

## **Exploring Multilingualism and Multiscriptism in Written Artefacts**

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## **Volume 38**

# **Exploring Multilingualism and Multiscriptism in Written Artefacts**



Edited by  
Szilvia Sövegjártó and Márton Vér

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Szilvia Sövegjártó, Márton Vér

# Introduction

Multilingualism is an intricate concept that reflects the interconnected nature of peoples and languages. Languages are not merely layered but internally complex and geographically diverse. They exist within a web of interactions and are shaped by diverse influences over time. The enduring traces of spoken languages, manifested in written artefacts, bear witness to the vibrant tapestry of human communication and cultural exchange that has profoundly influenced societies throughout history. These written artefacts serve as valuable testaments to the multifaceted essence of language, encapsulating the thoughts, ideas, stories and experiences of countless individuals and communities across time and space. They provide a glimpse into the evolution, adaptation and interplay of languages, offering valuable insights into the past while also paving the way for future linguistic developments.

Multiscriptural written artefacts also highlight the rich diversity and complexity of human languages. Languages often manifest themselves through multiple scripts, each with its own unique set of characters and symbols. Multiscriptural written artefacts encapsulate the historical trajectory of numerous influences and cultural encounters, providing tangible evidence of the dynamic exchange of ideas and knowledge across societies. These artefacts bear witness to the multiplicity of scribal traditions and the vast array of human experiences they represent. They serve as tangible reminders of the enduring power of scripts and writing systems, transcending time and space to communicate the thoughts, stories and heritage of diverse cultures. Through their existence, multiscriptural written artefacts offer valuable insights into the development, adjustment and mutual influences of scripts, illuminating the path towards further linguistic exploration and cultural appreciation.

Multilingual and multiscriptural written artefacts serve as reflective mirrors of a vibrant and diverse society that embraces multiculturalism and linguistic plurality. These artefacts not only provide evidence of the coexistence of multiple languages and scripts but also bear witness to the innovative ways in which individuals navigate elements that may be foreign to a particular language or writing system but familiar to its users. The interplay of various languages and scripts within written artefacts necessitates a contextual understanding of the social and cultural practices of those who created them. Exploring the practices of scribes proves especially enlightening when studying written artefacts pro-

duced by multilingual and multicultural communities or in regions where distinct writing cultures intersect. We can uncover valuable insights into the dynamics of linguistic and cultural exchange by delving into the mapping of scribal practices, shedding light on the complex relationships and interactions that shape these diverse written expressions. Such investigations provide a fruitful avenue for unravelling the rich tapestry of multilingual and multiscriptual societies and deepening our appreciation of the nuanced complexities of language and writing systems.

Despite the widespread presence of corresponding written artefacts in almost all societies, multilingualism and multiscriptism are often considered exceptional phenomena when compared to the more prevalent monolingualism or monoscriptism. The present volume addresses this and other fundamental matters, aiming to broaden horizons by establishing connections and understanding the underlying coherences that extend beyond the scope of case studies focusing solely on individual written artefacts.

The studies included in this volume span a wide chronological range, from the third millennium BCE to the present day, and encompass diverse regions across Asia, Africa and Europe. Rather than focusing solely on individual written artefacts, the articles concentrate on the cultures of writing and their contributions to the realm of multilingual manuscripts and inscriptions. By adopting this broader perspective, the volume seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in multilingualism, even within the realm of writing.

However, it is important to note that the collection of articles represents mere snapshots, offering glimpses into the multifaceted nature of multilingualism as it manifests in writing. The intention is to showcase the complexity and richness of multilingualism and multiscriptism, highlighting its varied forms and manifestations throughout history. This volume strives to shed light on the interplay between languages and scripts by examining the cultures of writing and their impact, offering valuable insights into the dynamic nature of linguistic expression in diverse societies.

Multilingual written artefacts can be classified by examining the various multilingual scenarios they represent. Broadly speaking, these artefacts can be categorised based on the underlying purposes of their creation: practical, scholarly or propagandistic multilingualism.<sup>1</sup> The papers in this volume are

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<sup>1</sup> Proposed by Peter Toth: <https://www.bl.uk/greek-manuscripts/articles/multilingualism-in-greek-manuscripts> (accessed on 22 August 2023).



organised into these three groups, aiming to contribute to the study of multilingualism and multiscriptualism within these distinct domains.

In the case of practical multilingualism, written artefacts incidentally contain texts in multiple languages, serving practical aims in a multicultural environment. The study of practical multilingualism is initiated by Jost Gippert's comprehensive overview of multilingual and multiscriptual written artefacts from the Maldives. The paper sheds light on the interplay between the local Dhivehi language and other languages, such as Sanskrit, Prakrit, Persian, Arabic and even English, within a dynamic multicultural environment. Various inscriptions, paper documents, inscribed metal plates, and charters on wood and stone are presented to illustrate the diverse manifestations of multilingualism and multiscriptism, spanning from the sixth century up to the present day. Another aspect that provides insight into the practical aspects of written language intertwining is the eighteenth-century technical innovation of replacing the local Dives akuru script with the right-to-left directed Thaana script, which resolved the challenge of incorporating Arabic elements into Dhivehi texts.

Leah Mascia takes us on a captivating journey through the intricately inscribed multilingual landscape of Oxyrhynchus. This town's social and religious panorama was moulded by the presence of Egyptians, Romans, Jews and Nabataeans during the Greco-Roman and late antique periods. Although this paper maintains a focused approach in terms of space and time, it provides a comprehensive and illuminating review of multilingualism and multiscriptism within the realms of administration and religion, while also delving into various aspects of the funerary landscape. The author adeptly portrays how the coexistence and constant interaction between native and foreign inhabitants contributed to the shaping of the settlement's cultural horizon.

Jochen Hermann Vennebusch's paper presents a compelling case study centred on the bronze baptismal font in the church of St Reinoldi in Dortmund. This remarkable font bears the preservation of two Latin inscriptions and a Low German vernacular inscription, each tailored to address distinct audiences and vividly showcasing the diversity within the medieval church. Additionally, these inscriptions potentially represent a case of limited scriptural presence, emphasising the importance of their mere existence on the object rather than their readability or comprehension.

In the concluding contribution to the exploration of practical multilingualism, Apiradee Techasiriwan and Volker Grabowsky delve deeply into a thought-provoking exploration of the manifestation of various scripts and languages

within the epigraphical culture of the Lan Na region in Thailand. The authors shed light on the rich cultural history of the region by presenting compelling examples of script amalgamation within the Lan Na writing culture, as well as the intriguing interaction between neighbouring writing cultures in the Thai world and more distant writing cultures, such as Chinese and English. Additionally, they make a valuable contribution by providing an edition of previously unpublished multilingual and multiscriptual inscriptions, which have not yet been made accessible to English-speaking audiences.

The focus of contributions in the second section of the volume shifts to scholarly multilingualism which gave rise to written artefacts intended for scholarly or educational purposes. Textbooks designed for language teaching, as well as bilingual or multilingual glossaries and dictionaries, exemplify this category. However, the realm of scholarly multilingual manuscripts is much broader and more diverse. It encompasses manuscripts that employ established *termini technici* from a different language, as well as those that include glosses, commentaries or additions in other languages or vernaculars.

The focus in Szilvia Sövegjártó's article is on Middle Babylonian Sumerian literary manuscripts, often accompanied by Akkadian glosses or translations. These manuscripts blur the line between the Old and Middle Babylonian periods due to their hybrid palaeography. While conventionally ascribed to the distinct practices of Middle Babylonian scribes, Sövegjártó proposes an alternative hypothesis: the influence of Old Babylonian manuscripts on the stylistic features of Middle Babylonian texts. This proposition re-evaluates previous assumptions regarding the transition from glossed manuscripts to bilingual ones, emphasising a diachronic viewpoint. Furthermore, Sövegjártó's research highlights a noteworthy shift in the practices of Middle Babylonian scribes – the preservation of glosses and translations. This shift reflects the changing significance of the Sumerian language and its literary heritage during this period.

Antonio Manieri presents case studies examining the technical and artisanal terminologies of ancient Japan, with the aim of providing insights into these terms and the underlying concepts within the realms of craftsmanship and technology. The author argues that, despite the established conventions favouring Sinitic languages in document compilation, there are instances where specialized vernacular terms are utilised, disregarding the presence of equivalent Sinitic terms. Interestingly, the use of these vernacular terms does not stem from a distinct Japanese cultural specificity that necessitates the use of phonograms, such as culturemes or proper names. The paper concludes that the blending of bureaucratic Sinitic and artisanal vernacular in the texts arises from

the interaction between two distinct knowledge systems: the Chinese scholarship and literary tradition, on the one hand, and the local practices transmitted, learned and disseminated orally and experientially through work experience, on the other.

Emmanuel Francis's paper draws attention to an intriguing observation regarding Tamil inscriptions, where Sanskrit loanwords are frequently written using the specific Grantha alphabet. This phenomenon highlights the historical interplay between Sanskrit and Tamil in South India. The paper also examines Tamil manuscripts with novel script-mixing practices, notably the creation of conjunct graphemes that blend elements from both the Grantha and Tamil alphabets. Such developments emphasise the dynamic nature of script evolution and the cultural exchange within the region. Furthermore, the paper stresses the importance of incorporating these findings into editorial practices within the realm of digital humanities. It suggests that not only should the phenomena of language and script mixing be recorded in the metadata, but it is also crucial to encode this information in the edited texts themselves. This integration of information aligns with the objectives of the 'The Domestication of "Hindu" Asceticism and the Religious Making of South and Southeast Asia' (DHARMA) project, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic and scriptural complexities present in Tamil inscriptions and manuscripts.<sup>2</sup>

Peera Panarut and Manasicha Akepiyapornchai present a case study on a previously unpublished Siamese Grantha manuscript, which sheds light on the use of both the Sanskrit and Thai languages in the predominantly Buddhist culture of Thailand. The manuscript, containing Sanskrit mantras and Thai ritual instructions, challenges the notion that the Theravada culture of Siam was solely dominated by Thai and Pali. It reveals that the Sanskrit and the Brahmanical tradition were also part of the cultural profile, showcasing the coexistence of multiple linguistic and religious traditions in Siamese society. This discovery highlights the cultural diversity and influences present in the region, providing valuable insights into the historical dynamics of Siamese culture.

Finally, Dmitry Bondarev and Darya Ogorodnikova's article investigates the integration of Arabic loanwords into West African languages through an analysis of spelling patterns found in two distinct manuscript traditions: Old Kanembu and Soninke. The study presents a preliminary typology of these spellings, revealing that orthographic practices within educational circles play a crucial

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<sup>2</sup> <https://dharma.hypotheses.org/project> (accessed on 18 September 2023).

role, overshadowing scribes' individual preferences. The study emphasises that relying solely on spelling as a diagnostic tool falls short in assessing loanword integration. However, when considered in conjunction with other linguistic and cultural factors, Ajami loanwords offer valuable insights into the chronology and pathways of borrowing. Ajami data should be approached cautiously, as they often reflect learned environments with distinct lexicons, influenced by established conventions within specific circles of scholars. This complexity sheds light on the diverse history of Arabic loanwords in West African languages, previously unrecognised as a significant factor in their multiple forms.

The case studies in the third section refer to propagandistic multilingualism which is more restricted to the realm of inscriptions. It involves the production of written artefacts in a multilingual format with a polemic or propagandistic agenda, which can be either concealed or overt.

In the initial paper, Gábor Zólyomi explores bilingual inscriptions that have been transmitted in Sumerian and Akkadian versions, albeit solely preserved in later copies and not in their original form. The author skilfully reconstructs the distinctive characteristics of these inscriptions, in both their primary and secondary contexts, and asserts that these bilingual inscriptions were initially composed in Akkadian. The author demonstrates significantly that the use of bilingual inscriptions was driven by ideological motives, as the ruler aimed to portray himself as the legitimate authority over both parts of Babylonia, adroitly manipulating the medium to suit the intended audience.

Zsolt Simon's case study investigates the topic of the formal adaptation of local theonyms in the Aramaic version of the decree called the Letoon Trilingual. The composer of the Aramaic version faced several challenges during this process, leading to the implementation of diverse solutions depending on the specific divinity being referenced. When Old Persian equivalents were available, they opted to substitute them. In other instances, the names were omitted, and blanket references were used instead. However, this approach was not viable for significant deities, resulting in the decision to transcribe the original names. These strategic choices were employed to maintain the cohesiveness of the original version of the decree.

Viola Allegranzi's paper explores language usage in the epigraphic culture of the Persianate world during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. Focusing on a range of monumental inscriptions and inscribed objects, she presents case studies that combine Arabic and Persian, examining the evolution of linguistic and stylistic choices in the absence of a reference model for Persian inscriptions. The paper investigates whether language-related decisions were influenced by the patron, scribe or recipient of the inscription,

aiming to provide a contextual understanding of multilingual inscriptions within the cultural production of medieval Persianate societies. The presence of Persian poetic inscriptions on both royal and privately commissioned monuments and objects is highlighted. Additionally, Persian's usage in construction texts reveals a greater influence from Arabic models. Allegranzi ultimately concludes that the distinctive features of Islamic epigraphy in the Persianate world lie in its multilingualism, as well as the development of new writing styles and decorative elements.

Eva Orthmann's article delves into the world of bilingual inscriptions in Arabic, Persian and various Indic languages found in the Indian subcontinent. These inscriptions, discovered in a diverse range of locations such as mosques, epitaphs, walls and copper plates, offer a valuable glimpse into the era of Muslim rule in India. The author presents a comprehensive overview of this unique corpus in this article, shedding light on how these languages were skilfully combined to create visually striking effects and express the complex hierarchy between them. Unlike mere translations, these bilingual inscriptions often present two distinct versions of a text, each adhering to its own stylistic norms. The study suggests that the production of these inscriptions may have involved expert scribes fluent in both languages, who were provided with clear content guidelines and entrusted with the task of crafting culturally appropriate texts, resulting in a rich tapestry of linguistic and cultural interplay.

By considering these classifications, we gain a deeper understanding of the multilingual nature of written artefacts, shedding light on the practical, scholarly and propagandistic contexts in which they were created. Such investigations contribute to the broader study of multilingualism and multiscrptualism, enriching our knowledge of language dynamics and cultural expressions within these distinct domains.

The present volume delves into the exploration of written artefacts that exhibit the distinctive use of multiple languages and scripts. The papers within this collection focus specifically on the interaction between languages and writing systems found in both manuscripts and inscriptions across various domains, including everyday life, scholarship and political propaganda. By adopting a cross-disciplinary approach, this volume aims to shed light on a wide range of phenomena encompassed by the comprehensive terms of multilingualism and multiscrptism.

The papers included in this volume embrace an interdisciplinary perspective, incorporating disciplines such as manuscript studies, epigraphy, textual criticism, linguistics, palaeography and cultural history. This diverse approach

enables a comprehensive examination of the subject matter, drawing on the collective expertise of various fields. The volume seeks to transcend traditional conceptual boundaries and encourage a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play in multilingual and multiscriptual written artefacts by undertaking a comparative study of inscriptions and manuscripts spanning ancient, premodern and modern times.

This volume aims to contribute to the broader discourse surrounding multilingualism and multiscriptism through the exploration of these written artefacts and the multifaceted methodologies employed. It seeks to foster new insights, bridge gaps in understanding and offer a fresh perspective on the complex interplay between languages and writing systems throughout history by bringing together scholars from diverse disciplines.

### Acknowledgements

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<sup>3</sup> On that occasion, eighteen speakers presented seventeen papers, most of them are authors of papers presented in this volume. Further speakers whose contributions should be acknowledged here are Sara Chiarini (UHH), 'Polyglossia in the Ancient Western Mediterranean'; Tibor Porció (University of Szeged), 'Uyghur Buddhist Pilgrim Inscriptions Revisited'; Ishayahu Landa (University of Bonn), 'Multilingualism and Multiscriptism in Mongol Eurasia's Numismatics'; Grzegorz Ochała (University of Warsaw / Leiden University), 'One People, One Script, Three Languages: Multilingual Experience of Medieval Nubia'; Erin McCann (UHH), 'Multilingual Manuscripts in a Multilingual Tradition: The Case of Śrīvaiṣṇava Manīpravaḷam'; and Polina Yaroslavtseva (UHH), 'Multilingualism in BnF, Ms Fr. 375'.

Elyze Zomer. Warm thanks also go to the two English copy-editors, Philip Saunders and Kristen de Joseph, for their patient and competent effort of putting the thoughts of the authors into correct English. The same thanks go to Francesca Panini for conscientiously taking care of the typesetting and laying out this quite complex and demanding volume as well as for preparing the index. Lastly, we wish to acknowledge Caroline Macé for her meticulous editorial guidance, which has greatly influenced the development of this volume. Additionally, we extend our gratitude to all the authors for their unwavering commitment in contributing to this project.







## **Practical Multilingualism**



Jost Gippert

# Written Artefacts from the Maldives: 1,500 Years of Mixing Languages and Scripts

**Abstract:** The archipelago of the Maldives, which extends over c. 1,000 km in a north-south direction in the Indian Ocean, looks back on an uninterrupted production of written artefacts since about the sixth century CE. In their entirety, the monuments that have been preserved give a clear picture of the historical development of both the local language, Dhivehi (lit. ‘Islanders’ [language]), and the scripts that were used to write it down, as well as the religious and cultural conditions in which the artefacts emerged (Buddhist vs Islamic). At the same time, the religious and cultural setting, which changed considerably with the conversion of the islanders from Buddhism to Islam in the middle of the twelfth century CE, caused a specific interaction of languages and scripts that manifested itself in a remarkable amount of mixing, with more or less impact on the graphical appearance of the artefacts. In the present article, I illustrate the interplay of Dhivehi with the other languages concerned (Sanskrit, Prakrit, Persian, Arabic and, lastly, English) and its reflection in written form based on a few examples.

## 1 The Buddhist pre-stage: Prakrit vs Sanskrit

The culture of the Maldives was predominantly determined by Buddhism before their inhabitants were converted to Islam in the middle of the twelfth century CE, a fact that is witnessed by a great bulk of archaeological findings throughout the archipelago.<sup>1</sup> Only a very few written artefacts have been preserved from those times which, however, display a principle that would remain typical for Maldivian literacy throughout the centuries, namely, the mixing of languages and, later, scripts.

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<sup>1</sup> For a survey of the remnants of Buddhism in the Maldives, see Gippert forthcoming a.

## 1.1 The Landhoo inscription

The oldest autochthonous written artefact that has been unearthed on the Maldives<sup>2</sup> is a brick-shaped block of coral stone detected on the island of Landhoo, which is inscribed on its four longitudinal faces in a Brāhmī script similar to the varieties used in southern India in about the sixth to eighth centuries. Its contents have been determined to be a *dhāraṇī* spell, i.e. a series of mantras protecting against demons; the stone probably pertained to a Buddhist monastery, not as part of its building construction but as a relic that was enshrined in its stupa.<sup>3</sup> In contrast to comparable *dhāraṇī* spells, such as the *Sitātapatrādhāraṇī*, the language it is written in is not just (Buddhist) Sanskrit; instead, it is a mixture of Sanskrit with a peculiar form of ‘Insular’ Prakrit, namely, the Middle Indic vernacular that is likely to be the historical ancestor of Dhivehi. In the excerpt of face 1 (Fig. 1) displayed in Table 1, the Sanskrit elements are indicated in red and the Prakrit elements in blue; the words in black in the last line are so-called *bīja* syllables, i.e. interjections that are believed to have magic power in themselves but are not necessarily attributable to one of the two languages. As the Table shows, it is the element *grāha* meaning ‘seizing’ or ‘possession’ that is usually spelt in its Sanskrit form (the Insular Prakrit equivalent would have been *\*gahə* or *\*gā*), whereas the formula for ‘I smash into pieces’, *toṭa(ṃ) b<sup>h</sup>idāmi*, is rather Prakrit (vs Sanskrit *\*troṭayaṃ b<sup>h</sup>indāmi*), as are most of the names of demons, even when compounded with *grāha*. The name *preta* denoting the evil spirit of a dead person (the Prakrit form would be *\*peya*), *nāga* for ‘snake’ (vs Prakrit *\*nā*) and *b<sup>h</sup>ūta* (spelt *b<sup>h</sup>uta*), a designation of another type of demon (vs Prakrit *\*bu(v)ə*) are exceptions to this. Interestingly enough, the latter term contrasts with *b<sup>h</sup>ui-*, which reflects, in its Prakrit form, the female equivalent of the same demon, in Sanskrit named *b<sup>h</sup>ūtī-*; and of all demons mentioned here, only this one has survived into modern Dhivehi as a suffix in the name of a fairy, *Santi Mariyam-bu*, which obviously reflects the Christian Saint Mary.<sup>4</sup> Sanskrit forms are also *svāha*, the formulaic greeting ‘Hail!’ (also occurring in the spelling *svaha* in the inscription), which would be *\*sahə* (or simply

<sup>2</sup> We leave aside here Roman and other coins of Antiquity that must have been imported by travellers (see, e.g. Forbes 1984).

<sup>3</sup> See Gippert 2004 for the first edition of the inscription and further details. In the present treatise, personal and geographical names and other terms that are in everyday use are rendered in the English-based Roman transcription for Dhivehi as it is used on the Maldives; other linguistic elements are transcribed in the system used in Indology.

<sup>4</sup> The name was probably introduced into the Maldives by the Portuguese conquerors in the middle of the sixteenth century; see Gippert 2004, 93–94.

\*sā) in Prakrit, and *sarva* (here spelt *sarvva*) ‘all’, whose Prakrit equivalent *sava* (for \**savā*) appears elsewhere in the text (partly with the spelling *savva*). Whether or not this variation is to be regarded as a case of true bilingualism or if it was just an indication of uncertainty in rendering Sanskrit graphically by speakers of the local Prakrit, must remain open; we should keep in mind, however, that Buddhist Sanskrit was notorious for being ‘hybrid’, in the sense of being mixed with elements from spoken vernaculars and that in the given case, Sanskrit grammar seems to be ignored at large (e.g. there are no accusative endings).<sup>5</sup>

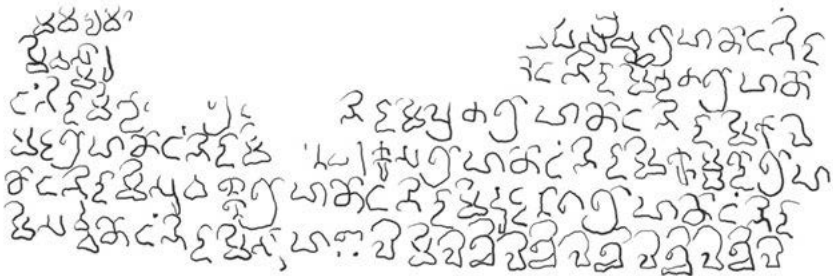
**Table 1:** The Landhoo inscription, face 1 (excerpt).

<i>pīśacchagrāha toṭa bhidāmi</i>	I smash the possession caused by <i>pīśācas</i> into pieces.
<i>vasmāra&lt;grāha toṭa bhidāmi&gt;</i>	I smash the possession caused by <i>apasmāras</i> into pieces.
<***grāha> toṭa bhidāmi	I smash the possession caused by ??? into pieces.
<i>bhutagrāha toṭaṃ bhidāmi</i>	I smash the possession caused by <i>bhūtas</i> into pieces.
<i>bhui&lt;grāha toṭa&gt; bhidāmi</i>	I smash the possession caused by <i>bhūtīs</i> into pieces.
<i>pretagrāha toṭa bhidāmi</i>	I smash the possession caused by <i>pretas</i> into pieces.
<i>kālamaṭṭagrāha toṭaṃ bhidāmi</i>	I smash the possession caused by <i>akālamṛtyu(s)</i> into pieces.
<*>rakkusa<grāha toṭaṃ bhidāmi	I smash the possession caused by ??rakṣasas into pieces.
<i>kummaṇḍagrāha toṭa bhidāmi</i>	I smash the possession caused by <i>kumbhāṇḍas</i> into pieces.
<i>suvaṇṇagrāha toṭa bhidāmi</i>	I smash the possession caused by <i>suparṇa(s)</i> into pieces.
<i>duṭṭanāgagrāha toṭaṃ bhidāmi</i>	I smash the possession caused by wicked <i>nāgas</i> into pieces.
<i>sarvva toṭaṃ bhidāmi</i>	I smash all (of them) into pieces.
<i>svāha</i>	Hail!
<i>ili mili khili khili khili khili &lt;****&gt; gili g*li hili hili hi&lt;li hi&gt;li hili hili hili //</i>	

5 See <<https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/inscription-1-from-landhoo-maldives-ea6c56ddf41c4320a5c76961bb2958ff>> (accessed on 22 July 2023) for a 3D-model of the Landhoo stone, which is registered as MAHS-MDV-COL-001-O-0033 in the database of the ‘Maritime Asia Heritage Survey’ project (hereafter MAHS; <<https://maritimeasiaheritage.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/manuscript-viewer/>>; Feener s.a.). A similarly inscribed artefact has recently been detected on the same island (registered as MAHS-MDV-COL-029-O-0001 in MAHS); see <<https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/inscription-2-from-landhoo-maldives-5c7e84b41e274a7a9f676c67c9228af2>> (accessed on 22 July 2023) for a 3D-model.



a



b

**Figs 1a–b:** The Landhoo inscription, face 1; photograph and sketch Jost Gippert, 2003.

## 1.2 Inscribed statues

In contrast to the inscription from Landhoo, which, as we have seen, can be regarded as being mostly in Prakrit, two inscribed artefacts from a few centuries later (c. ninth to tenth centuries CE) must be considered as being basically composed in Sanskrit. Both these artefacts are shaped as multifaced statues with features that are typical for the so-called *Vajrayāna* Buddhism; their inscriptions, which are applied across the surface, are written in a much more ‘cursive’ script than that of Landhoo, resembling that of medieval Sinhalese and, thus, obviously representing an antecedent of the so-called *Dives akuru* script that was used for Dhivehi until the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Even though the shape of the two statues and the arrangement of the inscriptions is totally different (Figs

<sup>6</sup> See Mohamed 1999 and 2004 and Gippert 2013 for details as to the script and its development.

2a–b), they have been proven to contain the same text, namely, a mantra addressing Yamāntaka, the ‘destroyer of death’ in *Vajrayāna* belief, which is also known from other sources.<sup>7</sup>

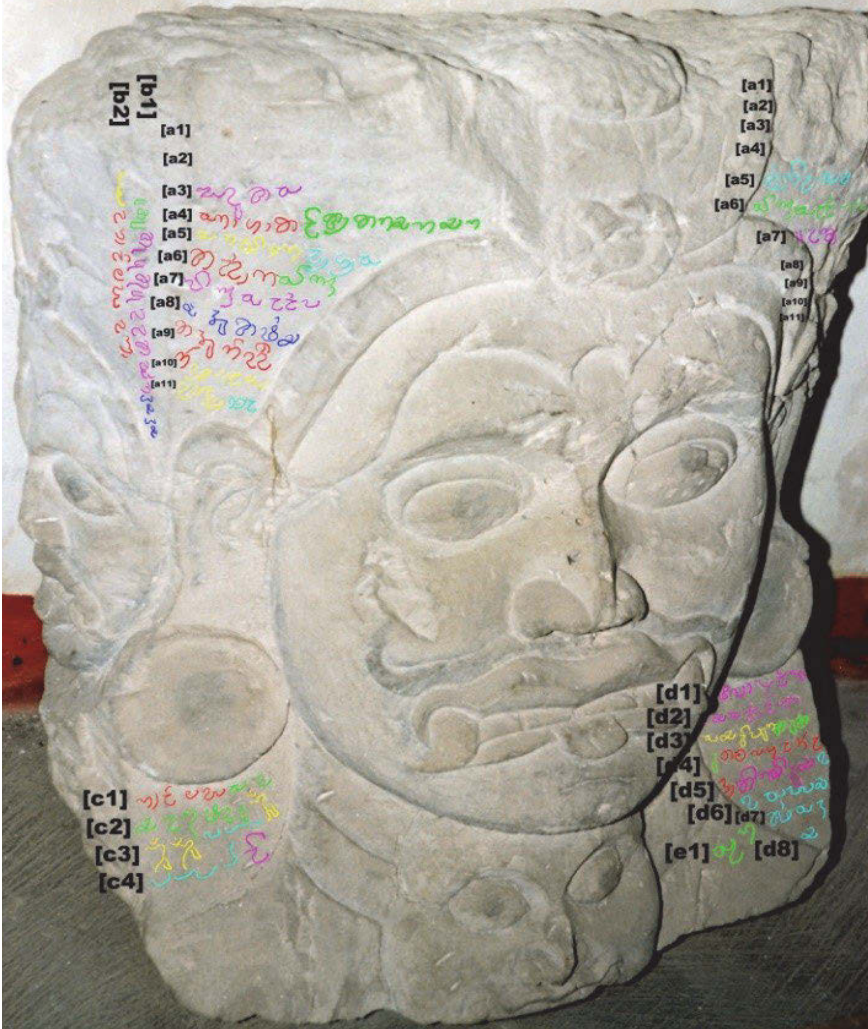


Fig. 2a: Statue with Sanskrit inscriptions; photograph and markings Jost Gippert, 1993.

<sup>7</sup> These are the *Guhyasamājantra* (Chap. 14) and the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (Chaps 1 and 52); the mantra also exists in Chinese and Tibetan translations. See Gippert 2013–2014 for further details.

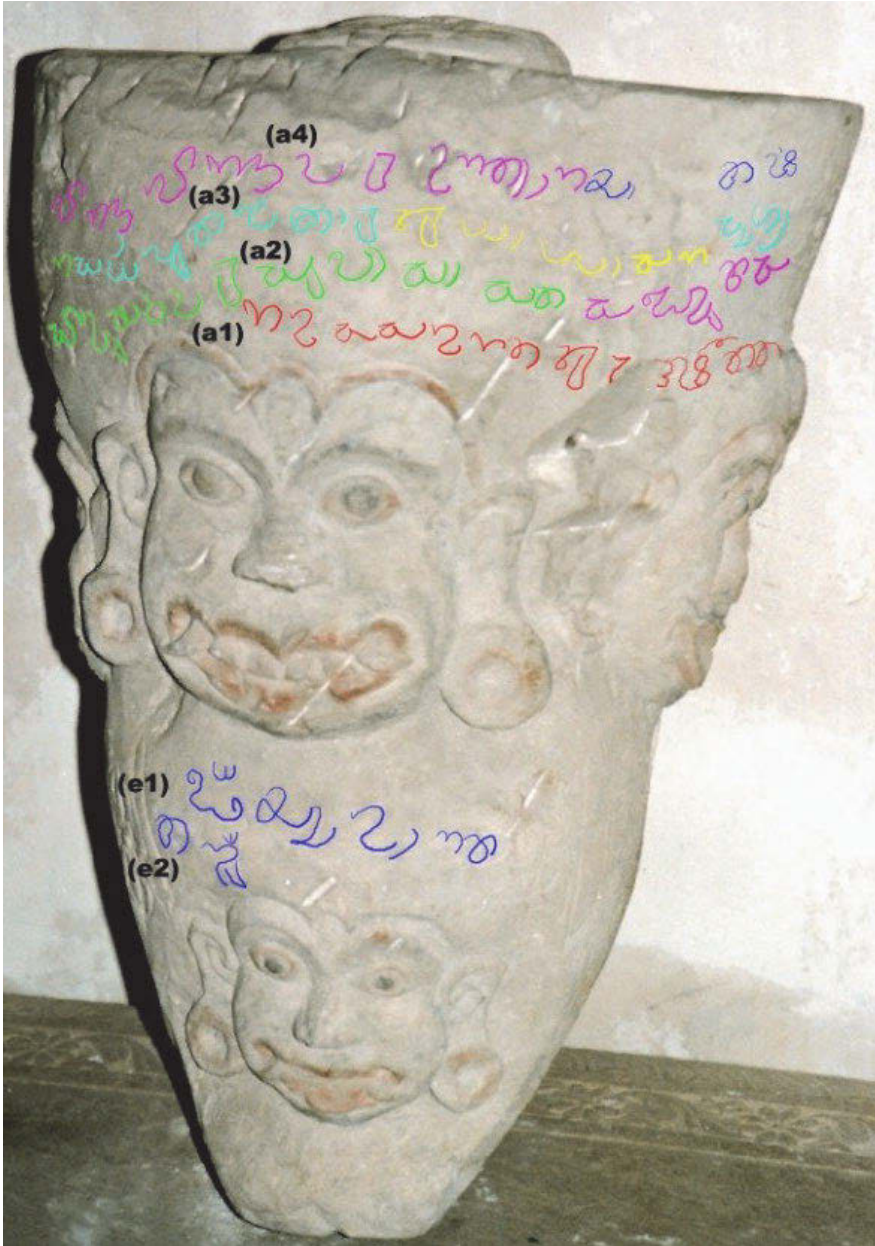


Fig. 2b: Statue with Sanskrit inscriptions; photograph and markings Jost Gippert, 1993.



In contrast to the Landhoo inscription, the Sanskrit wording is here aimed at being at least grammatically correct (with adequately formed genitives, accusatives and vocatives); however, the spoken vernacular shimmers through everywhere in the form of spelling inconsistencies that are caused by the reduced phonological inventory of spoken Dhivehi. Sanskrit *vyāghracarma*- ‘tiger’s skin’, for example, appears in both inscriptions as *vyagrasamma*, the imperative *chinda* ‘break!’ as *sinda* or *ṣinda*, and *vajra*, the ‘thunderbolt’, whose name underlies the given Buddhist tradition, as *vadra*.<sup>8</sup>

## 2 Islamisation and the arrival of Persian and Arabic

Even after the conversion of the Maldives to Islam in the middle of the twelfth century, the influence of Sanskrit on the islands remained notable. This can be well illustrated with the first written artefacts that have been preserved from this time (end of the twelfth century), namely, sets of copperplates documenting the kings’ endowments for newly constructed mosques. These documents (usually styled *lōmāfānu*, i.e. ‘great excellency of copper’ in the Maldives) are generally written in an early form of Dhivehi, in a script (sometimes called *Evēla akuru*)<sup>9</sup> which clearly continues that of the Buddhist statues. Regarding the self-introduction of the king, however, they usually contain a seal that is written in a *Nāgarī*-type script, with the language being Sanskrit (albeit with graphical distortions); this is true, for example, for the so-called *Isdū lōmāfānu*, which was issued by a king named Gaganāditya for the island of Isdhoo in Haddunmathi (or Laamu) Atoll in c. 1194 CE (see Figs 3 and 4). The seal reads *sva-sti śrī ga-g<sup>h</sup>a-nā-dī-t<sup>h</sup>a de-va-s<sup>l</sup>-ya dā-nām*, rendering *svasti śrī gaganāditya devasya dānam* ‘Hail! Grant of the brilliant God (-like) Gaganāditya’. In a similar way, the king’s signature on the last plate of the set was written in *Nāgarī* script, as visible in Fig. 5, where we read *āṃ-dī-nta śrī mahā-rā-c*’ as a rendering of *āditya śrī mahārāja* ‘Brilliant great-king Āditya’.

<sup>8</sup> See Gippert 2013, 90–91, for the relation between Dhivehi phonology and *Dives akuru* script.

<sup>9</sup> The term was coined ‘provisionally’ by Henry Bell (1940, 166); it means ‘script of that time’ or ‘of yore’.



Fig. 3: First plate of the *Isdū lōmāfānu* with king's seal; photograph Jost Gippert, 2002.



Fig. 4: King's seal on the first plate of the *Isdū lōmāfānu* (enlarged); photograph Jost Gippert, 2002.



Fig. 5: King's signature on the last plate of the *Isdū lōmāfānu* (line 1); photograph Jost Gippert, 2002.

However, the use of Sanskrit terms in these documents is not restricted to seals and signatures. As a matter of fact, the grants abound in Sanskritisms, even where they are written in the local script, thus, being indistinguishable from Dhivehi words proper. This is not only true for most of the names mentioned in

them, at least those of kings, which, like *gaganāditya* ‘sun of the heaven’,<sup>10</sup> reflect purely Sanskrit formations. The co-occurrence of Dhivehi and Sanskrit elements is illustrated in Table 2, which shows the content of the first plate of the *Isdū lōmāfānu*, with Sanskrit elements in red and those of Dhivehi in blue; note that, in some cases, the Sanskrit genitive ending *-sya* is attached to a Dhivehi word form (*rasunu-sia* and *rasun-sya* ‘of the king’, quasi Sanskrit \**rājanasya*, with Dhivehi *rasun-* representing the historical outcome of the Sanskrit *n*-stem *rājan-*). Besides names, it is typically invocations and titles, but also numbers, such as *ekaviñśatī* (for *ekaviñśati*) ‘twenty-one’ (the modern Dhivehi equivalent would be *ekāviṣ*, ‘twenty’ alone would be *vihī*)<sup>11</sup> or *pañcatriñśati* (for *pañcatrīñśati*) ‘thirty-five’ (vs Dhivehi *tirīs fas*) that are in Sanskrit.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 2:** Beginning of the *Isdū lōmāfānu* with Sanskrit elements in red.

<i>svasti śrī ṣomavañśa ādīpātī</i>	Hail! When the lord of the brilliant Moon Dynasty,
<i>śrī manābaruṇa mārasun</i>	the brilliant <i>mahārāja</i> Mānābharāṇa,
<i>puṇa dese reda vuṇa dai</i>	after of his reigning over all the country
<i>ekaviñśatī avurodun ikit vī kalu</i>	had passed twenty one years,
<i>reda opun side</i>	had left his reign,
<i>mī rasunusia benī</i>	(and) this king’s younger brother,
<i>svasti śrī tribuvana ādītya mārasun</i>	hail! the brilliant <i>mahārāja</i> Tribhuvanādītya,
<i>reda vuṇa d<sup>h</sup>ai</i>	after of his reigning
<i>pañcatriñśatī avurodun ikit vī kal</i>	had passed thirty-five years,
<i>mī rasunस्या malu ...</i>	(and) this king’s nephew ...

At the same time, the conversion of the islands introduced new terms that were related to the Islamic faith and not readily available in either Dhivehi or Sanskrit. These are typically Arabic or Persian words concerning mosques and people associated with them; on plate 13r of the *Isdū lōmāfānu*,<sup>13</sup> for example, we

<sup>10</sup> See Gippert 2003, 34 with n. 13.

<sup>11</sup> See Fritz 2002, vol. 1, 114.

<sup>12</sup> There is no established transliteration system for Old and Middle Dhivehi texts written in *Evēla* and *Dives akuru*. The transcriptions provided here and in the following tables are simplified to warrant readability.

<sup>13</sup> An excellent image of the plate can be found on the MAHS website (Feener s.a.) under the designation MAHS-MDV-COL-001-O-0024 - Isdhoo Loamafaanu (MLE-NMM-MS1) as page 34 (image 35). Unfortunately, the images of the *lōmāfānu* plates are arranged in disorder there.

find *masudid<sup>h</sup>u* ‘mosque’ representing the Arabic *masǧid*, *mālimu* ‘Qur’an teacher’ ~ the Arabic *mu’allim*, and *mūdimu* ‘muezzin’ ~ the Arabic *mu’addin*. As these examples show, the Arabic terms were adapted to Dhivehi phonetically and grammatically (e.g. by adding the dative ending *aṭa* as in *masudid<sup>h</sup>aṭa* ‘to the mosque’) and could, thus, be written in the local script; their integration is illustrated in Table 3 where the Arabic elements are marked in green.

**Table 3:** Text of plate 13 (recto) of the *Isdū lōmāfānu* with Arabic elements in green.

<i>śrī isuduvu masudidu</i>	For the mosque of brilliant Isdū
<i>ṣāna pangeāi</i>	reed for thatching the roof,
<i>veṭṭelāi sadakā saḍulāi</i>	oil for the lamps, alms rice,
<i>mālim mūdimun kana bogaāi</i>	the food share for the teacher (and) the muezzin,
<i>mī emme kamakemmaṭa māruvai</i>	and measures for providing all these things
<i>masudid<sup>h</sup>aṭa dinu</i>	were allotted to the mosque.
<i>mālimu iduna ge bimaṭa</i>	For the ground of the house of the teacher
<i>vaṭai sia bamai koṭṭakāi</i>	a parcel of a hundred fathoms and a parcel of
<i>vaṭai panasu bamai koṭṭakāi</i>	fifty fathoms and for the housing of the
<i>mūdimu idinaṭa vaṭai sia bamai koṭṭāi</i>	muezzin, a parcel of a hundred fathoms
<i>mī de d<sup>h</sup>arunaṭa ... dinu</i>	were allotted to these two ... people.

On the other hand, even for religious concepts, Sanskrit terms that are likely to have been associated with Buddhist thought previously continued to be used. A striking example is provided by a second copperplate grant issued by King Gaganāditya in 1194, the so-called *Gamu lōmāfānu*, which concerns a mosque on Gan, another island of Haddunmati (or Laamu) Atoll. Unfortunately, this grant, which comprises a lengthy account of the Creation and the life of Muḥammad,<sup>14</sup> is not as well preserved as its counterpart from Isdhoo (see Figs 6a–b showing the remnants of plates 2 and 3); however, the remarkable interplay of Sanskrit words such as *devatā* ‘deity’ (also in *ekadevatā-* ‘one deity’), *utt<sup>h</sup>ara svargga loka-* (for *uttara-svarga-loka*) ‘the place of utmost heaven’, *narakā-* (for *naraka-*) ‘hell’, *ādītya-* (for *āditya*) ‘sun’, *pr<sup>h</sup>thivi loka* (for *pr<sup>h</sup>thivī loka-*) ‘the place of earth’ or *sind* (for *sind<sup>h</sup>u*) ‘Indus, Panjab’ with Arabic terms such as *rahimat-* (for *rahma<sup>t</sup>*) ‘mercy’ and *kautar* (for *kauṭar*) ‘abundance’ (here denoting a river in

<sup>14</sup> See Gippert 2003, 37–40 for details. Images of the *Gamu lōmāfānu* can be found on the MAHS website under the designation MAHS-MDV-COL-001-O-0026 - Gan Loamafaanu (MLE-NMM-MS3).

paradise),<sup>15</sup> and names such as *šaur* ‘Syria’ (Arabic *sūriya*), *erāk* ‘Iraq’ (*‘Irāq*), *bāb<sup>h</sup>il* ‘Babylon’ (*bābil*), *pārīš* ‘Persia’ (*fāris*) and *dad<sup>h</sup>irā* ‘Mesopotamia’ (*šazīra*) can be taken for certain. A peculiar trait of the *Gamu lōmāfānu*, not attested elsewhere in historical documents of Dhivehi, are the listings of Islamic paradises (beginning with [*dā*]ralu *salāmu* for Arabic *dār al-salām* ‘House of Peace’) and hells (beginning with *sairu* for Arabic *sa‘ir* ‘flaming fire’), as illustrated in Table 4. Note that only one of the geographical names involved, *jabuduv* for *Jambudvīpa* ‘(southern) India’, appears in a local form (the modern Dhivehi equivalent would be *dambidū*).<sup>16</sup>

The picture becomes even more colourful if we consider that some Islamic terms are not of Arabic but of Persian origin. This is true, for example, of the word for the ‘prophet’, *petāmbaru*, which obviously represents a dialectal variant of Persian *pay(ġ)āmbar*<sup>17</sup> ‘messenger’ and which is used in the *Gamu lōmāfānu* for both the founder of Islam, Muḥammad, and his (biblical) predecessors; other Persian terms that occur regularly are *roda* ‘fasting’ (for Persian *rōza*, today *rūze*) and *namādu* ‘prayer’ (Persian *namāz*), as well as a second denomination of mosques, *miskitu*, which must reflect Early New Persian *mazgit* ‘id.’ and which substitutes *masudid(h)u* after the first copperplate grants.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the text contains a few elements that have retained a Prakrit shape. These are higher numbers, such as *eklakka* ‘100,000’ (cf. Sanskrit *eka-lakṣa*), *šauvīsu* ‘twenty-four’ (cf. Sanskrit *catur-viṃśa(ti)*), and *šālīsu* ‘forty’ (cf. Sanskrit *catvāriṃśa(ti)*), contrasting with *cāšra* ‘1,000’ which probably represents Sanskrit *sahasra-* directly (vs Prakrit \**səhassə* > Dhivehi \**sāsu* > *hās*). Persian elements are indicated in violet and Prakrit ones in orange in Table 5.



Fig. 6a: *Gamu lōmāfānu*, plate 2; photograph Jost Gippert, 2002.

15 For this use see the Qur’an, *Surah* 108.1.

16 See Gippert 2003 and 2015, for further details as to the *Gamu lōmāfānu*.

17 See Gippert 2003, 42, for details.

18 See Gippert 2003, 41–42 and forthcoming b for further details.



Fig. 6b: *Gamu lōmāfānu*, plate 3; photograph Jost Gippert, 2002.

Table 4: *Gamu lōmāfānu*, plate 2 (excerpt).

... <i>ekadevatā</i> <i>inge rahimatun upe</i> [dduvi ...]	... [crea]ted by the mercy of the one deity ...
... <i>devatā</i> <i>inaṭa ga</i> [t birun ...]	... [by fear gai]ned towards the deity ...
... <i>pen ve kekuṇi dumu seduṇu</i> ...	... made of steam emerging from boiled water ...
... [dā]ralu <i>salāmu dāralu karālu dāralu damālu dāralu kuludu dannatalu adin dannatalu naṭimu</i> ...]	... <i>dār al-salām</i> ‘House of Peace’, <i>dār al-qarār</i> ‘House of Steadfastness’, <i>dār al-ḡamāl</i> ‘House of Beauty’, <i>dār al-ḥuld</i> ‘House of Eternity’, <i>ḡannat al-‘adan</i> ‘Paradise of Eden’, <i>ḡannat al-naṭim</i> ‘Paradise of Happiness’ ...]
... <i>usu ran risi maṇikkatun ṣeduṇu raṭu utt<sup>h</sup>ara svargga</i> <i>lokaen</i> ...	... from utmost heaven, a land made from gold, silver and jewels ...
... <i>sairu sakaru ṣāvvā mi sat narakāen āditya mulu koṭu ṣadān prtt<sup>h</sup>ivi loka upaduv</i> [ai ...	... <i>al-sa’ir</i> ‘flaming fire’, <i>saqar</i> ‘hell’, <i>al-hāwiya’</i> ‘depth, nethermost hell’, from these seven hells, making the sun first (lit. as the root), creat[ing] the earth ...
... <i>svarggai kautar eviana gagu svarggai ṣaur eviana raṭu erāk eviana raṭu bāb<sup>h</sup>il eviṭana raṭu</i> ...	... in heaven and the river named <i>Kautar</i> in heaven, the land named <i>Syria</i> , the land named <i>Iraq</i> , [the land nam]ed <i>Babylon</i> , ...
... <i>pāriṣ eviana raṭu dad<sup>h</sup>irā eviana raṭu sind eviana raṭu jabuduv eviana raṭu mitak raṭu</i> ...	... the land named [ <i>Per</i> ]sia, the land named <i>Mesopotamia</i> , the land named <i>Panjab</i> , the land named <i>India</i> ( <i>Jambudvīpa</i> ), all these lands ...

**Table 5:** *Gamu lōmāfānu*, plates 2–3 (excerpt).

... upaduvāji <i>prāṇa dī mīn aṛddʰa aṅgain śāuā upaduvai mi de mapirīn svargga vaṣai</i> ...	... creati]ng (Adam), giving him <b>breath</b> , creating Eve from his half body, lodging this couple of man-and-woman (lit. mother-and-man) in <b>heaven</b> ...
... <i>ādamu petāmbaṛun suktra bīdāin ṣāuā baḍun upan genīn dari ve dunie mīsun ve vī</i>	... the children born from Adam the prophet's sperm drop by the womb of Eve having become mankind on <b>earth</b> ,
<i>mi ādamu petāmbaṛun ādi koṣu paṭai eklakka ṣāuvīsu cāśra petāmbaṛun upede dʰunien nivana gat pase</i>	after <b>124,000</b> prophets had been created with this Adam the prophet as the first, (and after they had) departed (again) from the <b>world</b> ,
<i>upan mahammadu petāmubarun ṣālīsu āvurodun</i>	in the <b>fortieth</b> year of Muḥammad the prophet, born after them,
<i>mi petāmbaṛun kraṭa dabarīlu aisu buṇe gosu</i>	Gabriel coming to this prophet, talking to him and going away (again),
<i>mi dabarilāi mikāilai mi de malāikatun peṇe</i>	this Gabriel and Michael, the two angels, appearing (again),
<i>burāk eviana asu puṭe mahammadu petāmbaṛun aruvai</i>	causing Muḥammad the prophet to mount the back of the horse named <b>Burāq</b> ,
<i>baitalu magadeṣaṭa gene gosu ...</i>	taking him to Jerusalem ( <b>Bait-al Maqdis</b> ) ...

### 3 Mixing *Dives akuru* with Arabic script

More than a hundred years after these copperplate grants were issued, the first artefacts that are inscribed in Arabic script appear on the Maldives. Leaving aside building and funeral inscriptions that are written in Arabic all over,<sup>19</sup> the most relevant monuments for our investigation are those where Arabic writing appears along with Dhivehi. The first such artefact that has been preserved is a copperplate grant of the year 758 AH (1356–1357 CE), which is about the endowment of a mosque named *Boḍugalū* ('big rock') in the islands' capital, Male.<sup>20</sup> There is still a clear distinction between the Arabic and Dhivehi elements in this document in that its first plate, comprising a *Shahāda* formula, the seal of King Ġalāl ad-dīn bin Ṣalāḥ ad-dīn (r. 1306–1341), and a few lines summarising the construction of the mosque, is all in Arabic, while the remaining plates are all in Dhivehi.<sup>21</sup> In later decrees,

<sup>19</sup> See Kalus and Guillot 2005; Gippert forthcoming c, § 2.2.

<sup>20</sup> See *Mālēge Miskitta*' 1980, 91–93 as to the mosque.

<sup>21</sup> See Gippert forthcoming c, § 2.1 for further details.

however, we begin to meet with Arabic elements that are inserted, in right-to-left directed Arabic script, into a Dhivehi context, in its turn, written in left-to-right *Dives akuru*. The first specimen of this type of mixed-script document is a copperplate grant of similar appearance to the *Boḍugalū lōmāfānu*; unfortunately only one plate has been preserved of this grant, containing neither a date nor the name of the issuing king (or queen).<sup>22</sup> We find here, integrated into the text passage that explains the ruler's purposes, two quotations of God and the Prophet that are taken from the Qur'an and the Ḥadīth, respectively; the context reads (cf. Fig. 7):

Causing for (every) Muslim king, royal prince, queen, high-born noble-man (or) noble-lady, minister, mandatee, or other person whatsoever who intends to maintain this sacred parcel of land as a sacred parcel (by saying) 'God the Almighty said, "May the curse of God be on the unjust"', the nine-fold blessing that is there for all persons who are well-intentioned towards Muslims, (and by saying) 'The Prophet – may God's prayers and peace be upon him – said, "None of you becomes a true believer until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself"', in this way, Muḥammad the commander-in-chief ...<sup>23</sup>



**Fig. 7:** *Lōmāfānu* (single plate) with insertions in Arabic (highlighted) in lines 1–2 and 4–5; Bell 1930, pl. I A.

While the Arabic elements of this grant are still full sentences in their own right, later documents exhibit the tendency towards shorter phrases or even individual words in Arabic script being inserted into the Dhivehi context. This is true, first of all, for two further fragments of copperplate grants that are undated. In one of them, also consisting of only one plate (see Fig. 8), we meet, within a series of taxes that were levied for a newly endowed mosque, the expression *qalam govibai* denot-

<sup>22</sup> The fragment is only known via Bell 1930, 541–552 with pl. I; its present whereabouts are unknown.

<sup>23</sup> For a first translation see Bell 1930, 543, where the Arabic elements are omitted, however. The Arabic quotations are قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَلَا لَعْنَتُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ (see *Surah* 7.44 and 11.19 of the Qur'an) and قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ (Ḥadīth 183).



ing a tax for registrars and registration, with *qalam* ‘scriptor(ium)’ written in Arabic (قلم).<sup>24</sup> The other one, of which only half a plate has survived (see Fig. 9), contains two instances of the Arabic title *al-ġāzī* ‘conqueror, warlord’, once associated with King Ibrahim (III, r. 1585–1609 CE), son of Muhammad Boḍu Takurufānu (r. 1573–1585 CE) who liberated the Maldives from the short Portuguese rule (1558–1573), and once, with his uncle Ali Katīb Takuru, the latter’s brother.<sup>25</sup>

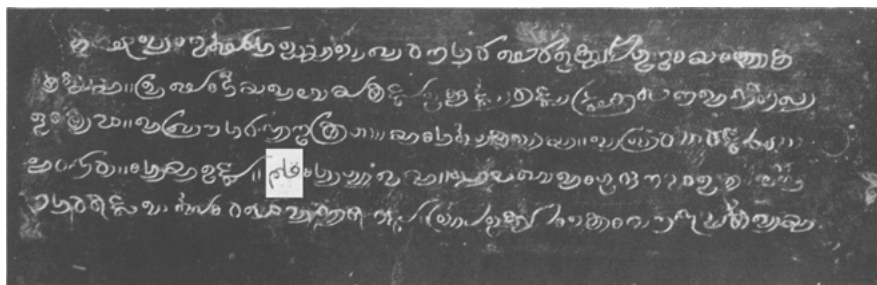


Fig. 8: Arabic *qalam* (highlighted) in a Dhivehi copperplate grant (fragment); Bell 1930, pl. II B.



Fig. 9: Arabic *al-ġāzī* (highlighted) in a Dhivehi copperplate grant (fragment); Bell 1930, pl. III A.

<sup>24</sup> See Bell 1930, 557–560 with pl. II for a first account. The other taxes in question are *ras boli* ‘royal cowries’, *rahu rā* ‘toddy tax’, *goi mas* ‘fish tax’ and *pālabba* ‘tree tax’; in contrast to Bell, who takes *qalam* and *govibai* as two distinct taxes (‘Tax Collector’s Fee’ and ‘Cultivation Tax’), the two terms are taken together here as they are demarked as constituting a phrase by a double vertical stroke (*daṇḍa*) preceding and following them.

<sup>25</sup> See Bell 1930, 560–567 with pl. III for a first account. According to Bell’s reconstructions, about fourteen characters (*akṣaras*) per line must have been lost with the right half of the plate.

### 3.1 Paper documents

Even though the change of writing directions must have caused severe problems for writers here and there, the practice of inserting Arabic words in Arabic script into Dhivehi contexts written in *Dives akuru* continued for at least two centuries, in all kinds of written artefacts that were produced, beginning with the first charters on paper which replaced the copperplate grants from the end of the sixteenth century onwards.<sup>26</sup> A typical example of such charters, which are usually called *fatkoḷu* (lit. ‘leaflet’),<sup>27</sup> is a document issued in 1108 AH (1696 CE) by King Muḥammad son of Ḥāḡḡī ‘Alī Tukkala (r. 1692–1701) concerning the renewal of the mosque on Gan island that had been the object of the *Gamu lōmāfānu* some centuries before. The Arabic elements in this voluminous *fatkoḷu* (cf. Fig. 10) comprise, firstly, the king’s seal, attached at the top of the leaf, then the *basmala* (introductory formula ‘In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful’, بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ), and five and a half lines of continuous Arabic text (prayers quoted from the Qur’an and the Ḥadīth) with the name of God and other important words highlighted in red ink. Arabic elements usually also appear in red ink in the Dhivehi text that follows from line 6 onwards; the words and phrases concerned range from the name and designations of the Prophet, *muḥammad* (combined with Dhivehi *petāmbaru* ‘prophet’ in line 40), *rasūl-allāh* (lit. ‘messenger of God’) and *sultān-al- anbiyā’* (lit. ‘king of prophets’, in line 10), via names of other persons such as *al-sultān muḥammad* (referring to the issuing king in line 28), *al-sultān iskandar ibrāhīm* (referring to King Ibrahim Iskandar I, r. 1648–1687, in lines 27 and 32), a vizier named *hāḡḡī muḥammad*, and the scribe, *muḥammad ḥaṭīb* (in line 49), references to the Qur’an (*ḥaqq qur’ānā*, lit. ‘truth of the Qur’an’, in line 10 and simply *qur’ān* combined with Dhivehi *pot* ‘book’ in line 44), the Kaaba (*ka’bat-ullāh* in line 45), the Hijra (*hiḡra-* in line 11), and other terms that pertain to Muslim thought (e.g. *raḥmat* ‘mercy’ in line 40, *ṭiqalain* ‘the two species of genies and men’ in line 9, and *ṣalawāt* ‘prayer rituals’ in line 35), up to mere abstract nouns (e.g. *manfa’a* ‘benefit’ in line 34 and *qabūl* ‘acceptance’, combined with Dhivehi *kuravvai* ‘making’ to form a complex verb meaning ‘accept’ in line 19). In several cases, the Arabic terms are equipped with Dhivehi endings, in turn, written in *Dives akuru* (and

<sup>26</sup> The oldest paper document that has been preserved can be dated to c. 1580 CE; it concerns the endowment of a mosque on the island of Kolhufushi in Mulaku atoll and was issued by Muḥammad Boḡu Takurufānu (see Bell 1940, 187–190 with pl. L).

<sup>27</sup> The *Maritime Asia Heritage Survey* website (Feener s.a.) displays about fifty Dhivehi charters in *Dives akuru* script; an immense increase of material in comparison with Bell’s list of eleven specimens (Bell 1940, 187).

usually not in red); this is the case, for example, of *rasūl-allāh* and *ka'bat-ullāh*, which are followed by the genitive ending *-ge* (lines 10–11 and 45), *manfa'a* (line 34) with the ablative ending *-in* ('from the benefit') or *ḡāhil* 'ignorant (person)' with the indefinite suffix *-aku* (line 44). However, the Dhivehi endings could also be integrated into the Arabic spelling, as in the case of *hiḡrain* (line 11) with the ablative ending *-in* ('from the Hijra') or in *mu'min musulmanaku* 'a Muslim believer' with the indefinite suffix *-aku* (line 41). In contrast to this, Arabic terms are sometimes rendered in *Dives akuru*; this is true, for example, of the name of Medina spelt *mad<sup>h</sup>īnayaṭ* with a dative ending in line 11, *rasūl* 'messenger, prophet' appearing with the comitative suffix *-ayi* in line 46, and *insi* 'human (being)' occurring in the form *insīnayi* with a plural ending and the comitative suffix in line 9, contrasting with *ḡīnī-nayi* 'genies' where the word stem is written in Arabic. Beyond this, Sanskrit terms also continue to be used (in a spelling strongly influenced by Dhivehi pronunciation); this is especially true of the long list of epithets with which the kings used to be ornated.<sup>28</sup> The interplay of all these elements is illustrated with some excerpts of the document in Table 6.

**Table 6:** The *Gamu fatkoḷu* of 1696 CE (excerpts).

... <i>suḷṭān-al-anbiyā' eve nan d<sup>h</sup>evvai</i> :	... from the <i>Hijra</i> that (our) lord, (his) majesty the <i>ḡaqq-qur'ānā d<sup>h</sup>ī poṇuvvi kau rasūl- Messenger of God</i> undertook to Medina, sent out <i>allāhu-ge pānun' mad<sup>h</sup>īnayaṭ voḍigat</i> (by God) who had given him the name <i>King of hiḡrain</i>
<i>ekusāstura ekusatt<sup>h</sup>a aṭvana ahar etere</i> :	in the 1108th year,
<i>svastī srīmata mahāsrī purasituru aud<sup>h</sup>āna srīkula ramvahāaud<sup>h</sup>akīriti katt<sup>h</sup>iri bvana mahārad<sup>h</sup>um vid<sup>h</sup>āḷin</i> :	(I), Hail! the Maharaja of the world, glorious, with great splendour, excessively bright, a <i>kshatriya</i> of a brilliant race, with a great golden fame of power, have ordered:
... <i>mage red<sup>h</sup>ali kurana hataruvana averud<sup>h</sup>u</i> ...	... in the fourth year of my reign ...
...	
... <i>srīkula ramvahāaud<sup>h</sup>akīriti katt<sup>h</sup>iri bvana mahārad<sup>h</sup>unge katt<sup>h</sup>iri mud<sup>h</sup>igesvuman mi pat lievumuge hudd<sup>h</sup>ayi vid<sup>h</sup>āḷu bahayī nikume al-wazīr hāḡḡī muḡammadu d<sup>h</sup>oṭimenayi aḷā kī hid<sup>h</sup>u muḡammad ḡaṭīb aḷā lī</i> ::	... After the Maharaja of the world, a <i>kshatriya</i> of brilliant race, with a great golden fame of power had left with the command to write down this document with the <i>kshatriya</i> 's seal, and (his) subject, the <i>vizier Muḡammad Doṭimena</i> had read it, (his) subject <i>Muḡammad the scribe</i> wrote it down.

<sup>28</sup> Geiger (1919, 176) and Bell (1940, 67) apply the Sinhalese term *biruda* < Skt. *viruca*. Given the distortion of the Sanskrit terms over the centuries, these epithets are not always restorable.

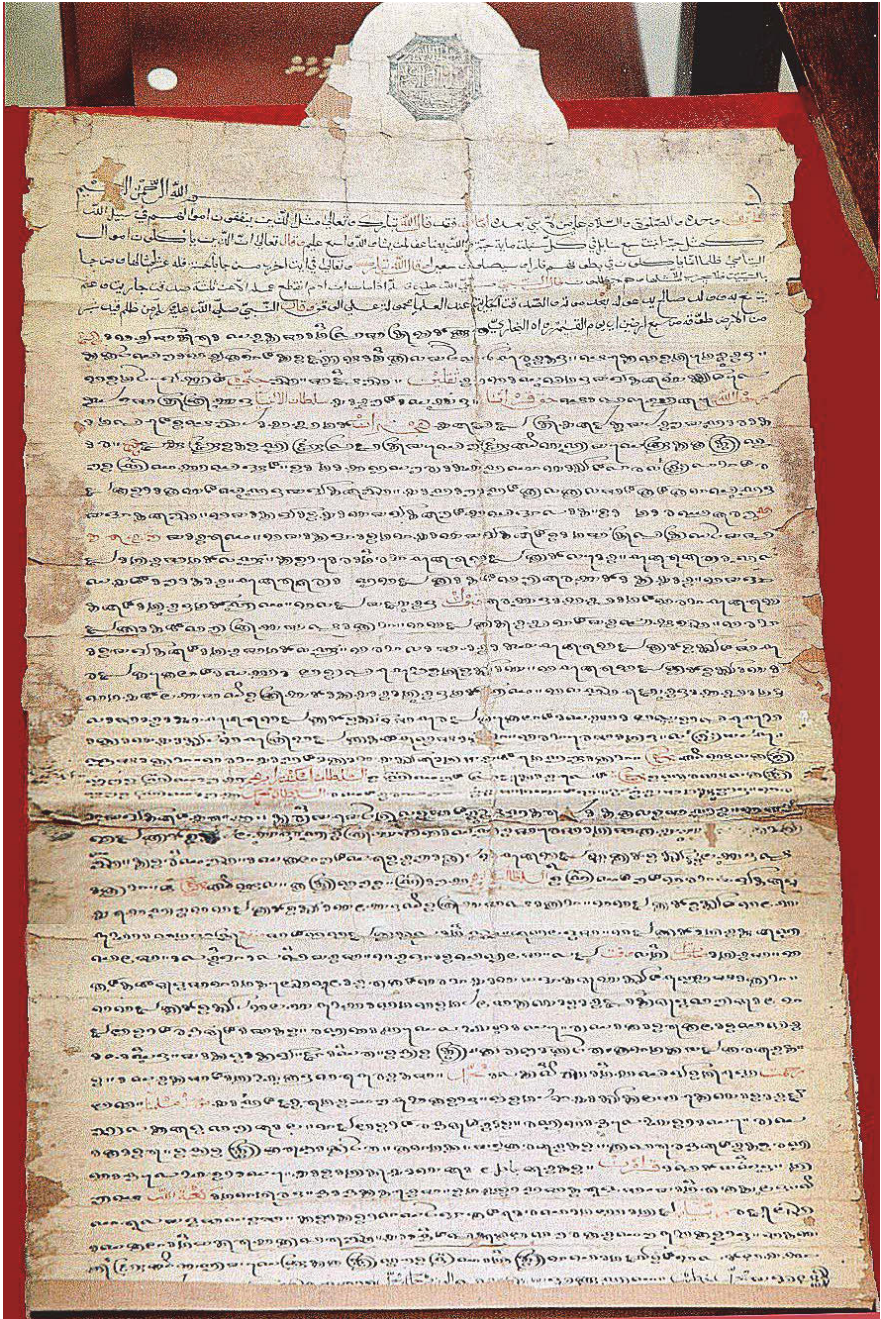


Fig. 10: The *Gamu fatko*lu of 1696 CE; photograph Jost Gippert, 1992.

### 3.2 Charters on wood and stone

The extensive mixture of Dhivehi text with Arabic elements in official documents is not restricted to paper charters. It is especially two inscriptions on wood that deserve our interest for the period in question. As a matter of fact, the two inscriptions, both dated to the year 1062 AH (1652 CE), are probably copies of charters that also existed on paper; they concern the endowment of mosques by King Ibrahim Iskandar I, in quite the same wording as what we find in *fatkoļus*. One of them is engraved in five longitudinal lines on a beam of about 3 m length (Fig. 11 may give an idea of its size), which was used in the construction of the so-called ‘Old Mosque’<sup>29</sup> of the Galolhu quarter of Male until its demolition in about 1980; it is today preserved in the National Museum in Male.



Fig. 11: Endowment inscription of the Galolhu Old Mosque (total); photograph Jost Gippert, 1993.

In the excerpt of line 4 shown in Figs 12a–b, we see the combination of Arabic *‘imārat* ‘construction’ with Dhivehi *kuļaimaṭ*, the verbal noun ‘making’ in the dative used to express a purpose; the sentence reads: *mi d<sup>h</sup>anāru huṭi galolu emve aļutakun mi danāru ‘imārat kuļaimaṭ ad<sup>h</sup>ai d<sup>h</sup>annavai gat hid<sup>h</sup>u* ‘when (I) received the information that all subjects of Galolhu where this building stands desired to construct this building’. The construction is dated to Friday, 11 Ramadan of the fifth regnal year of the king, with both the month name, *ramaḍān*, and the Dhivehi word for ‘month’, *mahu*, written in Arabic (*mahārad<sup>h</sup>unge pasuvana averud<sup>h</sup>u ramaḍān mahu egāra vī hukuru d<sup>h</sup>ā*); the date equals 16 August 1652.

<sup>29</sup> Bā Miskit, also known under the names Kuṇḍikoi-Miskit and Masjid al-Hadith.



b

**Figs 12a–b:** Same, excerpt with line 4 highlighted; photographs Jost Gippert, 1993.

The second *'fatkoḷu* on wood' is a large rectangular board measuring 1.7 × 0.54 m; its eighteen-line inscription attests the endowment of a mosque on the island of Gan in the southernmost atoll, Aḍḍū (or Seenu), on the 23 Muharram of the same year, a Friday as well, corresponding to 5 January 1652. This inscription is peculiar in that it begins with a lengthy account of the Creation and the life of Muḥammad, as in the *Gamu lōmāfānu*; in addition, it provides important information on the circumstances of the conversion of the Maldives to Islam.<sup>30</sup> The board, today also kept in the National Museum in Male, was probably exposed in the mosque concerned as long as it existed.<sup>31</sup>

During the construction of mosques, *fatkoḷu*-like endowment acts were sometimes also engraved in the building material itself. This is true, for example, of the *Dives akuru* inscription that was applied to the four inner walls of the so-called 'Middle Mosque' (*Medu Miskit*) in Male, which provides details concerning both the construction of the mosque and its properties. Here, we read, among others, the Arabic words *'āda'* 'custom' (with the ablative ending *-in* added in *Dives akuru*), *miḥrāb* 'niche for praying' (once with the comitative

<sup>30</sup> See Gippert 2003 and forthcoming b for further details.

<sup>31</sup> See Bell 1940, 190 according to whom the board was still 'in the possession of the inhabitants of Gan Island' in his times.

ending *-āi*, written in *Dives akuru* together with the stem-final *b*), Ḥadīth and *ziyārat* ('shrine').<sup>32</sup>

### 3.3 Funerary inscriptions

A considerable number of artefacts written in *Dives akuru* with Arabic insertions consist of epitaphs which, however, are less numerous than the bulk of funerary inscriptions that are all in Arabic. It is usually datings (by *Hijri* year and month), personal names, and mentions of God and the Prophet that are written in Arabic in the mixed inscriptions. Of the sixteen such inscriptions that have been recorded for the big cemetery of the Friday Mosque in Male,<sup>33</sup> three are undecipherable today due to erosion caused by the maritime climate; the other ones are datable between 1662 and 1782 CE. The outer appearance of the Dhivehi script is partly similar to that of the contemporary charters, as in the case of the gravestone of a certain Ḥussain Boḍu Doḍimena Kiṅagepānu, son of Wazīr Muḥammad Pāmuladeri Maṅikupānu, who died in the night of Monday, 6 Dhu al-Hijja 1178 AH, corresponding to 27 May 1765 CE (see Fig. 13); its textual content is illustrated in Table 7.<sup>34</sup> In a few cases, however, the script on the gravestones is extremely ornamental, thus, reminiscent of Arabic calligraphy. This is true, for example, of the epitaph of a certain Ḥussain Āmin (?) Kilagepānu, grandson (?) of 'Umar Rannabaderi Kilage, who died on Friday, 18 Jumada al-awwal 1089 AH, corresponding to 8 July 1678 CE (see Fig. 14).<sup>35</sup> As far as it can be ascertained, its text is displayed in Table 8.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> A reproduction of the inscription is published in *Mālē Hukuru Miskit* 1984, 173–180; an edition of the text in a *Thaana* transcription in the same book, 97 and 165–168.

<sup>33</sup> Epitaphs with mixed inscriptions are also found in graveyards on other islands of the archipelago; they are especially numerous in the Koagannu graveyard on Hulhumeedhoo island (Seenu atoll).

<sup>34</sup> See *Mālē Hukuru Miskit* 1984, 372 (group XIII, no. 142).

<sup>35</sup> See *Mālē Hukuru Miskit* 1984, 346 (group IV, no. 9).

<sup>36</sup> See Gippert forthcoming c, § 3.1, for further information on Maldivian funerary inscriptions.



Fig. 13: Gravestone of 1765; photograph Jost Gippert, 1993.

Table 7: Epitaph of 1765 CE.

*hiḡrain mitakvana ave|rud<sup>h</sup>u sanat 1178 gai dū-  
al-ḡiḡḡa mahu ha | rean vvi angāra vīle rei |  
hataruvana sā'atu al-sulṭān | al-ḡāzī ḡassan  
'izz-al-dīn | sirik<sup>h</sup>ula raḡmiba kattri bvana |  
mahārad<sup>h</sup>unaṭu ek kihun upan | mī rad<sup>h</sup>unme  
diapurāsūtā vi al-wazīr muḡammadu pāmu-  
lad<sup>h</sup>eri mani|kupānaṭ | me upan ḡussayn boḡu  
d<sup>h</sup>oṭimenāyi ki|ḡagepānu | purautt<sup>h</sup>a vi | kamu  
had<sup>h</sup>ān :*

This is to memorise that in the year 1178 after Hijra, in the month of *Dū'l-ḡiḡḡa*, in the fourth hour of the sixth night which dawned into Tuesday, passed away ḡussain Boḡu Doṭimena Kiḡagepānu, born from the same womb as the Maharaja of the world, Sultan al-ḡāzī ḡassan 'lzz al-dīn, a kshatriya of brilliant race with golden elephants, and born to the vizier Muḡammad Pāmuladeri Manikupānu by whom was begotten this same king.





Fig. 14: Gravestone of 1678; photograph Jost Gippert, 1993.

Table 8: Epitaph of 1678 CE.

*hiḡrain | ekusaṣtura | uḡavai|vana ahar eture |  
svastī srīmaḷta mahāsirikula ra|mvība kattri  
ba|vana maṣārad<sup>h</sup>unge | ektirīsvana | aharu  
ḡumād al-awwal mahu | hukuru aṭāra viḷle rei  
mi rad<sup>h</sup>una ek-|kihun upan 'umar rannaba|ḍiri  
kilagon upan | koṭari kalegepānuge | d<sup>h</sup>i  
kamanāpānu | baḍun upan ḡussayn | āminnāi  
kilage|pānu mi d<sup>h</sup>va|hu me purauta | vedd<sup>h</sup>ye  
kamu had<sup>h</sup>ā|naṭ līpanti*

This had to be written down to memorise that in the 1089th year after Hijra, in the 31st year of Hail! the glorious Maharaja of the world, a kshatriya of very brilliant race, with golden elephants, in the month of Ḡumād al-awwal, in the night dawning into Friday, the 18th, on this day passed away Ḥussain Āmin Kilagepānu, born from the womb of Kamanāpānu, the daughter of Koṭari Kalegepānu who was born to 'Umar Rannabaḍeri Kilage, born from the same womb as that king.

## 4 The Invention of *Thaana*

With the replacement of *Dives akuru* by a newly invented right-to-left directed script in the eighteenth century, the problem of inserting Arabic elements into a Dhivehi context was solved for the Maldivian scribes. Curiously enough, the new *Thaana* script was not based on Arabic letters but on digits: as shown in Table 9, nine characters derive from the Arabic or, rather, Persian digits for 1 to 9, nine further characters from the inherited digits of *Dives akuru*.<sup>37</sup> Considering that in Arabic, numbers are written against the regular script direction, the use of the digits for the purpose of representing consonants in a right-to-left directed script is perplexing. This is all the more true since the ratio of the assignment of sound values to the digits is still unknown. Nevertheless, the influence of Arabic writing habits is clear from another characteristic: *Thaana* uses the Arabic vocalisation marks as far as possible for the assignment of vowels (including *sukūn*, the circle-shaped mark denoting the absence of a vowel). The interplay of *Thaana* and Arabic script is illustrated in Fig. 15 and Table 10 with a page from the *Rādavaḷi*, a chronicle covering the time from Creation up to the eighteenth century;<sup>38</sup> note that the inherited digits are used for denoting numbers, not the Arabic ones, and that both the Arabic names and the numbers are usually in red ink.

**Table 9:** The development of *Thaana* characters.

<i>Thaana</i> character	١	٢	٣	٤	٥	٦	٧	٨	٩
Sound value	h	ś	n	r	b	!	k	ʔ	w
Persian digit	١	٢	٣	٤	٥	٦	٧	٨	٩
Numeric value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

<i>Thaana</i> character	١٠	١١	١٢	١٣	١٤	١٥	١٦/١٧	١٨	١٩
Sound value	m	F	d	t	l	g	ñ/ŋ	s	ḍ
<i>Dives akuru</i> digit	١٠	١١	١٢	١٣	١٤	١٥	١٦	١٧	١٨
Numeric value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

<sup>37</sup> See Gippert 2013, 96–98, for more details.

<sup>38</sup> The present copy of the chronicle (styled ‘C’ in Bell 1940, 200) was published in facsimile in *Rādavaḷi* 1979, 2; fragments of two further copies (‘A’ and ‘B’, the latter in *Dives akuru* script), which were partially edited by Bell (1940, 198–200 with plates N and O), do not contain the passage in question.



**Table 10:** *Rādavaḷi* ‘C’, (excerpt).

<i>...’ādamu fētānbaru</i> : kulavati kura’ vai ‘e <i>suvāmīnge re’sava’igenḷi hata’   dāku su- varuge la’i ti’bava’ifa’i : mi de ‘aḷun   bo- vana’a’ : va’dava’ifī mā’i : duni’a matī :   fētānbarukamu huṣī ‘aharu . 300 .</i>	... after having made her (Eve) a family mem- ber of the prophet <b>Adam</b> , having entrusted (?) her to him as (her) husband, He (God) lodged them for seven days in heaven and (then) caused these two servants to enter earth; the years of his (Adam’s) prophethood in the world (were) <b>300</b> .
<i>mi’a’ fahu   ‘ane’ka : 1200 : ‘aharu duvas ve’je fahu .   lamakuge fut nūḷu fētānbaru kalōge ha’dava’i   mi kalōge : fuṣā’i samundurē na’u ma’cā’ i   huṣī ‘aharu : 950 :</i>	When after this another <b>1200</b> years had seen the light, He created the noble prophet <b>Nūḷ</b> (Noah), son of <b>Lamech</b> ; the years this noble- man passed in a boat on the ocean after having embarked (were) <b>950</b> .
<i>mi’a’ fahu : ‘āzaruge fut  ’ibrahīm fētānbaru kalōge : vanavaruge ‘aḷharu : 1142 :</i>	After this, the years of the lifetime of the noble prophet <b>Ibrahīm</b> (Abraham), son of Azar, (were) <b>1142</b> .
<i>mī fahu ‘imrānge fut mūsā   fētānbaru kalōgoṣ’ : vanavaruge ‘aharu . 505 .</i>	After this, the years of the lifetime of the noble prophet <b>Mūsā</b> (Moses), son of <b>Imrān</b> (Amram), (were) <b>505</b> .
<i>mī fahu den dāwūdu fētānbaru : ...</i>	After this then, of the prophet <b>Dāwūd</b> (David) ...

## 5 Outlook

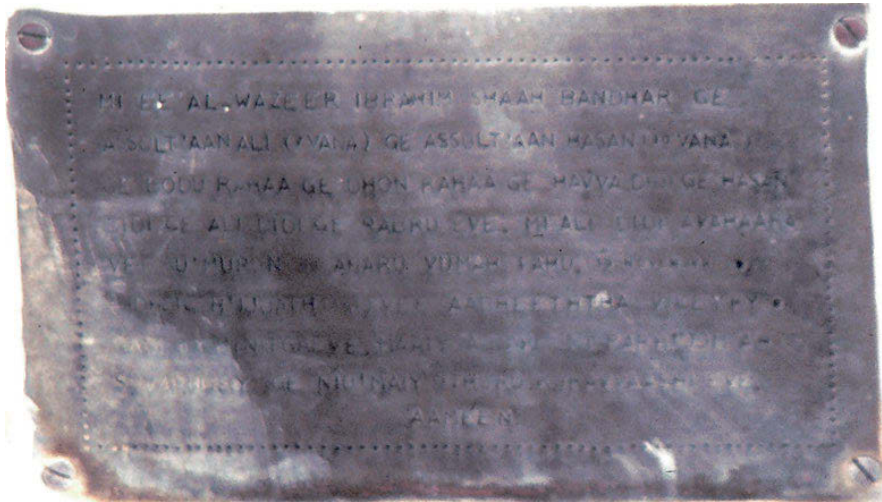
Dhivehi has witnessed a strong influence of another foreign language, namely, English, since the nineteenth century, and especially from 1887 to 1965 when the Maldives were a British protectorate. Indeed, there was an attempt to introduce Latin script for Dhivehi, based on English orthographical premises; however, this ‘Male Latin’ was only officially used for two years (1976–1978), and only a few written artefacts from that period have survived (see Fig. 16 showing a metal plate with a Roman inscription from the grave of a certain Ali Didi on Hithadhoo island). In contrast to Arabic, it has remained rather uncommon to insert English words in Latin script in a Dhivehi context, which would, of course, bring about the problem of mixing script directions again; instead, English elements are usually entered in a *Thaana* transcription today, as in the online news headlines illustrated in Table 11;<sup>39</sup> the only Dhivehi elements in this text are, except for nominal endings, the auxiliary verbs *vumun* in *fe’il-vumun*

<sup>39</sup> Mihaaru, 9 May 2023 (<<https://mihaaru.com/news/121098>>, accessed 9 January 2024).

‘by failure’, lit. ‘by be(com)ing fail’, and *kuri* in *saspeṇḍ-kuri* ‘suspended’, lit. ‘suspend-made’. As a Dhivehi word, we might also count *ra’īs* ‘president’; this, however, is a loan from Arabic.

**Table 11:** News headline.

	
<i>ra’īsge seki’uriṭī fe’il-vumun saspeṇḍ kuri</i>	<i>Promotion for officer suspended for Presiden-</i>
<i>ofisara’ promōṣan</i>	<i>tial security failure.</i>



**Fig. 16:** Grave inscription in ‘Male Latin’; photograph Jost Gippert, 1999.

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# A Journey Through the Multilingual Landscape of Greco-Roman and Late Antique Oxyrhynchus

**Abstract:** This paper aims to provide an insight into the multicultural and -lingual panorama of Oxyrhynchus (modern el-Bahnasa), integrating textual and archaeological evidence. The present study combines the examination of papyrological and epigraphic sources with the analysis of the results of over thirty years of archaeological investigations carried out by the archaeological mission of the University of Barcelona. Despite the wealth of Greek papyri published so far, whose significance remains indisputable for understanding the society inhabiting this ancient site, new discoveries highlight the importance of the Egyptian language and culture up until the late antique phase and beyond, as well as the existence of foreign communities (Romans, Jews, Nabataeans) who have introduced their own culture into Oxyrhynchus and shaped the local social and religious panorama. Furthermore, through the lens of the documentation discussed, the linguistic transformations which occurred in the Christian period and particularly the essential importance of the Coptic language in the local society will be highlighted.

## 1 Introduction

Oxyrhynchus represents an interesting case study for having a glimpse into the variety of linguistic interactions which might have existed in many Egyptian settlements during the Greco-Roman and late antique periods. This site, laying on the western bank of the Bahr Yusuf River, c. 190 km from the city of Cairo, is known predominantly in light of the extraordinary corpus of Greek papyri discovered here by Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt more than one hundred years ago. However, the essential role played by these Greek papyri in the understanding of Oxyrhynchite society and beyond has inevitably overshadowed a wide range of papyrological and epigraphic evidence attesting to a variety of other languages.

Combining the research conducted in museums and other research institutions with the results of over thirty years of archaeological investigations at the site carried out by the mission of the University of Barcelona,<sup>1</sup> this paper aims to provide an insight into the different degrees of linguistic interaction traceable in the multicultural panorama of Oxyrhynchus between the Greco-Roman and the late antique phases. This complex intertwining between languages and scripts in this ancient city will be observed from two distinct perspectives. On the one hand, analysing the coexistence of writings in different languages and scripts in the same spatial contexts and/or cultural settings. On the other, observing how different languages and scripts were mixed in the production of a variety of written sources, from inscribed portable objects made of papyrus, wood, clay and stone to texts inscribed or painted on the walls of various buildings discovered at the site. It remains essential, when possible, to consider these sources in their original archaeological context for understanding how this linguistic compresence shaped the cultural landscape of this city, marking phenomena of continuity and transformation throughout the centuries. For this reason, as much as the sources available allow, this paper will discuss the collected documentation in its original archaeological settings or try to recontextualise them according to their specific function. However, major limits of contextualisation cannot be overlooked dealing with other inscribed materials discovered in the past which were predominantly unearthed in the rubbish dumps surrounding the ruins of this site. Their nature as discarded material poses numerous questions regarding their provenance and function. In this regard, their discussion according to the cultural and/or social settings to which they could have originally belonged is meant to provide an overview of the surviving evidence rather than offering a comprehensive solution to these issues.

## **2 A brief introduction to bilingual practices in the administration of Greco-Roman Oxyrhynchus**

Before examining the contexts and social settings in which we can trace multilingual practices in Oxyrhynchus, a side note must be devoted to the admin-

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<sup>1</sup> My deepest gratitude goes to the directors of the mission of the University of Barcelona, Esther Pons Mellado and Maite Mascort Roca, for having welcomed me into the team since 2020 and for their constant support in studying the unpublished Oxyrhynchite epigraphic and papyrological material.



istration of this settlement in the Greco-Roman phase and what we can reconstruct according to the evidence offered by the papyrological documentation.

Papyri dating before the Ptolemaic period are virtually absent due to the rising underground water level in the entire archaeological area, a phenomenon already begun in the early twentieth century with the expansion of the agricultural landscape.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, documents especially in Demotic are occasionally found,<sup>3</sup> and various pieces of evidence seems to remark that aside from Greek, which had become the administrative language of the country after the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great, Egyptian played a key role in the Oxyrhynchite administrative settings during the Ptolemaic period.<sup>4</sup>

The native language seems to have been largely abandoned in administrative settings after the Roman conquest, substantially replaced, as in most Egyptian settlements, by the Greek language. Despite this apparent predominant switch from Egyptian to Greek, especially in the administrative sphere, a small corpus of Demotic documents dating between the late Ptolemaic and early Roman periods has been recently identified. The Oxyrhynchite Egyptian administrative collection includes, among others, annuity contracts and documents about real estate.<sup>5</sup> Within the scope of this paper, is interesting to note that many of them included a Greek translation,<sup>6</sup> which perhaps was also meant to make these documents comprehensible to the imperial officers, unable to read the Egyptian version.

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2 The corpus of papyrological evidence dating even to the Ptolemaic phase is very limited.

3 Several ostraca inscribed in Demotic, for instance, were found during the investigations of a series of rubbish dumps surrounding the area of the so-called High Necropolis of Oxyrhynchus in the excavation campaign held between November and December 2022. For a brief overview of this unpublished material, see Mascia 2023b.

4 A corpus of c. 1800 Demotic ostraca, for instance, dated mainly between 170 and 116 BCE, is housed in the collection of the universities of Pisa and Cologne. Most of these documents dealt with the provision of a desert outpost between Oxyrhynchus and the Bahariya Oasis in the Western Desert; see Thissen 2013.

5 Among the latest might be one document preserving the name of Emperor Trajan; see Quack 2016b, 107–108. However, Edward Love also reports the existence of a document dating to the nineteenth year of Hadrian (135/136 CE); see Love 2021, 177. In addition, the presence of several Demotic accounts, probably dating from the first century CE, should be mentioned; see Quack 2016b, 108.

6 Quack 2016b, 108.

### 3 Multilingualism in the Egyptian temples of Oxyrhynchus and beyond

The papyrological documentation offers a glimpse into the religious panorama of this city between the Roman and late antique phases. Despite the existence of sanctuaries devoted to the cult of a variety of Greco-Roman and Near Eastern deities, Egyptian temples still played a central role in the lives of the local inhabitants. Since the Ptolemaic phase, the Great Thoereion was beyond doubt the major religious centre of this settlement. This sanctuary hosted the cult of Thoeris,<sup>7</sup> the goddess patroness of the city, here worshipped together with Isis, Serapis and all the associated gods (i.e. *synnaoi theoi*). The central importance of this religious organisation is underlined by the administrative documentation dating predominantly to the early Roman period, which seems to demonstrate that this temple and its priesthood had a chief function in the administration of the other religious institutions of this city and the temples of the villages of the Oxyrhynchite nomos.<sup>8</sup> It is often in association with this sanctuary that we find the name of the local highest priestly ranks<sup>9</sup> and the personnel traditionally in charge of the production of ritual texts essential for the endurance of the activities of the temples and their personnel.<sup>10</sup> Considering this evidence, it might be hypothesised that the Great Thoereion hosted a ‘house of life’ (*per-ankh*), ‘The institution of an ancient Egyptian temple in which the priests formed, transformed and transmitted the religious traditions of their country’, as defined by Andreas Stadler.<sup>11</sup>

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7 On the cult of this deity at Oxyrhynchus from the Late Dynastic to the Greco-Roman phase, see Mascort Roca and Pons Mellado 2019.

8 For an introduction to the role of the Great Thoereion and its priesthood, as well as other institutions associated with this deity, in the religious panorama of Oxyrhynchus, see Mascia 2023a.

9 Like the *prophetes* Harthonis (SB X 10256, 55–67 CE). Another priest named Aurelius Osorapis, holding the titles of *archiprophetes* and *protostolistes* (PSI IX 1039, third century CE), and who was probably also associated with this sanctuary is the most important religious authority of Roman Oxyrhynchus known so far. On these religious offices in Greco-Roman Egypt, see Clarysse 2010, 288.

10 The papyrological documentation records only one priest holding this service in the Roman phase; Thoonis in service at the temple of Athena-Thoeris and the divine Augustus Caesar in the second century CE (P.Mich. XVIII 788). He bears the title of *pteraphoros*, the lector priest with a key role in conveying and translating temple knowledge. On this religious office in Greco-Roman Egypt, see Clarysse 2010, 288.

11 Stadler 2015, 190.

Some of the Egyptian documentary, literary and paraliterary texts recently attributed to this settlement, being located in the Great Thoreion or another sanctuary, should be linked to the production of the ‘house of life’ of Oxyrhynchus, presumably active at least until the late second century CE. Indeed, while research on the ‘Egyptophone’ history of Oxyrhynchus is still in its infancy, the in-depth studies carried out over the last few years by Joachim Quack in the Egyptian Exploration Society papyrus collection in Oxford<sup>12</sup> have provided a first idea of the essential importance of the Egyptian textual sources for understanding the religious panorama of this city.<sup>13</sup>

The corpus of Egyptian texts identified by Quack counts around forty hieratic, seven hieroglyphic and ninety Demotic papyri;<sup>14</sup> other evidence recently discussed by Edward Love<sup>15</sup> and some specimens spread in museum collections should be added to this number.<sup>16</sup> The majority of these texts seem to date from the second century CE, with a minor number of exemplars dating from the first century CE and, less likely, to the third century CE.<sup>17</sup> A similar chronology can be attributed to a large part of the administrative texts recording the activities of the Egyptian temples and the priesthood of Oxyrhynchus.<sup>18</sup> To some extent,

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**12** For an introduction to this corpus, see Quack 2016b.

**13** While many of these texts might be attributed to the Egyptian temples of Oxyrhynchus, it should be remarked that all of them were found scattered in the rubbish dumps surrounding the ancient settlement. In particular, Kahle MS 2/3 belongs to the discoveries of the excavation campaign 1897–1898; Love 2021, 187–188. P.EES Oxyrhynchus 3b 4/9 was found in the 1903–1904 excavation campaign; Love 2021, 185. P.EES Oxyrhynchus 29 4B.42/H (13) and P.BM EA 10808 were discovered in the 1904–1905 excavation campaign; Love 2021, 184, 191. And Clackson MSS 8.2.5 in the 1905–1906 investigations; Love 2021, 198.

**14** Quack 2016b, 106.

**15** Kahle MS 2/3 and Clackson MSS 8.2.5; see Love 2021, 187–189, 198–199.

**16** Several unpublished Demotic and hieratic ostraca are now kept in the collection of Columbia University; they formerly belonged to the findings donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the early twentieth century. I owe my gratitude to Niv Allon for providing this information on the de-accessed materials transferred in the early 1950s. In addition, numerous unpublished inscribed objects in the Egyptian language have been discovered in the course of the last years of investigations carried out by the mission of the University of Barcelona.

**17** On the problems behind the dating of the aforementioned fragments, see Quack 2016b, 107; Love 2021, 176, 183. PSI III 177Ro, probably dating between the second and third century CE, is a hieratic text containing an offering liturgy, i.e. a water libation, destined to a private beneficiary. For a preliminary description of this text, see Pintaudi 2011–2012 [2013], 161; Quack has provided a more precise interpretation of the text; Quack 2016b, 109.

**18** Although it must be noted that the number of administrative texts associates with the Egyptian priesthood dating from the third century CE is also substantial. For a discussion of this documentation, see Mascia 2023a.

some of these testimonies, in particular the hieratic ritual texts, finds parallels among textual sources predominantly from Tebtynis, but no extensive comparisons from contemporary Egyptian settlements renowned for the discovery of textual corpora associated with temple activities.<sup>19</sup> Comprehensively, the Oxyrhynchite corpus encompasses features which remark on the unique peculiarities of this textual production epitomised by the attestation of distinctive phenomena of script-shifting in the composition of texts belonging to the ritual domain.<sup>20</sup>

An introduction to the bilingual textual production in large part presumably associated with these sanctuaries is deemed necessary before examining written artefacts in which we can trace a direct combination between different languages and scripts.<sup>21</sup> While no ‘mixing’ phenomenon occur in these compositions, they, nonetheless, hold essential importance in understanding how the long interaction between indigenous and foreign communities had irremediably influenced many aspects of the organisation and, therefore, the textual production of the Egyptian temples. The multicultural setting in which these texts were produced is remarked by the variety of solutions adopted to answer different liturgical and administrative needs.

Egyptian temples in the Roman period were still organised according to a system of rules which had been established since the Pharaonic period. Texts of central importance in the traditional cult administration continued to be produced in Greek and Egyptian until the Roman period. *The Book of the Temple*,<sup>22</sup> a manual that provides insight into the laws regulating the native religious organisations and describes the appearance, as well as the functioning of the ideal Egyptian temples is illustrative in this sense.<sup>23</sup> While this composition was only witnessed for decades in Oxyrhynchus by two Greek fragments dating from the

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**19** Like also Soknopaiou Nesos and Narmouthis, see Love 2021, 183.

**20** Love 2021, 200–204.

**21** Among others, the following discussion comprehends both texts found in Egyptian and Greek versions at Oxyrhynchus (i.e. *The Book of the Temple*), as well as compositions attested in the two languages, but with only one version identified among the Oxyrhynchite papyri (i.e. P.Oxy. XLVI 3285).

**22** For an introduction to this handbook, see Quack 2000 and 2003.

**23** The study conducted by Quack on numerous fragments of this handbook found at Tebtynis has made it possible to reconstruct the content of this ancient manual. The manuscript contained a treatise on the ideal temple and a detailed list of rights and duties that all the members of the temple personnel must follow. See Quack 2000.

second century CE,<sup>24</sup> recent studies have led to the discovery of a discrete number of copies in the hieratic script from this site.<sup>25</sup> Although probably following an older archetype, the manual is known from manuscripts dating exclusively from the Roman period.<sup>26</sup> It is important to note that some of the hieratic fragments, such as those transmitted in Greek, might date to the second century CE;<sup>27</sup> thus, suggesting a possible coexistence of the Greek and Egyptian versions.

While the reasons behind the choice of Greek may reside in the bilingual nature of the local community<sup>28</sup> and decrease of temple personnel having a strong command of the Egyptian writing systems, it is likely that this change also reflects the control exercised on the Egyptian temples and the ritual activities of these institutions by the imperial authorities.<sup>29</sup> The verso side of the same papyrus roll preserving *The Book of the Temple* contains a collection of laws regulating the conduct of the priestly class and listing the punishments destined for transgressors of temple law.<sup>30</sup> This collection of rules could also have been translated into Greek to provide the necessary information to the Roman authorities, who partially controlled the Egyptian temples' administration from the time of Augustus.<sup>31</sup>

Another interesting testimony although not necessarily directly linked to the temples' domain is P.Oxy. XLVI 3285, dating to the second half of the second century CE.<sup>32</sup> The papyrus preserves a Greek translation of a legal code known as *The Legal Manual of Hermopolis*,<sup>33</sup> which was identified for the first time in a

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**24** P.Washington University inv. 138 + P.Oslo 2; both fragments have been the object of several studies, although Quack was the first to provide a reliable interpretation of the texts preserved in these fragments recently. For an introduction to the various interpretations proposed over the last century, see Quack 2016a, 268–271.

**25** Quack 2016b, 109.

**26** Quack 2016a, 268.

**27** Quack 2016b, 107.

**28** Quack 2016b, 116.

**29** Mascia 2023a.

**30** For an overview on the recent identification of this text, see Quack 2016a, 277–278.

**31** Some of the regulations present in this manuscript find parallels in the *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* (regulations of the emperor's private account), which was a handbook containing a list of legal rulings pertinent to the duties of the *idios logos*. In particular, it seems that the sections of this manual dedicated to the rights and duties of the Egyptian priesthood were composed following the traditional temple law. For an introduction to this handbook, see Speidel 2013.

**32** See Rea 1978, 30–38.

**33** For an overview of this manual, see Mattha 1975.

papyrus roll written in Demotic dating from around the third century BCE.<sup>34</sup> The existence of a Greek translation of this manual concerning mainly Egyptian civil law, as remarked by Edda Bresciani, was probably meant to allow its consultation by the Ptolemaic and later Roman authorities.<sup>35</sup> The Greek version found at Oxyrhynchus seems to have been a compendium rather than a literal translation of this Demotic manual.

A coexistence between texts written in both Egyptian and Greek languages is also attested in divination practices, which combined elements peculiar to both foreign and native oracular traditions. Aside from the numerous Greek oracle tickets published over the last century,<sup>36</sup> and a Greek fragment of a dream book,<sup>37</sup> several divinatory compositions written in Demotic have been identified recently.<sup>38</sup> At least some of these textual sources seems to be contemporary,<sup>39</sup> underlining how the temple personnel of the Sarapeion,<sup>40</sup> the Thoereion<sup>41</sup> and perhaps other sanctuaries<sup>42</sup> performed oracular services in both languages throughout the early Roman phase. The coexistence between Egyptian and

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**34** This handbook found during the investigations of the ancient site of Hermopolis in the winter between 1938 and 1939 is a collection of rules concerning civil law, including instructions for the redaction of contracts and other documents. On the story of the transmission of this text, see Pestman 1983.

**35** ‘Non sorprende che il νόμος τῆς χώρας esistesse in traduzione greca, a disposizione e per la comprensione dei funzionari e degli amministratori di lingua greca, in età tolemaica e poi in quella romana’; see Bresciani 1981, 202.

**36** Like P.Oxy. IX 1213, P.Oxy. VIII 1149, P.Oxy. XLII 3078, P.Oxy. XXXI 2613, P.Oxy. LXXIV 5018 and P.Köln. IV 202 date from the second century CE. P.Oxy. LV 3799, P.Oxy. L 3590, P.Mich. inv. 1258, P.Oxy. LXV 4470 and P.Oxy. VI 923 date between the second and third century CE. A Demotic oracular question addressed to Osiris and Serapis, possibly dating to the Roman period, has probably been identified among the papyri kept in Oxford, Quack 2016b, 108.

**37** P.Oxy. XXXI 2607 (third century CE). For a re-examination of this text and a possible interpretation of this composition as a treatise of Egyptian origin, see Prada 2016.

**38** Quack 2016b, 108.

**39** Quack 2016b, 107.

**40** Most of the oracular tickets from this city are addressed to the deity patron of this temple.

**41** One oracle ticket associated with Thoeris PSI Congr. XVII 14, dating from the Ptolemaic phase (second–first century BCE), is known from Oxyrhynchus. Despite the absence of direct attestations ascribable to the Roman period, a document P.Oxy. XLI 2976 (second century CE) seems to attest the continuity of divinatory practices associated with this deity up to the second century CE.

**42** One oracular question is addressed to the god Thonis (P.Köln. IV 202, second century CE), which might indicate the existence of a sanctuary associated with this deity. An alternative solution might be the presence of a chapel or an altar in another temple of this city. The wide attestation of priests bearing theophoric names associated with Thonis in the Great Thoereion might suggest the worshipping of this god in the major religious institution of this city.

Greek in the performance of these ritual practices might find various explanations. On the one hand, it could depend on the typology of divination practices performed, being oracle tickets predominantly attested in Greek, not only from this site, while divination handbooks continued to be produced to some extent still in Egyptian. On the other hand, the linguistic choice might have also been dictated by the necessary adaptation to the needs of an ever-growing multicultural clientele requesting divinatory services.

The production of such a variety of texts also implies the existence of an educational setting that, as has already been noted, must have been strictly linked to a local centre of textual production, perhaps the ‘house of life’. Several are, indeed, compositions among the unpublished Oxyrhynchite material which might have pursued their function in an educational context.<sup>43</sup> Clackson MSS 8.2.5, an Old Coptic wordlist (second century CE), for instance, although barely intelligible, provides at least an idea of the typology of ‘*compendia* of lexical information’ used by the local priests in the early Roman period.<sup>44</sup>

Aside from the coexistence between languages in the production of documentary, literary and paraliterary texts associated with the domain of the local Egyptian temples,<sup>45</sup> the site attests to the recurrent interaction between various scripts in the production of specific textual *genres*: compositions associated with the inner ritual domain of temples. The practice at Oxyrhynchus took shape especially in the combination of a linear text in hieratic script with glosses in Old Coptic.<sup>46</sup> These glosses were used to supply punctuation, transliteration and full vocal pronunciation, as testified by various findings offered by other contemporary Egyptian settlements. In other words, many were probably pronunciation notes for priests who needed to fully comprehend the text, as well as recite and perform the religious ritual in the most accurate way. Correct pronunciation was indeed mandatory for the procedure efficacy; therefore, we can imagine how these glosses played a key role, especially in a historical phase

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<sup>43</sup> Sections of a Demotic schoolbook, for instance, have been identified. As noted by Quack, the text includes, among others, a list of birds used for memorising the Late Egyptian alphabetic sequence; see Quack 2016b, 109.

<sup>44</sup> Love 2021, 198–199. Old Coptic is based principally on the Greek alphabet with a collection of signs derived from the Demotic script used to write sounds absent in the Greek language to transliterate any stage of the Egyptian language. For an introduction to Old Coptic scripts and texts, see Quack 2017.

<sup>45</sup> Although, as already discussed, we cannot be sure that some of the texts examined were produced outside temples’ settings, like in the case of P.Oxy. XLVI 3285.

<sup>46</sup> It is important to consider that 33% of the Oxyrhynchite hieratic texts known so far appear to have been glossed in Old Coptic; see Love 2021, 176.

in which high proficiency in the Egyptian language and scripts, especially hieratic, was probably restricted to a minority of temple personnel. In this sense, according to the evidence offered by Oxyrhynchus, a priest illiterate in hieratic but having certain knowledge of Old Coptic together with the pronunciation and intonation of Middle/Classical Egyptian would have been able to recite the text correctly.<sup>47</sup>

While glosses had, in principle, a similar function, especially in ritual texts, the system of glossing was adopted according to different solutions reflecting the phase of experimentation characterising the Egyptian temple *scriptoria* between the late Ptolemaic and early Roman phases. It is especially at Oxyrhynchus that the Egyptian glossed documentation, written mainly in hieratic but transmitting texts in Middle/Classical Egyptian, remarks the variety of employments of supralinear glossing in Old Coptic. As noted by Love:

At Oxyrhynchus, script shift in the ritual domain was from hieratic to Old Coptic, but at one other it was from hieratic to demotic. What can only be stated is that (an) Egyptian priesthood(s) at Oxyrhynchus considered Old Coptic to have the highest utility in aiding decipherment, perhaps thereby coupled with ensuring correct pronunciation. This ‘shift in priority’, however, had the consequence that ‘while the phonetic realisation becomes even easier’, i.e., literacy in Old Coptic is considerably easier to acquire than literacy in hieratic due to orthographic depth, comprehension of the text’s semantics became even harder.<sup>48</sup>

Among the hieratic texts attesting the presence of Old Coptic glosses, several are included in the corpus of sources classified by Love as texts showing ‘subsequent selective supralinear glossing’, namely, concerning only designated sections of the ritual composition.<sup>49</sup> Others attest to what is defined by Love as a ‘subsequent comprehensive supralinear glossing’, which seems part of a process generally posterior to the composition of the linear text.<sup>50</sup> Another group, in Love classification, consists of ritual texts characterised by the presence of a

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<sup>47</sup> As recently remarked by Love 2021, 190.

<sup>48</sup> Love 2021, 197.

<sup>49</sup> This group includes P.EES Oxyrhynchus 29 4B.42/H (13), comprising five fragments of a ritual for protection featuring no punctuation (second century CE). P.EES Oxyrhynchus 3b 4/9 counts one fragment of a ritual text of unclear content preserving partial glossing with linear punctuation (second century CE); see Love 2021, 184–187.

<sup>50</sup> Kahle MS 2/3, a hieratic ritual text with Old Coptic glosses (early second century CE?) of uncertain content belongs to this category; see Love 2021, 187–189.



layout planned to leave space for the glossing of the text; therefore, allowing the inclusion of the glosses contemporary to the linear hieratic composition.<sup>51</sup>

Aside from hieratic texts, linear compositions in Old Coptic are also attested. The texts in this script could have found their origins in copies of Old Coptic glosses, which provided a transliteration of the original linear hieratic or perhaps even Demotic compositions.<sup>52</sup> P.BM EA 10808<sup>53</sup> is certainly the most well-known example of Old Coptic linear text from this settlement. The papyrus preserves a collection of magical texts in Egyptian probably dating to the second century CE, which production setting remains still debated.<sup>54</sup> The composition consists of a poorly preserved first column written in Demotic, Greek script and Old Coptic, and a second column in Old Coptic,<sup>55</sup> ‘complemented by certain group-writings in Demotic’, as described by Love.<sup>56</sup> The text comprises different spells interpreted by Quack as incantations to acquire favour and love.<sup>57</sup> Among them, one meant to obtain a *πάρεδρος*, an ‘assistant in ritual practices’; another possibly interpreted as a dream-sending invocation, probably calls for the assistance of a deceased, a ‘ghost’ from the necropolis, followed by three spells in which a deity is invoked. It is important to notice that the title and indication for the actions are written mainly, as noted by Quack, in Late Demotic. The use of Demotic was doubtless aimed at clarifying the content of the ritual instructions to the user of the spell. On the other hand, the spell itself, written in Old Coptic, probably remained mostly unintelligible to the reader. The interaction between scripts in this context shows the dual component peculiar to the Greco-Egyptian ritual production. As observed by Quack:

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51 P.EES Oxyrhynchus 25 3B.58 M(a), which consists of three fragments of a composition comprising a ritual for protection involving body parts; see Love 2021, 189–191.

52 On the possible origins of Old Coptic linear texts, see Love 2021, 191.

53 A first interpretation of this composition has been provided, among others, by Dieleman 2004. For further studies in light of the identification of another fragment among the Oxyrhynchus papyri kept in the Sackler Library, see Quack 2010, 83; Quack 2017, 64. The presence of a reference to Nephthys seems to justify its association with a ritual or temple setting, which, as we will discuss in the following pages, might be proposed for other texts recently discovered in the necropolis of Oxyrhynchus.

54 For instance, Love (2021, 198), while stating that the text ‘is safely ascribable to either to the ritual or temple domain’ rejects Renate Dekker’s interpretation (Dekker 2013, 64) of the text as belonging to an Egyptian temple library considering the lack of evidence at our disposal; see Love 2021, 191, n. 55.

55 The copying from an Old Coptic *Vorlage* seems suggested, according to Love, by ‘the fluent copying of the hand and precise layout of the manuscript’; see Love 2021, 197.

56 Love 2021, 191.

57 Further bibliography in Love 2021, 194.

Ritual texts have two different components. The one is the indication of the aims achieved by it as well as performance guidelines. For both, semantic clarity is imperative, and in this manuscript, this is guaranteed by the use of the contemporary vernacular. The second one is the spell, and that functions by the power of its sound, not by its meaning.<sup>58</sup>

Alongside the ritual domain, some texts also help us to gain more information about the use of Egyptian and the intertwining between distinguished writing systems in a private setting, although most likely restricted to the Egyptian temples personnel.<sup>59</sup> Several letters have been identified as largely written in hieratic, but with the addition of a few Demotic signs, even though the language appears as being quite certainly Demotic.<sup>60</sup>

## 4 Scripts interactions in context: The Osireion of Oxyrhynchus

As we have seen, the evidence offered by materials kept in museums' collections and other research institutions already provide essential information on the multicultural context characterising the religious institutions of Roman Oxyrhynchus and the activities of various ritual specialists, which might have been linked, at least to some extent, to these organisations.<sup>61</sup> However, the absence of any information regarding their provenance inevitably limits our knowledge of the settings in which these ritual texts were produced and used. It is in this sense that the investigations of the temple-catacomb of Osiris, carried out by the mission of the University of Barcelona in the early 2000s, play an essential role in concretely observing how different scripts physically coexisted in an Egyptian temple between the Ptolemaic and Roman phases. The compresence of hieroglyphic, hieratic and Demotic inscriptions in an Egyptian sanctuary certainly does not come as a surprise since each script traditionally answered specific functions in the fulfilment of both administrative and ritual

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<sup>58</sup> Quack 2016b, 118–119.

