

**STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF BRĀHMĪ AND ŚĀRADĀ INSCRIPTIONS
FROM GANDHĀRA: ITS IMPACT ON RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL AND
HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE REGION**

By

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**DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF PESHAWAR**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

abbrv.	abbreviation(s)
abl.	ablative
acc.	accusative
adj.	adjective

adv.	adverb
caus.	causal
dat.	dative
du.	dual
f.	feminine
gen.	genitive
impv.	imperative
ind.	indeclinable
inst.	instrumental
loc.	locative
m.	masculine
n.	neuter
N/A	not available
nom.	nominative
opt.	optative
pl.	plural
pp.	past participle
ppp.	present perfect participle
pre.	present
pron.	pronoun
sing.	singular
voc.	vocative

LIST OF SYMBOLS

[]	Unclear or partially preserved character(s) which reading is uncertain
[...]	Untranslated part of the inscription
()	Lost or illegible character(s) conjecturally restored based on context or other means
< >	Character(s) that has been omitted by the scribe and conjecturally restored
<~>	Erraneous character(s) which should be cancelled
.	A missing portion of consonantal or diacritic vowel sign of partially legible character
?	An illegible but visible or partially visible character
+	A missing character
///	Beginning or end of an incomplete line
○	A single large or medium-sized circle, a design composed of circles, or other large circular or square design used in the original text
=	A word break within an character: used in phrase such as <i>vyupaśamas=sukham</i> , in which the final consonant of the preceding word and the initial vowel of the following word are written together as a single syllable <i>ssu</i> .

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PREFACE

The title of the present research is *Study and Analysis of Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions from Gandhāra: Its impact on religious, cultural and historical landscape of the region*.

It is a study of the Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions found in Gandhāra, the area which

covers the present day Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa as well as part of Punjab and Afghanistan. The research data consists of the Brāhmī, Gupta-Brāhmī, Proto-Śāradā, Śāradā and Bilingual inscriptions which are preserved in various Museums in Pakistan and abroad, *in situ* as well as lying in private collections. The result of this research has significantly contributed to the present body of our knowledge regarding the religious, cultural and historical landscape of the region. Detailed analysis of these epigraphic materials have added new informations to the Post-Kushan period history of Gandhāra. Detailed palaeographic study, on the other hand, shows local development in the writing system in Gandhāra from the Gupta Brāhmī of the 4th/5th Century C.E. to Śāradā script.

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter one introduces the history of epigraphic study of the Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions in Gandhāra and explains the objective and methodology of the present research. Chapter two begins with a brief explanation about the geography of Gandhāra, followed by discussions regarding the early written records and historical chronology of the region. Chapter three contains the history and decipherment Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions, which is the main body of the present research. In Chapter four, the history, cultural and religious landscape of Gandhāra is discussed based on the informations retrieved from the decipherment. Chapter five deals with the palaeography of these inscriptions, where their characters are studied in detail. The thesis is concluded in chapter six, followed by the bibliography and index.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research

Numerous archaeological remains have been discovered in Gandhāra, the most significant among them are coins, sculptures, as well as secular and religious buildings. These discoveries provide important information about the art, political, social and cultural history of the region. Another important cultural material from Gandhāra which deserves special attention are the inscriptions, written in Kharoṣṭhī, Brāhmī, Kohi¹ and other foreign scripts like Bactrian, Aramaic and Greek. Kharoṣṭhī was initially used alongside with the less predominant Kohi script in the earlier period. After the 4th Century C.E., the popularity of Kharoṣṭhī faded away and gradually being replaced by the north-western style of Gupta-Brāhmī, which later developed into Proto-Śāradā and Śāradā. The Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions found in Gandhāra are mostly carved on metal plates and sheets, stones, boulders and clay tablets. Although some of these epigraphic materials give important information regarding the culture and history of the area, even though compared to the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, less importance has so far been given by the scholars to the Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions found in Gandhāra.

This thesis, therefore, not only focuses on the problems concerning the epigraphic and palaeographic study of Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions, but we will try to understand its impact on the religion, cultural and historical landscape of Gandhāra.

1.2 Origin and Development of Writing in the Indo-Pak Subcontinent The earliest writing system used in the Indo-Pak Subcontinent was the Indus Script, found in different sites of the Indus civilization. Dated between 2600-1800 B.C. (Parpola 1996: 165), the script was used in short inscriptions discovered in Harappa, Mahenjo-Daro and Dhulavira archaeological sites. They were found in the forms of seals or seals impressions except in Dhulavira, where an inscription written in the Indus script was discovered in the northern gateway of the city. One of the longest is often called “Dhulavira Signboard”, which is 3 metres long and the signs are around 37 cm in height (Kenoyer 1998: 98). The most frequent among the Indus script symbols are homo signs, bull signs, fish signs, bird signs, scorpion, jar, geometric designs etc. The signs may

¹ Research on its decipherment is still in progress (Nasim Khan 2007: 89 -118).

have been used for merchantile purposes until the decline of the Indus civilization in 1900 B.C. (Upasak 1960: 1; Parpola 2008:119125). Although few scholars have proposed their sound values, the decipherment still remains an enigma. The failure to decipher the Indus script is due to the lack of knowledge about the origin of the script, its relation with other legible scripts, and the language used in it. The absence of bilingual inscriptions made the task of deciphering the script extremely difficult.

Evidence regarding the presence of writing in the Indo-Pak Subcontinent between the decline of the Indus civilization in the 19th Century B.C. and the rise of the Maurya in the 3rd Century B.C. is scanty. Few Buddhist texts such as the Jātaka stories show that writing existed during the time of the Buddha (Upasak 1960: 7). As for material remains, only one inscription using local script was found. It was a potsherd inscribed with a short Brāhmī inscription said to be dated at 4th Century B.C. (Coningham. et.al. 1996: 73-97). However, this date was disputed by Falk (2014: 4647).

In the 3rd Century B.C., King Aśoka ascended the throne and issued a number of inscriptions written in native and foreign scripts. Kharoṣṭhī, Greek and Aramaic were generally used in the north-western provinces while Mauryan Brāhmī remained the main script in the rest of his empire. So far, only two Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of Aśokan period were discovered in Gandhāra, namely the Mansehra and Shahbazgarhi rock edicts. A fragment of the Aśokan Rock Edict written in Mauryan Brāhmī was also reported to have been discovered in Buner. However, its authenticity is very much doubted. The inscriptions mostly contain edicts engraved by officials of the central government (Dani 1963: 32-36). Although his empire was extremely vast, the inscriptions located in far flung areas hardly show regional variants in their characters (Upasak 1960: 29).

After the death of Aśoka, Brāhmī started to be used for other purposes such as royal, popular or individualistic (Dani 1963: 50-51). From the 3rd Century B.C. to 1st Century C.E., a new variety of Brāhmī emerged, known as the Provincial Brāhmī or Post Mauryan Brāhmī (Dani 1963: 50-51). The inscriptions belonging to this style followed the regional standards based on different technical achievements. They include Nagarjuni Cave inscription of Daśaratha, Mahasthan inscription, Ramgadh Cave inscription, Heliodorus inscription, coin legends of Agatocles, inscription of Mathura Kshatrapa and inscription of Nayanika (Dani 1963: 59-64).

After the 1st Century C.E., there were noticeable elaborations on the pen styles which led to the foundation of different schools (Dani 1963: 77). However, no fundamental differences in the executions of letters can be observed. During this period, Provincial Brāhmī branched out into more styles. They included the Indus Zone, Mathura, Sanchi, Eastern Style, Kausambi, Madhya Pradesh, Eastern Malwa, North-Eastern Rajasthan, Gujarat, Western Deccan, Eastern Deccan, South-Western Deccan and Early Gupta. Main features of this period were the formation of headmarks, style of the medial vowels, influence of cursive hands, fondness for flourishes and introduction of new signs (Dani 1963: 78-84).

In the Mathura inscriptions, the tapering thickness of the vertical has led to the formation of headmarks, present in almost all inscriptions of this period (Dani 1983: 136-141). Few types of headmarks developed such as line, block, notched, solid square, hollow square, solid triangular and hollow triangular. For the medial vowels, *ā* became a slanting vertical, *-ī* and *-i* assumed rounded forms, *-u* bends its base to lesser or greater degree and the strokes of *-e*, *-ai*, *-o* and *-au* bend upwards. The development in cursive style and decorative elements changed the form of the letter. In the 4th/5th Century C.E., the Gupta style of writing was used throughout the Indo-Pak subcontinent including Gandhāra.

After the 5th Century, with the decline of the Gupta Empire, all of the three main styles of Gupta-Brāhmī script developed independently according to their regional variations. The scripts of southeast developed to Pallava and Grantha scripts which became the parents of the modern scripts of Southern India including Tamil, Telegu, Malayali and Kannada. The scripts of Gujarat-Rajasthan and Central India developed to Nagari and Devanagari, while those from the Eastern India developed to Bengali script. The south-eastern style of Gupta-Brāhmī became the parent script of Southeast Asia such as Old Javanese, Old Khmer, Old Mon and Old Cham.

The regional variation in the writing system also existed in Kashmir and Gandhāra. The north-western variant of Gupta-Brāhmī used in the 4th/5th Century C.E. evolved into Proto-Śāradā and Śāradā scripts, which became the dominant writing system of the region.

1.3 History of Epigraphic Research in Gandhāra

The study of Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions of Gandhāra was pioneered by

Princep (1837), Burnes (1842) and Bühler (1892-1893; 1896-1897). In the early 20th Century C.E., the research was continued by Lüders (1901), Konow (1909-1910), Vogel (1911; 1921-1922), Hargraves (1923-1924), Sahni (1919; 1931-32; 1933-1934) and Shakur (1946). From the Indo-Pakistan partition until the early 90's, scholars such as Sircar (1953-1954; 1963-1964; 1983), Dani (1963; 2001; Dani et.al 1964), Rahman (1978; 1979; 1980; 1998), Tucci (1958; 1970), Norman (1988), Sander (Srinivasan & Sander 1997), Kreitman (1992), Sachs (2003) and Melzer (2006) significantly contributed to this field. Even in the 21st Century, a good number of new inscriptions continued to be discovered, and they were studied by Hinüber (2010) and Falk (2003; 2004a; 2008). The most current researches on this topic are done by Nasim Khan (1998a; 1998-1999; 1999-2000a; 1999-2000b; 2001a; 2001b; 2003a; 2006; Swati & Nasim Khan 2000; Nasim Khan & Shahab 2012).

The first to conduct research on Śāradā inscriptions found in Gandhāra was Burnes in 1837. He collected two inscriptions during his visit in Hund and made hand copies before removing them to the Calcutta Museum (Burnes 1842: 120). Princep published the hand copies and made an attempt to decipher them (Princep 1837: 876879). Six decades later, Bühler added more inscriptions to the list of published inscriptions from Gandhāra, namely the Toramāṇa Śāhi inscription and three Buddhist inscriptions of Swat (Bühler 1892-1893; 1896-1897). The Toramāṇa Śāhi inscription recorded the construction of a Buddhist monastery (Bühler 1892-1893: 239), while the short inscriptions of Swat contained the Dhammapada and Mahaparinibbanasutta texts (Bühler 1896-1897: 133-135). The Mahaparinibbana Sutta inscription was revisited by Lüders (1901). In 2010, these three Buddhist inscriptions were republished with photographs by Badshah Sardar without new interpretations (Sardar 2010: 303).

S. Konow (1909-1910: 75-81) studied a long but late period Śāradā inscription discovered in the Hazara division, which commemorated the construction of a tank by Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka. Ph. Vogel greatly contributed to the study of Śāradā inscriptions in his comprehensive corpus of those coming from Jammu, Kashmir and a few from Gandhāra (Vogel 1911). His corpus became an important reference for the detailed palaeographic study of Śāradā inscriptions of Jammu and Kashmir by Deambi (1982). Vogel also studied an inscription discovered in Shorkot, Punjab (Vogel 1921-1922:

15-17). Hargreaves is another explorer who studied a Śāradā inscription from Hund. However, he did not manage to make anything out from the inscription beyond a few scattered words because it was extremely worn out (Hargreaves 1923-1924: 69-70).

D. R. Sahni studied a number of Gupta-Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions. Among his earliest work is the preliminary decipherment of the Kadambeśvaradāsa inscription (Sahni 1919). He also deciphered 6 Śāradā and Nāgarī inscriptions preserved in the Lahore Museum, three of them coming from Gandhāra (Sahni 1931-1932: 293-301). In another work, he studied a long Śāradā inscription from Hund which recorded the construction of a temple by Maharājñī Śrī Kameśvaridevi (Sahni 1933-1934: 97-98). D. C. Sircar revisited the Kadambeśvaradāsa, Khimṅala Śāhi, Dewai and Barikot inscriptions which were initially published by Tucci and Sahni (Sircar 1953-1954: 59-63; 1963: 44-47; 1983: 430, 431; Tucci 1958: 322-328; Sahni 1919; 1931-1932: 293-301).

M. A. Shakur compiled a good number of Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions from Gandhāra preserved in the Peshawar Museum. He also included Kharoṣṭhī, Bactrian and Arabic inscriptions in his guidebook (Shakur 1946). The Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions from Gandhāra compiled by Shakur include the Dewal inscription, Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka inscription, Īśvara inscription, Mahārājñī Śrī Kameśvari inscription, Tochi Valley bilingual inscription A and B, Memorial Stone inscription, Wano inscription and Wartir inscription.

Tucci published two inscriptions, one of Khimṅala Śāhi found in Kabul while the other was of Ratnamañjarī found in Taxila (Tucci 1958: 322-328; 1970: 103-104). Dani also contributed to the research of Śāradā inscriptions by studying the Tochi Valley Bilingual inscriptions A, B and C as well as the Veka inscription (Dani et.al 1964; Dani 2001: 81-87). In his work, *Indian Palaeography*, Dani made an analysis about the evolution of the north-western variant of the Brāhmī script (Dani 1963: 59-65, 85-88, 142-151). However, his discussions only focused on those inscriptions available to him at that time. But since then, a good number of inscriptions have been discovered which could add more to the information related to the palaeographic study of Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions.

A single inscription written in Mauryan Brāhmī said to have been discovered in Takht-I-Bahi, Buner District was published by Norman in 1988. Although he made a good discussion about the content, the authenticity of the inscription is doubtful (Norman 1988: 99-102).

The contribution of L. Sander is also important in his decipherment of the Vāsudeva-Nārāyaṇa image inscription, which probably originated from Kashmir Smast (Srinivasan and Sander 1997: 105-170). Kreitman (1992: 215-217), Melzer (2006: 251-278) and Sachs (2003: No.213) each published one Gupta-Brāhmī found in Afghanistan. Hinüber studied three Śāradā inscriptions of unknown provenances which might have come from the Northern Areas or Gandhāra (Hinüber 2010: 9-12).

Rahman made significant contributions to the study of Proto-Śāradā and Śāradā inscriptions found in the region. He published three new inscriptions, Jayapāla Śāhi inscription, Gumbatuna inscription and Zulamkot Bilingual inscription (Rahman 1978: 34-36; 1979: 339; 1998: 469-473). He also made a palaeographic study of the Proto-Śāradā and Śāradā scripts used in the inscriptions as well as in the legends of the Hindu Śāhi period coins (Rahman 1979: 220-229, 237-258). Rahman was the first person to identify the Śāhi era, and managed to satisfactorily date few Śāradā inscriptions of the Hindu Śāhi period (Rahman 1978:34-36).

H. Falk's contribution towards the study of Brāhmī script in Gandhāra can be judged by the six Kushan Brāhmī and Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions said to have come from Gandhāra (Falk 2004: 139-155). He also revisited the decipherments of Sita Maha Kandara inscription (Falk 2003: 1-8), the Kamaṇḍalu inscriptions (Falk 2008: 137-148), a Buddha bronze image inscription from Afghanistan (Falk 2008:137-148) and Vāsudeva Nārāyaṇa bronze image inscription (Falk 2004: 144-146).

Nasim Khan deciphered a good number of long inscriptions written in Gupta-Brāhmī, Proto-Śāradā and Śāradā scripts. The main works of Nasim Khan include the decipherment of Śrī Malikaputra inscription (Nasim Khan 2003a), Spina inscription (Nasim Khan 2001a), Narendrāditya inscription (Nasim Khan 1998-1999), Sita Maha Kandara inscription (Nasim Khan 1999-2000a; 2001b; 2006), Narasiṃha inscription (Nasim Khan 1998a) and Relief panel inscription (Swati and Nasim Khan 2000). As for the Śrī Bhāganaṣa (Nasim Khan 2006) and Mir Ali inscriptions (Nasim Khan 1999-2000b), their texts still need to be translated. Other shorter inscriptions studied by him

include the Copper Plate II, III and IV, Kamaṇḍalu inscriptions no.I, II and III, and Bangle inscription (Nasim Khan 2001b; 2006). His epigraphic and palaeographic research constituted the most recent research on Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions from the Gandhāra region.

The study carried out by these different scholars are the main sources of our knowledge about the Brāhmī and its derivative inscriptions found in Gandhāra.

1.4 Statement of problems

Although significant contributions have already been made to the study of Gandhāran Brāhmī and Śāradā epigraphs, but since then, a good number of inscriptions have turned out and need to be studied. The study of these inscriptions may help us to fill the gap observed in the post-Kushan history of the region.

Firstly, it concerns the lack of comprehensive corpus of the Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions found in Gandhāra. Many scholars who have devoted their research to inscriptions other than Kharoṣṭhī focused their studies on certain particular inscription/inscriptions with the general aim to its decipherment and treating them individually.

Secondly, a considerable number of inscriptions discovered in Gandhāra remained undeciphered. These inscriptions are either preserved in the different museums in Pakistan or lying in private collections or can even be found *in situ*. The information to be retrieved from these undeciphered records could help us fill in certain gaps and further enhance our knowledge about the religion, culture and history of Gandhāra. The inscriptions which have already been deciphered also need to be revisited as new decipherment could offer different interpretations.

Finally, less attention has been given to the palaeographic studies by previous scholars, especially of the Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions. Their analysis only revolves around the general description of the shapes of the characters without comparing them with other contemporaneous inscriptions from the region of Gandhāra and the surrounding areas. The overall evolution of Brāhmī and Śāradā script in the region has yet to be established.

1.5 Objective of the Present Research

The present research has four main objectives:

First, to prepare a comprehensive corpus of Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions found in Gandhāra and in the surrounding region. Attempts are made to survey, document and classify all these materials coming from the research area and systematically compiled in one corpus.

Second, a number of inscriptions which have not been precisely deciphered are transliterated and translated while these which were already deciphered are revisited.

Third, detailed palaeographic analysis have been done.

Finally, historical significance of these inscriptions have been discussed. The information gathered from these inscriptions is extremely encouraging and it suggests a revisit of the different aspects of Gandhāran history.

Reinterpretation of materials which has already been studied by previous scholars also offered new information which would add more to our knowledge about the history of the Gandhāra region.

1.6 Methodology of research

The methodology adopted consists of five main stages: basic study in Sanskrit, library research, data collection, data classification and data analysis.

Basic knowledge of Sanskrit was the essential part of this research. Therefore, extensive courses in Sanskrit have been taken by the scholar for the study of the subject.

Second, library research was carried out to acquire relevant literatures on this subject. As mentioned earlier, a good number of data treated in this thesis have already been studied. The published inscriptions available in various articles, reports and books were recorded and discussed in this work. Materials on related fields such as Sanskrit and Prakrit language, numismatics, political and cultural history of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent as well as Hindu-Buddhist art and religion were also studied.

In the third stage of our research, data collection was made. The epigraphs were documented by acquiring their photographs and recording available information about their provenances, states of preservation and other physical descriptions. Three groups of inscriptions were documented in this thesis: 1. Inscriptions preserved in the different museums 2. Lying in private collections 3. Found *In situ*.

The museums where most of these inscriptions are being preserved include the Peshawar Museum, Hund Museum, Chakdara Museum, SSAQ Museum University of Peshawar and Lahore Museum. Those found *in situ* are located in Mardan (Kashmir Smast), Swat (Shakhorai and Talang) and Mohmand Agency (Alingar). Inscriptions

lying in private collections were also documented and compiled into the corpus with the rest of the epigraphic materials.

After data collection, the inscriptions were arranged chronologically. They were classified into five main categories: Brāhmī, Gupta-Brāhmī, Proto-Śāradā, Śāradā and Bilingual inscriptions.

In the final stage, the data was analysed. Here, the focus was made on three main areas: decipherment, palaeographic study and interpretation. The decipherment involves the transliteration and translation of the inscription. Next, a study was made on the significance of the inscription. Palaeographic research is an important part of studying the inscriptions. Keeping in mind its importance, the inscriptions were grouped according to their periodizations. Several different tables were prepared, containing detailed tracing of the characters, their relations with each other and the different developmental stages.

Based on the epigraphic and palaeographic study of the epigraphs, our conclusion is included in the present thesis regarding the religious, cultural and political landscape of Gandhāra.

CHAPTER TWO

GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY AND POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF GANDHĀRA

2.1 Geography of Gandhāra

The Graeco-Roman accounts contribute immensely to the ancient history of Gandhāra in terms of its geographical location. Hecataeus (550-450 B.C.) considered Gandhāra to be attached to the frontiers of India (Rawlinson 1862: 176; McCrindle 1885: 115). Herodotus (484-420 B.C.) mentioned that the *Gandarioi* tribe who were subdued by the Achaemenids, lived in an area between India and Persia (Rawlinson 1862: 175). The *Gandarians* along with *Sattadygians*, *Dadicae* and *Aparytae* were also recorded as tribes that became the seventh satrapy of the Achaemenids (Rawlinson 1862: 402). Although Arrian (86-160 C.E.) did not make specific mention of Gandhāra, he described *Peukelaitis* (Proklais of Ptolemy) or Puṣkalavati as a great city located not far from the Indus river (McCrindle 1877: 180). Strabo (63 B.C.-24 C.E.) located Gandhāra between Kabul and the Indus river, with Puṣkalavati and Nilab as its two main cities (McCrindle 1885: 115). Klaudios Ptolemy (90-168 C.E.) on the other hand, placed Gandhāra between the Indus and Swat rivers (McCrindle 1885: 115). Another account includes that of Stephanus of Byzantium (6th Century C.E.) who referred *Kaspapyros* as a Gandaric City (McCrindle 1885: 116).

Hieun-Tsang (602-664 C.E.) mentioned that Gandhāra spanned from the Kunar to the Indus river; an area which is also being watered by the Kabul and Swat rivers with Peshawar as its capital (Beal 1884: 97-115). He reported that Gandhāra covers an area of 1000 *li*'s from north to south (370 km) and 800 *li*'s from east to west (296 km).² Fa-Hian (337-422 C.E.) and Sung-Yun (??-528 C.E.) briefly discussed this topic but did not specify the exact boundaries of Gandhāra. As for the Indian sources, the Upaniṣads and Brahmaṇas located Gandhāra on both banks of the Indus with Puṣkalavati and Taxila as the two main cities (Tripathi 1942: 47). The Aśokan Rock Edict of Shahbazgarhi stated that the Gandhāra tribe lived at the western end of the Mauryan Empire (Hultzsch 1925: 56).

² *Li* is the Chinese traditional unit of measurement and length of the unit varies over time. During the time of Hiuen-Tsang which falls during the Tang Dynasty (618 to 906 C.E.), one *li* was equal to 369.75 metres (Schinz 1996: 428).

The cultural boundary of Gandhāra is defined according to the locations of archaeological discoveries such as monuments and sculptures related to the Gandhāra art. According to Jansen, the cultural region stretched from Taxila valley through the Margala Pass to Manikyala in the east of the Indus to the Kabul and Bamiyan Valley in the west (Jansen 2008: 27). The cultural region also included Swat and Hazara to the north to the Suleiman Mountains in the south (Jansen 2008: 28). According to Saifur Rahman Dar, the cultural influence of Gandhāra even reached up to the valley of the Jhelum river in the east (Dar 2007: 54-55). The important archaeological sites which are considered to be located within the core region of Gandhāra include Peshawar, Puṣkalavati, Hund, Kashmir Smast and Taxila while those located in the cultural region are Bamiyan, Kabul, Jalalabad, Tochi Valley, Kurram Valley, Manikyala and the Salt Range (See Map 1).

2.2 Historical Records on Gandhāra

The earliest known historical record of Gandhāra lies in the Rig Veda (Book I, Hym CXXVI) which mentions the Gandhāri people in reference to the good wool that they produced (McDonnell & Keith 1912: 219). The Rig Veda could have been composed between 1800 to 1000 B.C., when the Aryans were invading the Indo-Pak Subcontinent (Rapson 1955: 100; Tripathi 1942: 38). Atharva Veda (1000-800 B.C.) mentions the Gandhāri tribe along with the Mūjavants, Angas and Magadhas (Verse 22, Hym 14)(Rapson 1955: 99-100).³ In the epic of Ramayana (5th/4th Century B.C.), Gandhārā is also frequently mentioned (Jansen 2008: 27-28). Other Indian sources include Telepatta Jātaka (No.96),⁴ Susīma Jātaka (No.63)⁵, Gandhāra Jātaka (No.406)⁶ as well as Aṅguttara Nikaya, all of which are dated after 5th Century B.C. According to Aṅguttara Nikaya, Gandhārā is one of the 16 great nations (Rapson 1955: 153).

³ “To the Gandhāris, the Māgavants, the Angas, and the Magadhas, we deliver over the takman, like a servant, like a treasure!”

⁴ “But in Gandhāra, two thousand leagues away (from Benares), there stands the city of Takkasilā. If you can reach that city, in seven days you will become king there. But there is peril on the road thither, in journeying through a great forest”

⁵ “Just such a famous teacher, my son, lives in Takkasilā, in the realm of Gandhāra, two thousand leagues away (from Benares)”

⁶ The Kingdom of Gandhāra was used as the background of the whole story. One of the verse is “Once upon a time the Bodhisatta was the king's son of the Gandhāra kingdom; at his father's death he became king and ruled with righteousness”

The earliest Chinese record about Gandhāra is the travel report of Fa-Hian (337-422 C.E.). *The Record of Buddhist Countries* published in 400 C.E. mentioned that Gandhāra (Kin-To-Wai) was located 5 days journey eastward from Udyāna, and was once ruled by the son of Aśoka named *Fah-Yih* (Beal 1869: 30, 32-33; Remusat et.al 1848: 67, 72). The country of *Tchu-sha-si-lo* (Takṣaśila) adorned with four great *Stupas* was seven days eastward journey from Gandhāra while *Fo-Lau-Sha* (Puruṣapura=Peshawar) was four days of southward journey (Beal 1869: 32-34; Remusat et.al 1848: 72-74). The account of Sung-Yun about Gandhāra is compiled in the 5th section of the *History of the Temples of Lo-Yang* (Beal 1869: 176, 196). Sung-Yun reported that Gandhāra was ruled by the *Little Yueh-Chi* who did not observe the law of Buddha. Unlike Fa-Hian who described Peshawar as a separate country, Sung-Yun mentioned Peshawar as the capital of Gandhāra (Beal 1869: 201).

The travel account of Hiuen-Tsang who visited the area between 629-645 C.E. is included in the report entitled *The Buddhist Record of the Ancient World* (Beal 1884: 97-115). The cities of Gandhāra included Puṣkalavati (Charsadda), Salatura (Lahor) and Udakhāṇḍa (Hund), with Peshawar as its capital. According to Hiuen-Tsang, Gandhāra was ruled by the rulers of Kapiśa (Kabul-Begram area) and the local ruling dynasty no longer exists, probably referring to the *Little Yueh-Chi*. There were 1000 *viharas* and *stūpas* lying in ruins with the towns and villages being sparsely populated. He recorded the presence of temples of “heretical sects”, probably referring to different Hindu and Buddhist cults after the decline of Mahayana Buddhism. Hiuen-Tsang also described the *stūpas* and other buildings built by Aśoka and Kaniṣka.

One of the most important Arab sources regarding the history of the region especially after the 7th Century C.E. is the account of Albīrūnī. In *Kitāb Fī Taḥqīq Māl'il Hind* and *Tarikhul Hind*, he gave important insights into the political history of Gandhāra and Kapiśa under the rule of the Turk Śāhis and Hindu Śāhis (Albīrūnī 1958; Rahman 1979: vii; Gupta 1984: 3). Though complaining about the lack of information, he narrated about the region's geographical positions, origin of the dynasties and the list of rulers (Rahman 1979: vii). Albīrūnī also gave a vivid description about the last struggle of the Hindu Śāhi rulers against the Muslim invaders and their final extinction (Gupta 1984: 3).

2.3 The Political Landscape of Gandhāra

Being located on a crossroad between the Middle East, Central Asia, and India, Gandhāra went through many of the inter-regional political, economical and cultural interactions. The same area is also made up of flood plains which could be substantially cultivated and able to sustain a considerable number of the human population (Zwalf 1996: 14-15). The geostrategic position and fertile valleys made Gandhāra the seat of many ancient kingdoms over the period of 2500 years.

The historical events in the region from the Vedic period involved successive foreign invasions and political upheavals. The region witnessed the arrivals of foreign invaders including the Indo-Aryan, Achaemenid, Bactrian-Greeks, Indo-Greeks, Scytho-Parthians, Kushan, Kushano-Sassanians, Sassanians and Huns. This resulted in the distinct forms of art and culture of Gandhāra as compared to the rest of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent.

The archaeological discoveries and written records show the continuity of the Gandhāra history from the Palaeolithic until the Muslim period.

2.3.1 Prehistory and Protohistory of Gandhāra

A significant number of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic artefacts were unearthed from the region, placing the period of early human occupation in Gandhāra from 25000 B.C. The artifacts of Palaeolithic culture were discovered in Sanghao Cave, Mardan, while those from the Mesolithic culture were found in Jamalgarhi, Khanpur Valley (Dani 1964:1-50). The Neolithic culture artefacts such as potteries and terracotta female figurines dating from 4500-2900 B.C. were discovered in Sheri Khan Tarakai, Bannu (Farid Khan et.al 1987: 86-87; 1990: 245). These discoveries suggested that human occupation in the region had long begun before the invasion of the Aryans.

The arrival of the Aryans in the 2nd Millenium B.C. is contemporary with the Protohistoric sites found throughout the region (Vogelsang 1988: Fig.1). The Gandhāran grave culture flourished during this period, of which a good number of burial sites were discovered. They included Gogdara – IV, Udegram-G, Timargarha I, Sarai Khola, Adina etc (Zahir 2012: 38, 51).

2.3.2 Gandhāra of the Vedic, Achaemenid and Mauryan Period

The historical reference of Rig Veda describes the society of Gandhāra as a tribe who produced good quality wools. However, the Atharva Veda, Brahmaṇa and

Upaniṣads treated the inhabitants of Gandhāra less favourably, particularly as an inferior race (Atharva Veda; Tripathi 1942: 47; Rahman 2011: 18). In 500 B.C., Gandhāra became one of the *Mahajanapada* or the Great sovereign Nations (Rapson 1955: 153). However, this is only known from the Buddhist texts *Anguttara Nikaya*, *Vinaya* and *Mahavastu* as epigraphic records coming from this period have not yet been discovered.

According to the Behistun inscription which was carved between 520-518 B.C., Gandhāra was among the Achaemenid provinces inherited by Darius when he ascended the throne (Magee & Petrie 2010: 504). As an Achaemenid satrap, the local chiefs had to pay regular tribute as well as providing army to the empire when required (Petrie & Magee 2007: 15-18). To date, no inscriptions coming from the Achaemenid period had been discovered in Gandhāra. However, significant number of archaeological remains were found in few Achaemenid period sites in Peshawar Valley, Swat Valley and Taxila such as Charsadda, Bhirkot and Bhir Mound (Petrie & Magee 2012: 8-9). Among the material remains related to their presence include the silver punch mark coins and ceramics (Bopearachchi & Rahman 1995:74-77; Petrie and Magee 2012: 8-9; Magee & Petrie 2010: 505-506). The excavation of Bhir Mound also unveiled the ruin of a town dated at 6th/5th Century B.C. (Bhatti 2006: 300).

The Greeks under Alexander the Great brought the area under their control in 326 B.C. After conquering Persia and Bactria, Alexander directed his military campaign to the Indo-Pak Subcontinent (Andreae 2008: 50). Some local rulers such as Ambhi of Taxila willingly submitted to his rule, while other tribes such as Ashvayanas and Ashvakayanas resisted. But the toughest resistance was given by Raja Porus, a ruler from the Jhelum area (Rapson 1955: 323). After Alexander's death, Gandhāra was briefly controlled by the Seleucids before Seleucus Nikator handed over the region to Chandragupta Maurya. Although the rule of Alexander and Seleucids were relatively short, a number of their coins were discovered (Bopearachchi & Rahman 1995: 80). To date, no inscriptions coming from this period has been discovered.

In 268 B.C., Chandragupta Maurya included Gandhāra into his empire. His successor Aśoka, the most powerful Maurya king, issued the Mansehra and

Shahbazgarhi rock edicts.⁷ The rock edicts suggested that the introduction of Buddhism to Gandhāra took place during the time of Aśoka. After his death at the end of 3rd Century B.C., the region was briefly ruled by his successors, known as Vīrasena and Subhāgasena (Rapson 1955: 462). However, their weakness led to the invasion of the Bactrian Greeks. Aside from the two rock edicts, a good number of punch mark coins dated to the Maurya period were also documented in the region (Bopearachchi & Rahman 1995: 80).

2.3.3 The Bactrian-Greeks

Before the mid 3rd Century B.C., Bactria was ruled by Diodotus I as a satrap of Antiochus II, who were gradually asserting his autonomy in that region. His successor, Diodotus II, finally rebelled against the Seleucids by taking up the royal title (Cribb 2005: 207). In the early 2nd Century B.C., Diodotus II was dethroned and killed by Euthydemus I who established his own dynasty, known as the house of Euthydemide (Narain 1957: 19-22). This event was contemporary with the death of Aśoka and the weakening of the Mauryan Empire.

In 191 B.C., Euthydemus I died and was succeeded by his son, Demetrius I who started a military campaign in the Indo-Pak Subcontinent. In the 2nd Century B.C., Gandhāra became the stronghold of the Bactrian Greeks for their expansion into Punjab (Narain 1957: 31-33). In 168 B.C., while Demetrius I was away in his military campaign, Eucratides with his troops expelled the Euthydemide kings such as Agathocles, Panteleon and Demetrius II who were ruling in Bactria, Kabul Valley and Gandhāra.

The Bactrian Greek rulers of Gandhāra whom had their capital in Bactria can be divided into two dynasties: Euthydemide and Eukratide. The Euthydemide rulers include Demetrius I, Demetrius II, Pantaleon and Agathocles. The Eukratide rulers who replaced the Euthydemides in Bactria and established their rule in Gandhāra are Eukratides I, Heliocles and Eukratides II.

After their expulsion from Bactria by the Kushans (Fussman 1996: 247), the Greek rulers who still held control over the remaining territories of Kabul Valley, Gandhāra and Punjab were known as the Indo-Greeks. Although inscriptions coming

⁷ A fragment of an edict written in Mauryan Brāhmī was reported from Buner District although the authenticity is doubtful (Norman 1988:99-101).

from their period in Gandhāra have not yet been found, a good number of coins issued by them had been retrieved in the region (Bopearachchi & Rahman, 1995: 84-97, 104-114).

2.3.4 The Indo-Greeks

The Indo-Greeks can be divided into two main ruling dynasties: the house of Eukratide and Euthydemide. After the expulsion of Eukratides II by the Kushans from Bactria, the areas of Kabul Valley, Gandhāra, Punjab and Mathura were ruled by these two dynasties.

The house of Eucratide was established by Eucratides when he expelled the Euthydemide rulers from Bactria, Kabul and Gandhāra to Punjab. Eucratides was perhaps a general of the Seleucids. In 168/169 B.C, Eucratides was despatched from Babylon to Bactria. After defeating the Euthydemide rulers, Eukratides was assassinated and he was succeeded by Heliocles (145-130 B.C) who continued Eucratides expansion into the Indo-Pak Subcontinent. However, in 140 B.C, Heliocles were driven out from Bactria by the Kushans, and established his kingdom in Gandhāra, Taxila and Kabul Valley.

Heliocles was succeeded by Antialkidas, the last Indo-Greek king who ruled a unified territory of Gandhāra, Taxila and Kabul Valley. After Antialkidas, the kingdom was broken down into many territories and ruled by different Indo-Greek chieftains. Their names were only known through numismatic evidences and the dates of their reigns still cannot be determined (Bopearachchi & Rahman 1995: 160-164).

The successors of Antialkidas in Gandhāra include Diomedes, Epander, Philoxenus, Peucela and Artemidorus, and Archebius.

The house of Euthydemide after the invasion of Eucratide ruled the area east of the Indus. After the death of Demetrius I, Menander I (155-130 B.C) consolidated power in the Indo-Pak subcontinent by marrying Agathocleia, the daughter of Demetrius I. Menander's empire covered the area from Mathura in the east to Baruch (Gujarat) to the west. At the same time, Menander also made a treaty with the Eucratides to draw a line between their two dominions. Menander may have held

Gandhāra for a certain period while the Eucratides ruled the western portion of the empire, including Kabul Valley and Bactria.

After the death of Menander, Agathocleia and her son, Strato I ruled jointly. The death of Menander weakened the kingdom which led to the invasion of Gandhāra and Taxila by Heliocles. Strato I retained Eastern Punjab and Mathura, and was succeeded by a number of chieftains who ruled simultaneously in different areas. They include Strato II, Zoilus I, Zoilus II, Dionysius, Lysius, Apollophanes, Polyxenus, Antimachus, Theophilius, Nikias, Apollodotus II and Menander II. These rulers are only known from numismatic evidences, and the date of their reigns and area of control are very hard to determine. The house of Euthydemide was overthrown in Taxila by the Indo-Scythians when Hipostratus was defeated by Azes I in 57 B.C. The last scion of the Euthydemides is Strato III who ruled in South Punjab.

The last ruler of the Indo-Greek in Kabul Valley was Hermeus who vigorously defended his domain. However, he was finally deposed by the Kushans in 75 B.C., who continued to imitate his coins long after his demise.

A good number of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions belonging to the period of IndoGreek are discovered in Gandhāra. They include the Bajaur inscription, Swat relic vase of Theodorus Meridarkh, Taxila copper plate inscription of a Meridarkh, Bajaur Seal inscription, Paris cornelian inscription, Tirakh rock inscription, Swat rock inscription and Saddo rock inscription (Konow 1929: 1-10; Hultzch 1929: 29-100).

These inscriptions gave limited information about the political history of the region as most of them are short donative inscriptions. These materials show the continuation of Buddhism in the region after the Mauryan rule in the region. A great number of coins issued by the Indo-Greeks were retrieved from the region, with legends written in Kharoṣṭhī, Greek and Brāhmī. The political history of the IndoGreeks, especially about the identification and chronology of rulers were mostly reconstructed on the basis of numismatic evidences.

2.3.5 The Scytho-Parthians

The origin of the Scythians is recorded in the *Han-Shu* (2nd Century B.C.), known as the Sai tribe. In the 2nd half of the 2nd Century B.C., they were driven out from the banks of Issikul lake, and divided into two groups. The first branch went south through the Karakorum and settled in Kashmir and the mountainous region of northern

Pakistan. The second branch went westwards through Sogdiana, Bactria, Margiana and finally to Parthia.

The northern Indo-Scythians gradually occupied and established their kingdom in Gandhāra and Taxila. Their rulers were Maues, Azes I, Azilises, and Azes II (Bopearachchi & Rahman, 1995: 170-196). In 57 B.C, Azes I overthrew Hipostratus and conquered Taxila, Punjab, Gandhāra and Sindh.

For the southern Indo-Scythians, as they arrived in Parthia, they were driven to Seistan by Mithridates I in 122 B.C. Between 100 to 90 B.C., Vonones established an Indo-Scythian kingdom in Seistan contemporary with Maues. Other Scythian rulers of this branch include Spalahores, Spaladagames, and Spalarisis (Bopearachchi & Rahman 1995: 168). Their dominion include Kandahar, Bannu and Ghazni.

The Indo-Parthians refer to a branch of Greater Parthians who ruled over the north-western part of the Indo-Pak subcontinent. After the rule of Spalarisis, the Southern branch of the Indo-Scythians was replaced by the Parthians who started to occupy the region. Gondophares united all the Parthians and became the first IndoParthian king of Seistan. The Indo-Parthian rulers include Gondophares, Aspavarma, Kharahotes, and Zeionises (Bopearachchi & Rahman 1995: 200). After the accession of Gondophares, the provinces previously ruled by the northern branch of the IndoScythians were conquered. Gondhophares ruled jointly with Orthoganes and divided his empire into different satraps. The empire of Gondhophares included Kandahar,

Bannu, Sindh, Taxila, Gandhāra and Kabul. Gondophares ruled Gandhāra (Peshawar Valley) in 40 C.E. and was replaced by Abdagases in c.55 C.E. (Nasim Khan 1997: 25). The last Indo-Parthian ruler before the rise of the Kushans was Sassan, who ruled between 64 to 70 C.E. (Nasim Khan 2010: 22).

Other than the numerous coins with Kharoṣṭhī and Greek legends, a good number of inscriptions were issued during the Scytho-Parthian period. The IndoScythian period inscriptions include Taxila copper plate of Paṭika, Maira inscription of the Salt Range, Fatehjang inscription, Shahdaur inscription etc. (Konow 1929:1132). Those issued during the Indo-Parthian period include Takht-I-Bahi inscription of Gondophares, Lion capital inscription of Mathura, Dir Relic Casket, Lid inscription and many more (Konow 1929: 30-48, 57-62; Nasim Khan 1997: 21-33).

2.3.6 The Kushans

The Kushans originated in the Kan-Su province, where they had a continuous war with the Hiung-Nu tribe to control the pastoral lands. In 165 B.C., they were finally defeated and driven to the Ili Basin where they fought with the Sai and WuSun tribe. In 150 B.C., they were driven by Wu-Sun from Ili Basin to Sogdiana.

By 133 B.C., they had already settled in Sogdiana-Bactria region and were divided into five tribes namely the Hsiu-Mi, Shuang-Nu, Kwei-Shang, Hsi-Tun and Kao-Fo. After, the death of Hermeus in 75 B.C., the Kushans occupied the Kabul valley. In the 1st Century C.E., the chief of the Kwei-Shang united all the 5 tribes under one rule, and declared himself king of the Kushans (Willis 2000:49). According to the Chinese texts, he was known as Kiu-Chiu-Kiu and Qui-Jui (Kujula). Kujula Kadphises (50-90 C.E.) expanded his territory from Bactria to Gandhāra, Northern Pakistan and the lower Indus region (Cribb 1993: 133). He died at the age of 80 and had enjoyed a relatively long rule. The genealogy of Great Kushans rulers are known from various sources, especially the Rabatak inscription (Willis 2000:46-47).

After Kujula Kadphises, the Kushan rulers include Vimataкто (90-113 C.E.), Vima Kadphises (113-127 C.E.), Kaniṣka I (127-151 C.E.), Huviṣka (151-190 C.E.), Vasudeva I (190-230 C.E.), Kaniṣka II (230-245 C.E.), Vasiṣka (245-260 C.E.), Kaniṣka III (260-270 C.E.), Vasudeva II (270-310 C.E.), Śaka (310-340 C.E.) and Kipunadha (340-360 C.E.) (Nasim Khan et.al 2008: 50). During the excavation in the Aziz Dheri site, the discovery of Vima Takto coins of different weight standards in different stratigraphic levels suggests two different rulers with the same name (Nasim Khan 2010: 24). The first Vima Takto ruled between 90-113 C.E. while the second Vima Takto probably ruled after Kaniṣka I (Nasim Khan 2010: 24).

The inscriptions issued throughout the Kushan empire are written in the Bactrian, Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī scripts. In Gandhāra, a large number of Kushans inscriptions were discovered, and almost all of them were written in Kharoṣṭhī. They include Kanishka casket inscription, Sui Vihar inscription, Māṇikiāla stone inscription, Ara inscription, Wardak inscription etc. (Konow 1929: 135-70).

2.3.7 The Later Kushans and Kushano-Sassanians

The Sassanian empire was established in 224 C.E. by Ardashir I in Tesiphon, Baghdad after he defeated the last Parthian ruler Artabanus III. Their territories include the modern day countries of Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, Turkey and Azerbaijan.

As their power grew under Shapur I, Bactria was annexed from the Kushans, and administered by a branch of Sassanian rulers known as the Kushano-Sassanian or Kushanshah. Their rulers include Ardaxir I (225-230 C.E.), Ardaxir II (230-250 C.E.), Peroz I (250-270 C.E.), Hormizd I (270-300 C.E.), Hormizd II (300-305 C.E.), Peroz II (305-320 C.E.) and Varahran (320-340 C.E.) (Nasim Khan et.al 2008: 70). Under the rule of Ardaxir I, the Kushano-Sassanian territory was limited only to Bactria. Gandhāra was conquered by his successors, driving the Kushans further to the east. However, during the rule of Varahran, Gandhāra went under the Sassanian direct rule by Shapur II (309-379 C.E.). Varahran's territory was probably only confined to Bactria and Kabul Valley (Cribb 1990: 153).

The invasion of Kushano-Sassanian had deprived the Kushans from the territories of Bactria, Kabul Valley and Gandhāra. However, it did not cause an abrupt end to the Kushan dynasty. The successors of Vasudeva I managed to retain the eastern portion of their empire for a considerable period after the mid-3rd Century C.E. From Kaniška II (230-245 C.E.) to Vasudeva II (270-310 C.E.), their kingdom was probably confined to Punjab but gradually dwindled to petty principalities under the rule of Śāka and Kipunadha.

The rule of Kushano-Sassanian and Later Kushan rule in the region covered the period of 3rd/4th Century C.E. A significant number of coins issued by the Kushano-Sassanians and Later Kushans were discovered in Gandhāra.

2.3.8 The Huns and Khingals

The period between the fall of the Kushano-Sassanian to the rise of the Turk Śāhis (4th to 7th Century C.E.) constituted the most shrouded part in the history of Gandhāra. The territorial divisions and the chronology for different groups of rulers are not yet clear due to the lack of sources. The known dynasties which ruled the area during this period include the Kidarites, Alkhons, Nezaks and Khiṅgala Śāhi/Khingals (Rahman 2002 37; Nasim Khan et.al 2008: 41).

In the 4th/5th Century C.E., the areas previously held by the KushanoSassanian rulers were annexed by the Hun tribes, known as the Kidarites, Alkhons and Nezaks. According to De La Vassière, the rise of these Hun kingdoms in Bactria and Gandhāra begun with their massive migration into Central Asia in the second half of the 4th Century C.E. (Vassière 2007: 122). The Huns who first challenged the

Sassanians were the Kidarites who initially ruled Sogdiana and drove the KushanoSassanians out of Bactria (Zeimal 1996: 119-122).

The Sassanians later recognised their kingdom in return for a nominal suzerainty. In the second half of 4th Century C.E., they conquered Gandhāra and made Peshawar their southern capital. During their campaign in Punjab, they overthrew the last Later Kushan rulers and went into an armed conflict with the Imperial Guptas. However, Skandagupta manage to stop the advancement of the Kidarites at the eastern banks of the Sutlej river. In the 5th Century C.E., the Sassanians renewed their attacks on the Kidarites to reclaim the provinces previously held by the Kushano-Sassanians. In 467 C.E., King Kankhas was defeated by Peroz and driven to Gandhāra (Zwalf 1996: 119-122).

The Kidarites issued coins imitating the designs of Kushano-Sassanian gold scyphate and Sassanian portrait with modifications on the crowns (Nasim Khan et.al 2008: 35-36; Errington 2010: 149-151). The legends also maintain the titles and names of Kushano-Sassanian rulers such as Kushanshah, Peroz and Varahran. The titles used in their coins include *Kidara*, *Kirada*, *Kujāṇa*, *Kujāṇasya*, *Dharma*, *Mahanade*, *Nanata*, and *Ṣāhi Kidara*, which are written in Brāhmī (Nasim Khan et.al 2008: 35-36; Errington 2010: 147-168).

Like the Kidarites, the Alkhons is one of the Hun tribes which can be identified with the *Chionites*, *Xyōn*, *Hyōn*, and *Xiongnu* which were known from Roman, Armenian and Chinese sources (Nasim Khan et.al 2008: 32-33). The Alkhons probably replaced the Kidarites in Gandhāra and issued two groups of coins, mostly retrieved from Shah-Ji-Ki-Dheri, Tope Kelan deposit and Kashmir Smast (Nasim Khan et.al 2008: 37). The Alkhon coins are based on the silver issues of Shapur II and Shapur III with some modifications. The territory of the Alkhons probably covered Peshawar Valley, Taxila and Taloquan in Afghanistan (Vondrovec 2008: 30).

The most distinctive features of the Alkhon coins can be seen on the legends and portrait of the ruler. The Alkhon rulers were depicted with distinctive elongated heads wearing only diadem ties (Nasim Khan et.al 2008: 37). The Alkhon coins contain Bactrian legends such as αλχοννο (alkhonno), βανο αλχοννο (shauoalkhonno), χιγγιλα (khiggila) and χιγγιλα αλχοννο (Khiggila Alkhonno) (Nasim Khan et.al 2008: 39). The legends are written in Brāhmī mentioning their names or titles such as

Devaśāhi Khingila, Javukha/Jaūkha, Rāja Lakhāna Udayāditya and Mepāma (Nasim Khan et.al 2008: 38). The names of Alkhon rulers such as *Mahāśāhi Khīṅgīla, Toramāṇa, Śāhi Mehama, Sādavīkha* and *Javūkha* were also recorded in the stupa consecration inscription written in Brāhmī discovered in Afghanistan (Melzer 2006: 258).

