Lord of the Universe Among Equals: The Challenges of Kingship in Early Historic/Early Medieval Gujarat

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Anthropology and History)
in The University of Michigan
2019

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation could not have been completed without the support and guidance of many teachers and scholars. I have been fortunate to work under the mentorship of Carla Sinopoli, my advisor and dissertation chair. She has been my advocate and guide since I arrived at the University of Michigan, first as a student of Anthropology and later Anthropology and History. I was fortunate to study ceramic analysis under her during a lab season for her LPEHLCT project in Karnataka. She has read multiple drafts of this dissertation and provided commentary that has pushed me to sharpen my analysis and my writing. Perhaps most importantly, she has been a model of everything a scholar should be — she is insightful, kind, generous, deeply knowledgeable, a sharp analyst and also open minded and broadly curious about her own area of interest and beyond.

I have also benefitted greatly from the insights of my other committee members. Madhav Deshpande has trained me in Sanskrit, given me confidence in navigating the vast corpus of Sanskrit texts, and helped me to gain an understanding of the world which Sanskrit texts imagined. Matthew Hull has guided me through the world of political theory and helped me to tease out the connections in my own thought, and in the world of the scholars I have studied, to the thought of modern scholars. Ian Moyer has shown me how the studies of history and the material world flow together and how the study of ancient history, so often compartmentalized by region and period, benefits from being joined in discussion that crosses geographic and temporal boundaries.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the development and implementation of ideals of kingship in mid-first millennium CE India, through a focus on the Maitraka dynasty of Gujarat. These ideals were highly contested, as religious elites and kings alike made efforts to frame the royal sphere. The ongoing conflict between Brahmanical and Buddhist orders ultimately produced many of the foundational works of Sanskrit political philosophy. For their part, kings selectively participated in and creatively manipulated these cosmological ideals. This dissertation brings these expansive debates down to the ground, by examining how a single dynasty worked in and through these highly contested models.

The land grants written by the Maitrakas show that they were keenly aware of ongoing debates and sought to position themselves among divergent view-points, in order to form relationships with other royal and non-royal elites. As these kings crafted networks of relationships with other elites, they were simultaneously being read and interpreted by inter-regional powers, namely the Sasanians and the Tang, showing that the political theories and practices of first millennium Indian kings were legible and valuable to their peers. Rather than assume that political universals of modern social theory, such as legitimacy and sovereignty, apply to the politics of ancient India, I build a view of politics from royal practices, crossing disciplinary boundaries and incorporating literary and courtly sources with religious literature, inscriptional evidence and archaeological findings.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In this dissertation I use the Maitraka dynasty, which ruled from approximately 475 to 775 CE in Gujarat and surrounding areas as a case study to understand how Sanskrit political theories of the first millennium – both those coming from India's various religious traditions and those coming from the court – might have played out in practice. In the context of the ancient history of India, this is an important question. Indian kings of the mid first millennium inhabited a world richly populated by elites representing largely contradictory interest groups. There were many kings (both petty kings and some more powerful), religious elites (defined here as ascetic Brahmins, temple priests, and Buddhist monks dwelling in a vihara), and even interested imperial parties from outside of India.

Traditionally there have been two approaches to Indian politics of the Early Historic and Early Medieval periods. The first approach is rooted in literary history. Given that a large number of India's foundational texts on political (and social and religious) theory were either composed or codified between 500 BCE and 1000 CE, the literary approach focuses on the shifting aims and goals of Indian social elites and philosophers. The second approach to the politics of this period is one rooted in various modern social theories. This approach variously portrays kings of this period to have been "feudal," or is rooted in ideas about the segmentary state. Proponents of the social theory rooted approach often see these ancient kings as broadly tolerant of various religious orders and look at the relationship between the king and the priest or

monk as one framed by legitimation. Following Sheldon Pollock's argument that legitimization is a poor category when it comes to understanding premodern Indian politics, I seek to build a picture of Maitraka rule from their practices. By examining a single dynasty, I recognize that the way of ruling I will describe is highly contingent, yet looking at royal practice through such a case study will allow me to frame Maitraka rule in conversation with political philosophy and broader social shifts without relying on external sources (contemporary to the Maitrakas and modern) to define their action.

I explore the Maitraka dynasty through land grants, mentions of them in literary sources and archaeological evidence. In doing so I build upon recent studies of South Asian politics in the premodern period by closely examining the practices of a single dynasty. I also explore the larger political and ideological landscapes that the Maitrakas both inhabited and shaped. The approach taken here is to use all available evidence, which admittedly is quite scarce in all categories, to understand how the Maitrakas ruled. Maitraka copper-plate land grants, 119 in total (plus an additional grant too fragmentary to be ascribed to any particular king), form the most abundant record of the dynasty. Building from these grants, I contextualize the way that the grants characterize kings as well as the actions that they record by examining them alongside courtly and literary sources. Ultimately, my goal is to construct an image of Maitraka politics and political relationships by exploring their most immediate evidence, rather than by relying on theoretical political models, either contemporary or modern.

Therefore, I heavily emphasize relationships in this dissertation. The Maitrakas inhabited a courtly world occupied by numerous kings of varying degrees of power. It was in the Maitraka period that both royal donative inscriptions and the dynastic histories which they contained became ubiquitous in the subcontinent.

> This expanding political order took the form neither of a single centralised imperial state nor a plethora of fragmented regional kingdoms, but instead a series of diverse and uneven political orders which, while regionally based, sought to relate themselves, in diverse ways, to ever more integrated political hierarchies which had as their ideal the notion of an imperial polity ruled over by a single supreme overlord, a king over kings.[1]

This world was also heavily populated by non-royal elites. Religious elites, by which I mean Brahmins, Buddhists and Jains, were not only land-holders in their own right (a privilege recognized and bolstered by royal land grants) but expended a great deal of intellectual energy on theorizing and debating the role of the king. The Maitrakas' own self-description, as I will argue here, shows that they were both aware of and concerned with these debates and formulations. Furthermore, the Maitrakas themselves, as well as their contemporaries, were made the subject of great interest by kings outside of South Asia. Kings from China and Persia along with their emissaries found the kings of India and their traditions to be a source of great knowledge. In other words, understanding the Maitrakas entails understanding how they fit in a complex, varied and thickly populated world of elite persons and institutions.

In this introductory chapter, I set the stage for this examination by introducing the main sources I will examine in the dissertation and giving relevant historical background of the Maitraka dynasty. In terms of evidence, I focus in this introduction on outlining the basic structure of Maitraka copper-plate grants (sample translations of which can be found in Appendix B) for two reasons. First, the land grants are the source most consistently drawn upon throughout this dissertation, and they form the evidentiary starting point for each chapter. Second, methodologically speaking, this dissertation works outward from the land grants. I start from references within the land grants to establish the relevant Sanskrit literary texts and external

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[1] Daud Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 33.

literature, rather than starting from theoretical texts and measuring the Maitraka grants against them. My archaeological research will be introduced in Chapter 4. Much of my argument relies on placing the Maitrakas in their context and understanding them through the relationships they referenced and fostered. It is thus necessary to begin by outlining the various powers and groups with whom the Maitrakas had meaningful relationships. I conclude this introduction by introducing some of the main questions which the dissertation will address through an overview of the relevant theoretical literature.

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

As noted above, this dissertation draws on multiple sources of evidence, both archaeological and textual. I discuss the Sanskrit literary and archaeological sources in Chapters 2 and 3, and 4 and 5, respectively. The archaeological data is drawn from a combination of published site reports and articles and my own surface survey, which was undertaken in collaboration with Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda in 2015. In this section, I describe in detail the main source of evidence for this dissertation — the corpus of copper-plate land grants of the Maitraka dynasty. Due to the abundance and historical specificity of these grants, they serve a more detailed and consistent source of evidence than literary or archaeological sources. Select translations of these grants can be found in Appendix B and a complete list with publication information of the 119 extant Maitraka grants is provided in Appendix C. These grants, called *dānapatra* in Sanskrit, adhere to a formulaic structure. They have four main parts – (1) the royal genealogy, (2) the specifications of the grant, (3) exhortations to the grant's permanence and importance and (4) a colophon.

Part 1, the royal genealogy, is present in all Maitraka grants with the exception of the lone grant of the third ruler, Droṇasiṁha. A list of Maitraka kings is given below in

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Table 1. It invariably begins with the founder of the dynasty, Bhaṭārka, and lists in order his ruling successors. Starting with the grants of Śīlāditya I, the kings Dharasena I to Dharapaṭṭa are omitted from the royal genealogical section. The king's achievements or virtues feature in each description, and the genealogical section terminates with any of the technical terms used to describe his kingship (these terms are discussed in Chapter 2). The description of each king ends with his name, followed by *tasya*, "his," and then a word meaning son/younger brother/elder brother. Only the descriptions of Śīlāditya II and Derabhata differ in this regard, perhaps indicating that they either did not rule or that rule was insignificant. These two kings are discussed only in the descriptions of other kings. The genealogy terminates with the description of the granting king, followed by an address to officials (the designations of the officials are dropped beginning with the grants of Kharagarha II, at which point this is just a general address). This section is, again with the exception of Droṇasiṁha's grant, the longest section of the text, thus it is largely from this section that references to Maitraka positioning among other kings (Chapter 2) and Maitraka references to scholarly debates in Sanskrit (Chapter 3) are drawn.

Table 1 - List of Maitraka Kings

King:	Regnal Years:[2]	No. of Grants:
1) Bhaṭārka	c. 475 CE	0
2) Dharasena I	493-499 CE	0
3) Droṇasiṁha	499-519 CE	1
4) Dhruvasena I	519-549 CE	25
5) Dharapaṭṭa	549-553 CE	0
6) Guhasena	553-569 CE	3

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[2] As per Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*.

7) Dharasena II	569-590 CE	18
8) Śīlāditya I	590-615 CE	13
9) Kharagraha I	615-621 CE	2
10) Dharasena III	621-627 CE	3
11) Dhruvasena II	627-641 CE	13
12) Dharasena IV	641-650 CE	9
13) Dhruvasena III	650-655 CE	3
14) Kharagraha II	655-658 CE	1
15) Śīlāditya III	658-685 CE	12
16) Śīlāditya IV	690-710 CE	9
17) Śīlāditya V	710-740 CE	3
18) Śīlāditya VI	740-762 CE	3
19) Śīlāditya VII	762-776 CE	1

Part 2 of the grants, the specifications, names the grantee and specifies the object(s) granted. There are three types of grantees in Maitraka grants: Brahmins (either single Brahmins or groups of two or more), Buddhist *vihāras*, and temples. The objects granted can either be a plot of land with specified measurements (either given by specifying its boundaries or in the measurement unit *pādāvartas*[3]), or one or more whole villages. The content of grants, with regards to both grantees and objects granted, is discussed in Chapter 3. This section of the grant also includes any taxes which the grant specified would accompany the granted land and be turned over to the grantee. This is the most variable section of the grants, as it is individually suited to the grant's purpose. The section frequently ends with the statement that the gift has been given *udak-atisargena*, "with libations of water."

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[3] See: Krishnakumari J. Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra (being a study of the Maitrakas of Valabhi V to VIII centuries A.D.)* (Bombay: Konkan Institute of Arts and Sciences, 1955), 247 for a discussion of the meaning of this measurement.

Part 3 contains various exhortations to protect the grant, and threats about the misfortune that will befall anyone that violates it. It also contains the only sections of the grant that occur in verse. One or more of seven verses occurs at the end of each grant. These verses, like the prose preceding them, speak to the cosmic importance of land grants and the terrible misfortunes that would befall anyone who violated their terms. This section relies on a number of formulaic phrases, but there is variation in their order and occurrence from grant to grant. This section always terminates with the verses. In this part, like part 1 above, are found references to Sanskrit theoretical literature and scholarly debates. Furthermore these exhortations frame the Maitraka understanding of the nature of these land grants, thus contextualizing the specification of the grant given in part 2.

Part 4 is the colophon of the grant. This section states the name, and sometimes description of the *dūtaka*, or messenger, to whom the grant is entrusted. It also states the name, and sometimes description, of the scribe who recorded the grant (*likhita*, "it has been written"). It includes the year, month and day that the grant was issued. It also includes the statement *sva-hasto mama*, "signed by my own hand." Prior to Śīlāditya I, this statement is accompanied by a restatement of the king's name and any technical terms describing his kingship. From Śīlāditya I on, the statement stands as written above. Generally speaking, these elements appear in this order, but there is variation. This section is, of course, critical for ordering the grants.

Physically, these grants, pictured in Figure 1, are inscribed on copper plates. Each grant consists of two plates, except for the single plate of Droṇasiṁha. In many cases, only one of these plates has survived or been recovered.
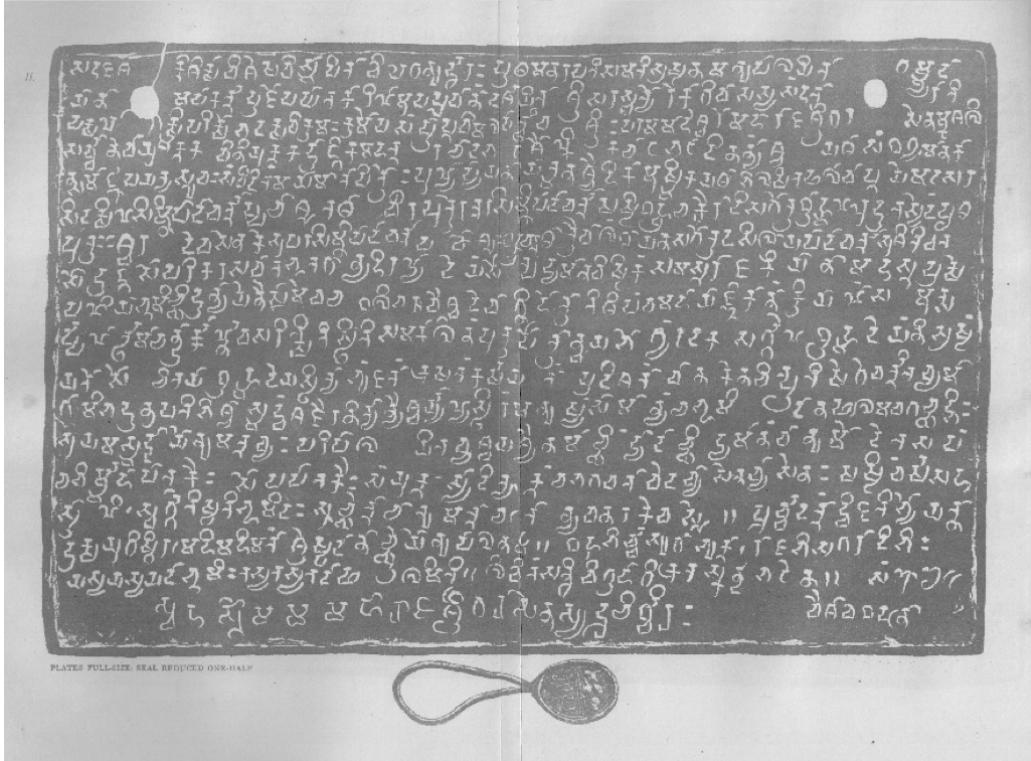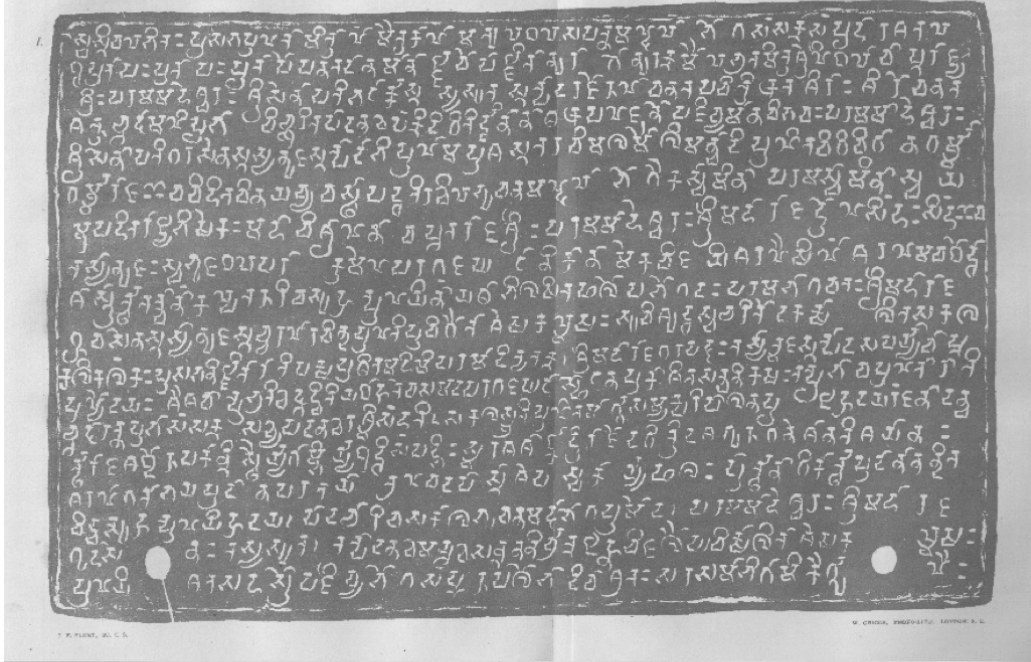
Figure 1 - Maitraka Plates and Seal, Grant 32[4]

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[4] W. Griggs, photo-litho, *Valabhi Grant of Dharasena II. __ The Valabhi Year 252* in J.F. Fleet, "Sanskrit and Old Caranese Inscriptions: No. LX," *The Indian Antiquary* 9 (1879).

They are inscribed on one side only and the edges are raised into the rims, so as to protect the writings. The inscriptions are fairly thick. The letters vary in size from 1/8" to 3/16" …. The size of the Valabhī plates cannot be reduced to any definite scale. It increases and decreases and falls into three groups: from Droṇasiṁha to Dhruvasena I, the size is 10"x6", from Guhasena to Dhruvasena II, it is 12"x8", from Darasena IV to Śīlāditya VII, we have great fluctuations — 12"x10" and 18"x12".[5]

The length of the text varies as well, from 24 to 78 lines,[6] and grants generally got longer over time. This is largely explained by the ever-lengthening royal genealogy, even with the omission of four kings by Śīlāditya IV and following rulers. The plates are perforated twice at the top and joined by rings. "[O]ne is plain and circular in shape with its ends either riveted or joined into a knot…. The other ring consists of a longer piece and it forms an elliptical loop…. Its ends are joined to the socket of the royal seal which is generally made of bronze."[7]

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of the Maitraka dynasty is well published,[8] and as such I will not rehash those accounts in great detail here. The order of the kings and the approximate dates of their rule is found above in

Table 1. A diagram of the relationships between these kings can be found in Appendix A. Rather, since this dissertation focuses on understanding the Maitrakas through their relationships, I will summarize existing histories with the purpose of highlighting the political contemporaries of the nineteen kings of the Maitraka dynasty and the interactions of these contemporaries with

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[5] Nita Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India: An Epigraphic Study of the Maitrakas (c. A.D. 475-775)* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1992), 22-23.

[6] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 250.

[7] Ibid, 249.

[8] See: H.G. Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī (History and Culture of Gujarat during the Maitraka Period-Crice 470-788 A.D.)* (Vadodara: Oriental Institute of Vadodara, 2000); Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India*; Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*.

the Maitrakas. At the time of the Maitraka dynasty, South Asia was experiencing a boom in kingship: "the appearance of so many royal houses between the fifth and seventh centuries throughout the subcontinent from diverse or unstated backgrounds … does suggest the integration of local or nascent power brokers into a composite but increasingly homogenous ruling class."[9] Dozens of named kingdoms have been documented in this period. Given the abundance of kings and their royal houses, inter-kingdom relationships were unavoidable, and often the cause of contestation. Indeed, new royal houses could and did arise out of the circles of courtiers of other kings, as was likely the case for the Maitrakas themselves.

> The trajectory [of the Maitrakas] seems to be from the status of a powerful royal military retainer enjoying revenues and supporting a retinued household to that of subordinate king, taking ceremonial status in the overlord's household. The transition to royalty was crucial for this family, though not all men of the court were able or even wished to do so.[10]

Understanding the Maitrakas, then, necessarily requires an understanding of their neighbors.

I outline three main phases of Maitraka interactions in the following paragraphs: In phase 1 (Bhaṭārka to Dharsena II) their main political contemporaries were the Guptas/Vākāṭakas. In phase 2 (Śīlāditya I to Dharasena IV) their main political contemporaries were the Vardhanas/Cāḷukyas. In phase 3 (Śīlāditya III to Śīlāditya VII) their main political contemporaries were the Cāḷukyas and various kings of the Islamic world of the Indian Ocean, who frequently made military incursions into Maitraka territory. As I will explain, the actual

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[9] Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, 37.

[10] Ibid, 48.

1 - Ghumli	4 - Valabhī	7 - Bharuch	10 - Ujjain	13 - Thanesar
2 - Dhaṅk	5 - Ghogā	8 - Surat	11 - Washim	14 - Kanauj
3 - Girnar	6 - Kaira	9 - Aparānta	12 - Badami	15 - Patna
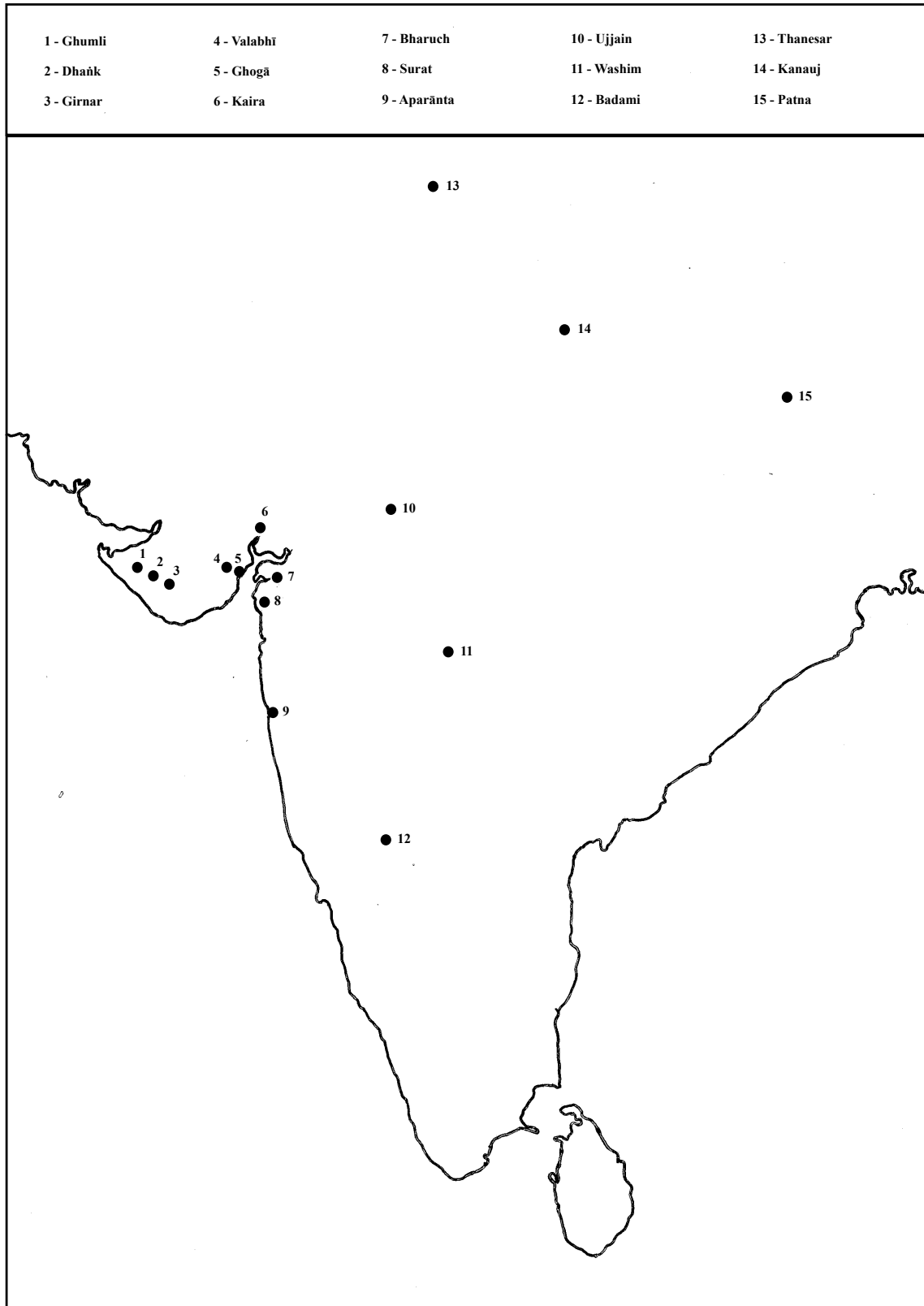
Map 1 - Cities Referenced in Historical Background of the Maitraka Period

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political situation was much more thickly populated and complex than such a phasing would suggest. Nevertheless, such a schematic view serves as a useful guide to some major shifts in the Maitraka polity and ideology.

The Maitraka capital was situated at Valabhī, modern Valabhipur, a town 40 km northeast of Bhavnagar in Gujarat on the Saurāṣṭra peninsula (also called Kathiawad) (See: Map 1 for the important locations mentioned in the following section). Before the Maitrakas, Valabhī was not the political center in this region. That distinction belonged to Junagadh and the Girnar hills, located some 170 km to the west of Valabhī. The Girnar hills had been a place of considerable importance since at least the time of the 3rd century BCE Mauryan ruler Aśoka, as Aśokan rock-edicts are found there. Subsequently the Kṣatrapa king Rudradaman added to these edicts around 150 CE, reaffirming that place's power. Still later, that territory came under control of the 4th through 6th century CE Gupta empire, whose capital was at Pataliputra, under which Girnar remained the center of local politics, with edicts of Skandagupta being added to those of Aśoka and Rudradaman. The Gupta edict, dated 457 CE, mentions the Gupta official in charge – Parṇadatta.

Virji argues that the first Maitraka king, Bhaṭārka, who may have reigned around 475 CE (although without any extant grants this is not certain), must have succeeded Parṇadata as an official of the Gupta state.[11] However, the Maitraka inscriptions do not give any indication that Bhaṭārka was in charge of the provincial government, calling him instead a *senapati*, or general. Around the time of Skandagupta's inscription, the first known copper-plate of Gujarat appeared. This inscription belonged to a king Dharasena of the Traikūṭakas of Aparānta who ruled south

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[11] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 13.