<sup>59</sup> Quack (2016b, 108) reflected on the peculiar use of the writing system and proposed to identify priests 'equally at home in both writing systems' as the authors of these documents. In particular, a reference to 'The Scribe of the Book of Per-Medja', namely, Oxyrhynchus, is present on the recto side of one of these documents; see Love 2021, 177, n. 4.

<sup>60</sup> See Quack 2016b, 108; Love 2021, 177.

<sup>61</sup> See, in particular, the problems in establishing the authorship and production setting of P.BM EA 10808 discussed in the previous section.

activities. Nonetheless, the Osireion of Oxyrhynchus offers us the rare occasion to imagine how these different scripts interacted spatially and examine a variety of inscribed objects in their original context.

The underground building complex, constructed in the early Ptolemaic phase<sup>62</sup> and enlarged in the Roman period, comprised two halls and two galleries meant to host the daily offerings to Osiris and the rituals performed during the Khoiak festival.<sup>63</sup> The investigations conducted over the last few decades have allowed the identification of a rich repertoire of inscribed materials, which comprise texts in hieroglyphic, hieratic and Demotic scripts.

The hieroglyphic script was used by the priesthood of Osiris to scribble short inscriptions on the walls of the underground structure. We might imagine one of these priests carving a short prayer in honour of Osiris<sup>64</sup> in the main hall, hosting the colossal statue of this deity, perhaps during a break from the daily religious services. Ritual formulae in hieroglyphic script were painted on the back of a group of Osirian figurines made of clay associated with the liturgical activities performed inside the building.<sup>65</sup>

While the latter evidence helps us in visualising the temple-catacomb of Osiris as an inscribed space, it is only by entering the galleries of this sanctuary that we would have seen a clear physical interaction between scripts in the production of single ritual texts.

Gallery 1A, built at the beginning of the Ptolemaic phase, hosts thirty niches progressively erected, or at least inscribed, under the reign of several Lagid rulers.<sup>66</sup> The gallery had a precise function in daily cultic activities and specific annual festivities. The last stages of the Khoiak festival, which was celebrated on the thirtieth day of the month of Khoiak, the fourth month of the season of flood, were performed in this area. On this occasion, the priests carried out the

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**62** Although some evidence seems to suggest that the Ptolemaic structure had been built upon the ruins of another religious complex, perhaps associated with a temple known as the *Pr Khf* dating back to the Late Dynastic phase; see Mascort Roca 2018, vol. 1, 25–26.

**63** For an introduction to the evidence for this religious celebration in the New Kingdom, see Eaton 2006.

**64** The various graffiti identified preserve invocations or brief prayers addressed to the main deity of the sanctuary. An inscription left on the door-jamb on the south-east wall at the 2C and D halls entrance is the best preserved of these. The text recites a religious formula alternatively interpreted as ‘The life belongs to the god Osiris’ or ‘The divine life of Osiris’, see Mascort Roca 2018, vol. 1, 48.

**65** See Mascort Roca 2018, vol. 1, 92–93.

**66** The last recorded are Berenice IV (c. 79–55 BCE) and Cleopatra V–VI Tryphaena (c. 95–57 BCE); see Coulon 2018, 187.

burial of mud figurines of Osiris, which had been crafted in the previous year, probably using the silt of the sacred lake located in the precinct of this sanctuary.<sup>67</sup> This ritual is described in the *Mysteries of Osiris*, which offers detailed instructions on how the ritual was performed.<sup>68</sup> As theorised by Laurent Coulon, the thirtieth day of the month of Khoiak marked the end of a monthly cycle, which echoed the cycle symbolised by the thirty niches of the galleries. The temple-catacomb of Oxyrhynchus functioned as the Osirian necropolis of Karnak, the niches being inscribed in the staging of the cyclical rebirth of the god of the dead.<sup>69</sup> Texts are painted in black on the lintels of the thirty niches placed at the beginning of the gallery and indicate the date of burial of the Osirian figurines.<sup>70</sup> The use of a standard chronological system, based on the year of the reign of the ruling Lagid king, also marked the assimilation between Osiris and the ruling pharaoh. The ritual texts are written in hieratic script, but the date of the deposition of the Osirian figurines is occasionally rendered in Demotic.<sup>71</sup> Dates are also recorded in hieratic script in the latest niches, where only the formula *hꜣt-sp* is expressed in Demotic.<sup>72</sup>

Plaques sealing the niches were destined to close the burials of the Osirian figurines;<sup>73</sup> the texts, which also record the statuettes deposition, are traced in black ink and combine hieratic, hieroglyphic and Demotic scripts.<sup>74</sup> The date is generally expressed in cursive hieroglyphs; however, it is sometimes associated with a version rendered in Demotic. The switching to Demotic might depend on the specific function that this script assumed since its creation. As indicated by the same Greek term Demotic ('popular'), this script was originally employed for writing administrative texts, while hieratic and hieroglyphic scripts remained tied to the production of literary and paraliterary compositions. Although already in the Ptolemaic phase, Demotic was often used in the production of ritual

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67 For a description of the sacred lake of the Osireion of Oxyrhynchus and associated evidence, see Mascort Roca 2018, vol. 1, 34–36.

68 For an introduction to this religious celebration, see Chassinat 1966 and 1968.

69 Coulon 2018, 187 and Coulon 2015.

70 For an in-depth study of these inscriptions, see Coulon 2018.

71 Coulon 2018, 171–172.

72 As noted by Coulon 2018, 172, the joint use of the hieratic and Demotic scripts in the production of the ritual texts traced in this gallery is quite remarkable, although attested by evidence from other settlements. For a detailed bibliography see Coulon 2018, 172, n. 8.

73 For a discussion of these testimonies, see Coulon 2018, 182–187.

74 As remarked by Coulon 2018, 183, 'le hiératique est progressivement concurrencé par l'emploi des hiéroglyphes cursifs. La date, donnée une première fois en hiéroglyphes cursifs, peut être doublée par une ligne de démotique'.

texts,<sup>75</sup> this script switching might reflect the adherence to a more archaic scribal habit.

The small funerary furniture buried inside these niches provides additional evidence.<sup>76</sup> The objects are predominantly small limestone boxes, which preserved a magical *bullā* inside<sup>77</sup> and limestone cones featuring representations of the goddess Neith.

As noted by Jean-Claude Goyon, the interpretation of the script remains problematic:

The cursive inscriptions are not hieratic of the classical type but have a ductus sometimes close to that of ‘abnormal’ hieratic, either ‘old’ demotic, or the range of demotic of the second and first centuries BCE.<sup>78</sup>

The poor state of conservation of most of these exemplars does not allow a clear interpretation of this ensemble of evidence. However, the *ductus* suggests the production of these texts between the beginning of the Ptolemaic and the early Roman period. According to the inscriptions preserved on the cones and the limestone boxes containing *bullae* and sealed by pyramidal lids, it appears that most of these objects were associated with the arrangement of the orientation of each *loculus* containing the Osirian figurines. They refer to the deities protectors of the four cardinal points, and others to Osiris as the guardian of the West.<sup>79</sup> Slabs preserving inscriptions mixing hieroglyphic, hieratic and Demotic scripts could have also sealed the three niches of the nearby Roman gallery (2E).<sup>80</sup> This area, built at the beginning of the imperial phase, was meant to host the continuation of the Khoiak rituals in the early Roman period. Inscribed limestone

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**75** On the use of Demotic for the production of ritual texts in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, see Quack 2012.

**76** For a preliminary study of these objects, see Goyon 2018.

**77** According to the *Mysteries of Osiris*, the *bullae* preserved inside these containers were meant to protect Osiris and served to keep away Seth and other malevolent entities, thus, promoting the completion of the ritual of the renaissance of the deity; see Chassinat 1966, 51–52.

**78** Goyon 2018, 197: ‘Les inscriptions cursives ne sont pas hiératiques de type classique mais ont un ductus parfois proche de celui du hiératique “anormal”, soit démotique “ancien”, soit du ressort du démotique des IIe/Ier siècles avant notre ère’ (my translation).

**79** Various deities associated with different cardinal points are mentioned in the inscriptions preserved on these portable written artefacts: to the south, Ammon and Montu; to the north, Shu and Tefnut; to the west, Neith and Wadjet; to the east, Sekhmet and Bastet; see Goyon 2018, 197.

**80** However, given the poor state of preservation of this area, this hypothesis cannot be proven. A description of this temple area is in Mascort Roca 2018, vol. 1, 74–78.

boxes containing *bullae* of the same typology as those traced in the Ptolemaic gallery were also found inside one of these niches (no. 2).<sup>81</sup>

## 5 The multilingual funerary landscape of Roman Oxyrhynchus and beyond

The so-called High Necropolis of Oxyrhynchus offers a unique perspective on the complex interaction between languages and scripts in the same spatial context. We should begin looking at the appearance of the funerary landscape of this city after the Roman conquest to fully comprehend how foreign and native cultures were intricately intertwined in the Roman period.<sup>82</sup> Imagine walking through this cemetery in ancient times: we would have been struck by the heterogeneity of funerary monuments dotting the landscape. Barrel-vaulted tombs, platform tombs with pyramidal superstructures, hypogea and coffins inspired by Roman models reflected the multicultural panorama of this Egyptian settlement. The intermingling between different ethnic groups might have also been perceived by looking at the compresence of Greek,<sup>83</sup> Latin<sup>84</sup> and Egyptian<sup>85</sup> fu-

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**81** Mascort Roca 2018, vol. 1, 74–75.

**82** The choice of concentrating the discourse to this period is dictated by the fact that the Roman phase of this cemetery is certainly archaeologically more well-preserved than the Ptolemaic phase. Nevertheless, it should be remarked that many tombs were probably in use already in the Ptolemaic period, and various Ptolemaic and Roman funerary complexes probably coexisted for centuries.

**83** For an overview of the first funerary inscriptions discovered at the site by Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt, although probably quite late in date (fourth to fifth century CE?), see Parlasca 2007, 95, 100–101. An inscribed female statue on a pedestal found in Sector 2D of the necropolis is certainly earlier in date (second/third century CE), see Padró et al. 2012, 4. A date to the late second or early third century CE might be attributed to an unpublished funerary statue preserving a short epitaph painted in red discovered in the excavations carried out in 2020; a brief mention of this discovery is in Mascort Roca et al. 2020, 8. Another inscribed stela found at the entrance of the funerary chamber of Tomb 12 in memory of a child name Theon, probably dating between the third and fourth century CE, was discovered in 2009. On this discovery, see Padró et al. 2009, 12. A study of this inscribed stela has been published in Campillo and Piedrafita 2010. Further reflections on the inscribed funerary stelae discovered at Oxyrhynchus in Codina Reina 2015, 172–173.

**84** Although only a few in number, several exemplars of funerary epitaphs written in Latin have been discovered during the investigations of this settlement. Fragments of Latin inscriptions, for instance, possibly funerary stelae although too fragmentary to identify their exact function, have been discovered in the High Necropolis (Sector 2D); see Mayer-Olivé 2015. A

nerary inscriptions standing in front of the tombs<sup>86</sup> or located inside the funerary chambers.<sup>87</sup> However, it was entering inside these burial spaces, in the inner funerary halls of these structures, where we would have perceived more closely how the long coexistence of Egyptians, Greeks and Romans and other ethnic communities have concurred in shaping the local funerary customs. This syncretic repertoire of beliefs is reflected in all the elements characterising the mortuary landscape of Roman Oxyrhynchus. Decorative programmes still betrayed the adherence to models finding their roots in the Pharaonic tradition, expressed in the broad attestation of offering scenes depicting the deceased standing in front of an enthroned Osiris surrounded by a court of Egyptian deities.<sup>88</sup> We would have often seen Greek graffiti witnessing the names of the deceased,<sup>89</sup> sometimes associated with brief invocations, on the walls of several of these tombs.<sup>90</sup> At least on one occasion, the owner (or owners) of the Roman Tomb 40 seems to have commissioned the production of a Latin inscription painted in red, which originally surrounded the walls of the main funerary chamber of this

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stela representing the deceased dressed as a Roman citizen and preserving a Latin inscription painted in red was found in Sector 26; see Padró et al. 2014, 14–15. Another fragmentary Latin funerary inscription mentioning a *libertus* was discovered in the High Necropolis during the investigations carried out in March 2020. Other unpublished Latin inscriptions are currently kept in the archives of the Egyptian Antiquity Service in el-Bahnasa.

**85** In truth, only a few inscriptions are known so far, which are predominantly dated to the Ptolemaic phase. The most well-preserved is a stela which was originally part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art collection and acquired in the early 1950s by Macquarie University (Sidney). I am grateful to Dr Marsha Hill and Dr Niv Allon for providing information on this artefact. Apart from these inscriptions, at least one fragmentary stela possibly originally preserving an Egyptian text has been discovered in a Roman tomb in Sector 26; see Pons Mellado 2016, 167.

**86** A funerary statue representing the deceased reclined on a *triclinium* was found in front of a tomb structure in the course of Evaristo Breccia's investigations in the early 1930s. Photographic documentation of this discovery is now kept in the Archivio Breccia of the University of Pisa. I am grateful to Dr Flora Silvano for allowing me to examine the documentation collected during Breccia's investigations at Oxyrhynchus.

**87** As in the case of the stela of the young Theon; see Campillo and Piedrafita 2010.

**88** Similar to those in Tomb 3, Tomb 18 and Tomb 21; see Pons Mellado 2016, 163–168, 170–171.

**89** Tomb 2, also known as 'Uraeus Tomb', preserved a charcoal graffito recording the name Demetrios on the northern wall of chamber no. 1. Two carved graffiti in chamber no. 2 preserved the name Didymas. A preliminary discussion of these graffiti is in Piedrafita 2011, 64–66. Two charcoal inscriptions preserving the name Pausanias were discovered at the eastern and western sides of the entrance to Tomb 11 in 2009; see Piedrafita 2011, 71–72. A description of this tomb preserving the mummified bodies of three individuals is in Padró et al. 2009, 7–11.

**90** A graffito recording the formula 'Marcus, be brave' was individuated on the southern wall of the funerary chamber in Tomb 11. Further discussions on this inscription are in Piedrafita 2008, 136, 143–144.

structure.<sup>91</sup> However, as has already been mentioned, Egyptian traditional motifs were still privileged in the decoration of most of these tombs. A short inscription written in Demotic, painted on the margins of a scene depicting the deceased surrounded by Egyptian gods in Tomb 29,<sup>92</sup> represents the only evidence found in its original archaeological context of the use of this script in the funerary spaces of Roman Oxyrhynchus. Getting closer to the deceased and their funerary paraphernalia, we would have seen in the iconography of coffins and mummy cases the undeniable influence of both indigenous and Greco-Roman motifs. Aside from a few exceptions,<sup>93</sup> these funerary artefacts are mainly inscribed in Greek and preserve epitaphs in honour of the deceased having the same formulary of the funerary inscriptions attested on stelae.<sup>94</sup> Interestingly, these texts might have also been found scribbled on the leg<sup>95</sup> or foot<sup>96</sup> of some Oxyrhynchite mummy cases. Even votive objects deposited inside the tomb, from the traditional *wedjat* eyes<sup>97</sup> to terracotta figurines,<sup>98</sup> underline the overall inspiration to a broad multicultural repertoire of religious beliefs.

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**91** Several inscribed plaster fragments preserving what seems to be a Latin inscription painted in red were discovered among the debris of Tomb 40 in the course of the excavations season 2020. A brief discussion on this funerary structure is in Mascort Roca et al. 2020, 9–11.

**92** For a report on the discovery of this barrel-vaulted tomb in the High Necropolis of Oxyrhynchus, see Padró et al. 2010, 7–8.

**93** Several painted wooden coffins preserving a rich decoration featuring short hieroglyphic inscriptions have been identified in the hypogeum (Tomb 17) of Sector 2A. However, their chronology remains still uncertain and might date no later than the late Ptolemaic or early Roman phase; for an introduction, see Castellano i Solé 2011–2012, 44–45.

**94** The slab sealing the anthropoid coffin buried in Tomb 18 (Sector 26) identifies the deceased as Polydeukes. For a description of the tomb and discovery of the inscription, see Pons Mellado 2016, 163–167. For further discussions on this text, see Piedrafito 2011, 67–69. An embossed inscription on a plaster mummy case has been discovered in the course of the 2020 excavation campaign. For a preliminary description of this discovery, see Mascort Roca et al. 2020, 14–15. The text is currently under study by the writer.

**95** As in the case of the plaster mummy case discovered in 2020, preserving a Greek inscription scribbled on the right leg of the deceased.

**96** Similar to the mummy of Harpochratiaina; a short inscription recorded the name, patronymic, and age of death of the young woman is in the area of the cartonnage mummy case corresponding to the feet, see Piedrafito 2008, 136, 138.

**97** A faience amulet of this type was discovered in a mudbrick structure sealing the entrance of Tomb 17 in Sector 2A. The building was reused as a burial space in the early Christian period (fourth to fifth century CE?), see Castellano i Solé 2011–2012, 43.

**98** Several terracotta figurines have been discovered over the last years of the archaeological investigations carried out in the High Necropolis, most of which remain unpublished. Other terracotta figurines discovered during Grenfell and Hunt's excavations were distributed among various museums and research institutions.



Despite the poor evidence known to date, the Egyptian language seems to have been still employed in the early Roman period in the local funerary administration.<sup>99</sup> Aside from the numerous Greek mummy labels spread among various museum collections,<sup>100</sup> one wooden fragment preserving a bilingual text testifies to a practice well known in the Roman phase,<sup>101</sup> which foresaw the writing of prayers or specific sections of the text only in the Egyptian language.<sup>102</sup> It is for this reason that this ‘mummy label’<sup>103</sup> records information essential for the identification of the deceased in Greek, but seems to abruptly switch to the use of Demotic in writing a closing formula.<sup>104</sup> These objects were traditionally attached to the body of the departed, and they seem to have been found partly in the area of the necropolis at Oxyrhynchus,<sup>105</sup> but mostly discarded in the rubbish dumps surrounding the ancient settlement.<sup>106</sup>

Defining the cultural and ethnic identity of the individuals buried inside these tombs remains extremely difficult. The wide attestation of Greek names recorded in graffiti, on mummy cases, labels and coffins, probably reflects the existence, aside from Greek settlers and their offspring, of a wealthy and influential group of native inhabitants who have partly embraced the customs and ways of living of the Greek and Roman conquerors. It is less difficult to identify Roman citizens, at least when we can trace names of Latin origin in funerary artefacts. The Romans largely adopted the Egyptian funerary habits; however,

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**99** On the use of mummy labels as identification tools see, for instance, Martín Hernández 2011.

**100** Several are now kept in the Penn Museum, Philadelphia: Inv. no. E11734; Inv. no. E11735; Inv. no. E 11736; Inv. no. E 11737. An important corpus, soon to be published by the writer, is also preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: Inv. no. 97.4.36; Inv. no. 97.4.37; Inv. no. 05.4.186; Inv. no. 05.4.187; Inv. no. 05.4.180; Inv. no. 05.4. 188. My gratitude goes to Dr Niv Allon for allowing me to study and publish the Oxyrhynchite mummy labels kept in the Metropolitan Museum collection. Another uninscribed mummy label (Inv. no. EA 50146) is now kept in the British Museum, in London.

**101** Inv. no. 05.4.179; the artefact is currently under study by the writer.

**102** However, it is important to stress that both the Greek and Demotic versions generally provided similar information on the deceased identity.

**103** It still remains unclear whether the fragment belonged to a mummy label or a coffin.

**104** Still, the interpretation of this last section remains tentative given the poor state of conservation of the text; further studies might lead to future revisions.

**105** Inv. no. 97.4.36 and Inv. no. 97.4.37 were discovered at the beginning of the excavation campaign 1896–1897 when the investigations were concentrated in the area of a necropolis.

**106** The Penn Museum corpus, for instance, was discovered in the excavation campaign of 1904–1905, which was concentrated in the investigation of several of these dumps. Inv. no. 05.4.179, Inv. no. 05.4.188, Inv. no. 05.4.180 and Inv. no. 05.4.186 were also discovered in the 1904–1905 excavation campaign and are among the artefacts kept in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

they did not miss the chance to occasionally reaffirm their identity, as testified by a ‘mummy label’ preserving a Latin epitaph<sup>107</sup> that still does not find parallels among the objects of the same typology published so far. If the interpretation of this object as a mummy label is proven to be correct, this artefact would represent an outstanding and unique example of the assimilation between the Roman and Egyptian traditions, which found its expression in a variety of declinations.

Mixing languages and scripts might have also taken the form of a strange combination of documentary, literary and paraliterary texts in Greek and Egyptian folded together and deposited on the chest, abdomen or pelvic area of several deceased identified in the Roman Tomb 42.<sup>108</sup> While this odd textual mélange might suggest, at first glance, their identification as cartonnage papyri, their discovery in small packages sealed by clay devices identified as embalmers seals, one of which preserves a hieroglyphic inscription,<sup>109</sup> suggests the performance of a practice mimicking the traditional deposition of funerary compositions.<sup>110</sup> Another inscribed clay embalmer seal was found in association with a papyrus, this time still found accurately sealed, preserving a Greek magical text.<sup>111</sup> Indeed, when speaking of the necropolises of Oxyrhynchus, particular attention should be devoted to the magical artefacts discovered in this area. The presence of these objects in the cemeteries of this city<sup>112</sup> is certainly not a surprise since magical practices are attested in funerary contexts across various

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**107** Inv. no. 05.4.188. The identification of the object as a mummy label, while suggested by both the shape of the object and the content of the inscription, is still uncertain. The artefact will be published soon by the writer.

**108** However, several deceased were found in association with only one text, like Potamon (UE 36192) who was buried with a Greek sealed documentary text placed on his abdomen. For a similar discovery see Grenfell 1897. Among the deceased buried with papyri are 36181, 36182, 36186, 36192 and 36204.

**109** 36204.

**110** A comprehensive study of this corpus of texts and their context of discovery will be published soon by the writer.

**111** The papyrus (36345) was discovered in Tomb 52 (Sector 36) on 28 November 2021. The folded packet was found on the abdomen of the mummy of a child buried in the barrel-vaulted tomb sometime between the first and second century CE. The identification of the composition as a Greco-Egyptian magical text has been confirmed by studies carried out by the writer between November and December 2022 in the laboratory of the mission. Over 20 *charaktères* visible through the folder fractures have been identified; the text is currently under study by the writer. For a short introduction on this discovery, see Mascort Roca et al. 2021, 11–12, 23.

**112** For an overview of the inscribed objects associated with magical practices performed in the necropolis of this city, see Mascia 2023c.

provinces of the Roman Empire. The reason behind the choice of the mortuary landscape for the performance of magical procedures resides in the idea that necropolises represented a liminal space between the world of the living and the dead. Furthermore, being outside the borders of the urban space and the administrative centre of the city, they were probably seen as more conceivable places for the activities of ritualists.<sup>113</sup> Among the artefacts found in the archaeological investigations of this settlement<sup>114</sup> is the discovery in 2020 of a wooden amulet in Tomb 40 of the High Necropolis dating to the late antique phase.<sup>115</sup> The object can be interpreted as a so-called ‘Bous’ amulet, a type of protective device widely attested in Egypt from the late antique period onwards.<sup>116</sup> The Greek *voces magicae* are surrounded by a series of *charaktères* and what seems, at first glance, to be the name of God written in the Coptic language.<sup>117</sup> Apart from these recent discoveries, at least one other written artefact found during Grenfell and Hunt’s 1904–1905 excavation campaign could be associated with a mortuary context in light of the content of its text. The object, measuring 7.1 × 2 cm, is a wooden tablet,<sup>118</sup> which seems to preserve a small section of what was originally a much more complex and larger text of applied magic, possibly a binding spell used in an execration rite.<sup>119</sup> The coercive nature of the text and its use in a burial context is suggested by the adoption of a terminology recurrent in the production of such incantations. The most well-preserved section of the ritual text is written on the recto side in Coptic. Nonetheless, the composition presents several misspellings, which suggest that the writer, having a certain knowledge of Greek, mixed up the two languages.

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**113** On this aspect, see Wilburn 2012, 249.

**114** In particular, a clay tablet preserving a drawing of the god Seth associated with Greek magical voices was discovered in 1993, see Piedrafita 2010. For the reinterpretation of the text as a sequence of magical voices, see Mascia 2023c, 1140. An ostrakon preserving a Greek protective spell was discovered in Tomb 40 in the course of the excavation campaign held in 2020; the object is currently under study by the writer.

**115** The artefact found on 26 February 2020 is currently under study by the writer; for a brief mention of this discovery, see Mascort Roca et al. 2020, 29.

**116** For an introduction to this typology of objects, see Sijpesteijn 1981; Menci 2007.

**117** Some doubts remain on the interpretation of the text given its poor state of conservation.

**118** Inv. no. 05.4.182. As with the other aforementioned objects preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, my gratitude goes to Dr Niv Allon for allowing me to study this object. An edition of this text will be published soon by the writer; for a short introduction to this artefact, see Mascia 2023c, 1139.

**119** To the best of my knowledge, only one wooden object preserving an aggressive spell meant to be deposited in a burial context has been published so far, see Boyaval 1974.

## 6 A brief note on the Jewish and Nabataean communities of Oxyrhynchus

Papyri, particularly documentary texts, offer significant evidence of the interaction between Greek and other foreign languages in this city.<sup>120</sup> This is the case of a receipt likely belonging to a Nabataean merchant living at Oxyrhynchus around the second century CE.<sup>121</sup> The presence of traces of Greek letters on the upper margin of the papyrus indicates that the fragment belongs to a bilingual contract, where the Nabataean text probably consisted of a subscription or a statement closing the document. A contract BL Or 9180D dating from the fourth century CE written in Greek preserving a note in Hebrew also comes from the same city.<sup>122</sup>

## 7 The multilingual landscape of Christian Oxyrhynchus

The integration of archaeological and textual evidence provides a new perspective on the multilingual panorama of this settlement at time of the rise of Christianity.

Despite the predominance of Greek sources published so far, which, nonetheless, offer essential information on the social and religious panorama of this settlement in the late antique phase, recent findings underline the importance that the Coptic language played in the local textual production. Sarah Clackson stressed the need to revise our understanding of the role played by the Egyptian language in Christian Oxyrhynchus in an essential contribution in the early

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**120** Despite the importance of Greco-Latin documentary texts for understanding the impact of the arrival of the Roman settlers in this city, these bilingual sources are excluded from the present discussion.

**121** Healey 2004.

**122** For a short description of this text see [https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Or\\_9180\\_D](https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Or_9180_D) (last accessed 12 March 2023). For an overview of the literary and paraliterary texts in the Hebrew language associated with the Jewish community of Oxyrhynchus, see Piotrkowski 2018.

2000s devoted to the Oxyrhynchite Coptic papyrological material.<sup>123</sup> This perspective can be now substantiated by the wealth of material discovered in over more than thirty years of archaeological investigations carried out at the site by the mission of the University of Barcelona.<sup>124</sup> These discoveries help us to understand how Coptic and Greek coexisted and interacted in the same environment.

As in other contexts and cultural settings discussed so far, we will speak predominantly in terms of spatial interaction; even though several testimonies will underline the recurrent linguistic intertwining in the production of single written testimonies. This phenomenon, attested throughout the Christian religious landscape of Oxyrhynchus, remarks how pilgrims visiting this cultic centre from various areas of the Egyptian lands, local inhabitants and members of the Oxyrhynchite religious institutions were frequently at home in using the two languages.

## 7.1 The funerary houses

A large building was identified in the High Necropolis of Oxyrhynchus in the early 2000s. The archaeological interventions conducted in this complex led to its interpretation as a structure associated with the cult of the dead dating between the early fifth and seventh century CE.<sup>125</sup> A pavilion might had the function of a *trichlia* or *apparatorium*, i.e. funerary banquet hall. These structures were traditionally devoted to events held in honour of the deceased in the Roman culture, also attested in the Christian tradition.<sup>126</sup> While this type of building finds parallels across the Mediterranean area,<sup>127</sup> the Oxyrhynchite complex can be compared to only a few structures discovered in other Egyptian settlements.<sup>128</sup>

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**123** Clackson 2007. Over four hundred Coptic papyri have been identified by Clackson in the Sackler Library of Oxford and other institutions. The earliest evidence counting private letters, documents, and literary texts date to the fourth century CE.

**124** A consistent number of unpublished Coptic papyrological and epigraphic evidence kept in the archives of the Egyptian Antiquity Service at el-Bahnasa should be added to the materials discussed in the following pages, currently under study by the writer.

**125** For an introduction to this religious complex, see Subías Pascual 2008.

**126** Subías Pascual 2008, 55. On this subject, also see Krautheimer 1965, 34, 36, 38.

**127** For an introduction on the ritual practice of funerary banquets in early Christianity, see Jastrzębowska 2019.

**128** In the necropolis of the nearby Antinoopolis (modern el-Sheikh Ibada), for instance, a building probably erected to answer similar religious needs, the so-called 'Peristylbaus', has

The discovery of the so-called Funerary Houses of Oxyrhynchus is not only archaeologically relevant since it offers a deeper understanding of the funerary practices peculiar to this historical phase, but it is also vital for the identification of an important corpus of graffiti (i.e. *dipinti*)<sup>129</sup> painted on the walls of this cultic space.<sup>130</sup> Most of them consist of votive inscriptions often enclosed in *tabulae ansatae* left by various devotees visiting the building and short epitaphs in memory of numerous deceased, which are presumably associated with the main function of this complex.<sup>131</sup> The corpus seems to include mainly Greek inscriptions; however, several graffiti appear to bear clear influences of the Coptic language.<sup>132</sup>

## 7.2 The basilica of St Philoxenos

The investigations of the mission of the University of Barcelona led to the discovery of another Christian building identified in the Sector 24 of the High Necropolis in 2009.<sup>133</sup> Further analyses of archaeological, papyrological and epigraphic evidence led to the identification of this complex as the basilica of St Philoxenos,<sup>134</sup> built around the fifth century CE,<sup>135</sup> presumably on the ruins of a pre-existing religious structure.<sup>136</sup> This religious institution, previously known

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been identified over the last few years. For an introduction, see Grossmann 2008. Another building meant to answer similar functions, known as the ‘Edificio Comunitario’, has also been identified in the necropolis of el-Bagawat; see Grossmann 1982, 78–79; Cipriano 2008, 74–83.

**129** This type of evidence is traditionally classified in classical epigraphic studies, as *dipinti*. However, the term graffiti, especially in Egyptological studies, is often employed for both scratched and painted inscriptions. While bearing in mind this traditional terminological distinction, I will here adopt the term graffiti to discuss painted, charcoal and scratched inscriptions.

**130** See Piedrafita 2003.

**131** Piedrafita 2003, Piedrafita 2008, 142–143.

**132** Piedrafita 2003, 37–38.

**133** Padró et al. 2009, 15–18.

**134** Padró, Martínez and Piedrafita 2018. For further reflection on the identification of this religious building see Martínez García and Mascia 2023.

**135** On the dating of this religious building see Martínez García and Mascia 2023.

**136** A possible identification of this pre-existing building with the Sarapeion of Oxyrhynchus has been advanced in the past few years; see Padró, Martínez and Piedrafita 2018, 716–717. This hypothesis seems suggested by the presence of an oracular cult inside the Christian building that could have inherited the role played by the Sarapeion in the Greco-Roman period. However, the surviving archaeological evidence do not provide sufficient information to verify this interpretation.

only in light of several pieces of papyrological evidence,<sup>137</sup> was an important oracular centre attracting pilgrims from all over the Egyptian territory.<sup>138</sup> The existence of an oracular cult associated with this saint at Oxyrhynchus was suggested by the identification of several Greek oracular tickets.<sup>139</sup> The performance of divination practices in the recently discovered building, entitled to this saint, is suggested by the examination of the Coptic and Greek graffiti recorded in the crypt and annexed chambers. The presence of Coptic graffiti presumably witnessing the performance of divination practices in the basilica opens up a new perspective on the ritual procedures performed in this sanctuary, suggesting that divination services were not only conducted in Greek, but also in Egyptian.<sup>140</sup> This linguistic compresence and interaction is reflected in various practices, from graffiti recording the visit of devotees to this cultic space, to the production of funerary stelae.

Over two hundred figural and textual graffiti have been recorded in the area surrounding the basilica superstructure<sup>141</sup> and the underground area.<sup>142</sup> The current study carried out on this broad corpus of sources seems to demonstrate how the walls of the basilica superstructure were originally covered by charcoal, painted and scratched graffiti made by pilgrims in the course of their visit to this religious complex. Apart from a few Greek testimonies, the use of Coptic seems to prevail in this area, although it was occasionally used to transliterate anthroponyms in other languages.<sup>143</sup> On the other hand, Greek and Coptic graffiti-

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**137** P.Oxy. LXVII 4617 (400–499 CE); P.Oxy. LXVII 4620 (475–550 CE); P.Oxy. XVI 1950 (487 CE); PSI VII 791 (500–599 CE); P.Oxy. XI 1357 (535–536 CE); P.Oxy. XVI 2041 = P.Cairo 10122 (500–699 CE); P.Lond. V 1762 (500–699 CE).

**138** For an introduction on the oracular cult of St Philoxenos, see Papaconstantinou 2001, 336–338. The presence of pilgrims arriving from various areas of the Egypt is indicated, among others, by the attestation of various Coptic dialects.

**139** P.Oxy. VIII 1150 (sixth century CE); P.Oxy. XVI 1926 (sixth century CE); P.Rendel Harris 54 (sixth century CE).

**140** A Coptic divinatory composition from Oxyrhynchus has been recently identified. The editor has proposed a possible association of this ritual text with the local oracular cult of St Philoxenos; see Kocar 2019.

**141** The stone blocks pertaining to the main building were predominantly reused to fill the underground area after its destruction. For an introduction to the graffiti (*dipinti*) identified on these stone slabs see Martínez García and Mascia 2023.

**142** Graffiti have been recorded in the crypt (Espacio I), the hallway (Espacio II) and two of the four annexed chambers (Espacio III and IV). The other two annexes were completely destroyed and only a few graffiti, predominantly pertaining to the pre-existing Greco-Roman building, have been recorded.

**143** Coptic was used to transliterate an Arabic name, for instance, on the stone slab inv. no. 470.

ti in the inner chambers of the basilica appear to testify to the coexistence of the two languages in the production of graffiti in the earliest stages of the life of this religious institution. In this sense, graffiti in both languages could have been made at the same moment by individuals simply choosing to write in different languages.

The area of the crypt where the balance is, nevertheless, still in favour of Coptic sources seems to have been a privileged space for graffitiing practices. It is in this area that we find the most consistent number of pieces of figural and textual evidence. The variety of writing skills of the individuals engaging in graffitiing practices seems to indicate the authorship of members of this religious institution and lay people. This relationship is overturned in the annexed chambers, where Greek seems to prevail over Coptic sources. The partial chronological overlap between Greek and Coptic graffiti is also indicated by the attestation of writings in which elements of Coptic and Greek are combined. The intertwining between the two languages is attested, among others, in the inclusion of closing formulae in which a switch into another script occurs. A Greek graffito scratched on the wall of one of the annexed chambers of the underground gallery of the basilica is a votive inscription in which Biktor, Doxia and Phaustine ask for St Philoxenos's protection.<sup>144</sup> While the text is written in Greek, the graffitist uses the Coptic letter ϩ to write the word 'amen', which is used here as a closing formula.<sup>145</sup> Tracing the influence of the Greek language in text written in Coptic is more common, reflected in misspellings and the inclusion of elements alien to Coptic. The frequent occurrence of this phenomenon seems to demonstrate that many of the authors of these graffiti were at home using both Greek and Coptic, and even the more experienced writers<sup>146</sup> occasionally mixed up the two languages when writing these ephemeral texts.

A compresence between Greek and Coptic would have also been probably perceived visiting the necropolis built in proximity to the basilica of St Philoxenos. Indeed, apart from the Greek evidence published so far,<sup>147</sup> the corpus counts a considerable number of Coptic epitaphs. Seven Coptic funerary stelae have been identified in this area, several of which seems to date between the

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**144** For a first mention of this graffito, see Padró, Martínez and Piedrafita 2018, 710. An edition of the text has been provided in Delattre, Dijkstra and van der Vliet 2020, 401.

**145** As noted in the re-edition, commenting on the script-switching choice of our scribe, 'He shows himself to be only moderately familiar with Greek orthography'; see Delattre, Dijkstra and van der Vliet 2020, 401.

**146** This phenomenon is also recurrent in graffiti allegedly written by trained writers.

**147** Mascia and Martínez García 2021.



sixth and the seventh century CE.<sup>148</sup> According to the palaeographic analyses carried out to date, at least some Greek and Coptic inscriptions are probably contemporary, a consideration that might be extended, as we have seen, to the written evidence provided by the main religious building.

### 7.3 The so-called Byzantine Fortress

At the end of this overview of the multilingual panorama of Oxyrhynchus between the Greco-Roman and late antique phases, I will briefly examine another archaeological context which provides additional evidence of the spatial coexistence between languages in the Oxyrhynchite religious institutions. This religious complex<sup>149</sup> was identified in the early 2000s in the suburban area of this site. The so-called Byzantine Fortress (i.e. *Fortaleza Bizantina*) was then the object of extensive investigations between 2005 and 2010.<sup>150</sup> Despite its original interpretation, the area preserves the remains of a cemetery and reliquary church located at the centre of the fortress, two chapels alongside its eastern façade, and the residence of a monastic community.<sup>151</sup> In addition to the discovery of several funerary inscriptions in the Greek language<sup>152</sup> and Arabic graffiti, the latter certainly later in date,<sup>153</sup> the area preserves an important corpus of Coptic graffiti (*dipinti*).<sup>154</sup> Seventeen textual graffiti were discovered in the area of the apse during the 2010 excavation campaign. However, the religious complex certainly counts a broader collection of figural and textual graffiti, which only future investigations will lead to a comprehensive evaluation.<sup>155</sup>

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**148** This epigraphic material is currently under study by the writer, in collaboration with José Javier Martínez García, who is overseeing the examination of the archaeological context.

**149** On the date of this religious structure, see Subías Pascual 2020.

**150** For a preliminary report, see Subías Pascual 2012.

**151** Subías Pascual 2020, 77.

**152** One of which carries a date in the 14th indiction and the year 402 of the era of Diocletian (i.e. 686 CE). For a first publication of this stone slab, see Piedrafita 2015. For a further discussion on the inscribed materials from this archaeological context, see Subías Pascual 2020, 77–78.

**153** On one of the Cufic texts discovered in the area of the chapel, see Subías Pascual 2020, 88.

**154** Probably dated to the mid-fifth century CE; for a comprehensive edition of this corpus, see Bosson 2015.

**155** Recent surveys of the area, particularly the monastic cells, remark the presence of numerous figural and textual graffiti, which still await publication.

## 8 Conclusion

This paper aimed to provide a new and comprehensive perspective of the multi-cultural and -lingual society of Oxyrhynchus between the Greco-Roman and the late antique phase. The comparative examination of textual and archaeological evidence allows us to integrate and widen the perspective offered so far by the Greek papyrological documentation. The heterogeneous corpus of written testimonies found or attributed to this city helps us to perceive how the interaction between languages and scripts could take different forms. From no more than their simple coexistence in the same physical space narrating the transformation of this city's cultural landscape throughout the centuries to their intertwining in the production of specific written artefacts. This latter phenomenon especially marks the existence of a considerable part of society at home in using different languages, although how each individual could master them varied greatly. The Egyptian language maintained a central importance in a social panorama subject to continuous transformations, especially in the production of ritual texts up until the early Roman period, latterly regaining its role in religious settings soon after the affirmation of the Christian religion. Through the bilingual documentation combining Hebrew or Nabataean to the Greek language, we gain a closer look at other communities inhabiting this city, which have unfortunately left almost no traces in archaeological records. Observing the compresence of different languages (Greek, Egyptian, Latin) in this city's funerary landscape, we can grasp a glimpse of how the coexistence and constant interaction between the native and foreign inhabitants shaped the cultural panorama of this settlement. Beyond doubt, in a city such as Oxyrhynchus, standing out for the richness and variety of the surviving material evidence, it is possible to trace the distinguishing features of the multilingual landscape of an Egyptian town in the long transition to Christianity.

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Jochen Hermann Vennebusch

# Commemoration, Explication, and Obligation: The Baptismal Font of St Reinoldi in Dortmund

**Abstract:** The bronze baptismal font cast by Johann Winnenbrock in 1469 in the church of St Reinoldi in Dortmund is an almost unique testimony to multilingualism in late medieval churches. Instead of extensive figural decoration, there is a Low German inscription around the foot and a Latin inscription around the cuppa. These texts bear witness to the origin of the artefact and interpret the sacrament of baptism theologically. The third inscription on the upper rim of the cuppa is almost singular. The godparents are addressed and reminded of their duties towards the baptismal candidate in vernacular language. These texts are taken or derived from various sources and imply specific addressees or intentions through the choice of language and their placement.

## 1 Introduction

Three inscriptions in relief are particularly decorative. These are written in minuscule script and are not difficult to decipher despite the abbreviations. The minuscule script (monk's script), which consists of angular small letters (Fraktur script), is the prevailing artist's script from the second half of the fourteenth century until into the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

With these words, Otto Stein described the inscriptions on the bronze baptismal font in the church of St Reinoldi in Dortmund (Fig. 1). Although he noted in the further course of his remarks that the inscriptions are written in different languages and transcribed the texts, he did not consider why there could be one Latin and two Low German inscriptions on the sacred vessel, which turn the baptismal font into a multilingual written artefact. This phenomenon, which has only been marginally discussed in further research on the bronze baptismal

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<sup>1</sup> Stein 1906, 142: 'Zu ganz besonderem Schmucke gereichen ihm drei Relieffinschriften. Diese sind in Minuskelschrift geformt und trotz der Abkürzungen nicht schwer zu entziffern. Die Minuskelschrift (Mönchsschrift), welche aus eckigen kleinen Buchstaben (Fraktur) besteht, ist die seit der zweiten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts bis ins 16. Jahrhundert hinein herrschende Künstlerschrift'.

font, is the central topic of this article. Firstly, a brief introduction to the inscriptions on medieval bronze baptismal fonts is given, before the object preserved in Dortmund is described in detail. Finally, the inscriptions are analysed from a formal point of view, before the origin of the texts that can be read on the baptismal font is examined and the corresponding use of the respective language in connection with the particular place of attachment is discussed.



**Fig. 1:** General view of the baptismal font, Johann Winnebrock, 1469, bronze, St Reinoldi, Dortmund; © Andreas Lechtape.

## 2 The phenomenon of multilingual inscriptions on late medieval bronze baptismal fonts

Numerous, but not all, medieval baptismal fonts made of bronze in northern Germany bear inscriptions, which in most cases were applied before casting. These inscriptions sometimes interpret the sacrament of baptism and its effects on the baptised person theologically, and sometimes they also provide information about the casting of the baptismal font or its caster or donor.



**Fig. 2:** Detail of the inscription, baptismal font, unknown caster, first half of the fourteenth century, bronze, St Mary's Church, Rendsburg; © Jochen Hermann Vennebusch.

A quite early example of an inscription distinctly related to the sacrament of baptism can be found on the bronze baptismal font of St Mary's Church in Rendsburg in Schleswig-Holstein (Fig. 2). An inscription band runs below the upper rim around the cuppa of the baptismal font, which was created at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The beginning of the Apostles' Creed is rendered in Latin here, however, due to a production error, upside down and in a left-hand reading direction: '+ CREDO + IN + DEVM + PATREM + OMNIPOTENTEM + CREATOREM + CELI'.<sup>2</sup> The reference to the sacrament of baptism is obvious because of the profession of faith expressed in the text. During the baptismal liturgy in early Christianity, the originally adult candidates for baptism were asked by the baptismal minister about their faith, which was immediately followed by baptism.<sup>3</sup> Adult baptism receded into the background in the Middle Ages and infant baptism became the rule. Nevertheless, even in the medieval baptismal liturgy, questions were asked about the faith of the person to be baptised, although it was not the infant who answered these questions but the godparents who took on this obligation on behalf of the child.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the affixing of the beginning of the Latin *Credo* as an inscription on the baptismal font is extremely meaningful. By contrast, the baptismal font cast by Hans Apengerter in 1337 in St Mary's Church in Lübeck gives background information on its manufacture in Low German (Fig. 3):

ANNO · D(OMI)NI · M° · CCC · XXX° VII° · JN · UI//GILIA · PE(N)THECOSTES ·  
 PERFECTVM · EST · PRESENS · OPVS ·  
 MARIA · WES · T//O ALLEN · GMALEN ·  
 GNEDICH HERN · EVERDE UAN · ALEN ·  
 CRIST(US) · DI DI · MART(ER) · HEFT · GELEDEN ·  
 GNADE · HERN · IOH(ANN)E · UAN · SCHEPENSTEDEN · /  
 UNDE · UERSEGTEG · NICHT · HEMELRIKE ·  
 IWME · TRWEN · DIENER DARTWIKE ·  
 (CHRIST)E · UERGIF · ALLE · MISSEDAT ·  
 DEME · DI · DIT · VAT · GEMAKET · HAT ·  
 HANS · APENGITER · WAS · HE · GENANT ·  
 VND · WAS · GEBORN · UAN · SASSENlant ·<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> 'I believe in God the Father, the Almighty, the Creator of Heaven'. The translations of the inscriptions and texts have been provided by the author, unless otherwise stated. See on this baptismal font, Haupt 1888, 207; Rauterberg 2006, 24; see on the production errors of the inscription on this baptismal font, Vennebusch 2022a, 156.

<sup>3</sup> Fürst 2008, 132.

<sup>4</sup> Angenendt 1987, 317–318; Müller 2012, 105.

<sup>5</sup> 'In the year of Our Lord 1337 on the evening before Pentecost [7 June] this work was completed. May Mary be gracious to Mister Everd van Alen in all cases. Christ, who suffered the torture,



**Fig. 3:** General view of the baptismal font, Hans Apengeter, 1337, bronze, St Mary's Church, Lübeck; © Kathrin Ulrich.

be merciful to Mister John of Schepenstede and do not deny the Kingdom of Heaven to his faithful servant Hartwich. Christ, forgive all evil deeds to him who made this baptism: Hans Apengeter was his name and he came from Saxony'. See on this baptismal font, especially Lampe 2022, 344–346; Vennebusch 2022a, 157–158; Vennebusch 2022b.

We can already observe here that there are some Latin set pieces in the Low German text that refer to the date of the casting and seem like a solemn declaration of the completion of the baptismal font. This observation is hardly surprising since this date is based on the liturgical calendar generally used and is an object in a sacred context. Similar phenomena of multilingual texts can be found on some medieval bronze baptismal fonts, on which either Latin dates appear in Low German vernacular inscriptions in the context of longer donor or caster's inscriptions, or Latin phrases commonly used appear as short passages. An example is the bronze baptismal font cast at the end of the fourteenth century in St Bartholomew's church in Neuenkirchen near Soltau, whose inscription calls for prayers for the salvation of the presumed donors (Fig. 4): 'orate ♦ p(ro) ♦ Ludeke ♦ mils ♦ vnde ♦ sin ♦ vrowe ♦'.<sup>6</sup> We can assume here that the Latin passage 'orate pro' was anchored in the general cultural consciousness, so that it was understood as a liturgical phrase, although the general legibility of the inscription is made more difficult by the left-hand reading direction – also due to a production error.<sup>7</sup> We find another case on the baptismal font cast by Heinrich Kock in 1505 in St Andrew's church in Geversdorf (Fig. 5): 'fons kristi bin ik ghe nant hinrik [foundry mark] kock mi ghe ghoten hat got gheve deir sele rat / in dem iar unses [lily] heren do me schref [lily] °m° ccccc vnde v'.<sup>8</sup> In this Low German inscription, in addition to the Latin date, the expression 'fons kristi', 'baptismal fountain of Christ', is used as a self-designation of the baptismal font that speaks for itself, with the name of Christ rendered as a phonetic spelling of the Latin phrase.

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<sup>6</sup> 'Pray for Ludeke Miles and his wife'. See on this baptismal font, Mithoff 1878, 70; Deckert et al. 1939, 39; Kämmer 1980, 48; von Poser und Groß-Naedlitz 1983, 51–55; Pantel 2001, 241.

<sup>7</sup> See on the method of production of the inscription on this baptismal font and the errors that occurred in the process, Vennebusch 2022a, 160–161.

<sup>8</sup> 'I am called Fons Christi. Heinrich Kock cast me. God grant counsel to the soul. / In the year of Our Lord, when it was written 1505'. See on this baptismal font, Mithoff 1878, 42; Kiecker, Lenz and Rüter 1956, 132, pl. 115; Böker 1997, 194.



**Fig. 4:** General view of the baptismal font, unknown caster, before 1400, bronze, St Bartholomew's church, Neuenkirchen; © Jochen Hermann Vennebusch.



**Fig. 5:** General view of the baptismal font, Heinrich Kock, 1505, bronze, St Andrew's church, Geversdorf; © Jochen Hermann Vennebusch.



### 3 The baptismal font of the church of St Reinoldi in Dortmund

After these introductory remarks, we come to a bronze baptismal font that has a remarkable solution in the context of multilingualism on this type of written artefacts: unfortunately, the baptismal font of the St Reinoldi church in Dortmund is only a fragment now, as it was severely damaged during the air raids during the Second World War.<sup>9</sup> The baptismal font,<sup>10</sup> reminiscent of a chalice, stands on a circular base tapering towards the top, from the centre of which emerges a similarly round and tapering shaft divided by whorls (Fig. 6). On top of this rests the broadly sprawling cuppa, which is divided into various bands by rings running around it (Fig. 7). The broad, widely protruding ring, which forms the upper end of the font, rests on lions' heads,<sup>11</sup> whose throats held six separately cast pinnacles surrounding the baptistery and resting on small crouching lion figures before the damage during the Second World War (Fig. 8).<sup>12</sup> Two busts of youthful-looking figures sprout from the ring, which formerly served to fasten a font cover. Shallow reliefs of eagles and griffins – according to Horst Appuhn 'nach der Art einer Glocke',<sup>13</sup> in the manner of a bell, are recognisable on the cuppa, which go back to wax appliquéés that were reproduced with the help of models and applied to the 'clay shirt' and melted out before casting. In addition, a repeat of round arches from which drooping leaves sprout runs below the rim. In contrast to the cuppa, the ornamentation of the foot is composed of floral motifs, with the exception of a small dragon and a bird in a tendril of leaves and flowers, and is mainly limited to signs separating words. Beyond that, the shaft, apart from the whorls, remained free of any decoration.

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<sup>9</sup> See on this baptismal font, Fritz 1933, 48–51; Fritz 1956, 88–89; Lindemann s.a., 16; Lübke 1853, 418–419; Ludorff 1894, 30; Stein 1906, 140–143; Rinke 1985, 26–27; Rinke 1987, 52; Ohm, Schilp and Welzel 2006, 232–233, no. 145 (Judith Zepp).

<sup>10</sup> Measures: h: 113 cm / Ø: 105.5 cm. See on the measurements, Rinke 1985, 26.

<sup>11</sup> Wolfgang Rinke wrongly interprets these heads as the heads of dragons or demons. See Rinke 1985, 27; Rinke 1987, 52.

<sup>12</sup> Lübke 1853, 418; Appuhn 1970, 33.

<sup>13</sup> Appuhn 1970, 33.



Fig. 6: Foot of the Dortmund baptismal font; © Andreas Lechtape.



Fig. 7: Cuppa of the Dortmund baptismal font; © Andreas Lechtape.



**Fig. 8:** Pre-war photograph of the Dortmund baptismal font; © Bildarchiv Foto Marburg.

Let us now turn to the inscriptions on the baptismal font, which are of particular interest for this volume, and begin with the inscription on the foot. Here, the founder and the year of casting are mentioned in Low German (Figs 9a–c):

◆ Jn : dem : iar : vns · herr(n) ◆ [pinnacle] ◆ M° CCCC° · LXIX° · doe ◆ goet : [pinnacle] ◆  
 iohan ◆ winnenbrock : [pinnacle] : klockengeiter ◆ borger ◆ [pinnacle] : tho ◆ dorpmun-  
 de : ◆ ◆ [pinnacle] ◆ disse : dope ◆ [pinnacle]<sup>14</sup>

**14** ‘In the year of Our Lord 1469, Johann Winnenbrock, bell founder and citizen of Dortmund, cast this baptismal font’. See on the founder, Mithoff 1885, 344.



a



b



c

**Figs 9a–c:** Inscription on the foot of the Dortmund baptismal font; © Andreas Lechtape.

This inscription, enclosed by two bars and written in Gothic minuscule, was placed on the foot that tapers upwards, thus, it is turned towards the viewer and can be read from above. The individual words are separated from each other by colons, elongated blossoms or smaller blossoms partly arranged one above the other without any recognisable system. The beginning of the inscription is marked by a slightly wider strip occupied by a small dragon and a bird in dense tendrils turning to the right, thus, implying a reading direction. It can be assumed that the leaf and flower tendril after the section ‘: tho ♦ dorpmunde :’ is to be understood as a section filler, because the following word ‘♦ disse’ could not have been inscribed there without disturbing the symmetrical arrangement of the pinnacles. The wider and now empty spaces between some sections of the inscription can also be traced back to the pinnacles destroyed during the Second World War, once being placed on small lions bearing the whole baptismal font. Thus, the inscription band on the base was originally interrupted by these architectures, but here too without any recognisable system or division of the text into sections of meaning.

The second inscription, also in Gothic minuscule, but now in Latin, is placed around the cuppa of the baptismal font (Figs 10a–f). A theological interpretation of the sacrament of baptism is given here:

Baptismi ♦ fructus ♦ est [dragon and bird in tendrils] plena ♦ remissio : culpe [dragon and bird in tendrils] gracia : confertur ♦ et [tendrils] pena ♦ remittitur ♦ omnis [dragon in tendrils] qui ♦ crediderit ♦ et ♦ baptisat(us) ♦ fuerit ♦ salvus ♦ erit · i(n) · et(er)nu(m) · [tendrils]<sup>15</sup>

Again, the individual words are separated from each other without any recognisable system either by elongated flowers, smaller flowers arranged one above the other, by the figuration already known from the inscription on the foot, consisting of a dragon in a network of tendrils either with or without a bird, or leaf and flower tendrils. The beginning of the inscription is particularly distinguished by the leafy tendrils that merge into the initial letter. The limited space available was almost completely used, and numerous abbreviations were made especially at the end of the text. Additionally, no consideration was given here to the pinnacles formerly surrounding the baptismal font; the inscription continued behind them without the areas occupied by the tendril work or the word separators corresponding to the rod-like architectures.

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15 ‘The fruit of baptism is the complete forgiveness of guilt. Grace is granted and sin is remitted. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved for eternity.’



**Figs 10a–f:** Inscription on the cuppa of the Dortmund baptismal font; © Andreas Lechtape.

Furthermore, we can observe an almost singular location of an inscription for medieval baptismal fonts on the Dortmund object. We can read a surrounding inscription in Gothic minuscule on the upper side of the flat rim, which is again formulated in Low German (Fig. 11):

· O · geestilike · vader · vnde · mod(er) · nempt · dat · to · sin(n)e · juwe(n) · pade(n) · to ·  
 lere(n) · de(n) · gelow(en) · i(n) · r(e)cht(er) · min(n)e · [bust] · Unde · dat · pat(er) · nost(er) ·  
 dei · x · gebode · gods · to · gader · Jh(e)s(us) · sal · sin · iu · loen · vnd · sin · hemelsche ·  
 vader · · [bust]<sup>16</sup>

**16** ‘O spiritual father and mother, take this to mean to teach your godchildren the faith in right love and the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments of God together. Jesus shall be your reward



Fig. 11: Inscription on the upper rim of the Dortmund baptismal font; © Andreas Lechtape.

In contrast to the inscriptions on the foot and the cuppa, the word separators are kept very uniform and consist of six-petaled blossoms, which, however, show a different casting quality. The inscription itself begins after one of the two busts and is highlighted by a majuscule O; the end is marked by two successive blossoms which are not found elsewhere. The interruption of the text by the second bust occurs between the words ‘min(n)e’ and ‘Unde’, without a calculated co-ordination of the layout and the text becoming clear. The bronze baptismal font of St Lamberti church in Coesfeld also has very similar inscriptions and in the same places (Fig. 12).<sup>17</sup> According to the inscription on the foot, it was cast in 1504 by the Dortmund citizens Reinhold Wiedenbrock and Klaus

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and his heavenly Father’. The further shaft in the word *juwe(n)* after the *w* is probably due to an error.

<sup>17</sup> Lübke 1853, 419; Wenning 1996, 13; see on the founder, Mithoff 1885, 340–341.

Potgeiter, from which it can be concluded that Reinhold Wiedenbrock is probably a descendant, possibly the son, of Johann Winnenbrock, who took over his workshop and also the casting models, although the ornamentation on the Coesfeld baptismal font is more restrained.<sup>18</sup>



**Fig. 12:** General view of the baptismal font, Reinhold Wiedenbrock and Klaus Potgeiter, 1504, bronze, St Lamberti church, Coesfeld; © Andreas Lechtape.

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**18** Lübke 1853, 419.



Let us briefly summarise the formal observations on the inscriptions on this baptismal font: the beginning of the text is particularly emphasised in each inscription, on the cuppa, by a stripe decorated with vegetal ornaments, and on the foot, by a dragon and a bird in tendrils, whereas on the upper rim the end is marked by two flowers. In all three cases, majuscules introduce the inscriptions and, thus, stand out from the minuscules of the texts. The word separators on the foot and on the cuppa – in comparison to the inscription on the rim – do not follow any systematic. It is noteworthy that the caster's inscription on the foot and the inscription addressed to the godparents on the rim are placed in such a way that they can be read without any problems, whereas the sacramental-theological text on the cuppa has been partially covered by the pinnacles formerly placed in front of it. Since this inscription is directed slightly downwards it was quite difficult to read as well.

#### 4 Praising the work: The vernacular caster's inscription on the base

After this detailed description, the following considerations will now focus on the question of the extent to which the place of attachment, the content and the language of the respective inscriptions are co-ordinated and what implications are connected with this. As has already been mentioned at the beginning, the inscription on the upwardly tapering foot is slightly inclined so that it can be seen and read by the viewer of the baptismal font from a certain distance in top view. Even if it cannot be supposed that all viewers were able to read, it can be assumed based on the vernacular text that Johann Winnenbrock intended the lowest possible hurdles to understanding the inscription.<sup>19</sup> The fact that the inscription took into account the former pinnacles also contributes to this, so that no part of the inscription was partially obscured by the architecture in front of it. It is also likely that Winnenbrock, as the caster, wrote the inscription in a language familiar to him, possibly even appropriate to or befitting his status, and affixed it to the baptismal font. In comparison with other medieval bronze baptismal fonts, it is conspicuous that there is no call for intercession for the caster. As we have already seen, these texts, which serve the *memoria* of the caster, sometimes also of the donor, are to be found quite frequently. In addition to the baptismal font by Hans Apengeter in Lübeck, this occurs, for exam-

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<sup>19</sup> See on vernacular foundry inscriptions, Neumüllers-Klauser 1984, 73–81.

ple, at the baptismal font in St Alexandri Church in Einbeck, which was cast by Henning Regner in 1427 (Fig. 13).<sup>20</sup>



**Fig. 13:** General view of the baptismal font, Henning Regner, 1427, bronze, St Alexandri Church, Einbeck; © Andreas Lechtape.

There, among other texts, are the subsequently engraved inscriptions ‘got · gheue · de(n) · sele(n) · // rat · de · dit · ghe · m(a)k(e)t · h(a)t · regner(us) · / hen(n)y(n)g(us) .’<sup>21</sup> and, in connection with a depiction of the donor,

<sup>20</sup> Heege 2000, 19; Kellmann 2017, 262–263; see on the inscriptions Hülse 1996, 14–15, no. 10.

<sup>21</sup> ‘God grant counsel to the soul of, who made this font, Henning Regner’.

‘d(omi)n(u)s · dege(n)hard(us) · ree · orate · pro · dato(r)e .’<sup>22</sup> A remarkable correspondence with the Dortmund baptismal font can be seen on the object in Einbeck, for in both cases – as on the baptismal font in Lübeck – the caster’s inscription is actually in Low German, while in Einbeck, the donor’s inscription is in Latin. Admittedly, it is not very likely that Johann Winnenbrock knew this baptismal font, but a fundamental strategy is possibly discernible here, which consisted of a kind of Low German ‘advertising’ for the objects he produced as well as publicity for his workshop and which was sometimes combined with an appeal for intercessory prayer.

## 5 Interpreting the sacrament: The Latin theological inscription on the cuppa

The Latin inscription on the cuppa refers to the effect of the sacrament of baptism, which according to theological doctrine provides the baptised with complete forgiveness of sins. Remarkably, it has not yet been recognised that the first part of this text (‘Baptismi fructus est plena remissio culpe gracia confertur et pena remittitur omnis’) is a quotation from the *Liber Floretus*, an anthology of 1160 rhymed Latin hexameters attributed to the Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux, but probably compiled in the fourteenth century by an unknown author.<sup>23</sup> The second part (‘qui crediderit et baptisat(us) fuerit salvus erit i(n) (a)et(er)nu(m)’) quotes the Gospel according to Mark (Mark 16:16) and, thus, continues this theological interpretation of baptism. This text – only differing in details – is also found on the bronze baptismal font in St Bartholomew’s in Wittenburg in Mecklenburg, which was created by a caster named Wilkinus in 1342, revealing a certain tradition of the use of this text on medieval bronze baptismal fonts.<sup>24</sup>

Without being able to go into the development of baptismal theology in detail at this point, only a brief classification of this text shall follow: the characterisation of the effect of baptism made here goes back to the view formulated by the Apostle Paul in the Letter to the Romans. In baptism, the person who was to be baptised was originally immersed in the water and then lifted out of the water, symbolically expressing dying, being buried and

<sup>22</sup> ‘The Venerable Degenhard Ree. Pray for the founder’.

<sup>23</sup> *Liber Floretus*, V, 366–367, ed. Orbán 1979, 17.

<sup>24</sup> See on this baptismal font, Bartels and Waack *s.a.*, *s.p.* [4]; Schlie 1899, 55; Mundt 1908, 34–36.

rising with Christ (immersion baptism), to thereby die to sin and be resurrected to a new life without sin.<sup>25</sup> For this purpose, the baptismal fonts designed as piscinas were sometimes but not always so deep that an adult person could be immersed in them.<sup>26</sup> Before this, however, the adult candidates for baptism in the early days of Christianity had to answer the questions addressed to them about the faith of the church, which, in the course of the Middle Ages, was passed on to the godparents, after infant baptism had become established.<sup>27</sup> It is conceivable that even in the high and late Middle Ages the children were completely immersed in the baptismal water, as the baptismal font also had a correspondingly large diameter and a sufficient depth of the cuppa, but depictions created in the middle of the sixteenth century, such as a miniature in a ritual book from St. Gallen, show that only the head of the baptised person was doused with water (infusion baptism) (Fig. 14).<sup>28</sup>

Let us return to the inscription on the cuppa and the question of why this inscription in Latin was placed there. First of all, it must be remembered that the text is a quotation from a Latin anthology and from the Gospel according to Mark, which already explains the Latin wording. The theological content and liturgical relevance of the inscription suggests the use of the Latin language, the prescribed language of the Roman church, although numerous bronze baptismal fonts created at about the same time also have a sacramental-theological inscription written in the vernacular, although these are not (translated) quotations from theological treatises or aphorism collections. An example of this is the baptismal font in St Lawrence's church in Kirchgellersen near Lüneburg, made around 1450 probably by the Lüneburg caster Cord Vribusch (Fig. 15).

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**25** Koch 1910, 3–5, 10–11; Schwarzmann 1950, 16–27; Schneider 1952, 44–48; see on the baptismal theology in early Christianity, Jensen 2012, 30–51.

**26** See on piscinas, Kleinheyer 1989, 59–61.

**27** Angenendt 1987, 317–318; Fürst 2008, 132.

**28** See on this manuscript, Schmid 1954, 147.

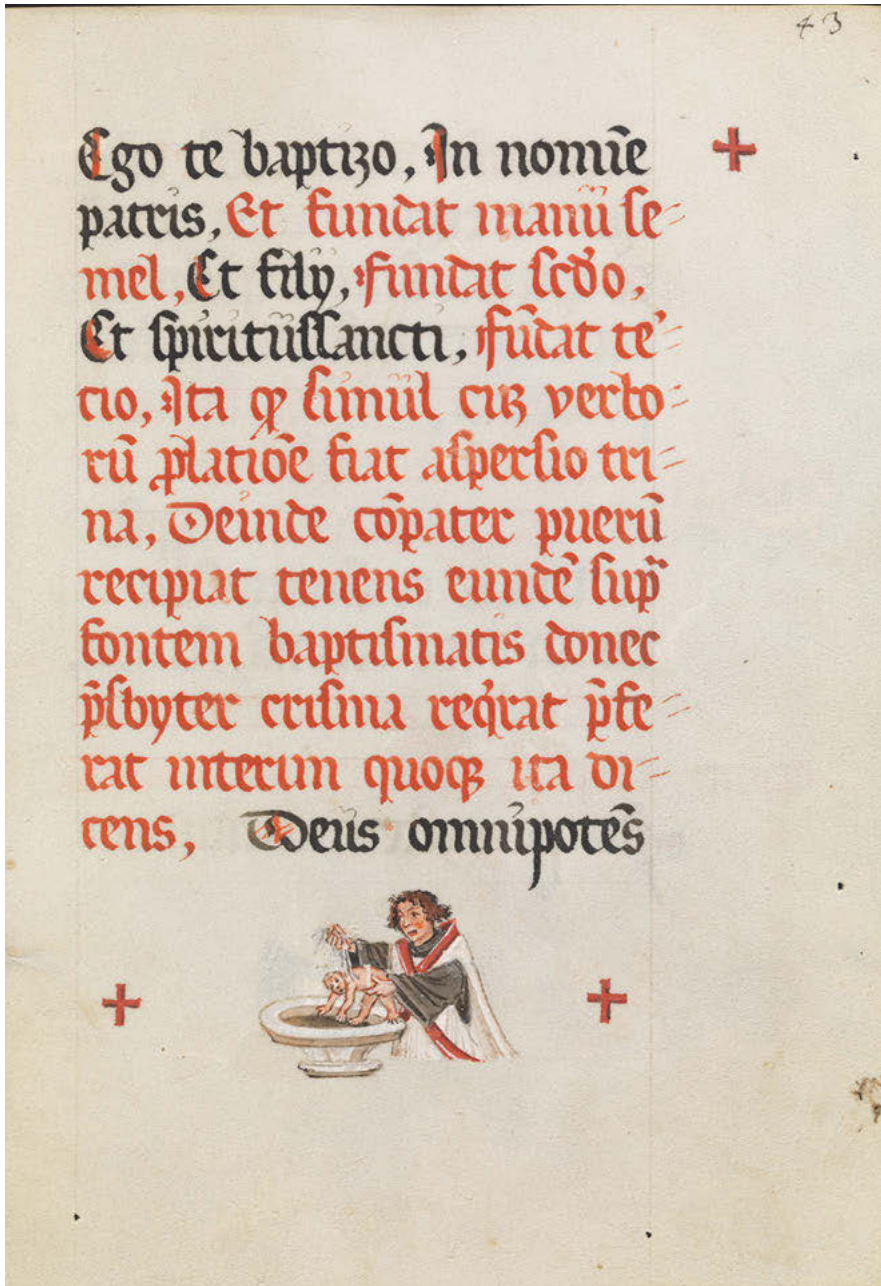


Fig. 14: Depiction of an infant baptism ritual, parchment, around 1555, Abbey library of St. Gallen, Cod. Sang. 442, p. 43; © Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen.



**Fig. 15:** General view of the baptismal font, Cord Vribusch, around 1450, bronze, St Lawrence's church, Kirchgellersen; © Jochen Hermann Vennebusch.

The following sacramental-theological text, which reminds us of the text in Dortmund in terms of content, is on the surrounding inscription band below the rim: ‘In de ere svnte lavrencii bin ik gheghoten [2 coins] de dope to alle stv(n)en maket reyne de(n) mi(n)chen van allen svnden [3 coins]’.<sup>29</sup> Because of its location on the cuppa, the Latin inscription on the baptismal font of the St Reinoldi church in Dortmund is not as easy to read as the Low German inscriptions on the foot or the upper rim. This is also due to the fact that the sacramental-theological inscription slopes slightly downwards and is always obscured by the widely protruding rim when the viewers are standing quite close to the baptismal font, so that it can only be read from a certain distance. In addition, the pinnacles formerly surrounding the baptismal font impaired the general legibility of the inscription. Whether it was intended that the inscription could be read and understood at all, however, is questionable; the use of Latin alone severely restricts the circle of those who received information about the effect of the sacrament of baptism through the text. The affirmative statement about the forgiveness of sins conveyed by baptism could, therefore, also be a phenomenon of restricted scriptural presence.<sup>30</sup> The inscription generally identified the artefact as a vessel used for the liturgy of baptism and irrevocably inscribed on it the effects associated with the sacrament administered on it, admittedly without being able to influence the efficacy of the ritual act itself or even be constitutive of it. While some inscriptions on bronze baptismal fonts recite prayers or liturgical texts which are addressed to God and perpetuated again and again due to their placement, this is not the case with the Dortmund baptismal font, since a statement is made here about the effect of the sacrament without being addressed to an addressee who would have any influence on this themselves.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, by casting this inscription in bronze, a permanent expression was given to the baptismal grace bestowed on this object.

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**29** ‘I was cast in honour of St Lawrence. Baptism makes a person clean from all sins at all hours’. See on this baptismal font, *St. Laurentius Kirche Kirchgellersen*, Kirchgellersen, s.n., s.a., s.p.; *Maria-Magdalenen-Kirche Lauenburg/Elbe*, Lauenburg/Elbe, s.n., s.a., 8–9; Mithoff 1877, 110; Wrede 1908, 25–28; Erhardt 1939, pl. 36; Weiß 1981, 87; Hessing 1987, 30; Vennebusch 2022c, 24–27.

**30** See Frese, Keil and Krüger 2013, 241–242; Keil et al. 2018, 2–6.

**31** See on the mediality of medieval baptismal fonts and their inscriptions, Vennebusch 2023.

## 6 Teaching the duties: The vernacular admonition of the godparents on the edge of the cuppa

The inscription on the upper edge, however, seems to be different. In contrast to the Latin text and also to the caster's inscription, an addressee is clearly recognisable here, which means that the inscription begins immediately: 'O · geestilike · vader · unde · mod(er) ·', 'O spiritual father and mother'. The inscription uses the Germanised Latin phrase *pater spiritualis* or *mater spiritualis* here, by which the godparents were designated as spiritual teachers.<sup>32</sup> The office of godparents itself can be traced back to early Christianity, with godparents accompanying and vouching for the originally adult candidate in preparation for baptism during the catechumenate.<sup>33</sup> In the Middle Ages, the godparents brought those to be baptised, now babies, to the church, asked for baptism and answered the baptismal questions on behalf of the candidate and opposed evil.<sup>34</sup> The further duties of the godparents are formulated in the text on the Dortmund baptismal font: they are obliged to teach their godchildren the faith and teach them the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments.<sup>35</sup> In return for this service, they are figuratively promised the Kingdom of Heaven.

A remarkable correspondence with the Dortmund baptismal font can be found in a liturgical book from the diocese of Schleswig, printed in 1512 and preserved in various places, which will be discussed in more detail below. Although the city of Dortmund belonged to the archbishopric of Cologne in the Middle Ages, the relative temporal proximity of the baptismal font and the ritual book allows a reference to be made. The liturgical book from northern Germany formulates this as follows: 'Tunc tam sacerdos atque patrini dicant orationem dominicam. Ave maria. et Credo. *quod est symbolum apostolorum.*'<sup>36</sup> Both the rubrics and the prayers are written here in Latin, but then there is a remarkable instruction in the further course:

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<sup>32</sup> Dannecker 2005, 113; Angenendt 2009, 475.

<sup>33</sup> Angenendt 1987, 314–321; Daschner 2006. See on the office of godparents in the early Middle Ages, Dick 1939; Bailey 1952, 1–26; Lynch 1986; Müller 2012, 103–105.

<sup>34</sup> Bailey 1952, 37–50.

<sup>35</sup> As contemporary written sources show, the expression 'de(n) gelow(en)' could also stand for the text of the Apostles' Creed. See on these texts within the Church's catechesis, Weidenhiller 1965, 17–20.

<sup>36</sup> 'Then the priest and godparents thus say the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria and the Credo, which is the Apostles' Creed' (emphasis in the original); *Liber Agendarum ecclesie*, ed. Freisen 1898, 45.



*Deinde dicat sacerdos vulgariter ad leuantes puerum sic laica lingua* Ick ghebede Iu by iuwer zelen salicheyt / Wen dat kindt komet so synen iaren der vornuft. dat gy dat suluighe kindt. vnderwisen in den rechten cristen louen. Dat Pater noster. Aue maria. vnd tuchnisse ghewen dat id hebbe de hillighen cristlijen dope vntphangen.<sup>37</sup>

The recitation of the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria and the Apostles' Creed by the priest and the godparents equally represents the highly abbreviated and, above all, completely recontextualized reminiscence of Early Christian preparatory rites for baptism. At the end of the catechumenate, which usually lasted three years,<sup>38</sup> was the time of competence, which the candidates for baptism underwent within the forty-day pre-Easter penitential period (Quadragesima) before the date of baptism in the Easter Vigil. Within this period of preparation, known today as Lent, scrutiny took place as part of the celebration of Mass, during which candidates for the sacrament of baptism were examined, exorcised several times and blessed at the end of each celebration.<sup>39</sup> The church father Ambrose, who served as a bishop in Milan in the fourth century, reports on the local customary practice of *Traditio*, the handing over of the profession of faith within the competent period before baptism.<sup>40</sup> This only took place after the completion of the scrutiny, during which the baptismal minister could convince himself of the sanctification of the body and soul of the baptismal candidates by means of exorcisms.<sup>41</sup> The *Traditio* took place on the Sunday before Easter after the Liturgy of the Word of the Mass and consisted of an address in the course of which the Creed was recited several times by the bishop and commented on in sections.<sup>42</sup> Ambrose also inculcated in this context that the text of the Creed should be learnt by heart and not written down, for as an expression of arcane discipline it should not be known to heretics or to catechumens not yet deemed worthy of this step in the context of baptismal preparation on the basis of the

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**37** 'Then the priest says in everyday language to those who hold up the child, as follows in secular language (lay language): I command you by the blessedness of your souls, when the child comes to his years of reason, that you instruct the same child in the right Christian faith, the Lord's Prayer, Ave Maria, and bear witness that he has received Christian baptism' (emphasis in the original); *Liber Agendarum ecclesie*, ed. Freisen 1898, 45; see on this ritual, Spital 1968, 90–95; see on vernacular addresses (*exhortationes*) in late medieval ritual printings, Kopp 2016, 19–37.

**38** Kleinheyer 1989, 40.

**39** Angenendt 2009, 463.

**40** See on this ritual Lange 2008, 9; cf. on other local practices of the *Traditio*, Fürst 2008, 118–119; see on the *Traditio* in general, Corblet 1881, 351–353.

**41** See on the scrutiny, Ambrosius, *De sacramentis*, ed. Schmitz 1990, 23–24.

**42** Ambrosius, *De sacramentis*, ed. Schmitz 1990, 25; Kleinheyer 1989, 69–70.

preceding scrutiny.<sup>43</sup> It is not known when the *Redditio*, the ceremonial recitation of the Creed by the baptismal candidates as the concluding rite of the period of competence before baptism, took place in Milan, because Ambrose only mentions that there was such a liturgical act. By contrast, it was customary ‘in Rome for the *redditio symboli* to be performed in a prominent place in full view of all the faithful’.<sup>44</sup> It can be assumed that the *Redditio* served to check the knowledge of the faith of the adult candidates for baptism and, thus, equally the success of the preceding period of preparation for the reception of the sacrament of baptism.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, the usual *Redditio* in Rome in the face of the assembled congregation could indicate that the greatest possible number of witnesses to the baptismal candidate’s confession of the Christian faith was to be ensured.

In the seventh century, as liturgical sources attest, the long catechumenate was condensed to the earlier period of competence during Lent.<sup>46</sup> According to the *Sacramentarium Gelasianum* and the *Ordo Romanus XI*, the *Traditio* of the central texts of the Christian faith took place in the fourth week of this penitential season.<sup>47</sup> Among these texts were the four Gospels, the beginnings of which were sung by deacons, the Apostles’ Creed and the Lord’s Prayer.<sup>48</sup> In addition, all texts were explained by the presider of the liturgy through an already pre-formulated explanation. Finally, on the morning of Holy Saturday, the *Redditio* or *Recitatio symboli* took place, which in early Christianity, originally ‘showed that one had successfully completed the catechetical instruction’<sup>49</sup> by testing the knowledge of the text of the Creed.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore ‘[i]t served as a statement of the personal faith of the candidate and admitted the candidate to baptism’.<sup>51</sup> In the early Middle Ages, however, when the *Sacramentarium Gelasianum* and the *Ordo Romanus XI* were compiled, this catechetical instrument had already been transferred to a priest, since infant baptism had meanwhile become established, so that the liturgical sources no longer presupposed that the candidates

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43 Fürst 2008, 120.

44 Fisher 1965, 6 (emphasis in the original).

45 Ambrosius, *De sacramentis*, ed. Schmitz 1990, 27–28.

46 Angenendt 1987, 288–289.

47 See on this ritual, Fisher 1965, 9–10; Angenendt 1987, 277, 289; Kleinheyer 1989, 110–112; Kunzler 2003, 400.

48 *Gelasian Sacramentary*, ed. Wilson 1894, XXXV–XXXVI; see also Wahle 2008, 32.

49 Old 1992, 7.

50 Angenendt 1987, 278.

51 Old 1992, 7.

for baptism could recite the text of the Creed by heart.<sup>52</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that although the rite originally conceived for adult baptismal candidates was greatly compressed in time, it remained almost unchanged in itself in terms of the individual elements, even though it was now infants who were to be baptised.<sup>53</sup> The ‘distribution of roles’ within the liturgy especially changed and, thus, the actual character of the time of preparation for baptism as an institutionalized and clearly regulated period of instruction in the faith and consolidation of knowledge about the faith gave way to a sequence of barely comprehensible rituals. It was no longer the candidate for baptism who was introduced to the mysteries of the faith and examined on them, but rather various ritual acts were performed on him, so that one can speak of ‘a displacement of the catechetical by the liturgical and thus of the intelligible by the ceremonial’.<sup>54</sup> While the liturgical books from the early Middle Ages still assume, in principle, that the baptised recite the texts given to them, this task is transferred to the godparents in ninth century sacramentaries.<sup>55</sup> Arnold Angenendt, therefore, describes the obligation to be responsible for the further Christian education of the baptised child as the most important task of the godparents in the course of the Middle Ages.<sup>56</sup> Possibly the reference of the ritual text from Schleswig ‘Wen dat kindt komet so synen iaren der vornuft’ represents a recourse to the criticism of the missionary Winfried-Bonifatius, who complained about the lack of catechesis during the preparation for and administration of baptism, since false priests (pseudo-sacerdotes) do not even teach the solemn vows which every disciple of the faith, if they are old enough to have the understanding, should grasp and understand in their heart, nor interrogate them to those whom they are to baptise.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, finally, in Carolingian times, special emphasis was placed on the fact that the Lord’s Prayer and the Apostles’ Creed should be part of the knowledge of faith of every believer.<sup>58</sup> Even in the late Middle Ages, the central

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52 Angenendt 1987, 289–290; Old 1992, 7–8; Wahle 2008, 32.

53 Old 1992, 6–9.

54 Bakhuizen van der Brink 1970, 68: ‘Verdrängung des Katechetischen durch das Liturgische und damit des Verständigen durch das Zeremonielle’; see on this development, Schlegel 2012, 75–81.

55 Angenendt 1987, 317.

56 Angenendt 1987, 318; see also Weidenhiller 1965, 14.

57 *Bonifatii epistolae*, ed. Rau 1968, Ep. 80, 262: ‘nec ipsa sollempnia verba, quae unusquisque caticuminus, si talis aetatis est, ut iam intellectum habeat, sensu cordis sui percipere et intelligere, nec docent nec quaerent ab eis, quos baptizare debent’. See Angenendt 1987, 290; Wahle 2008, 40; Angenendt 2009, 470.

58 Jungmann 1941, 170–171.

texts of the Christian faith were repeatedly taught to the faithful, as they were also among the texts that were a prerequisite for absolution in confession: in 1451, for example, the papal legate and cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) had a ‘catechism board’ hung in St Lamberti church in Hildesheim, on which the vernacular texts of the Lord’s Prayer, the Ave Maria, the Apostles’ Creed and the Ten Commandments were listed.<sup>59</sup> The introduction before the texts, which is also in the vernacular, states that the cardinal had discovered during a visitation that the faithful were unable to say the Lord’s Prayer, so he wanted to ensure that these texts, which are essential for salvation, were taught. In summary, then, it can be said that by the time the Dortmund baptismal font was created, the rite of the baptismal liturgy had been contracted to the point that, according to Hughes Oliphant Old, it was a ‘telescoped rite’. He characterises it as follows:

It was a rite made up of many rites which in earlier centuries had extended over a period of several weeks and then in the Middle Ages had been compressed into a single rite which could be performed in about a half an hour.<sup>60</sup>

Unfortunately, the surviving late medieval and early modern rituals from the Archdiocese of Cologne do not give any indication that the godparents were instructed about their obligations in the vernacular in connection with the baptismal liturgy. The oldest surviving printed ritual containing the baptismal liturgy, the *Agende in chatolicis ecclesiis observande*<sup>61</sup> manufactured around 1482 by Ludwig von Renchen, lists the text of the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer and the Ave Maria after the rubric ‘Deinde ponat manu(m) super caput baptisa(n)di et cathec(izat) dice(n)s simbolu(m)’<sup>62</sup> and the Latin rubric ‘Et com(m)ittat patrinis q(uod) informent baptisandu(m) de fide et or(ati)one d(omi)nica’.<sup>63</sup> Whether this is a modification of the *Traditio* or the *Redditio* of the texts of faith cannot be determined with certainty. According to Alois Stenzel, this rite is more likely to be interpreted as a *Traditio*, since in the early medieval liturgical sources this act is accompanied by the laying on of hands, which is still mentioned in the

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<sup>59</sup> See on this ‘catechism board’, Wulf 2003, 394–397, no. 167. The author thanks Dr Christine Wulf and Dr Jörg H. Lampe for their reference to this object.

<sup>60</sup> Old 1992, 1.

<sup>61</sup> See on this liturgical book, Vollmer 2000, 46; Vollmer 1994, 45–62.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Then the priest puts his hand on the head of the child to be baptised and instructs [him] in the faith by saying the Creed’, *Agende in chatolicis ecclesiis observande s.a., s.p.*; see also Vollmer 2000, 50; Vollmer 1994, 221–223.

<sup>63</sup> ‘And he should entrust to the godparents that they teach the child to be baptised the faith and the Lord’s Prayer’, *Agende in chatolicis ecclesiis observande s.a., s.p.*

late medieval ritual.<sup>64</sup> A vernacular text, however, addressed directly to the godparents and recited by the priest, as in the ritual from the diocese of Schleswig, cannot be found in the print of the liturgical book used in Cologne, nor are there any vernacular exhortations and addresses in manuscripts of rituals in general.<sup>65</sup> A vernacular address to the godparents, on the other hand, can be found in the 1591 printed ritual *Agenda ecclesiastica sive legitima ac solennis sacramentorum Ecclesie administratio* from the diocese of Münster in Westphalia:

Ick vermane juw Paden / dat ghy dit Kind juw laten befallen syn / neuen synen Natuerlichen Olderen / Also / wenn eth tho synen verstendigen Jahren kommen werdt / dat ghy idt (da desseluigen Olderen daran seumich weren oder verstoruen) mit ganzem Flyte underrichten vnd lehren / stede und fast in der hylligen Christlichen Catholischen vnd Apostolischen Kercken (darin idt idzunder de Doepe entfenget) to blyuen. Derseluigen wahren vnd vngetwyuelten Gelouen alletydt standthafftighlich to holden / vnd darbeneuen oick dat Vader vnse / de Engelsche Grote / de twelff Artickel deß hilligen Geloues / vnd de tein Gebodde Gods.<sup>66</sup>

Although this was printed after the final reformation of the city of Dortmund in 1570<sup>67</sup> and the Council of Trent (1545–1563), the geographical proximity of Dortmund to the diocese of Münster, on the one hand, and the expected continuation of local rites and customs in the liturgy, on the other hand, could reflect a tradition of admonishing the godparents in the vernacular within the baptismal liturgy that was possibly already recognisable in the Middle Ages.

Even if there is no absolute literal correspondence between the inscription on the Dortmund baptismal font and vernacular liturgical formulas from late medieval ritual printings, the clear correspondence in content between the texts cannot be denied. Finally, the question remains to whom the inscription on the upper rim of the bronze baptismal font was addressed: although it is conceivable that the very brief exhortation to the godparents served as a reminder to the priest as baptismal minister during the ceremony, it is more likely that this was intended to directly address the godparents who knew the scriptures. Neverthe-

<sup>64</sup> Stenzel 1958, 277–278.

<sup>65</sup> Kopp 2016, 19.

<sup>66</sup> ‘I admonish you, godparents, to make this child your charge, next to its natural parents, so that when it comes to its years of understanding (should its parents fail to do so or die) you will teach and instruct it with all diligence, to abide steadfastly and firmly in the holy Christian, Catholic and Apostolic Church (in which he now receives baptism), to hold fast to her true and undoubted faith at all times, and besides this, to learn the Lord’s Prayer, the Angelic Salutation [the Hail Mary], the Twelve Articles of the Holy Faith [the Apostles’ Creed] and the Ten Commandments of God’, *Agenda ecclesiastica* 1592, 17.

<sup>67</sup> See on the reformation in Dortmund, Freitag 2017, 212–215.

less, in this case, the group of people who were able to understand this text at all remains small, despite the vernacular wording. It is possible that the priest pointed out the inscription and its content to the godparents during the course of the baptismal ceremony, and that they were perhaps even able to literally grasp this text haptically, which was intended to make their duties abundantly clear to them. Since it can be assumed that the baptismal font was formerly placed in the west of the church and that one usually passed this artefact when entering the church, the godparents were implicitly reminded of their duties again and again. This assumption is not invalidated by the fact that, as the two busts show, a font cover was used to lock this vessel when it was not being used for baptism.

## 7 Conclusion

In summary, we will now discuss the potential reasons that might have led to the affixing of the various inscriptions on the baptismal font of St Reinoldi in Dortmund, making the object a multilingual written artefact: first of all, the question of the recipients is certainly central to the choice of the respective language. The addressees are only explicitly mentioned in the inscription on the upper rim, which addresses the godparents directly and refers to their obligations. But the question remains to whom the inscriptions on the foot and on the cuppa are directed. The vernacular caster's inscription on the foot can probably be seen as the self-confident signature of Johann Winnenbrock, who presents himself as a bell founder and Dortmund citizen who made the baptismal font for the local council church and possibly also tried to generate further commissions due to the special quality of his casting. It can also be assumed that Winnenbrock implicitly wanted to encourage the readers to commemorate him through the signature and the vernacular inscription, but this aspect is not nearly as clear as on other baptismal fonts due to the lack of reference to God and the omitted call to intercessory prayer. However, it must at least be conceded that his name is permanently present on an object used liturgically, which is highly significant for the question of *memoria*, the provision for the heavenly afterlife.<sup>68</sup> By contrast, the determination of an addressee for the inscription on the cuppa is considerably more complicated. The statement made there about the effects

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<sup>68</sup> Johannes Tripps addresses the question of the presence of donor names on liturgical objects and their legibility using the example of medieval chalices. See Tripps 2018, 335–344.

of the sacrament of baptism is formulated in the indicative, it is an affirmative statement of fact in the theological sense. In this context, the quotation from the Gospel according to Mark, the second part of the inscription, could be addressed to the person being baptised or even to those who have already been baptised; after all, the baptismal grace is here associated with faith. In this sense, baptism can, thus, be seen as a fundamental condition for salvation, which, however, only finds its fulfillment through the faith of the person being baptised. For this reason, it seems to be meaningful to point out the firmness in faith, which – according to the addressees in the printed rituals – the godparents should also point out to their godchildren repeatedly. But even if these two Latin quotations from the *Liber Floretus* and the Gospel according to Mark, respectively, could be read, they certainly could not be comprehended by all believers or baptised people, which is not only due to the theological background but, above all, the Latin language of the inscription. Again, it could be assumed that the celebrant, when administering baptism, referred to this saying and the promise of the forgiveness of sins and the promise of salvation expressed through it. With the baptismal font, these quotations were once again before the eyes of those entering the church and reminded them of the reception of the sacrament. As has already been mentioned, the inscription could be a phenomenon of restricted scriptural presence, so that it is not necessarily important that an inscription is read and understood, but primarily that it is present on the object. While this is obvious for the founder's inscriptions, since the presence of the corresponding name on the liturgical device can be interpreted as a contribution to *memoria*, it is not nearly as clear for the complex theological inscription.<sup>69</sup> In this respect, the Latin text could mark the baptismal font as a sacred object and, because it was written in the official language of the church and liturgy, it could receive a higher authority through the Latin quotations which can be regarded as an additional authentication of the statement in the inscription about the salvation of the soul obtained through baptism and the forgiveness of sins that had taken place. Finally, the baptismal font stands in a field of tension between liturgical change and theological continuity: while the form of the baptismal font clearly reflects the practice of infant baptism that has prevailed since the early Middle Ages, since the immersion baptisms of adults practiced originally are no longer possible in the cuppa, the Latin inscription reflects the eternally valid theology of baptism that is already grounded *in nuce* in the New Testament Pauline epistolary literature. By contrast, the Low German inscription on the upper rim testifies to the change in the office of godparent. It

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69 Tripps 2018, 347.

is no longer the adult candidates for baptism who receive an introduction to the Christian faith and learn the most important texts during the catechumenate, but the task of imparting faith and knowledge has passed to the godparents, to whom this duty was clearly inculcated by the priest during the baptismal liturgy, as can be seen in some late medieval prints of rituals.

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Apiradee Techasiriwan, Volker Grabowsky

# Multi-scriptural and Multilingual Inscriptions in Lan Na

**Abstract:** ‘Lan Na’ is the name of an ancient kingdom situated in the upper north of present-day Thailand. Founded in the late thirteenth century, it became fully integrated into the modern Thai state only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Tai Yuan possess their own distinct language and have developed three sets of scripts: Tham (Dhamma), Fak Kham and Thai Nithet script. These scripts (mainly Fak Kham) were used for inscriptions and manuscripts (mainly Tham and Thai Nithet). In our paper, we analyse how different scripts and languages (such as Burmese, Thai/Siamese, Chinese, Pali and Roman scripts/languages, in addition to the Tai Yuan vernacular language/script) are documented on various kinds of artefacts and what this tells us about the cultural history of the region.

## 1 Objectives

The epigraphical culture of Lan Na is in particular diverse and richly documented compared to other regions of the Tai world. Moreover, the various Lan Na scripts have also been applied by other (Tai) ethnic groups who have migrated to Lan Na in substantial numbers either voluntarily or as the result of forced resettlements caused by war. The resulting processes of acculturation and integration of these groups into a coherent Lan Na society is also reflected by the use of multiple scripts and languages on the same inscribed object. We pay special attention to the social and cultural contexts which furthered the use of multiple languages and scripts on the same inscribed artefact. We differentiate between the presence of languages and scripts widely used within the larger Lan Na cultural domain and those which were derived either from neighbouring Tai writing cultures (e.g. Thai and Lao) and more distant areas (e.g. Burma, China and Europe).

## 2 Historical background

The kingdom of Lan Na emerged after the conquest of the Mon polity of Hariphunchai by King Mangrai (1292)<sup>1</sup> and the founding of Chiang Mai (literally, ‘New City’) as the kingdom’s capital (1296). Lan Na, literally meaning ‘[the land of] a million rice fields’, comprises the eight provinces of Thailand’s upper north. More than 80% of its population belong to a Tai ethnic group called the (Tai) Yuan. During the reign of King Tilokarat, the ninth king of the Mangrai dynasty (1441–1487), the borders of Lan Na expanded into southern Yunnan (Sipsòng Panna), the eastern part of the Shan region in present-day Burma (Chiang Tung, Müang Nai and Müang Yòng) and north-western Laos.<sup>2</sup> With the extension of political power to areas further to the north, Theravada Buddhism, which was firmly established in the main Buddhist centres of Chiang Mai, spread throughout the upper and middle Mekong basin, and Lan Na finally became the major centre of Buddhist scholarship in South East Asia for more than half a century.<sup>3</sup> Lan Na remained an independent polity until the conquest of Chiang Mai by a Burmese army (1558). By the end of the sixteenth century, Lan Na had ceased to exist as a unitary Burmese vassal state and split into contending polities.<sup>4</sup>

Lan Na was occupied by Burmese forces for more than two and a half centuries and remained under Burmese suzerainty until the late eighteenth century. From 1775 (liberation of Chiang Mai) until 1804 (conquest of Chiang Saen), Lan Na was liberated from Burmese rule by a joint effort of the Tai Yuan elite of Lan Na and the resurgent Siamese kingdom. From that time, Lan Na consisted of five autonomous vassal states: Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang in the western part, all ruled by members of the Kawila dynasty, and Phrae and Nan in the east, each of them staying under Siamese suzerainty. Between 1874 and 1933, the five vassal kingdoms became gradually integrated into the emerging modern nation-state of Thailand.

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1 Unless otherwise stated all dates are CE.

2 The political dynamics of the Lan Na kingdom in its early phase is discussed in detail in Sarassawadee Ongsakul 2005, 89–105; Grabowsky 2004, 116–125; Grabowsky 2005, 3–19.

3 The eighth Buddhist Council was held in Wat Chet Yòt or Wat Photharam Maha Wihan in the city of Chiang Mai in 1477.

4 For the political developments in Lan Na during the period of Burmese domination, see Sarassawadee Ongsakul 2005, 109–128; Grabowsky 2004, 149–176.



**Fig. 1:** Map of Lan Na kingdom, c. 1450 CE; © Volker Grabowsky.

The period of Burmese domination shows a significant decline in inscripational activities and the gradual appearance of the Tham script as the dominant one in Lan Na epigraphy.<sup>5</sup> The post-Burmese period of Lan Na epigraphy is character-

<sup>5</sup> The dearth of Lan Na (stone) inscriptions during the period of Burmese domination is discussed in Buchmann 2018, 124–127, who also observes: ‘Only four inscriptions from the pre-Burmese period show a combination of Fak Kham and Dhamma-Lanna scripts. This implies

ised by the exclusive use of Tham script and the increased preference of writing material other than stone, such as metal and wood.<sup>6</sup> The forced resettlement of numerous war captives from Tai Khün and Tai Lü inhabited areas in the eastern Shan areas of Myanmar, north-western Laos and south-western Yunnan to the core areas of the five Lan Na principalities (Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Phrae and Nan) in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This resulted in significant ‘foreign’ Tai communities – making up more than one-third of the total populations – which maintained particular features of their original written cultures.<sup>7</sup>

### 3 Lan Na scripts

The Tai of Lan Na have their own language which is distinct, and developed three different scripts. These scripts were used separately for two different purposes: one script was used predominantly for the writing of religious texts, another script was used for the writing of secular, or non-religious, texts. A third script, which appeared at a much later stage, mixed elements of the first two scripts. The three types of Lan Na scripts are as follows:

(1) The Tham script (or Dhamma script of Lan Na, Thai: *aksòn tham lan na* อักษรธรรมล้านนา): This script was developed from the old Mon script of the pre-Tai kingdom of Hariphunchai (present-day Lamphun province). In Buddhism, *dhamma* (Skt.: *dharma*) means the cosmic law and order as expressed in the Teachings of the Buddha. Thus, as its name already implies, the Tham script was first used for the writing of Buddhist scriptures; these texts were mostly written in Pali but, in some cases (for instance the commentaries or the popular Jataka tales), also in the Northern Thai vernacular. The earliest evidence of the Tham script is from 1376. It is a bi-scriptural and bilingual inscription combining Sukhothai and Tham scripts, discovered in the early 1980s on a golden leaf in a *cetiya* in Sukhothai, which is situated outside the Lan Na area (see Fig. 11)

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that Dhamma-Lanna script was not used in pre-Burmese stone inscriptions’, see Buchmann 2018, 128.

<sup>6</sup> Lorrillard 2022, 25.

<sup>7</sup> Up to two-fifths of the Tai-speaking population of Lan Na by the end of the nineteenth century were descendants of war captives who had been deported from the Tai Lü, Tai Khün and Shan inhabited areas of the north and resettled in the southern parts of Lan Na during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the era of *kep phak sai sa*, *kep kha sai müang* (‘gathering vegetables in baskets, gathering people in the polities’). For details, see Grabowsky 1999.



However, an inscription on the pedestal of a Buddha image from Wat Chiang Man in Chiang Mai city, dated 1465, is the earliest evidence of that script used for the writing of texts in the Tai vernacular and Pali found in Lan Na territory.<sup>8</sup> At a later period, notably since the late eighteenth century, this script was also used for the writing of secular texts, such as folktales, chronicles, and astrological and medical treatises. Eventually, it became the only script of the country and, thus, it is colloquially called *tua müang* (ตัวเมือง), which means ‘script of the country’.



**Fig. 2:** Tham (Dhamma) script; inscription 1.2.1.1: Pratu Tha Phae, 2010 BE / 1467 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.

(2) Fak Kham script (อักษรฝักขาม): The script’s name was chosen because the letters’ curves resemble the shape of a tamarind pod.<sup>9</sup> The Fak Kham script was developed from the script that had been adopted from Sukhothai, the immediate southern neighbour of Lan Na, in the late thirteenth century. The Sukhothai script is also the prototype of the modern Thai script, which is nowadays used as the only and official script in Thailand. The Fak Kham script was normally used for secular texts written in the vernacular Tai Yuan language, but we also find Pali words or short Pali phrases written in this script. The vast majority of Lan Na stone inscriptions prior to the seventeenth century are written in Fak

<sup>8</sup> The inscription of Wat Chiang Man has been edited, translated and analysed by Prasert na Nagara and Griswold 1992, 699–732.

<sup>9</sup> The tamarind is a tropical fruit indigenous to tropical Africa and also naturalised in South East Asia. The tamarind tree produces brown, pod-like fruits which contain a sweet, tangy pulp used in cuisines around the world. The pod-like fruits resemble the shape of the largely square characters of the script named thereafter.

Kham script.<sup>10</sup> While the famous inscription of Wat Phra Yün, dated 1370, in Lamphun was still written in Sukhothai script,<sup>11</sup> the inscription of Wat Suwanna Maha Wihan of 1411 from Phayao province was already written in Fak Kham script. This inscription that records the donation of rice fields and 246 households as temple serfs to support this monastery under royal patronage is, therefore, considered to be the oldest extant Lan Na inscription written in the Northern Thai vernacular and a genuine Lan Na script.<sup>12</sup>



**Fig. 3:** Fak Kham script; inscription 1.5.1.1: Suwannamahawihan, 1974 BE / 1411 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.

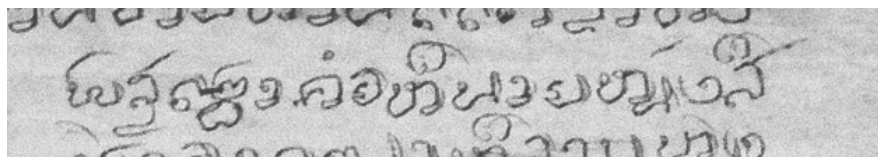
(3) Thai Nithet script (อักษรไทยนิตเทศ): This script was created by mixing the Dhamma and Fak Kham scripts. Most characters resemble those of the Fak Kham script but, unlike the latter, they have a round shape similar to the Tham script characters. Thai Nithet was used mainly for secular poetry written on palm-leaf manuscripts. However, we also find this script in royal edicts and decrees inscribed on silver plates. The silver plate of Ban Pae in Chòm Thòng district, Chiang Mai province, recording a royal decree of Queen Wisuttha Thewi (r. 1564–1578), the last female ruler of the Mangrai dynasty who ruled over the whole of Lan Na as a Burmese vassal, dated 5 June 1567, is the oldest evidence

<sup>10</sup> For a glossary of these inscriptions, see Buchmann 2011; with a descriptive catalogue (Buchmann 2012) and a grammar (Buchmann 2015) being published separately.

<sup>11</sup> The Wat Phra Yün inscription has been edited, translated and analysed by Prasert na Nagra and Griswold 1992, 605–623.

<sup>12</sup> The endowment of land and temple serfs to monasteries is discussed in detail by Penth 2003 and Grabowsky 2004 and 2005. For an edition of the Wat Suwanna Maha Wihan inscription (Lamphun 9), see Sujit Wongthes 1995, 49–57.

of the Thai Nithet script.<sup>13</sup> The latter also appears on a few other inscriptions. This script was not widely spread. It appeared mainly in manuscripts of the first half of the nineteenth century and not much later disappeared into oblivion. There are only fewer than ten extant palm-leaf manuscripts and inscriptions written in this hybrid script.



**Fig. 4:** Thai Nithet script; palm-leaf manuscript entitled *Ongkan chaeng thian* ('Royal command cursing the candle'); Microfilm no. 90.166.03/023-023, Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University; photograph © ALI, CMU.

## 4 Multi-scriptural and multilingual inscriptions in Lan Na

Our ongoing survey of Lan Na epigraphic culture brought to light a small but by no means insignificant number of inscriptions which reflect the mixing of scripts and languages in the same inscribed object. For the sake of clarity, we have divided these multi-scriptural and multilingual inscriptions into three categories. The first category consists of inscriptions written in the Northern Thai (Tai Yuan) vernacular – in some cases with occasional Pali phrases interspersed – but with at least two of the three 'indigenous' Lan Na scripts used. The second category includes inscriptions in which scripts and languages from neighbouring writing cultures – such as that of Burma – were integrated into Lan Na inscriptions. The third category pertains to inscriptions after the eighteenth century which reflect the influence of more distant writing cultures, such as Thai (Siamese), Chinese and European.

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**13** The silver plate of Ban Pae has been translated and analysed by Kraisri Nimmanhaeminda 1967; for a German translation of both the inscription (dated 1567) and a palm-leaf manuscript confirming the contents of the inscription by confirming the villagers' privileged status as temple serfs regarding events that happened in 1632, see Grabowsky 2004, 448–453.

## 4.1 The mixing of scripts within the Lan Na writing culture

The first example shows the mixing of scripts within the Lan Na written culture. It is an inscription on the pedestal of a Buddha image, dated c. 1490, kept at the National Museum in Nan province close to the border to Lao (1.7.3.2 Museum Nan c. 2030 BE / c. 1490 CE, ALI inventory number).<sup>14</sup> The inscription is written partly in Tham script and partly in Fak Kham script. This example makes the original role of the Tham script to be used for the writing of Pali language very clear and the use of Fak Kham script for writing texts in the local Tai vernacular. The main content of the inscription is a magic spell called *Gathā Paṭhamam*, which was popularly inscribed on Buddha statues made of bronze in Lan Na during the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries.<sup>15</sup>

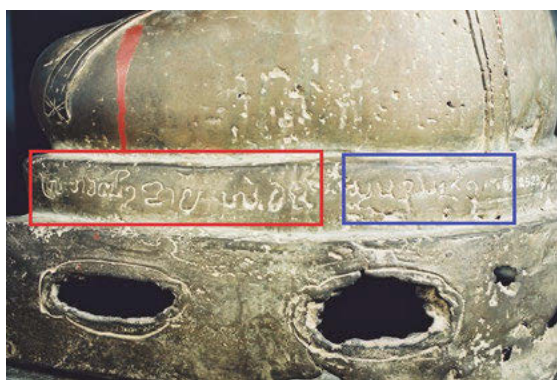
The text starts with the *Gathā* inscribed in Tham script, but then within the *Gāthā*, the scribe inserted the name of the sponsor, พระหัวเมืองซ้ายฟ่อน (Phra Hua Müang Sai Fòn), i.e. the person who initiated the casting of this Buddha statue, in Fak Kham script. The name of the sponsor inscribed in Fak Kham script is framed in red in Fig. 6. The inscription then continues with the *Gāthā*, inscribed in the Tham script again. This text is framed in blue in the figure.

<sup>14</sup> The Bronze Buddha statue has been published in Penth, Phanphen Khrüathai and Silao Ketphrom 2001, 203–214.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Silao Ketphrom, a specialist of Lan Na inscriptions, on 11 May 2023 by Apiradee Techasiriwan. Yijing or I-tsing was a Chinese Buddhist monk who spread Buddhism from India to China during the Tang dynasty in the seventh century. He recorded that the casting of Buddha statues entailed the enshrining of two types of elements inside the Buddha statues, namely, relics of the Gotama Buddha and/or principles of the Buddha. It is presumed that this idea to insert internal organs inside the Buddha statues and inscribe Buddhist verses on the pedestals of Buddha statues also spread to Lan Na until the belief became popular. In Lan Na, the most popular Buddhist verse inscribed on the pedestal of Buddha statues is *Gathā Phra Buddha Sihing's heart* (คาถาหัวใจพระสิหิงค์) or *Gathā Paṭhamam*, in which the meaning corresponds to the Four Noble Truths. See Surasawadi 2012, 21–22.



**Fig. 5:** Mixing of Fak Kham script and Tham script on the pedestal of a Buddha image; inscription 1.7.3.2: Museum Nan c. 2030 BE / c. 1490 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.



**Fig. 6:** Detail of the pedestal of a Buddha image (Fig. 5); inscription 1.7.3.2: Museum Nan c. 2030 BE / c. 1490 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.

The second example is from a much later period; it is an inscription on a wooden board, dated 18 April 1848, which has been kept at Chang Khoeng monastery (วัดช่างเคิ่ง) in Mae Caem district west of Chiang Mai city (1.2.2.1 Wat Chang Khoeng 2391 BE / 1848 CE, ALI inventory number). This inscription runs over seventeen lines. The main content is inscribed in Fak Kham script and Tai Yuan language running over sixteen lines, while the last line is a colophon recording the name of the scribe, Saen Siri (แสนสิริ); this last line is inscribed in Tham script, in a smaller size than the rest of the inscribed text. The inscription highlights the simultaneous use of Fak Kham and Tham scripts in the same inscribed object. It seems evident that the scribe used two different scripts as a tool to separate the main text visually from the colophon. This is frequently the practice in Tai manuscript cultures where the main text could be written in one of the major religious scripts (f.e. Tham or Khòm), while the colophon is in a secular script (f.e. Thai or Lao).<sup>16</sup> Moreover, it might be assumed that using Fak Kham script for the main content of this inscription reflects the fact that this script was commonly used for inscribing Lan Na stone inscriptions from the early fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, though after the seventeenth century, Tham script had superseded Fak Kham script for the writing of manuscripts.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, the last example of the first category is an inscription on a pedestal of a hermit statue made of bronze currently kept at Chiang Saen National Museum, Chiang Rai province (1.4.3.2 Doi Tung 2148 BE / 1605 CE, ALI inventory number).<sup>18</sup> The inscription is dated 1605, thus, it derives from the early period of Burmese rule in that area which had become the main military and administrative centre of Burma in the upper Mekong valley by the end of the century. The inscription is inscribed mainly in Tham script and Tai Yuan language. The text starts with the date and names of sponsors, with the local governor of Chiang Saen and high-ranking monks presiding over the casting of the statue, then the text continues with a chant in Pali, a phrase recited for worshiping Buddha relics and referring to a chronicle of Phrathat Dòi Tung.