The rule of the Alkhons in Gandhāra was supplanted by the Nezaks, the third branch of the Huns after Kidarites and Alkhons. The presence of the Nezak rulers was known from their coins which bear the legend *Napki Malka*. The common features of the Nezaks' coins design are buffalo's head on top of their crowns, Pahlavi legend on the obverse and a fire altar with two attendants with wheels above their heads on the reverse (Vondrovec 2012: 169). The Nezaks first struck their coins in the end of 5th Century C.E., had their territory in Kapiśa and at times ruled over Gandhāra (Vondrovec 2012: 173).

In the 6th Century C.E., Bactria and Kabul were reconquered by the Sassanians with the help of the Turks. This left a power vacuum in the region which gave an opportunity for the rise of a new kingdom. In the year 554 C.E., a Kṣatriya ruler known as Khīṅgila established a new dynasty which ruled over Kapiśa, known as Khīṅgila Śāhi or simply the Khingals (Rahman 2002a: 37). The founder of this dynasty was neither Turk nor Hun, but probably a native Kṣatriya as reported by Hieun Tsang. Until 653 C.E., 12 kings from that dynasty successively ruled Kapiśa. Unfortunately, the identities of most of these rulers were not known. One of the Khīṅgila Śāhi king is Narendrāditya who ruled over Kapiśa and Gandhāra, and probably the same ruler who issued the Narendrāditya and Khīṅgala Śāhi inscriptions (Dani et.al 1996; Rahman 2002a: 38).

During the same period, Punjab and Kashmir was probably ruled by Toramāṇa Śāhi (485-515 C.E) which is mentioned in the Kura and Eran inscription, Sañjali Copper plate and few seals from Kaushambi (Nasim Khan et.al 2008: 33). However, his coins were absent from Kashmir. Nasim Khan mentioned that this ruler shared certain links with Khīṅgila and was probably the same personality mentioned in the Afghanistan stupa consecration inscription (Nasim Khan et.al 2008: 33).

The inscriptions in Gandhāra which were dated during the period of the Kidarites, Alkhons, Nezaks and the Khīṅgila Shahi are written in Gupta-Brāhmī and Proto-Śāradā scripts.

2.3.9 The Turk Śāhis

Between the 7th to 9th Century C.E., Kapiśa and Gandhāra were ruled by the Turk Śāhi Dynasty, and information about them mainly came from the numismatic sources, as well as the Arabs and Chinese records.

The dynasty was established by Barhatigin, also known as Burtizena, Pharatassa, Phraates and Boritigin who initially ruled Gandhāra as a vassal of the Khingal ruler (Rahman 2002a: 39-40). In the 7th Century C.E., Kapisa was under continuous siege by the Muslims who had their base in Seistan. During the siege, Barhatigin was safely sheltered behind the Khyber Pass while building his strength. In 665 C.E., the Muslim under Ibnu Samarah invaded Kabul and had taken the Khingal king prisoner. After converting him to Islam, Ibnu Samarah released him and returned with war bounties.

After the withdrawal of the army led by Ibnu Samarah, Barhatigin went to Kabul and invaded the much weakened Kapiśa. He killed the last Khingal ruler, GharIlchi/Ko-Chieh-Chih (653-665/666 C.E), and usurped the throne in Kabul. From there, he extended his kingdom to Zabulistan and appointed his brother as the governor, with the title Rutbil. The Rutbil expanded his territory as far as Rukkhaj and Bust. In 680 C.E., Kabul and Zabulistan broke and established as two separate kingdoms. Kabul and Gandhāra continued to be ruled by the successors of Barhatigin while Rukkhaj, Bust and Zabulistan were ruled by the Rutbils.

The list of Turk Śāhi rulers is constructed on the basis of the Chinese and Arab records as well as numismatic sources. They are Barhatigin (665/6-725/6 C.E.), Khurasan Tegin Shah/ Śrī Tagina Shaho/ Wu-San T'e-Chin Shai (725/6-739 C.E.), Phromo Kesaro/ Fu-Lin-Ji-Shuo (739-745 C.E.), Vasudeva/ Po-Fu-Chun (745-??? C.E.), Ju-Lo-Li (???-764 C.E.), Khinkhil (764-??? C.E.), Maharab Patī Dūmī/ Mahrab/ Iṣpahbadh Kabul Shah/ Spalapatideva (???-820? C.E.) and Lagaturman/ Katorman (820?-843 C.E.) (Dani et.al 1996: 171; Gupta 1984: 32-34; Rahman 1979: 79-81; 2002a: 39-42).

The Turk Śāhi rulers had to send large tributes to the Muslim governors in Seistan and failing to do so usually resulted in a devastating war. The continuous threats and raids by the Muslims and the serious economic burden to pay tributes contributed to their decline. The last ruler of the Turk-Śāhi, Lagaturman/Katurman, was deposed in 843 C.E. (Rahman 1979: 88).

To date, only 4 inscriptions belonging to Turk Śāhi period are documented, which include the Ranigat inscription, Śrī Bhāganaṣa inscription, Dal Mahat inscription and Promjharājya inscription. Unfortunately, these epigraphic materials only give scanty information about political environment of the Turk Śāhi kingdom.

2.3.10 The Hindu Śāhis

The Turk Śāhis was succeeded by another dynasty, known as the Hindu Śāhi. The most important historical records about the Hindu Śāhis come from the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of Kalhana, *Kitāb Fī Taḥqīq Māl'il Hind* by Al-Biruni and a number of Śāradā inscriptions.

There are a few different opinions regarding the ethnicity of the Hindu Śāhis. Hussain Khan related Hindu Śāhis with the Janj'uas of Salt Range (Husain Khan 1991: 178-185), E. Thomas identifies them with the Bhatti of Rajputs while Rahman mentioned that they were the descendants of the Oḍi tribe (Rahman 2003: 4).

The Hindu Śāhi dynasty was established by Kallar, a Brahman minister in the government of Lagaturman. According to Al-Biruni, Kallar imprisoned Lagaturman for "bad manners" and "worse behaviour" (Rahman 1979: 88). He later took over the government and usurped the throne. During the 4th quarter of the 10th Century C.E., the Hindu Śāhis extended their territory to Lahore in the east (Rahman & Sehrai 1997: 3).

The list of Hindu Śāhi Rulers based on the exhaustive work of Rahman include Kallar (843-850 C.E.), Sāmantadeva (850-870 C.E.), Khudarayaka (870-880 C.E.), Lalliya (880-902 C.E.), Toramāṇa; Kamalū; Kamaluka; Kalavarman (903-921 C.E.), Bhīmadeva; Bhima; Śrī Vakkadeva (921-964 C.E.), Jayapāladeva (964-1002 C.E.), Ānandapāladeva (1002-1010 C.E.), Trilocanapāla (1010-1021 C.E.), Bhīmapāla (1021-1026 C.E.).

During the rule of Jayapāladeva, their power started to diminish due to the aggressive campaign of Mahmud of Ghazna, who finally brought an end to the kingdom. The later Śāhi rulers, Anandapala, Trilocanapala and Bhimapala suffered continuous defeats at the hand of the Ghaznavids. The territory of the Śāhis in the Punjab were gradually annexed until the last remnant of the ruling class dwindled to petty chieftains in the Sivalik Hills (Rahman 1983: 174-177).

A good number of inscriptions were issued during this period and are included in the present research.

CHAPTER THREE

EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE FROM GANDHĀRA: HISTORY AND DECIPHERMENT

3.1 Background

Study and analysis of the archaeological materials recorded in Gandhāra provides important accounts about the art, culture, economic, political and religious history of the area. Among these archaeological evidences, the most important are the inscriptions which give specific insights into the historical, religious and political events that took place in the region. The inscriptions retrieved from the research area are mostly written in Kharoṣṭhī, Brāhmī and Śāradā scripts. The Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, dated from the 3rd Century B.C. to the 4th Century C.E., give chronological accounts about the ruling kings, spread of Buddhism, administrative and revenue matters as well as shedding light on the cultural history of the region (Nasim Khan 1998b: 31). They were issued during the Mauryan, Indo-Greek, ScythoParthian and the Kushan periods. After the 4th Century C.E., Gupta-Brāhmī replaced

Kharoṣṭhī, remained as the popular script of Gandhāra and developed to become the Proto-Śāradā and Śāradā scripts in the succeeding centuries. The 73 inscriptions documented during this research contain useful information and greatly contribute in the reconstruction of the history of the region. The inscriptions included in this chapter

are divided into five groups: Brāhmī, Gupta-Brāhmī, Proto-Śāradā, Śāradā and the Bilingual inscriptions.

Regarding the status of their past researches, these epigraphs can be placed under the following categories:

- Category A: Unpublished inscriptions
- Category B: Published but neither transliterated nor translated
- Category C: Published and transliterated but not translated
- Category D: Published, transliterated and translated, but decipherment needs to be revisited
- Category E: Published and satisfactorily deciphered

In this thesis, 7 inscriptions come from Category A, 8 from Category B, 2 from Category C, 14 from Category D and 42 from Category E. Most of these epigraphic evidences were found at the sites of Kashmir Smast (Mardan) and Hund (Swabi) as well as in the area of Swat. The rest were recovered from other areas such as Hazara, Malakand, Buner, Peshawar, Mohmand Agency, South Waziristan Agency, North Waziristan Agency, Kabul, Jalalabad and Punjab (See Map 1). Three inscriptions came from unknown findspots in Afghanistan while the other 12 are of unknown provenance. However, there is strong possibility that they came from Gandhāra or found in the surrounding areas from the scripts being used

3.2 Brāhmī Inscriptions (3rd Century B.C. - 4th Century C.E.)

Six Brāhmī inscriptions have so far been documented in Gandhāra belonging to the mentioned period. They were found in Mardan District, Buner District, Peshawar District and Hazara Division. These inscriptions were written in Mauryan Brāhmī, Post-Mauryan Brāhmī and Kushan Brāhmī scripts.

3.2.1 Aśokan Rock Edict

Category: E (Plates: 1a and 1b; Tables 1 and 71)

Material: Schist stone

Measurement: 24 cm x 14 cm x 3 cm

Provenance: Takht-I-Bahi or Buner District, purchased in Peshawar

Present Location: Private collection in Karachi

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Scialpi 1984; Taddei 1988; Norman 1988)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 269-232 B.C. (This inscription falls during the reign of Aśoka)

The only Mauryan Brāhmī inscription found in Gandhāra is a fragment of the Aśokan rock edict, a three lines inscription engraved into a schist slab. It was first mentioned by Scialpi (1984) but transliterated by Taddei (1988) and further discussed by Norman (1988).

Scialpi made a brief remark on this inscription based on the information provided by Taddei (Scialpi 1985: 62-63, n.36). He suggested that the presence of a Mauryan Brāhmī inscription in the north-west implies the flexible and adroit policy adopted by Aśoka towards communities of different ethnic groups.

Taddei transliterated the inscription and restored the incomplete text based on a comparison made with the first three lines of the Aśoka's Pillar Edict VI (A-B) of Delhi (Taddei 1988; Hultzschi 1925; Cunningham, 1961: 139).

Following is the transliteration by Taddei:

Line 1: naṃpiye piya

Line 2: bhisitename

Line 3: ye setaṃa

Based on the transliteration, Taddei made the following text reconstruction:

Line 1: [devā]naṃpiye piya[dasilājahevaṃmahāduvaḍasa]

Line 2: [vasaa]bhisitename[dhammalipilikhāpitālokaśā] Line 3:

[hitasukhā]ye setaṃa[pahaṭā taṃtaṃdhammavaḍhipāpovā]

Following is the translation of the Magadhi text proposed by Cunningham (1961: 139):

Thus spoke King Devanampiya Piyadasi:- in the twelfth year of my annointment, a religious edict (was) published for the pleasure and profit of the world, having destroyed that (document) and regarding my former religion as sin..

While treating the information given by the antiquity dealer with caution, Norman discussed the inscription's authenticity and explained various possibilities for its exceptional presence in Gandhāra (Norman 1988: 99-101). Although not certain about the provenance, he mentioned that it was unlikely to be brought from other places if it is genuine.

He also pointed out the possibility that the edict was sent to the area for the exact text to be transliterated from Brāhmī to Kharoṣṭhī. Although Norman discussed the provenance and authenticity of the inscription, he did not answer the question of

whether the language represents the local dialect of the place where it is said to be discovered or not.

The Aśokan rock edict of Buner appears to be written in Magadhi based on the phrase *[deva]nampiye piya[dasi]*, a language used in the rest of the Indo-Pak subcontinent. However, Prakrit is used in the Shahbazgarhi and Mansehra rock edicts of Gandhāra, with the same phrase written as *devanampriye priyadasi*. The possibility that the edict was sent to Gandhāra to be transliterated from Brāhmī to Kharoṣṭhī as proposed by Norman is doubtful as the language of the inscription is different.

Furthermore, the material used for the inscription (black schist) suggests that it is locally made. The characters also appear to be an exact duplicate of the pillar inscription, in terms of the shape as well as the spacing (Cunningham, 1961, Plate XIX). If this artefact is genuine, it could have been carved by someone who memorized every detail of the Aśoka's pillar inscription for some unknown reason. The inconsistency between the script and language with the material, as well as the striking resemblance with the Delhi pillar inscription raised the question of whether this fragment is a modern copy or not.

3.2.2 Relief Panel Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 2a and 2b; Tables: 2 and 71)

Material: Grey schist stone

Measurement: 20.1 cm x 16.1 cm x 4.2 cm

Provenance: Hazara Division, Left bank of the Indus

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Swati & Nasim Khan 2000)

Subject: Religious

Date: 1st Century B.C.-1st Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.2.2)

This grey schist stone panel bears two lines of Post-Mauryan Brāhmī inscription above the relief which depicts the birth and promenade of the Buddha (Swati & Nasim Khan 2000: 79-86). According to Farooq Swati and Nasim Khan, the panel has poor physiognomy of the figures, faulty articulation of body parts, lifelessness and the lack of depth.

They also mentioned the orthographic, syntactic and grammatical problems in the text and pointed out the absence of uniformity in the shapes of certain letters and diacritical marks. The content in the second line are similar with the Brāhmī inscription

on the Bhārut railing. The relief panel is probably executed by an unskilled artist who had little or no knowledge in the language and script.

Following is the transliteration and translation by Farooq Swati and Nasim Khan:

Line 1: [ma]ragā[jha]maragālāyagājaniyādā[ka]

Line 2: bhaga[va]to vapas[si][no]+[dh]ā

Moving towards death, moving towards death without knowing, the blessed Vipāśyin (taking) the way which (is) going towards permanence...

The crudely executed letters of this panel followed the styles of Buddhist inscriptions of Bharut and Sanchi, which can be placed between 1st Century B.C. to 1st Century C.E.

3.2.3 Bi-Scriptual Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 3a and 3b; Tables: 3 and 71)

Material: Stone

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Spin-a-warai, Peshawar District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Falk 2004)

Subject: Construction of a *Vihara*

Date: 2nd - 3rd Century C.E. (Palaeography of the Brāhmī part, See 5.2.3)

This two lines Bi-scriptual inscription is engraved in Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī into a stone pedestal. It was found in 2003 during a road construction alongside with three other pedestals which are inscribed with Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions. These four pedestals were used to support the life-sized statues which appear to wear Kushan style shoes, bearing inscriptions referring to their names.

The study by Falk included the decipherment, linguistic analysis and their historical significance (Falk 2004a: 146-147). Following is the translation and transliteration by Falk:

Kharoṣṭhī: bakag(r)e vihara-karavaka Brāhmī:
bakako vihāra-karāvakaḥ

[This is] Bakaga/Bakaka, the builder of the monastery

The Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions on the three other pedestals are read as *Grucem...e*, *Grulasvaahe* and *Devadasa*.

According to Falk, this Bi-scriptual inscription shows that at a time, the usage of Kharoṣṭhī was being complimented with Brāhmī. He also tried to relate the personalities *Devadasa* and *Bakaga/Bakaka* recorded in these inscriptions with the *Devadāsa* and *Mahārāja Devaputra* mentioned in the Cooking Vessel inscription.

However, there are some doubts about the inscription's authenticity as the Kharoṣṭhī part appears to be much older than the Brāhmī part. The straight horizontal bar *ka*, straight vertical *ra*, triangular *va* and rounded top *ga* are found in the Kushan Brāhmī inscriptions (2nd to 3rd Century C.E.) while the Kharoṣṭhī *ka* and *ha* are similar to those of the Aśokan and Indo-Greek period (3rd to 1st Century B.C.). This ambiguity raises questions of whether the inscription is a modern forgery or not.

3.2.4 Inscription of the time of Huviṣka

Category: E (Plates: 4a and 4b Tables: 4 and 71)

Material: Red sandstone

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Peshawar Valley?

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Falk 2004)

Subject: Donative

Date: 162 C.E. (first Kushan era) or 262 C.E. (second Kushan era)

This four lines Kushan Brāhmī inscription is engraved into a red sandstone slab. It was first published by Falk, with the decipherment based on the photograph provided to him by an antiquity dealer named Riaz Babar (Falk 2004: 139-140). The inscription records the donation by a personality named *Samgila* for the teachers of the *Mahāsaṅghika* order.

According to Falk, the date either belongs to the first or second Kushan era, giving the year 162 C.E. or 262 C.E., both in conformity with the palaeography (2nd to 3rd Century C.E.). Based on the material (Red Sandstone), script (Kushan Brāhmī) and the content (donation for the *Mahāsaṅghika* order), Falk concluded that the inscription could have traced its origin from Mathūra and was probably brought to Gandhāra.

Following is the transliteration and translation by Falk:

Line 1: <saṃ>///30 5 vā 1 di 20 5

Line 2: ///upajhāyena saṃghila
Line 3: ///[ta]sukhārtha ācāryana mahasa
Line 4: ghiyāna parigrah(e)

In the year 35, 1st month of the rainy season, day 25, [this... was dedicated] by/together with the teacher. Saṃghila ...for the welfare and happiness[of all beings]. For the acceptance of the teachers of the Mahāsaṃghika order

Although Falk mentioned that the inscription was found in Peshawar Valley, it is not known when it was brought from Mathura, and for what reason. Besides, the information provided by the antiquity dealer has to be dealt with caution as he is known for making fake objects. Due to these uncertainties, the relevance of this inscription to the history of Gandhāra is hard to determine.

3.2.5 Narasiṃha Inscription of the Gupta period

Category: E (Plates: 5a and 5b; Tables: 5 and 71)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 24 cm x 34.5 cm x 10 cm

Provenance: Cheniot, Punjab Province

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 1998a)

Subject: Establishment of Narasiṃha Image

Date: 2nd-4th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.2.5)

The pedestal of this Narasiṃha image is inscribed with a line of Kushan/Gupta-Brāhmī inscription. The image represents the *avatar* of Viṣṇu, an earthly reincarnation in the form of a man-lion to kill the demon king *Hiranyakaśipu*. Nasim Khan studied the iconography in detail and provided the following decipherment of the inscription (Nasim Khan 1998a: 12-20):

B[u]dhyamena smaṭanaraṣamahā+yabi[ṣe]na+++śi

By Budhyama, the image of Narasiṃha

The most interesting point about this Brāhmī inscription is, it seems to have been written from right to left,⁸ with the letters being written in a mirror image of the actual orientation. Other examples of Brāhmī inscriptions written in the same manner include the Minor rock edict of Erragudi and the Ceylon inscription of Duvegala (Upasak 1960: 11-12).

⁸ Personal Communication with Prof. (Meritorious). Dr. M. Nasim Khan, 12 May 2014.

Palaeographically, the characters possess a mixed style of Kushan and Gupta-Brāhmī. The letters *ma*, *ya* and *na* resemble the 2nd/3rd Century C.E. Mathura Brāhmī while the letters *sma*, *ṭa*, *ra*, *ṣa*, *ha* and *bu* show the characteristics of both Kushan and Gupta Brāhmī. This places the inscription between the 2nd to 4th Century C.E.

Among the earliest evidence for the worship of Narasiṃha was found in Orissa, Eastern Deccan, in the 3rd Century C.E. (Ibrahim Shah 2002: 47). This image shows that by the 4th Century C.E., the cult has already arrived in Punjab. If the inscription is genuine, it was most probably executed by a scribe who only had the skills in writing Kharoṣṭhī and was possibly unaware about the styles and direction of the Brāhmī script.

3.2.6 Bangle Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 6a and 6b; Tables: 6 and 71)

Material: Stone

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Kashmir Smast. Mardan District

Present Location: Unknown

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 2001b; 2006)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 2nd-4th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.2.6)

This bangle fragment bears four Brāhmī characters which are read by Nasim Khan as *///jvalāya*, which means to *///javala* (Nasim Khan 2001b: 3; 2006: 99). The word seems to be a proper name in a dat. case whereas the last element *javala* is preserved. The word *jvāla*, adj. means “burning/blazing/torch/light” while *jvālā*, f. means “illumination”.

The characters are placed between the 2nd to 4th Century C.E.

3.3 Gupta-Brāhmī Inscriptions (4th-5th Century C.E.)

Out of 24 Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions, 12 were found at Kashmir Smast site.⁹ The rest were recovered from other areas in Gandhāra; 1 inscription came from the Punjab province, 1 from Abbotabad, 1 from Swabi District, 2 from South Waziristan, 3 from Swat, 3 from Afghanistan and 1 is of unknown provenance.

⁹ The painted inscriptions of Kashmir Smast are two main rocks painted with dozens of short individual records (See 3.3.10).

3.3.1 Sita Maha Kandara Inscription (Copper Plate I)

Category: E (Plates: 7a and 7b; Tables: 7 and 72)

Material: Copper

Measurement: 17 cm x 23 cm

Provenance: Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 1999-2000a; 2001b; 2006; Falk 2003)

Subject: Donative

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.1)

This copper plate is inscribed with 11 lines of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription, found buried 2.5 metres below the surface during an illegal digging inside the Great Cave of the Bakhai complex. It was first deciphered and published by Nasim Khan (2000a: 1-7; 2001b: 1-7; 2006: 92-94) and revisited by Falk (2003: 1-19).

The first study made by Nasim Khan unveiled important information about its purpose and relation to the Kashmir Smast Hindu sites. According to Nasim Khan, the inscription narrates the famous Hindu ceremony *Mahā Śivarātrī* or *Śivarātrī* to honour the God *Śiva*. This view is supported by the material evidence discovered in the same area. The ceremony include ablution ritual as well as flower and food offering to the deity.

The inscription also records the presence of a Hindu temple and monastery dedicated to the God *Vardhamāneśvara*, of which food and water were offered to the inhabitants. The goddess *Bhīma* is said to dwell in the Great Cave of the mountain of *Śrī Miñja*. The presence of the *Bhīma* cult is also recorded in the three Kamaṇḍalu inscriptions and a few seals found at Kashmir Smast (Nasim Khan 2003b: 83-90; 2006: 100-105, 115; Falk 2004b: 138-140).

Following is the transliteration and translation proposed by Nasim Khan:

- Line 1: [verse 1] siddham svasti bhagavata[h] suravaratara
[si]ddhagandharvvanityā-dhara-gāṇa+
- Line 2: [verse 2] sita-mahā-kandara-śikhare śrīmīnja-parvva-mahā-
guhā nivasinyaci [or bhi]
- Line 3: māyāh- [verse 3] pāda-mūle prayad-chatya-kṣayaṇim
yāsuvarṇasi[te]+++
- Line 4: s[va]ssa 5 viṣṇuśīpi-tara-śālīyakaḥ asya-su-varṇasya vardha[mā]

Line 5: neśvarasya nṛibhiś-ca-ṣoṭṭako-snapana[m] (or stapinaṃ) kartavyaṃ
 puṣpāhārika- dvayena dakuṭa [verse 4]ca pā
 Line 6: [ra]-maṭhakena śukarṭamyā/śūkarṭamyābhoktavyaṃ
 vardhamāneśbharasyā-agrata-darantu (or agranaśintu) survvakamkṛtvā-
 Line 7: taṇ[ḍa]rṇardha-dhakaṃ bhaktasya ṣu or pūpāḍakadvayaṃ ca-
 ekekasya[ca]-iyam tatha-eva kṛṣṇa [verse 5] catu
 Line 8: rdaśyā kuṭinsa pāra-maṭhakena puṣpuhārikadvayena
 bhoktavyaṃ snāpanaṅ-ca [deva]
 Line 9: sya kbhatavya (bhaktavya) ya-iva dāpogāvaś-canta-ādityau-navad
 bhoktavya [asya] s[u]- varṇasya guha+
 Line 10: ++ddha+++++koma+++tha+gaśya[ta]yadanadrau+śa++++++
 Line 11: do+++chedaikaadata+++maga+ śrava(da)

- Verse 1: Success! Salutations! (By this act all are honoured), the Bhagavant, the most excellent among the gods, Siddhagandharva, Nitya (and) Dharagāṇa
 Verse 2: To Acimā/Bhīma who dwells in the great place/cave of the mount Śrī Mīṇja (situated) at the end of the great Sita Valley
 Verse 3: At the foot of the mountain, (there is) a beautiful living place, (the monastery) Kṣayaṇi with a lively Caitya (temple). Adorned with 5 Svassa/5 Svassa (were offered) to the house (that is) enlightened with rays of stars, of this beautiful (house) of the god Vardhamānś vara(Śiva), men/women and the Ṣoṭṭako of the monastery were given food and water with two Saktu (each)
 Verse 4: After offering food, inside the (house), to the god Vardhamānś vara by Śuklarṭamyā/Śūkarṭamyā of the Pāra Maṭhaka, one enjoy the pure food. (By) the men of Śiva of the large sacred building, the food was offered one by one
 Verse 5: In this manner, on the fourteenth day in the dark half of the month (Phalguna) (the men and women) of the temple after the ablution, food and flowers were offered to the god. Thus the Dapogavas and the nine Adityas of the beautiful house of the Cave were offered food

The first decipherment by Nasim Khan was made based on the visible part of the inscription. However, Falk managed with the dealer to get a better copy of the inscription and proposed a new reading with the help of other published inscriptions from Kashmir Smast by Nasim Khan (2003b: 83-90; Falk 2003: 7-10).

According to Falk, the inscription records a permanent endowment of five gold coins by *Viṣṇuśiri* for the monastic establishment. It is also mentioned that the golden statue of *Vardhamāneśvara* is to be given bath and ornated with girdles. Another pious act by *Viṣṇuśiri* recorded in the inscription is, the garland sellers and caretakers of the

shops shall be given rice and cakes every 8th night of the waxing moon and every 14th night of the waning moon.

Following is the transliteration and translation by Falk:

- Line 1: Siddham svasti bhagavataḥ sura-varanara-siddha-gandharva-
vidyādharaṇādy(ā)
Line 2: Sita-mahākandara-śikhare śrī-miñja-parvva-mahāguha-nivasiny<ā> bhī
Line 3: māyāḥ pādamūle prayacchaty akṣayaṇīyaṃ suvarṇā satera pañca
Line 4: Svassa 5 viṣṇu<u>śirir (u)ttara-śālīyakaḥ asya suvarṇasya vardhamā
Line 5: Neśvarasya tṛbhiś ca paṭṭakaiḥ snāpanaṃ kartavyaṃ puṣpahārika-dvayena
ca kuṭivy<ā>p<ā>
Line 6: ra-maṭhakena śuklāṣṭamyāṃ bhoktavyaṃ vardhamāneśvarasyāgratas
saktu-purvvaṃ kṛtvā
Line 7: taṇḍulārdhāḍhaka-bhaktasy<ā>pūpakadvayaṃ caikekasya deyaṃ tathaiva
kṛṣṇacatu
Line 8: rddāśyāṃ kuṭvy<ā>pāra-maṭhakena puṣpahārika-dvayena bhoktavyaṃ
snāpanaṃ ca deva
Line 9: Sya kbharttavyaṃ yāvad āpo gāvaś candradityau tāvad bhoktavyaṃ asya
suvarṇasyāgrahā(r)o
Line 10: gañ(j)avaram apada-komāpa ekaduśam adiṣṭam nayadevanyoṇya –trama
Line 11: ...ratakata..yamādo vaveched ekudata sabha 3 margaś..

- Line 1-4: Siddham. Svasti. On the mountain top of the Lord, which is the abode of Gods, perfect men, ascetics, gandjarvas, vidyādhara, gaṇas etc with its great glen at the feet of (goddess) Bhīmā, who lives in the great cave on the Śrī Miñja mountain, Viṣṇuśirī, who has (had) access to the higher hall, offers as permanent endowment 5 golden staters
Line 4-5: His golden Vardhamāneśvara is to be given a bath (ornated?) with three girdles (?)
Line 5-6: And two garland sellers (and) the inhabitant of the Maṭh in charge of the shop business shall eat on (every) eighth (night) of the waxing moon in front of the Vardhamāneśvara
Line 6-7: After Saktu has been offered, to each and every one (present) rice (made from) half an āḍhaka of rice grains (=ca. 2 kg) and two cakes (apūpaka) should be given
Line 7-9: In the same way the inhabitants of the Maṭh in charge of the shop business and the two garland sellers shall eat on (every) fourteenth (night) of the waning mood, and the gods is to be given a bath
Line 9: (They) shall eat as long as the waters, cows, moon and sun (will exist)
Line 9-10: This donation of Gold of his, the Gañjavara
Line 10: Year x3 Mārgaśira

Although the interpretation of Nasim Khan and Falk agrees on several points, differences are marked on some other details. Generally, the decipherment of Nasim

Khan focuses on the *Mahā Śivarātrī* ritual while that of Falk revolves around the endowment and offering made by *Viṣṇuśiri* to the inhabitants of the monastery. Although the year is not readable, the usage of north-western variant of Gupta-Brāhmī suggests the date of 4th/5th Century C.E.

3.3.2 Copper Plate II

Category: D (Plates: 8a and 8b; Tables: 8 and 72)

Material: Copper

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 2001b; 2006)

Subject: Religious

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.2)

This copper plate bears four lines of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription executed in dotted technique. It was discovered by illegal diggers in the Bakhai Complex, and had been used for a long period of time as a floor scrapper for cleaning cow dung. Due to the prolonged use, the rust had been eroded and the akṣara became visible to the owner.

It was first published by Nasim Khan with the following decipherment (Nasim Khan 2001b: 1-8; 2006: 95-96):

///+///
///ṇmna śrutayena siddhasya/sikdhasya/// ///[ś]rirmaḍhā
saptakaiḥ samyuktasya di///
...ṭhava[ca]ndro yanallokasti candrajñāsata
...bha || vi++tantrisu

by hearing [...] the combination by the seven Śrī Maḍha

Although Nasim Khan provided detailed explanations for his decipherment, certain words can have other alternative meanings, which may render other possible translations for the whole text. They include the words *śrutayena*, sing.n.inst. “sacred knowledge”, *siddhasya*, sing.adj.gen. “perfected/become perfect”, and *[ś]rirmaḍhā saptakaiḥ*, pl.n.inst. “by the seven illustrious maḍha/monastery”. Based on the comparison with Copper Plate III, the reading *samyuktasyadi-* in line two can be reconstructed as *samyuktasyāditi* which means “the unbroken union”.

Following is another proposed translation:

[...] perfected by the sacred knowledge [...]
[...] of the unbroken union by the seven illustrious
maḍha/monasteries[...]

The inscription appears to contain religious text written in characters belonging to 4th/5th Century C.E.

3.3.3 Copper Plate III

Category: C (Plates: 9a and 9b; Tables: 9 and 72)

Material: Copper

Measurement: 5 cm x 6 cm

Provenance: Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 2006)

Subject: Religious

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.3)

This copper plate with seven lines of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription was first published by Nasim Khan with the following transliteration (Nasim Khan 2006: 97):

///
///śar śaparava///
///+ktobhavirmatāghā/// ///+yade[vabra]hma+///
///saṃyuktasyāditi///
///vadoṇyirohiṇi///

The reading of the first line is not certain as their diacritic vowel signs are missing. The first two characters could be *śarśa* or *śata*, representing either a single word or the final component of a compound word. The word *śarśa* might be for *śarśarika*, adj. “hurtfull/mischievous” while *śata*, n. means “hundreds” or “any very large number”. The succeeding word is restored as *parāvāka*, m. which is translated as “contradiction”.

In the second line, the word *(yu)kto* is difficult to translate because its prefix is missing. The different prefixes which could be attached to the word can give many different meanings. The succeeding word, *bhave*, sing.m.loc. is translated as “obtaining”. As for the next three characters: *mā*, *ta* and *gha*, *māta* is either a separate word with *gha* constituting the first syllable of the next word or *mātagha* is the first component of a longer compound word. As a single word, *māta*, adj. means

“composed/made/formed”.

In the third line, the meaning of the first two characters is not clear. The succeeding words are *deva* and *brahma*. The fourth line is read and decomposed as *saṃyuktasya* and *aditi*. These two words are also observed in the Copper Plate II of Kashmir Smast (Nasim Khan 2006: 95). The word *saṃyuktasya* (from *saṃ-yuj-*), sing.m.gen. means “combination/union/connection” (Nasim Khan 2006: 95) while *aditi*, adj. means “unbroken/boundless/immensity/perfection”.

Although it is difficult to translate the reading *vadonyirohiṇi* in the final line, but then the word *rohiṇi* could refer to a star constellation.

Following is the revised transliteration and translation:

///+///
///[śarśa or śata] p.r.v.k.///
///[yu]ktobhavemātagha/// ///vayade[vabra]hma+///
///saṃyuktasya=adi[ti]///
///vadony[i]rohiṇi///

[...] hundreds of contradictions [...]
[...] composed by obtaining [...]
[...] deva, the brahman [...]
[...] of the unbroken/ union [...] [...]
(constellation of?) rohiṇi [...]

This inscription appears to contain religious text, and the characters are placed at 4th/5th Century C.E.

3.3.4 Copper Plate IV

Category: D (Plates: 10a and 10b; Tables: 10 and 72)

Material: Copper

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 2006)

Subject: Religious

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.4)

This copper scroll contains 5 lines of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription, executed using the dotted technique. It was first published by Nasim Khan with the transliteration (Nasim Khan 2006: 98). He pointed out that the reading is extremely difficult as the dots were slightly made and only a part of the scroll was unrolled by the owner.

Following is the transliteration by Nasim Khan:

+[ta saṃvan śarasya] [kenā][gi]+[svasi]+
[navadbrahmaṇādbhi
] [paṃ]+...[vi] [pāṇī
kāmiḍani]

Only a few words could be translated from the legible part of the inscription. They include *saṃvatsara* “year” and *navad-brahmaṇādbhi(h)* “acquisition of nine divine powers”. The word *paṃca* “five/kind of measurement” is also found in the Śrī Bhaganaṣa inscription of Kashmir Smast. Following is another proposed transliteration:

+[ta saṃvatsarasya]/// [kenā][gi]la[svanne]+///
[navadbrahmaṇādbhi](h)///
[paṃcavi]+...[vi]///
[pāṇītkāmiddhani]///

This inscription is dated at 4th/5th Century C.E.

3.3.5 Kamaṇḍalu Inscription I

Category: E (Plates: 11a and 11b; Tables: 11 and 72)

Material: Bronze

Measurement: height-29 cm, diameter-32 cm, minimum diameter of neck-5.7cm, maximum diameter of neck-8.7 cm, diameter of base-7.6 cm

Provenance: Open Site of Bakhai Complex, Kashmir Smast, Mardan District **Present**

Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 2006)

Subject: Donative

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.5)

The Kamaṇḍalu inscription I bears a line of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription engraved on half of its shoulder using the dotted technique which is slightly incised. It was first published by Nasim Khan (2006: 69-70, 100-101) and revisited by Falk (2008: 138-140).

According to Nasim Khan, the inscription mentions a donation by *Devadharmā* to the Goddess *Bhīma* in the beautiful monastery of *Ahaṇi*. Following is his proposed transliteration and translation:

Śrī bhīmāyāhaṇī suva++na maṭha devadharmā

First Translation: To Śrī Bhīma, (gift of) Devadharmā, in the beautiful monastery of Ahaṇi

Second Translation: In the beautiful monastery of Ahaṇi (gift) to Bhīma by Devadharmā

Falk on the other hand gives different reading and interpretation on the inscription. He mentioned that the inscription records the donation of the Kamaṇḍalu to the Goddess Bhīma in the Maṭha of water carriers. Following is the decipherment by Falk (2008: 138):

Śrī bhīmāya paṇīkavahīkāna maṭhā devadharmā

(This is) a religious donation for Śrī Bhīmā in the Maṭh of the water-carriers

For all three Kamaṇḍalu inscriptions (I, II and III)¹⁰, Nasim Khan had justified his decipherments by providing the drawings of the inscriptions, of which his readings appear to be exactly in conformity with the Gupta-Brāhmī texts. Although Falk had claimed that the decipherment of Nasim Khan is inaccurate, it is difficult for us to cross-check his transliteration for this inscription as he neither provided any clear photograph nor drawing of the inscribed part of the Kamaṇḍalu.

3.3.6 Kamaṇḍalu Inscription II

Category: E (Plates: 12a and 12b; Tables: 12 and 72)

Material: Bronze

Measurement: height-14.5 cm, diameter-15 cm, diameter of the mouth-8.15 cm, diameter of base-7.6cm

Provenance: Open Site of Bakhai Complex, Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 2006)

Subject: Donative

¹⁰ See 3.3.6 and 3.3.7 for discussions on Kamaṇḍalu inscriptions No.II and III

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.6)

The Kamaṇḍalu Inscription II contains a line of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription inscribed on half its shoulder using the dotted technique slightly incised, first published by Nasim Khan (2006: 102-103) and revisited by Falk (2008: 139).

According to Nasim Khan, it mentions a donation by a town ruled by *Devadharmarakṣita* to the Goddess *Bhīma* in the beautiful monastery of *Ahaṇi*. An interesting piece of information noted by Nasim Khan is the mention of the town of *Holama*.

This place-name is recorded in the Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, Petroglyphs of Upper Indus Valley and the Inscriptions of Mathura, Takht-I-Bahi, and Manikyala as *Holamaysa*, *Horamusa*, *Hora(mu)*, *Horumaysa*, *Horamaysanagara*, *Horaka*, *Horamurta* and *Horaśadasa* (Nasim Khan 2006: 102). It is probably situated somewhere in the north-east or north-west of the Indo-Pak subcontinent.

Following is the proposed transliteration and translation by Nasim Khan:

bhīmāyāhanī su-maṭhe devadharmarakṣitaṣyaḥ horamaysa(sya) nagara

Translation 1: To Bhīma, in the beautiful monastery of Ahaṇi, (donation of) the town of Horama of Devadharmarak ṣita (or ruled by Devadharmarak ṣita)

Translation 2: The town of Holama of Devadharmarak ṣita (did this donation) to Bhīma, in the beautiful monastery of Ahaṇi

Falk on the other hand mentioned that this inscription records the donation of a personality named Rakṣita for the Goddess Bhīma in the Maṭh of water carriers. He translated the word *Horamaysanagara* as “the town of *Ahura Mazda*”. According to him, the character –ysa in the word *Horamaysa* is used to express / za /, soft voiced spirant, not common in Indic languages. Based on his interpretation on this placename, he suggested that there was a considerable number of Zoroastrian Iranians in Kashmir Smast.

Following is the translation and transliteration by Falk:

Bhīmīyā pānīamaṭhe devadharmarakṣitasya / horamaysanagara

This is the religious donation by rakṣita for Bhīma in the Maṭh of water carriers at the town of Ahura Mazda.

The reading *bhīmyā* by Falk is doubtful as after the sign *bhī*, the open mouthed *ma* and tripartite *ya* is clearly observable in the photograph included by him, both with medial vowel *-ā* expressed by a slanting stroke. He read the next sign as *pā*. In the Gupta-Brāhmī script, the letter *pa* is flat bottomed with two equal arms, both surmounted with hollow triangular headmarks (See table 72 and 73). For the medial vowel *-ā* diacritical mark, it is represented as a slanting stroke attached to the left headmark (See Table 73-1). However, this sign appears to have a left arm surmounted with a hollow triangular headmark and a right hook, which is identified as the letter *ha*. Then he reads the succeeding letters as *nī* and the initial *a-*. The sign which is read as *a-* by Falk appears to be a hooked *sa-* with the right verticals prolonged downwards, giving the reading *su*. The last two characters are read as *maṭhe*.

Our detailed observation on the visible characters shows that the reading of Nasim Khan, *bhīmāyāhanī su-maṭhe*, is more plausible. Unfortunately, we are only able to revisit the first eight characters as the rest of the inscription in the photograph provided by Falk is unclear. As for his interpretation regarding the presence of Zoroastrian community in Kashmir Smast, more evidences aside from the interpretation of a single word is needed to support this claim.

3.3.7 Kamaṇḍalu Inscription III

Category: E (Plates: 13a and 13b; Tables: 13 and 72)

Material: Bronze

Measurement: height-15.3 cm, diameter-14.5 cm, diameter of mouth-8.4cm, diameter of neck-4.5cm

Provenance: Open Site of Bakhai Complex, Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 2006)

Subject: Donative

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.7)

The Kamaṇḍalu Inscription III bears a line of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription inscribed around its shoulder by using the dotted technique and mildly incised. It was first published by Nasim Khan (2006: 104-105) and revisited by Falk (2008: 139).

According to Nasim Khan, this inscription mentions a donation made by the town of *Devadharma* to the Goddess *Bhīma* who dwells in the *Ahaṇi* monastery located in a cave.

Following is the transliteration and translation by Nasim Khan:

Divadharma nagara śrī bhīmaya guha-vasīṇīya haṇī-su-va(r)ṇī-suṇī-maṭhe...|
syarītī -ghaṭarasya

The town of Devadharma (i.e. Horama) (did this donation) to Bhīma who lives in the beautiful monastery of Ahaṇi, (situated inside) the Cave, of all qualities, the liquor of the pot is poured

Falk who revisited the decipherment mentioned that the inscription records the donation of the Kamaṇḍalu which was made from bell-metal for the goddess *Śrī Bhīma* who lives in a cave, for the Maṭh of water carriers.

Following is his transliteration and translation:

Śrī Bhīmaya guhavasīṇīya pāṇīavahīṇa maṭhā [m]āgalasya
rītīghaṭakasyadivadharma nagara

This is the religious donation of a pot for auspicious occasions (made) from bell-metal for śrī bhīma who lives in the cave, in the Maṭh of the water carriers, in the town.

As the photograph provided by Falk is unclear, it is difficult for us to revisit his reading. Unlike the Kamaṇḍalu inscriptions Pot No.I and II, the characters of this inscription do not show uniformity in their headmarks. They are either topped with hollow triangular or horizontal line headmarks. This inscription is placed at 4th/5th Century C.E.

3.3.8 Dharmadata Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 14a and 14b; Tables: 14 and 72)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 45 cm x 14 cm

Provenance: Bakhai Complex, Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Present Location: SSAQ Museum, University of Peshawar

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Shahab 2011; Nasim Khan and Shahab 2012)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.8)

This block of stone is inscribed with a line of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription, and was found alongside with the Viṣṇuva inscription (See 3.3.9) during the excavation and exploration led by Nasim Khan. These two big stone blocks were exposed during a clearing of the staircase close to the entrance of the cave. They were removed from their original place and brought to the SSAQ Museum of Archaeology, UoP for display.

The inscription was first mentioned by Shahab (2011: 50, Plate 20.1) and deciphered by Nasim Khan (Nasim Khan & Shahab 2012: 41). It is read as *dharmadatasya*, sing.gen. “of Dharmadata/belong to Dharmadata”.

The word consists of two elements, *dharma* and *data*, which could be Buddhist in nature. It is written almost in pure Sanskrit, except for the suffix *-data* of which the correct one is *-datta*. The inscription is probably engraved by a pilgrim or visitor to the shrines of Kashmir Smast. The script belongs to 4th/5th Century C.E.

3.3.9 Viṣṇuva Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 15a and 15b; Tables: 15 and 72)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 42 cm x 14 cm

Provenance: Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Present Location: SSAQ Museum, University of Peshawar

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Shahab 2011; Nasim Khan and Shahab 2012)

Subject: Religious

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.9).

This block of stone is engraved with a short Gupta-Brāhmī inscription and was first mentioned by Shahab (2011: 50, Plate 19.2) and deciphered by Nasim Khan (Nasim Khan & Shahab 2012: 41). It is read as *om śira(or va) vi[ṣṇu]va[sya]*, sing.gen. “Salutations to Śiraviṣṇuva/Salutations to Śiva-Viṣṇuva”.

It is carved probably by a pilgrim out of his his/her devotion to the Lord *Viṣṇu* with the characters belonging to 4th/5th Century C.E.

3.3.10 Painted Inscriptions Category:

E (Plate: 16; Table: 16)

Material: Stone

Measurement of Rock No.1: 10 m x 8 m

Measurement of Rock No.2: 3.7 m x 2.1 m

Provenance: Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Present Location: Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 2000; 2006; 2009)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 4th-6th Century C.E. (Palaeography, *See* 5.3.10).

These short inscriptions are painted on two main rocks, Rock no.1 and Rock no.2 and were studied in detail by Nasim Khan (2000; 2006: 88-90; 2009: 129-132). Rock No. 1 is a large rock painted with 22 inscriptions on its four surfaces (labelled as Area A, B, C and D) while Rock No. 2 is a large rock painted with 65 inscriptions on one surface, with only 43 are readable. These short records were probably painted by different pilgrims of Kashmir Smast over a period of time, containing personal names and religious words. The characters belonged to the 4th to 6th Century C.E.

Following is the transliterations of inscriptions from Rock No.1 (Nasim Khan 2009: 129-132):

Inscription 3:	om	Inscription 19:	+ na na
Inscription 4:	Vidhava	Inscription 20:	[vab]hadha
Inscription 5:	Rakapa	Inscription 22:	śra bhavabhadhra
Inscription 7:	mudi+++		
Inscription 9:	syacarvaśraho/ sracarvasraho		
Inscription 10:	+rari+bhā		
Inscription 11:	bhadakuda++		
Inscription 13:	śr(ī)r saceṣṭama[ṭa] ++++alaya///++++		
Inscription 14:	navama+		
Inscription 15:	+namavaṣa		
Inscription 17:	++ra++		

Following is the transliterations of inscriptions from Rock No.2 (Nasim Khan 2009: 132-144):

Inscription 24:	om ++va++	Inscription 45:	...
Inscription 25:	rasuma+	Inscription 46:	thoṭu komaraka mu[nyā]ra[sya] kudinika[sya]
Inscription 26:	na+sa[raca] ++śrīka[ra]	Inscription 47:	karani
Inscription 27:	raśadha	Inscription 48:	thoṭaka
Inscription 28:	śa[ka]	Inscription 49:	karani
Inscription 29:	[ka]ra++ṭhaha	Inscription 50:	+++rasa
Inscription 30:	Ru	Inscription 51:	om
Inscription 31:	ranta[ka]	Inscription 53:	kara-bandha-upakara
Inscription 32:	puradit[ya]	Inscription 54:	om
Inscription 33:	Karani	Inscription 55:	ra[bha]kaḥ
Inscription 34:	cāramasi	Inscription 57:	racandrama
Inscription 35:	///+dhujā	Inscription 58:	misayotho
Inscription 36:	om ṭha...	Inscription 60:	vi[ṣṇu]kara/ vimakara
Inscription 37:	[om] cāramas[i]	Inscription 61:	alaya or sumipah thanāṭa
Inscription 38:	ala[ya]+++ku[li]ki[ya]	Inscription 62:	kiraṭamaṭana dirira
Inscription 39:	++rapura[vṛ]ndhini++	Inscription 63:	vidurabha
Inscription 40:	... [pu]di++++ ...na...	Inscription 64:	thora+
Inscription 41:	sulama ...	Inscription 65:	dekule+++
Inscription 42:	[bhi]majata[sya] ++mara+		
Inscription 43:	...dhaśarasya		
Inscription 44:	Karani		

3.3.11 Conch-Shell Inscriptions

Category: B (Plate: 17)

Material: Schist

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 2006)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E?

This schist slab is inscribed on the upper left and right with two lines of inscription written in the Śaṅkhalipi style, first published by Nasim Khan (2006: 109, fig.98). The ornamental manner of writing is very difficult to read.

3.3.12 Vāsudeva Nārāyaṇa Bronze Image Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 18a and 18b; Tables: 17 and 72)

Material: Bronze

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Srinivasan & Sander 1997; Falk 2004)

Subject: Establishment of *Vasudeva Nārāyaṇa* image **Date:** 460 C.E. (Kushan era) or 353 C.E. (Gupta era)

The bronze *Vāsudeva Nārāyaṇa* image is inscribed with a line of GuptaBrāhmī inscription which rotates anti-clockwise around the pedestal and ends again at the lower part of the frontal surface where the text began. This inscription was first studied by Srinivasan and Sander (1997: 105-170) and revisited by Falk (2004: 144). Based on the art-historical evidence, Srinivasan suggested that the sculpture originated from Himanchal Pradesh (Śrīnivasan & Sander 1997: 152). However, on linguistic and palaeographic basis, her co-author suggested that the image originated from the north-west of the Indo-Pak subcontinent (Srinivasan & Sander 1997: 124). They calculated the date according to the Laukika Era, giving the year 427 C.E. (Srinivasan & Sander 1997: 124).