Gujarat in the late 5th century CE.[12] This copper-plate shows that the region the Maitrakas would come to rule was under active contestation, even at the time when the Gupta inscriptions suggest their hegemony over the area. Dharasena even performed an *aśvamedha* sacrifice, the royal horse sacrifice associated with the ascension of a king.[13] The inscription also marks the beginning of the pattern of south Gujarat, roughly construed as the region from Bharuch southwards being ruled by separate powers than Saurasṭra and the mainland region of Gujarat in the areas surrounding Ahmedabad.

At the time of Bhaṭārka's successor, Dharasena I, the Guptas were embroiled in a conflict with the Huṇa king Toramāṇa.[14] The Vākāṭaka king Hariṣeṇa, whose capital was at Washim, ruler of a polity to the south and east of the Maitrakas and an ally of the Guptas perhaps also under threat from the Huṇas, may have made a marriage alliance with the Maitrakas. Jain sources describe a princess Candralekhā, daughter of the king of Ujjain, who was likely the Vākāṭaka king, as being married to Dharasena I[15] or Dhruvasena I.[16] Evidence for this marriage alliance is tenuous, appearing only long after the fact in Jain sources. The relationships between the Guptas, Vākāṭakas and Maitrakas are discussed further in Chapter 2 from the Maitraka point of view. By 502 CE, the third Maitraka king, Droṇasiṃha, had taken the throne. One copper-plate of Droṇasiṃha, the first copper-plate of the Maitrakas survives. The Guptas, Vākāṭakas and Huṇas remain his contemporaries. Droṇasiṃah, according to his genealogical description, had his coronation ritual performed by a paramount lord, although as I will discuss in Chapter 2, the

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[12] Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 8.

[13] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 22.

[14] Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India*, 52.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 27.

identity of this lord was left, probably deliberately, ambiguous. Since Bhaṭārka was called a general, and his own genealogical description and that of other early Maitraka kings reference a paramount lord, the early Maitrakas are often understood to have been tied into Gupta power.[17]

Dhruvasena I, the fourth Maitraka king, issued grants from 525 to 545 or 547 CE. Dhruvasena I was likely the king of Saurāṣṭra over whom the Maukhari king Īśvaravarman claimed victory. The Maukhari's center of power was at Kanauj, approximately 1300 km northeast of Valabhī. This event was recorded in the Jaunpur stone inscription of Īśvaravarman's successor Īśānavarman, who ruled from c. 520-550 CE.[18] The Maukharis seem to have been allies of the Guptas. Despite the Maukhari's claim, the renown of the kings of Valabhī continued to increase. It was during Dhruvasena I's reign that the Jain council responsible for committing Jain texts to writing was held at Valabhī.

> It was here that the final reduction into writing, of the whole canonical literature of the Jainas, resulted in the split of the Jaina community, with differences in matters of certain dogmas and beliefs. The whole thing was arranged at Valabhi, because of the efforts of queen Chandralekhā,[19] and thus Valabhi became an important city in the history of Jaina literature.[20]

In 549 CE, the Gārulaka king Varāhadāsa mentions his allegiance to Dhruvasena I in a grant.[21] The Gārulakas seem to have ruled from a place called Phaṅkaprasravaṇa, which cannot be firmly identified, but may be a misreading for Dhanapravasaṇa, and if so, perhaps correlates to modern

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[17] Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, 47.

[18] Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 35.

[19] Note: This is the same queen identified above as a potential wife of Dharasena I, so it is possible that this even occurred earlier. Jain records, as is the norm for literary sources of this period, are notoriously hard to date, or fix dates within.

[20] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 34.

[21] A.S. Gadre "Five Vala Copper-plate Grants: Grant No. 1 Copper-plate Grant of the Gārulaka Mahārāja Varāhadāsa of the year 230 G.E. (549 A.D.)," *Journal of the University of Bombay* 3 (1934): 77-79.

Dhaṅk in western Saurāṣṭra..[22] This grant, along with the other surviving Gārulaka grant, was found along with Maitraka grants,[23] further evidencing their close association. No copper-plates survive from Dharapaṭṭa, Dhruvasena I's successor, but he appears to have ruled for a very short time (perhaps c. 550 to 555 CE).[24]

Guhasena, the sixth Maitraka king, issued copper-plates between 556 and 567 CE. At that time, the Maukharis and the Guptas were fighting each other, and the king Prabhākaravardhana of Sthāṇvīśvara (modern Thanesar, in Haryana) had conquered south Gujarat. Prabhākaravardhana's sons Rājyavardhana and Harṣavardhana would go on to rule Kanauj, and Harṣa would ultimately rule the majority of northern India.[25] His successor, Dharasena II, by whom copper-plates were issued from 571-598 CE, found himself once again fighting the Maukharis, this time Īśānavarman.[26] The only other extant Gārulaka grant, dating 574, is contemporary with Dharasena's rule, but does not mention him by name.[27]

Śīlāditya I, the eighth Maitraka king, issued grants from 605-611 CE. Southern Gujarat, and the nearby territory of Ujjain in Mālava, modern Madhya Pradesh, had come under the control of the Kaḷacchuris, whose center of power was in central India. They were involved in clashes with both the Guptas[28] and the Cāḷukyas,[29] whose power was growing in the south from

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[22] Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 116.

[23] Ibid, 113.

[24] Ibid, 38.

[25] Ibid, 43.

[26] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 34.

[27] E. Hultzsch, "No. 2—Palitana Plates of Simhaditya; The Year 253," *Epigraphia Indica* 11 (1911-1912): 16-20.

[28] Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 48-49.

[29] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 50-51.

their capital at Badami. In the midst of all this, Śīlāditya I managed to conquer Ujjain, and became the king of Mālava as well as Valabhī. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, this was a definitive power grab. Also during Śīlāditya I's reign, Harṣa came to power and began to consolidate control over the territories of northern India. Śīlāditya I's successor Kharagraha I, by whom two copper-plates were issued in 616 CE, also appears to have ruled from Ujjain.[30] Beginning with Śīlāditya I's reign, there was a period (phase 2) where the Maitrakas main contemporaries were the Vardhanas (Harṣa and his family) and the Cāḷukyas.

During the reign of the tenth Maitraka king, Dharasena III, Harṣa turned his attention toward the Cāḷukyas. Harṣa was ultimately defeated by Pulakeśin II, who in the process seems to have gained south Gujarat and Mālava.[31] It is unclear if that conquest included Maitraka territories or those adjacent to them. It did, as subsequent events show, bring the Gurjaras, kings of south Gujarat, into an alliance with the Cāḷukyas. The Cāḷukyas seem to have installed some of their own family members in Gujarat as well.[32] Dharasena III issued grants between 623 and 624 CE. His successor Dhruvasena II, who issued grants from 629 to 642 CE, seems to have been pulled into the conflict between Harṣa and Pulakeśin II. Harṣa seems have defeated Dhruvasena II (or, possibly, Dharasena III) causing the king of Valabhī to flee to the court of the Gurjara king Daḍḍa II. The latter event is recorded in a grant of one of Daḍḍa's successors, who does not name the king, calling him only a king of Valabhī.[33] The sequence of events is uncertain, and has been the subject of debate, as that particular conflict is evidenced only by the

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[30] Grant 56.

[31] Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 55.

[32] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 68.

[33] Bhagwanlal Indraji, "A New Gurjara Copper-Plate Grant," *The Indian Antiquary*, 13 (1884): 77.

Gurjara grant, and does not appear in sources of Harṣa or Pulakeśin II.[34] What is certain is that,

at some point following these events, the Maitrakas became allied to Harṣa. The Chinese pilgrim

Xuanzang reports that Dhruvasena II, whose court he visited, was Harṣa's son in law, and thus

allied to him by marriage.[35]

　　Dharasena IV, the twelfth Maitraka king, who issued grants from 645 to 649 CE, seems

to have captured some or all of south Gujarat from the Gurjaras. The Cāḷukyas were much

weaker at this time.[36] Dharasena IV appears to at least have been in possession of Bharuch,

formerly in possession of the Gurjaras.[37] Hostilities between the Maitrakas and the Cāḷukyas and

their allies seem to have continued under the reign of Dhruvasena III, who issued grants from

651 to 653 CE. A grant in 655 CE, from a Cāḷukya loyalist, made grants in the Surat district of

south Gujarat.[38] Only one Maitraka grant, issued in 656 CE, remains from the reign of his

successor Kharagraha II. The Cāḷukya grants recorded a victory over an individual named

Vajjaḍa[39] in 666, which may be a reference to Śīlāditya III,[40] who issued grants between 662 and

684 CE. The Cāḷukya victories over this king are confirmed in Rāṣṭrakūṭa grants, which associate

him with Harṣa.[41] The association is further suggested by Śīlāditya III's further activity around

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[34] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 74.

[35] Xuanzang, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions (Taishō Volume 51, Number 2087)*, BDK English Tripiṭaka Series, trans. Li Rongxi (Moraga, CA: Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai America, Inc., 1996): 301.

[36] Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India*, 60.

[37] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 78.

[38] Ibid, 82.

[39] See: Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, Appendix G, 139-142 for an extended discussion on the identity of this individual.

[40] Ibid, 86.

[41] Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 75.

Bharuch.[42] Śīlāditya III also seems to have been the first Maitraka king to have faced a threat from the Indian Ocean. "The Arab commander Ismail landed at Ghogā with a mighty army in A.H. 57 (A.D. 677)."[43] Ghogā is located near Hastavapra, a prominent district with a famous port that had been part of the Maitraka kingdom since its beginning. Thus, with Śīlāditya began the third phase of Maitraka politics — the Cāḷukya/Indian Ocean phase.

Śīlāditya IV was the last Maitraka king to issue a grant from Valabhī, indicating that that the reigns of the latter Śīlādityas — Śīlāditya IV (686-706 CE), Śīlāditya V (722 CE), Śīlāditya VI (740-760 CE) and Śīlāditya VII (766 CE) — were problematic at best. They continued to face incursions from Muslim kings from the east and from the Cāḷukyas, and eventually from the Rāṣṭrakūṭas from the west. The marriage between the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Indra I and the Cāḷukya princess Bhāvanāga took place at Kaira, another long-held Maitraka territory, sometime after 733 CE.[44] Cāḷukya grants, dated to 739 CE, record a Tājika assault by one Junaid, Governor of Sindh, appointed by the Caliph Hasham, in western India in areas including Bharuch.[45] The Gurjaras recorded their defeat of the Tājikas "at the city of the Lord Valabhī" in an inscription dated 735 or 736 CE.[46] Shortly after his appointment in 757 CE, Hasham, the governor of Sindh, seems to have attacked Valabhī itself, called Baradha ot Barlbah by Al Biladuri.[47] During the aforementioned conflicts with the Tājikas, the Saindhava dynasty seems to have established itself in Gujarat, its rulers perhaps migrating in from Sindh. Their presence is evidenced by a seal

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[42] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 88.

[43] Ibid, 88.

[44] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 94-95.

[45] Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 82.

[46] Ibid, 83. Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India*, 61, interprets this as a defeat of the Maitrakas as well.

[47] Ibid, 85.

belonging to their founder which was found at Valabhī.[48] The Saindhavas ruled from Ghumli, around 40 km northeast of Porbandar on the west coast of Gujarat, but may have earlier been situated in south Saurāṣṭra.[49] According to the genealogy in their grants, the Saindhava king Agguka I repulsed their enemy, likely the governor Hasham, due to their naval prowess.[50] Abdul Malik led another expedition against west India in 776 CE, but it is doubtful if it was successful.[51] It is tempting to associate these events with the destruction of Valabhī recorded in Jain sources, which attribute its destruction to a *mleccha* (foreigner) invasion, but the dating in these sources is so uncertain that an exact correlation cannot be made.[52] By the early ninth century, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas seem to have had power over Valabhī, as one of their grants records a gift to a Brahmin resident of the city.[53]

ROYAL PATRONS

Beyond these complex and varied entanglements with their fellow kings, the Maitraka kings were involved with the members of several religious orders. Their grants detail gifts to and relationships with Brahmins, Buddhists and a few temples. From literary sources, we learn that they patronized Jains as well, although they do not appear to have issued any grants to Jain individuals or institutions. Unlike their royal contemporaries, who only rarely, and usually very

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[48] Ibid, 86.

[49] Ibid, 118.

[50] A.S. Altekar, "Six Saindhava Copper-Plates from Ghumli: F.–Grant of Jaika II; Gupta Saṁvat 596," *Epigraphia Indica* 26 (1941-1942): 225, l. 4-5.

[51] Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 90.

[52] See Ibid, 90-91; Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 102.

[53] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 112.

obliquely, mentioned the Maitrakas, they are explicitly mentioned as rulers and patrons in the literature produced by religious elites.

The Maitrakas, and Valabhī in particular, had long standing associations with Buddhism and Jainism. As mentioned above, an early king of Valabhī hosted the *saṁgha* responsible for the redaction of the Jain cannon. Perhaps as a result of this, the kings of Valabhī were and still are held in high regard by the Jain literati. Valabhī also hosted a large Buddhist monastic complex. The *vihāras*, or monasteries, at Valabhī "formed two separate groups (*maṇḍalas*) viz. the *Duddā-Vihāra-Maṇḍala* for Monks and the *Rakṣasūra-Vihāra-Maṇḍala* for Nuns."[54] Duḍḍa, the founder of one of these *maṇḍalas*, was described in grants to those *vihāras* as Dhruvasena I's sister's daughter, as is noted in grants to the same. Maitraka kings from Guhasena to Śīlāditya III (the last Maitraka king known to have given a grant to a *vihāra*) made grants to the monastery founded by Duḍḍa, evidencing their lasting relationship with that institution. There may also have been Jain temples at Valabhī during Maitraka rule. At least one text, the *Viśeṣāvaśyaka Bhāṣya*, is associated with a Jain temple there. This information is taken from a palm-leaf manuscript, which associates the text with the Śāntinātha temple at Valabhī in 609 CE, a date which would correlate with the reign of Śīlāditya I.[55]

In fact, religious literary sources give us further support that the Maitraka kings acted as patrons of religious elites in more ways than simply granting them land. Two texts, one Brahmanical and one Jain, claim to have been written at the behest of a king of Valabhī. The introductory section of the *Śatruñjaya Māhātmya* (a text which explores the Jain significance of

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[54] Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 97.

[55] Ibid, 261. Shastri explains that this date was likely the date of the original manuscript which was copied onto the extant palm-leaf manuscript.

the mountain Śatrūñjaya, located nine km south of the city of Palitana in Bhavnagar district)
states that the work was composed "at the request of the glorious Śīlāditya of Surāṣṭra from
Valabhī, who ruled over 18 kings making up Śatruñjaya."[56] It is not possible to identify which
Śīlāditya was the author's patron.[57] Bhaṭṭi's *Rāvaṇavadha* (a text which expounds on the death
of Rāvaṇa, the villain of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and also serves as a quasi-grammatical treatise[58])
concludes with: "This poem was accomplished by me, under the protection of the king Śrī
Dharasena (Dharasunu),[59] that the fame of that king may henceforth become greater, since that
king is a maker of love for the people."[60] Virji identifies this Dharasena as Dharasena IV,[61] but
as Shastri explains, it is difficult to determine to which of the four Dharasenas the author
referred.[62] Based on these claims by the authors, both of these texts must date back to the
Maitraka period.

Later Buddhist, Brahmin and Jain texts also preserve mentions of the kings of Valabhī.
These references are, I argue, particularly significant, because they show that the Maitraka kings
remained significant forces in religious history long after their reign had ended. That authors

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[56] Dhaneśvara, *Über das Çatrunjaya Māhātmyam: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Jaina*, ed. Albrecht Weber (Leipzig: F. A Brockhaus, 1858), 51, v. 14.

[57] Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 51.

[58] Oliver Fallon, introduction to *Bhaṭṭi's Poem: The Death of Rāvaṇa*, The Clay Sanskrit Library, by Bhaṭṭi, trans. Oliver Fallon (New York: New York University Press and the JJC Foundation, 2009), xx; Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 206, n. 1.

[59] Fallon translates this as "protected by Naréndra, son of Shri·dhara" in Bhaṭṭi, *Bhaṭṭi's Poem: The Death of Rāvaṇa*, The Clay Sanskrit Library, trans. Oliver Fallon (New York: New York University Press and the JJC Foundation, 2009), 461. However, he states in his introduction "that his patron may instead have been Shri Dhara·sena" in Fallon, introduction to *Bhaṭṭi's Poem*, xxi.

[60] Bhaṭṭi, *Bhaṭṭi's Poem*, 460, v. 22.35.

[61] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 80.

[62] Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 237-238.

writing centuries later reference these kings demonstrates that members of these religious

traditions considered their relationship to the Maitrakas significant, and that they remained

important historical figures whose mention lent gravitas to their texts. Indeed, I would contrast

the reference in Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracarita* (a text composed from a Brahminical world-view

certainly, but also an example of courtly art prose) where the king of Valabhī remained unnamed

to the sources I describe below, which considered specific associations with particular Maitraka

kings significant. In all of the following cases, the texts mention a king Śīlāditya of Valabhī.

They likely do not all refer to the same historical person. On the one hand, this was the most

common name for Maitraka kings, and on the other, given the use of the name by the last five

kings of the dynasty, perhaps it came to simply mean the name of a Maitraka king who had

ascended to the throne.

The Buddhist *Mañju Śrī Mula Kapla*, a text perhaps originally dating to around 800 CE

and translated into Tibetan circa 1060 CE,[63] is the text that is most 'historical' by modern

standards, and the text likely composed closest in time to the Maitraka dynasty. It gives a

dynastic account of Indian history from the time of the Buddha until the early Medieval Period,

stopping with some of the earlier Pāla kings. Verses 586 to 604 discuss the Valabhī dynasty,

describing a king Śīlā (Śīlādiyta) whom the text claims was Buddhist, and who ruled from the

country of Ujjain to the West.[64] This, to all appearances, correlates with Śīlādiyta I.[65] The text

then refers to his successor Chapla, who was apparently murdered on account of his crimes

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[63] K. P. Jayaswal, introductory to *An Imperial History of India in a Sanskrit Text (C. 700 B.C. — 770 A.D.) With a Special Commentary on Later Gupta Period*, With the Sanskrit Text Revised by Ven. Rāhula Sāṅṛṛityāyana (Patna: Eastern Book House, 1988), 3.

[64] Jayaswal, *An Imperial History of India in a Sanskrit Text*, ४३-४४, v. 586-600.

[65] Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 50-51; Virji, Ancient History of Saurashtra, 64-65.

against women.[66] If this refers to one of the Valabhī kings named in their own royal genealogy, this would have to be Kharagraha I or Dharasena III.[67] Finally, it notes a king Dhruva (Dhruvasena).[68] This account both matches and does not match with the known history of the Maitrakas. Importantly for my purposes, the text claims Śīlādiyta I, who did patronize Buddhist *vihāras* but also claimed to be a Śiva devotee and made grants to Brahmins and a temple, as a Buddhist king.

Subsequent texts make use of the Maitraka kings in a slightly different way. In the eleventh century, one Soḍḍhala composed the *Udayasundarī Kathā*, a text largely consisting of geographical descriptions and holding a Brahmanical world-view. This is not, nor does it claim to be, a historical text. Śīlāditya of Valabhī makes an appearance in this text as the author's ancestor.[69]

Latest in date are the Jain texts. A number of Jain texts narrate an event in which a Jain saint bested the Buddhist intellectuals at Valabhī and caused them to be expelled from the city. Again, the king named is Śīlāditya. Versions of this story[70] occur in the 13th century *Purātana Prabandha Saṅgraha*,[71] and in the 14th century *Prabandha Cintāmaṇi* of Merutuṅga[72] and

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[66] Jayaswal, *An Imperial History of India in a Sanskrit Text*, ४४, v. 601-602.

[67] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 69.

[68] Jayaswal, *An Imperial History of India in a Sanskrit Text*, ४४, v. 603-604.

[69] Soḍḍhala, *Udayasundarī Kathā of Soḍḍhala*, ed. and trans. Sudarshan Kumar Sharma (Delhi: Parimal Publications), 8-10.

[70] See: Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 181-183 for a comparison of these accounts.

[71] Jinavijaya Muni, ed., *Purātana Prabandha Saṅgraha* (Calcutta: The Adhiṣṭhātā-Singhī Jaina Jñānapīṭha, 1936), 82-83.

[72] Merutuṅga, *Prabandha Cintāmaṇi*, ed. Jinavijaya Muni (Śāntiniketan: The Adhiṣṭhātā-Singhī Jaina Jñānapīṭha, 1931), 106-108.

Prabandha Kośa of Rājaśekhara Sūri.[73] These accounts also claim that the saint in question, Malla, was related to Śīlāditya.[74] In these examples, the invocation of a Maitraka king seems to have served as a way of adding importance to the author or saint's lineage. Importantly for my purposes here, these texts show that the Maitraka kings, or an impression of them, remained relevant and significant for elite persons long after their dynasty had ended.

LEGITIMATION

This complex situation, with kings claiming one religious affiliation and making grants far beyond that, is not isolated to the Maitraka dynasty.[75] In fact, it was the norm in the period under discussion here. Theory contemporary to the Maitrakas on this subject tends to be confined to a single religious tradition due to the fact that most Sanskrit political and social theory was composed by religious elites.[76] Therefore, expansive theorizations of these actions tend to rely more on modern social theory than on primary evidence. The same can be said of premodern Sanskrit political formations more generally: "The single available explanation of the social function of the Sanskrit cosmopolitan culture is legitimation theory and its logic of instrumental reason: elites in command of new forms of social power are understood to have deployed the

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[73] Rājaśekhara Sūri, *Prabandha Kośa*, ed. Jina Vijaya (Śāntiniketan: The Adhiṣṭhātā-Singhī Jaina Jñānapītha, 1935), 21-23.

[74] There are variations to this story that do not include Śīlāditya, as discussed by Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 233, n. 17-18.

[75] See: Oskar von Hibüner, "Behind the Scenes: The Struggle of Political Groups for Influence as Reflected in Inscriptions," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 53 (2013): 365-369.

[76] E.g.: David Brick, introduction to *Brahmanical Theories of the Gift: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of the Dānakāṇḍa of the Kṛtyakalpataru* (Cambridge: The Department of South Asian Studies Harvard University, distributed by Harvard University Press, 2015), 24.

mystifying symbols and codes of Sanskrit to secure popular consent."[77] Common though this

approach may be, as Pollock argues, it is extremely problematic. "[I]t is not only anachronistic

but intellectually mechanical, culturally homogenizing, theoretically naive, empirically false, and

tediously predictable."[78] Drawing on Pollock, in this section, I examine his critique of legitimacy

as the primary approach for understanding Early Historic and Early Medieval Indian kingship in

order to lay the foundation for the ways this dissertation will approach questions of royal

relationships.

Pollock's work is synthetic and he shows, with good basis, that the necessary components

for understanding the political-cultural system of the Sanskrit world through the theory of

legitimation are simply not present. Key to Pollock's anti-Weberian argument is that "in its most

fundamental (English) sense 'legitimation' signifies transforming something that is 'false' into

something that is 'true' — a bastard son into a legal heir, for example. Such a transformation,

however, presupposes a moment of discontinuity, so to put it, a potential lack in the antecedent

state of affairs, which one proceeds to fix."[79] This lack of rupture is key to Pollock's argument.

Indeed, one of the few things that all parties — the court, the Buddhists, the Brahmins, etc. –

– agreed upon was the importance of the king.[80] Different orders or traditions may have

disagreed on the specifics, but the need for the king was axiomatic.

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[77] Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 18.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid, 517.

[80] The centrality of the king in Sanskrit political theory is discussed in Chapter 3.

There is little need, in the context of premodern India, for a concept such as legitimation, and thus it is unclear what work legitimizing any given king or polity may have done. As Pollock has argued:

> [F]rom what vantage point, in a world of continuous political practices — that is, in the world of premodernity — would it be possible even to perceive the asymmetry between political fact and political norm? In the historical experience of a tenth-century Indian, there had always been kings who had always exercised power in a given way. No one had ever experienced anything else; no standard of comparison existed for doubting the inevitability of kingship, which accordingly approximated a natural law. Of course rulers could be just or unjust, true heirs or false, but there is no reason whatever to assume they cared let alone needed to secure the assent of their subjects one way or the other. In such circumstances, the process of legitimation would seem not only cognitively redundant but virtually unthinkable.[81]

Key to this argument is that legitimation has always, even in Weber's eyes, been something *extra*. "Experience shows that in no instance does domination voluntarily limit itself to the appeal to material or affectual or ideal motives as a basis for its continuance. In addition every such system attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy."[82] Legitimation is a solution to a problem, not a mere fact of politics or domination. Legitimacy, as Weber points out, is a *belief*. Nowhere — in the land grants, in Sanskrit political theory, or in the invocations of Maitraka kings — do we see evidence of this belief. Consider the aforementioned invocations of the Maitraka kings by members of religious orders. They stress relationships, and even attempt to claim exclusivity in these relationships (as in the case of claiming a king to be Buddhist, or claiming a king expelled the Buddhists in favor of the Jains). It was the fact of the relationship that was both significant and also at issue, not the legitimacy of the domination of the king.

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[81] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 522-523.

[82] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 1, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 213.

Pollock's work, as the title indicates, focuses largely on language and power. His focus lies in courtly relationships and courtly theory — ideas I will explore further in Chapter 5. In this dissertation I take up his convincing critique of legitimation theory and attempt to understand Maitraka rule, the practical rule of a single dynasty, without resorting to legitimation as an explanation for their actions. As noted above, Pollock's work is oriented toward literary sources and is largely syncretic. The question of how legitimacy does or does not function is slightly different at the smaller scale of a single dynasty. As Pollock himself has noted, "rulers could be just or unjust, true heirs or false." To say that these kingdoms and the larger political system in which they functioned did not rely on an underlying principle of legitimation does not mean that there were not reasons for things, or that there were not justifications for particular kings or their rule. Legitimacy, in the Weberian sense, is a particular kind of reason or justification deeply implicated in his theorization of the state itself. "A compulsory political organization with continuous operations (*politischer Anstaltshetrieh*) will be called a 'state' insofar as its administrative staff successfully upholds the claim to the *monopoly* of the *legitimate* use of physical force in the enforcement of its order."[83] As both Weber and Pollock argue, legitimacy is something specific — it implies a particular relationship between rulers and the ruled, and furthermore relies on a particular definition of the state that is very different from *rājya*, or "royal power," and other Sanskrit theorization of the state and rule. In taking up Pollock's argument here, I am not attempting to retheorize legitimation or the concepts related to it, but rather building, on a small scale, an explanation of the practices of rule of a single dynasty without resorting to these categories.