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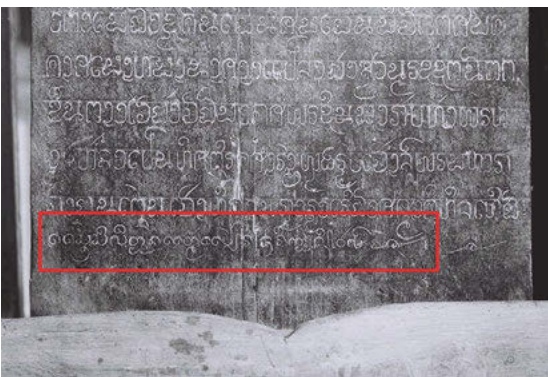
<sup>16</sup> As Peter Skilling (2009, 3) aptly remarks, it was a ‘feature of Thai, Lanna Thai, and Isan bilinguals is the use of two (or very rarely three) scripts in the same inscription or text, for example Thai script for Thai language combined with Khom script for Pāli, or Fak Kham for Lanna language and Tham for Pāli’.

<sup>17</sup> Kannika Wimonkasem 1981, 18.

<sup>18</sup> The bronze hermit has been published in Penth, Phanphen Khruathai and Silao Ketphrom 1997, 189–210.



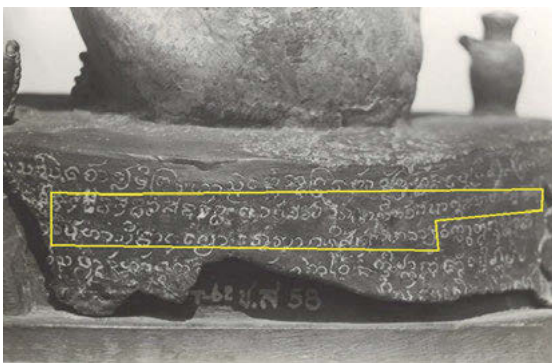
**Fig. 7:** Wooden board inscription; inscription 1.2.2.1: Wat Chang Khoeng, Chiang Mai, 2391 BE / 1848 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.



**Fig. 8:** Detail of inscription 1.2.2.1 (Fig. 7) using Tham script in the last line of the wooden board inscription: Wat Chang Khoeng, Chiang Mai, 2391 BE / 1848 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.



**Fig. 9:** A bronze hermit; inscription 1.4.3.2: Dòi Tung, Chiang Rai, 2148 BE / 1605 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.



**Fig. 10:** Tham and Thai Nithet scripts on the bronze hermit, detail of inscription 1.4.3.2 (Fig. 9): Dòi Tung, Chiang Rai, 2148 BE / 1605 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.



It is worth mentioning that the scribe inserted a short text in Thai Nithet script running from the second half of the second line until the first half of the third line (highlighted in yellow in Fig. 10) for inscribing the Pali phrase, followed by a short text in the Tai Yuan vernacular marking the beginning of the chronicle, then continuing the text in Tham script until the end.

This inscription seems to break the original convention of using Thai Nithet script for the Pali language instead of Tham script. We are tempted to speculate that the scribe might have preferred to use Tham script for inscribing the main text, but, at the same time, also wanted to keep the distinction between the vernacular and Pali languages. To solve this problem, the scribe decided to use the Thai Nithet script for the short Pali phrase. If we consider the year of production of the inscription, 1605, it occurred thirty-eight years after the oldest evidence of Thai Nithet script, which appears on a silver-plate inscription made in 1567 in Chiang Mai, as an order of the last queen of Lan Na's Mangrai dynasty (Queen Wisutthathewi, r. 1564–1578).<sup>19</sup> Therefore, it is likely that Thai Nithet script was still popular to use in the royal court that the ruler of Chiang Saen presided over the casting of this statue.

## 4.2 Mixing of scripts and languages of neighbouring writing cultures

In the past, Lan Na had maintained close ties with neighbouring kingdoms, such as Ayutthaya and Lan Sang, in several ways: culturally, politically and economically, ties which did not exclude military confrontations from time to time. Therefore, there was a close cultural exchange between the various polities of the Tai world and Tai scripts were arguably borrowed from one another in the writing cultures of neighbouring Tai polities.

The first example of this category is very important because it is considered the oldest evidence of the appearance of the Tham Lan Na script. Interestingly, it was found outside the Lan Na area, in Sukhothai, the older kingdom that had had a close relation with Lan Na since the time of the foundation of the Lan Na golden plate mentioned previously which was produced by a high-ranking monk from Sukhothai in 1376 (ศท. 52, Inventory number of the National Library of Thailand). The golden plate is inscribed mainly in Sukhothai script and the Thai language. The inscription is about

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<sup>19</sup> For a translation of this inscription and of a palm-leaf manuscript related to it, see Grabowsky 2004, 448–453.

the construction of a temple hall (*vihāra*), Buddha statues and relics being placed in the monastery by the Venerable Cudhāmuṇi. The scribe then separated the content by using a small circle and continued the inscribed text in Tham Lan Na script and the Pali language until the end. However, until now, we cannot find any other evidence to substantiate the hypothesis that the Tham Lan Na script was used for writing Pali texts in the Sukhothai kingdom. However, we can also not exclude the possibility that the high-ranking Sukhothai monk was a native of Lan Na.

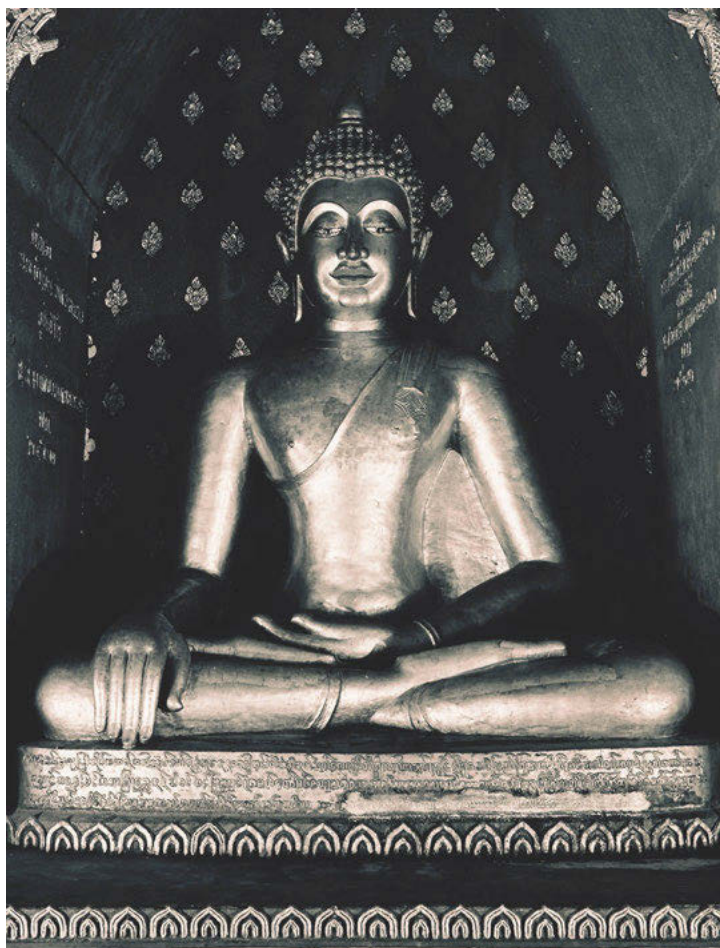


**Fig. 11:** Golden leaf of Maha Thera Cuthamuni (Cudāmuṇi) from 1376; photograph © Apiradee Techasiriwan.

Another example is an inscription on a bronze Buddha image. This inscription is very important because the image was produced by a Burmese ruler during the first years in which Burma occupied Chiang Mai. The Buddha image was cast in Lan Na art, in 1566, and has been sitting in Chai Phra Kiat (ชัยพระเกียรติ) monastery in Chiang Mai town until today (1.2.3.2 Wat Chai Phra Kiat 2108 BE / 1605 CE, ALI inventory number). The text on the pedestal is divided into two parts. The first part is inscribed in Tham Lan Na script, while the second part is written in Burmese script. The two parts contain the contents of the same narrative. However, the text inscribed in Tham Lan Na script and Tai Yuan language provides more details. The inscription text mentions the background of casting the image, stating that the king of Burma appointed a Burmese nobleman as the new ruler of Chiang Mai. The Burmese ruler then asked the last queen of Chiang Mai and the local Tai people to gain merit together by collecting damaged and scattered bronze Buddha images with the intention of melting the bronze for casting a new Buddha statue, and, finally, named the Buddha image Müang Rai Cao (เมืองรายเจ้า), which refers to the name of the founding king of Lan Na, Mangrai (มังราย).<sup>20</sup> The use of Lan Na art in casting the Buddha image and combining the two scripts

<sup>20</sup> Penth 1976, 98–102.

together in this inscription reflects the relative tolerance the Burmese showed towards the cultural traditions of their Northern Thai vassal state, at least during the early period of Burmese suzerainty which lasted until the early seventeenth century.<sup>21</sup>



**Fig. 12:** A bronze Buddha image; inscription 1.2.3.2: Wat Chai Phra Kiat, Chiang Mai, 2108 BE / 1605 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.

<sup>21</sup> According to Sarassawadee Ongsakul (2005, 111), the period of tolerance lasted from 1558 until c. 1664.



**Fig. 13:** Detail showing Burmese script on the Buddha image; inscription 1.2.3.2: Wat Chai Phra Kiat, Chiang Mai, 2108 BE / 1605 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.



**Fig. 14:** Detail showing Tham script on the Buddha image; inscription 1.2.3.2: Wat Chai Phra Kiat, Chiang Mai, 2108 BE / 1605 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.

### 4.3 Mixing of scripts and languages of distant writing cultures

After the Tai Yuan elite, especially in the south-western parts of Lan Na, accomplished the expulsion of the Burmese from Lan Na through the strategic alliance with and help of King Taksin of Thonburi and King Rama I of Bangkok from 1774 until 1804,<sup>22</sup> Lan Na became associated with the Siamese kingdom in the south and was eventually known as ‘Northern Siam’. The economy and society in Lan Na prospered, particularly in Chiang Mai, the largest of the five Northern Thai

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<sup>22</sup> Sarassawadee Ongsakul 2018, 238–239.

kingdoms. In the course of the nineteenth century, various new technologies entered the area and a number of foreigners – such as Burmese, Chinese, West-erners – came to settle in Chiang Mai, a city known for its multicultural environment.

This characteristic is also reflected in some Lan Na inscriptions, for example, an inscription on a bronze bell at Wat Dòì Suthep in the city of Chiang Mai originally cast in May 1868 CE (1.2.3.1 Wat Phra That Dòì Suthep 2473 BE / 1930 CE, ALI inventory number). More than sixty years later, in 1930, this large bronze bell was recast by a high-ranking monk and Cao Kaeo Nawarat (1910–1939), the then ruler (เจ้าหลวง *cao luang*) of Chiang Mai, joined by a wealthy family of the city, because the old bell was severely damaged. Therefore, the sponsors cooperated to cast the bell and added more bronze, then donated the bell to Suthep Cetiya on Dòì Suthep mountain in Chiang Mai. It is worth mention that the inscription notes Princess Dara Ratsami (1873–1933), daughter of King Inthawichayanon of Chiang Mai and consort of late Siamese King Chulalongkorn (r. 1868–1910), as a royal co-sponsor of the casting of the new bell.

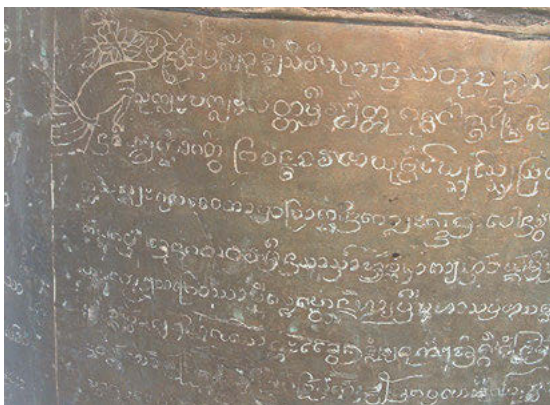
The new bronze bell is inscribed in three scripts and languages. The first part (Part I),<sup>23</sup> written exclusively in the Tham script, presumably recalls the text of an earlier inscription which existed before the recasting of the damaged bell. It is followed by an additional text referring to the reasons for the recasting. This text is written in two almost identical versions, one in Tham script and the vernacular Tai Yuan language (Part II) and the other in modern Thai script and Thai (Siamese) language (Part III). Both parts record the date of casting the new bell, the names of the sponsors, their purpose in recasting the bell, and their wishes for the benefit derived from the deed gaining merit. As for the Chinese characters (Part IV), we assume that they were used to be inscribed on the bell because a wealthy family of Chinese descent who had been living in Chiang Mai were among the group of lay sponsors. The members of that family might have wanted to add a short text recorded the date of casting the bell in Chinese style, accompanied by words of blessing to all Chiang Mai people.

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<sup>23</sup> This numbering refers to the edition presented in Appendix 3 of this paper.



**Fig. 15:** A large bronze bell of Dòi Suthep; inscription 1.2.3.1: Wat Phra That Dòi Suthep, 2473 BE / 1930 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.



**Fig. 16:** Detail showing Tham script on the bronze bell of Dòi Suthep; inscription 1.2.3.1: Wat Phra That Dòi Suthep, 2473 BE / 1930 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.



**Fig. 17:** Detail showing Thai script on the bronze bell of Dòi Suthep; inscription 1.2.3.1: Wat Phra That Dòi Suthep, 2473 BE / 1930 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.



**Fig. 18:** Detail showing Chinese characters on the bronze bell of Dòi Suthep; inscription 1.2.3.1: Wat Phra That Dòi Suthep, 2473 BE / 1930 CE; photograph © ALI, CMU.

The last example is an inscription engraved on a cement board, 1964, วัดหมื่นเงินกอง (Mün Ngoen Kòng monastery), Chiang Mai (1.2.4.1 Wat Mün Ngoen Kòng 2507 BE / 1964 CE, ALI inventory number). The content of this inscription is divided into four parts: the first part is inscribed in Tham Lan Na script. It provides the name and the purpose of the principal sponsor, Nai Tha Thipphotha (นายทา ทิพย์โพธา), who donated money to build an Ubosatha hall and dedicated the benefits derived from the meritorious deed to his deceased wife, Nang Lan (นางหลาน); the second part is inscribed in modern Thai script, the contents of which is the same as that of the first part; the third part is inscribed in Roman script, the meaning also corresponds largely with the first and second parts; and in the last part, the scribe turned to using Tham script again to add more details, including the names of the sponsors who initiated the building of the wall surrounding the monastery. Moreover, at the end of this inscription, the name of the abbot of this monastery is inscribed in Thai script. We surmise that it was the monastery's abbot himself who acted as the scribe or at least ordered the engraving of this cement inscription.

However, a connection between the principal sponsor (Nai Tha Thipphotha) and the use of the Roman script is still unclear. However, a modern Thai education had gradually been introduced in the north since the late nineteenth century, but the role of American missionaries of the Presbyterian Mission should be mentioned as well. The teaching of English became popular in the region, opening the opportunity to local people, laity and monks similarly to learn the English language. The abbot and scribe of our inscription might also have acquired some knowledge of English. Moreover, scribe and sponsor might have wished people from several Western nationalities to be able to understand and know the merit they had accumulated, or it exhibits the proficiency of the scribe in a Western foreign language and script.



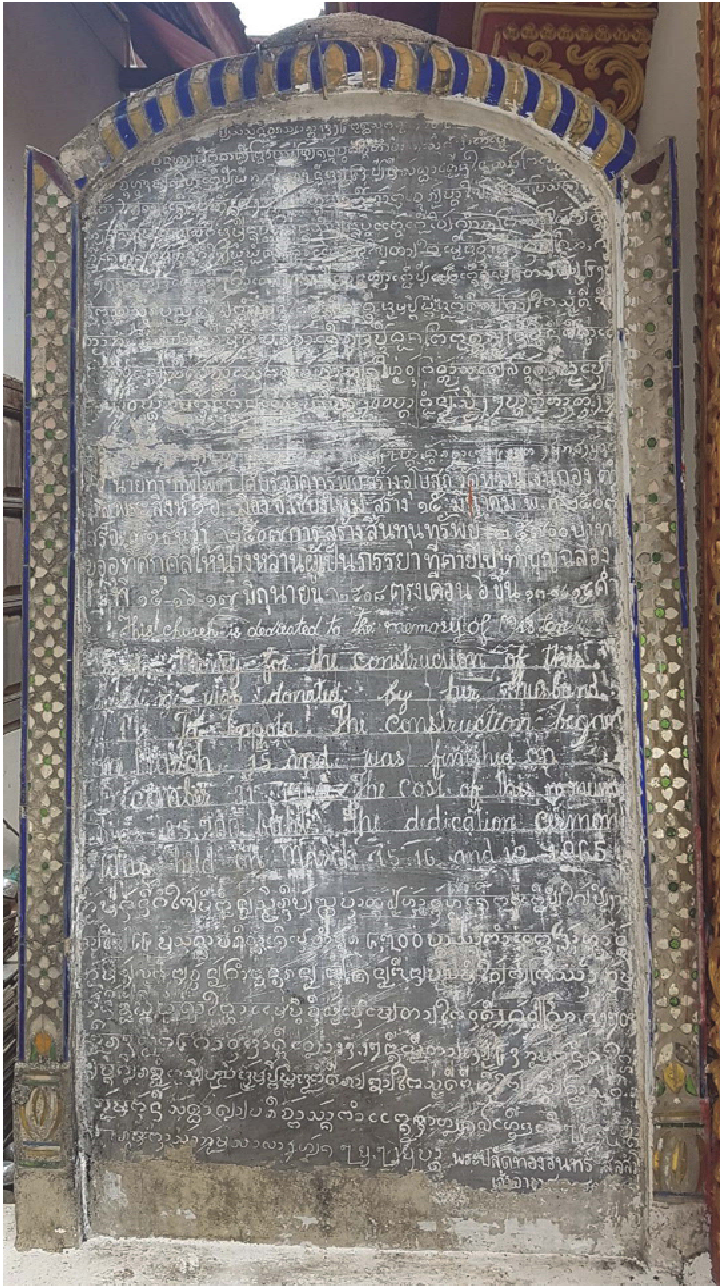
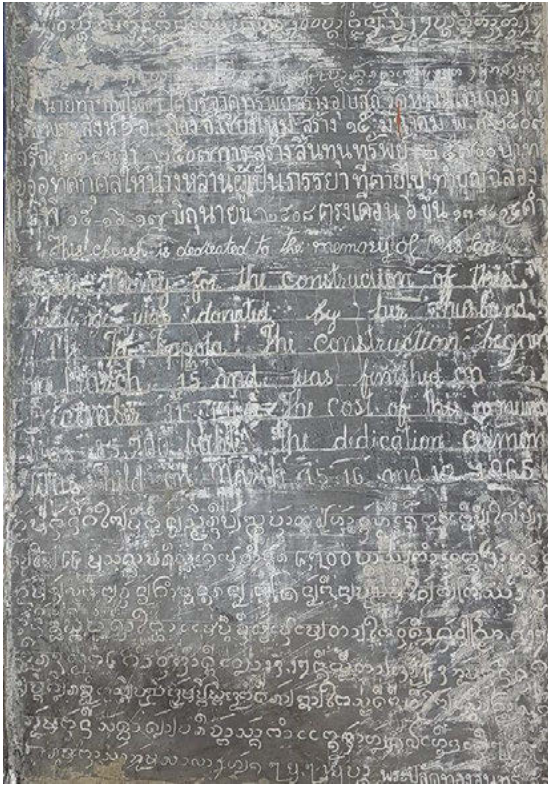


Fig. 19: Cement inscription; inscription 1.2.4.1: Wat Mün Ngoen Kông 2507 BE / 1964 CE; photograph © Apiradee Techasiriwan.



**Fig. 20:** Detail showing Thai, Roman and Tham scripts of the cement inscription; inscription 1.2.4.1: Wat Mün Ngoen Kông 2507 BE / 1964 CE; photograph © Apiradee Techasiriwan.

## 5 Conclusion

These characteristics mentioned above are not only found in the Lan Na epigraphic culture, but also in other epigraphic and manuscript cultures in South East Asia. Exemplary are the Tai groups in Yunnan, such as the Tai Nüa in the autonomous Tai counties of Moeng Laem and Jinggu who normally use only their locally developed secular Lik To Ngòk (Bamboo Shoot Script). However, some Tai Nüa settlements closer to Chiang Rung in China and Chiang Tung in eastern Burma came under the cultural influence of Lan Na Buddhism and adopted the Tham script which they use alongside the Lik script. Moreover, in the case of the manuscript culture of the Tai Lü in northern Laos, we also observe that Tai Lü scribes often copy the main contents in Tai Lü script following

older extant manuscripts, then use modern Lao script to write colophons.<sup>24</sup> Another case are bilingual – Pali and Thai – manuscripts in central Thailand, where scribes normally use Khôm script, which is a variant of Khmer script, for writing Pali, and Thai script to write vernacular texts. Similarly, Burmese script is often used for the writing of Pali language texts in the Shan manuscript culture because Shan consonants are insufficient for the writing of Pali, and Shan orthography does not support the writing of Pali, which has a different way of writing with the vernacular language.<sup>25</sup>

In conclusion, the use of several scripts and languages in the same inscribed object is testified in Lan Na epigraphy and can be conceptualised by differentiating three categories: firstly, the mixing of scripts widely used within the Lan Na writing culture; secondly, the mixing of scripts and languages of Lan Na with those of neighbouring writing cultures; and thirdly, the mixing of the scripts and languages of Lan Na with more ‘distant’ writing cultures. Multiscriptism and multilingualism in Lan Na are influenced by, at least, the following four factors: the individual knowledge of scribes; the role of languages and scripts in public spheres; the ethnic background of sponsors and commissioners; and the popularity and social value of scripts at the time when the inscriptions were produced. The multilingual and multiscriptural inscriptions presented in this preliminary study reflect the vicissitudes of Lan Na history and the transformation of the region from an independent Buddhist kingdom to a vassal state of Burma, and later Siam, and its final integration into the modern Thai nation-state.

## Abbreviations

ALI = Archive of Lan Na Inscriptions (CMU)

BE = Buddhist Era

CE = Common Era

CMU = Chiang Mai University

CS = Culasakarāja, lunar calendar used in Thailand

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<sup>24</sup> For colophons in Tai Lü manuscripts in northern Laos, see the catalogue of manuscripts found at Vat Pak Chaek, a Tai Lü village monastery in Luang Prabang province, situated roughly 50 km to the north of Luang Prabang town. See Khamvone Boulyaphonh and Grabowsky 2022.

<sup>25</sup> For the round-shaped secular Shan script, also called Lik Tou Moan (literally, ‘circular letters’), see Sai Kam Mong 2004, 119–146.

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## Appendix 1: Wooden board inscription of Wat Chang Khoeng, Chiang Mai

### 1.2.2.1 Wat Chang Khoeng 2391 BE / 1848 CE (All inventory number)

Source: Penth, Silao Ketphrom and Sarawut Sitha 2004, 137–148.

#### Transcription into modern Thai:

ศุภมัสดุ ศักราชได้ 1209 ตัว ปีมะเมียฉนำ กัมโปชคาม ตามขอมพิสัย เข้ามาในคิมห  
จิตรมาส ไทยว่าปีเมืองเม็ต เดือน 7 ออก 15 ค่ำ วันอังคาร ไทย (ว่าวัน) กัดเป้า ฤกษ์ 12  
ตัว ชื่ออุตรพลคุณ บุญมี

พระเป็นเจ้าของตนชื่อแก้วเมืองมา (พร้อมทั้ง) อรรคชายาชื่อศรีบุญยวง มีจิตประสาทเป็น  
ปฐมมหามูลศรัทธาอันยิ่ง จึงมีพระบ้นฑูรใส่ห้วยนายนาญก จูคน หนภายในมี

- ครูบาสิลมณี เป็นเค้า และ
- ตู๋หลวงนนทา
- ตู๋หลวงโพธา
- ตู๋หลวงเทพ

หนภายนอก มีแสนสิริเป็นเค้า (พร้อมทั้ง) ฝาเมือง ตงเมือง จูคน เยนศมเยน  
มีจิตสมัคกรรมโมทมาน (ที่จะ) สร้างเปียงยังสุวรรณรัชตฉัตร ชั้นต่างไว้ยัง

จอมเกศพระชินมาร (พร้อม) กับทั้ง (สร้าง) พระหาร 2 หลัง เป็นที่สถิตสำราญ (ของพระ)  
พุทธรูปเจ้า และ (ของรูป) พระมหากัจฉายนเถรเจ้า หื้อก้านกุง รุ่งเรือง (แก่) ศาสนา ดีหลี  
เตื่อะ

แสนสิริต้องแต่้ม แพลจาริกนี้ไว้ แล

#### Translation:

Be you blessed. In 1209 cs, the year // of the horse, according to the Cambo-  
dian tradition, entering the hot season, // a *müang met* year as the Tai say, //  
on the fifteenth waxing day of the month of Caitra, the seventh lunar month,  
on a Tuesday, a *kat pao* day as the Tai say, at the auspicious moment of 12, //

which was a full-moon day,<sup>26</sup> // His Royal Highness Kaeo Müang Ma, along with his queen named Si Bun Yuang, // had the intention to be the royal leading supporter // and, thus, gave the royal order // to all chiefs; among the heads of the Sangha these were Khruba Sinlamani, who takes the lead, // Tu Luang Nantha, Tu Luang Photha, and Tu Luang Thep; // among the heads of the laypersons, these are Saen Siri who takes the lead, as well as Fa Müang // and Tong Müang. They all are delighted unanimously // to sponsor the making of this golden and silver parasol // which is placed above the head of the Phra Chinaman (Brah̄ Jinamāra) Buddha statue, // along with the [construction of] two temple halls (*vihāra*) which are the joyful place of Buddha images and images of Phra Maha // Kaccāyana Thera Cao so that the Teachings of the Buddha will prosper surely. // **Saen Siri Tōng Taem (i.e. the royal scribe) translated this inscription.**<sup>27</sup>

## Appendix 2: Golden leaf of Maha Thera Cuthamuni (Cudāmuṇi)

### สท. 52 (Inventory number of National Library of Thailand)

Source: Kongkaeo Wirapracak 2014.

#### Transcription into modern Thai:

- 1) ๐ ศักราชได้ ๗๓๘ โรงแษษัทร เดินหกแรมค้ำหนึ่งสุกราวพาร ๐ สมเด็จพระมหาเถรจุทามุณีปลุกพิหาร
- 2) นี้ได้เดินสิบห้าวันบริบูรณ์แล้วเมื่อหน้า เดินสิบ แรมสี่ค้ำ พุทธพาร กรรติการิกสจึงปราดิสถา
- 3) พระธาตุ และพระพุทธรูประติมาอันท่านกระทำด้วยเงิน ทอง เขียว กง ทั้งหลายจึงกระทำ
- 4) พระอถารสเหนืออัน ๐ อิมินาบุญญกมุเมน พุทโธ โหมิ อนาคต สงุสราโมจนตุถาย สพุเพ สตุเต อเสสโตชะชะ

<sup>26</sup> This date corresponds to Tuesday, 18 April 1848 (1210 Caitra 15 CS). This day was indeed a *kat pao* day. However, on that day, the solar year had already moved to 1210 CS, a *poek san* year.

<sup>27</sup> This last sentence is inscribed in the Tham script and, thus, highlighted in bold letters.

**Translation:**

In Culasakkarat 738, the year of the dragon, on the first waning day of the sixth [lunar] month, a Friday,<sup>28</sup> Somdet Phra Maha Thera Cuthamuni completely built this temple hall (*vihāra*) for a month and fifteen days. // Passing to the tenth [lunar] month, on the fourth waning day, on a Wednesday, the auspicious moment of Karttika<sup>29</sup> (...), therefore it establishes // the stupa and the Buddha statue which is made of silver, gold, zinc, ivory. Thus it celebrates // *Phra Atharot (Brah Athārasa). Iminā puññakammena buddho homi anāgate saṃsārāmocanattāya sabbe satte asesato* ('By virtue of the merit (obtained by) this deed I ask for becoming a Buddha in the future in order to ensure that all sentient beings escape from the cycle of rebirth without any exception').<sup>30</sup>

**Appendix 3: A large bronze bell of Dòì Suthep****1.2.3.1 Wat Phra That Dòì Suthep 2473 BE / 1930 CE (ALI inventory number)**

Source: Penth, Silao Ketphrom and Apiradee Techasiriwan 2007, 287–306.

**Part I: Tham script****Transcription into modern Thai script:**

สุทินัน วด เม มหาขณโท ทาน มงคฺลวฑฺฒิ ลิริสุภมฺสฺสตุ  
 จุลศักราชได้ 1230 ตัว มะโรงฉนำ กัมโพชพิสัย ในคิมกันตฤดู มาสวิสาขา สุกลปักษ์  
 ปุณมี พุทธวารโถง ไทยภาษาว่าปีเป็กสี เดือน 8 เพ็ญ เม็ง (ว่า)วันพุธ ไทย(ว่าวัน) เต่าสี  
 ดิถี 15 ตัว นาทีดิถี 1 ตัว พระจันทร์จรณยุติเสด็จเข้าเที่ยวเทียบนักษัตรฤกษ์ตัวถ้วน 16  
 ชื่อวิสาขเทวดา นาทีฤกษ์ 4 ตัว ปรากฏในตุลวโยราสี อดิตวรพุทธศาสนาคล่า่งแล้วได้  
 2412 อนาคตวรพุทธศาสนา(ที่)จักมาภายหน้าบ่น้อยยัง 2588 พระวรรษาเต็มบ่มีเศษ

<sup>28</sup> This date corresponds to Tuesday, 24 February 1377 (738 Phalgunā 16 cs).

<sup>29</sup> This date corresponds to Sunday, 6 July 1376 (738 Ashadhā 19 cs).

<sup>30</sup> The Pali phrase was translated by Achan Sa-aem Kaeokhlai.



เหตุนี้หมายมี พระเจ้าชีวิตตนเป็นเจ้าแก้รัตนดิงสา อภินวบุรีศรีพิงไชย เจ้ากาวิโลรส  
 สุริยวงษ์ เจ้าพระนครเชียงใหม่ เป็นเค้า ซึ่งเป็นกับด้วยอรรถคมเหลสี และราชบุตรา ราชบุตรี  
 หมายมี เจ้าทิพ(เกสร) และเจ้าอุบลวันณา และราชบุตรา ราชบุตรี จู๊ตุน จู๊คน  
 ก็ได้สร้างยังมหาฆัณโทแดงหลวงลูกนี้ ถวายไว้ให้เป็นทาน (เพื่อ)ส่วยตีบูชา กับพระมหา  
 ซินธาตุเจ้าสุเทพที่นี่ トラบ 5000 พระวรรษา น้ำหนักทองมี (1) ล้าน 5 แสนปลาย 2 หมื่น  
 ของจงเป็นปัจจัย(แก่)โลกียะ โลกุตระ มรรคะ มีผลนิพพานเป็นยอด แต่  
 นิพพานัน ปรรม์ สุขี

### Translation:

*Sudinnaṃ vatame mahāghaṇḍo dānaṃ maṅgalavuḍḍhi sirisubhamastu* ('The donation of the great bell is given by me. Let there be glorious and auspicious!')

In Culasakarāja 1230, in the year of the dragon in the hot season, on the full moon-day of the month of Visākhā, a Wednesday, [or] as the Tai say, in a *poek si* year, on the eighth [lunar] month, a Wednesday as the Mon say, a *tao si* day as the Tai say, at the *tithi* (auspicious time) of 15 and *nādi tithi* of 1,<sup>31</sup> when the moon entered the sixteenth *nakkhataṛkṣa*, the zodiacal sign of Libra, with 2412 years of the Buddhist Era already elapsed and 2588 years of the Buddhist Era still remaining: the Lord of Life, Protector of the Three Gems, Supreme Ruler over the Great City of the Ping River, King Kawilorot Suriyawong of Chiang Mai, as principal initiator, along with his queen, royal sons and royal daughters, namely Princess Thip[kesòṅ] and Princess Ubonwanna, and all their sons and daughters, sponsored the making of the Mahā Ghaṇḍo Deng Luang bell and donated it to worship the Phra Mahā Jīnadhātu Cao Suthep (statue) so that it will last [until the end of] 5000 years. The weight of its bronze is over one million and five hundred and twenty thousand [units]. May this be a support for the mundane (*lokiya*) and supermundane (*lokutta*), a path to reach Nibbāna.

*Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ* ('Nibbāna is the highest [stage of] happiness').

31 This date corresponds to Wednesday 6 May 1868.

## Part II: Tham script; Pali and Tai Yuan languages

## Transliteration into modern Thai script:

มงฺคฺลวฑฺฒิ สิริสุภมฺสฺสตุ

จุลศักราชได้ 1292 ตัว มะเมียจนำ กัมโพชพิสัย เข้ามาในคิมหันตฤดู อุดนฤกษ์สตุ สุกละ  
 ปักข์สัตตมิ ฤดู พุทธาวโรง ไทยภาษาว่าปักดสะง่า เดือน 10 ขึ้น 7 ค่ำ เม็ง (ว่า) วัน 4  
 ไทย (ว่าวัน) กำเป่า ดิถี 7 ตัว นาทีดิถี 12 ตัว นาทีฤกษ์ 18 ตัว พระจันทร์จรณยุตโยส  
 โสเดเสด็จเข้าเที่ยวเทียมเสมียงเมียงม่อ อ่วยหน้าราจรล่อ พระนักษัตรฤกษ์ตัวถ้วน 12  
 ชื่ออุตตราผลคุณเทวดา มาปรากฏในการกัญหาไปราศรี อติตวพรุทธศาสนา อันคลาล่ง  
 แล้วได้ 2473 พระวรรษา ธิกายปลาย 1 เดือนกับ 18 วัน อนาคตวชินศาสนาอันจักมา  
 ภายหน้า ยังมีมากบ่น้อยยังอยู่ 2526 พระวรรษา ธิกายปลาย 10 เดือนกับ 8 วันบุ่เศษ  
 เหตุเอามาบวกสมกันก็หากเต็ม 5,000 พระวรรษาบุ่เศษ

เหตุนั้นหมายมีมหาสมณศรัทธา และมูลศรัทธาทั้ง 2 คณะคณา ทั้งภายในและภายนอก  
 นอกภายใน หมายถึงเจ้าคุณอภัยสารทนะ เจ้าคณะจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ และเจ้าคณะแขวงทั้ง  
 หลายทุกๆ องค์ ก็พร้อมด้วยศิษย์ สาธุศิษย์ทั้งหลาย จู๊ตุน จู๊องค์ (และ) ศรัทธาครูอุปัฏฐาก  
 จู๊ผู้ จู๊คน ๆ หนภายนอกหมายมีพ่อแก้วนารัฐ เจ้าผู้ครองนครเชียงใหม่ ก็พร้อมด้วยอรรค  
 มเหสี และบุตรา บุตรีทั้งหลาย จู๊ผู้ จู๊คนๆ ถัดเรียงนั้นมาหมายมี พระราชชายาเจ้า  
 ดารารัศมี ก็พร้อมด้วยเด็กสาว ชาวแม่นาง เจ้าแม่เรือนหลวงทั้งหลาย จู๊ผู้ จู๊คน ๆ  
 ถัดเรียงนั้นมาหมายมีหลวงอนุสารสุนทร ก็พร้อมด้วยภริยา (ชื่อ) นางคำเที่ยง และบุตรา  
 บุตรี ทั้งหลาย จู๊ผู้ จู๊คน ๆ

ได้เล็งเห็นเด็จพระอริยวงศาคตญาณสมเด็จพระสังฆราชเจ้า กรมหลวงชินวราลงกรณ  
 ได้เล็งเห็นเด็จพระอริยวงศาคตญาณสมเด็จพระสังฆราชเจ้า กรมหลวงชินวราลงกรณ  
 ไปตั้งนี้ น้ำหนักเด็จพระอริยวงศาคตญาณมีล้าน 5 แสน 2 หมื่นเท่านั้น (จึง) พร้อมด้วยสมณศรัทธา  
 และมูลศรัทธา ทั้ง 2 ฝ่าย คณะคณา ก็พร้อมเพรียงกันมาปฏิสังขรณ์ซ่อมแซมขึ้นใหม่  
 เต็มทองใส่แถม 5 แสน รวมน้ำหนักทอง (ของ) เต็งเก่า (และ) ใหม่ มีน้ำหนัก 2 ล้าน 2  
 หมื่นทอง เท่านั้นแล เต็งหลวงแก่นนี้ถวายเป็นทานไว้กับ พระธาตุเจ้าสุเทพ ทรายอายุเต็ง  
 นี้เทอญ

ขอให้ศรัทธาผู้เข้าทั้งหลาย ทั้ง 2 ฝ่ายคณะคณา ทั้งภายในและภายนอก ขอหื้อได้ข้าม  
 พันจากโอฆวัฏสงสาร หื้อได้ถึงฝั่งกล้าหน้าที่เมืองฟ้านิพพานเจ้านั้น แท้ดีหลี

เขยุดุภาว เขยุดุภาว เขยุดุภาว

## Translation:

*Maṅgala vuḍḍhi siri subhamastu.* In Culasakarāja 1292, the year of the horse, (...)  
 the Tai say a *kot sanga* year, on the seventh waxing day of the tenth [lunar]  
 month, the fourth day of the week as the Mon say, a *ka pao* [day] as the

Tai say,<sup>32</sup> at the *tithī* (auspicious time) of 7, and *nāḍī tithī* of 1, the *nāḍīrkṣa* of 18, the moon entering the twelfth *nakkhataṛkṣa*, the zodiacal sign named Uttarā phala guṇa devatā, with 2473 years, one month and twenty-one days of the Buddhist Era already elapsed and 2526 years, ten months and eight days of the Buddhist Era still remaining, adding up to the full 5,000 years of the Buddhist Era: the two leading monastic supporters and all principal supporters (*mūlasaddhā*) of the two groups – the ‘inner group’ led by Cao Khun Aphai Santha, the principal abbot of Chiang Mai province, along with the principal abbots of the ecclesiastical districts and all their disciples and attendants, the ‘outer group’ led by Phò Cao Kaeo Nawarat, the ruler of Chiang Mai, together with his queen, and all his children, joined by the royal consort Princess Dara Ratsami<sup>33</sup> and her daughter, (...) all people in the palace, followed by Luang Anusan Sunthôn and his consort named Nang Kham Thiang, and all their children, saw that the old bell was dilapidated, its sound was bad and not loud.

The original weight was one million five hundred and twenty thousand [units]. Therefore, the leading monastic supporters and principal supporters of the two groups unanimously renovated the bell by adding five hundred thousand [units of] copper. Thus the total weight of the bell – old and new – was two million and twenty thousand [units of] copper. This great bell was donated to the stupa (*phra that*) of Dòi Suthep until [the end of] this bell’s life.

May we all, religious faithful of the two groups, both the inner and the outer group, escape from the cycle of rebirth (*oghavaṭasamsāra*) and reach the borders of the celestial city of Nibbāna with certainty.

*Jeyyatubhavaṃ jeyyatubhavaṃ jeyyamaṅgalaṃ* (‘Let there be victorious and auspicious!’).

<sup>32</sup> It is the tenth lunar month of the northern Thai calendar corresponding to the month Ashada. This date corresponds to Wednesday, 2 July 1930 which was indeed a *kap pao* day.

<sup>33</sup> The first part of the inscription states that King Kawilorot of Chiang Mai (r. 1854–1870), along with his queen, presided over the original casting of the bell in 1869.

### Part III: Thai script; Thai language

#### Transliteration into modern Thai script:

มังคลาฤทธิสิริสุภามัสตุ จุลศักราชได้ 1292 ตัว มะเมียณนำกัมโพชพิสัย เข้ามาในคิม  
 หันตฤดู สุกลปักษ์ สัตตมิถดู พุทธวารโอง ไทยภาสาวาปีกตสะง้า เดือน 8 ขึ้น 7 ค่ำ เมง  
 (ว่า)วัน 4 ไทย (ว่า)วัน) ก่าเป้า ดิติ 7 ตัว นาทีดิติ 12 ตัว นาทีฤกษ์ 18 ตัว พระจันทร์  
 จรณะยุติโยดโสดเสด็จเข้าเที่ยวเทียมเสมียงเมียงม่อ อว่ายหน้าราชรถล่อพระนักซ์ต  
 ฤกษ์ตัวถ้วน 12 ชื่ออุตตราผละคุณเทวดา ปรากฏในการกัญญาโปราตี อติตวรพุทธศาสนา  
 อันกลาล่วงแล้วได้ 2473 พระวระษา ธิกาปลาย 1 เดือนกับ 21 วันอนาคตวรชินศาสนา  
 อันจักมาภายหน้ายังมีมากคัมบ่้อยยังอยู่ 2526 พระวระษา ธิกาปลาย 10 เดือนกับ 8  
 วันบ่เศษ เหตุเอามาบวคสมกันก็หิกเต็มถ้วน 5,000 พระวระษาบ่เศษ  
 เหตุนั้นหมายมีมหาสมณศรัทธา และมูลศรัทธาทั้ง 2 คณะคณะทั้งภายในและภายนอก  
 ภายในมีเจ้าคุณอภัยสารทะ เจ้าคณะจังหวัดเชียงใหม่ และเจ้าคณะแขวงทุก ๆ องค์  
 พร้อมด้วยศิษย์สาธุศิษย์ทุกองค์ๆ ศรัทธาอุปัฏฐานทุกคนๆ  
 หนภายนอกมีพ่อเจ้าแก้วนารัฐ เจ้าผู้ครองนครเชียงใหม่ พร้อมด้วยอรรคมเหสี บุตรา  
 บุตรี ทุกคน ๆ ถัดเรียงนั้น มีพระราชชายาเจ้าดารารัศมี ก็พร้อมด้วยเด็กสาว ชาวแม่  
 นาง เล้าแก่เรือนหลวงทุกคน ๆ ถัดนั้นหลวงอนุสารสุนทร พร้อมภรรยา (ชื่อนาง) คำเที่ยง  
 บุตรา บุตรี ทุกๆ คน ได้เล็งเห็นยั้งตั้งหลวงอันแก่นั้น ชำรุดทรุดโทรมแตกเสีย เสียงต่อยก็  
 บัดี ตีกับตั้ง น้ำหนักเด็กเก่า มีล้าน 5 แสน 2 หมื่น เพราะฉะนั้นสมณศรัทธา และ  
 มูลศรัทธาทั้ง 2 คณะคณะ พร้อมเพรียงกันปฏิสังขรณ์ซ่อมแซมขึ้นใหม่ เต็มทองใส่แถม  
 5 แสน รวม (น้ำหนักของเด็ก) ทั้งเก่า (และ) ใหม่ มีน้ำหนัก 2 ล้าน 2 หมื่นทอง เท่านั้น  
 เลเด็กหลวงแก่นนี้ถวายเป็นทานไว้กับพระธาตุดอยสุเทพ ทรายอายุเด็งนี้เทอญ  
 ขอหื้อศรัทธาผู้เข้าทั้งหลาย ได้ถึง นิพพานปัจจุโย โหตุ โนนิจุฉิ

#### Translation:

*Maṅgala vuḍḍhi siri subhamastu* ('Let there be glorious and auspicious'). In Culasakarāja 1292, the year of the horse, (...) the Tai say a *kot sanga* year, on the seventh waxing day of the eighth [lunar] month, the fourth day of the week as the Mon say, a *ka pao* [day] as the Tai say,<sup>34</sup> at the *tithi* (auspicious time) of 7, and *nādi tithi* of 1, the *nādiṛkṣa* of 18, the moon entering the twelfth *nakkhataṛkṣa*, the zodiacal sign named *Uttarā phala guṇa devatā*, with 2473 years, one month and twenty-one days of the Buddhist Era already elapsed and 2526 years, ten months and eight days of the Buddhist Era still

<sup>34</sup> It is the eighth lunar month of the central Thai calendar corresponding to the month Ashada. This date corresponds to Wednesday, 2 July 1930 which was indeed a *kap pao* day.

remaining, adding up to the full 5,000 years of the Buddhist Era: the two leading monastic supporters and all principal supporters (*mūlasaddhā*) of the two groups – the ‘inner group’ led by Cao Khun Aphai Saratha, the principal abbot of Chiang Mai province, along with the principal abbots of the ecclesiastical districts and all their disciples and attendants, the ‘outer group’ led by Phò Cao Kaeo Nawarat, the ruler of Chiang Mai, together with his queen, and all his children, joined by the royal consort Princess Dara Ratsami and her daughter, (...) all people in the palace, followed by Luang Anusan Sunthòn and his consort named Nang Kham Thiang, and all their children, saw that the old bell was dilapidated, and its sound bad and not loud.

The original weight was one million five hundred and twenty thousand [units]. Therefore, the leading monastic supporters and principal supporters of the two groups unanimously renovated the bell by adding five hundred thousand [units of] copper. Thus the total weight of the bell – old and new – was two million and twenty thousand [units of] copper. This great bell was donated to the stupa (*phra that*) of Dòi Suthep until [the end of] this bell’s life.

May this be for all of us, religious faithful, a condition to reach Nibbāna with certainty.

#### Part IV: Chinese script; Chinese language

##### Transliteration into modern Thai script:

- 1) จง ห้า หมิน ก้าว อี้ ลือ
- 2) จิว เหนียน ชุ่ย ชือ เกิง อู่
- 3) ลิว เยว่ ชู ชี ยี เจี้ยน
- 4) ชิง ม่าย เหวอ เซ็ง ผิง อาน

##### Translation:

On the sixth month, the seventh day, in the nineteenth year (after the change of government in China, i.e. 1930 CE), this bell has been cast at noon time.

May the people of Chiang Mai live all in happiness.

## Appendix 4: Inscription of Wat Mün Ngoen Kòng

### 1.2.4.1 Wat Mün Ngoen Kòng 2507 BE / 1964 CE (ALI inventory number)

Source: Unpublished inscription kept at the Archive of Lan Na Inscriptions, Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University.

#### Part I: In Tham script

#### Transcription into modern Thai script:

- 1) ปุ่ลสสอศกจฺรสราก 1326 พุทฺธสกราช 2507
- 2) [วง]นี้หมายมีพ้อธาทิบโพธาบ้านอยู่หลังวัดบวกหงต่าบรกละสิงค์ อำเภอเมือง
- 3) จังหวัดเชียงใหม่ เพื่อบปีย ๓.ศ. 2507 นี้ อายุ 63 ปี มีสัทธาเชื่อในศาสนาพระพุทฺธ
- 4) เจ้า ได้สละเงินเปนจำนวน 2750034 บาท สองหมื่นห้าพันเจ็ดร้อยบาท ได้สั่งยังอุโบสถ
- 5) หลังนี้ ก้อมกับด้วยลูกอันมีนางบัว[ชุม] นางสิมอย นางบัวแก้ว เพื่อไว้ค้ำชูพระศาสนาไว้กับวัด
- 6) หมั้นเงินกอง ก้อมกันนี้ คิได้ยกยอทานโพหาแม่หลานได้ตายไฟเมื่อวันที่ [3] ธันวาคม ๓.ศ.
- 7) 2505 . กับ 3 [เหนือ]ขึ้น 7 ต่ำ เวลา 20[.20] นาที วันจัน นางหลานเกิดปีเป้าเป็งงัวเมื่อตายอายุ 62 ปี
- 8) กุสลส่วนบุญที่ได้กทำมานี้ ไฟรอดไฟถึงอุ้มปกยกออกที่ร้ายค้ายไฟสุ่ที่ดี
- 9) ตามกฎที่ตนปากฎ จิมมีผู้บริจากเงินร่วมปีตรองพระพุทฺธรูปในโบถนี้ มีอ้านเจ้า
- 10) ศุรสเทพ . . . . เจ้าคณะจังหวัดเชียงใหม่วัดพระธาตุสุเทพ แลวัดทุ่งยูเปน
- 11) เงิน 2[9]0 บาท ก้อมกันนี้ พ่อน้อยแสนบริจาก 200 บาท พ่อน้อยสม 27 บาท พ้อหนานต . 27
- 12) . . . [เงิน] . . [417] บาท . . . สร้าง . . . 26467 บาทถ้วน ทานเดือน 6 ออก 2[4] ๓,ศ 2408

#### Translation:

In this year 1326 CS, 2507 BE, // Phò Thathipphotha whose house is situated behind (the monastery of) Wat Buak Hong in Phra Sing sub-district, Müang district, // Chiang Mai province, who is 63 years old in the year 2507 BE, had the faith in the Teachings of the Buddha // spending 25,700 Baht of money to build

this ordination hall (*ubosot*) // along with his daughters Nang Bua Sum, Nang Si Mòi, and Nang Bua Kaeo, with the intention to support the Teachings of the Buddha at Wat // Mùn Kòng. At the same time, he makes the donation for his wife Mae Lan who had passed away on 3 December // 2505 BE, [i.e.] on the seventh waxing day of the third [lunar] month of the northern [calendar] at 20 o'clock, on a Monday.<sup>35</sup> Nang Lan was born in the year of the cow and died at the age of 62. // This share of merit derived from this donation [shall help] move her from an unpleasant place to a pleasant one // depending on her current situation. The persons donating the money, together with putting golden leaves on the Buddha statue placed in the ordination hall, are Cao // Khunsuthep, the head of the Sangha of Chiang Mai province [residing at] Wat Phrathat Suthep and Wat Thung Yu // amounting at 290 Baht. Besides, Phò Nòi Saen donated 200 Baht, Phò Nòi Som 27 Baht, Phò Nan (...) 27 Baht // (...) 417 Baht. (...) making up a total of 26,467 Baht. This donation was made on the 24th of the sixth month, 2408 BE.

## Part II: In Thai (Siamese) script

- 13) นายทา ทิพโพธา ได้บริจาคทรัพย์สร้างอุโบสถวัดหมีเงินกอง ตำบล
- 14) บลพระสิงห์ ๑ อ. เมือง จ. เชียงใหม่ สร้าง ๑๕ มีนาคม พ.ศ. ๒๕๐๗
- 15) เสร็จ ๓๑ ธันวาคม ๒๕๐๗ การสร้างสิ้นทุนทรัพย์ ๒๕๗๐๐ บาท
- 16) ขออุทิศกุศลให้นางหลานผู้เป็นภรรยาที่ตายไป ทำบุญฉลอง
- 17) วันที่ ๑๕-๑๖-๑๗ มิถุนายน ๒๕๐๘ ตรงเดือน ๖ ขึ้น ๑๓-๑๔-๑๕ ค่ำ

## Translation:

Mr Ta Thippotha donated property for the construction of the ordination hall (*ubosot*) at Wat Mùn Ngoen Kòng // in Phra Sing sub-district, Müang district, Chiang Mai province. The construction [started] on 15 March // and finished on 31 December 1964. A capital of 25,700 Baht was spent. // May I dedicate the merit to Nang Lan, my deceased wife. The merit-making is celebrated // on 15–16–17 June 1965 corresponding to the 13th–14th–15th waxing days of the sixth month.

<sup>35</sup> This date corresponds to Monday, 8 February 1965 (1326 Magha 7).

**Part III: In Roman script**

- 18) This church is dedicated to the memory of Mrs Lan  
 19) . . . . . Money for the construction of this  
 20) building was donated by her husband  
 21) Mr Ta Tippota. The construction began  
 22) on 15 March and was finished on  
 23) 31 December 1964. The cost of this monument  
 24) [w]as 25,700 Baht. The dedication [*cermon*]  
 25) was held on 15, 16 and 17 March 1965

**Part IV: In Tham script****Transcription into modern Thai script:**

- 26) ก้อมกันนี้คี่ได้มีพ่อน้อยสมริต ปัญจะ บ้านตั้งอยู่หน้าวัดหมื่นเงินทอง เกิดปีได้ ปี 25 . .  
 27) อายุได้ 66 มีสัทธาบริจาคเงินเป็นจำนวน 6,700 บาท ส้างกำแพงต้นหน้าวัด  
 28) ก้อมด้วยลูกนายจัน น้อยคำ นางนวลน้อย นาง[ไถ]น้อยพี่นายบุญมี ไว้กับพระ  
 ศาสนาก้อม  
 29) กันนี้ ขอยกยอทานไฟหาแม่บัวจันผู้เปนเมียตายไฟวันที่ 2 ธันวาคม ภ.ศ. 2504  
 30) เดือน 3 ออก 6 คำ วันอาทิตย์ เวลา 13.15 นาที เมื่อก่ายอายุ 63 ก้อมกันนี้ทานไฟหา  
 31) นายมงคล ขอกุศลบุญอุ้มปกยกออกที่ร้ายช้ายไฟสุที่พื้นหื้อได้เสวยความสุข .  
 32) ก้อมกันนี้ สัทธาทั้งหลายบริจาคส้างกำแพงด้านหลังแลเหนือ เงิน 7939 บาท  
 33) รวมกันส้างก้อมศาลา 2 หลัง 74,724 บาท (ต่อไปเป็นอักษรไทย) พระปลัดทอง  
 อินทร์ ลิลลัวโร  
 เจ้าอาวาส . . . . .

**Translation:**

At the same time, Phò Nòi Somrit Panca whose house is situated in front of Wat Mün Ngoen Kông and who was born in the year 25[...] // and 66 years old, has the religious faith to donate an amount of 6,700 Baht to construct the wall on the front side of the monastery. // [This donation is made] together with his children Nai Can, Nòi Kham, Nang Nòi, Nang Tho Nòi who is elder than Nai Bunmi [in support of] the Teachings of the Buddha. // Besides, I ask that this donation is to the benefit of my wife, Mae Bua Cin, who passed away on 2 December 1961, // on the sixth waxing day of the third [lunar] month, a Sunday, at



13.15 o'clock, at the age of 63. In addition, the donation is also dedicated to // Nai Mongkhon. May this merit help them to move from an unpleasant place to a place where they enjoy happiness. // All religious faithful have donated 7,939 Baht to build the wall on the backside of the monastery. // Together with the construction of the two pavilions (*sala*) this total up to 74,724 Baht.

(followed by a colophon in Thai)

Phra Palat Thòng In Sinlasngwaro (Indra Silasamvaro), the abbot.



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## **Scholarly Multilingualism**



Szilvia Sövegjártó

# On the Emergence and Development of Middle Babylonian Bilinguals

**Abstract:** Sumerian literary manuscripts from the Middle Babylonian period were often accompanied by Akkadian glosses or partially translated into Akkadian. However, determining whether a specific manuscript belongs to the Old or Middle Babylonian period is not a straightforward task: Middle Babylonian manuscripts frequently display a hybrid palaeography, incorporating elements of both earlier and later grammar and sign forms. Scholars typically attribute this phenomenon to the innovative and conservative tendencies of Middle Babylonian scribes. Nonetheless, it is also plausible that Old Babylonian manuscripts were available and copied during the Middle Babylonian period, directly influencing the stylistic characteristics of the final product. This article aims to examine the origins and evolution of the corpus of Middle Babylonian bilingual manuscripts from this perspective.

## 1 Introduction

The corpus of Middle Babylonian (c. 1595–1155 BCE) literary manuscripts<sup>1</sup> is significantly smaller than the Old Babylonian (c. 2004–1595 BCE). Despite several recent publications that have utilised this corpus, it has not yet been fully published.<sup>2</sup> Another important distinction is that while most compositions are still written in Sumerian, the manuscripts containing complete compositions, rather than excerpts,<sup>3</sup> are mostly bilingual. These manuscripts include either Akkadian glosses or a more or less complete Akkadian translation.<sup>4</sup>

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1 The present study refers with the term Middle Babylonian manuscripts specifically to manuscripts of the Kassite period.

2 See Viano 2016, 33, on the details.

3 These excerpts are mostly school exercises, published by Bartelmus 2016. On the format of school tablets, see Bartelmus 2018. An overview to this corpus was also provided by Veldhuis 2000.

4 Viano 2016, 33–36, lists seventy-nine Middle Babylonian manuscripts, including thirty-three bilinguals. Bilingualism also seems to be prominent in the scholarly corpus of the Middle Babylonian period. Zomer 2018, 124 reports forty-six bilingual incantations from the Middle

When distinguishing between Old Babylonian and Middle Babylonian literary manuscripts, their ductus and visual organisation provide the most informative clues, since explicit dating or colophons are generally not preserved on the manuscripts. The typical format of Middle Babylonian bilingual manuscripts was described by Jeremiah Peterson:

The Akkadian is entered below the Sumerian, and the translation is typically incomplete, with only select lines rendered in Akkadian or sporadic glossing in Akkadian in smaller script within the same line underneath the Sumerian it pertains, which is analogous to the predominant method of glossing in Old Babylonian literary texts.<sup>5</sup>

This format will be referred to as the *incomplete interlinear format*.

Another format frequently observed in this period is the two-column format, with the Sumerian version on the left and the Akkadian version on the right column. The Akkadian version is generally more complete in this *two-column bilingual format*<sup>6</sup> compared to the other two types of visual organisation.

A third format provides an Akkadian version without any demarcation or line break, as a direct continuation of the Sumerian text. This format is an innovation of the Middle Babylonian period<sup>7</sup> as it is virtually unattested in the Old Babylonian period, except for a manuscript from Tell Harmal.<sup>8</sup> It is also rare within the Middle Babylonian bilingual corpus. This manuscript type will be referred to as the *continuous bilingual format*.<sup>9</sup>

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Babylonian period, compared to the five to seven bilingual manuscripts known from the Old Babylonian period.

<sup>5</sup> Peterson 2017, 260–261.

<sup>6</sup> Peterson 2017, 261.

<sup>7</sup> Zomer 2018, 133, refers to a precursor of this format in the Old Babylonian period.

<sup>8</sup> The only example for this irregular format dating to the Old Babylonian period known to me is the manuscript IM 53977 (RIME 3/2.1.2.38), a bilingual composition containing a royal inscription of Šulgi in a syllabic Sumerian and an Akkadian version. In this case, the unique format is not the only irregularity.

<sup>9</sup> The typology presented here is simplified compared to the very elaborated categorisation provided by Zomer 2018, 127–138. Her typology considers not only Middle Babylonian but also Middle Assyrian bilingual manuscripts. On the latter corpus, also see Wagensonner 2018. Here, I only relate to the presentation of the Sumerian and Akkadian text regarding their position, while Zomer considers several other features, including script size, rulings and indentation techniques. I would argue that the choice of whether and how to apply ruling and indentation was determined more by the scribes' individual preferences, while the positioning of the Sumerian and Akkadian texts or text versions has praxeological implications. Therefore, the rough typology presented here is justified as I do not ascribe any specific function to the aforementioned elements of visual organisation. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the variety

Although these formats are also found in the Old Babylonian period, the visual appearance of the tablets is distinct, as suggested by Peterson's comparison of Old Babylonian and Middle Babylonian manuscripts from Nippur.<sup>10</sup> The ductus can be assessed based on diagnostic sign forms, including the KUR, NE KA, RU, KUG, SIKIL, HUR, UB, MUNUS and HE<sub>2</sub> signs.<sup>11</sup> The use of Middle Babylonian forms is sufficient to date a given manuscript to the Middle Babylonian period. However, as has been observed by several scholars, manuscripts often exhibit inconsistency in the use of Old Babylonian and Middle Babylonian sign forms. This phenomenon is usually explained by the use of contemporary sign forms while still drawing on the archaic and conservative Old Babylonian forms.<sup>12</sup>

Mixing older and newer sign forms is not unique to this corpus. Nevertheless, in a culture where copying<sup>13</sup> has played a significant role in the transmission of scholarly and literary content, there must be comprehensible reasons for the combination of various sign forms.<sup>14</sup> Contrary to the argument for conservatism, it could be proposed that scribes literate in cuneiform also had their individual writing styles and, as a consequence, they applied sign forms with some consistency in their manuscripts. Therefore, the mixture of sign forms may re-

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of formats attested in the Middle Babylonian period shows that the standardisation of bilingual formats is a later phenomenon, as suggested by Zomer 2018, 138.

**10** Peterson 2017, 261: 'In contrast to prevailing O[ld] B[abylonian] Nippur formats, formal column rulings are frequently used to establish the middle of the line and to establish a small empty margin between the end of the first columns and the beginning of the second column. Rulings on M[iddle] B[abylonian] literary texts are frequently distinguishable by their quality and their depth, which is often quite shallow and rounded in comparison to O[ld] B[abylonian] rulings.'

**11** See Peterson 2017, 261. Considering diagnostic sign forms, those of the late Old Babylonian First Sealand dynasty texts from Nippur should also be mentioned, including RI, UZ, 𒄩U, AR, KA and GI, where the Winkelhaken of the first four signs is written behind the vertical wedge. On this topic, see Nougayrol 1971, 68–69 with n. 4; George 2013, 129–130; Gabbay 2014, 148. A more comprehensive overview and recent discussion is provided by Gabbay and Boivin 2018, 24.

**12** See e.g. Peterson 2017, 261. He also mentions that such an admixture of various sign forms 'is frequently encountered in Babylonian scripts', however, I argue that whenever such inconsistencies occur, the reason behind them should be investigated.

**13** On the cultural practice of copying, see Brita et al. 2020.

**14** Krebernik 2001, 241, was more careful when assessing these features in a manuscript: 'Ob die sumerischen Zeichenformen tatsächlich eine ältere Vorlage widerspiegeln oder aber künstliche Archaismen sind (was mich wahrscheinlicher dünkt), wage ich nicht zu entscheiden. Eine umfassende Studie zu dem bisher kaum beachteten Phänomen der Koexistenz älterer und jüngerer Zeichenformen im selben Text steht noch aus.'

sult from the use of other scribes' manuscripts as a source in the production process, which involved copying, updating, redacting and complementing older manuscripts, including the addition of (further) glosses or even an Akkadian translation.



**Fig. 1:** CBS 3558 obverse (Nippur, Middle Babylonian Period, Penn Museum, Philadelphia), an incomplete interlinear bilingual manuscript; courtesy of the Penn Museum.

It was initially observed by Andrew R. George in relation to the bilingual fragment CBS 3558+, a manuscript of the royal hymn Lipit-Ištar A, that distinct features of both Old Babylonian and Middle Babylonian dialects coexist in the



Akkadian version of the composition.<sup>15</sup> Based on this observation, he proposed a multi-phase translation process that may have made use of previous Old Babylonian glosses.<sup>16</sup> The Old Babylonian status of this particular composition, the royal hymn *Lipit-Ištar A*, indeed, suggests the existence of earlier versions with only sporadic glosses. This hymn was among the few curricular texts studied in elementary education during the Old Babylonian period, which could have prompted the inclusion of a few or even additional glosses, depending on the skills of the apprentice scribe. However, a complete Akkadian translation is unlikely due to the predominant use of the Sumerian language in schools during that era.

In the following, I will argue that while this manuscript may appear unique, it is not truly one-of-a-kind. Additionally, the various types of bilingual manuscripts provide valuable insights into the production process of Sumerian literary manuscripts during the Middle Babylonian period.

## 2 Changes in the institutional background of literary manuscript production

Scholarly education in the Old Babylonian period was the subject of several studies, catered by the substantial amount of extant manuscripts related to this institution, as well as relevant archaeological discoveries, including school houses.<sup>17</sup> Scribal education in the Middle Babylonian period is not documented that extensively and, therefore, it also received moderate attention until recently. The most important studies were carried out by Leonhard Sassmannshausen (1997, 2002), Niek Veldhuis (2000), Veldhuis and Hermann Hilprecht (2003–2004) and in the recent monograph of Alexa Bartelmus (2016). A further important corpus, that of the incantations, was published by Elyze Zomer (2018).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> George 2012, 370.

<sup>16</sup> George 2012, 370: ‘Probably individual words of the Sumerian text were glossed in Akkadian in the Old Babylonian period, and these glosses only later joined up to yield a full translation.’

<sup>17</sup> On a school house discovered in Nippur, see Robson 2001. Another school house, ‘No. 7, Quiet Street’ is known from Ur, see Charpin 1986, 52, 69 and 434. A school in Babylon was described by Pedersén 1998, 332; Pedersén 2005, 19.

<sup>18</sup> Zomer 2018, 142, argues that especially bilingual incantations suggest that the genre was incorporated into the scribal curriculum during the late Old Babylonian or early Middle Babylonian period and, therefore, they are also relevant for the present paper.

The fundamental difference between Old Babylonian and Middle Babylonian scribal education is not the corpus of Sumerian texts they used for this purpose. School texts still mostly consisted of lexical and literary manuscripts, in many cases, excerpts. These two genres provided the necessary skills to understand scholarly texts, namely, access to the Sumerian lexicon and the complexities of Sumerian grammar. The lexical tradition could be also important to use the language actively, by composing new texts analogous to the older ones.<sup>19</sup>

However, the status of the Sumerian language appears to be very different compared to the Old Babylonian period. Though literary bilingualism is attested from the Old Babylonian period onwards, the low number of bilinguals prove that the bilingual format was more experimental than established in this era.<sup>20</sup> While scribal and scholarly education was carried out in Sumerian, on an individual basis and quite infrequently, Akkadian aids and hermeneutic tools making use of the scribes' native tongue were also applied. In the Middle Babylonian period, by contrast, Sumerian was no longer the mere device of scholarly activities and the language of education. Akkadian had already been implemented in schools as a teaching language as it was appropriate and encouraged to comment and translate Sumerian literary compositions more extensively than before. Moreover, Sumerian enjoyed a status of high prestige and, as a venerable language, was also the carrier of a cultural heritage.<sup>21</sup>

### 3 Case studies of Middle Babylonian bilingual manuscripts

In the following, I would like to present some case studies of Middle Babylonian bilingual manuscripts. I will focus on incomplete interlinear bilinguals with some typical features related to mixing Old Babylonian and Middle Babylonian characteristics. These hybrid features were also pointed out by the respective editors of these manuscripts. As I will argue, such hybrid manuscripts invite further investigation because they probably had a similar setting to manuscript CBS 3558+. The latter is not the only one where the Middle Babylonian scribe possibly used an Old Babylonian master copy when preparing his own exemplar.

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<sup>19</sup> Bartelmus 2016, 249.

<sup>20</sup> Cooper 1969, 13; Cooper 1993, 79.

<sup>21</sup> Bartelmus 2016, 5.

My aim is to shed new light on the direct influence of Old Babylonian literary manuscripts on their Middle Babylonian counterparts. The close relationship of the two corpora has been proven and extensively discussed by scholars, however, mostly restricted to the level of contents, especially to literary patterns and models. Here, I would suggest a more direct relationship apparent only in a few cases, namely, where exemplars of Old Babylonian literary manuscripts could have served as master copies when scribes recopied and redacted them in the Middle Babylonian period.

### 3.1 BM 78164

The manuscript BM 78164 (CT 58, 70) contains a bilingual liturgical composition dedicated to the god Enki in Sumerian<sup>22</sup> and Akkadian, written in interlinear format.<sup>23</sup> The Akkadian version was written with a somewhat smaller script and provides a partial translation to the Sumerian composition. The Sumerian and the Akkadian version of each line is separated from the previous and subsequent text line by a ruling. The manuscript probably comes from Sippar, and, thus, forms part of the northern Babylonian tradition.

The dating of the manuscript to the Middle Babylonian period is secured by the Middle Babylonian sign forms of RU (obv. 7' and 9') and KUR (rev. 20').<sup>24</sup> Maurizio Viano provides an in-depth discussion of this manuscript<sup>25</sup> and points out that the Akkadian version of the text exhibits a mixture of Old Babylonian and Middle Babylonian features. He also claims that the Sumerian version was redacted in the Middle Babylonian period because of some features, however, two of his three remarks are rather invalid<sup>26</sup> and the use of the terminative with a human referent (obv. 4' *passim* and obv. 24') is already common in the Old Babylonian corpus.

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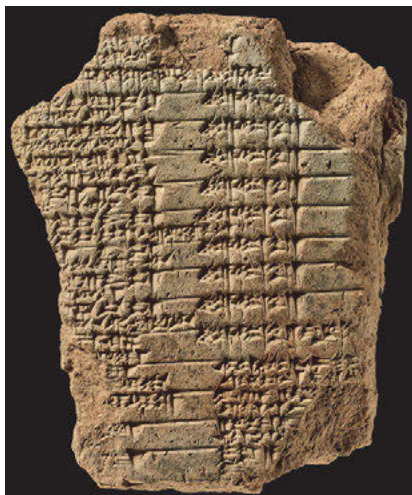
<sup>22</sup> In the Emesal dialect of Sumerian.

<sup>23</sup> The text was edited by Geller 1992.

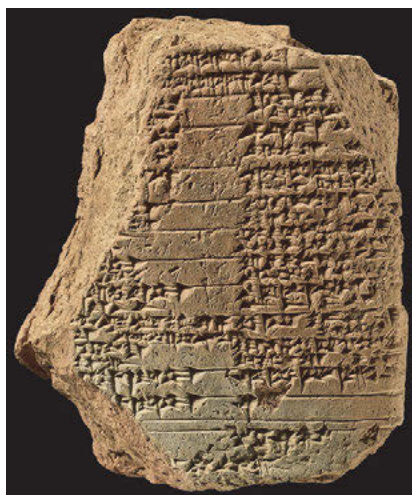
<sup>24</sup> The line numbers provided here deviate from those given by Viano 2016 and refer to the edition of the Electronic Babylonian Library (<<https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/BM.78164>> accessed on 9 August 2023).

<sup>25</sup> Viano 2016, 69–70.

<sup>26</sup> Viano reads a sign as [ka] in rev. 20' but it is probably a [de<sub>3</sub>'] and, thus, correct. In rev. 12', I would read *mur<sub>7</sub> še<sub>10</sub>-ba*, phonetic *mur<sub>7</sub>-ku-ba* or prefer solutions considering a dittography, a scribal lapse or a frozen gloss here, but certainly not an imperative prefixed erroneously with the /ba/-.



a



b

**Figs 2a–b:** BM 78164 obverse (Sippar, Middle Babylonian Period, The British Museum, London), an incomplete interlinear bilingual manuscript; © The Trustees of the British Museum, shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

The Old Babylonian features of the Akkadian version are the mimation preserved in two nominal forms (obv. 15': *i-na e-re-em pa-nim*; rev. 15': *su-mu-<sup>r</sup>uk-ta<sup>7</sup>-am*), though missing in all other contexts,<sup>27</sup> as well as the use of the Old Babylonian possessive suffix *-šu* in the text.<sup>28</sup> Further Old Babylonian peculiarities are observable on the level of the script, namely, the use of the signs ŠA and QA<sub>2</sub> (rev. 7'), as expected in Old Babylonian manuscripts, instead of their Middle Babylonian counterparts ŠA<sub>2</sub> and QA. Nevertheless, several CVC signs (obv. 25': PÍŠ; rev. 11': ṬIR, ŠIT; rev. 19': LAK; rev. 21': LID<sub>2</sub>, LUL) are typical of the Middle Babylonian orthography.<sup>29</sup>

While most Middle Babylonian traits are restricted to the Akkadian version, the Middle Babylonian sign form for KUR is also attested in the Sumerian version of the text, suggesting that the scribe was copying an Old Babylonian manuscript, probably one containing a few glosses, without being completely rigid

<sup>27</sup> On the loss of the mimation by the Middle Babylonian period, see Aro 1955, 32.

<sup>28</sup> On the orthography of the pronominal suffixes in the Middle Babylonian period with the loss of the final vowel see Aro 1955, 54–58.

<sup>29</sup> On this matter, see Aro 1955, 22.

in keeping to the archaic orthography. All in all, this manuscript is a further candidate for an Old Babylonian manuscript, originally with sporadic glosses, copied and supplemented with a more complete Akkadian translation in the Middle Babylonian period.

### 3.2 HS 1512

The manuscript HS 1512 contains a bilingual Ki-utu incantation.<sup>30</sup> The tablet was probably unearthed in Nippur and dates to the Middle Babylonian period, assured by the typical sign form of KUR (obv. 4b and 9a) both in the Sumerian and the Akkadian version.<sup>31</sup> The manuscript exhibits the interlinear bilingual format: the Sumerian and the Akkadian version of each line are separated from the previous and subsequent text line by a ruling. The Akkadian version is written with smaller signs than the Sumerian text. While the obverse of the tablet, or at least the preserved fragment of it, gives a complete Akkadian translation to the Sumerian text, the reverse only contains a few glosses arranged under the corresponding Sumerian expressions. A remarkable exception is the first line of the obverse where the Akkadian version is written above the Sumerian line, on the upper edge of the tablet.<sup>32</sup>

The palaeography of the tablet is characterised by Old Babylonian sign forms in the Sumerian version, while the Akkadian version contains several later sign forms. Manfred Krebernik compared the palaeography of the sign forms which appear in both versions, namely KUG, RU and two signs from the GIRI<sub>3</sub> group, and concluded that the newer forms appear consequently in the Akkadian version.<sup>33</sup>

The editor's further observations include the presence of the mimation in most cases, typical of the Akkadian grammar of the Old Babylonian period. The use of the Old Babylonian signs QA<sub>2</sub> and ŠA (obv. 10b) is also attested in the

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<sup>30</sup> The tablet was published by Krebernik 2001.

<sup>31</sup> See Viano 2016, 75. Krebernik 2001, 240, proposed either a late Old Babylonian or Middle Babylonian date. Zomer 2018, 143, proposed a late Old Babylonian or early Middle Babylonian date, listing some of the archaic and Middle Babylonian features of the manuscript on pp. 144–145. The lines of the tablet are quoted according to Krebernik 2001, however, (a) refers to the Sumerian, (b) to the Akkadian version of each text line.

<sup>32</sup> Krebernik 2001, 240. Zomer 2018, 82, suggested that this deviation might correspond to archival practices, though the archival context of the manuscript remains unknown.

<sup>33</sup> Krebernik 2001, 241. He also raised attention to further archaic sign forms in the Sumerian version without counterparts in the Akkadian text.

Akkadian version, suggesting an earlier dating of parts of the Akkadian text. By contrast, the use of several CVC signs (obv. 1b: NAP, ŠA<sub>2</sub>; 9b: KUN, MIT, U; 10b: BIŠ) is a Middle Babylonian trait of the Akkadian text.<sup>34</sup>

Assessing the status of this manuscript, conclusions are more problematic than in the previous case. First of all, the provenance of the tablet is only secured by the fact that most manuscripts in the Hilprecht Collection, but especially those of literary content, come from Nippur. Krebernik probably mentioned on purpose that no information is provided on the provenance of this tablet,<sup>35</sup> since Ki-utu incantations typically come from and are related to the temple of the sun god in Sippar.<sup>36</sup> Viano explicitly argues for reconsidering the provenance of the manuscript based on these arguments.<sup>37</sup> Even if the manuscript's provenance was established correctly, whether the tablet was produced in or was copied based on a master copy from the Sippar area should be considered.

The present manuscript seems to be more problematic at first sight when assessing the status of the Sumerian and Akkadian versions because the Akkadian version shows a high intertwining of Old and Middle Babylonian peculiarities. While the Sumerian version is characterised by archaic orthography and a fairly archaic grammar, except for a few, late Old Babylonian features, the Akkadian version is a mixture of Old Babylonian grammatical traits and Middle Babylonian orthographic peculiarities. Nevertheless, these peculiarities do not co-occur in single words but in some lines,<sup>38</sup> and, thus, it is possible that, indeed, Old Babylonian glosses or even a rather extensively glossed manuscript was completed by the scribe to provide a full translation to the Sumerian text. Interestingly, the sporadic glosses of the reverse include no Middle Babylonian peculiarities at all, which further reinforces the hypothesis of glosses taken over by the scribe from an Old Babylonian manuscript. A further, even if minor, hint of a master copy used in the course of the production process of the present manuscript can be found in obv. 3b. The Sumerian verb *luh-ha-ab* is provided with two equivalents in Akkadian, namely *mi-si* 'wash!' and *ub-bi-ib* 'clean!', separated by a double wedge. As, in this case, two translations are allocated to a

<sup>34</sup> Krebernik 2001, 240, and, generally, Aro 1955, 22.

<sup>35</sup> Krebernik 2001, 238.

<sup>36</sup> Compare the list of manuscripts in Krebernik 2001, 238, and the close parallel CBS 1529, also probably from Sippar, mentioned in Krebernik 2001, 242, n. 15.

<sup>37</sup> Viano 2016, 75. On the corpus of the Ki-utu incantations in general, see Baragli 2022, 27–31.

<sup>38</sup> See e.g. obv. 1b: [dUTU š]ar-rum da-a-a-nu ša<sub>2</sub> AN u KI. In this line, the Old Babylonian trait is the mimation on *šarrum*, while *dayyanu* lacks mimation and is followed by the sign ša<sub>2</sub>, both peculiar for the Middle Babylonian period.

lexeme, both probably come from an original manuscript and, thus, the scribe wished to keep them in the copy instead of making a decision of which translation to take over.

## 4 The emergence and development of literary bilinguals in the Middle Babylonian period

The archaic sign forms discovered in the Middle Babylonian literary corpus can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, they may have been inherited from older manuscripts. Secondly, they could be deliberate attempts by scribes to imitate older manuscripts, aiming to harmonise the form and the content, namely, the Sumerian language, considered as an archaic relict, with the sign forms used for writing the manuscript. I will argue that both of these strategies can be traced in the corpus of Middle Babylonian literary bilinguals. Although archaisms may appear similar on the surface, distinguishing their function requires careful consideration of their scope and presence in either or both versions of the bilingual text.

To conclude regarding the emergence and development of Middle Babylonian bilinguals, it is important to carefully assess all three main types of bilingual formats. What I will present here is a hypothesis based on the variety of visual organisations found in the Middle Babylonian literary and scholarly corpus, which provide insights into how Middle Babylonian manuscripts became bilingual.

During the Middle Babylonian period, scribes continued to copy Sumerian manuscripts from the Old Babylonian period, as they were part of a literary heritage written in a highly esteemed language. In some cases, it can be proven that not only the content was transmitted from the Old Babylonian to the Middle Babylonian period, but Old Babylonian manuscripts also served as master copies for producing new tablets. However, Middle Babylonian scribes took an innovative approach when creating their own manuscripts, providing them with more or less complete or incomplete Akkadian translations.

Middle Babylonian literary bilinguals exhibit several similarities in their microstructure, including formatting, ruling and indentation techniques, use of innovative sign forms and grammar. However, when examining the sources of text production, specifically the various types of Old Babylonian manuscripts available to Middle Babylonian scribes, a key distinguishing factor is the visual

organisation, namely, the arrangement of the Sumerian and, where present, the Akkadian text on the tablet in relation to each other.

The three dominant formats of bilinguals known from this period might have been influenced by their respective master copies. This does not necessarily mean that Middle Babylonian scribes adhered strictly to the format of the master copy, but rather that their formatting choices were influenced by the resources available to them when preparing their manuscripts. When they could only draw on the Sumerian version and had to create their own translation, they preferred either continuous bilinguals or parallel columns. The first option involved translating the Sumerian text line by line, placing the Akkadian version directly after the corresponding Sumerian phrase. Some interlinear bilinguals may also have been inspired by monolingual Sumerian manuscripts, in case the scribe chose to establish a clear separation between the Sumerian and Akkadian versions, either through ruling or indentation techniques, or by keeping the two versions on separate text lines – a practice commonly observed in cuneiform text production. These formats could also invite archaisms, both in the script and grammar, although they manifest differently compared to the case studies presented above. Importantly, the archaisms in these manuscripts primarily characterise the Sumerian version, while the Akkadian version adheres to Middle Babylonian standards.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, the hybridity of the Akkadian version becomes a distinct characteristic of those manuscripts where the Akkadian version draws on pre-existing contents preserved in the master copy.

The second format, arranging the two versions in parallel columns, allowed the scribes to create a complete copy first and then proceed with the translation in the second column. This formatting technique provided a clear boundary between the two versions, making them accessible separately for performative or reference purposes. Moreover, the parallel arrangement facilitated direct comparison, as corresponding lines were positioned next to each other.

When the format of parallel columns was employed, it can generally be assumed that the Akkadian version would be free of archaisms, as the translation was the work of the Middle Babylonian scribe. However, it is worth noting that exceptions exist. The manuscript CBS 11341 (PBS 1/1 11), for instance, a two-column tablet found in Nippur, contains a bilingual text. While the reverse of the tablet is well-preserved, the obverse has nearly been lost. The Sumerian text is presented in the left column, and the Akkadian version is found in the right column. However, the lines do not evenly match, and only the Sumerian lines

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<sup>39</sup> Representative examples of this type of visual organisation are the Nippur manuscripts CBS 13905 and N 3395.



have rulings. This particular composition is probably a ritual description which once belonged to a hymn dedicated to King Šulgi, with no known duplicates from earlier or later periods. The dating of the tablet has been a subject of debate, Veldhuis even suggested that the bilingual composition is entirely a product of the Middle Babylonian period.<sup>40</sup> In this case, the archaisms present in the composition<sup>41</sup> would be deliberate attempts by the scribe to align the form and content with the older tradition. By incorporating archaic elements into the newly composed hymn, the scribe demonstrates their erudition and knowledge of the Sumerian literary heritage, both in terms of its form and content. Notably, the archaic elements in this specific case are present in both versions, but primarily on the level of script and orthography, while grammatical archaisms are completely absent in both the Sumerian and Akkadian versions. Additionally, the Sumerian version displays some unique and innovative lexical elements that are not found in the extensive Old Babylonian literary corpus. This suggests that the author drew more from the Middle Babylonian lexical tradition when composing the hymn, rather than relying solely on the established literary style and phraseology of the Old Babylonian period.

Lastly, the (incomplete) interlinear format, which was discussed in detail in two case studies above, facilitated the simultaneous copying and translation of a text line by line. Furthermore, this format proved useful for preserving the glosses from the master copy and supplementing them with additional annotations when necessary, resulting in manuscripts with more complete, albeit sometimes still partially incomplete, Akkadian versions. One characteristic of these manuscripts, especially when using a glossed manuscript as the master copy, is the mixture of Old Babylonian and Middle Babylonian grammar and orthography within the Akkadian version.

In summary, the high formal variety within the relatively small corpus of Old Babylonian bilinguals can be attributed to the different affordances provided by various visual organisations, which were probably advantageous in an

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<sup>40</sup> Veldhuis 2008, 31, n. 11, dated the tablet to the Middle Babylonian period, while Westenholz 2005, 345, argued for an Old Babylonian date. For the discussion of their arguments pro and contra as well as for further reasoning for a Middle Babylonian date, see Viano 2016, 47–48. On the dating of the composition, but not this specific manuscript, see Sövegjártó 2022.

<sup>41</sup> Especially the mixing of Old Babylonian and Middle Babylonian sign forms throughout the composition could be such a feature, but archaisms are also identifiable on the level of the grammar. Furthermore, the lexicon can be also used as an argument for a later dating, as several unorthographic writings and terms only known from lexical compositions were integrated into the text. On the exact lexemes, see Viano 2016, 47, n. 175. All in all, Viano also argues for a Middle Babylonian dating.

educational context. However, in the case of the Middle Babylonian corpus, the variety of formats stems more from scribal practices. The formatting choices of Middle Babylonian scribes were probably also influenced by the range of Old Babylonian master copies available to them, including monolingual Sumerian manuscripts, manuscripts with sporadic glosses, and even complete or incomplete bilinguals. Additionally, translation practices and the Sumerian proficiency of the scribe, allowing for direct line-by-line translation, could also have influenced the format chosen. Nevertheless, it cannot be entirely ruled out that other factors, such as specific assignments in a teaching context, might have constrained scribal choices.<sup>42</sup>

## 5 Conclusion

Glossed manuscripts and bilinguals emerge contemporaneously in the Old Babylonian period, therefore, the concept proposed by Joachim Krecher<sup>43</sup> that bilinguals once developed from glossed manuscripts should be refuted as I have argued elsewhere.<sup>44</sup> In the end, apparently, some glossed manuscripts were, in fact, precursors of bilingual manuscripts, though not from a synchronic but from a diachronic perspective.

As was shown through a few examples, at least some bilingual manuscripts dated to the Middle Babylonian period probably used Old Babylonian glossed manuscripts as their models. While scribes in the Old Babylonian period did not usually preserve the glosses of a manuscript while copying as they were mostly intended for the personal use of the scribes, this practice changed in the course of the Middle Babylonian period. Most probably, as soon as Sumerian did not play such a central role in education and apprenticeship, as it was the case in the Old Babylonian period, any hints surviving in the form of glosses and translations proved to be useful and worth preserving for the copyist.

The fact that Middle Babylonian scribes appreciated and safeguarded the glosses by taking them over to the newly produced manuscript prove the differ-

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<sup>42</sup> See also Cooper 1993, 80–83, who argues for the practicality of the interlinear format regarding the format of the clay tablet and the use of the multicolumn format in an educational context. Jerrold S. Cooper only provides a rough overview without referring specifically to any period. However, the affordances of bilingual literary manuscripts are quite different in the early and late second millennium BCE.

<sup>43</sup> Krecher 1980, 127.

<sup>44</sup> Sövegjártó 2020, 91.

ent status of the Sumerian language and literary heritage compared to the early second millennium BCE. Sumerian was still an estimated language of erudition, but also an ancient and prestigious relict subject to preservation together with its written heritage. Therefore, unlike Old Babylonian scribes, the literates of the Middle Babylonian period opted for preserving the heritage of the past in its entirety, and complemented the extant manuscripts according to their best knowledge of what they certainly considered inferior.

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## Abbreviations

BM = British Museum, London

CBS = Catalogue of the Babylonian Section, University Museum, Philadelphia, PA

CT = Cuneiform Texts, Babylonian Tablets, British Museum

HS = Hilprecht Collection, Jena

N = Nippur, University Museum, Philadelphia, PA

PBS = Publications of the Babylonian Section, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

RIME = Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods

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Antonio Manieri

# Vernacular Terms in Sinitic Texts: Multilingualism in Eighth-century Japanese Documents

**Abstract:** The paper proposes the analysis of manuscript Japanese documents in Sinitic (on wooden tablets or on paper) in which specialised vernacular Japanese terms are employed. These terms are used regardless of the availability of equivalent Sinitic terms, their referents are not culturally specific and, therefore, their usage may not be justified on the basis of cultural particularity. The paper explores the factors that motivate such departures from established norms and their implications for the communicative efficacy of the documents in question, and aims to elucidate the rationale behind the compiling of such multilingual texts. Additionally, the study touches tangentially upon the process of sharing and learning such terminologies among different actors of the eighth-century state.

## 1 Introduction

In this paper, I present some results of ongoing research into the technical and artisanal terminologies of ancient Japan, specifically from the late seventh to the eighth centuries CE, with the aim of shedding light on such terms and their underlying concepts in the domains of craftsmanship and technology. As no Japanese treatises on technical knowledge from this period have been found, and probably none were produced,<sup>1</sup> reconstructing these matters involves recognising terms, actors and practices in other types of texts, such as legal sources, dictionaries and encyclopaedias, and administrative and practical documents. I use the term ‘practical documents’ to refer to texts containing highly technical content, composed for practical purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> It goes without saying that Chinese technical books circulated widely in Japan, since, as is well known, the reception of the Chinese civilisation had a bookish character. For a synthesis of the problems regarding the history of technical knowledge in pre-1600 Japan, refer to Buhrman 2017. For more information on the reception of Chinese civilisation and its bookish character, see von Verschuer 1985, 251–256.

The present study entails the examination of five distinct case studies that showcase a diversity of examples regarding the typology of the documents, the context of their production and consumption, and the related terminology. Through the discussion of these sources, the paper contends that, despite the established conventions governing the compilation of documents in Sinitic, there are instances where specialised vernacular terms are employed,<sup>2</sup> regardless of the availability of an equivalent Sinitic term. It is notable that referents of these terms are not culturally specific, and, therefore, their usage may not be justified based on cultural particularity.

The paper, thus, explores the factors that motivate such departures from established norms and their implications for the communicative efficacy of the documents in question, and aims to elucidate the rationale behind the compilation of such multilingual texts. Additionally, the study touches tangentially upon the process of sharing and learning such terminologies among different actors of the eighth-century state.

## 2 Multilingual texts in ancient Japan

The linguistic repertoire<sup>3</sup> of ancient Japan was characterised by a macroscopic variation related, first of all, to the presence of sources in Sinitic versus those in Japanese vernacular. Sinitic, as the cosmopolitan language of prestige and learning, and widespread throughout East Asia, was a conservative written medium over a large and shifting area that went far beyond the lands where Chinese languages were spoken, and Japanese was certainly also a spoken language of the archipelago.<sup>4</sup> Actually, scattered evidence suggests that spoken Chinese was also used on the archipelago, at least in the early eighth century, but only at the level of cultural elites. One passage, for example, reports that

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<sup>2</sup> I use the word ‘term’ in the sense of modern terminological science and particularly as ‘a conventional symbol that represents a concept defined within a particular field of knowledge’ (Cabr  1999, 81).

<sup>3</sup> I use the term ‘linguistic repertoire’ to refer to the collection of linguistic resources available to a language community, which individuals within that community use to communicate and convey meaning.

<sup>4</sup> It was particularly the obligatory language of diplomacy and statecraft throughout East Asia until the late nineteenth century, but it was not imposed by China, since each East Asian society used the language of its neighbour voluntarily. On the choice of the term ‘Sinitic’ rather than ‘Classical’ or ‘Literary Chinese’, see Mair 1994 and 2001.



five scholars were each ordered to teach ‘Han speech’ (*kango* 漢語),<sup>5</sup> in other words, the spoken language of the Han country (i.e. Chinese), to two pupils apiece. In any case, the phenomenon was transitory and not solidified as in the case of written Sinitic.<sup>6</sup>

The limited use of Sinitic as an oral language speaks against the existence of ‘diglossia’ (much less that of ‘bilingualism’) in Charles Ferguson’s terms, leading some scholars to state the ‘fallacy of bilingualism’ in favour of a continuum in terms of written language/script between Sinitic and Japanese vernacular.<sup>7</sup>

This script continuum exhibits several variations. In the realm of Sinitic, the language of translated Buddhist scriptures, laws and official documents, and literary poetry displays significant differences. Moreover, certain texts exhibit a distinctive style that lies somewhere between the two ends of the scriptural continuum. The *Kojiki* 古事記 (‘Record of Ancient Matters’, 712) and the *Harima no kuni fudoki* 播磨国風土記 (‘Record of the Province of Harima and its Customs’, c. 714), for instance, feature a sort of ‘multi-grammatical prose’ in which logograms are arranged in both Chinese and Japanese syntax.<sup>8</sup> But Japanese had prestigious uses too, such as being the language of royal edicts (*shō* 詔) that ‘conveyed the august word’ (*mikotonori*) of the sovereign<sup>9</sup> – the only official documents written in Chinese characters used as phonograms – and the language of *norito* 祝詞 prayers and formulas, with the magic implications they possess. The script used for edicts and *norito* prayers is called *senmyōgaki* 宣命書 (‘writing in the style of edicts’).<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, local variation is also attested in sources, since, besides the so-called Western Old Japanese, we also find some languages of fragmentary at-

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5 In this paper, Japanese names and bibliographic references are transcribed in the revised Hepburn system, and Chinese names and bibliographic references in *pinyin*. Linguistic data from Old Japanese are presented following Vovin 2020, from Medieval Chinese following Baxter and Sagart 2014. Characters are furnished only for titles of books and when useful to the argument.

6 The passage is in the *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀 (‘Chronicle of Japan. Continuation’, 797), Book 10, Tenpyō 2.3.27 (Aoki Kazuo et al. 1990, 132–133). See also Duthie 2014, 208–209, Manieri 2022a, 182.

7 Lurie 2011, 323–334.

8 Lurie 2011, 227–228; Sema Masayuki 2011, 35–48; Palmer 2016, 13, 55–56.

9 In Japanese the character *shō* 詔 (‘edict’) was spelled as *mikotonori*, lit. ‘relating the august word’, as it was intended to be read publicly. On the form of *shō*, cf. Migliore 2011, 18–21.

10 On *senmyōgaki*, see Bender 2009; Lurie 2011, 250–253; on *norito*, see Philippi 1990. On the prestige usage of Japanese in general, see Hayakawa Shōhachi 1997, 3–21, which highlights the passage from the ‘world of orality’ (口頭の世界) of pre-*ritsuryō* Japan to the ‘world of documents’ (文書の世界) established by Nara’s strong administrative state.

tation, such as Eastern Old Japanese and the Kyūshū dialects.<sup>11</sup> When discussing the languages of ancient Japan, scholars usually refer to a passage from the somewhat cryptic text titled *Tōdaiji fujū monkō* 東大寺諷誦文稿 (‘Tōdai Monastery Recitation Draft Text’, early ninth century), which refers to languages spoken in Japan, Great Tang, Silla, Persia, India and South East Asia, as well as several local dialects spoken in the archipelago, namely those of ‘this land’, the Emishi, Hida (to the north of Yamato) and the Azuma (eastern regions).<sup>12</sup> Although the passage does not aim to present the linguistic scenario and focuses instead on the Buddha’s universal ability to communicate, it indirectly provides information about the languages spoken during the period under examination, suggesting a sort of awareness of linguistic diversity.

Various terms have been proposed to describe this linguistic repertoire of ancient Japan where, rather than a speech community, it is the emergence of a script community centred on the use of written Sinitic that is relevant.<sup>13</sup> One convincing framework is the ‘Sinographic cosmopolis’, originally elaborated by Ross King in his study of Sinitic and vernacular Korean,<sup>14</sup> which may also be fruitfully applied to Japan, Vietnam and other peripheries in the Sinic world. The concept highlights the ‘supraregional dimension’ (‘cosmo-’) of this sphere, with a focus on the political dimension and the common aesthetics of political culture (‘-polis’). The term ‘Sinographic’ is used to emphasise the graphological

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**11** Western Old Japanese is the language of songs in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (‘Chronicle of Japan’, 720), as well as of almost any book of the *Man’yōshū* 万葉集 (‘Collection of Myriad Leaves’, *post* 759). Eastern Old Japanese is attested in Books 14 and 20 of the *Man’yōshū* and in some poems of the *Hitachi no kuni fudoki* 常陸国風土記 (‘Record of the Province of Hitachi and its Customs’, c. 713–718), while sparse attestations of the Kyūshū dialect are found in the *fudoki* (geographical records) of the Saikaidō region. For Western Old Japanese, see Vovin 2020; for Eastern Old Japanese, see Vovin and Ishisaki-Vovin 2021; for the old dialect of Kyūshū, see Manieri 2022b.

**12** For a detailed and updated introduction to the manuscript and its complex history, see Whitman 2022. The text is reproduced in Nakada Norio 1969. For a translation of the passage and an analysis in the wider context of the construction of imperial power, refer to Duthie 2014, 209–211. Terada Akira argues that the passage shows no awareness of the ‘difference among the languages’, since both the language group outside the archipelago and that within are referred to as *hōgen* 方言 (‘dialects’) (Terada Akira 2009, 167–168). However, in my view, the fact that the text distinguishes two different language groups and statutes – ‘the language of this land’ in relation to ‘foreign’ languages – indicates the opposite.

**13** Cf. ‘hieroglossia’, discussed by Robert 2006, and ‘Sinoglossia’, by Saitō Mareshi 2021. Cf. also the concept of ‘brush talk’ in Denecke 2014. For a detailed review of other terms, see Kornicki 2018, 33–41.

**14** King 2014. See also Handel 2019 and Kin Bunkyō 2021.

and scriptological dimension that distinguishes this sphere from the mega-regions studied by Sheldon Pollock in his ‘Sanskrit cosmopolis’.<sup>15</sup>

This diverse array of texts often incorporates multiple languages. It is not uncommon to encounter texts written in Sinitic that use phonograms to indicate vernacular pronunciation for the proper names of people or places. Furthermore, some works in Sinitic, such as diaries, annals and fiction, include poems, edicts and prayers in vernacular. In some cases, such as in reports from the provinces, even local variants of certain words are documented.<sup>16</sup> Finally, texts in Sinitic with lexical and/or grammatical glosses in vernacular are not rare in the eighth century.

The focus of this paper, however, is not the attestation of local varieties or Japanese poetic diction in texts in Sinitic, but rather, the occurrence of vernacular terms in bureaucratic and practical texts in Sinitic, whose models are more or less standardised or even defined by rule.

The *Yōrōryō* 養老令 (‘Administrative Code of the Yōrō Era’, 718), for example, which is the official code of the eighth century, includes the *Kūjikiryō* 公式令 (‘Law on Official Documents’), where twenty-two out of eighty-nine articles are specifically devoted to establishing the formats of official documents, such as the edict, petition, notification, appointment, register and pass, providing information on their opening and closing formulas, the character of the main text and the procedure to follow when compiling them.<sup>17</sup> All the text forms are in Sinitic, with the sole exception of the edict (*shō* 詔). Other kinds of documents, however, even ones not possessing a format determined by law, follow a tradition of procedures and precedents, as shown by the wide availability of practical texts in Japanese archives and later legislation.

<sup>15</sup> King 2014, 6. On the Sanskrit cosmopolis, see Pollock 2006.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, the occurrences of the Kyūshū dialect of Western Old Japanese in records from the provinces of the Saikaidō region (Manieri 2022b, 40–45).

<sup>17</sup> The text of the law has been preserved in two commentaries from the ninth century, namely, the *Ryō no gige* 令義解 (‘Official Commentary on Administrative Laws’, 833) and the *Ryō no shūge* 令集解 (‘Collection of Commentaries on Administrative Laws’, compiled between 859 and 877). The reconstructed text of the *Kūjikiryō* 公式令 can be found in Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1976, 365–406. For translations and commentaries into European languages, see Dettmer 2010, 329–415 and Migliore 2011. An introduction to the law is in Migliore 2018, 183.

### 3 Multilingualism in practical texts

This paper focuses on instances of multilingualism in practical texts on wooden tablets or paper.

Wooden tablets are called *mokkan* 木簡 in modern Japanese and they are, by a simple definition, documents written down by the use of ink on wooden slips, made of Japanese cypress or cedar, of varying size, usually not very big.<sup>18</sup> Most tablets date back from the late seventh to the eighth century and originate from Nara, the ancient capital, but a significant number also come from the surrounding regions of other former capitals such as Fujiwara, Nagaoka and Heian, from the headquarters of certain provinces and from Buddhist monasteries, that were, in any case, areas of power with a more advanced level of literacy.

Japanese scholars at the Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties have elaborated a taxonomy in fifteen types of surviving tablets according to shape, showing a diversity that does not emerge in their Chinese counterparts.<sup>19</sup> In terms of their contents, they can be classified into three major types: labels or tags, which were attached to tax goods; documents in the strict sense; and slips for calligraphy practice and learning.<sup>20</sup>

Regarding the paper documents, this study refers to some *Shōsōin monjo* 正倉院文書 (lit. ‘Shōsōin documents’), which are the documents contained in around 660 scrolls preserved in the Shōsōin 正倉院, the repository of Tōdai Monastery 東大寺 in Nara. The Shōsōin consists of three sections: the North Section contains artefacts connected with the sovereign Shōmu 聖武 (701–756, r. 724–749), donated by his consort Kōmyō 光明 (701–760) in 756, forty-nine days after his demise; the Middle Section, documents and objects related to the Office for the Construction of the Tōdai Monastery (Zō Tōdaiji shi 造東大寺司); and the South Section, Buddhist and ritual implements used at the Tōdai Monastery.<sup>21</sup> The documents of the Office for the Construction of the Tōdai Monas-

**18** Tōno Haruyuki 1983, 4. The initial significant collection of wooden tablets was excavated at the Heijō Palace site in Nara in 1961. Subsequently, more than 150,000 slips have been uncovered across approximately five hundred sites spanning from northern Honshū to Kyūshū. For a general introduction to *mokkan*, see Tōno Haruyuki 1977; Tōno Haruyuki 1983; Tōno Haruyuki 2005; and Satō Makoto 1997. For some remarks in English, see Piggott 1990; Farris 1998; Manieri 2020.

**19** Farris 1998, 201.

**20** A corpus of about 50,000 tablets is freely available online at the *Mokkanko – Wooden Tablet Database* (<<https://mokkanko.nabunken.go.jp/>>, accessed 25 June 2023) by the Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties.

**21** After being maintained by Tōdai Monastery for over a thousand years, and under the responsibility of the Imperial Household Agency (former Imperial Household Ministry) since

tery were actually inscribed on the reverse side of discarded documents that were originally created by other offices in the capital or the provinces. Consequently, this practice of utilising them as ledger paper ensures the preservation of various distinct documents.<sup>22</sup>

The practical texts, which are the focus of this article, are ‘service’ texts that were entrusted to writing supports that – not being intended for preservation, such as wooden tablets or loose sheets of paper – were more likely to be lost. Those that do remain available to us have been preserved for often accidental reasons, such as being reused on the back for transcribing other documents.

The use of these texts associated with temporary material support offers a glimpse into a form of writing that maintains a sense of naturalness. Moreover, it sheds light on the practice of multilingualism, even within contexts characterised by limited institutional formality.

Although these sources have been widely studied for their contents, historical reconstruction or document genres, scant attention has been paid to their linguistic features, and particularly to the co-presence of Sinitic syntax and specialised terms in Japanese vernacular. Thus, insights into technical and artisanal terminology contribute to the ongoing and enthusiastic debate surrounding the linguistic repertoire of seventh- and eighth-century Japan.

## 4 Attestations of vernacular terms in practical texts in Sinitic

In this section, I will provide five different sources in Sinitic containing specialised terms in vernacular Japanese. I will introduce each source in terms of its philological features and textual genre; I will then focus on the terms, eliciting their scriptural features and meaning by consulting ancient Japanese dictionar-

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1884, as of 31 March 2010, the catalogued collection held 8,932 items. The details of the items belonging to Shōmu are recorded in the *Kokka chinpōchō* 国家珍宝帳 (‘Record of Rare Treasures of the Country’, 756). For a general introduction to the Shōsōin, see Hayashi Ryoichi 1975, in particular on the *Shōsōin monjo*, see Tōno Haruyuki 1977; Tōno Haruyuki 2005.

<sup>22</sup> The digitised version of the documents is available at the database of the Shōsōin official website (<<https://shosoin.kunaicho.go.jp/>>, accessed 25 June 2023). Most of *Shōsōin monjo* have been published as *Dai Nihon Komonjo* 大日本古文書 (‘Old documents of Japan’) (1901–1940), also available at the open access databases of the Historiographical Institute of the University of Tokyo (<<https://wwwap.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/ships/>>, accessed 25 June 2023).

ies or, when no lexicographic information is available, by linguistic reconstruction with reference to later sources or lexical data.

I will mainly consult the *Wamyōruijushō* 和名類聚抄 (‘Classified Notes on Japanese Nouns’, c. 930), compiled by the scholar-official Minamoto no Shitagō 源順 (911–988). It is a bilingual Sinitic-Japanese dictionary, and though it dates to c. 930 CE – thus, much later than the period of compilation of the texts under investigation – it is an essential tool because it is organised into categories and composed of quotations from previous sources, including eighth-century dictionaries, as we will see more thoroughly below. The work survives in a twenty-book version (*nijikkanbon* 廿卷本) and a ten-book version (*jikkanbon* 十卷本) that differ in their respective number of books and internal arrangement; there is not always complete correspondence between the lemmas of the two versions, and it is difficult to determine which of the two is the oldest or most faithful to the author’s intentions.<sup>23</sup>

I will also occasionally refer to other dictionaries, such as the *Shinsen jikyō* 新撰字鏡 (‘Mirror of Characters, Newly Edited’, c. 898–901) by the monk Shōjū 昌住 (?–?), which is a character dictionary organised by character radical – but also includes an appendix where words are listed by semantic category – and to the later *Ruijumyōgishō* 類聚名義抄 (‘Notes on Classified Meanings’, late eleventh century), which is also arranged by radical.<sup>24</sup>

#### 4.1 Source A: A bay horse in *mokkan* 1926

The first example comes from the *mokkan* numbered 1926, unearthed at excavation SD1900 at the Heijōkyū Suzakumon site in Nara (Sakichō), on the Shimo-

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<sup>23</sup> There are several testimonies of the two versions in the form of both manuscripts and print editions. All of the manuscripts are either incomplete or have lacunas, but the two versions have vulgates in the form of printed editions: for the twenty-book version, the *Genna sannen kokatsujiban nijikkanbon* 元和三年古活版廿卷本 (‘Movable-Type Edition in Twenty Books of the Third Year of Genna Era’), an edition printed with movable type and published in 1617 by the Confucian scholar Naba Kassho 那波活所 (1595–1648); and, for the ten-book version, the *Senchū Wamyōruijushō* 箋注倭名類聚抄 (‘Annotated Commentary on the *Wamyōruijushō*’), the edition annotated by Kariya Ekisai 狩谷穰齋 (1775–1835), completed in 1823 but published only in 1883. In this paper, I will mainly consult the *Genna sannen kokatsujiban nijikkanbon*, for which I follow Nakada Norio 1978. Other testimonies are in Kyōto daigaku bungakubu kokugo kokubungaku kenkyūshitsu 1968. For a general introduction to the *Wamyōruijushō*, see Lin Zhongpeng 2002.

<sup>24</sup> For the *Shinsen jikyō*, I follow Kyōto daigaku bungakubu kogaku bungaku kenkyūshitsu 1967; for the *Ruijumyōgishō*, I follow Tenri daigaku fuzoku Tenri toshokan 2018.

tsumichi, one of the three main roads that ran north-south through the ancient Yamato plain, and which extended northward from the Fujiwara capital leading to Nara. It is a rectangular plate measuring 656 × 36 × 10 mm.<sup>25</sup> It is written on both the recto (one line) and the verso (two lines). Around seventy-three characters are readable, while one character may be delineated as missing.

The text of the *mokkan* reads as follows:<sup>26</sup>

関々司前解 近江国蒲生郡阿伎里人大初上阿口勝足石許田作人  
 大宅女右二人左京小治町大初上笠阿曾彌安戸人右二  
 同伊刀古麻呂  
 送行乎我都 鹿毛牡馬歳七 里長尾治都留伎

A tentative translation is as follows:

Petition to the official of frontiers

Aki nə Su<sup>9</sup>guritaruiwa, upper great initial rank, a man from the village of A[ki], district of Kamapu, province of Apumi, allowed the tillers of rice fields.

The tillers of rice fields [are] the two men Itokomarə and Opoyakeme. The two aforementioned [are] men of the residence unit of Kasa nə Asəmi Yasu, upper great initial rank, of Woparimati, in the Left Capital.

Accompanied by Wokatu. Male bay horse, seven years old.

– Village Chief Wopari nə Turu<sup>9</sup>gi

The *mokkan* is a permit issued by the village chief Ohari no Tsurugi (Wopari nə Turu<sup>9</sup>gi) to allow two men, Itokomaro (Itokomarə) and Ōyakeme (Opoyakeme), members of the residence unit (*ko* 戸) of Kasa no Yasu in Oharimachi (Woparimati), to return to the capital from the village of Aki. They were working as rice field tillers for Aki no Suguritaruiwa (Aki nə Su<sup>9</sup>guritaruiwa) in the village of Aki, district of Kamō (Kamapu), in the province of Ōmi (Apumi).

The *mokkan* does not contain a date, but several hints suggest that it may have been issued in the early eighth century. Firstly, the institution of the village chief was regulated by the *Taihō ritsuryō* 大宝律令 (‘Penal and Administrative Codes of the Taihō Era’) of 701, but the character 里 was used for ‘village’ until 715 and then again after 740. Between these two years, the more complex *gōrisei* (郷里制) system came into effect, in which the character 郷 (Ch. *xiang*, Sino-Jp. *gō*) was used for ‘village’, while 里 (Ch. *li*, Sino-Jp. *ri*) was used to indicate its subunits. Secondly, in

<sup>25</sup> For the excavation report, see Nara kokuritsu bunkazai kenkyūjo 1974b. A photographic reproduction is found in Nara kokuritsu bunkazai kenkyūjo 1974a, pl. 1. See also Kiyota Yoshiki 1980.