Following is the proposed transliteration and translation by Srinivasan & Sanders:

front, left side, line 1: sa[m]vacchare trayo right
side: āṣāḍhamasa dīvase pañca- rear: mi(ātra dī)vase
nārāyaṇapratimā pratitthāvita left side: bhīmāsthāne
gharaṭṭamaṭṭhe śrī vai(h?)likā- front, left side, line 2:
yā devadharma[yaṃ?] front, right side: tya śrī
variṣyā

In the year three, in the month of āṣāḍha, on the fifth day, on this day the image of Nārāyaṇa was installed at Bhīmāsthāna in (or at) Gharatṭamatṭha of the honorable (śrī) Vai(h)likā. It is a religious gift of ... the honorable (śrī) Variṣā

Based on a comparison made with the Sita Maha Kandara and Kamaṇḍalu inscriptions, Falk suggested that it originated from Kashmir Smast (Falk 2004: 145146). As for the date, he proposed the Kushan era instead of the Laukika era, giving the year 460 C.E. (Falk 2004: 145). Aside from the Kushan era, another possibility is the Gupta era, which gives the date of 353 C.E.

Following is the revised transliteration and translation by Falk:

Surface 1: savacchare trayo-trś(e) variṣāyā
Surface 2: aṣāḍhamāsa divase pañca-
Surface 3: mi(atra di)vase nārāyaṇapratimā pratitthāvita
Surface 4: bhīmāsthāne gharaṭṭamaṭṭhe śrī vaīlikā-
Surface 1: yā devadharma

In the year thirty-three, in the rainy season, on the fifth day of the month Āṣāḍha, at this day this statue of Nārāyaṇa was installed at the holy place of Bhīma in the Mill-maṭha by the honourable [lady named] Vailikā as a religious gift.

Our detailed palaeographic study shows that there are similarities between *Vāsudeva Nārāyaṇa* image inscription with other Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions of Kashmir Smast. This further supports Falk’s opinion about its possible provenance from the area.

According to Falk, the image was installed in a *gharaṭṭamaṭṭha*, “mill-maṭha” at the *bhīmāsthāna* “holy place of Bhīma” (Falk 2004a: 145). The word *maṭha*, adj. means “hut/cottage/temple/college/monastery”, depending on the preceding word and the context of the sentence. In Ratnamañjarī inscription, *maṭha* means “temple” while in the Sita Maha Kandara and Kamaṇḍalu inscriptions, it means “monastery” (Nasim Khan 2006: 92, 100-106). *Maṭha*, adj. combined with the word *gharaṭṭa*, m. “grindstone” can be translated as the premise where the process of grinding takes place, i.e. mill.

The word *bhīmāsthāna* “abode of Bhīma” most probably refers to the complex of monasteries and temples of Kashmir Smast. A significant number of grinding stones were discovered in the centre buildings of the religious complex, indicating the presence of the milling area (Nasim Khan 2001c: 225). *Gharaṭṭamaṭṭha* mentioned in the inscription most probably refers to this area. This inscription was possibly discovered in the central building of Kashmir Smast by illegal diggers before it went into the antiquity market.

Falk mentioned that the *gharaṭṭamaṭha* is a place for grinding corn (Falk 2008: 139). However, this is most unlikely as it is already an established fact that corn is not a native crop of Europe or Asia. It was only brought from the Americas by European explorers in the 15th/16th Century C.E. The mill in the religious complex probably functioned as a place where other grains like rice, wheat and spices are processed for the consumption of the visiting pilgrims or residents of the monasteries.

The ingredients for food which was prepared in that mill could have also been used for religious rites in Kashmir Smast, which is also mentioned in the Sita Maha Kandara inscription. The image of *Nārāyaṇa* was donated by *Śrī Vaiḷika*, probably a pilgrim, as her religious gift for the inhabitants of the mill who were Vaiṣṇavites.

3.3.13 Mahārāja Kadambeśvaradāsa Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 19a and 19b; Tables: 18 and 73)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 58 cm x 20 cm

Provenance: Abbotabad District

Present Location: Lahore Museum

Accession Number: 107

Reference(s): (Sahni 1919; Sircar 1953-1954; Falk 2004)

Subject: Construction of a *Kumara* temple

Date: 344 C.E. (Gupta Era)

This four lines of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription was recovered from a spring tank in the Abbotabad. It was first published by Sahni (1919: 18, Appendix C) and revisited by Sircar (1953-1954: 59-62) and Falk (2004: 147-152).

Based on Sahni's incomplete reading, he concluded that the inscription records the completion of the spring-tank where it was found. According to Sahni, the work was executed by *Śāphara Kumāra Sthānaṃgaśūra* during the reign of *Mahārāja Kadambeśvaradāsa*. He calculated the date by using the Gupta Era, giving the year 344 C.E.

After revisiting Sahni's decipherment, Sircar suggested that the inscription commemorated the construction of *kumarasthāna* "the temple for the god *Kumara*", another name for God *Skanda*. The person responsible for the construction was *Gaśūra Śāphara*, son of *Maka*. According to Sircar, *Mahārāja Kadambeśvaradāsa* was an independent or semi-independent ruler of the Hazara region.

Sircar rejected Sahni's opinion about the usage during the Gupta Era in the inscription on the basis that the political influence of the Guptas did not reach to Hazara. Sircar suggested the Kaniṣka II Era instead,¹¹ giving the year 250 C.E. He based his argument on his observation of the characters *ga*, *ta*, *śa*, *ṣa* and *ma*, which he claimed to be of Kushan Brāhmī style (2nd-4th Century C.E.).

Following is the translation and transliteration by Sircar:

Line 1: [sa] 20 5 m[ā]rgaśira-di pratha kārto=ya
Line 2: kumāra sthānaṃ gaśūraṇa maka-putrēna
Line 3: śāpharēṇa mahārāja kadambēśvaradāsa-r[ā]jy[ē]
Line 4: daṭha[sa]ka [||]

The first day of the month of mārgaśira/mārgaśirṣa in the year 25, this Kumara Sthāna has been made/constructed, by the Gaśūra, Shāphara, son of Maka, during the reign/in the kingdom of Mahārāja Kadambēśvaradāsa

Falk stated that there is possibly a connection between *Mahārāja Kadambēśvaradāsa* and the Kadamba Ruler of Avanti, and identified *Gaśūra*, *Shāphara*, son of *Maka* as Iranian names. He also proposed different reading in the fourth line: *data(h) bhak[ṣ]a(h)* “food has been provided”, probably in association with the ceremony for the establishment of the temple.

Sircar's basis for refuting Sahni's date is debatable as such usage of the Gupta era does not necessarily signify the direct political control of the Gupta empire in the area. The location of the Hazara district which was at the western border of the Gupta empire made it possible for the local chiefs to adopt the era. The Wano and Spina inscriptions of South Waziristan are other epigraphs found outside the Gupta political sphere in Gandhāra which also used the Gupta era.

Sircar's identification of the characters with Kushan Brāhmī is also doubtful. The solid triangular headmark, curved *ta*, rounded *tha* with a midline, bent base bar *na*, angular *pha*, hooked *sa*, rounded top *śa* with a left tick and tripartite *ya* show strong characteristics of the 4th/5th Century C.E. Gupta-Brāhmī. On this basis, the year 344 C.E. calculated by Sahni appears to be more plausible.

3.3.14 Cooking Vessel Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 20a and 20b; Tables: 19 and 73)

Material: Copper

¹¹ The Kanishka II Era started in the year 225 C.E.

Measurement: height-54 cm, maximum diameter-51 cm, shoulder diameter- 40 cm, mouth diameter-17 cm, and top collar diameter- 27 cm

Provenance: Monastery of Gaddon Amazi near Tarbela Dam, Swabi District

Present Location: Private Collection **Accession**

Number: N/A **Reference(s):** (Falk 2004)

Subject: Donative

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.13)

This copper cauldron with a line of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription was first published by Falk (2004: 143). It records a donation by *Daṇḍanāyaka Devadāsa* for the Buddhist order of the four quarters.

Falk mentioned that the title *Mahārāja Devaputra* used by the unnamed king in the inscription is found in several Kushan inscriptions such as Kanishka Casket inscription (Konow 1929: 137), Sui Vihar inscription (Konow 1929: 141), Ārā inscription (Konow 1929: 166). He also pointed out that the discovery of the vessel may indicate the consumption of rice by the local population.

Following is the transliteration and translation by Falk:

Maharaja-devaputra-daṇḍanāyaka-devadāsa
bhavane saṃghe cāturdiśe pradāno daṇḍanāyaka devadāsasya

In the palace of Devadāsa, the general of the Mahārāja, son of the gods, [this] gift is from the general Devadāsa to the [Buddhist] order of the four quarters

Although most characters appear to be of the Gupta-Brāhmī style, the irregular shapes of the headmarks and few signs raise some doubts about its authenticity. In addition, the strange sentence formation with the repetition of *daṇḍanāyakadevadāsa* in the same sentence adds more questions of whether the inscription is a modern forgery or not.

3.3.15 Mahaparinibbanasutta Inscription Category:

E (Plates: 21a and 21b; Tables: 20 and 73)

Material: Stone

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Khazana Ghat, Shakorai, Swat District

Present Location: Khazana Ghat, Shakorai, Swat District

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Bühler 1896-1897; Lüders 1901; Stein 1929; Sardar 2010)

Subject: Religious

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.14)

This four lines of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription is deeply and boldly incised into the rough surface of a rock at a low hill. It was mentioned by Bühler as Inscription A and by Badshah Sardar as Inscription No.3. Based on the content, we name it as the Mahāparinibbanasutta inscription. It was discovered alongside with Dhammapada inscription I and II at the entrance of the Malam Jabba valley which served as a link between Swat and many outside regions.

The religious importance of the area is evident from the Buddhist rock carvings, inscriptions and ruins of stupa discovered in various sites such as Shakhori, Nangrial and Ghar-Patai. In Shakhori, aside from the three Buddhist inscriptions, a 13 feet, seated Buddha rock carving, smaller size reliefs and a large ruin of a stupa were also discovered (Stein 1929: 77-78). The site probably functioned as a place of pilgrim in the Jabba valley (Rafiullah 2011: 218).

This inscription was first published by Bühler (1896-1897: 133-135), followed by Lüders (1901: 575-576), Rapson (1901: 291-294), Stein (1929: 78) and Badshah Sardar (2010: 287-288). Bühler, Lüders and Sardar published their decipherments while Stein and Rapson only provided the photographs.

Following is the transliteration and translation by Bühler (1896-1897: 134):

Line 1: anītyā vata saṃskārā utpādayaya-
 Line 2: dharmināḥ [|*]
 utpadya hī nīruddhyante tepā
 Line 3: vyupaśamassukham [|*]

Alas! Transient are the aggregate constituents (of beings), whose nature is birth and decay! For, being produced they are dissolved; - their complete cessation is bliss

Lüders revisited the inscription and agrees with the palaeographic dating given by Bühler.

Following is the transliteration by Lüders (1901: 575):

Line 1: anītyā vata sa[ṃ*]skārā utpādaya[ya*]-
 Line 2: dharminā [ḥ |*] utpadya hī nīruddhya[ṃ*]te[teṣāṃ*]
 Line 3: vy[u*]paśamas=sukham [||*]

Bühler (1896-1897: 134) and Lüders (1901: 575) compared the inscription with a verse in Mahāparinibbanasutta, V.16 which is originally written in the Pali language. It was uttered by the king of gods Sakka, also known as Indra, during the death of the

Śākyamuni. The original Pali text as provided by Bühler is as follows (Bühler 1896-1897: 134):

Anicca vata saṃkhārā uppādavayadhamminī | Uppajjitvā
nirujjhanti tesam vūpaśamassukham||

Following is the verse of Mahāparinibbana Sutta by Childers and its English translation (Childers 1876: 252):

Aniccā vata saṅkhārā uppādavayadhammino, uppajjitvā nirujjhanti, tesam
vupasamo sukho

Transient are all compounded things,
Subject to arise and vanish;
Having come into existence they pass away; Good
is the peace when they forever cease.

Lüders also compare the inscription with a similar verse in the Kharoṣṭhī manuscript of Dhammapada written in the Prakrit language.

Anica vata saghara upadavayadamino |
Upajiti nirujhati teṣa uvaśamo suho ||

Badshah Sardar published the photograph and discussed the content of the inscription based on the decipherment made by Fussman. According to the survey done by him in 2002, this inscription was still in a good state of preservation (Sardar 2010: 286-288).

Fussman gave a different version of the transliteration and translation (Sardar 2010: 287-288):

Line 1: anityā vava (sic! for vata) samskāṛā utpādayaya Line
2: dharmaṇaḥ utpadya hi nirud (dh)yante tepā (read teṣam) Line
3: vyupasamas sukham

the Samskaras are truly subject of originating and decay. For, after originated they disappear. Calming them is happiness

Hinüber (Sardar 2010: 288) and Bühler (1896-1897: 134) noticed few spelling mistakes in the inscription, probably due to the negligence of the scribe. They include *vava* for *vata* and *tepā* for *teṣam*. However, Bühler pointed out that the composition of the Sanskrit text is relatively more accurate as compared to other northern Buddhist inscriptions. The Dhammapada inscription I and II also show similar palaeographic characteristics which suggest that all three of them are contemporary. As for the

translation, the one which was done by Bühler and Lüders appear to be more similar in translation to the original Pali verse than that of Fussman.

The purpose of this inscription can be interpreted based on the position of Shakhori site as the centre of Buddhist pilgrimage in the Malam Jabba valley. The presence of numerous rock carvings depicting the Buddha nearby the inscription suggests its ritualistic purposes. It could have also been carved by pilgrims out of their piety. Due to the proximity with the Mahaparinibbanasutta inscription and their similar contents¹², most probably the Dhammapada inscription I and II also had the same function.

Both Bühler (1896-1897: 133-134) and Lüders (1901: 576) mentioned that the characters resembled the north-western Gupta characters which can be placed at 4th/5th Century C.E. However, Sardar suggested a later date (6th/7th Century C.E.) without giving proper justification. The dating of Bühler and Lüders appears to be more likely. Dhammapada I and II Inscriptions are most probably contemporary with Mahaparinibbana Sutta inscription.

3.3.16 Dhammapada Inscription I Category:

E (Plate: 22; Tables: 21 and 73)

Material: Stone

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Shakorai, Swat District

Present Location: Shakorai, Swat District

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Bühler 1896-1897; Stein 1929; Sardar 2010)

Subject: Religious

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.14)

The Dhammapada I inscription is located above the low hill where the Mahaparinibbanasutta inscription is located. The four lines of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription is deeply and boldly carved high up in the centre of the rock face known as *Oba Ghat* “stone of spring”, inaccessible from the ground surface.

It was reported by Major H. A. Deane (Bühler, 1896-1897: 133) and Stein (1929: 78) along with Mahaparinibbana Sutta and Dhammapada II inscriptions. A large

¹² All three containing the Sanskrit translation of Pali Canon

temple and rock cut figure are located on the cliff nearby (Bühler 1896-1897: 133). Bühler mentioned this inscription as Inscription B while Badshah Sardar as Inscription No.1. Based on the content of the inscription, we named it as the Dhammapada inscription I. According to the survey done by Badshah Sardar in 2002, the inscription was already worn out.

It was initially studied and published by Bühler (1896-1897: 134-135) with the decipherment and palaeographic study, and republished by Badshah Sardar (2010: 286-288) with the decipherment made by Fussman.

Following is the transliteration and translation of the inscription by Bühler (1896-1897: 134):

Line 1: [sarvva]pāpasyākaraṇaṃ ku[śala*]-
Line 2: syo[pa]sāmpad [|*]
Svacitta[vya]va[dā]naṃ
Line 3: ca etadbu[ddhānu]śāsanam [|*]

Not to commit any sin, to acquire merit, to purify one's mind – that is the teaching of the Buddha

The text is the Sanskrit rendering of Dhammapada, Verse 183. The following is the original text written in Pali (Bühler 1896-1897: 135):

sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ kusalassa upasāmpadā
sacittapariyādanaṃ etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ

Not to commit any sin, to do good and to purify one's mind, that is the teaching of the Buddha

Following is the decipherment by Fussman (Sardar, 2010, p.287):

Line 1: sarvva pāpasyākaraṇaṃ kuśala syopasāmpada
Line 2: svacittavyavadānaṃ
Line 3: ca etadbu[ddhānu]śāsanam

Not to commit any sin, to acquire merit, to purify one's mind – that is the teaching of the Buddha

3.3.17 Dhammapada Inscription II Category:

E (Plate: 23; Tables: 22 and 73)

Material: Stone

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Shakorai, Swat District
Present Location: Shakorai, Swat District
Accession Number: N/A
Reference(s): (Bühler 1896-1897; Sardar 2010)
Subject: N/A
Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, *See* 5.3.14)

The Dhammapada inscription II was located only nine metres from the Dhammapada inscription I. Bühler named this inscription as Inscription C while Badshah Sardar as Inscription No.2. Based on the content of the inscription, we named it as the Dhammapada Inscription II. According to the survey done by Badshah Sardar in 2002, the four lines of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription is carved into the right lower corner of the rock, which was exposed to human vandalism and natural erosion (Sardar 2010: 287).

This inscription was initially published by Bühler with the decipherment and palaeographic study (Bühler 1896-1897: 134-135) and revisited by Sardar with the decipherment made by Fussman (Sardar 2010: 287).

Following is the transliteration and translation by Bühler (1896-1897: 135):

Line 1: vācānurakstī marasā su-
Line 2: saṃvṛtaḥ kkāyena caivā[kuśa]lanna kurva[n] [|*]
e-
Line 3: tāstrāyinkarmapathā[nvi]śokya [ā]radhye-
Line 4: nmārgamṛṣippraveditam [|*]

(Let him be one) who guards his speech, is well restrained in mind, and commits no evil with his body. Keeping these three roads of action clear, one may gain the path taught by the sages

This inscription is the Sanskrit rendering of Dhammapada verse 281. Following is the original text in Pali (Bühler 1896-1897: 135):

Vācānurakkhī manasā saṃvutī kāyena ca akusalaṃ na kayirā |
Ete tayo kammaṃpathe viśīdhathe ārādhaye maggaṃ isippareditaṃ ||

Watching his speech, well restrained in man never commit any wrong with his body!
Let a man but keep these three roads of action clear, and he will achieve the path which is taught by the wise.

Fussman made the following decipherment (Sardar 2010: 287):

Line 1: vācānurakstī marasā
Line 2: saṃvṛtaḥ kkāyana caivākuśalanna kurvan
Line 3: tāstrāyinkarmapathānviśokya āraghye-
Line 4: nmārgamṛṣippraveditam [|*]

(Let him be one) who guards his speech, is well restrained in mind, and commits no evil with his body. Keeping these three roads of action clear, one may gain the path taught by the sages

3.3.18 Spina Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 24a and 24b; Tables: 23 and 73)

Material: Stone

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Three kilometres from Gul Hospital, Spina, South Waziristan Agency

Present Location: N/A

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 2001a)

Subject: Unspecified meritorious work

Date: 305 C.E (Kushan era), 311 C.E (Kushano-Sassanian era) or 398 C.E (Gupta era).

This inscription was first published by Nasim Khan based on the eyecopy made by Dr. Latiff in 21st April 1967 (Nasim Khan 2001a: 89-94). According to Nasim Khan, due to the absence of the original text, the decipherment has an uncertain reading except for the first 4 lines.

The inscription starts with the phrase *siddham vijaya* followed by the date, which is read as *samvat aṣṭha saptati 78 caitra masaśukla divase [na]vamyā 9* “year 78, of the 9th lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month of Caitra (March-April)”.

It records a donation ceremony by *Mahārāja Ya+ṇa Mīhusarthutra* and mentions few names such as *tati mitra* “friend of Tati”, *[ca]gra[kpa]punya priya* “dear son of Cagra”, and *kudila-māta-thoḍata* “Thoḍata, the mother of Kudila”. Following is the transliteration and translation:

Line 1: siddham vijaya saṃvat
Line 2: aṣṭha saptati 78 caitra ma
Line 3: se śukla divase [na]vamyā 9 a[+] radi[va] Line
4: se mahārājā ya+ṇa mīhusarthutrena
Line 5: cakkana+ti ṣi gāṇa[śva] ṣṣami-hireṇa sarvva-sa[t]va [ka]kamū
Line 6: [ca]gra[kpa] punya-priya tati-mitra mivikara maka
Line 7: [la]bhata-maya-miñja-divī rapati ++
Line 8: kudila-māta-thoḍata
Line 9: ++rma

Line 1: perfection has been obtained, victory, In the year
 Line 2 and 3: seventy eight 78, on the nine (9) lunar day of the bright fortnight
 of the month Caitra, on this day Line 4: by Maharaja Ya+Mīhusarthutra
 Line 5: ...all human beings...
 Line 6: ...friend of tati, dear to son cagra[kpa]
 Line 7: ...praises Miñjadevi (the one who) seizes extraordinary power...
 Line 8: Thoḍatā the mother of Kudilā
 Line 9: ++rma

The characters are similar with the north-western Gupta-Brāhmī script used in the 4th/5th Century C.E. According to Nasim Khan, the inscription can be dated either in the Kushana era (227 C.E.) or the Kushano-Sassanian era (233 C.E.), giving the year 305 C.E. or 311 C.E. (Nasim Khan 2001a: 93). Another probable era is the Gupta era (320 C.E.), giving the year 398 C.E.¹³

3.3.19 Wano Inscription

Category: D (Plates: 25a, 25b and 25c; Tables: 24, 25 and 73)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 58 cm x 37 cm

Provenance: Wana, South Waziristan Agency

Present Location: Peshawar Museum

Accession Number: PM2406

Reference(s): (Shakur 1946)

Subject: Unspecified meritorious work

Date: 368 C.E. (Gupta Era)

It is an irregular stone slab bearing two Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions. The large surface contains seven lines of inscription (Wano A) while across the slab on the left contains two lines (Wano B).

It was presented to the Peshawar Museum by Mr. Crump and was first published by Shakur (1946: 42) with a preliminary study. According to him, the letters are very much effaced, and only a part of it could be deciphered. He also added that the inscription records the name of a *Maharaja* which ends with *Mihira*, with a son whose name starts with *Tossana*. On palaeographic basis, Shakur suggested that the date refers to the *Harṣa* era (654 C.E.).

¹³ Matters regarding the usage of Gupta Era in the Spina and Wano inscriptions are discussed in 3.3.19

He only provides the transliteration and translation of the first line which runs as follows (Shakur 1946: 42):

Siddham Vijayasamvatsare 40 8 Chaitra

Hail! In the victorious year 48 (on the --- day) of Chaitra

The inscription posed some problems of decipherment. Although the reading is difficult as portions of the engraved surface are extremely worn out, even then we could get some information about the date and purpose of the inscription.

The first line opens with the word *siddham* with a *halanta* followed by *vijayasamvatsara*. Among the numerous Gupta period inscriptions in India which opens with the word *Siddham* include the Sanchi inscription of Candragupta II, Udayagiri Cave inscription of Candragupta II and Bhitari Stone Pillar inscription of Skandagupta (Fleet 1970: 31, 35, 53). In Gandhāra, this rare combination can be observed in the Spina and Sita Maha Kandara inscriptions (Nasim Khan 2001b: 91; 2000a: 47). According to Falk (2004b: 172), the mention of *Vijayarājyasamvatsara* in the beginning of many Gupta inscriptions of India signifies the usage of Gupta Dynastic years. In the Wano and Spina inscriptions, the term *vijayasamvatsara* most probably refer to this era. The date is expressed in figures (40 8), and the month is mentioned as *caitra* “March/April”. However, the fortnight day is not being specified.

In line two, the title *mah<ā>rāja* is followed by what appears to be a personal name, *yapsūṇamihirasūta*. The succeeding word is *bhūpamahā-* with the character restored as *ya*, giving the reading *bhūpamahā(ya)*, sing.m.dat. “for great king/prince”. In the third line, the word *patnī*, “wife” and the personality *maharaja tośśāṇa* are mentioned.

The fourth line starts with *bhaginya<ḥ>*, pl.f.nom. “sisters” followed by the proper name *Tośśāṇa*, also mentioned in the preceeding line. The succeeding word is read either as *duvvāyā* or *dravvāyā*. *Duvvāyā* might be for *duvoyā*-,f. “worship” while “*dravvāyā*” is probably derived from the verb *drāvayati* “cause to run/ put to light/ make flow” or *dravayati* “drive away”, both coming from the verb root *dru-*. Next are the compound word *sarvvasatva* “all beings”, observable also in line 5 of Spina inscription (Nasim Khan 2001: 92) and line 4 for Standing Buddha inscription (Falk 2008: 141).

In the end of line four, sign *tra* is followed by a character which is broken and continued by the letter *daṃ* in the beginning of line 5, giving the reading *tra+daṃ*. One possible reconstruction is *tra(pa)daṃ* which may be derived from the verb *trapate* (verb root *trap-*, to be perplexed). The fourth line of Śrī Malikaputra inscription also bears this word, translated as adj. “perplexed” (Nasim Khan 2003a: 83-84).

The next word is read either as *kaṭuma* or *kaṭupna*, both with unclear etymology. It is followed by *kārapitam*. In Pali, *kārāpita* is the pp. of *kārāpeti* and caus. of *karoti* (root verb *kr-*) “made to do”. Similar conjugation is also observed in the verbs *pratiṣṭhāpitam*, “was installed” in the Khimṅala Śāhi inscription and *khanapita*, “was dugged” in the Mir Ali inscription. The reading of the following character is not certain, followed by *-ttima*. The fifth line ends with the reading *sth<ā>nāyāta*, composition of *sthānāya* and *ata*. The word *sthānāya*, sing.n.dat., means “to/for the sacred altar/holy place”.

In the sixth line, the words *puṇyadbhi<ḥ>*, *su-dīya* and *kīrtti* shows that the inscription records a meritorious work. The word *puṇyadbhi<ḥ>* is translated as “acquisition of merit” while *su* which precedes *dīya* “gift” is also used in the Kamaṇḍalu inscriptions which means beautiful (Nasim Khan 2006: 102). Finally, the word *kīrtti* refers to “meritorious works/pious deeds”. The inscription ends with the words *kr(ta) likhitam* “(so) it is written” is read.

Following is the proposed decipherment of Wano A:

Line 1: siddham vijayasamvatsare 40 8 caitra m<ā>(se)
 Line 2: mah<ā>rāja ya[psū]ṇamihiras[ū]ta bhūpamahā(ya)
 Line 3: patnī ha ca=asya mahārāja tośśāṇa śirā[s.]+
 Line 4: bhaginya<ḥ> tośśāṇa [du or dra]vvāyā sarvvasatva tra(pa)
 Line 5: daṃ kaṭu[ma or pna] kārapitam ?ttima sth<ā>nāya=ata+ Line
 6: ra nyairvva puṇyadbhi<ḥ> ritada su dīya kīrtti ra[bhu or bha]+
 Line 7: ///+++kr(ta)+++likhitam++++///

Perfection has been obtained! In the 48th victorious year of the month Caitra, for the mighty prince, offspring of Mahārāja Yapsunamihira, Mahārāja Tośśāṇa, (his) consort, (his) sisters and all perplexed beings [...] made worship/offering [...] on the sacred altar [...] (for) acquisition of merit [...] the beautiful gift (is given) as a pious deed [...] (so it is) written

The Wano B inscription is difficult to read as the characters are being crudely executed. The first line starts with the word *adhiṣṭhāna* followed by the proper name *ahosna*. Then comes the word *padaḥ* which can be translated as “position/rank/station/pace/subject”. The succeeding word *kudinam*, may be derived from the Pali word *kuṭi*, f. “hut” or Sanskrit word *kuṇḍi*, m. “water jar/pitcher”. It is followed by the reading *putr bhaṭṭa* “venerable princess”. In the second line, the word *karmareṇa*, sing.m.inst., “by the blacksmith” is succeeded by the word *paghsarapati*, which meaning is unclear.

Following is the transliteration and translation:

Line 1: *adhiṣṭhāna=ahosna padaḥ kudinam putr-bhaṭṭa*

Line 2: *karmareṇa [paghsarapati]++++*

Palace/dwelling of Ahosna, the station/rank [...] venerable princess [...] by the blacksmith

The date of this inscription is March/April, 368 C.E. of the Gupta era, which is in conformity with the palaeography (4th/5th Century C.E.). The theme of the inscription is the meritorious work done by Mahārāja Toṣṣāṇa for the acquisition of merit for all beings.

3.3.20 Shorkot Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 26a and 26b; Tables: 26 and 73)

Material: Copper

Measurement: Diameter-46 cm

Provenance: Shorkot, Punjab Province

Present Location: Lahore Museum

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Vogel 1921-1922)

Subject: Donative

Date: 403 C.E. (Gupta era)

This copper cauldron is inscribed with a line of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription, and was found along with other utensils at Shorkot, Punjab. Detailed study of this inscription was done by Vogel (1921-1922: 15-17). It records the donation of the copper cauldron by *vaiyābrītyakara-buddhadāsa* to the monks of *Sarvātivādin* sect of the *Radhika* monastery located in the park of *Śībipura*.

According to Vogel, *Śibipura* can be linked to the capital of the *Śibis*, an ancient tribe mentioned in Mahabharata. They can also be identified with the *Siboi* tribe, mentioned by Arryan to be subdued by Alexander the Great who lived between the Chenab and Indus rivers. Curtius on the other hand located the *Siboi* somewhere in the confluence of the Jhelum. The description given by both Curtius and Arryan are in conformity with the location of Shorkot near the meeting point of Chenab and Jhelum river. Following is the transliteration and translation by Vogel (1921-1922:

15):

saṃ 80+3 māgha-śukla-di 5 [vai*]yābrityakara-buddhadās-ōtthāpi[ta] ||
śibipurōpavana-rādhika-vi[hā]ra-chāturdiśa-sarvbāstivādi-bhikṣu-saṃghasya//

In the year 83, in the month Māgha, the bright fortnight, the fifth day, dedicated by vaiyābrityakara-buddhadāsa|| to the universal congregation of friars of the Sarvativādin sect, of the Radhika Convent in the park of Śibipura

The year 83 most probably referred to the Gupta era, giving the year 403 C.E. while characters are placed at 4th/5th Century C.E. This inscription suggests the thriving of *Sarvativadin* sect in the Punjab area during the rule of the Imperial Guptas.

3.3.21 Bronze Buddha Inscription I

Category: E (Plates: 27a, 27b and 27c; Tables: 27 and 73)

Material: Bronze

Measurement: Height of figure-26.5cm

Provenance: Afghanistan

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Sachs 2003; Falk 2008)

Subject: Establishment of image

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.18)

The pedestal of this standing Buddha image contains four lines of Gupta Brāhmī inscription, where one is inscribed on the rim and the other three on the frontal face of the pedestal. The image was included by Sachs (2003: no. 213) into his catalogue, but the inscription is only studied in detail by Falk (2008: 141).

According to Falk, the inscription is written in Prakrit with Sanskrit influence, recording the donation of the image by a personality named *Devaśrī* with her parents and husband for the merit of all beings. Following is the transliteration and translation:

Line 1: devadharmo yaṃ devaśrīyāya //
Line 2: saddhaṃ mādāpitrau saddhaṃ svamī
Line 3: nā harivameṇa yad atra puṇya
Line 4: tad bhavatu sarvasatvasya

This is the pious donation of (lady) Devaśrī (donated) together with (her) mother and father, together with her husband Harivarman. Whatever merit there is (involved) this shall belong to all being(s).

Although the inscription was mentioned by Sachs to be originated from Afghanistan (Sachs 2003:235), for some reason Falk had claimed it to come from the cave site of Kashmir Smast (Falk 2008: 141). The provenance as reported by Sachs is more plausible because it is less likely for a Buddhist image to be discovered in a Hindu temple and monastic establishment. The characters are dated at 4th/5th Century C.E.

3.3.22 Bronze Buddha Inscription II

Category: E (Plates: 28a, 28b and 28c; Tables: 28 and 73)

Material: Bronze

Measurement: Height of figure-20.3 cm, Height of base-8.3 cm **Provenance:** Afghanistan

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Kreitman 1992)

Subject: Establishment of image

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.19)

This is another inscription engraved into the pedestal of a standing Buddha image strikingly similar with the Bronza Buddha Inscription II, also found in Afghanistan. According to Kreitman, the image shows similar characteristics with other images found in eastern Afghanistan (Kreitman 1992: 215-217). As for the inscription, he published the following decipherment made by Allchin:

Line 1: deya dharmo ‘yaṃ s(a)kya bhikso(h) //
Line 2: Budha pratima yaso nandina(a)
Line 3: sadham mata-pitrau parama duskara
Line 4: [...] tro ba (?u, ?sa)

This is the pious gift of the Śākya monk an image of The Buddha by Yaso-Nandini [...] together with mother and father, most difficult [...] Buddha, by the teacher.

Although it is difficult to revisit Kreitman's reading based on the photograph he has given, the characters visible to us appear to be of the 4th/5th Century Gupta-Brāhmī style.

3.3.23 Copper Ladle Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 29a and 29b; Tables: 29 and 73)

Material: Copper

Measurement: Length of the ladle- 29.7 cm, diameter of bowl- 12.8, depth of the bowl- 6 cm **Provenance:** N/A

Present Location: Schøyen Collection, Oslo

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Falk 2004)

Subject: Donative

Date: 4th/5th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.3.20)

This copper ladle is inscribed with a line of Gupta-Brāhmī inscription around its mouth and was first published by Falk with the decipherment. According to Falk, it records a donation by *Ratnaśa* for the *Samghata* monastery. He also noticed the usage of corrupted Sanskrit in the inscription and strange forms of several characters.

Falk suggested that the inscription came from the Peshawar Valley based on the shape with the letter *śa* with a left curl, said to be absolutely identical with the Vāsudeva Nārāyaṇa Bronze image inscription (Falk 2004: 141). However, it is unlikely that the inscription originated from Kashmir Smast as all the inscriptions coming from that area are Hindu in characters.

Following is the transliteration and translation by Falk (2004: 141):

saghe cāturdiśe saghātavihāre dāna ratnaśasya

In the order of the four quarter, in the Sa(m)ghata monastery: this donation is the gift of Ratnaśa

The letters *ra*, *na*, *vi*, *ta* and *da* which are irregular in shapes raise some doubts about its authenticity.

3.3.24 Stupa Consencration Copper Scroll Inscription

Category: E (Plate: 30)

Material: Copper

Measurement: first part- 15.5 cm (height), second part- 40 cm (height), greatest width- 26.2cm

Provenance: Northern Afghanistan

Present Location: Schoyen Collection
Accession Number: MS 2241
Reference(s): (Melzer 2006; Braarvig and Liland 2010)
Subject: Consencration of Stupa
Date: 492-493 C.E. (Laukika era)

This is a long inscription engraved into a copper scroll placed inside a stupa, and probably never meant to be read (Braarvig & Liland 2010: 93). This inscription was first published by Melzer (2006: 251-278), and discussed by Braarvig and Liland (2010: 91-97). The inscription are divided into five main parts.

The first part of the inscription contains praises for the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha, while the second and third parts contain the quotations from the *Sūtras* and *Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikāḥ*. The fourth part of the inscription contains the subject-matter of the inscription which include the purpose of the donation, names and titles of donors and the date while the fifth part contains proses in classical Sanskrit metres (Braarvig and Liland 2010: 93).

The informations retrieved from the fourth part of the inscription contributed a lot to the history of the region during the Huns' period. Following is translation of the fourth part:

In the sixty-eighth year on the seventh day of the bright half of the month Kārttika [corresponding to October-November]: On this day this caitya of the Realized One containing relics (*dhātugarbha*) was established by the lord of a great monastery (*mahāvihārasvāmin*), the son of Opanda, the Tālagānika-Devaputra-Śāhi, ..., together with [his] father Opanda, together with [his] wife, the daughter of the Sārada-Śāhi, [named] Buddh. ..., together with the mistress of a great monastery Arccavāmanā, together with [her] father Ho..gaya, [and] with [her] mother, the queen (*mahādevī*) ..., together with the spiritual friend (*kalyāṇamitra*), the religious teacher (*ācārya*) Ratnāgama, together with the great Śāhi (*mahāśāhi*) Khīṅgīla, together with the godking (*devarāja*) Toramāna, together with the mistress of a great monastery Sāsā, together with the great Śāhi Mehama, together with Sādavīkha, together with the great king (*mahārāja*) Javūkha, the son of Sādavīkha; during the reign of Mehama.

The names and titles of the donors were also known from the legends of Alkhon coins found throughout the region include *mahāśāhi* Khīṅgīla, *devarāja* Toramāna, *mahāśāhi* Mehama and *mahārāja* Javūkha (Vondrovec 2008: 25-26). Dated at 492-493 C.E., this inscription shed some light into the shrouded period of Gandhāran history.

3.4 Proto-Śāradā Inscriptions (5th to 7th Century C.E)

The Proto-Śāradā script was used in Gandhāra between the 5th to 7th Century C.E. Only six inscriptions written in this script are documented in the present research, 2 inscriptions were found at Hund (Swabi District), 1 from Malakand District, 2 from Punjab Province and 1 from Kabul, Afghanistan.

3.4.1 Toramāṇa Śāhi Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 31a and 31b; Tables: 30 and 74)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 46 cm x 69 cm

Provenance: Kura, Salt Range, Punjab Province

Present Location: Lahore Museum

Accession Number: 712.I

Reference(s): (Bühler 1896)

Subject: Construction of a Vihara

Date: 485-516 C.E. (This inscription was issued during the reign of Toramāṇa Śāhi).

This 13 lines Proto-Śāradā inscription is engraved into a large stone slab. The first three lines of the inscription are defaced and the right-hand portions of the 12th and 13th lines are broken.

It was first published by Bühler, who pointed out that the language used is a form of corrupted Sanskrit influenced by Prakrit, known as the Gatha dialect (Bühler 1892: 239). The inscription records the construction of a Buddhist monastery by *Roṭṭa Siddhavṛddhi*, son of *Roṭṭa Jayavṛddhi* for the benefit of his family, teachers of the *Mahīśāsaka* school and the royal family of king Toramāṇa Śāhi (Bühler 1892: 239).

Following is the transliteration and translation by Bühler (1892: 239-241):

Line1:[**Verse1**]+[raja]+rājamahārājatoramāṇaśā[hi]jaū++[bhivardhamānarājye++saṃ
vatsare]
Line2: ++++me mārگاśīramāsa śukladvitiyāyām cā[ndramgra]+++++gaga
Line3: ++vara+śuciśātadhyānādhyayanamendacittānukule prati[ṣṭa+++++[na]
Line4:kṣatre bhagavato buddhasya devātidevasya [**Verse2**] sarvapāpapakṣiṇa
sarvapūṇya sasudgata[sya]
Line5:tīrṇa sasāraṇasatvānām tārayitā daśabalabalina
catuvauśāradyacata śrapatisaṃ[vidā]
Line6:aṣṭādaśā veṇīkādsuta dharmasamanvāgatasya sarvasatvavatsala
mahākāruṇikasya [**Verse3**] bu
Line7:ddhapramukha cāturdīśe bhikṣusaṃghe deyadharmoya vihārapraṭiṣṭhāpana
naścīrapatipraśastā

Line8:dāritanāmadheya viśeṣavṛddhiḥ roṭṭa jayavṛddhi aneka vihārasvāminīsāt putreṇa
[Verse4] yadatrāpūṇyaṃ tadbhavatu
Line9:[mā]tapitro āpāyakapoṣakacittasya jambudvīpasya darśayitāro agrebhāva
pratyam śatāyāstu tathā vihārasvāmiro
Line 10: roṭa siddhavṛddhi sarveṣaṃ bhrātarāṇāṃ bhagitīnāṃ patrīnāṃ duhitṛīnāṃ
maharaja toramāṇaśāhajaūvla sa
Line 11:rveṣāṃ devīnāṃ rājaputrāṇāṃ rājaduhitānāṃ ca sarvasatvānāṃ
anuttarajñānāvāptaye **[Verse5]** ayaṃ puna vihārasyo
Line 12:pakaraṇa cāturdiśe bhikṣusaṃghe parigrahe ācāryamahīś[āsakānāṃ
sāddhakapu]treṇa [ācā] Line 13: +++ta++++++

Verse1: In the prosperous reign of the King of Kings, the great king Toramāṇa Śāhi Jaū.. | In the ...the year, on the second (lunar day) of the bright half of the month of Mārgaśīras | Under the Nakṣatra, which is propitious for pure, tranquil meditation, study and reflection on salvation.....this appropriate and meritorious gift, the erection of a Vihāra for the congregation of the monks of the divine Buddha, the god of gods

Verse2: freed from all sins and endowed with all holiness, the saviour of beings that have crossed the ocean of birth, who possesses the power of the ten powers, who has attained the four subjects of confidence, the four analytical science, the eighteen independent conditions, the supernatural conditions, who cherishes all creatures and is most compassionate

Verse3: of which (congregation) Buddha is the chief and which comes from the four quarters of the world, - (has been made) by the virtuous son of Roṭṭa Jayavṛddhi, the lord of any Vihāras, whose name praised and honoured by the lord of Naścira, (indicates a) particularly (great) prosperity

Verse 4: Whatever merit (there is) in this (act), may it be for the attainment of supreme knowledge by (my) parents, the instructors of Jambūdīpa that is famous for nurses and nourishers,(their) share being a preferential one, moreover by all the brothers, sisters, wives, sons and daughter of the lord of the Vihāra RoṭaSiddhavṛddhi, by all the queens, princes and princesses of the great king Toramāṇa Śāha Jaūvla (and) all creatures

Verse 5: But this benefaction by a Vihāra (is) for the congregation of the monks of the four quarters, for the acceptance of the teachers, the Mahīśāsakas, by the son of Sāddhaka.....

Although the year of the inscription is not readable (Bühler 1892: 239), it is clear that it was issued during the reign of King Toramāṇa Śāhi. This ruler is known in various sources including the Rajataraṅgini, Eran inscription and Gwalior inscription. A good number of his coins were also discovered in the area (Bühler 1892: 239; Litvinsky 1999: 142).

This inscription can thus be assigned to the period of his reign, which fell between 485 to 515 C.E. This date agrees with the palaeography, which shows the early transition from Gupta-Brāhmī to Proto-Śāradā in the 5th/6th Century C.E.

3.4.2 Vāsudeva Pratima Inscription

Category: A (Plates: 32a and 32b; Tables: 31 and 74)

Material: Marble

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Hund, Swabi District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): Unpublished

Subject: Establishment of Vāsudeva image

Date: 6th / 7th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.4.2)

This marble stone pedestal is inscribed with four lines of Proto-Śāradā inscription. The first three lines are divided into two parts in the left and right by what appears to be the drapery of an image. Although a significant part of the inscription is damaged, the few legible words help us to understand its purpose and religious influence.

The first line begins with the word *diṇara*, which might be for *dīnāra*, m. “gold coin/gold ornament”. It is probably derived from the Roman word *denarius* for gold coin (Sircar 1966: 97). The succeeding word, *sasra*, adj. “flowing/streaming”, could also be an abbreviated form of *sāhasra*, adj. “exceedingly numerous/ thousand fold”. The last word is read as *divase*, m.sing.loc. “in the day”. The second line starts with *-miyaṃ* which is probably the last component of the preceeding word, followed by *vāsudeva pratima* “image of Vāsudeva”.

The next line starts with *brahmaṇe*, m.sing.loc. “at/on/in the Brahman”, which can also be reconstructed as *brahmaṇe<na>*, m.sing.inst. “by the Brahman”. Then comes the proper name *bhaṭṭaradatta*, followed by *datta* with suffix *-ka*. One possible translation for the word *dattaka* is “multitude of gifts”. However, as the succeeding characters are lost, this translation is not certain.

In the fourth line, the word *prapaṇa* is probably for *prāpaṇa* n. “attainment”, followed by *datupraphakabhyayā* with uncertain etymology. It is succeeded by *datta* referring to either m. “gift”, or adj. “honoured”. The next word *punyatāla* “sacred palm”, is finally followed with the verb *bhavatu* third person.impv. “to be”. Following is the translation and transliteration:

Line 1: /// +[pa]+++++**[image]** d<ṭ>ṇ<ā>ra sasra divase+

Line 2: ///++[mi] **[image]** yaṃ vāsudeva pratima

Line 3: ///++brahmaṇe<na>**[image]** ka bhaṭṭaradatta dattaka

Line 4: ///p[r]<ā>paṇa [datupraphakabhyayā] datta punyatāla bhavatu

Line 1: thousands of gold coins, at this day
Line 2: the image of Vāsudeva
Line 3: by the Brahman Bhaṭṭaradatta, the gifts...
Line 4: Let the [...] attainment (of) [...] the honoured sacred palm

This inscription records the establishment of a Vāsudeva image and a religious donation. The Brahman *Bhaṭṭaradatta* is either the person who made the donation and installed the image, or the one who presided over the religious ceremony. The characters can be placed at 6th / 7th Century C.E. It shows the presence of the Vāsudeva cult in Hund during the period of the Kھیngals or the Turk Śāhi dynasty.

3.4.3 Narendrāditya Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 33a and 33b; Tables: 32 and 74)

Material: Marble

Measurement: 20.5 cm x 25.5 cm x 9.20 cm

Provenance: Hund, Swabi District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 1998-1999)

Subject: Unspecified meritorious work

Date: 7th Century C.E. (This inscription falls during the reign of King Narendrāditya of the Kھیngal Dynasty)

This 12 lines Proto-Śāradā inscription is inscribed into a rectangular or square white marble slab. It was first published by Nasim Khan (1998-1999: 77-83) and briefly mentioned by Hinüber (2004: 110).

According to Nasim Khan, the inscription records some meritorious works (*puṇyakīrtī*) by *Narendrāditya*. The word *Brahmacarī* hints at the construction of a temple while the word *kallola-dola* refers to the act of swinging of the boy Kṛṣṇa image in the temple's *maṇḍapa*. The temple is described in this inscription as being “decorated by spring flowers” (*śata-pratata-mādhavī-māṇḍapam*). According to Nasim Khan, the inscription can be placed between the 7th to 9th Century C.E.

Following is the transliteration (Nasim Khan 1998-1999:78-79):

Line 1: ///++++ [pu]
Line 2: ṇyakīrtīr dīvadviṇjātīthigu++++
Line 3: va or bagā-rasa || narendrāditya+++++
Line 4: radaḥ travāha-jana-śarsseti na[rendradi]
Line 5: tyā [surama or pa]ti ++neye-vice+++

Line 6: tā paṃca-kāra ||valgāt kallola-do[la]++
 Line 7: brahmacarī sakala-kalimalakṣā[ṇa]+
 Line 8: da-janina-punājāt ucitpatunesmiṃ+
 Line 9: vala-drūmāṇaṃ sūleṣva-sūlajāpha pra
 Line 10: labhā-śata-pratata mādhavīmāṇḍapaṃ [pramā]
 Line 11: ritā-atiśayana-āryasya dhahmāmmaṇa-śata-śate///
 Line 12:

Other words which could be added to the translation already done by Nasim Khan include *paṃca kāra* “the five religious austerities/acts” and *atiśayana-āryasya*, sing.masc.gen. “of the eminent Ārya”. It is difficult to fully translate the preserved part of the inscription since the words are not complete and most of their grammatical contexts are not known.

The name *Narendrāditya* can be related to a few personalities, including two kings of Kashmir or one of its minister (Nasim Khan 1998-1999: 81-82). According to the detailed study by Rahman, Narendrāditya probably refers to the king of the Kṛiṅgila Dynasty who ruled over Kapiśa and Gandhāra in 7th Century C.E. (Rahman 2002a: 37-38). This personality could also be the same ruler who issued the Kṛiṅgila Śāhi inscription (Dani 1999:170).

3.4.4 Wartir Inscription

Category: D (Plates: 34a and 34b; Tables: 33 and 74)

Material: Marble

Measurement: 20 cm x 10 cm

Provenance: Wartir, Malakand District

Present Location: Unknown

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Shakur 1946)

Subject: Establishment of image

Date: 5th/6th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.4.4)

It is a broken marble pedestal bearing three lines of Proto-Śāradā inscription, first published by Shakur with the following transliteration and translation (Shakur 1940: 45):

Line 1: data (?)na – nakha – prollasa[t...*]
 Line 2: pasya murttir-jvalad-anaka-si[kha-*]
 Line 3: ya hrtah Kamsa-puttar-Jayanta

Line 1: With shining nails

Line 2: image, resplendent as the spark of burning fire of ///pa

Line 3: (by) Jayanta, the son of Kamsa

The first line starts with *data*, adj. “given/cut off/mowed/cleansed/purified” which can also be read as *d<ā>ha*, m. “burning/glowing”. It is succeeded by *ṇanakha* which might be for *naṇaka*, n. “coins/hard money”. Finally, the word *prollasat*, referred to the verb *prollasati* “to glitter/to shine brightly” (root verb *prollas-*). One possible reconstruction is *prollas<e>t* referring to a third person sing.opt mode. In line 2, the first word is *pasya*, with the preceeding characters missing. It is probably a sing.masc.gen. for a noun/proper name which ends in *-pa*.

The succeeding words are *mūrttir=jvalad=anala*. *Mūrttir (mūrttiḥ)*¹⁴ means for *mūrtiḥ*, f. “idol/image/statue/deity”, while the word *jvalad (jvalat)*¹⁵ either refers to adj. “ablaze” or ind. “in flame/blazing fire/flame”. Finally is the word *anala*, m. “god of fire/fire”.

The third line opens with the letter *ya*, possibly a suffix of the preceeding word which is lost. It is followed by the word *hṛtaḥ*, adj.

“ravished/charmed/fascinated. The next words, *kāṃsaputtrar=jayan[ta]* can be decomposed and restored as *kāṃsaputtraḥ jayan[ta](h)*, sing.masc.acc, “Jayanta, son of Kāṃsa”.

The following is another possible transliteration and translation:

Line 1: ///da[ta or ha] ṇanakha prollas<e>t[mū]///

Line 2: ///pasya mūrttir=jvalad=anala [kha.]///

Line 3: ///ya hṛtaḥ kāṃsa puttrar=jayan[ta](h)///

Line 1: May the donated/glowing coin glitters

Line 2: blazing fire of the [...]pa image

Line 3: Jayanta, the charmed son of Kāṃsa

The characters belonged to 5th/6th Century C.E. The inscription appears to record the installation of an image, and the donor who made the meritorious gift.