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[83] Ibid, vol. 1, 54.

This has particular consequences for understanding land grants. Weber's legitimation

framework makes a number of assumptions that are better suited to medieval Europe than

premodern India. Among these, legitimation, for Weber, implies a strict division of secular and

religious power:

> As a rule, a compromise is concluded between the otherworldly and thisworldly powers; this is indeed in their mutual interest. The political power can offer exceedingly valuable support to the hierocracy by providing the *brachium saeculare* for the annihilation of heretics and the exaction of taxes. In turn, two qualities of the hierocracy recommend an alliance to the political authorities. First of all, as a legitimating power, hierocracy is almost indispensable even (and especially) to the caesaropapist ruler, but also to the personally charismatic (for example, plebiscitarian) ruler and all those strata whose privileges depend on the "legitimacy" of the political system.[84]

The key for Weber was that secular and religious power were mutually interdependent and yet,

entirely separable. Yet, in the South Asian context, this critical division did not work in the same

way.

> The temporal power has not been 'secularized.' It bears the imprint of the sacred but lacks the transcendence of spiritual authority. This is particularly notable in the contradictory relationship between the king and the brahmin. The two must work together, but at the same time the brahmin is warned in no uncertain terms against involvement with the king and his sacrality, which would jeopardize the brahmin's Vedic claim to transcendence. For the same reason, the brahmin cannot be properly called a priest, for priesthood means handling the sacred matter of life and death, which would fatally impair the brahmin's transcendent stance, which requires him to cultivate the Veda in, by, and for himself alone. *In fact it was the brahmin, not the king, who was 'secularized.'*[85]

My argument here is not about secularization, per se. Kings and various religious elites clearly

served different roles in ancient India, but the idea of 'secularization' itself is a topic beyond the

scope of this study. Rather, the key point here is that the divisions between different types of

elites did not follow a neatly categorized Weberian framework. In other words, it is possible

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[84] Ibid, vol. 2, 1175-1176.

[85] J.C. Heesterman, *The Broken World of Sacrifice: An Essay in Ancient Indian Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 5, emphasis added.

speak of types, as contemporary Sanskrit sources clearly do, but those types do not follow the same dividing lines assumed in modern political theory. Certainly, a Brahmin did different things than a king, but their social, political and cosmological roles were deeply entangled, as were the roles of the king and the Buddhist, the king and the Jain, etc.

Tracing the extensions of this logic has wide ranging implications and puts Pollock in conversation with other historians and theorists of the Medieval, Early Modern and politics. For example, as Kantorowicz explains, even the concept of sovereignty itself is rooted in the two bodies — sacred and secular — of the king. "For the Crown would have been incomplete without both the king as the head and the magnates as the limbs, since only both together, supplemented by the parliamentary knights and burgesses, formed the body corporate of the Crown which, in modern language, meant Sovereignty."[86] In other words, in medieval Europe, the king, in his secular role, was the principal component of the body sovereign — the state. The theory of sovereignty itself was drawn out of Medieval European sources, during a 16th century study of feudalism. Davis, in her study of the medieval roots of modern theories of sovereignty and periodization, points to particular texts, including *De Fiefs*, written in 1539, which "simultaneously expands feudal custom as a capacious legal and social category, and secures it as an origin myth for French sovereignty."[87] Feudalism, as I will discuss in Chapter 2, is an idea that has a long and troubled history in studies of the South Asian premodern.

Critically for my purposes, Davis's study reveals the deeply enmeshed relationship between sovereignty, legitimacy and theories of power, as well as the particularity of their roots

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[86] Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 364.

[87] Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism & Secularization Govern the Politics of Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 38.

in premodern European studies of the political. "[S]ixteenth-century struggles of sovereignty were often phrased, in a continuation of a long medieval tradition with classical roots, in terms of the *merum imperium*—sheer power, or the 'power of the sword'—ultimately the right to inflict the death penalty."[88] Recall that Weber's definition of the state outlines this exact relationship between a right (in his case one that is rendered *legitimate* in the eyes of the body politic), force and governing power. Davis locates this search for legitimacy in these same 16th century texts:

> In their struggles over sovereignty, sixteenth-century legal scholars were competing to define the *location* of sovereignty, the "power of the sword " that operated as law, but also superseded law. Feudal historiography, conflicted in its relation to the past and characterized by its insistence upon both local specificity and universal ideals, emerged as a means of negotiating the sovereign paradox as legists sought to restrict or to empower absolutism, and to legitimize nationalist and increasingly expansive imperial agendas. The feudal relation, in turn, became the basis for theorizing the sovereign *subject*.[89]

It is unsurprising that scholars and kings, living one thousand years before these discussions took place, and at a great distance from the societies governed by Roman and feudal law which 16th century theorists drew upon, would have a very different conception of the relations of power.

Early Modernist historian Fasolt, too, draws a direct connection between the division between the Medieval and the Modern and the sovereign. Disciplinary history, he notes "is also a form of action. From that perspective the distinction between past and present looks like an act of self-determination by which the sovereign subject assumes her rightful place in time."[90] Sovereignty as a political model, he argues, is tied to a particular for of knowledge production that has existed only in particular places and times. "As sovereignty was declared to be absolute and subject neither to history not positive law not, above all, to any papal or imperial powers, but

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[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid, 39.

[90] Constantin Fasolt, *The Limits of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 14.

only to a natural law defined by a new science, so history was declared to be absolute, independent of time, and subject solely to the objective faculties of the historian."[91] Fasolt's method, similar to Pollocks, is to examine a theorist who does not fit in this mold. The subject of his study on the 'limits of history,' Hermann Conring, "lived in a period when the adoption of a temporal perspective."[92]

The body sovereign, or later the sovereign state with its sovereign subjects, has become essential to the understanding of not only the state itself but international relations. The end of this dissertation, which focuses on Indian kings, including the Maitrakas, in the context of a broad Asian matrix of kings, confronts this principle. Bartelson, who, like Davis, draws a genealogy of sovereignty out of "the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance" [93]and ultimately the modern age, argues that "sovereignty is introduced both as the defining property of the state and in explaining the presence of an international system."[94]

> [T]he ontological primacy accorded to the state in international political theory implies the *givenness of sovereignty* as its defining property; sovereignty signifies what is inside the state, either constituted by the fall from a primordial unity, or simply taken for granted at the level of definition. In either case, sovereignty is constituted as a primitive presence from which all theorizing necessarily must depart, if it is to remain international political theorizing.[95]

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[91] Ibid, 25.

[92] Ibid, 41.

[93] Jens Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 39 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 88. Bartelson goes as far back as references to Plato and Augustine in his tracing of the concept of sovereignty, insofar as he is concerned with the 13th century reception of Aristotelean texts. Ibid, 97.

[94] Ibid, 23.

[95] Ibid. 24.

For the modern understanding of the international system, sovereignty serves this purpose because it homogenizes states. This "sovereign equality of states"[96] is critical to theories of modern international relations precisely because it reduces states to their similarities. Bartelson would argue against projecting such an international system in to the premodern past: "history, as we know it, is as much a precondition of the international as a result of it, since both arise out of a new and distinctively modern arrangement of identity and difference in knowledge."[97] Therefore, if this specific construction of relations is bounded by its historical and genealogical trajectory, and a theory of sovereignty underpins not only the theory of the state but the theory of the international — the state among states — we should expect to find a very different set of relations, and a very different set of theories which underlie them in mid-first millennium Asia. As I will argue in Chapter 5, the kings of mid-first millennium India, and their foreign neighbors, existed in a complex system of international kingly relations predicated on no such assumption of likeness. While they recognized key units of analysis — namely, the king himself — across theoretical and cosmological spheres, ancient kings and courtly theoreticians did not see fundamental difference as a barrier to knowledge and understanding.

SUMMARY

In Chapter 2, "The Peer King and the Paramount Lord," I focus on how kings portrayed their relationship to other kings in the South Asian context. In that chapter, I will look at the technical terminology of kingship and rule used by Maitraka kings, as well as literary sources which explicitly framed king-to-king relationships, namely the *Arthaśāstra*, a late Early Historic

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[96] Jens Bartelson, "The Concept of Sovereignty Revisited," *The European Journal of International Law* 17, no. 2 (2006): 474.

[97] Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*, 187.

manual on statecraft, and the *Harṣacarita*, a biographical composition which examined how the Emperor Harsha rose to power. The Maitraka kings used titles that might be considered contradictory by more normative models of statecraft. Some kings called themselves both *mahārāja* (great king) and *mahāsāmanta* (which is sometimes translated as 'great vassal' but which I argue they might have used more in the sense of 'great peer-king,' or more loosely 'great king among other kings'). The most objectively powerful Maitraka kings eschewed royal titles completely, and the king Dharasena IV, who ruled after the Maitrakas were defeated by and subsequently allied to Harsha is the only king to have given himself the title of *cakravartin*, literally 'wheel turner' or emperor. I argue in Chapter 2 that Maitraka titles are better viewed as a way that Maitraka kings negotiated their presentation to and among their neighbors rather than as a strict hierarchy, and that the Maitrakas were actually very responsive to social change, and that they selectively reflected regional powers in their self-presentation.

Chapter 3, "To Fix the Rules of the Path of Proper Conduct," picks up this idea of selectiveness to examine how the Maitrakas participated in and were influenced by philosophical debates about the role of the king. In this chapter, I expand the category of the Maitrakas' elite contemporaries to include religious elites, and rather than use Sanskrit theoretical sources to define the role of the king, I start from an examination of how the Maitrakas positioned themselves amid this ongoing debate. They are the first kings to have explicitly mentioned Manu in their grants, where they also invoked Yudhishthira, the Dharmarāja of the *Mahābhārata*. They are also self-proclaimed Śaivites, yet they heavily patronized Buddhist viharas. A close examination of their grants reveals that their patronage had serious implications for their own bureaucracy, especially in the realm of tax-extraction. These gifts, which were explicitly both permanent – imagining the duration of the grant on a longer time scale than the duration of the

dynasty – and free from material obligations on the part of the recipient, demonstrate the importance of royal relationships to non-royal elites, who must have held a great deal of practical power.

Following this, Chapter 4, "Om, good fortune from Valabhī!," broadens the idea of the theoretical world which the Maitrakas inhabited by looking at courtly presentations of kingship and broader trends in how first millennium kings ruled. In that chapter, I build on Sheldon Pollock's description of cosmopolitan geographies, which in the Sanskrit cosmopolitan sphere rendered the world "vast yet delimited in its vastness and completely named and known," and could be lifted and transported across the cosmopolis, transplanting, for example, Mount Meru and the mythical geography of the *Mahābhārata* from the subcontinent to Java. I argue that the quasi-imperial pursuits of the Maitraka kings followed a map of such cosmopolitan geographies. Their attachment to the capital city of Valabhī was, I argue, highly strategic. Valabhī was a center of power preceding Maitraka rule but it was not so powerful that it could not be shaped by new rulers. As they gained power, they sought out more widely recognized centers of power, eventually conquering the city of Ujjain, and earning Śīlāditya I the title of "King of Mālava." Royal space and religious space frequently overlapped, with elites of various stripes being attracted to the same centers, and powerful spaces being shared by competing interest groups.

Chapter 5, "Seafaring Lords whose Wealth was Equal to Kubera," places the Maitrakas in a broader Asian context. It examines the trade relationships between Gujarat and Persia (likely the reason that Daṇḍin called the kings of Valabhī "seafaring lords whose wealth was equal to the king of the Guhakyas, who is the god of wealth Kubera") and between the Maitrakas and the Tang pilgrim Xuanzang, who visited the courts of Harṣa and Dhruvasena II. The main argument of that chapter is that, while to modern scholars the many rulers of India seem to be petty kings,

with only a few such as the Guptas and Harṣa rising to the level of international importance, there was in fact a sustained interest in Indian statecraft coming from India's more imperially consolidated neighbors. I extend Mathew Canepa's arguments about the '*kosmos* of power' which existed between the Sasanians and the Byzantines and use that device to examine how royal technologies and ideologies were shared across Eurasia. While Indian kings only obliquely referenced their imperial neighbors, the kings of Tang China and Sasanian Persia actively sought out texts on Indian statecraft. India's mid-millennium contemporaries did not see royal India as fragmentary, messy or passive (as it has often been portrayed by modern scholars). Rather the kings of India were not only legible, but their royal technologies, valuable and highly sought after.

The goal of the dissertation, broadly speaking, is to embed the Maitrakas in their own context and try to pull apart and understand the many ways in which they formed relationships with a wide network of elites. The practices of the Maitraka kings follow something close to a *rājamandala* theory of power-making, but in a world far more complex than that described by the *Arthaśāstra*. While the *Arthaśāstra* deals mainly with the relationships among kings (and at that, the relationships among kings of roughly equal power), Maitraka royal practices acknowledge a far wider range of elite interests – in political theory building, cosmography, ritual knowledge and an ongoing negotiation about paramountcy. In spite of the remarkable diversity of elite interests and types of elites, one constant within India and beyond the subcontinent was a recognition of kingly power. Kings were broadly legible elites, both embedded in the minutia of their own contexts and translatable across cosmographic spheres.

CHAPTER 2

The Peer King and the Paramount Lord

In this chapter I will take up a question that has, admittedly, fallen out of favor in recent years, namely, the question of Indian feudalism.[98] I do so not because I wish to defend this model, but because the fall of feudalism has had broad ranging effects both at the macro-historiographic level and at the micro-level of translation and dynastic interpretation. At the macro-level, feudalism was used by Marxist historians in their political economy focused periodization of Indian history.[99] Furthermore, I have referenced in the Introduction that feudalism (or the theorization thereof) has enormous implications for modern political theory. As the theory of Indian feudalism was critiqued and the Marxist periodization of Indian history fell out of favor, the span of time in which the bulk of India's political philosophy was either credited or codified became a time without a name. What in the West would be considered the Antique Period, or in China would roughly correspond to the Six Dynasties period, in India might be referred to as the later part of the Late Early Historic, or perhaps post-Gupta or maybe the earlier portion of the Early Medieval. While there is no reason to assume there should be some great planetary (or even Eurasian) synchrony of periods, I will argue in this chapter and throughout

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[98] See: Daud Ali, "The Historiography of the Medieval in South Asia," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 22, no. 1 (2012), 7-12; Upinder Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, (Cambridge: Hardard University Press, 2017), 12-13 for a full overview of scholarly shifts in the characterization of this period.

[99] E.g. R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism: c. 300-1200* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1965).

this dissertation that political maneuvering undertaken between 400 and 800 CE in general and by the Maitrakas in particular was deliberate and significant rather than chaotic and inscrutable.

At the micro-level, the literature on South Asian feudalism has left a confusing trail. Most problematic is the issue of vocabulary. The grants employ a number of technical terms for rulers. These terms are most comfortably rendered as 'titles,' although as I will discuss later in this chapter there are significant ideological differences between the English term 'title' and the collection of technical terms I discuss here. The term *sāmanta* is near universally translated as 'vassal' – an interpretation that I will argue in this chapter, fails to capture adequately the complexity of the positions of the individuals whom the term references. As a secondary but related issue, without the totalizing framework of feudalism it has proven difficult to discuss the relationships between dynasties, especially dynasties of different sizes. I will argue here that the titles used by kings do not transition into a neat hierarchy of categories which we may use to untangle their relationships and relative strengths. Some kings and dynasties clearly had greater and more expansive control than others, some less, but other than in the most extreme cases, these differences are not marked by either titulature or by the explicit acknowledgment of other kings.

This chapter will move roughly chronologically through the shifts in Maitraka titulature, tracking the changes in the royal terminology they used and linking these changes, wherever possible to their likely proximate causes. I begin with the question of feudalism because of a terminological pairing first attested in the Maitraka inscriptions – *mahāsāmanta mahārāja*. I will argue that, in the context of the Maitrakas, the *sāmanta*, referred not to a vassal, but to a 'peer-king,' that is, a king who is a king among other kings. In order to explore this term, I will draw on contemporary literary sources to see how the term is contextualized outside of land grants. I

will then argue that the titles used in the grants, specifically the shifts in the titles over time, are an indication that the Maitraka kings were actively and selectively drawing on a variety of source material when characterizing themselves in their grants. I will look at their relationships with the Guptas, Vākāṭakas, and Harṣavardhana, as well as their own relationships with less powerful kings in their own orbit. As the Maitraka kings described themselves, through the titles they invoked and the way they presented their relationship to other kings, I argue that they were asserting a narrative about themselves and where they fit in the tightly packed landscape of Indian kingship.

THE SĀMANTA AND THEORIES OF INDIAN FEUDALISM

No extant inscriptions remain of the first two Maitraka kings, Bhaṭārka and Dharasena I. The inscriptional record is kinder to the next five kings – Droṇasiṁha, Dhruvasena I, Dharapaṭṭa, Guhasena and Dharasena II – whose rules spanned most of the sixth century. Among these, only Dharapaṭṭa is absent from the record. All of these kings deployed the term *mahārāja.* Dhruvasena I and Dharaena II styled themselves as *mahāsāmanta mahārāja*. In one grant, Dharasena used only s*āmanta* rather than *mahāsāmanta.* This combination is a titular innovation. Although this construction would spread beyond the Maitraka kingdom these kings are the first to have attested its use. Lallanjani Gopal has tracked the use of the term *sāmanta*, and its gradual transformation from the simple meaning of 'neighbor' to its eventual use in the medieval period to designate landed nobles "having the right to enjoy a certain fixed income."[100] In earlier periods, as Gopal and others have noted, the term *sāmanta* designated 'neighbors' more than

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[100] Lallanjani Gopal, "Sāmanta: Its Varying Significance in Ancient India," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 95 no. 1/2 (1963), 37.

'subordinates,' and it isn't clear precisely when the switchover happened, or if the earlier meaning was completely negated.[101]

The question of how and when this transition played out is the focus of Gopal's study, which remains one of the most comprehensive explorations of the term. The more generic meaning of 'neighbor' is indicated by its use in the *Arthaśāstra* and *Manusmṛti*. The term *sāmanta* is commonly found in descriptions of boundary disputes, where a neighbor would have a say in where land markers should be located. In this context, it clearly did not indicate a subordinate. Gopal sees the *sāmanta* at the time of the Maitrakas as occupying an interstitial position — not as powerful as an emperor and not quite a bureaucrat. "A *sāmanta* was thus a ruler distinct alike from a sovereign king and from a governor. His emblems and other paraphernalia indicated this dual position of superiority over appointed governors and subordination to the Emperor."[102] Gopal also notes that *sāmantas* tended to be loyal only as long as it was required, and often broke away from their overlords. This matches up nicely with the history of the Maitrakas, who were founded by a Gupta general (*senapati*) Bhaṭārka, who, apparently seizing on a moment of Gupta weakness, founded the dynasty some time around 470 CE. While the general view is that the term *sāmanta* developed from meaning neighbor to meaning subordinate (or vassal) in a political context, it continued to have the meaning of a neighboring king (either of the kingdom itself or of a more largely construed empire). The 12th century *Aparājitapṛcchā*, another architectural manual, "designates by this term the kings and kingdoms beyond the provincial kingdoms and half-kingdoms."[103]

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[101] Ibid. Note: Olivelle persistently translates *sāmanta* as 'neighbor' in his translation of the *Arthaśāstra*. See also: Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 103.

[102] Gopal, "Sāmanta: Its Varying Significance in Ancient India," 27.

[103] Inden, "Hierarchies of Kings in Early Medieval India," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 15 (1981): 112.

For Marxist historians of the 1950s and 1960s such as R.S. Sharma and D.D. Kosambi, the *sāmanta,* viewed as a sometimes loyal vassal but not always as a recipient of land grants, was a key component to the theory of Indian feudalism. The theory of Indian feudalism remains the most comprehensive, subcontinent-wide, study of land grants as they relate to the political structures of ancient India. Their approach was, on the one hand, an attempt to build a history from the bottom up — privileging "'mode of production' and 'social formation' as analytical models."[104] It also held to Marxist ideals about social development and evolution, seeing feudalism as a necessary step from the Asiatic Mode of Production to modernity. In the case of the Maitrakas, even more recent scholarly works[105] have based their interpretations on a basic feudalism model. The appeal of feudalism persists, in part, because land grants make up the bulk of the surviving historical records for dynasties like the Maitrakas.

However, there are some key points of difference between Indian copper plate land grants and a political-economic system such as European medieval feudalism, which was based on the exchange of land for taxation rights and loyalty. Copper plate grants almost universally were made to religious officials and were almost universally tax and obligation free (if you do not count various kinds of religious merit, to be discussed in the next chapter). While scholars arguing for Indian feudalism present *sāmantas* as key evidence of their argument that kings ruled in a stratified hierarchy, with more powerful kings controlling feudal lords beneath them, at the time of the Maitrakas we do not find any evidence for this kind of relationship in the land grants themselves. In the view of proponents of Indian feudalism, "the whole scheme visualizes a state

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[104] Daud Ali, "The Historiography of the Medieval in South Asia," 8.

[105] See: Nandini Sinha, "Early Maitrakas, Landgrant Charters and Regional State Formation in Early Medieval Gujarat," *Studies in History* 17 no. 2 (2001): 151-163. Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India.*

of affairs in which the ruler of a lower rank is in a position where he has to pay tribute to the ruler of a higher rank."[106] The *sāmanta* is thus conceptualized by Sharma as a formal rank which was filled with appointed officers.[107]

However, if this were the case, this system of ranking should have produced a hierarchy of titles and offices. Yet, for proponents of Indian feudalism, the list of these rankings comes from an unlikely source, the *Mānasāra*, a c. 11th century architectural treatise. While this seems an odd location for a theory of royal hierarchy, medieval architectural treatises in general were greatly concerned with the hierarchy of kings. As Inden explains:

> [Descriptions of kings in inscriptions] do not present as much detail as another class of texts, the instructional manuals of architecture, beginning in the twelfth century. This seems strange until one realises that this topic subsumed a whole host of rules which we would call 'sumptuary regulations'. The lordships of the kings of early medieval India and the places they had in the particular Hindu scheme of things in which they led their lives were all represented, the one in relation to the other. They were visibly represented in the placement of their citadels, the size and design of their mansions in the capital of their overlord, the complexity and richness of their thrones, couches, crowns, umbrellas, fly—whisks, and banners, as well as by the dignity of the animals or vehicles they rode, the titles they had proclaimed, and the musical instruments which they had played to herald their appearance.[108]

The *Mānasāra* lists ranks of kings — *cakravartin, mahārāja, mahendra,* and so on. *Sāmantas*, great or otherwise, did not make the list. Sharma notes that "surprisingly enough the theoretical basis of political feudalism is found in the texts on art and architecture."[109] This is particularly remarkable in the context of the literary developments of the early first millennium, during which many of the foundational texts of Sanskrit political philosophy were produced. The focus

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[106] Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, 205.

[107] Ibid, 96.

[108] Ronald Inden, "Hierarchies of Kings in Early Medieval India," 104.

[109] Ibid, 204.

of texts such as the *Arthaśāstra*, *Manusmṛti* and others is not on ranking, but rather on how elites

constitute their relationships to each other. In inscriptional sources, we see that titles one would

expect to neatly conform to a feudal hierarchy in fact exist at wildly different ranks that coexist

quite comfortably; for example, one can be at once a *mahārāja* and a *mahāsamanta*.

INTERLUDE: EUROPEAN FEUDALISM

As the theory of Indian feudalism was always based on a set of political structures

derived from European history, it is worth a brief examination of the current state of the study of

feudalism in medieval Europe. The study of European feudalism has come a long way since the

1960s. After an attempt to throw off the idea entirely in the 1990's,[110] scholars came to more

complex and nuanced understandings of feudalism and vassalage in the European Middle Ages.

Today, 'feudalism' is understood as a concept that exists at multiple levels:

> one can distinguish between three main meanings of the word in historical practice: feudalism as a mode of production; feudal society as the 'politics of land', characteristic of the land-based rather than the tax-based polities just discussed; and what is sometimes called 'military feudalism', or 'feudo-vassalic' relationships, characterized by a system of rewards based on conditional military tenures (fiefs) and complex rules of loyalty.[111]

The first of these three meanings is both extremely generic and easy to assess. For Wickham, as

for the Indian Marxists of the 1950s/60s, one key to understanding and defining society was by

its mode of production. Societies which extract from peasant, or peasant-like, labor, are common

from the emergence of the idea of hierarchy. India was certainly an agrarian society in this

period, and it is therefore safe to say that one of the things kings did was extract from an agrarian

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[110] Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals : the medieval evidence reinterpreted,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[111] Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400-800*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 60-61.

or peasant base. Frequent references to officials who may have been tax collectors of some kind[112] in the Maitraka grants supports this. This meaning of feudalism is, however, too broad to be practically useful in understanding the politics of any given dynasty (given that it can easily describe thousands of years of human history). It is also much more broad than the ideas of proponents of Indian feudalism, who saw a distinct feudal period between the Mauryan Empire and the Medieval (and largely Muslim-administered) states.

The third meaning of feudalism is the one closest to the ideas the term conjures in vernacular imagination. The issue of assessing "'feudo-vassalic' relationships, characterized by a system of rewards based on conditional military tenures (fiefs) and complex rules of loyalty" in India boiled down to problems of evidence. Key to this concept is that grants of land were given by a lord to his men as a reward or as a guarantor of military service, and that they could be revoked, or at least not renewed, at the lord's discretion. Although the centrality of this idea has been critiqued by European historians, there is ample evidence to show that relationships of this type between lords and their subordinates were common in Europe from about the 11th century on. Even when the relationship was not secured by a formal feudal contract, the tension surrounding the inheritance of land and the ability of a lord to potentially alienate land can be seen, for example, in 11th century Poitevin narrative.[113] Although the relationship between a lord and one of his men may have been contested, such a relationship does seem to have revolved largely around the issue of land and land granting. Not only do we find no texts of this type in India, but land grants in general and Maitraka land grants in particular are not used to establish a

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[112] See above on the *dhruv-adhikarana.*

[113] Stephen D. White, "The Politics of Exchange: Gifts, Fiefs and Feudalism," in *Medieval Transformations: Texts, Power and Gifts in Context*, ed. Esther Cohen and Mayke B. De Jong (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 174-176.

relationship between lords and their "men" but rather between kings and religious persons and institutions.[114] In fact, the relationships which generated such angst in Medieval Europe, leading to volumes of court cases and literary exegeses, are barely mentioned in what survives of the court records of India.