<sup>26</sup> All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. In the transcriptions of the texts and the translations, round brackets indicate portions of text printed in characters of smaller size in the original; square brackets in translations indicate my insertions to facilitate understanding.

715, the use of wood and bamboo for transit permits was prohibited, and they began to be produced on paper instead.<sup>27</sup> Thirdly, some textual features, such as 前, were present in the seventh-century *mokkan*, but became less common in the eighth century,<sup>28</sup> showing that the *mokkan* was inscribed in a transitional period, possibly the early eighth century. Finally, several places in Fujiwara, the capital from 694 to 710, are called by proper nouns, such as Oharimachi, while there are no such cases for Nara, the capital from 710.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, we can assume that this *mokkan* was created between 701, the year of the promulgation of the *Taihō ritsuryō*, and 710, the year of the capital's transfer from Fujiwara to Nara.

The fact that the *mokkan* was unearthed near Nara is due to the likelihood that the travellers using the ancient pass crossed Yamashiro Province via the Tōkaidō road to enter Yamato Province, where the pass was abandoned as it was no longer necessary. The two men were accompanied by another man named Okatsu (Wokatu), likely a serf, and a seven-year-old male bay horse.

The 'Law on Official Documents' of the *Yōrōryō* of 718 contains an article on the form of the transit pass, probably also present in the *Taihō ritsuryō* of 701, since the *Ryō no shūge* 令集解 ('Collection of Commentaries on Administrative Laws', compiled between 859 and 877), in the section regarding the law, contains some quotations from the *Koki* 古記 ('Ancient Records', early eighth century), which was a commentary to the code of 701. The article reads as follows:

過所式

其事云云。度某関往其国。

某官位姓。(三位以上。称卿。)資人。位姓名。(年若干。若庶人称本属。)従人。某国某郡某里人姓名年。(奴名年。婢名年。)其物若干。其毛牡牝馬牛若干疋頭。

年 月 日                      主 典 位 姓 名

次 官 位 姓 名

右過所式。並令依式具録二通。申送所司。々々勘同。即依式署。一通留為案。一通判給。<sup>30</sup>

Transit Pass: Form.

Purpose of travel. Crossing such barriers and reaching such province.

The official, rank, honorific title (if holder of a third rank or higher: family name and lord).

Assistants: Rank, honorific title, name (age. If a commoner, [the family register] he belongs to shall be indicated). Accompanying people: Province, district, village, honorific ti-

<sup>27</sup> Kiyota Yoshiki 1980. For the prohibition on using bamboo and wooden tablets for transit passes, see *Shoku Nihongi*, Book 6, Reiki 1.5.1 (Aoki Kazuo et al. 1989, 224–227); *Ryō no shūge*, Book 34 (*Kyūjikiryō*), 'Tenshi shinji jō' (Kuroita Katsumi 1955, 852).

<sup>28</sup> Nara bunkazai kenkyūjo 2017, 1.

<sup>29</sup> Nara bunkazai kenkyūjo 2017, 2.

<sup>30</sup> Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1976, 389.



tle, name, age (male slaves: name and age; female slaves: name and age). Objects and their quantities. Number of heads of horses and cattle, their coat colour and sex.

Year, month, day. Official of the fourth class, rank, honorific title, name.

Vice director: rank, honorific title, name.

The aforementioned transit pass forms shall be prepared in two copies according to this format and sent to the relevant office. The relevant office shall carry out the checks. Then, the copies shall be signed according to the format. One copy shall be filed [in the relevant office], and the other shall be delivered [to the interested party].<sup>31</sup>

The transit pass on *mokkan* 1926 deviates from the law article in some respects, but it does not fail to record the names of the travellers, their origin, purpose, the accompanying people and the heads of horses, along with their coat colour and sex.

In the *mokkan*, the horse's coat colour, which we have translated as 'bay', is expressed by the two characters 鹿毛, respectively meaning 'deer' and 'coat'. This compound seems to refer to a colour similar to the 'coat of a deer', but it is not attested in Chinese sources as a term for an equine coat. Additionally, the two characters are also often used as phonograms of the *kungana* 訓假名 type for *ka* and *ke*.

The *Wamyōruijushō*, Section 16 'Bovines and Horses' (牛馬部), Subsection 149 'Bovine and Equine Coats' (牛馬毛) has the largest early organised nomenclature of equine and bovine coat colours. Among the various lemmas, we find the compound 鹿毛 in the following entry:

*Wamyōruijushō*, Book 11, 16/149

驪馬[...] 毛詩注云驪(音留漢語抄云驪馬鹿毛也[...])赤身黑驪馬也[...]<sup>32</sup>

Bay horse. The *Maoshizhu* states [that] bay 驪 (the sound is [that of the character] *ljuw* 留; the *Kangoshō* states [that] a bay 驪 horse is a *kakε* horse [...]) is a horse with a brown body and black hair.

The entry explains that the *Kangoshō* 漢語抄 ('Notes on Chinese Words'), which is a lost bilingual Sinitic-Japanese dictionary from the eighth century, furnishes the compound 鹿毛 as an equivalent of the Sinitic 驪, which is defined by a quotation from the Chinese source *Maoshizhu* 毛詩注 ('Mao's Commentary on the Classic of Poetry', pre-221 BCE) as a horse with a reddish-brown body and black extremities (called 'bay' in English). In the 'Bovine and Equine Coats' section of the *Wamyōruijushō*, there are many examples of vernacular equiva-

<sup>31</sup> A translation into Italian can be found in Migliore 2011, 81; into German, in Dettmer 2010, 370–371.

<sup>32</sup> Nakada Norio 1978, 128.

lents with the morphological structure ‘name + *ke* 毛’, none of which is attested in the varied Sinitic nomenclature. Finally, these vernacular terms with phonograms that also have a semantic value do not occur in contemporary poetry, such as in the poetic anthology *Man’yōshū* 万葉集 (‘Collection of Myriads of Leaves’, post-759), where the horse-coat colours are only basic terms, such as *aka* ‘red’, *kuro* ‘black’ and *awo* ‘white’.<sup>33</sup>

## 4.2 Source B: Unusable horses in the *Suō no kuni shōzeichō*

The second text I would like to present is a passage from the *Suō no kuni shōzeichō* 周防国正税帳 (‘Register of Correct Taxes for the Province of Suō’).

The *shōzeichō* 正税帳 was the register that each province compiled to record the amount of annual regular taxes collected, expenditures borne in the previous year and balances. The form of this register has varied, but without straying significantly from the model later recorded in Book 27 of the *Engishiki* 延喜式 (‘Procedures of the Engi Era’, 927) related to the Bureau of Public Resources (Shuzeiryō 主税寮).<sup>34</sup> About twenty-five *shōzeichō* from the Tenpyō era (729–749) have been preserved among the documents of the Shōsōin, some being more or less complete, others fragmentary.

*Shōzeichō* were prepared in three copies: one copy was kept at the provincial administration headquarters as a reference for subsequent governors and the drafting of the following year’s document; two copies were submitted to the Great Council of State (Daijōkan 太政官) by the end of the second month,<sup>35</sup> forwarded by provincial officials called *shōzeichōshi* 正税帳使 or *shōzeishi* 正税帳使 (lit. ‘messengers of the registers of regular taxes’). The *shōzeichō* were inspected for errors or irregularities in each category at the Bureau of Public Resources of the Ministry of Popular Affairs (Minbushō 民部省), and, if any were found, they were returned, and adjustments would be ordered. The entries in the register are, therefore, related to quantities of rice, millet or salt, expenses for repairing weapons or transportation expenses, and it is also possible to come across expenses related to livestock, particularly post and relay horses.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> For other attestations of ‘name + 毛’ types of coat colours in ancient Japanese sources, see Manieri 2012.

<sup>34</sup> Kuroita Katsumi 1938, 671–685. As for the *Engishiki* see Bock 1970; Bock 1972; Bock 1985.

<sup>35</sup> The provinces of the Saikaidō (present-day Kyūshū) were required to send them to the Dazaifu before the thirtieth day of the second month, and, once checked, to send them to the Council of State before the thirtieth day of the fifth month.

<sup>36</sup> On the *shōzeichō*, see Inoue Tatsuo 1967; Hérail 1966, particularly 106–107.

The extant registers held at the Shōsōin also include that of the province of Suō, a territory corresponding to the eastern part of present-day Yamaguchi Prefecture. The *Suō no kuni shōzeichō* dates to 738.<sup>37</sup> The document survives on 15 sheets that are part of manuscript scroll Seishū 正集 35 (paper, 26.2 × 617.2 cm, consisting of 18 glued sheets in total) and Seishū 36 (paper, 26.6 × 556 cm, consisting of 15 glued sheets in total).<sup>38</sup> These sheets have survived because the Office of Sutra Transcription (Shakyōshi 写経司) used their reverse sides as second-hand paper for several types of registers and documents from the eighteenth (746) to the twentieth (748) year of the Tenpyō era. The *Suō no kuni shōzeichō* from 738 occupies fols 12–18 of Seishū 35 and 1–8 of Seishū 36,<sup>39</sup> which are marked with the province's stamp. The document is incomplete, but it provides various pieces of information regarding the province's expenditures and rice reserves. It also includes a brief section on horses that are no longer usable (*fuyō uma* 不用馬), which reads as follows:

不用馬陸匹 (一匹天平三年買、齒七、経傳八歳、左前足字弓。二匹天平五年買、齒六、経傳五歳、左後足多利。一匹天平四年買、齒七、経傳八歳、右前足字弓。一匹天平六年買、齒四、経傳五歳、左前足字弓。一匹天平六年買、齒五、経傳五歳、右前足字弓。)

Unusable horses: six. (One horse purchased in the third year of the Tenpyō era, seven years old, eight years old according to the manual, with a bruise on the left front leg. Two horses purchased in the fifth year of the Tenpyō era, six years old, five years old according to the manual, with lameness on the left hind leg. One horse purchased in the fourth year of the Tenpyō era, seven years old, eight years old according to the manual, with a bruise on the right hind leg. One horse purchased in the sixth year of the Tenpyō era, four years old, five years old according to the manual, with a bruise on the left front leg. One horse purchased in the sixth year of the Tenpyō era, five years old, also five years old according to the manual, with a bruise on the right front leg.)

Other *shōzeichō* – such as that of the province of Echizen in 733, of Owari in 734, and of the administration of the eastern part of the capital (Sakyōshiki) in 738 – also give an indication of the ‘unusable horses’, though recording only the

<sup>37</sup> On various questions about the *Suō no kuni shōzeichō*, see Inoue Tatsuo 1967, 247–294.

<sup>38</sup> The manuscripts Seishū 35 and 36 are both held at the Shōsōin, Section Centre, 15. Their digitised versions are at the following URLs, respectively: <<https://tinyurl.com/4278fmh8>>; <<https://tinyurl.com/kzywvtc3>> (accessed on 25 June 2023). A diplomatic edition of the document is in DNK, vol. 2, 130–146.

<sup>39</sup> In Seishū 35, the height of the sheets in is 26.6 the length of each sheet, from 12 to 18, is 14.2 + 50.8 + 50.8 + 56.2 + 56.0 + 56.1 + 29.3. In Seishū 36, the height of the sheets is 26.6 the length of each sheet, from 1 to 8, is 29.9 + 40.6 + 55.3 + 56.2 + 56.3 + 5.2 + 17.5 + 28.

number of heads.<sup>40</sup> The *Suō shōzeichō* under examination provides additional information, including the year of acquisition, age (expressed by the character 齒, lit. ‘tooth’, as usual in the technical field of hippology) and, notably, the reasons for the animals’ lack of utility.

Specifically, all six heads of cattle are reported to have a leg issue, which in two cases is attributed to a condition known as *tari* 多利, and in the remaining four cases, to a condition called *ute* 宇弓. A peculiarity of the text is the fact that although the document is written in Sinitic, the names of the two diseases are conveyed by the phonograms 多利 and 宇弓. The term *ute* has no other attestations in sources. It could have the same root as the verb *utsu* 打つ [Old Jp. *utu*], meaning ‘to strike, to hit’, and it could, thus, indicate a contusion (bruise) occurring when a blow strikes part of the body. The term *tari* is, etymologically, the converb form of the intransitive quadrigrade verb *taru* 垂る, which means ‘to droop’ or ‘to sag’, and could refer to the formation of fleshy warts on a part of the body that droop and sag. The term is also attested in several ancient dictionaries. In the *Shinsen jikyō*, it occurs in the following lemma in Section 27 ‘Radical Sickness’ (疔部):

*Shinsen jikyō*, 27

疣三形同有流反平腫也。伊比保又太利又比志比子。<sup>41</sup>

Lameness. It is the same as the word ‘three-formed’ 三形. [The sound is that of *hjuw*, like the initial of the character] *hjuwX* 有 plus [the final of the character] *ljuw* 流. It is an ordinary ‘swelling’ 腫. [Vernacular terms:] *ihihō*, and *tari*, and *hisihisi*.

A precise definition is found in the *Wamyōruijushō*, Section 16 ‘Bovines and Horses’, Subsection 151 ‘Bovine and Equine Maladies’ (牛馬病):

*Wamyōruijushō*, Book 11, 16/151

驚 唐韻云驚(陟利反、興到同、俗云驚多利。)馬脚屈重也。<sup>42</sup>

Lameness. The *Tangyun* states that lameness 驚 (the sound is that of [the initial of the character] *trik* 陟 plus [the final of the character] *lijH* 利, the same [as that of the character] *trijH* 致; the vernacular of 驚 is *tari*) is [the malady in which] the horse’s leg bends and trudges.

<sup>40</sup> The *shōzeichō* of Echizen Province, dating to the fifth year of the Tenpyō era (733), and that of Owari Province, dating to the sixth year of the Tenpyō era, are in DNK, vol. 1, 461–469 and 607–622, respectively, while that of Sakyōshiki, dating to the tenth year of the Tenpyō era, is in DNK, vol. 2, 106.

<sup>41</sup> Kyōto daigaku bungakubu kogaku bungaku kenkyūshitsu 1967, 44.

<sup>42</sup> Nakada Norio 1978, 130.

The later *Ruijumyōgishō*, Section ‘Clergy/Part 2’ (僧中), Subsection 102, reads as follows:

*Ruijumyōgishō*, Book Clergy/Part 2, 102

驚 今正音至馬重兒音致 タリ ナツム ナヘク ツマツク<sup>43</sup>

Lameness. Present-day correct sound is the same as [that of the character] *tsyijH* 至. Troublesome appearance of a horse. [Vernacular terms:] *tari*, *natumu*, *naheku*, *tumatuku*.

*Tari* is, therefore, the vernacular equivalent of 驚, a pathology of the horse’s leg most likely identifiable with what is known as ‘lameness’, a disease in which a deformed hoof curves backwards, generating a defect in the flatness of the horse’s foot, due to which the animal proceeds by resting predominantly on the toes of the hooves.

In conclusion, ancient dictionaries attest that *tari* is the vernacular equivalent of the Sinitic veterinary term 驚 or 疔. For the purpose of this analysis, it is interesting to note that the *Wamyōruijushō* specifically mentions *zoku* 俗 in its twenty-book version (but *zokujin* 俗人, ‘common people’ in its ten-book version). Within the *Wamyōruijushō*, Japanese equivalents are marked with *wamyō* 和名 and *zoku* (or alternatively *zokujin* or *zokugo* 俗語) where there is no attestation in previous dictionaries. As Tsukishima Hiroshi has pointed out, *wamyō* refers to a term for which the compiler Shitagō recognises a previous attestation, while *zoku* is used when he does not recognise it and takes it from spoken language.<sup>44</sup>

### 4.3 Source C: Struts and beams in the *Zō Ishiyamain shō yōdochō*

The third text is a passage from the *Zō Ishiyamain sho yōdochō* 造石山院所用度帳 (‘Register of Expenses of the Institute for the Construction of the Ishiyama Monastery’), which is a budget document listing necessary supplies.

The monastery was originally built in 747 at the request of sovereign Shōmu, when the monk Rōben 良弁 (689–773), founder of Tōdai Monastery, enshrined Nyoirin Kannon 如意輪觀音.<sup>45</sup> Later, from 761, the expansion of the

<sup>43</sup> Tenri daigaku fuzoku Tenri toshokan 2018, vol. 2, 257.

<sup>44</sup> Tsukishima Hiroshi 1963, 57.

<sup>45</sup> Established as a temple of the Kegon lineage, its foundation and history is told in the *Ishiyamadera engi emaki* 石山寺縁起絵巻 (‘Illustrated Scroll of the Origins of Ishiyama Monastery’, first version: c. 1325; enlarged version: 1805) (Aizawa Masahiko and Kuniga Yumiko 2016).

halls and the maintenance of the temple complex were promoted as a state project and carried out under the government office known as the Institute for the Construction of the Ishiyama Monastery (*Zō Ishiyamadera sho* 造石山寺所), to which Buddhist monks and other staff members were dispatched from the Office for the Construction of the Tōdai Monastery.

Several documents preserved at the Shōsōin date to 761 (i.e. the sixth year of the Tenpyō hōji era) are related to works of expansion and maintenance, including the *Zō Ishiyamain sho yōdochō* under examination. The document survives on 14 sheets: 19<sup>v</sup>–7<sup>v</sup> of the manuscript scroll *Zokuzokushū* 続々集 38.9 (paper, 29.1 × 921 cm, consisting of 19 glued sheets) and 9<sup>v</sup> of *Zokuzokushū* 43.9 (paper, 29.0 × 287 cm, consisting of 9 glued sheets).<sup>46</sup>

The document provides various pieces of information regarding the supplies necessary for the expansion of the complex, including a section on the coating to apply to the double-level roof of the pulpit (*kōza* 高座), which reads as follows:

三斗六升高座蓋二覆塗料  
 一斗五升蓋二覆墺料  
 九升一蓋三重墺料(重別三升)  
 六升一蓋二重墺料(重別三升)  
 九升二蓋裏於一度土漆料(蓋別四升五合)  
 五升二蓋枚桁丸桁垂木并多々理形及波佐目等《塗二度土》塗二度土漆料(蓋別二升五合)  
 七升二蓋枚桁丸桁垂木多々理波佐目等塗三度墨漆料(蓋別三升五合)<sup>47</sup>

Here is a translation of the passage:

3 *to* and 6 *shō* as the quantity of coating to apply to the two levels of the roof of the pulpit.  
 1 *to* and 5 *shō* as the quantity of dry lacquering to apply the two levels of the roof.  
 9 *shō* as the quantity for three layers of dry lacquering for one level of the roof (three *shō* for each layer).  
 6 *shō* as the quantity for two layers of dry lacquering for one level of the roof (3 *shō* for each layer).

<sup>46</sup> The manuscripts *Zokuzokushū* 38.9 and *Zokuzokushū* 43.9 are both held at the Shōsōin, Section Centre, 20. In *Zokuzokushū* 38.9, the length of each sheet from 19<sup>v</sup> to 7<sup>v</sup> is 56 + 57 + 55 + 56 + 58 + 56 + 38 + 44 + 26 + 56 + 57 + 57 + 57; in *Zokuzokushū* 43.9, the length of sheet 9<sup>v</sup> is 45 cm. Their digitised versions are, respectively, at the following URLs: <<https://tinyurl.com/yzvjsn5p>>; <<https://tinyurl.com/6esptbtv>> (accessed on 25 June 2023). A diplomatic edition of the document is in DNK, vol. 16, 263–274. Another document with the same name, but dated to the twelfth (intercalary) month of the sixth year of the Tenpyō hōji era (761), is preserved in *Zokuzokushū* 45.5, 1<sup>v</sup>–5<sup>v</sup>; 45.6, 5<sup>v</sup>; 45.7, 1<sup>v</sup>–3<sup>v</sup>, 1<sup>v</sup>–3<sup>v</sup>. The diplomatic edition of this second document is in DNK, vol. 16, 219–252.

<sup>47</sup> *Zokuzokushū* 38.9, 11<sup>v</sup>.

9 *shō* as the quantity of clay lacquering to apply once each to the two roof insides (4 *shō* and 5 *gō* for each inside).

5 *shō* as the quantity of clay lacquering to apply twice to flat beams, round beams, rafters, struts, *pasame*, etc. of the two roofs (2 *shō* and 5 *gō* for each roof).

7 *shō* as the quantity of black lacquering to apply three times to flat beams, round beams, rafters, struts, and *pasame* of the two roofs.

In the passage, quantities are expressed by the system of measurement in *to* 斗, *shō* 升 and *gō* 合,<sup>48</sup> and refer to lacquering to apply to each part of the cover of the pulpit. Therefore, the recorded specialised terms are related to lacquering, such as ‘dry lacquering’ 壩 and ‘black lacquering’ 墨漆,<sup>49</sup> and to carpentry and building construction, such as ‘flat beams’ 枚桁, ‘round beams’ 丸桁 and ‘rafters’ 垂木.<sup>50</sup> Among these terms, which are all written in Sinitic, we also find two words indicating other parts of the construction framework spelled in phonograms: *tatarikata* 多々理形, which, as we see below, is the ‘strut’, and *pasame* 波佐目, a term that is not yet clear. The *Wamyōruijushō*, Book 10, Section 13 ‘Residences’ (居処部), Subsection 137 ‘Parts of the Dwelling’ (居宅具), records the vernacular term *tatarikata*:

*Wamyōruijushō*, Book 10, 13/137

榑 爾雅注云梁上謂之榑(音而文選師說多々利加太)榑榑也。說文云榑榑[薄盧二音]柱上榑也<sup>51</sup>

Strut. *Eryazhu* states [that what is] on the beams is called a ‘strut’ 榑 (the sound is that of *nyi* 而; the master’s explanation to the *Wenxuan* [states it is] *tatarikata*), and [it] is the bracket [supporting the beams]. The *Shuowen* states [that] the bracket (the sound is that of *bak lu* 薄盧) is the capital at the top of the columns.

Thus, the vernacular *tatarikata* is furnished as the equivalent of the term 榑 (‘strut’), which is explained as 榑榑 (‘bracket’); this, in turn, is explained – with reference to the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (‘Explaining the Graphs and Unravelling the Characters’, 100 CE) – as 柱上榑, the ‘capital’, the square wooden block at

48 According to Article 1 of the *Zōryō* 雜令 (‘Miscellaneous Law’) of the *Yōryō*, 1 *to* is equivalent to 10 *shō*, and 1 *shō*, in turn, is equivalent to 10 *gō* (Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1976, 475; Dettmer 2010, 536). In the present-day usage of these traditional units, 1 *gō* is equivalent to 0.18 litres.

49 Dry lacquering is a lacquer craft technique in which a lacquer-coated linen cloth is applied to the bare surface, allowed to dry, and then coated over and over again.

50 A ‘flat beam’ 枚桁 (*hirageta*) is a light, horizontal, rectangular structure that is inserted into the corner-post between the top and bottom rails of a balustrade; a ‘round beam’ 丸桁 (*marogeta*) is a circular beam that supports the rafters; and a ‘rafter’ 垂木 (*taruki*) is the simplest type of structure, extending from the ridge to the end of or beyond the eave.

51 Nakada Norio 1978, 118.

the top of the column. In the *Wamyōruijushō*, the word is indicated by the *ongana* 音仮名 phonograms 多々利加太, while in the attestation of the word in the *Zō Ishiyamain shō yōdochō*, the last two syllables, *kata*, are rendered by the disyllabic *kungana* 形. The source that the compiler Shitagō uses is marked by the expression 師説, meaning ‘master’s explanation/comment’, and refer to the explanations the master provides while commenting on a certain text.

Unfortunately, ancient dictionaries do not record the vernacular term *pasame* 波佐目, and it is not clear what part of the construction it indicates. It could be related to the verb *pasamu* (Modern Jp. *hasamu* 挟む or 挿む), meaning ‘to insert’, ‘to put between’, and which also has a bigrade conjugation. Thus, *pasame* could refer to an ‘insert’ to be put between the beams. In any case, it is worth noting that this additional word, so specific as not to be recorded elsewhere, is recorded in the vernacular, using only phonograms.

These two terms related to carpentry are not the only ones recorded in Shōsōin documents in vernacular, as we can infer from the list of architecture terminology collected by Fukuyama Toshio, where eight of the eighty-five terms enlisted are written in phonograms,<sup>52</sup> showing a trend of making use of vernacular terms in the domain of carpentry and architecture.

#### 4.4 Source D: Things to arrange in the *Shasho zōyōchō*

The text in this subsection is a *Shasho zōyōchō* 写書雑用帳 (lit. ‘Register of Miscellaneous Expenses for Copying Books’). It is a document on paper preserved at the Shōsōin, inscribed on the verso of the manuscript scroll Zokushū 続集 16 (paper, 29.1 × 397.3 cm, consisting of 10 glued sheets), in particular on sheets 2<sup>v</sup> and 3<sup>v</sup>, respectively 45 and 27.7 cm long. The document is cut off at the beginning and the end.<sup>53</sup>

This budget document dates to the fourth day, seventh month, second year of the Tenpyō era, which is 730 CE. Its compiler is Takaya no Akamaro 高屋赤麻呂 (fl. 730), an official of the Office of Sutra Transcription – established around

<sup>52</sup> Fukuyama Toshio 1986. The list includes *tatarikata* 多々理形, but not *pasame* 波佐目. The useful article of Fukuyama lacks a discussion of the typology of terms.

<sup>53</sup> The manuscript Zokushū 続集 16 is held at the Shōsōin, Section Centre, 16. Its digitised version is at the following URL: <<https://tinyurl.com/398dder9>> (accessed on 25 June 2023). A diplomatic edition of the document is in DNK, vol. 1, 303–394.



729 under Queen Consort Kōmyō – who was already engaged at the scriptorium when it was still part of Kōmyō’s household organisation.<sup>54</sup>

The text is a list of entries with quantities of supplies needed at the office,<sup>55</sup> which can be grouped into four main sections: (1) wrappers with the number of scrolls they contain; (2) ink, paper sheets and rollers for transcribing the texts; (3) garments (e.g. the ‘pure robe’, a hemp mantle, trousers and caps) and tools (e.g. fragrances, a cauldron and a small knife) useful to the transcription practice and rite; and (4) things to arrange and set up.

This fourth section, titled ‘Things to Arrange and Set Up’ (舖設物), includes fifteen entries:

舖設物			
長畳二枚	短畳五枚	立薦二枚	苫二帙
篋四枚	長席一枚	短机九枝	(四寺送附安宿熊取見五足)
辛櫃七合(又須利一合)	甕三口	由加六口	叩戸二口
缶一口	壺二口	長机二枝	每一口 <sup>56</sup>

A translation, useful to the current argument, is as follows:

Things to arrange and set up

Long mats: two; short mats: five; ‘vertical’ woven mats: two; straw mats: two.

Bamboo-plaited mats: four; long seats: one; short desks: nine (four sent by the temple; Asaka no Kumatori now has five of them).

Chests: seven (and bamboo basket: one); shallow-bottomed jars: three; crocks: six; containers [for liquids]: two.

Vases: one; jars: two; long desks: two.

Among the several types of mats and pieces of furniture listed, there are two entries on boxes, counted by the classifier 合, and five entries on kinds of containers, all counted by the classifier 口 (lit. ‘mouth’), used for things with ‘mouths’ or ‘openings’. While 辛櫃 (‘chest’), 甕 (a ‘shallow-bottomed jar’ used for carrying water or making liquors), 缶 (a ‘vase’ for holding liquids, large-bodied and small-mouthed), and 壺 (‘jar’) are represented by the Sinitic words, the three words appearing in the third line, 須利, 由加, and 叩戸, are rendered by phonograms.

<sup>54</sup> For the reconstruction of the various institutions dedicated to the copying of scriptures and related to Queen Kōmyō, as well as to aristocratic households and provincial organisations, see Lowe 2017, 106–145.

<sup>55</sup> There are similar extant budget documents from the same office, as in Zokuzokushū 39.4<sup>v</sup> (DNK, vol. 21, 121). See also Lowe 2017, 106.

<sup>56</sup> This entry is struck through, a correction necessary because the entry had already been inserted at the beginning of this line.

The compound 須利 is recorded twice in the *Wamyōruijushō*, both in the subsection on ‘Travel Utensils’ (行旅具) in Book 14 and in that on ‘Bamboo Implements’ (竹器類) in Book 16.

*Wamyōruijushō*, Book 14, 22/189

籬 說文云(音鹿楊氏漢語抄云籬子須利)竹篋也<sup>57</sup>

Bamboo basket. The *Shuowen* states (the sound is that of *luwk* 鹿; the *Yōshi kangoshō* states [that] ‘bamboo basket’ 籬子 is the *suri*) [that it] is a small bamboo box.

*Wamyōruijushō*, Book 16, 23/205

籬 考声切韻云籬(音祿和名須里)箱類也<sup>58</sup>

Bamboo basket. The *Kaosheng qieyun* states that the ‘bamboo basket’ 籬 (the sound is that of *luwk* 祿; the Japanese name is *suri*) is a type of box.

In both cases, *suri* 須利 is attested as the equivalent of 籬子 or 籬, defined as a ‘small box made of bamboo’.

The term *yuka* 由加 is attested in the *Wamyōruijushō*’s subsection on ‘Earthen Implements’ (瓦器類) in Book 16.

*Wamyōruijushō*, Book 16, 23/204

游罏 唐韻云罏(音剛楊氏漢語抄云游罏由賀)甕也(今案俗人呼大桶為由加乎介是弁色立成云於保美加)<sup>59</sup>

Urn. The *Tangyun* states [that] a ‘crock’ 罏 (the sound is that of *kang* 剛; the *Yōshi kangoshō* states [that] ‘crock’ 游罏 [corresponds to the vernacular] *yuka*) is a [kind of] 甕. (It is possible that people call a big bucket 大桶 *yuka woke*. The *Benshiki rissei* states [it is] *opomika*.)

The lemma *yuka* is rendered by the phonogram 由 and the phonogram 賀, which has the same value as 加, and is presented as the equivalent of an earthen crock. The same phonograms also appear in *mokkan* 159 (198 × 26 × 2 cm), unearthed in Nara:

r. 移 務所 經師分由加六口

v. 附秦忌寸万呂<sup>60</sup>

Notification: Scripture master divides six crocks.

Submitted by Pata nə Imiki Marə.

<sup>57</sup> Nakada Norio 1978, 164.

<sup>58</sup> Nakada Norio 1978, 179.

<sup>59</sup> Nakada Norio 1978, 179.

<sup>60</sup> The *mokkan* is an item with a square end and a hole perforated. The digitised version is at <<https://tinyurl.com/3wttny2y>> (accessed on 25 June 2023). A diplomatic edition is found in Terasaki Yasuhiro 1989, 9.

This *mokkan* is an *i* 移, i.e. a notification between equivalent offices regulated by Article 12 of the *Kūjikiriyō*.<sup>61</sup> Though only a few characters are inscribed, we can see that 經師 ‘scripture master’ occurs, and the name Hata no Imiki Maro (Pata nō Imiki Marō) 秦忌寸万呂 is that of the same Hata no Maro 秦麻呂 attested in another *mokkan*, where he is declared a ‘proofreading attendant’ (文校帳内), thus, again involved in scripture transcription.<sup>62</sup>

Finally, the third word, 叩戸, though not attested as a Sinitic word, has a slightly different aspect than the other two terms. The character 戸 is a *kungana*-type phonogram for *pɛ*, while the first one, 叩, is used as a trisyllabic *kungana*-type *tataki*. Also attested in the *Engishiki*, Book 1 ‘Festival to the Four Deities of Hiraoka’ (*Hiraoka no kami shiza no matsuri* 平岡神四座祭), where it is glossed as *tataihe* タタイへ, it is a synonym of 叩瓮 (*tataibe*), which is a type of pottery container for water or wine.<sup>63</sup>

To sum up, also in the passage from the *Shasho zōyōchō*, vernacular terms rendered by phonograms, including *kungana*-type ones, are used in a Sinitic text and even inserted among other terms in the same semantic family of containers, which are written in Sinitic (semantograms). Finally, it is also worth noting that in furnishing the Japanese equivalents of these terms, the *Wamyōruijushō* quotes some previous dictionaries, such as the *Yōshi kangoshō* 楊氏漢語抄 (‘Notes on Chinese Words by Master Yako’, 720 c.) and the *Benshiki rissei* 弁色立成 (‘Compendium of Classifications’, early eighth century).

#### 4.5 Source E: Weaving tools in the *Hizen no kuni fudoki*

The last example I shall provide is drawn from a received document, namely the *Hizen no kuni fudoki* 肥前国風土記 (‘Record of the Province of Hizen and its Customs’). This bureaucratic record was compiled in eighth-century Japan pur-

61 Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1976, 379; Dettmer 2010, 358–359; Migliore 2011, 62–63.

62 The term is also attested in the *Engishiki*, for example, in Book 1, *Kasuga no kami shiza no matsuri* 春日神四座祭; *Hiraoka no kami shiza no matsuri* 平岡神四座祭; and *Hirano no kami shiza no matsuri* 平野神四座祭 (Kuroita Katsumi 1938, 12, 16, 21). See also Bock 1970, 66, 71, 75.

63 *Engishiki*, Book 1, *Hiraoka no kami shiza no matsuri* (Kuroita Katsumi 1938, 16). See also Bock 1970, 71; Arai Hideki 2019, 380.

suant to a decree promulgated by the sovereign Genmei 元明 (660–721, r. 707–715) in 713, which stipulated that the governors of each province should prepare an elaborate report on the geographic features of their provinces, with particular emphasis on natural resources and legends of bygone times. The primary objective of this edict was to establish the legitimacy of the Yamato court's authority.<sup>64</sup>

We do not have the precise date of compilation or completion of the text, but several features suggest dating it between 732 and 739.<sup>65</sup> The authors of the *Hizen no kuni fudoki* remain unknown, as is the case for the majority of the *fudoki* 風土記 (geographic records) corpus. However, it is possible that the compilation of the text involved a layered approach. The initial phase of writing may have been conducted by district officials who provided sources of a purely bureaucratic nature on their lands. These officials probably played an important role in consulting with the elders, as mandated by Genmei's edict. The second phase of writing probably consisted of revision by provincial officials. It is evident that the texts were the product of officials dispatched to the provinces on behalf of the central government, who were strongly aligned with the central government and supported its prerogatives and needs. It is worth noting that the province of Hizen was also subject to the authority of a supra-provincial institution known as the Dazaifu, located on the island of Kyūshū. Consequently, it is plausible that the *Hizen no kuni fudoki* was further reviewed by this office, as suggested by the numerous similarities shared with reports from other provinces.<sup>66</sup>

The oldest extant manuscript of the *Hizen no kuni fudoki* is the *Inokumabon* 猪熊本 from 1297, preserved at the private archive of Inokuma Nobuo 猪熊信男 (1883–1963), who discovered it at a book market. Nowadays recognised as a 'national treasure' (*kokuhō* 国宝), it is acknowledged as a reliable version of the

<sup>64</sup> The edict is in the *Shoku Nihongi*, Book 6, Wadō 6.5.2. For the text see Aoki Kazuo et al. 1989, 196–199.

<sup>65</sup> Manieri 2022b, 37.

<sup>66</sup> Manieri 2022b, 37–38. If we accept the dating of the text between 732 and 739, the governor-general of the island would be Fujiwara no Umakai 藤原宇合 (694–737), who was the son of Fuhito 不比等 (659–720), Genmei's powerful minister of the right, an expert in Sinitic both in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure, especially after his participation in the 717 mission to the Tang. Umakai became governor-general after 734 (the exact date is not known) until 737, so his contribution to the writing of the text appears very probable and, according to Akimoto Kichirō 1958, 29, even inevitable.

text. The few other existing manuscripts of the text are much later and do not show consistent variations from *Inokumabon*.<sup>67</sup>

The passage to be examined in this study, for which no variant has been found among the several testimonies, pertains to a narrative section describing the village of Himekoso, located in the District of Ki. This section is valuable for elucidating the origin of the place name, which is a customary feature of the *fudoki*. The compilers specifically record the legend of the shrine attendant Kazeko, who was able to appease a cursing deity after receiving an oracle. Kazeko is visited by a dream where he sees weaving tools that dance, push him around and indicate that the cursing deity is Orihime, the ‘princess of weaving’. As a result, the popular etymology recorded in the passage suggests that the name Himekoso means ‘princess’s shrine’. The passage I will be focusing on reads as follows:

其夜、夢見臥機謂(久豆比岐)絡塚謂(多々理)。儼遊出来、圧驚珂是古。於是、知識女神。<sup>68</sup>

That night, in a dream, [Kazeko] saw that a heddle cord of the loom (called *kutupiki*) and a warping reel (called *tatari*) were dancing and pushing him around. From this, he understood that [the deity] was Orihime.

The two tools Kazeko sees in the dream are a heddle cord of the loom 臥機 (MC *ngwaH kj+j*), which is the tool used to wind the sewing threads, and a warping reel 絡塚 (MC *lak thwaX*). The compilers used the two Sinitic terms 臥機 and 絡塚, but they needed to gloss the two terms for weaving tools with notations in *man'yōgana* 万葉仮名 phonograms to furnish the vernacular equivalents: *kutupiki* 久豆比岐 and *tatari* 多々理, respectively. The glosses are introduced by the character 謂 (MC *hju+jH*, Ch. *wei*, Jp. *ware*), meaning ‘referred to as, termed’. Both terms are recorded in the *Wamyōruijushō*, Section 22 ‘Utensils. 2’ (調度部), Subsections 185 ‘Parts of the Loom’ (織機具) and 186 ‘Sericulture’ (蚕糸具):

*Wamyōruijushō*, Book 14, 22/185

臥機 楊氏漢語鈔云臥機(久豆比岐) [...]<sup>69</sup>

Heddle cord of the loom. The *Yōshi kangoshō* states ([that this is called] *kutupiki*).

<sup>67</sup> The oldest printed editions date back to 1800, when the *kokugaku* 国学 philologist Arakida Hisaoyu 荒木田久老 (1746–1804) published the annotated edition with a preface by Hasegawa Sugao 長谷川菅緒 (d. 1848) at the Yanagihara Kihee 柳原喜兵衛 publisher in Ōsaka.

<sup>68</sup> The text is from the *Inokumabon* in the critical edition by Okimori Takuya, Satō Makoto and Yajima Izumi 2008, 70.

<sup>69</sup> Nakada Norio 1978, 161.

*Wamyōruijushō*, Book 14, 22/186  
 絡塚 楊氏漢語鈔云(多々理) [...] <sup>70</sup>

Warping reel. The *Yōshi kangoshō* states ([that this is called] *tatari*).

As these two entries show, the *Wamyōruijushō* quotes the lost *Yōshi kangoshō* in turn. In Saikaidō (Kyūshū) *fudoki*, glosses with vernacular equivalents are usually inserted just to provide the local variant of a word. But in this case, the compilers feel the need to clarify these Sinitic terms by means of vernacular equivalents that are used to facilitate the understanding of difficult technical words related to the specialised domain of the textile sector.

## 5 Discussion

In the previous section, we have analysed five different texts in Sinitic from which the following vernacular terms have been elicited (Table 1). The eight terms belong to different lexical domains, from hippology and veterinary (texts A and B) to carpentry and architecture (text C), from bamboo and pottery craftsmanship (text D) to the textile sector (text E). The attestations provided are not isolated or rare cases, since some terms are also found in other eighth-century texts or in later documents, such as the term *yuka*, also occurring in a *mokkan*, or the same *yuka* and *tatakipe* found in the *Engishiki*. Previous literature confirms trends in this direction, given the large repertoire of coat colours<sup>71</sup> attested in documents on paper or wooden tablets, or the list of architectural terminology in the *Shōsōin monjo*.<sup>72</sup>

It is useful to evaluate the nature of the terms from two different perspectives. On the one hand, we need to evaluate the intrinsic character of the words elicited in terms of their classification and exposition in ancient dictionaries. On the other hand, we have to consider the register and usage of the words, focusing on the semantic domains to which they belong, the textual genres in which they occur, the aim of the texts and the actors involved in the communication.

<sup>70</sup> Nakada Norio 1978, 163.

<sup>71</sup> Manieri 2012.

<sup>72</sup> Fukuyama Toshio 1986.

Table 1: Vernacular terms.

Text	Term	Attestation in the <i>Wamyōruijushō</i>
A	<i>kake</i> 鹿毛 ('bay')	<i>Kangoshō</i>
B	<i>tari</i> 多利 ('lameness')	<i>zoku</i> (vernacular)
	<i>ute</i> 宇弓 ('bruise?')	not attested
C	<i>tatarikata</i> 多々理形 ('strut')	<i>Yōshi kangoshō</i>
	<i>pasame</i> 波佐目 ('insert?')	not attested
D	<i>suri</i> 須利 ('bamboo basket')	<i>Yōshi kangoshō</i>
	<i>yuka</i> 由賀 ('crock')	<i>Yōshi kangoshō</i>
	<i>tatakipe</i> 叩戸 ('container')	not attested
E	<i>kutupiki</i> 久豆比岐 ('heddle cord')	<i>Yōshi kangoshō</i>
	<i>tatari</i> 多々理 ('warping reel')	<i>Yōshi kangoshō</i>

## 5.1 Dictionary description of the terms

Verifying the attestation of terms in phonograms within the *Wamyōruijushō* has been necessary not only to search for the meanings of these words but also to ascertain the treatment they received in Shitagō's dictionary. The Japanese equivalents are always provided, either through a citation from a previous dictionary or glossary or through a label indicating a lexicographic marker.

The labels *zoku* 俗 and *shisetsu* 師説 occur in the entries analysed in this paper.

The character *zoku* can indicate different meanings in different contexts, as recently demonstrated by Baba Mariko.<sup>73</sup> Generally, *zoku* can be interpreted as referring to what is typical of everyday life: what is common, usual or not particularly noteworthy. Incidentally, *zoku* also appears in the compound *sezoku* 世俗, meaning 'the world of common people', in the preface of the *Wamyōruijushō*, where it is contrasted with *fūgetsu* 風月, a well-known and widely used metaphor for *belles lettres*, intended as both poetry and prose in Sinitic. Moreover, *zoku* is often associated with spoken language and idiomatic expressions such as 'the talks of the streets and discussions of the alleys' (街談巷説). This expression, which is still used as a four-character idiom in both China and Japan, refers to what is not canonical, has practical utility and is performed orally. In summary, the concept of *zoku* (and *sezoku*), as outlined in the preface, per-

<sup>73</sup> Baba 2022.

tains to orality, everyday life and what is not canonical or officially transmitted, such as popular conversations and discussions.

The label *shisetsu* refers to explanations offered by the master while commenting on a certain text in public or private lectures. In the *Wamyōruijushō*, it is applied to several Chinese texts, such as the *Wenxuan* 文選 ('Literary Selection', c. 530), the *Youxianku* 遊仙窟 ('The Dwelling of Playful Immortals', early eighth century) and the *Yanshi jiaxun* 顏氏家訓 ('Family Instructions of Master Yan', second half of the sixth century), as well as some Japanese works, such as the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 ('Chronicle of Japan', 720). The lectures were commonly conducted in private learning contexts outside the official state curriculum, thus, merging philological activity with oral transmission.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, as has been noted previously, these terms have a strong oral character and are not typically associated with written language. Additionally, none of these terms are found in contemporaneous poetry, not even the ancient songs of the *Kojiki* or *Nihon shoki* or the *Man'yōshū*. Incidentally, of the eight terms, only *tari*, *suri*, *yuka*, *kutupiki* and *tatari* are recorded in the dictionary of Old Japanese language *Jidaibetsu kokugo daijiten*. *Jōdaihen* 時代別国語大辞典—上代編, while only *tatari* is attested in the *ONCOJ – Oxford-NINJAL Corpus of Old Japanese*.<sup>75</sup>

## 5.2 Context of use of the terms

The texts exist on wooden tablets or paper, and represent different genres, including brief documents required by common people, such as transit passes; long documents consisting mostly of lists of words and quantities, such as registers of expenses and necessities; or geographical reports, where compilers choose to explain technical terms even when used in a narrative passage related to a myth.

Consequently, some texts have a predominantly bureaucratic purpose, such as recording goods, registering budgets and reporting the situation of provinces, while others have practical aims, such as allowing the crossing of frontiers and organising an office. However, regardless of their purpose, the texts are not private communications or individual notes, but are 'public', if not even 'offi-

<sup>74</sup> The *shisetsu* label applied to the *Wenxuan* has been studied by Yin Xianhua 2009, to the *Youxianku* by Kuranaka Susumu 1967, to the *Yanshi jiaxun* by Kuranaka Shinobu 2011, and to the *Nihon shoki* by Kuranaka Shinobu 1988.

<sup>75</sup> Manieri 2022a has shown how very few vernacular terms that the *Wamyōruijushō* quotes from the Nara-period *Yōshi kangoshō* are effectively recorded in the *Jidaibetsu kokugo daijiten*. *Jōdaihen* or the *ONCOJ – Oxford-NINJAL Corpus of Old Japanese*.



cial', and presume one or more readers, not necessarily in a close relationship. As such, the authors are aware that their texts would be read and must be understood. Thus, the authors did not use vernacular terms on their own whims or as a personal stylistic choice.

In terms of the relevant offices, there are various levels and responsibilities involved. Text A, for instance, was issued by the village chief and addressed to officials stationed at the internal frontiers for inspection of the passage of travelers and goods. The district-level officials, probably aided by the village chiefs, were responsible for the initial drafting of the information in the *fudoki* (text E), which was subsequently refined by the provincial officials, including the provincial governor. Regarding the *Hizen no kuni fudoki*, the text was further scrutinized and endorsed by the governor-general of Dazaifu before being submitted to the central government. The provincial officials were also the authors of the *shōzeichō* (text B), which had to undergo review by the Bureau of Public Resources before being presented to the Great Council of State. Texts C and D were compiled by officials from the Institute for the Construction of the Ishiyama Monastery and the Office of Sutra Transcription, respectively, both in connection with the Office for the Construction of the Tōdai Monastery.

In all of these offices, as in any office, bureau or ministry of the state, fourth-level officials played an important role in assisting higher officials in the compiling of documents. This type of petty official, holding a rank of 7 to 9 on a ranking scale of 1 to 10 (where 10 is the lowest), was indicated by different characters according to the office, but all refer to the so-called *reishi* 令史 (clerks), who were in charge of drafting texts, such as correspondence and records, and reading, selecting and summarising official documents.

However, clerks and their superiors, as well as the village and the district chiefs, were not expected to be experts in the fields of knowledge treated in the documents that they compiled.

In other words, the official who had to compile the document did not necessarily have a command of the knowledge, sources and related terminology to be used in the document. At the same time, there were offices of *shinabe* 品部 (or *be* 部), professional groups of skilled artisans, who were the actual experts and possessed the skilled know-how required by the developed bureaucratic system of the so-called 'code-based state' (*ritsuryō kokka* 律令国家).<sup>76</sup>

Therefore, apparently specialised terminologies were employed at two distinct levels of the state system: firstly, in the production and management of

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<sup>76</sup> *Shinabe* were a relic of pre-*ritsuryō* Japan. See Kanō Hisashi 1960. In general, on the *ritsuryō* state, see Enomoto Jun'ichi 2010.

activities for the benefit of the state, where labourers undertook hands-on work; and secondly, in the compilation of various document types, where users ranging from clerks to high-ranking officials engaged in managerial or intellectual work.<sup>77</sup>

The two categories of actors using terminologies had differing typologies of training in and command of technical knowledge and its lexicon. Skilled labourers held a procedural form of technical knowledge, and would learn terminologies orally and by performative acts, consisting, for example, of naming things while indicating them, or describing procedures while showing how to do them. Conversely, document compilers were not necessarily immersed in such a learning environment. They were expected to possess a descriptive, almost exclusively conceptual and lexical form of specialised knowledge, not imparted by the official system of education established by the *Gakuryō* 学令 ('Law on Education') or represented by the Bureau of Higher Education (Daigakuryō 大学寮, i.e. 'State Academy').<sup>78</sup> They needed to know only the terms to fill out the documents, and it seemed essential for them to acquire such words, or, at least, know the tools to search for the words.

In my previous research, it has been demonstrated that the *Wamyōruijushō* cites dictionaries such as the *Yōshi kangoshō* for words that frequently appear in the types of texts under investigation. Unfortunately, the *Yōshi kangoshō* is now lost and survives only in indirect transmission. It is one of the fragmentary dictionaries collectively known as *kangoshō* ('notes on Chinese words'), which also includes the *Kangoshō* found for the lemma *kake*, and the *Benshiki rissei*. The textual reconstruction and analysis of their lexicographic macro- and micro-structure show that they are bilingual, monodirectional dictionaries with Sinitic as the source language and vernacular Japanese as the target language. They collect terms covering technical domains of knowledge: generally, low-frequency words or *hapax*, not attested in refined literature, but mostly in handwritten

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<sup>77</sup> The presence of clerks and skilled artisans in most offices and bureaus can be ascertained by looking at the *Shiki'inryō* 職員令 ('Law on Officialdom'). See Inoue Mitsusada et al. 1976, 157–196. An introduction to the system in English is in Sansom 1932.

<sup>78</sup> An exception is the field of medicine, since the *Ishichiryō* 医病令 ('Law on Medicine') also regulated the official education of medicine and acupuncture students, and had a special institution, the Bureau of Medicine (Ten'yakuryō 典薬寮), dedicated to their training. For an introduction to the official educational system in ancient Japan, see Momo Hiroyuki 1994; the translation of the *Gakuryō* into English is in Crump 1952; for medical education, see Maruyama Yumiko 1998.

practical documents on wooden tablets or paper. The contents of these dictionaries are arranged thematically to provide easy access to their contents.<sup>79</sup>

Therefore, they were intended to serve as ‘passive’ dictionaries, as they were consulted for passive assistance in comprehending unfamiliar Sinitic terms encountered in reading. Additionally, due to their thematic organisation, they were surely used as pedagogical instruments for learning technical terminologies across various semantic domains.<sup>80</sup> Specifically, they proved valuable for the technical instruction of state clerks, whose cultural backgrounds may not have encompassed the competencies and specialised vocabulary necessary for their assigned office. Their compilers, thus, mediated the passage of technical-artisanal knowledge from the oral and performative layer of specialised labourers to the conceptual and literary layer of the clerks.

The learning of terminologies and vocabulary in ancient Japan is an area of research that has been largely overlooked and deserves greater attention. While this paper touches on this issue only briefly, it is also essential to consider some wooden tablets that were used in educational settings, called *shūsho mokkan* 習書木簡 (‘wooden tablets for learning texts’). Previous research has focused on tablets where Sinitic words are accompanied by their vernacular equivalents, which are known as *ongi mokkan* 音義木簡 (literally, ‘wooden tablets with pronunciation’);<sup>81</sup> where characters are repeatedly written down along with similar characters or those with the same radical component;<sup>82</sup> or where texts from classics are copied.<sup>83</sup> However, a third group of wooden tablets for learning also exists; this consists of items containing words that share a semantic relationship, such as meronymy, co-hyponymy and antonymy, in a way that resembles the arrangement found in the *kangoshō* dictionaries. These various types of *shūsho mokkan* show how part of education focused on learning terminologies that did not occur in the classics or in *belles lettres*, but were useful for practical and bureaucratic work.

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**79** Kuranaka Susumu 2001; Kuranaka Susumu 2002; Kuranaka Susumu 2003; Lin Zhongpeng 2012; Manieri 2022a.

**80** Manieri 2022a.

**81** Yamamoto Takashi 2020.

**82** Watanabe Akihiro 2009; Inoue Miyuki 2017.

**83** Satō Makoto 1997, 429–465; Watanabe Akihiro 2009.

## 6 Conclusion

This paper has presented an analysis of five multilingual texts from eighth-century Japan employing Sinitic syntax and lexicon but also containing some vernacular Japanese terms. These terms cover a range of semantic domains, including hippology, carpentry, craftsmanship and the textile sector. As evidenced by the dictionaries consulted, these terms have Sinitic counterparts, which, however, were not made use of in the texts themselves. Therefore, their use in the vernacular is not based on a Japanese cultural specificity of the concept or object that would require the use of phonograms, such as culturemes or proper names. Instead, the referents of the terms are known in both Japan and China, and, thus, the use of the Sinitic equivalent in the texts does not appear meaningless. Moreover, other specific words in Sinitic are also used in the same texts. The lexicographic exposition of the words by means of labels, such as *zoku* or *shisetsu*, has shown a solid relation to orality, and the usual contexts of usage of these words confirm this. Incidentally, viewed from a transcultural perspective, this phenomenon does not appear exceptional: as in some European traditions, the origins of the artisanal lexicon are rooted in dialects, which are vernacular and popular means of expression of craftsmanship, in contrast to the learned and educated varieties used by cultural elites.<sup>84</sup>

The artisanal lexicon and specialised terminology in ancient Japan were, therefore, based on a dense social and economic network, whose actors were the workers, who possessed the know-how and, in fact, used the vernacular terminology; the officials, who mostly had a role of management and control through the drafting of documents modelled on Sinitic formats; and the scholars ('lexicographers'), who connected theoretical and bookish erudition from Chinese sources with practical and procedural instruction from local professional groups. The latter were particularly able to promote broader access to technical knowledge through the compilation of dictionaries and glossaries. The attestations of Sinitic – vernacular word pairs in the dictionaries – suggest that officials effectively learned the terminologies in both versions.

Therefore, the choice of vernacular terms in documents with formalized Sinitic models does not invalidate the function of the texts or affect communication, since the terms are expressions of a residual orality justified by the environment in which they were used more, and because related tools, such as the *kangoshō*-type dictionaries, were produced in the same period.

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<sup>84</sup> See e.g. Zanola 2018.

In conclusion, the code-mixing of bureaucratic Sinitic and artisanal vernacular found in the texts results from the interaction between two different systems of knowledge: that of Chinese scholarship and literature (in the broader sense of ‘writing texts’), which were described by books and approached in formalized settings, and that of local practices, which were transmitted, learned and disseminated orally and performatively via work experience. These two systems are not intended in a strictly binary opposition, as both were interrelated in the management of the relevant offices to which officials and labourers belonged, and both contributed to the good governance of the state.

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## Abbreviation

DNK = Tōkyō daigaku shiryō hensanjo 東京大学史料編纂所 (eds) (1901–1940), *Dai Nihon komonjo* 大日本古文書, Tokyo: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai.

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Emmanuel Francis

# Mixing Languages and Scripts in Tamil Inscriptions and Manuscripts

**Abstract:** This chapter focuses on two periods in the history of writing texts in the Tamil language in the present-day Tamil Nadu state of South India. The first period starts around 600 CE, when two different alphabets – the Grantha and the Tamil alphabets – were designed to write texts in Sanskrit and Tamil, respectively. One can observe for several centuries onwards that Sanskrit loanwords are often written in their specific Grantha alphabet in Tamil inscriptions. The second period is attested in Tamil manuscripts, most of which are dated to the eighteenth and nineteenth century CE. These manuscripts evince new practices of script-mixing, the most conspicuous being the creation of conjunct graphemes mixing Grantha and Tamil alphabets.

## 1 Introduction

The Tamil region in South India, the present-day state of Tamil Nadu, has known a peculiar situation as far as alphabets have been concerned for approximately 1200 years, from the seventh to the nineteenth century CE. A single alphabet has been used to write texts in the regional language and in Sanskrit, the Indian cosmopolitan language, in most parts of India. By contrast, a distinct alphabet, called Grantha, designed around 600 CE, was used to write texts in Sanskrit in the Tamil south, whereas other distinct alphabets (called the Tamil and Vaṭṭeḷuttu alphabets) were used for writing texts in the Tamil language.

Given the multilingual (Sanskrit and Tamil) culture of the learned, it often happened that multilingual texts were produced in the Tamil area, with the use of specific alphabets for the different languages. This has resulted in interesting cases of language and alphabet mixing attested early in Tamil inscriptions and later in the surviving manuscripts.

The present chapter will focus mainly on two different cases of language and alphabet mixing in the Tamil area, separated by approximately a millennium:

- The use of Grantha graphemes for Sanskrit loanwords in otherwise fully Tamil inscriptions, with examples dated between the seventh and the thirteenth century CE.

- The use of the Grantha grapheme *m* as the final element of conjunct graphemes mixing Grantha and Tamil alphabets, in otherwise fully Tamil manuscripts dated mostly to the eighteenth and nineteenth century CE.

## 2 Scripts and languages in the Tamil region

The earliest attested alphabet for writing Tamil is the Tamil-Brāhmī alphabet (also called the *Tamiḷi* alphabet). This is an adaptation of the northern Brāhmī alphabet (fourth century BCE, at the latest), initially designed for writing Indo-Aryan languages. This alphabet has been adapted in the Tamil area to write inscriptions in Tamil, a Dravidian language, from the third century BCE. Slightly later, another alphabet called *Vaṭṭeḷuttu*, also derived from the Brāhmī alphabet, is attested to write down Tamil.<sup>1</sup>

A new alphabet for Tamil appeared around the beginning of the seventh century CE, simply called the Tamil alphabet, from which the modern Tamil alphabet derives. At the same time, a specific alphabet, called Grantha, was designed for writing Sanskrit texts, as this language knows phonemes (e.g. aspirate) unknown in Tamil and as, in writing, Sanskrit consonant clusters are generally dealt with ligature letters rather than using a ‘vowel-killer’ (see below) on the first consonant.<sup>2</sup> The *Vaṭṭeḷuttu* alphabet continued to be used, up to the eighth century CE, in countryside areas, for instance, for the specific type of hero stone inscriptions, before later being confined to Kerala and the southern districts of present-day Tamil Nadu.

The Tamil and Grantha alphabets, designed around 600 CE, however, have some graphemes in common, as shown in Table 1, which is only an attempt to describe the configurations of Tamil and Grantha alphabets at the time of their invention in the seventh century CE.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On these small corpora of Tamil-Brāhmī and early *Vaṭṭeḷuttu* inscriptions, and on the relations between these alphabets, see Mahadevan 2003 and 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Grantha is also called Grantha Tamil (Grünendahl 2001), Tamilian Grantha (Franceschini 2022), to distinguish it from other varieties of Grantha used in regions of South India, contiguous to the Tamil area, e.g. Grantha Malayalam (Grünendahl 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Some graphemes listed in lines 2 and 3 might, in fact, be changed from one line to the other. As such, lines 2 and 3 are provisional.

**Table 1:** Graphemes of the Grantha and Tamil alphabets (seventh century CE).<sup>4</sup>

1	Graphemes	Grantha alphabet	Tamil alphabet
2	Common to both alphabets	ṭa, ṇa, ta, na ya, va	
3	Specific in each alphabet	initial vowels ñā ka, ra pa ma la	initial vowels ñā ka, ra pa ma la
4	Specific to the Grantha alphabet	kha, ga, gha ca, cha, ja, jha ṭha, ḍa, ḍha tha, da, dha pha, ba, bha ṣa, sa, śa ha ṁ, ḥ	
5	Specific to the Tamil alphabet		ca ḷa, ḷa, ra, ṇa ḷ

Line 2 shows the graphemes common to both alphabets. Line 3 shows graphemes for phonemes common to both languages but differentiated in their respective alphabet. The letters *ka* and *ra*, for instance, have a single stroke in the Tamil alphabet and a double stroke in the Grantha alphabet (see Fig. 1d); the Grantha *pa* is larger than the Tamil *pa*. Line 4 shows graphemes found only in the Grantha alphabet for specific Sanskrit phonemes not attested in the Tamil language, for instance, aspirated consonants, and for phonemes not distinguished by script in Tamil language, such as voiced and unvoiced consonants.<sup>5</sup> Conversely, as shown in line 5, the Tamil alphabet also has exclusive graphemes, specifically for Tamil Dravidian phonemes, such as alveolar consonants.

<sup>4</sup> For the conventions of visualisation of different scripts and languages, see Conventions, below.

<sup>5</sup> The reason why Tamil does not distinguish voiced/unvoiced consonants in its dedicated script is that this quality is indicated by the immediate environment of the consonant: for instance, the Tamil *t*, between two vowels or after *n*, is a voiced dental, but is unvoiced when duplicated or at the beginning of a word (unless, in the latter case, the final grapheme of the preceding word is *n* or *t*).

Furthermore, Grantha also regularly resorts to ligature writing, using conjunct graphemes, i.e. one single grapheme made by merging the graphemes of two or more consonants following each other without being vocalised. Such a feature only occasionally appears in the Tamil alphabet, where it mostly affects graphemes common to both the Tamil and Grantha alphabets, showing the probable influence of the Grantha alphabet upon the Tamil alphabet.

The distribution above of graphemes between the two alphabets is, in fact, tentative and shows the situation in the seventh century CE. In the course of time, Tamil and Grantha scripts came to be more sharply distinguished. Initial vowels might not be well differentiated, at least in the early period, and were clearly differentiated only later. Further differentiation between the two scripts may be observed quite early in some inscriptions:<sup>6</sup>

- In the inscription IP 205 (c. 877 CE), the Tamil *ṭa* is longer than the Grantha *ṭa*, which is here found also used in a conjunct grapheme and, as such, marked as Grantha. Compare Eṭṭāvatu (Fig. 1a) and bhāṭṭanukku (Fig. 1b).
- In the same inscription IP 205, in the word Ācāriryānēn (Fig. 1c), the final *n*, a grapheme common to both scripts, is marked as Grantha by a superscript wavy line, which is a *virāma* (i.e. a vowel-killer, indicating that the consonant is not vocalised).<sup>7</sup>
- In the inscription IP 96 (late ninth century CE), in the word vallaṅ āyuktaṅākiya (Fig. 1d), the form of the vowel sign *-u* in *yu* marks this grapheme as Grantha, as it has two strokes (instead of one stroke in the Tamil script). Also note the difference mentioned above between Grantha *k* (two strokes) and Tamil script *k* (a single stroke).
- The inscription IT 4 (c. 1048 CE) shows two types of *tu* (Fig. 1e): śricoleṅtra-siṃhaccatu<r>vvedīmaṅkalattu. The first *tu* is in Grantha and the second in Tamil script, as indicated by the alternative ways the vowel sign *-u* is attached to the consonant.

The Tamil script does not normally use conjunct graphemes. But there are also cases of Tamil conjunct graphemes observed in Tamil words. They concern graphemes common to both scripts (e.g. *n* and *t*) but also Tamil graphemes proper (e.g. *k*). Here are a few examples:

<sup>6</sup> Roman, grey-highlighted roman, and italic, respectively mark graphemes in the Tamil alphabet, graphemes in the Grantha alphabet, and graphemes common to the Tamil and Grantha alphabets.

<sup>7</sup> The same wavy line is used in this inscription as a vowel-killer above Tamil graphemes, instead of the usual *puḷḷi* ('dot'). Also see the Centalai inscriptions below.

- n=ti (Fig. 2a) in the phrase svasti śrī nan=tippō(t)taraiyarkku (IP 144, c. 849 CE). This syllable *nti* can be considered to be written here in Tamil script as it represents the Tamil pronunciation and notation of Sanskrit *ndi*.
- k=ku (Fig. 2b) in the word putuk=ku (IP 120, supplementary inscription, c. 852 CE). This is possibly the first example of a common Tamil conjunct grapheme. We see here that the single vertical strokes of both *k* are very close, that both graphemes seem to share a single horizontal stroke, while the vowel sign *-u* surrounds both of them.
- p=pa (Fig. 2c) in the word tirup=pati (IT 30, c. 1241 CE). That this is not a Grantha conjunct grapheme is indicated by the fact that the *p* is not large and the two graphemes are merged horizontally (instead of vertically, as in Grantha).
- pa=ṭa (Fig. 2d) in the word tēvapa=ṭaṇ (IT 30, l. 15, c. 1241 CE).

The coexistence of specific alphabets for Tamil and Sanskrit languages implies that both languages might be marked by their alphabets in a text written in the Tamil area. This practice, attested by some of the inscriptional examples above, has been apparently acknowledged by Tamil grammarians, as early as the eleventh century,<sup>8</sup> and comes, in the Tamil area, in different configurations.<sup>9</sup>

On the one hand, there are inscriptions which consist of at least two distinct portions of text, one in Sanskrit and Grantha, the other in the Tamil language and script. These are diglossic inscriptions, as there is a division of labour<sup>10</sup> between the languages: Sanskrit for the eulogy and Tamil for the business part, i.e. what Timothy Lubin calls ceremonial diglossia<sup>11</sup> and Sheldon Pollock, hyperglossia.<sup>12</sup> There are also cases of bilinguals, where the Tamil language, on par with Sanskrit, is also used for the eulogy, which I have suggested calling amphiglossic (ceremonial) bilinguals.

On the other hand, there are numerous inscriptions that I have called Tamil mixed-language inscriptions, where Tamil is the main language of the record whereas Sanskrit loanwords, in a variable quantity, are integrated into the text

**8** On *viraviyal*, ‘that which has the nature of mixing’, mentioned in the eleventh-century CE Tamil grammar called *Viracōḷiyam*, see Francis 2021a, 129.

**9** The following three paragraphs summarise what is described at length in Francis 2021a.

**10** Pollock 2006, 117.

**11** Lubin 2013, 411.

**12** Such inscriptions are false or non-strict bilinguals, i.e. the two texts in different languages are not translations one of the other, but differ in content, as opposed to strict bilinguals, where the two texts in different languages are (almost exact) translations one of the other. The latter type is virtually inexistent in the Tamil region until the nineteenth century CE.

and marked as such by the use of Grantha. This is another type of diglossia, legal<sup>13</sup> or technical.

Finally, there is also the language called Maṇippiravāḷam – applied to texts, especially in Vaiṣṇava commentarial tradition, from the twelfth century CE onwards – transmitted in manuscripts, where Tamil and Sanskrit are mixed, without hierarchy. The label Maṇippiravāḷam has also been applied to inscriptions from the Tamil area. I would restrict this label only to inscriptions where Sanskrit and Tamil are both languages of eulogy, mixed in the same text, i.e. in cases of amphiglossic (ceremonial) mixed-language inscriptions, but not in cases of legal or technical diglossia in Tamil mixed-language inscriptions, where Sanskrit is a term of higher register, i.e. hyperglossic.

### 3 Tamil inscriptions (600–1300 CE)

We are concerned with the period, starting around 600 CE, when the Grantha alphabet, specifically designed for writing Sanskrit, appeared and coexisted with alphabets designed for writing Tamil: an already existing Vaṭṭeḷuttu alphabet and a newly-designed Tamil alphabet. This period lasted for several centuries and also witnessed the progressive assimilation of Sanskrit loanwords to Tamil phonetics and script, with only a few residual Grantha graphemes still used.<sup>14</sup>

#### 3.1 Trichy royal epithets

The first examples of these two new alphabets are possibly to be found, around 600 CE, in the rock-cut cave at Trichy.<sup>15</sup>

Among the inscriptions of this cave are a series of royal epithets (*birudas*, ‘glorifying soubriquets’) of the Pallava king Mahendravarman I, distributed on

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<sup>13</sup> Following Lubin 2013.

<sup>14</sup> These Grantha graphemes, i.e. *ja*, *śa*, *ṣa*, *sa*, *ha*, *kṣa* and *śrī*, eventually came to be considered as Grantha elements of the modern Tamil alphabet, but are found only in Sanskrit loanwords.

<sup>15</sup> Lockwood 2008.



different parts of the monument. This list is multilingual and multiscriptual, as we find:<sup>16</sup>

- Sanskrit royal epithets in Grantha script.
- Tamil royal epithets in Tamil script.
- Tamil royal epithets, exceptionally, in Grantha script.
- Telugu royal epithets in Grantha script, with a specific grapheme for the Dravidian alveolar *ra*.

### 3.2 Auspicious beginnings

Similar to any Indian text, an inscription usually starts with an auspicious beginning. Inscriptions in the Tamil region, from the eighth century CE onwards, whether in Sanskrit or in Tamil, start with the Sanskrit blessing *svasti śrī* ('Prosperity! Fortune!') in Grantha (Fig. 3).<sup>17</sup> This almost compulsory initial blessing *svasti śrī* appears to be typical of South Indian Tamil inscriptions and only occasionally occurs in North Indian inscriptions.

Alternative blessings of the same purport in Tamil script are attested at an early time. (Āyu)ḷ cīr (IP 262; ninth century CE), for instance, which, in fact, is made of two Sanskrit loanwords, *āyus* and *śrī*, assimilated to Tamil phonetics and script.

Another pan-Indian Sanskrit blessing formula, *śubham astu*, became ubiquitous in the Tamil region and practically displaced *svasti śrī* subsequently, from the fifteenth century CE onwards.

### 3.3 Sanskrit loanwords

Tamil inscriptions contain loanwords from Prakrit, and later from Sanskrit, from the early beginnings. These words are usually assimilated into the Tamil phonetics and morphology in the early Tamil-Brāhmī inscriptions.<sup>18</sup>

However, from the time the Grantha alphabet was invented to write down Sanskrit texts, we regularly find Sanskrit loanwords written, fully or partially, in Grantha script in a Tamil inscription, denoting, similar to our modern use of the

<sup>16</sup> For details, illustrations, and translations, see Francis 2013a, 363–368; Francis 2021a, 112–115. For another list of royal epithets, bilingual only, and multiscriptual, see the Centalai inscriptions below.

<sup>17</sup> Also see IP 144 above (Fig. 2a).

<sup>18</sup> See Mahadevan 2003, 109; Mahadevan 2014, 146.

italics, the awareness of the writer that the word is a loanword. Here are a few examples of selected Sanskrit loanwords found in such Tamil mixed-language inscriptions:

- brahmāṇiyār (IP 78, l. 2; c. 755 CE).
- brahmatēyan (IP 171, l. 3; c. 890 CE).
- branmatēyattukku (IP 119, l. 11; c. 852 CE).

In the last two cases, note that the dental in *tē* is already assimilated into Tamil script, but there are instances where this is not the case, such as:

- brahmadeyam (SII 19, no. 357, ll. 15–16; late tenth century CE).

### 3.3.1 Allographs

Various allographs are found in Tamil inscriptions, across places at the same time or across time in the same place, because, as just seen above, the same Sanskrit loanword can be instantiated using a variable amount of Grantha graphemes. Allographs are also attested in the same record by the same hand. Compare brahmadeyam (l. 50; Fig. 4a) and brahmatēyam (l. 73; Fig. 4b) in the Bāhūr plates (IP 155, c. 877 CE). Similarly, we find [mahā]devarkku (l. 1), mātēvaṭikaḷārāna (l. 2), Iddevarkku (l. 2) and Idevaruṭaiya (l. 2) in SII 19, no. 292 (late tenth century CE), all instances of various ways of actualising the Sanskrit word *deva* in a Tamil inscription.

### 3.3.2 Mixing morphology

The examples above additionally show that mixing alphabets and languages also implies mixing morphology. The root of Sanskrit loanword is normally in Grantha, whereas the Tamil morphological suffix is in Tamil letters. Thus, the transition of one script to another is often at the morpheme boundary.

An interesting case is that of Sanskrit personal names of the *a*-stem declension. In the following examples, the stem of the Sanskrit loanword in Grantha is suffixed with the purely Tamil morphological ending of the third person masculine *-aṇ*, in Tamil letters:

- pākaśācanaṇ = Sanskrit *pākaśāsana*- ('punisher of Pāka', a name of the god Indra) + Tamil *aṇ* (SII 3, no. 206, l. 89; tenth century CE). The letter *na*, at the transition between Grantha and Tamil scripts, is considered here as a grapheme common to both alphabets.

- **madhyastan** (IP 152, pl. 7v, l. 4 = l. 125; c. 875 CE) = Sanskrit *madhyastha* (with aspirated *tha* changed to non-aspirated *ta*) + Tamil *an*.

The first example comes from the Tamil portion of a bilingual ceremonial amphiglossic copperplate charter, the second one from the Tamil portion, evincing technical diglossia, of a bilingual ceremonial diglossic copperplate charter.

Interestingly, we also have, although rarely, examples where the Sanskrit personal name is fully written in Grantha, including the purely Tamil morphological suffix of the third person masculine, ‘Granthaised’ as *n*, a grapheme, in fact, common to Tamil and Grantha scripts, but marked here as Grantha in contrast with the Tamil grapheme *ṇ*:

- **śrīvaran· śrīmanoharan· ciṇac·coḷaṇ· puṇap·pūḷiyaṇ· vītakan·maṣaṇ· vinaya·viṣṭutan· vikramapāraḱan· vīrapurokan** (Vēḷvikkuṭi plates, EI 17, no. 16, ll. 98–99; c. ninth century CE). This is a long string of royal epithets of King Neṭuṅcaṭaiyaṇ, where Tamil ones, written in Vaṭṭeḷuttu script<sup>19</sup> and ending with the Tamil ending of the third person masculine *-aṇ*, alternate with Grantha ones, written in Grantha and ending with Tamil suffix of the third person masculine, ‘Granthaised’ as *n* and followed by a *virāma* vowel-killer. This text portion is an example of epigraphical Maṇḱipiravāḷam from the Tamil portion of a bilingual amphiglossic copperplate charter.
- **bhāṭ=ṭanukku** (see IP 205 above and Fig. 1b). The letter *nu*, at the transition between Grantha and Tamil scripts, is considered here as a grapheme common to both alphabets.

In the same Vēḷvikkuṭi plates (EI 17, no. 16, c. ninth century CE) we also find personal names mixing Tamil and Sanskrit, fully in Grantha, in portions of texts otherwise fully in Tamil script:

- **māravarmman** (plate 4<sup>v</sup>, l. 2 = l. 48) = Tamil *māraṇ* + Sanskrit *varman*.
- **śrīmāravarmman** (plate 5<sup>r</sup>, l. 6 = l. 62).

There is an interesting case in Centalai of two mixed-language amphiglossic inscriptions found each inscribed twice on four pillars. Each inscription is a list of four royal epithets of a Muttaraiyar chief (eighth century CE; EI 13, no. 10).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> This is, thus, a case of Vaṭṭeḷuttu and Grantha scripts being mixed, examples of which are found in the southern parts of the Tamil region, where Vaṭṭeḷuttu subsides. Also see, for instance, a cave inscription at Āṇaimalai (EI 8, no. 33.II).

<sup>20</sup> For further details, translations and illustrations, see Francis 2013a, 376–382; Francis 2021a, 114–115.

The first series reads [śrīmāraṇ·] śrīśatrukesarī śrīkaḷvarakaḷvan· śrīAtisāhasan·, whereas the second series reads śrītamarālayaṇ· śrīAbhimānadhīran· śrīkaḷ·vara-kaḷ·vaṇ· śrīśatrukesarī. The following traits are noticeable here:

- The *virāma* on the final Grantha *n* of the Grantha royal epithets and the *puḷli* on the final Tamil letter *ṇ* of the Tamil royal epithets, which are both a similar wavy line.
- The two royal epithets in the Sanskrit language and Grantha script śrīAtisāhasan· and śrīAbhimānadhīran·, which both end with the Tamil personal suffix of the third personal singular (-aṇ), ‘Granthaised’ as *n*.
- The Tamil royal epithet *kaḷvarakaḷvaṇ* found in Tamil script except for the honorific prefix *śrī* in Grantha (śrīkaḷ·varakaḷ·vaṇ·), but also written entirely in Grantha (śrīkaḷvarakaḷvan·), with the alveolar final *ṇ* of the third person singular ‘Granthaised’ as *n*.

### 3.3.3 Sociolinguistic aspects

Several factors, not mutually exclusive, might explain the choice of the Grantha alphabet for the Sanskrit loanwords:

- An almost ‘mechanical’ writing of words in their appropriate script – like we, today, use quotation marks or italics for foreign words – by a copyist knowledgeable in both scripts and languages.
- A pedantic writing reflected in the script.
- An identity statement by a Brahmin writer, as Sanskrit is the Brahmins’ preserve.
- A reference to a pan-Indian concept otherwise theorised in Sanskrit texts. This is a diglossic situation (legal, technical) at the level of a Tamil mixed-language inscription.
- An identity statement of a Tamil writer, in the case of amphiglossic Tamil mixed-language inscriptions or Maṇippiravāḷam, such as the multilingual lists of royal epithets, where both Sanskrit and Tamil are used as both fit to proclaim the grandeur of kings.

Sanskrit loanwords are progressively assimilated into the phonetics and script of the Tamil receiving language. The Sanskrit word *brahmadeya*, that we have seen written as *brahmadeyam* or *brahmatēyam* above, could also be and was indeed written *piramatēyam*. This spelling spread and became the norm in Tamil inscriptions, but for reasons sometimes unclear, the older spellings *brahmadeyam* or *brahmatēyam* could, across time and place, subside longer or resurface.

## 4 Sanskrit inscriptions from the Tamil region

Regarding Sanskrit inscriptions in Grantha script produced in the Tamil region, they sometimes evince other instances of mixing, but not that of alphabets and languages.

The spelling of Sanskrit words written in Grantha in a Sanskrit inscription might evince the influence of the Tamil language and phonetics as they were composed by a Tamil speaker. This would be a case of mixing phonetics.

The spelling, for example, in a list of royal epithets in Mahābalipuram (IP 39; seventh century CE), betrays that the mother tongue of the composer is Tamil, as he writes *bāchana* for the Sanskrit *bhājana* and *pridhivi* for the Sanskrit *pr̥thivi*.<sup>21</sup>

A current Tamil alteration of Sanskrit pronunciation is reflected in writing *tṣa* instead of *kṣa*. An instance of this is the Bāhūr plates (IP 155; c. 877 CE), where the writer is, however, not consistent as he writes the Sanskrit phoneme *kṣa*, sometimes *kṣa* and sometimes *tṣa*.

The substitution of an unvoiced consonant for a voiced consonant (e.g. *t* for *d* before a consonant) is also common:

- *kulotbhava* instead of *kulodbhava* (IP 91, l. 5; c. 793 CE and IP 181, l. 11; c. 893 CE).
- *sakara* instead of *sagara* (IP 91, l. 15; c. 793 CE).

There are also cases of biscript monolingual Sanskrit inscriptions, where the same text is found twice in two different alphabets, the local Grantha and a North Indian alphabet, in a statement of cosmopolitanism and claim to universality.<sup>22</sup>

## 5 Tamil manuscripts

Let us now jump to a time approximately five hundred years later than the end of the inscriptional period concerned above<sup>23</sup> and deal with practices observed in Tamil manuscripts, which usually date to the eighteenth century at the earli-

<sup>21</sup> See EI 10, no. 7, n. 1. For other examples, see the Bāhūr plates (IP 155; c. 877 CE, see EI 18, no. 2, p. 6).

<sup>22</sup> See Francis 2013b; Francis 2021b, 157–160.

<sup>23</sup> The period between the fourteenth and the seventeenth century CE is not the area of expertise of the present contributor and certainly deserves a closer study.

est and, most of the time, to the nineteenth century CE.<sup>24</sup> This period was also marked by polyglossy: Sanskrit, the pan-Indian cosmopolitan language, and regional languages coexisted and were used and read by the same people. One often finds, for instance, complete Sanskrit sentences, blessings or colophons, i.e. scribal paratexts attesting the copyist's knowledge of these two languages and their respective scripts, in Tamil manuscripts.

However, cases of legal or technical diglossia comparable to those discussed above from Tamil mixed-language inscriptions are only rarely found: Sanskrit loanwords appear to have been fully assimilated into Tamil phonetics and script; their Sanskrit origin is now unrecognisable from their script. Grantha and Tamil scripts are also more differentiated than at their origins.

One novelty that can be observed is the creeping of the Grantha grapheme *m*, so far not observed in earlier inscriptions, but possibly in inscriptions contemporary to the manuscripts, into the writing of Tamil texts, in the form of conjunct graphemes.

## 5.1 Final *m*

The main phenomenon observed concerns the grapheme for the final *m* in words, which are mostly Sanskrit loanwords, but also, by extension, in Tamil words. Basically, there are three options for writing the ending *m* in a Sanskrit loanword for a copyist:

- Tamil letter *m*, as an independent grapheme.
- Grantha letter *m*, as an independent grapheme.
- Grantha letter *m*, as the final element of a conjunct grapheme, the first element being a Tamil grapheme.

The final *m* in Tamil manuscripts can, thus, be variously instantiated, besides the expected standard Tamil letter *m*.

### 5.1.1 Independent final Grantha *m*

Here are a few instances of the use of a final Grantha *m*, not in a conjunct but as an independent final grapheme, with or without an ascending stroke, that could

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<sup>24</sup> The manuscripts considered here are mostly on palm leaves, but there are also some paper manuscripts.

be considered a *virāma* (vowel-killer), meaning that the consonant is plain, without vocalisation:

- śrīrā=ma<sup>m</sup>ceyam (BnF Indien 1039, U2b, fol. 167<sup>r</sup>, left margin; Fig. 5a).
- virut=tam (BnF Indien 303, U2c, fol. 77<sup>v</sup>, l. 2; Fig. 5b).
- tirucciṛampalam (BnF Indien 303, U2c, fol. 77<sup>v</sup>, l. 2; Fig. 5c).

Note that this final Grantha *m* is used mostly, if not exclusively, in paratexts, such as scribal blessings (in the margins or at junctures of the root text, such as ends of chapters or colophons) or total verses (at junctures of the root text), but rarely in the root text itself.

### 5.1.2 Tamil-Grantha conjuncts with a final Grantha *m*

Another option is to use a Tamil-Grantha conjunct grapheme, where the final *m* is appended below the base of the first (Tamil) grapheme of the conjunct. This appended final *m*, noted here as =<sup>m</sup>, appears, from its physical aspect, to be, in fact, a Grantha *ma*. It should, as pointed out to me by Charles Li, be read as *m*, i.e. even in the absence of an explicit vowel-killer.

There are also cases where, similar to the independent final Grantha *m* (Section 5.1.1 above), the final *m* bears what could be interpreted as a vowel-killer in the form of an ascending stroke. In the absence of an explicit vowel-killer, it is, however, sometimes to be read *ma* and not *m*, as we will see below (Section 5.2).

Here are some commonly found examples of Tamil-Grantha conjunct graphemes ending with a below-base Grantha letter *m*, as compared to the standard Tamil script graphemes:

- ṇam vs ṇa=<sup>m</sup> (Fig. 6a and Fig. 6b).
- ṇam vs ṇa=<sup>m</sup> (Fig. 6c and Fig. 6d).
- yum vs yu=<sup>m</sup> (Fig. 6e and Fig. 6f).
- yam vs ya=<sup>m</sup> (Fig. 6g and Fig. 6h).

Note that yu=<sup>m</sup> and ya=<sup>m</sup> are basically the same grapheme that can be read yum (in pure Tamil words, e.g. ariyu=<sup>m</sup>) or yam (in Sanskrit loanwords, e.g. ceya=<sup>m</sup>).

Other Tamil-Grantha conjunct graphemes attested are, for instance, ka=<sup>m</sup>, k=ka=<sup>m</sup>, ta=<sup>m</sup>, t=ta=<sup>m</sup>, tu=<sup>m</sup>, mu=<sup>m</sup>, ra=<sup>m</sup>, la=<sup>m</sup>, vu=<sup>m</sup> and ḷa=<sup>m</sup>. There might be more, not yet observed.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See growing list of examples on <<https://tst-project.github.io/palaeography/below-base-ligatures>> (accessed on 20 July 2023).

### 5.1.3 Allographs

As such variant spellings coexist with standard Tamil spellings, there are several allographs for certain words. The syllable *ṇam*, for instance, could be written:

- ṇam (two graphemes, fully in Tamil script).
- ṇa=m (Tamil-Grantha conjunct grapheme).
- ṇam (one Tamil grapheme + Grantha *m* without *virāma*).
- ṇam̄ (one Tamil grapheme + Grantha *m* with *virāma*).

The Tamil word *carāṇam*, from Sanskrit *śaraṇa*, ‘shelter, refuge, protection’, for instance, encountered frequently in the blessing formula *X carāṇam*, is found variously spelled, with further spelling options, such as *ra* for *ra*, as follows:

- carāṇam (BnF Indien 246, U2, fol. 77<sup>v</sup>, l. 7 and BnF Indien 362, U3, fol. 17<sup>r</sup>, col. 3, l. 3; Fig. 7a and Fig. 7b).
- caṛaṇam (BnF Indien 362, U3, fol. 17<sup>r</sup>, col. 2, l. 2; Fig. 7c). Note that this is by the same hand as that of the second of the two examples above, in other words, an inconsistent hand.
- caṛaṇa=m (BnF Indien 89, U2a, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, l. 3; Fig. 7d).
- carāṇam=᳚ (BnF Indien 247, U2, fol. 1<sup>v</sup>, l. 5; Fig. 7e), with *piḷḷaiyār cūḷi* merged with the final Grantha *m*.

The same could be shown for other Sanskrit loanwords, in blessings adapted from Sanskrit. Sanskrit *sakāya* (‘support’) in the *X-cakāyam* blessing formula, or Sanskrit *kaṭākṣa* (‘glance, side look’, i.e. ‘grace’) in the *X-kaṭākṣam* blessing formula (see examples below) are instances.

## 5.2 *rā=m* / *rā=ma* conjunct grapheme

The grapheme *rā=ma* is a case of a Tamil-Grantha conjunct grapheme where the appended *m* should be read vocalised, that is *ma* and not *m*. We read this grapheme, which looks like two merged Tamil *kāls*<sup>26</sup> + Grantha *ma* attached below its base, as *rāma*. This could alternatively be read *rām*, but in all its occurrences, it makes more sense to read *rāma* rather than *rām*, except when it is followed by a medial *ā*, so as to note *rāmā* (see below).

<sup>26</sup> The *kāl* is an ambiguous Tamil grapheme, which represents either the medial vowel *ā* or the consonant *r*. Only the context indicates the relevant reading.



In practice, this conjunct grapheme  $r\bar{a}=ma$  has been found so far almost exclusively for the word  $r\bar{a}ma$ , as in the blessing  $\acute{s}r\bar{i}r\bar{a}maceyam$  (from Sanskrit  $\acute{s}r\bar{i} + r\bar{a}ma + jaya$ ), for which there are numerous variant spellings.<sup>27</sup> Several factors explain why this blessing is found spelt with so many possible variants, as the copyist could use:

- The conjunct  $r\bar{a}=ma$ .
- A final independent Grantha  $m$ , with or without  $vir\bar{a}ma$ , to write  $yam$ .
- The final below-base Grantha  $m$  in a conjunct grapheme, with or without  $vir\bar{a}ma$ , to write the same  $yam$ .
- Several variant Tamil spellings for Sanskrit  $jaya$ .
- The allograph  $r$  for  $r$ .
- The double  $k\bar{a}l$  merged for  $r\bar{a}$ .

What follows is just a sample of the various possible spellings:<sup>28</sup>

- $\acute{s}r\bar{i}r\bar{a}maceyam$  (BnF Indien 390, U2c, fol. 2<sup>v</sup>, l. 2; Fig. 8a), an example of full assimilation to the Tamil script except for the Grantha  $\acute{s}r\bar{i}$ .
- $\acute{s}r\bar{i}r\bar{a}=maceyam$  (BnF Indien 265, U2b, fol. 601<sup>r</sup>, l. 2; Fig. 8b), where the conjunct grapheme  $r\bar{a}=ma$  is used.
- $\acute{s}r\bar{i}r\bar{a}=maceya=m=\omega$  (BnF Indien 3, U2c, fol. 14<sup>v</sup>, l. 5; Fig. 8c), where the conjunct graphemes  $r\bar{a}=ma$  and  $ya=m$  are used, the latter being merged with the punctuation in the form of a *piḷḷaiyār cuḷi*.
- $\acute{s}r\bar{i}r\bar{a}=maceyam$  (BnF Indien 1037, fol. 1<sup>v</sup>, left margin; Fig. 8d), where the conjunct grapheme  $r\bar{a}=ma$  and the final Grantha  $m$  are used.
- $\acute{s}r\bar{i}r\bar{a}=maceyam \cdot$  (BnF Indien 1039, U3, fol. 167<sup>r</sup>, left margin; Fig. 8e), where the conjunct grapheme  $r\bar{a}=ma$  and the final independent Grantha  $m$  with a vertical stroke, possibly functioning as a vowel-killer, are used.
- $\acute{s}r\bar{i}r\bar{a}maceyam$  (BnF Indien 143, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, l. 1; Fig. 8f), where the Tamil grapheme  $r\bar{a}$  is used instead of the Tamil grapheme  $r\bar{a}$ .
- $\acute{s}r\bar{i}r\bar{a}majayam$  (BnF Indien 431, U2a, fol. 1r, col. 1, l. 1; Fig. 8g), where the Tamil grapheme  $r\bar{a}$  is used instead of the Tamil grapheme  $r\bar{a}$ , whereas the Grantha  $ja$  is kept.
- $\acute{s}r\bar{i}r\bar{a}majeyam$  (BnF Indien 143, fol. 271<sup>r</sup>, l. 1; Fig. 8h), where the Tamil grapheme  $r\bar{a}$  is used instead of the Tamil grapheme  $r\bar{a}$ , the Grantha  $j$  is kept, but vocalised  $-e$  instead of  $-a$ .

<sup>27</sup> BnF Indien 143, Ariel papers, made of papers by various hands bound in one volume, used here, provides a good sample of various possible spellings.

<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the final grapheme can be merged with the following punctuation.

- śrīrāmaceyam (BnF Indien 143, fol. 464<sup>r</sup>, l. 1; Fig. 8i), where the allograph *rā* (double *kāl* fused instead of two discrete successive *kāls*) is used.

As in the case of epigraphical allographs, such allographs can be found in the same manuscript by the same hand. This might be due to the inconsistency of the copyist, but one can wonder if sometimes allographs were not used on purpose. We find this blessing *śrīrāmaceyam* three times in succession, each with a different spelling, for instance, in BnF Indien 947, U4, fol. 112<sup>r</sup>, l. 3: śrīrāmaceya=m śrīrā=maceyam śrīrā=maceya=m. Perhaps the copyist used three different spellings here on purpose, so that the blessing would be more operative by being repeated three times in three variant spellings.

There are other instances where the very same grapheme is not to be read *rā=ma* but *rā=m* instead, that is, when it is followed by a medial *-ā*. We have found this so far only for the name Rāmānuja and for the name Rāma in its vocative form *rā=mā*, as in the following example: śrīrā=m=ā (BnF Indien 335, U5, fol. 476<sup>r</sup>, left margin; Fig. 9), where the medial *-ā* looks like a part of the whole conjunct (thus, preceded here by ‘=’).

### 5.3 Grantha-Tamil conjunct graphemes

The examples above can be considered as regular Tamil-Grantha conjunct graphemes. As it happens, there are further, rare or unusual, examples of conjunct graphemes where these two distinct alphabets are also mixed, but in the reverse order, i.e. the first element of the conjunct is a Grantha grapheme and the below-base element is a Tamil grapheme. This practice concerns, unexpectedly, Sanskrit loanwords. Note that the Grantha graphemes involved in the examples observed so far are among those to become Grantha elements of the modern Tamil alphabet. This is as if the copyist, unfamiliar with the full-fledged Grantha script, was aware of the Sanskrit origin and reflected this awareness in the script, using a Grantha grapheme still commonly used in Tamil writing, even considered as a Tamil grapheme (a kind of loan grapheme), to create a Grantha-Tamil conjunct grapheme. Here are two examples:

- ś=ca for Grantha *kṣa*, usually noted *ṭca* in Tamil script. Compare kaṭāṣ=cam (BnF Indien 294, U2, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, col. 2, l. 3; Fig. 10a) and kaṭāṣcam, with two successive graphemes instead of a Grantha-Tamil conjunct grapheme (BnF Indien 237, U3, fol. 211<sup>r</sup>, l. 5; Fig. 10b).
- s=cu for Grantha *su*: s=cuvāmi (BnF Indien 28, U3, fol. 181<sup>r</sup>, l. 2; Fig. 10c).

The existence of these further Grantha-Tamil conjuncts imply further cases of allography, involving, besides the final *m*, the spelling of *kṣa*, as in the *X-kaṭākṣam* blessing formula, where the Sanskrit *kaṭākṣa* is found variously spelled, for example, kaṭāṭcam, kaṭāṭcam, kaṭāṣcam, kiṭāṣcam, kiṭāṣṣam, kaṭāṣṣam or kaṭāṣ=cam.

## 5.4 Vowel-killer *virāma*

Another interesting phenomenon is the use of a *t*-like *virāma* (Fig. 11) with the Grantha grapheme *s* (one of those that had become integrated in the modern Tamil alphabet). This specific type of *virāma* (vowel-killer) looks like a below-base *t*, but some examples indicate it could indeed be a *virāma*.

In a first example, this grapheme looks exactly like a *t*, and the reading is uncertain:

- pos·takattukku or posttakattukku (BnF Indien 339, U1, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, l. 3; Fig. 11a).

In other examples, it does not look so much like a *t*, and we are inclined to read it as a *virāma*, as reading a *t* would amount to read three *ts* successively, which is improbable:

- namas·ttu NOT namas·tttu (BnF Indien 449, U1, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, l. 3; Fig. 11b).
- Akas·t=tiyar NOT Akastt=tiyar (BnF Indien 112, U2, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, col. 1; Fig. 11c).

The reading as *t*, given the environment, does not make much sense in two further examples, although it might not be precluded:

- Aḷakēs·paraṇ rather than Aḷakēstparaṇ (BnF Indien 417, U2, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, l. 1; Fig. 11d).
- tecamas·kkantam rather than tecamastkkantam (BnF Indien 256, U2, fol. 276<sup>v</sup>, l. 4; Fig. 11e).

## 5.5 Sanskrit phrases in the Tamil alphabet

As has been mentioned above, given the polyglossic milieu of copyists, Sanskrit phrases occasionally appear in otherwise fully Tamil manuscripts.

The blessing *hariḥ Om* is a telling example as it has many spelling variants which show different mixings of Grantha and Tamil graphemes. From the original standard Sanskrit formula *hariḥ Om* (with typical Grantha *r* and final *m*) to the standard Tamil adaptation *hari Ōm* (where only the Grantha grapheme *ha* subsists, now integrated into the Tamil script), there are, in between intermediary allographs, with or without *visarga* (the final Sanskrit phoneme *ḥ*), or with *hariḥ* in Grantha and *Ōm* in Tamil, as shown in the following examples:

- hariḥ Om (BnF Indien 291, U2, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, left margin; Fig. 12a).
- hariḥ Ōm (BnF Indien 433, U2, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, left margin; Fig. 12b), where *r* is Grantha (as it has a middle dot) and Ōm alone is in the Tamil alphabet.
- hari Om (BnF Indien 294, U4a, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, left margin; Fig. 12c), where *r* appears to be in Tamil script and ḥ is dropped.

Sanskrit *namaskāra* ('homage') formulae are also found entirely or almost entirely (with a few Grantha graphemes only) written in Tamil script, as in the following examples:

- viṇāyakāya namam, with Grantha *ma* (BnF Indien 983, U2, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, left margin; Fig. 13a), i.e. Sanskrit *vināyakāya namaḥ*.
- śrīmatē ramāṇucāya nama namaḥ ttu, with a Grantha *śrī* and ṣ (whereas a Grantha *s* would have been more faithful to the original Sanskrit word) (BnF Indien 381, U3c, fol. 26<sup>v</sup>, col. 1, l. 1; Fig. 13b), i.e. Sanskrit *śrīmate rāmānujāya namaḥ tu*.
- Ōm catācivāya nama (BnF Indien 516, U2, fol. 2<sup>v</sup>, col. 2; Fig. 13c), i.e. Sanskrit *Om sadāśivāya namaḥ*.
- kuruppiyō nama (BnF Indien 307, U2a, fol. 1<sup>v</sup>, l. 4; Fig. 13d), i.e. Sanskrit *gurubhyo namaḥ*.

Was this due to copyists not having the command of the Grantha script and using the Tamil script to write down a Sanskrit phrase as they heard it pronounced? Or was it an early statement of Tamil regionalism of a copyist assimilating Sanskrit phrases to Tamil script?

## 6 Sanskrit manuscripts from the Tamil region

Finally, mention must be made of a phenomenon comparable to the conjunct grapheme *rā=ma* discussed above, i.e. the use of the Grantha conjunct grapheme *n=ma* for writing the Sanskrit word *namas*. This is regularly found in Sanskrit manuscripts from the Tamil region (and possibly from other parts of South India) and, occasionally, in Tamil manuscripts which include Sanskrit blessings. Compare the following two allographs examples:

- śrīvedavyāsāya namaḥ 𑌕 (BnF Sanscrit 290, U4, fol. 342<sup>r</sup>, l. 5; Fig. 14a) without the conjunct grapheme.
- śrīmahāsarvasvatyai n=maḥ 𑌕 (BnF Sanscrit 290, U3, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, l. 25; Fig. 14b) with the conjunct.

## 7 Conclusion

Various phenomena of mixing have been observed from the provisional survey of two periods in the history of writing Tamil texts containing Sanskrit loanwords above. The mixing of languages and alphabets, as well as the mixing of morphology, occur in bilingual diglossic/amphiglossic inscriptions, in diglossic mixed-language inscriptions and in amphiglossic mixed-language inscriptions. The mixing of alphabets, but not of languages, occurs in biscript monolingual inscriptions, for Tamil conjuncts in Tamil inscriptions (influenced by Grantha practices) and for Tamil-Grantha conjuncts in manuscripts. The existence of many allographs, variant spellings of the same word, are attested in inscriptions, for several centuries, before the progressive assimilation of Sanskrit loanwords to Tamil phonetics was achieved (with the conservation of a set of specific Grantha graphemes for Sanskrit loanwords, up to, let us say provisionally, circa 1300 CE, but inscriptional practices after this date still have to be explored in depth). Manuscripts of the eighteenth and nineteenth century CE also show a great variety of allographs. In both cases, inconsistencies by the same hand have been observed: the same inscriptional writer may use various spellings for the same Sanskrit loanword in the same record, whereas a manuscript copyist may use different spellings of the same word or syllable in the very same manuscript.

Regarding our present editorial practices for inscriptions and manuscripts in the era of digital humanities, it seems important not only to record such phenomena in the metadata but also to encode these in our edited texts, so as to be able to make quantitative and qualitative studies. Such an effort is currently being made in the framework of two research projects.

The project ‘The Domestication of “Hindu” Asceticism and the Religious Making of South and Southeast Asia’ (DHARMA) has developed transliteration and encoding conventions that reflect the script peculiarities in the editions of inscriptions. Marking up Grantha graphemes in Tamil mixed-language inscriptions will hopefully one day make it possible to study the progressive assimilation of Sanskrit loanwords to Tamil phonetics and script across time and place.

The project ‘Texts Surrounding Texts: Satellite Stanzas, Prefaces and Colophons in South-Indian Manuscripts’ (TST) similarly not only developed transliteration and encoding conventions for Tamil script phenomena in Tamil manuscripts, but also started to provide, thanks to Charles Li, specifically designed

Tamil font graphemes for script phenomena, such as Tamil-Grantha conjuncts with a final Grantha *m*.<sup>29</sup>

The road is still long, but, at least, the path and direction are taken.

## Acknowledgements

This paper, written at the invitation of the editors of this volume, is a result of the projects DHARMA, ‘The Domestication of “Hindu” Asceticism and the Religious Making of South and Southeast Asia’ and TST, ‘Texts Surrounding Texts: Satellite Stanzas, Prefaces and Colophons in South-Indian Manuscripts’ (collections of the Paris BnF and Hamburg Stabi). The DHARMA project (2019–2025) has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement no. 809994). The TST project (2019–2023) has received funding from the ANR and the DFG in the framework the FRAL programme (Franco-German research projects in humanities and social sciences).

Thanks to Charles Li for sharing with me many insights about the peculiarities of Tamil alphabet and for commenting upon a draft of this paper.

## Conventions

The original texts are provided in transliteration – so as to clearly demarcate them and use the distinction between roman, grey-highlighted roman, and italic – according to the following transliteration conventions:

Roman	for graphemes in the Tamil alphabet
Roman (grey-scale highlighted)	for graphemes in the Grantha alphabet
Italic	for graphemes common to the Tamil and Grantha alphabets
Upper-case (vowel)	initial vowel
C=C	Tamil conjunct consonant (‘C’ for consonant, ‘=’ to demarcate the consonants fused in the conjunct grapheme; e.g. <i>k=ku</i> , <i>t=ta</i> )
=m / =ma	below-base Grantha consonant <i>m</i> or <i>ma</i> in a conjunct grapheme
(abc)	graphemes not clearly legible
[abc]	lost graphemes supplied by conjecture

<sup>29</sup> See <<https://tst-project.github.io/editor/entities.html>> (accessed on 20 July 2023), under construction. These graphemes are used in the Tamil display of the TST catalogue <<https://tst-project.github.io>> (accessed on 20 July 2023).

<abc>	graphemes omitted by the copyist and supplied
᳚	<i>piḷḷaiyār cuḷi</i> (short and long forms)
.	explicit <i>puḷḷi</i> or <i>virāma</i>

The BnF manuscripts are referred to above by their current BnF shelfmarks, that is, ‘Indien’ or ‘Sanskrit’, followed by accession number. In the case where the manuscript is a composite manuscript, a letter follows immediately the accession number.

## Abbreviations

BnF = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

El = *Epigraphia Indica*, 42 vols (1892–1992), New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India.

IP = *Inscriptions of the Pallavas*; see Mahalingam 1988.

IT = *Inscriptions of Tirunallaṅṅaru*; see Viyavenugopal 2017.

SII = *South Indian Inscriptions*, 27 vols (1890–2001), New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India.

U = unit of a manuscript, followed by a number or a number + letter to indicate the codicological/textual unit (e.g. ‘U1’, ‘U2a’ and ‘U2b’).

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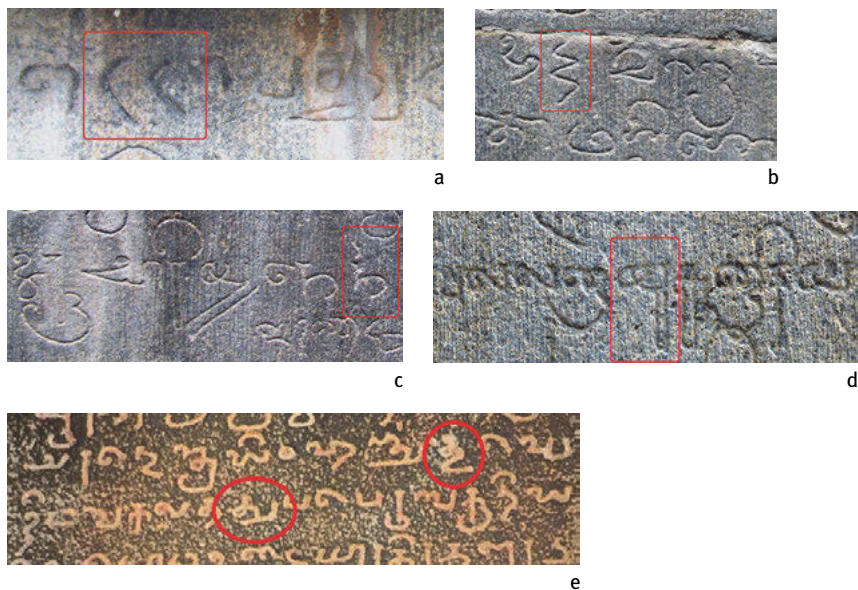
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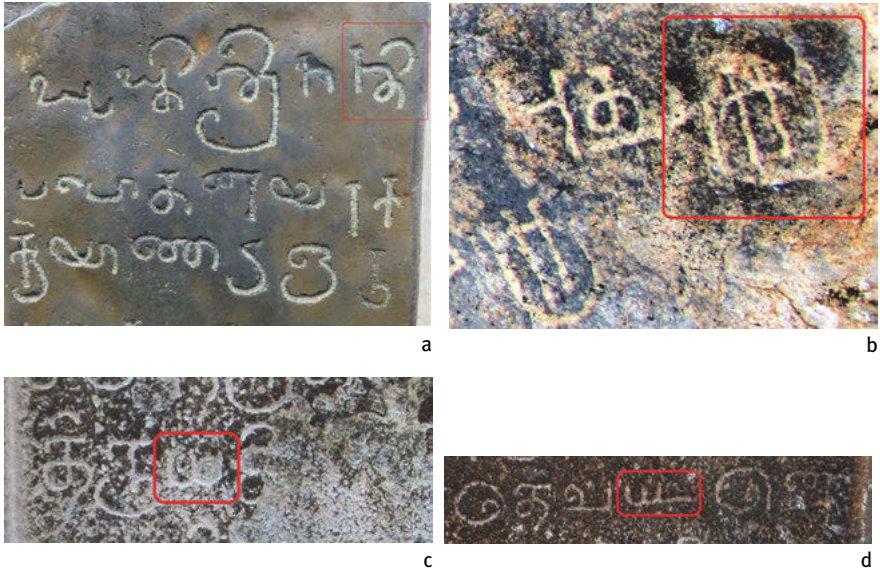


## Appendix: Images

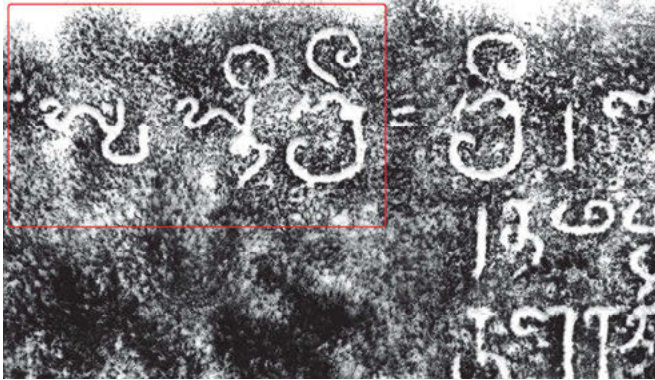
All photos of BnF manuscripts, either retrieved from Gallica (<<https://gallica.bnf.fr>>) or taken by Emmanuel Francis, by courtesy of BnF.



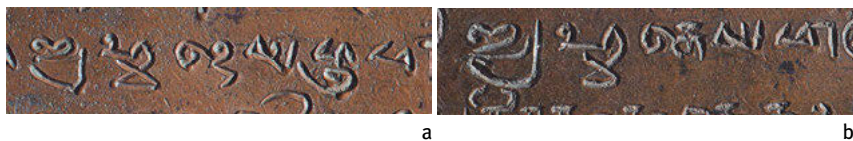
**Figs 1a–e:** Graphemes differing between Grantha and Tamil alphabets from inscriptions: (a) the word *Eṭṭāvatu* at Uttiramērūr c. 877 CE; IP 205, l. 1 (© E. Francis); (b) the word *bhāṭṭanukku* at Uttiramērūr c. 877 CE; IP 205, l. 4 (© E. Francis); (c) the word *Ācāriyyanēn* at Uttiramērūr c. 877 CE; IP 205, l. 7 (© E. Francis); (d) the word *vallaṅ āy uktaṅākiya* at Tirunaḷḷāru, late ninth century CE; IP 96, l. 2 (© E. Francis); (e) the word *śrīcoḷentrasimhaccatu<v>vedimaṅkalattu* at Tirunaḷḷāru, c. 1048 CE; IT 4, ll. 6–7 (© Babu N. Ramaswamy).