¹⁴ Decomposed to *mūrttiḥ* due to the sandhi rule of *-ḥ* to *-r*

¹⁵ Decomposed to *jvalat* due to sandhi rule final *-t* to *-d*

3.4.5 Shahpur Inscription

Category: B (Plates: 35a and 35b; Tables: 34 and 74)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 10 cm x 9 cm

Provenance: Shabz Pind near the Miani Village, Shahpur, Punjab Province

Present Location: Lahore Museum

Accession Number: 159

Reference(s): (Vogel 1911)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 5th-7th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.4.5)

It is an irregular fragment of a larger inscription with four lines of ProtoŚāradā inscription mentioned for the first time by Vogel (1911: 259).

Following is the transliteration:

Line 1: ///++[pu]++///

Line 2: ///[aṣata]+puṇya///

Line 3: ///ndhyaṣeci+kane///

Line 4: ///++racit<e>na///

Due to the fragmentary nature of the inscription, only a few words can be translated. They include the word *puṇya*, adj.

“sacred/meritorious” and

++racit<e>na, sing.ins. “by ++racita” . The characters are placed between the 5th to 7th Century C.E.

3.4.6 Khimṅala Śāhi Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 36a, 36b and 36c; Tables: 35 and 74)

Material: Marble

Measurement: 71 cm height and 36 cm breath

Provenance: Gardez, Afghanistan **Present**

Location: Kabul, Afghanistan?

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Tucci 1958; Sircar 1963)

Subject: Establishment of image

Date: 632 C.E. (Laukika era) or 611 C.E. (Harṣa era)

The pedestal of this marble Mahāvināyaka image is inscribed with two lines of Proto-Śāradā inscription. It was first published by Tucci (1958: 328, fig.40) and revisited by Sircar (1963-1964: 44-46).

According to Tucci, the image is executed in the *ālīḍha* posture, wearing dhoti, lion skin and *nāgayajñopavita* with a huge belly, *lambodara*, *mihodara* as well as in a state of erection. The inscription records the establishment of the image by *Mahārājādhirāja Paramabhaṭṭaraka Śrī Śāhi Kṣiṅgala*, mentioned as the king of *Utyana/Udyana* (Swat).

Tucci relates the name *Kṣiṅgala* with *Deva Śāhi Kṣiṅgila* and *Narendrāditya Kṣiṅkhila*, recorded in various sources such as coin legends and *Rajatarangini*. The event took place in the 8th year of an unmentioned era, 13th day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Jyeṣṭhā*, in the *nakṣatra* of *Viśakha* and constellation of *Siṃha*.

Although unsure about the exact date of the inscription, Tucci placed the characters at 5th/6th Century C.E.

Following is the proposed decipherment by Tucci (1958: 328):

Line 1: om samvatsare aṣṭatame saṃ 8 jyeṣṭhā-māsa-śukla-pakṣa-tithauttrayodaśyāṃ śudi 10.3 rikṣe viśakhe śubhe siṃhe ci..

Line 2: mahat pratiṣṭhāpitam idaṃ mahāvināyaka
mahārājādhirājaparamabhaṭṭaraka-śrī-śāhi-kṣiṅgalo-tyāna-śāhi-
padai[h]

Hail! In the eighth year, month of Jyeṣṭhā, 13th Day of the Bright Fortnight, in the Nakṣatra of Viśakha and Lagna of Siṃha, this (image of) Mahāvināyaka was consencrated/erected by the Illustrious Śāhi Kṣiṅgila, the supreme ruler, king of kings, and ruler of the Abode of Udyana

Sircar produced the following decipherment and placed the characters at 6th/7th Century C.E. (Sircar 1963-1964: 44-46):

Line 1: [Siddham] [||] om sa[m]vatsarē aṣṭatamē saṃ 8 jyēṣṭhā-māsa-śuklapakṣa-tilau(thau) ttrayōdaśyāṃ śu-di 10 3 ji(ri)k[ṣ]ē viśākhē śubhē siṃ[hē] chi[traka]-

Line 2: [m] mahat pratiṣṭhāpitam=idaṃ Mahā-Vināyaka
paramabhaṭṭarakamahārājādhirāja-śrī-śāhi-kṣiṅgala-autyāta-śāhi-padai[h]

May be it well! In the eighth year-year 8, on the thirteenth tithi of the bright half of the month Jyeṣṭhā- bright day 13, in the constellation of Viśakha and Siṃha (Lagna), this lovely (and) big (image of) Mahā-Vināyaka has been installed by the *Paramabhaṭṭaraka Mahārājādhirāja* Illustrious Śāhi Kṣiṅgila *alias* Ōtyāna Śāhi

The date either refers to the Laukika Era or Harṣa era, giving the year 632 C.E.

or 611 C.E. respectively. Both dates are in conformity with the palaeography and fall during the period of *Narendrāditya Khingila*'s rule (597-633 C.E.)(Dani 1999: 170).

3.5 Śāradā Inscriptions (7th to 16th Century C.E.)

The Śāradā script started to be used in 7th Century C.E., and became a popular script in Gandhāra during the Hindu Śāhi period (9th to 11th Century C.E.). Even after the invasion of the Muslims, a number of Śāradā inscriptions continued to be issued but lesser in number.

The Śāradā inscriptions constitute the largest body of data for this thesis. In the present research, 33 Śāradā inscriptions are documented. Eight came from the Swabi District, 2 from Mardan District, 3 from Swat District, 2 from Rawalpindi District, 2 from Hazara Division, 1 from Buner District, 1 from Mohmand Agency, 1 from Dir District, 1 from North Waziristan Agency, 1 from Mazar-I-Shariff and 1 from Jalalabad. However, the provenances of 10 other inscriptions are unknown.

3.5.1 Ananda Inscription

Category: A (Plates: 37a and 37b; Tables: 36 and 75)

Material: Marble

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Hund, Swabi District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): Unpublished

Subject: Unclear

Date: 7th/8th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.5.1.1)

This broken marble which appears to be fragment of a larger inscription bears four lines of Śāradā inscription, neatly and deeply engraved

The first line is read as *grhaspativārena*, which is a composition of *grha* and *spativārena* or *grhaspati* and *vārena*. For the first composition, the word *grha*, n. “home/house” is followed by a proper name *spativārena*, sing.inst. “by spativāra”. Second composition starts with the word *grhaspati*, which might be for *grhapati*, m. “master of a house/head or judge of a village/householder”. It is succeeded by *vārena*, sing.m.ins. “by the doorway/vessel for holding sacred liquid”.

The second line starts with *dane* which appears to be the last component of a word in loc. case. Then, comes the word *anandā*, which might be for *ānanda*. It could be a proper name or referring to adj. “joy/happiness”. The succeeding word *deśye* could either be sing.loc. “presence of Ananda/witnessed by Ananda” or the first component of a compound word. In the end of line 2, traces of sign *sva* can be observed.

The third line begins with the reading *gajjanat<ā>ka*, and according to *Sandhi* rule (dental to palatal), it can be decomposed as *gad=janat<ā>ka*. *Gad* appears to be the last syllable for the preceeding word. The word *janat<ā>* with the suffix *–ka* refers to adj. “of the people/of the community”, and is followed by *bhārena*, sing.m.inst. “by/through labour/heavy work”. Finally in line four, the inscription ends with a salutation to the lord Śiva. The translation and transliteration is as follows:

Line 1: ///gr̥ha=spativārena///
 Line 2: ///dane <ā>nand<a>deśye [sva]///
 Line 3: ///gajjanat<ā>ka bhārena/// Line
 4: ///tr(em) nama śivāya///

Line 1: the house, by Spativāra
 Line 2: at the presence of Ānanda
 Line 3: by the labour of the people
 Line 4: Salutations to the Lord Śiva

This inscription probably recorded religious works of some sort, possibly dedicated for the Śaivite cult. On the palaeographic basis, this inscription can be placed at 7th/8th Century C.E.

3.5.2 Palola Śāhi Inscription

Category: A (Plates: 38a and 38b; Tables: 37 and 75)

Material: Sandstone

Measurement: 81 cm x 48 cm

Provenance: Unknown

Present Location: Peshawar Museum

Accession Number: PM1240

Reference(s): Unpublished

Subject: Unspecified meritorious work

Date: 648 C.E. (Harṣa era) or 667 C.E. (Laukika era)

This 22 lines Śāradā inscription is engraved into a rectangular sandstone slab.

Although the characters are deeply and neatly engraved, most parts of the inscription are either defaced or broken. The reading of the badly damaged text posed many problems, but then, the few words retrieved hinted its purpose.

In line 3, *kamādana*, probably for *kāmadāna*, n. is translated as “gift for one’s satisfaction”. In line 14, *kara putrena*, sing.m.inst. “work by the son/prince” could refer to some sort of donation or meritorious work. Other words include *viśokabhaya* “free from sadness and fear”, *vaśātā* “having power over” and *cakkravartī* “universal ruler”

The first personality mentioned is a person whom name ends with *Vikkramamahidā* and the second person, probably a ruler, is mentioned as *(mahā)rājā paramaśvara uttamaṇuka*. The reading *Śāhi Śā Palola Śāhi Mahārāja Śrī Dirda+++* refers to the title of the ruler. The last personal name mentioned is read as *Śrī Paṅkasa*. *Palola Śāhi* refers to a ruling dynasty who established their kingdom in Gilgit-Baltistan region in 7th/8th Century C.E.

The date of the inscription is in lines seven and eight; *vati ta varṣa saṃ 422 +++++ saṃvat ti 2 budha graha rohiṇī nakṣa(tra)* “the dark fortnight day, of the rainy season, of the year 4 2 2....”. The *nakṣatra* is *rohiṇī* (Alderaban constellation) while the *navagraha* is *Budha* (Planet Mercury which presides over the *Budhavāra* or Wednesday).

The letter *saṃ* abbrv. of *saṃvatsara* “year” is followed by three digits “4”, “2” and “2”. Our considerations on the palaeography as well as the possible eras the date may refer to led to the conclusion that the year is only represented by first two digits, “4” and “2” succeeding the word *saṃ*.

The third digit “2” probably stood for something else, which is not certain as the succeeding characters are defaced. If this is the case, the two digit year may refer to the Laukika or Harṣa Era which were widely used in Gandhāra and the Northern Areas. According to the Laukika Era, this inscription can be dated at 667 C.E while the Harṣa era gives the year 648 C.E.

Following is the proposed translation and transliteration:

Line 1: ///oṃ svasti+

Line 2: ///śārāyaṣa sammāna tasāya///

Line 3: ///kamādana srestū a++dye

Line 4: ///aśvāṣṭha śaṣate+[ya]++[ra]+[pasā]+[i]

Line 5: ///[vi]kkramamahidā || prīto bhavatu +++[yaga]+

Line 6: syadya viśokabhaya vaśatā sa+ka+niya
 Line 7: va[ti] ta varṣa sa(m) 422 +++++ samvat
 Line 8: ti 2 budha graha rohiṇī nakṣa(tra) +tra++[viri]
 Line 9: [mahā]rājā parameśvara=uttamaṇuka++ || ++
 Line 10: śāhi śā palola śāhi maharaja śrī
 Line 11: dirda +++bha cakka(va)rti (ś)rī ma+śovema [ma]
 Line 12: +ma adīya+jñā++saha śaka++ra+ka
 Line 13: śrī paṅkasa+ma+lani+mi+śrī pa
 Line 14: ///+tāh kara putrena heva+gaya [śrī] +
 Line 15: ///++++++vasami+++++[śrī]ma
 Line 16: ///+kā+u++++++kā[śā]nā++[ṇa]bhirṣa[śma]
 Line 17: ///++++++pibasa++++
 Line 18: ///++++++tya+++++[dha]+[ṣṭhapraka]++
 Line 19: ///++++++srā
 Line 20: ///++++++[śe] Line
 21: ///++++++
 Line 22: ///++++++ka+++++

Line 1: Hail, Success!
 Line 2: [...] homage to[...]
 Line 3: gift for one's satisfaction
 Line 4: [...] the eight horses [...]
 Line 5: [...] vikkramamaḥiḍā || let [...] be delighted by [...]
 Line 6: [...] having power to free one from sadness and fear
 Line 7: the dark fortnight day, of the rainy season, of the year 422 [...]
 Line 8: day 2, in the graha of Budha and constellation of Rohiṇī [...] Line
 9: The Supreme Ruler, Parameśvara uttamaṇuka...
 Line 10: The Śāhi(nu)śā(hi) Palola Śāhi, The Illustrious Supreme King
 Line 11: Dirda[...] The Universal Ruler, the Illustrious [...]
 Line 12: [...]
 Line 13: The Illustrious Paṅkasa [...] Line
 14: [...] work by the prince [...]
 Line 15-22: [...]

The provenance of this inscription can be discussed based on the materials and the palaeography. It was made from the red sandstone, which is not locally available in the region of Gandhāra, but is abundant in Gilgit Baltistan. As for the palaeography of the characters, it also shows a close resemblance with the Hatun dan Danyor inscriptions discovered in the same region.

The *Palola Śāhi* inscription most possibly could have originated from Gilgit Baltistan and probably brought to Gandhāra in a later period.

3.5.3 Śrī Bhāganaṣa Inscription

Category: B (Plates: 39a and 39b; Tables: 38 and 75)

Material: Stone

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 2006)

Subject: Donative

Date: 707/807 C.E. (Laukika era)

This 7 lines Śāradā inscription is inscribed into a rectangular slab attached to a broken image with a protruded belly, representing either Gaṇeṣa or Kuvera.

The inscription begins with a common phrase *om svasti* followed by a circular sign and the digit “1”. The reading of the next seven characters is *paramatadākaka*, with unclear etymology, and followed by another sign which is illegible.

The last two characters of line one, line two and first two characters of line three are read and restored as *Śrī Bhāganaṣar<ā>j<y>e*, sing.m.loc. “in the kingdom of the Illustrious *Bhāganaṣa*”. Line two contains only three characters and appears to be added into the limited space between lines one and three.

In line three, the date is read as *saṃ 83 vaiśuti*, abbrev. of *saṃvatsara 83 vaiśaka-śuddha-tithi*, followed again by a circular sign and the digit “2”. It is succeeded by the reading, *rāṣṭe* probably means for *rāṣṭ<r>e*, sing.m/n.loc. “in the kingdom/realm/district”. The succeeding word is a proper name sing.m.nom *Maghūṅgho(Maghūṅghaḥ)*¹⁶.

Line four starts with the sign *ka*, succeeded by *putr*, f. “daughter” and *bhāge*, sing.m.loc. “inheritance/good fortune/luck”. It is followed by *ca*, succeeded by the word *bhāryās*, sing.f.nom “wife/lawful wife”. Next is a sign which is illegible, followed by *kinasreputr* “daughter of Kinasre”.

The fifth line contains the subject-matter of the inscription. It begins with the word *phanirdham*, probably referring to the verb *nirdhamati* (verb root *nirdham-*) “to blow away”. For the context of this inscription, it probably means “to spend/donate”. The following words are *dīnāra sahas<r>a*, “numerous gold coins” succeeded by *pañcakaṭattam*, “a measure of strawmat”.

¹⁶ composed to *Maghūṅghaḥ* due to Sandhi rule *-ḥ* to *-o*

In the sixth line, the first two characters are possibly read as *dī/ni* and *ma*, followed by three solid circles. The succeeding word is either read as *tarṣakāra*, “desire for religious austerity” or *takṣakāra* “doing the act of worship”. The next four characters are read as *catokera*, with uncertain etymology.

In line seven, the word *ghaṭitaṃ*, adj. “produced/affected by/made/made of” is followed by a sign with an uncertain reading, and *ti*. The inscription ends with the word *śutam* which can be translated as “so it is said”, to lay stress on the preceeding words.

Following is the transliteration and translation:

- Line 1: [oṃ svasti]① paramatadā[kaka]+ śrī bhā
 Line 2: ganaṣa
 Line 3: r<ā>j<y>e sam⁸³ vaiśuti ○² rāṣṭ<r>e maghuṅgho
 Line 4: ka putr bhāge [ca] bhāryas+kināsreputr
 Line 5: phanirdham dīnāra sahas<r>a pañca kaṭattaṃ++
 Line 6: [dī or nī]ma •• ta[rṣa or kṣa]kāra catokera
 Line 7: ghaṭitaṃ?ti śutam

Oṃ! Success [...] during the reign of the Illustrious *Bhāganaṣa* in (his) realm, year 83 in the (month of) vaisakha, 2nd bright fortnight day, (as result of) the fortune of the daughter and wife of Maghuṅgha, the daughter of Kinasre donated numerous gold coin (and) a measure of beautiful straw mat [...] doing the act of worship [...] produced [...] so it is said.

The year 83 either referred to the Laukika or Harṣa era, giving the year 707/807 C.E. or 689 C.E. respectively, both in conformity with the palaeography (7th to 9th Century C.E.). It records the donation of the daughter of *Kinasre* to some establishment, due to the good fortune of the wife and daughter of *Maghuṅgha*.

3.5.4 Gumbatuna Inscription

Category: D (Plates: 40a and 40b; Tables: 39 and 75)

Material: Marble

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Gumbatuna, Dir District

Present Location: Chakdara Museum

Accession Number: DR74

Reference(s): (Rahman 1979)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 8th/9th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.5.1.4)

This 19 lines Śāradā inscription is extremely damaged and in a very poor state of preservation. It was discovered among the structural remains of Gumbatuna fort by

the Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar in 1970 and first published by Rahman with the palaeographic study (Rahman 1979: 229, 339). He pointed out that it shows a similarity with early Śāradā inscriptions, observed in the wedged shape protuberance of the letters *ja* and *ṇa*.

Following is the transliteration

Line 1: ///++gaṭṭi// Line 2:
///++śi+++khara+///
Line 3: ///+++ma+ṇava a+///
Line 4: ///++++mahidana+///
Line 5: ///++++++tha+pa++dha/// Line
6: ///+++++śusaṇyatrani+ya+/// Line 7:
///++++++gacasaya+///
Line 8: ///umahayandhājisa+///
Line 9: ///++++++pratrasu abha+///
Line 10: ///++++++dhihi+++ma+///
Line 11: ///++++++midhatāka+///
Line 12: ///++++++bhrjava+ta///
Line 13: ///++++++catra++ppraya+///
Line 14: ///++++++maṣa+++++///
Line 15: ///+++varaca+++++///
Line 16: ///+dha+hi+va+++++///
Line 17-19: /+/

Nothing much could be made out from the text, except that it is written in the early form of Śāradā dated at 8th /9th Century C.E.

3.5.5 Dal Mahat Inscription

Category: D (Plates: 41a and 41b; Tables: 40 and 75)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 47 cm x 20 cm

Provenance: Torbela, Hazara Division

Present Location: Lahore Museum

Accession Number: 108

Reference(s): (Vogel 1911)

Subject: Construction of a tank

Date: 790 C.E. (Harṣa era)

This rectangular stone slab bears four lines of Śāradā inscription, deeply and neatly engraved. The inscription is framed on all sides by a single line, with a hole on the left hand side of the slab. It was first published by Vogel with the following reading (Vogel 1911: 259):

[Śāstra]-saṃvat 84, Śrāvaṇa va ti 5.

In the first line, the inscription opens with *om svasti* followed by the date. The year 184 probably refers to the *Harṣa* Era, giving the year 790 C.E., which is in conformity with the palaeography (8th/9th Century C.E.).

The purpose of the inscription is to record the construction of *vogūna* tank by *Mahā Śrī Viccaharāja or Viggaharāja*, son of *Ghoraśiva*. *Vogūna* either refers to a place-name or proper name. The inscription ends with the word *likhi*, probably derived from the verb root *likh-* (to write/sketch/scrape). However, the context of the word is not yet clear.

Following is the transliteration and translation:

Line 1: om svasti 1 || saṃvat 184
Line 2: śrāvaṇa vati 15 atra di
Line 3: ne mahā Śrī Viccaharāja Ghoraśi
Line 4: vaputra vogūnavāpī pratiṣṭhita likhi

Hail Success 1 || Year 184 of the month of Śrāvaṇa (July/August), 15th day of the bright lunar fortnight, at this day the great Śrī Viccaharāja, the son of Ghoraśiva established the tank of Vogūna.

The inscription probably falls during the period of the Turk Śāhi and the personality *Śrī Viccaharāja* could either be an individual or a local ruler. The word *mahā* which precedes his name could suggest that he is an individual with a certain social status.

3.5.6 Ranigat Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 42a and 42b ; Tables: 41 and 75)

Material: Marble

Measurement: 25 cm x 10 cm

Provenance: Ranigat, Buner District

Present Location: Lahore Museum

Accession Number: 25A

Reference(s): (Vogel 1911; Sahni 1931-1932)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 8th/9th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.5.1.6)

This cylindrical white marble slab bears four lines of Śāradā inscription on the curved surface. Although it was first mentioned by Vogel (1911: 259), only in 1931 that the estampage, transliteration and summary were published by Sahni (1931-1932: 299-300).

According to Sahni, the first line contains an invocation of a deity whose feet was variegated by the brilliant jewels in the crowns of the multitude of gods. The second line starts with an eulogy to a king who has a famous prowess like *Arjuna*. After the punctuation marks, the king is mentioned as having a devoted son diligent in carrying out his command. However, the word *bhartṛ*, m. probably referred by Sahni as the “son”, can also be translated as “the one who carries out order/bearer/preserver”. The third line describes a personality whose hair resembles the sacred cord of *muñja* grass, besmeared with the pollen of lotus flower in the shape of the feet of *Śiva*. The fourth line mentions that the worldly attachment of someone was burnt in the fire of knowledge.

Following is the transliteration of the inscription (Sahni, 1931-1932, p.300):

Line1:[svasti] || gīrvāṇavṛnda mukūṭasphuṭaratnakānti kirmīritām●●ghṛyuga[la]///

Line2:///rjunorjuna iva prathitapratāpa || bhakto [bhartṛ]manonuvṛtticaturam tasya///

Line3:///raprabhṛti dhūrjaṭipāda padmareṇu-utkarac-churita mūrdhaja mūṃjamā[la] ///

Line4: ///rtha-avagama hṛtāśadagdha bandhaḥ khyāto yaḥ prapathā iveśaḥ///

Although Sahni mentioned that the third line contains the description of an unknown personality, our translation shows that it constitutes an invocation to the lord *Śiva*.

The third line starts with *prabhṛti*, f. “offering” followed by the words *dhūrjaṭi*, m. “having matted locks” and *pāda*, n. “feet/ray/beam/pillar”. The phrase *padmareṇu-utkarac-churita* can be translated as “strewed with sprawls of lotus pollen”. The word *mūrdhaja*, m. means “hair/hair of the head”.

The succeeding word is read as *pūṃjamā[la]*. However, the *anusvara ṃ* above the letter *pū* could be a scribal error as the meaning of the word *pūṃja* is not known. Thus, the reading renders *pūjamāla* which means “worship” or “reverence”. This suggests the thriving of Śaivism in the Turk Śāhi kingdom alongside with the *Sūrya* and *Ganeśa* cults (Filigenzi 2011: 191-196).

By revisiting the summary by Sahni, we propose a different translation for line 3:

Line 1:[hail] || (the deity whose) pair of feet variegated by the crown of multitude of gods, filled with splendorous jewels [...]

Line 2: [...] like arjuna's celebrated heroism || the devoted servant of the king who is devout in swiftly carrying out (his orders) [...]

Line 3: [...] offering (to) the revered feet of the one with hair of matted locks (Śiva-Rudra) strewn with sprays of lotus pollen [...]

Line 4: [...] (the fire of) knowledge burnt away the worldly ties in the same manner lose (the attachment of) possessions [...]

The characters belonged to 8th/9th Century C.E., which places the inscription during the Turk Śāhi period. As some parts of the inscription is missing, it is difficult to determine the actual subject-matter. The king who is eulogized for his bravery and valour in this inscription probably refers to one of the Turk Śāhi kings, known to have continuous armed conflicts with the Muslim invaders.

3.5.7 Promjavarāja Inscription¹⁷

Category: E (Plates: 43a and 43b; Tables: 42 and 75)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 30 cm x 30 cm

Provenance: N/A

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Hinüber 2010)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 741/841 C.E. (Laukika era)

This inscription was first published by Hinüber based on the photograph provided to him by I. Kurita (Hinüber 2010: 10-11). The subject is unclear as it mentioned neither gift nor property. Hinüber cautiously relate the place-name

Promjavarā mentioned in the inscription with *Prūśava* and *Bruža* recorded in the Khotanese Saka texts.

It was executed by/for the son of king of *Promjavarā* kingdom, the nobleman *Sabhaḍikaṇā Ghikadhāghika* and the Brāhmīn *Hrāryamakhaka*. According to Hinüber, these personal names are similar to the Burushaski names carved on the petroglyphs of the upper Indus Valley. The year 17 corresponds to the Laukika era, giving the date 741/841 C.E.

¹⁷ In this thesis, the inscription is named as Promjavarāja, based on the location where it is said to have been issued.

Following is the transliteration and translation:

Line 1: svasti 17 sa(m)vatsa
Line 2: la srī pro(m)jhvarājyadeva
Line 3: rājye bhogasya putra rājikena
Line 4: sabhaḍikaṇā ghikadhāghike
Line 5: ṇa tātha h(ā)ryama(kha)kena vramhma

Hail! In the 17th year. By the son of the one who enjoys (rules in) the kingdom, the king of the Projhva kingdom, the nobleman Sabhaḍikaṇā Ghikadhāghika and the Brāhmīn Hrāyamakhaka

Until more evidences about the names and places are found, their identifications will remain uncertain.

3.5.8 Ghaṭṭibhoṭṭika Inscription¹⁸

Category: E (Plates: 44a and 44b; Tables: 43 and 75)

Material: Stone

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: N/A

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Hinüber 2010)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 886/986 C.E. (Laukika era)

This inscription was studied and published by Hinüber based on the photograph provided to him by Mr. I. Kurita (Hinüber 2010: 12). Although the date and few personal names can be read, the subject-matter of the inscription is unclear.

According to Hinüber, the names *Ḍanimesaṅgaṭerayaṭṭa*, *r̥ṣi Kandaja* and *Ghaṭṭibhoṭṭika*, are similar to those mentioned in the petroglyphs of Upper Indus valley. The date, “year 62, 7th *Śrāvana*”, possibly refer to the Laukika era and calculated by Hinüber to be 586/7 C.E. Following is the transliteration and translation:

Line 1: # svastiḥ samba (60) 1 1 7 śrāvana
Line 2: va dī || vuddhāḥ śrī ḍanimesa
Line 3: ṅgaṭerayaṭṭapitā śrī i

¹⁸ In this thesis, the inscription is named as one of the personalities mentioned as *Ghaṭṭibhoṭṭika*

Line 4: si kandajena | ghaṭṭibha-o

Line 5: ṭṭikena |

Hail! Year 62, 7th (day of the month) Śrāvaṇa, day of the dark half. Buddhas!
By the Father of Ḍanimesaṅgaṭerayaṭṭa, the ṛṣi Kandaja. By
Ghaṭṭibhoṭṭika

The year 586/7 C.E. as suggested by Hinüber can still be debated as he based the 6th Century date solely on the usage of tripartite *ya* in the personal name *Ḍanimesaṅgaṭerayaṭṭa*. His identification of the tripartite *ya* is not free from doubt because the character appears to have the right vertical elongated downwards below the baseline, having a flat bottom and the left arm bending outwards. The character could also be read as *gha* instead of *ya*. The name is thus read by us as

Ḍanimesaṅgaṭeraghaṭṭa

Furthermore, other signs in the inscription are not dated as early as 6th Century C.E. The squarish *sa* and *śa*, *ṭa* with a flat top, looped *ma* with a slanting base, equal armed *na* which opens at an angle and *pa* with a right vertical shows the characteristics of Śāradā characters of 9th/10th Century C.E. On this basis, the date of the inscription should be assigned to 9th/10th Century C.E., giving the date 886 or 986 C.E.

3.5.9 Mir Ali Inscription

Category: C (Plates: 45a and 45b; Tables: 44 and 75)

Material: Quartzite stone

Measurement: 38 cm x 33 cm x 7.5 cm

Provenance: Mir Ali, North Waziristan Agency

Present Location: Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 1999-2000b)

Subject: Digging of a well

Date: 842/942 C.E. (Laukika era) or 840/861 C.E. (Śāhi era)

The Mir Ali inscription is an irregular slab of quartzite stone bearing ten lines of Śāradā inscription. It was found lying in a pile of stones collected from an archaeological mound. According to Nasim Khan (1999-2000b: 36-37), the characters of the inscription share some similarities with those of the Sarahan, Dewai and Barikot inscriptions but at the same time maintained the older forms of Post-Gupta and Proto-Śāradā script.

Following is the transliteration by Nasim Khan:

Line 1: om lyoḥnya samvatsre abhṛsatāle iti
 Line 2: name/mi paṃcatñī kīlaṃ/bhe/bhi bhṛimo/so paścakṛipakta Line
 3: racakārmasyo supileguptaramiva sidhami/pikṛivaha
 Line 4: ra śrī chaṃikacut śrī viḍiyacandraṃṇaṣaḍyama
 Line 5: khalīgadhataāneḍākuhekhanā vītāsusya khaṇa
 Line 6: vaṇe/ṇokāhabaṭosua varnu/suvaṇūtrojāṃ bhatadbivarddhalattā pra
 Line 7: Śivamcavakatālo/e ṣatāddhramcale kaṣeṭakārdasu
 Line 8: sidhākya śetatimttīṇiṃ satāyamadatlabdhaṇacaliṣama
 Line 9: vetisya ta/ḍavahīla śramamcavidhipuindralalleta uka Line
 10: ṇetapaṃyathāḍoṭajaputtragrahāsena(seta) // la/

Lines one to three contains the date of the inscription, which begins with the spiral sign *om*. The etymology of the following word, *lyoṃnya*, is not certain. The date is mentioned both in words and digits. *Samvatsare āṣṭādaśa liṅga* “in the year eighteen”¹⁹ is followed by the word *titame* and *samvat 10, 8* “year 18”. After the month *j<y>eṣṭhā māse*, the fortnight day is first expressed in words, *śuklapakṣaekādaśyā*, and succeeded in digit, *śudi 10, 1*. The same method to express the date is also used in the Tochi Valley inscription A²⁰ and B²¹, both discovered in the North Waziristan Agency.

Location of the event, and personality involved are mentioned in lines three and four. The text starts with *atra divase* “At this place and this day”, followed by *varnni vihāre*. The word *varnni*, may be a proper name, or means for *varṇi* “gold”, while *vihāre*, sing.m.loc. is translated as “Buddhist or Jain temple/monastery”.

Then comes the name of the personality involved, *Śrī Kaṃikaputr Śrī Dehi* “Śrī Dehi, the daughter of Śrī Kaṃika”. It is succeeded by the reading *Candruṇajanya*, *Candruṇa* appears to be a proper name while *janya*, adj. can be translated as “born/produced/arising from” or “belonging to a race/family”.

At the end of line four and in line five, the text bears the subject-matter of the inscription. Firstly, the sign *ya* is followed by the word *khalī* and a letter which is flaked off. The word *khalī*, f. “sediments of oil”, can be seen but with an unclear context. The

¹⁹ As for the word *liṅga*, its context is not yet certain

²⁰ In Tochi Valley Inscription A, the year is read as (*samvatsare aṣṭatrimśa*) *titame samvat 38* while the fortnight day is mentioned as *bahula tithau dvī(tī)(yā)yām vadi 2*

²¹ In Tochi Valley inscription B (*samvatsa*)*re dvātrimśa ti(tame) samvat 32* while the fortnight day is mentioned as *sukla pakṣa (sapta)myām sudi 7*

subject-matter is mentioned in the phrase *janā ananakuhaṃkhanapita<ṃ>*. The word *janā* (*janāḥ*),²² sing.m.nom. means “public”. If it is read as *jana*, it could either indicate adj. “generating” or m. “people/race/tribe/living being/subjects”.

The succeeding words are *ananakuhaṃ*, which appears to be a compound word. *Anana*, n. is translated as “breathing/living”, and if it means for *ānana*, m., it could refer to “surface/mouth/entrance/door”. The word *kūhaṃ* might be for *kūpaṃ*, sing.m.acc. “well”, and is followed by *khanapita<ṃ>*, pp. for the verb *khanati* “to dig/dig up/excavate” (root verb *khan-*).

From line five to six, more description is given regarding the subject-matter of the inscription. The phrase is read as *asya khaṇa maṇika dravada suvarṇa tra++[va]*. The word *khaṇa*, m. “backbone” can also be for *khana*, adj. “digging/rooting up” or *khanana*, n. “act of digging”. The succeeding word *maṇika*, m. “pot/water jug/water pitcher”, is followed by what is read as *drava(da)*. It may be derived from the verb *dravate* “become fluid/run/dissolve” or *dravat*, adj. “trickling”.

Then comes the word *suvarṇa*, adj. which means either “golden/made of gold/bright”, m., “gold coin”, f. “property/wealth/gold/riches”. The succeeding three characters cannot be read with certainty.

Although the reading is uncertain, line six to seven probably narrates about the merit of this work. It is transliterated as *tāddhi(ta) dharmalatta pratiṣṭhā [śu]vargatā*. *Tad-dhita*, derv. noun “good for that” is succeeded by *dharmalatta*, f. “religious woman”, probably in reference to *Śrī Dehi*. The word *pratiṣṭhā*, f. “performance of ceremony/religious act” is followed by *[śu]vargatā*, of which the etymology is not certain. However, it could be a corrupted form of *svargata*, adj. “being in heaven/gone to heaven”.

Line seven to eight appears to eulogize *Śrī Dehi*, which is read as *tādva malika śre<ṣ>ṭ<h>a kārma gamesātya śatāti*. After the ind. *tādva* (*tadvā*), the word *malika*, m. “king” is read, which is also found in the coin legends of Nezaks and the Turk Śāhis (Gupta 1984: 28-29, 34). It is followed by *śreṭa*, possibly for *śreṣṭha*, adj. “most splendid/excellent/auspicious” or “best/distinguished/superior” are read.

²² composed as *janāḥ* due to the Sandhi rule which has the *-h* dropped.

The succeeding words are *kārma*, n. “action” and *game*, sing.m.loc. “road/march/course”. The word *game* might also be for *grāme*, sing.m.loc. “in the village”. Then, comes the word *sātya* adj. “one whose nature is truth” and *śutāti*, which its etymology is not certain.

The reading of the next two signs are not certain, followed by *matāya*, sing.n.dat. “religion/advice/vote/knowledge/doctrine”.

However, the reading from line eight to ten is not certain, and only a few isolated words could be made out. They include *puṇ<y>aphala* “meritorious work”, *d<e>vakule*, sing.n.loc. “deity house/temple” (Hinüber 2013: 227), *puttra lalle* “son of lalle”, and *doṭakaputtra grahāsena* “the son of Doṭaka, lord of the house”. Following is the revised transliteration and translation:

Line 1: om lyomṇya saṃvatsare aṣṭadaśa linga ti
 Line 2: tame saṃvati [18] j<y>eṣṭha māsa śuklapakṣa Line
 3: ?ekādaśyā[śu]di 10 latra divase varṇna vihā
 Line 4: re śrī kaṃikaputr śrī ḍehi candruṇa janyaya
 Line 5: khali+[ja]nā ananakūhaṃ khanapita<ṇ> asya khaṇa
 Line 6: maṇikā drava(da) suvarṇo tra++[va] tāddhi<ta> dharmalatta pra Line
 7: [tiṣṭhā] śuvargatā +? tādva malika śre<ṣ>ṭ<h>a kārma ga
 Line 8: me sātya śatāti ??matāya dantra puṇ<y>a phala ??
 Line 9: [vetisya] d<e>vakule [lisam] ya viddhi puttra lalle tadra[ja]
 Line 10: [gita]mayāvā doṭakaputtra grahāsena ||| [la]

Hail! [...] In the eighteenth year 18, month of Jyeṣṭhā eleventh day of the bright fortnight day 11. At this day, in the golden monastery/monastery of Varṇni, Śrī Ḍehi, the daughter of Śrī Kaṃika, belonging to the family of Candruṇa [...] (and/with her?) subjects, dugged the well. Of this work, the golden/brilliant [...] trickles (from) the water pitcher. Due to the religious act (of this) faithful woman [...] the king’s action in excellent path of truth [...] the meritorious work in the temple [...] prince of the house of Lalle [...] the son of doṭaka, lord of the house.

The year 18 mentioned in the inscription refers to either the Laukika era or Śāhi era, giving the year 842/942 C.E. or 840/861 C.E. respectively, both in conformity with the palaeography (9th/10th Century C.E.). Śrī Ḍehi who established the well could have belonged to a local ruling family under the suzerainty of the Śāhis or the Muslims.

3.5.10 Dewal Inscription

Category: D (Plates: 46a and 46b; Tables: 45 and 76)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 32 cm x 24 cm x 7.5 cm

Provenance: Dewal, Rawalpindi District

Present Location: Peshawar Museum

Accession Number: PM03089

Reference(s): (Shakur 1946) **Subject:**

Digging of a well

Date: 930/951 C.E. (Śāhi era)

This block of stone is engraved with eight lines of Śāradā inscription, enclosed within a double line boarder with the lower part broken. Shakur mentioned that the year 708 refers to the Vikrama Era, giving the year 651 C.E. However, he pointed that the date is not free from doubt as the script does not appear to be as old (Shakur 1946: 3). According to Shakur, the purpose of the inscription is to commemorate the digging of a well by *Kulasanka*, son of *Puiya* at the instance of *Sahasyaraja* (Shakur 1946: 3).

Following is the transliteration and translation by Shakur (1946: 2-3).

- Line 1: om svasti || saṃvat 708 aśvayuja va
Line 2: di 9 atra di (n)eha trohakāgrahāre ?
Line 3: Śrī -puiya-putra Śrī -(ku)lasanka (nā) ma
Line 4: (mna) ayam kupah krtah Śrī-sahasyaraj- Line
5: na karapita h ---pativasam
Line 6: (ti) kapisikan salila karshana m- Line
7: an (e) nā (trā) ca kupa karshako-
Line 8: sapatati kṛti--

Om Hail. In the Samvat year 708, on the 9th day of the dark fortnight of Asvina in the agrahara of Trohaka? Śrī -Kulasanka" the son of Puiya sank this well at the instance of Sahasyaraja? To take water for the Kapisikas (= the inhabitants of the Kapisa country, i.e. Kingdom to the north of Kabul River). By thus injuring the well...he fells

Our decipherment agrees with that of Shakur in terms of the place and subjectmatter of the inscription. But then, there are differences on matters concerning the date, personality who executed the work, and minor details in the reading of lines 7 and 8. Regarding the date, the first digit of the year is read by us as "1" instead of "7" by Shakur. The digit referring to the day in the inscription was read as "9" by Shakur. However, the digit which is a curve hanging from a horizontal line headmark is read by us as "8".

According to the translation of Shakur, the digging was done by *ŚrīKulasanka* for *Śrī Sahasyaraja*. However, our translation shows that it is actually the other way

round; the digging was done by *Śrī Sahasyaraja* for *Śrī Kulasanka*. Our version of translation is based on the grammatical structure of the sentence.

The personal name *Śrī Sahasyaraje* is followed by the character *na* in line five, giving the reading *Śrī Sahasyarajena*. The instrumental mood of this personal name shows that he is the agent succeeding the passive verb, *karapita*, pp. of verb *karita* “done/completed” and preceding object, *ayaṃ kupakṛta<ṃ>* “the digging of this well” and. Examples of similar sentence formation of passive mood are observed in the Veka and *Śrī Vaṇḍaḍaka* inscriptions.

Shakur read lines 7 and 8 as *an(e)nā(trā) ca kupa karshako sapatati kṛti*, while we read them as *ananakūpa karṣa-sarva saṃpatati kṛti*. The word *ananakūpa* is similar with the compound word *ananakūha* in the *Mīr Ali* inscription. It is succeeded by the word *karṣa*, m. “act of drawing” and *sarva*, m. “each”, n. “water/universe/all things”, pron. “every”, adj. “everything/everywhere/altogether”. The following word is read as *patati* (root verb *pat-*) third person.sing.pre. “sink” with suffix *saṃ-*.

Finally, there is the word *kṛti*, m. “creation/making/doing” f. “work/act of doing”. As the lower part of the inscription is damaged, our reading is not complete.

Following is the transliteration and translation:

- Line 1: om svasti || saṃvat 108 aśvayuja va<dya>
Line 2: di<vase> 8 atra dineha tr(o)haka=agrahāre
Line 3: śrī puiyaputra śrī kulaśaṅka nā[ma]
Line 4: ?ayaṃ kūpakṛta śrī sahasyaraje
Line 5: [na] karapita [kaka++] pati vasa
Line 6: ti kapiśikan=salila karṣana
Line 7: anana?kūpa karṣa sarva
Line 8: saṃpatati kṛti

Oṃ Success || In the year 108, month of Aśvina, the 8th day of the dark lunar fortnight. At this day, in the Village of Trohaka, (at the instance of) *Śrī Kulaśaṅka*, son of *Śrī Puiya*, *Śrī Sahasyarajah* has made this well, the water drawn out (for/at) the dwellings of the people of *Kapiśa*. The drawing (of water) [...] all together sink the well [...]

Abdur Rahman mentioned that it probably referred to the *Śāhi* Era, giving the year 930 or 951 C.E., which fall during the reign of *Bhīmadeva*.

3.5.11 Dewai Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 47a and 47b; Tables: 46 and 76)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 16.7 cm x 11.4 cm

Provenance: Dewai, Gadun Territory, Swabi District

Present Location: Lahore Museum

Accession Number: I.57

Reference(s): (Sahni 1931-1932; Sircar 1983)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 940-963 C.E. (This inscription is probably contemporary to Bhīmadeva's reign)

This inscription was first published by Sahni (1931-1932: 298-299) and revisited by Sircar (1983: 430).

Sahni mentioned the importance of this inscription in confirming the accuracy of the Hindu Śāhi history written by *Al-Biruni* regarding King *Bhīmadeva* and his predecessor, *Kalakamalavarman*.

Following is the transliteration and translation by Sahni (1931-1932: 299):

Line 1: śrī kala[ka] . . lavarmodbhava-

Line 2: gadāstaparamabhaṭāra- Line 3:

ka mahārājādhirāja para-

Line 4: meśvara śāhi śrī bhīmade[va] [||*]

The supreme sovereign, superior king of great kings and supreme lord the śāhi, the illustrious Bhīmadeva who holds the mace in his hand and is sprung from the illustrious Kala[kama]lavarman

Following is the transliteration by Sircar (Sircar 1931-1932: 430):

Line 1: [śrī]-kala[ka][ma]lavarmodbhava-

Line 2: [ga*]dāsta-paramabhaṭā(ṭṭā)ra- Line

3: ka-ma[hā]rājādhirāja-para-

Line 4: [me]śvara-śāhi-śrī-[bhī]ma[devaḥ*]

The subject-matter of this inscription is unclear as it only mentions the name and titles of king *Bhīmadeva*, the fourth ruler of the Hindu Śāhi dynasty. He receives the epithet *gadāsta*, abbrv. of *gadahasta* “(the one) who holds mace in his hand” and *paramabhaṭṭāra mahārājādhirāja parameśvara śāhi* “The supreme ruler, king of kings, supreme lord of the Śāhis”. He is also said to have sprung from the Illustrious *Kalakamalavarman* (*Kalakamalavarman-udbhava*). This inscription can probably be placed during the period of his reign (940 to 963 C.E.).

3.5.12 Ratnamañjarī Inscription

Category: D (Plates: 48a and 48b; Tables: 47 and 76)

Material: Stone

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Taxila

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Tucci 1970)

Subject: Construction of a temple

Date: 942/963 C.E. (Śāhi era)

The Ratnamañjarī inscription was first documented by Tucci in Peshawar when a local peasant tried to sell it to an antiquity dealer. Although Tucci was doubtful about the provenance, he was certain that it came from the north-western region of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent.

The photograph was handed over to Raniero Gnoli who provided Tucci a summary regarding the subject-matter of the inscription and personalities involved (Tucci 1970: 103-104). According to Gnoli, the inscription commemorates the foundation of a *maṭha* in *Marmalika* by *Ratnamañjanrī*, daughter of *Ḍanuma* whose title is *mahārājadhirājakirātapakṣābhimukha*. He highlighted a few other names including *Mahārājādhirāja śrī Vijayapāladeva*, *Mahārājaputra Candrapāla* and *Araṇima* (Tucci1970: 104).

According to Tucci, the characters which is middling in quality could be placed at 8th/9th Century C.E. The historical significance of this inscription was also discussed by Rahman, who mentioned that *Vijayapāladeva* was a Śāhi vassal in Taxila (Rahman 1978: 33; 1979: 340-341).

Although Tucci has provided the transliteration, he did not produce the direct translation of the text. He pointed out that the effort to fully translate the inscription is challenging as it is written in poor Sanskrit, with a significant number of words deviating from the standard morphology of Sanskrit words.

Following is the transliteration by Tucci:

Verse one **[Line 1]** om svasti || kamaladalamalitakapola bhramarakula-ākulitagaja
 [Line 2] mukha gaṇapa nikhilajagadārtiharaṇaḥ smaraṇe duritāri ha rakṣa
 tād+

Verse two **[Line 3]** saṃvat 120 āśvayijaśukula aṣṭamyāṃ mahāttevasya samapaya
 || kaśyapa

[Line 4] gotra yasya pravarāya |

Verse three	mahārājādhirājakirātapakṣābhimukha śrī ḍanumaṃ+ [Line 5] ruduhita śrī ratnam(ñ)jarya mahārājaputra apū(r)varāja (saṃ)parinamitāsī
Verse four	[Line 6] aśvatā upariniśuddha puṇyāyatanam ihāparaloka saṃtāranāya yaḥ [Line 7] marmalikaviśaya kṛta-maṭham pratiṣṭhitam
Verse five	atra ca samaye mahārājādhirāja [Line 8] raja śrī Vijayapāladevasya rājyabhavitaḥ atra ca kārakaḥ mahārā [Line 9] japutra śrī caṇḍrapālaḥ tathāraṇima sūtradharikaḥ
Verse six	atra ca maṭhe pati [Line 10] ca satrasya gr̥hakṣetrāgrahāraḥ pratibaddhāsti tatra kanā /// [Line 11] pi vācā manasā apahārāti supunadapi na cintitavyam atra // ca + [Line 12] mana yaḥ svadattām paradattām vā yo hareti vasuṃdharā sa viṣṭhāyām

The inscription is divided into six verses: The first bears invocation to the divinities, the second mentions the date, the third mentions the name of the donor, the fourth contains information about the subject-matter and where the event took place, the fifth mentions the names of the ruling monarch, the crown prince and the architect and finally the sixth mentions the royal endowments to cover the expenses of the temple, consisting of houses and town.

Following our translation made with the help of the summary published by Tucci:

Verse one	Hail Success! (As) the cheek of the perplexed elephant-face (Ganeṣa) gallantly crowned by the garland of lotus petals by the brahmans, the Gaṇapa took away the pain of whole mankind by invoking the name of God. The enemy of sin protecting [...]
Verse two	Year 120, in the month of Aśvina [...] the eighth [...] May the endeavoured race of Kaśyapa brings fortune
Verse three	(By) the Illustrious Ratnamañjari, the daughter of the Illustrious Ḍanuma, who were disposed to the favour of the Kirāta chief The unparelled prince who were being bowed to
Verse four	the cleansing unselfish act (at) the sacred altar, shines as guidance in this and the next world [...] to the district of Marmalika (where) the temple was established
Verse five	(this took place) during the reign of the supreme sovereign, the illustrious Vijayapāladeva, and the executor is the royal prince, the illustrious Candrapāla whose architect is Araṇima,

Verse Six and in the temple [...] the donation consisting of house and town that is fixed for that purpose [...] the holy words in thought [...]

The year 120 probably refer to the Śāhi era, giving the year 942 or 963 C.E. As King *Vijayapāladeva* is not recorded in Rajatarāṅgini or the Al-Biruni list, this inscription has added one more ruler to the known list of Hindu Śāhi kings.

3.5.13 Veka Inscription

Category: D (Plates: 49a and 49b; Tables: 48 and 76)

Material: Stone

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Northern Afghanistan, later brought to Mazar-I-Syarif

Present Location: National Museum, Islamabad

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Dani 2001)

Subject: Establishment of image

Date: 960/981 C.E. (Śāhi era)

This long inscription was first deciphered by A. H. Dani (2001: 81-86) who placed the date at 959 C.E. According to Dani, the inscription records the establishment of the *Śiva Bhaṭṭāraka Umā Mahita* image by *Parimahā Maha Maitya* for the merit of himself, parents and teacher. The event took place in *Maityasya* during the reign of *Śrī Śāhi Veka*, whom Dani identified with *Vakadeva*.²³

Dani suggested that after the reign of Bhīmadeva, the Hindu Śāhi dynasty was broken and established into two branches, one led by Jayapāla in Lamghan and Punjab while the other by *Veka* who controlled Northern Afghanistan. This branch however came to an end by the conquest of Alaptigin in the second half of the 10th Century C.E.

However, parts of his transliteration and translation pose some problems as the English traslation by Dani does not appear to go entirely hand in hand with the Sanskrit text. Thus, his decipherment needs to be revisited.