In India, evidence for anything that looks like the secular vassalage of Europe is slight. One might argue that, especially given the prescription of the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* that grants should be recorded on copper or cotton, land grants to secular elites might have been recorded in a form that did not survive. I find this unlikely for several reasons. First, although rare, there are copper plate land grants in which the recipient is a non-religious entity. One Viṣṇuṣeṇa (a king with an uncertain relationship to the Maitraka dynasty) made a grant to a group of merchants in 592 CE.[115] This grant, unlike the grants given to religious entities, actually specified a large number of terms which the merchants would have to follow. Ray sees this charter as evidence that "the Maitrakas were attempting to widen their resource base."[116] It is certainly an unusual grant, being not only the only Maitraka-related grant where the recipients were not Brahmins or Buddhists but because it specified economic terms at all. Nevertheless, it does demonstrate that it was perfectly possible to make a more contractual grant than the ones that usually appeared.[117] Viṣṇuśena's grant is discussed further in Chapter 5.

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[114] See: Ali, "The Historiography of the Medieval in South Asia," 8-9; D.C. Sircar, "Indian Landlordism and European Feudalism," in *Studies in the Political and Administrative Systems of Ancient and Medieval India* (Delhi: Moltial Bandarisass, 1995), 13-32.

[115] Dineschandra Sircar, "Charter of Visnusena Samvat 649," *Epigraphia Indica* 30 (1953-54): 163-81.

[116] Himanshu Prabha Ray, "The Beginnings: The Artisan and the Merchant in Early Gujarat, Sixth-Eleventh Centuries," *Ars Orientalis* 34 (2004): 52.

[117] Discussed in D.D. Kosambi, "Indian Feudal Trade Charters," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 2, no. 3 (1959): 281-293.

Without either clear 'vassals' or any recognition of intimate relationships between lords and their subordinates, let alone contracts for military support or rules of loyalty, it is difficult to make an argument that feudalism of the feudo-vassalic type can be found in India. The remaining of Wickham's three characterizations of feudalism — systems of governance which are land based rather than tax based, proves to be the most troubling. Even for Wickham, most polities use a mixture of these approaches. "Even the Roman emperors [Wickham's example par exellence of tax-based rulers] were large-scale landowners as well, and the rent they received was significant, even if their tax returns always overshadowed it."[118] Indian rulers certainly taxed. That is established in a variety of political treatises, as well as by the existence of tax collecting officials and the structure of the land grants themselves. But land is precisely what is at issue in understanding these grants. It is not entirely clear to what extent kings held an exclusive right to land: could they alienate the property of others? More generally, the fact that kings would give away land at all, without the expectation of a return in the form of taxes or direct services, was an odd choice for rulers with clearly imperial ambitions.

SĀMANTAS BEYOND THE PARADIGM OF FEUDALISM

In the wake of historiographical critiques of the feudalism model and the re-dating of texts such as the *Arthaśāstra* from the Mauryan period to the early first-millennium CE, scholars have re-conceptualized the use of the term s*āmanta*. Nonetheless it has remained central to the understanding of the political system of the time. Even among those who critique feudalism as a political model for India, the *sāmanta* is still seen as a subordinate king (perhaps even

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[118] Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400-800*, 59.

subordinate kings who have their own hierarchy according to Ali).[119] Chattopadhyaya goes so far

as to see the period between the Guptas and the 12th century as characterized by a "*sāmanta*

system."

> These diffused foci of 'quasi-autonomous' power are represented by what is broadly
> labelled as the *sāmanta* system .... *Sāmanta* is of course a broad-spectrum category and
> encompasses a proliferating range of designations in use in the early medieval period. Not
> all designations emerge simultaneously, but by the 12th/13th centuries such terms as
> *mahāsāmanta, mahāmaṇḍaleśvara, maṇḍaleśvara, rāṇaka, rāuta, ṭhakkura* and so on
> came to indicate a political order which was non-bureaucratic and in the context of which,
> in the overall structure of the polity, the *rājapuruṣas* constituting the bureaucracy had a
> limited part to play.[120]

He argues that the *sāmanta* system had its beginning in "a pattern of relations characterized by

grahaṇa-mokṣa (i.e. capture and release) in the early Gupta phase" followed by "a shift towards

a patterning which the *sāmantas* were integrated into the structure of the polity and in which the

overlord-subordinate relation came to be dominant over other levels of relations in the

structure."[121]

For Chattopadhyaya, the *sāmanta* system is thus seen as derived from a mode of

governance outlined in the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta: "whose high

excellence combined with splendor was produced when he seized and then liberated in order to

show favor all the kings of the southern path."[122] This inscription models Samudragupta's

conquest of his kingdom. Quite contrary to Chattopadhyaya's quasi-autonomous *sāmanta*

system, the Allahabad pillar inscription laid out a quasi-imperial vision, mapping a universal

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[119] Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, 35-36.

[120] Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*, Second Edition (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 225-226

[121] Ibid, 227.

[122] D.R. Bhandarkar, "Allahābād Stone Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta," in *Corpus Insciprionum Indicarum: Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings*, vol. 3, Revised, eds. B. Chhabra and G.S. Gai (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1981), 213, l. 20.

geography through a list of conquered kings from the far reaches of the South Asian world.[123] It

proclaimed that Samudragupta had accomplished a *sarva-pṛthivī-vijaya*, a "conquest of the

whole earth," and described him with the term *mahārājādhirāja*, "great king among kings."

Pollock sees the tensions between universal conquest and restoring conquered kings as an

important, if not necessarily dominant, element of *rājya*, or "royal power," in the mid-first

millennium:

> Consider only the ideal of "uprooting" and "restoring" competitor kings – in other words,
> the creation of something like layered sovereignties. This can be traced from Rudrādaman
> in second-century Gujarat to Govinda III in tenth-century Karnataka to Jayasimha
> Siddharaja in twelfth-century Gujarat. The most decisive component of empire of this sort
> was extension in space. The ability to expand was presented axiomatically as unchecked
> by ecological, political, cultural, or other boundaries as if the only limit was the fact,
> apparently never considered contradictory, that every assertion of universal dominion
> encountered competing assertions to universal dominion. Yet one can perceive a very
> peculiar shape to the universality of power in South Asia, one that becomes especially clear
> when contrasted with the vision of the *imperium romanum*. It was universality that knew
> its limits.[124]

Rājya for Pollock is the key political model of premodern South Asia — a courtly model of

courtly power. Furthermore, the theory of *rājya* stands as evidence that kings had their own

discourses of power, not defined by religious theorists, as will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

Recent scholarship on the politics of this period[125] has tended to stress the importance of

drawing political theory out of primary texts as Pollock has done. Scholars who embrace this

method do so in order to better understand both the relationships between historical figures and

the relationships between texts. Ali, for example stresses the *Arthaśāstra*'s theory of

rājamaṇḍala as critical for understanding the mid-first millennium, placing stress not on the

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[123] Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 240.

[124] Ibid, 253.

[125] See: Daud Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*); Upinder Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*.

sāmanta specifically, but on the relationships between and among kings and dynasties. Rather than a strictly stratified system, this was a system of identifying one's allies and enemies. Ali notes that "As other kings could operate with the same policy, the *rajamandala* was not so much the blueprint of an imperial state as a theory of dynastic relationships."[126] Looking to the *Arthaśāstra*, the *sāmanta* figures prominently in both the explanation of the constituent elements of the kingdom and the *rājamaṇḍala* itself.

The *sāmanta* is referenced in two contexts when the *Arthaśāstra* describes the constituent elements of the kingdom, when describing an approachable Lord (or king) and the good qualities of an inhabited country:

BOOK SIX - THE BASIS OF THE CIRCLE [OF KINGS][127]

CHAPTER 1

TOPIC 96 - THE EXCELLENT QUALITIES OF CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS

Lord, minister, the inhabited country, fort, treasury, army and ally are the constituent elements.

Of them, the excellent qualities of the lord are:

Being from a great lineage, endowed with good fortune, intelligence and character, one who sees and observes elders, a righteous man, one who speaks truth without breaking his word, grateful, generous, having great strength/energy, prompt, having weak/pliant *sāmanta*s, firm minded, whose council is not vulgar, desirous of training - these are the qualities of a one who is approachable.[128]

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[126] Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, 33.

[127] A note on translations: All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own. I have translated Sanskrit works myself, and used current scholarly translations of works in Pali, Chinese, Pahlavi, etc. Translated works are referenced in the Bibliography under the "Editions of Ancient Texts" section, where they are organized according to their titles. I have given the reference to the Sanskrit edition of the text, as well as to any translations of the text to which I have referred in that section. In the body of the dissertation, translations are numbered or cited according to the numbering given in the edition. Sanskrit words in these translations and throughout the text of the dissertation are given in italics. I have left the Sanskrit word in the translations in the following circumstances — where the term is untranslatable without a protracted explanation (e.g. *dharma*); where the term is a specialized technical term discussed in the dissertation (e.g *sāmanta*); or where the meaning of the term is unknown.

[128] Arthaśāstra 6.1.1-3.

Having strongholds both in the center and on the frontiers, sustaining itself and even sustaining others in a time of distress, easy to protect, providing good living, hostile to enemies, having weak/pliant *sāmantas*… able to withstand fines and taxes, having farmers assiduous in their work, having masters who are wise, with the largest portion of inhabitants being of low *varṇa*, having men who are loyal and honest — these are the excellent qualities of the inhabited country.[129]

As this passage shows, the *sāmanta* is one among a suite of elements which may be associated with a kingdom. Given that one of the objectives of the The *Arthaśāstra* is to triangulate the king among his potential enemies and allies, it makes sense that the text would also think about these other kingdoms in terms of their neighbors.

The text goes on in the next chapter of Book Six to define the *rājamaṇḍala*, or circle of kings. *Rājamaṇḍala*, the circle of kings, is the schematic way that the *Arthaśāstra* imagines enemies and allies. In this view, the conquest seeker is the center point, surrounded by concentric rings of alternating enemy and ally kings. Hence the idea that the enemy of his enemy is his potential friend. In the following passage, it is the qualities of the *sāmanta* that makes him an enemy:

TOPIC 97 - ON PEACE AND EXERTION

The one being desirous of conquest is a king who is endowed with the excellent qualities of the self and material substance. Forming a circle around him on all sides with immediately adjoining territories are the constituent of enemies. Similarly, those removed by one territory are the constituent of allies.

A *sāmanta* endowed with the excellent qualities of an enemy is the natural enemy, if there is a misfortune he is vulnerable, when he is with our refuge or has only weak refuge he is vanquishable, in the reversed case he is to be pressed or ill-treated. These are the various kinds of enemies.[130]

These passages draw out the double meaning of s*āmanta* in the *Arthaśāstra* – it carries both a relational meaning (is the king stronger than you? weaker? has he faced any misfortune? is he

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[129] Ibid, 6.1.8.

[130] Ibid, 6.2.13-17.

easily persuaded?) and a spatial meaning (i.e. the s*āmanta* is often literally still a neighbor, the

king who is next to you or rules the land next to yours).

PEER KINGS

The *Arthaśāstra* is a good starting place for thinking about the *sāmanta* precisely because

it uses the term in both the sense of a royal relationship and in the earlier spatial sense of the term

(in other passages, *sāmanta* is used in in a straightforward sense of neighbor in reference to

boundary disputes, etc.). The following passages from the *Arthaśāstra* will demonstrate two

points: First, that *sāmanta* is a quasi-neutral term in this text. In a world of enemies and allies,

while everyone is a potential enemy, a *sāmanta* can technically be either. Second, that *sāmanta* is

not a designation of rank. The *sāmanta* can be either relatively stronger or weaker than the king

in question but is not dramatically stronger or weaker. That is, there is a way that the king might

be able to tip the scales in his own favor or to lose his position if he makes poor decisions. I will

translate *sāmanta* from this point on as 'peer-king' which I will argue fits its meanings in the

Arthaśāstra, as well as in the Maitraka inscriptions.

This is not to say that the *Arthaśāstra* has no concept of hierarchy among kings, but that

sāmanta does not imply this hierarchy in the text. Upinder Singh argues that the *Arthaśāstra*'s

characterization of the *vijigīṣu* "clearly indicates the idea of empire-building."[131] "The idea of a

graded hierarchy of kings with a paramount king and various subordinates is … implied in the

discussion of interstate relations, the idea of the *vijigīṣu* (the king desirous of victory) and the

description of the righteous victor."[132] However, the *sāmanta* is not clearly implicated in such

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[131] Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 103.

[132] Ibid.

hierarchical relations, and it is critical to note that the text is written for the king *desirous* of victory. The text sets paramountcy out as a goal, but it is written for a king who has not, and may not ever, achieve that position.

On the topic of kings seeking conquest, the *Arthaśāstra* says: *sāmantam sāmantena sambhūya yāyāt* — "he should go against one peer king through joint effort with another peer king."[133] This is one of several examples where the *sāmanta* is depicted as a quasi-neutral element of royal maneuvering. Such maneuvering generally falls under the heading of *ṣadgunya* or "the six measures of royal policy," which the text outlines as follows:

> BOOK SEVEN - ON THE SIX MEASURES OF ROYAL POLICY/SIX STRATEGIES OF FOREIGN POLICY
>
> CHAPTER 1
>
> TOPIC 98 - COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF THE SIX MEASURES OF ROYAL POLICY[134]
>
> The basis/origin of the six measures of royal policy is the circle of constituent elements (of the state).
>
> "The six measures of royal policy are making alliance, declaration of war, halting, marching against (your enemy), seeking refuge, and the double stratagem," say the teachers.
>
> "It has two parts," says Vātvyādhi, "The six measures of royal policy are completed on account of making alliance and declaration of war."
>
> "Indeed there are six measures of royal policy, because of the situation," says Kautilya.
>
> Therefore, making alliance is uniting with a treaty; declaration of war is doing injury; halting is looking around; marching against your enemy is increasing (strength);

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[133] *Arthaśāstra*, 7.7.2.

[134] Two possible translations of *ṣāḍguṇya* - Translation a) "six measures of royal policy" follows the Monier Williams Sanskrit dictionary, which is the general point of reference for the translations here, unless there is a compelling reason (dictated by context or other reasons) to go another way. Translation b) "six strategies of foreign policy" follows Olivelle's *A Sanskrit Dictionary of Law and Statecraft*, perhaps more reliable on this topic, given its focus. However, in Olivelle's own translation of the *Arthaśāstra*, he chooses the more neutral "sixfold strategy" rather than Kangle's earlier translation of "six measures of foreign policy."

seeking refuge is entrusting (yourself) to another; the double stratagem is the use of both making alliance and declaration of war; are the six measures of royal policy.

If he is becoming weaker than the other, he should make an alliance. If he is thriving he should declare war. If it is that "the other is not able to be my destroyer, nor I his," then he should halt. If he has an abundance of strategic advantages he should march against his enemy. If he is deficient in power he should seek refuge. In the matter that can be accomplished with a co-conspirator (lit. "one who goes along with (another)") he should go to the double stratagem. These are the established strategies.[135]

In deciding which of these strategies to deploy, a *sāmanta*, seemingly due to proximity, is usually an enemy, but that does not mean they warrant the same response or treatment in all situations, or that they cannot become an ally. For example:

TOPIC 100 - CONDUCT WHEN SEEKING REFUGE

He should seek refuge with one whose strength is greater than the strength of his peer king (*sāmanta*). If there is not someone whose strength is greater, he should resort to that one himself (the peer king) and keeping out of sight, he should make an effort to be a helper for him by means of the things called: treasury, army, and land. Because, associating with someone of greater strength is a great danger for kings, other than in this respect – when he is at war with an enemy.[136]

In this case, the text uses the term to establish the relative strength and weakness of the king's options. If the *sāmanta* is the king's neighbor and peer, this makes perfect sense — the king's options should be weighed according to the most proximate king of a relative level of strength.

Under the right circumstance, the peer king may even be an ally:

TOPIC 111 - ON MARCHING HAVING FORMED A PEACE TREATY

The conquest seeker should overcome the second constituent thus: He should urge the peer king to march having formed a peace treaty, saying "You shall go in this direction, I shall go in that direction, the gains will be equal. When the gains are equal there will be a peace treaty, when they are unequal forcible means will be used.[137]

…

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[135] *Arthaśāstra*, 7.1.1-19.

[136] Ibid, 7.2.6-8.

[137] Ibid, 7.6.1-3.

The wise king, having caused one peer king to join in war with another peer king; then should seize the land of the other, having cut off their half completely.[138]

As the above passage demonstrates, alliances in the *Arthaśāstra* are treated as exceedingly ephemeral.

This is one reason that peer kings are inherently risky – all allies are potentially risky in the thinking of the *Arthaśāstra*. In fact, the *Arthaśāstra* specifically guides kings on how to overthrow their allies:

> TOPIC 121 - CONDUCT FOR THE KING SUBJUGATING OTHERS BY FORCE
>
> The strong king being desirous of conquering the one who has disturbed/broken the peace treaty to which was agreed, he should march there where the land, season and livelihood are favorable to his own troops, where has no fort as a way of escape and is without a protector or protection from behind. In the reversed case, he should march having taken countermeasures.
>
> He should subjugate the weak by means of gifts and conciliation, the strong by means of sowing dissension and by force. He should subdue the constituents who are removed by one other state or those with immediately adjoining territories by alternating or aggregate use [of these strategies].
>
> The preservation of those living in villages and forests, of cattle sheds and trade routes, of those who are abandoned, and the delivery of those who have gone away and who are harmful – this is how he should practice conciliation. The giving of land, goods and maidens and the giving of safety – this is how he should practice giving gifts. Making a demand for gifts of treasure, troops, land or inheritance, by supporting a peer king (*sāmanta*), tribal chief, pretender from the royal family, or a prince in disfavor — this is how he should practice sowing discord. The seizure of an enemy by open, deceitful, or silent battle or by capturing a fort — this is how he should practice the use of force.[139]

The strategy outlined here for sowing discord specifically mentions supporting a peer king, followed by a list of other alternatives. This list is so common in the *Arthaśāstra*, it has a

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[138] Ibid, 7.6.15.

[139] Ibid, 7.16.1-8.

dedicated abbreviation term: *sāmantādīnām* which refers, according to Olivelle, "to the standard list of individuals who may succeed a king."[140]

The *Arthaśāstra* also treats the peer king as a king who is roughly equal in power to the king seeking conquest. The maneuvering between stronger and weaker kings assumes that the scales can be flipped. This is not a vassal and his lord, or an emperor and his subject. These calculations are complicated and consider not just the two kings involved but the totality of their circumstances, as seen in the following passage:

> TOPIC 108 - THOUGHTS ON ATTACKING THE VULNERABLE KING AND THE ENEMY
>
> When the predicament of peer kings (*sāmantas*) is equal [should he attack] the vulnerable king or the enemy? Indeed, in this case he should attack the enemy. Because, when the enemy has been subdued, the vulnerable king might be help, but not the enemy when the vulnerable king has been subdued.
>
> A vulnerable king in a serious predicament or an enemy in a simple predicament? Indeed, in this case, "(the one in) a serious predicament because it is easier," say the teachers. "No," says Kautilya. "The enemy in a simple predicament for this reason: because even a simple predicament becomes dangerous to one who is attacked. Truly, even a serious (predicament) becomes more serious [in that case]. If the one with a simple predicament is not attacked he might overcome the predicament easily, might rescue the vulnerable king or might attack from the rear.
>
> When there are many vulnerable kings simultaneously, [should he attack] the one in a serious predicament having just moral conduct, the one in a simple predicament not having just moral conduct, or the one having disaffected subjects? Indeed, in this case (he should attack) the one having disaffected subjects for this reason: subjects help (lit. uphold) [a king] having just moral conduct in a serious predicament who is under attack, they abandon [a king] not having just moral conduct in a simple predicament, disaffected (subjects) can destroy even a mighty (king). He should attack the one whose subjects are disaffected.[141]

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[140] Kauṭilya, *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India: Kautilya's Arthasastra*, trans. Patrick Olivelle (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013), 656.

[141] *Arthaśāstra*, 7.5.1-11.

The *Arthaśāstra* thus creates an image of a political landscape with a very particular set of spatial and political relationships. Kings have neighbors, who may be allies, but whom one always ideally wishes to conquer. Those kings themselves have neighbors whom you may wish to manipulate into aiding your cause. All of these kings are, to a certain extent, peers. There is not a real risk of one of these kings actually dominating the map and conquering all of the others, or at least, the text doesn't give instructions on what to do once a king has accomplished that. Instead, it assumes that these shifts in power are ongoing, and it puts forth a scenario where a king is perhaps not most concerned with their subordinate or their overlord, but with those who are the most like themselves.

To return briefly to the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta, it is worth noting that not all kings fared as well as 'the kings of the Southern Way.' Samudragupta and his armies "forcibly exterminated" the kings of Aryavaryya, and from a range of others he simply took tribute, willingly or by force.[142] Pollock notes that "The 'kings of the Southern Way' probably represent the overlords and allies of what was earlier the domain of the Iksvakus and then of the ascendant Pallavas."[143] While other notable dynasties make the list of Samudragupta's conquests –namely the Kushans and Sakas – and do not fare nearly so well, they were in decline. The Pallavas were, arguably, the near peers of the Guptas at the time, and thus perhaps deserving of special recognition. The critical significance of this passage, however, does not ultimately derive from pinpointing Samudragupta's real historical actions, romantic as it may be to imagine a Gupta royal catch and release policy. The Allahabad pillar set out a moral vision of kingship, which would be picked up in Kalidasa's *Raghuvaṁśa*, and subsequently spread throughout

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[142] D.R. Bhandarkar, "Allahābād Stone Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta," 213, l. 21-24.

[143] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 240.

India.[144] The *ideal* of a king who would undertake such an action, *grahaṇa-mokṣ-ānugraha* in the Allahabad pillar and *gṛhīta-prati-muktasya* in the Raghuvamsa (both meaning captured and released),[145] could lay a foundation for kings to claim for themselves a title by which they call themselves a peer rather than an overlord.

NEGOTIATING ROYAL SPACE

While I call these technical terms for kingship and rule 'titles' here, and while that is how these are normally referred to in scholarly works, the term 'title' is implicated in many of the same issues laid out in the above critique of feudalism. The English term 'title' invokes a medieval system of appointed officials in stable offices and, moreover, a stable and consolidated hierarchy in which they operate.

> While the nobilities as a whole contracted in early modern Europe, the loftiest groups in aristocratic society, those with the most imposing titles, became everywhere more numerous. We have seen that the Spanish king Charles V first introduced such titles to Iberia in 1520, creating the specific group of nobles called grandees of Spain. Elsewhere such titles had long existed, but their numbers expanded dramatically. For early modern rulers had discovered the political advantages of creating lofty new noble titles. These could be sold for cash, as a way of balancing budgets, or they could be given to men who were already powerful, to secure their gratitude and political allegiance.[146]

Royal technical terms in Maitraka grants and in this period more generally, did not at all function in this way. While, as will be seen below, they were sometimes used to describe other royal or courtly persons, for the most part these terms were self-reported. In Maitraka grants, these terms occur in the genealogical section of the grant always immediately preceding the name of the king. They are accompanied, in the genealogical section, by the description of the king as a

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[144] Ibid, 240-242.

[145] D.R. Bhandarkar, "Allahābād Stone Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta," 217, n. 3.

[146] Jonathan Dewald, *The European Nobility: 1400-1800* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), 26.

devotee of a particular god. Clearly, these terms are linguistically somehow distinct from the rest of the genealogical section, as they are the only part of the description of the king repeated in the colophon of the grant. There again, they accompany the king's name, when it occurs. They fluctuate in not entirely predictable ways, even within the reign of a single king and, on occasion, even within a single grant. For example, in some grants of Dharasena II, in the genealogical section the king is described as *sāmanta mahārāja śrī Dharasena*,[147] or *mahāsāmanta mahārāja śrī Dharasena*.[148] The colophon of the same grants drops (*mahā*)*sāmanta* and calls the king *mahārāja śrī Dharasena*, or in one case *mahādhirāja śrī Dharasena*.[149]

These fluctuations are not simply an issue of space. The genealogical portion of the grant is essentially descriptive. Take, for example, this grant of Dhruvasena I, which called him *mahā-pratīhāra, mahā-daṇḍanāyaka, mahā-kārttākṛtika, mahāsāmanta, mahārāja* — "the great gate keeper, great judge, great *kārttākṛtika* (meaning unknown), great peer king, great king."[150] While this grant repeats the list of terms in the colophon — "Signed by my own hand, the great gate keeper, great judge, great *kārttākṛtika* the great peer king, the great king Dhruvasena"[151] — the preceding grant, Grant 15, issued one year earlier, included this list of terms in the genealogical section but omitted them in the colophon. The use of these terms in both the genealogical section and the colophon, as well as their placement directly before the name of the king does potentially set them apart from the rest of the description of the king. In fact, the use of these terms is more variable than the rest of the description, which is broadly consistent both

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[147] Grant 26; Grant 28.

[148] Grants 36-38.

[149] Grant 36.

[150] Grant 16, l. 11.

[151] Ibid, l. 25-26.

across the grants of any given king and across the grants of the dynasty as a whole — these descriptions were picked up and repeated nearly verbatim by successor kings. Given the fluctuations in these terms and the fact that they are, in almost all cases, used in the sense of self-description, they are clearly not terms that designate fixed offices or were appointed by the ruler of a strict hierarchy.

The copper-plate grants of the early Maitraka kings give us a great deal of evidence that these kings were concerned with situating themselves and their dynasty in the extant royal landscape.[152] While Droṇasiṁha, the earliest Maitraka king from whom we are left a single

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[152] The full descriptions of Bhaṭārka, Dharasena I, Droṇasiṁha, Dhruvasena II, Dharapaṭṭa, Guhasena and Dharasena II read: Om, good fortune from Valabhī! [A king] who forcibly bent down his enemies, of the Maitrakas, who obtained glory in a hundred battles having encountered the circle of territories of enemies of unequalled strength; who procured affection by straightforwardness, honors and gifts for those who surrendered to his glory; who obtained kingly splendor through the strength of the range of his friends/allies and hereditary mercenaries attached [to him]; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious general Bhaṭakka.