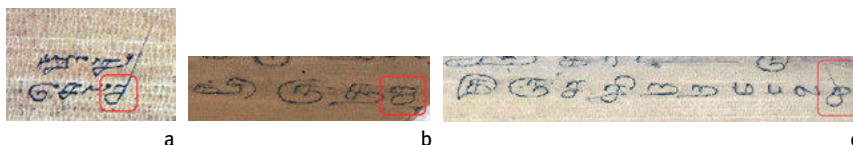
**Figs 2a–d:** Tamil conjunct graphemes from inscriptions: (a) the phrase *svasti śrī nan=tippō(t)tarai-yarkku* at Guḍimallam, c. 849 CE; IP 144, ll. 1–3 (© Valérie Gillet); (b) the word *putuk=ku* at Vanta-vāci, c. 852 CE; IP 120, supplementary inscription, l. 2 (© Valérie Gillet); (c) the word *tīrup=pati* at Tirunallāru, c. 1241 CE; IT 30, line 12 (© Babu N. Ramaswamy); (d) the word *tēvapa=ṭ=ṭaṅ* IT 30, line 12, c. 1241 CE; IT 30, l. 15 (© Babu N. Ramaswamy).



**Fig. 3:** Initial blessing *svasti śrī* at Kōṅṇērīrājpuram, late tenth century CE; SII 3, no. 146, l. 1 (© E. Francis).



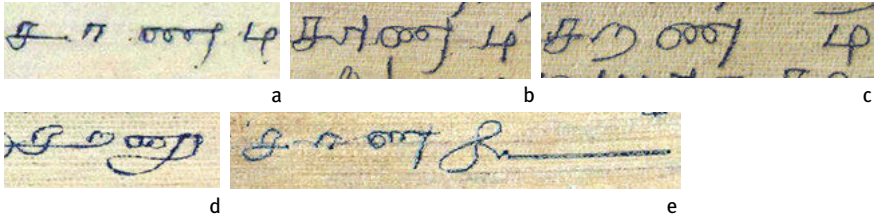
**Figs 4a–b:** Allographs in the Bāhūr plates: (a) the word *brahmadeyam*, c. 877 CE; IP 155, l. 50; (b) the word *brahmatēyam*, c. 877 CE; IP 155, l. 73 (courtesy of BnF).



**Figs 5a–c:** Independent final Grantha *m* in manuscripts: (a) the phrase *śrīrā=maceyam*; BnF Indien 1039, U2b, fol. 167<sup>r</sup>, left margin; (b) the word *virut=tam*; BnF Indien 303, U2c, fol. 77<sup>v</sup>, l. 2; (c) the word *tiruccirāmpalam*; BnF Indien 303, U2c, fol. 77<sup>v</sup>, l. 2 (courtesy of BnF).



**Figs 6a–h:** Tamil-Grantha conjunct graphemes with appended final Grantha *m* in manuscripts: (a) *ṇam*; (b) *ṇa=m*; (c) *ṇam*; (d) *ṇa=m*; (e) *yūm*; (f) *yu=m*; (g) *yam*; (h) *ya=m* (courtesy of BnF).



**Figs 7a–e:** Allographs of the word *caraṇam* (standard form) in manuscripts: (a) the word *caraṇam* in BnF Indien 246, U2, fol. 77<sup>v</sup>, l. 7 (courtesy of BnF); (b) the word *caraṇam* in BnF Indien 362, U3, fol. 17<sup>r</sup>, col. 3, l. 3 (© E. Francis); (c) the word *caraṇam* in BnF Indien 362, U3, fol. 17<sup>r</sup>, col. 2, l. 2 (© E. Francis); (d) the word *caraṇa=m* in BnF Indien 89, U2a, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, l. 3 (courtesy of BnF); (e) the word *caraṇam* in BnF Indien 247, U2, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, l. 5 (courtesy of BnF).



**Figs 8a–i:** Allographs of the phrase *śrīrāma* in manuscripts: (a) the phrase *śrīrāma* in BnF Indien 390, U2c, fol. 2<sup>v</sup>, l. 2 (courtesy of BnF); (b) the phrase *śrīrāma* in BnF Indien 265, U2b, fol. 601<sup>r</sup>, l. 2 (courtesy of BnF); (c) the phrase *śrīrāma* in BnF Indien 3, U2c, fol. 14<sup>v</sup>, l. 5 (courtesy of BnF); (d) the phrase *śrīrāma* in BnF Indien 1037, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, left margin (© E. Francis); (e) the phrase *śrīrāma* in BnF Indien 1039, U3, fol. 167<sup>r</sup>, left margin (courtesy of BnF); (f) the phrase *śrīrāma* in BnF Indien 143, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, l. 1 (© E. Francis); (g) the phrase *śrīrāma* in BnF Indien 431, U2a, fol. 1r, col. 1, l. 1 (© E. Francis); (h) the phrase *śrīrāma* in BnF Indien 143, fol. 271<sup>r</sup>, l. 1 (© E. Francis); (i) the phrase *śrīrāma* in BnF Indien 143, fol. 464<sup>r</sup>, l. 1 (© E. Francis).

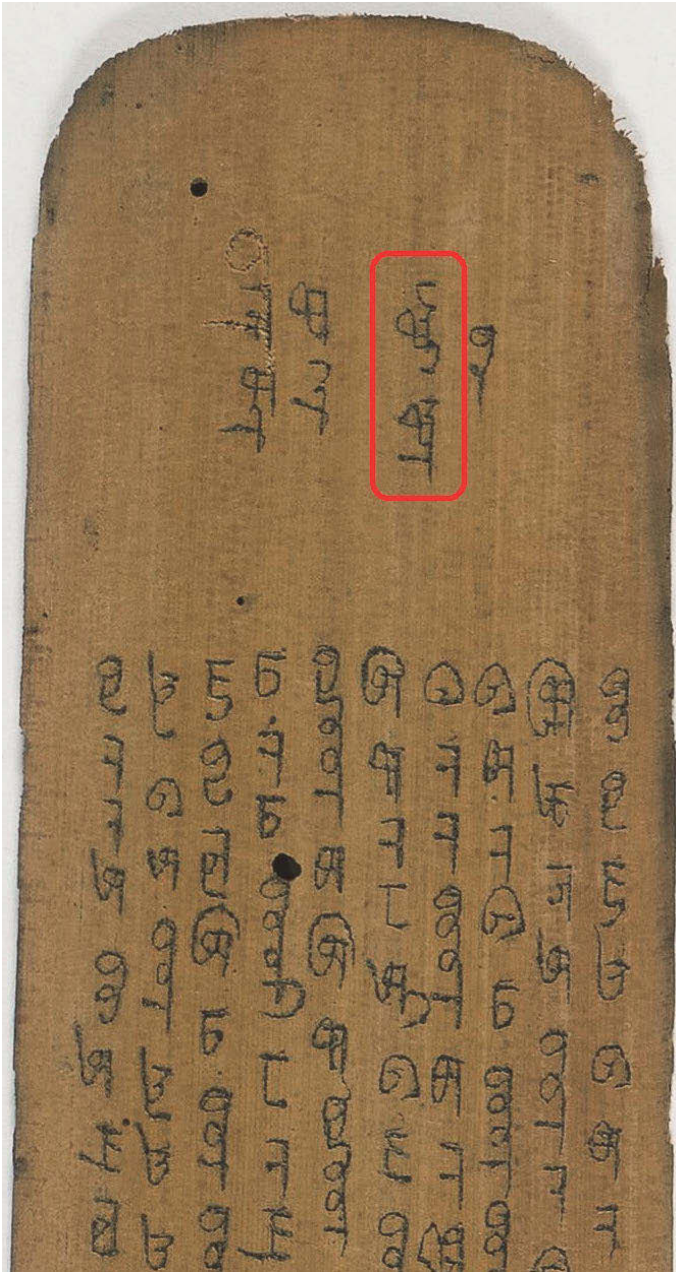
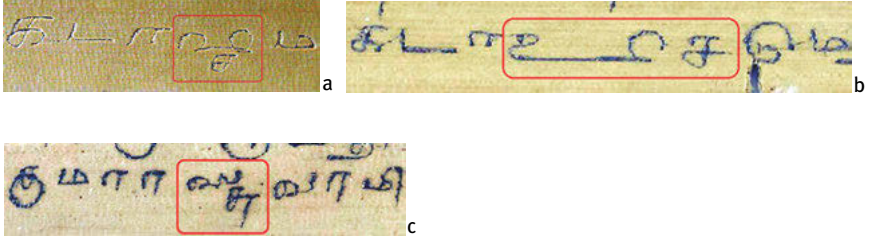


Fig. 9: The phrase śrīrā=mā in BnF indien 335, U5, fol. 476', left margin (courtesy of BnF).



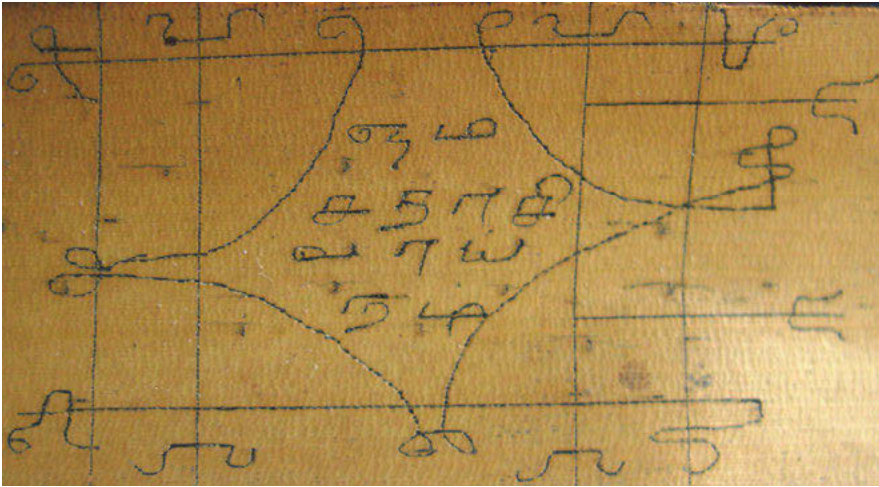
**Figs 10a–c:** Tamil-Grantha conjunct graphemes in manuscripts: (a) the word *kaṭāṣcam* in BnF Indien 294, U2, fol. 1', col. 2, l. 3 (© E. Francis); (b) the word *kaṭāṣcam* in BnF Indien 237, U3, fol. 211', l. 5 (courtesy of BnF); (c) the phrase *śrīkumāraṣcuvāmi* in BnF Indien 28, U3, fol. 181', l. 2 (courtesy of BnF).



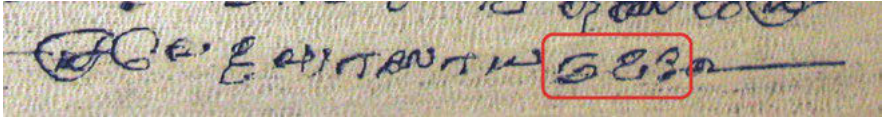
**Figs 11a–e:** Vowel-killer (*virāma*) in manuscripts: (a) the word *pos-takattukku* or *postakattukku* in BnF Indien 339, U1, fol. 1', l. 3 (courtesy of BnF); (b) the phrase *namas-ttu* NOT *namas ttu* in BnF Indien 449, U1, fol. 1', l. 3 (© E. Francis); (c) the word *Akas-t=tiyar* NOT *Akastt=tiyar* in BnF Indien 112, U2, fol. 1', col. 1 (© E. Francis); (d) the word *Aḷakēs-paran* rather than *Aḷakēstparan* in BnF Indien 417, U2, fol. 1', l. 1 (courtesy of BnF); (e) the phrase *tecamas-kkantam* rather than *tecamastkkantam* in BnF Indien 256, U2, fol. 276', l. 4 (courtesy of BnF).



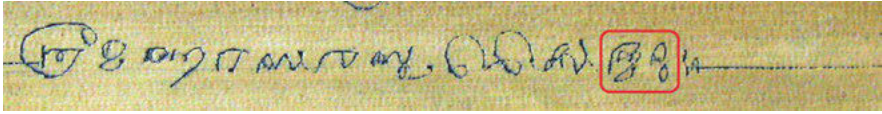
**Figs 12a–c:** Allographs of *hariḥ Ōm* in manuscripts: (a) the phrase *hariḥ Ōm* in BnF Indien 291, U2, fol. 1', left margin (courtesy of BnF); (b) the phrase *hariḥ Ōm* in BnF Indien 433, U2, fol. 1', left margin (© E. Francis); (c) the phrase *hari Ōm* in BnF Indien 294, U4a, fol. 1', left margin (courtesy of BnF).



**Figs 13a–d:** Sanskrit homage formulae (*namaskāra*) in Tamil alphabet in manuscripts: (a) the phrase *viṇāyakāya namam* in BnF Indien 983, U2, fol. 1', left margin (courtesy of BnF); (b) the phrase *śrīmatē ramāṇucāya nama namaṣ ttu* in BnF Indien 381, U3c, fol. 26<sup>v</sup>, col. 1, l. 1 (courtesy of BnF); (c) the phrase *Ōm catācivāya nama* in BnF Indien 516, U2, fol. 2', col. 2 (© E. Francis); (d) the phrase *kuruppiyō nama* in BnF Indien 307, U2a, fol. 1', l. 4 (courtesy of BnF).



a



b

**Figs 14a–b:** Allographs *nama* and *n=ma* in manuscripts: (a) the phrase śrīvedavyāsāya namaḥ नमः in BnF Sanscrit 290, U4, fol. 342', l. 5 (© E. Francis); (b) the phrase śrīmahāsarvasvatyai n=maḥ नमः in BnF Sanscrit 290, U3, fol. 1', l. 25 (© E. Francis).



Peera Panarut, Manasicha Akepiyapornchai

# Sanskrit Prayers in a Theravada Kingdom: A Multilingual Siamese Grantha Manuscript from Munich

**Abstract:** This article explores the multilingual character of a Siamese Grantha manuscript preserved at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich (Cod. siam 99). The manuscript, presumably dated between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, is the only known Siamese Grantha manuscript that is kept in Germany. Manuscript Cod. siam 99 collects a variety of Sanskrit *mantras*, written in the South-Indian-derived Siamese Grantha, as its title *Wet Tang Tang* ('Various *mantras*') suggests. In addition, ritual instructions in Thai consistently accompany their Sanskrit counterparts throughout the manuscript; the multilingual dynamic between Sanskrit and Thai is, thus, a salient feature of this manuscript. The manuscript, therefore, deserves more scholarly attention, and its texts should be published in the future.

## 1 Introduction

The traditional writing culture of Thailand – the country that, until 1939, was known as Siam – has long been dominated by Theravada Buddhism, much like its neighbours in mainland South East Asia: Laos, Burma and Cambodia. Pali, an Indo-European language and the canonical idiom of Theravada Buddhism, was commonly used in various Buddhist manuscript cultures throughout this region, becoming the religious lingua franca of the Theravada world, or what Steven Collins calls the 'Pali *imaginaire*':<sup>1</sup> the trans-local and -temporal premodern world of Buddhism, which prospered amid the coexistence of diverse vernacular languages from different linguistic families.<sup>2</sup> The Khm̐ script, which developed from the Old Khmer script in Thailand, has mainly been employed in the Siamese manuscript culture of central and southern Thailand for preserving

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1 Collins 1998.

2 For example, the Thai (the official language of modern Thailand), Tai Lan Na (from northern Thailand), Shan (from north-eastern Burma) and Lao languages from the Tai-Kadai (Kra-Dai) ethnolinguistic group; Burmese from Tibeto-Burman; and Khmer and Mon from the Austroasiatic group. See further in Goddard 2005.

religious texts, especially those written in Pali, and has, thus, been perceived as the sacred script of the Siamese Buddhist tradition.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the Thai script has been used for writing vernacular Thai from the early phase of Thai literacy in the thirteenth century to the present day.

Despite the dominance of Theravada Buddhism, the Brahmanical tradition continued to be practiced in Thailand for many centuries. Brahmanical priests conducted a number of royal ceremonies and rituals alongside Buddhist monks in the Siamese royal court. These Brahmanical rituals aimed at establishing the sacred identity of the king and the hierarchy between the king and his subjects.<sup>4</sup> Sanskrit texts were, therefore, also uttered by Brahmanical priests in Siam. After the fall of the Siamese kingdom in Ayutthaya in 1767, the Brahmanical lineage descending from the Angkorian Khmer was believed to have ended. Therefore, after King Rama I founded Bangkok as the new capital of the later Siamese kingdom in 1782, Brahmanical priests from Nakhòn Si Thammarat (southern Thailand) were recruited to Bangkok to perform Brahmanical rituals at the royal court.<sup>5</sup> Due to their strong connection with the Brahmanical tradition in Tamil Nadu, priests from the south brought with them their specific script, originating from South Indian Grantha, most possibly Grantha Tamil, which has been widely used to write Sanskrit texts in Tamil Nadu. This Grantha script used among the Siamese Brahmanical priests is known in Thai as *chiang khriin* or *chiang phram* script, which is referred to here in English as Siamese Grantha. The latter script features shapes that obviously differ from those of the Thai and Khòm scripts, and is, thus, to be considered a specific script used uniquely by the Brahmanical priests of Siam. The script was used to write ritual texts in Sanskrit, Tamil and Thai, forming a unique multilingual manuscript corpus in Siam.

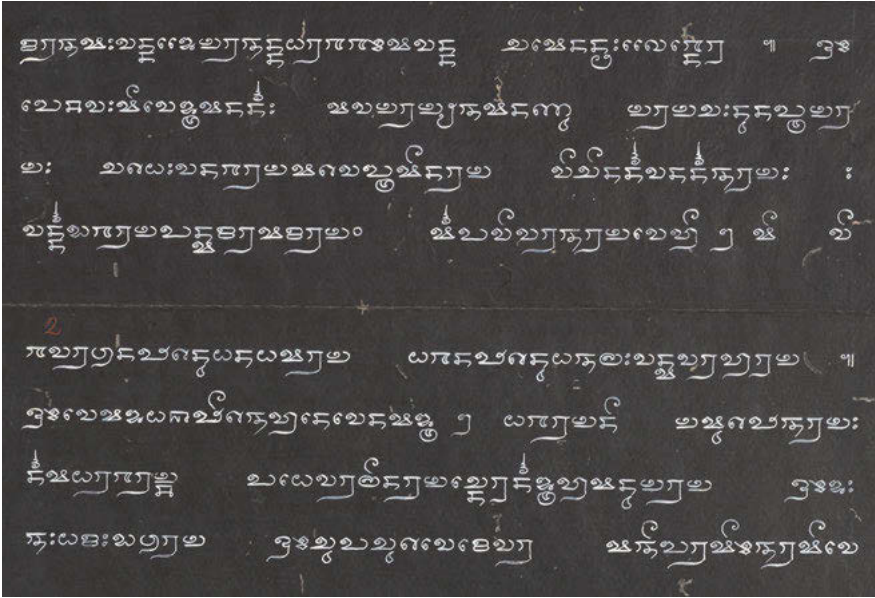
This article presents one particular manuscript to demonstrate the multilingual character of Siamese Grantha. It is the only Siamese Grantha manuscript to have found its way to Germany, and is now preserved at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Bavarian State Library) in Munich under the inventory number Cod. siam 99 (Fig. 1). As the manuscript was digitised and made available online only in 2019, modern scholars have been less aware of it. It has scarcely been mentioned in any scholarly works from the twentieth century. However, manuscript Cod. siam 99 offers us a case study on the use of the Sanskrit and Thai languages within a single manuscript, a phenomenon that has not often been found in the Buddhist-dominated culture of Thailand, part of the ‘Pali *imaginaire*’.

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<sup>3</sup> Grabowsky 2011, 146; Santi Pakdeekham and Nawarat Pakdeekham 2018, 45.

<sup>4</sup> See more in Wales 1931.

<sup>5</sup> Kanjana Suwanwong 1996, 53.



**Fig. 1:** A Siamese Grantha manuscript from the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, originally from Thailand, between the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries; © Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. siam 99, fols 5<sup>r</sup>-6<sup>r</sup>.

## 2 Background of the Siamese Grantha manuscript corpus

Originating from South Indian Grantha, the Siamese Grantha script does not resemble the usual scripts of the Siamese, such as Thai and Khòm, and is, thus, unintelligible to normal Siamese readers. On the other hand, Siamese Grantha has embraced the use of certain elements of the Thai and Khòm scripts, for example, tone marks, numerals and the use of some Khòm consonants. As a result, the script created a restricted literacy accessible to the limited group of Siamese Brahmanical priests who were trained to read and write it. It is noteworthy that the Brahmanical priests of twenty-first-century Thailand still learn Siamese Grantha and perceive it as the sacred script of the Brahmanical tradition in the Thai context.

In contrast to the large number of Siamese Buddhist manuscripts from central and southern Thailand, Brahmanical manuscripts written in Siamese Grantha are very limited in number, with only seventeen manuscripts found so far.<sup>6</sup> All are *khòì* paper leporello manuscripts, which were employed to preserve secular and vernacular texts of the Siamese tradition. Most of them are now preserved either at the National Library of Thailand in Bangkok or the National Library of Thailand in Nakhòn Si Thammarat. Only one of these manuscripts, Cod. siam 99, has been preserved in Munich, Germany. However, there is also an unknown number of manuscripts in the possession of the Brahmanical temple of Bangkok, which has served as the main temple of the Brahmanical priests at the Siamese royal court since the early days of Bangkok. The manuscripts from the temple are not accessible to the public, except one manuscript on the allegiance oath (Thai: *Ongkan Chaeng Nam*), published in 1988.<sup>7</sup>

Owing to the small handful of manuscripts, the dating of the emergence of Siamese Grantha script is uncertain. The earliest extant manuscript can be dated from the mid-nineteenth century, while the latest dated Siamese Grantha manuscript is from 1919 CE, copied from an exemplar taken from Nakhòn Si Thammarat.<sup>8</sup> However, the date of 1693 CE is briefly mentioned in one damaged Siamese Grantha manuscript from the National Library in Nakhòn Si Thammarat.<sup>9</sup> Though the date is arguably more likely to refer to the composition of the text than the date of the manuscript's production, it indicates that Brahmanical rituals must have existed in southern Thailand at least since the late seventeenth century, supporting the scholars' suggestion that Siamese Grantha originated in southern Thailand before thriving at Bangkok's royal court.

Though the corpus available is rather small, it consists of different collections of ritual texts used and uttered by the Brahmanical priests on different occasions, covering priestly rituals, such as the daily purification rite, and those used in royal ceremonies, for example, the coronation and oath of allegiance ceremonies. Therefore, as an anthology of ritual texts, a Siamese Grantha manuscript often consists of multiple texts in Sanskrit, Thai and sometimes even Tamil.<sup>10</sup> The compilation of texts differs in each manuscript, suggesting different editorial processes and text selections by the compilers or editors, probably

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<sup>6</sup> See Akepiyapornchai and Panarut 2022, 131–133.

<sup>7</sup> See Wudhichai Kosolkajana 1988, 305–316.

<sup>8</sup> Akepiyapornchai and Panarut 2022, 128–130.

<sup>9</sup> Nakhòn Si Thammarat, National Library of Thailand, no. 461, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of Tamil texts from the Siamese Grantha manuscript corpus, see Akepiyapornchai and Panarut 2022, 137–140.

the Brahmanical priests. Sanskrit texts constitute the bulk of the Siamese Grantha corpus among the extant manuscripts, while Tamil texts appear in only three manuscripts of the corpus,<sup>11</sup> collected alongside Sanskrit and Thai texts. Due to the various languages of their ritual texts, Siamese Grantha manuscripts can be considered a unique multilingual corpus, in which three languages from three linguistic families appear together.

Siamese Grantha has never been a script widely learned and studied by modern scholars and students. Still, scholarly works on Siamese Grantha can be found from the early twentieth century onwards. P. Subrahmanya Shastri provides a survey (in Thai) on manuscripts and their texts,<sup>12</sup> while Quaritch Wales has discussed (in English) the use of the script in the context of royal ceremonies in Siam.<sup>13</sup> Both works are based on seven Siamese Grantha manuscripts. John Ralston Marr describes the forms and orthography of Siamese Grantha in writing Sanskrit and Tamil in his first article,<sup>14</sup> and investigates some Sanskrit and Tamil texts in the second one.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the forms and orthography in writing Thai are specifically elaborated in the works of Wudhichai Kosolkajana and Niyada Lausoonthorn.<sup>16</sup> Neelakanta Sarma has produced modern transliterations of Siamese Grantha manuscripts, provided with an introduction in French by Jean Filliozat,<sup>17</sup> through utilising facsimiles of the manuscripts kept at the National Library of Thailand in Bangkok. The twentieth-century scholars of Thai and Tamil studies mentioned above may not have known of the whereabouts of Cod. siam 99 from the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, thus, it has never been properly studied in the previous scholarship on Siamese Grantha.

After having been acquired by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich in 1978, manuscript Cod. siam 99 became one of the Asian manuscripts shown at an exhibition by the library between 16 November 1982 and 5 February 1983. Therefore, the exhibition book, *Buch im Orient*,<sup>18</sup> published in 1983, also includes a description of this manuscript by Alfons Dufey, who

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**11** Namely, Bangkok, National Library of Thailand, *Lilit* Subsection, no. 360; and Bangkok, National Library of Thailand, Royal Ceremonial Treatises Subsection, nos 667 and 668.

**12** P. Subrahmanya Shastri 1931.

**13** Wales 1931.

**14** Marr 1969.

**15** Marr 1972.

**16** Wudhichai Kosolkajana 1988; Niyada Lausoonthorn 1992.

**17** Filliozat 1972.

**18** Dachs 1983.

proposes the date of this manuscript to the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup> This might be the only publication of the twentieth century that mentions this manuscript at all. While labelling the language of the manuscript as corrupted Sanskrit ('Korruptes Sanskrit'), Dufey, nonetheless, focuses his description on Brahmanical priests in Thailand and their culture rather than the content of this particular manuscript:

Vetata 3. Leporello-Handschrift aus pappeartigem Papier. 80 Bl., 11,5 × 36,5 cm. Korruptes Sanskrit, weiße Grantha-Schrift auf schwarzem Grund. – Thailand, Ende 19. Jh. Cod. siam 99. Obwohl die offizielle Religion Thailands der Buddhismus ist, war das siamesische Hofzeremoniell schon seit jeher hinduistisch. Seit 1786, als König Cakri den Namen Rama I. annahm, knüpft das Herrscherhaus sogar an das hinduistische Epos Ramayanam an. Für die Staatszeremonien, soweit sie nicht rein buddhistischen Charakter tragen, leben seit Jahrhunderten eigene Brahmanen in der jeweiligen Regierungshauptstadt. Da diese überwiegend aus Südindien stammenden Priester keine Frauen mitbrachten, hat sich der Anteil indischen Blutes in ihren Adern stark verringert. Eine ähnliche Entwicklung haben auch die Sanskrit- und Tamilkenntnisse dieser Vishnu- bzw. Shiva-Anhänger durchgemacht. Immerhin tragen sie noch die lange Haartracht ihrer Kaste, eine Art Chignon, legen bei feierlichen Anlässen die Brahmanenschnur um und rezitieren religiöse indische Texte. Dazu lesen sie aus Handschriften wie der hier aufgelegten, deren sehr korruptes Vedisch in einem vom südindischen Tamil-Grantha abgeleiteten Alphabet geschrieben ist. Erstaunlicherweise haben sich aber die Bezeichnung für den musikalischen Akzent des Vedischen bei diesen Zaubersprüchen, Mantras, erhalten.

Vetata 3. Leporello manuscript on *khòì* paper. 80 pages, 11.5 × 36.5 cm. Corrupted Sanskrit; white Grantha script on black background. – Thailand, late nineteenth century. Cod. siam 99. Although the official religion of Thailand is Buddhism, for a long time the Siamese court ceremonies were Hindu. Since 1786, when King Cakri took the name 'Rama I', the royal house has even connected itself with the Hindu epic Ramayana. Brahmanical priests have lived in the capital city for centuries for [conducting] state ceremonies, which do not bear a purely Buddhist character. Since these priests, most of whom came from South India, did not bring any wives with them, the proportion of Indian blood in their [descendants] veins has been greatly reduced. The Sanskrit and Tamil knowledge of these Vishnu and Shiva devotees has also developed in a similar way. After all, they still wear the long hairstyle of their caste, a kind of chignon; put on the Brahmanical threads on ceremonial occasions; and recite Indian religious texts. To do this, they read from manuscripts such as the one published here, whose very corrupt Vedic is written in an alphabet derived from the Grantha Tamil script of South India. Surprisingly, the indication of the chanting accent of the Vedic in these magic spells, *mantras*, has been preserved [through this script].<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Dufey 1983.

<sup>20</sup> Dufey 1983, 283 (our translation).

Barend J. Terwiel briefly mentioned this manuscript from Munich more recently in 2017, as one of the few Thai manuscripts preserved in Germany.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Manasicha Akepiyapornchai and Peera Panarut also include the manuscript Cod. siam 99 as one of the seventeen manuscripts in their updated overview of the extant Siamese Grantha corpus.<sup>22</sup> However, the manuscript and its text, a collection of Brahmanical formulas or *mantras* in the domain of the Pali *imaginaire*, deserve more elaboration.

### 3 Cod. siam 99: A Siamese Grantha manuscript from Munich

The manuscript in question, Cod. siam 99, is a blackened *khòì* paper leporello manuscript, the form that is commonly found in traditional Siamese manuscript culture. The writing is written in white ink on a black paper background. According to the handwritten catalogue of Oriental manuscripts at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek,<sup>23</sup> the library acquired the manuscript in 1978<sup>24</sup> by purchasing it from Dr W. Burger of Hong Kong.<sup>25</sup> The catalogue provides a brief description as follows: ‘Leporello manuscript. 11.5 × 36.5 cm. 4 lines [per page]. White writing on black paper. So-called Grantha script. Text of the court Brahmanical priests. Vetatam3’<sup>26</sup> (see Fig. 2). The manuscript is in fine condition, except for the front cover, on which the title (in Grantha) is rather faded. However, it is identifiable as Thai written in Siamese Grantha, and reads *Wet Tang Tang* (‘Various *mantras*’).<sup>27</sup> Though the Thai word *wet* originates from Sanskrit *veda*, the title here also suggests that this manuscript collects the verses or *mantras* in general rather than any direct or precise citations of Vedic Sanskrit texts, compiling material from different sources into an anthology.

<sup>21</sup> Terwiel 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Akepiyapornchai and Panarut 2022.

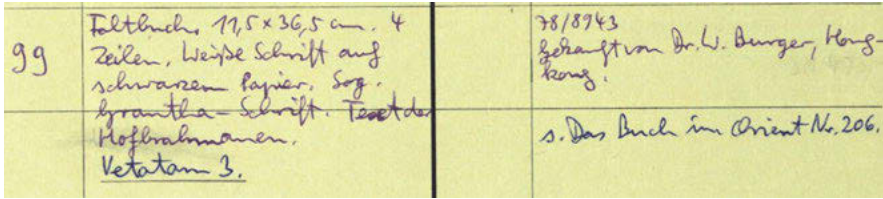
<sup>23</sup> Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 2008.

<sup>24</sup> The catalogue indicates that the entries from Cod. siam 91 to Cod. siam 99 were acquired in 1978.

<sup>25</sup> Noted in the catalogue as ‘Gekauft von Dr. W. Burger, Hongkong’.

<sup>26</sup> Originally in German: ‘Faltbuch. 11,5 × 36, 5 cm. 4 Zeilen. Weiße Schrift auf schwarzem Papier. Sog. Grantha-Schrift. Text der Hofbrahmanen. Vetatam3’.

<sup>27</sup> Thai เวตตางง. As the writing is faded, the title could easily have been read and misread as ‘Vetatam3’, which does not make proper sense in the Thai language, as recorded in the catalogue.



**Fig. 2:** Information on Cod. siam 99 as registered in the catalogue of Oriental manuscripts at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich; Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 2008.

Even though the writings inside the manuscript appear undamaged, the copying process seems incomplete. The entire verso side has been left blank, while what is written on the recto side does not seem to have reached its proper end. The text runs from the beginning of the manuscript to fol. 73<sup>r</sup>, and then the running text, seemingly unfinished, is interrupted by a few blank pages (fols 76<sup>r</sup>–81<sup>r</sup>). The writing continues on fol. 82<sup>r</sup> and ends on fol. 86<sup>r</sup>. The latter part (fols 82<sup>r</sup>–86<sup>r</sup>) preserves the related ritual texts and was undoubtedly written by the same hand. Nonetheless, it does not seamlessly continue from the previous part. The manuscript is undated, but is probably from the period between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, in which Siamese Grantha manuscripts were still produced by the Siamese Brahmanical priests.<sup>28</sup> No scribal colophon has been found. Therefore, we unfortunately do not have any further information on its scribe, compiler or editor, apart from the presupposition that Siamese Grantha has been used only by Siamese Brahmanical priests.

The entirety of manuscript Cod. siam 99 is written in Siamese Grantha script. Nevertheless, this single script is employed for writing two languages here: Sanskrit and Thai. The manuscript is comprised of various sets of Sanskrit *mantras*. It is unclear whether all the *mantras* collected in this manuscript were used together in the same series of rituals, but the different *mantras* must have been collected in Cod. siam 99 for the practical purpose of performing rituals, as each of them is often interrupted by short ritual instructions in vernacular Thai, telling the priests how to conduct the rituals. The use of two languages in this manuscript and their relationship will be discussed further below.

<sup>28</sup> See more in P. Subrahmanya Shastri 1931.



## 4 Sanskrit texts in Cod. siam 99

Approximately half of this manuscript is parallel to Sarma's transliteration of the section he labels *Ācāryapūjā Devarūpa Śrī Umā Śrī Nārāyaṇa Śrī Mahāvighneśvara*.<sup>29</sup> Although the title includes various Hindu deities, such as Umā and Nārāyaṇa, the texts based on Sarma's transliteration seem to be devoted mainly to Śiva. This is also the case of manuscript Cod. siam 99. It should be noted that a great deal of the Sanskrit in this manuscript is unintelligible. The structure of the entire manuscript, especially the parts that are intelligible, is as follows:<sup>30</sup>

**Table 1:** The structure and texts in the manuscript Cod. siam 99.

	Text	Folio no. (recto)
1	Prayer to Śiva and Umā	4–9
2	Prayer to the different directions	10
3	The eightfold praise poem to Śiva ( <i>stotrāṣṭaka</i> ) and	11–20
4	Praise of the five-syllable <i>mantra</i> ( <i>śivapañcākṣarastotra</i> )	
5	Self-purification ( <i>ātmaśuddhī</i> )	20–23
6	Prayer to Īśvara and Śiva	23–27
7	Prayer to Vighnanāyaka (Śiva's son)	27–29
8	Offerings	29–39
9	Worship of the teachers ( <i>ācāryapūjā</i> )	39–53
10	Prayer to destroy faults	53–67
11	Prayer to Umā (incomplete)	68
12	Prayer to the <i>Śiva liṅga</i> (?)	68–71
13	Unintelligible parts	71–84
14	A poem from Bāṇa's <i>Harṣacarita</i>	84–85
15	Prayer to Kailāsa	85–86

As we can see, the Sanskrit texts could be categorized differently, namely by genre, if we were to look at them through the lens of the Sanskrit literary paradigm. Most of the Sanskrit texts have no label attached to them. Nevertheless,

<sup>29</sup> Sarma 1972, 137–163.

<sup>30</sup> The structure and identification of each text is based on Sarma's transliteration.

they usually refer to a particular Hindu deity or more than one deity at a time, and can, thus, be understood as prayers or devotional and expressive statements dedicated to a deity, especially Śiva in this context.<sup>31</sup> It is also probable that these prayers had been circulated in mainland India and even South East Asia by the time they were incorporated into this collection. Interestingly, one text evidently identifies itself as a praise poem (*stotra*): the eightfold praise poem (*stotrāṣṭaka*). Furthermore, there is one poem from the *Harṣacarita*, the biography of King Harṣa, by the important Sanskrit poet Bāṇa (seventh century).<sup>32</sup>

Despite the differences in genre, it can be argued that these texts all have the same function as *mantras*. It is difficult to determine precisely what a *mantra* is, as it is so culturally specific; still, it may be loosely defined as a formula that is used in a certain ritual practice or action and has innate efficacy regardless of its linguistic meaning.<sup>33</sup> Some of the texts in the manuscript have a form that is obviously mantric, especially those that include *oṃ* at the beginning or *svāhā* at the end. Examples are *Oṃ pañcākṣarāya siddhiḥ jaya*<sup>34</sup> ('*Oṃ* to the five-syllable [*mantra* of Śiva]. May there be success. Triumph!')<sup>35</sup> and *Hari oṃ namaḥ śivāya* ('*Hari oṃ*, honour to Śiva')<sup>36</sup> and *Oṃ namo nirṭidiśāya [...] svāhā* ('*Oṃ*, honour to the south-west direction [...] *svāhā*').<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, it is less common in India for a poem like that of Bāṇa to be used as a *mantra*. In any case, the ritual instructions in Thai that surround these Sanskrit texts also serve to contextualize them, indicating that they function as *mantras* that accompany various ritual practices.<sup>38</sup> Importantly, the title on the front cover of this manuscript, *Wet Tang Tang*, also suggests that it is a collection of various *wet* or Brahmanical *mantras*. The words *wet* (or *veda* in Sanskrit) and *mon* (*mantra* in Sanskrit) are usually paired in the compound *wet-mon* (เวทมนตร์) to refer to sacred formulas in Brahmanical culture in contemporary Thai.<sup>39</sup> In this manuscript, however, the word *wet* alone is used to refer to a *mantra*. Although the Sanskrit word *veda*, which became *wet* in Thai, usually indicates the most authoritative scriptural corpus in Brahmanical orthodoxy, it could be argued that

31 For more on prayers, see Stainton 2019, 159–196.

32 For more information on Bāṇa and his works, see Bronner, Shulman and Tubb 2014.

33 See Alper 1989 for other definitions of *mantra*.

34 Cod. siam 99, fol. 20<sup>r</sup>.

35 All of the translations of the Sanskrit texts are Manasicha Akepiyapornchai's unless indicated otherwise.

36 Cod. siam 99, fol. 38<sup>r</sup>.

37 Cod. siam 99, fol. 10<sup>r</sup>.

38 See the next section on Thai instructions.

39 See McGovern 2022, 259.

once it entered the Thai context, its lexical scope was broadened to Brahmanical *mantras* in general, both Vedic and non-Vedic.

*Mantras* dedicated to Śiva form the majority of the Sanskrit texts. They are often marked by opening passages that mention the names of Śiva: exemplarily, the first statement is for Śiva and his consort, Umā, *namas tubhyam umāsvāmibhyām* ('Honour to Umā and the Husband [Śiva]').<sup>40</sup> In some cases, they are also accompanied by closing statements dedicated to Śiva, such as *hara rudrarūpa mahādeva śambho* ('O, the destroyer, the one with the form of Rudra, the great god, the benevolent one'), which occurs twelve times at the end of each set of mostly unintelligible *mantras*.<sup>41</sup> We also find a declaration of the result (*phalaśruti*) of reciting this set of *mantras*, namely, that it may save one from going to hell, which is Yama's abode: *idaṃ puṇyaṃ yaḥ paṭhet śivasamnidhau yamalokam ayaṃ naiti* ('the one who recites this in the presence of Śiva does not reach the abode of Yama').<sup>42</sup> Further *mantras* to Śiva can be identified through his various paradigmatic attributes and epithets in the text, most evidently, 'the three-eyed one', 'the destroyer of the three cities', 'the one with the blue neck', and so on. This can be seen, for example, in the passage, *Oṃ namaḥ satataṃ bhagavad- viśvaviśveśvarāya tryambakāya tripurāntakāya trikamalanayanāya [...] nīlakaṇ- ṭhāya sarveśvarāya sadāśivāya śivamahādevāya namaḥ* ('Oṃ, honour to the great god, Śiva, the lord of the universe, the three-eyed one, destroyer of the three cities [...] the one with the blue neck, the lord of all, the eternal Śiva').<sup>43</sup>

In addition to Śiva, some of the Sanskrit *mantras* are meant for other, minor deities. This latter includes Śiva's son, Vighnanāyaka or Vighneśvara, as in the line, *mahādevāya ḍamaruśivaputrāya namo namaḥ* ('Honour to the great god, the son of Śiva who has the sacred drum').<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, all the *mantras* in the self-purification ritual (*ātmaśuddhi*) relate solely to Viṣṇu except the first one, which is the beginning of the *Gāyatrī mantra*: *Oṃ bhūr bhuvah svaḥ* ('Oṃ, o earth, space and heaven').<sup>45</sup> The *mantras* in this ritual context are paired with the different body parts that should be purified. The first *mantra*, the *Gāyatrī*, is to be recited when one plunges into the water three times. While washing the hands, one should recite, *Oṃ padmanābhāya namaḥ* ('Oṃ, honour to the lotus-

40 Cod. siam 99, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>.

41 Cod. siam 99, fols 12<sup>r</sup>–18<sup>r</sup>. Sarma 1972, 149 identifies this text as the *Śivaparādhakṣamāpa- nastrotra*, but the two texts are far from identical.

42 Cod. siam 99, fol. 18<sup>r</sup>.

43 Cod. siam 99, fols 23<sup>r</sup>–24<sup>r</sup>.

44 Cod. siam 99, fol. 29<sup>r</sup>.

45 Cod. siam 99, fols 20<sup>r</sup>–23<sup>r</sup>.

navelled one’);<sup>46</sup> for the arms, *Oṃ mādhavāya narāya namaḥ* (‘*Oṃ*, honour to the primeval one, Mādхва’);<sup>47</sup> for the body, *Oṃ narāya namaḥ* (‘*Oṃ*, honour to the primeval one’);<sup>48</sup> and for the head, *Oṃ keśavanarāya namaḥ* (‘*Oṃ*, honour to the primeval one, Keśava’).<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, we find a more extensive list of the deities, along with non-divine elements, such as mountains, continents, oceans, aeons and scriptures, in the section that corresponds to the one Sarma identifies as *Ācāryapūjā*:<sup>50</sup>

*Oṃ*, may there be success; *oṃ*, honour to the good one; *oṃ*, honour to the god, the god of gods and demons; honour to the great lord, whose wife is Umā, who is superior to all kinds of goodness, the fruit of the four classes, the powerful god, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, the young one who is invincible on the battlefield [...] earth, water, fire, wind, space; the sun, the moon, Indra, the four guardians of the directions, the carrier of the vase of wealth, the mountains that are the middle one, Kailāsa, Meru and Himalaya, along with the continents, the four oceans, the four aeons, the four Vedas, the four kinds of grease.<sup>51</sup>

Note that these elements and their numbers reflect common tropes usually found in Sanskrit literature in mainland India. There are other elements, for example, the seven (*sapta*) rivers (*nadī*), continents (*dvīpa*), oceans (*samudra*), kings (*rāja*) and sages (*ṛṣi*), followed by the ten guardians of the directions (*daśalokapāla*) and thirty-three deities (*trayastrīṃśaddevatā*). We then have the names of the mythologically well-known snakes or *nāgas*, such as Takṣaka, Ānanta and Vāsuki. Unfortunately, the rest is unintelligible. Importantly, this is not the only place we find reference to forces other than the deities. There is another set of *mantras* at the beginning of the manuscript devoted to the eight directions, such as the east (*pūrva*), south-east (*āgneya*), south (*dakṣiṇa*), south-west (*nirṛti*) and north-west (*vāyavya*). However, the other directions, namely, the north, north-east and west, cannot be definitively identified.<sup>52</sup>

The two most distinctive texts in this manuscript are the one that is about the destruction of faults and the poem of Bāṇa. The first set can be found immediately after the *Ācāryapūjā* section, and runs until the interruption in the man-

46 Cod. siam 99, fol. 21<sup>r</sup>.

47 Cod. siam 99, fol. 21<sup>r</sup>.

48 Cod. siam 99, fol. 21<sup>r</sup>.

49 Cod. siam 99, fol. 21<sup>r</sup>.

50 Sarma 1972, 138–142; Cod. siam 99, fols 39<sup>r</sup>–50<sup>r</sup>.

51 This translation is based on the text in Sarma 1972, 138.

52 Cod. siam 99, fols 9<sup>r</sup>–10<sup>r</sup>.

uscript.<sup>53</sup> This set usually begins with ‘all’ (*sarva*) and ends with ‘for the destruction of faults’ (*doṣavināśāya*), as in ‘for the destruction of all karmic faults’ (*sarvakarmadoṣavināśāya*). It claims that the recitation or ritual in each context has the aim of destroying various kinds of faults: for example, those related to different astrological aspects, namely, the conjunction of qualities based on the position of the moon when one is born (*gaṇa*), the conjunction of the planets (*saṃgati*) and the zodiac sign (*rāśi*).<sup>54</sup> The other set merely constitutes a popular poem from the *Harṣacarita* of Bāṇa. As noted above, this poem stands out in this manuscript of ritual instructions and *mantras*, yet, it seems to have the same mantric function as other Sanskrit texts. It should be noted that this poem particularly was collected in Bhagadatta Jalhana’s thirteenth-century *Sūktimuktāvali*, edited by Krishnamacharya.<sup>55</sup> Based on this, one could argue that this poem circulated outside of the *Harṣacarita* and attained its status as part of a collection of well-known passages before it was incorporated into this Siamese ritual corpus. In any case, it is devoted to Śiva as the cosmic pillar and describes him in the universal city:

Homage to him,  
beautiful with the chowrie  
of the crescent moon  
kissing his high head,  
to the one Pillar  
put in place at the founding of the city  
that is the universe –  
to Śambhu.<sup>56</sup>

As has been mentioned above, this manuscript shares some of the Sanskrit texts found in Sarma’s transliteration. The texts in this manuscript also present a similarly high degree of corruption and incompleteness when compared to those recorded by Sarma, to the extent that it is arguably the most corrupted of the Siamese Grantha manuscripts we have explored so far.<sup>57</sup> The textual corruption makes it quite difficult to identify some of the texts precisely and understand what they convey, even for those with a good knowledge of Sanskrit, like Sarma. Thus, we still do not know the sources of the various Sanskrit texts aside from those already identified. Given their unintelligibility, these Sanskrit texts

<sup>53</sup> Cod. siam 99, fols 51<sup>r</sup>–67<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> Cod. siam 99, fol. 64<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> Krishnamacharya 1938.

<sup>56</sup> Bronner, Shulman and Tubb 2014, 27. See the same source for more analysis of the verses.

<sup>57</sup> Sarma 1972, 137.

are not just variations or representatives of what we find in South East Asia, which, in some cases, differ only slightly from Sanskrit texts in mainland India.

Moreover, it seems unlikely that the Brahmanical priests understood the meaning of these texts. They are, as has been stated previously, meant to be used as *mantras* in a ritual or rituals, and the recitation is, thus, more important than comprehension. However, contrary to the general practice of Sanskrit recitation in mainland India, which prioritizes precise and invariant pronunciation, the pronunciation of the texts in this manuscript deviates greatly from the Sanskrit pronunciation, and seems to align more with Thai and Pali. We have suggested in the overview of Siamese Grantha manuscripts that the alignment of the Sanskrit pronunciation with the Thai and Pali ones could contribute to textual corruption,<sup>58</sup> which might be the case in this particular manuscript. In addition to corruption, some of the texts and the manuscript itself are also incomplete, suggesting that they might not have been recorded or handed down properly.

## 5 Ceremonial instructions in Thai: Text or paratext?

The Siamese Grantha script was commonly employed to write texts in the Thai language. Ritual poetry texts in Thai, such as *Ongkan Chaeng Nam* and *The Collection of Old Elephant Treatises*, have been preserved as the main texts of several Siamese Grantha manuscripts from the corpus. However, the paratexts of the manuscripts often appear in vernacular Thai, though written in Siamese Grantha, as in the case of the front cover title of the manuscript Cod. siam 99, *Wet Tang Tang* ('Various *mantras*'). The vernacular Thai here seems to be the language the scribes used to communicate with their readers, while the main texts of a Siamese Grantha manuscript can appear in foreign languages, such as Sanskrit and sometimes Tamil. Apart from scribal paratexts, such as cover titles, ritual instructions in Thai also accompany the Sanskrit texts in many cases, including Cod. siam 99.

Ritual instructions in Thai consistently accompany each *mantra* from the beginning to the unfinished end of Cod. siam 99. Even when some longer Sanskrit texts run to more than ten folded pages, Thai instructions still appear at the end of each part. Although the written texts are interrupted by blank pages

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<sup>58</sup> Akepiyapornchai and Panarut 2022, 136.

(fols 76<sup>r</sup>–81<sup>r</sup>), the writing that resumes on fols 82<sup>r</sup>–86<sup>r</sup> also bears Sanskrit *mantras*, along with the corresponding Thai instructions. These brief instructions, forming a significant feature of this manuscript, inform readers not only of the purpose and context of each *mantra*, but also what to do while uttering these *mantras* in the actual rituals. Furthermore, the instructions also mark the end of each *mantra* before the following ones begin, thereby assuming a structural function and helping readers to navigate through the Sanskrit text. Interestingly, the instructional texts of this manuscript, despite being written in Thai, appear only in Siamese Grantha script throughout the manuscript. Thus, unless the average reader reads Siamese Grantha, they would not be able to recognise the Thai texts or distinguish them from the Sanskrit texts at all. This may be considered a way to prevent the average reader from making sense of passages written in the common vernacular language.

Sometimes the name of the specific ritual is also mentioned in the instruction; for example, a Thai instruction text from page 13<sup>r</sup> reads อนนอาราตธนาครปรจมนเอนชชะ แลวจงธมอาตมาสต (‘These verses are for inviting teachers over [our] heads. [After that,] then conduct the Attama Sut [ritual]’).<sup>59</sup> This short passage explains that the previous Sanskrit *mantras* were used to invite and pay homage to teachers; it then names the ritual to be further performed as Attama Sut (Sanskrit *ātmaśuddhi* ‘self-purification’), a purification ritual for Brahmanical priests. Correspondingly, other Thai instructions found in this manuscript explicitly state the purpose of the Sanskrit *mantras*, namely, to which god they were recited. The instructions พระคาถาสามบตันสงนามพระอสนนแล (‘These three verses are for consecrating [the statue of] God Śiva with water’)<sup>60</sup> and อนนสงนามพรวคเนกวมนายแล ฯ (‘These verses are for consecrating [the statues of] God Ganesha’)<sup>61</sup> were found, for example. These Thai instructions are essential for traditional readers to recognise the purpose of each individual Sanskrit text.

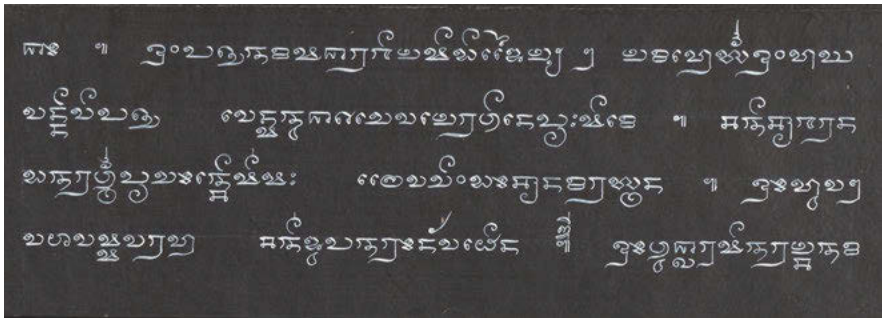
Furthermore, a number of Thai instructions also inform readers on how to perform the ritual when reciting the related Sanskrit *mantras*. The manuscript (Cod. siam 99, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>), for example, begins with the reverential verse *namata-sava ulaśvāmyeṇaṃ* (Sanskrit: *namas tubhyam umāsvāmibhyām*), followed by an instruction in Thai: ๓ ท (‘three times’), marking how many times the prayer

<sup>59</sup> The passage can be rendered in modern Thai orthography as อนนอาราธนาครปรจมาเสนชชะ แลวจงทาอาตมาสตร; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. siam 99, fol. 20<sup>r</sup>.

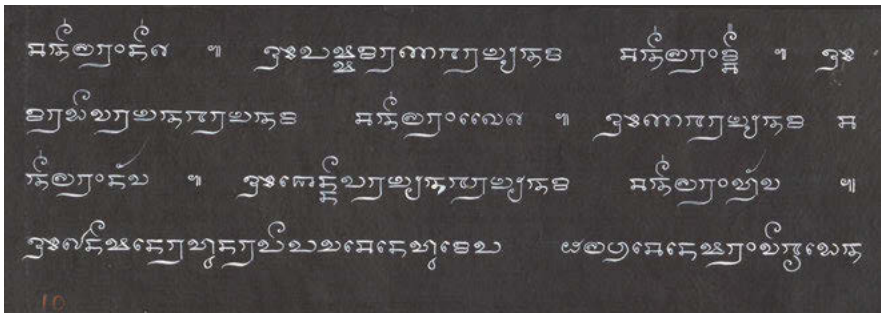
<sup>60</sup> In modern Thai orthography: พระคาถาสามบตันสงนามพระอศวรแล ฯ; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. siam 99, fol. 27<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> In modern Thai orthography: อนนสงนามพรวคเนกวมนายแล ฯ; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. siam 99, fol. 29<sup>r</sup>.

should be uttered. Then the instruction continues: กราบเบนนจนจายคปรทตามเพตชแลววานมษกาน ('Prostrate in the manner of five parts, according to the tradition, and then utter the reverencing verses'),<sup>62</sup> telling readers which gestures should be performed in the ritual. The most obvious case of Thai instructions describing how to conduct the ritual is found in the text of the self-purification ritual, in which Brahmanical priests purify each part of the body while uttering the *mantras*. The Sanskrit *mantras* in this part are short, followed by the Thai instructions marking which part of the body the priests have to wash for purification (see Fig. 3).<sup>63</sup>



a



b

**Figs 3a–b:** The text of the Attama Sut (*ātmaśuddhi*) purification from Cod. siam 99 (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. siam 99, fols 20'–21').

<sup>62</sup> In modern Thai orthography: กราบเบญจางคประคษฐตามเพชชแลววานมสการ; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. siam 99, fol. 4<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> For the Sanskrit *mantras* and translation, see the previous section.



The text of these two folded pages (fols 20<sup>r</sup>–21<sup>r</sup>) reads:

*kam* | *oṃpancanamaṣakāriyaṣidhijaiyya* (× 2) ‘Oṃ to the five-syllabled [*mantra* of Śiva]. May there be success. Triumph!’ (× 2) *yamaheśra oṃbhagha vattivipanca vetṣanukancevayogitepraṣīme* [this part is unintelligible] | อนอาราตธนาครปรจมนเนอษษะ แลวงจธมอาตมาสต ‘These verses are for inviting teachers over [our] heads. [After that,] then conduct the Attama Sut [ritual].’ | *ombhuva* (× 2) *vaśavaṣṣavāha* ‘Oṃ, o earth, space, and heaven.’ (× 2) อนชบนามตวตวเสุต ๓ท ‘This [verse] is for rinsing the body with water three times.’ *oṃgukkhāṣināyanam* [unintelligible part] อนलगตน ‘This is for washing the feet.’ | *oṃpaṣṣamānarāyyanam* ‘Oṃ honour to the lotus-navelled One.’ อนलगมอ ‘This is for washing the hands.’ | *ommādhivāyanarāyanam* ‘Oṃ honour to Mādhva.’ อนलगเสน ‘This is for washing the arms.’ | *oṃnarāyyanam* ‘Oṃ honour to Nara.’ อนलगตว ‘This is for washing bodies.’ | *omkottapāyanarāyyanam* ‘Oṃ honour to Keśava.’ อนलगหว ‘This is for washing heads.’ |

The question of whether these Thai ritual instructions should be considered part of the main text of the manuscript or its paratext might be answered differently depending on the perspective. If we follow what the manuscript title, *Wet Tang Tang* (‘Various *mantras*’) suggests, then the main text should cover the Sanskrit *mantras*, which are the only parts recited in the actual rituals. The instructional texts, on the other hand, are not supposed to be uttered at all, but give the readers further details concerning the rituals (i.e. the purpose of *mantras*, the gestures for performing the rituals). Nevertheless, these instructional texts were probably not composed by the scribe of this particular manuscript, given the fact that instructions for the same ritual texts sometimes appear in multiple manuscripts, as in the case of Attama Sut (*ātmaśuddhi*). The Sanskrit *mantras* and their Thai instructions as found in Cod. siam 99 correspond closely to the *ātmaśuddhi* preserved in a Siamese Grantha manuscript from Nakhōn Si Thammarat, suggesting that the Thai instructions might have been transmitted along with the Sanskrit ritual texts. The use of Siamese Grantha in Cod. siam 99 also allows these Thai instructions to assimilate visually to the Sanskrit texts by means of the same writing. In addition, these Thai instructions may have been necessary for Brahmanical priests in Thailand, who did not use Sanskrit in their everyday lives outside ritual contexts. From this perspective, these Thai instructions may also be considered part of the main text and should not be missing from the manuscript, although they might not originally have been conceived for their Sanskrit counterparts, but added later in order to assist readers, or in this case ritual practitioners, with practical details of the rituals.

Regardless of whether the Thai instructional texts of manuscript Cod. siam 99 fall under the category of main text or that of paratexts, these Thai instructions are undeniably a significant part of the manuscript, interacting with their corre-

sponding Sanskrit texts, and, thus, should not be overlooked by any traditional reader when reading this manuscript.

## 6 Concluding remarks

Although the Theravada culture of Siam has been dominated by Thai and Pali, Sanskrit and the Brahmanical tradition are still part of its cultural profile. This is evident in manuscript Cod. siam 99, in which Thai and Sanskrit coexist, performing different but closely related functions. In this manuscript, the Thai texts play a role as ritual instructions, while the Sanskrit texts constitute the majority and serve as *mantras*. The two languages create multilingual dynamics in a single-script artefact, and represent the multicultural identity of this Siamese Grantha corpus, which is situated between the Pali *imaginaire*, in the Theravada world of the Thai-speaking kingdom, and the Sanskrit-language Brahmanical culture of India. The manuscript Cod. siam 99 should, therefore, be considered a significant manuscript due to its multilingual character, despite the fact that it has long been excluded from scholarship on the Siamese Grantha manuscript corpus. This article merely serves as a preliminary study of this particular manuscript and its multilingual dynamic, aiming to be a first step towards its further investigation and the future publication of its contents.

Although the Sanskrit texts of manuscript Cod. siam 99 could potentially come from mainland India, they differ and are detached from the standard or widely known literary corpus of Sanskrit. The corruption evident in these texts also suggests that they had lost contact with the Sanskrit corpus in mainland India and were handed down and circulated solely in the Pali *imaginaire* of Thailand long enough to attain this level of unintelligibility, especially in terms of pronunciation. However, the corruption indicates that these texts had assimilated to the Siamese Theravada domain, in which Thai and Pali were linguistically predominant. Being accompanied by the Thai instructions, the Sanskrit texts, as collected and preserved in Cod. siam 99, also attained a new life, distinct and independent from the Sanskrit corpus of India. They are not merely Sanskrit texts but part of Siamese Brahmanical rituals in Thailand. Importantly, their function as *mantras* still resonates with Sanskrit verses in the Indian or even South Asian context. Thus, the Sanskrit *mantras* in a Siamese Grantha manuscript such as Cod. siam 99 represent the persistence of Indian influence in the Theravada kingdom of Thailand as much as Siamese Brahmanical culture.

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Dmitry Bondarev, Darya Ogorodnikova

# How to Spell Loanwords? Integration of Arabic Etymons in Bilingual Islamic Manuscripts of West Africa

**Abstract:** Different stages of the integration of Arabic loanwords into West African languages are studied on examples of spelling patterns identified in two distinct manuscript traditions of Old Kanembu and Soninke. Both languages are written in Arabic script (Ajami) providing interlinear translations of Arabic texts. These Ajami writings exhibit a high degree of Arabic loanwords, some spelled etymologically and some deviating from the Arabic graphemic source to the point of complete dissimilarity. The paper outlines a preliminary typology of the spelling of Arabic loanwords in interlinear Ajami writings and suggests that retentions and divergences from etymological spelling are probably motivated by established orthographic practices specific to teaching–learning circles, whereas the individual linguistic sensitivity of scribes does not seem to play a prominent role in the selection of spelling features.

## 1 Introduction

Arabic came to sub-Saharan Africa with the spread of Islam, starting from the ninth century CE.<sup>1</sup> Lexicons of regional languages have since been under the significant influence of Arabic. Many sub-Saharan societies with a long history of Islam or contact with Muslims had parts of their vocabulary changed and expanded by Arabic borrowings covering a wide semantic range, including religion, administration, warfare, science, trade, time and counting systems and mathematics. Some Arabic borrowings have been entirely integrated into the lexicon of the target languages, so that the Arabic etymons have changed considerably, for example, Soninke *sèyîdî* from Ar. *shahîd* ‘martyr’, Hausa *lādân* from Ar. *al-’adân* ‘muezzin’ or Kanuri *ashâm* from Ar. *aş-şiyâm* ‘fast(ing)’. However, a large part of Islamic vocabulary remains transparent as to its source in Arabic.

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<sup>1</sup> On the chronology of propagation of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa, see Hiskett 1984; Levztzov and Pouwels 2000; Insoll 2003; Salvaing 2020.

The relative chronology, different mechanisms and types of borrowing from Arabic into sub-Saharan languages have been predominantly studied based on spoken data. How the process and result of borrowing were reflected in writing is largely unknown. This is partially due to the paucity of early written data. Epigraphic evidence, for example, of the interaction between Arabic and Songhay on funeral inscriptions dates to the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. But the type of texts incised onto cliffs and tombstones is too short and too Arabic-oriented to be of significance for investigating the borrowing processes.<sup>2</sup> Writing on paper opens up a much more generous resource, which, however, is of much later time. The most ‘ancient’ manuscripts where Arabic is accompanied by local languages in Arabic script (Ajami) go back to the mid-seventeenth century, and even this date is exceptional – only Qur’an manuscripts from Borno have such a noble age. The rest of the sub-Saharan region of West Africa feature Arabic-Ajami manuscripts dating, at best, to the late eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

This kind of bilingual and multilingual Islamic manuscripts from West Africa have only recently started emerging from obscurity, and the novelty of the material explains its absence from the previous research on Arabic loans in sub-Saharan languages. This paper is just a first step to complement studies of lexical borrowing in languages of West Africa by manuscript data by taking a preliminary look into some select Ajami manuscripts from two unrelated regions of the Senegambia and Lake Chad. Our slightly more ambitious aim is to sketch some tendencies of loanword spelling observable in manuscripts and map distances from the original Arabic graphemic words to their spelling in the recipient language (what we call a ‘gradient of etymological spelling’). We then relate the types of spelling thus obtained to the question of graphemic visual interaction between the donor and recipient language (spelling affected by the visual proximity to the original, and/or by the level of the scribe’s literacy) and will ask whether the typology may have the potential for the study of the relative chronology of borrowing and degrees of incorporation of the loanwords into the recipient language.

The paper is structured as follows. We sketch out a brief history of adaptation of Arabic script to the languages of West Africa in the next section. Section 3 deals with previous studies of channels and patterns of Arabic loanwords in these languages. Section 4 starts with the specification of the kind of linguistic data represented by the interlinear Ajami material under study (Subsection 4.1). We then introduce our methods and principles for the study of loanwords in

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<sup>2</sup> De Moraes Farias 2003. On epigraphy in Essouk-Tadmakka, see Nixon 2017.

<sup>3</sup> See a summary on types of Ajami manuscripts in Bondarev 2021, 708.

interlinear Ajami (Subsection 4.2). Section 5 presents an analysis of selected etymons in Old Kanembu (Subsection 5.1) and Soninke (Subsection 5.2) manuscripts. Section 6 provides a comparative summary of our findings, and Section 7 draws some conclusions.

## 2 Adaptation of Arabic script: Ajami

Inscriptions on cliffs and tombstones provide the earliest evidence of the interaction between Arabic and local languages, for example, Songhay. But the words in Songhay are very few, the texts in Arabic do not betray any linguistic influence of Songhay, and nothing can be said about the process of borrowing and adaptation of the Arabic lexicon at the time when the inscriptions were made. We should, thus, start with much later written practices witnessed by manuscripts on paper. The first such evidence comes with the Qur'an manuscripts of the Borno sultanate, what is now roughly north-east Nigeria and south-east Niger. We find an enormous amount of annotations in Old Kanembu, a language that was exclusively used for the translation of the Qur'an and other Arabic texts used in traditional Islamic education and scholarship, in the inter-linear and marginal space of the manuscripts written from the mid-seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

Soninke, the language spoken in north-eastern Senegal, south-eastern Mauritania and western Mali, is another sub-Saharan language that has an early written attestation comparable to Old Kanembu. At least one manuscript with interlinear annotations in Soninke to a theological treatise by Muḥammad b. Yusūf al-Sanūsī (d. 1486) is datable to the late eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Writing in Soninke must have been practiced much earlier however, because it was probably one of the earliest languages exposed to Islam in the western Sahel.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Old Kanembu was a Western Saharan language closely related to Kanuri and Kanembu of the same sub-branch in the Saharan languages. Circumstantial evidence points to much earlier practices of writing in Old Kanembu, very possibly before the fifteenth century. On this topic and also on relationship between Old Kanembu, its modern-day descendant exegetical translational language Tarjumo and Kanuri/Kanembu dialects, see, *inter alia*, Bondarev 2013a; 2013b; 2014a; and 2014b.

<sup>5</sup> See Ogorodnikova 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Soninke was the language of the ruling elite of ancient Ghana, one of the first West African polities to adopt Islam; see Cuoq 1984.

There is no certain periodisation of Ajami writing in the other languages of West Africa, and various publications give different chronological pictures. Thus, Tamasheq, a Tuareg Berber language mostly spoken in the north of Mali, has been reported to exist in a sixteenth-century manuscript, although the proof of this claim is yet to be seen.<sup>7</sup> Songhay, after its prominent, if fragmented, appearance in medieval stone epigraphy, seems to reappear in manuscripts only in the late eighteenth century, but even this dating is speculative because the scribes are typically tacit about the time of their writing. The chronology does not improve in the case of Fulfulde (Fula), the language of the Fulbe (Fulani) who live across West Africa from Senegal to Chad and were the major propagators of Islam across the whole region in the nineteenth century. Possible earliest hard evidence has been found in manuscripts going back to the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup> The Wolof language of Senegal, known for its significant body of contemporary literature in Ajami (Wolofal), was used in 1817 in a bilingual treaty between the Bar kingdom and France.<sup>9</sup> Incidentally, 1817 is also the date for the first extant example of Ajami in Hausa, the language spoken in the past in several urban kingdoms to later evolve into the most spoken language of West Africa, centred in northern Nigeria and southern Niger.<sup>10</sup>

As is the case of Old Kanembu and Soninke, the other languages must have existed in written form much earlier than the earliest manuscript evidence suggests. A French travel account of the mid-seventeenth century, for example, reports that Mandinka spoken in the lower Gambia region was written in Arabic characters.<sup>11</sup>

In spite of the chronologically limited range of the extant manuscript data, there is one clear tendency in the development of various Ajami orthographies, especially visible in Old Kanembu, Soninke and Hausa writings: the older the manuscripts, the more the conservative approach is manifest in the adaptation of Arabic script. Thus, the Arabic characters in the earliest Ajami writings were rarely modified to better represent the sounds of the target languages and no innovation is visible before the late nineteenth century. In Old Kanembu, for example, only nineteen of twenty-eight Arabic consonants were actively used

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<sup>7</sup> Gutelius 2000. On Ajami writing in the other Berber languages (beyond the scope of this survey), see van den Boogert 1997.

<sup>8</sup> Salvaing and Hunwick 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Ngom 2017.

<sup>10</sup> 'The first dated example of Hausa Ajami (in a multilingual text) was written in the Caribbean diaspora in 1817', Bondarev and Dobronravin 2019, 254.

<sup>11</sup> Cultru 1913.



for the reconstructed twenty-three consonants.<sup>12</sup> The main selection principle was homorganic proximity, i.e. the phonetic similarity in the place and manner of articulation. The Arabic letter <d>, for example, was chosen for the sound [d]. One or more distinctive features are omitted in less straightforward cases. Thus, for a bilabial voiceless plosive [p] absent in Arabic, the choice was either the letter <b>, which encodes a phoneme with two features shared with the [p], i.e. ‘bilabial’ and ‘plosive’ (but lacking ‘voiceless’), or the Arabic letter <f>, sharing (in its phonetic representation) the features ‘bilabial’ and ‘voiceless’ (but lacking ‘plosive’).<sup>13</sup>

Some Arabic letters that represent sounds absent in Soninke, are used for specific Soninke sounds in Soninke manuscripts. Thus, the letter *ḡayn* is conventionally used for the Soninke /ŋ/. In rare instances, the letter is used as a graphemic support for a vowel diacritic. The letter *ḍāl*, which represents the interdental fricative [ð] in Arabic, is ‘reinterpreted’ for the sound [tʃ] (henceforth [c] in simplified transcription), or sometimes for the sound [dʒ] (henceforth [j]), the latter sound being also represented by the letter *jim*. The same letter *ḍāl* is used in some manuscripts to encode the voiced palatal approximant [j] (henceforth [y] in the conventional notation of the Soninke phonology).

The Arabic consonants that were only sparsely used in non-Arabic Ajami content range from nine in Old Kanembu Ajami (*ṣād*, *ḍād*, *ṭā*, *zā*, *ḡayn*, *qāf*, *xā*, *ḍā* and *šīn*) to eight in Soninke (*ṣād*, *ḍād*, *ṭā*, *zā*, *zāy*, *xā*, *ḍā* and *šīn*).<sup>14</sup> We will call these letters *Arabic-specific*. As will become obvious in the following sections, the scribes of respective manuscript traditions had the letters in reserve for spelling Arabic loanwords.

The special status of the Arabic-specific letters implies a conscious attitude to spelling in multilingual writing which goes hand in hand with scribes’ self-

<sup>12</sup> Bondarev and Dobronravin 2019, 244–245.

<sup>13</sup> The encoding of vowels in early Ajami texts exhibits the same conservative principle. The picture depicted here is intentionally simplified to emphasise the tendencies. However, there is more to the selection of Arabic graphemes than can be sketched out in this short overview. For more details on orthographies in various Ajami traditions, see Souag 2010 and Mumin and Versteegh 2014; and for specific languages, see Bondarev 2014b on Old Kanembu; Dramé 2021 and Ogorodnikova 2023 on Soninke; Newman 2000 and Bondarev and Dobronravin 2019 on Hausa; McLaughlin forthcoming on Atlantic languages, such as Fula and Wolof; Vydrine 1998 and Tamari 2017 on Manding.

<sup>14</sup> In Soninke manuscripts analysed by Dramé 2022, *xā* is regularly used for the Soninke /x/. In the Soninke manuscripts discussed in this study, the sound phoneme /x/ is usually expressed by the letter *qāf*, but can also be denoted by *kāf*. A rarer set of graphemes for this sound is *ḡayn* and *xā*.

perception, evident in how they labelled non-Arabic content with the term *ʕajami* and other metalinguistic means.

The scribes were not just conscious of differences between their language and Arabic – this is well expected in translational context. They were marking their Ajami writing by metalinguistic means, such as a short tag signalling that the writing is in Ajami, or describing their phrases as written ‘in our language’.<sup>15</sup> The spelling choices made by the scribes in writing loanwords may have been prompted by the use of such conscious metalanguaging, as will be discussed later.<sup>16</sup>

### 3 Arabic influence on lexicons of West African languages and types of borrowing

The Arabic lexical load on vocabularies of West African languages is substantial and the languages spoken by communities with a long history of Islam have a particularly high number of Arabic loans. Lexical borrowing comes about by a variety of routes. The earliest attempt to map different channels and patterns of Arabic borrowings across the breadth of languages of West Africa is by Paul Wexler.<sup>17</sup> With the exception of Sergio Baldi, later lexicographical studies dedicated to Arabic loans have focused mostly on individual contiguous or co-regional languages.<sup>18</sup>

Our study is, in many ways, consonant with Wexler’s approach to disentangle different patterns of borrowing from Arabic, and we briefly outline some of his concepts here. In an attempt to ‘distinguish between borrowed vocabulary defined by the speakers themselves as “Arabic” (regardless of the origin) and

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**15** Ogorodnikova 2017; Ogorodnikova 2023; Bondarev 2021.

**16** On the concept of metalanguaging, see Maschler 1994.

**17** Wexler (1980) examined data available at the time for sixteen languages: Tamasheq (Berber family); Kanuri, Teda (Saharan); Dangaléat, Hausa, Mandara (Chadic); Maba; Fula, Wolof (North-Central Atlantic); Temne (Mel, of Atlantic-Congo macro phylum); Songhay (Nilo-Saharan?); Dagbani, Moore (Gur, of Atlantic-Congo); Bambara, Busa, Manding (Mande) and Mbay (Central Sudanic).

**18** Baldi 1999 deals with the periodisation of Arabic loans in Chadic languages and Baldi 2008 provides large-scale surveys of Arabic loans across African languages. Kossmann 2005 is an exemplary study of Arabic loans in Hausa and Kanuri contrasted to loans from Berber. An excellent overview of literature and topics dealing with the Arabic impact on sub-Saharan languages is given in Souag 2016.

genuine Arabic loans no longer identified as such',<sup>19</sup> Wexler draws a distinction between 'Arabisms' and 'Arabic elements'. Thus, 'Arabisms' are (1) the words purposefully borrowed from Arabic, precisely because of their Arabic origin, and (2) the words recognised by the speakers to be of Arabic origin (even if wrongly). 'Arabic elements' are Arabic loans 'no longer recognised as such by speakers'<sup>20</sup> as a result of a 'chance diffusion of Arabic elements'.<sup>21</sup>

Islamisation was a gradual process, initially involving elite social groups and only later reaching out to wider populations, therefore, a useful distinction has to be made between the loans coming at an earlier stage of demographically narrower interaction with Islam and those introduced later into predominantly Muslim societies. However, the identification of such different stages of borrowing is complicated by 'the possibility that the original norms of Arabic in the target language may have undergone change' and, therefore, 'the age of the borrowing cannot easily be determined simply from the type of formal integration in the target languages'.<sup>22</sup> Another complicating factor is the possibility of different or multiple contacts of the target languages with the secondary intermediate channels of Arabic etymons. The eastern regions of the Hausa language, for example, were exposed to indirect contact with Arabic from the east through its contact with Kanuri, whose speakers were influenced by Islam from the eleventh century, and then later, around the fifteenth century (and simultaneously with the ongoing Kanuri contacts), the western regions of Hausa came into contact with Songhay. At the same time, Islamic education was constantly developing, encompassing a greater number of people, leading to new or renewed direct borrowing from written Arabic.

The result of widespread reciprocal impact is that West and Central African languages frequently have doublet forms of a single Arabic etymon – one form borrowed directly from Arabic and one form introduced through a neighbouring *lingua franca*.<sup>23</sup>

A classification similar to Wexler's has been advanced by Nico van den Boogert in his study of the Berber literary tradition of the Sous.<sup>24</sup> Van den Boogert distinguishes between four types of borrowing in written Berber: quotations, classi-

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**19** Wexler 1980, 524–525.

**20** Wexler 1980, 525.

**21** Wexler 1980, 526.

**22** Wexler 1980, 529.

**23** Wexler 1980, 531.

**24** Van den Boogert 1997.

cisms, colloquialisms and Berberised loans.<sup>25</sup> Quotations are loans from Classical Arabic that retain the standard Arabic orthography. Classicisms are borrowings of nouns with their morphological properties, such as plural and singular forms, the definite article and case affixes. Colloquialisms are borrowings from Moroccan colloquial Arabic. Finally, the Berberised loans consist of the oldest Arabic layer of borrowed verbs, and are distinguished from the other loans by their complete integration into the Sous Berber morphology.

Types of borrowing discussed by Wexler and van den Boogert are commensurate with the general framework of lexical borrowing. Gerrit J. Dimmendaal, drawing on the examples of African languages, outlines different types and mechanisms of borrowing.<sup>26</sup> In order to avoid terminological ambiguity, we first list some of the relevant concepts discussed by Dimmendaal, and then align the terminology we use in our study with that of Wexler, van den Boogert and Dimmendaal.

Our data (in Section 5) is introduced from the less to maximally integrated loans, therefore, our selection of terms mentioned by Dimmendaal is also given in a similar order. The first term is *unadapted borrowing*, which refers to the type of borrowing when items are not phonologically integrated into the target language. Unadapted borrowing occurs ‘in particular when there is widespread bilingualism’.<sup>27</sup> The second type is *morphosyntactically integrated* borrowings without phonological integration of the borrowed item.<sup>28</sup> The third type is *loan blends* or *hybrids*, which refers to ‘partial morpheme substitution in loanwords’.<sup>29</sup> The fourth type is *phonological adaptation*, that makes the loanword completely integrate into the target language by various mechanisms, from the insertion and deletion of sounds to phone substitution and phonological restructuring.<sup>30</sup>

In our analysis of Arabic loans, we try to ascertain to what extent the scribes were making intentional decisions in their spelling choices (from less integrated to more integrated). This sociolinguistic dimension is also discussed by Dimmendaal under the notion of an ‘act of perception’,<sup>31</sup> whereby the speakers are conscious of their multilingualism, prompting unadapted borrowings.

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25 Van den Boogert 1997, 223–224.

26 Dimmendaal 2011, 179–188.

27 Dimmendaal 2011, 182.

28 Dimmendaal 2011, 182.

29 Dimmendaal 2011, 185.

30 Dimmendaal 2011, 182.

31 Dimmendaal 2011, 183–184.

We are now in a position to introduce the terminology we use in our study in comparison to the concepts by the three authors mentioned above. Note that not all concepts are fully compatible with each other.

**Table 1:** Terminology in comparison.

<b>This study</b>	<b>Wexler</b>	<b>van den Boogert</b>	<b>Dimmendaal</b>
insertion	Arabisms (1) the words borrowed from Arabic purposefully	quotations	unadapted borrowing
copy-spelling; etymological spelling	Arabisms (2) the words recognised by the speakers as of Arabic origin	classicisms	morphosyntactically integrated
partial etymological spelling			loan blends or hybrids
complete integration; adapted spelling	Arabic elements	Berberised	phonological adaptation

## 4 Types and mechanisms of borrowing discernible in manuscripts

All data on Arabic loans in African languages, except for van den Boogert's research into the Berber literary tradition,<sup>32</sup> have come so far from spoken African languages. The general assumption that written Classical Arabic was a significant (or even the primary) point of contact between West African languages and Arabic has never been corroborated by the study of Ajami writing.<sup>33</sup>

The type of written data presented in this study has the potential for testing various assumptions about borrowing processes related to written Arabic. Unlike independent Ajami texts that exist on their own without direct relationship with Arabic source texts, the interlinear annotations are in constant interplay

<sup>32</sup> Van den Boogret 1997.

<sup>33</sup> Wexler's important conclusion that 'written Arabic can be considered the most important contributor of Arabic elements to the West and Central African languages spoken by Muslims' (Wexler 1980, 556) results from his study of grammars and dictionaries that do not deal with literary variants of the languages.

with the Arabic in the translational source-target frame. At the same time, this kind of written texts has its difficulties and limitations. We, firstly, discuss the peculiarities of such written data and then introduce our method of dealing with the spelling of Arabic loans.

#### 4.1 Peculiarities of Ajami texts in interlinear annotations

Linguistic data represented by the Ajami manuscripts under study are highly specialised. The Ajami texts consist of glosses that translate the Arabic texts, mostly of a religious genre which deal with various subjects of the classical Islamic curriculum. The manuscripts were produced in the domain of intermediate and advanced classical Islamic education.<sup>34</sup> Ajami glosses represent a written counterpart of oral exegetical practices based on the translation of small units of the source text, most typically parsed into short noun phrases and verb phrases. In spite of such a source-dependent relationship between the units of the parsed Arabic texts and the units of translation, the translational output is rarely influenced by the grammatical structures of Arabic, and the phrases of the target language are usually grammatically well-formed.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, the Ajami glosses represent specialised exegetical varieties of the respective languages which differ from the ordinary spoken languages and may, therefore, be incomprehensible to the speakers outside the learned circles.<sup>36</sup> One specific characteristic of these exegetical and translational registers is their technical vocabulary, drawn largely from Arabic.<sup>37</sup> In this context, loanwords are often preferred over the language-internal vocabulary to unambiguously convey the concepts of the main text. Such an increased load of the Arabic vocabulary in exegetical spoken and written practices makes it difficult to draw a line between the borrowings already incorporated into the target language and the specialist ‘technical’ terms used exclusively in the educational and learned domain.

A similar problem of differentiating borrowings from specialist vocabulary was identified by Maarten Kossmann in relation to the linguistic content of Berber manuscripts:

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<sup>34</sup> Bondarev 2017; Ogorodnikova 2021.

<sup>35</sup> Tamari and Bondarev 2013, 9; Bondarev 2022.

<sup>36</sup> Tamari and Bondarev 2013, 15–22; Bondarev 2022.

<sup>37</sup> Tamari and Bondarev 2013, 15–22.

In Islamic treatises and admonitions, the text genre entails the usage of much Arabic vocabulary. Some of this is no doubt genuine borrowing, while others are necessary insertions in order to explain concepts not nameable otherwise. There are also many terms that seem to be inserted from Arabic, even though there are Berber forms available.<sup>38</sup>

Van den Boogert also stressed the increased ‘use of Arabic loans instead of an Existing [sic] Berber word’ as a characteristic of Berber manuscript verse texts.<sup>39</sup>

Another complicating factor in the analysis of borrowings in the glosses is that literate scribes were conversant with the phonology and morphology of the source languages. Therefore, they probably adhered to accurate pronunciation<sup>40</sup> and orthographic rules, both of which may trigger the etymological spelling of Arabic borrowings. As a result, manuscript glosses are likely to capture and reflect scholarly attitudes towards borrowings rather than general tendencies or patterns of integration into ordinary language. Moreover, the scribes’ awareness of the words’ etymologies may result in ‘original/authentic’ spellings even when the words had been well-integrated and undergone phonological adaptations.

## 4.2 Method: Identification of distance from etymological spelling

Aware of peculiarities of the linguistic material represented by Ajami annotations, we set out the principles employed in our analysis of Arabic borrowings discernible in manuscripts. The basic procedure is to compare the spelling of a given Arabic loanword in Ajami with the original Arabic orthography of the word. The comparison is carried out following what we call a gradient of etymological spelling schematised in Table 2. The types of spelling are organised in descending order from the spelling identical to Arabic to the spelling unrelated to the Arabic original orthography.

Working with the etymological scale of graphemic representation, we pay close attention to the visual proximity of a given Ajami loanword to the original Arabic word. This is important to ascertain the extent to which the scribes are influenced in their spelling choices by the immediate graphemic prompts of the source orthography, rather than by their mental map based on the knowledge of Arabic orthography acquired during their previous cycles of learning.

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<sup>38</sup> Kossmann 2013, 47.

<sup>39</sup> Van den Boogert 1997, 52.

<sup>40</sup> Tamari and Bondarev 2013, 16.

**Table 2:** Types of etymological spelling of Arabic loans in Ajami: a scalar.

<b>Type of spelling</b>	
1	Identical: all graphemic segments retained
2	Partial
	2a All consonants retained
	2b Some consonants retained
	2c Vowels retained
	2d Some vowels changed
3	Dissimilar spelling: none of the original spelling is retained
4	Sensitivity to Arabic morphology: Arabic definite article
	4a retained
	4b absent

We also try to distinguish various characteristics of borrowing, partly drawing on Wexler's work discussed in Section 3, in our analysis of selected examples presented in Section 5.<sup>41</sup> The characteristics include relative chronology, channels of borrowing, the impact of written Arabic, integration into the target language, scribes' recognition of Arabic elements in their language, and semantic fields of loanwords. These characteristics are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Characteristics of borrowing.

<b>Earlier vs later layers of borrowed words (including multiple cycles)</b>	
1	Direct vs intermediary source (including multiple sources)
2	Impact of scholarly and written Arabic vs non-written, colloquial Arabic
3	Non-integrated vs fully integrated etymons
4	Recognised vs unrecognised Arabic elements
5	Semantic fields related to Islamic concepts vs unrelated/non-bound to Islamic concepts

A systematic investigation of all these characteristics is beyond the scope of the present study. However, we will take them into consideration where possible in order to relate a preliminary typology of borrowing in Ajami texts to more general questions of processes of borrowing.

<sup>41</sup> Wexler 1980.



## 5 Case studies

We now turn to the analysis of loanwords in Old Kanembu (henceforth, OKb) and Soninke Ajami manuscripts. Differences in the type of manuscripts and linguistic practices of translation represented by each Ajami tradition dictate a slightly different organisation of data. Old Kanembu glosses of the Qur’anic manuscripts retain much more archaic features not present in modern Kanuri. The glosses in Soninke are translations of non-Qur’anic texts and the similarity between Soninke glosses and modern spoken Soninke is much greater than that between OKb and Kanuri.

### 5.1 Old Kanembu

As already mentioned, OKb is a written language exclusively used for the translation of Arabic texts. In this paper, we deal with the earliest written attestations of OKb preserved in Qur’anic manuscripts produced in the Borno sultanate from around the mid-seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century. Old Kanembu or, more precisely, its later written variants outlived the epoch of written Qur’anic translation practiced in Borno until the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup> The non-Qur’anic texts have continued to be translated into written OKb. The written translational language has functioned as a downsized counterpart of the oral exegetical language known locally as Tarjumo, also applied in exclusively translational contexts.<sup>43</sup> Although it is possible to trace a continuum of incremental linguistic changes from the earliest witnesses of OKb to the modern-day Tarjumo, the term ‘Old Kanembu’ refers to the language of the Qur’anic manuscripts before the early nineteenth century. Both written OKb and spoken Tarjumo are closely related to the Kanuri language spoken in north-east Nigeria and south-east Niger (around and off the western shores of Lake Chad) and to the Kanembu language spoken in the areas north, north-east and east of the lake.<sup>44</sup> It will, therefore, be necessary to compare some of the examples of Arabic loans in OKb with their equivalents in one of the major Kanuri dialects, Yerwa Kanuri. A wide-scale comparison across available data of the other Kanuri and Kanembu dialects is outside the scope of this paper.

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<sup>42</sup> Bondarev 2024 and forthcoming.

<sup>43</sup> Bondarev and Tijani 2014.

<sup>44</sup> Kanuri and Kanembu are usually considered a continuum of dialects.

Kanuri is one of the West African languages with a large number of Arabic loans, and various aspects of a borrowed lexicon in Yerwa Kanuri have been studied in previous literature.<sup>45</sup> John P. Hutchison described the Kanuri lexicon as chronologically layered (a notion applicable to almost any human language, no doubt) ‘in the sense that it is possible to recognize words in the language that are older as distinct from words that have not been in the language as long’.<sup>46</sup> As our primary focus is written attestations of Arabic borrowings, we will assess the extent to which their spelling may help to unravel such chronological layers.

The discussion of Arabic loans in OKb is organised along the scale from etymologically identical (copy-spelling) to completely divergent spelling. The scale also takes into consideration the visual relationship between the target and source etymons. The spelling scale is, thus, subdivided into the following components.

**Table 4:** Spelling scale of loanwords.

	Type of spelling and visual proximity to the source word	Subtype
1	Copy-spelling (of entire lexeme) above the corresponding source word	Copy-spelling, no source word present
2	Partial etymological spelling above the corresponding source word	
3	Partial etymological spelling, not written above the source word	
4	No traces of etymology, but written above the corresponding source word	
5	No traces of etymology, no source word present	

These types of spelling are exemplified below by select etymons. Each etymon is introduced as a vocabulary entry followed by explanations. Each entry is provided with a reference to a manuscript and the Qur’anic text (e.g. 1YM/91:9 reads ‘from the manuscripts 1YM, chapter 91, verse 9’).

<sup>45</sup> Greenberg 1960; Baldi 2002; Baldi 2003; Baldi 2007; and Baldi 2020.

<sup>46</sup> Hutchison 1981, 10.

### 5.1.1 Etymological spelling written above corresponding Arabic words

Most of the etymons in this category consist of the terms related to theology, religious practice and conduct, nouns designating specific entities of geographic and botanical nature unknown in the host culture, and proper names (the latter is, however, not dealt with here).

{1} <aflaḥa> ‘to prosper’.<sup>47</sup> The verb is a direct borrowing from Arabic *ʔaflaḥa* ‘to prosper’. In the manuscript, the word is spelled without the initial *hamza* according to the *Warsh* reading of the Qur’an and the word is, thus, an exact orthographic copy of the original. At the same time, it functions as a typical OKb verb with its own inflectional morphology, which is characterised in the example given by the suffix <-jī> denoting the 3rd person subject morpheme and the perfective category: <aflaḥa-jī> ‘he has gained reward’.

{2} <ṭūr> ‘Mount Sinai’,<sup>48</sup> written above Ar. *ṭūr* ‘mount (Sinai)’. Since Mount Sinai is the place of revelation of the Torah, the passage about Sinai is commented upon by another OKb term borrowed directly from the orthography of Arabic: <tawrē> ‘Torah’, the pronunciation specific to the *Warsh* reading. The same OKb spelling is found written next to the original Arabic term, as in 1YM/3:50.

{3} <aṣiyām> ‘fasting’,<sup>49</sup> above Ar. *al-ṣiyām*. This is a special case of phonetic spelling of the assimilated definite article before the coronal consonants (‘sun letters’). The Arabic word *ṣiyām* ‘fasting’ when used with the definite article *al-* is written as <al-ṣiyām> and pronounced as [aṣ-ṣiyām]. The OKb loan <aṣiyām> is written above the Arabic <al-ṣiyām>, but, nevertheless, reflects a phonetic form. At the same time, the OKb written word does not indicate the phonetic gemination [ṣṣ] in its spelling, although the Arabic spelling clearly has the gemination marked by the diacritic *shadda*.<sup>50</sup>

{4} <kun-ḡūlm> ‘wrongdoing, injustice’,<sup>51</sup> above Ar. *ḡulm*. This loanword entered the language at the time when there was a productive nominal derivation through the prefix *k-* (and its variant *kVn-*, where V = vowel). Such prefixed forms are among the oldest integrated loans, and, nevertheless, the Arabic source of some of these is obvious to the scribes who copy the orthography of

47 1YM/91:9. Note that in transliteration of OKb the letter *ḡayn* is represented as <g>.

48 1YM/2:93.

49 1YM/2:183, 187.

50 That OKb <aṣiyām> is borrowed from the definite article form (rather than being a phonetic adjustment by insertion of an initial prosthetic vowel [a-]) is confirmed by the OKb loan that starts with the consonant <ṣ> <ṣūm> ‘to fast’ borrowed from the Arabic verb *ṣūm* ‘to fast’.

51 1YM/2:61, 114; 4:160.

the corresponding Arabic etymon. A similar case of scribal awareness is attested in the loanword <kašūm> ‘fasting’, which is, however, not found in visual proximity to the source word (and, therefore, discussed with category 3 below), unlike its more frequent and supposedly later loan <ašiyām> ‘fasting’ discussed above.

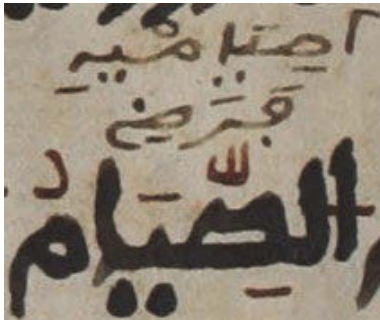


Fig. 1: The OKb loan <ašiyām> is written above the Arabic <al-ṣiyām>.

Many words in this category start with the letter *ṣayn* <ṣ>, which is rarely used in non-Arabic etymons.

{5} <ṣaṣ> ‘to disobey’,<sup>52</sup> above Ar. *Ṣaṣā*. The OKb verb form <ṣaṣ-inmi> (disobey-AUX.2s.PRF) ‘you disobeyed’ is written above Arabic *Ṣaṣay-ta* (disobey-2s.m.PRF) ‘you disobeyed’. The verb has been fully integrated into the Kanuri lexicon, having the phonological shape *ashi*.

{6} <ṣaḏāb> ‘punishment’,<sup>53</sup> above Ar. *al-Ṣaḏābu*. Although the OKb form is a copy of the Arabic orthography, it does not retain the case ending *-u* necessarily present in the written Qur’an, but not always pronounced in recitation.

(1) 1YM/2:86	tandikan	Ṣaḏāb-yi	itskāybō
	3p.on	punishment-SJ	lighten.3s.IMPf.NEG
	‘the punishment will not be lightened for them’		

52 1YM/10:91.

53 1YM/2:86.

However, the etymon is spelled as <ṣaḏābu>, i.e. with the final vowel *-u*, in other places of the same manuscript. This probably shows a process of phonetic adjustment to a more typical OKb syllable structure that avoids plosive consonants at the end of the syllable. This three-syllable form has been retained in Modern Kanuri: *azáwu*.

{7} <ṣinab> ‘grape’,<sup>54</sup> above Ar. *ṣinab-an* (*-an* is the suffix of the accusative case). The OKb word is borrowed from a singular Arabic form without case endings and is invariable in OKb. Thus, the same singular form is used to translate the plural *ṣaḥnāb-an* ‘grapes-ACC’ in 1YM/78:32. The OKb item has a final vowel after the consonant: <ṣinab-e>, probably due to the same phonetic adjustment described above.

{8} <ṣadas> ‘lentil’,<sup>55</sup> above Ar. *ṣadas*. In the other manuscripts, the same Arabic agricultural term is translated by vernacular generic terms for beans: 3ImI <gālū>, 1YM <gālgāla>.

### 5.1.2 Partial retention above corresponding Arabic words

These OKb words are probably well integrated, and, at the same time, the scribes are conscious about their origin, which shows in the selection of specifically Arabic graphemes for the spelling of the OKb words.

{9} <ṣājab> ‘wonder’.<sup>56</sup> This etymon is a good example of a fully integrated word that does not always copy the source vowels, but invariably retains the etymological spelling of the consonants. The visual proximity to the source etymon does not, therefore, have a defining effect on the orthography of the vowels, as explained below.

The OKb loan <ṣājab> is based on the Arabic noun *ṣajab* ‘wonder’ and is used for not only the translation of this noun but also the Arabic adjective *ṣajib* ‘wonderful, amazing’. In 1YM/72:1, the Arabic phrase *immā samiṣnā qurʔānan ṣajaban* ‘Indeed, we have heard an amazing Qur’an’ is translated into OKb as <alqurʔān ṣajabū=ka kniyē> (the Qur’an amazing=DO we have heard). Although the consonants of both *qurʔān* ‘the Qur’an’ and *ṣajab* ‘wonder’ are retained in the OKb spelling, the OKb phrase is morphologically independent from the source text. Thus, the absence of the article *al-* in the source word ‘Qur’an’ is ignored and the word is given in its borrowed form with the article: *al-qurʔān*. The Arabic noun (in

<sup>54</sup> 1YM/80:28.

<sup>55</sup> 2ShK/2:61.

<sup>56</sup> 1YM/11:72, 50:21, 72:1.

attributive function) *ʕajab-an* is translated as an adjective in OKb, and has the final vowel <u> to form a permissible phonotactic structure in OKb (i.e. avoiding syllables with final plosive consonants).

The Arabic adjective *ʕajīb(un)* ‘wonderful’ (derived from the noun *ʕajab* ‘wonder’) in 1YM/11:72 is again translated by the OKb word <ʕajab(u)>, which (1) ignores the second vowel <i> in the source word and (2) functions as a noun (in the OKb associative construction ‘with’) rather than an adjective.

(2) 1YM/11:72	atti	agō	ʕajab-wa
	this	thing	wonder-with
	‘this is an amazing thing’ (lit. ‘this is a thing with wonder’)		

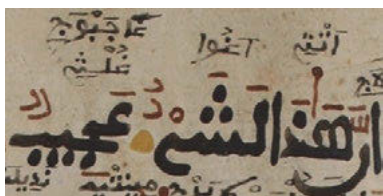


Fig. 2: Arabic adjective *ʕajīb(un)* ‘wonderful’ is translated by the OKb word <ʕajab>.

The scribe’s awareness of the Arabic source of this otherwise fully integrated lexeme becomes more obvious when compared to the genuine OKb word <agō> written next to it. If <agō> starts with an *ʔalif* and the vowel sign [a] *fatḥa* above it, the initial grapheme of the loan word is a copy of the source letter *ʕayn* that corresponds to the guttural voiced pharyngeal fricative sound [ʕ] in Arabic but is absent in Saharan languages including OKb. However, the rest of the OKb word is spelled deviating from the original. The most significant difference is in the vowel of the first syllable. It is a short vowel [a] in Arabic, whereas it is written as <a> + <ʔalif> in OKb, the combination representing a long [ā] in Arabic, but probably used here to mark a high tone á (cf. Kanuri cognate *ájap* ‘wonder’, *ájabba* ‘amazing’). Similarly, the vowel of the second syllable in Arabic is spelled as <i> + <ya>, standing for a long [ī], but it is <a> in OKb.

Other OKb words written with the letter *ʕayn*, such as <ʕabat> ‘to worship’ and <ʕalam> ‘to teach’, are in the same category of spelling.

{10} <ʕabat> ‘to worship, serve’, from Ar. *ʕabada*. The spelling of the final consonant in the OKb lexeme denotes a voiceless stop [t] rather than the voiced [d] of the Arabic source. The non-voiced feature shows that the verb had long been inte-

grated into the language. The OKb phonotactics observable in the manuscripts does not require a syllable-final voiced /d/ to become voiceless in any environment. Consider the inflectional forms of the verb <ʕabat> ‘worship’ (3) and <wud> ‘pour’ (4) for comparison, both having the auxiliary verb *n* suffixed to the final root consonant. In the case of <wud>, there is no change from [d] to [t].

(3) 1YM/3:51	nadiyi	tika	ʕabat-n-ügū
	2p.SJ	3s.DO	worship-AUX-2p.IMV
	‘worship Him!’		

(4) 1YM/80:25	andiye	wud-n-ē
	1p.SJ	pour-AUX-1p.PRF
	‘we poured (water)’	

At the same time, there are other Arabic verbs with the last consonant /d/ that changed in OKb to the root-final /t/, as in the OKb verb <wat> ‘promise’ from Arabic *wāʕada* ‘promise’. The change of the final /d/ of the source word to the final /t/ in the target should then be due to some earlier sound change rules no longer productive at the time of the OKb of the Qur’anic manuscripts.<sup>57</sup>

Conversely, the Arabic verbs with the final voiced plosive consonant /b/ retained the voiced feature of the consonant when borrowed into OKb: <jarab> from Ar. *jarraba* ‘to test’, <jab> from Ar. *jāwaba* ‘to answer’.

{11} <ʕalam> ‘to teach’ from Ar. *ʕallama*. The OKb form is invariable in its syllabic and vocalic structure (i.e. CV-CVC), irrespective of the Arabic form that has the geminated /ll/ and changes vowels according to inflection. In 1YM/2:102, for example, this OKb verb <ʕalam> is written above Arabic *yuʕal-limāni* ‘two (angels) were teaching’:

(5) 1YM/2:102	malayka	diro	trgsā	yamka	ʕalam-kisa-ḥalan
	angels	two	were sent	to people	teach-ing-ADV
	‘two angels were sent to teach people’				

<sup>57</sup> The final voiced ‘emphatic’ /ḏ/ in some Arabic nouns also changed to [t] in the process of borrowing, but not systematically: thus, the OKb loan from Arabic *al-ʔarḏ* ‘earth’ is sometimes written as <larṭ>, sometimes as <larḏ> (see below item {30}).

{12} The last example in this category of loans with a recognisably Arabic-specific letter is a lexeme that starts with the latter *šin*, rarely used outside Arabic borrowings. This is the verb <šawar> ‘to consult’ in 1YM/3:159, that translates the Arabic *shāwir-hum* (consult.2s.m.IMV-them) ‘consult them!’, as in <ni-ye tandika shawar-nē> (you.SJ they.DO consult-2s.IMV) ‘consult them!’. The same lexeme is used as a noun in 1YM/2:233, where it translates the Arabic phrase *wa tashāwurin* ‘(by mutual consent) and consultation’ as follows: <šawari-bi gābukan> (consultation-GEN after.from) ‘after consultation’.

### 5.1.3 Borrowing from Arabic, not written above the source word

This group of loanwords retains some etymological graphemes but is not written in proximity to the corresponding source word. The Arabic corresponding terms exist in the Qur’an elsewhere, and the same OKb lexeme is sometimes also used to translate its etymological source.

{13} <kašūm> ‘fasting’, from Arabic *šūm* ‘to fast’. This is another k-prefixed borrowing comparable to <kun-zūlm> ‘wrongdoing’ in {4} that, in spite its ancient integration into the language, was recognised by the scribes as an Arabic loan. But, unlike <kun-zūlm>, the etymological spelling is not prompted by the corresponding Arabic word (e.g. *šūm* ‘to fast’): no such Arabic word is present in the verse (Q2:51) where OKb <ka-šūm> ‘fasting’ occurs. However, the event described in the verse refers to Moses’s fasting on Mount Sinai and, thus, the OKb phrase explains this as follows:

(6) 1YM/2:51	būnēkami	fidegbi	kašūm-nn	watkīniyē
	night.from	forty.GEN	fasting-ADV	we.appointed
	‘we appointed forty nights of fasting (for Moses)’			

{14} <ḥašm>/<ḥašum> ‘to argue’ from Ar. *xašm* ‘opponent’ or *xāšama* ‘to argue’. In 1YM/4:109, the verb <ḥašm> translates a different Arabic lexeme *jadala* ‘to argue’, rather than the verb *xāšama* ‘to argue’.

(7) 1YM/4:109	?ālagin	amū	dū	ḥašm-nū
	God.with	persons	who	argue-3p.FUT
	‘who will argue (on their behalf) with God?’			



In 1YM/22:19, a participle form of <ḥaṣum> is used to translate its etymological source, also in nominalised form. Thus, the Arabic *xaṣmāni* ‘two adversaries’ corresponds to the OKb <ḥaṣum-kita-ndi> (argue-ing-two) ‘two arguing ones’. The OKb word is fully integrated in both cases, but retains the etymological connection through the use of the letter *ṣād*. Notably, the first consonant is represented by the letter *ḥā*’ (it denotes a fricative voiceless pharyngeal sound in Arabic) rather than by the original *xā*’ (used for the same set of articulatory features, except for the place of articulation, which is velar/uvular rather than pharyngeal). This is interesting in light of the existence of the OKb loans that copy the etymological *x*, e.g. <xalq> ‘to create’ from Ar. *xalq*. In modern Kanuri, the lexeme corresponding to the OKb <ḥaṣm> does not have the initial consonant: *āsəm* ‘argument’.

{15} <safr> ‘to travel’ from Ar. *safar* ‘voyage’.<sup>58</sup> The OKb loan verb is used to translate a different Arabic verb *ḡaraba* with the synonymous meaning ‘to travel’: <nadiye safr-nīyūya> (above Ar. *wa ʔiḏā ḡarab-tum* ‘and when you travel’).

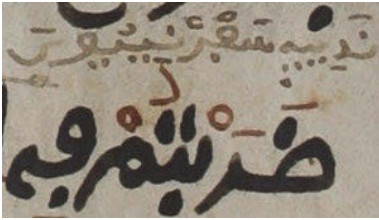


Fig. 3: The OKb loan verb <safr> is used to translate a different Arabic verb *ḡaraba*.

The same loan may function as a noun ‘journey’ in OKb and is used to interpret the corresponding Arabic noun. Thus, the Ar. *asfarinā* ‘our journeys’ in 1YM/34:19 is translated into OKb as <safr-dē> ‘journey-our’. Note that the Arabic plural is not expressed in OKb.

The Arabic term *safar* ‘travel’ is sometimes translated by a genuine OKb word <blāgrū> (Kanuri *bālāwūrō*), rather than by the loan <safr> (as in 1YM/2:184).

It is difficult to assess whether the scribes meant to copy the original orthography with items such as <safr>. This is because all consonantal letters of the original word are equally used in the genuine OKb lexemes. Therefore, such words overlap with those in the following two categories, but, at the same time, represent items in their own right because the Arabic words to which they corre-

<sup>58</sup> 1YM/4:101.

spond do not have specific consonants that can be used as a diagnostic of the scribal orthographic awareness.

#### 5.1.4 Written above, but no etymological spelling

The orthography of the lexemes in this category do not have any signs of original etymology, even though they are used as translations of the original Arabic etymons and are actually written above or in close vicinity to the source words.

{16} <ka-sūgu> ‘market’, from Arabic *-suq* ‘market’, written above Arabic *ʔaswāq* ‘markets’.<sup>59</sup> This k-prefixed word has been discussed extensively in the literature on lexical contact in West Africa as an unambiguous example of borrowing pathways from Arabic into a language of wider communication (*lingua franca*), such as Kanuri, and the k-prefixed word’s subsequent spread into many other languages.<sup>60</sup> The fact that the spelling of OKb <ka-sūgu> is not sensitive to the source word *suq*, let alone its plural form *ʔaswāq*, seems to betray the scribes’ oblivion of its Arabic connection.

{17} <alū> ‘writing board’ from Ar. *al-lawḥ*. The OKb item has almost no traces of the original word, except for the element of the definite article manifest in the initial vowel <a>. The consonant /l/ could probably have been pronounced as a geminated [ll], which would make it closer to the source word, and this is the case in Kanuri: *alló*. The example below (8) and Fig. 4 demonstrate an interplay between this well-integrated word and an orthographic copy/insertion, although the latter has the long vowel misplaced (to the third syllable instead of the second).

(8) 1YM/85:22

Q.	<i>lawḥ-in</i>	<i>maḥfūz-un</i>	
OKb	alū	maḥfuzū=gin	kaθikō
	tablet	preserved=in	be.3s.AFP
	‘in the preserved tablet’		

<sup>59</sup> 1YM/25:7, 20.

<sup>60</sup> Greenberg 1960; Kossmann 2005; Baldi 2020.



Fig. 4: OKb <alū> ‘writing board’ and *maḥfūz* ‘preserved’ written above the corresponding Arabic phrase.

The simultaneous use of the non-etymological and etymological spelling of two etymons in the same short phrase suggests that the word <alū> was not perceived by the scribe as a loan from Arabic.

{18} <jagaru> ‘blast’,<sup>61</sup> from Arabic *zajra* ‘shout, cry, blast’ (variants: <jgaru> (2ShK), <jugaru> (Arabe 402)). The lexeme is found in the phrase <jagaru tilō> (blast one) ‘one blast’ written above Ar. *zajratun wāḥidatun* (blast first) ‘the first blast’ (of the Day of Judgement). The first consonant of the OKb <jagaru> represented by <j> probably stands for the voiced non-palatal affricate [dz],<sup>62</sup> which would be a close approximation to the Arabic [z] *zajra*. The second consonant <g> points to a source other than Classical Arabic, to a dialect where the Classical Arabic /j/ corresponds to /g/. But this alone does not explain why a colloquial Arabic source would be considered for a very specific word used in the context of the Day of Judgement.<sup>63</sup>

{19} <ʔala> from Ar. *allāh* ‘God’. The etymon has the most transparent connection to the original Arabic word, and it is remarkable that the OKb employs this very specific spelling convention for the most significant religious concept God. However, this non-etymological spelling only occurs in the first part of 1YM, about 65% of the entire 470-folio manuscript (see item {30} for more details). The remaining 35%, and indeed many other manuscripts, exhibit the etymological spelling <allāh>.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> 1YM/79:13.

<sup>62</sup> Bondarev 2014b.

<sup>63</sup> Lameen Souag confirms the doubts about a colloquial source (Souag’s comments on an earlier draft of the paper).

<sup>64</sup> The manuscripts that have the etymological spelling <allāh> or, much more often, non-vocalised spelling, are T.Kano, 3ImI, 4MM, Kad.Ar.33, 5.Konduga.

### 5.1.5 Borrowing from Arabic, but not associated with the source language

The Arabic words in this group of borrowings are either not used in the Qur'an or used only once or twice.