Following is the trasliteration and translation by Dani:

Line 1: [om] || saṃvatsare varṣe 100 30 8 aṣṭa triṃ śādhike saṃvate Line
2: śate (śu)kla grīhṇa māghe rbha (rya)ti matu ksāṅgi nānka śrī
Line 3: śāhi veka rājye bhu(va)na haṭṭa Durga aṣṭa b(v)ale
Line 4: nāsītavatyā śivabhaṭṭārakasya umā ma
Line 5: hitasya deva pratimā maityase parimahā mai

²³ The name King Vakadeva was mentioned on copper coins (Rahman 1979: 203-204)

Line 6: tyena pratiṣṭhito atra śiva bha(ṭṭarākam) mahā
 Line 7: śraddhayaṃ vaḍṇaṃ ubhaṃ saputra puṇya phalaṃ tato
 Line 8: Śiva bhaṭṭārakasya umā sahitasya guro mā
 Line 9: tā pitro ra kha(dī)vatu || aṣṭeṣṭaka samā yu
 Line 10: ktaṃ cha karotu śivalāyaṃ bhāva umā la(ṅga)ne Line
 11: svargonya || (mi)ttrā-nścha bhuksaśā iti || Śrī (Śāhi)

Om In the year 138, one hundred increased by thirty-eight, on the while half of Māgha, during the reign of Śrī Śāhi Veka, marked by powerful Kṣaṅgiṇa, having occupied the earth, markets and forts by eightfold forces: the godly image of Śiva Bhaṭṭāraka with Umā was established at Maityasya by Parimahā (the great) Maitya. Here Śiva Bhaṭṭāraka is worshipped with great devotion for the merit of both along with son; hence Śiva Bhaṭṭāraka with Umā (‘s blessing) may protect the teacher, mother and father. At the temple of Śiva with the embrace of Umā, eight desired ceremonies should be performed for the attainment of Svarga etc. Friends be pleased. Śrī.

The inscription can be divided into five verses.

The first verse bears the date. The year is read as *saṃvatsare varṣa? aṣṭatṛiṃ sādhike saṃvat śat* “In the year thirty eight increase by a hundred years, the rainy season”. The next two characters are possibly read as *lagna* m. referring to the moment of the sun's entrance into a zodiacal sign. The succeeding character is read as *dhā* which could be an abbrev. of *dhanu*, n., the ninth astrological sign referring to Sagittarius. Then, the month and fortnight day are mentioned.

The second verse mentions that the kingdom of Śrī Veka (*Śrī Śāhi Vekarajyah*) possesses the Goddess Durga's shining eight powers/strengths, *bhaṭṭādurga-aṣṭabala-kāśi-bhavatyah*. She is one of the popular reincarnations of Devī, the consort of Śiva who defeated Mahiśāsura and has the combined power of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Varuṇa, Agni, Vayu, Indra, Yama, Viṣvakarma, Himavat and other gods (Blurton 1992: 168-171).

The third verse marks the subject-matter, clearly indicating the establishment of *Śiva-Uma* image. The verse starts with *Śiva-Bhaṭṭārakasya-Uma-Mahitasya devapratima* “sacred image of *Śiva-Bhaṭṭāraka-Uma-Mahita*” followed by what is reconstructed as *caityasya*, sing.m.gen. “sanctuary/temple”. Then *upari*, adv. “with regard to/in reference to” is read and succeeded by the proper name *Maha Maityena*, sing.inst. “by *Maha Maitya*” and *pratiṣṭhita*, adj. “consencrated/endowed/fixed”.

Few words in verse four mentions the people who received merit from this religious act: *maha(ś)raddhayā* “with great faith”, *puṇyaphalaṃ*, “meritorious gift”, *tat Śiva Bhaṭṭāra(ka)sya Uma Mahitasya*, “in reference to the Lord Śiva-Uma”,

guro-mata-pitro “guru, mother and father” and *<bha>vatu* third person.sing.pre.imprv. of verb *bhavati* “to be”(root verb bhu-).

The fifth verse describes the religious rites that took place during the establishment of this image. The compound word *aṣṭeṣṭaka* is decomposed as *aṣṭa*, adj. “eight” and *iṣṭaka*, “sacred rites”. The succeeding word *saṃmayuktaṃ* might be for *saṃyuktaṃ* “combination of” (root *saṃ yuj-*), and followed by the sign *ya* and word *karoti*, third person.sing.pre. of verb *kṛ-* “to do/make”.

Then comes the word *Śivalayaṃ*, n. “temple/abode of Śiva” and *bhāva*, m. “coming/coming into being” with suffix *-ta*. The word *balaṣaṃ* probably means “power”, followed by *svargadya*, probably derived from *svargada*, adj. “procuring paradise/heaven giving”. The word is succeeded by an oddly-shaped letter, which reading is not certain.

At the end of the inscription, the word *candrāśaturdaśā* is read, with unclear etymology. It is followed with *iti*, a word which referred to something that has been said or thought, or lays stress on what was to be preceded. Finally, the sign *Śrī* ends the inscription.

Following is the revised translation and transliteration:

Line 1: [oṃ] || **[verse 1]** saṃvatsare varṣa + aṣṭatṛṃ sādḥike saṃvat Line
2: śat lag[na] dhā<nu> māgherya ti caturdaśi 14 **[verse two]** Śrī
Line 3: Śāhi Vekarājyo [dune] bhaṭṭā durga aṣṭabala
Line 4: kāśī bhavatyā(h) **[verse 3]**[Śiva] Bhaṭṭārakasya Uma Ma
Line 5: hitasya deva(pra)ti(ma) caityasya=upa[rima]ha mai
Line 6: tyena prati[ṣṭhi]ta**[verse 4]** atravadha +++[mahā]
Line 7: śraddhay<ā>ṃ dhaya<ṃ>++++pu(ṇ)ya phalaṃ tat Line
8: Śiva Bhaṭṭāra(ka)sya Uma Mahitasya Guro Ma
Line 9: ta Pitro ?++<bha>vatu || **[verse 5]** aṣṭeṣṭaka saṃ<~ma>yu
Line 10: ktaṃ ya karo[ti] Śivālayaṃ bhāvata balaṣaṃ
Line 11: svargādyā candrāśaturdaśā iti///śrī

Verse 1: In the year thirty eight, increased by one hundred years, in the rainy season, of the constellation of Sagittarius, in the month of Māgha (JanuaryFebruary), the fourteenth day of the lunar fortnight, 14

Verse 2: (In the) Kingdom of the Illustrious Śāhi Veka which possesses the eight shining/illustrious power of the Goddess Durga

Verse 3: At this moment, the Śiva-Uma sacred image of the temple is established by the great Maitya

Verse 4: Let the Guru, Mother and Father (enjoy the benefit) of this meritorious work dedicated to Śiva-Uma

Verse 5: The combination of eight sacred rites in the abode of Śiva in bringing strength/power to procure place in heaven [...]

The date is January-February 960/981 C.E. Based on the present decipherment, this inscription records the establishment of a Śiva-Uma image in a temple by *Maha Maitya* for the benefit of his Guru and Parents.

3.5.14 Śrī Priyaṃvada Inscription²⁴

Category: E (Plates: 50a and 50b; Tables: 49 and 76)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 32 cm x 18 cm

Provenance: Unknown

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Hinüber 2010) **Subject:** Land grant

Date: 985 C.E. (Śaka era)

This inscription was published by Hinüber based on the photograph provided to him by Mr. I. Kurita (Hinüber 2010: 9-10). The reading poses some problems as the scripts are blurred by the reflection of the camera flash at the beginning of the inscription. It is dated during the month of *Karttika* (October-November) in the *Śaka* year of 907 (985 C.E.).

According to Hinüber, this inscription is a land grant which records *Śrī Priyaṃva(da)*'s ownership of the property *traṃmaṃkṛto*, probably referring to a field, place etc in the village of *Silimāna*. It could have been fixed onto walls, which marks the boundary of the land.

Following is the transliteration and translation provided by Hinüber (2010: 9-10):

Line 1: #sa(ṃ)va 907 śake kārttikamā
Line 2: se atra dine silimānagrāme
Line 3: srī prīyaṃva-satka-traṃmaṃkṛ
Line 4: to likhyate

In the year 907 Śaka, in the month Kārtika, on that day. In the village of Silimāna, The Traṃmaṃkṛto, property of Śrī Priyaṃva(da), is written

²⁴ This inscription is named by us according to the personality mentioned in the text, Śrī Priyaṃvada.

3.5.15 Jayapāla Śāhi Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 51a and 51b; Tables: 50 and 76)

Material: Marble

Measurement: 26 cm x 20 cm

Provenance: Hund, Swabi District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Rahman 1978; 1979)

Subject: Construction of a Śaṅkara temple

Date: 968/989 C.E. (Śāhi era)

This inscription was discovered by workers while collecting stones for construction purposes and was first published by Rahman based on the estampage provided to him by an antiquity dealer. He made an exhaustive study on its decipherment as well as the palaeographic study (Rahman 1978: 31-37; 1979: 246).

The first two verses are invocations to Lord Śiva while the third to sixth verses describe the majestic city of *Udabhaṇḍra* (Hund) and the river Indus. Verses seventh to tenth eulogize on the valour of King *Bhīmadeva* who defeated his enemies, and verse eleventh mentions the heroism and fame of the reigning *Jayapāla*. In the last two verses, the purpose and date of the inscription are mentioned, recording the construction of a Śaṅkara temple by *Caṅgulavarman*, possibly an official in the government of *Jayapāla*.

Following is the transliteration and translation by Abdur Rahman (1978: 32-33):

Verse 1: Om Namāmi Bhūtanāṭasya lalāṭasthaṃ vilocanaṃ
yasmāt Kāmasya saṃdāhād bibhyaty adyāpi śatravaḥ |

Verse 2: Praṇamya śirasā Śarvaṃ śāsvataṃ
Paṃgulātmajaḥ ālaye Śitikaṇṭhasya khyātiṃ kuryām

svaśaktiḥ || **Verse 3:** Asty uttareṇākhila-puṇya-rāśeḥ
nāmnodhāṇḍaṃ jagatīha Sindhoḥ vidvaj-janair yaśca
vidhāya saṃghaṃ kṛtāpadaṃ Merur ivāmarādyaiḥ ||

Verse 4: Sevate yasya satataṃ vibhāgaṃ dakṣiṇaṃ nadī
| pārśvaṃ Malaya śailasya vela-vāri-nidher iva || **Verse**

5: yatra sindhus sadālokais sevyate puṇya-hetunā |
sannihityeva candrārkaḥ balad gṛhṇati dānave ||

Verse 6: yatra sindhau sadā kuryus tapitās sūrya-raśmibhiḥ nidāghe
dantino mattās tāṃtā bībhṛāmya tṛṣṇayā ||

Verse 7: tatrāsīd bhūbhṛtāṃ mukhyo Bhīmo bhīma-parākramaḥ nirjitya
para-sainyāniyena saṃrakṣitā mahī ||

Verse 8: Bhīmenāpi svadagdhasya sambhavo'sti pinākina |

saṃkalpa-yones saṃkalpān, na tu bhīmena vairiṇā || **Verse 9:** yasya nāryas sapatnānām keśa-pāśaṃ rirād api | kavārī-racana-hīnaṃ vahanty-adyāpi duḥkhitaḥ || **Verse 10:** yasya vairi-vilāsinyo niryāntyo nagarād iha | idam ūcur mahodyānaṃ tu dronas saṃgataṃ tvayā || **Verse 11:** tasyāsti raja Jayapāladevo dehobhavāj janma-vṛte ka-vīraḥ hitvā divaṃ yasya yaśas suśuddhaṃ brahmāspadaṃ nityam iti prapannaṃ || **Verse 12:** tasya śrī-Jayapāladevasya rājye paṅgula-sūnunaḥ | Śaṅkarasya pratiṣṭeyaṃ kṛtā Caṅgulavarmaṇā || **Verse 13:** saṃvatsara-śate purṇe ṣaṭ-catvāriṃśad-uttare | mādhave śukla paṃcamyām Umānātha pratiṣṭitaḥ || **Prose:** kṛtir iyaṃ pratiṣṭhā ca kāyastha-Pāḍhida-pautrasya Paṅgula-sūnoḥ caṅgulasya

Verse 1: I reverence the eye in the brow of Bhūtanātha (Śiva), of which through the burning of Kāma, his enemies are afraid even today

Verse 2: May I, the son of Paṅgula, bowing my head to the eternal Śarva (Śiva) produce by my own powers fame in the realm of the Black-necked (Śiva)

Verse 3: to the north of the Indus, which is a mass of complete merit here on earth, there is (a city) by name Udabhāṇḍra, which has been made their home by learned men forming communities, just as Meru (was made their home) by the immortal (gods) and other (supernatural beings).

Verse 4: the southern part of which (i.e. Udabhāṇḍra) the river constantly serves, as the side of Malaya mountain (is served) by the treasure of water on its shore **Verse 5:** where the Indus is always served (i.e. worshipped) by the people to obtain merit, when the demon is forcibly seizing moon and sun, as though bringing them together

Verse 6: where, in the Indus in summer, rutting elephants, scorched by the rays of the sun, weary and confused by thirst, would also make

Verse 7: Therein dwelt the chief of kings Bhīma, of terrible valour (or with valour like that of Bhīma, the legendary hero), by whom, having, having conquered his enemies' troops, the earth was protected

Verse 8: Though he is terrible, through Pinākin (Śiva) there is the (re-)birth of him whose origin was desire (i.e. Kāma, the love-god), who was burned up by himself (i.e. by Śiva), through (Śiva's) desire, but not through the terrible enemy (? was Bhīma to restore life)

Verse 9: of whose (i.e. Bhīma's) enemy, the sorrowful women even today long wear their hair devoid of braiding

Verse 10: the charming women of whose enemies, going out from the city here, said this "Through you the great park has become a (mere) bucket"

Verse 11: The kind of that (country) is (now) Jayapāladeva, who, through his body, origin, and birth, has become the sole hero, whose very pure fame, having left heaven, has attained the eternal abode of Brahman

Verse 12: In the kingdom of that Śrī Jayapāladeva, Caṅgulavarman, son of Paṅgula, has made an abode of Śaṅkara (= Śiva)

Verse 13: When hundred years with six and forty added were completed, on the fifth

(tithi) of the bright half of Mādhava (= the month of Vaiśakha), the Lord of Umā (= Śiva) has been set up

This establishment is the work of Caṅgula, grandson of the secretary Pāḍhida and son of Paṅgula

The year 146 possibly refers to the Śāhi era, rendering the date 968 or 989 C.E.

3.5.16 Mahārajñī Śrī Kameśvaridevi Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 52a and 52b; Tables: 51 and 76)

Material: Marble

Measurement: 24 cm x 44 cm x 36 cm

Provenance: Hund, Swabi District

Present Location: Peshawar Museum

Accession Number: PM03090

Reference(s): (Sahni 1933-1934; Shakur 1946)

Subject: Construction of a temple

Date: 981/1002 C.E. (Śāhi era)

This eight lines Śāradā inscription was first published by Sahni with the decipherment (Sahni 1933-1934: 97-98) and later incorporated by Shakur into his handbook (Shakur 1946: 12-13).

The inscription records the construction of a *devakula* “statue shrine/temple” by *Mahārājñī Śrī Kāmeśvarīdevī* with the consenctration which took place between year 168 and 169 of an unmentioned era. The inscription lists down personalities involved in the *devakula*’s construction along with their specific duties.

The *navakarmapati* “architect” who supervised the work was *Jayantarāja* son of *Upendra*, an inhabitant of *Avanti*, or present day *Mālwa*. *Śrī Pillaka Brāhmaṇa*, son of *Śrī Vīrāditya* was the *paṃcakula* or the head of the “assembly of five” who manages the affairs of the town. The *kāyastha* who composed the inscription was *Śrī Bhogika*, son of *Śrī Vihenda*. Both the *navakarmapati* and *kāyastha* are described as being the *Sūryadvija*, the special priests of the Sun-God and said to have sprung from the Sun

Following is the transliteration and translation by Sahni (1933-1934: 97-97):

Line 1: Om Svasti 1 || Mahārājñī Śrī Kameśvarīdevyā satka Line
2: devakule navakarmapati Upendraputtra Jayantarā
Line 3: ja Āvantike | Sūryadvijoh || paṃcakula Śrī Virādi
Line 4: tyaputtra Śrī Pillaka Brāhmaṇaḥ || || kāyastha Śrī Vihe
Line 5: ndaputtra Śrī Bhogika Sūryadvijah || || Iti

Line 6: saṃvat 168 Āśvayujavati 8 śanauḥ ato
Line 7: dina ārabhya saṃvat 169 Āṣāḍha śuti 12 vṛhau pra Line
8: tiṣṭha kṛtāḥ || || = ||

Om Salutations! || The statue shrine belonging to Mahārajñī Śrī Kameśvarīdevi, whose architect is the Sūryadvija Jayantarāja, son of Upendra from Avanti || the paṃcakula is Śrī Pillaka Brāhmaṇa, the son of Śrī Vīraditya || The (person of the) writer's caste is the Sūryadvija Śrī Bhogika, son of Śrī Vihenda || This took place on the year 168, the 8th day of the dark fortnight of the month of Āśvayuja Saturday. The day the (temple) was established is 12th day of the bright fortnight of the month of Āṣāḍha in the year 169

According to Sahni, the Śāradā characters can be placed in the 8th Century C.E. On this basis, he suggested the Harṣa Era (606 C.E.), giving the year 774/775 C.E. However, Rahman later pointed out that date proposed by Sahni is too early for the script and suggested the Śāhi era, giving the year 981 or 1002 C.E. (Rahman 1978: 34).

3.5.17 Śrī Pillaka Brāhmaṇa Inscription

Category: E (Plate: 53)

Material: Marble

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Hund, Swabi District

Present Location: Calcutta Museum

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Princep 1837; Burnes 1842; Rahman 1979; 1980)

Subject: Construction of temple

Date: Probably contemporary with the Mahārajñī Śrī Kameśvaridevi inscription

The *Śrī Pillaka Brāhmaṇa* inscription was received by Burnes in the early 19th Century from the local Sikh ruler during his survey in Hund. It is a marble stone slab containing 13 lines of Śāradā inscription. The round hole in the middle is due to its continuous usage as a grinding stone. Although Stein reported to have it known in Calcutta in 1892, an enquiry made by Rahman to locate the inscription was not successful (Rahman 1980: 55).

Princep deciphered the inscription based on the eyecopy made by Burnes, which he noted as being “hopelessly inaccurate” (Burnes 1842: Plate No.1; Rahman 1980: 55; Princep 1837: 876-879). After more than a century, the decipherment of the last two lines by Princep was revisited by Rahman (1979: 248; 1980: 55-59).

The two historical points of interest marked by Princep from his decipherment is the defeat of the *Turuṣkas* by an unnamed hero, and the identification of *Śrī Pillaka Brāhmaṇa* as the composer of the inscription.

Following is the transliteration and translation (Princep 1837: 877):

- Line 1: [om] svasti ||bhūpatitvaṃyatitvaṃ vā yairarātibhirejate
Line 2: kīrtti bhupatīyāṃ riṃgate hitāyataribhisvayā
Line 3: tāhyenedriktaturuṣkapuṣkalapala (nnāsā) karenātsanā
Line 4: utkicyāruvivardkitāgurujanrnpresvasaṃkhyamva [ca]ḥ ti
Line 5: rājāyaḥ saṃviśedha saṃgraha ratiryatna prajāpālana | hantarna
sarana devanu pataṣki kinaleketura
Line 6: nepeya pārvati sakhaḥ || yasa yaṃkallaṭho thaṃmaḥ
mi....padavīm gataḥ ta....
Line 7: vipanamamaresinvurāka.....laḥtasya..tipiturnaguṇa
Line 8: yatyabhiticirasyī.....ya....yasaḥ saujanya
Line 9: guṇa.....jā.....
Line 10: devasyamahāvibhu.....ssarāṣdraḥ yamanu ca ndrorayama
Line 11: nāyo.....mahā.....hānatasamśassāntavāsa
Line 12: ntaneya [ka]lyāṇadetasah || naṃpaka tirtaye ... pra...ya
Line 13: nyasta śrī tillakaḥ brahmaṇaḥ | ..sya krihe sutra ki hogi

- Line 1: ..blessings;-whose kingly and priestly rule even among his
enemies spreads:
Line 2: ..above his glory doesfor pleasure.....
Line 3: ..the powerful flesh-eating turuṣcas causing alarm to,
Line 4: ...lavishing bland speech on spiritual superiors and brahmans
without number
Line 5: such a prince as attracts all things to him; persevering in the
protection of his people
Line 6: ..husband of parvati;went on a road,...
Line 7: ...elephant.....whose mother's(?) and father's virtue
Line 8: ...endure for ages.....glory and excellence.
Line 9: virtue.....
Line 10: of deva the great riches, ...rule...moon...
Line 11:great....sun...living among.
Line 12:the cheerful-minded;
Line 13: ..then Śrī tillaka brahman, ..(shall be made beautiful)

After carrying out a detailed study, Rahman discovered that the lines 2, 3, 4 and 5 of *Mahārājñī Śrī Kameśvari* inscription have an exact reading with the last two lines of the *Śrī Pillaka Brāhmaṇa* inscription (Rahman 1980: 56). Although the *Mahārājñī*

Śrī Kameśvaridevi inscription was published long ago, the similarities of the two inscriptions were not noticed due to the erroneous reading by Princep (Rahman 1980: 56).

Following is the reconstruction of lines no.12 and 13 of *Śrī Pillaka Brāhmaṇa* inscription by Rahman (1980: 57):

Navakarmapati Upendraputra Jayantarāja Āvantike Sūryadvijoḥ paṃcakula
Śrī Virādityaputra Śrī Pillaka Brāhmaṇaḥ

Navakarmapati (architect), Jayāntarāja, the son of Upendra, a Sūryadvija paṃcakula (headman) Śrī Pillaka Brahmana and the son of Śrī Virāditya Kāyastha (who composed the inscription) Śrī Bhogika, a Sūryadvija and the son of Śrī Vihendra

This inscription is possibly meant to record the construction of a temple, as the same personalities recorded in the *Mahārājñī Śrī Kameśvari* inscription are mentioned. However, until more accurate reading of the inscription is available, matters regarding the date, subject-matter and the identity of the issuer shall remain as an open question.

3.5.18 Barikot Inscription

Category: D (Plates: 54a and 54b; Tables: 52 and 76)

Material: Slate stone

Measurement: 27 cm x 22 cm

Provenance: Barikot, Swat

Present Location: Lahore Museum

Accession Number: 119

Reference(s): (Vogel 1911; Sahni 1931-1932; Sircar 1983)

Subject: Unspecified meritorious work

Date: 964-1002 C.E. (This inscription probably falls during the reign of Jayapāladeva)

This extremely worn out and defaced inscription was first mentioned by Vogel (1911: 259) and studied in detail by Sahni (1931-1932: 301). Sircar revisited the inscription but did not add anything new (Sircar 1983: 431).

According to Sahni, the inscription mentions that in *Vājīrasthāna* (Wazisitan), three individuals whose names are illegible founded something of which its nature cannot be determined in the text. Although the complete date is not readable, the second line shows that the inscription was issued during the reign of *Jayapāladeva* (964-1002 C.E.).

Following is the transliteration by Sahni. Sircar proposed a similar reading (Sahni 1931-1932: 301; Sircar 1983: 431):

Line 1: om svasti 100 paramabhaṭṭārkamahārājādhirāja para
Line 2: meśvara śrī jayapāladevarājye śrī vajīrasthāne
Line 3: bhaṭṭapunna śrīpīṣya (?) minnadevakula prabha prarthite+++
Line 4: ++++++
Line 5: +++ebhistnibhi+++++
Line 6: ++++++karma
Line 7: ++++++prabhava uda
Line 8: karma+++++pratiṣṭā
Line 9: tasya+++++ratha pratiṣṭita+++ka---(ka)rāpitaḥ
Line 10: ebhistibhi(h)+++++
Line 11: +++++h ||

The translations of a few scattered words in lines 6, 7 and 8 give some clues about the subject of the inscriptions. Words such as *devakule*, sing.n.loc “temple/deity house” and *pratiṣṭhā*, f. “consencration/religious ceremonies” show that the inscription records a religious event. The words *pratiṣṭhita*, adj. “consencrated/placed/founded” and *karāpitaḥ* pp. of verb *karoti* (verb root kṛ-)

“done/completed” could refer to the construction of a tank or religious building, or the installation of an image.

The mention of *Vajīrasthāne*, sing.loc. in the inscription gives an important clue about the political landscape of Gandhāra in 10th/11th Century C.E. If the word really refers to the modern day Waziristan as claimed by Sahni, it shows that in spite of the growing Muslims’ influence, King Jayapāla was still able to maintain his political grip onto the area.

3.5.19 Vasantaraja Inscription

Category: B (Plates: 55a and 55b; Tables: 53 and 76)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 18.2 cm x 25 cm

Provenance: Hund, Swabi District

Present Location: Hund Museum

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Zarawar Khan. et.al 2012)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 9th-11th Century C.E. (Palaigraphy, See 5.5.2.9)

This square stone slab which bears three lines of Śāradā inscription is broken on the right hand side, with some traces of characters still visible. The photograph of this inscription was first published by Zarawar Khan (2012: 81, Pl.8). Following is the proposed transliteration:

Line 1: seripati [pa] Line
 2: vasa<̣m>ntara[ja]
 Line 3: nakadapa+

Although the purpose of this inscription is unclear, the incomplete name of a personality, *Vasantaraja*, could be read. On the palaeographic basis, the characters can be placed between 9th to 11th Century C.E.

3.5.20 Īśvara Inscription

Category: D (Plates: 56a and 56b; Tables: 54 and 76)

Material: Marble

Measurement: 24 cm x 13 cm

Provenance: Hund, Swabi District

Present Location: Peshawar Museum

Accession Number: PM1786

Reference(s): (Hargreaves 1923-1924; Shakur 1946)

Subject: Unspecified meritorious work

Date: 10th/11th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.5.2.10)

This 10 lines Śāradā inscription is broken on two sides of its lower portion and a large part of the surface are either has worn out, defaced or flaked off.

The inscription was partly deciphered by Hargreaves (1923-1924: 68) and included by Shakur (1946: 11) into his handbook. According to Hargreaves, the words *isvara*, *sambhoh*, *tasyaishā kīrttiḥ*, *mandapam* and *kritam kirtti* imply that the inscription records the construction of a Śiva temple.

In the first line, the opening phrase (*om*) *svasti* and *trem namaś-śiva(ya)* show the Śaivite influence. The incantation *trem* is also observed in the Ādityarāja and Ananda inscriptions. The purpose of the inscription can be guessed from the fragmentary reading of lines 2 and 3.

In the eighth line, *īśvarasya prasāde*, sing.loc., in the loving kindness of the lord Īśvara” possibly referred to the deity which the temple was dedicated for. Finally in the ninth line, *śasta sindhunā* "auspicious Sindhu (Indus)” is mentioned. The following is the transliteration and translation:

Line 1: [om] svasti || tremnama[ś=śivaya]+++bhaga++rbhalabhu[ś]va++++++

Line 2: ++ḥ kṛtaṃ śaste pra[tiṣṭhita] c(ait)ya++++lara+syaya+tasasya
 Line 3: +++nāsvāśahoda+++++yaja kīrti prācīmukha kṛta
 Line 4: [a]bhīmukhasya=evana+++++romam=vaśya tathā dai///
 Line 5: +camaimapāṃsova kara ++++++ta+saca///
 Line 6: pura tolappi+na prati(ma) ++++++bandha rathaṃ pi+++
 Line 7: +++ṇamighu pr(ā)pita+++++(kī)rti+varśosa pu++/
 Line 8: ///+mata | īśvarasya prasāde ++ kīrti+///
 Line 9: ///śasta sindhunā kṛtac-chandasana sata///
 Line 10: ///+++++di+///

Line 1: Hail Success! Salutation to the Lord Śiva [...]
 Line 2: in the auspicious deed, temple was established [...]
 Line 3: [...] temple facing to the north was made
 Line 4: of facing towards [...] at the disposal of [...] thus [...]
 Line 5: [...] the work [...]
 Line 6: the town of [...] image of [...] fastening the chariot
 Line 7: [...] was obtained [...] the temple [...]
 Line 8: [...] | in the loving kindness of the lord Īśvara [...] the meritorious work
 Line 9: [...] the auspicious Sindhu (river) [...]
 Line 10: [...]

On the palaeographic basis, it could be placed at 10th/11th century C.E., which falls during the period of the Hindu-Śāhi.

3.5.21 Broken Image Base Inscription

Category: B (Plate: 57)

Material: Stone

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Hund, Swabi District

Present Location: Calcutta Museum

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Burnes 1942; Princep 1897)

Subject: Unclear

Date: Unclear

This five lines Śāradā inscription is inscribed on a pedestal of a broken image, presented to Burnes by a local Sikh ruler along with the *Śrī Pillaka Brāhmaṇa* inscription during his survey in Hund (Princep 1837: 877).

According to Princep, nothing much could be made out from the text of the mutilated inscription except that it is written in Sanskrit, and it is about the same age with the *Śrī Pillaka Brāhmaṇa* inscription (Princep 1837: 877).

3.5.22 Memorial Stone Inscription

Category: D (Plates: 58a and 58b; Tables: 55 and 77)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 36 cm x 24 cm

Provenance: Unknown

Present Location: Peshawar Museum

Accession Number: PM03428

Reference(s): (Shakur 1946)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 11th-13th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 4.5.3.1)

This block of stone bears five lines of Śāradā inscription engraved within a boundary line. It was presented to the Peshawar Museum by Sir Aurel Stein and included by Shakur (1946: 40) into his handbook. Probably served as a memorial stone, it mentions the instability of everything, and only fame can make one immortal (Shakur 1946: 40). However, the reading of Shakur does not seem to go hand in hand with his English translation.

Following is the transliteration and translation by Shakur (1946: 40):

Line 1: Om svasti (A)chho (so) kina raa
Line 2: Mahimatra (i) Am (ta) bhu (ti) a
Line 3: na(ne) a idi a-/viahavai
Line 4: jana k(i)rtti (i) te gaanahuga
Line 5: ahavti // om srandreya (o) bhavatin

Line 1: Om. Hail. By a griefless (person) (or proper name)
Line 2: Of unlimited wealth in the whole of the earth
Line 3: many... prosperous
Line 4: persons sung by the sky
Line 5: are. Om Sram. Let there be prosperity.

The decipherment pose some problems as the etymology of most words are not clear. Line one begins with the phrase *om svasti* followed by *chokena*, sing.inst. “by choka” and signs *śa* and *a*. Line two starts with *mahāmatra*, adj. “most excellent of/the greatest”, succeeded by *miḍha/mipha*, with unclear etymology. The word *bh(ū)ti*, f. “power/ornament/wealth”, is succeeded by sign *ga* continued by *ṇaka* in the third line. *Gaṇaka* means “jasmine” or “female elephant”. The meaning of “*idiśusā | citara i*” in line 3 is unclear.

In the fourth line, the word *jaṇa* might be for *jana*, m. “tribe/people/living being”, and followed by *kirtti* which might be for *kīrti* “fame/lustre/glory/meritorious work”. Then

comes the word *bhaga*, n. “good fortune/happiness/welfare/prosperity” and *aṇabhuga*, of which its meaning is unclear. Line five starts with *abhitti*, adj. “having no wall”, and followed by the incantation *omśrī śreyambhava<tu>* “may there be prosperity”.

Line 1: om svasti chokeṇa sa a
Line 2: mahim[atra] miḍhabhūti ga
Line 3: ṇaka idiśusā | citara i
Line 4: jaṇa kirttī bhaga aṇabhuga
Line 5: abhitti || omśrī śreyambhava<tu>

Hail! By Choka [...] the greatest power [...] Meritorious work (by) the people [...] may there be prosperity.

The Śāradā characters of this inscription can be placed between the 11th to 13th Century C.E.

3.5.23 Kṛṣṇaratipadajo Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 59a and 59b; Tables: 56 and 77)

Material: Schist

Measurement: 17 cm x 10 cm

Provenance: Kashmir Smast, Mardan District

Present Location: Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 2001b; 2006)

Subject: Religious

Date: 11th-13th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.5.3.2)

This 3 lines Śāradā inscription is deeply engraved into a rectangular piece of schist stone framed on three sides. It was first published by Nasim Khan with the following decipherment (Nasim Khan 2001b: 3-4; 2006: 107-108):

Line 1: kṛṣṇaratipadajo ra
Line 2: japutro samdikate li
Line 3: kaṃ śivalokī+naṃ

Kṛṣṇaratipadaja, the son of Raja, wrote in the world of Śiva (this) religious text

This inscription records the religious merit of *Rajaputra Kṛṣṇaratipadajo* which clearly shows Śaivite influence. The socketed hole behind the inscription shows that it could have been fixed at a wall.

The characters are of late period Śāradā, placed between the 11th to 13th Century C.E. This inscription shows that Kashmir Smast continued to be visited by Hindu pilgrims until the 13th Century C.E.

3.5.24 Kamala Inscription

Category: A (Plates: 60a and 60b; Tables: 57 and 77)

Material: Stone

Measurement: Diameter-11 cm

Provenance: Unknown

Present Location: Peshawar Museum

Accession Number: PM1216

Reference(s): Unpublished

Subject: Unclear

Date: 11th-13th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.5.3.3)

This irregular stone fragment contains four lines of Śāradā inscription. Although the inscription is extremely worn out, the meaning of few scattered words can still be made out. In line 2, the reading *varcas*, n. “lustre/splendour/glory” is followed by *urasya*, adj. “produced from one self/ belonging to oneself”. In line three, the word *kamala* either refers to adj. “rose coloured/pale red” or f. “sacred lotus”. Following is the transliteration and translation:

Line 1: ///h[a] ranada///

Line 2: ///varcas=urasya [nara]///

Line 3: ///[pta]rjunidh=kamala///

Line 4: ///tadi///

[...] one's lustre [...] the sacred lotus [...]

The characters of this inscription are placed between the 11th to the 13th Century C.E.

3.5.25 Śrī Hammīra Inscription

Category: D (Plates: 61a and 61b; Tables: 58 and 77)

Material: (Vogel 1911)

Measurement: 125 cm x 68 cm

Provenance: Ghahai, Swat District

Present Location: Lahore Museum

Accession Number: 94

Reference(s): (Vogel 1911)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 1032/33 C.E. (Laukika era)

This large stone slab bears four lines of Śāradā inscription. It was first published by Vogel with the following preliminary reading; [*Śastra*]-*samvat 9 Jyeṣṭha* (1033 C.E.) (Vogel 1911: 259). According to Vogel, the inscription falls during the reign of Śrī Hammīra (*Mas'ūd*, the son of Mahmud of Ghazna). However, the study by Vogel needs to be revisited.

In the first line, the date is followed by a proper name Śrī Hammīra and the word *rājye*, sing.n.loc. “state/realm/empire”. Śrī Hammīra, a Sanskritized form of the Arab word *Āmīr*, is mentioned in the *Rājatarāṅgini* in reference to Mahmud of Ghazna or one of his generals (Dutt 1879: 172).²⁵ The phrase Śrī Hammīrarājye most probably referred to the kingdom of the Ghaznavids.

In line two, the word *bhākta*, m. with the suffix *-ra* can be translated as adj. “faithful”. Then comes the proper name Śrī Mehsuḍha which appears to be the Sanskritized form of Mas'ud, the successor of Mahmud who ruled between 1031-1041 C.E. It is succeeded by the *śr(ā)vaṇalikhitaṃ*, adj. “heard and written”. Finally, comes the proper name *kāmalavareṇa*, sing.m/f.inst. “by Kāmalavara”. Following is the transliteration and translation:

Line 1: *saṃvat 9 jyeṣṭhā* māsē mahā śrī haṃ
Line 2: *mīra rājye bhāktara śrī mehsuḍha* Line
3: *dha śraṇalikhitaṃ kāma*
Line 4: *vareṇa*

In the 9th year of the month Jyeṣṭhā, in the great kingdom of Hammīra, (words) of the faithful Śrī Mehsuḍha is heard and written by Kāmalavara.

Although the purpose of the inscription is unclear, the large size suggests that it was meant to be displayed to the public.

3.5.26 Śrī Malikaputra Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 62a and 62b; Tables: 59 and 78)

²⁵ The text runs as “The Kashmirians crossed the river Tushī, and destroyed the detachment of soldiers sent by Hammira to reconnoitre”, (Book VII, *Rājatarāṅgini*).

Material: Sandstone

Measurement: 39 cm x 17 cm

Provenance: Unknown

Present Location: Peshawar Museum

Accession Number: SRO346

Reference(s): (Nasim Khan 2003a)

Subject: Landgrant

Date: 1217/1317 C.E. (Laukika era) or 1269 C.E. (Vikrama-Calukya era)

This inscription was first published by Nasim Khan (2003a: 77-83). It records the purchase of the perplexed land of *Paṃgu*, prepared by the son of *Śrī Malika*. The event took place in the village of *Tvāgapurā*, *Sākṣasratra* in the presence of men.

Following is the transliteration and translation (Nasim Khan 2003a: 83):

Line 1: Om Svasti || saṃvātraśra +193 Kārtikya ma

Line 2: se | atra diṇe tvāgapurāgrāme | sākṣasratra

Line 3: karābhyāṃ varah jaṇapratyakṣe | bhūmipa[tra]ṃ mūlye grhī

Line 4: tā | Śrī Mālikaputra paṃguketraṃ trapada kṛte brahmarī

Line 5: dadhajābrahma[gajavi]śe[dika]gutradha śrī caṃbake śrī śrīmeṇatdhadā

Om Success! In the year +193, in the month of Kārtika, on this day, in the village of Tvāgapura, Sākṣasratra, eminent among the doer, in the presence of men, a land has been bought, the son of Śrī Mālika, prepared the perplexed land Paṅgū, Brahmarī...

The date is read as *saṃvātraśra 193/+93 kārtikya mase* “year 193/+93” of the month Kārtika (October/November). Although the era is not mentioned, the year can be guessed based on the palaeography (13th/14th Century C.E.). One possibility is the *Laukika* era, provided that the first digit is read as other than 1. Another possibility is the *Vikrama-Cālukya* Era which starts at 1076 C.E. The *Laukika* era gives the date 1217/1317 while the *Vikrama-Cālukya* era 1269 C.E.

This inscription shows that under Muslim rule, land matters were still managed by the locals who used Pseudo-Sanskrit as their daily and official language.

The term “in the presence of men” probably shows that the land acquisition deal was a public matter, made while being witnessed by other local inhabitants.

3.5.27 Nayarāja Inscription

Category: B (Plates: 63a and 63b; Tables: 60 and 78)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 36.8 cm x 49.5 cm
Provenance: Jalalabad, Afghanistan
Present Location: Lahore Museum
Accession Number: 153
Reference(s): (Vogel 1911)
Subject: Unclear
Date: 13th-15th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.5.4.2)

This inscription was first mentioned by Vogel as “the Defaced Jalalabad Inscription” (Vogel 1911: 259). This 5 lines Śāradā inscription is inscribed into an irregular stone slab, broken on the upper and lower side with most parts of the engraved surface extremely worn out.

Lines 1, 2 and 3 bear the date of the inscription. The words *vr̥ha*, m. “Thursday” and *atra*, ind. “here at this time” in line 2 are followed by *dine*, sing.n.loc. “day” and a word which ends with *sayam*, sing.acc in line 3.

In line 4, the word *maḍham* is read, observable also in Copper Plate II (Nasim Khan 2006: 95) which probably refers to the word *maṭha*, adj. “temple/monastery”. The following words are *kr̥ta*, adj. “obtained/accomplished/made ready” and *likhitam*, adj. “written”. In the 5th line, the proper name *Nayarāja* is followed by the letter *va*.

The following is the transliteration and translation:

Line 1: ///
Line 2: +++vr̥[ha] atra
Line 3: dine+++sayam
Line 4: [ma]ḍham kr̥(ta)likhitam
Line 5: nayarāja va++

[...] (on) Thursday, at this day [...] the temple/monastery, the deed which is written, Nayarāja [...]

Although the inscription appears to be religious in nature, the subject-matter is unclear. On a palaeographic basis, it can be placed between the 13th to 15th Century C.E.

3.5.28 Talang Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 64a and 64b; Tables: 61 and 78)
Material: Stone
Measurement: 2 m x 3 m
Provenance: Talang, Swat District
Present Location: Talang, Swat District
Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Olivieri et.al. 2006)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 12th-16th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.5.4.3)

This six lines of *in situ* Śāradā inscription is engraved on a large boulder at the Talang Rock Shelter and was first published by Olivieri with the following transliteration (Olivieri et.al. 2006: 146-147):

Line 1: śrī saṣo t(i)ṣṭha ṣa le pu ++cha++śra(?) gra(?)

Line 2: +++++

Line 3: +++++balaputra mu(ni?)

Line 4: saṃbū++++ghasa sa(?)

Line 5: ++++++da karatvena

Line 6: ///+///

Nothing much could be added to the transliteration already made by Olivieri. The few scattered words include *kara*, m. “duty/doing/maker”, *tiṣṭha* “to stay” and proper name *balaputra*. Olivieri placed the characters between the 12th to the 15th Century C.E., but our study shows that a few characters can be placed at 16th Century C.E.

3.5.29 Ādityarāja Inscription

Category: A (Plates: 65a and 65b; Tables: 62 and 78)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 32 cm x 18 cm

Provenance: Unknown

Present Location: Peshawar Museum

Accession Number: PM1235

Reference(s): Unpublished **Subject:** construction of edifice.

Date: 14th-16th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.5.4.4)

This stone slab is neatly inscribed with four lines of Śāradā inscription. The upper right part of the slab is broken and the possibility of another line in the beginning cannot be ruled out.

The inscription begins with the digits 1, 3 and 0, followed by the word *Ṣāhi* and the sign *gr-*. The second line starts with *-vena*, most probably the last component of a proper name in the preceeding line which is lost. The ending part *-ena*, sing.inst. suggested that the proper name is the subject of the succeeding verb, *karāpita* pp. of *karoti* (root verb *kr-*) “was done/made”.

The third line begins with the word *navakarmapati* “architect/builder”, also mentioned in the Mahārajñi Śrī Kameśvari and Śrī Pillaka Brāhmaṇa inscriptions (Sahni, 1933-1934: 97-98; Rahman 1979: 248). Then comes the proper name *Ādityarājā* followed by a missing character. Judging from the first two signs of the fourth line, *-hmaṇa*, the missing character can be restored as *bra*. In the fourth line, *hmaṇa* is followed by a double *daṇḍa*.

The inscription ends with *tre<ṃ>nama* “salutations” with a double *daṇḍa* and an astral design  which is exactly similar with that of the 12th Century C.E.

Bakshali Manuscript (Rahman 1979: 261; Deambi 1982: Table No.6A).

Following is the translation and transliteration:

Line 1: 130 Ṣāhi [gr.] ++++++
 Line 2: vena karāpita [had.] +
 Line 3: navakarmapa[ti] ādityarāj(a bra)
 Line 4: hmaṇa || tre<ṃ>nama ||

[...] 130 the Ṣāhi [...] the work was done by [...]va, the builder, Ādityarāja
 brahmaṇa || Salutations ||

This inscription probably commemorates the construction of a building under the supervision of a Brahman named Ādityarāja. Although the date is not certain, the characters can be placed between the 14th to 16th Century C.E.

3.5.30 Alingar Inscription

Category: B (Plates: 66a and 66b; Tables: 63 and 78)

Material: Stone

Measurement: N/A

Provenance: Karkanai Ghar, Alingar, Mohmand Agency

Present Location: Karkanai, Ghar Alingar, Mohmand Agency

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Mohammadzai 2002)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 14th-16th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.5.4.5)

This ten lines of late period Śāradā inscription was first reported by Qasim Jan Mohammadzai during his survey in the area of Mohmand agency (Mohammadzai 2002: 187). It is engraved into a rock surface 150 metres from ground level. Also found nearby

are rock carvings of animals and horse rides. As the photographs available to us are not in digital forms, the effort to read the inscription is very difficult.

Only a few isolated words could be identified from the these photograph. They include *vipatti*, f. “calamity/misfortune”, *svāti*, f. “name of a star/sword”, *kandharam*, sing.m.acc. “cloud/elephant head/neck”, *sātya*, adj. “one whose nature is truth”, *svaka*, m. “friends/kinsman/wealth” and *vrajana*, n. “going/ road”.

Following is the transliteration:

Line 1: a++sa++a+ka+nu+++
Line 2: ++++śe+śi+++rke+
Line 3: eṭṭa+ma++vaśīkriśna++
Line 4: di kapaśavipatisvati tiśa+kari+
Line 5: mase kandharām manindham kaja+garśa
Line 6: svaka nigāmasiditala+++
Line 7: sātyamarisī vrajana trathapa+++
Line 8: śavaṅka tatha+vaiśa vamaśi adi garebaciśka
Line 9: ++ki kandhaśīṭakathoda+++++ Line
10: sitam

The characters belong to 14th to 16th Century C.E.

3.5.31 Fragmentary Inscription

Category: A (Plates: 67a and 67b; Tables: 64 and 78)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 96 cm x 42 cm

Provenance: Unknown

Present Location: Lahore Museum

Accession Number: 35

Reference(s): Unpublished

Subject: Unclear

Date: 15th/16th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.5.4.6)

This large stone slab fragment bears two lines of Śāradā inscription, one runs horizontally while the other vertically. Due to its fragmentary nature, the decipherment is very difficult.

The following is the transliteration of the text:

Verticle line:

Line 1: +gī

Line 2: katakha

Horizontal line:
Line 1: +śatya+
Line 2: guitaśa Line
3: śvaṃ anī

Palaeographically, the script appears to be of late period Śāradā with connected headmarks, placed at 15th/16th Century C.E.

3.5.32 Gahurya Inscription

Category: A (Plates: 68a and 68b; Tables: 65 and 78)

Material: Brick

Measurement: 25 cm x 21 cm

Provenance: Unknown

Present Location: Lahore Museum

Accession Number: 2859

Reference(s): Unpublished

Subject: Unclear

Date: 15th/16th Century C.E. (Palaeography, See 5.5.4.7)

This square brick is inscribed with four lines of Śāradā inscription. The translation of this inscription is challenging as the etymologies of most words are not clear.

It starts with the spiral sign *om*, followed by proper name *gantaya/gahurya* and the word *potra*, n. “snout/ship or boat/garment”. The second line starts with the word *śighi* with the suffix *ka*, *śighi* might be for *śikhi*, m. which means “peacock/god of love”.

Then comes the signs *vā* and *i*, followed by *ta* in line 3. The word *ita*, adj. can be translated as “obtained/gone/returned/remembered”. Next are the words *śarita* and *cinaka*. *Śarita* might be for *śārita*, adj. “variegated/coloured” while *cinaka* probably stands for *cīnaka*, m. “camphor/fennel/Chinese”. Following is the transliteration and translation:

Line 1: *om gahuryapotra*
Line 2: *śighikavā i*
Line 3: *ta śarita*
Line 4: *cinaka*

Hail! the Gahurya snout of the peacocks, obtained the variegated fennel

On palaeographic grounds, this inscription can be placed at 15th/16th Century C.E.

3.5.33 Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka Inscription

Category: E (Plates: 69a and 69b; Tables: 66 and 78)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 55.8 cm x 24 cm

Provenance: Hazara Division

Present Location: Peshawar Museum

Accession Number: PM03431

Reference(s): (Konow 1909-1910; Shakur 1946) **Subject:** Digging of well/tank.

Date: 1461 C.E. (Laukika era)

This large stone block contains 7 lines of late period Śāradā inscription. It was received by Sir Aurel Stein and transferred to the office of the Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Frontier Circle in 1907. It was first published by S. Konow (1909-1910: 79-81) and included by Shakur (1946: 7-8) into his handbook.

According to Konow, the inscription starts with the invocations to Viṣṇu, written in Āryā metre. It records the construction of a tank by Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka for his father, Śrī Īśvara son of Śrī Śūrade which took place on Saturday, 17th October 1461. The *sthapati* (architect) was Śi[m]gāli Kargi son of Kāli from the *navagrama* (village) of *Draṅga*. It is written in Sanskrit with some mistakes, which shows that the author was not well-versed in that language (Konow 1909-1910: 80).

Among the mistakes meant by Konow probably referred to the misspelled words of *kusma* for *kusuma*, n. “flower”, *vāhu* for *bāhu*, m. “arms”, and *udīśya* for *uddiśya*, ind. “in reference to” “for the sake of”.

Following is the translation and transliteration (Konow, 1909-1910, pp. 80-81):

Line 1: Om svasti || || atasi-nava-kusma-nibhaṃ Mandara-parivarta-

Line 2: gr̥ṣṭakeyūram [|*] apaharatu duritam=akhilaṃ Madhu-Mura-Narakā

Line 3: ri-vāhu-yugam [|*] Lokya-saṃvac-chara-śate gaja-triṃśādhike saṃvat Line

4: 38 Kārtikā(ka) śu ti 13 śanau | Atra dine śrī-Śūrade-suta-śrī Īśvaraṃ

Line 5: u[d]iśya suta-śrī-Vāṇhaḍakena puṣkaraṃ karāpitam || ||

Line 6: sthapati-Kāli-suta-Śi[m]gāli-Kargi Navagrama-draṅga-vradhajana

Line 7: Om śrī sthānasya śreyaṃ bhavat...likhitaṃ liṅgasya

Om Hail! May the pair of arms of the enemy of Madhu, Mura and Naraka (Viṣṇu) turn away all evil, that which is like a fresh *atasī*-flower (and) the bracelet of which were rubbed at the turning of (the mountain) Mandara (in the churning of the ocean) [|*] In the Lokya (Laukika) year arrow (five)-hundred increased by thirty and elephants (eight), Saṃvat 38, the 13th of the bright (fortnight) of Kārtikka, on Saturday | On this day, a tank was made with the reference to śrī Īśvaraṃ, the son of śrī-Śūrade by (his)

son śrī-Vāṇhaḍaka || || the sthapati (was) Śi[m]gāli-Kargi, the son of Kāli, a Paṇḍit from Navagrama-draṅga. Om. Prosperity. May Luck follow the place...written of the Liṅga.

