hemāḍideva), without referring to the Yādavas.<sup>85</sup>

Still another stone epigraph from the same region, the Bahal inscription of Śaka 1144 (1222/23 CE), which was found some 20 km to the north of Chalisgaon, at the Sārajādevī temple,<sup>86</sup> provides interesting additional information, although only the Yādava rulers, not the Nikumbhas, have been referred to in the text. Six members of the family of the astrologer Bhāskara are listed, but he himself is not mentioned. Bhāskara's grandfather Manoratha and his father Maheśvara have been enumerated, and then the lineage is continued with the member of a collateral branch called Śrīpati, another son of Bhāskara's father. The grandson of this Śrīpati was a certain Anantadeva, who is described as the court astrologer of Yādava Siṅhaṇa II and as the founder of a temple (*prāsāda*) for a goddess which is called "mother of the three worlds" (*tri-jagaj-janani*).<sup>87</sup> This deity, which can probably be identified with Pārvatī, is addressed as "Bhavānī" alias "Dvārajādevī" in the invocation and the invocatory stanza<sup>88</sup> and named "Ambikā" at the end of the inscription, in the stanza containing the date.<sup>89</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

As has been demonstrated on the basis of the epigraphic material for three important *mathas* (one of them being called *mathikā* instead) founded and promoted in the early medieval Deccan, i.e., (1) in the coastal stretch between present-day Maharashtra and Gujarat, (2) in northwest Maharashtra and (3) in south Maharashtra (see Map 1), such institutions were frequently dedicated to a particular local deity (for instance, the goddess Bhagavatī or Umāmaheśvara alias Amṛteśvara). A *matha* could also be established for an explicitly mentioned educational purpose, namely, the teaching of the astrological theories of a famous early medieval scholar. All three *mathas* discussed here had been founded by *brāhmaṇas*, and at least two of them more specifically by what

85 Patne (Chalisgaon) inscription of Śaka 1075: lines 21–24, stanzas 17 and 19. See also Fleet 1878: 30, no. 283.

86 Kielhorn 1894–95a: 110 and n. 16.

87 Bahal inscription of Śaka 1144: lines 15–16, stanza 17.

88 Bahal inscription of Śaka 1144: lines 1–2, prose invocation and stanza 1.

89 Bahal inscription of Śaka 1144: line 18, stanza 20.

might be called “political” *brāhmaṇas*, i.e., such representatives of this group who were in one way or another involved in court politics and administration, as friends of ministers or court astrologers. Grants for the maintenance of the *maṭhas* were made by subordinate rulers as well as by the founders of these institutions and their families. Donations comprised of villages, land, taxes, oil-mills, flower gardens, houses, etc., the income or produce of which were meant to be used for repairs of the *maṭha* buildings, the sustenance of certain groups of *brāhmaṇas* and the worship of specific deities.

What distinguished the foundation of and the endowment for a *maṭha* or *maṭhikā* from the establishment of and the support for a temple or shrine? There were obviously many similarities, especially regarding their function as places of worship. But, also in contrast to Bengal (see Furui above), *brāhmaṇas* as founders seem to have been more instrumental for *maṭhas* than for temples in the early medieval (western) Deccan. In fact, it is the clear involvement of *brāhmaṇas* that distinguishes the description of a *maṭha* or *maṭhikā* from contemporary epigraphic depictions of temples in the Deccan. Endowments in favour of *maṭhas* could be administered by *brāhmaṇas*, often specifically mentioned, and a *maṭha* was home to *brāhmaṇas*. Besides residential areas for them, a *maṭha* could also comprise of a *sattra* or charitable feeding hall and storage facilities. In the Kolhapur inscriptions, the donative purpose most frequently mentioned is the relatively unspecific feeding of *brāhmaṇas*. Nothing is said about the location of the *sattra*, but it was probably situated in ancient Kollāpura, near the *maṭha*, as it seems rather improbable to assume that the feeding of the *brāhmaṇas* was organised in a decentralised manner in individual villages.

The three *maṭhas* in the early medieval (western) Deccan seem to have been – as their contemporary counterparts in Bengal (see Furui above) – highly complex centres of worship (for a particular god or goddess) and learning. They were apparently supposed to be inhabited by scholars proficient in the Vedas or in other Vedic sciences, as, for instance, astrology. *Maṭhas* could be attached to a greater pre-existing temple compound or be located on the premises of a larger *devālaya* with a main deity different from the *maṭha*'s own shrine. *Maṭhas* could also get involved in land disputes with neighbouring religious institutions and solve these through agreement.

Two of the three *maṭhas* were clearly situated in an urban environment, in the ancient cities of Saṁyāna and Kollāpura. But in contrast to Central India, where the ruins of Śaiva *maṭhas* still exist, and corresponding to the situation in Bengal, we are left without any excavated remains assignable to early medieval *maṭhas* from the Deccan. The charters pertaining to the *maṭhikā* at Saṁyāna have been discovered out of any archaeological context at



Chinchani, some 40 km away. The *maṭha* at Kollāpura is recorded to have been located to the north of the western gate of the *śrīmat-kollāpura-mahālakṣmī-devī-devālaya*, which can be identified with the find-spot of the inscriptions at the still existing Mahālakṣmī temple of Kolhapur, but with no traces of the *maṭha* being detected so far. Nothing is known about the location of the *maṭha* founded for disseminating Bhāskara's astrological knowledge. The find-spot of the inscription, the temple of Pāṭaṇādevī in the Chalisgaon taluk, may have been the site of this *maṭha*, but again without any traces of the college.

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