His son, whose head was purified, being bent down and reddened by the dust of his (father's) feet; whose shining row of five toe nails of his feet was inlaid with the gleaming head jewels of the bowed heads of his enemies; whose wealth was lived/depended upon by the poor and helpless people; devoted to Maheśvara, was the glorious general Dharasena.

His younger brother, whose spotless jewel became auspicious being bowed down on his (brother's) feet; whose *dharma* comes from the performance of the rules first taught by Manu; by whom, like Dharmmaraja, the rules of path of proper conduct were fixed; who by the lord of the circle of territories belonging to the whole world, the highest lord himself was given kingly splendor, being purified by his great gifts, in the royal inauguration, devoted to Maheśvara, was the great king Droṇasiṁha.

His younger brother, who being like a lion, by the strength of his own arms, had victory over the armies and troops of elephants of his enemies; who was the refuge for those seeking refuge; who perceived the true meaning of the *śāstras*; who being like the wish granting tree to his constant friends, granted the enjoyment of rewards and wishes as desired; devoted to Viṣṇu, the great peer king, was the glorious great king, Dhruvasena.

His younger brother, whose sins were entirely cleansed by washing through bowing town to the lotuses that were his (brother's) feet; by whom all the stains of the Kali age were washed by water which was his own perfectly pure acts; by whom the celebrated greater of the troops of his enemies was forcibly conquered; devoted to Sūrya, was the glorious great king Dharapaṭṭa.

His son, who obtained a rise in merit through the worship of his (father's) feet; whose second arm was a sword even beginning from childhood; the basis of whose strength was displayed by slapping the foreheads of the rutting elephants of those hostile to him; for whom the multitude of beams from the nails of his left foot were united with the shining head-jewels of his enemies who were bowed down by his might; who saws the true meaning of the word 'king' due to the rejoicing in the heart of his people because of his properly nourishing the way established by all the *smṛtis*; who exceeded Smara the god of love with his beauty, the moon with his brightness, the himalayas with his tranquility, the ocean with his depth of profundity, Tridaśaguru the preceptor of the thirty gods with his intellect, and Dhaneśa the god of wealth with his prosperity; who discarded the fruits of all his own actions as if they were worth

extant inscription, did not call himself a *mahāsāmanta*, he did use the descriptive compound *parama-bhaṭṭāraka-pāda-anudhyāta* before his titles, "one who meditates on the feet of the highest lord." This construction about meditating on another's feet, sometimes expanded to describe this act wherein the named king polishes the feet of another king with the jewels on his head, can also be found in later king's references to external *sāmantas*. Kharagraha II is described as one whose "pair of lotus feet were inlaid with a multitude of bright crest jewels from all his enchanted *sāmantas* bowing down being pleasantly enchanted by his superior affection."[153] Droṇasiṁha's successor, Dhruvasena I used the same compound as Droṇasiṁha describing a highest lord, but also used the *mahāsāmanta mahārāja* titles, as seen in the genealogy quoted above. After Dhruvasena I, Maitraka kings referenced only meditating on the feet of their own ancestors, and sometimes that the other king meditated on their feet. It is important to note that the use of the term *mahāsāmanta* does not match up with a reference to an external *parama-bhaṭṭāraka*. The way that the Mairtrakas frame this payment of respect or subordination also suggests that, following the reign of Dhruvasena I, Maitraka kings portrayed themselves as only subordinate to their successors, even when, as I will discuss below, they were actively under threat from external powers far stronger than them.

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as little as straw because he was intent on giving [freedom from] fear; who was like the going on foot (personification?) of the delight of the whole curve of the circle of the earth; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious great king Guhasena.

His son, whose sins have all been washed off as if by the water of the river Jāhnavī by the flow of rays which originated from the nails of his (father's) feet; whose wealth and property give life to one hundred thousand of those dear to him; who, as if from a desire for beauty, is the refuge of all inviting and charming qualities; who astonished the entirely of the archers with the superiority of his innate ability and skill; who is the preserver of the dharmic gifts having been granted by prior kings; who overcomes the calamities which would to damage and by injurious to his people; who is the abode of Knowledge and Glory; whose expert valor is the enjoyment of the fortunes of the continuous ranks of troops; whose kingly glory is spotless having been obtained continuously; devoted to Śiva, was the great king glorious Dharasena.

[153] Grant 78, l. 10-11: *atipraṛṣṭ-ānurāga-sarabhasa-vaśīkṛta-praṇata-sāmasta-sāmanta-cakra-cūḍāmāṇa-mayūkha-khacita-caraṇa-kamala-yugalaḥ.*

While these terms may seem to indicate that the Maitrakas were subordinates of some larger dynasty, how these relationships actually functioned is not spelled out in the grants. This unnamed 'highest lord' could perhaps be taken to refer to the Gupta king, as Gupta kings did use this term in their own inscriptions, and the Maitrakas would have gained their territory through their founder Bhaṭārka's relationship with the Gupta kings. As the Maitrakas' inscriptions also establish, Bhaṭārka was a *senāpati*, or general, presumably of the Guptas.[154] Even when one dynasty explicitly acknowledges another, that does not place firm limits on either their ability to operate in their own spheres of influence or to expand and gain considerable power. This "fluid" hierarchy is described by Singh: "'Subordinate' kings were often powerful in their own realms and made grand, eloquent epigraphic pronouncements about their power and achievements. They may not have assumed the highest titles, but they shared many of the qualities of their overlords. It was a participatory kingship."[155]

In spite of their relationship to, and possibly their continued acknowledgment, however symbolic, of Gupta power, the Maitrakas modeled their inscriptions primarily on those of the Vākāṭakas, not the Guptas. "The Vakataka records contain all the details found in the Maitraka inscriptions, albeit in a slightly varied form to suit the purposes of a different dynasty, except the autograph of the monarch and the name of the executive officer. The Guptas, however, while giving the details included in the Maitraka grants, followed a totally different arrangement, and in this the Chalukyas are closer to the Maitraka model than to the Gupta."[156] While this comparison does hold for each dynasty's corpus of grants as a whole, it is worth taking a closer

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[154] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 21.

[155] Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 188.

[156] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 252.

look at the opening, or genealogical section, of the grants in order to examine how these dynasties depicted royal relationships. In the following table (Table 2), I compare three roughly contemporary grants. While all grants, ultimately, contain slight variations, these grants are not exceptional, and indeed I have chosen them precisely because they are not unusual. The first is a Gupta grant, dating to 481/482 CE, and thus, we might guess, roughly contemporary with the rule of Bhaṭārka, whose successor ruled from 493-499.[157] The second is a Vākāṭaka grant. The grant itself is undated, but it was issued by Pṛthivīṣeṇa II who ruled roughly between 460 and 480 CE.[158] Finally, there is a Maitraka grant, issued by Dhruvasena I, and dating to 525/526CE. [159] I have chosen this grant for the purposes of comparison instead of the single extant grant of Droṇasiṁha because the latter is more irregular.

A comparison of these inscriptions shows that the Maitrakas clearly used a more ornamental genealogical section, along the same lines as the Vākāṭakas. However, their approach was not identical to the Vākāṭakas copper plates. The obvious difference is one of contents. Queens and mothers are not mentioned in the Maitraka inscriptions. On the one hand, this makes their marriage alliances much harder to parse; on the other, it reveals a fundamentally different approach to their portrayal of royal relationships that privileges genealogy over alliance. Where the Vākāṭakas highlighted their relationship to the Guptas even late into their dynasty, the Maitrakas make no exact reference to either marriage alliances or their higher lord. In fact, in the

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[157] D.R. Bhandarkar, "Dāmōdarpur Copper-plate Inscription of Buddhagupta," in *Corpus Insciprionum Indicarum: Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings*, vol. 3, Revised, eds. B. Chhabra and G.S. Gai (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1981), 342-344.

[158] V.V. Mirashi, "Bālāghāṭ Plates of Pṛthivīṣeṇa II," in *Corpus Insciprionum Indicarum*, vol. 3, Inscriptions of the Vākāṭakas (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1963), 79-81.

[159] Grant 2.

Table 2 - Comparison of Introductory/Genealogical Sections of Gupta, Vākāṭaka and Maitraka Grants

Dāmōdarpur Inscription of Buddhagupta:	Bālāghāṭ Plates of Pṛthivīṣeṇa II	Palitana Plates of Dhruvasena I:
Year 163, Aṣāḍha, day 13, the one devoted to Vishnu, the highest lord, great king among kings, Śri **Budhagupta**, is lord of the earth; and the great king Brahmadatta is Uparika of Puṇḍravarddhana province, having been received by (his majesty's) feet was doing the business (of administration) …	Of he who had done the Agnishtoma, Aptoryama, Ukthya, Shodasin, Atiratra, Vajapeya, Brihaspatisava, Sadyaskra and four Asvamedhas, who was grown in the Viṣṇu gotra, the universal ruler, the great king of the Vākāṭakas, Śrī **Pravarasena**. The son of his sons, who was exceedingly devoted to the Lord Mahabhairava, whose royal family was begotten by Śiva being greatly pleased by their lifting of the Śiva-liṅga like a burden on their shoulder, sprinkled on their foreheads by the spotless water of the Bhāghiratthi acquired by their heroism, who had done the Asvamedha and Avabhṛtha in devotion to Śiva was the great king Śrī **Rudrasena**. His son was the one who was exceedingly devoted to Maheśvara, who possessed truth, honesty, compassion, heroism, strength, good management, modesty, good education, devotion to great men, who was a dharma conqueror, whose mind was pure and who was possessed of superior qualities, whose sons and grandsons possessed a treasury and army which was a continuous accomplishment having been accumulating for a century, who conducted himself like Yudhithira, the great king of the Vākāṭakas Śrī **Pṛthivīṣeṇa**. Whose son was a devotee of Lord Catrāpaṇa, who acquired an abundance of glory by his favor, the great king of the Vākāṭakas Śrī **Rudrasena**. Whose son who followed the path of obedience to ancient kings, who is the enemy of vile things, possessed of heroism, and the strength of wise policy, born of Prabhāvatigupta, daughter of Śrī Devagupta, the great king among kings, whose children decorated the dynasty of the Vākāṭakas, who established the *kārtta-yuga* with the favor of Śambhu, the great king of the Vākāṭakas, Śrī **Pravarasena**. Whose son, who had taken away his good fortune being free from doubt in his good qualities what was acquired before, whose rule was honored by the lords of Kosalā, Mekalā and Mālavā, who rules his enemies who are bowed down by his splendor, the great king of the Vākāṭakas, Śrī **Narendrasena**. His son was born of the Mahādevī Ajjhitabhaṭṭārika, the daughter of the lord of Kuntala, whose being is the receptacle of majesty and forgiveness, who rescued his family which had set like the sun, the highest worshiper of Bhagavat, the great king of the Vākāṭakas, Śrī **Pṛthivīṣeṇa** …	Om, good fortune from Valabhī! [A king] who forcibly bent down his enemies, of the Maitrakas, who obtained glory in a hundred battles having encountered the circle of territories of enemies of unequalled strength; who procured affection by straightforwardness, honors and gifts for those who surrendered to his glory; who obtained kingly splendor through the strength of the range of his friends/allies and hereditary mercenaries attached [to him]; devoted to Maheśvara, was the glorious general **Bhaṭakka**. His son, whose head was purified, being bent down and reddened by the dust of his (father's) feet; whose shining row of five toe nails of his feet was inlaid with the gleaming head jewels of the bowed heads of his enemies; whose wealth was lived/depended upon by the poor people; devoted to Maheśvara, was the general **Dharasena**. His younger brother, whose spotless head jewel became auspicious being bowed down on his (brother's) feet; whose *dharma* comes from the performance of the rules first [taught by] Manu; by whom, like Dharmmarāja, the rules of path of proper conduct were fixed; who by the lord of the circle of territories of the whole world, the highest lord himself was given kingly splendor, being purified by his great gifts, in the royal inauguration; devoted to Maheśvara, was the great king **Droṇasiṁha**. His younger brother, who being like a lion, by [the strength] of his own arms, had victory over the armies and troops of elephants of his enemies; who was the refuge for those seeking refuge; who perceived the true meaning of the *śāstras*; who being like the wish granting tree to his constant friends, granted the enjoyment of rewards as desired; devoted to Viṣṇu, he who meditates on the feet of the highest lord, the great peer king, the great king, **Dhruvasena**, being in good health …

later Maitraka inscriptions, as will be discussed below, the Maitraka kings bowed down to the feet of their predecessors, sealing their referential world within their own dynasty.

In spite of the structural similarity to the Vākāṭakas inscriptions, the general realm of Maitraka inscriptional practice referenced here was Gupta-established. As Singh has noted, "Gupta inscriptions reflect changes in the vocabulary of political relationships and the emergence of certain formulaic expressions of paramountcy and subordination that were to remain fairly stable over the next few centuries."[160] In particular she points to three terms: *paramadaivata*, *paramabhaṭṭāraka*, and *mahārājādhirāja*.[161] This *paramabhaṭṭāraka* is the "highest lord" upon whose feet Dhruvasena I meditated. This reference therefore, even without explicitly naming the higher king, situates the Maitrakas in a Gupta world of discourse, and demonstrates that they followed a semi-standard Gangetic model of kingship.

All three of the above inscriptions exhibit some characteristics, either in the titles used or in the descriptions of the kings and their genealogies, which show that these kings were situating themselves in a wider political landscape. For the Guptas, this was done through an administrator: great king Brahmadatta, Uparika of Puṇḍravarddhana province. The Vākāṭakas likewise explicitly mention another dynasty, in this case the Guptas, when they make reference to their marriage alliance through Prabhāvatigupta. The Maitrakas, who were surely the weakest, or at least the smallest, of the three are the only ones who leave their references open for interpretation.

In exploring the various strategies that the Maitrakas may have used to relate to larger and arguably more powerful dynasties to the East, it is useful to examine the rhetoric of

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[160] Singh, Political Violence in Ancient India, 188.

[161] Ibid.

subordinate dynasties in first millennium Sauraṣṭra itself. The Tang pilgrim Xuanzang described Sauraṣṭra as subordinate to the king of Valabhī, "From the country of Valabhi going westward for more than five hundred *li*, I reached the country of Surattha (in the domain of West India)…. It has a large number of wealthy households, and it is under the jurisdiction of the country of Valabhi."[162] Judging by what is known of their military campaigns, the Maitrakas cared little for Sauraṣṭra. Their ambitions seem to lie inland. Nonetheless, two Sautraṣṭra dynasties are believed to have ruled under the Maitraka sphere of influence: the Gārulakas and the Saindhavas.

The Gārulakas called themselves *mahāsāmanta* and *mahārāja*, as the early Maitraka kings do. The grant of the Gārulaka king Varāhadāsa[163] is interesting for a number of reasons. Unlike the Maitrakas, who do not name the overlords to whom they pay their respects, this grant does explicitly acknowledge Dhruvasena I. That said, this must have been a family of considerable practical power, because they were able to grant a village to the Buddhist monastery in Valabhī itself — the Maitraka's own capital city. Many Maitraka grants went to this vihara as well, and the ability of a sub-king to make grants within the main territory of a more powerful king indicates that the Gārulakas were intimately linked with Maitraka political organization.

The case of the Saindhavas is quite different. The Saindhavas ruled from Ghumli in the far west of Sauraṣṭra. Of the extant Saindhava grants, only one comes from a king who was contemporary with the Maitrakas — Ahivarman, a contemporary of the last known Maitraka king. The Saindhavas do not characterize themselves like the Gārulakas. Ahivarman simply calls

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[162] Xuanzang, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, 302-303.

[163] A.S. Gadre "Five Vala Copper-plate Grants: Grant No. 1 Copper-plate Grant of the Gārulaka Mahārāja Varāhadāsa of the year 230 G.E. (549 A.D.)," *Journal of the University of Bombay* 3 (1934): 77-79.

himself *mahārāja*. However, his father is styled a *mahārāja mahāsenapati* (recall that *senapati* was the position held by the Maitraka dynasty's founder) – further extending the umbrella of positions which could come under or at least be consistent with the *mahārāja*. The Saindhavas were kings of considerable military power, or more precisely, considerable naval power. Unusually, they style themselves as *apara-samudradhipati* – "lords of the Western Ocean." They also claim that their dynasty descends from Jayadratha, a hero from the Mahābharata. References to the Mahābharata are not unknown in Maitraka grants, as will be seen in the next chapter.

Other kings take inspiration from the Maitrakas as well. Viṣṇuṣeṇa, mentioned above, (whose grant to a group of merchants comes from Gujarat but may be in the orbit of the Kalacchuris rather than the Maitrakas) styles himself *mahā-pratīhāra, mahā-daṇḍanāyaka, mahā-kārttākṛtika, mahāsāmanta, mahārāja*,[164] in a grant that has been described as Maitraka-style. While he may or may not be in the direct orbit of the Maitrakas (he may be in the orbit of the neighboring Kalachuris) he uses the same list of titles used in three grants by Dhruvasena I.[165] Visnusena's charter shows both that this Maitraka 'style' and way of grouping titles is spreading beyond their immediate area of control. Just as the Maitrakas were influenced by Vākāṭaka and Gupta styles of land granting, Maitraka innovations worked their way out into the surrounding world.

What I suggest by making these comparisons is that kings and their courts were making strategic choices when it comes to grant writing, particularly in the representation of the king and his relationship to a wider landscape populated with royal figures. There was not one way to

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[164] These titles translate to — great gate keeper, great judge, great *kārttākṛtika* (meaning unknown), great peer king, great king.

[165] Grants 15-17.

write these grants, however formulaic they may at first appear. Innovations (such as the

mahāsāmanta mahārāja title) can be traced, variations found, and we can speculate on the

proximate causes for these political maneuvers. Furthermore, innovation need not come from

political centers. Even relatively small dynasties could and did leave wide ranging impacts in the

inscriptional record.

BUILDING THE MAITRAKA KINGDOM

Dharasena II was followed by four kings – Śīlāditya I, Kharagraha I, Dharasena III, and

Dhruvasena II, whose rules span the first half of the seventh century. These kings used no royal

titles at all.[166] This is particularly interesting because this list includes some of the most

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[166] The full descriptions of these kings read: [Dharasena II's] son, who meditated on his (father's) feet; who covered the entire horizon by the aggregation of his wonderful good qualities which delight the whole world; who carried the burden of heavy desires on the seat of his shoulders which possess the brilliance of the victories of a hundred battles; whose thoughts were even made pure by his mastery of all the sciences, distributed from highest to lowest, who even delighted in producing happiness from a fragment of eloquence from any side; whose heart possessed a depth of profundity that is as deep as the whole world; whose virtuous nature best manifested the superiority of good conduct; who obtained the height of fame because he cleansed the path of the kings of the Kṛtayuga which had been abandoned; for whom, from his enjoyment of wealth and happiness and riches that excel brightness of a fire from not obstructing *dharma*, was derived his second name – Dharmmāditya; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Śīlāditya.

His younger brother, who meditated on his (brother's) feet; who himself was like Upendra, the younger brother of Indra, out of eagerness to show respect for him carried himself like a most happy bull, with the beauty or kingship fixed on his shoulders, only out of a wish to accomplish his [brother's] commands; whose possession of the quality of goodness was not stressed by exhaustion or happiness or passion; who, although his throne was covered by the color of the head-jewels of kings he had completely subdued by his might, had a disposition that was not occupied by a taste for arrogance or contempt for others; among whose means of success against an enemy retaliation was nonexistent except in bowing down those arrogant ones who were celebrated for their manliness; by whom all the manifestations of the ways of the Kaliyuga were forcibly broken, accomplishing the joy of spotless good qualities for the whole world; whose noble heart was not smeared by any faults because of rising above inferior people; who attained in battle the manifestation of the first among heroic men by forcibly taking the wealth of the assemblage of eminent enemy lords of the earth through his celebrated skill in many weapons; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Kharagraha.

His son, who meditated upon his (father's) feet; who eminently delighted the minds of all learned people by having accomplish the mastery of all [kinds of] knowledge; who broke chariots that were the desires of the ranks of enemies having a dispersed arrangement and being disordered by the generosity of his gift giving furnished from his strength; who had an exceedingly gracious nature because of his perception of the deepest parts of the world along with the many *śāstras* and practical arts; who was adorned with in artificial modesty, discipline and handsomeness; by whom the rise in pride of all his adversaries was destroyed with his fierce long arms carrying off the banners of victory of

powerful, and some of the least powerful Maitraka kings. Śīlāditya I was arguably the most

successfully imperialistic of the Maitrakas in terms of his military actions. At some point, likely

in the latter part of his reign, he conquered the city of Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh. Ujjain lies to

the east of their territory of Mālava and represents the farthest geographical extent of Maitraka

control. As mentioned in the Introduction, this information appears in the *Mañju Śrī Mula Kapla*

and is confirmed by a grant issued from Ujjain by his successor Kharagraha I. Śīlāditya I was

described extraordinarily favorably by Xuanzang, who also identifies him as king of Mālava.

By contrast, Dhruvasena II, who like Śīlāditya I did not use royal titles in his grants,

suffered a humiliating defeat by the emperor Harṣavardhana. He took refuge in the court of his

former enemy Daḍḍa II, a Gurjara king allied with the Chālukyas, before later forming a

marriage alliance with Harṣa and becoming his son-in-law. This episode is discussed further in

Chapter 5.

While none of these four Maitraka kings assumed any titles, Śīlāditya I and Dhruvasena

II engaged in the practice of taking a second name this was also done by some Gupta kings.

Śīlāditya I had the second name Dharmmāditya. Dhruvasena II had the second name Bālāditya.

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those who resisted him in a hundred battles; whose command delighted the whole circle of kings whose pride was overpowered by the arrows which came from his own mighty bow; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Dharasena.

His younger brother, who meditated upon his (brother's) feet; whose good conduct was superior to all previous kings; who accomplished dominions that were even exceedingly difficult to accomplish as if he were the personification of heroism; who was like Manu himself, sought for protection by his subjects whose minds were full of affection for him on account of his strong virtues; who had acquired the totality of practical arts; whose loveliness was the cause of complete satisfaction; who was [like] the moon, the lord of lotuses, without stain; who was [like] the sun that is constantly risen, having destroyed the darkness in the midst of the directions being covered by his splendor; who became supreme faith for his subjects; whose intent was to be the cause of very much love, being covered with traditional doctrine; who was skilled in the conjoined matters of peace, war; who accomplished the production of increasing types of orders from being given instruction by those who had grown old in place; who was clever in following both [the sciences of] kingship and Pāṇini; who had a soft and compassionate heart and also superior courage, who was not proud and also [possessed of] knowledge, who was tranquil and also beautiful, who drove away the wicked and also was a steadfast friend; for whom, from his spreading of joy among the creatures of the world and generating love among his subjects on the occasion of his rise, is derived the second name – Bālāditya; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Dhruvasena.

The Gupta practice of double naming comes into Maitraka inscriptions not from their copper

plates, which as we have seen above contain very limited introductory sections, but rather from

their coinage, as seen below in

Table 3. Understanding the use of second names by the Maitraka kings then requires us to think

of a suite of royal rhetoric, rather than a limited set of inscriptional formulae. As Śīlāditya I and

Dhruvasena II referenced this Gupta practice, they were drawing from a slightly different literary

field, but clearly not from an alien or unrecognizable set of royal tools. Rather than take Gupta-

style titles, these kings referenced a Gupta naming practice at the same time that their dynasty

physically extended itself westwards.

Table 3 - Double Naming on Gupta Coinage

Gupta King:	Coin Legend:[167]	Inscription Title:[168]
Changragupta II / Vikramaditya	*paramabhāgavata - mahārājādhirāja - Śrī - Chandragupta - Vikramāditya* Śrī Chandragupta, Vikramāditya, the great king among kings, highest devotee of Bhāgavata	*bhaṭṭāraka - mahārājārājādhirāja - Śrī - Chandragupta vija - rājya* in the victorious reign on Śrī Chandragupta the lord, the great king among kings *Mathura pilaster
Kumaragupta I / Mahendraditya	*paramabhāgavata - mahārājādhirāja - Śrī - Kumāragupta - Mahendrāditya* Śrī Kumāragupta, Mahendrāditya, the great king among kings, highest devotee of Bhāgavata	*paramadaivata - paramabhaṭṭāraka - mahārājādhirāja - Śrī - Kumāragupta pṛthivīpatau* Śrī Kumāragupta, the one devoted to Vishnu, the highest lord, the great king among kings, is the lord of the earth *Dāmādoar copper-plate
Skandagupta / Kramāditya	*paramabhāgavata - mahārājādhirāja - Śrī - Skandagupta – Kramāditya* Śrī Skandagupta, Kramāditya, the great king among kings, highest devotee of Bhāgavata	*paramabhaṭṭāraka - mahārājādhirāja - Śrī – Skandagupta* Śrī Skandagupta, the highest lord, the great king among kings * Indōr copper-plate

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[167] See: Vincent Arthur Smith, "The Coinage of the Early or Imperial Gupta Dynasty of Northern India," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, N.S. 21, no. 1 (1889): 1-158.

[168] See: D.R. Bhandarkar, *Corpus Insciprionum Indicarum: Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings*, vol. 3, Revised, eds. B. Chhabra and G.S. Gai (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1981).

In contrast to his predecessors, the next king, Dharasena IV, describes himself with a host of prestigious titles. He is *parama-bhaṭṭāraka* (highest lord), *mahārāja-adhi-rāja* (great king among kings), *parameśvara* (highest master), and *cakravartin* (the wheel turner, or imperial overlord).[169] He is the only Maitraka king styled in this way, although the list of titles reappears in the grants of the latter Śīlādityas (III-VII) either as titles of these kings or in conjunction with a Śrī Bappa or Bāva, on whose feet they meditate (Bappa/Bāva is discussed further in Chapter 3, note 253). The later Śīlādityas were commonly styled as *parama-bhaṭṭāraka*, *mahārāja-adhi-rāja*, *parameśvara*, but not as a *cakravartin*.[170] The intervening kings (Dhruvasena III,

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[169] The full description of Dharasena IV reads: [Dhruvasena II's] son, whose forehead bore the mark of the crescent moon as a scar produced by rubbing the earth bowing down to his (father's) lotus feet; whose ears were marked by the pure grace of a pearl ornament from hearing [what knowledge] is laid down even in childhood; whose tips of lotus hand was washed by the water of gifting; whose conduct was as a tender lover of the earth in that he took only mild taxes as if [taking] a young lady; who was like an arrow that seized all of its aims being like the science of archery in effectiveness; whose orders are like jewels worn on the top of the head for the circle of peer kings (*sāmantas*) who have bowed down to him; devoted to Śiva, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master, the wheel-turner, was the glorious Dharasena.