The inscription is contemporaneous with the period of the Bahlul Lodi of the Delhi Sultanate (1451-1489 C.E.) and Sultan Zain-ul-Abdeen of Kashmir (1420-1470 C.E.). *Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka* could be a local Hindu chief who lives under the Muslim rule.

3.6 Bilingual Inscriptions (9th to 14th Century C.E.)

Four bilingual inscriptions are documented in the region of Gandhāra. They include the Tochi Valley Bilingual inscription A, Tochi Valley Bilingual inscription B, Zalamkot Bilingual inscription and Paśaḍhamahe inscription.

3.6.1 Tochi Valley Bilingual Inscription A

Category: E (Plates: 70a and 70b; Tables: 67 and 75)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 81 cm x 24 cm x 29cm

Provenance: Tochi Valley, North Waziristan

Present Location: Peshawar Museum

Accession Number: PM5581

Reference(s): (Kuraishi 1925-1926; Shafi 1942; Shakur 1946; Dani, Humbach & Gobl 1964)

Subject: Construction of a tank

Date: 857 C.E. (Hijri and Laukika era)

The Tochi Valley Bilingual inscription A is a rectangular block of stone with nine lines of *Kufic* and five lines of *Śāradā* inscriptions. It was discovered by Mr. Pears in 1907 and first published by Muhammad Hamid Kuraishi (1925-26: 27-28), Muhammad Shafi (1942: 44-45) and Shakur (1946: 43-45). However, the exhaustive study was only made by Dani, Humbach and Gobl, who satisfactorily deciphered the inscription, studied the palaeography and discussed the historical significance (Dani et.al 1964: 134-135).

The *Kufic* part records the construction of a tank by *Hayy* son of '*Amār*' for the benefit of the people. The event took place on Friday 13th of *Jumādā*, 243 A.H (September 7th, 857 C.E.) which the *Śāradā* part gives a similar date. Dani pointed out that the script shows the characteristics of neither *Nāgarī* nor *Śāradā*. The inscription appears to be roughly executed, probably by an unskilled scribe.

Following is the translation of the *Kufic* part (Dani, Humbach, & Gobl 1964: 130):

It was ordered by Hayy, son of ‘Amār to construct this tank. May God accept his pious deeds and forgive his sinful deeds! It was recorded on Friday, the thirteenth day of Jumādā I, of the year 243. Blessings of God be upon Muḥammad, the chosen, and his descendants

Following is the transliteration and translation of the Śāradā part (Dani, Humbach, & Gobl 1964: 130):

Line 1: (Om namaḥ samvatsa)re dvātriṃśa ti
Line 2: (tame) saṃvat 32 Kārti Line 3: (ka)
māsa bahula tithau dvi(ti)
Line 4: (yā)yāṃ vadi 2 atra diva
Line 5: (se)//

Om. Salutation. In the thirty second year, year 32, in the month of Kārtika (Sept-Oct), on the second day of the dark fortnight. On this day...

The fifth line is read by us as [se]kirti[di]++. The word *kirti*, m. “the meritorious work” probably refers to the construction of the tank which is mentioned in the *Kufic* part. It appears that the Śāradā part is the Sanskrit translation of the Arabic text.

3.6.2 Tochi Valley Bilingual Inscription B

Category: E (Plates: 71a and 71b; Tables: 68 and 75)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 62 cm x 30 cm x 28 cm

Provenance: Khazana, 6.43 km from Mir Ali, North Waziristan Agency

Present Location: Peshawar Museum

Accession Number: PM5583

Reference(s): (Shakur 1946; Dani, Humbach, & Gobl 1964)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 862 C.E. (Laukika era)

The Tochi Valley Bilingual Inscription B was discovered by Barnes in 30th July 1926 and was first published by Shakur (1946: 17-18). It is a cylindrical block of stone with five lines of Bactrian and Śāradā inscriptions. The Śāradā part is engraved on the right and Bactrian on the left, separated by a dividing line.

Shakur retrieved a few words from the Śāradā part without giving the overall translation. The words include *titama samvat 38, bhupa, na(va)chandra* and *putra*.

The Bactrian part of the inscription was mistaken by him to be Mongolian, of which he erroneously identified the words *Bruain* and *Paighambar*.

Dani, Humbach and Gobl made a complete decipherment of both the Bactrian and Śāradā parts, discussed the palaeography as well as the historical significance (Dani, Humbach, & Gobl 1964: 125-135). The Bactrian part mentions the epithets of *Gomo Sahi* as the “drinker of liquor”, “shepherd of cows”, “member of the cow family”, “preserver” and “king of the noblemen”.

The reading of the Śāradā part is not entirely certain as the characters are being crudely executed. Aside from the date, the titles *Kula Nṛpa Khojana* “King Kushana” and *Naina Chandra Phruma* “Fromo” are read. Unfortunately, the subject of the inscription is unclear.

In the Śāradā part, the date of the inscription is 7th day of the *Bhādra* month, year 38 possibly of the Laukika Era, equal to the August-September 862 C.E. The date is almost contemporary with the Tochi Valley “a” (857 C.E).

Following is the transliteration and translation of the Bactrian part (Dani, Humbach, & Gobl 1964: 132):

Line 1: zo xsono x: I: b,: maho osoi gomos ahi (mo) [...n] ibixto Line
 2: ta malbo ba^o horonodogo mi(i) inano gomano kaldo ta
 Line 3: stara: gado mo kirdo gi I ro sidano malizi do ni (b...)
 Line 4: bigo harougo zoladi- bo- starani do fromono gokado Line
 5: staro

(1) In the year 632, month six, written By Gomo Sahi, (2) by him, the drinker of liquor, the lord, the shepherd of the cows, the member-of-the-cowfamily. By him the Kaldo (3) was made at the arrival of the star, (by him) who (is) a preserver, a king of the noblemen and (4) a custodian of the inscriptions elevated beyond the starts and a scion-of-fromo, a member-of-the-cowhouse.(5) a star.

Following is the transliteration and translation of the Śāradā part (Dani, Humbach, & Gobl 1964: 130-131):

Line 1: (oṃ namaḥ samvatsare aṣṭatrimṣa) titame samvat 38 bhādra
 Line 2: (pada māsa sukla pakṣa sapta)myāṃ sudi 7 atra diva
 Line 3: se /// Naina –chandra Phruma
 Line 4: ///saya///dda///
 Line 5: ///kula-narapaa khojana -putra

Hail. Salutation. In the year thirty-eight, year 38, on the seventh day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhādra. On this day ... Nai (vī-)na-chandra Phruma /// (established?) /// king of the family of /// the son of Khojana (i.e. the Kushana).

The ruler identified with these titles may be related to the Old Kushan rulers of Gandhāra or the Rutbils of Zabulistan (Dani, Humbach, & Gobl 1964: 127).

3.6.3 Zalamkot Bilingual Inscription

Category: D (Plates: 72a and 72b; Tables: 69 and 77)

Material: Marble

Measurement: 55 cm x 36 cm

Provenance: Batkhela, Zalamkot, Malakand District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Rahman, 1997-1998; 1998; 2002b)

Subject: Construction of resting place

Date: 1011 C.E. (Hijri era)

This rectangular marble stone slab bears seven lines of Kufic and three lines of Śāradā inscription. Except on the left-hand lower corner, the inscription is slightly damaged at the corners. It was fixed onto a wall during its discovery before being sold into the antiquity market.

The Zalamkot Bilingual inscription is among the earliest Persian inscription found in Pakistan, and is closely related to the invasion of Ghaznavids in Swat Valley. It was first published by Rahman, who translated the Kufic part and first line of the Śāradā part (Rahman 1997-1998: 35-38; Rahman 1998: 469-473). Based on the personalities and information retrieved from the inscription, Rahman added to the history of Ghaznavids invasion in the Indo-Pak Subcontinent (Rahman 2002b: 11-14).

According to him, the Swat Valley was one of the adjoining territories which were subdued by the Ghaznavids in the beginning of spring in 1002 C.E. Arslān Jādhib who was mentioned in the inscription probably reached the Zulamkot area during this time, and brought Swat under his control. Rahman mentioned that the presence of a tomb in Zulamkot shows that the Ghaznavid armies must have had suffered casualties, and it was upon the graves of those martyrs that Arslān wished to build a mausoleum.

The date of the Persian part is the month of *Dhū al-Qa'ada*, year 401 (Hijrī), equal to June 1011. The date given in the Sanskrit part is year 189, probably of the *Śāhi* Era, which initially calculated by him to begin in 843 C.E. (Rahman 1979: 318).

However, by correlating the year 189 with that of the Hijri date,²⁶ he reassigned the beginning to 822 C.E. The complete date as provided by the Śāradā part is June 19, 1011 C.E.

The inscription records the construction of an edifice mentioned as *markad* (مركد) of which the foundation stone was laid by *Arslān Al Jādhīb*, the Grand *Amir* of Ṭūs. Rahman translated the word *markad* (مركد) as tomb, dedicated to *Arslān*'s fallen comrades during a military campaign (Rahman 2002b: 14). However, the correct word for tomb is *marqad* (مرقد) instead of *markad* (مركد) and it was assumed that the mistake done by the scribe due to the lack of knowledge in Arabic (Rahman 1997-1998: 35).

Following is the transliteration and translation of the Persian part (Rahman 1997-1998: 36):

With the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful
There is no god but Allāh, Muhammad is the Prophet of Allāh
This tomb was founded by the Grand *Amīr*, the governor of Ṭūs,
Arslān Al-Jādhīb, may Allah prolong his life. It was completed by
The *Sipahbak* (i.e. commander) *Khalīlbak*, son of the *Kotwāl* Ahmad al-Baghr
May Allāh perpetuate his fortune, in the month of Dhū al-Qa'ada The
current (*marr*) year was 401 (Hijri)

Following is the translation and transliteration of the Sanskrit part. His reading of the first line posed no problem (Rahman 1997-1998: 38): Om Samvat 189 āsāḍha vati 1 atra dine Srī

Salutation, on the first of the dark fortnight of the month āsāḍha in the year 189

Based on the photograph available to us, the decipherment of the remaining two lines of the Śāradā is possible. The reading of the first line posed no problem.

In the second line, the first two characters are read as *u* and *pa*, while the third character appears to be superscript *sa* with an illegible ligature. The next two characters are *gā* and *dha*. The first word of the second line is probably read as *upas[tha]anagādhā* which consist of two elements, *upasthāna* n.

“sanctuary/place/abode/palace/settlement” and *gādhā* n. “ground for standing on in water”. Then comes the title *maha śrī* <a>*mira tosa*, the Sanskritized form of “The

²⁶ Year 189 subtracted from year 1011

Grand Amir of Ṭūs”. Finally there is the proper name *Śrī Asalana*, a Sanskrit rendering of “The Illustrious Arsalan”. The suffix –*sa* may be the corrupt form of –*sya* sing.gen.

In the beginning of the third line, the first three characters are obliterated. The word *bhavataḥ* is the 3rd person.du.pres for *bhavati* “to become/happen”. The word *koṭṭapala* means “officer in charge of the fort” or “commander of the fort” (Sircar 1966: 161). The next word *maha śrī* “the great and illustrious” is followed by the reading *tha*. The translation of the final few words are unclear, but possibly refer to a proper name.

Following is the full transliteration and translation:

Line 1: om samvat 189 Aśadha vati1 atra dine śrī

Line 2: [upas](thā)nag<ā>dha maha śrī <a>mira tosa śrī asalanas<y>a

Line 3: +++ta kaśo bhavataḥ koṭṭapala maha śrī tha//

Hail, in the year 189, month of Aśadha, at the first dark fortnight day, at this day, the Grand Amir of Ṭūs, the Illustrious Arsalan and [...] has made the great sanctuary for fetching water (resting place, place for refreshment), the commander of the fort [...]

Rahman acknowledged the deficiency of evidences about the so-called tomb recorded in the Persian part (Rahman 2002b: 12). He pointed out that the epigraph mentioned nothing about the person buried in the tomb and the date when the construction started. He also added that the type of tomb, whether it was just a grave, a walled enclosure or a roofed mausoleum is not being mentioned in the inscription. On the other hand, the *Śāradā* hardly mentions anything about the construction of a tomb, which is translated in Sanskrit as *mṛtagrha* n. “house of the dead” or *samādhi* m. “tomb”.

Thus, his interpretation regarding the subject-matter of the inscription, which is to record the construction of a tomb, is not final. Study on the *Śāradā* part yields another possible interpretation, that it could also record the construction of a resting place, a palace, settlement, sanctuary etc. Aside from translating *markad* (مكرم) as a modern Arabic word, detailed study on its etymology in the context of 11th Century C.E. Turkish, Persian and colloquial Arabic is necessary to affirmatively confirm the meaning.

3.6.4 Paśaḍhamahe Bilingual Inscription

Category: B (Plates: 73a and 73b; Table: 70)

Material: Stone

Measurement: 17.1 cm x 5.8 cm

Provenance: Swat District

Present Location: Private Collection

Accession Number: N/A

Reference(s): (Zarawar Khan & Wahab 2012)

Subject: Unclear

Date: 9th-14th Century C.E.

It is a fragmentary stone slab with Śāradā and Kufic inscriptions and the owner encircled it with ring of mud to prevent it from further decaying. Zarawar Khan published the photograph and other information about this inscription (Zarawar Khan & Wahab 2012: 62, pl.21).

The arabic part is extremely worn out and illegible, and only 5 characters remained in the Śāradā part. The transliteration is *paśaḍhamahe*, with an uncertain etymology.

It is extremely difficult to determine the palaeographic date of the inscription as the five characters of this inscription showed the common feature of Śāradā script, broadly placed between the 9th to 14th Century C.E.

CHAPTER FOUR CONTRIBUTION OF THE BRĀHMĪ AND ŚĀRADĀ INSCRIPTIONS TO

THE HISTORY, CULTURE AND RELIGION OF GANDHĀRA

4.1 Epigraphic Materials as Historic Source

Epigraphic materials from Gandhāra possess unique advantages with regards to their contribution to the history of the region. They usually record contemporary events, and in some cases incorporate historical accounts of a particular dynasty from its foundation until the date of the inscription (Sircar 1965: 18). Unlike manuscripts, the texts in inscriptions are not usually liable for modifications, making it more trustworthy than any other literary works (Sircar 1965: 20). This is because most literary works are written in manuscripts which have to be copied from time to time when the medium started to decay, and in the process of copying, the text could have been easily altered. However, as inscriptions are engraved into hard and unperishable medium, there is no necessity for them to be copied, and the original text usually remains unaltered from the date it was executed.

The events usually recorded in inscriptions are donations for religious establishments, construction of temples, religious festivals and the purchase of lands. In some inscriptions, name and titles of personages, especially rulers alongside with their relatives are mentioned. This contributes a lot in reconstructing the genealogy of the rulers. Epigraphic study in Gandhāra on the Kharoṣṭhī, Aramaic and Greek inscriptions had become the foundation for the history of the region before 4th Century C.E. (Nasim Khan 1998b: 30-45).

In the present research, it has been proven that the Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions are as equally important in reconstructing the history of Gandhāra, especially after the 4th Century C.E. Thus, this chapter firstly analyses the information gathered from the contents of the inscriptions discussed in Chapter Three. The discussions the distributions of Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions in Gandhāra, issuers and personalities mentioned in the epigraphs, their subject-matters as well as religious affiliations. After that, their contribution to our knowledge about the Post-Kushan history of Gandhāra is discussed.

4.2 Analysis of Brāhmī and Śāradā Epigraphs of Gandhāra

The information gathered from the 73 Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions can be discussed from several aspects; 1. Their distributions in the Gandhāra region 2. Issuers and personages mentioned in the epigraphs 3. Subject-matter of the inscriptions and 4. Religious affiliations of the inscriptions

4.2.1 Distribution of Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions in Gandhāra

The distribution of Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions shows a particular pattern (See Table 80 and 81; Chart 1 and 2; Map 2, 3, 4 and 5).

The Aśokan, Post-Mauryan and Kushan Brāhmī inscriptions dated from between the 3rd Century B.C. to the 4th Century C.E. remain the earliest data documented by us. However, they only constitute a fraction of the overall bulk of data (6 inscriptions), and 4 of them are suspected to have resulted from forgery.

From the second half of the 4th Century C.E., the last remnants of the Eastern Kushan ruler in Gandhāra came to an end, along with the usage of Kharoṣṭhī. In the 4th/5th Century C.E., the north-western variant of Gupta-Brāhmī script started to be widely used in Gandhāra, especially in Kashmir Smast. This can be observed from the significant rise of the chart, where 24 Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions are documented. The Gupta-Brāhmī of Gandhāra appeared to have a distinctive style. However, two of these materials are of doubtful authenticity.

Between the 5th to 7th Century C.E., only 6 Proto-Śāradā inscriptions are recorded. However, in the period between 7th to 16th Century C.E., Śāradā became the most popular system of writing in Gandhāra when the figure sharply increases to 37, with 4 existing as bilingual inscriptions. Between 9th-11th Century C.E., Śāradā existed in its fully developed form, and continued to be used until the 16th Century C.E. until it was totally replaced by the Perso-Arabian script.

Although a good number of these Brāhmī and Śāradā scripts were documented, their provenances are not evenly distributed throughout the region (See Chart 2 and Table 80).

Almost half of them (33 Inscriptions or 45.21%) were discovered in three main districts, namely Mardan, Swabi and Swat. The district with the most inscriptions is Mardan, of which all of them were retrieved from Kashmir Smast (15 Inscriptions or

20.55%). From these 15, 12 are written in Gupta-Brāhmī,²⁷ 1 is written in Brāhmī and 2 in Śāradā. Mardan is the area which yielded the most inscriptions using the Brāhmī derived script in Gandhāra.

In the Swabi district (11 Inscriptions or 15.07 %), 10 were found in the site of Hund; 2 are written in Proto Śāradā and 8 in Śāradā. In Swat, 7 inscriptions were discovered (9.72%), 3 are written in Gupta-Brāhmī while the other 4 in Śāradā. As for the other inscriptions, they are sparsely distributed over a wide area of Greater Gandhāra, from Kabul in the West to Shapur in the East.²⁸ A good number of inscriptions are with unknown provenances (12 Inscription or 16.44%), 10 are written in Śāradā, 1 in Gupta Brāhmī and 1 in Brāhmī.

Based on these statistics, it is concluded that the widespread usage of the Brāhmī probably begun Kashmir Smast, of which the Gupta-Brāhmī used possess their own distinctive style of writing. The centre later shifted to Hund and Swat in the 6th/7th Century C.E. where a considerable number of Proto-Śāradā and Śāradā inscriptions were documented.

4.2.2 Issuers and personages in the epigraphs

Study regarding the names and titles retrieved from inscriptions found in Gandhāra was done by Falk (2010: 73-90). In his work, he analysed the titles of nobilities and office-holders of the Indo-Greek, Kṣatrapas, Indo-Scythians, Kushans, Śāhi-Muruṇḍas, and the Hun rulers. Falk also studied the personal names of the Kṣatrapas and the Huns. However, his research only covers the period up to the 5th Century C.E. Our detailed study has added more to the information regarding the names of the personalities involved in the recorded events. We also managed to classify the issuers of the inscriptions which include kings, members of the royal family, government officials/nobles, vassal rulers/local chiefs or private individuals/donors (See Table 82; Chart 3).

Out of the 73 inscriptions, 26 or 35.62% are not having their issuers known (See Table 80). The personalities who issued 20 of these 26 epigraphs cannot be identified

²⁷ Kashmir Smast is the site which yielded the most Gupta-Brāhmī Inscriptions in Gandhāra.

²⁸ They were found in various areas including Punjab Province, Hazara Division, North Waziristan Agency, South Waziristan Agency, Rawalpindi District, Malakand District, Buner District, Dir District, Peshawar District, Mohmand Agency, Jalalabad, Kabul and Mazar-I-Syarif.

because their texts are either too damaged or not readable at all. As for the other 6 inscriptions, the issuers are not known for two reasons. In the Relief panel, Mahāparinibbānasutta, Dhammapada I, Dhammapada II, Dewai and the Memorial

Stone inscriptions, the texts simply do not include the name of the issuer. As for the Śrī Pillaka Brahmāṇa inscription, the available handcopy do not permit a complete decipherment by Princep and Rahman, and did not unveil the name of the patron of the inscription. For the Ananda inscription, although the issuer is not known, the name *Spativāra* is mentioned. However, his identity and role in the event recorded in the inscription is unclear.

Private individuals constituted the highest number of issuers (28 inscriptions or 38.36%), and in most cases their names were being mentioned. In inscriptions written in Brāhmī, the personal names of the three individuals are *Bakaka/Bakagra*, *Samghila* and *Budhyama*. For Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions found in Kashmir Smast, personages such as *Devadharmā*, *Viṣṇuśiri*, *Dharmadata* and *Śrī Vaiḷikā* were mentioned. The names *Buddhadāsa*, *Devaśrī*, *Harivarman*, *Yasonandini*, *Ratnaśa*, *Mahārāja Kadambeśvaradāsa* and *Gaśura Ṣaphara* son of *Maka* were found in the other Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions discovered in the remaining part of Gandhāra. Two individual issuers are known from the 5th-7th Century Proto Śāradā inscriptions, which are *Jayanta*, Son of *Kamsa* and a Brahman named *Bhaṭṭaradatta*. A good number of epigraphs written in Śāradā were issued by individuals, whose name include the daughter of *Kinasre*, *Śrī Viccaharāja* son of *Ghoraśiva*, *Sabhaḍikaṇā Ghikadhāghika*, *Ghaṭṭibhoṭṭika*, *Śrī Sahasyarāja*, *Kāmalavara*, Son of *Śrī Mālīka*, *Nayarāja* and *Ādityarāja*. Other personalities involved in the events recorded in the inscriptions were the daughter and wife of *Maghuṅgha*, *Hrāryamakhaka*, *Ṛṣi Kandaja*, father of *Ḍanimesaṅgaṭeraghaṭṭa*, *Śrī Kulaśaṅka* son of *Śrī Puiya*.

Seven inscriptions or 9.59 % were issued by kings. The earliest example is the Aśokan rock edict of Buner, though its authenticity is very much doubtful. Two 4th/5th Century C.E. Wano and Spina inscriptions were issued by local rulers who received the title *Mahārāja*. The Wano inscription was issued by *Mahārāja Tośśāṇa*, son of *Mahārāja Yapsuṇa Mihira*. The Spina inscription on the other hand was issued by *Mahārāja Ya+ṇa Mīhusarthutra* and mentioned other personalities such as the friend of *Tati*, *Cagrakpa* and *Thoḍatā* the mother of *Kudilā*. In the Stupa consecration

Copper Scroll inscription, the names of Alkhon rulers, such as *Mehama*, *Javukha*, *Khingila* and *Toramāṇa* were mentioned. *Narendrāditya* and *Paramabhaṭṭaraka Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Śāhi Khingila* were mentioned in the two Proto-Śāradā inscriptions found in Gardez and Hund, both names probably referring to the same monarch of the Khingal dynasty (Dani 1999:170; Rahman 2002a: 37-38). Only one Śāradā documented in this thesis is known to be issued by a king, which is the Palola Śāhi inscription. Although the *Śrī Bhaganaṣa* inscription was probably issued by a private individual, a king named *Śrī Bhaganaṣa* is mentioned. Aside from rulers, two inscriptions or 2.74% were issued by members of the royal family. The Mahārajñī Śrī Kameśvarīdevi inscription was issued by a Hindu Śāhi queen, named *Śrī Kameśvarīdevi*. Other personalities mentioned in the inscription were *Jayantarāja* son of *Upendra*, *Śrī Pillaka Brahmana* the son of *Śrī Vīraditya* and *Śrī Bhogika* son of *Śrī Vihenda*. These three personalities were also mentioned in the Śrī Pillaka Brāhmaṇa inscription. As for the *Kṛṣṇaratipadajo* inscription, it clearly mentioned *Kṛṣṇaratipadajo* as the son of the king, *Rājaputro*. However, to which king this inscription was referring to is not yet known.

Vassals or feudatories are local rulers who carried out administration in certain areas with some degree of autonomy on behalf of a superior or more powerful monarch. Four Śāradā and Bilingual inscriptions or 5.48% were issued by these subordinate rulers. Three of them came from North-Waziristan, which are all dated at 9th Century C.E. They are the Mir Ali inscription, Tochi Valley Bilingual inscription

A and B. The Mir Ali inscription records *Śrī Dehi* daughter of *Śrī Kaṁika* of the *Candruṇa* family as the patron while mentioning other names such as House of *Lalle* and son of *Doṭaka*. The Tochi Valley Bilingual inscription “a” was produced by *Hayy* son of *Amār* while Tochi Valley Bilingual inscription “b” by *Gomo Sahi*, also mentioned as *Naivīnachandra Phruma* and the son of *Khojana* in the Sanskrit part. Another example of inscription issued by a Hindu chieftains during the Muslim period is the *Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka* inscription. The issuer is *Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka*, who did the meritorious work on behalf of *Śrī Īśvara*, the son of *Śrī Śūrade*. The architect for the construction of the tank is *Śi[m]gāli-Kargi*, the son of *Kāli*.

Six inscriptions or 8.22% were issued by government officials or people of the noble class. The earliest inscription of this category is the Gupta-Brāhmī Cooking Vessel

inscription, issued by *Devadāsa* who received the title *Daṇḍanāyaka* and also mentioned the title of the ruling king as *Mahārājaputra*. Unfortunately, the authenticity of this inscription is questionable. The Jayapāla Śāhi inscription was issued by *Caṅgulavarman* son of *Paṅgula*, possibly an official of the Śāhi government. This epigraph also mentioned the names of the two most important Śāhi rulers: *Bhīmadeva* and *Jayapāladeva*. Another Hindu Śāhi period Veka inscription which records the meritorious work of *Mahā Maitya* mentioned the name of a local ruler's *Śrī Śāhi Veka*. The Zulamkot Bilingual inscription was issued by a Ghaznavid Governor of Ṭus, *Arslān Al-Jādhīb*. In the Sanskrit part, his name was mentioned as *Śrī Amira Tosa Śrī Asalana*. The Toramāṇa Śāhi and Ratnamañjarī inscriptions were issued by personages possessing high social statuses, which is known from the titles they received. The issuer of Toramāṇa Śāhi inscription was *Roṭa-Siddhavṛddhi*, son of *Roṭa Jayavṛddhi* who received the titles “lord of many Vihāras” and “the one whose name praised and honoured by the lord of Naścira”. The patron of Ratnamañjarī inscription is *Ratnamañjarī*, the daughter of *Śrī Ḍanuma* who was described as being “disposed to the favour of the *Kirāta* chief”. Other personages mentioned in the inscription include king *Vijayapāla*, the crown prince *Candrapāla* and the architect *Araṇima*.

4.2.3 Subject-matters of the inscriptions

The Brāhmī and Śāradā epigraphs of Gandhāra were issued for various purposes. Unfortunately, 24 inscriptions or 32.88% of the overall data are not serving their purposes due to several reasons (See table 83, Chart 4). The first reason is, the epigraphs are too damaged, that information regarding the subject-matter cannot be retrieved from the preserved part of the text. These inscriptions include the Aśokan Rock Edict, Bangle inscription, Ananda inscription, Shahpur inscription, Ranigat inscription, Vasantaraja inscription, Broken image base inscription, Gumbatuna inscription, Kamala inscription, Fragmentary inscription, Talang inscription and Paśaḍhamahe bilingual inscription. As for the Conch-Shell inscription and Alingar inscription, our decipherments are not yet as satisfactory to yield information about the purpose. Finally, the subject-matter of some inscriptions is not known because they are simply not being mentioned in the text. They include Tochi Valley B, Dharmadata inscription, Viṣṇuva inscription, Painted inscriptions, Promjavarājya inscription,

Ghaṭṭibhoṭṭika inscription, Dewai inscription, Memorial Stone inscription and the Gahurya inscription.

Eight inscriptions or 10.96% record some sort of meritorious works. However, the nature of their meritorious works, whether they refer to a donation, construction of building or the establishment of image are not known due to two main reasons. For the Wano, Narendrāditya, Palola Śāhi, Íśvara, Barikot and Nayaraja inscriptions, they are either broken or too worn out to give a complete reading and translation. As for the Kṛṣṇaratipadajo inscription, the specific meritorious work is not being mentioned in the text.

Nine inscriptions or 12.33% record the construction of buildings, consisting of temples, monasteries or resting place. The Mahārāja Kadambeśvaradāsa, Mahārajñi Śrī Kameśvaridevi, Ratnamañjarī, Jayapāla Śāhi and Śrī Pillaka Brahmana inscriptions record the construction of temples for various Hindu deities such as Kumāra and Śaṅkara. The Toramāṇa Śāhi and Bi-Scriptual inscriptions record the construction of Buddhist Vihāras while the Zalamkot bilingual inscription records the construction of a resting place. Although the Ādityarāja inscription probably records the construction of a building, the type of building is unknown as part of the inscription is broken.

Another 9 inscriptions or 12.33% record donations for religious establishments consisting of household objects, food and money. The cooking vessel inscription, Kamaṇḍalu inscriptions No.I, II and III, Shorkot and Copper Ladle inscriptions recorded the donations of pots and ladles for various Hindu and Buddhist monastic establishments. These materials were probably used for domestic purposes in the monasteries. The Śrī Bhaganaṣa inscription mentions the donations of gold coins and grass mat for probably a religious establishment while the Sita Maha Kandara inscription records a permanent endowment of gold coins and food for the temple and monastery of the god Vardamāneśvara.

The subject-matter of 8 inscriptions or 10.96% are the installation of religious images. The inscriptions which record the establishments of Hindu images are Vāsudeva Pratima, Khiṃgala Śāhi, Narasiṃha, Vekaraja and Vāsudeva Nārāyaṇa bronze image inscriptions. The installations of the Buddhist image are mentioned in the Bronze Buddha Image inscriptions I and II. As for the Wartir inscription, the identity

of the image is not known as only the pedestal remains, and the inscription is not complete.

Five inscriptions or 6.86% record the construction/digging of wells or water tanks. The digging of a well is recorded in the Mir Ali and Dewal inscriptions. In both these instances, the well was mentioned as *ananakūha* or *ananakūpa*. The word *kūpa* for well was mentioned in the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of Gandhāra as *kuo*, *kue*, *kupe*, *kuve* and *kuvo* (Falk 2009b: 23-37). The construction of a water tank or pond, variously mentioned as *puṣkara* and *vāpī* are recorded in the Śrī Vaṇhaḍaka and Dal Mahat inscriptions, probably for religious or domestic purposes.

Finally, 7 inscriptions or 9.59% contain religious texts, of which 4 of them are affiliated with the Buddhist faith. The Mahaparinibbana Sutta, Dhammapada I and Dhammapada II inscriptions found in the Malam Jabba valley were probably carved by the Buddhist pilgrims out of their piety. As for the Relief panel inscription, the inscription is engraved as a caption for the relief describing the Buddha's promenade. However, the incomplete text of Copper Plate II, III and IV made it difficult for us to identify their religious affiliations. However, based on their findspots in Kashmir Smast, they could be Hindu in nature.

4.2.4 Brāhmī and Śāradā records on Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam in Gandhāra

The information gathered from these epigraphs also gave descriptions about Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam in Gandhāra (See Table 84; Chart 5). Unfortunately, the religion of 21 inscriptions or 28.77% are not known. For the Tochi Valley B inscription, Dal Mahat inscription, Promjharājya inscription, Ghaṭṭibhoṭṭika inscription, Dewal inscription, Śrī Malikaputra inscription, Gahurya inscription and Memorial stone inscription, their religious influences are not known because the texts did not make any mention on the subject. For the rest of the inscriptions, they are too damaged for their religious nature to be determined.

Although the numismatic study by Nasim Khan had shown that the early Muslim arrival in Gandhāra took place in the second half of the 7th Century C.E.

(Nasim Khan 2013: 123), the Śāradā epigraphs showing affiliations with the Muslim faith are dated much later, between 9th to 11th Century C.E. The Tochi Valley bilingual inscription A were issued during the period when the Umayyad empire were expanding

their power into the region. As for the Zulamkot bilingual inscription and the Śrī Haṃmīra inscription, they were issued when the Ghaznavid rulers already cemented their rule in Gandhāra.

4.2.4.1 Buddhism according to Brāhmī and Śāradā records

Buddhism probably reached Gandhāra during the period of Mauryan rule under the emperor Aśoka (mid 3rd Century C.E.) and continued to be practiced in the region during the Indo-Greek and Scytho-Parthian period. During the Kushan rule especially under Kaniška, Mahayana Buddhism flourished under the great royal patronage. A great number of Buddhist inscriptions written in Kharoṣṭhī were found in the region while those written in Brāhmī and Śāradā are much less in number.

Only 14 inscriptions or 19.17% of the overall data showing Buddhist affiliations dated between the 3rd Century B.C. to 6th Century C.E. However, the authenticity of the few earlier dated inscriptions such as the Aśokan rock edict, Copper Ladle inscription, Cooking Vessel inscription, Bi-scriptual inscription and Inscription at the time of Huviška are extremely doubtful.

Most Buddhist inscriptions recorded in this thesis either contain religious texts or record religious donations. The Mahaparinibbana Sutta inscription and Dhammapada inscription I and II of Swat contain Sanskrit rendering of the Pali Mahaparinibbana Sutta and Dhammapada. These three inscriptions, in addition to numerous other archaeological discoveries in Swat, show the presence of a Buddhist community in the area. The Shorkot inscription (502 C.E.) which recorded a donation to the congregation of monks shows the prevalence of the *Sarvativadi* sect in Punjab under the Gupta empire rule.

The latest Buddhist inscription is the 5th/6th Century C.E. Toramāṇa Śāhi inscription, which recorded the construction of a Buddhist monastery and the donations by the Roṭa Siddhavṛddhi son of Roṭa Jayavṛddhi. This meritorious act was done for the benefit of the family members of Roṭa Siddhavṛddhi and King Toramāṇa Śāhi. Contrary to the description of Hieun-Tsang regarding the Hun's aggression in destroying Buddhist monasteries, this inscription shows King Toramana Śāhi's tolerance towards Buddhism. Such a tolerance was also proven by the discovery of

“post-Gandharan” Stupas found in the region (Filigenzi 2010a: 396). Another inscription found in Afghanistan, the Stupa Consenration Copper Scroll inscription, even shows that Hun rulers were patronizing Buddhist religious establishments (Melzer 2006: 251-278).

Although no Buddhist inscriptions dated after the 6th Century C.E. were documented during this research, the archaeological discoveries especially in Swat shows that Buddhism coexisted with Hinduism in the area during the Turk Śāhi period in the 7th/8th Century C.E. (Filigenzi 2010b: 413; 2011: 198). During the Hindu Śāhi period, Albiruni mentioned that Buddhism continued to survive in the region alongside the more predominant Hinduism until the 11th Century C.E. (Gupta 1984: 129).

4.2.4.2 Chronology for the spread of Hinduism in Gandhāra

Thirty three epigraphs documented in this thesis are affiliated with the Hindu faith. The earliest epigraphical evidence for the presence of Hinduism in Gandhāra is the Narasiṃha inscription (2nd-4th Century C.E.) found in Cheniot, Punjab which shows that Hinduism was being practised alongside with Buddhism in the 4th Century C.E.

In the 4th/5th Century C.E., the discovery of a good number of Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions in Kashmir Smast shows that the early rise of Hinduism in Gandhāra have initially concentrated in the area. This is also evident from the discoveries of a great number of antiquities and monuments in the vast archaeological complex as compared to other areas in the region (Nasim Khan 2001c: 1). The discovery of the Wano, Kadambeśvaradāsa, Vāsudeva Pratima, Khiṃgala Śāhi and Narendrāditya inscriptions show that between the 4th to 7th Century C.E., Hinduism started to slowly gain popularity in Gandhāra. Among the important evidences for the presence of Hinduism during this period are the Hindu temples of Kafir-kot which are dated from 6th Century C.E. (Meister & Rahman 2001: 571-578).

The Ananda, Ranigat and Śrī Bhāganaṣa inscriptions show that the Hindu faith continued to prevail in Gandhāra during the Turk-Śāhi rule. Between the 9th to 11th Century C.E., Hinduism gained true prominence in Gandhāra and received royal patronage by the Hindu Śāhi rulers. Nine Hindu inscriptions coming from this period were documented, all bearing records regarding the digging of wells, religious donations, construction of Hindu temples and establishment of Hindu images.

In the 11th Century C.E., the Ghaznavids invaded Gandhāra, forever ending the Hindu domination in the region and cemented the Muslim rule. However, the invasion by the Muslims did not abruptly extinguished Hinduism in the area. The Kṛṣṇaratipadajo, Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka, and Nayaraja inscriptions dated between the 11th to 15th Century C.E. shows that long after the fall of the Śāhis, donations for Hindu establishments and construction of Hindu temples continued to be carried out by individuals.

4.2.4.3 Hindu Cults in Gandhāra

Although there are 33 inscriptions affiliated with the Hindu religion, the specific gods or goddesses were only mentioned in 20 of them. According to these epigraphs, there were two major Hindu cults in Gandhāra, Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism.

Śaivism is one of the most frequently mentioned cults in the Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions of Gandhāra, occurring in 7 epigraphs. The god Śiva is invoked in various names such as Śiva, Vardhamāneśvara, Bhūtanātha, Śarva, Nilakantha, Śaṅkara, Kumāra and Īśvara. Archaeological and historical sources on the other hand show that Śiva was also being worshipped in Gandhāra in the forms of Linga, Mukha Linga, Skanda, Kārttikeya and Maheśvara (Beal 1884:114; Aiyar 1913-1914: 276280; Taddei 1962: 288-310; 1964:24-25; Khan Sahib 1934-1935: Plate VIII f1; Nasim Khan 2006: 60-61; Samad 2010: 91). The Kadambeśvaradāsa inscription, dated at 344 C.E., is one of the early records of Śaivism in Gandhāra, which mentions the construction of a Kumāra temple, a representation of the God Skanda, Viśakha and Mahāsenā (Sircar 1953-1954: 60-61). During the same period, the Sita Maha Kandara inscription records the donation and ceremony for the god Vardhamāneśvara. The Ranigat inscription hints the thriving Śaivism during the Turk-Śāhi period in the 8th/9th Century C.E., of which the eulogy for the king is accompanied with an invocation to the Lord Śiva. Another Śaivite inscription dated during the Turk-Śāhi period is the Ananda inscription with the incantation *om nama Śivāya* at the end of the text. The Veka, Jayapāla Śāhi and Īśvara inscriptions are other evidences attesting the popularity of Śaivism during the Hindu Śāhi period. Finally, the late period Kṛṣṇaratipadajo

inscription shows that even in the 11th-13th Century C.E., Śiva was still worshipped in Kashmir Smast.

Other Hindu deities worshipped in Gandhāra, which are closely related to Śaivism are Bhīma, Durga, Uma, Gaṇeśa and Śaṣṭi. The Goddess Parvati, the consort of Śiva was worshipped in the forms of Bhīma and Durga in Gandhāra. The presence of the Bhīma cult, also known as Lajja Gauri, in Kashmir Smast was mentioned by Hiuen-Tsang, and is known from the inscriptions coming from the area (Beal 1884: 112-114). The epigraphs mentioning donations for the Goddess Bhīma include Kamaṇḍalu inscriptions I, II and III. The goddess was also mentioned in the Sita Maha Kandara inscription as well as in the seals and sealings found in Kashmir Smast (Nasim Khan 2006: 111-120). As for the Goddess Durga, it was invoked in the Veka inscription as the one who possessed the eight powers. Aside from the inscription, a number of Durga images were also found in Afghanistan and Swat (Gupta 1984: 132). Although only one inscription documented by us records the establishment of the Mahāvināyaka image, a good number of other Gaṇeśa images and rock carvings were documented in the region. Among them are the rock carving in Swat, two marble images of Kabul, the terracotta plaque of Bannu and Bronze Gaṇeśa of Kashmir Smast (Gupta 1984: 133; Nasim Khan 2006: 50-51; Filigenzi 2011: 199). As for the Śrī Bhaganaṣa inscription, the image attached to the inscribed surface could either be Gaṇeśa or Kuvera. The information gathered from the inscriptions along with other archaeological and historical accounts showed that the Bhīma, Durga and Gaṇeśa cults had a considerable number of followers in the area. As for of the goddess Śaṣṭi, the consort of Skanda, the evidence of her worship in Gandhāra is only known from the two sculptures found in the region (Samad 2010: 123-124).

Seven inscriptions documented in this thesis shows the presence Vaiṣṇavism, which is also evident from the archaeological discoveries. The Lord Viṣṇu was mentioned in these epigraphs in various names or avatars such as Vāsudeva, Narasiṃha and Kṛṣṇa. Viṣṇu was briefly invoked in the Viṣṇuva inscription of Kashmir Smast as *Om Śraviṣṇuva*, and is also mentioned as the enemy of Madhu, Mura and Naraka in the 15th Century Śrī Vaṇhaḍaka inscription in the Āryā metre in the beginning of the text. The Viṣṇu worship in the form of Vāsudeva-Nārāyaṇa is mentioned in the Gupta Brāhmī Vāsudeva Nārāyaṇa bronze image inscription of Kashmir Smast and Vāsudeva Pratima inscription of Hund. Other avatars of Viṣṇu being worshipped in Gandhāra are

Narasimha and Kṛṣṇa, having been mentioned in the Narasimha and Narendraditya inscriptions respectively. The epigraphic evidences in Gandhāra are in conformity with the archaeological discoveries regarding the thriving Vaiṣṇavism in Gandhāra between the 4th to 10th Century C.E. The archaeological discoveries include the Viṣṇu image of Kashmir Smast, rock carving of Swat, Viṣṇu image of Julian Sherrier Collection, Varāha from Bannu, Kṛṣṇa fighting with Keśin image of Taxila and the Viṣṇu Caturānana temple from Barikot (Khan Sahib 1935-1936: Plate xia; Nasim Khan 2006: 48-49; Filigenzi 2011: 202; 2010b: 411; 2011: 205; Samad 2010: 80-83).

The rock carving in Swat shows the presence of the Sūrya cult in Gandhāra in the 7th/8th Century C.E. (Filigenzi 2011:199). The mention of *Sūryadvijas*, or Sunworshippers in the Mahārājñi Śrī Kameśvaridevi inscription of the Hindu Śāhi period shows that the cult endured in Gandhāra until the 11th Century C.E.

4.3 Post-Kushan History of Gandhāra

Unfortunately, only a small number of inscriptions dated before the 4th Century C.E. are documented in the present research, with some of their authenticity highly doubtful. However, after the 4th Century C.E., more Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions appeared, being issued either by rulers or individuals. In the succeeding centuries, inscriptions written in Proto-Śāradā and Śāradā continued to be issued. The information retrieved from these materials gave insights into the history of the region between the 4th to 15th Century C.E.

These inscriptions gave insights into the political landscape of Gandhāra during the Sassanian, Kidarite, Turk-Śāhi, Hindu Śāhi and Muslim period.

4.3.1 King Kadambeśvaradāsa and the Sassanians

The earliest Brāhmī inscription issued by a king documented in the present research is the Mahārāja Kadambeśvaradāsa inscription (344 C.E.). This inscription is contemporary with the reign of Shapur II (309-379 C.E.) who annexed Gandhāra to be ruled directly under the Sassanian Empire. It recorded the construction of the temple of the god Kumara by *Gaśūra Shāphara*, son of *Maka*, a name which appears to be of Iranian influence (Sircar 1953-1954: 61).

Falk tried to link king Kadambēśvaradāsa with the ruler of Kadamba, a kingdom situated in Southern India (Falk 2004: p.148). However, he pointed out that this interpretation had led to questions on how a king ruling 2000 km away prevailed in Abbotabad (Falk 2004: 148).

The title *Mahārāja* for Kadambēśvaradāsa qualifies him to be considered as the ruling monarch of the area, or at least as a semi-independent king. There is possibility of some relation between the Kadambēśvaradāsa with the Sassanians who were ruling in Gandhāra. He could be a vassal or even a branch of the Sassanian ruling house.

Unfortunately, this ruler is not known from the presently available epigraphic, historical or numismatic sources. His dynasty could have been reduced to insignificant chieftaincy or even overthrown when the area was annexed by the Kidarites.

4.3.2 South Waziristan in the 4th/5th Century C.E.

According to the *Pei-Shih* (Annals of the Wei Dynasty), it is not possible to get a clear picture about the event that took place in Gandhāra and Kapiśa during the period of 4th/5th Century C.E. It is also mentioned that during the time of Yan-Wei (386-550/557 C.E.) and Chin (265-480 C.E.), the dynasties of the Western Territories were swallowing up each other, signifying the continuous armed conflicts between different groups of ruling clans.

During this period, the war between Kidarites and the Sassanians in Gandhāra and Bactria had caused political disunity and fragmentation in the eastern boarder of the Sassanian Empire. Such a political environment could have led to the formations of short-lived independent polities to fill up the power vacuum in areas which lacked control from neither side of the opposing powers.

Two important inscriptions coming from South Waziristan give important information about the political landscape of the region during this period, which are the Wano (368 C.E.) and Spina inscriptions (398 C.E.). Their dates were contemporary to the period of conflict between the Kidarites and Sassanians. Both inscriptions recorded certain meritorious works, and mention the names of rulers with the title *mahārāja*.

The names are *Mahārāja Yapsūṇa Mihira*, *Mahārāja Tośśāṇa* and *Mahārāja Ya+ṇa Mīthusarthutra*, which do not appear to be Indian in nature. The usage of the title *Mahārāja* suggests that they ruled the area as independent kings. However, their names are not yet known from any other sources, and no tributes were known to be sent by them either to the Sassanians or the Chinese.

They could be members of local dynasties which rose to power as the political grip of the Sassanians in the areas weakened during the war with the Kidarites. They probably remained independent for a relatively short time until the Kidarites had fully consolidated their power in Bactria and Gandhāra.

The proximity of the Wano and Spina inscriptions' findspots and the small difference in their dates could suggest a possible relation between the two rulers.

4.3.3 Inscriptions from the Turk-Śāhi Period

Information regarding the Turk Śāhi kings are mostly retrieved from the Arab, Chinese and numismatic sources, which have been discussed in detail by Rahman (1979; 2002a). Although inscriptions which made direct mention about these rulers have not yet been discovered, a number of materials included in the present research came from the Turk Śāhi period. They include the Ranigat, Śrī Bhāganaṣa, Dal Mahat and Promjharājya inscriptions.

The Ranigat inscription (8th/9th Century C.E.) eulogized the prowess and bravery of a king who had obedient followers. Based on the palaeographic date, this ruler referred to a Turk-Śāhi king, and his bravery eulogized in the inscription probably referred to his military campaigns. Such is not surprising, as the Turk-Śāhi rulers were known to have continuous wars with the Muslim invaders who were expanding their territories into the Śāhi kingdom. Thus, this inscription probably commemorates a victory of this unknown king in the battle.

The Śrī Bhāganaṣa inscription (707/807 C.E.) recorded the religious donation by the daughter of *Kinasra* due to the good fortune of the wife and daughter of *Maghūṅgha*, a name which appears to be Turkish in nature. The event took place in the kingdom of *Śrī Bhāganaṣa* and was contemporary with the reign of Barhatigin (666-726 C.E.), Khinkhil (764-??? C.E.) or Spalapatideva (???-820? C.E.). *Śrī Bhāganaṣa* could be one of the vassal rulers of the Turk Śāhi in Kashmir Smast.

The Dal Mahat Inscription (790 C.E.) is contemporary with the rule of Khinkhil (764-??? C.E.) or Spalapatideva (???-820? C.E.). It recorded the construction of a tank by *Viccaharāja*, the son of *Ghoraśiva*. The name *Viccaharāja* could either refer to a notable individual, Turk Śāhi government officer or even a local chief which is not yet known from any other sources.

Another individual record dated at 741/841 C.E. is the *Promjharājya* inscription which falls during the rule of Khinkhil (764-??? C.E.), Spalapatideva (???820? C.E.) or Lagaturman (820-843 C.E.). It mentions few personalities such as Sabhaḍikana, Ghikadhāghika and Hrāyamakhaka. However, the purpose of the inscription and identification of the personalities are unclear.

All these materials only give scanty information about the political landscape in Gandhāra. However, the names Śrī Bhaganaṣa, Maghūṅgha, Ghoraśiva, Viccaharāja etc. retrieved from these inscriptions added to the present knowledge about the history of the Turk-Śāhi and their vassal rulers.

4.3.4 Chieftaincies of North Waziristan in the 9th Century C.E.

The first half of the 9th Century C.E. marked the final days of the Turk Śāhi dynasty and Rutbils, due to the continuous conflicts with the Muslim invaders. During this period, epigraphic documents show the presence of semi-autonomous chieftaincies in North Waziristan, which probably owed their allegiances to the Hindu-Śāhis, Rutbils or even to the Muslim rulers of Seistan. The four inscriptions are the Mir Ali Inscription (840/843/861 C.E.), Tochi Valley inscription A (857 C.E.), Tochi Valley inscription B (862 C.E.) and Tochi Valley inscription C (865 C.E.).