{20} <algāma> 'wheat', from Ar. *al-qamḥ* (Kanuri *algāma*, *lāgāma*, *laāma*). The Arabic word *qamḥ* 'wheat' does not occur in the Qur'an, and the OKb term is written above the Qur'anic Arabic *fūm* (Q.2:61), which may mean either 'garlic' or 'wheat'.<sup>65</sup> The OKb scribes interpreted the Arabic word *fūm* as 'wheat' following certain exegetical sources.<sup>66</sup> This is also corroborated by the very choice of the OKb word, or rather, by the absence of the OKb term for 'garlic', which would resemble the modern Kanuri *kəngālmú* 'garlic' (unattested in OKb).

Due to its significance for the reconstruction of the scribes' perception of the integrated loanwords, the whole sentence translating various agricultural terms in this Qur'anic verse is illustrated below in (9). The two Arabic loans <algāma> 'wheat' and <albāsar> 'onion' are integrated into the list of the vernacular botanical terms, and it is obvious that both terms are not perceived as loans. Thus, <algāma> 'wheat' does not have its original equivalent in the verse and elsewhere in the Qur'an, whereas <albāsar> 'onion' is written above the corresponding Arabic term in the spelling, entirely disconnected from the original word (*baṣal*).

(9) 1YM/2:61

Q.	<i>min baqli-hā</i>	<i>wa qabaθāʔi-hā</i>	<i>wa fūmi-hā</i>	<i>wa ʕadasi-hā</i>	<i>wa baṣali-hā</i>
OKb	<b>kālō</b> kli-ji kāmi	<b>fāli</b> -ji kāmi	<b>algāma</b> -ji kāmi	<b>gālgāla</b> -ji kāmi	<b>albāsar</b> - ji=kami
	leaf green-its from	watermelon-its from	wheat-its from	beans-its from	onion-its from
	'from its (earth's) herbs, its cucumbers, its wheat, its beans, its onions'				

<sup>65</sup> Badawi and Haleem 2008, 721.

<sup>66</sup> Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373) referred to this ambiguity in his *tafsīr*: 'Others said that *fūm* is wheat, the kind used for bread. Al-Bukhari said, "Some of them said that *fūm* includes all grains or seeds that are eaten"' (<https://quran.com/2:61/tafsirs/en-tafisr-ibn-kathir>; accessed on 12 January 2024). Similar explanations in Arabic are found in various OKb manuscripts.

{21} <kn-jikl> ‘hardship’, from Ar. *shikāl* (pl. *shukul*) ‘fetter(s) for shackling the feet of riding animal’ or *shakl* ‘state of confusion’.<sup>67</sup> The k-prefixed word does not exist in modern Kanuri, and the cognate Kanuri term *shiwol* ‘distress, trouble’ must have entered the language at a later stage and possibly from a source different to <knjikl>.<sup>68</sup>

{22} <fahama> ‘hear’, from Ar. *fahima* ‘understand’. Some obvious loans that retain Arabic orthography seem so well integrated into the language that their spelling peculiarities should be considered part of the core graphemic inventory of OKb. Such is the word <fahama>, with the letter *hā* normally used in borrowings and as a word-spacing device.<sup>69</sup> The lexeme is used as a verb ‘to hear’ in the OKb manuscripts. It is unlikely that the OKb term was borrowed from the Qur’an since there is only one occurrence of the Arabic *fahima* in the Qur’an, where it occurs in the causative derivation *fahhama* ‘to make understand, explain’ (Q.21:79). What the OKb term <fahama> consistently translates is the Arabic *samiʿa* ‘to hear’ and, thus, the loan word has its own path of semantic derivation from ‘understand’ to ‘hear’, making it completely independent from the source language (however present the latter may be in such a translational relationship). The only occurrence of the Arabic *fahima* (a causative *fahhama*) is translated into OKb by another OKb verb *fam*, <fam/fan> also with the meaning ‘to hear’ (<itfamgiye> ‘we made him understand’).<sup>70</sup>

### 5.1.6 Definite article retained

Many Arabic words came into OKb and Kanuri-Kanembu with the Arabic definite article *al-*. The article in such loans may be written as either <al-> or only

<sup>67</sup> 1YM/90:4. As pointed out by Lameen Souag in his comments on an earlier draft of the paper, the Arabic *shakl* as a borrowing source raises the problem of the difference in vowel, /a/ in Arabic vs /i/ in OKb. It is also possible that the OKb lexeme is internal Saharan rather than a loan from Arabic. Thus, in Tubu, the verb *kakal* ‘belästigen’ has been attested by Lukas (1957, 185), with the basic root *kal*. This would not, however, explain the affricate <j> in the OKb <kn-j-kl>, and the matter, therefore, is left for future research.

<sup>68</sup> Apart from the prefix *k-*, the major difference here is in the vowel quality in the second syllable of *shiwol*, rather than in the quality of the second consonant, because the historical sound change *k > w* in the intervocalic position is common in Kanuri.

<sup>69</sup> Bondarev and Dobronravin 2019, 249.

<sup>70</sup> It is unclear whether the OKb <fam/fan> (Kanuri *fan*) is a different borrowing of the same Arabic *fahima* or an internal Saharan root with such cognate forms as *bas* in Teda-Daza and Bakoore Beria *kebenô* given regular correspondences between Kanuri-Kanembu *f-* and Teda-Daza and Beria *b-* (Chonai 1999, 21, 183, 217–218).

retaining the second segment – the consonant /l/, or as reflecting a form assimilated to the following coronal consonants/graphemic ‘sun letters’ (see etymon {3} <ašiyām> ‘fasting’). We only consider the two first types of the retained article, <al-> and <l->, in this subsection.

The borrowings with the definite Arabic article are listed here in a way similar to the previous examples, from the closest etymological spelling to the items spelled independently of Arabic source words. Given that the Arabic definite article is an easily identifiable grammatical item with a very high occurrence frequency, it is expected that the scribes who constantly deal with the Arabic and OKb content would naturally analyse the OKb words containing the initial element *al-* as Arabic loans. Some of the article-based OKb loans have other distinctive Arabic graphemic elements and, thus, plausibly represent the conscious Arabic-related repertoire of scribal choices. However, the orthography of some OKb words with the retained definite article is unrelated to the original Arabic words, making such loans more difficult to classify from the point of view of scribes’ etymological awareness. This discrepancy between the clear presence of the Arabic definite article and non-transparent spelling of the rest of the word also complicates categorisation of the loanwords that retain the Arabic article in a clipped form, with the initial vowel lost, such as <laqabur> ‘grave’ from Arabic *al-qabr*. If the word ‘grave’ is spelled with the Arabic letter <q>, irrespective of the changed (phonetic and graphemic) shape of the article *al-*, why does a more obvious article-based loan <al-bāsar> ‘onion’ from Arabic *al-baṣal* not reflect the original *ṣad* <ṣ> and is spelled instead with the letter *sīn* <s>? A plausible answer to this question could only be obtained through the analysis of a much larger set of data than that selected for this study.

### 5.1.6.1 Words with the Arabic article *al-* retained in full

{23} <alaxira> ‘afterlife; the hereafter’,<sup>71</sup> from Ar. *al-ḥaxira* ‘the afterlife’ and written above the Arabic word used in genitive case (*al-ḥaxira(ti)* ‘of afterlife’). This genitive grammatical relationship is translated into OKb with the respective genitive marker *-be* (<alaxira-be> ‘of afterlife’). The only deviation from the original spelling is the disregard of the *tā*’ *marbūṭah* ending *-ti* in the Arabic *al-ḥaxira-ti*, but this is typical in almost all borrowings in OKb or Kanuri-Kanembu.

{24} <alqurʔān> ‘the Qur’an’, from Arabic *al-qurʔān*. This OKb word denoting the sacred scripture always occurs with the definite article integrated into the lexeme, irrespective of the grammatical status of the original word. Thus,

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71 1YM/79:25.

the OKb <al-qurʔān> in 1YM/72:1 is written above the Arabic word without the article (*qurʔān*). The form with the whole definite article is, however, less frequent in this manuscript than the one with the clipped initial vowel (see <luqurān> and its variants in the next list). However, the form with the whole article is preferred in the manuscript T.Kano: <alqurān> (Q.46:2). At the same time, the T.Kano variant lacks the original *hamza* <ʔ> in its spelling.

{25} <albāsar> ‘onion’. Ultimately from Arabic *al-baṣal*, via an intermediary language. The same etymon in Kanuri has the article integrated into the clipped form: *luwāsar*.

{26} <algāma> (repeated {19}) ‘wheat’. Ultimately from Ar. *al-qamh*, but borrowed via an intermediary source. The etymon in Kanuri occurs in three (idiolect/dialect-specific) forms: *algāma*, *lɛgāma*, *laāma*.<sup>72</sup>

### 5.1.6.2 Words with the definite article without the initial vowel a, i.e. <l->

{27} <luqurān>/<luqrān> ‘the Qur’an’.<sup>73</sup> Unlike the form with the unchanged definite article *al-* (etymon {24}), this is fully integrated into the language and the only sign of the original etymology is the letter <q> rather than the Okb standard <k> used for the voiceless velar stop /k/. It is this clipped form that exists in modern Kanuri, with the velar being elided between vowels: *luwurān*.

{28} <laqabur>/<laqabr> ‘grave’,<sup>74</sup> from Ar. *al-qabr* (pl. *al-qubūr*). The form with the clipped article is not known in Kanuri, where the cognate (borrowed)

<sup>72</sup> See Wexler 1980, 536, on the problem of borrowing paths of both etymons (onion and wheat). Baldi (2008, 244–245) provides an extensive list of the etymon ‘onion’ across forty different languages, the majority of which have either the whole or clipped article in the first syllable. The etymon ‘wheat’ with the integrated Arabic article is attested in twenty languages, see Baldi 2008, 415–416. The form with the voiced [g] after the article *al-* is only reported in Kanuri and Munjuk (a Bio-Mandara [Central Chadic] language spoken in Cameroon and Chad). Lameen Souag’s suggestion that the voiced [g] (g < q) ‘would readily reflect Libyan or Sudanese Arabic’ may well explain the voiced feature of the velar in this OKb/Kanuri borrowing (Souag’s comments on an earlier draft of the paper).

<sup>73</sup> 1YM/17:105 and 1YM/2:176 respectively.

<sup>74</sup> <laqabur> in 1YM/9:84, 82:4; <laqabr> in 1YM/35:22, 100:9. In the case of <laqabur>, the insertion of a vowel into the consonant cluster (here, *-br-* in the source word *al-qabr*) to form a permissible syllable structure is a typical mechanism in Kanuri. Exemplarily, K. *laadar* (*lagadar*) ‘capacity’ < Ar. *al-qadr* ‘extent’; K. *lāmar* ‘event, situation’ < Ar. *al-ʔamr* ‘matter, affair’. The quality of the inserted vowel /u/ in <laqabur> is conditioned by the preceding bilabial /b/. Lameen Souag suggested an alternative source from a Maghribi colloquial form \**l-əqbər* (Souag’s comments on an earlier draft of the paper). However, since the common pattern of vowel insertion plausibly justifies Classical Arabic as a direct source of borrowing, a distant link to Maghribi sources seems unnecessary.

word is *káwar*. However, the OKb variant has been preserved in Tarjumo: *lawura*.

{29} <lqalam>, variant <lqālm> ‘pen’,<sup>75</sup> from Ar. *al-qalam*. All three known instances of the word in 1YM exhibit a peculiar combination of the copy-spelling and phonetic encoding. The letter <q> is a reference to the source word, but the integration of the article in the clipped form rather than the whole <al-> suggests an adapted pronunciation [ləkalam] or, possibly, [ləkálam] if the long vowel in the variant <lqālm> encodes a high tone. This is plausible, since the Kanuri cognate also has a high tone on the second syllable: *alkálam*. However, unlike OKb, the Kanuri form (and its numerous variants *alkəram*, *alláram*, *ar’álam* and *arkəram*) has the whole article integrated into the word.

{30} <larḍ>/<lant> ‘earth’,<sup>76</sup> from Ar. *al-ṭarḍ* ‘the earth’. The word *al-ṭarḍ* occurs 461 times in the Qur’an, and only with the article, which is always preceded by a vowel. This results in the pronunciation [l-arḍ]. The prominence of this phonetic form in the Qur’an suggests that the OKb (and Kanuri/Kanembu) borrowed the term directly from the Qur’an. Note, however, two distinct types of spelling: one with the copy of the original letter <ḍ> for the emphatic voiced alveolar stop [ḍ] and the other with the letter <t> used for the voiceless alveolar [t]. The former spelling convention <larḍ> is consistent in the first part of the manuscript 1YM, whereas the latter <lant> corresponds to the second part. The watershed between the two spelling types runs in Q.34. In Q.34:1, the etymon is written as <larḍ> and in the next verse, Q.34:2 (and in different hand!), the same word is written as <lant>. It is hard to ascertain the significance of this orthographic difference. On the one hand, being an obvious deviation from the Arabic original, the variant <lant> seems to suggest an adapted pronunciation independent from the source word, something like [lantə]. This is plausible given that the modern Kanuri word is *lārdə* ‘earth’ and that historically, the voiceless alveolar stop /t/ became voiced between sonorant/vowel and vowel (e.g. *atə* > *adə* ‘this’). On the other hand, the same second part of the manuscript consistently copies the orthography of the etymon ‘God’ <allah> (الله). This co-occurrence is, however, reversed in the first part of the manuscript. There, the etymon ‘earth’ is copy-spelled as <larḍ>, but ‘God’ is written as <ʔāla> (الء), probably reflecting pronunciation (cf. Kanuri *Ála*, with the first vowel having a high tone). The two

75 <lqalam> in 1YM/68:1, 96:4; <lqālm> in 1YM/31:24.

76 <larḍ> is found in the first part of 1YM (e.g. Q.2:30, 36, 116, 117, 164, 3:50, 4:97, 18:14, 27:25), whereas <lant> occurs in the second part of 1YM (e.g. 50:7, 44, 51:20, 57:4, 5, 10, 79:30, 81:2 84:3, 86:12, 88:20, 89:21, 91:6). Other spelling variants are rare, e.g. <lārd> in 1YM/9:2 and <lard> in 1YM/78:6. In 2ShK/91:14, the word is also written as <lant>.



parts of the manuscript 1YM are different in many other ways as well,<sup>77</sup> and it is plausible that they were produced by different students taught within different schools of Qur'anic interpretation, each of which had specific preferences for the choice of phonetic- and etymology-based spelling.

{31} <k-l-islām> 'Islam'. Unlike the other k-prefixed loan nouns, the source for this word was the Arabic lexeme with the definite article *al-* (*al-ʔislām*). The orthography of the OKb <klislām> is consistent and invariable, irrespective of the form and proximity of the source word. Thus, in 1YM/3:19, it is written above *al-ʔislām*, in 1YM/2:208, above *al-silm* 'submission to God, peace' and in 1YM/2:257, it is used to specify the Arabic word *nūr* 'light' in the sense of the 'light of Islam': <klislām-bi nūr>. The OKb k-prefixed form based on the source word with the article (*a*)l- did not find its way into Kanuri, where the concept of Islam is expressed by a prefixed form *kər-məsələm* 'Islam', which derives from the Arabic word without the article *muslim* 'Muslim'.

## 5.2 Soninke

Soninke was the language of the Ghana empire, which was among the first sub-Saharan polities to adopt Islam.<sup>78</sup> Despite the long history of contact with Islam and, hence, the Arabic language, there was relatively scarce research on Arabic loans in Soninke. Although examples of Arabic borrowings into Soninke have been documented in lexicographical works<sup>79</sup> and quoted in comparative surveys,<sup>80</sup> the only work (we are currently aware of) addressing this topic in detail is that of Seydina-Ousmane Diagana.<sup>81</sup>

The present section examines how Arabic borrowings are represented in Soninke Ajami writings.<sup>82</sup> The materials discussed here appear in manuscripts mainly from the early nineteenth century. These manuscripts were produced by speakers of Mandinka,<sup>83</sup> who resorted to a related language, Soninke, as a means of exegesis.<sup>84</sup> Theological treatises and Islamic law manuals are among

<sup>77</sup> Bondarev forthcoming.

<sup>78</sup> Cuoq 1984.

<sup>79</sup> Dantioko 2003; Baldi 2008; Ousmane Moussa Diagana 2013; Bathily 2017.

<sup>80</sup> Souag 2016.

<sup>81</sup> Seydina-Ousmane Diagana 1992.

<sup>82</sup> On spelling of Arabic borrowings in Soninke Ajami, see also Dramé 2021.

<sup>83</sup> The scribes used their native Mandinka language to write colophons and some glosses, which they marked with the phrase *fi kalāminā* 'in our language'. See Ogorodnikova 2017 and 2023.

<sup>84</sup> See Ousmane Moussa Diagana 1995, 19; Tamari and Bondarev 2013, 18; Tamari 2016, 45.

the texts annotated by the scribes. Because of the texts' specific nature, the scribes extensively incorporated words of Arabic origin.

The examples of borrowings in this section are divided into three groups, depending on their spellings: (1) etymological, (2) partially etymological and (3) non-etymological. The spelling of borrowed words does not seem to depend on their proximity to the source word.

The spellings of borrowings are compared to their assumed source, on the one hand, and to the modern-day Soninke form, on the other. It is frequent across the manuscripts under examination that the same word is spelled differently by either the same or different scribes. As a result, the spellings range from less to more distant from the assumed etymon. Although spelling variants and their frequency are considered when categorising examples into a particular group, the statistical analysis of these variations and occurrences of each item will be carried out in the future.

### 5.2.1 Etymological spelling

This group includes borrowings that retain the orthographies of the source in the Ajami glosses, even though many of these words in modern-day language have undergone phonological changes. It comprises concepts and words central to Islam, such as God and the holy scripture, words from the religious exegesis and practices.

{32} <alqurʔān> *al-qurʔān* 'the Qur'an'. The term for the holy scripture of Islam is one example of complete etymological spelling throughout the manuscript corpus, with consonantal base and vocalisation rendered exactly the same as in the source. The lexeme is attested in two forms in modern-day spoken language – with and without the definite article – *àlixùràané* and *qùràané/qùràané*.

{33} <allāh> *Állà* 'God'. The word 'God' in Soninke Ajami glosses is often written in proper Arabic spelling. However, spellings reflecting the phonetically adjusted form *Állà* are also frequent: <alā> or <ala> (the medial consonant gemination being underrepresented). The latter graphical representation with *ʔalif-lām* is usually attached to the following segment, similar to that in <alataʕalā><sup>85</sup> *Állà tāʕalā* 'God the Exalted' or <alamakiri><sup>86</sup> *Állà mà gírì* 'God is eternal' (lit. 'God did not come to an end'). Some spellings differ from the source entirely,

<sup>85</sup> EAP 1042/9/2 p. 22.

<sup>86</sup> BULAC MS.ARA.219bis fol. 2<sup>r</sup>.

replacing the initial *ʔalif* with *ʕayn*, followed by *lām*, i.e. <ʕala><sup>87</sup>, or *lām-ʔalif maqsurah*, i.e. <ʕalā><sup>88</sup> (corresponding to the spelling of the Arabic preposition *ʕalā* ‘on, upon’).

### 5.2.2 Partial etymological spelling

Several etymologically spelled borrowings exemplified below reproduce the consonantal base (including long vowels) but may differ in vocalic notation.

[34] <ʕāḥibi> *saahibe* ‘companion’ from Ar. *ṣāḥib* (pl. *aṣḥāb*, *ṣaḥb*) ‘associate, companion’. The Soninke plural suffix *-nu* is often attached to the core form, spelled etymologically, i.e. <fāri ṣāḥibinu> *fāaré saahibe-nu* ‘prophet’s companions’. Word formation with indigenous suffixes suggests borrowing rather than insertion or copy-spelling. This word is not listed in dictionaries, which suggests that its usage is specific to exegetical contexts.

[35] <tālibi> *táalibè* ‘student’ from Ar. *ṭālib* (pl. *ṭullāb*) ‘student’. The main phonological difference between the source and the borrowing is the emphatic /t/ transformed into an alveolar voiceless plosive /t/. Most Ajami spellings retain the initial consonant of the Arabic original, but sporadic spellings with *tā*’ for the adapted form also occur. Similar to the previous example, the word produces derivatives with Soninke suffixes (e.g. <ṭālibinu> *táalibè-nú* ‘students’), indicating its integration into the Soninke lexicon. The term refers to learners at intermediate and advanced stages of classical Islamic education and has several synonyms, such as *qàrànlénmè* ‘pupil, student’ (a compound formed with an Arabic borrowing; see below).

The next group of examples contain the sounds /ħ/ (fricative voiceless pharyngeal) transliterated as <ḥ> and the glottal fricative /h/. While the former is outside of the Soninke phonemic inventory, the latter exists in eastern dialects, regularly corresponding to *f* in western dialects.<sup>89</sup> The /ħ/ in the Arabic borrowings is usually adjusted to /h/ (without being changed to the dialectal *f*) in the spoken domain.<sup>90</sup> In the written domain, however, the tendency is to retain the graphemes of the original: <ḥaramu> *hàràamè* ‘forbidden’ from Ar. *harām* ‘forbidden, unlawful’, <ḥaқи> *háqqè* ‘right’ from Ar. *ḥaqq* ‘right’, also

<sup>87</sup> BL Or. 6473 fol. 206<sup>v</sup>; UbL Or. 14.052(5) fol. 1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>88</sup> BL Or. 6473 fol. 221<sup>r</sup>; PGL ORI 11/2 fol. 12<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>89</sup> Creissels 2016, 13. Ousmane Moussa Diagana (1995, 19) notes that due to intellectual migration, the language of religious exegesis is characterised by systematic usage of *f* (and not *h*).

<sup>90</sup> See Seydina-Ousmane Diagana 1992, 207; Ousmane Moussa Diagana 2013, 77–78.

with attached Soninke suffixes:<sup>91</sup> <ḥijāna> *ḥījāanà* ‘pilgrim’ from Ar. *ḥajj/ḥijjah* ‘pilgrimage’ + *-ānà* (NMAG). At the same time, the glottal fricative /h/ is represented by the letter *hā*: <jāhilāku> *jāahilāaxù* ‘ignorance’ from Ar. *jāhil* ‘ignorant’ + *-āxù* (ABSTR), <ḏāhiri”kīti> *jāahirīnkīitè* ‘transparent judgement’<sup>92</sup> from Ar. *ḏāhir* ‘visible, clear’ + Soninke *kīitè* ‘judgement’, and <halaki> *hālāki/fālāki* ‘ruin, destroy’ from Ar. *halaka* ‘to perish, to be destructed’. However, these graphemes are sometimes used interchangeably. Yet, there is one word that appears consistently across the corpus in the source spelling with *hā*’ even though in the phonetically adjusted form it is dropped:

{36} <fahamu> *fāāmù* ‘understand’ from Ar. *fahima/fahm* ‘understand/understanding’.<sup>93</sup> While the modern Soninke form does not have the medial /h/,<sup>94</sup> the corresponding Arabic grapheme *hā*’ is systematically retained in writing. At the same time, the verb behaves as fully integrated, taking the Soninke grammatical items, such as aspectual suffixes, for example, the imperfective gerundive suffix *-nV* in the example below:<sup>95</sup>

(10) Gloss to [*kull mā*] *yafhamu al-jāhil [minhi]* ‘[everything that] the ignorant understands [from it (the Qur’an)]’: <jāhilinun kw’ fahamunu>

<i>jāahīli-nú-n</i>	<i>gā</i>	<i>wá</i>	<i>fāāmù-nú</i>
ignorant-PL-D	SBD	INACP	understand-GER
‘the ignorant (ones) understand’			

The following examples demonstrate approaches to spelling Arabic words with voiced alveolar /z/ (encoded with the grapheme *zāy*) and voiced interdental ḏ (encoded with *ḏāl*), both of which correspond to /j/ in Soninke borrowings.

{37} <lazimi> *lāajīmí* ‘become obligatory’ from Ar. *lazima* ‘to be necessary’. This is another word of the exegetical domain in which the original consonant (*zāy*) of the source word is retained in the Ajami spellings. Although in a few cases, it is

<sup>91</sup> Morphological categories are marked based on Creissels 2016.

<sup>92</sup> See this example in Dramé 2021, 195, and also MAAO AF 14722(87) fol. 154<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>93</sup> Seydina-Ousmane Diagana (1992, 128) quotes *fahama* as the basis of the Soninke borrowing. For the cognate Bamana verb *fāamu*, Zappa (2011, 237) suggests either *fahm* (*mašdar*) ‘understanding’ or *ifham* (2sg m imperative) ‘understand!’.

<sup>94</sup> Creissels (2016, 25) argues that the vowel sequence *ā-á* of the word *hāāmù/fāāmù* resulted from the dropping of the *h* in the intervocalic position.

<sup>95</sup> MAAO AF 14722(87) fol. 190<sup>v</sup>.

also spelled with *jīm*, thus, betraying its oral counterpart pronounced as /j/. Despite the etymological spelling, <lazima> behaves as a genuine Soninke verb:

(11) Gloss to *bi-mā yalzamu* ‘with what is necessary, required’: <’a ka wu sirī lazimini>

<i>a</i>	<i>gà</i>	<i>wó</i>	<i>sèré</i>	<i>làajímí-ní</i>
3S	SBD	INACP	person	become.obligatory-GER
‘that [what] is obligatory to a person’				

It also produces various derivatives, such as *làajímí-yé* ‘obligation’ (‘become obligatory’ + NMLZ) and *làajímí-nd-áanà* (‘become obligatory’ + ANTP + NMAG) ‘necessary, requiring’.<sup>96</sup> The core-element <lazimi> tends to be spelled etymologically in all these forms.

The retention of etymological spelling in the verb *làajímí* contrasts with the spellings of *jíidí* ‘to increase’ from Ar. *zāda* or *zid*.<sup>97</sup> The latter is much more frequently spelled with *jīm* or *ḍāl*, rather than the original *zāy*.

{38} <ḍunubi<sup>n</sup>> *jùnúbù* ‘sin’ from Ar. (s. *ḍanb*) *ḍunūb* ‘sins’. The target spellings retain the initial consonant *ḍāl* of the source, even though it is pronounced as an affricate /j/ (for which the grapheme *jīm* is a better match). The vocalization pattern of the Soninke item suggests that it derives from the Arabic plural form *ḍunūb*. Contrary to the attested modern form (for singular and plural) *jùnúb-ù*,<sup>98</sup> the spellings in the glosses mark the last vowel with *kasra* <ḍunubi<sup>n</sup>>,<sup>99</sup> giving /junub-i/ or /junub-e/. Thus, the scribes possibly reinterpreted the borrowed *junub-u* as the Soninke plural and, using the *-e* ending, derived its singular form.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>96</sup> The gloss *làajímíndáanà* corresponds to the main text’s (active participle) *lāzim* ‘necessary, requisite’.

<sup>97</sup> Zappa (2011, 237) suggests the imperative *zid* of the verb *zāda* as the etymon of the Bamana *jíidí* ‘increase’.

<sup>98</sup> The Soninke plural is formed by the suffixes *-o*, *-u* and *-nu*. The singular word forms ending with *-e* regularly form the plural by changing the final vowel to *-u*, while singular forms ending with *-u* form the plural by attaching the suffix *-nu*. The Soninke words with the singular marker *-u*, including Arabic borrowings, have the lowest rate of occurrence. See Ousmane Moussa Diagana 1995, 54–58. Thus, *jùnúb-ù* seems to have an exceptional and irregular number morphology.

<sup>99</sup> AAN1 p. 100; BL Or. 4897 fol. 168<sup>v</sup>; JRL MS 780[825] fol. 37<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>100</sup> However, the glosses are sometimes ambiguous as to whether the form <ḍunubi<sup>n</sup>> is to be interpreted as singular or plural. Additionally, I could not find out whether there are forms such as /junubu/ or /jubuni-nu/ for the plural.

{39} <ḥarafu> *harafe* ‘letter’ from Ar. *ḥarf* ‘letter, consonant’. An opposite case is the word *harafe* ‘letter’, in the modern language attested with the final *-e* but spelled in manuscripts with the final *ḍamma* for /u/, i.e. <ḥaraf-u>. This corresponds to the Arabic source form in the nominative case *ḥarf-un*. From the examples below in the glosses, it follows that <ḥarafu> is used in singular (12), and forms the plural by attaching the suffix *-nu* (13):<sup>101</sup>

(12) Gloss to [*mā xaṭṭa bi yadihi*] *ḥarfun* ‘[he (the Prophet) did not write with his hand] a letter’: <ḥarafu bāni ya>

<i>haraf-u</i>	<i>báané</i>	<i>yá</i>	<i>ní</i>
letter-SG	one	FOC	COPEQ
	‘a single letter’		

(13) Gloss to *bi-al-ḥurūf* ‘with the letters’: <tiḥurufūnu>

<i>tí</i>	<i>harafu-nu</i>
with	letter-PL
	‘with letters’

It is plausible that the item *haraf-u* was at some point reinterpreted as a plural, producing the modern-day singular *haraf-e*.

{40} <xibāriṇḍiyi> *qìbáarìṇḍiyè* ‘information’ from Ar. *xabar* pl. *ṭaxbār* ‘news’. The Soninke *qìbáari-ndí-yè* (*qìbáari-ndì* ‘to inform’ + *-yé* NMLZ) ‘information’ seems to be another borrowing which derived from the broken Arabic plural noun. The Soninke *qìbáari/qìbáarè*, with the long vowel /ā/ in the second syllable, corresponds to the Arabic plural *ṭaxbār* with the initial vowel omitted (i.e. *xbār*). Interestingly, in one instance, the scribe retained the entire Arabic plural form (i.e. retaining the initial vowel and adjusting vocalic notation) in the Soninke borrowing <axbāri<sup>n</sup> di yin dū> /axbaarindiyen du/ *qìbáarìṇḍiyèn dī* ‘in the news, information’ when translating the respective Arabic phrase *fī al-ṭaxbār*.<sup>102</sup> Given the close proximity of the source word, copy-spelling of the form /axbaarindiyen/ cannot be ruled out. However, it is then unclear as to why the scribe omitted the definite article *al-* and added the Soninke suffixes.

<sup>101</sup> Examples 12–13 are from MAAO AF 14.722(87) fol. 208<sup>r</sup> and fol. 199<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>102</sup> MAAO AF 14722(87) fol. 105<sup>r</sup>.

In this and other instances, the scribes retain the etymological grapheme *xā*’ in the spelling of *q̄ibáarè/q̄ibáarindíyè* (without the initial vowel). Although the Arabic grapheme *xā*’ is a good match for the Soninke uvular /q/ or its allophone [χ], it is not a common convention to use it in writing indigenous lexemes in the Ajami material under examination, and the grapheme *qāf* is typically used. Another example of retaining the source orthography <xayra<sup>n</sup>><sup>103</sup> with the grapheme *xā*’ is *qéerì* ‘joy, fortune’ from Ar. *xayr* ‘prosperity’.

The graphemic representations of borrowings in the following group are somewhat ‘hybrid’, since they reflect phonetically adjusted forms while retaining traces of the source orthographies, especially conspicuous with Arabic-specific graphemes.

{41} <qara>/<karā> *qārā* ‘study, read’ from Arabic *qaraʿa* ‘read, recite’. Some of the scribal spellings replicate the orthography of the etymon, retaining the final *ʔalif* (although without *hamza*). The final *ʔalif* may appear even when the first consonant is not spelled etymologically, also in composites: <karā<sup>n</sup>mūdi><sup>104</sup> *qārānmoodì* ‘teacher’. The usage of the long vowel in the second syllable of <qarā>/<karā> could be explained by the scribal intention to mark the high tone. However, the example of the compound word <karā<sup>n</sup>mūdi> shows that a long vowel is marked even when it bears a low tone, and it is probably a reference to the source orthography.

{42} <ṣali> *sállì/-è* ‘pray/prayer’ from Ar. *al-salāh/ṣalla* ‘prayer/pray’. This word could possibly count among the oldest borrowings due to the antiquity of Islam among the Soninke. The scribal spellings often conform to the original orthography by using the emphatic *ṣād*, even in compounds, such as <ṣali yi><sup>105</sup> *sállì-jì* ‘ablutions (lit. prayer-water)’ or <ṣalifana> *sállifānā* ‘afternoon prayer’.<sup>106</sup> However, as indicated earlier, the etymological and adapted spellings coexist, and one finds spellings with *ṣād* or *sīn* even on the pages of the same manuscript.<sup>107</sup>

**103** BULAC MS.ARA.219bis fol. 9<sup>v</sup>; TCD MS 3499 fol. 47<sup>v</sup>.

**104** BL Or. 4897 fol. 154<sup>v</sup>.

**105** Ubl Or. 14.052(8) fol. 21<sup>r-v</sup>. The grapheme *yā*’ in this spelling apparently represents a palatal glide /y/ rather than the affricate /j/ expected in the Soninke word *jī* ‘water’. This may evidence a specific Soninke dialect or an influence of a scribal native language.

**106** EAP 1042/9/2 p. 3. The Soninke gloss *sállifānā* corresponds to the Arabic *zuhr* ‘midday prayer’ in the main text. As Lameen Souag explains, the Soninke term *sállifānā* ‘lit. prayer-first’ is in fact a calque of Arabic or Berber term *ṣalat al-ʿūlā* ‘the first (among the obligatory) prayer(s)’, with it another appellation for *zuhr*. See Souag 2015, 361–362.

**107** BnF Arabe 5675 fol. 71<sup>v</sup>, fol. 74<sup>f</sup>, fol. 75<sup>f</sup>; TCD MS 2179 fol. 20<sup>v</sup>, fol. 21<sup>v</sup>.

{43} <lašili>/<lasili> *lásilì* ‘origin’ from Ar. *al-ʔašl* ‘origin’. The word retains two etymological features: the definite article (even though with the clipped initial vowel) and the emphatic <š>, that fairly often appears in the spellings of the otherwise adapted CV-CV-CV form. Spellings with *sīn*, indicating a phonetic adjustment to /s/, are also found in the glosses.

{44} <lašada> *lāadà* ‘custom, tradition’ from Ar. *al-ʕādah* ‘custom’. Similar to the previous example, the word was borrowed with the (clipped) definite article. The manuscripts display remarkably consistent spelling of this item with *lām-ʕayn-dāl* (لعمد) vocalized with *fathas*.

{45} <sariša>/<šarišā> *sàriyà* ‘law’ from Arabic *šarʕ* ‘Revelation, divine law’ or *šarʕīah* ‘canonical Islamic law’. Interestingly, the phonetical form of the Soninke borrowing *sàriyà* corresponds more to the Arabic *šarʕīah*, whereas its graphical representation reproduces the Arabic *šarʕ* almost identically. The variants with *sīn* at the beginning of the word likely signal the phonetically adapted form, while those with *šīn* evoke the original etymon. As for the retention of the final *ʕayn*, it does not seem to have any phonological motivation since it usually represents the velar nasal /ŋ/ or serves as a support for a vowel, which would then give /sariŋa/ or /saria/. Thus, the retention of the *ʕayn* seems to be a purely visual reminder of the source, and, in this case, is to be interpreted as /y/ for /sariya/.

{46} <nišima> *néemà* ‘peace, grace’ from Ar. *nišmah* ‘benefit, blessing’. The etymological spellings with the medial <š> appears alongside an adjusted orthography of the word with *yāʾ* and *kasra* for /ī/: <nīma>. Therefore, the *ʕayn* is conceivably a way of encoding the long vowel, while, at the same time, referring to the word’s source orthography.

Similar to examples 42–45, the feminine suffix *-ah* encoded by *tāʾ marbūṭah* is omitted in the spelling, and the last syllable is vocalised with *fathā* (for /a/).<sup>108</sup> By contrast, the word *umatunu* ‘peoples’<sup>109</sup> from Ar. *ummah* (pronounced [*um-matun*]) ‘community’, is a borrowing derived from the literary Arabic form (with /t/ at the end) followed by the Soninke plural suffix *-nu*. The phonetically integrated *tāʾ marbūṭah* ending resulted in spelling the last syllable with *tāʾ* <t>: <ʾumatunu> or <ʾuma<sup>n</sup>tūnu>.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>108</sup> The word *sóora* ‘sura’ from Ar. *sūrah* may occasionally be spelled with *tāʾ marbūṭah* <š>, i.e. <sūraš> (e.g. UBL Or. 14.052(8) fol. 72<sup>v</sup>). However, spelling <sūra> without *tāʾ marbūṭah* also occur (e.g. BL Or. 4897 fol. 155<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>109</sup> The word *unmatoonuu* (pl.) ‘prophet disciples’ is listed in Mody Bathily’s dictionary as a borrowing from Arabic *ummah*, see Bathily 2017, 362. A cognate word *mānton* ‘people, nation, group’ is attested in Bamana.

<sup>110</sup> BL Or. 6473 fol. 214<sup>r</sup>; TCD MS 2179 fol. 13<sup>r</sup>.



### 5.2.3 No etymological spelling

Several words of Arabic origin display spellings quite dissimilar to the source orthography. Some of these words possibly came via an intermediary language, and the Arabic etymology of some is even disputable.

{47} <sʔumu>/<sumu> *súumè/súumù* ‘fast’ from Ar. *ṣaum* ‘abstention, fasting’.<sup>111</sup> The adapted spelling of the word appears twice in the proximity of the source word.

In the first case (14), it explains *tašūmu* ‘she is to fast’.

(14) <ā nā sʔumu kafunu ki furu yā>

à	nà	súumì	kāfìnì	ké	fòró	yá
3S	SUBJ	fast	with	DEM	blood	FOC
‘she should fast with this bleeding’						

In the second instance (15), the gloss is linked to the Arabic phrase *wa lā yaqṭaʕu-hā* ‘and he does not interrupt it’, in which the pronoun *-hā* relates to the *ṣiyām ramaḍān* ‘the fast of Ramdan’ written two lines above.

(15) <’a nti ramaḍāna sumuyi kutunu>

à	ntá	Ramaḍān	súumiyé	kútú-nú
3S	INACP.NEG	Ramadan	fasting	interrupt
‘he does not interrupt the Ramadan fasting’				

Interestingly, the name of the month in the phrase <ramaḍāna sumuyi> *Ramaḍān súumiyé* ‘Ramadan fasting’ is spelled etymologically, while the word *súumiyé* appears as well integrated, both in spelling (no etymological consonant) and derivation (with the Soninke nominalising suffix *-yé*).

{48} <bataqi<sup>m</sup>>/<batāqi>/<batāki> *bátáaxè* ‘letter, message’ from Arabic *biṭāqah* ‘slip of paper, card’.<sup>112</sup> The Soninke lexeme does not appear in the proximity of the source word in any instances and is used to explain different Arabic

<sup>111</sup> Seydina-Ousmane Diagana (1992, 201) suggests the 2 pl. imperative form *šūmū* ‘you all fast!’ as a basis for the Soninke borrowing.

<sup>112</sup> Seydina-Ousmane Diagana 1992, 197.

words, such as *ṣahāʿif* ‘leaves, pages’ or *jarīdah* ‘list, register’. The spellings of the Ajami forms – with slight variations: <bataqī<sup>n</sup>>, <batāqī> or <batāki><sup>113</sup> – reflect the phonetically adjusted form. Thus, the initial *bāʿ* is vocalised with *fathā* (for /a/) and the second consonant is written as *ṭāʿ* as opposed to the emphatic *ṭāʿ* of the original, followed by the long or short /a/. The consonant of the last syllable is ambiguously represented by the letters *qāf* or *kāf*, each of which can encode both /x/ and /k/. The *tāʿ marbūṭah* is omitted (cf. examples above).

{49} <hakili> *hāqīlè* ‘mind, intelligence’ from Ar. *ṣaql* ‘sense reason’. The spellings of this word range from etymologically transparent to obscurer forms, i.e. from <ṣaqīli> or <ṣakili> to <ḥaqīli>/<ḥa<sup>n</sup>kili> or <ha<sup>n</sup>kili>, with the latter spellings predominant in the corpus.<sup>114</sup> The variation between *kāf* and *qāf* may be purely graphical since both graphemes are used for uvular /q/, which occurs both in the source and Soninke borrowing. On the other hand, spellings with *kāf* <ḥakili> may, in fact, reflect Mandinka pronunciation with the velar /k/. Regarding the initial letters *ḥāʿ* or *hāʿ*, they stand for the Soninke /h/, which, in its turn, is a result of the phonological adaptation of the initial /ʕ/ of the source word.<sup>115</sup>

{50} <ḥariziki>/<ḥarziqi> ‘favour, fortune’ from Arabic *al-rizq* ‘livelihood, blessing of God’. Although <ḥariziki><sup>116</sup> corresponds to Arabic *yurzaqūna* ‘they are bestowed/blessed’ in one instance, its spelling only remotely resembles the original. On the other hand, the second spelling <ḥarziqi>,<sup>117</sup> without the source word visible nearby, reproduces the etymon *al-rizq* (pronounced [ar-rizq]) almost identically. While the *zāy* in the third syllable for /j/ hints at the word’s etymology, the first *ḥā* represents /h/, apparently inserted to avoid an initial vowel-only syllable.<sup>118</sup> Unlike the word *hāqīlè* examined above, the forms

**113** TCD MS 3499 fol. 46<sup>r</sup>.

**114** MAAO AF 14722(87) fol. 5<sup>v</sup>; PGL ORI 11/2 fol. 13<sup>r</sup>.

**115** The change of initial /ʕ/ to /h/ is not very common. Seydina-Ousmane Diagana (1992, 210), for instance, cites only one further example in addition to the one discussed here. Interestingly, forms for the etymon *ṣaqīl* with the initial /h/ are attested in a few other sub-Saharan languages, see Baldi 2008, 347–348.

**116** TCD MS 2179 fol. 16<sup>v</sup>.

**117** MAAO AF 14722(87) fol. 137<sup>r</sup>.

**118** It is noteworthy that Creissels (2016, 24) cites /w/ and /ŋ/ as being more typically added to ‘regularise the proper syllable structure CV’. He also notes that many Arabic borrowings are retained in Soninke with the initial /a/ unpreceded by a consonant. However, /h/ appears at the beginning of the compound *hādāmārénmé* ‘human being’, which is a calque from the Arabic *banī Adama* ‘sons of Adam’. Interestingly, this word is mainly written etymologically with the initial *ʔalif*, and only exceptionally with *ḥāʿ*, in the glosses.

<ḥariziki>/<ḥarziqi> seem to have survived only in manuscripts' margins since this item is attested as *ārjaxè/wàrjâxé* in modern-day Soninke.<sup>119</sup>

{51} <yalabi><sup>120</sup> *xâlîbè* 'writing tool'. Next to the word <yalabi>, which is only found in one instance, the scribe added the Arabic *al-qalam* 'pen'. However, the vowels of the modern form suggest a derivation from Tamasheq *a-yanib* '(reed) pen' rather than from the Arabic *qalam* '(reed) pen'. The manuscript form <yalabi> may, thus, represent a hybrid between *a-yanib* and *qalam*, motivated by the scribe's knowledge of Arabic.<sup>121</sup>

{52} <fākî<sup>n</sup>/<a<sup>n</sup>ki<sup>n</sup>> from Ar. *ḥax* 'brother'. The word *áaxí/wáaxì* 'brother' in Soninke is a borrowing from Arabic, but not always recognised as such in scribal spellings. In two occurrences,<sup>122</sup> for instance, both linked to the Arabic text *yā ḥaxī* 'oh, my brother', the glosses are as follows: <fā ki<sup>n</sup> ũ> *áaxìn wó* and <yā a<sup>n</sup> ki<sup>n</sup>wū> *ya áaxìn wó*. Neither spelling resembles the etymon. Interestingly, in two other instances,<sup>123</sup> the scribes chose the native Soninke kinship term *máarénmè* 'brother' to translate the same Arabic phrase. Finally, in one instance, the scribe wrote the word <axi> *áaxí* in the same spelling as Arabic.<sup>124</sup>

Another group of examples written in deviating orthographies are probably borrowings from Arabic that underwent successive phonetic changes in transmission from one linguistic community to another. Their spellings vary from etymological to 'native' in the glosses:

{53} <šuyula> ~ <suqula>/<sūla><sup>125</sup> *súxùlà* 'preoccupy, trouble' from Ar. *šayala/šuyl* 'occupy, concern'.

<naqasi> ~ <nakasi>/<nāsi><sup>126</sup> *nàqási* 'decrease' from Ar. *naqaša* 'decrease'.

<waqati> ~ <wakati>/<wati><sup>127</sup> *wáxátì* 'time' from Ar. *waqt* 'time, moment'.

<lawḥi> ~ <walaḥa>/<wulā><sup>128</sup> *wáláhâ/wáláxà* 'wooden board' from Ar. (*al-*)*lawḥ* 'board, tablet'.

119 However, Maninka has the form *hàrijεε*. See Vydrine 1999, 249.

120 TCD MS 2179 fol. 11<sup>r</sup>.

121 We are grateful to Lameen Souag for his interpretation of the manuscript form as a hybrid and for elucidating the borrowing path of the Soninke word. He further added that 'Despite appearances, this [*xâlîbè*] is at best very distantly cognate with Arabic [*qalam*]: *a-yanib* is a Tuareg-specific variant of pan-Berber *a-yanim* "reed", a loanword from Phoenician *\*qān-īm*' (Lameen Souag's comments on an earlier draft of this paper).

122 EAP 1042/9/2 p. 24 and BULAC MS.ARA.219bis fol. 5<sup>v</sup>.

123 BULAC MS.ARA.219bis fol. 10<sup>r</sup>; UPenn Lewis O35 fol. 34<sup>r</sup>.

124 UPenn Lewis O35 fol. 86<sup>v</sup>.

125 AAN1 p. 179; PGL ORI 11/3 fol. 102<sup>r</sup>; BnF Arabe 5675 fol. 77<sup>v</sup> and fol. 80<sup>r</sup>; TCD MS 2179 fol. 9<sup>r</sup>.

126 TCD MS 2179 fol. 16<sup>r</sup>; UbL Or. 14.052(8) fol. 58<sup>r</sup> and fol. 59<sup>r</sup>; BL Or. 6473 fol. 210<sup>v</sup> and fol. 212<sup>r</sup>; TCD MS 3500 fol. 21<sup>v</sup>.

127 UbL Or. 14.052(8) fol. 63<sup>r</sup>; BmT 2234 p. 104; ZOC1 di 5302.

This spelling variation reflects phonetic changes in (1) consonants:  $y, ħ \rightarrow x$  or  $k/g$ ; (2) syllabic structures: metathesis  $l-w-ħ \rightarrow w-l-x$ ;  $C \rightarrow CV$ ; and (3) dropping of the intervocalic uvular/velar. While the adaptation (1) and (2) probably happened primarily due to borrowing into Soninke, (3) is a clear secondary adaptation of Soninke into Mandinka, where the velar between two vowels is rare.

The next group of examples is concerned with different sources, channels or chronological layers of borrowing.

{54} *lâgâré* ‘last, youngest’. This word is regularly linked in the glosses to the Arabic *al-ʔāxīr* ‘last, extreme’, as well as other derivatives from the same root, such as *muʔaxxar* ‘rear part, end’. Although it is possible that the Arabic word is the source for Soninke,<sup>129</sup> the etymological connection is not evident from spellings: <lākari<sup>m</sup>> and <laʔri>,<sup>130</sup> <lāri><sup>131</sup>, or <laqari>.<sup>132</sup> The graphemes *kāf* and *qāf* may stand either for /g/, /k/ or /x/, as in /lagare/, /lakare/ or /laxare/, whereas the spellings with *ʕayn* and *ʔalif* most likely indicate the dropping of the intervocalic velar/uvular, as in /laare/. Thus, both the graphic and phonetic realisations of this borrowing are relatively distant from its source. Interestingly, the word *láaxàrà* ‘afterlife, hereafter’, which is a phonetic adaptation of the Arabic *al-ʔāxīrah*, in writing is typically spelled etymologically (i.e. retaining the definite article and the consonant *xāʔ*). Therefore, the different channel and/or time of borrowing might be assumed for these two words deriving from the same root.

{55} <ḥāli>/<ḥāri><sup>133</sup> *hārî* ‘even, until, so that’. This Soninke function word corresponds systematically to its potential source, the Arabic preposition/particle *ḥattā* ‘until, even, so that’. The initial consonant *ḥāʔ* suggests a borrowing.<sup>134</sup> The consonant of the second syllable is represented either by *lām* or *rāʔ*, and never by *tāʔ* of the assumed etymon. The transformation from /t/ in Arabic to /l/ or /r/ in Soninke is unusual and not attested in other examples. Hence, the grapheme *ḥāʔ* seems inspired by its Arabic counterpart rather than

128 TCD MS 3499 fol. 167<sup>v</sup> and MAAO AF 14722(87) fol. 196<sup>v</sup> and fol.197<sup>v</sup>, respectively.

129 Vydrine (1999, 271) suggests the Arabic *al-ʔāxīr* ‘the last’ as the source for the cognate Maninka word *lâgare* ‘youngest child’.

130 TCD MS 2179 fol. 31<sup>r</sup> and fol. 32<sup>r</sup>.

131 BL Or. 6473 fol. 222<sup>v</sup>.

132 BnF Arabe 5675 fol. 69<sup>v</sup>; UbL Or. 14.522(8) fol. 18<sup>r</sup> and fol. 26<sup>r</sup>.

133 PGL ORI 11/1 fol. 15<sup>r</sup>; TCD MS 3499 fol. 164<sup>v</sup>.

134 The initial consonant in the word *hārî* is not explained by the dialectal variation *f-h*, but rather that this word is a borrowing; see Ousmane Moussa Diagana 2013, 77–78.

dictated by an etymological connection. Instead, Tamasheq can be suggested as a source for the Soninke particle *hārī*.<sup>135</sup>

{56} *mīsidè* ‘mosque’. The Arabic word *al-masjid* ‘mosque’ in the glosses is explained in two ways: <mišijidi><sup>136</sup> and <misdi><sup>137</sup>. While the first spelling clearly mimics the Arabic, the second, with the omitted <j>, reflects the Soninke modern-day *mīsidè*. However, the omission of /j/ is unlikely to be a result of phonetic change.<sup>138</sup> The form <misdi> and modern-day Soninke *mīsidè* ‘mosque’ could instead be derived from Ḥassāniya Arabic *msīd* ‘mosque’.<sup>139</sup>

{57} <šafāri> *sāfāaré* ‘medication’ used in translating the Arabic *dawā*’ or *ṭibb* ‘medicine’. In a few instances, the scribes encoded the first consonant with *šin*, a grapheme not frequently used in indigenous words, which led to previous assumptions that *sāfāaré* derived from Arabic *šafā* ‘cure’.<sup>140</sup> However, this word was most certainly borrowed from another source. The word *safari* ‘cure, treat’ exists in Songhay, where it was borrowed from Tamasheq.<sup>141</sup> In this case, the Soninke Ajami spellings of *sāfāaré* with *šin* is either another (untypical) way of encoding /s/, an awareness of the scribes that the word is ultimately a borrowing, or (as suggested by Lameen Souag) a mistaken assumption by the scribes that it derives from *šifā*’.

#### 5.2.4 Definite article retained

Some borrowed Arabic nouns retain the definite article, integrated into the lexeme without any grammatical function. This section presents examples of such words, looking at the relationship between graphemic representation and phonetic realisation in Arabic and Soninke items.

**135** Vydrine (1999, 252) suggests Tamasheq as a source for the Maninka *hālī* ‘even’. Whether the Tamasheq *har* has derived from the Arabic *ḥattā* is inconclusive. Heath (2006, 215), for instance, indicates a potential relation of the Tamasheq *hār* ‘until’ to the Arabic *ḥattā*. Kossmann (2005, 137–138), on the other hand, considers such a derivation unlikely.

**136** Ubl Or. 14.522(8) fol. 60<sup>v</sup>.

**137** BnF Arabe 5675 fol. 78<sup>r</sup>.

**138** See Seydina-Ousmane Diagana 1992, 206.

**139** See Wexler 1980, 540–541. Lameen Souag also points out that ‘*msīd* is a pan-Maghrebi form attested at least from Tunisia and Morocco, sometimes meaning “Quranic school”’ (Souag’s comments on an earlier draft of the paper).

**140** Ogorodnikova 2023, 179. Note that Ousmane Moussa Diagana (2013, 180) considers the word *sāfāaré* to be an Arabic borrowing.

**141** See Heath 1998, 212; Baldi 2005; Souag 2016.

The article is kept intact in some words, and it is represented in writing the same way as in Arabic by *ʔalif-lām* with *sukūn*, even though some modern forms feature a vowel added after *l*: *aljannā* <aljana><sup>142</sup> from Ar. *al-jannah* ‘Paradise’, *alhaalā* <alhāla><sup>143</sup> from Ar. *al-ḥāl* ‘condition, state’, and *álixiyáamā* <alqiyāma><sup>144</sup> from Ar. *al-qiyāmah* ‘resurrection, final judgment’.

The definite article is typically retained in words borrowed from the words with the initial ʔ and ʕ. The borrowed forms in modern Soninke begin with the consonant *l*–: *liimànāaxù* from Ar. *al-ʔīmān* ‘faith’; *lásìlì* from Ar. *al-ʔaql* ‘origin’; *láaxàrá* from Ar. *al-ʔāxirah* ‘the hereafter’; and *láadà* from Ar. *al-ʕādah* ‘custom’. The initial *ʔalif* of the article may still be written in the glosses, but such spelling is infrequent, and the words are mostly written with the initial *lām*, representing phonologically adapted forms.<sup>145</sup> Peculiarly, on one occasion, the /l/ of the definite article in the word *l-Āráabù* ‘Arabs’ <ḏaʕarābu><sup>146</sup> was encoded with the Arabic *dād* <ḏ> (which is sometimes used for /l/).

The phonetic assimilation is ignored in a few words beginning with the ‘sun letters’, adhering to the conventional writing of the article with *lām*: <al-dālilīn><sup>147</sup> from Ar. *al-dalīl* ‘sign, proof’, <al-ḏāti><sup>148</sup> from Ar. *al-ḏāt* ‘essence’, <[a]lṭālibinu><sup>149</sup> from Ar. *al-ṭālib* ‘student’, <alšayx><sup>150</sup> from Ar. *al-šayx* ‘shaykh, elder’ or <al-tawḥīdi><sup>151</sup> from Ar. *al-tawḥīd* ‘asserting oneness (of God)’. Nevertheless, the forms of these same words without the article occur much more frequently in the glosses: for example, *dālilè* ‘proof’, *jàatì* ‘divine essence’ or *táalibènù* ‘students’.

There are two exceptions to the previous habit – both beginning with *nūn* (which is the ‘sun letter’) – where the article is represented in its ‘assimilated’ rather than ‘graphical’ form. Thus, the most common spelling for the borrowing *ānnābīnūnmè* ‘prophet’ (from Ar. *al-nabīy* pronounced as [an-nabī]) in the Ajami glosses is with the initial *ʔalif-nūn* <anabi yūmi> (the reduplication of the first consonant is underrepresented),<sup>152</sup> or sometimes with *ʔalif-nūn-nūn* <anna-

142 BULAC MS.ARA.219bis fol. 10<sup>v</sup>; PGL ORI 11/3 fol. 102<sup>r</sup>.

143 BnF Arabe 5657 fol. 53<sup>r</sup>; PGL ORI 11/1 and ORI 11/3 fol. 19<sup>r</sup>.

144 BnF Arabe 5675 fol. 67<sup>r</sup>; EAP 1042/9/6 p. 52.

145 TCD MS 3499 fol. 62<sup>v</sup>.

146 BULAC MS.ARA.219bis di 1233.

147 BL Or. 6473 fol. 205<sup>v</sup>; EAP 1042/9/3 p. 13; MAAO AF 14722(87) fol. 52<sup>r</sup>.

148 EAP 1042/9/3 p. 20.

149 EAP 1042/9/8 p. 18; PGL ORI 11/3 fol. 10<sup>r</sup>.

150 PGL ORI 11/3 fol. 4<sup>r</sup>.

151 BL Or. 6473 fol. 222<sup>v</sup>; PGL ORI 11/3 fol. 20<sup>r</sup> and fol. 25<sup>r</sup>.

152 DNN2 di 0001; MAAO AF 14722(87) fol. 2<sup>r</sup>, fol. 190<sup>v</sup>, fol. 198<sup>r</sup>; TCD MS 3499 fol. 45<sup>r</sup>.

biyunmi>.<sup>153</sup> However, even the first *ʔalif* of the article can sometimes be ‘replaced’ with an *ʕayn* as a support for the initial vowel, with spellings such as <ʕanabiy><sup>154</sup> *ʕannábì* ‘prophet’ or <ʕaniya><sup>155</sup> *ʕanniyà* ‘intention, desire’ (<Ar *al-niyyah* pronounced as [*an-niyyatu*]).

## 6 Towards a typology of spelling loanwords in annotated manuscripts

The OKb and Soninke data presented in Section 5 have both distinct and similar characteristics of loanwords in terms of their spelling and relationship with the original Arabic orthography. The main difference is in the parameter of the visual proximity between the Ajami word and the corresponding Arabic word. The proximity of the Arabic original in OKb seems to play a more significant role than in Soninke. It is possible that a conservative environment imposed on OKb by the Qur’an text created tighter connections between Ajami and Arabic. Such connections are best seen in OKb presented in Subsections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3. At the same time, visual proximity is a good diagnostic for the integration of a loanword when it does not exhibit etymological orthography while written close to the source word, as discussed in Subsections 5.1.4 (OKb) and 5.2.3 (Soninke).

Both OKb and Soninke data are similar in how they show some predictable tendencies along the scale from etymological to non-etymological spelling. Thus, the closest (identical) orthography is displayed by the etymons in the semantic fields of Islamic terminology – a tendency noticed in previous literature.<sup>156</sup> At the same time, both OKb and Soninke Ajami show that some prominent religious concepts and terms related to literacy (OKb items 17–19; Soninke items 47, 48, 50, 51) are graphemically very distant from the source words.

The orthography divergent from the original is often applied to well-integrated words, usually with a longer history of phonological adaptation. But, at the same time, the undoubtedly oldest loans that had undergone significant morphological adjustments (e.g. OKb items 4, 13) are written with clear references to the original spelling.

153 DNN2 di 0028 and 0029.

154 MAAO AF 14722(87) fol. 190<sup>v</sup>, fol. 208<sup>v</sup>.

155 BnF Arabe 5675 fol. 74<sup>r</sup>; BULAC MS.ARA.219bis di 1247.

156 Greenberg 1960; Wexler 1980, 539–540; van den Boogert 1997, 223–229.

Such spelling retentions and divergences are probably motivated by established orthographic practices specific to a teaching-learning circle, whereas the individual sensitivity of scribes does not seem to play a prominent role in the selection of spelling features. The orthography of some loanwords (e.g. OKb items 9, 11, 15; Soninke items 36, 43, 44, 49) display a high degree of consistency, even when written by different scribes. Such standardisation tendencies suggest that the writing of these items predated the manuscripts in which they are found and that the words in question had long ago been integrated into the target language.

Remarkably, the frequency of loanwords used in manuscripts does not seem to be a spelling factor, which is in stark contrast to frequency-conditioned standardisation of language-internal words.<sup>157</sup>

The spelling of loanwords borrowed with the Arabic definite article *al-* sometimes indicates a kind of graphemic hypercorrection. Thus, an otherwise integrated word with the initial vowel clipped, and, therefore, retaining only the consonant /l/, may be written with the whole article restored to the original (OKb Subsection 5.1.6.1; Soninke Subsection 5.2.4). At the same time, a reverse process has been observed, whereby a written word is spelled with the clipped article but the spoken counterpart attested in modern language retains the whole article (e.g. OKb item 29).

We have tried to use the terminology introduced in Table 1 in our discussion (in Section 5) of spelling types based on Table 2. The analysis presented allows us to clarify some of the terms. The major difference is between identical and divergent spelling, which is trivial. However, the term *copy-spelling* should probably be reserved to denote conscious copying of what the scribe sees in the original Arabic word. However, given our assumption that individual groups of teachers-learners constitute a stronger factor of orthographic conventions, we should acknowledge that copy-spelling, in the strict sense, is rather difficult to identify.

In light of the analysis presented in Section 5, we should also clarify the term *insertion* suggested by Kossmann.<sup>158</sup> It is useful to distinguish between the narrower and wider meaning of the term. In a narrow sense, the insertion is a word strictly used to denote an Arabic concept not available in the target language. In a wider sense, however, the insertion refers to the use of a word in the exegetical register associated with practices of translation. The *exegetical insertion* has then a higher potential to be passed onto the wider circles of speakers

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157 Bondarev and Dobronravina 2019.

158 Kossmann 2013, 47; cited in Section 4.1.



through register-induced contacts. Due to this potential path of transmission from insertion to integrated borrowing, it is often hard to establish whether we are dealing with the (exegetical) insertion or the etymological spelling of an already integrated word. This is because of a lack of evidence of contemporaneous use (synchronic with our data) of the given word in the spoken language of the time when manuscripts were produced.

In summary, types of spelling presented in Table 2 and exemplified in Section 5 are difficult to subdivide into neat categories. However, our preliminary typology opens up a novel perspective on Arabic loans and we hope that it may also be a useful heuristic tool to look into the patterns of borrowing in addition to previous research based on common historical linguistic principles. These types can be used further in future research, involving more data, to investigate the characteristics of borrowing outlined in Table 3.

## 7 Conclusion

Our paper has examined different stages of the integration of Arabic loanwords into West African languages based on examples of spelling patterns identified in two distinct manuscript traditions of OKb and Soninke. Both languages, written in Arabic script (Ajami), were used for interlinear translations of Arabic texts. These interlinear Ajami writings exhibit a high degree of Arabic loanwords, some spelled etymologically, some deviating from the Arabic graphemic source to the point of complete dissimilarity. The question ‘To what extent such spelling variation reflects the integration of Arabic loanwords into the target language?’ was a primary motivation for our study. We started with an analysis of the spelling of Arabic loans in OKb and Soninke annotations by using the principle of gradient etymological spelling, introduced in Subsection 4.2. Different spelling types were, thus, examined following a scalar from identical to partial etymological (further subdivided into four subtypes) to dissimilar spelling. Based on this comparison of spelling patterns, we have sketched out some tendencies for a preliminary typology of spelling of Arabic loanwords in interlinear Ajami writings (Section 6). However, our findings are far from being conclusive. Both OKb and Soninke data demonstrate that spelling alone is a weak diagnostic for the degree of integration of loanwords, but together with other linguistic and cultural factors, loanwords in Ajami open up an additional perspective on the chronology and paths of borrowing.

The Ajami data should, nevertheless, be taken with caution. This is because the learned environment in which Ajami writings were produced has its own lexical base, often independent from the lexical history of the spoken languages. Although the Ajami texts in our corpus are translations bound to the source texts, with a high potential of Ajami–Arabic interplay, orthographic choices seem to be largely dictated by the conventions established within the individual learned circles, which transmit such conventions across time and manuscripts. Such circles are usually clustered around certain scholars,<sup>159</sup> who could be responsible for an orthographic consistency different from the other learned circles of the same speech community. The multiple and parallel channels of this kind of individualised transmission must have amplified the divergent history of Arabic loanwords – the process that has so far been unrecognised as a factor behind multiple forms of loanwords in West African languages.

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<sup>159</sup> See Ogorodnikova 2023 on individual distinct learning groups.

## Abbreviations

- 1, 2, 3 = 1st, 2nd, 3rd person  
 1s, 2s, 3s = 1st person singular, etc.  
 1p, 2p, 3p = 1st person plural, etc.  
 AAN = Aliou Ndiaye, Adéane, manuscript  
 ABSTR = abstract  
 ADV = adverbial (operator)  
 AFP = argument focus perfective  
 ANTP = antipassive  
 Arabe 402 = the manuscript in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (N334 Arabe 402)  
 AUX = auxiliary  
 BL = British Library  
 BmT = Bibliothèque municipale de Tours  
 BnF = Bibliothèque nationale de France  
 BULAC = Bibliothèque Universitaire des Langues et Civilisations  
 COPEQ = equative copula  
 DEM = demonstrative  
 DNN = N.N., Dembanecane, manuscript  
 DO = direct object  
 EAP = Endangered Archives Programme, the British Library  
 FOC = focus marker  
 FUT = future tense  
 GEN = genitive  
 GER = gerundive  
 INACP = incomplete aspect  
 IPFV = imperfective  
 IMV = imperative  
 JRL = John Rylands Library  
 MAAO = Musée national des Arts d’Afrique et d’Océanie  
 NEG = negative  
 NMAG = agent noun  
 NMLZ = nominalization  
 OKb = Old Kanembu  
 PL = plural  
 PFV = perfective  
 PGL = Palace Green Library  
 2ShK = the ‘Shetima Kawo’ manuscript  
 SBD = subordination marker  
 SG = singular  
 SJ = subject marker  
 SUBJ = subjunctive  
 TCD = Trinity College, Dublin  
 T.Kano = the ‘Tahir Kano’ manuscript  
 1YM = the ‘Yerima Mustafa’ manuscript  
 Q.2:72 etc. = chapter and verse of the Qur’an  
 UbL = Universitätsbibliothek Leiden  
 UPenn = University of Pennsylvania  
 ZOC = O.C., Ziguinchor, manuscript

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## **Propagandistic Multilingualism**



Gábor Zólyomi

# Mesopotamian Bilingual Royal Inscriptions from the Third Millennium BCE: Texts with a Primary and Secondary Context

**Abstract:** This paper discusses inscriptions transmitted in both Sumerian and Akkadian versions, originally prepared for the Akkadian-speaking rulers of the dynasty of Sargon in the twenty-third century BCE. They are known from manuscripts made in the first part of the second millennium BCE. The first part of the paper discusses features of the manuscripts that originate in the cuneiform manuscript culture of the Old Babylonian period, the time when their manuscripts were prepared. The second part examines features deriving from the time when they were at first composed. Its main conclusion is that these bilingual inscriptions were first composed in Akkadian. The Sumerian versions may have been prepared depending on the Akkadian ones by bilingual people who were familiar with the writing conventions of southern Babylonia.

## 1 Introduction

This paper discusses Old Akkadian royal inscriptions transmitted both in Sumerian and Akkadian versions. These texts are known from manuscripts written with cuneiform script on clay tablets in the Old Babylonian period, i.e. in the first part of the second millennium BCE. The manuscripts are scholarly editions recording not only the inscriptions but also other features of the original objects that carried them. The inscriptions, therefore, have a double character: they have both a primary and secondary context. The primary context is the period of the dynasty of Agade, around the twenty-third century BCE, when the original inscriptions were composed and carved on monumental and votive objects, while the secondary is the Old Babylonian period, when they were copied from the original objects and collected with a number of exclusively Akkadian inscriptions into some kind of ancient anthologies.

Both Sumerian and Akkadian were spoken as vernaculars by their native speakers in the third millennium BCE, and we may safely assume that a number of individuals existed who were capable of communicating in both languages in both written and spoken form. By the Old Babylonian period, on the other hand, Sumerian had ceased to be a vernacular, its users were native speakers of Akka-

dian, who did not learn Sumerian from their mothers but in some kind of institutional context, which we may call a scribal school.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, this paper is in two parts. In the first part, I will discuss features of the inscriptions that originate in their secondary context, the cuneiform manuscript culture of the Old Babylonian period.<sup>2</sup> In the second part, I will examine features that derive from their primary context, the bilingual environment that felt it important to have texts describing the deeds of the Akkadian-speaking rulers of Agade in both Akkadian and Sumerian.

## 2 The secondary context

Modern editions of these inscriptions recognise three of them. Two record the deeds of Sargon, the founder of the dynasty of Agade in the twenty-third century BCE, and one belongs to Rimuš, the elder son of Sargon.<sup>3</sup> They will be referred as Sargon 1,<sup>4</sup> Sargon 11<sup>5</sup> and Rimuš 18<sup>6</sup> in this paper, following the edition of Douglas Frayne (1993).

However, Walter Sommerfeld argues in a number of publications that Sargon 1 and Sargon 11, in fact, constituted one continuous text written on the back of the same monument, a statue of Sargon.<sup>7</sup> According to him, the separation of this inscription into Sargon 1 and 11 is due the editorial work of the scribe(s) who prepared the collections preserved on the Old Babylonian MTMs (also see below).

Let me start with a short characterisation of the four manuscripts that preserved the royal inscriptions.<sup>8</sup> Table 1 lists below the four manuscripts:<sup>9</sup>

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**1** For a review on the relationship between Sumerian and Akkadian over the millennia, see Crisostomo 2020; Hasselbach-Andee 2020b; Van Dijk-Coombers 2021; Cancik-Kirschbaum and Schrakamp 2022.

**2** For more Old Babylonian collections of royal inscriptions, see Sövegjártó 2023.

**3** For the dynasty of Agade, see Westenholz 1999; Foster 2016.

**4** RIME 2.1.1.1 (CDLI Q000834) recorded on manuscripts A and B; labelled as ‘Sargon C1’ in Gelb and Kienast 1990.

**5** RIME 2.1.1.11 (CDLI Q001403) recorded on manuscripts A and B; labelled as ‘Sargon C2’ in Gelb and Kienast 1990.

**6** RIME 2.1.2.18 (CDLI Q000842) recorded on manuscripts A, C and D; labelled as ‘Rimuš C9’ in Gelb and Kienast 1990.

**7** Cf. Sommerfeld 2008, 234; Sommerfeld, 2021, 560, n. 142.

**8** For a more detailed description of the features of manuscripts A and B based on his own collations, cf. Sommerfeld 2012, 197–199.

**Table 1:** Manuscripts containing Sargon 1, 11 and Rimuš 18.

	<b>Museum no.</b>	<b>CDLI no.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Texts</b>
MS A	CBS 13972 + CBS 14545	P227509	MTM, 28 cols	Sargon 1, 11, Rimuš 18
MS B	Ni 3200	P227510	MTM, 20 cols	Sargon 1, 11
MS C	CBS 02344 (+) CBS 14547 + N 3539	P227513	MTM, ? cols	Rimuš 18
MS D	AO 5477	P220619	single-text MS, 2 cols	Rimuš 18

The first tablet, manuscript A, is now in the Penn Museum in Philadelphia. It is an unbaked tablet, 25 × 22 cm, and about 2 cm thick. It has been reconstructed from two main fragments. It is not complete, as you can see on Fig. 1 below, small parts are missing here and there.

It originally contained twenty-eight narrow columns, fourteen on each side, which preserved a total of twenty-four royal inscriptions. Fig. 2 shows the approximate arrangement of the texts on the tablet. The bilingual Sargon texts are at the beginning of the obverse, and the Rimuš text is at the very end of the reverse.<sup>10</sup>

The inscriptions are separated with colophons referring to parts of the object on which the text was originally carved. The captions that identify people on reliefs of the original monument are also recorded after some texts.

Manuscript A is an MTM, containing all bilingual inscriptions which are the subject of this paper. The arrangement of the texts is chronological: Sargon, Rimuš and Maništuš ruled in this order. The texts kept the archaic orthography and even reproduced the sign forms of the originals.<sup>11</sup>

Manuscript B is a slightly smaller MTM that originally contained twenty columns, preserving twenty-three inscriptions. It is now in the Arkeoloji Müzeleri of Istanbul. Among our texts, it contained only the Sargon 1 and 11; Rimuš 18 was not part of this collection.

Manuscript C is a very fragmentarily preserved MTM that originally contained probably only Rimuš 18 among our inscriptions, as it seems to be a col-

<sup>9</sup> For copies and/or photos of the manuscripts, visit CDLI's search page (<<https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/search>>) and search for the manuscripts with the P-numbers provided in Table 1.

<sup>10</sup> Note that the columns run from left to right on the obverse and right to left on the reverse on cuneiform tablets.

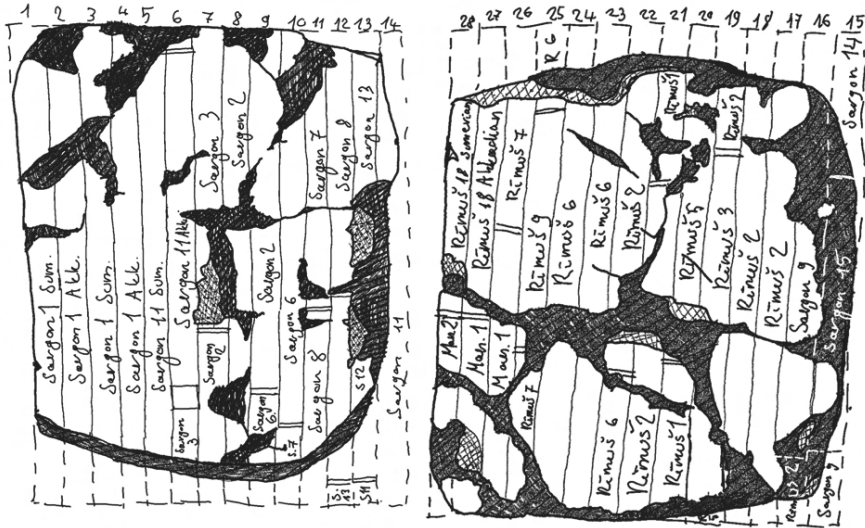
<sup>11</sup> Cf. Sommerfeld 2021, 556, n. 121 and 561–564.

lection of inscriptions of Rimuš and Naram-Sin. It is now in the Penn Museum in Philadelphia.

Manuscript D is a single-text manuscript now in the Louvre in Paris. It contains only Rimuš 18 written in two parallel columns: the Sumerian on the left, the Akkadian version on the right.



**Fig. 1:** Obverse of manuscript A (CBS 13972 +); courtesy of the Penn Museum, image 296512 and object B13972.



**Fig. 2:** Approximate arrangement of the inscriptions on manuscript A (numbering after Frayne 1993).

There is a colophon on the left edge of manuscript A relating to the whole collection written on it:

Manuscript A, left edge i 1–iii 2

[... ..], ʿšar<sup>1</sup>-ru-GI, ri<sub>2</sub>-mu-uš, ʿma-an-iš<sup>1</sup>-[tu]-šu, šag<sub>4</sub> e<sub>2</sub>-kur-ʿra<sup>1</sup>, a-na me-a-be<sub>2</sub><sup>12</sup>

‘The ... .. of Sargon, Rimuš and Maništusu, within the temple Ekur, as many as there are.’

It states that the collection on the tablet is a copy of all the inscriptions of the first three rulers of the dynasty of Agade which were on display in the Ekur temple of Nippur. Ekur was the main temple of the god Enlil, the head of the Sumerian pantheon. Unfortunately, the text is broken where we would find the designation of the objects located in the Ekur.

No colophon relating to the collection is preserved on manuscript B. There is another colophon relating to the whole of the collection recorded on manuscript C, at the end of the last two columns of the reverse:

<sup>12</sup> In the graphemic transliteration, subscript numerals distinguish homophonic graphemes, and superscript graphemes are semantic classifiers; graphemes that constitute a word are linked by hyphens.

Manuscript C, rev. vi' and vii' 46–47

murub<sub>4</sub> kisal-ka al-ḫar, šag<sub>4</sub> kisal e<sub>2</sub>-kur-ra

'Set up in the middle of the courtyard, within the courtyard of the Ekur.'

It confirms the information of the colophon on manuscript A: the texts copied to these tablets are from objects originally on display in the Ekur temple, particularly in the courtyard of the temple complex. They probably still stood there during the Old Babylonian period when the copies were made, some 400 to 600 years after they had originally been set up.

Other colophons relate to individual texts of the collections. Table 2 below shows the preserved colophons of Sargon 1 and 11:<sup>13</sup>

**Table 2:** The preserved colophons of Sargon 1 and 11.

Colophons		
	Sumerian version	Akkadian version
Sargon 1	MS A, obv. iii 43–44 mu-sar-ra, ki-gal-ba 'inscription on its pedestal'	MS A, obv. iv 44–45 mu-sar- <sup>1</sup> ra <sup>1</sup> , <sup>1</sup> murgu <sub>2</sub> -na <sup>1</sup> 'inscription of his back/shoulder'
Sargon 11	MS B, obv. vii 11–12 mu-sar-ra, ki-gal-ba 'inscription on its pedestal'	MS A, obv. vi 48–49 <sup>1</sup> mu-sar-ra <sup>1</sup> murgu <sub>2</sub> -na, ki-gal-be <sub>2</sub> nu-sar 'inscription of his back/shoulder, its pedestal is uninscribed'

On the basis of these colophons, Sommerfeld assumes that on the original monument, a statue of Sargon, there was one continuous Akkadian text situated on the back of the statue, which was then protected with one curse formula, preserved at the end of Sargon 1 (manuscript A obv. iii 35–41); leaving the pedestal of the rear uninscribed. According to him, the corresponding Sumerian texts were written in two parts (as Sargon 1 and 11) on separate sections of the pedestal of the statue, explaining that both end with a protecting curse formula.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Note that the colophons of Sargon 1 on manuscript B are not preserved; the text is broken where they would be expected to occur. The colophon after the Sumerian version of Sargon 11 is preserved only on manuscript B, and the colophon after the Akkadian version of Sargon 11 is preserved only on manuscript A. See also n. 32 and n. 33 below.

<sup>14</sup> 'Bei der akkadischen Fassung FAOS 7 Sargon C 1 und C 2 (RIME 2.1.1.1 und 11) handelt es sich um einen einzigen zusammenhängenden Text auf der "Rückseite", zu deren Schutz dann auch eine Fluchformel ausreichend war. Die selbständige [sich] sumerische Version wurde geteilt, an zwei verschiedenen Stellen auf dem "Sockel" angebracht und folglich auch mit zwei



This reconstruction entails that the division of the original texts into Sargon 1 and 11 were the result of the editorial work of the Old Babylonian scribe(s) who started from the separate Sumerian texts and adjusted the Akkadian version accordingly.

The main argument for Sommerfeld's reconstruction is the lack of a curse formula in the Akkadian version of Sargon 11, as one would not expect separate colophons for the Akkadian versions if there was one continuous Akkadian text situated on the back of the statue. This argument, however, is undermined by the fact that a monolingual, Akkadian version of Sargon 11 is also copied to both manuscripts A and B,<sup>15</sup> and the monolingual version also lacks a curse formula, indicating that the lack of the curse formula in the Akkadian version of Sargon 11 cannot be explained by the assumption that Sargon 1 and 11 were inscribed on the same monument.

Additionally, Sargon 1 is followed by seven fragmentary captions on both manuscripts. These captions refer to the leaders involved in the conflicts narrated in the text, who were most probably carved into a relief on some part of the original monument. The captions are distributed into two columns and their presence suggests that the copy of the monument, i.e. the monument that carried both versions of the text of Sargon 1, ends here and what follows belongs to another one.<sup>16</sup>

So, in my view, *pace* Sommerfeld, there are good arguments for assuming that Sargon 1 and 11 were also originally inscriptions belonging to separate

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separaten Fluchformeln versehen' (Sommerfeld 2008, 234, also see Sommerfeld 2021, 560). Cf. also Buccellati's (1993) paper in which he reconstructs a statue of Rimuš with numerous surfaces and pedestals, which, according to him, carried reliefs and inscriptions of Rimuš divided by modern editions into five separate texts.

**15** The fragmentarily preserved inscription begins in obv. xiii 43 on manuscript A and in rev. ii 17 on manuscript B. Frayne considers this inscription (Sargon 12 in his edition) 'distinct from, but similar to' the Akkadian version of Sargon 11 on the ground that one 'would not find an original inscription copied twice on one Sammeltafel' (Frayne 1993, 30). One could, however, argue that the Old Babylonian scribes copied monuments but not texts, and indeed Sargon 12 ends with captions that were not part of Sargon 11. According to Sommerfeld, '(e)s handelt sich nicht um direkte Duplikate, sondern um gleichlautende Inschriften, die auf zwei verschiedenen Monumenten wiederholt sind' (Sommerfeld 2012, 198, n. 3). The edition of Gelb and Kienast 1990 considered the monolingual inscription (Frayne's Sargon 12) as another manuscript of the bilingual version (Frayne's Sargon 11, their Sargon C 2). Their edition is, therefore, somehow misleading, the captions following Sargon 12 are not part of Sargon 11, so, the text reconstructed by them and labelled as Sargon C 2 never existed in this form in reality.

**16** For another, textual argument against Sommerfeld's reconstruction, cf. the discussion of Examples 7 and 8 below.

monuments. The monument that carried Sargon 1 may have been a statue with the Akkadian inscription on its back or shoulder, and with the Sumerian text on its pedestal. There must have been reliefs on it as well. The position of the inscriptions on the original monument of Sargon 11 is less clear on the basis of the colophons, but Sommerfeld's idea that the clause 'its pedestal is uninscribed' refers only to the rear is not unrealistic.

We have two colophons for Rimuš 18. On manuscript A, the colophon says:

Manuscript A rev. xviii 30 + rev. xvii 31  
 mu-<sup>urud</sup>1sar-ra ū<sup>1</sup>šen 'za-hum'  
 'inscription on a *zahum* cauldron'

This colophon runs over two columns, so, it must refer to both versions. The colophon on manuscript C, written under each of the versions, involves a word whose reading is still unsolved.

Manuscript C rev. vii' 43–45  
 (end of Sum. text)  
 mu-sar-ra,  
 TI URUD<sup>2</sup> X-ga du<sub>3</sub><sup>?</sup>/ni<sup>?</sup>,  
 ri<sub>2</sub>-mu-uš-kam  
 'inscription on ... of Rimuš'

rev. vi' 43–45  
 (end of Akk. text)  
 mu-sar-ra,  
 TI URUD<sup>2</sup> X-ga du<sub>3</sub><sup>?</sup>/ni<sup>?</sup>,  
 ri<sub>2</sub>-mu-uš-kam  
 'inscription on ... of Rimuš'

Now some words on the arrangement of the inscriptions on the manuscripts. The two versions are always in two parallel columns, and not after each other. This indicates that the scribe who made these collections wanted to present the versions as those of the same text. This arrangement, Sumerian to the left, Akkadian to the right, is well-known from other kind of scholarly texts of the Old Babylonian period, such as lexical or grammatical lists. It is meant to demonstrate that a given part of the Sumerian text corresponds to a given part of the Akkadian texts.

The principle of parallel columns is so strong that it can even overwrite the chronological arrangement on manuscript A. The two versions of Rimuš 18 are placed at the beginning of the last two columns on the reverse, with the result that the text Manišusu 1 is, in fact, placed before them, see Fig. 2 above.

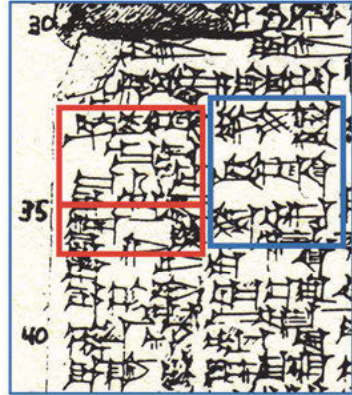
The desire to place corresponding semantic units next to each other is demonstrated clearly on Fig. 3 below; see also Example 2 below.

33. lu<sub>2</sub> urim<sub>2</sub><sup>ki</sup>;-ma-da  
 34. ne<sup>š</sup>tukul  
 35. e-da-sag<sub>2</sub>  
 36. aga<sub>3</sub>-kar<sub>2</sub>  
 37. e-ne<sub>2</sub>-seg<sub>10</sub>

‘(Sargon, king of Agade) fought with the man (= leader) of Ur (and) defeated him;’

35. in tāhazim( REC169)  
 36. urim<sub>2</sub>ki  
 37. i<sup>š</sup><sub>11</sub>-ar

‘(Sargon, king of Agade) defeated (the city of) Ur in battle;’



**Fig. 3:** The arrangement of the lines obv. i 33–37 and ii 35–37 on manuscript A; copy of the corresponding lines from Poebel 1914, pl. XX–XXI (no. 34).

The Akkadian idiom *ina tahāzīm ša’ārum* ‘to be victorious over/to defeat someone/something in battle’ is translated with two finite verbs in Sumerian, requiring five lines to write. The corresponding Akkadian clause is written in three lines but there is deliberately so much space left between the lines that they occupy approximately the same space as the corresponding five lines in Sumerian.<sup>17</sup>

The arrangement of these texts on the tablets, therefore, clearly indicates that the scribes considered these texts as each other’s translations which correspond to each other exactly, unit by unit.<sup>18</sup> The purpose of these arrangements

<sup>17</sup> Cf. also Sommerfeld 2008, 234 for a description of similar adjustments in another part of the tablet.

<sup>18</sup> Also note that the arrangement of the texts in parallel columns seems to refute Lucrezia Menicatti’s conclusion ‘that the Sumerian texts were original compositions rather than translations from the Akkadian ones’ (Menicatti 2019, 23). The Old Babylonian scribes obviously considered these texts corresponding to each other unit by unit. She concludes that ‘the two versions differ to a much larger extent, though. As for the writing system, the logographic writings of verbal forms in the two versions show substantial discrepancies. The logograms used in the Akkadian versions do not correspond to those of the Sumerian ones, and thus the verbal stems are not semantic equivalent. Moreover, these verbs often require different grammatical constructions, and as a result, the whole structure and meaning of the Sumerian and of the Akkadian texts may not be equivalent’ (Menicatti 2019, 22). Regarding the differences in grammatical constructions, one wonders why it should be a requirement to use the constructions of the source language but not its own for a text to qualify as a translation. Concerning

was probably educational. The scribes, native speakers of Akkadian, learnt the Sumerian language by studying the equivalent constructions of the two languages.

### 3 The primary context

This part of the paper will discuss features relating to the primary context of the bilingual inscriptions. Firstly, one can be certain that these texts, both the Akkadian and the Sumerian versions, were composed in around the twenty-third century BCE. Their orthography and grammar comply with those of the contemporary texts.<sup>19</sup>

In the case of the Sumerian versions, one can also notice, somehow unexpectedly, that these show linguistic features characteristic of texts from southern Babylonia. One of the few linguistic features indicating dialectal differences in third millennium BCE Sumerian is the phenomenon of vowel harmony. It operates on certain verbal prefixes. Depending on the following syllable in some of the verbal prefixes, the vowel may be either /i/ or /e/. This assimilation, the so-called ‘Old Sumerian vowel harmony’, was an isogloss dividing cities in southern Babylonia (Lagaš, Umma, Ur and Uruk, which exhibit the assimilation) from those further north in Babylonia (Nippur, Adab, Šuruppak and Isin) in the twenty-fifth to twenty-third centuries BCE. The assimilation disappeared in subsequent centuries.<sup>20</sup>

Neither a scribe from Nippur nor one from Agade would be expected to write texts showing this phenomenon, but the vowel harmony characteristic of texts from southern Babylonia is in operation in all three Sumerian versions. The use of the southern dialect may have been more prestigious than the local dialect.

Another, so far neglected, indication of the southern background of the scribe(s) responsible for the Sumerian versions is the writing of the Sumerian word *murub* ‘middle’ in Rimuš 18, see Example 1 below.

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the writing system, the second part of this paper will argue that it was a deliberate choice to create a Sumerian text that follows the writing conventions of southern Babylonia.

<sup>19</sup> See Sommerfeld 2021, 561–564, who shows that the Akkadian texts use the orthography and sign forms of the local Nippur tradition, while the Sumerian versions use the orthography and sign forms of southern Babylonia.

<sup>20</sup> See Zólyomi 2017, 29–33.

Example 1: Rimuš 18 16–19

mu<sub>5</sub>-ru<sub>5</sub>, diŋir-re-ne-ka, me-te-ne<sub>2</sub>, ni-šid

‘(Rimuš, ..., fashioned a tin statue of himself and set it up before Enlil.) He counted himself among the gods.’

This writing, mu<sub>5</sub>-ru<sub>5</sub>(NI.UL), is attested so far *only* in administrative documents from Lagaš written in the twenty-fourth century BCE.<sup>21</sup> It is attested twenty-three times in the administrative texts.<sup>22</sup> Its use in Rimuš 18 suggests a southern background for the composer of the text.

A remarkable feature of Sargon 1 is the use of the Sumerian /nga/- prefix, cf. Example 2, l. 41, and Example 3, l. 101 below, written with the sign GA in the text.<sup>23</sup>

Example 2: Sargon 1 (= MS A obv. i 33–41 and ii 35–43)

33. lu<sub>2</sub> urim<sub>2</sub><sup>ki</sup>-ma-da

35. *in tāḥazim*(REC169)

34. <sup>neš</sup>tukul

35. e-da-sag<sub>3</sub>

36. *urim<sub>2</sub><sup>ki</sup>*

36. aga<sub>3</sub>-kar<sub>2</sub>

37. e-ne<sub>2</sub>-seg<sub>10</sub>

37. *iš<sub>11</sub>-ar*

38. <sup>ri</sup>ri<sup>1</sup>-ne<sub>2</sub>

38–39. *u<sub>3</sub>, ālam*(URU<sup>ki</sup>)

39. e-ḥul

40. *inīr*(SAG.GIŠ.RA)

40. bad<sub>3</sub>-be<sub>2</sub>

41–42. *u<sub>3</sub>, dūr*(BAD<sub>3</sub>)-šu

41. e-ga-[seg<sub>10</sub>]

43. *iqqur*(I<sub>3</sub>.GUL.GUL)

‘(Sargon, king of Agade) fought with the man (= leader) of Ur, defeated him, conquered the city, and also destroyed its walls.’

‘He was victorious over Ur in battle, and (*then, as a consequence of this victory*) he conquered the city, and (*then, as a consequence of this conquest*) he destroyed its walls.’ (translation of Kogan 2014, 51)

**21** For reading the signs NI UL as mu<sub>5</sub>-ru<sub>5</sub>, see Krecher 1985, 171, n. 76. The reading is confirmed by the following clause, where the same word is written as mu-ru: mu-be<sub>2</sub> mu-ru diŋir-re-ne-ka, gu<sub>3</sub>-de<sub>2</sub>-a ensi<sub>2</sub> lagaš<sup>ki</sup>-ke<sub>4</sub>, pa e<sub>3</sub> ba-ni-a ‘Gudea, the ruler of Lagaš, made their names appear among those of the gods’ (Gudea Cylinder A xxvi 17–19).

**22** Cf. DP 403 rev. i 5 (CDLI P221053), DP 406 rev. i 3 (CDLI P221056), DP 408 obv. iii 3 (CDLI P221058), DP 437 obv. iv 5 (CDLI P221087), DP 461 obv. i 2, rev. ii 6 (CDLI P221111), DP 577 rev. ii 6 (CDLI P221227), DP 596 obv. ii 2–3 (CDLI P221246), DP 641 obv. iii 5, rev. i 9, ii 4 (CDLI P221291), DP 654 rev. i 1 (CDLI P221304), Nik 1, 46 rev. i 3 (CDLI P221815), Nik 1, 35 obv. i 3 (CDLI P221742), TSA 40 obv. i 1 (CDLI P221401), VS 14, 52 obv. iii 2 (CDLI P020067), VS 14, 177 obv. ii 2 (CDLI P020188), VS 25, 39 obv. iii 2 (CDLI P020246), VS 25, 102 obv. i 1–2 (CDLI P020309), VS 27, 8 obv. i 1, rev. iii 3 (CDLI P020325).

**23** On the use of /nga/- prefix in Old Akkadian bilingual texts, cf. Jagersma 2010, 514–515.

Example 3: Sargon 1 (= MS A obv. iii 37–41 and iv 39–43)

97. <sup>a</sup> utu	105. <sup>a</sup> utu
98. suḫuš-ne <sub>2</sub>	106. išid(SUHUŠ)-šu
99. ḫe <sub>2</sub> -bur <sub>x</sub> (KAxŠU)-re <sub>6</sub>	107. li-su <sub>3</sub> -uḫ
100. numun-na-ne <sub>2</sub>	108. u <sub>3</sub> zēra(ŠE.NUMUN)-šu
101. he <sub>2</sub> -ga-deg <sub>x</sub> (RI)-deg <sub>x</sub> (RI)-ge	109. li-il-qu <sub>3</sub> -ut

‘(Whoever obliterates this inscription), may Utu uproot him and also destroy his lineage!’

This prefix occurs five times in this text and its use always correlates with that of the conjunction  $u_3$  ‘and’ in Akkadian. There is, however, a difference in use between the two morphemes, as you can also see in Example 2: in Akkadian, all three clauses are co-ordinated with  $u_3$ , but the /nga/- prefix occurs only in the last finite verb of a series of co-ordinated clauses.

The Sumerian prefix appears to have a conjunctive function here, co-ordinating clauses. In other texts, however, the /nga/- prefix has an adverbial, additive function meaning something like ‘also, too’, as in Example 4 below:

Example 4: Gudea Cylinder A vii 10 (CDLI Q000377) (Lagaš, twenty-second century)

gal mu-zu gal i<sub>3</sub>-ga-tum<sub>2</sub>-mu

‘(The true shepherd Gudea) is wise, and able *too* to realise things.’

‘(The true shepherd Gudea) is wise, and *therefore* able to realise things.’

Clause co-ordination in Sumerian is unmarked most of the time, so apparently the translator here applies the /nga/- prefix only to have a morpheme in the Sumerian text that corresponds to the Akkadian conjunction  $u_3$ .<sup>24</sup> Rimuš 18 ends with the same curse formula as Sargon 1 (cf. Example 3 above), but no /nga/- prefix is used there, indicating that this solution was the invention of an individual.

Clauses such as the one in Example 4, however, may also show that this invented use of /nga/- might have a basis in Sumerian. Example 4 may also be interpreted so that the clause with the /nga/- prefix expresses a logical conclusion of the predicate expressed in the first clause: ‘(The true shepherd Gudea) is wise, and *therefore* able to realise things’.

And this is exactly the function that is attributed to the conjunction  $u_3$  in the Sargonic corpus by Leonid Kogan in an article about this morpheme,<sup>25</sup> as his translation under the Akkadian version in Example 2 demonstrates.

<sup>24</sup> A similar principle is in use in the so-called *Old Babylonian Grammatical Texts* (Black 1991). These are long lists containing Sumerian-Akkadian verbal paradigms which try to establish one-to-one correspondences between Sumerian and Akkadian morphological elements, resulting, therefore, sometimes in obviously incorrect Sumerian verbal forms, see Zólyomi 2005, 353–357.

<sup>25</sup> Kogan 2014.

The use of the /nga/- prefix in Sargon 1 is, therefore, a kind of Akkadism in the Sumerian version and its presence may indicate that the relation between the two versions of Sargon 1 is asymmetric: the Sumerian version has been prepared with a knowledge of the Akkadian version. In other words, the Sumerian version is dependent on the Akkadian version and was prepared by a competent bilingual scribe using the Akkadian version as a starting point.

Consider again Example 2 above. The two versions are clearly not literal translations. In ll. 40 and 43 of the Akkadian version, the text uses logograms to write the Akkadian verbs, written in modern transliteration in brackets and with capitals. These logograms are essentially Sumerian words. One would expect the Sumerian version to use the same verbs. But this is not the case. It uses different verbs, which correspond only semantically to the Akkadian ones. The two versions deliberately applied two different writing traditions; and the Sumerian version was prepared by someone familiar with the writing conventions of southern Babylonia.<sup>26</sup>

The difference between the two versions is even bigger in the first part of the excerpt. In the Sumerian version, a sequence of two clauses corresponds to the Akkadian clause in ll. 35–37. The Akkadian idiom *ina tahāzim ša'arum* 'to be victorious over/to defeat someone/something in battle' has no literal correspondence in Sumerian; it is translated with the combined use of two idioms: <sup>ηεš</sup>tukul — sag<sub>3</sub> 'to fight with' and aga<sub>3</sub>-kar<sub>2</sub> — seg<sub>10</sub> 'to defeat someone/something'.<sup>27</sup>

The idiom 'to fight with someone' is also attested in an inscription of Irikagina, see Example 5 below, and Sumerian also has an expression dam-ha-ra — ak 'to do a battle with someone', see Example 6 below.

Example 5: Irikagina 4 iii 4'–5' (CDLI Q001132) (Lagaš, twenty-fourth century)  
iri-ka-gen<sub>6</sub>-na-ke<sub>4</sub>, tukul e-da-sag<sub>2</sub>  
'Iri-kagina fought with him.'

Example 6: En-metena 1 i 25–27 (CDLI Q001103) (Lagaš, twenty-fourth century)  
umma<sup>ki</sup>-da, dam-ḥa-ra, e-da-ak  
'(Ningirsu, Enlil's warrior) did battle with Umma.'

The sequence of clauses used in ll. 33–37 of the Sumerian version is not attested in any other Sumerian text; its first part (<sup>ηεš</sup>tukul e-da-sag<sub>2</sub>) functions *only* as the

<sup>26</sup> On features of these two traditions, called Nippur and Uruk tradition by him, see Sommerfeld 2021, 561–565.

<sup>27</sup> For a detailed discussion of the idiom aga<sub>3</sub>-kar<sub>2</sub> — seg<sub>10</sub> 'to defeat, to win over', see Zólyomi 2018, 146–148.

counterpart of the Akkadian adverbial phrase *ina tahāzīm* ‘in battle’; the biclausal construction was invented to cover all semantic nuances of the corresponding Akkadian clause by the scribe who translated the original Akkadian into Sumerian.

One may also notice a dependence of the Sumerian version on the Akkadian in Example 7 below:

Example 7: Sargon 1 (= MS A obv. iii 1–6 and iv 1–6)	
Sum. 62–67	<sup>1</sup> šar <sup>1</sup> -[um-GI], <sup>1</sup> lugal <sup>1</sup> , kalam-ma-ra, <sup>d</sup> en <sup>1</sup> -lil <sub>2</sub> -le, lu <sub>2</sub> - <sup>1</sup> erim <sub>2</sub> <sup>1</sup> , nu-na- [šum <sub>2</sub> ]
Akk. 67–72	[šar-ru-GI], šar( <sup>1</sup> LUGAL <sup>1</sup> ), mātim( <sup>1</sup> KALAM <sup>1</sup> .MA <sup>[ki]</sup> ), <sup>d</sup> en- <sup>1</sup> li <sub>2</sub> <sup>1</sup> , ma-[hi- ra], [la i-di <sub>3</sub> -šum]
Sum. and Akk.	‘Enlil did not give Sargon, king of the Land, an opponent.’

Here, the Akkadian expression ‘not to give someone an opponent’ meaning ‘making someone to be a person without an opponent’ is almost certainly, despite the break in the text, translated with the verb šum<sub>2</sub> ‘to give’ in Sumerian. It is, therefore, a literal translation of the Akkadian idiom, which also uses the verb ‘to give’ *nadānum*.

However, the same Akkadian expression in Sargon 11, see Example 8 below, is translated with a causative form of the Sumerian verb *tuku* ‘to have’.

Example 8: Sargon 11 (= MS A obv. v 32–36 and vi 39–43)	
Sum. 29–33	šar-um-GI, lugal, <sup>d</sup> en-lil <sub>2</sub> -le, lu <sub>2</sub> gaba-ru, nu-mu-ni-tuku ‘Sargon, the king whom Enlil made a man without opponent.’ (lit. ‘did not let him have an opponent’)
Akk. 36–40	šar-ru-GI, šarrum(LUGAL), šu <sup>d</sup> en-lil <sub>2</sub> , ma- <sup>1</sup> hi-ra, la i-di <sub>3</sub> -šum ‘Sargon, the king to whom Enlil did not give an opponent.’

This idiom is also attested in an inscription of Lugalzagesi, see Example 9 below, and inscriptions of Gudea, ruler of Lagaš, from the twenty-second century.<sup>28</sup>

Example 9: Lugal-zagesi 1 ii 14–16 (CDLI Q001379) (Nippur, twenty-third century)	
<sup>d</sup> en <sup>1</sup> -lil <sub>2</sub> -le, [gaba]- <sup>1</sup> šu <sup>1</sup> - <sup>1</sup> nar, nu-mu-ni-tuku	
‘Enlil made him (i.e. a man without opponent’ (lit. ‘did not let him have an opponent’)	

The scribe who prepared the Sumerian version of Sargon 1 might have also chosen this idiom, but apparently, he chose another one nearer to the Akkadian one. The different Sumerian translations of the same Akkadian idiom in Sargon 1 and 11

<sup>28</sup> The expression *gaba-šu-<sup>1</sup>nar nu-tuku* ‘who has no opponent’ also occurs in Gudea Cylinder A ii 10 and xxiii 15.



provide another argument against Sommerfeld's assumption that Sargon 1 and 11 originally constituted one single inscription; see the discussion above.

Another example in which the Sumerian version might have been influenced by the Akkadian one is Example 10 below, in which the Sumerian version uses the verb *keše<sub>2</sub>* 'to bind' in the meaning 'to moor' instead of the more common *us<sub>2</sub>* 'to move next to something', see Example 11 below. In fact, this is the only known example of using the verb *keše<sub>2</sub>* in this meaning. In Akkadian, the verb *rakāsum* 'to bind' is attested in at least two more texts with this meaning.<sup>29</sup>

Example 10: Sargon 11 (= MS A obv. v 12–6 and vi 20–25)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 9. ma <sub>2</sub> me-luḥ-ḥa <sup>ki</sup>             | 11. <i>elep</i> (MA <sub>2</sub> ) me-luḥ-ḥa  |
| 10. ma <sub>2</sub> ma <sub>2</sub> -gan <sup>ki</sup> | 12. <i>elep</i> (MA <sub>2</sub> ) ma <sub>2</sub> -gan <sup>ki</sup>                             |
| 11. ma <sub>2</sub> dilmun <sup>ki</sup>               | 11. <i>elep</i> (MA <sub>2</sub> ) dilmun <sup>ki</sup>   |
| 12. kar ag-ge-de <sub>3</sub> -ka <sup>ki</sup>        | 14–15. <i>in ka<sub>3</sub>-ri<sub>2</sub>-im ši a-ka<sub>3</sub>-de<sub>2</sub><sup>ki</sup></i> |
| 13. bi <sub>2</sub> -keše <sub>2</sub>                 | 13. <i>ir-ku-us</i>   |

'He moored the ships of Meluhha, Magan and Dilmun at the quay of Agade.'

Example 11: Gudea Cylinder A iv 4 (CDLI Q000377) (Lagaš, twenty-second century)

kar niṅin<sup>ki</sup>-na-ke<sub>4</sub> ma<sub>2</sub> bi<sub>2</sub>-us<sub>2</sub>

'He moored the boat at the quay of Nigin.' (lit. 'he moved the boat to be next to the quay of Nigin')

In Example 12 below, the Sumerian verb *dim<sub>2</sub>* 'to fashion' is used with the ablative prefix *-ta-*. This construction is unattested in any Sumerian text.

Example 12: Rimuš 18

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 6. [...]                  | 6. <i>'ma<sup>1</sup>-na-ma</i>                            |
| 7. alan an-na             | 7. <i>šalam</i> (DUL <sub>3</sub> ) <i>amūtim</i> (KUG.AN) |
| 8. nu-ta-dim <sub>2</sub> | 8. <i>la ib-ni</i>   |

'(No one) had ever fashioned a tin statue.'

In Sumerian texts, the expression 'to fashion a thing from a material' requires the THING in the terminative case (*-še<sub>3</sub>*) and the MATERIAL functions as the object of the verb 'he fashioned the MATERIAL into a THING', as showed in Example 13 below:

Example 13: Gudea Statue B v 45–47 (CDLI P232275) (Lagaš, twenty-second century)

<sup>neš</sup>eren-be<sub>2</sub>, ig gal-še<sub>3</sub>, mu-dim<sub>2</sub>

'He manufactured the cedar-beams into big doors.'

<sup>29</sup> Cf. CAD R, p. 94 (*rakāsu* 1d).

Apparently, the Sumerian version in Example 12 reflects the syntax of the Akkadian version, in which the *THING* is the object of the verb, and the *MATERIAL* is expressed as the possessor of the *THING*.

As the context is broken, it is difficult to explain the presence of the ablative prefix, but one tentative explanation may be that the choice of the *-ta-* prefix was influenced again by the Akkadian usage which used the preposition *ina* with materials, thus, ‘from gold’ may be expressed as *ina ħurāšim*. A correspondence between the Sumerian ablative and the Akkadian *ina* preposition is well attested in later periods.

## 4 Conclusion

The arrangement of the texts on the Old Babylonian manuscripts discussed in the first part of the paper shows that the scribes considered the Sumerian and Akkadian versions of the inscriptions as translations which correspond to each other exactly unit by unit. Their arrangement in parallel columns is well known from other kinds of scholarly texts, such as lexical or grammatical lists. The purpose of this arrangement was probably educational. The scribes, native speakers of Akkadian, learnt the Sumerian language by studying the equivalent constructions of the two languages.

The grammatical and lexicographic peculiarities listed in the second part of the paper suggest that these bilingual inscriptions were first composed in Akkadian. The Sumerian versions may have been prepared depending on the Akkadian ones by bilingual people who were familiar with the writing conventions of southern Babylonia.<sup>30</sup>

The need for the bilingual versions was ideological. Sargon established his empire by defeating and capturing Lugalzagesi, king of Uruk, who had already united the mainly Sumerian-speaking southern part of Babylonia under his rule. By displaying a monument with inscriptions written in both main languages of his territorial state, he and his successor Rimuš represented themselves as legitimate rulers of both parts of Babylonia.

This message may also have been strengthened by deliberately preparing a Sumerian inscription with clearly southern features, mirroring the language used by Lugalzagesi, Sargon’s enemy, on his inscriptions. In other words, the

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<sup>30</sup> For a partly similar conclusion, cf. Sommerfeld 2021, 560–561: ‘The Sumerian version is a literal, in part awkward, translation of the Akkadian.’

Sumerian version with its southern linguistic and orthographic features reflects the targeted audience and demonstrates a sophisticated sense of manipulating the medium according to the intended audience.<sup>31</sup> It may also indicate that the southern version of Sumerian, both in its written and spoken form, was considered more prestigious than the local version.

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## Abbreviations

AO = Antiquités orientales, Musée du Louvre, Paris

CAD = *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, vols 1–21

CBS = Catalogue of the Babylonian Section, Penn Museum, Philadelphia, PA

CDLI = Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (<<https://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/>>, accessed on 9 August 2023)

DP = Allotte de la Fuyé 1908–1920

ETCSRI = Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Royal Inscriptions

(<<https://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri>>, accessed on 9 August 2023)

MTM = multiple-text manuscript

N = Nippur, Penn Museum, Philadelphia, PA

Ni = Nippur, Arkeoloji Müzeleri, Istanbul

Nik 1 = Nikolskij 1908

obv. = obverse

rev. = reverse

RIME 2 = Frayne 1993

TSA = Genouillac 1909

VS 14 = Förtsch 1916

VS 25 = Marzahn 1991

VS 27 = Marzahn 1996

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<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, in my view, the concerns of Hannes D. Galter that ‘in all three cases the two versions are separate and independent texts that even show different orthographies in logographic writing of the same words’ (Galter 1995, 31) may not support the assumption that the original objects did not carry a bilingual inscription.

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## Appendix: The Sumerian texts in translation

**Sargon 1** (cf. <<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etscri/Q000834>>, accessed on 9 August 2023)<sup>32</sup>

<sup>1-20</sup> Šarrukin, king of Agade, commissioner of Inana, king of the world, išib priest of An, king of the Land, chief governor of Enlil, conquered the city of Uruk and demolished its city walls. He fought with the leader of Uruk and defeated him.

<sup>21-29</sup> He fought with Lugal-zagesi, king of Uruk, captured him, and took him to the gate of Enlil in a neck stock.

<sup>30-41</sup> Šarrukin, king of Agade, fought with the leader of Ur and defeated him. He conquered his city and demolished its city walls.

<sup>42-52</sup> He conquered the temple of Ninmarki, and demolished its walls. From Lagaš until the sea he conquered all lands, all of them, and washed his weapons in the sea.

<sup>53-61</sup> He fought with the leader of Umma and defeated him. He conquered his city and demolished its city walls.