[170] This begins in the last plate of Śīlāditya III, Grant 88, prior to which Śīlāditya III takes no titles. The descriptions of the later Śīlādityas reads: Of [Kharagraha II's] elder brother, who whitened the whole circle of directions with his fame as if it was the light of the moon blocking the glory of a heap of white water lilies; whose wide breasts were [like] the Vindhya mountains, lumps of black ointment from pieces of aloe-wood; the lord of the earth, the glorious Śīlāditya; whose son was, like the light from fresh snow, daily increased the circle [of his mastery of] the practical arts; who, like the young Indra, the lion, [embodied] royal glory; who, like the mountains of the forest region, was decorated; who, like the body of Śikhaṇḍi, was adorned with a brilliant diadem and the manifestation of fierce power; who was like the arrival of autumn to those hostile to him; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Śīlāditya, who meditated on the feet of the glorious Bappa, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest king.

His son, who held the highest dominion; the fire of whose great majesty shining forth was issued from the strokes of his sword, drawn in anger, which burst the temples of his enemies' elephants; who obtained a firm position among the circle of people surrounding them with a wall; whose umbrella was made by the canopy of his fame which was white like the clusters of foam which shook from the clashing and turn of the milky ocean, which possessed the whole circumference of the earth by resting it on his long arms which were naturally large; devoted to Śiva, was the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master, the glorious lord Śīlāditya, who meditated on the feet of the glorious Bappa, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master.

His son, whose lotus feet were colored by the rays which covered his nails from the head jewels of all the *sāmantas* who bowed down on account affection for his splendor; devoted to Śiva, was the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master the glorious lord Śīlāditya, who meditated on the feet of the glorious Bappa, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master.

His son, who quelled the pride in strength of his enemies; whose felicity was the refuge of great victory; whose breast was caressed by the close embrace of Glory; whose unrestrained power had the strength of [the one who] rose

Kharagraha II) took no title at all, although Kharagraha II is also, like Śīlāditya I, called

Dharmmāditya as a second name.[171] These other titles — *parama-bhaṭṭāraka, mahārāja-adhi-*

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in the form of the lion-man, Narasiṁha; who protected the whole globe from the actions of arrogant enemy kings; by whom the faces of all directions were colored by the rays from his toe-nails which were softened by the ruby diadems of great kings he had bowed down; devoted to Śiva, was the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master the glorious lord Śīlāditya, who meditated on the feet of the glorious Bappa, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master.

His son, whose wheel of irresistible heroism increased; who is the abode of good fortune; who zealously accomplished the destruction of hell; who is intent on solely accomplishing his duty of lifting the earth; whose fame appears as spotless as the light of the full moon; whose mind knows the three good qualities; who has conquered the ranks of his enemies; who is endowed with … happiness; who gives happiness; who is the abode of knowledge; who is praised as the protector of all the people; who is followed by those who hold knowledge; who is celebrated on the earth; whose most excellent body blazes with jewels; who is the multitude of types of jewels; who is endowed with the best qualities, superiority and valor; who constantly brought about benefits in all his companions; who, as if he were Janārdana (Viṣṇu) in bodily form, destroyed the pride of the wicked; whose first ability is ever killing enemy elephants in battle; who is the abode of merit; whose great splendor is sung on the earth; who is born of the lineage of kings among kings and great masters; the glorious Dhrūbhata is victorious; being the manifestation of great joy; devoted to Śiva, the highest lord, the great king among kings, was the highest master the glorious lord Śīlāditya, who meditated on the feet of the glorious Bappa, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master.

[171] The full descriptions of Dhruvasena III and Kharagraha II read: [Dharasena IV's] grandfather's brother being the glorious Śīlāditya; who, as if he became the arm of the wielder of Śārṅga, Viṣṇu, bowed down his well arranged curved limbs to him (Śīlāditya); whose stainless head, as is innate to the river Mandākinya, a branch of the Ganges, made radiant the jewels that were his (Śīlāditya's) toenails such that his (Śīlāditya's) lotus feet were pure whiteness; who was a royal sage like Āgastya in spreading piety; whose bracelet of greatly white fame was a distinguished decoration for the sky and encircled entirely with a halo the image of the moon; who was the lord of the earth pair whose of breasts are the Sahya and Vindhya mountains whose splendid peaks are like nipples because of the dark clouds; was the son of the glorious Derabhaṭa; who accomplished dominion over a multitude of kings attached [to him] who, wearing the cloth of pure fame, offered [to him] their royal glory as if out of a desire for self-chosen marriage; who depended on his actions of indestructible valor by which the circle of fierce traitors was bent down as if it was a sword; who accomplished the taking of the taking, by means of drawing his bow and arrow forcibly, of enemy lands in autumn; who duly seized taxes in the usual way; who whose ears were decorated by jeweled ornaments and furthermore were coupled with splendid learning by his superior listening and by gold of various kinds; the tip of whose hands were glittering from the sprinkling brought by the water of uninterrupted giving and gleaming from the beams from beautiful emerald jewels in his gold bracelets, as if sprouting young moss; who encircled the earth with his arms which became the boundary of the ocean like the large gold bracelets they possessed; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Dhruvasena.

His elder brother, whose slender form was embraced by Lakṣmī herself in a clear gesture, as if intent on removing the wicked touch of enemy kings; who attracted the great affection of all kings by his venerable actions; whose pair of lotus feet were inlaid with a multitude of bright crest jewels from all his enchanted peer kings (*sāmantas*) bowing down being pleasantly enchanted by his superior affection; who has broken the pride of the multitude of his enemies with his extraordinary very long arms as he extended his mastery; who burned the lineage of all his enemies with his splendor; who gave away his wealth to the flocks of his dear ones; who, by sending out his beautiful wheel, ejected disease; who abandoned childish games; who did not disrespect the twice-born; who ornamented the surface of the earth with his singular valor; who did not sleep with or take the side of stupid men; who, being the first among the best of men, had conduct which arranged all the orders of the classes of people like *dharma* personified; whose own lineage was delighted by his excellent and dazzling *dharma* manifest as a banner, in which the three worlds rejoiced by his acceptance of the multitude of those gifts to Brahmins and gods even which had been stolen by former kings out of their greed and desire for reaping [land] though the extension of his own most correct mind; who as the Cakravāla, a mythical range of mountains (encircling the orb of the earth and being the limit of light and darkness),

rāja, parameśvara – have similar implications to *cakravartin*. They refer to the king who has completed *digvijaya* — "a conquest of the four directions." Dharasena IV also used the descriptive compound *praṇata-sāmanta-maṇḍal-ōttamāṅga-dhṛta-chūda-ratnāyamāna-śāsana* — "whose orders are like jewels worn on the top of the head for the circle of *sāmantas* who have bowed down to him" — further indicating that he was styling himself in the *digvijaya* mode of kingship outlined in the Allahabad pillar inscription. While these terms give a very grandiose impression, I argue here that their use is more indicative of Maitraka kings discursively establishing themselves within a shifting political context than of concrete gains in power. In this way, these terms reference their context not unlike the double-naming discussed above.

I say that these kings *styled* themselves in this way because Maitraka kings were not, at any time, what we would consider imperial overlords. The territory they controlled is much smaller than the Guptas, Cāḷukyas, or Vardhanas (to name just their contemporaries, but the comparison would hold for other polities that are generally considered empires as well). These titles seem to be more aspirational, a way of laying claim to a certain way of thinking about kingship, than a reflection of a systemic ranking or even a systemic set of relationships between kings. The taking of a second name can be seen as a similar sort of act — it is a gesture toward the kind of king the Maitrakas wished to be, namely the powerful kings of the Gangetic plain. I would then suggest that these titles, ranging from the menial seeming *mahāsāmanta* to the grandiose *cakravartin* represent a range of royal ideals and theoretical orientations more so than ranks.

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filled all the directions with his lofty fame, yet satisfaction was not produced for him through the punishment of criminals or the beginning gifts or the great fixed taxes established by his mind in honor of gods, the twice-born and teachers; whose second name is Dharmmāditya, which is true and appropriate; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Kharagra.

A similar style can be seen through an examination of the literary and inscriptional records of Harṣa's court. Harṣa himself was the father-in law of Dharasena IV's father Dhruvasena II, as will be further discussed in Chapter 5.[172] In his own copper plate grants, Harṣa used the following titles: *parama-bhaṭṭāraka mahārāja-adhi-rāja śrī-Harṣa*. He did *not* title himself a *cakravartin* in his grants (a concept I will return to shortly), but he did sketch out the expansive reach of his kingly power, not only in the titles he assumed, but in the way he represented his relationships to royal officials. The inspiration for Dharasena IV's representation of *sāmantas* as kings who had bowed down to him could come from the Maitraka's incorporation into and subsequent relationship with Harṣa's kingdom. Along with other royal officials: gate keepers (*daussādhasādhanika*), officers concerned with the administration of justice (*pramātara*), chief justices (*rājasthānīya*), officer's cadres (*kumārāmātyas*), governors (*uparika*), district officers (*viṣayapati*), regular and irregular soldiers (*bhaṭas* and *cātas*), servants (sevaka) and all the residents of the country (*prativāsijanapada*), Harṣa's grants listed *mahāsāmantas* and *mahārājas* as addressees.

The best source for understanding Harṣa's relationship to *sāmantas* is the *Harṣacarita*, a work of art prose written by the poet Bana, which gives an account of the king's rise to power following the early death of his brother. Bana described *sāmantas* at several points in the text, usually not very favorably. When Bana first arrived at Harṣa's encampment, he gave a long and vivid description of the multitudes of elephants, horses, camels, white umbrellas, fly whisks and

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[172] It is possible that one grant of Dharasena IV may reference Harṣa. Grant 10 includes the phrase *śrī ajjaka-pād-ānudhyāta* — 'he who meditates upon the feet of his grandfather.' This phrase is inserted between the titles He is *parama-bhaṭṭāraka mahārāja-adhi-rāja parameśvara cakravartin* and *Śrī Dharasena. Ajjaka* is a Prakrit form of the Sanskrit *āryaka*, meaning father's father, or grandfather. *Indian Epigraphical Glosary* s.v. "āryaka." Of course, Harṣa would have been Dharasena IV's maternal grandfather, unlike the term suggests.

gemstones that festooned the prince's court. Among these lavish decorations and trappings of grandeur are the pitiful defeated *sāmantas*:

> [The *sāmantas*] for whom admission was not obtained, as if with their faces turned downs, their own bodies appeared to have been put to shame, the appearance of the reflections of their faces having descended on their toe nails, some caused fly-whisks to blow in homage, having the appearance of a multitude of rays coming from their finger-nails, scattered on the ground which was scratched by their fingers, some whose garments were glittering with the best sapphires swinging in the place of their chests, as if their swords were bound to their throats in order to pacify the anger of their lord, some whose beards were worn long as if in sorrow for their stolen wealth, their faces made dark by the multitude of bees agitated by their fragrant breath, others with circles of bees flying up to the tops of their heads as if their top-knots were fleeing in fear from the disgrace of bowing down, treated with respect even being conquered and having no other refuge, these tired men again and again asked the attendants who began to be followed by many thousands of petitioners as they entered departed here and there and in between rejected [some petitioners]: "Good sir, will it be today? Will the highest master (*parameśvara*) give a viewing in his place after having eaten? Or will he depart to the outside [where he will be] observable?" — thus they conducted their day with the thought of a viewing, [the camp] was inhabited by enemy *mahāsāmantas*, conquered by arms, from neighboring [territories]. And there were other kings, having come out of an affection for [his] splendor, born in various countries, waiting in the midst of things for a time to see the king. And seated apart there were Jains, Ārhatas (Buddhists), Pāśupatas (worshipers of Śiva), followers of Pārāśarya (medicants) and Varṇins (persons having a *varṇa*; religious students), and people born from all countries, and those of non-Aryan tribes (*mleccha-jāti*) who were inhabitants of all the forests circling the edge of the oceans, and a circle of messengers/ambassadors who came from all distant countries paying homage. [The camp] was like a world of all generative power with its creator/king, like a fourth world gathered up from the essential parts of the other three worlds. It's high degree of excellence could not be told in a hundred Mahābhāratas, the camp was as if a thousand golden ages, delightfully arranged like a billion heavens, I came to the king's gate, made so that it surrounded [the camp] as if the highest point of royal splendor.[173]

While this is hardly a flattering description, the *Harṣacarita* consistently represents the *sāmantas* as Harṣa's lesser adversaries. They faced inevitable defeat, as the text tells us that Harṣa was destined to become a world conqueror. When he ultimately set out to avenge his brother and capture his kingdom, Baṇa set the scene:

[173] Bāṇabhaṭṭa, *The Harshacarita of Bāṇabhaṭṭa (Text of Ucchāvas I-VIII)*, ed. P.V. Kane (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965), Book 2, 27-28.

Surely king Harṣa had maintained all the components of royal power (*rājya*). After that accordingly, to accomplish his vow, king Harṣa commanded his march to conquer to directions; in the dwellings of enemy peer-kings (*prati-sāmanta*) whose vigor has gone away multiform bad omens were spreading around.[174]

The *sāmantas* must fulfill the dual narrative role of being significant enough to vanquish and weak enough to be disgraced.

The *sāmantas* do not always come off so poorly in the text. When marriage alliances occur, the wives of *sāmantas* attended the festivities. When Harṣa and Rājyavardhana are sent to attach the Hunas, their father ensured that they are well equipped:

Then one day the king called over Rājyavardhana, who had arrived at the age of wearing armor to kill the Huna, as the lion sets his cub against the deer, gave him command of an immeasurable army, accompanied by his old ministers and beloved great peer kings (*mahāsāmanta*) along with companions [to head] North.[175]

After Harṣa and Rājyavardhana's father dies, when Rājyavardhana is gripped by grief, it is not his brother, but the *sāmantas* at the court who convinced him to eat again:

And at that time, having been approached by the chief peer-kings (*pradhāna-sāmanta*), whose words could not be passed over who were making their request, in that way [the king] ate.[176]

The *sāmantas* in these passages are not described as enemies or as defeated. They seem to have been fixtures of the court who held considerable power and had the trust of the king and his family.

For his part, the Harṣa of the *Harṣacarita* is a quasi-mythical figure. Baṇa seems to have modeled the work at least in part on the *Mahābharata*. "To Bana, the *Mahabharata*, a representative work of the *itihasa* tradition, was an ideal composition. He consciously imitated

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[174] Ibid, Book 6, 51.

[175] Ibid, Book 5, 19.

[176] Ibid, Book 6, 38.

its style. The *Mahabharata* opens with an account of the Bhargava lineage at the instance of the

kulapati Saunaka. The *Harṣacharita*, likewise, starts with the history of the Bhargava-

Vatsyayanas."[177] He also may have drawn on Harṣa's own compositions (although there is some

debate about whether or not Harṣa actually wrote the three plays attributed to him) to frame the

story.[178] As the story unfolds, Harṣa sets out to rescue Rājyaśrī, his widowed sister-in-law, whose

name also means royal glory.

> Further, in accordance with the technique of Indian dramas, this part was organically designed, falling into five well-defined stages of the Beginning, the Efforts, the Hope of Achieving the End, the Certainty of Success and the End. Since the last stage of the End is reached with the recovery of RājyaŚrī—the royal glory, the story is complete.[179]

While Baṇa's account may thus leave out many details the modern historian would be eager to

know, the combination of literary and inscriptional sources nevertheless leaves a much more

complete record for Harṣa's reign that that of many of his contemporaries.

The text makes two clear arguments about the universality of Harṣa's rule: first that this

universality was a pre-ordained, intrinsic feature of Harṣa's character; and second, that the

universality of his rule expands beyond just a conquest of the four corners. He encompasses not

only one cosmology but many.

> As if he had the distant and delicate feet of Aruṇa, the Dawn, the slow thigh of the Buddha, the hard forearms of the thunderbolt armed god (Indra), the shoulders of Justice personified as a bull, his lips like the sphere of the sun, having the Bodhisattva Avalokita's tranquility, the face of the Moon and the the hair of Kṛṣṇa, his wonderful form appeared like an avatara of all gods in one. And also so that the surface of the earth was colored by the garlands of powerful rays, on a great and very precious foot-stool made from sapphires and having a belt adorned with a garlands with rubies, he placed his left foot as if it was the head of [the demon who rules] the Kali-age, [the footstool was] like the circle of hoods of the serpent Kaliya pressed by [the feet of] the young lotus-eyed god (Kṛṣṇa), having planted [his feet]

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[177] Vishwambhar Sharan Pathak, *Ancient Historians of India: A Study in Historical Biographies* (London: Asia Publishing House, 1966), 37.

[178] Ibid, 43.

[179] Ibid, 31.

with the rays branching out of his toe-nails, having the color of white linen, like the crown of his chief queen (*mahādevi*), he caused the earth to thrive with his greatness. As if with anger at unsubmissive kings, as if a light emitting from ruby-gems on the row of deep-golden crests of all the lords of men, as if it caused to burst a sunset of the all the wise warriors, as if honey and flowers were streaming down from the flower crowns of all the lesser kings, as if circles of bees were wandering about the heads of enemies, not being separated from them even for a moment, because of the fragrant wreaths worn on the crowns of the heads of all the peer-kings (*sāmanta*), as if they prepared for the Goddess of Fortune, as she acted as his driver, causing her forest dwelling to be brilliant with red lotuses, as if endowed with symbols — the lotus, the conch, the fish and the sea-creature (*makara*), the tale of the signs of his rule over the four oceans, his feet generated redness.[180]

In his inscriptions, Harṣa, like the Maitraka kings, called himself *parama-maheśvara*, and thus represented himself as devotee of Śiva, but in this vastly more expansive account, the prince (this is long before he became king) was a manifestation of all religious traditions.

This is a self-consciously cosmopolitan representation of the highest order, and unlike the more traditional titles assumed in his copper plate inscriptions, the text gives him a grandiose title borrowed from the Buddhist tradition. As his father lies dying, he says to Harṣa:

"…'The earth is yours' is a repetitive statement for one whom the station of a wheel-turner (*cakravartin*) is marked on the body. 'Seize Glory (*Śrī*)' is a contradiction when even Glory herself has seized [you]. 'You should contemplate the world' is empty of meaning for one who is desirous of conquering both worlds. 'Claim the treasury' is useless for one whose only intent is accumulation of honor/renown is as spotless as a mass of moonbeams. 'Take possession of the lesser kings' is nonsensical when all living beings have been taken possession of by your excellent qualities. 'Carry the burden of royal power (*rājya*)' is an improper command to one for whom it is customary [to bear] the burden of the three worlds. 'Protect the people' is repetition when the sky is fastened by a bolt which is the staff that is your long arm. 'Govern your servants' necessarily follows for one who is the equal of the world's guardians. 'Perform the practice of arms' what is the intention of saying this to one whose forearm has a dark scar from the bow string's quarreling? 'Suppress unsteadiness' are words out of place one whose senses were suppressed even from an early age. 'Totally subdue your enemies' is even an idea of your inborn vital power." Thus even [saying] these words the lion king closed his eyes, never again to open them.[181]

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[180] Bāṇabhaṭṭa, *The Harshacarita of Bāṇabhaṭṭa*, Book 1, 32-33.

[181] Ibid, Book 5, 31-32.

While the title *cakravartin* may not have appeared in Harṣa's inscriptions, the text clearly indicates that both the title and the concepts which it indicated were in circulation at his court. He is not the first king to have been represented with combinations from various religious traditions. Even the *Arthaśastra* briefly makes reference to the concept of *cakravartin*, although the term occurs only once in the text, as "*cakravatīkṣetra* (the field of conquest of the *cakravartin* or emperor)."[182] The Guptas had drawn on multiple rhetorics of kingship as well. One coin type of Chandragupta II represents "Cakrapurusha, a personification of the cakravartin's wheel" on one side and on the other "a goddess standing on and holding a lotus, and the epithet *Cakravirama.*"[183] Singh makes the following note in regards to this coin: "We may note that the wheel is also one of the attributes of the god Vishnu and many of the Gupta emperors are described ad devotees of this god. One symbol encapsulates many ideas."[184] The Maitrakas then, pulled on several different discourses of kingship, including, but not limited to, other copper-plate inscriptions when describing themselves with these titles so closely tied to paramountcy. Like Sīlāditya I, Dhruvasena II and Kharagraha II who drew on the Gupta practice of double naming, the Maitrakas were likely making a rhetorical gesture by describing themselves in this way. This does not mean that they did not exercise considerable power, but that they were in this instance talking, or at least writing, like kings.

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[182] Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 103.

[183] Ibid, 190.

[184] Ibid.

The considerable diversity in titles used by the Maitrakas as well as in their use in combination with other features of the grants suggests that it is possible to read royal titles as reflections of elite discourses which kings could exploit and after which they could style themselves. Perhaps the Maitrakas, allied to Harṣa by marriage, may have taken the cue for this mixed approach to grandiose and religiously mixed titling from his syncretic approach to rule.[185] But the kings were not merely regurgitating these models. The theoretical texts, largely produced by religious elites (further discussed in the next chapter) that circulated in the mid-first millennium are ideals rather than perfect reflections of actual social relations. As the variety of approaches taken by the Maitrakas demonstrates, kings explored different reference points and discourses in order to establish and describe themselves — they could reference the Guptas with their double naming while exploring their ambitions of conquest, and when they reclaimed their independence from Harṣa, they took some of the same the same titles that he had. If these titles were claims to potentially competing ideals rather than reflections of an established and systemic mode of typing kings, then there is no contradiction in being a *mahārāja* AND a *mahāsāmanta*, and the ability to make simultaneous claims to both roles may help us to understand another way that kings inserted themselves into discourses about royalty. If indeed, as I have argued, these 'titles' were not really 'titles' at all, but royal descriptors, then the terms used by the Maitrakas and other Indian kings were ways of claim-making more than the statement of an office.

As chaotic as this may appear, I would argue that these discursive moves were not merely rhetorical or symbolic. While the exact meanings of these titles may remain obscure to

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[185] Other titles can be picked out throughout the *Harṣacarita*, for example, he is referred to as a *parameśvara* by Baṇa's relatives in Book 3.

contemporary scholars, and the precise way that kings understood their relationships seems to have been highly contingent on their circumstances, contemporary evidence from outside India should cause us to question seriously any model that proposes that these kings were weak, their system of politics chaotic and disjointed, or their diplomacy substandard. At this early stage of the dissertation, I will let these contemporaries be their defense. Khosrow I, the king of the comparatively expansive and well consolidated Sasanian empire, exhibited a sustained interest in the political arts of India. A Pahlavi text *Wizārišn ī čatrang ud nihišn ī nēwardašīr* explains how the Sasanians learned to play chess during the course of their diplomatic relationships with India.[186] The *Pañcatantra* a Sanskrit text on royal training, was translated into Pahlavi as well. If the kings of India served as a source of political knowledge for their Persian contemporaries, it is far more likely that they were considered politically skilled than viewed as weak rulers of fragmentary kingdoms.

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[186] Matthew Capena, *The Two Eyes of the Earth: Art and Ritual of Kingship Between Rome and Sasanian Iran* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 181.

CHAPTER 3

To Fix the Rules of the Path of Proper Conduct

This chapter will move from exploring relationships among kings to examining the relationships most explicitly outlined in land grants: namely the relationship between the king and religious officials of various kinds. Maitraka grants provide evidence that the dynasty was both patronizing an increasingly powerful Brahmin elite and maintaining relationships with Buddhist centers of power. While the Maitrakas professed to be Śaivite, and to adhere to a generally Brahmanical world view in their grants, they limited neither their patronage, nor their expectation that they would gain merit from land granting, to Brahmin donees. This phenomenon, which Upinder Singh terms "inclusive sectarianism,"[187] is not unique to the Maitraka kings. Generally, kings in the first millennium patronized multiple religious orders that often held conflicting, if not contradictory, views of the role of the king and the cosmos.

This period saw an intense upheaval in philosophical approaches to an extremely broad range of issues, many of which can be traced to the struggle between Brahmin and Buddhist elites. Brahmins attempted to win back their privileged place at the top of the social hierarchy while Buddhists sought to manage their somewhat diminished cultural power (although, as I will discuss below, they likely maintained an enormous deal of practical power, both political and economic). Previously, in the Early Historic period, Indian empires had become deeply

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[187] Upinder Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 181.

entwined with Buddhist ideology and institutions. The Mauryan emperor Aśoka famously

converted to Buddhism, and later empires, such as the Guptas, whose leaders were self-

proclaimed Śaivites, maintained close relationships with powerful Buddhist institutions such as

Nalanda. While Brahmins never completely lost their place in the court (it was the Brahmin

prerogative to perform coronations, for example, and Brahmin advisers were a fixture at the

courts of kings)[188], the challenge to Brahmanical ideology raised by Buddhism was a challenge

to the practical reaches of its power as well. Buddhism had become, as Bronkhorst claims, "a

victim of its own success" in that the goal of solitary meditation and total lack of connection with

the world was quickly supplanted by the reality of monks, nuns, monasteries and large numbers

of converts.[189]

The Maitrakas found themselves, quite literally, in the midst of these religious debates.

All the kings except two were self-described as *paramamaheśvara*, or "devoted to Śiva," in their

grants. Only Dhruvasena I and Dharapaṭṭa (whose grants do not survive but whose genealogy is

preserved in the grants of his successors) deviated from this pattern. In Dhruvasena I's grants,

the term *paramabhāgavata*, or "devoted to Viṣṇu," appears, while Dharapaṭṭa's is described as

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[188] Johannes Bronkhorst, *Buddhism in the Shadow of Brahmanism*, Handbook of Oriental Studies: Section Two: South Asia, vol. 24 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 99.