The Mir Ali inscription (840/843/861 C.E.) is a long record commemorating the construction of a well by Śrī Dehi, daughter of Śrī Kamika from the family Candruṇa, names which appear to be Indian in nature. Two interesting phrases, *puttralalle* “the son/prince of the Lalle” and *Doṭakaputra-grahasena* “son of Doṭaka, army of the house” are read in the last two lines. The name *Lalle*, also known as *Lalli* could refer to a ruling clan while the word *grahasena* shows the presence of military force. These information shows that Śrī Dehi could belong to the family of a local chieftain who ruled an area in North Waziristan, probably as vassals of the Rutbils, or the early Hindu Śāhi rulers.

The Tochi Valley Bilingual Inscription A (857 C.E.) records the construction of a tank by Hayy bin Amār, written in Arabic and Sanskrit. This inscription falls under the final years of the rule of the Rutbils (Rahman 1979: 96-97). According to

Abdur Rahman, Hayy bin ‘Amār is the son of ‘Ammār, a Khājirite who rebelled against Šāliḥ bin Naṣr (Rahman 1979: 96-97). This inscription shows that the Khājirites have established their settlement in the territory of the Rutbils. The pious deed of Hayy bin ‘Amar in the construction of the tank also shows that they had a strong and permanent base in that area, probably ruling autonomously.

The Tochi Valley Bilingual inscription B (862 C.E.) mentioned the name of a ruler Gomo Sahi in the Bactrian part, who is eulogized as king of the noblemen, the scion of fromo, drinker of liquor, scion of fromo and the member of the cow-house. The Sanskrit part mentioned *nai(vi)na-chandra-phruma, kula-naraapa(nrpa)* “King of the House” and *khojana-putra* “Son of Khojana”. The Tochi Valley inscription C (865 C.E.)²⁹ also had a similar eulogy in Bactrian, possibly in reference to the same monarch mentioned in the Tochi Valley Bilingual inscription B. Although the purpose of the inscription is not clear, it appeared to be issued by another local chieftain who could be related to the Rutbils of Zabulistan or the Kabul Shah.

These four inscriptions showed that there were at least three ruling dynasties coming from different religious and cultural backgrounds in North-Waziristan in the mid-9th Century C.E.

4.3.5 The Śāhi Era

The term Śāhi era was first coined by Rahman when he deciphered the Jayapāla Śāhi inscription of Hund. This era was used in many inscriptions found in Gandhāra dated between the 9th to 11th Century C.E.

In the Jayapāla Śāhi inscription, the year 146 did not corroborate with any known era at that time. By correlating the information retrieved from the inscription with other historical events recorded in the Rajatarāṅgini and the Arab sources, Rahman mentioned that this inscription should fall during the early or middle of Jayapāla’s reign (963-1002 C.E.) (Rahman 1978: 35; Rahman 1979: 316). Thus, the era should begin somewhere between 818 to 856 C.E.

He then referred to the Mahārājñi Śrī Kameśvaridevi inscription which most probably also used same era, and should not be dated later than the time of the Ghaznavid

²⁹ This inscription is not included in the present research as it is written only in Bactrian.

invasion (1002 C.E.). By computing this, he reassigned the year 0 of this Śāhi era to somewhere between 805 to 843 C.E. (Rahman 1979: 317).

After comparing these calculations with the Al-Biruni's account regarding the era used in the Hindu Śāhi kingdom, he concluded that this era began in 843 C.E. He named the era as the Śāhi era (Rahman 1979: 318).

However, the discovery of the Zulamkot Bilingual inscription in the 90s has changed his opinion regarding the beginning of the Śāhi era. Discovered in the Malakand district, the inscription is written in Persian and Sanskrit language while the date is mentioned in both the Hijri Era and an unknown era, which Rahman presumed to refer to this Śāhi Era (Rahman 1997: 38).

While assuming that both the Sanskrit and Persian parts are contemporary with each other without fully translating the Sanskrit text, he correlated the Hijri 401 (1011 C.E.) with *Samvat* 189. He thus reassigned the beginning of the Śāhi Era to 822 C.E., and abandoned his earlier calculation of 843 C.E.

The beginning of the Śāhi era most probably marked the establishment of the Hindu Śāhi dynasty when Kallar overthrew Lagaturman, the last ruler of the TurkŚāhi (Rahman 1979: 318; 1993: 31; 1997: 38). The date of 822 C.E. for the establishment of the Hindu Śāhi dynasty posed chronological problems because it does not tally with the historical events of the early 9th Century C.E.

According to the record of Ibn Khurradādbheh, the Kabul Shah had paid the annual tribute to the Governor of Khurasan, Abd Allāh bin Ṭāhir who ruled between 828 to 845 C.E. (Khurradadhbhih 1889: 36). Kabul Shah referred to the rulers of Afghanistan in the 2nd decade of 9th Century C.E., who could also be identified with Ispahbadh Kabul Shah, Pati Dumi, Spalapatideva or Lagaturman (Rahman 1993: 30). This clearly shows that in 822 C.E., Lagaturman was still on the throne and the usurpation by Kallar, which is considered as the beginning of the Śāhi era has not yet taken place. Furthermore, the year 822 C.E. also does not fit into any description of Al-Biruni regarding the era used in the territory of the Śāhis. On the other hand, it is not possible to utterly reject the year 822 C.E. as the beginning of the era because the authenticity of the Zulamkot Bilingual inscription is beyond doubt.

Thus, until more conclusive epigraphic or historical evidence is found, both possibilities (year 822 and 843 C.E.) should be taken into consideration when calculating the date of inscriptions using the Śāhi era.

4.3.6 Identification of Vijayapāladeva and Thakkana Śāhi

Among the questions which have not been satisfactorily answered regarding the Hindu Śāhi dynasty is the identification of Thakkana Śāhi and Vijayapāladeva. This matter is closely related to the issues regarding the transfer of power from Bhīmadeva to Jayapāla. The question about the end of Bhīma's rule was discussed by a few notable scholars such as Mishra (1972), Pandey (1973) and Rahman (1979).

Based on Rajatarangini's story about the conflict between the Śāhi Chief Thakkana and the King of Kashmir Abhimanyu (958-972 C.E.), Mishra suggested the date 960 C.E. for the death of Bhīma while Pandey suggested the year 957 C.E. (Dutt 1879: 157-158; Mishra 1972: 87; Pandey 1973: 90). Both of them placed Thakkana Śāhi as the successor of Bhīmadeva.

Based on his interpretation of the Jayapāla Śāhi inscription and other events which took place in mid-10th Century C.E., Rahman suggested that Bhīmadeva had expired only after 963 C.E. (Rahman 1979: 129). He also refuted the opinions of Mishra and Pandey regarding the succession of Thakkana after Bhimadeva, on the basis that no mention was made about Thakkana in Al-Biruni's record (Rahman 1978: 34). Rahman maintained that Jayapāla was the immediate successor of Bhimadeva, who ascended the throne somewhere between 964 to 965 C.E. (Rahman 1979: 130133).

However, the refutation of Rahman regarding the succession of Thakkana Śāhi can still be debated. This is because Al-Biruni could have omitted the insignificant king(s) who ruled for a short period from the list, as also being observed from the incomplete list of Turk-Śāhi rulers (Rahman 1978: 34).

The new interpretation on the Ratnamañjarī inscription provides another alternative explanation about the identity of Bhīma's immediate successor. If the year 843 C.E. is accepted as the beginning of the Śāhi era instead of 822 C.E.³⁰ the Ratnamañjarī inscription can thus be placed at September-October, 963 C.E.

The Ratnamanjarī inscription records the establishment of a temple by Ratnamanjarī, daughter of Ḍanuma in the district of Marmalika. The most important information is the mention of *Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Vijayapāladeva* as the ruling

³⁰ See discussions in 4.3.5

monarch when the temple was established. The king is also mentioned along with his crown prince, *Mahārājaputra Caṇdrapala*.

Rahman mentioned that Vijayapāla may have been the nominal feudatory of the Śāhis of Udabhāṇḍa (Rahman 1979: 245). However, the title *Mahārājādhirāja* which is also used by Bhīmadeva and Jayapāladeva hardly shows the feudatory status of Vijayapāla.

The date of this inscription fits into the possible time frame for the demise of Bhīmadeva (963-965 C.E.). It shows that Vijayapāla could have been raised to the throne of Udabhāṇḍa in 963 C.E. He however seemed to have a relatively short rule, before being replaced by Jayapāladeva.

Mishra suggested that the transfer of power between Bhīmadeva and Jayapāla was not very smooth, based on the interpretation of the Arab sources (Mishra 1972: 95). A conflict probably had existed between Vijayapāla and Jayapāla for a considerable period of time before Jayapāla finally emerged to victory and erased Vijayapāla from the pages of history.

One is tempted to also identify Vijayapāla as the regal name for Thakkana Śāhi who was mentioned in the Rajatarangini. Kalhana mentioned that during the rule of Abhimanyu (958-972 C.E.)³¹ (Dutt 1879: 158), Yaśodhara, the Lord of Kampana marched against the Śāhi chief. He forcefully penetrated into the Śāhi territory which was fortified with rivers and mountains, defeated and captured Thakkana (Dutt 1879: 158).

The situation which led to the expedition was not known, but the Śāhi chief was described as wily and rebellious (Dutt 1879: 158). If Vijayapāladeva is identified with Thakkana, his short reign probably was ended by this event, which left the throne vacant for Jayapāla to occupy. Based on the suffix –pāla in their names, Vijayapāla, Candrapāla and Jayapāla may have belonged to the same ruling branch, belonging to Aṣatapala of Kabul (Rahman 1979: 131-132).

The rule of Vijayapāla possibly ended in 964 or 965 C.E.

4.3.7 Identification of Śrī Śāhi Veka

³¹ A date which is consistent with the date of the Ratnamanjari Inscription.

The personality known as *Śrī Śāhi Veka* was first mentioned by Ahmad Hassan Dani when he deciphered the Veka inscription of Mazar-I-Syarif (Dani 2001:81-86). This inscription records the establishment of the Śiva-Uma image by Maha Maitya in the kingdom of Śrī Śāhi Veka. The year is read as *saṃvat* 138, corresponding to the Śāhi era which renders either 960 C.E. or 981 C.E.

Dani who dated the inscription at 959 C.E. mentioned that Śrī Śāhi Veka was the independent ruler of Afghanistan in the mid-10th Century C.E. During the reign of Bhīmapala, the Hindu Śāhi dynasty was broken into two branches, the first headed by Jayapāla in Lamghan and Punjab, and second by Śrī Śāhi Veka in Northern Afghanistan (Dani 2001: 82). This line came to an end during the conquest of Alaptigin (Dani 2001: 82).

However, this interpretation posed some problems as northern Afghanistan in the 10th Century C.E. was still under the rule of the Samanid empire before they passed to the hands of Alaptigin in 961 C.E. In the second half of the 10th Century C.E., there was continuous military conflict between the Hindu Śāhis and Alaptigin, and the western border of the Hindu Śāhi did not go beyond Kabul and Lamghan (Rahman 1979:128-132).

The inscription was reported to have been discovered in the northern part of Afghanistan and brought to Pakistan from Mazar-I-Shariff. The historical background of Northern Afghanistan in the 10th Century C.E. raised some doubts regarding the real provenance of the inscription. It is likely that the inscription was discovered in an area where rule of the Śāhis still prevailed in the second half of 10th Century C.E.

Before the battle of Ghuzak in 986/987 C.E., where the Śāhi forces suffered a crushing defeat, the area of Lamghan and Kabul was still under the Śāhis. Śrī Śāhi Veka do not appear to be one of the Śāhi kings due to the absence of the title *mahārājādhirāja*. He could be a feudatory ruler in Kabul and Lamghan who probably enjoyed a semi-autonomous status, before the area was conquered by the Ghaznavids.

4.3.8 Muslim rule in Gandhāra according to Śāradā records

To date, two Śāradā inscriptions coming from the Ghaznavid period are documented in the present research, which are the Zulamkot Bilingual inscription and Śrī Haṃmīra inscription. The usage of Śāradā by these Ghaznavid officials was probably to adapt to their newly-conquered subjects, who still used Śāradā as their official scripts. The

Zulamkot bilingual inscription which records the construction of a resting place (*upasthanagadha*) shows that aside from mosques, the Ghaznavid rulers have started to build secular infrastructures for public convenience. As for the *Śrī Haṃmīra* inscription, although the purpose is not clear, it demonstrates the political grip of Mehsud I over the area.

After the fall of the Ghaznavids in 1173 C.E., the region of Gandhāra continued to be ruled by successive Muslim dynasties. They include the Ghorids (12th-13th Century C.E.), the Delhi Sultanate (13th-16th Century C.E.) and the Mughal

Sultanate (16th-18th Century C.E.). A number of *Śāradā* inscriptions coming from the Muslim periods are documented in the present research. The decipherment of a few well-preserved inscriptions shows that they were issued by individuals.

The *Śrī* Malikaputra inscription records the purchase of land, while the *Ādityarāja* commemorates the construction of a building. The Nayaraja inscription on the other hand records an unspecified meritorious works. Although the *Śāhi* rule had long passed, these inscriptions show that the last remnants of their Hindu heritage still remained.

4.3.9 The last scion of the *Śāhi* ruler

The *Śrī Vāṇhadaka* inscription was discovered in the Hazara Division and dated at 1461 C.E. This inscription recorded the construction of a tank by *Śrī Vāṇhadaka*, the son of *Śrī Īśvara* at the instance of his father, *Śrī Īśvara* the son of *Śrī Śūrade*. The *sthapati* was *Śi[m]gāli-Kargi*, the son of *Kāli*, a *Paṇḍit* from *Navagramadraṅga*.

If *Śrī Vāṇhadaka*, *Śrī Īśvara* and *Śrī Śūrade* were the local chieftains in the Hazara region, they could possibly be related with the *Jānjū*'as of Hazara, who traced their descendants to *Rājā Mal* from the Sivalik Hills (Husain Khan 1993: 185). *Rājā Mal* probably was the scion of the last remnants of the *Śāhi* ruling elites that was deposed by Mahmud of Ghazna (Husain Khan 1993: 185).

The five sons of *Rājā Mal* found their settlements in various areas, one of whom is *Rājā Tanāwalī* who established their fief in Hazara (Husain Khan 1993: 185). *Śrī Vāṇhadaka* could have descended from these *Jānjū*'as clan who established their semi-autonomous rule there, and possibly was the last remnant of Hindu rulers in Gandhāra before they were totally extinguished by the Muslims.

The Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka inscription was issued during the period of Delhi Sultanate, under the rule of Bahlol Lodi (1452-1489 C.E.) of the Lodi Dynasty. If Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka was the local chieftain there, he probably served to the Lodi rulers as semi-independent vassals for a considerable period.

During the rule of Akbar the Great, the Jānjū'as of Hazara was reported to have sent tribute to the Mughals in the form of 3,100,000 in money while maintaining 20 cavalry and 500 infantry for the empire (Husain Khan 1993: 185). The last remnants of the Jānjū'as in Hazara, was overrun by the Yusofzais during the rule of Akbar the Great (1542-1605 C.E.).

CHAPTER FIVE PALAEOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE BRĀHMĪ AND ŚĀRADĀ CHARACTERS

5.1 The Brāhmī and Śāradā scripts of Gandhāra

Between the 3rd Century B.C. to 4th Century C.E., the usage of Kharoṣṭhī in Gandhāra made a distinction of the region from the rest of the Indo-Pak subcontinent which used Brāhmī as their main writing system. Kharoṣṭhī was used in inscriptions, manuscripts, coin legends, etc. to write Gandhārī, a north-western dialect of Prakrit.

However, in the 4th/5th Century C.E., Kharoṣṭhī started to lose out as a popular script and was replaced by Gupta-Brāhmī, the official script used within the Gupta empire covering an area from Bengal up to the eastern banks of the Indus. As it was being used in Gandhāra, it developed into its own regional style. Among the first to use

the script in the region were the Kidarites, Alkhons and Nezaks rulers as well as few local chieftains in Hazara and South Waziristan. Aside from those, a good number of religious and donative inscriptions written in Gupta-Brāhmī were also found in Kashmir Smast.

From the 5th to 7th Century C.E., Proto-Śāradā replaced Gupta-Brāhmī in the region. However, as compared to the Gupta-Brāhmī and Śāradā, a relatively small number of epigraphs written in that script was found. After the 7th Century C.E., Śāradā became the official script, especially during the Turk Śāhi and Hindu Śāhi period, and to be used even after the Muslim invasion.

Out of the 73 Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions documented in this thesis, we are able to produce the partial or full drawings of the 69 inscriptions, depending on the quality of the photographs available to us. Each characters from the drawings of these 69 inscriptions are classified according to their sound values in the tables no. 1 to 70. The characters are then placed in the comparative tables no. 71 to 79 to show their development throughout the centuries. In this chapter, the palaeography of the Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions is discussed in detail based on these analysis.

5.2 Mauryan Brāhmī, Post Mauryan Brāhmī and Kushan Brāhmī

The Mauryan Brāhmī, Post-Mauryan Brāhmī and Kushan Brāhmī inscriptions are the oldest epigraphs included in the present research. In terms of date, they are contemporary with most Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of Gandhāra. The 6 epigraphs included in this thesis are mostly short inscriptions with high portability and doubtful authenticity, giving the possibility that they are either modern forgeries or were brought from other areas.

5.2.1 Aśokan Rock Edict

The initial vowel *a*  comprises of vertical stroke connected with two left arms by a horizontal dash. This style occurs in the Aśokan Rock Edicts of Sahasram, Maski, Lumbini Nigliya and Bhabru (Upasak 1960: 38).

The letter *ta* (*te* ) shows a slanting stroke leaning towards the right, with a small stroke joint at the middle leaning towards the left. The medial vowel *-ā* is a

horizontal dash to the right while the medial vowel –e is a dash to the left. Similar style is seen in the minor rock edicts of Brahmagiri, Siddapur and Gujjara (Upasak 1960: 78).

The sign *na*  is made up of a horizontal line attached to an upright stroke in the middle, where both the lines are equal in length. The letter *pa* (*pi* ) is a hook attached with a medial vowel –i at the top of the vertical.

The character *bha* (*bhi* ) takes the form of straight vertical line on the right while character *ma* (*me* ) is represented as a semi-circle placed upon a circle.

5.2.2 Relief Panel Inscription

The cross type *ka*  and round topped *ga*  are similar to the Bhārhut inscription No. I and II (1st Century B.C.) (Dani 1963: Plate VIb). A stroke slanting to the right is added at the top for medial –ā.

The letter *ta*  has two slanting strokes of opposite directions, forming an acute angle, following the style of Magha inscriptions from Kosam (2nd to 3rd Century C.E.) (Dani 1986: Plate VIIa).

The Post Mauryan style of rounded *da* (*dā* ) and *ni*  with horizontal base are found in Nanaghat inscriptions (1st Century C.E.) (Dani 1963: Plate VIa). Their respective medial vowels –ā and –i retain the archaic forms of Mauryan Brāhmī. The letter *dha*  is expressed by a spiral in the shape of a tear drop.

The letter *jha*  is a vertical line attached to a hook opening upwards. Unlike most *jha*'s of the Mauryan and Post Mauryan Brāhmī, the hook is attached on the left instead of on the right. The equal armed *pa* , *bha* with straight vertical on the right  and the archaic form of *ma*  are comparable to those of Sanchi inscriptions (1st Century B.C.).

The letter *si*  is a left hook with a downward stroke on the right. The medial vowel –i is a slanting stroke to the left. This form is commonly found in the Mauryan Brāhmī, Post Mauryan Brāhmī and Kushana Brāhmī inscriptions.

The anchor shaped *ya* , straight vertical *ra*  and rounded bottom *la* (*lā* ) show the distinctive features of the Sanchi inscriptions (1st Century B.C.) (Dani 1963: Plate VIa). The letter *va*  with a protruding bulge occurs in the Nanaghat inscription (1st Century B.C.).

The style of writing resembles inscriptions coming from Bhārhut and Sanchi (Dani 1963: Plate VIa), which are placed between the 1st Century B.C. to the 1st Century C.E.

5.2.3 Bi-Scriptual Inscription

There are two types of *ka*, the lengthened vertical with a straight  or curved  horizontal bar. The medial vowel –o (*ko* ) is expressed as two superscribed strokes.

The letter *ba*  is square in shape while *ra*  is a straight vertical. The letter *va*  is triangular in shape while the medial vowel –ī (*vī* ) is expressed as a lengthened horizontal line from the headmark curving to the right and downwards. The line headmark is present on all the letters except *ba*.

The Kharoṣṭhī part appears to be dated far earlier than the Brāhmī part. The straight vertical of *ka*  is with a stroke on the upper left and angular hook facing downwards on the upper right. The letter *ha*  is the reversed type of roman S.

These forms are observed in the Aśokan rock edicts of Mansehra and Shahbazgarhi (3rd Century B.C.) and the Bajaur Casket of the Indo-Greek period (2nd Century B.C.). However, the Brāhmī part shows strong characteristics of the Kushan inscriptions of Mathura and Sarnath (2nd-3rd Century C.E.) (Dani 1986: Plate VIIIa).

The palaeographic dates of Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī do not go hand in hand, and this raises question about the inscriptions' authenticity.

5.2.4 Inscription at the time of Huvishka

The initial *ā*  has two left curves meeting at the right vertical, with the lower curve shorter than the upper one. A dash expressing *ā* is added at the lower right. The

angular initial *u*  is a horizontal line, with vertical line forming a 90-degree angle, and is similar to the early Mathura inscription of 1st Century C.E.

The letter *khā*  which has a prominent triangular base and flat bottom *ghi*  are found in the Mathura inscriptions of Vāsudeva (2nd Century C.E.) (Dani 1963: Plate VIIIa). The medial *-ā* is a dash on the right while *-i* is a curve opening to the left. The letter *gra*  has a round top and ligature *-ra* is in the form of a small curve bending upwards.

The foot type of *cā*  has equivalents in the Magha Inscription of Kosam (2nd-3rd Century C.E.) (Dani 1963: Plate VIIIa) and the angular variety of *jhā*  retains the old form of the Aśokan Brāhmī. Both letters express the medial vowel *-ā* in the form of a dash slanting upward to the right on the head mark.

The bent base *na* , angular backed *di* , angular and equal armed *pa*  and triangular based *ma* are commonly found in Kushan Brāhmī inscriptions of Mathura and Sarnath (Dani 1963: Plate VIIIa).

The same goes with the *sa*  with a left hook, triangular *vā* , tripartite *yā* , vertical line *ri* , flat bottom *la*  and equal armed *ha* with a  base with its right tick curving down, which are similar with the Mathura and Sanchi Kushan Brāhmī of the 2nd Century C.E. (Dani 1963: Plate VIIIa).

The overall palaeographic characteristics of this inscription show Kushan style Brāhmī of Mathura (2nd to 3rd Century C.E.).

5.2.5 Narasiṃha Inscription of the Gupta period

The character *dhya*  is comprised of a half circle superscript *dh-* and bipartite subscript *-ya*, which is elongated downwards. The bent base *na*  is common in Kushan style Brāhmī (2nd-3rd Century C.E.) (Dani 1963: Plate VIIIa). This form of *na* is also observable in the Gupta period inscriptions of Chandragupta II (Dani 1963: Plate XIIa).

The letter *ṭa*  retains the old semi circle shape, while the letter *ba* is squarish

in shape. The medial vowel *-i* (*bī* ) is a curve opening to the right while *-u* (*bu* ) is expressed by the elongation of the right vertical downwards.

The letter *ma*  has a triangular base while medial vowel *-e* (*me* ) is expressed by the right arm which curved downwards. This type of *ma* continued to be used in the north-western part of the Indo-Pak subcontinent until the end of 3rd Century C.E.

The letter *ra*  is a curved vertical line, while the letter *ya*  is of a segmented double curve type, common in the Sanchi and Bhārhut inscriptions (1st Century B.C. to the 1st Century C.E.) (Dani 1963: Plate VIa). The letter *ha* (*hā* ) with equal arms and the right tick curving down is also found in the 3rd Century C.E. Kushan inscriptions.

Palaeographically, most of the characters belong to the period between 2nd to 4th Century C.E., although the older form of *ya* is still retained.

5.2.6 Bangle Inscription

The character *jva*  consist of three armed *ja* attached with a triangular subscript *va*. These forms are shared by the Kushan and Gupta-Brāhmī writing styles.

The letter *la*  is similar to the Besnagar pillar inscription of Heliodorus (3rd Century B.C.) (Dani 1963: Plate Vb). However, the same form of *la* continued to be used in Gupta Brāhmī.

The tripartite *ya*  with the three arms similar in height resembles the Mathura inscription of Vasudeva (2nd Century C.E.) and Sarnath inscription of Aśvaghoṣa (3rd Century C.E.) (Dani 1963: Plate VIIIa).

This inscription is dated between 2nd to 4th Century C.E.

5.3 Gupta-Brāhmī Inscriptions

The Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions of Gandhāra show similarities with the Mathuran style of Gupta-Brāhmī, with some regional variations. The frequent use of hollow triangular headmark in Gandhāra, especially in Kashmir Smast, probably represents the local style which is distinct from the rest of northern variant of the Gupta-

Brāhmī. Another local characteristic is the presence of footmark on the letter *ra*, *śa* and *ga*, especially found in the Kashmir Smast inscriptions.

5.3.1 Sita Maha Kandara Inscription (Copper Plate I)

The Mathuran style of Gupta-Brāhmī is observed in the triangular foot and rounded top *kha* , beaked *ca* , open-mouthed *ma*  with a half circle at the left arm, the angular *pa* and *bha* , double curve *da* , and bent base *ha* 

The initial *a*  is comprised of an upper stroke that curves outward and lower stroke that curves inward. This form is similar with the Toramāṇa Śāhi inscription (Bühler 1892: 238-241) and Indor Copper Plate inscription of Skandagupta (Fleet 1970: Plate ix A).

There are two varieties of the letter *ka*, the cross bar  and cross bent bar . The cross bar *ka* is similar to that of Udayagiri Cave inscription of Kumaragupta (426-426 C.E) (Fleet 1970: Plate xxxviii A) while the cross bent bar type is common in most Mathuran Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions.

The letter *ha* (*hā* ) and *la* (*le*  *lī* ) maintained the angular form of older Kushan Brāhmī style with a flat base. The tripartite *ya*  with a loop on its left arm and the hooked type of *sa*  are found in the north-western style of Gupta-Brāhmī.

The equal and curved arms of *ta*  and oval shaped *tha*  with a midline also characterized the Mathuran style. The more archaic forms are observed in the semi circle *ṭa* (*ṭi ṭṭa*)  and the circular *ṭha* . The stepped *ḍa*  with a lengthened leg and *ḍha* with an angular back are similar with the Kushanlo Brāhmī of Mathura.

The rounded top *ga*  and *śa*  with the left arm ticked upwards, as well as the letter *ra* with its lower end curved upwards resembles the Shorkot inscription. The round *va* , resembles the Shorkot and Toramāṇa Śāhi inscriptions, distinct from the triangular *va* of the Mathuran Gupta Brāhmī.

Some regional characteristics of Gandhāra can be observed in this inscription. The most striking feature is the hollow triangular headmark while most Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions of the northwest are surmounted by solid triangular headmark. They include Toramāṇa Śāhi, Mathura and Sanchi inscriptions of Skandagupta and Kumaragupta (Bühler 1892: 238-241; Fleet 1970: Plate iii A and B; Dani 1963: 142).

The inscription belonged to 4th/5th Century C.E.

5.3.2 Copper Plate II

The bent cross bar *ka* (*ka kai*), beaked *ca*, curved arms *ta*, bent base *na*, tripartite *ya* with left loop and hooked *sa* occur in most Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions of 4th/5th Century C.E.

The open-mouthed *ma* (*mna*) is found in Sita Maha Kandara inscription along with the round top *śa* (*śru*) with its left arm ticked upwards.

The angular back *dha* and letter *la* (*lla*) with a left hook curls inwards, suggesting a development of the Gupta-Brāhmī script.

Letter *ja* (*jña*) is expressed by a slanting left stroke with three arms and the medial *-i* (*vi*) is elongated and curled up. The letter *da* (*ddha*) is with an angular back while *tha* shows a spiral form.

These characters are similar with the Sita Maha Kandara inscription, dated at 4th/5th Century C.E.

5.3.3 Copper Plate III

The characters of the Copper Plate III inscription are marked by its angularity, probably due to the method of engraving, of which the short lines are repeatedly punched onto the metal surface to form the characters. Both the hollow triangular and line headmarks are observed in this inscription.

The bent cross-bar *ka*, flat base *gha*, double curved *da* (*de*), *dī*, *do*

) angular *pa* and *bha* , vertical line *ra* (*ra* *ro*), open-mouthed *ma* (*mā* ), equal armed *ta* and triangular *va* are very common in Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions of Mathura.

The open-mouthed *ṇa* (*ṇi*  *ṇyaṃ* ) with the outer curves extending outwards shows developed form. There are two varieties of the tripartite *ya*, with  and without (*yu*)  the left loop. The hooked *sa* (*sa*  *sya* ), flat top *śa*  ,  and *ha* (*hi*  *hma*) with a straight base occur in most northern Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions.

The characters belonged to 4th/5th Century C.E.

5.3.4 Copper Plate IV

In this inscription, the characters are only slightly made in dotted form, thus making the reading very difficult

The straight vertical *ra* , broad type *bha* (*bhi* ), bent crossbar *ke* , beaked type *ca*  , bent base *na* , equal armed and angular *pa* (*paṃ*) are common features of north-western Gupta Brāhmī. The letter *ddha* is similar to Copper Plate Illine while the letter *la*  with a slanted base shows a further development.

This inscription is dated at 4th/5th Century C.E.

5.3.5 Kamandalu Inscription I

The open-mouthed *ṇa* (*ṇī*)  , triangular *va* with the  , *ha*  right tick curving down, rounded top *śa* (*śrī*)  and open-mouthed  *ma* with sharp angles on the left arm are seen in most Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions of Mathura. The characters are surmounted by the hollow triangular headmark.

The circular *ṭha*  , tripartite *ya* (*yā* ) with the left arm curving inwards, *sa* (*su* ) with a left hook and the semi-circle *dha* ,  all show the general features of Gupta Brāhmī.

The rounded back *da* (*de* ) , broad type of *bha* (*bhī* ) and *na*  with its base forming an angle appears to be a more developed form of the northern type of Gupta-Brāhmī.

This inscription is dated at 4th/5th Century C.E.

5.3.6 Kamaṇḍalu Inscription II

This inscription is also marked by the hollow triangular headmark. Similarity with Kamandalu I is observed in the letter *bha* , *ha*  (*bhī*  and *na*  . As for the letter *ma* (*ma*  *mā* ) , hooked  *syā*  type *sa* (*su*) and *va* , their angles are rounded off.

The tripartite *ya* (*yā*) has a  *ysa*  left loop and *da* (*de* ) is of a double curved type. The  equal armed *ta* is curved while *ka* (*kṣa*) is a bent crossbar type.

The letter *ra*  is similar to the Shorkot inscription of Punjab, with its lower end curves to the left and upwards. The letter *ga*  is with a flat top, with the right limb extended and a foot mark at the left, similar to those of Mehrauli iron pillar inscription of Chandragupta II (5th Century C.E.) (Dani 1963: Plate XIIa).

Despite some minor differences, it shares many palaeographic similarities with Kamaṇḍalu Inscription No.1, and can be placed at 4th/5th Century C.E.

5.3.7 Kamaṇḍalu Inscription III

The letters of Kamaṇḍalu No.III are surmounted by either the horizontal line or the hollow triangular headmark (Nasim Khan 2006: 105).

Similarity with Kamaṇḍalu No.I is observed in the letters *ha* , *ya* , *ma* , *va* , *bha* (*bhī* ) , *ṇa* (*ṇī* ) , *ṭha*  and *da* (*dī* ) . The letter *ta* (*tī* ) , *ra*  and *sa* (*sī*  *su* ) are also found in Kamaṇḍalu No.II.

The letter *ga*  has a rounded top and left footmark while flat base *gha* 

shows a similarity to the Toramana Śāhi inscription. Letter *ta*  retains the old semicircle type while semi-circle *dha*  and *na*  with the base forming angle are similar with the Copper Plate II.

5.3.8 Dharmadata inscription

The semi-circle *dha* , open-mouthed *ma*  with angles on the left arm, hooked *sa* (*sya* ) , equal armed *ta* and double curved *da*  follow the style of the northern Gupta-Brāhmī. The headmark appears to be a solid triangle. The characters belonged to 4th/5th Century C.E.

5.3.9 Viṣṇuva Inscription

The rounded letter *va* (*va*  *vi* ) takes the form of northern Gupta-Brāhmī while the hooked *ṣa* ) with the letter *ṣṇu* (*ṣi* ) show irregular forms. The characters are surmounted either by the solid triangular, hollow triangular or line headmark.

It is placed at 4th/5th Century C.E.

5.3.10 Painted inscription

The curved *a* , rounded back *da* (*du*  *de* ) , rounded *va* , beaked *ca* (*cā* ) and vertical line *ra*  showed the characteristics of the Gupta-Brāhmī script.

However, medial *-i* with a long loop (*vi* ) and bipartite *ya* (*yū* ) resemble the Proto-Śāradā script of 5th-7th Century C.E.

The letter *ka*  with a curved lower end and looped *na* (*ni* ) show the characteristics of the Central Indian Brāhmī script.

5.3.11 Vāsudeva Nārāyaṇa Bronze Image inscription

The characters are either surmounted by a hollow triangular or horizontal line headmark.

The initial vowel *a*  is made up of an upper stroke that curves outward and a lower stroke that curves inward, with a horizontal headmark on the left vertical. This form is seen in the Sita Maha Kandara and Toramāṇa Śāhi inscriptions.

The curved arms , bent base *na* (*ne*  *ta*), open-mouthed and angular *pa* , tripartite *ya* , *yo*  (*ya*) with a left hook are the same to most

Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions of Kashmir Smast.

The angular *bha* (*bhī* ) *ra* (*ra*)  with a footmark, angular and double-curved *da* (*dē* ) and rounded *va*  occur in Shorkot and Sita Maha

Kandara inscriptions.

The letter *śa* (*śe* ) *śrī* ) is surmounted by a headmark while the hooked *sa* , are found in the Sita Maha Kandara inscriptions and Copper Plate II. There are two varieties of the open-mouthed *ma*; tailed *ma*  and *ma*  with a semicircle on the left. The tailed variety is the same as the Wano inscription.

The flat base *ṣa* (*ṣā* ) with equal arms and narrow-bottom *dha*  have equivalents in the Toramāṇa Śāhi and Shorkot inscriptions. The letter *ccha*  with the beaked superscript *ca* and double-looped subscript *cha* is found in the Sita Maha Kandara inscription.

The characters show striking resemblance with the Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions discovered in Gandhāra, especially in Kashmir Smast. The script belonged to 4th/5th Century C.E.

5.3.12 Mahārāja Kadambeśvaradāsa Inscription

The palaeographic study of this inscription was first done by Sircar (1953/1954: 59) who assigned the characters to the Kushan period.

However, the bent bar *ka* , curved arms *ta* , bent base *na* (*naṃ* ) and equal armed *pa* (*pra* ) are found in the inscriptions of Kumaragupta and Skandagupta



(Dani 1963:142). Such similarities are also observed in the rounded *bha* , round top *śa* (*śi śu*) and equal armed *ṣa*.

The open-mouthed *ma* , in simplified forms suggests a developed form of Gupta style. The cerebral *ṇa* is similar with the cursive Kushan style.

The rounded *da* , hooked *sa* , rounded *tha*  with a midline, tripartite *ya*  with a loop on the left arm and the angular *pha*  resembled the Mathura Gupta-Brāhmī script of Chandragupta II and Skandagupta (Dani 1963: Plate VIIIb).

This inscription can thus be dated at 4th/5th Century C.E.

5.3.13 Cooking Vessel Inscription

The characters of this inscription are surmounted by either a horizontal line or a hollow triangular headmark.

The beaked *ca* (*cā*) , hooked *sa* , three armed *ja* , equal armed *ta* (*tu ttra*)  and round top *śa* (*śe*)  with a left footmark follow the style of the northern Gupta-Brāhmī script. The bent cross-bar *ka*  is with a long vertical, which is found in 2nd/3rd Century Brāhmī.

The 4th/5th Century characteristics are seen in the triangular *va* , bent base *na*  *ne*  *no*  (*nā*), tripartite *ya* with  and without  a .

left loop and broad *bha*

The open-mouthed *ma* , and double curved *da* (*da*  *de*  *de*  *dā*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de*  *de* *de*

5.3.14 Mahaparinibbanasutta, Dharmapada I and II

Due to the lack of good photographs, only a few characters can be traced and studied.

The bent cross-bar *ka* , triangular based *kha* , bent base *na* (*ni* ) , *ha* (*hi* ) with a right tick, angular *ṣa* (*ṣi* ) and beaked *ca*  resembled the 4th/5th Gupta-Brāhmī script.

The letter *ga* (*rga* ) with the right vertical longer than the left, looped *sa*  and with a slanted base shows a development of the writing style.

5.3.15 Spina Inscription

The detailed palaeographic analysis on Spina inscription is difficult, as the accuracy of the handcopy is extremely doubtful. The analysis is done only by rough comparison with the Wano inscription, which was discovered nearby and almost contemporary with the Spina inscription.

The letter *ṣha*  and *ha* (*hi*  *hu* ) are similar with the Wano inscription (*ṣhā* )^{ho}. The open-mouthed *ma* , bent cross-bar *ka* , three armed *ja* , rounded *vā*  and hooked *sa*  also resembled the Wano inscription.

5.3.16 Wano Inscription

The characters of the Wano inscription are topped with either a horizontal line, solid triangular or hollow triangular headmarks.

The angular *bha*  and *pa* (*pā* )^{pi}, *pu* , *va* , tripartite *ya* with  and without  left hook, hooked *sa* , triangular base *kha* (*khi* ) and *na* (*nā* ) with the bent base are commonly found in Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions of Gandhāra.

The bent cross-bar *ka*  and horizontal line *ra*  are sometimes with footmarks. The open-mouthed *ma* are either of the  tailed variety

or showed irregular forms .

The letter *ta* are of two equal arms either meeting at an angle or a curve, surmounted by either a solid triangular  horizontal line (*to*  *tsa* ) and hollow triangular headmark (*tra* ). The angular backed *da* are also topped with either one of these headmarks (*da*).   *di*  *du* 

Similar with most Gupta-Brāhmī characters of Gandhāra, the letter *śa* (*śśā* ) is with a footmark on the left. The letter *la* (*li* ) with the base sloping and left hook is similar with the early Chamba inscription of 7th Century (Dani 1963: 146147).

The short inscription carved across the main surface appears to be executed by different hand. The characters are broader, more crudely produced and only surmounted by a horizontal line headmark.

Differences with the inscription carved on the main surface are observed in the letter *ra*  without footmark, *na*  with angular base, open-mouthed *ṇa*  with a triangular wedge on the left and open-mouthed *ma* (*rma* ) with a vertical line in the left arm. The initial *a*  with the upper left curve broader than the lower, retains the older Kushan style.

Although stylistically different, it is also placed at 4th/5th Century C.E.

5.3.17 Shorkot Inscription

The Shorkot Inscription is one of the important Gupta period inscriptions coming from the northwest region of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent, as the inscription is dated and the scripts are clearly executed. This inscription is used as the point of reference and comparison to study other undated Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions coming from the surrounding area.

One of the most significant characteristics is the presence of a hollow triangular headmark and footmark on the letter *ka*  , *ra*  , *śa*  and medial *-u* (*bu*  *pu* ).

Dani pointed out that these attributes belonged to the Central Indian Gupta-Brāhmī (Dani, 1963: 145). He also mentioned that the spiral form of subscript *tha* in

the letter *ttha*  represented a distinctive form of Central Indian writing style.

However, the footmark in the form of a tick curving upwards is common in many inscriptions from Gandhāra. As for the subscript *-tha* in the spiral form, it is also observable in the Wano inscription (*stha* ) and Vāsudeva Nārāyaṇa inscription of Kashmir Smast (*sthā* .

These characteristics appears to be the local features of Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions used in Gandhāra and the surrounding area which happened to be parallel with those of Central India.

The bent cross-bar *ka* , beaked *ca* , rounded *va* , double curved *da* , (*dā* ) , hooked *sa* , rounded top *śa* and angular *pa* and *bha* (*bhi* ) show the characteristics of the northern Gupta-Brāhmī style.

The letter *dha* (*dhi* ) *dha* ) , which narrows down at its lower end is similar to the Mathura inscriptions of the Gupta period (Dani 1963: 143). The letter *ba* (*bu* ) *bi* ) *bī* ) is curved on left vertical, following the manuscript style of the Gupta period (Dani 1963: 151).

5.3.18 Bronze Buddha Inscription I

This inscription shows general characteristics of Gupta-Brāhmī being used in Gandhāra especially in the open-mouthed *ma* ( me), *ya*  and *pa* ( pu  pi). Unfortunately, only few characters can be traced and studied as the photograph available to us are not clear enough. The angular backed *da* ( de  da), hooked *sa* , and rounded *va*  are similar with the Sita Maha Kandara inscription.

5.3.19 Bronze Buddha Inscription II

This characters of this inscription show clear resemblance with the Vāsudeva Nārāyaṇa bronze image inscription in the letter *ya* with a left loop , angular 
pa (*pra*), bent-bar *na* (*ni*), and  *dha* narrowed bottom  . The letter *ka*
(*kya*  and *tāa* (*trāu*)  are similar  with the rest the Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions of Gandhāra.

5.3.20 Copper Ladle Inscription

The characteristics of the Copper Laddle inscription raised some doubts about its authenticity.

Some characters shared similarities with other Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions of Gandhāra such as *śa* , flat based *gha* , hooked *sa* , beaked *ca* (*cā*) 
) and equal armed *ha* (*hā* ).

However, certain characters unveiled unconventional shapes, such as the letter *ra* , *ta* (*ta* , *tu* , *tna* ) , *da* (*dā* , *di* ) and *na*  and *vi*  which raised doubts regarding its authenticity.

5.4 Proto-Śāradā Inscriptions

The Proto-Śāradā script is derived from the Gupta-Brāhmī and was used in Gandhāra between the 5th to the 7th Century C.E. The characters do not show a clear uniformity in their forms and each individual inscriptions have their own particular styles, which is a mixture of both Gupta-Brāhmī and Śāradā characteristics.

Among the characteristics of the Proto-Śāradā is the presence of either looped or cross bent bar *ka*, *ta* with the left arm shortened and right arm forming a curve opening to the right, *ba* with a similar shape to *va*, looped *sa*, *bha* with an inverted wedge and the occasional usage of tripartite or bipartite *ya*, frequent usage of triangular headmark, beaked *ca* as well as the angular *pa*.

5.4.1 Toramāṇa Śāhi inscription

There are two varieties of initial *a*, both with a triangular headmark on the left vertical. The first variety  consists of a left vertical with a curve opening to the

right, connected by a horizontal stroke with an upper and lower curves which bend outwards and inwards. The second variety  consists of a horizontal line connected by a stroke with an upper curve and a lower wedge. The letter *ā*  has a knot at the left, which appears to be a developed form of the Kushan letter. The letter *ū*  is a developed form of the curved base type.

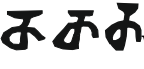
The bent cross-bar *ka* , triangular base *kha* , round top *ga*,  and *śa* , flat based *gha* (*ghe*) , equal armed *ta*, , double curved *da*,  bent base *na* , tripartite *ya* with a left hook,  and open-mouthed *ṇa*  with extended arms are found in most northern Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions.

The open-mouthed *ma* , narrowed bottom *dha*  and flat base *ṣa*  with equal arms and straight vertical *ra*  take the form of Mathura Gupta-Brāhmī style. The first variety of *sa* has the left hook curved inwards, forming an angular hook 
 while the second variety is with a right loop

The angular *bha*'s left arm bends inwards, almost forming a hollow triangular (*bhi*  *bhā* ). Another type of *bha* is with a solid triangular wedge on the left, with the right arm being extended slightly downwards (*bhi* ). The letter *la* 
 also occurs in Wano Inscription.

5.4.2 Vāsudeva Pratima Inscription

This inscription retains the archaic form of Gupta-Brāhmī script in the triangular headmark, tripartite *ya*  and double curved *da* . The hooked *sa* (*sa*  *su* ) shows similarity with the Toramāṇa Śāhi inscription.

The letter *pa* (*pa*  *pu* ) , looped *ka*  with a vertical tick to the
) with a right prolonged and curved limb, open-mouthed *ma* (*hma*

right, *ta* (*ta* ) with the base sloping to the right and *bha* (*bha* ) with a right triangular loop show similarity with the Khimṅala Śāhi inscription. *ma* (*ma* ) *mi* (*mi* )

The letter *la* (*la* ) with the vertical base attached to the right vertical are similar with the Hatun Inscription (Hinuber 2004: Abb.19). The letter *pha* (*pha* ) with a lower loop occurs in the Sarahan inscription. This inscription belonged to 6th/7th Century C.E.

5.4.3 Narendrāditya Inscription

The palaeography of Narendrāditya inscription was first discussed in depth by Nasim Khan (1998-1999:79-81), who placed the inscription from the 7th to 9th Century C.E. The characters show the influence of Gupta, Post-Gupta and Śāradā scripts of Gandhāra and Kashmir.

The  letter *śa* with the right vertical extended lower than the left,

 *di*  *do*  looped *da* (*da*), beaked *ca* (*ca* ) and angular *pa* (*pa* ) *pu* (*pu* ) and *ma*

 retained the old form of the northern Gupta-Brāhmī script.

A significant number of the characters show similarity with the early Proto-Śāradā script, namely the Khimṅala Śāhi inscription, Hatun inscription and Sarahan inscription (Hinuber 2004: Abb.19; Deambi 1982: Table No. 2A).

The characters include the letter *na* (*na* ) , looped *la* (*la* ) with the right limb prolonged and curved, semi-circle *tha* (*tha* ) with a

midline, *pha* (*pha* ) with a lower loop, and the straight vertical *ra* (*ra* ) .

The letter *ḍa* (*ḍa* ) , triangular *va* (*va* ) , the letter *ha* (*ha* ) with a slanted base and left curve, and flat top *ga* (*ga* ) , shows the characteristics of the later Śāradā inscription.

This inscription is placed at 6th/7th Century C.E., which is in conformity with the historical context.

5.4.4 Wartir Inscription

The bent cross-bar *ka* , rounded top *kha*  with a triangular base, bent base *na* , double curved *da* , tripartite *ya*  with the left arm curving inwards and solid triangular headmark follow the style of 4th/5th Century C.E. Gupta-Brāhmī inscriptions of Mathura (Dani 1963: Plate XIIb).

The letter *ta* consists of two varieties. The first variety is the older form of a two-armed *ta*  with the right limb slightly prolonged. The second type  is similar to the Hatun inscription with the left arm missing and the right converted to a curve.

The looped *sa* , *ha* (*hr*)  with a slanting base and a left tick curved downwards, *la* (*la lla*)  with a slanted base and left hook broadened, and openmouthed *ṇa* with both limbs are seen in the Toramāṇa Śāhi inscription of 5th/6th Century C.E.

As for the letter *pa* , the first variety is the rounded form with the left arm bent outwards, similar to the Khimṅala Śāhi inscription while the second one (*pu* ) is the older angular form.

Based on these characteristics, the Wartir inscription is placed at 5th/6th Century C.E.

5.4.5 Shahpur Inscription

The, beaked *ca* (*ci*) , hooked *sa* , *ṣa* (*ṣe*)  with a slanted base, angular *pa* (*pu*) , straight vertical *ra* (*ra*)  with a triangular footmark and a solid triangular headmark show the common features of Gupta-Brāhmī script.

The letter  *ta* and *na* () are similar with the Hatun inscription while the looped  *ka* and *ṇa* () with the right limb forming a vertical are similar with those of Brahmor and SPS Image inscription (Hinuber 2004: Abb.19; Deambi 1982: Table No.2A).

It is placed between 5th to 7th Century C.E.

5.4.6 Khimṅala Śāhi inscription

The characters of this inscription show a clear transition from the Gupta-Brāhmī to the Śāradā script.

The older forms of Gupta-Brāhmī are observed in the tripartite *ya* (*ya*  *yo* ) , round topped *śa* (*śa*  *śu* ) with a left footmark, *dha* (*dhi* ) which narrows down at the bottom, the straight vertical *ra*  and three armed *ja* (*ja*  *jā* )).

The letter *ta*  and *na* (*na*  *nā* ) with the right limb prolonged, *ma*   with its base sloping to the right, flat top *ga*  with a left footmark, looped *sa*  and *ha* (*hā*  *hi* ) with a sloped base also appear in the Vāsudeva Pratima and Narendrāditya inscription of Hund and Toramāṇa Śāhi inscription. The looped *ka*  and *pa*  with the left arm slightly bent out could be observed on early Śāradā inscriptions of 8th/9th Century C.E.

This inscription shows the palaeographic characteristics of 6th/7th Century C.E.

5.5 Śāradā Inscriptions

Although Śāradā was widely used in the inscriptions of Kashmir, Abdur Rahman mentioned that the script might have developed in Hund, or in the region of Gandhāra before it was brought to Kashmir. In comparison with the Proto-Śāradā, the Śāradā script possessed a few inherent characteristics. They include the horizontal line headmark, looped *ka*, flat top *kha* and *ga*, *ta* with the left half missing and right limb forming a loop, squarish *sa* and *śa*, exclusively bipartite *ya* and *ra* with either a solid or hollow wedge. However, Śāradā sometimes retain the old forms of post Gupta Brāhmī script in the letters *ṣa*, *ṭha* and *da*.

The Śāradā inscriptions documented in the present research are placed between the end of 7th Century C.E. to the 16th Century C.E. Arranged in chronology, the Śāradā inscriptions discussed here are classified into four categories: 7th-9th Century, 9th-10th Century, 10th-13th Century and 13th-16th Century.