<sup>62-80</sup> Enlil made Šarrukin, king of the Land, a man without opponent, and gave him (all the people) from the Upper sea to the Lower sea. From the Lower sea the citizen of Agade *exercise* rulership.

<sup>81-93</sup> Mari and Elam stood (in obedience) before Šarrukin, king of the Land. Šarrukin, king of the Land, restored Kiš, and the city provided him with ....

<sup>94-101</sup> Whoever obliterates this inscription, may Utu uproot him and destroy his lineage!

**Sargon 11** (cf. <<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etscri/Q001403>>, accessed on 9 August 2023)<sup>33</sup>

<sup>1-13</sup> Šarrukin, king of the world, was victorious in thirty-four battles. He demolished all city walls as far as the shore of the sea. He moored the ships of Meluhha, Magan, and Dilmun at the quay of Agade.

<sup>14-28</sup> In Tuttul, Šarrukin, the king, prostrated himself before Dagan and prayed to him. (Dagan then) gave him the Upper land, (including) Mari, Yarmuti, and Ebla, as far as the cedar forests and the mountains of precious metal.

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**32** About the Akkadian version, MS A, obv. iv 44–45 (see Table 2): l. obv. iv 45 is read both by Gelb and Kienast (1990, 160) and Frayne (1993, 12) as 'ki<sup>1</sup>-[gal]-'ba<sup>1</sup> 'on its pedestals'. Sommerfeld readings are based on collations carried out on manuscripts A and B (cf. Sommerfeld 2012, 197). Note, however, that Sommerfeld's new reading creates a grammatical problem not discussed and solved by him. Namely, the statue is referred to both by a non-human possessive enclitic =/be/ (kigal=**be**=ak 'of **its** pedestal') and by a human one =/ane/ (murgu=**ane**=ak 'of **his** back').

**33** About the Akkadian version, MS A, obv. vi 48–49 (see Table 2): the second part of obv. vi 48 is read both by Gelb and Kienast (1990, 165) and Frayne (1993, 29) as 'alan<sup>1</sup>-na 'of a statue'. Sommerfeld readings are based on collations carried out on manuscripts A and B (cf. Sommerfeld 2012, 197).

<sup>29-37</sup> In the presence of Šarrukin, the king whom Enlil made a man without opponent, thirteen (units of) troops eat daily.

<sup>29-37</sup> Whoever obliterates this inscription, may An obliterate his name, may Enlil put an end to his lineage, may Inana cut his ... short!

**Rimuš 18** (cf. <<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/Q000842>>, accessed on 9 August 2023)

<sup>1-19</sup> [Rimuš, king of the world: since the dawn of time no one had ever] fashioned a tin statue [for Enlil], (but now) Rimuš, king of the world fashioned a statue of himself, which is of tin, and set it up before Enlil. He counted himself among the gods.

<sup>20-27</sup> Whoever obliterates this inscription, may Enlil and Utu uproot him and destroy his lineage!





Zsolt Simon

# Anatolian Theonyms in the Aramaic Version of the Letoon Trilingual

**Abstract:** This paper discusses the formal adaptation of the local theonyms in the Aramaic version of the Letoon trilingual. It provides a new, regular explanation of the theonym KNDWŠ from Carian and an improved explanation of the Lydian origin of ʾRTMWŠ.

## 1 Introduction

The so-called Letoon trilingual (N 320) is a decree introducing a new cult in Xanthos (Lycia), that of the deities ‘the King of Kaunos’ and ‘ArKKazuma, the king’. The inscription, discovered by the French archaeological mission to Xanthos in 1973, was written on three different sides of a 1.35 m high and 0.575 m wide stele of local limestone,<sup>1</sup> erected in the temple complex of Leto and her children called Letoon, about 4 km south-west to the Lycian city of Xanthos (Lycian Arñna), in 337 BCE.<sup>2</sup> The stele now stands in Fethiye Museum.

The inscription was written in three different languages and alphabets: Lycian A (the local vernacular, henceforth, ‘Lycian’) and Greek (a widespread lingua franca in this region) on the front and backsides of the stele, and Aramaic (the official language in the Achaemenid empire), on one of the side faces of the stele. The present paper does not deal with the general sociolinguistic issue of the usage of these languages in Lycia; instead, it focuses only on a single aspect, which, however, does contribute to the larger picture: the adaptation strategies of the Aramaic version (KAI 319)<sup>3</sup> regarding the local theonyms. The description of the Aramaic adaptation strategies is hindered by the fact that some of the theonyms have not been explained satisfactorily. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to provide an improved explanation of these theonyms and, thus, clarify the adaptation strategies of the composer of the Aramaic text.

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1 Metzger 1979b, 31.

2 See most recently Christiansen 2021, 48 with references.

3 Editions: Dupont-Sommer 1979; Lemaire 1995.



**Fig. 1:** The Letoon trilingual stele, fourth century BCE (Fethiye Museum, Fethiye, Türkiye). Source: Wikimedia Commons (<[https://www.flickr.com/photos/sarah\\_c\\_murray/4914812770/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/sarah_c_murray/4914812770/)>).

In addition to the newly introduced deities, the King of Kaunos and ArKKazuma, the king, the Lycian version, more precisely its final section (lines 38–39), also mentions other local deities: ‘the Mother of this precinct’ and her children (i.e. Leto, Artemis and Apollo), and the Elijānas.<sup>4</sup> In the Aramaic version, the King of Kaunos is one of the theonyms to be explained (see Section 2). ‘ArK-Kazuma, the king’ is never mentioned by his name but consistently mentioned only as ‘his companions’ (W-KWNTH, lines 8 and 23, possibly an Elohim-type *pluralis majestatis* in divine names),<sup>5</sup> i.e. of the King of Kaunos. Whatever this means, the underlying deity and its name are completely obscure, including its reading as visible in the conventional transliteration with -KK-,<sup>6</sup> and, therefore, it must be left for further investigations. Setting aside the Elijānas, who are simply mentioned as the ‘others’ (W-<sup>2</sup>ḤWRN, line 25), Leto and her children appear in an interesting mixture: Leto as L<sup>2</sup>TW, Artemis as <sup>2</sup>RTMWS̄, and Apollo as ḤŠTRPTY (lines 24–25). While L<sup>2</sup>TW points to an underlying Dorian Greek form,<sup>7</sup> the spelling of Artemis is completely unexpected, and, thus, it will be discussed in Section 3. The term ḤŠTRPTY is linguistically clear, being the Aramaic transcription of Old Persian \*xšaθra-pati- ‘Lord of Power’,<sup>8</sup> and, thus, it will not be discussed further here.<sup>9</sup> The paper closes with a summary of the observations (Section 4).

**4** Laroche 1979. Unsurprisingly, the Greek version (Metzger 1979b) shows nothing unexpected: Greek theonyms were used, if Greek equivalents were available (Leto in line 34 [Artemis and Apollo are referred to as ‘(her) children’] and the Nymphs for the Elijānas, line 34–35); in the other cases, a Greek translation, if applicable (Basileus of Kaunos, lines 7, 15–16, 22–23) and otherwise, a simple transcription, i.e. a phonetically adapted form (Arkesima, lines 7–8, 16, 23).  
**5** Dupont-Sommer 1979, 145–146.

**6** For overviews, see Melchert 2004, 16–17; Raimond 2004, 401–407; Neumann 2007, 26; Molina Valero 2016, 36–37; Vernet forthcoming; all with detailed references.

**7** Dupont-Sommer 1979, 155. Leto as such is not attested yet in Lycian, only its genitival adjective, if this is the correct analysis of *leθθi* in TL 44b, 61 (for different proposals see the overviews in Melchert 2004, 35; Neumann 2007, 185–186, with references), which, however, does not tell us anything about the Lycian stem of Leto. Nevertheless, Lycian did not have /o/ and, therefore, sound substitution is expected. While /u/ cannot a priori be excluded, Lycian did not have *u*-stems. Exact parallels do not exist, but Greek names in -ων were reinterpreted as *a*-stems: e.g. *Jjera\** from Ἰέρων and *Pa[r]ymna* from Παρμένων (Melchert 2004, 97, 101), which argues for a substitution with /a/. Therefore, it is more probable that L<sup>2</sup>TW with its -W reflects the Greek form.

**8** Mayrhofer 1979, 184–185.

**9** Its employment for Apollo is a complicated problem of religious history, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

## 2 The King of Kaunos

The god called ‘the King of Kaunos’ in the Lycian and the Greek versions appears as KNDWṢ ʔLHʔ ‘KNDWṢ, the god’ in the Aramaic version (lines 7–8, 12, 16, 21, 22–23 [in line 22, spelt as KNDWS]), which is qualified in line 8 with KBYDŠY. Setting aside ʔLHʔ ‘god’, the phrase is not in Aramaic, the question is therefore, from which language it originates and what it actually means.

The publishers believed that KNDWṢ was the transcription of the Lycian term (*‘manifestement’*).<sup>10</sup> As for KBYDŠY, André Dupont-Sommer explained the suffix -ŠY as Anatolian, more precisely, Lycian or Carian.<sup>11</sup> Considering the general setting of the inscription, a Lycian derivation was certainly logical (the Carian idea could not have been checked, since at that time it had not yet been deciphered).<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, Ignasi-Xavier Adiego rightly objected that both words are incompatible with the Lycian words:<sup>13</sup> S/Ṣ cannot be reconciled with the Lycian word for ‘king’, *χṽtawat(i)-*,<sup>14</sup> nor -ŠY with the Lycian suffix *-ēñni*. Mariona Vernet also argued that KNDWṢ/S cannot be a Lycian word, since none of the cases of *χṽtawat(i)-* show a sibilant ending.<sup>15</sup> The phonetic criticism is fully justified, assuming that the Lycian word was *i*-mutating: although the

**10** Dupont-Sommer 1979, 145 (cf. already Dupont-Sommer 1974, 142–143 with n. 2); Lemaire 1995, 425 with n. 12 (who, however, even claimed ‘or rather Caunian/Carian’); followed by Garbini 1977, 270; Fried 2004, 147, the latter ignoring the critical literature to be discussed below.

**11** Dupont-Sommer 1979, 145 (and not Carian only, *contra* Carruba 1977, 293; Adiego 1995, 19, it was only the preliminary edition [Dupont-Sommer 1974, 143] that considered only Carian [with a question mark]).

**12** Onofrio Carruba criticised Dupont-Sommer’s description, claiming that there are many Anatolian possibilities, such as the *-assi/-assa-* toponym suffix. This solution, however, can certainly be excluded, since this would have given Aramaic †SY or †S.

**13** Adiego 1995, 18 (followed by Molina Valero 2004, 1015; Molina Valero 2016, 29–30, without reference).

**14** Dupont-Sommer 1979, 145 claimed that the Lycian <t> corresponds to the Aramaic sibilant, but, firstly, as Adiego 1995, 18, n. 1, rightly pointed out, there is absolutely no evidence for the assibilation of Lycian <t> /t/. Secondly, although Aramaic <Ṣ> could have represented an interdental fricative, this is not the phonetic value of the Lycian <t> (and, anyway, this possibility was present only in Old Aramaic and not in Imperial Aramaic (see e.g. Segert 1983, 92–93). Lemaire 1995, 425, n. 12 wondered whether Aramaic -Ṣ transcribes the nominative ending ‘-tis > t(i)s > ṣ’, but there is no such change in the nominative ending.

**15** Vernet 2021a, 87, n. 11.

word is not attested yet in nom./acc. sg./pl., which would clearly decide the question, the closely related (Hieroglyphic) Luwian form is *i*-mutated.<sup>16</sup>

After the decipherment of Carian, Adiego provided a new analysis, in which he argued that KNDWŞ/S KBYDŞY is nothing else but the Aramaic spelling of the Carian phrase ‘el rey caunio’.<sup>17</sup> He argued that KNDWŞ/S is identical to the Carian word for ‘king’, attested as *kδowš* in *esayδowš* of AS 7 (from \**esan-kδouš* with a secondary voicing of [k] after the nasal), ‘cuya coincidencia con licio *χñtawat(i)*-, luvita *handawatti(i)*- resulta difícil de negar’.<sup>18</sup> He emphasised that the Carian word fully matches the Aramaic spelling, including the final sibilant, which is, in his view, either the result of a stem-final *-t* with the nominative ending *-s* or a suffix, the Carian equivalent of Lycian *-za-* building professions.<sup>19</sup> As for the suffix *-ŞY*, he identified it with the Carian ethnic suffix *-si-*, and explained the discrepancy between the sibilants with the argument that the different Carian sibilants were not very clear to the adaptors, as the vacillation in this very name shows.<sup>20</sup> Later, he alternatively suggested that it could reflect the Carian genitival adjective with the *i*-mutation.<sup>21</sup>

A similar argumentation was presented by Diether Schürr regarding KNDWŞ/S, but on a much broader Carian basis.<sup>22</sup> He identified the underlying Carian word as \**kδusi*, which would even be attested in *kδxsi* from Abydos, which he read as *kδusi* and assigned the meaning ‘commander’. As supporting evidence, he, furthermore, quoted the words *kδušolš* (nom. pl.) as ‘königliche’; *kδušo-* from Hyllarima; and *rmkδušioš* from Abydos, i.e. a patronym *kδušio* in gen. sg., in which he saw an earlier form of *kδušo-* (from \**k(i)ndusyó-*).

He had, however, very different views on KBYDŞY: according to him, this would show the same suffix *-ŞY* as the Aramaic ʾPŞŞY ‘Ephesian’ from Sardes,

**16** Bauer 2020. Presumably the same applies to the similarly closely related Pisidian form as well, if the word underlying the personal name *Gdebetis* is identical to this word (see most recently Sasseville 2020b with references). Note that the interpretation of *χñtawati* in TL 35, 1 is debated (nom. sg. according to Melchert 2004, 84, but Neumann 2007, 128 proposed dat.-loc. sg., followed by Sasseville 2020a). To be sure, there is yet another local language, Lycian B, the relation of which to Lycian A is unclear. Nevertheless, Lycian B can surely be excluded as a candidate, since, although the word for ‘king’ itself is not attested in it yet, Lycian B has *-b-* instead of *-w-* in the word family of *χñtawat(i)*- (cf. e.g. Melchert 2004, 136).

**17** Adiego 1995, 19–21 (followed by Carruba 1999, 51–52; Kottsieper 2001, 198, n. 7b; and Raimond 2004, 397–399).

**18** Adiego 1995, 19.

**19** Adiego 1995, 19–20.

**20** Adiego 1995, 20–21.

**21** Adiego *apud* Molina Valero 2004, 1016; Molina Valero 2016, 31.

**22** Schürr 1998, 145–147.

translating Lydian *ipsimšiš* ‘dto’<sup>23</sup> and reflecting the Lydian suffix *-ši-*, directly on the stem of the toponyms.<sup>24</sup> He did not explain, however, why a Lydian suffix would appear on a Carian term such as in KBYDŠY, especially in Lycia, far away from Lydia without Lydian speakers. In my view, Vernet offered a more logical solution for <sup>?</sup>PŠŠY:<sup>25</sup> she argued that we are dealing with a regular Aramaic nisba in *-Y* and <sup>?</sup>PŠŠ- simply reflects *ipsimši-*, with a trivial assimilation of the first sibilant to the second. In other words, I add, we would be dealing with the Aramaic spelling of the Lydian term, re-characterised by the Aramaic nisba, presumably because the composer of the Aramaic version had limited knowledge of Lydian, the local vernacular. We will see below that this is not an isolated phenomenon.

Another attempt to explain KBYDŠY was presented by André Lemaire, who suggested that KBYDŠY is a regular ethnic name in *-Y* from KBYDŠ, which could ‘perhaps’ be a transcription of ‘Lydian *chbide* [sic] with a (Luwian nominative?) ending *-is*’.<sup>26</sup> However, all aspects of this idea are completely ad hoc. What kind of ending is this ‘*-is*’? Why does it appear as Š instead of S? Why would any Luwian ending be attached to a Lydian toponym, especially in an inscription from Lycia? And why would the Lydian name have been used for a Carian toponym?

Finally, the Carian interpretation was picked up and further developed by Vernet.<sup>27</sup> She argued that KNDWS appears only once (line 22), while KNDWŠ appears elsewhere (four times) and, thus, KNDWS is a scribal error and it is KNDWŠ that needs explanation.<sup>28</sup> She accepted both the idea that KNDWŠ is based on the Carian word for ‘king’ and the Carian words provided by Adiego and Schürr with the meaning ‘king’ or similar to it, except *mkδušioš*, which she did not mention.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, she identified the word *kdown-* ‘king’ extracted from *esaydowš* of E.AS 7 with *kδous* (gen. sg.) in E.Bu 1 (‘probably the same’).<sup>30</sup> In both cases, she defended the meaning ‘king’, claiming that they ‘appear very

<sup>23</sup> Dupont-Sommer 1979, 145.

<sup>24</sup> Schürr 1996, 152, n. 4; Schürr 2018, 14.

<sup>25</sup> Vernet 2021a, 89, n. 23.

<sup>26</sup> Lemaire 1995, 426.

<sup>27</sup> Vernet 2021a.

<sup>28</sup> Vernet 2021a, 85, n. 9, referring to further palaeographic errors in the Aramaic text, for which see esp. the list of Lemaire 1995, 431. For Garbini 1977, 271 it was only a phonetic variant, which hardly explains anything.

<sup>29</sup> Vernet 2021a, 87–88.

<sup>30</sup> Carian inscriptions are quoted according to the standard reference system of Adiego 2007. In this system, the sigla refer to the inscriptions’ findspot (E = Egypt, C = Caria, Ab = Abydos, AS = Abu Simbel, Bu = Buhen, H = Hyllarima, xx = findspot unknown).

near' to the pharaoh's name in both inscriptions.<sup>31</sup> She claimed that KNDWŞ can represent a gen. sg. *kdouś* 'king', 'since Carian -ś, in its use in *pismaśk* could represent a palatal fricative [ç] or even an affricate [ts]',<sup>32</sup> or a dat. sg. in -s (cf. the spelling variant KNDWS), which would fit the Aramaic syntax showing L-'to' before this phrase. Nevertheless, considering the discussion around the Carian dat. sg. ending -s, she is cautious regarding the latter solution.

As for KBYDŠY, Vernet rightly pointed out<sup>33</sup> that, firstly, we have learnt in the meanwhile that 'Kaunian' is *kbdyn-* in Carian and not *\*kbsi-*; secondly, the stem of the city's name is KBYD only; and, thirdly, -ŠY cannot be an Aramaic ethnic suffix as there is no such Aramaic ethnic suffix.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, she suggests<sup>35</sup> that KBYDŠ° represents the Aramaic spelling of the gen. sg. of the city name, fitting both semantically (completely equivalent to the Greek and Lycian formulations) and formally (the Carian gen. sg. is -ś, a sort of palatal sibilant).<sup>36</sup> She explained the remaining °Y as a re-characterisation by the Aramaic nisba suffix -Y in order to make it clear that the last word of the sequence KNDWŞ ʔLHʔ KBYDŠY should be understood as an adjective indicating the god's origin for an Aramaic reader unfamiliar with Carian.

Vernet's solution for KBYDŠY convincingly solves all the problems.<sup>37</sup> I doubt, however, that her explanation for the re-characterisation is satisfactory, since for a reader unfamiliar with Carian this is but little help, since the first word, KNDWŞ, is also opaque, not to mention that the presence of the toponym, and thus, the 'affiliation' of the god, could also have been heard from this phrase even by a non-Carian speaker. Therefore, I prefer the explanation I have already provided in Vernet's paper:<sup>38</sup> the Aramaean scribe did not know Carian well enough and did not recognise the gen. sg. ending and, consequently, added the nisba-suffix.

<sup>31</sup> Vernet 2021a, 87–88.

<sup>32</sup> Vernet 2021a, 89.

<sup>33</sup> Vernet 2021a, 89–90.

<sup>34</sup> See Lemaire 1995, 426.

<sup>35</sup> Vernet 2021a, 90–91.

<sup>36</sup> See esp. Schürr 2001, 116–118; Melchert 2002, 310–312; Adiego 2007, 250–251. There could be an objection that according to some proposals, Kaunos was a *plurale tantum* in Carian; nevertheless, this proposal is far from proven and generally accepted, since the phrase in which it appears is opaque (see most recently the detailed discussion in Simon 2022b with references).

<sup>37</sup> Add also that the similar Carian suffixes, -si- and the genitival adjective -s-, both proposed previously as per above, do not have a palatal sibilant and, thus, they do not fit anyway.

<sup>38</sup> Simon *apud* Vernet 2021a, 91, n. 24.

Whatever the explanation of the re-characterisation is, KBYDŠY seems to have found a fitting explanation. This is, however, not the case with KNDWŞ. We saw that it is neither Lycian nor Lydian, but all three Carian solutions, i.e. those of Adiego, Schürr and Vernet, have two common problems: they do not explain the spelling with -Ş and they assume a Carian word for ‘king’ based on words that have no demonstrated meaning ‘king’.

As for the spelling, even if we assume that the Carian word for ‘king’ was a dental stem and not an *i*-mutating stem (contrary to the closest relatives, as per above), Adiego’s explanation of -Ş from the dental stem and the -s nom. sg. ending still cannot be maintained, since the Carian nom. sg. ending is a zero morpheme. His alternative, the Carian equivalent of *-za-* building professions, suffers from the lack of any similar Carian suffix and, due to the only partly known Carian historical phonology, from the uncertainty about precisely what it should look like in Carian. Similarly, even if we assume with Schürr that *\*kδusi* means ‘king’, for which we have no evidence, it should also have been consistently spelt as KNDWS.

The same applies to Vernet’s alternative as a dat. sg., which, contra her suggestion, is not supported by the syntax: why would a Carian name get a Carian ending in an Aramaic inscription triggered by an Aramaic prefix? Her main solution, KNDWŞ as a gen. sg., is unfortunately incompatible with her own explanation of KBYDŠY, since both cannot reflect the same sibilant: while KBYDŠY is spelt consistently and, thus, implies an underlying Carian palatal sibilant (which, if it is indeed a sibilant and does not represent a sound substitution, can only be *ś* or *š*), KNDWŞ/S obviously cannot have the same underlying sibilant. Furthermore, it does not make sense morphologically either: why would KNDWŞ be in the genitive singular and not in the nominative?

Turning to the alleged words meaning or supporting a meaning of ‘king’, unfortunately none of them can be accepted:<sup>39</sup>

- 1) *mkδuśioś*: Schürr referred to Ševoroškin<sup>40</sup> as the source for this word, but this inscription is known only from the transcription and claim of Ševoroškin; it has never been published or documented, and, thus, it cannot be considered.
- 2) *esay<sup>2</sup>δowš* (E.AS 7): Adiego’s assumption of a secondary voicing from *\*kδowš* is completely ad hoc. But even if this were correct, the beginning of the word, *esa-*, and the final *-š* provide problems for which there is currently

<sup>39</sup> See also Nunn and Simon 2023, 170–171.

<sup>40</sup> Ševoroškin 1994, 143.



no solution, as admitted by Adiego himself.<sup>41</sup> Vernet's claim that it stands close to the name of the pharaoh does not prove anything since we do not understand the inscription and the pharaoh's name is, in fact, separated by another word (*mýqudem*) of unknown meaning.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, *esay<sup>2</sup>đowš* seems to stand in agreement with the preceding word, *býš*,<sup>43</sup> and if this is correct, then they are in either nom. or acc. pl., which cannot be reconciled with the meaning 'king'.

- 3) *kđous* (E.Bu 1): Unfortunately, the meaning and even the grammatical definition of this word are unclear; gen. sg. is only a possibility.<sup>44</sup> Vernet's claim that it stands close to the name of the pharaoh does not prove anything since we do not understand the inscription and the pharaoh's name is in fact separated by three words. Moreover, it is probably not the pharaoh's name at all: it seems to appear in an onomastic formula: (...) | ar[Ī]iš | psmšk | urmš | (...) 'Arliš, (son) of Psmšk, (son) of Urm',<sup>45</sup> in which Psmšk is obviously not the pharaoh Psammetichus.
- 4) *kđušolš* (C.xx 4 & 5): Since these inscriptions, each one word on a bracelet, are discussed in detail elsewhere,<sup>46</sup> it suffices to quote here a summary of that investigation: none of the several analyses provide a formally and semantically fitting solution, with the exception of Günter Neumann's theory of a personal name (*Kđ-ušol*, with the well-known Carian name element *-ušol-* and the widespread Luwic name element *kđ-*, here from \**hanti(ya)-* 'first'), which can now be reinterpreted as an appurtenance adjective 'of *Kđušol*', referring to the owner of the bracelet.
- 5) *kđušiš* (E.Ab 35): This word provides a papponym or a title or the origin of the deceased. Adiego's cautious choice of a papponym or an adjective of origin from a toponym \**Kđu*<sup>47</sup> fits the context better than Schürr's 'commander', since he is forced to assume that the owner of the tomb, interred

<sup>41</sup> Adiego 2007, 294, 364. Note that the reading *esak<sup>2</sup>đowš* was introduced by Schürr 2001, 108 without any reasoning (followed by Adiego 2007, 118); it would solve the phonetic problem but is not supported by the photograph in Masson 1979, pl. IV/3.

<sup>42</sup> See most recently Simon 2020b with references.

<sup>43</sup> See the critical overview in Simon 2021a.

<sup>44</sup> See the detailed discussion in Simon 2020a with references.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. the phrase of the closely related inscription E.Bu 2: | arliš pdtomš uromš | 'Arliš, (son) of Pdtom, (son) of Urom'.

<sup>46</sup> Nunn and Simon 2023, 168–172.

<sup>47</sup> Adiego 2007, 269, 372; on the identification of the toponym see most recently Simon 2021c, 197–198 with references.

in Abydos (Egypt) was a ‘king’ in Caria, which he was clearly not, or a sort of ‘commander’ in Egypt, clearly a *petitio principii*.<sup>48</sup>

- 6) *kdušo* (C.Hy 1, 1): This word undoubtedly means ‘reign’,<sup>49</sup> but its morphological relation to the Luwic words for ‘king’ is completely unclear and thus, it is not helpful.

All in all, we still do not have the Carian word for ‘king’ and none of the Carian interpretations of KNDWŞ/S can be upheld. Therefore, we are looking for a solution that explains the spelling with -Ş in the nominative (as per Vernet above, KNDWŞ seems to be the correct form) and, preferably, comes up with a fitting Carian word for ‘king’, since both the Greek and Lycian traditions call this divinity ‘King’ and Kaunos belonged to the Carian-speaking region (and, as we saw above, it cannot be a Lycian A or B word). Stephan of Byzantium claimed that *gela* means ‘king’ in Carian, but it does not help further and we cannot generally contextualize this claim historically.<sup>50</sup> We also saw that the Carian word for ‘king’ is not yet attested in the Carian inscriptions and the term ‘reign’ does not help, since it is morphologically opaque. It is worth recalling, however, that the closely related Lycian A and Luwian languages share the same word for ‘king’, as per above. Therefore, it is logical to assume that the same word would have been used in Carian as well. Nevertheless, we have to apply the known Carian sound laws, and they lead to a nom. sg. form \*k(V)δ(V)w(V)τ. The history of the Carian vowels remains elusive, but they do not have a role in this case.<sup>51</sup> <δ> is phonologically /<sup>n</sup>d/ or /n.d/,<sup>52</sup> naturally spelt as <ND> in the Aramaic version. The nom. sg. -s had regularly disappeared.<sup>53</sup> The key change is \*ti > τ, in which τ is a palatal or dental affricate,<sup>54</sup> the closest equivalent of which is precisely Ş in Imperial Aramaic. Therefore, KNDWŞ faithfully spells the expected Carian form of the Luwic word for ‘king’.

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**48** One could, of course, assume that the personal name underlying the papponym or the profession of the deceased goes back to a word that once meant ‘king’. For this, however, the existence of the homonymous word for ‘king’ should independently be demonstrated, which is not yet the case.

**49** Adiego 2019a, 18–19, 23–24.

**50** See the critical discussion in Simon 2022a.

**51** Several scholars assumed the loss of unaccented vowels, but the details were defined very differently, see e.g. Hajnal 1995, 17–21 and Simon 2023.

**52** See the discussion between Kloekhorst 2008, 138–139; Adiego 2019b, 105.

**53** See e.g. Adiego 2007, 312.

**54** See most recently Simon 2021b, 56–60 with discussion and references.

In other words, the composer of the Aramaic text chose to use the original Carian name of the deity. According to Vernet,<sup>55</sup> one possible reason for this fact – instead of translating it from Lycian – is that the term ‘king’ is not used for gods in Aramaic and Phoenician.<sup>56</sup> However, considering the probable lack of knowledge of Carian of the scribe writing in Aramaic (he did not seem to recognise a simple genitive either), it is more probable that he simply did not understand the term, and thus, used the original name of the deity.

### 3 ʔRTMWŠ

The case of ʔRTMWŠ ‘Artemis’ mentioned in line 24 of the Aramaic version is considerably simpler, although it is remarkable from two points of view: firstly, as the spelling with -WŠ shows, this is not the Greek form. Secondly, surprisingly enough, it is not the Lycian form either: the Lycian form of Artemis is well attested and she is called Erteme/i- and Ertēme/i-,<sup>57</sup> neither of which is compatible with the Aramaic spelling,<sup>58</sup> and the same applies to her Phrygian name, attested as Artimitos (gen. sg.), whence \*Artimis, too<sup>59</sup> (on Carian, cf. below). However, the editor, Dupont-Sommer, has already compared<sup>60</sup> the Lydian form of Artemis, the single by-form of her name with -u- (Artimus,<sup>61</sup> transliteration modernised), and it was also identified as the Lydian form by Schürr<sup>62</sup> and Ingo Kottsieper.<sup>63</sup> The solution is, formally speaking, undoubtedly correct.<sup>64</sup> However, Carlos Molina Valero objected that if this is correct, we have the problem of

<sup>55</sup> Vernet 2021a, 86–87.

<sup>56</sup> See already Teixidor 1978, 183, not quoted by Vernet.

<sup>57</sup> Melchert 2004, 17; Neumann 2007, 72.

<sup>58</sup> Pointed out also by Vernet 2021b, 533, n. 12.

<sup>59</sup> See most recently Obrador-Cursach 2022, 136–138.

<sup>60</sup> Dupont-Sommer 1979, 155.

<sup>61</sup> See Gusmani 1964, 63–64 for the attestations.

<sup>62</sup> Schürr 1996, 152, n. 4 (here without referring to Dupont-Sommer); Schürr 2018, 14.

<sup>63</sup> Kottsieper 2001, 199, n. 24c, without references.

<sup>64</sup> Vernet 2021b, 533, n. 12 claims that this name is attested in Carian, too, as ‘*artm*’ and ‘*rtim*’. These are, firstly, personal names, but even if they are theophoric names from Artemis, they obviously have no -u-. Moreover, based on Vernet’s own research (2016), *rtim* seems to be of Iranian origin (\*Rtima-) and it is not assured that ‘*artm*’ (*recte artmi*, C.Tr 2) is a theophoric name (see Adiego 2007, 356–357 for the problems involved). This requires further investigation, but if it turns out to be correct, it would show that the Carian form does not fit either. The claim of Molina Valero 2016, 33 that the reading of this word is (*a*)*rtimu* and thus, comparable to the Letoon form, is false.

whether we are dealing with a Lydian term or a Lydian loan in Carian.<sup>65</sup> The latter question is not a problem, since there is no reason to assume any Carian transmission,<sup>66</sup> and thus, the problems with the Lydian origin can more precisely be formulated as follows: the spelling with -š and the question of why an Aramaic scribe would have used the Lydian form in Lycia.<sup>67</sup> It is the spelling with -š that answers these questions.

The Lydian form has [s]<sup>68</sup> and since Aramaic did have [s], <sup>2</sup>RTMWš cannot be a direct spelling of the Lydian form. However, for historical phonological reasons, the nominative of *u*-stems (such as Artimus) ends in -uš – in Old Persian.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, Lydian Artimus regularly became Old Persian \*Artimuš, which was precisely spelt as <sup>2</sup>RTMWš in the Aramaic version. There is nothing surprising in the fact that a scribe in the Achaemenid empire writing in Imperial Aramaic, the official language of the empire, uses the Old Persian forms of divinities, if available, which was, in contrast, not the case with the other gods of the inscription. This is precisely what happened to Apollo as well, who appears as ḤŠTRPTY. But why was Lydian the source of the Old Persian form? If we look at the expansion of the Achaemenid empire in Anatolia, we can find a logical scenario: the first Anatolian region conquered by the Achaemenids was none other than Lydia, and one of the main gods of Lydia was Artemis.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the officers of the Achaemenid empire encountered Artemis for the first time in Lydia and, logically, they adopted her Lydian name, which they used later elsewhere.

<sup>65</sup> Molina Valero 2004, 1017; Molina Valero 2016, 33.

<sup>66</sup> Molina Valero 2004 and 2016, 22–34 argues that the major part of the non-Semitic onomasticon in the Aramaic text is of Carian (and not Lycian) origin, but this is not correct, as Carian origin could have logically been ascertained only in the case of Carian people and gods, and Artemis is not one of them.

<sup>67</sup> Schürr 2018, 14 only stated that ‘der aramäische Part der Trilingue spiegelt zumindest nicht nur einen regionalen Sprachgebrauch wieder’, and that it was adopted in Aramaic from Lydia, later used in the Aramaic of the Achaemenid chancellery (Schürr *apud* Molina Valero 2016, 33), which does not explain anything.

<sup>68</sup> Note that the earlier transcription with <š> was phonetically incorrect, see e.g. Melchert 1994, 335.

<sup>69</sup> See e.g. de Vaan and Lubotsky 2012, 200.

<sup>70</sup> Compare with Payne 2019, esp. 240.

## 4 Conclusion: Adaptation strategies in the Aramaic version of the Letoon trilingual

We can summarise our findings regarding the uneasy situation of the composer of the Aramaic version on how to deal with the local divine names as follows: firstly, he substituted those divine names that were known to him with the Old Persian equivalents (𐎠𐎲𐎠𐎹𐎺 and 𐎠𐎺𐎠𐎹𐎺).<sup>71</sup> As for the remaining ones, he simplified his task by dropping the names and referring to the divinities in a blanket way, wherever he could (‘his colleagues’ and ‘the others’). This was not possible in the case of the King of Kaunos and Leto, in the first case, due to obvious reasons (the very goal of the decree) and in the latter case, perhaps due to the deity’s importance. In these cases, he chose to transcribe the original name.<sup>72</sup>

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### Abbreviation

*eDiAna* = Olav Hackstein et al. (eds), *Digital Philological-Etymological Dictionary of the Minor Ancient Anatolian Corpus Languages*, <<https://www.ediana.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/>> (accessed on 8 July 2023).

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<sup>71</sup> These are Old Persian loans in Aramaic. On the frequent Old Persian terminology in Achaemenid Imperial Aramaic, see the overview of Tavernier 2013, 652.

<sup>72</sup> Molina Valero 2016, 32–33 rightly wonders why the Greek form was used in the case of Leto instead of a local form. This requires further investigation.

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Viola Allegranzi

# Multilingualism in the Epigraphic Culture of the Persianate World (Eleventh to Thirteenth Century)

**Abstract:** Arabic and Persian coexisted in the eastern Islamic regions in medieval times, and their use can be related to specific contents and contexts. Inscriptions seem to have remained more anchored in the Arabic models than manuscripts, since Persian rarely appears in epigraphic sources dating from the pre-Mongol period. Moreover, epigraphic Persian is never independent but either juxtaposed or mixed with Arabic. This paper examines a selection of monumental inscriptions and inscribed objects combining the two languages, and explores the ways in which these texts deviate from the standard. In most cases, the linguistic interplay is intentional and reflects a specialisation of languages, but linguistic interferences and scribal errors are also attested. An attempt is made to define for each case study whether language-related choices depended on the patron, the scribe or the recipient of the inscription, in order to contextualize multilingual inscriptions better within the cultural production of medieval Persianate societies.

## 1 Introduction

Successive conquests and political upheavals had a strong impact on the cultural and linguistic background of the Iranian region in medieval times.<sup>1</sup> The main geo-political transformations can be outlined in three main phases: the Arab conquests and annexation to the Caliphate (seventh–eighth centuries), the rise of semi-independent dynasties of Iranian or Turkic origin (ninth–twelfth centuries), and the Mongol invasions and incorporation into the Mongol empire (thirteenth century). The linguistic situation in the region was equally complex and changing, and its development cannot be completely reconstructed due to

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<sup>1</sup> We refer to a region wider than contemporary Iran, often designated as the ‘Persianate zone’, which includes the lands between eastern Iraq, the Central Asian Steppe and northern India, where Persian has long been the main language of literature and trade. Fragner 1999; Amanat and Ashraf 2019.

the scarcity of primary sources, especially for the period preceding the tenth century. It is clear, however, that the medieval Persianate society was multilingual (as it still is today), since Arabic, New Persian and Turkic languages had different uses across places and social classes, and coexisted with numerous local languages and dialects of Iranian, Turkic or Indic origin.<sup>2</sup> Although we know from the sources that political and military elites of Central Asian origins used to speak *turk* and often had Turkic names and honorifics, Arabic and Persian established themselves as the main written languages of the eastern Islamic regions in the pre-Mongol period.<sup>3</sup>

This paper looks at the use of languages in inscriptions on monuments and objects from the medieval Persianate world.<sup>4</sup> It focuses on the introduction of Persian, its interplay with Arabic, and the progressive transformation of the epigraphic models, which seem to have remained more grounded in the Arabo-Islamic tradition compared with manuscript culture.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, New Persian texts in both prose and verse dating from the ninth century onwards are known,<sup>6</sup> while the earliest preserved inscriptions in this language date back to the eleventh century. Even after this date, Arabic remained dominant in the epigraphic culture of the eastern Caliphate, while Persian was used sporadically and usually juxtaposed or mixed with Arabic.<sup>7</sup> The following sections explore the ways in

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**2** New Persian is a descendant of Old Persian (sixth–fourth centuries BCE) and Middle Persian (third century BCE–ninth century CE). It developed after the Arab conquest and is written in Arabic characters. On the rise of New Persian and the context in which it took place, see Lazard 1995; Ludwig Paul 2000; Perry 2009.

**3** On the interaction between Arabic and Persian, see Bosworth 1978–1979. Only two eleventh-century literary works in Qarakhanid Turkic written in Arabic letters have come down to us, see Vásáry 2015. I follow the system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES)* for the transliteration of Arabic and Persian.

**4** Only after submitting the first draft of the paper did I become aware of Andrew C. S. Peacock's article on the interplay of Persian, Turkish and Arabic in eastern Islamic epigraphy (Peacock 2023). However, Peacock examines documents from a wider chronological and geographical range, focusing on the epigraphic uses of Turkish, which makes our works rather complementary.

**5** On the introduction of Persian in Islamic epigraphy, see O'Kane 2009; Allegranzi 2019, vol. 1, 207–224.

**6** Lazard 1963 and 1964. These texts are copied in later manuscripts. About the earliest known handwritten documents in New Persian (tenth–eleventh centuries), see the preliminary results of the project 'Invisible East' (PI, Arezou Azad, University of Oxford) at <<https://invisibleeast.web.ox.ac.uk/timeline-landing-page>> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

**7** Sheila Blair's catalogue of Islamic monumental inscriptions from Iran and Transoxiana up to the early twelfth century lists sixty-nine out of seventy-nine inscriptions in Arabic alone; five in Arabic with the insertion of Persian words (Blair 1992, 34, 115, 118, 130, 174, nos 7, 42, 43, 48,

which these two languages combined in epigraphic sources, and their association with specific contents and styles.<sup>8</sup> The purposes of this investigation are to define the rationale of language-related choices and measure the success of written and visual expressions experimented in eastern Islamic epigraphy between the eleventh and the thirteenth century.

## 2 Multiscriptual inscriptions

### 2.1 Arabic and Middle Persian

Epigraphic sources confirm that the Middle Persian (or Pahlavi) language and script were still in use in some Persian-speaking milieux for a few centuries after the Arab conquests.<sup>9</sup> A small group of bilingual inscriptions in Arabic and Middle Persian dating from the eleventh century is particularly noteworthy as it bears witness to the impact of the Arabic models and the hybridization of epigraphic language. The inscriptions appear on three tomb towers erected in the historical region of Tabaristan (on the Caspian coast of northern Iran) by some members of the Bavandid dynasty, who ruled locally between the eighth and fourteenth century.<sup>10</sup> The bilingual inscriptions on the tomb towers at Radkan (Iran, Golestan province, dated 407–411 AH / 1016–1021 CE) and Lajim (Iran, Mazandaran province, dated 413 AH / 1022–23 CE) are located in epigraphic bands encircling the cylindrical structure below the roof. In both cases, the Arabic and Pahlavi texts record similar – but not identical – foundation texts and give the date of construction according to the Islamic (*hijri*) and Zoroastrian (*yazdigirdi*) calendars. The foundation text on the tomb tower at Risgit (or Res-

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66); three bilingual in Arabic and Middle Persian (Blair 1992, 85, 88, 208, nos 31, 32, 79); and two in New Persian (Blair 1992, 128, 153, nos 47, 58). The use of Persian increased slightly during the twelfth century, but the general trend remained unchanged.

**8** Only selected excerpts from the inscriptions are quoted in the article, exemplifying the linguistic choices of their authors; for the full texts of the inscriptions, please refer to the publications cited in the footnotes.

**9** For an overview of Middle Persian inscriptions, their genres, chronology and geographical distribution, see Engeskaug 2020.

**10** On the monuments and their Arabic inscriptions, see Blair 1992, 85–90, 208–210, nos 31, 32, 79; on the Middle Persian inscriptions, see Bāghbidi 1383 SH / 2004 CE and Cereti 2015, 161–169 (these authors reference previous studies by Max van Berchem, David H. Bivar, Ernst Herzfeld and André Godard). See also an overview of the bilingual inscriptions in Allegranzi 2017, vol. 1, 367–374, Allegranzi 2019, vol. 1, 208–209. On the history of the Bavandids, see Madelung 1984.

ket, Iran, Mazandaran province) is inscribed above the entrance door and consists of three and a half lines in Arabic, followed by half a line in Middle Persian. The end of the inscription is badly damaged, but it seems plausible that it originally recorded the date of construction, according to the Islamic and Zoroastrian calendars.<sup>11</sup> The patrons and dedicatees in the inscriptions at Radkan and Lajim bear Arabic names and honorifics (e.g. *al-amīr* ‘emir’, *mawlā amīr al-mu’minīn* ‘client of the Commander of the Faithful’) along with others of Persian origin (e.g. *al-ispahbad* ‘army chief’, *shahriyār* ‘king’). Moreover, the epigraphic band below the roof of the Risgit tomb tower contains Quranic quotations (Quran 12:36 and Quran 112). The hybrid titulatures and epigraphic formulary, together with the juxtaposition of Arabic and Pahlavi script, are well-suited to the cultural policy of the Bavandid rulers, who claimed descent from the Sasanian kings but had converted to Islam as early as the ninth century.

Some choices related to the arrangement and palaeography of the bilingual inscriptions are also noteworthy. The Arabic text in Radkan is written on one line and occupies the longer section of the epigraphic band, while the Middle Persian version is distributed on two lines within a shorter section. The Arabic letters are traced in an ornate knotted and floriated Kufic style, and some ornamental motifs inspired by this style are appended to the smaller Pahlavi letters.<sup>12</sup> The inscriptions in Lajim each run on one line on two superimposed bands: the lower band contains the Arabic text in simple Kufic script, the upper band the Middle Persian text, traced in smaller, undecorated letters.<sup>13</sup> Both Middle Persian inscriptions display a script derived from cursive Book Pahlavi, and their graphic style seems to be influenced by the Arabic inscriptions next to them.<sup>14</sup> The distribution and relative dimensions of the texts seems to confirm a kind of hierarchy between the two languages and the predominance of the Arabo-Islamic epigraphic model.

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**11** The chronological attribution of the monument is debated, but it seems likely that this tomb tower was founded, like the other two, in the first half of the eleventh century. See Allegranzi 2017, vol. 11, 371.

**12** See Flury 1921 and Cereti 2015, 165–166 for a palaeographic analysis of the Arabic and the Pahlavi inscription, respectively.

**13** One may admit that the different medium and technique (carved stucco in Radkan versus cut brick in Lajim) influenced the different degree of plasticity and ornamentation of the inscriptions. The inscriptions are illustrated in Allegranzi 2017, vol. 2, pl. LXIII.

**14** Cereti 2015, 162. Most funerary inscriptions in Middle Persian known to us employ cursive Book Pahlavi instead of Inscriptional Middle Persian characters, and are, therefore, attributed to the late Sasanian or early Islamic period (Engeskaug 2020, 177–178).

Another noteworthy evidence of the survival but progressive decline of Middle-Persian epigraphy is a short funerary inscription, undated, incised on a Byzantine sarcophagus in Constantinople and dedicated to an Iranian immigrant. The use of a variety of cursive script similar to Book Pahlavi, together with the fact that several words follow the phonetic spelling of New Persian, point to a late dating (probably ninth or tenth century).<sup>15</sup>

The inscriptions mentioned so far are among the last examples of the use of Pahlavi script in epigraphy and show a process of hybridization of the language and writing style. They constitute an exception to the epigraphic practices developed in Islamic Iran, where the vast majority of inscriptions make use of the Arabic (or Perso-Arabic) alphabet to transcribe texts in both Arabic and Persian, abolishing the visual differences between the two languages.<sup>16</sup>

## 2.2 Arabo-Persian and Sanskrit

The earliest inscription in New Persian language and Arabic script known to date is engraved on a rectangular limestone slab (55 × 36 cm) retrieved from the village of Zalamkot in the lower Swat valley (close to Batkhela, Pakistan).<sup>17</sup> The inscription on the slab is multilingual and multiscriptual: it consists of seven lines in Arabo-Persian,<sup>18</sup> traced in simple Kufic script, followed by three (or four) lines in Sanskrit, inscribed in Śāradā script. The Persian text commemorates the construction of a building, probably a mosque, patronised by two political and military authorities: the *amīr* ('emir') Arslān al-Jādhīb, governor of Tus, and the *sarhang* ('general') Biktāsh, castellan of Ajaypālnaghar (?).<sup>19</sup> The date of comple-

<sup>15</sup> See the reading and chronological attribution proposed by de Blois 1990.

<sup>16</sup> New Persian has four more consonants than Arabic, which are transcribed adding three diacritical points or a stroke to the basic shape of some letters (پ 'p', چ 'ch', ژ 'zh', گ 'g'). However, diacritical marks are often omitted in medieval Islamic inscriptions, especially – but not exclusively – in those executed in Kufic script.

<sup>17</sup> The slab entered a private collection in Peshawar and was published by Abdur Rahman in 1998 (the only available illustration of the object is appended to this article); its current location is unknown.

<sup>18</sup> The main text is in Persian, but is interspersed with Arabic phrases (particularly the *basma-la*, the *shahāda* or Profession of Faith, two benedictory formulae and the name of the month).

<sup>19</sup> Rahman 1998, 469–470 first read the Persian inscription; see also Allegranzi 2017, vol. 1, 374–377; Allegranzi 2019, vol. 1, 209–211. Shavarebi 2022 proposes a new version, where he convincingly emended the reading of the building type (*mazgid* 'mosque' instead of *markad*, supposed to be an erroneous form for *marqad* 'tomb') and the name and titles of the second patron. Arslān al-Jādhīb was a Ghaznavid military commander and local governor in Khura-

tion is given in a mixture of Arabic and Persian as *dhū'l-qa'da* 401 AH (6 June–5 July 1011 CE). Moreover, the construction verbs *banā kard* ('he built') and *tamām kard* ('he completed') are both placed at the beginning of a sentence, as is standard in Arabic foundation inscriptions. One can argue that the verb-initial word order of Arabic influenced the syntax of the text, which deviates from the subject-object-verb order common in Persian.<sup>20</sup> The Sanskrit text is barely legible and has only been partially deciphered.<sup>21</sup> It seems to correspond to an adaptation of the foundation text and conform to the model of Śāradā inscriptions; in fact, the text opens with the date and the Sanskrit honorific *śri* ('great honourable') precedes the names of the patrons.

Although no information is available on the archaeological context of the inscription, its content clearly indicates that it originally belonged to an Islamic building founded in the lower Swat valley in the early eleventh century, possibly following the conquest of this area by the Ghaznavid armies.<sup>22</sup> The scribe was probably acquainted with the Arabic language and epigraphic models, as evidenced by the inclusion of Arabic formulae and the general structure of the text. Why he composed the text in Persian is uncertain. His and/or his patrons' intention was perhaps to facilitate the readers' comprehension, as is the case in the Sanskrit part, probably addressing the local community. Indeed, Persian, besides being the favoured language of Ghaznavid court poetry and historiography, may have been more widespread than Arabic among the soldiers and immigrants settled in this peripheral area of the Ghaznavid state. At any rate, the choice of composing a construction text in New Persian is rather unusual for the time (the second known foundation inscription in Arabo-Persian is dated 547 AH / 1152 CE, see below, Subsection 4.1) and the scribe was probably forced to experiment with new expressions due to the lack of an established repertoire of epigraphic texts in this language. Finally, observing the stylistic features of the Zalamkot inscription, one is struck by the lack of ornamentation: the writing

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san, known from historiographical sources; on the contrary, the identity of Biktāsh remains uncertain, although his name suggests that he was a military commander of Turkic origin, possibly appointed in the Swat region. The identification of the toponym Ajaypālnaghar (perhaps a corrupted form of Jayapālnagar) is similarly uncertain.

<sup>20</sup> Note, however, that verb-initial phrases occur in later Persian epigraphic texts and manuscript colophons, where an Arabic influence need not be assumed.

<sup>21</sup> See Ingo Strauch's reading in Shavarebi 2022.

<sup>22</sup> The Ghaznavid dynasty (366–582 AH / 977–1186 CE), a Turko-Iranian line of Central Asian origin, settled in Ghazni (in present-day Afghanistan) and founded an influential state stretching from Khurasan to northern India. On the history of the Ghaznavids and their conquests in the first half of the eleventh century, see Bosworth 1963.

style of the text engraved on the slab is closer to that of rock graffiti than to the carefully designed and ornate monumental inscriptions retrieved from the Ghaznavid capital city, Ghazni.<sup>23</sup>

The production of multiscriptual texts including Arabic versions is not entirely new in the Pakistani area: indeed, two inscribed stones retrieved from the Tochi valley in Waziristan bear an Arabic inscription (one dated 243 AH / 857 CE), accompanied by a Bactrian and a Sanskrit text, respectively.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, a series of bilingual coins (dammas) in Arabic and Sanskrit/Nagari were issued in Multan in the ninth century. They set precedents for the bilingual coins issued by the Ghaznavid ruler Maḥmūd b. Sebüktegin (r. 388–421 AH / 998–1030 CE) in Lahore, which display an Arabic legend on the obverse and a Sanskrit translation on the reverse.<sup>25</sup> The minting of such coins seems to be limited to two consecutive years (418–419 AH / 1027–1028 CE), which suggests that this model was soon abandoned in favour of a return to more traditional coinage.

All in all, the appearance of multiscriptual inscriptions in peripheral areas of the eastern Islamic regions appears to be a restricted phenomenon. The specific cultural policy and linguistic situation of their context of production and reception in the case of both the Bavandid tomb towers in northern Iran and the Ghaznavid bilingual inscriptions from Pakistan, seem to be the main reasons for the deviation from the standard models of Arabo-Islamic epigraphy.

### 3 Persian and Arabic juxtaposed

New Persian seems to have spread as an epigraphic language during the eleventh century, when it appears on the royal monuments sponsored by the Qarakhanid and Ghaznavid rulers in the eastern Iranian lands.<sup>26</sup>

An inscription entirely composed in the Persian language and in verse frames the entrance arch of the brick portal of the complex known as Ribāṭ-i

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<sup>23</sup> For an overview of the epigraphic repertoire from Ghazni, see Flury 1925; Giunta 2003; and below, Section 3.

<sup>24</sup> Sims-Williams and de Blois 2018, 85–94.

<sup>25</sup> Flood 2009, 39–42.

<sup>26</sup> The Qarakhanids were a Turko-Muslim dynasty who ruled in Central Asia from the late tenth to the early thirteenth century, see Jürgen Paul 2021. The monuments discussed here are attributed to the western branches of the dynasty, based in Samarqand (Uzbekistan) and Uzgend (Kyrgyzstan).

Malik (Navoi, Uzbekistan) (Fig. 1).<sup>27</sup> The surviving sections praise a ‘building’ (*banāī*) comparable to paradise, erected by the ‘sultan of the world’ (*sulṭān-i jahān*) with God’s blessing. The text appears to be a panegyric poem composed on the occasion of the construction of Ribāṭ-i Malik itself, but does not provide any details on its function, dating or patron. This architectural complex located on the road connecting Bukhara and Samarqand was long considered to be a caravanserai built in the times of the Qarakhanid ruler Shams al-Mulk Naṣr b. Ibrāhīm (r. 460–472 AH / 1067–1080 CE); however, more recent studies revealed that the structure underwent several transformations and propose that the monument initially served as an extra-urban royal residence, eventually turning into a caravanserai in post-Mongol times.<sup>28</sup> Inscriptions in Arabic certainly adorned the complex as well; in fact, Quranic verses (Quran 3:16–19) were recorded on the lost minaret and other undeciphered fragments (probably later) on the interior structures. Yet, the position of the Persian text above the main entrance gives it an undisputed prominence.

Three Persian inscriptions are sculpted on stucco at different heights on the interior of the so-called Shāh Faḏl mausoleum at Safid Buland (Kyrgyzstan, 447–451 AH / 1055–1060 CE).<sup>29</sup> The upper text was the best preserved at the time of the first surveys and contains an elegy for a deceased ruler, identified as the Qarakhanid governor of Ferghana Sayf al-Dawla Muḥammad b. Naṣr. His son, Mu‘izz al-Dīn ‘Abbās, was probably the patron of the mausoleum (*khvābgāh*, literally ‘sleeping place’), mentioned in the middle inscription. The latter has only been partially deciphered; it was also composed in verse and possibly functioned as a construction text, as suggested by the use of the verb *farmūd* (‘he ordered’). The lower inscription is very fragmentary, but the surviving sections seem to address the reader a moralising message. Arabic formulae (the *shahāda* and the doxology *al-mulk li-llāh* ‘sovereignty [belongs] to God’) occur at the end of the two upper Persian inscriptions and around one decorative roundel; small-sized Quranic inscriptions frame other roundels adorning the inner walls. It appears, however, that Arabic played a secondary role in the epigraphic decoration of this building.

<sup>27</sup> See on the monument, McClary 2020, 202–213, and on the inscription, Giunta and Allegranzi 2020, 121–122 (both studies reference previous works).

<sup>28</sup> See especially Karev 2013, 125–126.

<sup>29</sup> See Nastić 2019, 33–77; McClary 2020, 23–52 (both studies reference previous works).





**Fig. 1:** The Persian inscription on the portal of Ribā-i Malik (Navoi, Uzbekistan, probably second half of the eleventh century). Photograph by Viola Allegranzi, 2015.

Numerous fragments of Persian inscriptions were discovered during the excavations and surveys in Ghazni (Afghanistan), capital city of the once-mighty Ghaznavid state.<sup>30</sup> A series of more than two hundred marble panels (c. 75 × 40 cm) with geometric and vegetal decoration, topped by short poetic inscriptions in Persian is particularly noteworthy (Fig. 2).<sup>31</sup> Most panels were excavated in a Ghaznavid royal palace and once adorned the dado of the antechambers that opened onto the building's central courtyard (probably late eleventh–early twelfth century). Their inscriptions composed a continuous text, made up of two or more poems praising the Ghaznavid rulers, their military exploits and reli-

**30** The Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan investigated the Islamic and Buddhist sites of Ghazni between 1957 and 1978. The archaeological and photographic materials collected have undergone systematic analysis in more recent times, and research on premodern Ghazni is still ongoing. A digital archive and up-to-date information on the mission's activities are available at <<https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/>> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

**31** Alessio Bombaci devoted a first study to the inscriptions carved on 115 dado panels (Bombaci 1966); 113 more inscribed panels of the same type were recorded during subsequent archaeological and research activities. The entire corpus is examined in Allegranzi 2017 and 2019.

gious policy. The poetic language is consistent with that used in the surviving poetic anthologies of the Ghaznavid court poets; it mixes common tropes of Persian panegyric poetry with Arabic royal titles and notions borrowed from Islamic religious sciences.<sup>32</sup>



**Fig. 2:** Marble dado panel with a fragment of a Persian inscription excavated in the Ghaznavid palace (Ghazni, Afghanistan, probably late eleventh–early twelfth century, H 75, W 40, D 7 cm). Text: ... *‘ulūm-i shar‘at* ‘... the sciences of the canonic Law’ (reading by Bombaci 1966, 14, no. 93). Archives of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan, inv. no. C2791.

<sup>32</sup> Arabic loanwords are Persianized and adapted to the prosody. The Arabic article, for instance, is generally omitted, the genitive case replaced by the Persian *izāfa*, and the *tā’ marbūta* (ة) by a final *tā’ maftūha* (ت).

One should note that several other inscriptions on different materials (marble, baked brick, stucco) were part of the architectural decoration of the Ghaznavid palace: they are all in Arabic and record construction texts, benedictory phrases, doxologies and Quranic verses. The large epigraphic repertoire collected throughout the city confirms that Arabic remained the main epigraphic language in premodern Ghazni. Nevertheless, a small group of marble finds of different types bear traces of Persian inscriptions: they are all attributable to the eleventh and twelfth centuries and probably belonged to lost buildings of the Ghaznavid city, which demonstrates the significant role this dynasty played in the development of Persian epigraphy.<sup>33</sup>

The Qarakhanid and Ghaznavid Persian inscriptions discussed so far share several common features: they are part of the architectural decoration of royal buildings, occupy prominent positions, and the best preserved among them prove to be composed in verse. In addition, in all the sites mentioned above, Persian poetic inscriptions coexist with Arabic texts recorded in separate epigraphic registers and having different contents, including Quranic quotations and rather standardised formulae. It appears that a linguistic specialisation in monumental epigraphy – titulatures, foundation and religious inscriptions in Arabic versus poetic inscriptions in Persian – was established by the late eleventh century, which reflects the bilingual cultural environment of the eastern Islamic courts. The visibility given to poetic inscriptions in royal buildings also testifies to the important role of Persian poetry in the legitimisation strategies of the Turko-Iranian dynasties and raises the question of a possible link with performative practices. Indeed, the narrative sources describe court ceremonies in which poets recited panegyric poems, competing one against the other to deliver the most pleasing praise of the ruler and obtain the greatest reward.<sup>34</sup>

From the palaeographic point of view, most Persian inscriptions from the eleventh and early twelfth century are written in Kufic letters,<sup>35</sup> although the writing style and ornaments vary from text to text. The lack of diacritical points makes the reading of some Persian passages ambiguous, and although the inscriptions were well visible to the observer, their actual legibility is an open

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<sup>33</sup> Allegranzi 2019, vol. 1, 193–206.

<sup>34</sup> Bosworth 1963, 129–139.

<sup>35</sup> Some fragments of Persian inscriptions in curvilinear letters come from Ghazni (Allegranzi 2019, vol. 1, 195–200), where curvilinear script seems to have spread in epigraphy in the first half of the eleventh century, i.e. earlier than at any other Islamic site known to us, see Giunta 2001; Giunta 2003, 431.

issue.<sup>36</sup> As a rule, inscriptions in various writing styles (in Kufic or curvilinear script, with different degrees and types of ornamentation) are placed side by side in the epigraphic programme of medieval Iranian monuments. While a fixed relationship between the use of language and the content of the text is generally observed, there is no established correspondence between the language and the writing style, the choice of which seems determined more by artistic trends and the visual harmony of the architectural decoration.

The tradition of inscribing Persian verses on monuments, juxtaposing them with Arabic inscriptions of different content, was destined to continue over time. A Persian poem inscribed in curvilinear letters is partially preserved on the arch framing the portal of the southern mausoleum in Uzgend (Kyrgyzstan, 582 AH / 1186–1187 CE), the capital of the Qarakhanid line of Ferghana.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, fragments of curvilinear inscriptions in Persian, probably versified, have emerged among the wall paintings of a Qarakhanid royal pavilion excavated in Samarqand and attributed to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.<sup>38</sup> In both contexts, several Arabic inscriptions varying in length, content and style were also recorded.

Persian poetic inscriptions are increasingly found on elements of architectural decoration and inscribed objects from the early thirteenth century onwards, and this epigraphic tradition bears witness to the continuity of artistic practices between the pre-Mongol and Mongol periods. The large corpora of lustre-painted ceramic vessels and tiles produced in north-western Iran between the late twelfth and the fourteenth century are a case in point. Persian love quatrains, excerpts from Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma* ('Book of Kings') and well-wishing verses are frequently inscribed on them, alternating with Quranic passages, hadiths and benedictory inscriptions in Arabic.<sup>39</sup> The inscriptions are painted on lustre-painted ceramics in curvilinear letters inspired by handwriting and they probably addressed a larger audience than the royal court. Indeed, while some of the lustre-painted tiles originally decorated state-sponsored

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**36** The progressive replacement of Kufic with curvilinear script in twelfth-century inscriptions did not solve the issue of ambiguity, since Persian inscriptions continued to be written without diacritics and using some confusable letters, see Allegranzi 2018, 106; Allegranzi 2019, vol. 1, 241–242.

**37** Nastič 2019, 99–100; see also Allegranzi 2019, vol. 1, 215–216; McClary 2020, 88–96.

**38** Karev 2005, 69; see also Allegranzi 2019, vol. 1, 216–217.

**39** Qūchāni (1371 AH / 1992 CE); O'Kane 2006. Several scholars have contributed to the study of inscriptions on lustre-painted ceramics, including Mehdi Bahrami, Leon T. Gjuzal'jan, 'Abdullah Gouchani, Assadullah S. Melikian-Chirvani and Manijeh Bayani; nevertheless, numerous inscriptions on these materials are still unpublished.

buildings (such as the Ilkhanid palace at Takht-i Sulaymān), other tiles and most vessels were probably destined for members of the upper classes. This gives us reason to assume that their epigraphic repertoire mirrors the literary taste of educated people in the premodern Persian-speaking societies.<sup>40</sup>

## 4 Mixing Persian and Arabic

### 4.1 The inclusion of Persian in construction texts

As mentioned above, a standardised Arabic formulary prevails in the construction texts of medieval Iranian monuments. However, in addition to the Zalamkot inscription (see above, Subsection 2.2), there are other exceptions of pre-thirteenth-century construction inscriptions partially composed in Persian. A foundation text that mixes Persian and Arabic is inscribed on the entrance arch of the northern mausoleum in the Qarakhanid site of Uzgend; it gives the starting date of construction as the fourth of *rabi'* II 547 AH / 9 July 1152 CE.<sup>41</sup> The main text is in Persian and some Arabic words inserted in the date are Persianized (*rabi' al-ākhir* > *rabi'-i ākhir*; *hijra* > *hijrat*). However, the verb is placed at the beginning of the text, as in standard Arabic texts, and the last third of the inscription contains a benediction of the prophet Muḥammad and his family and a doxology in Arabic. The text is sculpted on terracotta tiles and features curvilinear letters on a background of vegetal scrolls. An inscription that differs in style and content runs inside the entrance vault of the same building: it is executed in bordered Kufic and records the titulature of the alleged patron, the Qarakhanid Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn (r. c. 531–551 AH / 1137–1156 CE), mixing Arabo-Islamic and Turkic titles and names.<sup>42</sup>

The Ghurids, successors to the Ghaznavids in eastern Khurasan and northern India, do not seem to have continued the tradition of adding Persian poetic inscriptions to monuments, at least as far as one can judge from the architectur-

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<sup>40</sup> By contrast, the largest group of inscribed vessels produced in Khurasan and Transoxiana in earlier times, namely Samanid epigraphic pottery (probably ninth to eleventh century), exclusively contained Arabic inscriptions (benedictory formulae, proverbs, hadiths). The language and the ornated Kufic styles employed in this production probably made the inscriptions challenging for Persian-speaking consumers to understand. Ghouchani 1364 AH / 1986 CE; Pancaroğlu 2002; Hillenbrand 2015.

<sup>41</sup> Nastič 2019, 82–83; McClary 2020, 74–76.

<sup>42</sup> Nastič 2019, 83–87; McClary 2020, 77–78. See also Peacock 2023, 291–295.

al complexes patronised by this dynasty that have come down to us.<sup>43</sup> Mention should be made, however, of a passage of the inscriptions in sculpted stucco adorning the interior of a Ghurid domed structure in Chisht-i Sharif (Hari Rud valley, Afghanistan), recording in Persian the date of the tenth of *jumāda* I 562 AH / 4 March 1167 CE. Similar to the inscription in the northern mausoleum at Uzgend, the Arab name of the month is altered (*jumāda al-awwal* > *jumid al-awwal*) and a benediction of the prophet in Arabic follows the date.<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, the Persian section occurs at the end of a long inscription in Kufic letters containing several Quranic quotations (Quran 3:18–19; 2:255–257; 112). The renovation text and the titlature of the Ghurid ruler Shams al-Dīn (later known as Ghiyāth al-Dīn) Muḥammad b. Sām (r. 558–599 AH / 1163–1203 CE), by contrast, appear in a separate epigraphic register, more easily visible to the visitor, composed in Arabic and an ornamented curvilinear script.

A final example of the oscillation between the adherence to the Arabic model and the experimentation of new formulae in Persian is that of the inscriptions referring to the foundation of the Quwwat al-Islām mosque (592–594 AH / 1195–1197 CE) in the Quṭb Minār complex in Delhi. Two foundation inscriptions in Arabic, located on the northern and eastern portal, respectively, mention the Ghurid ruler Mu‘izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Sām (r. 569–602 AH / 1173–1206 CE) and his military commander Quṭb al-Dīn Aybak (d. 607 AH / 1210 CE), responsible for the Ghurid expansion in India and actual patron of the building.<sup>45</sup> Two more inscriptions adorning the eastern entrance mention Quṭb al-Dīn Aybak, his victory over the infidels and role as the founder of the mosque: they are composed in Persian, in two different varieties of curvilinear script.<sup>46</sup> The intricate writing style suggests that the longer text, located on the inner lintel, is a later addition to the original epigraphic programme, but the shorter text, in the lu-

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**43** The Ghurids (or Shansabanis) were a Muslim confederation originating from central Afghanistan, who conquered and ruled over a vast area stretching from eastern Iran to northern India between the mid-twelfth and the early thirteenth century, see O’Neal 2015. On Ghurid architecture in Afghanistan and Pakistan, see Patel 2021 (with an Appendix on monumental inscriptions: pp. 342–356).

**44** Blair 1985, 81–82, pl. 12; Giunta 2010, 177. Earlier inscriptions attest to the insertion of some Persian words in a date, see, for instance, a Buyid text incised in Persepolis (Iran, 438 AH / 1046 CE), Blair 1992, 118–120, no. 43.

**45** Horovitz 1914, 14–15, nos 3, 5; Blayac 2013, 218–219, fig. 12.2.

**46** Horovitz 1914, 13–14, nos 1, 2; Blayac 2013, 221, figs 12.4 and 12.5. Other royal inscriptions in Arabic mentioning the Ghurid sultans and Quṭb al-Dīn Aybak appear on the lower storey of the adjoining minaret, together with a highly fragmentary inscription in Kufic letters, probably in Persian (Horovitz 1914, 19, no. 12).

nette above the gateway, is probably contemporary with the Arabic foundation texts (late twelfth century).

This review has shown that the use of Persian in pre-Mongol monumental epigraphy is restricted to scattered sites. Besides the evidence mentioned above, a few other examples are related to late twelfth-century Islamic buildings in the Caucasus.<sup>47</sup> Although some inscriptions composed in a mixture of Persian and Arabic are recorded on monuments dating back to the second half of the twelfth century, it seems that construction texts did not cease to refer to the Arabo-Islamic model, and there was no consistent development of an epigraphic formula in Persian at that time.

## 4.2 The uses of Persian on inscribed objects

Following its introduction in monumental inscriptions, Persian epigraphy began to be sporadically used on luxury objects, as evidenced by a few pieces of metalwork produced between the mid-twelfth and the early thirteenth century.<sup>48</sup> These are four dated and signed objects made of copper alloy or brass, decorated and inscribed with silver and copper inlays. The earliest artefact is a rectangular pen-box dated 542 AH / 1148 CE, kept at The State Hermitage Museum (inv. no. SA-12688).<sup>49</sup> Several inscriptions decorate the object, among which is a text in curvilinear script included in cartouches on both long sides, containing a quatrain in Persian followed by the name ‘Umar b. al-Faḍl b. [...]’.<sup>50</sup> The full name occurs in a passage of the Arabic dedicatory inscription on the upper face: ‘amal ‘umar b. al-faḍl b. yūsuf al-bayyā’ (‘work of ‘Umar son of al-Faḍl son of Yūsuf, the seller’).<sup>51</sup> The epithet *al-bayyā* (‘the seller’) suggests that the signature does not refer to the maker or decorator of the pen-box, as one would ex-

47 O’Kane 2009, 33, 59; Allegranzi 2019, vol. 1, 218–220. Furthermore, a fragmentary foundation text in Persian, probably dating back to the mid-thirteenth century, has recently been identified in the Great Mosque of Faryumad in north-eastern Iran (Aghajani forthcoming, no. 46).

48 A silver bowl inscribed with Persian verses has been attributed to the Samanid period (late ninth–early tenth century); however, O’Kane (2009, 11–13) questioned this early dating.

49 See an in-depth analysis of the object and its inscriptions in Giuzalian 1968. The inscriptions are also recorded in *TEI*, no. 16862.

50 Giuzalian 1968, 115–116, figs 1, 9. This author translated the poem as follows: ‘I was satisfied with Izad’s pre-determination, I cut off the hope of all creatures, Izad regarded me in favour while I lived, He will favour me in the future until I die’. Note the use of the Persian word *izad* for ‘God’ instead of the Arabic *allāh*, more widespread at that time.

51 Giuzalian 1968, 98–99 and pl. 1, fig. 2. The inscription is unconventionally designed in a mixture of Kufic and curvilinear script.

pect in an inscription that begins with *‘amal* ‘work of’, but to the person responsible for its sale.<sup>52</sup> It is unusual for a signature to be repeated twice on the same object and the implications of the mention following the Persian poem are uncertain: it is unlikely that the signatory was the author of the pietistic verses, while it is more than plausible that their function was to draw divine favour on him.<sup>53</sup>

A longer Persian poem appears on the ribbed body of a ewer produced in Herat in 577 AH / 1181–1182 CE and held by the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia in Tbilisi (inv. no. MS 135).<sup>54</sup> The verses praise the extraordinary beauty of the ewer (*āftābah*) and mention its place of production (Herat) and its maker, upon whom they invoke heavenly mercy, generous reward and good fortune. One line attached to the versified inscription contains the signature – *al-‘amal al-naqsh maḥmūd b. muḥammad al-harawī* (‘work [and] design (?) of Maḥmūd son of Muḥammad al-Harawī’) – and the date. This section is composed in Arabic but has some inaccuracies: the article (*al-*) preceding the word *‘amal* is not justified by the syntax, since *‘amal* is usually employed as the first term of an *iḍāfa* construction (construct case) and, thus, without the definitive article. This also applies to the following *al-naqsh* (‘the painting’ or ‘the design’), which should additionally be preceded by the conjunction *wa* ‘and’. The use of *al-naqsh* is in itself unusual, as it replaces the agent noun derived from the same root, *al-naqqāsh* (‘the painter’ or ‘the designer’), commonly used in inscriptions on various media to designate the artisan responsible for the decoration. The signature probably refers to the inlayer and, as in the case of the pen-box discussed above, the question can be asked whether the signatory was also the author of the poem, which explicitly demands for recognition and reward for the artisanal work. Doubts have been raised about the authenticity of the Persian inscription on the ewer, due to the inconsistency in the spelling of the relative pronoun, alternatively transcribed *kī* or *kih* (the latter being a later form, rarely attested at that time). If we accept a dating from the late twelfth century, we must admit that the inscription represents a diversion from the established

52 This was already the hypothesis of Giuzalian (1968, 99–102); note, however, that professional epithets and *nisbas* did not necessarily reflect the actual social role of a named person and should be treated with caution. On the varied roles of signatories of Iranian metalwork and on the multiple meanings of the introductory formula *‘amal*, see Allegranzi forthcoming.

53 Two more Persian poems incised on the lower face of the pen-box were probably added later (Giuzalian 1968, 116–117). These verses personify the pen and inkwell (*qalam* and *dawāt*), thus, allegorically referring to the function of the artefact.

54 Loukonine and Ivanov 1996, 136–137, no. 117; Canby et al. 2016, 155–156, no. 85.



models, since the scribe seems to be unfamiliar with the standard Arabic formulary and more acquainted with Persian language.

The last two inscribed objects discussed, both held by The State Hermitage Museum (inv. nos IR-2268 and AZ-225), provide examples of fabrication texts composed in Persian. The first is a bucket of globular shape produced in Herat in 559 AH / 1163 CE, the body of which is finely decorated with figurative scenes and Arabic benedictory inscriptions in ornate styles.<sup>55</sup> The fabrication text, inscribed in curvilinear letters on the upper side of the rim, is in Persian. However, as in some examples discussed above (see Subsections 2.2 and 4.1), the syntax follows the verb-object-subject word order and the phrase *farmūdan-i īn khidmat rā* ‘ordered this service (or: gift)’ (literally ‘the ordering of this service’) introduces the names of three individuals involved in the production process, followed by the mention of the owner.<sup>56</sup> All the people mentioned bear Arabic names and titles, and the owner’s name is followed by a benedictory phrase in Arabic, which shows the strong influence of the Arabic model.

We finally focus attention on a zoomorphic aquamanile dated 603 AH / 1206 CE, featuring a zebu suckling her calf and a lion-shaped handle, which originally had movable pieces (the zebu’s bell, harness and tail) activated by an internal mechanism (Fig. 3).<sup>57</sup> The artefact is unique in its design, and the fabrication inscription, traced on the zebu’s neck, is equally unconventional.<sup>58</sup> The first part of the text is in Persian: it unusually describes the object and its fabrication process (*īn gāv va gūsāla va shīr har si yak bāra rikhta shud-ast* ‘This cow, calf and lion were all cast at the same time’), and invokes God through a magniloquent Persian phrase (*yāzdān-i dādgar parvardgār* ‘God, the all-just judge and the nourisher’). Conversely, the second part, giving the name of the owner and the decorator, adheres to the Arabic syntax and formulary. However, both the patron (Rūzba b. Afrīdūn [b.] Barzīn) and the owner (Shāh Barzīn b. Afrīdūn b. [Bar]zīn) bear Persian names and seem to be members of the same family, probably belonging to the Iranian elites. The context of reception could, therefore, justify the choice of composing ad hoc a ‘Persianized’ inscription for the precious automaton.

55 Ettinghausen 1943. See photos at <<https://www.kornbluthphoto.com/BobriniskyBucket.html>> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

56 Ettinghausen 1943, 196, 198, fig. 3; Giuzalian 1968, 105. See also *TEI*, no. 7979 and a full transliteration and translation in Allegranzi forthcoming. I thank Prof. Jürgen Paul who pointed out that the term *khidmat* could be used in this context with the meaning of ‘present, gift’.

57 Giuzalian 1968, 103–109; Loukonine and Ivanov 1996, 144, no. 127.

58 Giuzalian 1968, 103–104. See also *TEI*, no. 2890 and a full transliteration and translation in Allegranzi forthcoming.



**Fig. 3:** Zoomorphic aquamanile (probably from Khurasan, 603 AH / 1206 CE, H 35 cm). The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no. AZ-225. Photograph © The State Hermitage Museum / photo by Vladimir Terebenin.

The Persian inscriptions on this small group of objects reflect trends already observed in monumental epigraphy. On the one hand, Persian verses are juxtaposed to Arabic inscriptions of different natures (cf. the pen-box and the ewer); on the other hand, Arabic syntax and vocabulary exert a strong influence on fabrication texts, composed in a mixture of Persian and Arabic (cf. the bucket and the aquamanile). The four inlaid pieces of metalwork are all extremely valuable and the explicit mentions of their patron and/or owner indicate that they

were the result of special commissions. The choice to deviate from the standard model and use Persian in the epigraphic decoration could respond to a specific request of the patron or represent an adaptation to the context of reception and consumption. It is good to remember that these pieces constitute an exception and that the great majority of medieval Iranian metalwork, presumably produced to be sold on the market, display standard benedictory inscriptions in Arabic, bestowing protection to an anonymous owner.

## Conclusion

Based on surviving evidence, the Persian language has been progressively introduced into the epigraphic culture of the eastern Islamic regions from the eleventh century onwards. In this period and up to the thirteenth century, inscriptions that deviate from the Arabo-Islamic model are few and geographically dispersed. Although it is likely that some vestiges of this probably wider phenomenon have been lost, it can be assumed that there was still no reference model for Persian inscriptions, as linguistic and stylistic solutions vary from case to case. Furthermore, at this epoch, Persian is never completely independent in the epigraphic decoration of monuments and objects, but always alternated or mixed with Arabic.<sup>59</sup> This is made possible by the fact that New Persian shares the same alphabet with Arabic. In fact, multiscritpism is observed in some eleventh-century bilingual inscriptions, but they constitute isolated attempts, produced in peripheral areas of the Iranian region.

The contents of the earliest inscriptions in New Persian allow us to define two main trends. On the one hand, Persian verses are inscribed on royal monuments (especially palaces and mausoleums), juxtaposed to Arabic inscriptions of different contents. The prominent position and panegyric tone of these inscriptions reflect the importance of Persian poetry in the political discourse and court culture of the Turko-Iranian dynasties. The use of Persian poetic inscriptions on monuments and objects is destined to continue and spread in the Iranian world, in association with both royal and private patronage, through the premodern and subsequent periods. On the other hand, Persian is sometimes used in construction texts, which, however, reveal a greater influence of the

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<sup>59</sup> The present study did not consider funerary inscriptions, which reveal a similar tendency, that is, a general adherence to the Arabo-Islamic formulary, rarely supplemented with Persian expressions (especially verses or invocations). See Giunta 2010; Allegranzi 2018; Babadjanov et al. 2019, 258–259, 262–263, 286–287, 304–305, 308–309, 446, nos Q-095, Q-097, Q-108, Q-117, Q-119, Q-180.

Arabic models. In particular, the verb usually occupies the first position, in accordance with Arabic verb-initial syntax (thus, contradicting the Persian subject-object-verb word order); moreover, Arabic words or phrases (especially benedictory formulae and doxologies) often complement the inscriptions. As a general rule, Arabic remains the standard language for construction texts in eastern Islamic epigraphy. The reasons behind the unconventional choice to compose a construction text in Persian (or rather, in a mixture of Persian and Arabic) are sometimes difficult to establish with certainty, but they seem to be mostly related to the particularity of the context of production and/or reception.

From a stylistic point of view, the Persian inscriptions attributed to the eleventh century were mainly composed in Kufic script without diacritical marks, in more or less ornate styles depending on the visual effect sought and, perhaps, on the medium. From the twelfth century onwards, the use of curvilinear script (generally not diacritised) took root. However, this shift is not limited to Persian inscriptions, but reflects a general trend in the artistic production of the eastern caliphate, where epigraphic cursive became widespread much earlier than in the western regions. Thus, there does not appear to be a preferential association between the language of composition and the writing style. However, multilingualism and the development of new writing styles and ornaments are, in effect, the most original features of Islamic epigraphy in the Persianate world.

## Abbreviations

*EP* = Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas and Devin J. Stewart (eds), *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Leiden: Brill, 2021 (online).

*TEI* = Ludvik Kalus, Frédéric Bauden and Frédérique Soudan, *Thesaurus d'Épigraphie Islamique* <[www.epigraphie-islamique.uliege.be](http://www.epigraphie-islamique.uliege.be)> (accessed on 5 May 2023).

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Eva Orthmann

# Bilingual Inscriptions from India: Combining Arabic and Persian with Indic Languages

**Abstract:** Multilingualism and multiscriptuality are omnipresent in today's India: different languages in various scripts are found on street signs and banknotes, in metro stations, public buildings and many other places.<sup>1</sup> However, despite the omnipresence of contemporary multilingual texts, examples from premodern India are much less frequent. The following article will shed light on one specific type of multilingual text from the premodern and early modern period: epigraphic documents. There are multiple combinations of languages and scripts in Indian epigraphy, but this article will focus only on combinations of Indic languages and scripts with texts in Arabic or Persian.

## 1 Introduction

Arabic and Persian inscriptions are an important source of information on Muslim rule in India. They are found on epitaphs, wells, walls, tablets, pillars and copper plates, in mosques and other places. The vast majority of the several thousand inscriptions so far discovered and published are monolingual or in a mixture of Persian and Arabic. The latter combination will not be considered as bilingual or multilingual, since the insertion of Arabic expressions into Persian is very frequent.<sup>2</sup> Rather, the bilingual texts studied in this article are combinations of Arabic or Persian with Indic languages, mainly Sanskrit. In a preliminary survey of the inscriptions published in the *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica* and its continuation, *Epigraphia Indica: Arabic and Persian Supplement*, from 1907 to 2011, sixty-three bilingual and three trilingual inscriptions have been recorded. Another bilingual and one more trilingual inscription are included in the

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<sup>1</sup> For good examples, see e.g. the images in Brandt 2014.

<sup>2</sup> I am not referring here to the many Arabic loanwords in Persian, but to Arabic phrases – in many cases from the Quran or Ḥadīth (records of the words and deeds of Muḥammad) – that have been included in Persian texts; Arabic eulogies or numbers are also common. In some cases, we even find Arabic poetry. See also Sheikh 2014, 189 for the same approach.

Siddham database,<sup>3</sup> and eight further inscriptions are contained in other publications. The total number of inscriptions considered here is thus seventy-six.

Most of the examples I will present contain texts in two different scripts and two different languages. In spite of the use of two different scripts, these texts are not bicultural, but bilingual, as only monolingual texts in two different scripts are bicultural by definition;<sup>4</sup> the only texts in this category are direction stones with Persian in Arabic and Nāgarī characters.<sup>5</sup> In the inscriptions considered below, one script is always Arabic, the other an Indian script.

Unfortunately, not all of these inscriptions have been fully edited, and in quite a few cases, we either lack photos of part of the inscription, or the quality of the reproduction is very poor. In many cases, the texts of the inscriptions have been published separately by language, with the Persian or Arabic text in one journal, the Sanskrit text in another. Because only rarely, all the necessary linguistic competences are found with one scholar, the texts have also been studied by different scholars,<sup>6</sup> and in most cases, the relationship between the two texts of the same bilingual inscription has not been examined. Two recent studies however address this question: while Soroni's study examines the corpus of inscriptions in Persian and Marathi,<sup>7</sup> Sheikh looks at the corpus of bilingual inscriptions from Gujarat.<sup>8</sup>

In my article, I attempt to give an overview of the entire corpus of bilingual inscriptions that join Arabic/Persian with an Indic language from the subcontinent. The goal is to formulate a broader idea of how these languages have been combined, what visual effects were produced, and how the hierarchy between languages was expressed. The comparison will show that in spite of the vast geographical and historical provenance of the inscriptions, their visual design was often similar. Two points are striking: given the dominance of Persian as an official language in many regions of India over a vast period, we would expect Persian and Arabic to be visually dominant in the inscriptions as well. While this is often the case, we also find many inscriptions in which the Persian and Arabic text is at the top of the inscription, but of equal size or even shorter than the Indic text. This broad overview cannot address the political and social context in which the single inscriptions were produced; it is rather meant as a pre-

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<sup>3</sup> <https://siddham.network/> (accessed on 4 September 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Bunčić 2016, 51–54.

<sup>5</sup> See below, Subsection 4.6.

<sup>6</sup> Soroni 2022, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Soroni 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Sheikh 2014.

liminary attempt to present the corpus and a starting point for further studies on bilingual inscriptions from India. It has not been possible to consider every archaeological publication on inscriptions in India, so the corpus can certainly be enlarged, especially by including unpublished inscriptions. The article will describe some general features of the corpus and look at some of the most interesting inscriptions in greater detail, considering especially the relations between the texts involved. The historical and social conditions of the inscriptions' production are not examined.

## 2 Languages

Twenty-eight of the inscriptions studied here – i.e. the majority – are in Persian (with or without some Arabic) and Sanskrit.<sup>9</sup> They are spread over a period of some one thousand years, and come from many different regions of the subcontinent: the Swat valley, Delhi, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Mumbai, the Deccan and other places. Persian-Sanskrit bilingual inscriptions have been produced by various dynasties and rulers, but the corpus contains no Persian-Sanskrit inscriptions from the period of Bābur (r. 1526–1530 CE), Humāyūn (r. 1530–1540 CE, 1555–1556 CE) or Akbar (r. 1556–1605 CE), and only one from Jahāngīr (r. 1605–1627 CE).

There are furthermore five inscriptions in Arabic and Sanskrit.<sup>10</sup> Though few in number, these are among the most interesting bilingual inscriptions, both with regard to their content and their placement (see below). The earliest Arabic-Sanskrit bilingual inscription, from the Tochi valley in today's Pakistan, dates to 243 AH / 857 CE; the latest, from Burhānpūr in contemporary Madhya Pradesh, to 997 AH / 1588–1589 CE.

The second largest group are inscriptions in Persian and Marathi: a total of nineteen inscriptions belong to this group.<sup>11</sup> We must however consider that seven of these are directional inscriptions, containing no more than place names, and that among these directional inscriptions, five consist mainly of transliterated Persian, written in Nāgarī script. One inscription in Arabic and a mixture of Gujarati and Marathi has also been preserved.<sup>12</sup> The majority of Per-

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<sup>9</sup> Persian and Sanskrit: 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 29, 30, 32, 37, 58, 70, 74, 76; Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit: 18, 24, 38, 63, 70.

<sup>10</sup> Arabic and Sanskrit: 2, 4, 26, 44, 46.

<sup>11</sup> Persian and Marathi: 7, 35, 42, 43, 47, 48, 49, 56, 57, 65, 72, 73, 75; transliterated Persian: 50, 51, 52, 53, 55; Persian, Marathi and Kannada: 36, 60.

<sup>12</sup> Arabic with a mixture of Marathi and Gujarati: 11.

sian and Marathi inscriptions belongs to the Nizām Shāhī period (1490–1636 CE) and comes from this dynasty’s realm.<sup>13</sup>

We furthermore find inscriptions in Persian and Telugu,<sup>14</sup> Persian and Rajasthan, <sup>15</sup> Persian and Kannada, <sup>16</sup> Persian and Kanarese, <sup>17</sup> Persian and Moṛī, <sup>18</sup> and Persian and Hindi.<sup>19</sup> For some inscriptions, the language has not been specified. In most of these cases, only the script is indicated (as Nāgarī), with no specification of the language.<sup>20</sup> In some cases, the second language is a local dialect.<sup>21</sup>

Four multilingual inscriptions also deserve to be mentioned: first and foremost, the so-called Tarisāppalli copper plates, which are mainly inscribed in Tamil, but contain signatures in Syriac, Arabic and Pahlavi (no. 1). Another trilingual inscription comes from Sri Lanka; this is in Tamil, Chinese and Persian. Further trilingual inscriptions are in Persian, Old Gujarati and Sanskrit and Persian, Marathi and Kannada.<sup>22</sup>

### 3 Dating

The inscriptions under study span a period of some one thousand years, with the earliest dating to 850 CE, the latest to 1830 CE. Of course, bilingual inscriptions have also been produced after 1830 CE – they are omnipresent in today’s India – but the time frame considered here ends with the beginning of direct British rule in 1857 CE. There are only two inscriptions from the ninth century, and one from the eleventh century. The number of inscriptions significantly increases in the fifteenth century, with a peak in the sixteenth century. There is a significant number of inscriptions related to the Nizām Shāhī dynasty,<sup>23</sup> and

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**13** For a study of this corpus, see Soroni 2022.

**14** Persian and Telugu: 33, 66, 68.

**15** Persian and Rajasthan: 61, 69.

**16** Persian and Kannada: 28; Persian, Marathi and Kannada: 36, 60.

**17** Persian and Kanarese: 25.

**18** Persian and Moṛī: 40.

**19** Persian and Hindi: 23.

**20** Arabic, Persian and Nāgarī: 38; Persian and Nāgarī: 34, 39, 41, 67; language not specified: 31, 45.

**21** Local dialects: 54, 59, 62, 64, 71.

**22** Chinese, Tamil and Persian: 16; Persian, Old Gujarati and Sanskrit: 12; Persian, Marathi and Kannada: 36, 60. No. 36 is however rather triscriptal than trilingual, since the Persian is written in Arabic and Nāgarī characters.

**23** Nos 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 55, 56.

quite a few to different rulers of Gujarat;<sup>24</sup> otherwise, the inscriptions are equally distributed over the different dynasties. The number of bilingual inscriptions from the Mughals is rather low, with the majority of them belonging to the period of Shāh Jahān (r. 1628–1658 CE)<sup>25</sup> and Aurangzēb (r. 1658–1707 CE).<sup>26</sup>

The inscriptions use a number of dating systems. The Arabic and Persian part of the inscriptions is usually dated in Hijrī years. In most cases, the day and the month are indicated. The numbers are mostly written out, but, in some cases, they are in Arabic numerals. In a few cases, we also find a chronogram. Inscriptions from the Deccan, namely from the Niẓām Shāhī and ʿĀdil Shāhī (1490–1686 CE) dynasties, indicate the Shuhūr-San, a solar year introduced in the Deccan in 741 AH / 1340 CE.<sup>27</sup> A document from the period of Aurangzēb mentions the Faṣḷī year, a lunisolar year introduced by the third Mughal ruler, Akbar, in 1556 CE, mainly for accounting (no. 72).<sup>28</sup>

In the period of Shāh Jahān and Aurangzēb, inscriptions are dated in regnal years. In the Indic versions of the inscriptions, the most widespread dating system is the Vikrama *saṁvat* calendar, a Hindu lunisolar calendar named after King Vikramāditya, whose era began in 57 CE. The Śaka *saṁvat*, also known as the Śālivāhana Śaka, is also used. Named after King Śālivāhana, it is a lunisolar calendar beginning in 78 CE. The earliest inscription mentions, in Sanskrit, the year [39]32, which belongs to the Laukika or Śāstra era used in the Punjab and Kashmir, beginning in 3076 BCE. The inscription from Prabhas Pātan (no. 4) also contains the Valabhī era, which began 375 years after the Vikrama *saṁvat* era and for which this inscription is an important source.<sup>29</sup> The Simha era, which begins in 1113/1114 CE, is also mentioned in the same inscription.<sup>30</sup> The dates are usually very precisely indicated in the Indic version. There are sometimes discrepancies, however, of a matter of days or even weeks between the Vikrama or Śaka date and the Hijrī date. This could indicate that the respective inscriptions were installed on different dates.

Another significant difference between the indication of dates in the Arabic or Persian and Indic versions is the placement of the date. In Indic inscriptions, it usually comes at the very beginning, while in the Arabic or Persian version, different places are possible, but it often comes at the end.

<sup>24</sup> Nos 4, 6, 12, 13, 15, 19, 20, 24, 29, 31.

<sup>25</sup> Nos 61, 62, 63, 64, 69.

<sup>26</sup> Nos 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73.

<sup>27</sup> On the Shuhūr-San, see Martin 1971.

<sup>28</sup> On the Faṣḷī year, see Blake 2013, 117–118.

<sup>29</sup> Virji 1952, 106.

<sup>30</sup> On this era, see Indrajī 1896, 176.

## 4 Contexts and types of inscriptions

Most of the inscriptions are related to building activities. We thus find inscriptions referring to the construction of a tomb;<sup>31</sup> a mosque or minaret;<sup>32</sup> a step well, well or spring;<sup>33</sup> doors and gates;<sup>34</sup> military structures like walls, fortifications and bastions;<sup>35</sup> cities;<sup>36</sup> gardens;<sup>37</sup> and other buildings.<sup>38</sup> One specific group of inscriptions served as sign posts.<sup>39</sup> Other inscriptions specify the details of endowments and grants,<sup>40</sup> refer to the cultivation of land<sup>41</sup> or indicate the content of *farmāns* (royal orders), tax regulations and other instructions.<sup>42</sup> We also find an epitaph (no. 11) and a description of offerings by the Chinese emperor (no. 16). The types of inscriptions do not differ very much from monolingual inscriptions. However, religious inscriptions are not very prominent, and neither epitaphs nor inscriptions in mosques are present in large number.

The original placement of the inscriptions was related to their content. Those that are still *in situ* are usually located in close proximity to the object referred to in the inscription, like on the wall of a well, the battlement of a fortification, or somewhere in the mosque.

## 5 Stylistic features and arrangement

The placement of the two or sometimes three languages in the inscriptions is not always the same, but one can identify some recurrent patterns. These differ in terms of period, the languages involved and the respective dynasty. The inscriptions also vary in terms of how they are made. Traditionally, Indic texts are incised, and Persian/Arabic texts are in relief. In the bilingual inscriptions, we

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31 Nos 3, 32, 62.

32 Nos 4, 7, 9, 22, 29, 40, 44, 46, 66.

33 Nos 5, 10, 12, 14, 18, 21, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 39, 57, 60, 61, 63, 64, 70.

34 Nos 13, 67, 75.

35 Nos 15, 20, 31, 37, 38, 41, 43, 45, 60, 68, 69.

36 Nos 24, 58, 64, 73.

37 Nos 32, 35.

38 Nos 2, 42.

39 Nos 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 55.

40 Nos 6, 8, 36, 56, 74, 76.

41 Nos 25, 33.

42 Nos 1, 17, 19, 23, 28, 34, 54, 59, 65, 71.

find three different arrangements: the texts may both be incised or in relief, or the Indic text may be incised and the Persian/Arabic text in relief.

In the following, the inscriptions will be placed into four different categories. These categories are defined according to the size and prominence allotted to the languages on the slab. The categories thus do not reflect the length of each text, but its outward appearance. Since the characters used for one language might be smaller than those used for the other, texts of different sizes might have the same content, whereas in texts of the same size, one language might contain more information. Some of the cases are difficult to decide, either because one of the texts has only been partially preserved, or since no photo of the Indic text has been published.

## 5.1 Indic text marginalized

In several inscriptions, the Persian/Arabic text is entirely dominant, while the Indic text is very small and in some cases almost invisible in the margins of the slab. The Indic text is in most cases in Nāgarī, and the language is Sanskrit or Hindi, but sometimes unspecified. Often, the Indic text is almost invisible in the published image and no translation is provided; this is the case for eight inscriptions.<sup>43</sup> In two cases (nos 31, 45), the Indic text is not mentioned in the edition at all. For no. 31, it is possible that the Persian text was inscribed on a *spolium* from an earlier building, and that the Indic text was not related to the Persian.

In this category of bilingual inscriptions, the Persian text is always prominently in the centre, and in most cases in relief. Inscriptions nos 37, 38 and 39 are all related to a certain Aflāṭūn Khān, who was the local governor for Murtaḍā Nizām Shāh I (r. 1565–1588 CE) of Ahmadnagar. The Indic version is very short, and in all three cases very damaged. It contains the construction date. In one case, Arabic numerals are spelled out in Nāgarī script (no. 38). Inscriptions nos 67, 69 and 70 were produced in the period of Aurangzēb, but differ in their arrangement of the two texts: in the first case, the Indic text is below the Persian; in the second, above it; and in the third, in the right and left margins. All three inscriptions deal with construction works in the realm of a *rāja* or *mahārāja*; the Indic versions contain the names of the persons involved.

We may wonder who the addressees of the Indic part of the inscriptions were. It was certainly only possible to read them from up close, while from a distance, one might not even have seen them. In the case of constructions from

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<sup>43</sup> Nos 31, 37, 38, 39, 45, 67, 69, 70.

the period of Aurangzēb, it is reasonable to assume that the Indic texts were added because the construction works were carried out in the territory of a *rāja* or *mahārāja*. It remains unclear, however, why even in such an environment, the Indic versions were entirely marginalized.

## 5.2 Indic text in smaller size

In many inscriptions, the Indic text, in most cases in Nāgarī script, is smaller in size than the Persian/Arabic text. The letters are smaller, and – with the exception of one inscription (no. 76) – the Indic text is below the Persian/Arabic. There is thus a clear hierarchy between the two texts, with the Persian/Arabic in the dominant position.<sup>44</sup> All three types – with both the Persian and Indic text incised,<sup>45</sup> the Persian in relief and the Indic text incised,<sup>46</sup> and both texts in relief<sup>47</sup> – feature this arrangement.

The comparison of the two versions is not easy, since in many cases, the Indic version is too weathered to be properly deciphered, and the Persian/Arabic version is also often damaged. The inscriptions are from many different areas and periods. But two general tendencies can be observed: first, in many cases in which the Indic version is shorter, it focuses on the essential information, like the name of the builder, the governor and the ruler and the purpose of the inscription. The *basmala*,<sup>48</sup> eulogies and blessing formulas, as well as threats, have often been deleted; this implies that specifically Islamic elements have been omitted, and only in a few cases replaced by Hindu phrases. Second, in spite of the reduction of space, many Indic inscriptions contain more chronological information.

## 5.3 Indic and Persian/Arabic texts of the same size

The second largest group of bilingual inscriptions has Indic and Persian texts of the same size.<sup>49</sup> There are four subcategories in this group: the first and predominant group consists of inscriptions in which the Persian/Arabic and Sanskrit

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<sup>44</sup> Nos 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, 19, 21, 22, 28, 34, 35, 42, 43, 47, 58, (65), 66, 71, 76.

<sup>45</sup> Nos 3, 8, 15, 66, 71, 76.

<sup>46</sup> Nos 6, 9, 10, 17, 19, 21, 22, 28, 34, 54, 58.

<sup>47</sup> Nos 42, 43.

<sup>48</sup> The phrase ‘In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful’ is called the *basmala*.

<sup>49</sup> Nos 2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 13, 23, 27, 29, 30, 32, 41, 44, 56, 59, 61, (64), 68, 72, 73.



text are on the same slab and placed one below the other.<sup>50</sup> In these cases, the Persian/Arabic inscription is always on top and thus optically prioritized. This is not the case for the other three types, in which no priority can be established. In the second type, the texts are placed next to each other, on the right and left sides of the same slab.<sup>51</sup> Here, the Indic text is on the left side. This arrangement is probably related to the different writing directions, because Persian/Arabic is written from right to left, and the Indic scripts from left to right. The third type consists of texts that have been placed on both sides of the same slab. Only one inscription of this type is found in the corpus (no. 5). In the fourth category, the two texts are on different slabs.<sup>52</sup> In these cases, it is often not easy to understand the intended relative position of the two inscriptions to each other, since many of these inscriptions have not been found in their original context. There are too many different relations between the two versions of the text to summarize them here; for some examples, details of the relationship between the two versions of the text are given below.

#### 5.4 Indic text larger than Persian/Arabic text

There is also a certain number of inscriptions in which the Indic text is longer and more prominent.<sup>53</sup> The order of the texts varies; in most cases, the Persian/Arabic text is on the top;<sup>54</sup> in others, it is on a different slab.<sup>55</sup> In one inscription, the two languages are on different sides of a copper plate (no. 74). There is one single inscription in which the Persian is below the Indic text (no. 62), and because of the layout of the two texts, it deserves special attention. It will be described in detail below (Subsection 6.9).

Here again, the relationship between the texts in different languages varies, and no general rule can be established. Some examples will therefore also be discussed.

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**50** Nos 2, 11, 13, 23, 27, 29, 32, 41, 44, 59.

**51** Nos 30, 61, 64.

**52** Nos 4, 26, 56, 68, 72, 73.

**53** Nos 18, 24, 25, 33, 46, 57, 62, 63, 74.

**54** Nos 18, 25, 33, 46, 63.

**55** Nos 24, 57.

## 5.5 Tri- and multilingual inscriptions

Altogether five examples of inscriptions with more than two languages are included in the corpus. The first is the Tarisāppaḷḷi copper plates, the oldest inscription included in the corpus (no. 1). On these plates, the main language is Tamil, while the other languages – Hebrew, Arabic and Pahlavi – have only been used for signatures. The majority of the space is therefore occupied by Tamil, which was the language of the Chera Parumals, the ruling dynasty of Kerala at that time (r. 844–1124 CE).

The second inscription is from Sri Lanka and is in Tamil, Persian and Chinese (no. 16). The Tamil version is on the top left, the Persian on the bottom left, and the Chinese fills the entire right side. The size of all three texts is almost the same, with none dominating the slab. This slab was not produced locally, but in Nanjing, and was transported to Sri Lanka to be placed in a temple. Due to its location in Sri Lanka, this inscription is exceptional in many regards.

The trilingual inscription in Persian, Marathi and Kannada (no. 60) from Karnataka belongs to the ‘Ādil Shāhī dynasty. The size of the three versions is more or less the same, with Persian first, then Marathi, and Kannada last. The Marathi and Kannada versions additionally report the construction of a well for the god Śambhu, while the Persian version has more praise formulas. In the trilingual inscription in Persian, Old Gujarati and Sanskrit, the Persian version is dominant.<sup>56</sup>

## 5.6 Direction stones

In a category of their own are the direction stones, or signs indicating the way to specific places.<sup>57</sup> Almost all of these were erected around the year 1000 AH / 1591–1592 CE by Burhān Nizām Shāh II (r. 1591–1595 CE), and one by Burhān Nizām Shāh III (r. 1609–1631 CE). On these direction stones, the majority of the words written in Nāgarī are Persian or Arabic, like *jamān* for *zamān* (Persian), ‘time’; *syā* for *shāh* (Persian), ‘king’; and *aḷapha* for *alf* (Arabic), ‘thousand’. They are thus rather biscriptal than bilingual, with Persian and Arabic written in two different alphabets. However, in between the Persian words, we also find

<sup>56</sup> No. 12; see Sheikh 2014, 202.

<sup>57</sup> Nos 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 55.

some terms in Marathi.<sup>58</sup> We may wonder who was supposed to read these direction stones, and why they were produced in this way. In the case of Latin inscriptions written in Greek, Martti Leiwo has suggested that the Greek characters were used because the stonecutter did not know the Latin characters, and because the person who set up the inscription did not know the difference between Latin and Greek.<sup>59</sup> This explanation cannot be transferred to the Marathi–Persian case, since the direction stones have Persian characters in addition to the Nāgarī ones. The reason for writing Persian in Nāgarī must therefore have been related to the addressees. According to Soroni, there also exist letters and *farmāns* with Persian written in Moṛī script, meant to be read aloud.<sup>60</sup> We must therefore assume that there were people who were able to read Nāgarī or Moṛī, but not Persian, and who knew Persian only orally. Besides the direction stones, two further inscriptions are known in which Nāgarī script is used to write Persian or Arabic: a grant for the village of Shirol (now Jaisinghpur, Maharashtra), which, besides an inscription with Persian in Arabic and Nāgarī characters, also has an inscription in Kannada, and an inscription from Galna fort (Nasik district, Maharashtra), in which the Arabic year is written in Nāgarī.<sup>61</sup>

## 6 Examples of bilingual inscriptions

The number of bilingual inscriptions in the corpus is too high to discuss them all. In the following, only some examples of bilingual inscriptions are therefore examined. The selection was guided by the wish to choose inscriptions that are distinguished by particular differences between the two versions, or that stand out due to certain historical or stylistic features.<sup>62</sup>

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**58** See Sohoni 2022, 1–2, who also gives a good transcription and transliteration of one of these direction stones.

**59** Leiwo 2002, 178.

**60** Soroni 2022, 6.

**61** Nos 36 and 38.

**62** The translations of the Indic texts are taken from the editions, with some corrections of the English. The translations of Arabic and Persian usually also follow the editions, but are occasionally modified according to the present author's understanding or – in cases of passages from the Quran – according to contemporary standard translations.

## 6.1 A Persian and Marathi inscription from the Nizām Shāhī period (no. 56)

Persian version:

در عهد شاه عادل کامل نظام شاه، بساط خان که هست از جان چاکری، از این باغ زمین  
انعام بدل چراغ مسجد [و] گنبد داد است – هر که منع کند، بر زن او خر

Translation of the Persian:

In the reign of the just and perfect king Nizām Shāh, Bisāt Khān, who is (His Majesty's) most loyal servant, has endowed land from this garden as *in'ām* for the lights of the mosque and the dome. Whoever contravenes, may a donkey be on his wife!

Transliteration of the Marathi:<sup>63</sup>

nijāma syā kā kadīma ... visāta – b(v?)āgaṃ  
jamīna ināma vadala dīvā vattī. masīdu va  
gubhata didhalā śrāhe jo koyahī manā karola  
-----mām para gacchava

Translation of the Marathi:

Nizām Shāh's old (?) ... Bisāt ... has given the garden land in *in'ām* for lighting the mosque and the dome. Whosoever forbids ... donkey.

The two versions of the inscription are remarkably close to each other. According to Pushkar Sohoni's categorization scheme,<sup>64</sup> the same text is rendered in the two languages. Even with some of the Marathi part missing, the purpose of the grant is evidently the same: in both cases, the endowed object is the garden; the name of the ruler and the donor are similar. The only difference seems to be at the beginning, where the Persian text refers to the reign of Nizām Shāh. The Persian term *in'ām* ('grant, endowment') has been kept in the Marathi version, probably because the composer wanted to keep this culturally specific term with all its juridical implications. From the Persian side, the typical western Indian curse 'may a donkey be on his wife' has been adopted.<sup>65</sup> Based on the textual evidence, it is impossible to decide which inscription was composed first, and which is a translation. Placed on two separate slabs, none of them is

<sup>63</sup> Transliteration by Lingli Li.

<sup>64</sup> Sohoni 2022, 8. This scheme is a modification of the one proposed in Leiwo 2002, 173–174.

<sup>65</sup> This inscription is also discussed in Sohoni 2022, 9.

optically dominant. Since the content is about a typical Islamic grant, I assume however that the Marathi is a translation of the Persian version.

## 6.2 Inscription from Junagarh, Khaljī period (1290–1329 CE) (no. 22)

Persian version:

(1) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم بنا کرد این مینار ملک سید محمد مبارک عز سلطانیوری  
(2) در عهد سلطان قطب الدین بن محمد شاه السلطان بتاریخ یازدهم ماه ربیع الاول  
(3) ...هر که... بانی را دعا ایمان یاد کر [د]

Translation of the Persian:

- (1) In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This *minār* (tower, minaret) was built by Malik Sayyid Muḥammad Mubārak ‘Azz of Sulṭānpūr,  
(2) during the reign of *Sulṭān* Quṭb ud-Dīn son of Muḥammad Shāh, the *sulṭān*, on the 11th of Rabī‘ I.<sup>66</sup>  
(3) ...Whoever ... offers a prayer for (the soundness of) the faith of the builder.

Transliteration of the Sanskrit:

- (1) saṁvat 1514 baṛṣe  
(2) śrāvaṇa-badi [2 rtha ravau] sulaṭāna-śrī-kutabadina-viji-rāje śrī devapatana-  
(3) taḥ sulaṭāna-[pahī] malika-śrīḥ mubāra[ka-su]ta-malika-śrī-mahaṁmada-suta-malika-  
śrī-[makada ...].  
(4) ji ... ipati vajepa ... ā ... na ha punya-tī a ...ī ... ṣa ... na...i ... bīrāsila  
(5) ... ī ... lā sūtra[dha]ra ... sūya...i ... tta ... su ... la ... tī saṁvat  
(6) [15]14 ba[r]ṣa ...

Translation of the Sanskrit:

In the (Vikrama) year 1514, on Sunday, the second day of the dark fortnight of (the month of) Śrāvaṇa,<sup>67</sup> during the victorious reign of the illustrious Sulaṭāna, Kutabadīna (*Sulṭān* Quṭb ud-Dīn), from the glorious (city of) Devapatana, the illustrious Malika (Malik) [Makada ...], son of the illustrious Malika Mahaṁmada, son of the illustrious Malika Mu-bāraka, ... Sulaṭāna ...Pious [holy place] ... the mason ... the year [15]14...