[189] See: Gregory Schopen, *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India, Studies in the Buddhist Traditions* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); *Buddhist Nuns, Monks, and Other Worldly Matters: Recent Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India, Studies in the Buddhist Traditions* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014). Schopen has explored a number of cases which demonstrate the considerable economic and social power which Buddhist monks took on. Gregory Schopen, "The Buddhist Nun as an Urban Landlord and a "Legal Person" in Early India," in *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India*, Studies in the Buddhist Traditions (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 123 -124 recounts one particularly evocative case from Buddhist *vinaya*, a proscription against nuns renting out their retreat houses (space for other traveling nuns) is arrived at when a nun sees some merchants whose wares are about to be drenched with rain, then proceeds to rent space to them (at more than double the going rate), having kicked some other nuns out of the retreat house in order to make this lucrative transaction.

paramādityabhakta, or "devoted to Sūrya," in the grants of Dharasena II.[190] What remains of

their royal iconography, found on coins and seals, reflects a Śaivite image as well: their seals

bear the image of a bull and their coins a trident.[191] Yet, their adherence to Śaivism should not be

taken as a declaration of exclusive allegiance. The grants of Śīlāditya VI and VII described them

by likening them to Narasiṃha and Janārdana (or Kṛṣṇa), both *avatāras* of Viṣṇu. In spite of this

both kings still called themselves *paramamaheśvara*.

In addition, Maitraka kings largely patronized individual Brahmins, not temples, and

those Brahmins most commonly belonged to the Chandogya or Vajisaneyi gotras, and thus were

involved in Vedic study and sacrifice, not Śaivism specifically.[192] At the time of the Maitrakas,

mainstream Brahmanism was ascetic Brahmanism.

> "The worship of Siva, Vishnu, the Sun, and Mahasena seems to have become popular
> with all classes from princes and chiefs to ordinary individuals. To this pantheon 'there
> was not even an allusion in the epigraphical records of the country for more than five
> centuries.' They suddenly present themselves to our view about the end of the fourth
> century; and appear uninterruptedly for the whole of the subsequent period of about two
> centuries covered by the inscriptions." It is very doubtful whether Siva, Vishnu, the Sun
> and Mahasena can be considered to be Brahmanic deities even in the Gupta period.[193]

In addition to these ideological internal divisions, Brahmins lagged behind Buddhists in terms of

institution building. While Buddhist monasteries had, for centuries, been bound up not only with

royal land granting practices but with internal and external trade,[194] Brahmins continued to be

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[190] The following king, Śīlāditya I abridges the royal genealogy, and omits all the kings between Bhāṭarka and Guhasena I, thus omitting Dharapaṭṭa from successive grants.

[191] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 165.

[192] Susan Verma Mishra and Himanshu Prabha Ray, *The Archaeology of Sacred Spaces: The temple in western India, 2nd century BCE-8th century CE* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 201. See also: Virji, Ancient History of Saurashtra, 147-148.

[193] D.R. Bhandarkar, introduction to *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum: Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings*, vol. 3 Revised, eds. B. Chhabra and G.S. Gai (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1981), 123.

[194] Himanshu Prabha Ray, *Monastery and Guild: Commerce under the Sātavāhanas* (Delhi: Harvard University Press, 1986), 207.

patronized as individuals, through the granting of land for their residence and livelihood in the form of a *brahmadeya* or *agrahāra*.

> Brahmins did gather to meet in assemblies called *pariṣad, saṃsad*, or *sabhā* to decide questions of ritual or social dharma, and to serve as a local court of law. But the development of durable, large-scale brahmanical institutions lagged behind that of buddhist monasteries. When it came, it took the form of brahmin settlements on endowed, tax-free lands (*agrahāra*s) and royally sponsored temples.[195]

Yet it appears that, upon an examination of Maitraka language and practices, and in spite of the many internal divisions and debates within Brahmanism, the Maitrakas held something like a broadly construed Brahmanical world-view, rather than exclusively adhering to or patronizing one Bhramanical school or faction.

Even as stone temples made their first appearances in Sauraṣṭra, and Brahmanism was strengthening its presence, the Maitrakas maintained a delicate balance in their relationships with various religious orders. Their capital at Valabhī was home to an internationally renowned Buddhist monastic complex,[196] which Maitraka kings heavily patronized, as will be discussed in this chapter. Royal relationships with both Brahmins and Buddhist institutions had practical implications in addition to their cosmological connotations. Buddhist monasteries had, since at least the time of the Sātavāhanas, been incorporated into the economic fabric of kingdoms. Monasteries were used by kings to expand the agricultural productivity of the state[197] and were often located at key points along trade routes.[198] Brahmins could also pose a considerable

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[195] Timothy Lubin, "The transmission, patronage, and prestige of Brahmanical piety from the Mauryas to the Guptas," in *Boundaries, Dynamics and Construction of Traditions in South Asia*, ed. Federico Squarcini (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2005), 82.

[196] See: Śramaṇa Yijing, *Buddhist Monastic Traditions of Southern Asia*, BDK English Tripiṭaka 93-I, trans. Li Rongxi (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2000), 149.

[197] Ray, *Monastery and Guild*, 101.

[198] Ibid, 126.

political threat. The kings of the Vākāṭaka dynasty were Brahmins themselves,[199] and their grants contain a prohibition that other Brahmins "should not wage war" against the state.[200] In the Maitraka context, religious elites exercised their this-worldly power to a potentially threatening degree.

In this chapter I explore the following questions: How did Maitraka rulers cope with or intervene in the changing fabric of religious orders and debates? To what extent was Maitraka rule practically and discursively shaped by ongoing religious debates? What do Maitraka grants tell us about the extent of or limits on the power of religious elites? Existing studies of land grants have largely examined them either from a social scientific and economic perspective, or from a mono-religious perspective. The Maitraka grants make clear that the dynasty was deeply entangled with multiple religious orders in both economic and ideological ways. I thus extend from the references in the grants an examine of how the Maitrakas engaged in ongoing religious debates, and how shifts in religious, social and political ideology impacted and potentially were impacted by Maitraka patronage. In order to address these questions, I examine both how the Maitrakas characterized themselves in the genealogical portions of their grants, and how they behaved toward different religious orders in their actual granting practices.

THE KING IN THE COSMOS

As noted above, the theoretical debates over politics in the mid-first millennium were dominated by the Brahmanical response to a Buddhist consolidated imperial model. In this section and following, by 'Brahmanical' I refer to canonical and largely orthodox ideologies and

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[199] Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 337.

[200] Ibid, 338.

texts of the time — i.e., the *Dharmaśāstras* and associated post-vedic texts. As mentioned above the temple Brahmin at the time in question was a slightly different phenomenon, as was the Brahmin advisor attached to the court, who had long been present, and whose views are perhaps best represented in a text such as the *Arthaśāstra*, discussed in Chapter 2. Brahmanical ideology, especially the Brahmanical ideology of the vedic practice, is not particularly amenable to imperialism. Ancient empires tended to look outward; cosmopolitanism and ambition were prerequisites for success.[201] Buddhism, as a religion of conversion, matches up well with these types of goals. Verardi claims that "despotic consequences are inherent in the Buddhist model," precisely because it re-centers social control into the person of the king, having the power to free various social groups from oppressive hierarchies of *varṇa*.[202] Emperors like Aśoka could bind their own ambitions to Buddhism's conversion project.

> "The Beloved of the Gods conciliates the forest tribes of his empire, but he warns them that he has power even in his remorse, and he asks them to repent, lest they be killed. … Even where the envoys of the Beloved of the Gods have not gone, people hear his conduct according to *dhamma*, his precepts and his instruction in *dhamma* and they follow *dhamma* and will continue to follow it. What is obtained by this is victory everywhere, and everywhere victory is pleasant."[203]

Brahmanism sought to be maintained, but Buddhism sought to be spread. It may not require an empire to convert people, but conversions (real or imagined)[204] can be a powerful tool of empire.

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[201] See: Peter Fibiger Bang and Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, "'Elephant of India': Universal Empire Through Time and across Cultures," in *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, ed. Peter Fibiger Bang and Dariusz Kolodziejczyk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 28-33.

[202] Giovanni Verardi, *Hardships and Downfall of Buddhism in India* (New Dehli: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2011), 83. *Varṇa* is the fourfold division of Indian society into Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. It is perhaps best rendered into English as estate/order per Thomas R. Trautmann, "On the Translation of the Term *Varṇa*," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 7, no. 2 (1964): 196-201.

[203] Alexander Cunningham, "Rock Inscriptions of Asoka at Shābāzgarhi, Khālsi, Girnār, Dhauli, and Jaugada," EDICT XIII, in *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum: Inscriptions of Asoka*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Officer of the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1879), 84-88.

[204] As another example, take the Sassanian forced conversion of Armenian Naxarars to Zoroastrianism (see: Robert Bedrosian, "The *Sparapetut'iwn* in Armenia in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries," *Armenian Review* 36, no.2 (1983):

As Bang has argued (referring to both the Mauryan empire and Hellenistic kingdoms), "at the top, rulers promoted forms of culture transcending region."[205] Buddhism more easily fit this bill. A practical example of this would be the Sātavāhana dynasty, which may have originated as a Brahmanical clan, and associated with Brahmins early in their rule, but later, as their power and territory grew, exclusively patronized Buddhist institutions.[206]

The Brahmanical counter-argument to Buddhist imperial models is seen most clearly in the *Mahābhārata*, which, like the *Dharmaśāstras*, includes an extended discussion of the relationship between the king and the brahmin in Book 12, the *Śāntiparvan*. This Brahmanical model sees totalizing kingship as potentially disastrous and emphasizes the importance of multiple kings and lineages. This was likely an appealing model — especially to less powerful kings, like the Maitrakas, Gārulakas and Saindhavas. The political situation with which the *Mahābhārata* grappled was one in which empires made bloody and brutal incursions, and, moreover, found their intellectual justifications not just in non-Brahmin ideologies, but in the anti-Brahmanical ideology of Buddhism. Hiltebeitel elegantly describes the political tension between Brahmins and Buddhist empires thusly:

> Despite Buddhism's appeal to nonviolence (ahimsa), early Buddhist rulers were murderous despots and, from the puranic perspective, not Ksatriyas anyway. The murder of such rulers by Brahmins is no solution, since it is a vicious cycle uncongenial to Brahmans, and, from

6-46.) These conversions were deeply politically motivated on both sides. The Naxarars only "feigned apostasy" to appease their overlords.

[205] Peter Fibiger Bang, "Between Aśoka and Antiochus: An Essay in World History on Universal Kingship and Cosmopolitan Culture in the Hellenistic Ecumene," in *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History*, ed. Peter Fibiger Bang and Dariusz Kolodziejczyk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 70.

[206] Ray, *Monastery and Guild*, 175.

the standpoint of epic and puranic history, there are no Ksatriyas left to replace the despots anyway.[207]

Obeyesekere, referenced in Hiltebeitel's argument above, carries the argument forward from a Buddhist perspective. It is his argument that the kind of guilt brought on by terrible acts — not just the brutal realities of empire but also the parricides carried out by kings — is precisely what makes a good Buddhist king. "The guilt-stricken kings are the ones that provide the unremitting drive toward atonement expressed in the ethic of works."[208] He thus recasts the sacrificer/donor relationship[209] as a relationship between the grief-stricken king and the merit he accrues through good works (often, donations). These kings did not only act badly because it was their *dharma* as kings to do so, they committed the worst of acts. He says of chronicles of Asoka: "they recount, not always abashedly, a whole list of purported, historical, parricidal kings, culminating in the great Asoka, the model of the ideal king for all Buddhists subsequently."[210] Indeed, it was *merit* which was the primary gain from gift-giving for kings. "South Asian contexts have not supported Mauss's general thesis about the fundamentally

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[207] Alf Hiltebeitel, *Rethinking the Mahābhārata: A Reader's Guide to the Education of the Dharma King* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001),181.

[208] Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Work of Culture: Symbolic Transformation in Psychoanalysis and Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 189.

[209] For an in-depth exploration of this relationship in the Brahmanical context, see: David Dean Shulman, *The King and the Clown in South Indian Myth and Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[210] Obeyesekere, *The Work of Culture,* 160. Obeyesekere also accounts the more extreme case of the king Kasyap (who committed suicide when faced with losing a battle with his brother after performing acts of extreme asceticism) and his brother, whose account brings together all of these elements: "After Kasyapa's suicide, his brother Mugalan became king. The new king was no saint either, though the M*ahavamsa* says that 'he protected the world in justice." He executes a thousand dignitaries who had supported his brother; he cut off their noses and ears and sent others in to banishment. Consequently, he was given the nickname the Rakkasa (*raskasa*) or 'demon.' Yet he too built many religious and public works and was praised by Monks." Ibid, 181.

reciprocal nature of gifting. Instead, these studies indicate that gifting in South Asia has been and continues to be, for the most part, markedly non-reciprocal."[211]

The *Mahābhārata*, then, grapples with the task of reorienting the relationship between the king and the Brahmin — both by re-centering the Brahmin (and the Brahmanical world) at the ideological core of rule, and by creating, or at least crystalizing, a form of Brahmanism which could contend with the new socio-political reality. The epic was "a dramatic new religious beginning for the Brahmin tradition,"[212] and a great deal of the text is spent dealing with the subject of the education of kings. Since the early 1900s, scholars of the *Mahābhārata* have recognized that the text is a reaction to a new wave of imperialism in India. Fitzgerald argues that the text is a Vaiṣṇava justification for imperialism while at the same time serving as a warning of the terrible costs and brutality of empire, providing ideological grounds on which a Brahmanical society could foster imperial ambitions.[213] As Hiltebeitel points out, in disagreement with Fitzgerald, the old order which the *Mahābhārata* so thoroughly destroys no longer existed at the time of the writing of the text. "In advocating the replacement of this old order, the *Mahābhārata* replaces and indeed rethinks an order defined by Vedic texts that no longer describe the current political situation."[214] The merit accrued through gift-giving, according to the Brahmanical tradition, must be without purpose, having no visible gain for the gift-giver.[215] Worldly reciprocity must be laid aside for gains in the next world.

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[211] Brick, introduction to *Brahmanical Theories of the Gift,* 24.

[212] James L. Fitzgerald, "The Great Epic of India as Religious Rhetoric: A Fresh Look at the *Mahābhārata*," J*ournal of the American Academy of Religion* 51, no. 4 (1983): 613.

[213] Ibid, 625.

[214] Hiltebeitel, *Rethinking the Mahābhārata*, 180.

[215] Ibid, 32-41.

The *Mahābhārata* shows evidence of this negotiation between the king and the Brahmin in its twelfth and thirteenth books, the *Śāntiparvan* and *Anuśāsanaparvan*. These books contain four sets of instructions to the king Yudhiṣṭhira: the first two (*rājadharmaparvan* [RDhP] and *āpaddharmaparvan* [ADhP]) on the proper behavior of kings, the third on how to achieve liberation (*mokṣadharmaparvan* [MDhP]), the fourth (*dānadharmaparvan* [DDhP]) on gift giving. The relationship between these four texts is summarized by Fitzgerald as follows:

> The core of the *RDhP* promulgates a fundamental charter of *brāhmaṇya* kingship – one with various stipulations of brahmin authority and one that extends the status of *dharma* to various apparently wicked practices of monarchical *niti* – and the *DDhP* closes the arrangement with a set of texts that are concerned to specify the flow of wealth to brahmins in return for these blessings and their attendant services. The *Āpaddharmaparvan* (*ĀDhP*) and the *MDhP* play critically important auxiliary roles in establishing and clarifying the proper relationships among brahmins, their royal clients, and the larger society in which both the *brahman* and the *kṣatra* must exist and survive. The first of the two middle collections (the *ĀDhP*) provides a defense to those aspects of the basic arrangement that fall below the normal standards in either royal actions or brahminic norms. The *MDhP* provides a profound new rationale for society's privileging and supporting the brahmin elite.[216]

He sees the working out of these relationships as absolutely central to the text. "The conception of a "pacificatory instruction" (*praśamana-anuśāsana*) and the consequent instructions in kingship given to Yudhiṣṭhira allowed the grafting of an anti-Mauryan, even anti-Aśokan, charter for *brāhmaṇya* kingship onto the narrative of the great *Bhārata* war as a part of a major new redaction of the *MBh* that occurred sometime between 200 BCE and 0 CE."[217] The *Mahābhārata*, then, provides good evidence for the negotiations between kings and Brahmins, as well as the contentious relationship between Brahmins and Buddhists, because it was those topics that were a central concern of the text's authors and/or compilers.

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[216] James L. Fitzgerald, "Negotiating the Shape of 'Scripture': New Perspectives on the Development and Growth of the *Mahābhārata* between the Empires," in *Between the Empires: Society in India 300 BeE to 400 CE*, ed. Patrick Olivelle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 258.

[217] Ibid, 259.

There are, however, fundamental problems with defining kings and their roles solely

through texts like the *Mahābhārata* because they were, in every case, written by the members of

opposing interest groups.[218] As Aiyangar notes: "the later writers on Rājadharma or Rājanīti

were paṇḍits, not statesmen."[219] Kings, Brahmins and Buddhists all had their own interests — in

power, in authority and even in the cosmological realm; yet the texts we are left with were

written mostly from a Brahmin perspective, with some Buddhist texts to add to the mix. Kings

did not leave behind their own treatises (except those preserved in the inscriptional record).

Therefore, the scholarly works which focused most explicitly on kingship were written by

Brahmins and can be seen as their attempt to define kingship and rule. These texts are members

of the genre of political theory[220] including but not limited to the *Arthaśāstra*, *Manusmṛti*,

Yājñavalkyasmṛti and *Nītisāra*. Epic texts such as the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyana* reference and

are referenced in works of political theory. In spite of this persistent conflict of interest, these

sources provide important reference points, because they are the writings that most explicitly

discuss the role of the king. They are, in other words, arguments rather than descriptions, and

arguments with a very specific bias at that. What these texts do show us is: a) what kinds of

subjects were most concerning for those who were attempting to define the king's role; and b)

what kinds of spaces these debates may have opened up for the kings, through their own actions,

to mold and guide these debates from the outside.

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[218] See: Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men* and Daud Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*.

[219] K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, *Rājadharma*, Adyar library series, no. 27 (Adyar: Adyar Library, 1941), xi.

[220] Upinder Singh, "Politics, violence and war in Kāmandaka's Nītisāra," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 47, no. 1 (2010): 29-62.

The genealogical section of the Maitraka grants takes sides in this debate, repeatedly allying the Maitrakas to a Brahmanical worldview. There are general references to the learned and Brahmanically virtuous nature of the kings, as well as specific references to texts within the genre of political theory. Maitraka kings therefore situated themselves not only on a particular side between religious traditions, but with particular interpretations among Brahmanical texts. The grants make several references to the *smṛtis* and *śāstras* – genres of texts which address political and social theory. Dhruvasena I was one "who perceived the true meaning of the śāstras."[221] Guhasena was one "by whom the meaning of the word 'king' was made clear, as he delighted the hearts of the people by correctly guarding/implementing the path conveyed through the totality of the smṛtis."[222] Dhruvasena II was "learned in both the rules of grammar and power."[223] The grants also contain references to a specific text – namely the *Manusmṛti*. Dronasiṁha was one "whose *dharma* comes from the performance of the rules first taught by Manu;"[224] and Dhruvasena II "like Manu himself, sought for protection by his subjects whose minds were full of affection for him on account of his strong virtues."[225]

These references to Manu place the Maitrakas firmly on the Brahmanical side of the debate, especially considering the *Manusmṛti*'s position on *varṇa*, and the centrality of the king in upholding the *varṇa* order. Buddhism sought the elimination of *varṇa* while Brahmanism was

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[221] *avaboddhā śāstr-ārttha-tattvānāṁ*

[222] *sakala-smṛti-praṇīta-mārga-samyakta-paripālana-prajā-hṛdaya-rañjan-ānvartha-rāja-śabdo*

[223] *rājya-Śālāturīyaya-tantrayor ubhayor api niṣṇātaḥ*. See: Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 183: "The implications of the association between grammatical and political correctness are far-reaching. If the Preservation of language sounds (*varṇa*) that grammar achieves was linked essentially to the preservation of the social orders (*varṇa*), and so to that of the polity at large, the obligation to maintain the order of language was no less than, and perhaps no different from, the obligation to maintain the political and spiritual order."

[224] *Manav-ādi-praṇīta-vidhi-vidhāna-dharmmā*

[225] *parivṛddha-guṇ-ānurāga-nirbhara-citta-vṛttibhir Manur iva svayam abhyupapannaḥ prakṛtibhir*

entirely dependent upon it. Both relied on the king and the court to patronize their more esoteric

pursuits and to establish and uphold a cosmologically determined order of some kind. They

therefore debated at length exactly what that cosmological order looked like, and how it was

arranged. On the Buddhist side, we can look at texts such as the *Aggana Sutta*, in which the

Buddha explains to two Brahmin devotees why their Brahmin heritage is unimportant (and

reorders the *varṇas* in the process). On the Brahmin side, the classification of *varṇas* (or more

precisely, the classification of children who resulted from inter-*varṇa* unions) receives extended

attention in the *Arthaśāstra, Manusmṛti, and Yājñavalkyasmṛti*. Olivelle more broadly argues

"that the authors of early Dharmasastras were working both within the model provided by the

Buddhist texts and in response to the Buddhist appropriation of dharma."[226]

　　The *Manusmṛti* itself relies heavily on the *Arthaśāstra* when it comes to statecraft. The

seventh chapter of the *Manusmṛti* "took its general structure and, so it follows, most of its major

topics and much technical vocabulary from the [*Arthaśāstra*]."[227] This intertextuality shows that

the *Manusmṛti* existed within a Brahmanical tradition of knowledge of and proscriptions for

statecraft. While the structure of the *Manusmṛti*, and even "parallels in wording and technical

vocabulary," follow the *Arthaśāstra* closely,[228] the *Manusmṛti* is not an exact copy or even an

exact summary of the *Arthaśāstra*. Rather than being a manual on statecraft, which the

Arthaśāstra claims to be, the *Manusmṛti* is mainly concerned with *varṇa*. As such, the text

contains an "overrepresentation of Brāhmaṇical political interests," especially in comparison to

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[226] Patrick Olivelle, "Explorations in the Early History of Dharmaśāstra," in *Between the Empires: Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE*, ed. Patrick Olivelle (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 177.

[227] Mark McClish, "The Dependence of Manu's Seventh Chapter on Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 134.2 (2014): 260.

[228] Ibid, 247.

the *Arthaśāstra*.[229] The *Manusmṛti*, and other *Dharmaśāstra* texts of the first millennium CE "eventually attained the status of 'Smṛtis,' that is, authoritative post-Vedic scriptures within the Brahmanical religious tradition."[230] The choice by Maitraka kings to both invoke and also endorse Manu thus portrays their position on the philosophy of statecraft as quite conservative within the Brahmanical tradition.

The *Manusmṛti* defines the role of the king as maintenance of the Brahmanical order of *varṇas*: "The king, having been made as the protector of the hermitage and *varṇa*, of all the settled people in regular order when they are possessed of their own particular *dharma*."[231] Indeed, the *raison d'être* of the treatise is to determine how people should behave according to their *varṇas*: "For the purpose of discerning his (proper) action, and the (proper actions) of the remainder (of the *varṇas*) in regular order, wise Manu, born of the Self, composed this *śāstra*."[232] Brahmins relied on this social order to maintain not only their position at the top of the social hierarchy, but their preferred way of life. In the ideal, the Brahmin lives in a *brahmadeya*, learning the vedas and performing sacrifices. This necessitates a relationship with the state where the king will support the Brahmin's lifestyle and patronize sacrifices. Without that role fulfilled, Brahmin authority will necessarily start to dwindle (as one can argue that it had begun to do in the Early Historic period). In spite of the centrality of *varṇa* to Manu's treatise, only the description of Kharagraha II in the genealogical section mentions it explicitly. Kharagraha II

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[229] Ibid, 260.

[230] Brick, introduction to *Brahmanical Theories of the Gift*, 3

[231] *Manusmṛti*, 7.35

[232] Ibid, 1.102

"being the first among the best of men, had conduct which arranged all the orders of the classes of people like *dharma* personified."[233]

The Buddhist characterization of *varṇa* — particularly the placement of Brahmins at the top of social order — was harsh and dismissive. In this passage from the beginning the *Aggana Sutta*, the Buddha (the Blessed One) explains to two Brahmin converts (Vāseṭha and Bhāradvāja) why Brahmins are not at the top of the hierarchy, and how Brahmins misrepresent themselves, in quite stark terms:

> [V and B] 'Sir, Brahmins say "The Brahmin is the best class (*vaṇṇa*), (any other class is inferior… Brahmins are Brahmā's own sons, born from his mouth, born of Brahmā, produced from Brahmā, the heirs of Brahmā…"'
>
> [Buddha] 'Surely, Monks, the Brahmins are not recalling the past when they say [this]. Brahmin women, (the wives) of Brahmins, are seen to menstruate, become pregnant, give birth and give suck; and (so) these brahmins who say: "the brahmin is the best class … Brahmins are born from Brahmā's mouth … heirs of Brahmā" are (in fact) born from vaginas. They are slandering Brahmā, telling lies, and producing demerit.
>
> Monks, there are these four classes: kṣatriya (warriors/kings), Brahmin (priests), vaiśya (farmers, merchants) and sūdra (servants).[234]

This important passage, from a text that would go on to outline the contours of the Buddhist political world view, reveals that in the Buddhist cosmology, Brahmins are not just wrong, they are slanderers (*abbhācikkhanti*), liars (*bhasanti*), and producers of demerit (*apuññaṃ pasavati*). The text then goes on to reorder the *varṇas*, upending the whole social system on which Brahmins rely and consolidating power in the person of the king.[235]

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[233] *pūrva-puruṣottamaḥ sākṣā-dharma iva samyag-vyavasthāpita-varṇa-aśrama-acāraḥ*

[234] Steven Collins, trans., *Aggañña Sutta: The Discourse on what is Primary: An Annotated Translation from Pali* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2001), 39-40 #3-5.

[235] See: Verardi, *Hardships and Downfall of Buddhism in India*, for the importance of this rhetorical move in Buddhist political theory.

As the above passage demonstrates, the competing Brahmanical and Buddhist positions were far from a friendly disagreement. While Brahmin texts tend to not address Buddhists in such stark terms, they do not escape ridicule. Looking at depictions of monks in court drama, Buddhist monks are played for laughs, but not in quite the same way as Brahmin characters. Brahmins, of course, also find a place in drama as comic characters, but the *bhikṣu* (Buddhist monk), unlike the *vidūṣaka*, is devoid of redeeming characteristics. The *vidūṣaka* (Brahmin jester) is dangerously clever;[236] the *bhikṣu* is just a fool. In this scene from the *Mṛcchakaṭikā*, the king's brother-in-law Samsthānaka (a cruel and stupid man — also a typical character called the *śakāra*) meets an even stupider *bhikṣu*. Samsthānaka is accompanied by the *viṭa* (note: the only Sanskrit speaking character in this scene), a Brahmin rogue or knave, who is typically parasitic, but extremely accomplished.