5.5.1 Śāradā Inscriptions 7th-9th Century C.E.

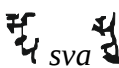
Abdur Rahman mentioned that the Śāradā script made its first appearance in Gandhāra on the coins of Spalapatideva (814 C.E.), while in Kashmir on the coins of the Varmans (mid 9th Century C.E.) (Rahman 1979: 241). However, observation on the

epigraphic materials documented in this research shows that the date when the Śāradā started to be used can be pushed to a century earlier. The inscriptions which falls under this category constitute the earliest documents which still retain some characteristics of Proto-Śāradā script.

From 7th Century onwards, the Śāradā script started to be used in the region. During the earlier phase (7th-9th Century C.E.), the script was not yet in its fully developed form. In these inscriptions, the important characteristics of Śāradā are found, such as the line headmark, bipartite *ya*, looped *ka*, squarish *sa* and *śa* and flat top *ga* and *kha*. However, the older forms of Proto-Śāradā such as the two armed *ta*, flat base *gha*, angular *pa* and double curved *da* were occasionally used.

5.5.1.1 Ananda Inscription

The typical features of Śāradā characters in Ananda inscription include the

double looped *ka* , looped *da*  (*da*), squarish shape *śa* (*śi*  *śe* ) with  *sva*

a wedge on the left and squarish *sa* (*spa*) with an open top. The rounded top *ga* , looped initial *a* retains the older Proto-Śāradā form. 

The broad *va* (*vā*)  and *na* (*na ne*) with the right vertical shown further are common in Śāradā script. The letter *bha* (*bhā*) with a left triangular loop, bipartite *ya*  and *ha* with a loop hanging from the headmark also showed later development. The letter *ja* (*jjā*) shows a resemblance  with Hund and Dewai inscription of 10th/11th Century C.E.

This inscription is placed between 7th/9th Century C.E.

5.5.1.2 Palola Śāhi Inscription

The inscription shows striking similarity with the Hatun inscription (Rahman 1979: 225-227; Hinuber 2004: Abb.19).

The resemblance are observed in the flat top *ga*  with left footmark, *ta*  with missing left half and the right limb forming a 

curve, *na* with right vertical and left horizontal stroke and *pa*  with downward elongation of the right vertical.

Other similarities include letter *bha*  with left triangular loop, slanting base *ma*  with left loop, angular *va*  and squarish *sa*  and *śa* , bipartite *ya*  with right vertical extended, the slanting base *ṣa*  and *ha*  with middle angular loop.

The initial *a*  and *ra*  with a lower solid triangular wedge, double curved *la*  connected to the right vertical, and angular *da* (*da*  *dā*  *dī*  *dī* ) with a left loop are found in most Śāradā inscriptions in Hund.

The similarities shared with the Hatun and Danyor inscriptions suggest that they are similar in date as well as provenance.

5.5.1.3 Śrī Bhāganaṣa Inscription

The characters are not regularly engraved, and the letters often show lots of inconsistencies. All the characters are surmounted by a horizontal line headmark.

The angular and tailed *mā*  comparable with those of Khimṅala Śāhi inscription. The letter *ta*  with the left half missing and the right limb forming a prominent loop is similar with the Hatun inscription (Hinuber 2004: Abb.19). The letter *na* (*na*  *nī*  *nā*) comprised of a few irregular varieties, some with the right limb forming a vertical line. The left limb is either a horizontal stroke, a loop or a stroke sloping downwards

Squarish *sa*  and *śa* (*śu* ) *ṣa*  with a slanted base and angular *va*  (*vai* ) *bha*  (*bhā*) with a left solid triangle and the right limb curving to the left, resembling the Hatun inscription.

The quadrangular  *ca* with a left knob, ) and *ga* 
flat top *ṭa* (*ṭa* , *ra* with a  hollow  or solid
triangular wedge, angular *pa* (*pa*) 
with the left and right vertical curving outwards, and *gha*
common in Śāradā inscriptions of 8th/9th Century C.E. (Deambi 1982: Table No. 1C).

Although the double looped *ka*  shows the characteristics of the 11th Century inscription of Somavarman (Deambi 1982: Table No. 3B), this form is also occasionally found in the earlier Palola Śāhi Inscription. This inscription belonged to 8th/9th Century C.E.

5.5.1.4 Gumbatuna Inscription

The inscription shows the characteristics of an earlier period Śāradā, especially in the letters *ja*  and *ṇa*  (Rahman 1979: 229). Earlier forms which are shared by Proto-Śāradā characters include the beaked *ca* , tailed *ṣa*  and angular *va* .

The letter *ya* , *pa* , *bha* , *ma* , *ra* , *sa* , *śa* and *ha*  show similarity with the Veka inscription.

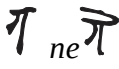
This inscription is placed at 8th/9th Century C.E.

5.5.1.5 Dal Mahat Inscription

The characters of Dal Mahat inscription are marked by the exaggerated length of the medial vowel -*i*, -*ī* and subscript -*ra*, probably due to the personal mannerism of the scribe.

The initial *a*  is made of a curve opening to the left, similar to the northwestern alphabet of the 6th/7th Century C.E. (Deambi 1982: 26).

The letter *ta*  with a missing left limb and right limb forming a curve, *pa*  (*pu*  *pī*) with a downward elongation of the right vertical, flat top and angular *va* , and vertical *ra*  with footmark in the form of upward tick are the same as Hatun inscription (Rahman 1979: 225-227; Hinuber 2004: Abb.19).

The double curved *da* (*di* ) resembles the Ananda inscription of Hund. The flat top *kha*  (*khi*), *gha* (*gho* ) with a downward elongation of the right  vertical, flat top *na* (*na*) with the right limb slightly longer, and the double curve *ṇa*  with the left arm curved to the right are examples of a more developed form of Śāradā script.

This inscription can thus be placed at 8th/9th Century C.E.

5.5.1.6 Ranigat Inscription

The characters of the Ranigat inscription are surmounted by wedged headmarks. The inscription retained the earlier forms of Proto-Śāradā script in the equal armed  *ta*, beaked *ca* , straight vertical *ra* , double curved *da*  , flat top *śa* , semi circle *ṭa* with a footmark and hooked *sa* (*syā* ).

The earlier Śāradā characteristics are observed in the letter *na* with the slight elongation of the right limb, downward elongation of the right vertical of *pa* , left limb of *bha*  forming a solid triangular wedge and the letter *gha* (*ghr* ) with the right base being slightly lowered.

The fully developed form of the Śāradā script could be observed on the looped *ka* (*ki* ) , flat topped *ga*  and *kha* (*khyā* ) , and flat top *va*  and *ba* .

This inscription is placed at 8th/9th Century C.E.

5.5.1.7 Promjavarājya Inscription

Due to the lack of a clear photograph, the tracing of this inscription can only be partially made.

The flat base *gha* (*ghi* ) , double curved *da* (*de* ) , angular *pa* (*pro* ) and *la*  with a slanted base resembled the characters of the Ananda and Khimṅala Śāhi inscriptions.

The looped *ka* (𑖕𑖖), squarish *sa* (𑖔) and *śa* (𑖔𑖅), flat top and broad *ba* (𑖃) and *va* (𑖆), squarish *tha* (𑖚) and *ta* (𑖛) with a right loop typically showed the characteristics of 9th/10th Century Śāradā script of Hund and Kashmir.

The flat top *ga* (𑖇) and *ra* (𑖇𑖅) with a lower hollow triangular wedge show similarity with the Sungal Copper plate (10th Century C.E). The flat top *kha* (𑖇𑖔) also showed further development of the script.

This inscription is placed at 8th/9th Century C.E.

5.5.1.8 Ghaṭṭibhoṭṭika Inscription

The palaeographic study of this inscription was first done by Hinüber (2009: 12). Due to the presence of a letter which is identified as the tripartite *ya* (𑖚𑖛), he placed the inscription at 6th Century C.E. Even if the character is in fact a tripartite *ya*, other letters appear to be dated much later. The earlier Śāradā characters are observed

in the letters *na* (𑖎𑖅) and *da* (𑖃𑖆).
(*di* 𑖃𑖆𑖛)

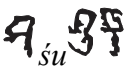
The horizontal line headmark, letter *va*, *ma* (𑖇𑖅𑖛), *ṭa* (𑖛𑖅𑖛)

(*te* 𑖛𑖅), *gha* (𑖇𑖛) and *ta* (𑖛) follow the style of 9th/10th Century C.E. Śāradā script.

The looped *ka* (𑖕𑖖), squarish form of *sa* (𑖔𑖅), *śa* (𑖔𑖅𑖛), open-mouthed *ma* (𑖇𑖅𑖛) with a knob and the angular *ja* (𑖇𑖛) are very common in Śāradā inscriptions from Hund of 10th/11th Century C.E. This inscription should thus be placed at 9th/10th Century C.E.

5.5.1.9 Mir Ali Inscription

The Mir Ali inscription is carved on a very hard quartzite stone slab. As a result, the characters are crudely and inconsistently executed.

The older forms of Gupta-Brāhmī and Proto-Śāradā characters include the rounded top *śa*  (*śa*), straight vertical *ra*  with a lower tick pointing upwards, semi-circle *ṭa*  and flat top *ga*  with a downward elongation of the right vertical.

The looped *ka* (*ka*  *kā* ) either rounded or angular showed similarity with most Proto-Śāradā and Śāradā scripts of Hund (Nasim Khan 1999-2000b: 36). The double curve *ṇa*  with a stroke on the upper left and a  *nā* (*na*) resembled the Ratnamañjarī inscription.

There is no uniformity in the letter *da*. However, a few varieties (*do* , *da* ) are similar with the Jayapāla Śāhi and Mahārājñi Śrī Kameśvaridevi inscriptions.

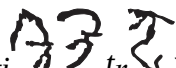
As for the letter *ta* , they are found in the Dewal and Ratnamañjarī inscriptions.

The letter *ja* (*jā*  *je* ) with the upper arm bending upwards resembles the Dewal and Narendrāditya inscription. No clear distinction could be made between the letter *ma*  and *sa*  as both constitute irregular forms of open top and slanted base character with a left loop.

The flat top *kha*  with a broad left loop shows a developed form while the letter *dha*  with a flat top is similar to the Brahmor Copper plate (10th Century C.E) (Deambi 1982: Table No.2B).

The characters are thus placed at 9th/10th Century C.E.

5.5.1.10 Tochi Valley Bilingual Inscription A

The character *ta* (*ti*  *tr* ) with the right limb prolonged is similar to the Wartir inscription. Although the shapes of letter *sa*  and *śa*  are not regular, they appear to resemble the Proto-Śāradā script.

The letter *da* (*di*) is similar with the Hatun Inscription while the looped *ka* , bipartite *ya* (*yā*), *la* with a downward elongation of the right vertical, open-mouthed *ma*, flat top *va*, *tha* (*thau*) , *ra* (*re*) , and *ba* , and hooked initial *a* are commonly found in 9th/10th Century C.E. Śāradā characters.

5.5.1.11 Tochi Valley Bilingual Inscription B

The letter *pa* (*pu*) with the left arm bending outwards, *pha* (*phru*) , with lower loop, *śa* (*śu*) with a round top and left foot mark characterized the earlier forms of Proto-Śāradā script. However, the double curved *ja*  and looped *na*    do not represent the script of the northwest.

The initial *a*  is the same as in the Mir Ali and Veka inscription. As for the letter *ta* (*ti*) , *da* (*di*) , *ma* , *va*  and *ya* , they have close resemblance with Tochi Valley Bilingual inscription A.

Abdur Rahman pointed out that these two inscriptions neither conform to the characteristics of Śāradā nor the Nāgarī scripts (Rahman 1979: 228). He also mentioned that the stylistic difference of this inscription is due to unskilled scribe (Rahman 1979: 228).

5.5.2 Śāradā Inscriptions of 9th-11th Century C.E

Between the period of 9th-11th Century C.E., the Śāradā script is in its most developed form. Almost all inscriptions dated during this period in Gandhāra are issued under the political influence of the Hindu Śāhis. Four of them clearly mentioned the name of the ruling kings, while the spots where the other three are found, are located within dominion of the Śāhis.

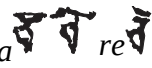
The Śāradā style of this period continued to be used in Gandhāra for the succeeding centuries with little modifications.

5.5.2.1 Dewal Inscription

This inscription shows common features of 9th/10th Century C.E Śāradā characters in the squarish *sa*  and *śa* (*śa* ) , bipartite *ya*  and *pa*  with a downward elongation of the right vertical and left arm inclined outwards. The letter *pa* sometimes have a close top  which is also found in the Mahārājñi Śrī Kameśvaridevi inscription.

The letter *ta* comprises of three main varieties, the one with a right loop opening to the left , two armed *ta*  and the looped *ta* (*ti*  *tra* ). The double looped *ṇa*  with a stroke on the upper right is similar with the Śrī Haṃmīra inscription.

The angular looped *ha*  is similar to the earlier Palola Śāhi inscription. The open top initial *a* has a curve on the lower left and a small hollow triangle on the lower right occurred in the Mahārājñi Śrī Kameśvari inscription.

The looped *ka* , flat top *ga* (*gra* ) with a small hollow triangle on the lower left vertical, *da* (*di*) with a left loop, straight vertical *ra* (*ra*  *re* ) with a hollow triangle at the lower end and *la*  with three unequal legs can be observed in the Dewai inscription.

5.5.2.2 Dewai Inscription

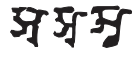
The letter *ka* , *ga* , *da* (*dā* ) , *pa* , *ra* , and *la*  resembled the Jayapāla Śāhi and Mahārājñi Śrī Kameśvaridevi inscription.

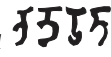
The flat top *dha* (*dhi* ) and semi circle *ṭa* (*tā* ) is similar with the Jayapāla Śāhi inscription while the slanted base *ma* with a left loop is similar with the Veka inscription.

The resemblance with the Dewai, Jayapāla Śāhi and Veka inscription confirms the earlier supposition that it was issued during the rule of Bhīmadeva.

5.5.2.3 Ratnamañjarī Inscription

The loop of the letter *ka* is the either in wedge form , solid triangular  or hollow triangular . The right loop of flat top *kha*  become a solid thick line while letter *ṇa*  have three equal vertical legs.

The letter *la* consist of two main varieties, which are the single curve  and double curve  while *ṭha*  maintains the old circular form. The initial *a*   is with an open top while initial *ā*  is with a left loop with a hook at the lower right vertical.

The letter *ga* , *ta* , *na* , *bha* , *va* , *ra*  , *ya* , *sa* , *śa* , *ṣa* (*ṣṭa*  *ṣṭhi* ) and *ha*  show similarity with the Jayapāla Śāhi and Mahārajñi Śrī Kameśvaridevi inscriptions.

The shapes of the characters are mostly in conformity with other contemporary Śāradā inscriptions of Gandhāra, with some minor differences.

5.5.2.4 Veka Inscription

The letter *ka* (*ka kā ke*), *gha* (*ghe*), *ta*, *dha*, *ṭa* (*ṭāṭ* , *ṭṭhi* ) *pa* , *va*  , *ra* (*ra rā*), *la* and *ya* show similar characteristics  with other contemporary Śāradā inscription of 9th/10th Century, especially those discovered in Hund.

The initial *a*  consists of a right vertical attached to a cross similar to the letter *ka* of the Gupta period. This type of initial *a* is observable on the Mir Ali inscription and Tochi Valley inscription B. The initial *u*  is with an elongated curve.

The quadrangular *ca*  and slanted base *ma*  with a left loop are similar to the Palola Śāhi inscription. The letter *ṣa*  and *sa*  seem similar with the Ranigat inscription.

The differences which are marked on the letters *a*, *sa*, *śa*, *ca* and *ma* suggest that this inscription is stylistically different from those discovered in Hund.

5.5.2.5 Śrī Priyaṃvada Inscription

The letter *ka* (*ka k̄a ke kṛ*), *ga* (*grā*), *na* (*na*), *ya*, *sa* and *kha* (*khyā*) are common characteristics of the Śāradā characters of Gandhāra. The letter *ra* with a hollow wedge (*rti*) and looped *ta* (*te tka tram*) are found in Dewal inscription. The double looped *la* (*li*) is similar with the Ratnamañjarī inscription while the letter *ma* (*maṁ mā me*) with a left loop is found in the Jayapāla Śāhi inscription.

5.5.2.6 Jayapāla Śāhi Inscription

The looped *ka*, flat top *ga* with a left footmark, looped *da*, *pa* with a right vertical and left arm inclined outwards, *na* with the right vertical and slanted left arm meeting at an angle, bipartite *ya*, *va*, *dha* and squarish *sa* and *śa* show the fully developed form of the Śāradā script.

Other Śāradā characters include the flat top *kha* (*khi*), *gha* with a downward elongation of the right vertical, semi-circle *ṭa* (*ṭa ṭca*), double looped *ṇa* (*ṇā*) with the left leg curved and extended to the right, *la* with a right vertical attached to the left loop via a horizontal stroke, *ra* with a lower solid triangular and *ma* with a left loop.

Similar with the Dewal Inscription, the open top initial *a* has a hollow triangle at the bottom of the right vertical. The superscript *ṇa* in the letter *ṇka* is similar to the Śrī Nagar inscription (Deambi 1982: Table No.2A).

5.5.2.7 Mahārajñi Śrī Kameśvaridevi Inscription

This inscription shows close similarity with the Jayapāla Śāhi inscription.

The letters include the letter *a* अ, *ka* क, *ga* (gi) गि, *ja* र, *ta* (ti) ति, *tā* ता, *da* दा, *na* नर, *pa* प, *bha* (bho) भे, *ra* र, *ya* यय, *sa* समस, *śa* स, *va* वयव, *ḍha* ङ and *ba* (brā) ब.

The quadrangular *ca* च with a left loop is similar with the Veka Inscription, while the letter *ṇa* ण is similar with the Brahmor Copper Plate.

5.5.2.8 Barikot Inscription

The letter *ka* क, *ja* र, *na* न, *pa* प, *ma* म, *la* ल, *va* व, *ra* र, *śa* (śva) श, *śra* श्र, *śrī* श्री and *sa* (sva) स्व, *sti* स्ति, *sya* स्य, *stha* स्था have equivalents in the Jayapāla Śāhi and Mahārājñi Śrī Kameśvaridevi inscriptions.

The letter *bha* भ with an open triangle is similar with the Dewai inscription while the semi-circle *dha* (dhi) ध shows the earlier form observable in the Ranigat inscription.

5.5.2.9 Vasantaraja Inscription

Striking similarity with the Dewai Inscription could be observed, especially in the characters *ka* क, *ja* र, *da* दा and *ta* (ti) ति. However, the angular form of *va* व could suggest a later date for the inscription. Based on these similarities, this inscription is probably dated between 9th-11th Century C.E.

5.5.2.10 Īśvara Inscription

The inscription is extremely worn out especially in the middle part where most characters are too damaged to be studied in detail.

The characters of Īśvara inscription showed resemblance with the Jayapāla

Śāhi inscription in the letters *ka* (*ka* क कī की), *kha* ख, *ga* ग, *ca* (ca च), *na* न, *ma* म and *ba* ब.

The letter *da* (*da* द di दि de दे dai दे) is similar with the Barikot inscription while *śa* श and *sa* स inscription

resembled the Veka inscription. The letter *ra* consists of two main varieties, one with a solid triangular र at the bottom of the vertical and the other with a hollow triangle र, which can also be observed in the Dewal and Dewai inscriptions.

This inscription is placed at 10th/11th Century C.E.

5.5.3 Śāradā Inscriptions of 11th-13th Century C.E.

In the year 1002, Hund finally fell into the hands of Mahmud of Ghazna, and the Hindu Śāhis were driven to Punjab. After 11th Century C.E., the region of Gandhāra fell under the Muslim rule, and the Hindu power were never again revived. However, Śāradā continued to be used, though in lesser extent.

The Śāradā inscriptions of the 11th to the 13th Century C.E. in Gandhāra continued to be written in the characters used during the Hindu Śāhi period with very few minor changes. Those small differences which are observed are the more angular form of *va* and *ba* as well as the occasional usage of *ma* with an angular base.

5.5.3.1 Memorial Stone Inscription

The looped *ka* (*ka* क कī के), *ra* र, squarish *sa* (*sā* स) and *śa* श, and the bipartite *ya* य are common features of the Śāradā characters. The letter *bha* (*bhu* भू *bhū* भू) with an open triangle is similar with the Dewai and Barikot inscriptions.

The letter *ḍha* ङ with a lower loop is similar with the Mahārājñī Śrī Kameśvarideva inscription while the flat top *ga* ग with a downward elongation of the right vertical is similar with the Mir Ali and Palola Śāhi inscription.

The letter *ja* (*jā* ) resembles the Dewai and Mir Ali inscription.

The letter *ma* with the base forming an acute angle is similar to the Devi-RiKothi inscription (12th Century C.E) (Deambi 1982: Table No.3B). Sometimes, the

letter *ma* occurs with a closed top , while the letter *da* (*di* ) , initial *a*   and *i*  are similar with the 11th Century Kulait Copper Plate (Deambi 1982: Table No.3B).

The letter *va*  in having an angular shape shows the characteristics of 11th-13th Century Śāradā character (Deambi 1982: 47).

This inscription belonged to the period of 11th to 13th Century C.E.

5.5.3.2 Kṛṣṇaratipadajo Inscription

The double looped *ka*  is similar to the Kulait Copper Plate and Dacchan Stone inscription (11th Century C.E) (Deambi 1982: Table No.3B). The letters *ta* (*ti* ) *te* , *pa* (*pu* ) , *la* (*li* ) and *śa* (*śi* ) are found in most 9th-11th Century C.E Śāradā inscriptions.

The letter *sa*  with a left loop and letter *ṣa* (*ṣṇa* ) show forms unparalleled to other known inscriptions of Gandhāra and Kashmir, probably due to the hand of the engraver.

The letter *da* (*da*  *di* ) with the left loop is similar with the Bhakhund inscription (11th Century C.E).

The letter *ja* (*ja*  *jo* ) with a left loop and the angular *va*  are of the 11th-13th Century type. The letter *ra* (*ra*  *rā* ) with a prominent upward stroke is similar to the Chamba Copper Plate and the Thundu Copper Plate (11th Century C.E) (Deambi 1982: Table No.3B).

The inscription is thus placed between the period of 11th/13th Century C.E.

5.5.3.3 Kamala Inscription

The letters *ta* , *na*  and *ra*  showed the typical forms of Śāradā inscriptions of Gandhāra between 9th-13th Century C.E., while the letter *sa* (*su* ) is similar with the Veka inscription. A looped variety of *ta* (*to* ) was used in the 11th Century C.E. Bhakund inscription (Deambi 1982: Table No.3B).

The angular *ca* (*rce* ) is similar to the S.P.S Museum Inscription (12th Century C.E.) while the angular base *ma*  is similar to the Devi-Ri-Kothi inscription (12th Century C.E.).

This inscription is placed between the period of 11th-13th Century C.E.

5.5.3.4 Zalamkot Bilingual Inscription

The open top initial *a* character has a curve which opened towards the left. There is either a hollow triangle  or solid triangle  at the foot of the right vertical.

The initial *u*  with the curve elongated up to the same level of the headmark is similar to the Veka and Mahārājñi Śrī Kameśvaridevi inscription.

The letter *ka*  is made up of a left angular loop with a rounded curve on the right. The flat top *ga* shows a small upward stroke on the lower left side . The letter *ta*  consists of a curve opening to the left with a solid loop.

The looped *da*  has a tail at the right end pointing upwards while the flat top *dha*  has a sharp tip at the bottom. The letter *na*  consists of two slanting verticals meeting at the headmark.

The letter *ṭa* (*ṭṭa* ) is a half circle with a flat top while *ḍha*  has a curve opening to the right. The letter *pa*  has two equal arms with a rounded bottom.

The letter *bha* has an inverted wedge and a tail pointing downwards. The open top *ma* has a knob on the left. The letter *śa* (*śrī* *śo*) and *sa* are squarish in shape while flat top *va* protrudes towards the left.

The letter *ra* consists of vertical line with a lower stroke slanting upwards while the letter *la* has vertical line connected to a curve.

5.5.3.5 Śrī Haṃmīra Inscription

The letter *ka* (*kā* *va*), *bha* (*bhā*), *ja* (*ye*), *ta* , *dha* , *ra* , *la* , *sa* and *śa* (*śrī*) are common features of 10th Century C.E. Śāradā script.

The flat top *kha* (*khi*) with a broad right loop is similar with the 11th Century Thundu Inscription (Deambi 1982: Table No.3B). The letter *ma* (*mā* *mī*), with an angular base are similar to the Devi-Ri-Kothi inscription (12th Century C.E) (Deambi 1982: Table No.3B). The letter *ma* (*me*) with a closed top is also observed.

5.5.4 Śāradā Inscriptions of 13th-16th Century C.E.

Although the Hindu rule in Gandhāra had long passed in the 13th Century C.E., Śāradā continued to be used in the region. The period after 13th Century C.E. constituted the final stage of development for the Śāradā script (Deambi 1982: 50).

Although these Śāradā characters retained the older forms, few significantly developed shapes are observed.

They include the close top initial *a*, initial *ā* with a lower loop, quadrangular *ca* with a left circular loop, *ja* with an extended middle stroke, slanted base *da* with a left circular loop and elongated right vertical, flat base *ma* with a left loop, and an angular *va*. On some inscriptions, the letter *na* occurs as two equal limbs meeting at an angle beneath the horizontal line headmark while the letter *ta* is frequently expressed in looped form.

5.5.4.1 Śrī Malikaputra Inscription

The letter *sa* (sva स्वि), *śa* (śa श, śe से, śrī श्री), *ga* गा, *ta* त, *da* द, *di* दि, *ja* ज, *ra* (ra रा, rā र), *pa* प, *ca* च and *śa* (śi शि, śe से) are

common features of Śāradā characters in Gandhāra and Kashmir.

Few characteristics show later development of the Śāradā script. The closed top initial *a* अ is similar with the Ghaznavid coins as well as the Wular Hama inscription (16th Century C.E.) (Deambi 1982: Table No.4A, 3B).

Similarity with the Ghaznavid coins is also observable in the double looped *ka* क. The angular *va* व and *ba* ब with a pointy angle on the left are similar with the Arigan Stone inscription, Kothiar inscription and Vanhadeka inscription (Deambi 1982: Table No.4A).

The squarish and closed top *ma* (ma म, mā म) with a flat base, right vertical and hollow circular left loop are similar in the Ushkur Relief inscription and Wular Hama inscription.

The three legged *na* न with an upper right stroke shows a similarity with the Kothiar inscription (14th Century C.E.).

This inscription is placed at 13th/14th Century C.E.

5.5.4.2 Nayarāja Inscription

The the initial *a* अ, *kha* ख, *ta* त, *ma* म, *ra* (rā रा), *la* (li ल), *ya* य, *śa* श and *ha* ह are found in Śāradā characters of 9th-13th Century C.E.

The letter *ja* ज has the central stroke extended downwards beyond the bottom level of the letter, which is the same with Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka inscription (15th

Century C.E.). The letter *da* (di द) has a prominent loop on the left with the base stroke highly slanting and the right vertical stroke lengthened.

Another similarity with the Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka inscription is the angular *va* (vā व) with an angle on the left while letter *na* (na न) has two arms meeting at a wider angle. The letter *ḍha* ढ with a horizontal base and with a right loop shows some resemblance to the Khonamuh inscription (15th Century C.E) (Deambi 1982: Table No.4A).

Based on these palaeographic characteristics, this inscription could probably be placed between the 13th to 15th Century C.E.

5.5.4.3 Talang Inscription

The letter *gha*  has the downward elongation of the right vertical while the letter *sa*  is square in shape, which are common features in most Śāradā characters. The double looped *ka*  is similar with 11th Century Ghaznavid coins while the letter *da* (*do* ) with the left loop is similar with the Ushkur inscription (16th Century C.E) (Deambi, 1982, Table No.4B).

The letter *na*  consists of two limbs meeting at an angle. The three legged *la*  with the horizontal line headmark being extended horizontally to the left is similar to the Ushkur Relief inscription (16th Century C.E). However, the inscription retained a few old forms of *pa* (*pu* ) , *ba* , *ma* (*mu* ) and *va* .

This inscription belonged to the 12th to 16th Century C.E.

5.5.4.4 Ādityarāja Inscription

The characters *ka* , *na* , *pa*  and *ra*  are typical features of 9th-13th Century Śāradā characters.

The initial *ā*  with a loop on the left vertical shows a striking resemblance with the Hariparbat Grave Stone inscription (15th Century C.E) (Deambi 1982: Table No.4A). The letter *ta*  with a left loop is similar with the Wular Hama inscription (16th Century C.E) (Deambi 1982: Table No.4B).

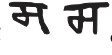
The letter *da* (*di* ) with a left loop, slanted base and upward right vertical is similar with the Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka inscription (15th Century C.E) and Ushkur Relief inscription (16th Century C.E.) (Deambi 1982: Table No.4B).

The letter *na*  is similar with the Kothiar inscription (14th Century C.E) while the flat *ma*  base with a right rounded loop, open top and a right vertical is similar to the Ushkur Relief inscription and Zaji Nai inscription (16th Century C.E).

The inscription is placed between 14th to 16th Century C.E.

5.5.4.5 Alingar Inscription

The Alingar inscription is marked with the connected horizontal line headmark. However, the photograph available to the author does not permit detailed palaeographic study on the characters.

The letter *ja* , *pa* , *sa* (*sā*) ) and *śa*  are common features of the Śāradā script.  The initial *a* has a close top which characterizes 15th/16th Century style.

The letter angular *va*  shows a similarity Khonamauh inscription (15th Century C.E). The slanted base *ma*  with circular left loop, *ga* () with a downward elongation of the right vertical are similar to the Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka Inscription (15th Century C.E).

This inscription could be placed between the 14th to 16th Century C.E.

5.5.4.6 Fragmentary Inscription

The initial *a*  with a close top and looped *ta*  are similar to Wular Hama (16th Century C.E (Deambi 1982: Table No.4A and B).

The letter *na* (*nī*)  consists of two limbs meeting at an angle, while the letter *ka* (*kā*) , *kha* , *ga* (*gī*) , *śa* (*śva*)  and *sa*  are common characteristics of the Śāradā script.

The inscription is placed at 15th/16th Century C.E.

5.5.4.7 Gahurya Inscription

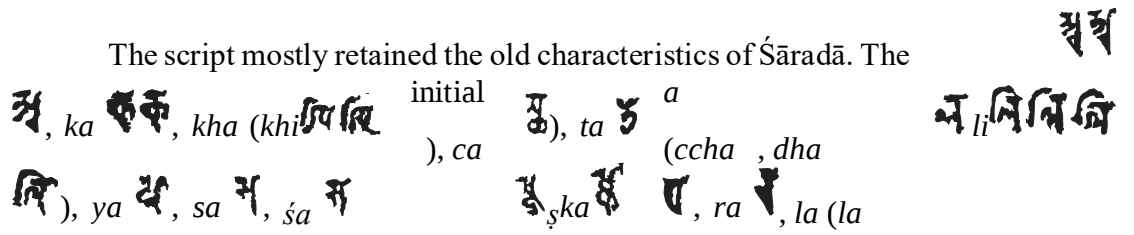
The letter *ka* , *ga* , *gha* (*ghī*) , *pa* (*po*) , *ra* (*ri*)  and *ya*  show typical features of Śāradā script.

The quadrangular *ca* (ci ) with the circular looped *ta*  showed similarity with the Wular Hama and Ushkur inscriptions (Deambi 1982: Table No.4B). The angular letter *va* (*vā* ) showed some resemblance of the Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka inscription.

This inscription is placed at 15th/16th Century C.E.

5.5.4.8 Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka Inscription

The characters of Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka inscription (1461 C.E) were executed in a relief form, similar to the styles of the Arabo-Persian inscriptions.

The script mostly retained the old characteristics of Śāradā. The  The script mostly retained the old characteristics of Śāradā. The , *ka* , *kha* (*khi* ) initial , *ta* ^a , *ccha*, *dha* , *ya* , *sa* , *śa* , *ka* , *ra* , *la* (*la*

and *ṣa* (*ṣṭa*) showed no significant development from the styles of 10th/11th Century C.E. Śāradā.

The  initial *ī* is similar with the Baijanath Inscription (12th Century C.E), while the  letter *ga* with the downward elongation of the right vertical is similar with the Hariparbat inscription (15th Century C.E). The angular *va*  forming a triangle is common to most 14th-16th Century Śāradā inscriptions.

The letter *da*  has a highly slanted base, left loop and a right vertical which extended upwards while the letter *ja*  has the middle stroke protruding downwards below the base of the characters. The letter *ha*  shows later development, similar to the Devanagari script.

The letter *ma*  with a horizontal base and a left circular loop is comparable with the Śrī Malikaputra Inscription (14th Century), Khonamauh Inscription (15th Century C.E.), and Wular Huma Inscription (16th Century C.E.).

5.6 Auspicious symbols

A significant number of inscriptions in this thesis start with the *praṇava* symbol or the sacred sound of *om*. The symbol consists of two main varieties, the hooked and spiral type. The usage of either one of these two correlate with neither the location nor the date of the inscription.

The hooked variety occurred only 3 times while the spiral variety occurred 11 times. The hook type is observed in the Ghaṭṭibhoṭṭika , Dewal  and Ratnamanjari  inscriptions.

The spiral variety has three sub-varieties, the spiral with the tail turned to the right, the spiral with the tail turned downward and to the left, and the spiral with an irregular shape.

The first sub-variety is observed in the earlier period inscriptions such as Dal Mahat  Jayapāla Śāhi  and Mir Ali inscriptions . This  sub variety is also observable in the angular form in the Palola Śāhi Inscription .

The second sub-variety has the tail prolonged downwards. This form is seen in the inscriptions dated after the 11th Century C. E., which include the Zulamkot Inscription  and Śrī Malikaputra inscription .

In the later period, the tail is extended to the left. This is observed in the Gahurya inscription  and Inscription of Śrī Vanhadaka .

The spiral symbol having irregular shapes are found in the Memorial Stone  and Barikot inscriptions  .

5.7 Numerals

Few inscriptions documented in this thesis bear significant number of numerals. Those available from these materials include the digits 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 20, 30, 40, 60, 70, and 80.

5.7.1 Digit 0

It is expressed as a simple dot in the Dewal , Ratnamanjari  and Adityaraja Inscription .

5.7.2 Digit 1

Digit 1 starts as a horizontal dash in the Kadambeśvaradāsa inscription  and develops into a hook in Śrī Bhāganaṣa , Dal Mahat , Ratnamañjarī  and  Mahārājñi Śrī Kameśvaridevi , Śrī Malikaputra , Ādityarāja  and Śrī Vāṇhaḍaka  inscriptions. In the Mir Ali inscription , the right end on the hook is extended slightly downwards while in the Dewal inscription , the right end curves to the right.

The Veka inscription shows a double loop , a characteristic shared by the another variety of number 1 of the Dal Mahat inscription .

5.7.3 Digit 2

Digit 2 in Śrī Bhaganasa  and Palola Śāhi  inscriptions are expressed in the form of a double loop opening to the left. Tochi Valley Bilingual Inscription A  shows a different variety of the double loop form.

5.7.4 Digit 3

It is expressed in the form of triple curved dashes in the Shorkot Inscription (403 C.E) , and the same form is continued by the Kiṃgila Śāhi inscription .

In the Śrī Bhaganasa inscription, the three dashes are connected, forming triple loops opening to the left . This form could also be observed from the Tochi Valley Bilingual inscription A  and B , Adityaraja , Śrī Malikaputra  and Śrī Vanhadeka .

5.7.5 Digit 4

Digit 4 occurs in the Palola Śāhi , Dal Mahat  and Veka Inscription  in a shape similar to the Śāradā letter *ṇka*.

5.7.6 Digit 5

It occurs in the Inscription at the time of Huvishka (165/262 C.E)  occurs as a vertical with a right stroke curving downward. Similar shapes can be seen in the Kadambesvaradasa , Sita Maha Kandara  and Shorkot inscriptions .

5.7.7 Digit 6

Digit 6 in Mahārājñi Śrī Kameśvaridevi inscription  is similar to the letter *pa* of the Śāradā script.

5.7.8 Digit 7

Digit 7  in the Tochi Valley Bilingual inscription b shows an irregular form, while in the Ghaṭṭibhoṭṭika inscription , is a trailed loop with an upper dash slanting upwards.

5.7.9 Digit 8

In the Wano inscription , the digit 8 resembles the letter *ha* of the Śāradā script, with the right tail extended towards the left. The Spina inscription  shows a similar form except for the slightly shorter right tail.

In the Shorkot inscription , the half right of the sign is missing, replaced with a lower loop opening to the left. In the Dal Mahal inscription, the shape is simplified as a simple curve hanging from a horizontal line headmark . This form is also observable in the Dewal  and Maharajni Śrī Kamesvari inscriptions .

The number 8 is also expressed as a hook hanging from the horizontal line headmark, either opening to the right (Śrī Vanhadeka inscription)  or to the left (Śrī Malikaputra inscription) . An irregular shape is observed in the Mir Ali inscription .

5.7.10 Digit 9

In the Spina inscription , digit 10 is a vertical line with a left horizontal stroke bending downwards. However, the Śrī Haṃmīra  and Śrī Malikaputra

inscription  showed a trailed loop.

5.7.11 Digit 10

It is a left loop connected to the right vertical by a slanting line, observed in the Shortkot  and the Dal Mahat  inscriptions.

The left loop in the Mir Ali inscription  is connected to the right vertical only by a thick horizontal wedge. Another variety of digit 10 in the Mir Ali inscription shows an irregular form .

5.7.12 Digit 20

Digit 20 in the inscription of the time of Huvishka  and Kadambeśvaradāsa inscription  showed a semi circle with a midline.

5.7.13 Digit 30

Digit 30 in the Kadambeśvaradāsa inscription shows a resemblance with the letter *la*  of the Gupta period.

5.7.14 Digit 40

Digit 40 in the Wano inscription  consists of a vertical with an upper stroke bending upwards and a lower stroke bending downwards.

5.7.15 Digit 60

Digit 60 only occurs in the Ghaṭṭibhoṭṭika inscription  as a straight vertical with two limbs meeting at the bottom and a horizontal dash on the right.

5.7.16 Digit 70

Digit 70 in the Spina inscription  comprises of a straight vertical with two limbs meeting at an angle and a left upward stroke.

5.7.17 Digit 80

Digit 80 in both Shorkot  and Śrī Bhaganasa inscriptions  are made up of a circle with a midline.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION

The long history of Gandhāra, with the continuous rise and fall of empires and kingdoms has led to the discoveries of numerous inscriptions written in Kharoṣṭhī, Brāhmī, Kohi as well as in foreign scripts. The Puṣkarasari script mentioned in the Jātaka stories probably referred to this Kohi script. A great number of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, dated from the 3rd Century B.C. to 4th Century C.E. were documented, compiled and exhaustively studied by a number of scholars. Although many Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions were also found in the region, less importance has been given

to them by previous scholars, and serious efforts have not been made to compile them under one comprehensive volume. The present research, which focuses on these inscriptions, has filled the gap in the epigraphic study of Gandhāra. In this thesis, we succeeded in documenting 73 inscriptions which are written in Brāhmī, Gupta-Brāhmī, Proto-Śāradā and Śāradā. The epigraphs were either found *in situ*, preserved in various museums or lying in private collections. As for their provenances, 33 inscriptions or 45.21% were found concentrated in the districts of Mardan, Swabi and Swat, while the other 28 inscriptions were sparsely distributed over the Hazara division, Rawalpindi district, Malakand district, Buner district, Dir district, Peshawar district, South Waziristan Agency, North Waziristan Agency, Mohmand Agency and Afghanistan. Although the provenance of the 12 inscriptions is not known, they could belong to Gandhāra or found in the surrounding regions based on the script being used. The scope of the present research is not limited only to the documentation and compilation of the 73 inscriptions, but also included their decipherments, which employed our basic knowledge in functional Sanskrit. The 14 inscriptions deciphered in this research are the Copper Plate II, Vāsudeva-Pratima, Shahpur, Ananda, Palola Śāhi, Śrī Bhaganaṣa, Mir Ali, Vasantaraja, Nayaraja, Ādityarāja, Alingar, Gahurya, Paśaḍhamahe and the Fragmentary stone inscriptions. The decipherments by previous scholars of another 14 were revisited. They include Copper Plate III, Copper Plate IV, Wano, Wartir, Gumbatuna, Dal Mahat, Ranigat, Dewal, Ratnamañjarī, Veka, Barikot, Īśvara, Śrī Haṁmīra and the Zulamkot Bilingual inscriptions.

Regarding the scripts, the 6 earliest inscriptions included in this work are written in Mauryan Brāhmī, Post-Mauryan Brāhmī or Kushan Brāhmī. However, there are possibilities that they were brought in from other areas or even modern forgeries. Thus, their significance to the history of Gandhāra is doubtful. Twenty four inscriptions, or 32.88%, were written in the 4th/5th Century C.E. Gupta-Brāhmī script. The characters show similarities with the Mathuran style, with some regional variations such as the frequent use of hollow triangular headmark and the presence of footmark on the letters *ra*, *śa* and *ga*. Six inscriptions using the Proto-Śāradā script were found while the Śāradā inscriptions remained the largest bulk of data for this thesis; 37 inscriptions or 50.68%, including four bilingual inscriptions. Among the characteristics of Śāradā script include the looped *ka*, flat top *kha* and *ga*, *ta* with the left half missing and right

limb forming a loop, squarish *sa* and *śa*, exclusively bipartite *ya* and *ra* with either a solid or hollow wedge etc. Based on our observations, it appears that the usage of Gupta-Brāhmī which replaced Kharoṣṭhī in Gandhāra were initially concentrated in the area of Kashmir Smast, probably owing to its position as the centre of Hindu pilgrimage. However, in the succeeding centuries, Proto-Śāradā and Śāradā were found more in Swabi and Swat districts, probably due to the rise of Turk Śāhi and Hindu Śāhi dynasties who ruled over the area between the 7th-11th Century C.E. The presence of a few Śāradā inscriptions dated after the 11th Century C.E. shows that even after the Muslim invasion, the Śāradā script continued to be used in the region for some time. Our detailed palaeographic study on the characters of all these epigraphs has shown clear regional development from Gupta-Brāhmī to Śāradā.

Although the Brāhmī and Śāradā inscriptions documented in this thesis are generally written in the Sanskrit language, there are many examples of grammatical mistakes being made in the epigraphs. They are observed to have different degrees of grammatical accuracy, at least from the classical Sanskrit point of reference. It is difficult to establish an overall pattern for the qualities of Sanskrit used in the region because the standard of Sanskrit in each inscriptions could vary according to the knowledge and capability of the scribe commissioned by the patron, or the individuals who executed the inscription. On the other hand, few inscriptions dated before the 5th Century C.E. are written in hybrid Sanskrit, which is a form of Sanskrit language influenced by Prakrit; such linguistic phenomena could either be the result of gradual process of sanskritization of Prakrit in the region or just a genuine case of free variation.

The analysis of the Sanskritized forms of foreign names retrieved from these inscriptions also give us some insights into the cultural interaction and hybridity in the region. Between the 4th to 6th Century C.E., Persian influence is noticed from few personal names such as Mahārāja Ya+ṇa Mīhusarthutra (Spina Inscription) and Gaśura Ṣaphara son of Maka (Mahārāja Kadambeśvaradāsa Inscription). The influence of the Hun dynasties is obvious from the names Khiṅgila, Toramāṇa, Javūkha, Mehama, etc. (Stupa Consencration Copper Scroll Inscription). Between the 7th to 9th Century C.E., the names Maghuṅgha (Śrī Bhaganaṣa Inscription) and Chandra Phruma (Tochi Valley Bilingual Inscription B) show the Turkish and Bactrian influences respectively. A number of inscriptions after the 11th Century C.E.

even portray Sanskritized Arabic names such as Śrī Haṃmīra for ‘Amīr (Śrī Haṃmīra Inscription), (A)mīra Tosa for ‘Amīr of Ṭūs (Zalamkot Bilingual Inscription) and Śrī Asalana for Arslān Al-Jādhīb (Zalamkot Bilingual Inscription). Chronologically, the foreign cultural influences rendered in these inscriptions are in conformity with the period of the Kushano-Sassanian, Huns, Turk-Śāhi and Muslim rule in Gandhāra.

This study has provided insights into the subject matters and issuers of the epigraphs, which in turn added to the body of knowledge regarding the history of the region. Regarding their subject matters, most inscriptions documented in this thesis record certain meritorious works/donations done by some personalities. These meritorious works/donations include the establishment of religious images (8 inscriptions/10.96%), donations (9 inscriptions/12.33) and unspecified meritorious works (8 inscriptions/10.96 %). The construction of buildings is among the popular subject-matter of the epigraphs (10 inscriptions/13.70%), 5 recording of Hindu temples, 2 for Buddhist *Viharas*, 1 for a *Buddhist Stupa*, 1 for a resting place and another one for a building which nature is unknown. The digging of wells/tanks, for religious or domestic purposes were recorded in 5 inscriptions, or 6.85% while only two inscriptions were there to record land matters. The content of 7 inscriptions on the other hand only contained religious texts, probably having functions for ritualistic purposes. We managed to determine the subject-matters of Zalamkot Bilingual inscription, Ādityarāja, Vāsudeva Pratima, Mir Ali, Dal Mahat, Śrī Bhaganaṣa and Nayarāja inscriptions which were otherwise previously unknown. As for their issuers, most inscriptions were issued by private individuals (28 inscriptions/38.36%), followed by kings (7 inscriptions/9.59%), Government officials or nobles (6 inscriptions/8.22%), Vassals/Local rulers (4 inscriptions/5.48%), and member(s) of the royal family (2 inscriptions/2.74%). The decipherment unveils many personal names of kings, government officials, individuals, local rulers and individuals from the newly deciphered or revisited inscriptions. These names include Mahārāja Yapsuṇa Mihira, Mahārāja Palola Śāhi, Śrī Amira Tosa Śrī Asalana, Śrī Dehi daughter of Śrī Kaṃika, Bhaṭṭaradatta, Kinasre, Maghuṅgha, Śrī Bhaganaṣa, Śrī Viccaharāja son of Ghoraśiva and Kāmalavara. Although most of these names are not yet known from other sources, future researches may shed some light about their

identities.

The various information gathered from the inscriptions deciphered by previous scholars contributed to the political history of Gandhāra from the post-Kushan until the Muslim period in the 15th Century C.E. However, the inscriptions deciphered or revisited in this work had significantly added to the information regarding the history of the region. The decipherment of the Wano inscription shows the presence of a short-lived principality in the 4th/5th Century C.E. South Waziristan, in addition to the one which has already been mentioned in the Spina inscription. Our study also added to the history of the Hindu Śāhi period, especially regarding the presence of local chieftains/vassals under their greater rule. The Mir Ali inscription mentioned a chieftain coming from the House of Lalle in 9th/10th Century North Waziristan, while the reinterpretation of the Veka inscription unveils the personality Śrī Śāhi Veka as the last vassal of the Hindu Śāhi territory in Afghanistan, before they were invaded by the Ghaznavids. The reinterpretation of Ratnamañjarī inscription on the other hand has added King Vijayapāladeva to the list of the Hindu Śāhi rulers. Our decipherment has also contributed to the history of the early Muslim invasion of Gandhāra. Moreover, the Zulamkot Bilingual inscription records not the construction of a tomb, but shows the construction of a resting place. The mention of *koṭṭapala* “officer in charge of the fort” or “commander of the fort”, confirmed the fact the Ghaznavids retained their political grip of the area via military means. The decipherment of the Śrī Haṃmīra inscription has added one more evidence regarding the reign of Mehsud I of the Ghaznavid dynasty in Gandhāra.

As for the religious affiliations of the inscriptions in Gandhāra, 33 inscriptions/45.21% are of Hindu in nature, 14 inscriptions/19.17% are Buddhist in character, 3 inscriptions/4.11% are Muslim while the religious nature of 21 of them are not known. The Buddhist inscriptions documented in this thesis mostly record donations or other meritorious works. However, inscriptions dated after the 6th Century C.E. do not show any affiliation with the Buddhist faith while the inscriptions affiliated with the Hindu faith continue from the 3rd/4th Century C.E to the 15th Century C.E. The Hindu deities being mentioned in the inscriptions include Śiva, Vardhamāneśvara, Śaṅkara, Kumāra, Śiva-Uma, Bhīmā, Durga, Ganeśa, Viṣṇu, Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa and Sūrya. Based on the present epigraphic discoveries, it appears

that in Gandhāra, Hinduism and Buddhism existed side by side, until the 6th Century C.E., the period when Hinduism started to gain more popularity in the region.

Although the early arrival of Muslims in Gandhāra is considered in the second half of the 7th Century C.E., there are three Śāradā inscriptions, two bilingual and one monolingual, which conform the presence of the Muslims in Gandhāra between the 9th to 11th Century C.E.

The data analysed here has significantly added to our knowledge regarding the epigraphic and palaeographic study of the inscriptions found in the region. The informations gathered from these inscriptions on the other hand has provided new insights into the political environment, cultural landscape and religious complexity at the time, especially during the Post-Kushan period, the epoch which is generally considered the shrouded part of Gandhāran history. Due to the complex nature of the Gandhāran history of the Post-Kushan period, we still need to further investigate and rely on epigraphic or other evidences that may help us to fill the missing links in the history of Gandhāra. Certain inscriptions included in this research also suggest to revisit the Śāhi era fixed previously by scholars working in the same field.

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