66 The third month of the Islamic lunar year.

67 The fifth lunar month of the Hindu calendar.

Even with the incomplete reading of the Sanskrit, the differences between the Persian and Sanskrit versions are obvious. The Sanskrit begins and ends with the date, which appears in the Persian version only once, towards the end, before the call to pray for the builder. This is missing in the Sanskrit version. The names and the genealogical information differ slightly, and Sulṭānpūr is called by its old name Devapatana. Due to the lacunae, we do not know which word was used for the minaret. The Sanskrit version contains more adjectives, like ‘victorious’ and ‘illustrious’. Although the two texts convey the same message, they are therefore quite different. The inscription belongs to Sohoni’s Category 3 (two different texts of nearly the same content). The size and placement of the Persian text give it a dominant position, but the Sanskrit text is not a translation of the Persian.

### 6.3 Quṭb Shāhī inscription from the Nalgonda district, Telangana (no. 33)

Persian version:

قطبشاه  
 ابوالمظفر سلطان  
 در تاریخ چهاردهم شهر رمضان  
 المبارک سنه ۹۵۸ حضرت پناهی  
 نقابت دستگاهی سید شاه میر بن  
 المرحوم سید احمد طباطبائی اصفهانی  
 کالوه حوض پانگل که بعد از سالها خراب شده  
 بود از جهت توابع زر خرج کرد و معمور ساخت  
 و کسی که کالوه مذکور را مشقت کرد و اهتمام نمود  
 رحمت الله بن عبد الکریم خوانشاهی (؟) و از ابتدای  
 کتوه... اند و... تا حد ندی کرشنا از کالوه و حوض...  
 ... در قصبه پانگل چکیده گشت  
 و در تحت حوض حصه (؟) مسلمان و...  
 ... یاد سنه ۹۵۸

Translation of the Persian:

[In the reign of] Quṭb Shāh Abū l-Muzaffar Sulṭān [Ibrāhīm]. On the 14th of the blessed month of Ramaḍān 958 [15 September 1551 CE], His Honour [lit. ‘His Refuge’], the wielder of authority, Sayyid Shāh Mīr, son of the late Sayyid Aḥmad Ṭabāṭabā’ī Iṣfahānī, rebuilt the embankment of the Pangal tank, which had fallen out of repair through age, and spent money [on this work] to obtain [God’s] forgiveness. The person who worked hard and supervised [the repairs] was Raḥmat Ullāh, son of ‘Abd ul-Karīm Khwān Shāhī [?]. The embankment was breached from ... to the boundary of the river Krishna, and waters flowed

from the tank through the breach (of the dyke) to the town of Pangal ... The share of the Muslims from [the lands of] the tank ... remain ...! 985 AH.

### Transliteration of the Telugu:

- (1) śrī [II\*] svasti śrī jayābhūdaya śālivāha
- (2) na-śaka-varuṣāmbulu 1432 yagunāṭi pramō
- (3) da-saṁvatsara-māgha-śu.15 Bhaumavāraṁ | Śrīma
- (4) n-mahāmaṅḍalēśvara Yiburāhim Kutubu
- (5) Śa rājyamu śeyaṁgānu vāri maṁnnana-sabhi
- (6) kuṁḍu Sayidu Sādātu Sayidu Śahā-Mi-
- (7) ruku puṇyamugānu āyana nija-hitu
- (8) ḍu vivēka-bhūṣaṇuḍu maṁnnana-tējō
- (9) nidhi ayinaṭhavaṁṭi Rāmattullāgāru Pānu
- (10) gaṁṭṭi Vudaya-samudraṁ-kāluva Yiṁḍdu
- (11) pukela-simalō Namile-vadda Musi-yēṭi kattuva khi
- (12) lamai vuṁḍaṁgānu punar-ōddharakamugānu
- (13) kattuva gaṭṭi kāluva śēyiṁcci ā niḷlu U
- (14) dayasamudramu niṁcci āṅgi niḷlu Kr
- (15) ṣṇa-gāmini śēyiṁci Namile-kattuva moda
- (16) lu koni Kṛṣṇa yimadhya cheruvulu kuṁṭalu
- (17) kāluvalu niṁcci yiṁḍula pāla-paḍḍa dhānyānaku da
- (18) śabamḍdamu Pānugaṁṭṭi kinḍa naḍachēnu ā-chamdr-ā
- (19) rka-sthāyigā | Yi Vudayasamudraṁ ve
- (20) nuka pāḷla vivaramu, rājuku pālu
- (21) 1 prajaku palumn-ara 11/2-ṁ Turukala-
- (22) ku Brāṁhmalaku pāḷlu reṁḍḍu 2 yi.
- (23) choppana ā-chamdr-ārka-sthāyigā i-
- (24) stimi || Yi dharmāṁ pratipālimcinavāri-
- (25) ki yaṁttō puṇyaṁ | sva-dattāḍvi-guṇaṁ pu-
- (26) nya[ṁ] para-datt-anupālanāṁ | para-datt-āpa-
- (27) hārēṇa | sva-dattaṁ niṣphalaṁ bhavēttu || Śrī [||\*]
- (28) naṣṭaṁ kulāṁ bhinna-taṭāka-kūpaṁ | babhra-para-
- (29) rājyaṁ śaraṇāgataṁ cca | gāṁ Brāhmanāṁ dē
- (30) va-grihālayaṁ cca yō[d\*]dharē[t\*] pūrva-catur-guṇa[h\*].
- (31) syat || Maṅgala mahā-śrī śrī śrī jēyu-
- (32) nū || Śrī[||\*]

### Translation of the Telugu version:

Hail! On Tuesday, the 15th day of the bright half of Māgha in the Jovian year Pramoda, the year of the Śālivāhana Śaka era being 1432, while Mahāmaṅḍalēśvara Yiburāhim Kutubu Śa (Ibrāhīm Quṭb Shāh) was ruling. Rāmattulla (Raḥmat Ullāh), who was kind to his own, had prudence as his ornament and who was like a revered treasure of splendour, saw that the channel from the Udayasamudram (tank) in Pānugallu and the dam of the river Musi near Namile in the Yindupukela-area had been dilapidated. For the sake of their recon-

struction he fixed the dam and had a channel made and filled the Udayasamudram (tank) with its waters. He then made the water flow into the Kṛṣṇā river and filled the tanks, ponds and canals between the Namile dam and the Kṛṣṇā river. (It was also ordered) that there be a *daśabandham* on the shared crops there (around the tanks, ponds canals, etc.) below Pānugallu as long as the sun and the moon last. (These acts of charity) were done for the merit of Sayidu Sādātu Sayidu Śāhā-Mīru (Sayyid us-Sādāt, Sayyid Shāh Mīr), who was an honoured councillor (of the king). The shares (of income) from [the lands irrigated] by the Udayasamudram (tank) are explained:

We (i.e. Raḥmat Ullāh) have given, at the following rates, one share to the king, one share and a half to the subjects, and two shares to the Turukas (i.e. Muslims) as well as to the Brahmans for so long as the sun and the moon endure. Those who protect this charitable act (*dharmamu*) will acquire immeasurable merit.

Maintaining the gift of another is twice as meritorious as one's own gift. By stealing another's gift, one's own gift becomes fruitless.<sup>68</sup>

He who should support a family ruined after their ponds and wells have burst, and a kingdom that has sought protection, and a cow and a Brahman on the grounds of a temple, will have four times [as much merit] as before [??].

Here, the differences between the two versions are even more remarkable. First of all, the Telugu version is longer. Although the Persian is at the top of the slab, the Telugu occupies the majority of the space and is more prominent. The sun and moon engraved on the top of the stone further enhance the dominance of the non-Persian elements. This dominance is also reflected in the content of the text. Both versions deal with the same event, namely the rebuilding of the Pangal tank and the building of a channel. The exact shares and the taxation of the crops (*daśabandham* tenure) are recorded in greater detail in the Telugu. The Telugu version mentions that the charity was done for the merit of Sayyid Shāh Mīr, promises merits for those who protect the endowment, and praises the virtue of giving. In the Persian version, the purpose of the endowment consists in obtaining God's forgiveness and thus in securing recompense for the next life – a typical Islamic concept. What is perhaps most remarkable is the difference in prominence between the person who financed the building activities and the one who supervised the work. In Telugu, the supervisor is not only mentioned earlier, but also praised more greatly. Was he involved in the wording of the Telugu inscription, or did he himself perhaps understand Telugu? Was he a locally prominent person whose merit was more meaningful to the Telugu-speaking community?

In conclusion, we also have to consider the relation between the two texts: is the Persian version a summarized translation of the Telugu, corresponding to Sohoni's Category 4? Or are these rather two texts that have been prepared on the

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68 Language of this verse and the next is Sanskrit, not Telugu.



same topic in ‘dynamic equivalence’?<sup>69</sup> Given the difference of emphasis between the builder and the donor in this inscription, what David G. K. Taylor has described for Aramaic and Greek inscriptions from Palmyra seems to be quite fitting here:

There are numerous examples of bilingual inscriptions where the two texts are not dramatically different, and yet it is clear that each is an independent product conforming to accepted conventions.<sup>70</sup>

## 6.4 Inscription from Bidar about the construction of a step well (no. 18)

The following inscription from Bidar is also longer in its Indic version. Again, the Persian text is at the top, but the Sanskrit text is much longer, taking almost two-thirds of the slab.

Persian version:

- (1) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم فالله خير حافظا و هو ارحم الراحمين يا غفور
- (2) ذکر بناء ؟ تاریخ چهاردهم ماه جمادالآخر سنه ؟ ثمان و اربعين و ثمانماية مخدومه جهان
- (3) بيبي شاهناز والدة خان معظم خلف ؟ اعظم محمود خان
- (4) شد بنا اين بائين از عون خدای کن فکان بود سال از هجرت پيغامبر آخر زمان
- (5) چهل و هشت و هيصد (= هشتصد) و عهد شده شه عادل کی بودال بهمن شاه و دارا شاه احمد ذو الامان
- (6) مادر محمود خان مهوری؟ ... شاه ...
- (7) عورت صاحب سعادت پاک دامن بود تا دست داد اين خير جاری هر که بخورد آب آن
- (8) در دعاء عاقبت خير اين سه تن در هر دمی بر کشاید (= گشاید) از میان جان بصدق دل زبان

Translation of the Persian:

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. ‘Allāh is the best preserver, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.’<sup>71</sup> O Forgiver!

Account of the construction, on the 14th of the month of Jumādā II (of the) year eight and forty and eight hundred, (by) Makhdūma-yi Jahān Bibi Shahnāz, mother of the magnificent *khān* and great royal scion Maḥmūd Khān.

This step well was constructed with help from the lord of the universe the year [counting] from the Hijra of the last of the prophets

was forty-and-eight and eight hundred, and (it was under) the reign of the just king,

<sup>69</sup> Taylor 2002, 321.

<sup>70</sup> Taylor 2002, 321.

<sup>71</sup> Quran 12:64, tr. Pickthall 1930.

who is directly descended from Bahman Shāh and Dāra Shāh, namely Aḥmad (Shāh), the protector.

(The builder is) the mother of Maḥmūd Khān of Mahūr (?) ... king

...

She was a fortunate woman, and chaste; hence,

such a flowing bounty came into existence (through her). May whosoever drinks water therefrom

in prayer for the happy ending of these three personages with every breath  
loosen his tongue from the grid of soul with sincerity of heart.

### Transliteration of the Sanskrit:<sup>72</sup>

- (1) 1 śriḥ | ajāya jagad-utpatti-sthiti-saṁhāra-kāriṇe | triḡuṇā[ya] guṇātūta-mūrtaye brah-  
mane na
- (2) maḥ || [1\*] tad-ājñayājāyata bhūtale smin bhūri-pratāpā[na]la-tāpi[tā]riḥ | ahaṁmado  
drpta-nareṁdra-pakṣi-śye-
- (3) no mahān bahmani-pātiśāhaḥ || [2\*] maheṁdrasya kuberasya nagarī na garīyasī |  
apekṣā bedaraṁ yasya na-
- (4) garaṁ nagaraṁ[jitam] || [3\*] muktāmayaṁ pravālā[dhyam] puraṁ śra-bhavanaṁ hi  
yat | ucchair aṁbhodhivad bhā[ti] citraṁ nānaka-
- (5) bhūdharaṁ || [4\*] vāditrair badhirāyate tribhuvanaṁ [dhūli]bhir aṁdhāyate yasmin  
rām̐jy abhiṣeṇayaty atibharād bhū
- (6) miś ca na[mrā]yate yad-durgādihikr̥tā malikaṁcanāḥ khānāḥ puraḥ koṭayaḥ kas ta-  
syāhmada-bahma
- (7) nī-narapateḥ saṁkhyātum iṣṭe camūm || [5\*] [jīva]d-rāja-maheṁdra-durga-nrpa[tiṁ]  
yasy[āgra]-senāpatiḥ kārāmaṁ-
- (8) dīra-gaṁ [karoti] — śrī-devarājaṁ nrpaṁ | vikrāntaṁ karadīkaroti sacivo yaś caika-  
kaḥ sarvadā
- (9) kas tasyāhmada-bahmani-narapateḥ saṁkhyātum īso guṇān || [6\*] tasyāsty abhimatābhū
- (10) pa-vanitā paryupāsītā | bibī śrī-sahanājh-ākhyā hreṇpayanti ratim śrīyā || [7\*] kim
- (11) śīta-dyuti-maṁḍalād abhipatatkum̐dōjvalā kaumudī smerāmbhoruhataḥ prabhūta-  
madhuno
- (12) niṣyanda-dhārā kim u | kim vā caṁdramaṇeḥ sravan-nava-sudhā-ve[lā] manohāriṇī  
kim vā ratna-sa
- (13) mūhato bahir asau sphāribhavaddīdhitih || [8\*] saubhāgya-sūmdara-satītva-kalā-  
vilāsa-cātu
- (14) rya-drāna-kuśalatva-suśilatā[dya] | yasyāṁ sadā saha-bhuvah prathitā guṇāughā ratnāni
- (15) rohaṇa-prthu-dyutimanti santi || [9\*] mahamūda-khāna-nā[mā tanayo] mām.. [pu]raṁ  
yasyāḥ | pāla
- (16) yati smāvani-pati-kirīṭa-koṭi-pramr̥ṣṭāṁghriḥ || [10\*] sā cāhmada-sulutrāṇa-tanaye  
naya-śā-

<sup>72</sup> Metres: verses 1, 3–4, 7, 11–13 *Anuṣṭubh*; verse 2 *Upajāti*; verses 5–6, 8 *Śārdūlavikrīḍita*; verse 9 *Vasantatilaka*; verses 10, 15 *Upagiti*; verse 14 *Āryā*.

- (17) lini | allābadī-pātīśāhe śāsaty ūrvīm mahodaye || [11\*] tasmin puravare 'gaṇya-tuṅga-  
maṁdi-  
(18) ra-maṁḍite | vāpim akārayad ramyām bhūri-sopāna-saṁpadām || [12\*] nīmdaty  
upavanam ramyam yasyā ... va-  
(19) nam vanam(nam) | manute cāpi pānīyam tam payahsāgaram garam(ram) || [13\*] idam  
ca | tarka-rasānala-caṁdraiḥ 1366 śā  
(20) ke raktākṣi-vatsarāśvayuji | māse śukla-daśamyām some śravaṇe dhruve yoge ||  
[14\*]... n=āhmada-ba-  
(21) hmani-bibi-[sa]hanājhayā vihītā | ā-caṁdrārkaṁ ... s ānamdini jagataḥ || [15\*] śrīḥ ||

### Translation of the Sanskrit:

[Verse 1] Bow to Brahmā, who is the cause of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the Universe, who is full of all the three qualities and transcends all the three qualities.

[Verse 2] As ordained by him [Brahmā], the great Bahmani king Ahammada [Aḥmad] was born on earth, a proud king like a hawk, his enemies scorched by the fire of his majesty.

[Verse 3] Not greater is the capital city of lord Kubera, who looks to the city of Bedara [Bīdar] delighted by mountains [?].

[Verse 4] His city is laden with pearls and rich in coral. The lofty splendid palace appears like the sea; [the city] in which a wondrous drum like a mountain

[Verse 5] (accompanied by) instruments deafens the three worlds; when the king is on the march they [the three worlds] are blinded by the dust; and because of the extreme burden the earth bowed down. Crores of kings, Khans were put in charge of his forts/citadels. Who is able to calculate [the size of] the army of Ahmada Bahmani.

[Verse 6] His chief general makes the living ruler of the fort at Rājamahendra a prisoner; and his minister, all by himself, makes the powerful King Devarāja pay tribute in perpetuity. Who can count the virtues of King Ahamada Bahmani?

[Verse 7] He has a beloved queen, much revered, named Sahanājh who puts to shame Rati with her splendour.

[Verse 8] Is she moonlight, shining like a white water lily descending from the orb of the moon or a torrent of juice from a fully-opened lotus abounding in nectar, or a charming stream of fresh nectar flowing from a moon stone? That [queen]'s external brilliance grows brighter from the abundance of gems [that she wears].

[Verse 9] She was beautiful by good fortune, in possession of chastity, skill in the arts and flirtatious grace, possessed a penchant for generosity, and refined habits. In her abide innate multitudes of virtues, far-famed, always abide, jewels with the abundant lustre of Mt Rohaṇa.

[Verse 10] Her son named Mahmūd Khān protected the city of Mām[.], his feet rubbed by the tips of the crowns of kings.

[Verse 11] And she, while the prosperous Allābadī Pātishah, son of Āhmad Sultān, governed the earth with good policy,

[Verse 12] had made a lovely tank/reservoir with plenty of excellent stairs in that best of cities which innumerable lofty mansions adorned.

[Verse 13] Its lovely grove condemns the forest [of the gods?] as a normal forest [?] and its drinking water considers the milk-ocean to be poison.

[Verse 14] And this [reservoir] was constructed on the 10th day of the bright fortnight in the month Āśvina<sup>73</sup> of the Jovian Year Raktākṣi<sup>74</sup> in 1366 of the Śālivahana Śaka, a Monday in the *nakṣatra* Śravaṇa, in the yoga (half-*nakṣatra*) of Dhruva (the polar star). It will last as long as the sun and the moon are there,

[Verse 15] by Ahmad Bahmanī Bibī Sahanājh ... as long as the sun and moon ... delighting for the world ...

The Persian version mainly mentions Bibī Shahnāz, the mother of Maḥmūd Khān, as the builder of the step well, records its construction date, and links the genealogy of the Bahmanids (r. 1347–1527) with the legendary hero Bahmān and his son Dārā. It begins with the *basmala* and a quotation from the Quran, and ends with the wish that those who drink from the well will pray for the builder Bibī Shahnāz, Maḥmūd and Aḥmad.

The Sanskrit inscription is much more detailed. After referring to Brahma, the creator god of Hinduism, the current ruler, ‘Alā ud-Dīn Aḥmad Shāh (r. 1436–1458 CE), is praised at length. It then provides some historical information and mentions Aḥmad’s victory over Deva Rāi of Vijayanagara. Related to these events, the inscription refers to a conflict within the royal family. It is too enigmatic, however, to fully understand the conflict without prior knowledge of the participants and events. What makes this inscription interesting is the fact that it conveys a very different message in the two languages. While in the Persian version, the building of the step well is no more than a charitable act, it has a political dimension in Sanskrit. The victory over Deva Rāi, the averted danger and the representation of the king as ordained by god and as so powerful that nothing against his interest can happen – all this is mentioned only in the Sanskrit and thus conveyed only to those able to read this language. Was it meant as a warning to those who had been involved in the intrigue and the supporters of Deva Rāi – that is, to insiders who knew the context?

Besides the information on the political intrigue, it is worth considering the adaptations of the religious phrases, like the invocation of Brahma and the references to the gods Indra and Kubera, which appear only in the Sanskrit text. Such changes are quite frequent, and in particular, the invocation of Hindu goddesses is found in several Indic versions of inscriptions.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, references to the king as a conqueror of infidels and shelter of Islam<sup>76</sup> are often omit-

73 The seventh lunar month of the Hindu calendar.

74 The fifty-eighth year of the Jupiter cycle of sixty years.

75 Nos 10, 24, 32, 60, 61.

76 Nos 4, 75.

ted from the Indic version, just as references to libations are from the Persian/Arabic text.<sup>77</sup> We can again see here an adaptation to accepted conventions.

## 6.5 Inscription from Gujarat about a religious endowment

Another interesting adaptation is related to curses and blessings, as already seen in some of the inscriptions discussed so far. These usually pertain to adherence to regulations and rules. Curses and blessings are used in all the languages considered here, often not translated verbatim, but rather adjusted to the cultural context. One good example comes from Gujarat; the inscription provides information on a religious endowment (*waqf*).<sup>78</sup>

Persian version:

- (1) در تاریخ روز سه شنبه غره محرم سنه اربع و سبعمائه
- (2) از صدقات بادشاه (=پادشاه) عادل رای کرندیو زید ملکه
- (3) و ملک الاکابر بلچق (و) ملک الامرا شادی عز نصرهم
- (4) وقف کرد برای مسجد جامع کنبایه تاج الدین
- (5) حسن بن وزیر الوزرا نجم الدنيا والدین محمود خطیب[ب]
- (6) ده سانبا (=سانپا) در زمین کنم با جمله حدود...
- (7) و در جنان (جهات؟) آنچه در تعلق این دهست از حاصل و...
- (8) ... مه؟ باید مسلمانان
- (9) ... کنند تا همه در
- (10) ... یا؟ تعرض و حکم کند و نقض
- (11) این وقف وصیت؟.....دهد گر بگرداند در لعنت
- (12) خدا و رسول باشد و لعنة اللاعنین و الملائكة اجمعین

Translation of the Persian version:

- (1) On the day of Tuesday, the first of Muḥarram,<sup>79</sup> of the year four and seven hundred,
- (2) from the estates dedicated to the pious use (*ṣadaqāt*) of the just king Rāi Kaṇ Dev, may his kingdom increase,
- (3) and Malik ul-Akābir Balchaq (and) Malik ul-ʿUmarā Shadī, may their victory be glorified,
- (4–5) Tāj ud-Dīn Ḥasan, son of Wazīr ul-Wuzarā Najm ud-Dunyā wa d-Dīn, made in laudable words an endowment for the Friday mosque of Kambāya,
- (6) in the village of Sāmbā, in the land of Kānam, with all its boundaries
- (7) and whatever in the vicinities is related to this village and the income and ...
- (8) ... the Muslims should ...

<sup>77</sup> Nos 4, 30.

<sup>78</sup> No. 6. See also Sheikh 2014, 191–192.

<sup>79</sup> First month of the Islamic year.

- (9) ... do so that they all, in  
 (10) ... should object to or pass any judgement against it or seek to breach  
 (11) this endowment (and) attestation, or change it, will incur the curse  
 (12) of God and (His) Prophet and (also) the curse of the cursers and angels, all of them.

#### Transliteration of the Sanskrit:

- (1) [śrī saṁ] vata 1360 varṣe bhādravā vadi  
 (2) [dvitiya-bhau] me Mahārājādhirāja śrī Ka-  
 (3) [rṇadeva]... Maliṣa śrī Baicaka Maliṣa śrī  
 (4) [Śhādi]..... va śrī Hasaṇa prabhrtibhiḥ  
 (5) [Kāname Sāṁ] pābhidhāna-grāmo 'yaṁ Stam  
 (6) [bhatirthe jā] me misi kiyā dharmme  
 (7) .....[pra] dāttaḥ || samastarāṇakaiḥ  
 (8) [ranu maṁtavya śva] pālanīyaḥ || ॐ ||

#### Translation of the Sanskrit:

- (1) In the auspicious year *saṁvat* 1360, in the dark half of Bhādrapada<sup>80</sup>,  
 (2) [the second day, Tuesday] Mahārājādhirāja Ka  
 (3) [ṛma Deva Ma]lik Śrī Baḍchak, Malik Śrī  
 (4) [Shādi ...] and Śrī Ḥasaṇa and the like,  
 (5–7) gave the village named Sāmpā in Kānam for religious purposes to the Stam(bhatirthe Jā)mi' mosque. All the Rānās should honour and  
 (8) execute it. That is all.

The Sanskrit version is not only smaller in dimension, but also shorter in length, and the extent of the *waqf* in particular is described much more briefly. Similar to our first example, the Sanskrit records the older name of the city, Stambhatirtha. Further, the Persian version contains several eulogies that are not included in the Sanskrit. The most interesting difference, however, relates to the protection of the *waqf*. The Persian version threatens all those who do not respect the endowment with the curses of God, the Prophet and the angels. The Sanskrit is much more down to earth and addresses the local chiefs (*rānās*), asking them to honour and execute the endowment. It is likely that the Sanskrit version was meant especially for these local chiefs and was supposed to explain the provisions of the *waqf* to them in a language they could understand. We can consider the Sanskrit version a summarized translation corresponding to Sohoni's Category 4, but at the same time, we here see an effort to address those who were responsible on site.

<sup>80</sup> The sixth month of the Hindu calendar.

## 6.6 A bilingual inscription from Baroda

A similar local context can be seen in the bilingual inscription from the tomb of Bābā Arjun Shāh in Petlad, Baroda, who died in 633 AH / 1236 CE.<sup>81</sup> It is in Persian and Sanskrit, and is one of a total of three inscriptions from the tomb. Both the Persian and the Sanskrit versions are damaged. The Persian version is at the top and occupies much more space than the Sanskrit version, which is below it in smaller letters.

Persian version:

بسم الله الرحمن [الرحيم]  
 (1)....تاریخ ماه مبارک ذی الحجه سنه....(2) باتمام رسید عمارت چاه از صدقات خل[یفه]  
 .....(3) السلاطین خدایگان عالم بادشاه.....(4) و الحاتم غیاث الدنیا و الدین غوث  
 الاسلا[م].....(5) كهف الثقلین ظل الله فی الخافقین ابو المظفر....(6) مد الله عمره و خلد  
 دولته در قصبه پیتلاودر جوار روضه شیخ المشایخ.....(7) نور الله قبره صاحب عمارت  
 اضعف عباد الله حاجی اسمعیل عثمان شیرازی این عمارت وقف (؟) (8) کرد لوجه الله  
 تعالی و بیست کبه زمین بجهت چاه از مقطع قصبه پیتلاودر سید الامرا بدر الدین (9) ابو  
 بکر امیر کوه...دارد مسلم است تا غریب و شهری را از این وضع راحتی رسد واجب  
 است (10) بر امرا و ملوک و حاکمان که بعد از این آیند این خیررا قایم دارند و هیچ  
 لغزشی (؟).... (11) و بیست کنبه زمین که ذکر رفت مسلم دارند تا ثواب دو جهانی حاصل  
 کرده باشند و....[شفاعا]عت (12) محمد علیه السلام.....گردد بالنبی و آله اجمعین

Translation of the Persian:

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

On the ... [20th] of the auspicious month of Dhū l-Ḥijja<sup>82</sup> [723 AH], the construction of the well was completed. [It is one] of the charitable works (ordered) by the Caliph – ... of kings, the lord of the world, the monarch ... and Ḥātim, Ghiyath ud-Dunyā wa d-Dīn, the defender of Islam ... the refuge of men and demons, the shadow of God in the east and west, Abū l-Muẓaffar ... may God prolong his life and perpetuate his glory! – in the town of Petlawad, in the vicinity of the tomb of Shaikh ul-Mashā'ikh [Arjūn Shāh], may God illumine his grave. The builder, the humble servant of God Hājī Ismā'il 'Uthmān of Shiraz, dedicated this building to the cause of God, be He exalted. And 20 *kubhas* of land in the town of Petlawad, from the fief of Sayyid ul-Umarā' Badr ud-Dīn Abu Bakr, the chief of the mountain ... are granted for the maintenance of the well: so that the stranger and the people of the town may gain relief through this charitable institution. It is incumbent upon the chiefs, kings and governors who succeed in the future to protect this gift and not fail ... and (also) to preserve the grant of 20 *kubhas* of land mentioned above, so that they may secure rewards in both worlds and ... intercession of Muḥammad, may peace be upon him! ... through the Prophet and all his descendants.

<sup>81</sup> No. 8. See also Sheikh 2014, 201–202.

<sup>82</sup> The twelfth month of the Islamic calendar.

## Transliteration of the Sanskrit:

- (1) om̐ samvat 1380 varṣe pauṣa-vadi 7 duliheja chaṁ 20
  - (2) [bh]omav adyeha yoginīpurādhiṣṭhita-mahārājādhirāja-
  - (3) śrīmat-suratrāṇa-śrī-gayāsadīna-vijīya-rājye tan-niyukt ...
  - (4) ṇahillapattana-śrī-dīvan-ādeśena peṭilāpadra-maṇḍala-karaṇi
  - (5) śrī-badara-dīna avubaka ahamad-amīra-koha-pratīpattau peṭila...
  - (6) \* ṣa-śrī-a(rjuna) ghoṛi sannidhau skambha-tīrtha-vāstavyen=[el
  - (7) ... [i]lā-ūshamāna-sīrājena jirṇa-uddhāra-kupa vahā(\*)e
  - (8) ... k(e)na-āghāṭe kṣepita bhūmī kubha 20 vim̐ [śati ka] ...
  - (9) ... sthale śrī-thakkurai[h] pālaniyāni
- pārasī likhitam̐

## Translation of the Sanskrit:

Om̐! In (Vikrama) *samvat* (year) 1380, on the 7th day of the dark (fortnight) of Pauṣa,<sup>83</sup> on the 20th (day) of the lunar month Duliheja (Dhū l-Ḥijja), on a Tuesday – on this day in the victorious reign of the glorious *sultān*, the illustrious Gayāsadīna (Ghiyath ud-Dīn), the paramount king of great kings, by the order of the Diwan at Aṇahilapaṭṭana ... appointed by him (i.e. the *sultān*), under the dispensation of the glorious Badaradīna Avubaka Ahamada Amīru-koha (Badr ud-Dīn Abu Bakr Amīr-i Kūh), agent in the circle of Peṭilāpadra, in the proximity of the revered Arjuna-ghoṛi, (at) Peṭila ... 20 *kubhas* of land marked off with boundary were given by (Ismāīla?) Ushmana Siraj (Ismā'il 'Uthmān Shirazī), an inhabitant of Skambhatīrtha ... repaired well.... The illustrious *thakkuras* should protect (these gifts). Written in Persian.

The two inscriptions cannot be compared in full due to some illegible parts in the Sanskrit. They bear many similarities, but also differ: all the religious phrases of the Persian text have been eliminated from the Sanskrit version, which instead begins with 'Om̐'. At the end, the Persian version calls upon notable figures, kings and rulers to preserve the land grant. In the Sanskrit version, this request is addressed to the *thakkuras*, a Sanskrit title for members of a landowning caste. One may wonder if the Sanskrit version of the inscription was addressing them: were the *thakkuras* supposed to read the text and obey it? It is the only inscription that ends in Sanskrit with a reference to the Persian text immediately above it. Perhaps the composer of the Sanskrit version did not know that the two versions would be placed on the same slab – or he wanted to indicate that the original text was in Persian, and that the Sanskrit is a translation of it.

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<sup>83</sup> The tenth month of the Hindu calendar.



## 6.7 The Veraval inscription of Chaulukya-Vaghela Arjuna

Many of the differences so far observed are also found in the famous bilingual inscription from Somanātha Pāṭan in Gujarat; it is in Sanskrit and Arabic and is about a Muslim shipowner and merchant, Nūr ud-Dīn Firūz from Hormuz, who acquired land next to the Somnath temple to build a mosque (no. 4). The lengthy text specifies the names of the people involved in the property transaction and the establishment of the *waqf* related to the building of the mosque and its maintenance. Since this text has been edited and translated several times and also discussed in the literature,<sup>84</sup> I will focus here on the bilingual aspects of the document. Unfortunately, the original location of the inscription and the relative position of the Arabic and the Sanskrit text are unknown. Both inscriptions have been displaced: the Sanskrit one is currently on a wall of the temple of Harshada Mātā in Verāval, next to Somnath, and the Arabic inscription is on the façade of the Qāḍī mosque in Somnath. The two texts were written on two separate stones, and we can only assume that they had originally been placed side by side or – somewhat less likely, due to access and readability – one atop the other.<sup>85</sup> Both scripts were engraved in black granite, with no ornamentation. There is no obvious hierarchical difference between the two inscriptions, but the date of the Sanskrit inscription is two months earlier (25 May 1264) than that of the Arabic inscription (23 July 1264), thus making it the primary one. Given that they are related to the building of a mosque, it is highly probable that the inscriptions were originally placed on a wall of said mosque. They obviously did not have a decorative function, but an informative character. We may assume that the addressees were those who had supported the construction of the mosque. Since the majority of the persons mentioned in the text were Hindus, one may wonder if the inscriptions were placed outside, perhaps on the façade – similar to the current placement of the Arabic inscription in another mosque – or close to one of the doors.

The Arabic version is not a translation of the Sanskrit. The content of the two inscriptions overlaps, but there are also significant differences: in the Sanskrit version, the details of the *waqf* are enumerated, both its sources and

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<sup>84</sup> Hultzsch 1882; Desai 1961, 10–15 and pl. II b; Sircar 1961–1962, 141–150; Chattopadhyaya 1998, 70–78, Thapar 2008, 88–99. The Arabic text is edited in Desai 1961, the Sanskrit text (in Nāgarī script) in Hultzsch 1882 and (in transliteration) Sircar 1961–1962. It is too long to reproduce here.

<sup>85</sup> The size of the Arabic inscription, which is not fully preserved, is 17" × 25" (43.18 × 63.5 cm); the size of the Sanskrit inscription is nowhere properly indicated.

intended use. The Sanskrit version furthermore contains four different dating systems, the first being the Hijrī year, referred to as year 662 of ‘*rasūla Maḥammada*’ (*rasūl* Muḥammad, i.e. the Prophet Muḥammad). This inscription also mentions that Fīrūz performed a libation with water, a ceremonial act rooted in Indian customs. The inscription generally shows a remarkable transfer of Islamic notions to the Hindu sphere, searching for equivalents within the other’s religious concepts. The mosque is thus called a *dharma-masthāna*, and ‘Śrī Viśvanātha’ most probably denotes Allāh. Usually, this name is applied to Śiva, the god of the Somnath temple. The activities to which the *waqf* is dedicated are described with a combination of terms used in the context of temple rituals – like *pūjā* (reverence, worship) – and Arabic religious terms.<sup>86</sup> The Arabic inscription is much less detailed with regard to the *waqf*. Instead, we find long eulogies related to Fīrūz’s father and Fīrūz himself. Furthermore, the inscription expresses the hope that Somnath might become a city of Islam, and that infidelity and idols might be banned from it. Since all other details of this bilingual inscription point to a friendly interaction between Hindus and Muslims, we may assume that this part of the Arabic inscription is rather formulaic and follows standard patterns.<sup>87</sup> Interestingly, the ruler addressed in the two inscriptions is also not the same: while the Sanskrit version refers to Arjunadeva, the Chaulukya-Vāghela king who ruled in Gujarat (r. 1261–1274 CE), the Arabic version instead mentions Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad, most probably the Delhi sultan Nāṣir ud-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh (r. 1246–1265 CE).<sup>88</sup> These two versions of the inscription can again best be explained by the need to address the different expectations of the presumed readers, and to fulfil different needs. The eulogies for Fīrūz and his father, for example, might have been meant to raise his status in the eyes of his co-religionists, and fulfilled the conventions of this genre. On the other hand, the need to elaborate the details of the *waqf* and its use might be related to the fact that it was most likely temple property that was purchased for the endowment. The Hindu authorities thus may have wanted the details of this endowment to be disclosed and promulgated.

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<sup>86</sup> Chattopadhyaya 1998, 74–76.

<sup>87</sup> Thapar 2008, 95.

<sup>88</sup> The identification is not entirely clear. Nāṣir ud-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh was a son or grandson of the Mamluk ruler Shams ud-Dīn Iltutmish (r. 1211–1236). It is not evident why he is called Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad here.

## 6.8 Two Arabic-Sanskrit inscriptions from Asīrgarh and Burhānpūr

The two inscriptions from the Friday mosques (*Jāma' Masjid*) in Asīrgarh and Burhānpūr<sup>89</sup> in today's Madhya Pradesh resemble the inscription from Somnath insofar as they also translate central notions of Islam into a Sanskrit terminology that Hindus could understand. However, the design and location of these inscriptions are very different, causing us to wonder who the addressees were.

Both mosques were erected by the Fārūqī dynasty (r. 1382–1601 CE) and date from 992 AH / 1584 CE and 997 AH / 1589 CE, respectively. The inscriptions are in Arabic and Sanskrit and are placed inside the prayer hall on the *qibla* wall. The *qibla* wall is the wall towards which Muslims turn for the ritual prayer; it contains one or more prayer niches (*mihrāb*) that indicate the direction of Mecca. It is thus the most important wall in a mosque. The inscription in Asīrgarh is placed in the northernmost *mihrāb*, and the one in Burhānpūr in the southernmost *mihrāb*. Although they are not placed over the central *mihrāb*, their position is very prominent and quite unusual. All the inscriptions are in relief.

The Asīrgarh inscription consists of two lines in Arabic and three lines in Sanskrit. Although the text is longer in Sanskrit, the size of the two inscriptions is equal; this is achieved by using slightly smaller letters in Nāgarī. The Arabic dominates insofar as it is on the top, but the Nāgarī might have been easier to read since it was a little bit lower and in a very clear and easily readable script.

Arabic text:

(1) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ان المساجد لله فلا تدعوا مع الله احدا قال عليه السلام من بنى  
مسجدا لله لو كمفحص قطة بنى الله له بيتا فى الجنة امر ببناء هذا المسجد المبارك الذى هو  
من حسنات الزمان و كالشامة على وجه الحسان سيدنا و مولانا السلطان ابن  
(2) السلطان ابن السلطان عادلشاه بن مبارکشاه بن عادلشاه الفاروقى العمرى العدوى خلد الله  
تعالى ملكه و سلطانه و افاض على العالمين بره و احسانه خالصا مخلصا لوجه الله الكريم و  
طلبا لمرضاته الجسيم تقبل الله منه صالح الاعمال بمحمد و صحبه و الال و كان ابتداء بنيائه  
(sic) فى ايام السلطنة الفاروقية العادلية فى يوم السبت رابع شهر شعبان فى سنة ٩٩٢ و  
اتمامه فى يوم

Translation of the Arabic text:

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. 'And the places of worship are only for Allāh, so pray not unto anyone along with Allāh'.<sup>90</sup> And, says the Prophet, blessings of

<sup>89</sup> Nos 44 and 46.

<sup>90</sup> Quran 72:18, tr. Pickthall 1930.

God be upon him, ‘whoever builds a mosque[;] be it small as the nest of the sandgrouse,<sup>91</sup> God will build him a house in Paradise’. The construction of this mosque, which is one of the meritorious acts of the age and like a mole on a beautiful face, was ordered by our lord and master the *sultān*, son of the *Sultān* ‘Ādil Shāh, son of Mubārak Shāh, son of ‘Ādil Shāh, al-Fārūqī l-‘Umarī l-‘Adawī – may God perpetuate his kingdom and sovereignty, and spread his goodness and munificence all over the world – purely and sincerely for the sake of Allāh the Merciful and with the object of obtaining His great pleasure. May Allāh accept his pious actions through the holy Prophet and his companions and descendants! Its construction was commenced in the days of the Fārūqyya ‘Ādiliyya Kingdom, on Saturday, the fourth of the month of Shā‘bān,<sup>92</sup> in 992 AH, and was completed on the day ...

#### Transliteration of the Sanskrit text:

- (1) śrī kartṛpuruṣāya namaḥ | guṇātmane nirguṇāya vyaktāvyaktasvarūpiṇe cidānandātmane nityaṃ viśvādhārayate namaḥ | 1 | candrārkatārāgaṃgādi\* tiṣṭhanti gagane bhuvitāvāt phārukivamaṃso ‘sau\*
- (2) vimalo bhuvitāvāt tiṣṭhatu | 2 | \*kṣaṃdrārkkā-tārāgaṃgādi śrīmatphāruṣikulo hita-prīta-pratāpa-dinakara-mitra-jana-cakora-ānandakara-pūrṇacandro (?) nirguṇe sacintana\*parāyaṇapātaśāha śrī śrī Ādilaśāha bina Mubārakhaśāha bina
- (3) Ādilaśāha vijayarājya śrīśānadeśa \*adhipateḥ || śrīvikramādityasamayāṭita samvat 1641 varṣe śālivāhana (śālivāhana) kṛta śāke 1506 prakṛmine(?) \*śrāvaṇama\* śukala (śukra) paṣye (pakṣye) tithi 6 śāni-dine citrā-naṣya (nakṣatre)

#### Translation of the Sanskrit text:

Let obeisance be paid to the creator of the world, the possessor of all qualities and yet destitute of them, manifest yet hidden, inherent in *citti* (mind) and *ānanda* (happiness), eternal, and upholder of the universe. May this pure Phāruki (Fārūqī) family endure on the earth as long as the sun, the moon, the stars, the Ganges and the like remain on heaven and earth. (Glorious) be the royal fortune of the *pādshāh*, ‘Ādil Shāh of the family of Phārushi,<sup>93</sup> son of Mubārak Shāh, son of ‘Ādil Shāh, the king of Khāndeś, (who is beneficial) to his people like the heat (of the sun)[or: the king’s splendour] is beneficial and beloved to the lotuses, and just as the full moon makes delight for the cakora birds, (and who is always) absorbed in meditation upon the Supreme Being. (Written) on Saturday, the 6th of the bright half of the early (?) Śrāvaṇa<sup>94</sup> in the Citrā *nakṣatra*<sup>95</sup> of the Vikrama *saṃvat*, 1641, (corresponding to) 1506 of the Śālivāhana Śaka era.

<sup>91</sup> Verbatim translation; often, it is translated as ‘the nest of a sparrow’.

<sup>92</sup> The eighth month of the Islamic calendar.

<sup>93</sup> ष instead of क, probably a mistake. See Kuraishi 1925–1926b, 2, n. 1.

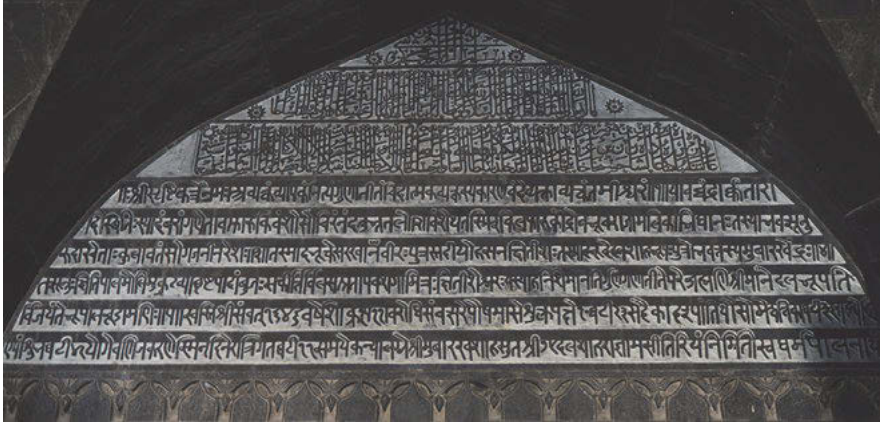
<sup>94</sup> The fifth lunar month of the Hindu calendar.

<sup>95</sup> That is, the fourteenth *nakṣatra* or lunar mansion according to Hindu astronomy.

The religious phrases from the Quran and Ḥadīth have not been translated into Sanskrit, but replaced by a call to obey God, who is then qualified by a number of characteristics. The two terms *citti* and *ānanda* could be taken from Advaita-Vedantic concepts. The wishes for the dynasty to last long have also been expressed with images common in a Hindu environment. The king's kindness towards his people is compared to the sun's kindness towards the lotus, and he is also considered a delight to his people, similar to the moon. He is said to be in constant meditation upon the Supreme Being.

In the Burhānpūr mosque, the design of both inscriptions is more sophisticated. The Arabic inscription consists of three lines. They are at the top, but due to the curvature of the arch, there is much less space for them; the first line in particular is very short. The letters are very elongated, so the single lines are significantly higher than the lines in Nāgarī below. The Sanskrit inscription is considerably longer: it not only fills six lines, but these lines also have more space, since they are less affected by the curvature of the arch. The *śirorekḥā* or headline that is drawn above the Nāgarī letters is so thick that the vowel signs are not above it, but incised into it. Though this visual effect, the vowel signs are more eye-catching. Most remarkably, in the middle of the third line from the top, a sign in the shape of the *tashdīd* (◌̣) has been added. The *tashdīd* is used in Arabic to indicate the gemination of a consonant. No such sign is used or needed in Nāgarī. I therefore postulate that through the graphic design of the Nāgarī text, an assimilation to the Arabic script was attempted, with the *tashdīd* as the most obvious element, but also the eye-catching vowel signs as the counterpart of the Arabic vowel signs. The script would thus be the graphic realization of what is happening in the text as well – a translation of Islamic concepts into terms and notions that were intelligible for Hindus.

The text of the Arabic inscription is very close to the one in Asīrgarh. The only major difference is that the genealogy of 'Ādil Shāh is mentioned. The genealogy is likewise mentioned in the Sanskrit version. The translation of Islamic concepts is similar to that of Asīrgarh, but the terminology is not exactly the same. The main factor in the length of the Sanskrit inscription is the very elaborate chronological data, indicating not only the date, but also the exact time the mosque began to be constructed.



**Fig. 1:** Sanskrit-Arabic inscription from the *qibla* wall of the *Jāmaʿ Masjid* in Burhanpur, ‘Adil Shāhī dynasty, 1588–1589 (Arabic inscription) / 1590 (Sanskrit inscription); public domain.

Transliteration of the Sanskrit, last section:

L. 5 virjayamte bhūpālacūdāmaṇiḥ || 5 || svasti śrī saṃvat 1646 varṣe śākre 1511 virodhi-  
saṃvatsare pauṣamāse śukl(v?)apakṣe 10 ghaṭī 23 sahaikā-daśyāṃ tithau some [kṛ?]ttikā-  
ghaṭī 33 rāha rohi -

L. 6 ṇayāṃ śubha ghaṭī 42 yoge vaṇijakaraṇesmin dine rātrigataghaṭī 11 samayo kanyālagna  
śrīmubārakhaśāhasutaśrī 7 edalaśāharājño masitiriyam nirmitā svadharmapālanārthaṃ

Translation of the Sanskrit, last section:<sup>96</sup>

Hail! Prosperity! This mosque was built by the king Śrī Ādil Shāh, son of the illustrious Mubārakh Shāh, for fostering his own religion<sup>97</sup>, in *saṃvat* (year) 1646, Śaka year 1511, in the year Virodhiṇ,<sup>98</sup> in the month of Pauṣa, in the bright fortnight, on the 10th *tithi* (lunar day), 23 *ghaṭīs* before the 11th *tithi*, on Monday, in the Kṛttikā, 33 *ghaṭīs* before Rohiṇi,<sup>99</sup> in the Śubha yoga at 42 *ghaṭīs*, in the Vaṇija *karāṇa* (lunar half-day), at the time when 11 *ghaṭīs* of the night on this day had passed and in the Kanyā *lagna* (entrance of the sun in the sign of Virgo).

<sup>96</sup> I would like to express my sincere thanks to Prof. Jost Gippert, who has corrected the reading of the Sanskrit calendrical and astronomical information.

<sup>97</sup> Not transliterated.

<sup>98</sup> The twenty-fifth year in the Jupiter cycle of sixty years.

<sup>99</sup> Kṛttikā and Rohiṇi are the third and the fourth *nakṣatras*.

This exact information on the construction date was related to astrological calculations for finding the best such moment, the so-called *catarchai*. Since the exact moment is only indicated in Sanskrit, the calculations were obviously done by an Indian astronomer or astrologer.

By virtue of their length, their position on the *miḥrāb* wall, and their attempt to adapt the religious content to a Hindu context, these two inscriptions are very exceptional. Who were the addressees: Muslim converts who knew Sanskrit? Muslim converts who did not know Sanskrit, but should be accommodated with a familiar script? Local notables and Brahmans who came to visit the mosque, without being Muslims themselves? And who translated the text? At least in the Asirgarh version, there are some mistakes – were they due to the translator, or rather the mason? Was the inscription produced by the same mason who also wrote the Arabic one, or were different masons employed? And why was the astrological information only given in Sanskrit – was it considered inappropriate to display it in Arabic on a religious building?

## 6.9 A bilingual inscription from Bilara in the Jodhpur district

The next inscription to be discussed is interesting because of its design. The inscription comes from Bilara in the Jodhpur district and was prepared in the time of Shāh Jahān; it is in Persian and a local dialect, written in Nāgarī (no. 62). The text in Nāgarī is much larger and therefore more prominent than the Persian version. It refers to the construction of a tomb for the rulers of Jodhpur and of a well and indicates the cost of building them. This inscription is remarkable insofar as the Nāgarī text on top is divided into two halves by a T-shaped central field. This field is filled with Persian text, with the *basmla* in the upper bar of the T, and the name of the ruler, Shāh Jahān, and the year in the vertical bar. In the same hand, the main Persian text is placed below the Nāgarī inscription.

Persian text:

- (1) لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله
- (2) شاه شها
- (3) ب الدين
- (4) قرانى شاه
- (5) جهان باد
- (6) شاه غازى
- (7) سنه ۱۰۴۹
- (8) ماه محرم

(9) تاریخِ غره ماهِ محرمِ یومِ پنجشنبهِ بامرِ مهاراجِ راجه جسونت سنگه بحکمِ چو [دهری؟] لکھمیداس راس [؟...] نمود چودھری..... یا داشت.....روپیہ ۲۵۰۱ و چشمہ گنگا روپیہ ۱۵۰۱ خرچ  
 (10) شد سنگ تراش لاد محمد و دودا کار فرما ویتھا بن دارکا [دوارکا؟] شعر باز [بعد....] مردن نام نکو در جهان آید بکار.....صرف را ..... باشد در کنار کاتب العبد عارف محمد

Translation of the Persian text:

There is no God but Allāh. Muḥammad is the Prophet of Allāh. Shāh Shihāb ud-Dīn [Šāhib] Qirān [-i Thā]ni, Shāh Jahān Pādshāh Ghāzī. Year (AH) 1049, month of Muḥarram.

On the first of the month of Muḥarram, the day of Thursday, under the orders of Mahārāj Rāja Jaswant Singh (and) at the instance of Cho(udhary?) Lakhmī Dās, Choudharī ... constructed (?) the tomb... 2501 rupees were spent (on ...), and on (?) Gangā spring, 1501 rupees. The stone carvers are Lād Muḥammad and Dūdā, and the supervisor Vithā, son of Dārka (Dwārka?) (Verse:) After death, a good name will remain in the world. Only ... will be in one's embrace (i.e. possession). The writer is the servant 'Ārif Muḥammad.

Although the Nāgarī has not been fully read, it very much looks as if the Persian script has been written over the Nāgarī, both in the middle of the first line and the central part, and possibly also at the bottom of the slab. In the central part, single words are spread over two lines due to the shortness of the line. Since Persian words are usually not hyphenated, this clearly indicates that no Persian text was planned there. Given the fact that the Persian or Arabic version is typically placed on top, and that the text has been arranged in such an unusual way, I assume that the original version of this inscription was in Nāgarī only, and that the Persian version was added later. The superimposition of some Persian text, and especially the placement of the *basmala* in the centre of the upper line, might have been a means to symbolically restore the normal order. The dates would contradict this interpretation, since the *saṁvat* date of the Nāgarī text – Āshāḍhā<sup>100</sup> 1696 – comes after Muḥarram 1049, the date indicated in the Persian version. But this could also be a deliberate misdating to give priority to the Persian text.

## 6.10 A bilingual inscription from the lower Swat valley

The last inscription to be considered also refers to the erection of a tomb and is one of the oldest inscriptions in the corpus (no. 3). It allegedly comes from Zalamkot, a place in the lower Swat valley. The languages used are Persian in

<sup>100</sup> The fourth lunar month of the Hindu calendar.



Arabic script and Sanskrit in Śāradā script. The two texts are not of equal status: by its length, the line spacing and its placement at the top, the Persian text is dominant, while the Sanskrit text is secondary. On the left, it is aligned with the Persian inscription, while on the right, it does not adhere to the space limit. This is a consequence of the different writing directions of Persian and Sanskrit, but also of the limited space available at the bottom of the limestone slab.

Persian version:

(1) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
 (2) لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله  
 (3) بنا كرد [ابن] مركدرا امير جليل امير طوس  
 (4) ارسلان الجاذب اطال الله بقاه تمام كرد  
 (5) سيهيك خليل بك ابن كوتوال احمد [ا]البغر  
 (6) ادام الله دولته في ماه ذو القعدة  
 (7) سال مر چهار صد يك بود

Translation of the Persian:

- (1) In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
- (2) There is no God but Allāh; Muḥammad is the Prophet of Allāh.
- (3) This tomb was founded by the grand *amīr*, the governor of Ṭūs,
- (4) Arsalān ul-Jādhīb – may Allāh prolong his life. It was completed by
- (5) the *sipahbak* (i.e. commander) Khalīlbak, son of the Kotwāl Aḥmad ul-Baghr –
- (6) may Allāh perpetuate his fortune – in the month of Dhū l-Qa’ada,<sup>101</sup>
- (7) the current (*marr*) year was 401.

No translation or transliteration of the Sanskrit text have been provided.

By the dates indicated in both languages, the inscription can be dated to the year 401 AH / 1011 CE. It is thus one of the oldest clearly datable attestations of Persian in Arabic script. Geographically, it can be related to the other earliest testimony of Persian in Arabic script, which has been found in today’s Afghanistan.<sup>102</sup> It thus provides further evidence of the use of the Arabic script in the eastern parts of Iran up to the border region with India. The early date of the inscription is probably the reason for some orthographic peculiarities, especially the spelling of *markad* instead of *marqad* (‘tomb’), although this variant is not

<sup>101</sup> The eleventh month of the Islamic calendar.

<sup>102</sup> There in one older document, in the so-called Afghan Genizah; see Haim 2019. Some even older Persian notes are found in Quranic booklets; these were done by a person from Tus. See Kariminia 1396 AH / 2018 CE.

attested to in the contemporary legal documents from Bamiyan.<sup>103</sup> The inscription consists of seven lines in Persian in Kufi script, and three lines of Sanskrit in Śāradā script. Unfortunately, only the Persian inscription has been transcribed and translated in full in the publication. It contains the Islamic creed (*shahāda*), the name of the governor of Tus who ordered the tomb to be built, and the name of the commander who had it completed. The name of the buried is not mentioned. The Persian text ends with the date; in the Sanskrit text, the date comes at the beginning and is indicated more precisely than in the Persian.

The inscription is unusual insofar as it is one of very few bilingual tomb inscriptions, but also since nothing about the dead person has been revealed. Neither his or her name, nor the date of his or her death have been mentioned, at least not in Persian. We can only speculate that the deceased had a local origin – was this the reason for adding some lines in Śāradā?

## Conclusion

In none of the inscriptions studied in this corpus is either text a verbatim translation of the other. It is therefore more appropriate to speak about two versions of a text conveying, in most cases, the same message. Even in cases in which the texts do not vary significantly, each version follows its own stylistic norms. The majority of the inscriptions can be compared to what Taylor has described for Aramaic and Greek inscriptions from Palmyra, which he considers to be ‘independent products conforming to accepted conventions’.<sup>104</sup> These conventions can be understood from how the details of the dates are indicated; the position of the dates in the text; the gods who have been invoked; specific phrases that are included or omitted in the text, like e.g. the *basma* or quotations from the Ḥadīth and Quran; blessings and imprecations; the indication of other or additional people responsible for adherence to a *waqf* regulation; etc. Taylor speaks here of a ‘dynamic equivalence’,<sup>105</sup> which means that the text in one language is not repeated verbatim, but transposes the meaning to its own cultural context.

In the case of the inscriptions from Palmyra, Taylor concludes that the bilingual inscriptions were not translated, but produced by the same bilingual speaker.<sup>106</sup> For the corpus of bilingual inscriptions considered here, such a con-

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103 Haim 2019, 418–419.

104 Taylor 2002, 321.

105 Taylor 2002, 323.

106 Taylor 2002, 323.

clusion cannot generally be drawn, since it is much too heterogenous. At least for the Sanskrit-Persian bilingual inscriptions, it is highly improbable that they were composed by the same bilingual speaker, since we know from studies on translations from Sanskrit into Persian that they were produced by a team of Sanskrit and Persian experts, and that there was often even an intermediate language involved in the process of translation.<sup>107</sup> I also doubt that there were speakers of both Arabic and Sanskrit. The production of the inscriptions certainly followed various models in the different geographical and historical contexts, but one might imagine that an order to produce an inscription was issued to one expert in each language, with clear instructions about the content, upon which the expert was left to formulate an appropriate text fitting the conventions of the language and the culture associated with it. Although it is possible to categorize the inscriptions according to the scheme provided by Sohoni, this gives only a rough orientation, and I doubt that this scheme is very helpful in understanding the complexity of goals, interests, needs and conventions that influenced the production of these inscriptions. This can be achieved only by further examining the historical and social circumstances of their creation in detailed studies for the different dynasties, epochs and regions. Joined editions of the different versions of the texts, together with high-quality images in a database like Sid-dham, would also be helpful.

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107 Truschke 2016, 104–105; Orthmann and Speziale 2020.

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## Appendix: List of inscriptions

### No. 1

*Year:* 5th regnal year of King Sthanu Ravi [849–850 CE]

*Names:* Ayyanadikal; Tiruvadikal; Sthanu Ravi; Mar Sapir Iso

*Location:* Kollam, Kerala

*Languages:* Tamil, with Hebrew, Arabic and Middle Persian

*Material aspects:* Vaṭṭeluttu, Pahlavi, Kufic and Hebrew scripts

*Context:* Copper plate

*Content:* Conferring of rights and privileges to Christian merchants

*Salient features:* Main text in Tamil, other languages and alphabets used for signatures

*References:* Tintu 2019

### No. 2

*Year:* 13 Jumādā I 243 AH; (39)32 Śāstra or Laukika era [857 CE]

*Location:* Tochi valley, North Waziristan

*Languages:* Arabic and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Kufic, Śāradā and Nāgarī; all engraved; Arabic on top, same size

*Context:* Out of context, Peshawar Museum

*Content:* Building inscription

*Salient features:* Sanskrit text with dating only, incomplete

*References:* ẖuraishi 1925–1926a, 27–28 and pl. XI b; Harmatta 1966, 427–448; Humbach 1966, 11–18

### No. 3

*Year:* Dhū l-Qa‘da 401 AH; Saṃvat 189; 1 Āśāḍha-vadi [1011 CE]

*Names:* Aرسالان al-Jādhīb (governor of Ṭūs); Khalilbak; Ghaznavid

*Location:* Zalamkot, lower Swat valley

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Kufic and Śāradā, both engraved

*Context:* Tomb; currently in Peshawar Museum

*Content:* Construction of a tomb by two governmental functionaries

*Salient features:* Oldest Persian inscription in Arabic script; Sanskrit text not edited and translated; name of deceased not mentioned

*References:* Rahman 1998



**No. 4**

*Year:* 27 Ramaḍān 662 AH; Saṃvat 1320; 13 Āśāḍha-vadi; 945 Valabhī; 151 Simha [1264 CE]

*Names:* Nākhudā Firūz; Arjunadeva, king of Gujarat; Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad; Amīr Rukn ud-Dīn, ruler of Hormuz

*Location:* Prabhaṣ Patan/Somnath, Gujarat

*Languages:* Arabic and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Engraved on two separate black granite stones

*Context:* Mosque; texts since relocated to the wall of another mosque and a temple

*Content:* Building of a mosque; waqf

*Salient features:* Details of waqf in Sanskrit; translation of Allah into Hindu concepts

*References:* Hultzsch 1882; Desai 1961, 10–15 and pl. II b; Sircar 1961–1962, 141–150; Chattopadhyaya 1998, 70–78; Thapar 2008, 88–99; Sheikh 2014, 190–191

**No. 5**

*Year:* 1 Ramaḍān 669 AH [1271 CE]

*Names:* Nuṣrat Khān; Ghiyāth ud-Dīn Balban

*Location:* Bayana, Bharatpur, Rajasthan

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh Sanskrit inscription on the back of the tablet

*Context:* Well belonging to Goculchandramāji temple in Kāman

*Content:* Clearance and renewed digging of a well that had been filled with stones

*Salient features:* Sanskrit not edited or translated

*References:* Yazdani 1937–1938a, 5–6 and pl. III a

**No. 6**

*Year:* 1 Muḥarram 704 AH; Saṃvat 1360; 2 Bhādrapada-vadi [1304 CE]

*Names:* Rāi Karna Deva Vāghelā; Balchaq; Shādī; Tāj ud-Dīn Ḥasan (Khaljī period)

*Location:* Sāmpā, 45 km from Vaḍodara, Gujarat

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Nāgarī; Persian on top; both incomplete

*Context:* Close to a pond; no edifice left

*Content:* Endowment for the village of Sāmpā for the mosque of Kambāyat; invocation to abide to the terms

*Salient features:* Sanskrit similar to Persian; Sanskrit version invokes Rānās to honour and execute the gift

*References:* Desai 1975a, 13–20 and pl. II a; Sheikh 2014, 191–192

## No. 7

*Year:* (720 AH); Śaka 1242 [1320 CE]

*Names:* Revaiya/Riḃya; Karīm ud-Dīn; Quṭb ud-Dīn Khaljī

*Location:* Bijapur, Karnataka

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Nāgarī, Persian; Persian in hesitant script

*Context:* Malik Karīm ud-Dīn mosque; Marathi on a pillar in the north wall; Persian on the second pillar in second row from the north

*Content:* Building of the mosque; mentions the carpenter who built it and his remuneration

*Salient features:* Marathi version much more detailed than Persian version; date indicated only in Marathi

*References:* Nazim 1936, 25; Sohoni 2022, 8–9

## No. 8

*Year:* 20 Dhū l-Ḥijja (723 AH); Saṃvat 1380; 7 Pausa-vadi [1323 CE]

*Names:* Bābā Arjun Shāh; Hāji Ismāʿīl; ʿUthmān of Shiraz; Ghiyāth ud-Dīn Tughluq

*Location:* Petlad, Anand district, Gujarat

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Nāgarī

*Context:* In the tomb of Bābā Arjun; originally in the vicinity of the tomb

*Content:* Dedication of a well; grant

*Salient features:* In the Sanskrit version, the *thakkuras* are asked to protect the gifts

*References:* Yazdani 1915–1916, 16–18 and pl. XIV b; Sheikh 2014, 201–202

## No. 9

*Year:* 25 Dhū l-Qaʿda 740 AH [1340 CE]

*Names:* Mokha Mehta; Malik Muḏaffar Sulṭān; Muḥammad b. Tughluq

*Location:* Karkhaḏi, Vaḏodara district, Gujarat

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Nāgarī; Sanskrit in more lines

*Content:* Construction of a mosque and a well

*Salient features:* Sanskrit has more details

*References:* Gyani 1944, 1–2 and pl. 1; Sheikh 2014, 193–194

## No. 10

*Year:* 1 Rabī' I 765 AH; Saṃvat 1420; 1286 Śaka; 14 Mārgaśīrṣa-vadi [1363 CE]

*Names:* Bāmdev, son of Nathū; Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq

*Location:* Originally from Sambhar, Jaipur district, Rajasthan; today in Archaeological Museum, Amber, Jaipur, Rajasthan

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Nāgarī; Persian in relief, Nāgarī incised and in very poor condition; Sanskrit much smaller and below the Persian

*Context:* Fixed on a well outside the town of Sambhar

*Content:* Construction of a step well

*Salient features:* In Sanskrit; invocation of Varuna at the beginning

*References:* Bukhari 1955–1956, 57–59 and pl. XV a

## No. 11

*Year:* 15 Safar 779 AH [1377 CE]

*Names:* Nākhudā Ghafūr, son of Nākhudā Aḥmad

*Location:* Originally probably from the west coast, somewhere to the north of Mumbai; today in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) museum, Mumbai

*Languages:* Arabic; mixture of Marathi and Gujarati; Portuguese insignia on the back

*Material aspects:* Arabic in verses in Naskh script, carved in relief, illegible; Nāgarī throughout the lower fourth, incised, text width broader than for the Arabic part

*Context:* Removed from original position by the Portuguese

*Content:* Epitaph, indicating the name of the deceased

*Salient features:* Only Sanskrit version read and translated; Perso-Arabic portion badly damaged

*References:* Desai 1957–1958, 12–13 and pl. IV a; Sohoni 2022, 9

## No. 12

*Year:* (784 AH) [1382–1383 CE]

*Names:* Dungar; Tikam; Natha; Punji, the mother of Dungar

*Location:* Sathod, Vaḍodara district, Gujarat

*Languages:* Persian, Old Gujarati, Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Nāgarī; versified Sanskrit

*Content:* Repair of a step well; grant of land for the maintenance of the well

*Salient features:* Genealogy of brothers in Sanskrit; different curses in the three languages

*References:* Sheikh 2014, 202–204

## No. 13

*Year:* 797 AH; Saṃvat 1452 (15 Vaiśākha-vadi) [1394–1395 CE]

*Names:* Malik Ya'qūb at-Tamīmī; Nuṣrat Shāh; Qāḍī Badr Rāṇig, son of Virdhavalā; Tughluq period

*Location:* Mangrol, Junagadh district, Gujarat

*Languages:* Persian in verse; Sanskrit in prose

*Material aspects:* Persian arranged in four columns; Sanskrit below; scripts in about the same size; Persian in relief; Sanskrit incised

*Context:* Small room at the Gādī gate, today at the record office of Mangrol

*Content:* Construction of two iron doors for the two gates

*Salient features:* No translation of the Sanskrit text; Persian begins with the creation of earth; Sanskrit text indicates who wrote the Torki (= Persian) text and who engraved the Sanskrit text

*References:* Desai 1962, 34–37 and pl. XI a; Diskalkar 1939–1940, 592–593; Sheikh 2014, 192–193

## No. 14

*Year:* (807 AH) [1404–1405 CE]

*Names:* Amir Nathu, son of Takhir; Ḍafar Khān, son of Wajīh ul-Mulk; Malik Adam b. Sulaimān

*Location:* Vaḍodara, Gujarat

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Not indicated

*Context:* At the entrance of a well; today at the entrance of the Jami' mosque

*Content:* Construction of a step well

*Salient features:* Not indicated

*References:* Sheikh 2014, 204

## No. 15

*Year:* 14 Shawwāl 810 AH; 27 Rabi' I 811 AH; Saṃvat 1464; 2 Caitra-vadi; 13 Śrāvana-vadi [1408 CE]

*Names:* Faḍlallāh Aḥmad; Abū Rajā; Muḥaffar Shāh, sultan of Gujarat

*Location:* Veraval, Gir Somnath district, Gujarat

*Languages:* Persian (prose) and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Sanskrit below Persian, much smaller

*Context:* Inner face of the west wall of the mortuary of a small tomb of Maghribi Shāh; not *in situ*

*Content:* Construction of a city wall and guard-room

*Salient features:* Sanskrit contains mostly dates and names

*References:* Desai 1953–1954a, 50–52 and pl. XV a; Diskalkar 1939–1940, 598–599; Sheikh 2014, 194

## No. 16

*Year:* (811–812 AH) [1409 CE]

*Names:* Zheng He

*Location:* Galle, Sri Lanka; today in Colombo National Museum

*Languages:* Tamil, Persian and Chinese

*Material aspects:* Tamil at the top left; Persian at the bottom left; Chinese in the right portion of the slab; two dragons facing each other carved at the top

*Context:* Made in Nanjing and carried to Sri Lanka; placed in a temple

*Content:* Offerings of the Chinese emperor to a god/saint in Sri Lanka; list of offerings

*Salient features:* Beneficiary of the offerings is different in each language

*References:* Siddham database, <https://siddham.network/object/ob03125/> (accessed on 4 September 2023)

## No. 17

*Year:* 15 Muḥarram 847 AH [1443 CE]

*Names:* Muḥammad Shāh

*Location:* Vaḍodara district, Gujarat

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* With figures of animals engraved at the top; Persian (in Naskh) much longer

*Context:* Pillar, originally from Sathod

*Content:* Order of remission of certain taxes

*Salient features:* Sanskrit not edited

*References:* Desai 1963, 22–23 and pl. VII a

## No. 18

*Year:* 14 Jumādā II 848 AH; Śālivāhan Śaka 1366, 10 Aśvin-śudi [1444 CE]

*Names:* Makhdūma-yi Jahān Bībi Shahnāz; Maḥmūd Khān; ‘Alā ud-Dīn Aḥmad Bahmānī

*Location:* Bidar, Karnataka; today in the Telangana State Archaeology Museum, Hyderabad

*Languages:* Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh in relief; Nāgarī engraved; prose and verse; Sanskrit much longer

*Context:* Step well

*Content:* Construction of a step well for public use

*Salient features:* Sanskrit version has much more information, *inter alia* about a conflict within the royal family

*References:* Desai 1959–1960, 33–34 and pl. VIII a; Joshi 1959–1960, 38–40; Datta and Suri 1962, 81–84 and pl. XXVI

## No. 19

*Year:* 11 Dhū l-Qa‘da 859 AH [1067 CE]

*Names:* Quṭb ud-Dīn Aḥmad II, sultan of Gujarat

*Location:* Prabhaṣ Patan, Gir Somnath district, Gujarat

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Nāgarī; Naskh much more prominent; Sanskrit small and at the bottom; Naskh in relief; Sanskrit incised

*Context:* Inner face of the city wall, to the left of the Moṭā Darwāza

*Content:* Order by the sultan to put a stop to the oppression of the public by some officials

*Salient features:* Sanskrit considered illegible; in Persian, admonition of Muslims and non-Muslims not to commit illegal acts

*References:* Desai 1955–1956a, 94–96 and pl. XXVI b; Sheikh 2014, 196–197

## No. 20

*Year:* 15 Rabīʿ I 862 AH; Saṃvat 1514; 2 Śrāvaṇa-vadi [1458 CE]

*Names:* Malik Asad; Quṭb ud-Dīn Aḥmad II, sultan of Gujarat

*Location:* Museum of Pasnavada, close to Prabhaṣ Patan; Gir Somnath district, Gujarat

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Nāgarī

*Content:* Construction of a fort

*Salient features:* Sanskrit version more informative than Persian; indicates names of artisans

*References:* Desai 1955–1956a, 96–99; Sanskrit version in Watson 1879, 183; Sheikh 2014, 194–195 (no plate)

## No. 21

*Year:* 862 AH [1457–1458 CE]

*Names:* Humāyūn Shāh Bahmānī

*Location:* Gulbarga, Gulbarga district, Karnataka

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh and Nāgarī; Persian in relief, Sanskrit incised; Sanskrit much smaller than Persian

*Context:* Eastern wall of the Bāoli Qalandar Shāh, Gulbarga

*Content:* Construction of a step well

*Salient features:* Sanskrit version mentions Ijalidevi as builder; Sanskrit not edited or translated

*References:* Kadiri 1964, 40–41 and pl. XIII b

## No. 22

*Year:* 862 AH; Saṃvat 1514; 2 Śrāvaṇa-vadi [1458 CE]

*Names:* Quṭb ud-Dīn Aḥmad

*Location:* Darbar Hall Museum (?), earlier Rasul Khanji Museum, Junagadh

*Languages:* Persian and incorrect Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Thulth in relief; Nāgarī; Nāgarī in much smaller characters

*Content:* Construction of a *mīnār* in Sulṭānpūr

*Salient features:* Sanskrit inscription mentions the earlier name Deopattan

*References:* Yazdani 1935–1936a, 48–49 and pl. XXXV b; Yazdani 1939–1940, 47

## No. 23

*Year:* (887 AH); Saṃvat 1540; 5 Phālguna-vadi [1482 CE]

*Names:* Maḥmūd Shāh, king of Malwa

*Location:* Bhonrasa, Bhopal district, Madhya Pradesh

*Languages:* Persian and Hindi with a few words in defective Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh; Nāgarī of a late period; writing style crude in both languages; both texts of equal size; Persian at the top

*Context:* Stone post near the main gate

*Content:* Text only partially preserved; remission of taxes

*Salient features:* In Hindi version, revival of worship and sin of killing cows is mentioned

*References:* Saksena 1937–1938, 23–26 and pl. VII a

## No. 24

*Year:* 893 AH; Saṃvat 1545; Śaka 1410; 13 Vaiśākha-śudi [1488 CE]

*Names:* Maḥmūd Begarhā Āṣaf, Malik ush-Sharq Maḥmūd Shāh b. Shāh b. Maḥmūd Shāh

*Location:* Mahamuda, Dohad district, Gujarat

*Languages:* Arabic (with some Persian phrases) and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh, in relief; date given in figure; Nāgarī, in verse, engraved; both versions on two different slabs

*Context:* Basket Bond Dohad

*Content:* Genealogy of Gujarat sultans; Maḥmūd's deeds and conquests; completion of a city



*Salient features:* In Sanskrit invocation of a goddess residing in Kashmir; two versions of the same record

*References:* Khwaja Muhammad Ahmad 1925–1926, 20–21 and pl. IX b; Desai 1975b, 26–30 and pl. III a; Sankalla 1937–1938, 212–225

## No. 25

*Year:* 12 Muḥarram 901 Shuhūr-San; 1422 Śaka; 3 Bhādrapada-vadi [1500 CE]

*Names:* Khān Ghalib Khān

*Location:* Bijapur, Archaeological Museum (Gol Gumbaz Museum)

*Languages:* Persian and Kanarese

*Material aspects:* Naskh, incised; two scripts separated by different figures (sun and moon, scales etc.); Kanarese part much longer

*Context:* No location indicated

*Content:* Qaulnāma (agreement, promise) issued by Khān Ghalib Khān

*Salient features:* The two inscriptions complement each other: the Persian part asks people to obey the content of the Qaul-i Hindawī, regulations for Muslims and Hindus in case they do not adhere to it; Kanarese version (not edited or translated) refers to cultivation of fallow land

*References:* Samadi 1955–1956, 77–78 and pl. XIX c

## No. 26

*Year:* (904 AH) [1499 CE]

*Names:* Bai Harir Sulṭānī; Maḥmūd Shāh

*Location:* Asarwa, Ahmadabad, Gujarat

*Languages:* Arabic and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Arabic briefer than Sanskrit

*Context:* On opposite walls of the wall, facing each other

*Content:* Construction of a step well by a slave attendant

*Salient features:* Sanskrit inscription begins with invocation of Varuṇa, the lord of water; Sanskrit indicates position of Bai Harir and costs of the well as well as the names of the builders

*References:* Sheikh 2014, 204–205

## No. 27

*Year:* Rajab 906 AH; Saṃvat 1557; 3 Phālguna-śudi [1501 CE]

*Names:* Shyām Kunwar Kalāwantī; Tātār Khān; Lodī dynasty

*Location:* Daulatpura village, Jatara, Tikamgarh district, Madhya Pradesh

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh, upper half, in relief; Nāgarī incised; Persian and Nāgarī are the same size

*Context:* Shaikhonwālī Bāolī, embedded in the wall

*Content:* Construction of a step well

*Salient features:* Sanskrit text cannot be fully read

*References:* Bukhari 1953–1954, 40–41 and pl. XII c

## No. 28

*Year:* 14 Dhū l-Qa‘da 918 AH [1513 CE]

*Names:* Malik ush-Sharq; Malik ‘Ambar; Bahmanid dynasty

*Location:* Maliabad village Raichur district, Karnataka

*Languages:* Persian and Kannada

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Kannada; Naskh in relief, Kannada incised; with animal drawing

*Context:* Lying loose in the local mosque

*Content:* Qaulnāma issued by Malik ‘Ambar, reductions in the levies on the village communities and prohibition of forced labour

*Salient features:* Kannada only contains imprecatory portion

*References:* Kadiri 1962, 63–65 and pl. XIX

## No. 29

*Year:* 13 Rajab 921 AH; Saṃvat 1572; 1437 Śaka [1515 CE]

*Names:* Faṭḥ Khān; Abū n-Naṣr Muḥaffar Shāh (Gujarat)

*Location:* Sankheda, Chhota Udaipur district, Gujarat

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Persian letters in uneven size; Sanskrit in an even hand; Persian at top

*Context:* Right bastion of the south gate of the fort

*Content:* Construction of a well and a mosque

*Salient features:* Sanskrit is very damaged

*References:* Desai 1963, 43–44 and pl. XIV a

**No. 30**

*Year:* 20 Šafar 923 AH; Saṃvat 1573; 7 Caitra-vadi [1517 CE]

*Names:* Shaikh Sikandar; Bībī ‘Ā’isha; Sikandar Shāh Lodi

*Location:* Mubarakpur Kotla, Delhi

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh in relief, Nāgarī incised; Persian at right, Sanskrit at left; same size

*Content:* Construction of a well

*Salient features:* Contents very similar, but Sanskrit omits reference to the king as conqueror of infidels, shelter of Islam and warrior on the path of God

*References:* Bukhari 1959–1960, 8–10 and pl. II b; Prasad 1990, 37–40

**No. 31**

*Year:* 1 Rabī‘ I 940 AH [1533 CE]

*Names:* Khāqān Ulugh Khān; Bahādur Shāh, son of Muẓaffar Shāh

*Location:* Bharuch (Broach), Bharuch district, Gujarat

*Languages:* Persian and ?

*Material aspects:* Persian in relief in the centre; another script on the margins, incised, perhaps an earlier text that has been overwritten in the central panel

*Context:* On a stone fixed to the Furza Mosque

*Content:* Construction of a new ditch for a fortress; names and dates

*Salient features:* The second script is not mentioned in the edition – it could be a *spolium* from an earlier temple or other building

*References:* Nazim 1933–1934, 30–31 and pl. XVIIb

**No. 32**

*Year:* Šafar 94(8) AH; Saṃvat 1599; 7 Āsāḍha-śudi [1541–1542 CE]

*Names:* Yūsuf; Hemārdrasēn; Shēr Shāh

*Location:* Bhabua, Kaimur district, Bihar; today in the Indian Museum Kolkata

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Nāgarī; letters raised in both scripts

*Content:* Construction of a sepulchre, a tank and a garden

*Salient features:* Sanskrit with invocation to Ganesha; mentions Hemārdrasēn as somebody who made an endowment; Hijrī date indicated wrongly in Sanskrit

*References:* Quraishi 1923–1924, 26; Qeyamuddin Ahmad 1973, 136–140 and pl. 27

### No. 33

*Year:* 14 Ramaḍān 958 AH; 1432 Śaka; 15 Māgha-śudi [1551 CE]

*Names:* Abū l-Muzaffar Sulṭān Quṭb Shāh; Sayyid Shāh Mīr Iṣfahānī, son of Sayyid Aḥmad Ṭabāṭabā'ī

*Location:* Nalgonda, Telangana

*Languages:* Persian and Telugu

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Telugu, both incised; sun and moon carved at the top; Persian on top; Telugu version longer

*Context:* Fixed on the dyke of the Pangal tank

*Content:* Rebuilding of the dam and the tank; attribution of benefits from the irrigated land

*Salient features:* Telugu close to Persian, with more details; also better preserved; Muslims and Brahmans receive benefits from irrigated lands

*References:* Yazdani 1925–1926, 23–24 and pl. XI a; Yazdani 1930, 4–7

### No. 34

*Year:* 12 Rabī' I 959 AH [1552 CE]

*Names:* Shaikh Sulaimān; Yūsuf Daulat Khān Ḥusain Sūr; Sūr dynasty

*Location:* Originally from Nagaur, Rajasthan; today in Sardar Government Museum, Jodhpur

*Languages:* Persian and Nāgarī

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Nāgarī; Nāgarī script is indistinct, text is much shorter; Persian in relief; Nāgarī incised; Persian much more prominent

*Context:* From a *pūsāl* at Nagaur

*Content:* Declaration of redemption and restoration of a *pūsāl* (school) by the intervention of a Muslim shaikh

*Salient features:* Sanskrit text very damaged; purport not clear

*References:* Ishaque 1955–1956, 63–64 and pl. XVI a

### No. 35

*Year:* (962 AH) [1555 CE]

*Names:* Nūr Khān; Ibrāhīm I 'Ādil Shāh

*Location:* Shirol, Kolhapur district, Maharashtra; today in Irwin Agricultural Museum, Kolhapur

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Nāgarī, Persian

*Content:* Grant of a garden near the village of Shirol (Jaisinghpur) to Nūr Khān by Ibrāhīm I ‘Ādil Shāh

*Salient features:* Marathi much shorter than Persian; both inscriptions have donkey curse

*References:* Sohoni 2022, 9–10

## No. 36

*Year:* (962 AH) [1555 CE]

*Names:* Nūr Khān; Ibrāhīm I ‘Ādil Shāh

*Location:* Shirol, Kolhapur district, Maharashtra; today in Irwin Agricultural Museum, Kolhapur

*Languages:* Persian, Marathi and Kannada

*Material aspects:* Persian in Arabic script and Nāgarī

*Context:* Originally affixed to Nūr Khān’s Gombād in Shirol

*Content:* Grant of the village of Shirol to Nūr Khān

*Salient features:* Not indicated

*References:* Sohoni 2022, 10

## No. 37

*Year:* 977 AH; 1491 Śaka [1569–1570 CE]

*Names:* Aflātūn Khān; Murtaḍā Nizām Shāh I of Ahmadnagar

*Location:* Galna fort, Nasik district, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Persian verse; only one line of Nāgarī

*Context:* Found between two central arches of a bastion situated in the wall of the fort

*Content:* Construction of a bastion for the king

*Salient features:* No image or translation of the Sanskrit part; Sanskrit part partially covered by a wooden frame

*References:* Desai 1957–1958, 13–14 and pl. IV b

**No. 38**

*Year:* (977 AH); 970 Shuhūr-San; 1491 Śaka [1569–1570 CE]

*Names:* Aflāṭūn Khān; Niḏām Shāhī

*Location:* Galna fort, Nasik district, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Arabic, Persian and Nāgarī (no indication of the language)

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Nāgarī; Nāgarī on the left and lower borders; Persian prose and verse

*Context:* Inner side of the fort wall to the right of the iron gate

*Content:* Date of the construction of a fort

*Salient features:* No translation of the Nāgarī Arabic year written in Nāgarī letters

*References:* Kadiri 1967, 46–47 and pl. XI a

**No. 39**

*Year:* 978 AH; 1492 Śaka [1570–1571 CE]

*Names:* Aflāṭūn Khān; Niḏām Shāhī

*Location:* Galna fort, Nasik district, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Persian and Nāgarī (no indication of the language)

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Nāgarī; Nāgarī on the margins; Persian verse

*Context:* Western wall of the enclosure of a spring called Chashma-yi Khiḏr

*Content:* Excavation of a spring, associated with the Water of Life

*Salient features:* Nāgarī version much shorter

*References:* Kadiri 1967, 47–48 and pl. XII a

**No. 40**

*Year:* 978 AH [1570–1571 CE]

*Names:* Bābāji Ḍābit Khān; ‘Alī ‘Ādil Shāh

*Location:* Jumma Peth, Solapur, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Persian and Moḗi

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Nāgarī

*Context:* Fixed into a pillar near the steps leading towards the ablution tank in the Jāmi‘ mosque

*Content:* Construction of the Friday mosque

*Salient features:* Moḗi version not edited and described

*References:* Siddiqui 1995, 98–99 (no plate)

**No. 41**

*Year:* 1 Rabīʿ II 985 AH; 1499 Śaka; 10 Jyēṣṭha-śudi [1577 CE]

*Names:* Ṣahīr Muḥammad Dāʿī; Khān-i Aʿzam Haibat Khān; Niṣām Shāh period

*Location:* Galna fort, Nasik district, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Nāgarī (no indication of the language) and Persian

*Material aspects:* Persian in Naskh; Nāgarī; both scripts in relief; Nāgarī better preserved; some lines of Persian lost

*Context:* A niche between the battlements fronting the north of the bastion

*Content:* Building inscription for a bastion

*Salient features:* Sanskrit not edited or translated

*References:* Desai 1957–1958, 14–15 and pl. V a

**No. 42**

*Year:* No Hijra date; 1503 Śaka (1 Vaiśākha-vadi) [1581 CE]

*Names:* Pūlād Khān Niṣām Shāh

*Location:* Galna, Nasik district, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq and Nāgarī, both in relief

*Context:* Fixed on a wall to the right of the iron gate

*Content:* Some construction

*Salient features:* Marathi version contains some more details about names and the date

*References:* Kadiri 1967, 52–54 and pl. XIII c; Sohoni 2022, 10

**No. 43**

*Year:* Rabīʿ I 991 AH (Shuhūr-San); 1505 Śaka; 1 Chaitra-śudi [1583 CE]

*Names:* Ṣahīr Muḥammad; Pūlād Khān Ghāzī Niṣām Shāh

*Location:* Galna, Nasik district, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Naskh and Nāgarī, both in relief; only one line in Marathi

*Context:* Galna fort

*Content:* Foundation of a bastion in Galna fort

*Salient features:* Marathi version contains only the date

*References:* Kadiri 1967, 55–56 and pl. XIV b; Sohoni 2022, 10

## No. 44

*Year:* 4 Sha‘bān 992 AH; Saṃvat 1641; 1506 Śaka [1584 CE]

*Names:* ‘Ādil Shāh b. Mubārak Shāh al-Fārūqī

*Location:* Asīrgarh, Burhanpur district, Madhya Pradesh

*Languages:* Arabic and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Nāgarī; very beautiful; letters raised

*Context:* Jāmi‘ Masjid, northernmost *mīhrāb*

*Content:* Construction of a mosque; dating

*Salient features:* Translation of central concept of Islam into Sanskrit; rulers shall endure as long as sun, moon, stars and the Ganges remain

*References:* Ḳuraishi 1925–26b, 1–2 (no plate)

## No. 45

*Year:* 12 Rajab 996 AH [1588 CE]

*Names:* ‘Alī ‘Ādil Shāh; Bijapur rulers

*Location:* Mudgal, Raichur district, Karnataka

*Languages:* Persian and ?

*Material aspects:* Ṭughrā style; inscription in other letters below the Persian text, incised

*Context:* Bastion

*Content:* Building of the Faṭḥ-i Jang bastion

*Salient features:* Nothing about another inscription is indicated in the edition

*References:* Yazdani 1935–1936b, 15 and pl. IX a

## No. 46

*Year:* 997 AH; Saṃvat 1646; 11 Pausa-śudi; 1511 Śaka [1588–1589 CE / 1590 CE]

*Names:* ‘Ādil Shāh, son of Mubārak Shāh Fārūqī

*Location:* Burhanpur, Madhya Pradesh

*Languages:* Arabic and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Naskh, with Ṭughrā flourishes; Nāgarī; very beautiful; letters raised in both scripts

*Context:* Jāmi‘ Masjid, southernmost *mīhrāb*

*Content:* Construction of a mosque; dating; genealogical information

*Salient features:* Exact moment of building indicated in Sanskrit; references to astral bodies; translation of Islamic concepts

*References:* Rahim 1961, 56–58 and pl. XIX b; Lal 1908, 306–310 (with photo)



**No. 47**

*Year:* 1000 AH, but 1000 Shuhūr-San indicated [1591–1592 CE]

*Names:* Burhān Niẓām Shāh Sulṭān II

*Location:* Kalamb, Yavatmal district, Maharashtra; today in Central Museum Nagpur

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Persian at top; very bad condition; Marathi in Nāgarī, but with some letters in Moṛī style

*Context:* Stone pillar, which was a direction stone

*Content:* Indication of directions

*Salient features:* Beginning like a transliteration of Persian in Nāgarī script; Marathi version seems to repeat Persian text; directions preserved only in Marathi

*References:* Verma 1955–1956, 114–115 and pl. XXIX c

**No. 48**

*Year:* 1000 AH; but 1000 Shuhūr-San indicated [1591–1592 CE]

*Names:* Burhān Niẓām Shāh II

*Location:* Bir, Beed district, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Naskh; one line in Persian and three lines in Marathi; both carved in relief

*Context:* Pillar, locally called rankhamb, fixed in the ground by the side of the road

*Content:* Indication of direction from Bir to Ahmadnagar

*Salient features:* Beginning like a transliteration of Persian in Nāgarī script; texts identical in Persian and Marathi, only one word differs

*References:* Kadiri 1970, 49–50 and pl. X a

**No. 49**

*Year:* 1000 AH [1591–1592 CE]

*Names:* Burhān Niẓām Shāh II

*Location:* Nimbait, Nashik district, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Inscribed on all four sides with bilingual texts

*Context:* Stone pillar in local graveyard

*Content:* Indications of direction

*Salient features:* Marathi version much shorter, without name of ruler and religious formula

*References:* Kadiri 1970, 50–53 and pl. XI a, XI b, XII a, XIII b

## No. 50

*Year:* 1000 AH [1591–1592 CE]

*Names:* Burhān Nizām Shāh II

*Location:* Sommaripeth, close to Khedla, Betul district, Madhya Pradesh

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq and Nāgarī

*Context:* Somewhere in the village of Sommaripeth

*Content:* Indications of direction

*Salient features:* Beginning of Marathi like a transliteration of Persian, esp. *yek* (one)

*References:* Kadiri 1970, 53–54 and pl. XII b

## No. 51

*Year:* 1000 AH [1591–1592 CE]

*Names:* Burhān Nizām Shāh II

*Location:* Rawanbari, close to Khedla, Betul district, Madhya Pradesh

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq

*Context:* Lying loose by the side of a cart track

*Content:* Indications of direction

*Salient features:* Marathi is transliteration of Persian; no indication of directions in Marathi

*References:* Kadiri 1970, 55–56 and pl. XIII a

## No. 52

*Year:* 1000 AH [1591–1592 CE]

*Names:* Burhān Nizām Shāh II

*Location:* Mehkar, Buldana district, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Marathi (and originally also Persian)

*Material aspects:* Persian has broken off, only Marathi has been preserved; Nāgarī

*Content:* Indications of direction

*Salient features:* Marathi is transliteration of Persian, without directions

*References:* Kadiri 1970, 57 and pl. XIV b

## No. 53

*Year:* 1000 AH [1591–1592 CE]

*Names:* Burhān Niẓām Shāh II

*Location:* Pavnar, Wardha district, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Persian written in Nāgarī

*Material aspects:* Persian section is lost, but Nāgarī part also contains Persian

*Context:* Fixed in a gateway

*Content:* Indication of direction

*Salient features:* No Marathi version, but Persian written in Nāgarī

*References:* Kadiri 1970, 57–58 and pl. XIV a

## No. 54

*Year:* 1 Ramaḍān 1006 AH; Saṃvat 1655; 1 Chaitra-śudi [1598 CE]

*Names:* Nawwāb Raja Jagannathji; Khwāja Bhoginder Singh; Rao Chondaji; Miyan Burhān; Mughal Period

*Location:* Ranthambore, Sawai Madhopur district, Rajasthan

*Languages:* Persian, local dialect

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq, Nāgarī; Persian occupies more space than Nāgarī, which is below

*Context:* Eastern face of a dwarf pillar of marble in the right side near the foot-steps of a small ruined mosque

*Content:* Official order discontinuing the levy in the form of commodities and goods received for Muslim and Hindu charitable funds

*Salient features:* Nāgarī version has not been translated

*References:* Hussain 1973, 45–48 and pl. V a

## No. 55

*Year:* (1018–1019 AH) 1010 Shuhūr-San [1609 CE]

*Names:* Burhān Niẓām Shāh III

*Location:* Shrivardhan Taluka, Raigad (earlier: Kolaba) district, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Naskh and Nāgarī, both in relief; Nāgarī much longer than Persian

*Context:* Fixed on the side of the road from Dive Āgar to Borlai Panchāyatan

*Content:* Sign post with indication of directions

*Salient features:* Marathi version begins with a transliteration of Persian. Indication that there is a ferry on the route to Ḍaṇḍā in the Marathi version

*References:* Kadiri 1970, 59–62 and pl. XV

## No. 56

*Year:* No date

*Names:* Bisāṭ Khān; Niẓām Shāh

*Location:* Ahmadnagar, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* On two separate stones, about the same size

*Context:* Aṛḥhā'ī Guṃbad Hāji Ḥamīd mosque and tomb complex, on the outer face of the walls; Persian in relief, Marathi incised

*Content:* Endowment of land, especially a garden, for the lights of the mosque and the dome

*Salient features:* Two versions very similar, including the formulation 'whoever contravenes may a donkey be on his wife'

*References:* Shaikh 1939–1940, 30 and pl. XIII b and c; Sohoni 2022, 9

## No. 57

*Year:* 1018 AH; 1010 Shuhūr-San; 1531 Śaka [1609 CE]

*Names:* Jagapat Rāo Daulatī; Mirza Walī Amīr Barīd

*Location:* Bidar, Karnataka

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Thulth, on two different slabs; Marathi version much longer

*Context:* From a well at Āshtūr

*Content:* Building of a well with steps

*Salient features:* Both versions are very close to each other

*References:* Yazdani 1937–1938b, 2–3 and pl. II a and b

**No. 58**

*Year:* 20 Jumādā I 1033 AH; Saṃvat 1681; 1546 Śaka; 12 Vaiśākha-śudi [1624 CE]

*Names:* La'l Beg; Prince Dāwar Bakhsh; Jahāngīr

*Location:* Mangrol Junagadh district, Gujarat

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq; Nāgarī below Persian. Much less space for Nāgarī

*Context:* Tablet lying loose in a house, now in the mosque

*Content:* Population of a suburb called La'lpūr, seeking cooperation of all; officials should look after it

*Salient features:* Sanskrit version refers to Jahāngīr by his name Salim Shāh; not fully deciphered

*References:* Desai 1970, 91–92 and pl. XXIII

**No. 59**

*Year:* 7 Dhū l-Qa'da 1035 AH [1626 CE]

*Names:* Rāja Rām Dās; Jahāngīr

*Location:* Shivpuri, Shivpuri district, Madhya Pradesh

*Languages:* Persian and local dialect

*Material aspects:* Naskh and Nāgarī

*Context:* On a pillar lying in front of a temple in Baṛā Bazār Maḥalla in Purani Shivpuri

*Content:* Farmān of the emperor about the remission of taxes

*Salient features:* No information about the Nāgarī version

*References:* Khan 1964, 79–81 and pl. XXV a; no photo of Nāgarī part

**No. 60**

*Year:* (1036 AH); 1018 Shuhūr-San (Persian); 1028 Shuhūr-San (Marathi); 1549 Śaka (Kannada) [1627 CE]

*Names:* 'Abd ul-Muḥammad, son of Malik Raiḥān; 'Ādil Shāh period

*Location:* Siruguppa, Ballari district, Karnataka

*Languages:* Persian, Marathi and Kannada

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Nāgarī, Kannada

*Context:* In the wall of the bastion near the Śambhulingaswāmin temple

*Content:* Erection of a bastion in the midst of the river (Persian); Marathi and Kannada also mention erection of a well

*Salient features:* Marathi almost identical with Kannada; erection of well for god Śambhu only in Marathi and Kannada

*References:* Desai 1953–1954b, 41–44 and pl. XIII a; Sohoni 2022, 11

## No. 61

*Year:* Saṃvat 1694; 13 Chaitra-vadi [1627 CE]

*Names:* Dhā'u Chatrā and his wife Dhā'ī Lakmī Mahārāja Jai Singh; Shāh Jahān period

*Location:* Bhaupura near Renwal, Jaipur district, Rajasthan

*Languages:* Persian and Rajasthani

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq, Nāgarī; Persian on the right, Nāgarī on the left; same number of lines, similar arrangement; some additional lines in Nāgarī added later

*Context:* Wall of a step well at Bhaupura

*Content:* Building of a step well by two nurses (male and female = *dhā'u* and *dhā'ī*)

*Salient features:* Invocation of Rāma; dedication of the step well in Rajasthani to Śrījī (Lakshmi or Vishnu), whose devotees the donors perhaps were

*References:* Prakash 1968, 67–68 and pl. XIV a

## No. 62

*Year:* 1 Muḥarram 1049 AH; Saṃvat 1694; 3 Vaiśākha-śūdi; Saṃvat 1695; 1 Phālguna-vadi [1639 CE]

*Names:* Cho. Lakhmī Dās; Mahārāja Rāo Jaswant Singh; Shāh Jahān

*Location:* Bilara, Jodhpur district, Rajasthan

*Languages:* Persian and local dialect

*Material aspects:* Nāgarī was carved above the Persian, contrary to general practice; Nāgarī divided into two parts by Persian

*Context:* Inner face of the western arch of main cenotaph of Jodhpur rulers, on the bank of the Tank at Banganga

*Content:* Construction of a tomb; amount of rupies spent

*Salient features:* Building of two tombs in Nāgarī; information on another 1501 rupies spent; Persian uses the abbreviation Cho., common in Sanskrit, but not in Persian

*References:* Desai 2011, 16–19 and pl. III b

**No. 63**

*Year:* 14 Dhū l-Qa'da 1054 AH; Saṃvat 1701; 1 Māgha-vadi; 1566 Śaka [1645 CE]

*Names:* Gokuladāsa and Dāmodaradāsa, sons of Qānungo Haridāsa of Māthura kāyastha family; Shāh Jahān period

*Location:* Udaipur, Rajasthan

*Languages:* Arabic and Persian, Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq, Nāgarī; Nāgarī much longer and more prominent

*Context:* Right side wall of a step well known as Qanungo Baoli, eastern outskirts of Udaipur

*Content:* Construction of the step well by Gokuladasa and Damedaradasa

*Salient features:* In Sanskrit, reference to Ganesha and more exact information on date, otherwise, very similar to Persian

*References:* Siddham database, <https://siddham.network/inscription/inap00021/> (accessed on 4 September 2023)

**No. 64**

*Year:* 1061 AH; 25th regnal year of Shāh Jahān; Saṃvat 1708; 11 Bhādrapada [1651 CE]

*Names:* Pahad Khān

*Location:* Gunaoti, near Makrana, Nagaur district, Rajasthan

*Languages:* Persian, local dialect

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq, Nāgarī; Nāgarī to the left of the Persian

*Context:* Western wall of a well known as Pahād Kunwā

*Content:* Excavation and construction of a well and foundation and settlement of a village through the kindness of God and efforts of Pahad Khān in a locality containing mines

*Salient features:* Nāgarī not deciphered no information on it

*References:* Desai 2011, 39–42 and pl. VIII a

**No. 65**

*Year:* 1062 AH [1651–1652 CE]

*Names:* Malik Shaikh 'Alī; 'Ādil Shāh period

*Location:* Mustafabad, Dabhol, Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra; today in the storage of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) museum, Mumbai

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Bi-faced stele; inscriptions on the two sides

*Context:* Tablet opposite Jāmi‘ Masjid

*Content:* End of confiscation of property for men without son

*Salient features:* Reference to the Mokāshī, the Thānādār, the Ināmdār who should not confiscate the property

*References:* Bendrey 1944, 151 (no plate); Sohoni 2022, 11

## No. 66

*Year:* 20 Shawwāl 1063 AH; 1578 Śaka; 13 Bhādrapada-śudi (1575 Śaka would be correct) [1653 CE]

*Names:* Mīr Jumla; Rustam, son of Dhū l-Fiqār; ‘Abdullāh Qutb Shāh

*Location:* Sriperumbudur taluqa, Poonamallee, Tiruvallur district, Tamil Nadu

*Languages:* Persian and Telugu

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq; Persian much more prominent than Telugu, which is written in rather small letters at the bottom

*Context:* Carved on a mosque at Poonamallee; perhaps on a base that originally belonged to a temple

*Content:* Building and completion of a mosque

*Salient features:* In Telugu, invocation to protect the mosque; promise of the sixteen great gifts for those who protect it; those who cause obstruction will incur the sin of killing a cow at Varanasi

*References:* Yazdani 1937–1938c, 52–54 and pl. XVIII b

## No. 67

*Year:* 29 Muḥarram 1076 AH [1665 CE]

*Names:* Rāja Rāi Singh; Dūngarsī Kotwāl Rājput Gahalot, son of Rāo Amar Singh; Aurangzēb

*Location:* Nagaur, Rajasthan

*Languages:* Persian and Nāgarī

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq in relief, Nāgarī incised; Nāgarī below, small, in the margin

*Context:* Over an arch leading to the Zanāna Tāl at Nagaur

*Content:* Construction of a gateway called Darwāza-yi Islām

*Salient features:* Nāgarī defective in many places; seems to be similar to Persian

*References:* Chaghtai 1949–1950, 47–48 and pl. XVI c



**No. 68**

*Year:* 1077 AH; 1578 Śaka; 7 Māgha-śudi; 1589 Śaka [1666 CE]

*Names:* ‘Abdullāh Khān; Bukhārī Mir-i Mirān; Mūsā Khān; ‘Abdullāh Quṭb Shāh

*Location:* Golconda fort, Hyderabad, Telangana

*Languages:* Persian and Telugu

*Material aspects:* Naskh, Telugu; Persian in relief, Telugu engraved; Persian on a greenish stone, Telugu on black basalt

*Context:* Mūsā Burj, back of the wall forming the western wing of the modern steps, probably relocated; Telugu part on a basalt tablet broken into three pieces, in the southern wall of the bastion steps

*Content:* Shooting of Mir-i Mirān; conclusion of peace; building of a bastion

*Salient features:* Telugu version with some more details about Quṭb Shāhi officer in charge of the bastion during the war

*References:* Yazdani 1913–1914, 51–55 and pl. XVII a and b

**No. 69**

*Year:* 5 Ramaḍān of 11th regnal year (of Aurangzēb) = 1079 AH [1669 CE]

*Names:* Rāja Gopāl Dās Goṛ; Rāja Manohar Dās; Shāh Jahān; Aurangzēb

*Location:* Thane, Maharashtra; today Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) museum, Mumbai

*Languages:* Persian and a variation of Nāgarī/Rajasthani

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq, Nāgarī; Persian by far longer; Nāgarī on top of it and on the right side of the slab

*Context:* Probably Maholi fort, found lying in the district court of Thane

*Content:* Services of Rāja Gopāl Dās Goṛ and Rāja Manohar Dās; reparation of walls, granaries, etc.

*Salient features:* Nāgarī version much shorter; only about repairs at the three forts of Maholi, Bhaṇḍar Durg and Palāsgaḍh and who carried them out

*References:* Desai 1957–1958, 16–20 and pl. VI

**No. 70**

*Year:* 9 Rabī‘ II 1083 AH; Saṃvat 1729 [1672 CE]

*Names:* Muḥammad Dānish; Mahārāja Rām Singh; Aurangzēb

*Location:* Archaeological Museum, Amber, Jaipur, Rajasthan

*Languages:* Persian verse with Arabic prose; Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq, Nāgarī; Persian in relief, Sanskrit engraved on the margins

*Context:* No exact location indicated

*Content:* Construction of a well by the eunuch Muḥammad Dānish

*Salient features:* No translation of the Sanskrit is given, only dates and names; mentions a Thākūra and Rām Singh

*References:* Bukhari 1955–1956, 59–60 and pl. XV b

## No. 71

*Year:* 14 Ramaḍān of the 23rd regnal year (of Aurangzēb) = 1090 AH [1679 CE]

*Names:* Randaula Khān; Aurangzēb

*Location:* Shahabad, Kota district, Rajasthan

*Languages:* Persian and local dialect

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq and Nāgarī; Persian above; Nāgarī part not completely preserved

*Context:* A loose pillar, previously fixed to a platform in front of the Kotwāli police

*Content:* Farmān of Aurangzēb regarding taxes and dispensation of specific taxes after complaints by people of the town; text addresses mahājans, Brahmins and traders who had complained

*Salient features:* No information about edition of local dialect version

*References:* Khan 1968, 69–74 and pl. XV a

## No. 72

*Year:* 1102 Faṣlī [1690–1691 CE]

*Names:* Dhondajī Kishan; Aurangzēb

*Location:* Beed district, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Nāgarī

*Context:* Dhonda gate

*Content:* Name of the humble servant, year

*Salient features:* Texts both very short and identical to each other

*References:* Yazdani 1921–1922, 21–22 and pl. VIII b and pl. IX a

**No. 73**

*Year:* (1113 AH); 1625 Śaka; 1 Āsin-śudi [1701–1702 CE]

*Names:* Ghāzī ud-Dīn Khān Bahādur; Aurangzēb

*Location:* Beed district, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi; Marathi on first panel in semi-Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Marathi carved on two panels, one beside the other; relative position of the Persian and Marathi inscriptions not clear

*Context:* Purāna Pura

*Content:* Laying out of a new street and quarter, Ghāzī ud-Dīn Nagar

*Salient features:* First panel with list of titles of a person, described as having the various titles of Śaiva divinity and representing the different phases of the god Śiva; second panel not translated

*References:* Yazdani 1921–1922, 19–20 and pl. III b and IX b

**No. 74**

*Year:* 1 Jumādā I of the 2nd regnal year of Farrūkh Siyār = 1126 AH; 1637 Śaka; 14 Vaiśākha-vadi [1714 CE]

*Names:* Todar Mal Srī Niwās Dās son of Ṭekchand son of Hans Gopāl; Nawwāb Sa‘ādatullāh Khān

*Location:* Chennai, Tamil Nadu

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq; Sanskrit in late medieval Telugu characters; inscribed on both sides: one and a half occupied by Sanskrit, the rest by Persian; three figures carved at the top, above the Sanskrit

*Context:* Copper plate from South Arcot district in Madras

*Content:* Five villages offered as a gift for the maintenance of a temple; Nawwāb also visits the temple

*Salient features:* According to the Sanskrit version, Srī Niwās Dās is a protégé of Todar Mal, while according to the Persian, this name is an alias of Todar Mal; Sanskrit version mentions libation of gold and water; dates disagree

*References:* Desai 1955–1956b, 104–106 and pl. XXVII b; no photo of Sanskrit version

## No. 75

*Year:* 17 Rabī‘ II 1201 AH; 1708 Śaka [1787 CE]

*Names:* Govind Āppā

*Location:* Akola, Maharashtra

*Languages:* Persian and Marathi

*Material aspects:* Marathi inscription is much longer; Persian on the northern side and Marathi on the southern side of the gate

*Context:* Delhi gate of Mokāsa Vēs

*Content:* Building of a gate

*Salient features:* Marathi mentions name of the city, pious men and Brahmans; gate is described as large and beautiful; building of a *ghāt* is also mentioned

*References:* Haig 1907–1908, 17 (no plate)

## No. 76

*Year:* 11 Sha‘bān 1245 AH; Saṃvat 1886; 13 Mah-śudi [1830 CE]

*Names:* Rāja Sohan La‘l Bahādur Singh

*Location:* Delhi, today Archaeological Museum, Red Fort, Delhi

*Languages:* Persian and Sanskrit

*Material aspects:* Nastaliq, Nāgarī; both incised; carved cow feeding a calf engraved at the top; Sanskrit much shorter

*Context:* Sandstone pillar, originally belonging to a temple close to Purānā Qal‘a

*Content:* Endowment of land together with two *pakka* wells for a temple of Lord Krishna; details of endowment

*Salient features:* Saṃvat dating also in Persian; Sanskrit text not translated; temple for Śiva in Sanskrit and for Krishna in Persian

*References:* Bukhari 1959–1961, 19–21 and pl. VI a

# Contributors

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# General Index

The primary aim of this general index is to assist the reader in finding concepts and terms of interest, rather than creating a concordance. This is also why terms that appear too frequently and would therefore be impractical as index headings are omitted as well as most personal and geographical names. Page numbers with an asterisk refer to illustrations.

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