> [bhikṣu]   (seeing him fearfully) Oh No! Here comes the king's brother-in-law, Samsthānaka. An offense was done to him by one monk, whenever he sees another monk, having pierced his nose like a bull he causes him to be driven away. Where will I, without protection go for protection? Rather, the venerable Buddha will be my protector.

> [the śakāra enters with a sword accompanied by the viṭa]

> [śakāra]   Stop, oh wicked Buddhist (*śramaṇaka*), stop! I will beat on your head like a red radish entered into the middle of a drinking bout! [he strikes him]

> [viṭa]   Bastard! Don't strike a monk who wears yellow [robes] and is indifferent to the world. Why so? Let you, sir, see this garden, which is so very good to visit.

> Beautiful things are being done by the trees of the forest, which have become a delightful protection to the protection-less; it is not hidden/protected, like the heart of a bad soul/person, like a new kingdom, it should be enjoyed unconquered [i.e. without any restraint].

> [bhikṣu]   Welcome! Favour [us] worshipper (*upāsaka*)![237]

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[236] See: Shulman, *The King and the Clown in South Indian Myth and Poetry*, 155-168.

[237] *Mṛcchakaṭikā*, 8.9-14.

…

| [śakāra] | Praise me, Buddhist, praise me! |
| [bhikṣu] | You are auspicious! You are virtuous![238] |

…

| [bhikṣu] | Fellow worshipper! It is so, I have recently left home to become a monk. |
| [śakāra] | For what reason did you not become a monk immediately after being born? |

[he strikes him]

[bhikṣu]	Praise Buddha!
[viṭu]	Why are you beating this miserable guy? Let him escape, let's go.
[śakāra]	Oh! Stop for a moment while I cause this to be considered.
[viṭu]	Along with whom?
[śakāra]	With my own heart.
[viṭu]	Alas! He (the monk) has not gone away![239]

At this point in the scene, the *viṭu* and Samsthānaka continue to banter back and forth, and the *viṭu* successfully distracts him (and makes excuses for the monk) while the monk eventually escapes. The differences between the characters are stark — even starker when you consider that later in the same act, Vasantasena (having been captured similarly by Samsthānaka) will stand up to him and refuse to sing his praises. The *viṭu* is crass but clever, while the monk is simply a coward (not to mention too stupid to escape given the opportunity) and is willing to sing the praises of such a vile man.

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[238] Ibid, 8.19-20.

[239] Ibid, 8.30-37.

It is the *Mahābhārata* though, which must be seen as the great Brahmin masterstroke: a text which revised the Brahmanical view of the world, packaged it in a way appealing to kings and irresistible to would-be kings, and enshrined the notion of *varṇa* as an essential element of rule and a technology of power. The sacrificial relationship between the king and the Brahmin, which required both sacrificers and patrons, was interrupted and threatened by the rise to power of Buddhism and Jainism. Heesterman's claim that "In fact it was the brahmin, not the king, who was 'secularized,'" even before the rise of Buddhism, demonstrates that compromise had long been an important component of the king-Brahmin relationship.[240] Brahmins could not maintain a solitary study of the vedas and their position of power unless they were granted the space to do so by patronage. As long as they were patronized, Brahmins could cast themselves as beings of great power, who not only studied the veda but had the real power to affect a king's rule. As Brohkhost observes, in the epics,

> Brahmins have the power to do what they please, and it is only by their good grace that they often follow the rules which they have themselves laid down in their treatises.

> All this only makes sense, of course, if we keep in mind that the ideal audience of the epic is not constituted by other Brahmins, but by worldly rulers. Brahmins are not encouraging each other to break their self-imposed rules; they rather remind their rulers that they can choose not to obey them, and there is nothing anyone can do to stop them.[241]

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[240] J.C. Heesterman, *The Broken World of Sacrifice: An Essay in Ancient Indian Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 5.

[241] Johannes Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won: From Alexander to the Guptas*, Handbook of Oriental Studies: Section two, South Asia, vol. 30 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 239-240.

The Brahmin response to Buddhist politics was to develop a theory of *rājadharma,* which simultaneously granted great power (perhaps even cosmically generative power) to kings and steered them far away from Buddhist imperial ideology.[242]

> The comprehensive duty of the king is to maintain the scheme of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, and *paripālana*, (protection, in the widest sense) includes this. The King and the Brāhmaṇa are said to uphold jointly the world-order, and to have undertaken a lifelong vow to do so (*dhṛta-vratau*). Neither can change the social order or alter its features to the slightest extent. The all-embracing obligation thus laid upon the ruler, i.e., the State, makes it necessary that the head of the executive, i.e., the Rājan, must treat *all* Dharma as *his* duty, *Rājadharma.*[243]

On the one hand, this conception limits correct kingly action to serving a Brahmanical world-view: the king must uphold the division of *varṇas* at all costs. On the other hand, this grants to the king enormous religious power. "In the Hindu view of life a king's efficient discharge of his duties is only the means to the end of all human activity, viz., freedom from rebirth (*mokṣa*)."[244] All *dharma*, as the *Mahābhārata* claims, comes together in and under *rājadharma*. The king, according to this vision, is essentially responsible for everything and everyone to an extent that far exceeds most theoretical approaches to a state's obligations to its citizens.

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[242] It is worth noting, as per Olivelle, that the concept of *dharma* itself developed in relation to Buddhism, and particularly in relation to the Buddhist emperor Ashoka. Olivelle classes *dharma* as a "marginal term and concept" in the Vedas. See: Patrick Olivelle, "Semantic History of Dharma: The Middle and Late Vedic Periods," in *Language, Texts, and Society: Explorations in Ancient Indian Culture and Religion* (London: Anthem Press, 2011), 137. A long process, which first sees the term coopted by ascetics, and then by Ashoka, brought the term to the heart of political philosophy. Patrick Olivelle, "Power of Words: The Ascetic Appropriation and the Semantic Evolution of Dharma," in *Language, Texts, and Society: Explorations in Ancient Indian Culture and Religion* (London: Anthem Press, 2011), 132 "propose[s] that the emergence of the new genre of *Dharma-sūtras* is a direct Brahmanical response to the events beyond their control." While the whole evolution of the concept of *dharma* is too complex to explore here, it is significant that *rājadharma* plays such a central role in classical explorations of *dharma*, and this central role is in keeping with the Brahmanical response to the use of the term in Buddhist (and particularly, Ashokan) royal philosophy. See: Olivelle, "Semantic History of Dharma: The Middle and Late Vedic Periods," 134: "We have come a full circle. A brand new term invented by ancient Brahmanical poets of the *Ṛgveda* has become the central and defining term for the Brahmanical religion and way of life with considerable help from their rivals for religious authority and influence, the ascetic communities, and from an emperor with dreams of conquering the world through and for *dharma*."

[243] K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar introduction to *Kṛtyakalpataru of Bhaṭṭa Lakṣmīdhara,* by Lakṣmīdharabhaṭṭa, trans. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, vol. 11 (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1943), x-xi

[244] Aiyangar introduction to *Kṛtyakalpataru of Bhaṭṭa Lakṣmīdhara*, 1.

The king can be compared to, listed with, or comprised of parts of gods according to various theories of *rājadharma*.[245] These texts also devote considerable space to how such a king should be educated — an education which of course involves the Vedas.[246] This emphasis on royal education (and the great Brahmanical concern with its correct application) can be seen in texts outside of the *Dharmaśāstra* genre, such as the *Pañcatantra* (the frame story tells us that the fables contained in this text are something of a last-ditch effort by Brahmin advisors to educate desperately idiotic princes) and the *Daśakumāracarita* (where 10 young nobles achieve total conquest through nothing but the power of their education). Other elements of *rājadharma* cross genre as well: Kalidasa depicts his kings as concerned with upholding the *varṇa* system in *Raghuvaṃśa* and *Abhijñānashākuntala*, for example.[247] While these debates are fairly esoteric, and while neither epic texts nor the *Dharmaśāstras* has a clear proscriptive force for the kings of ancient India, it is critical to understand the terms of these debates because the Maitraka kings, as will be seen below, both invoked them and also, as I will argue here, took sides.

The Maitrakas, especially the early kings in the dynasty, made clear references to the epics in their grants. In the final lines of the grants, at the end of the exhortation portion of the grants, the writer switches from prose to verse, providing some general wisdom on land grants and why they should be respected. The following verses are all found in various combinations at the end of Maitraka grants:

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[245] Pandurang Vaman Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra: Ancient and Mediaeval Religious and Civil Law*, vol. 3, 2nd edition (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute 1973), 23

[246] Ibid, 46.

[247] K. Pratap, "Rajadharma reflected in Kalidasa's works," in *Concept of Rajadharma*, ed. Dr. Michael (New Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 2005).

a. The giver of land rejoices in heaven for sixty times a thousand years. The one who attains the land or permits (others to attain it), they themselves will live in hell.[248]

b. Whoever seizes the land that has been granted either by himself or by another, he will suffer the sin/guilt [*kilbiṣa*] of the killer of 100,000 cows.[249]

c. Yudhiṣṭhira be the zealous guardian of those gifts already made to the twice-born, as the fruits of benefits of gifts are better than much land.[250]

d. The land has been enjoyed/possessed by many kings, beginning with Sagara, whoever possesses the land, for all that time possesses its fruits.[251]

e. Riches, which have been made manifest here in righteous things by lords of men who are afraid of being poor, they are equal to yesterday's discarded garland. Who that is called a virtuous man would take it back?[252]

f. Those who live in dried out hollows of the waterless forest of knowledge, who are born again as black serpents because they took away gifts to Brahmins.[253]

g. Being the abode of good fortune (*lakṣmī*) you obtained [the same] by recourse to it, on account of that being the sole desire of a king; you should cause the increase of even that merit, and let not the benevolent position be neglected.[254]

All of these verses are normally introduced in the grant as "verses of Vyāsa," the mythic

composer of the *Mahābhārata* as well as the *Purāṇas*.[255] Verses (c) and (d) invoke the epics to

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[248] *ṣaṣṭiṁ varṣa-sahasrāni svarge modati bhūmidaḥ | ācchettā c-ānumatā ca tāny-eva narake vaset ||* This verse first appears in Grant 1.

[249] *sva-dattaṁ para-dattaṁ vā yo haret vasundharām | gavāṁ śata-sahasrasya hantuḥ prāpn-eti kilbiṣam ||* This verse first appears in Grant 1.

[250] *purva-dattām dvijātibhyo yatnād-rakṣa yudhiṣṭhira | mahīṁ mahi-matāṁ śreṣṭha dānāccheyo 'nupālanam ||* This verse first appears in Grant 4a.

[251] *bahubir-vasundhā bhuktā rajabhis-Sagara-adihiḥ | yasya yasya yadā bhūmis-tasya tasya* phalam || This verse first appears in Grant 1.

[252] *yān-iha dāridra-bhayān-narendrair-ddhanāni dharma-ayatanikṛtāni | nirbhukta mālya pratimāni tāni ko nāma sādhuḥ punar-ādadīta ||* This verse first appears in Grant 6.

[253] *vindhy-āṭavīṣv-atoyāsu śuṣka-koṭara-vāsinaḥ | kṛṣṇāhayo hi bhūmi-dāyaṁ haranti ye ||* This verse first appears in Grant 7.

[254] *lakṣmī-niketaṁ yad-apāśrayeṇa prāpto 'si ti-eko 'bhimataṁ nṛp-ārtham | tāni-eva puṇyāni vivarddhayethā na hāpanīyo ti-upakāri-pakṣa ||* This verse first appears in Grant 24.

[255] In addition to Manu and Vyāsa, it is possible that a third sage is named in the grants – a Śri Bappa. By the end of the dynasty, the later Śīlādityas professed their loyalties to Śrī Bappa. Per V.N. Mandlik, "Three Walabhī Copper-plates, with Remarks," *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 11, no. 32 (1875): 355*, he

guarantee the grants. Sagara, from whom Rama was descended and who plays the role of an

ideal king in the *Mahābhārata*[256], establishes that the king has power over the land. Yudhiṣṭhira,

the Dharmarāja of the *Mahābhārata*, is cast here as the guarantor of land grants. Droṇasimha is

likened to Yudhishthira in the genealogical section of the early grants: "by whom, like

Dharmarāja, the rules of path of proper conduct were fixed." This reference is dropped (along

with all reference to Dharasena I, Droṇasiṁha, and Dhruvasena I) from the grants of Dharasena

II onwards. Practically, this omission abridges the genealogical section to a more manageable

length, at least at first, but unlike references to the *śāstras*, *smṛtis* and Manu which can be found

both in the early complete genealogies and the later abridged version, no other king is explicitly

likened to Yudhiṣṭhira, although the above verse continues to appear.

This is significant because the way that the *Mahābhārata* portrays kingship and rule is, I

argue, especially appealing to less powerful kings. While the epic warns against the dangers of

non-violence,[257] the path to paramountcy is neither easy nor straightforward. At several points in

the text, various Pandavas bemoan their fate as world-conquerors. Arjuna loses his will to fight

when he faces his family-turned-enemies on the battlefield:

> Having seen my kinsmen, Kṛṣṇa, fully arrayed and eager for battle, my limbs sink down,
> and my mouth has thoroughly dried up; and there is a tremor in my body and the bristling

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"seems to be some great teacher of the Śaiva faith, or some remarkable great king of that name, but more probably
the former, from the adjectives used. In Paṇḍit Bhagavánlál's collection of Nepál inscriptions of about this time, all
the kings are described as worshippers of the feet of Bappa." H.G. Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī
(History and Culture of Gujarat during the Maitraka Period-Crice 470-788 A.D.)* (Vadodara: Oriental Institute of
Vadodara, 2000), 74, takes the use of this term or name along with the grandiose titles that accompanied it as an
indication of the rising power of religious figures at the time. However, the word may be an incorrect rendering of
bāva, in which case it refers to a paternal relative. This issue is discussed at length by John Faithful Fleet "Alina
Copper-plate Inscription of Siladitya VII. The Year 447," *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum,* Vol. 3, Inscriptions of
the Early Gupta Kings and their Successors, 186-188 (Calcutta: Superintendant of Government Printing, India,
1888), although even he says that the reading *bappa* occurs far more frequently than *bāva*, so the meaning seems to
be largely unclear.

[256] *Mahābhārata* 12.56.9-10

[257] Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 74.

of my body hair happens. Gāṇḍīva has fallen down from my hand, and thus my skin is burnt all over. And I cannot stand, and my mind is as if it is wandering around. And I see perverse signs, Keśava, I cannot discern good as the killer of my kinsmen by battle.[258]

Oh Alas! We have decided to do a great evil, as out of a desire for the prosperity of the kingdom we are prepared to kill our kinsmen! If, weapons in hand, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra killed me in battle not resisting, unarmed, then that would produce greater happiness for me.[259]

Yudhishthira bemoans kingship and criticizes *dharma*, which is both a universal concept and his father. In the *Mahābhārata*, "Dharma seems to be irreconcilable with happiness."[260]

Yudhiṣṭhira said: I am not seeking the pleasures of kingly power [*rājya-sukha*]. I do not want kingly power, even for a moment. For the sake of *dharma* I accepted kingly power, but there is no *dharma* to be found in it. This is enough of kingly power for me wherein there is no *dharma* to be found. So therefore I will go to the forest out of a desire of performing *dharma*.[261]

As Pollock argues, "The dilemma of power – in the starkest terms, the need to destroy in order to preserve, to kill in order to live – becomes most poignant when those whom one must kill are one's own kin. That is why the *Mahābhārata* is the most harrowing of all premodern political narratives in the world."[262]

This path to power, filled with doubt and despair, could not be more different than the path to power of the Buddhist *cakravartin*, laid out in the *Aśokavadana*. Like Yudhiṣṭhira, Aśoka is preordained to take power:

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[258] *Mahābhārata* 6.25.28-31.

[259] Ibid, 6.25.45-46.

[260] Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 71.

[261] *Mahābhārata* 12.76.15-16

[262] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 225.

THE GIFT OF DIRT[263]

Let us remember the gift of soil/dust by the king Aśoka, whose footstool was illuminated by the rays of the crown jewels of the whole of his *sāmantas* bowing down, from compliance with his duty. So it is heard repeatedly:

The Lord wanders around in Kalandakanivāpa, in Veṇuvana, in Rājagṛha. Then the Lord entered Rājagṛha in the morning for offerings taking his robes and bowl, surrounded by a flock of monks and honored by the monks of the *saṅgha*.[264]

…

As soon as the Lord arrived at the main road; in that place were two young boys; one was the son of a prominent good family, the second was the son of a good family (but not a prominent one); playing by making houses with soil/dust. The one was named Jaya and the second was named Vijaya. The lord, whose body was ornamented by the 32 marks of a great man and who was lovely to see, was seen by both.

At that moment, a handful of soil was flung in to the Lord's bowl by the boy Jaya, [thinking] "I will give [him] some ground meal;" and approval was expressed by Vijaya by holding his hands in an *añjali* (the open hands placed side by side and slightly hollowed (as if by a beggar to receive food)). As it is said:

Having seen the self-existing one, whose whole body shined light for a fathom (*vyāma* — the measure of the two extended arms);

Having obtained favor, he made a gift with a firm face of soil/dust to the one who makes an end of birth and aging.

He (Jaya) having presented [his gift] to the Lord, began to make a prayer: "With the root of this good merit, I will become king putting the earth under one umbrella; then I will make praise to the divine Buddha."

Then the sage clearly perceived the boy's nature and learned of his request;

He saw the desired fruits would be acquired with authority over the land, and feeling compassion, he grasped the soil/dust.[265]

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[263] For the section headings used here see: John S. Strong, *The Legend of Kings Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the* Aśokāvadāna (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2011).

[264] Sujitkumar Muhkopadhyaya, ed., *The Aśokāvadāna* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1963), 28-29.

[265] Ibid, 31-32.

THE BUDDHA'S SMILE

…

The Lord said: … "Do you see this Ananda, the boy by whom a handful of soil/dust was flung in the bowl of the Tathāgata?" "It is so Lord." "That boy, Ananda, with the root of this good merit, one hundred years from when the Tathāgata gained final liberation, in the city Paṭaliputra, he will become a king named Aśoka; he will become a cakravartin over the four quarters, a virtuous *dharma*-king; he who will cause my body parts/ relics of my body to be widespread; he will cause eighty four thousand stupas to obtain firmness (be built); he will rush toward the benefit of many people. And he said:

When I have come to an end, there will be one king he who indeed is named Aśoka, who has extensive fame.

He will cause Jambudvipa to be decorated with my relics, thus having honored the undying lord:

His duty of giving which was having flung a handful of soil/dust in the bowl of the Tathagata.

Then the Lord gave all of it (the dirt) to the aged Ananda…[266]

…

His eventual ascent to power could not have gone more smoothly. The future king barely has to

do anything to conquer Takṣila and begin to establish his paramountcy.

AŚOKA'S ACCESSION

Then the city named Takṣila was hostile to king Bindusāra; therefore Aśoka was sent forth by king Bindusāra: "Prince, go to the city of Takṣila." He was prepared; he was given a four-armed army, and he omitted the weapons.

As the prince Aśoka was departing from Pātaliputra, he was informed by his ministers: "Prince, we do not have any weapons for an army, with what can we wage war? How?

Then Aśoka declared: "If my good merit is deserving of kingship, let the weapons for an army appear." Such having been said by the prince, a space (opening) was placed on the earth, and weapons for an army were produced by deities; at that moment, the prince went to Takṣila with his four-armed army.

Having heard that, the citizens who were living in Takṣila, having made the road adorned for two and a half *yojanas* (the distance traversed in one harnessing or without unyoking),

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[266] Ibid, 43.

having taken their full water-jars, they went out to meet [him]; and going to meet him they chanted: "We were not hostile to the prince, nor even the king Bindusāra. But wicked ministers closed in on us." And with great reverence they entered Takśila.

So at length (after some time), Aśoka entered the kingdom of Khaśa; two of their great champions united (with him); their livelihoods were presented [to them] by him (Aśoka); they set out in front of him, having cut through mountains; and it was said by the deities; "Asoka will become *cakravartin* of the four quarters; let him be opposed by no one." The earth, as far as the ocean, was fully commanded [by him].[267]

…

He (Rādhagupta, Aśoka's chief minister — *agrāmātya*) dug out a ditch all around [the city], filled it with Acacia charcoal, covered it with straw and scattered sand over it. And Susīma was called out to, "If you are able to kill Aśoka you will be king."

At that moment he (Susīma) went to the East gate; [thinking] "I will fight with Aśoka." He fell into the ditch full of charcoal; so there he obtained defeat with misfortune. And when Susīma was killed, moreover his great champion named Bhadrāyudha, who has many thousands of followers; he became an arhat (the highest rank in the Buddhist hierarchy) monk in a religious order.[268]

Once the kings in these respective texts have gained power, their positions switch. That Bhīṣma's discourse on *rājadharma* is delivered to Yudhiṣṭhira "in the Shanti Parva (The Book of Peace) suggests a connection between peace and the art of ruling."[269] The Asokavadana however, depicts the young king Aśoka as *candaśoka* – the fierce Aśoka. Before his enlightenment "he personally beheads five hundred ministers when they ask him why he has ordered them to chop down all flowering and fruit trees and preserve the ones with thorns. He burns five hundred women of his harem alive when they cut the flowers and branches off an ashoka tree."[270] Even after his enlightenment "he has 18,000 Ajivikas killed, and offered a dinara

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[267] Ibid, 39-40.

[268] Ibid, 42.

[269] Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 67.

[270] Muhkopadhyaya, ed., *The Aśokāvadāna*, 143.

coin for the head of every Nirgrantha (Jaina) brought before him."[271] Yudhiṣṭhira's actual rule is comparatively uneventful. The hard part, in the Mahābhārata, is ascending to the throne.

Both Aśoka and Yudhiṣṭhira have the reputation of being paramount kings, but the way that the texts approach the issue of paramountcy is fundamentally different. Aśoka is *cakravartin*, but moreover he is specifically a "'*caturbhāga-cakravartin*,' that is, a 'ruler over one of the four continents," or, alternatively, a '*balacakravartin*,' a term which [Strong suspects] should be translated as 'armed cakravartin' or ' cakravartin who has to use or threaten physical force to become the ruler of his cosmos.'"[272] Chinese translations of the text call Aśoka an 'iron-wheeled cakravartin,' who, as Strong notes, "though still a cakravartin, can also be fully involved in this imperfect world."[273] The *Mahābhārata*, by contrast, uses the term *cakravartin* "only eleven times."[274] In that text, "paramountcy is more usually indicated by terms such as *samrājya* (empire) and *samrāṭ* (emperor). The epithets routinely used for ordinary kings include *nṛpa, rājendra, rājā, mahārāja, rāṣṭrīya,* and *viṣāṁoati*."[275] *Sāmrājya* is derived from *sam-rājya*, where the particle *sam* connotes "with, together with, along with, together, altogether" and expresses "conjunction, union, thoroughness, intensity, completeness."[276] In other words, it does not imply singularity in the way that is implied for emperors of the Buddhist tradition.

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[271] Muhkopadhyaya, ed., *The Aśokāvadāna*.

[272] Strong, *The Legend of Kings Aśoka*, 50.

[273] Ibid, 54.

[274] Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 61

[275] Ibid, 503 n. 98.

[276] *Monier Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary,* s.v. *"सम्,"* accessed February 1, 2018, https://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/monier/.

The worldview laid out in the *Mahābhārata* is one in which paramountcy is the ultimate goal, but the cost of achieving that goal is catastrophically high. For a small dynasty establishing itself, such as the Maitrakas at the time of Droṇasiṁha, this must have been an appealing view of the world. The text gives the king a claim to ultimate power, clear directives to rule, a workable compromise with the Brahmin elite, and an argument against the all-consuming forces of empire all in one. The *Mahābhārata* war did, after all, bring the end to an entire cosmic age. This quasi-anti-imperial logic is carried forward by texts contemporary with the Maitrakas such as the *Daśakumāracarita*, which tells the story of a prince and his nine friends regaining his father's kingdom, and paramount kingship, through their collaborative efforts. Such rulers are both kings over kings and kings among kings.

LORDS OF THE EARTH

The Maitrakas were thus engaged in several careful balancing acts, between kings as *mahāsāmantas* and later as *mahārājādhirājas* and *cakravartins*, and between themselves and the Brahmins of different orders and affiliations and the monks whom they patronized. These religious orders all agreed on the utmost importance of the *dharma* of the king yet had very different visions of what that *dharma* was.

Dharmaśāstras like the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* instructed kings to give gifts of land to Brahmins and to support their rituals and lifestyle:

> He should grant various enjoyments and riches to the priests, for what is obtained by priests is an undecaying treasure for kings. It is said that priest-fire is superior to other rites done by fire, because it is unbroken, unchanging and beyond reproach. He should protect his possessions with great effort, and endeavor to obtain the things he does not yet possess virtuously. He should cause those things he protects to grow by means of political wisdom. He should grant the things he accumulates to the worthy. **When a king gives a grant of land he should write it down for the reference of all good future kings. The order will be fixed, on cloth or on copper plate, sealed with the king's seal and signature,**

containing his lineage, the name of the grantee, and the size and boundaries of the land.[277]

The Maitraka grants adhere well to this formula. As an addition to these two features (the genealogical portion and the specifics of the grants), Maitraka grants usually included an address to officials (found at the conclusion of the geneaology), and a section containing exhortations that the grant be preserved throughout time.

The *Manusmṛti* further specifies that Brahmins should be exempt from taxation. "Even when he is about to die the king shall not take taxes from a Brahmin versed in the Vedas, no Brahmin versed in the Vedas living in his dominion may be afflicted with hunger."[278] This was not unusual in the *Dharmaśāstra* tradition, wherein "literature consistently grants to Brahmins the unique right to receive gifts and, therefore, regards them as recipients par excellence."[279] It also states that the king is better off giving gifts to Brahmins than directly beseeching the gods. "It never fails, it never wavers, it never vanishes, an offering in the mouth of a Brahmin is better than sacrifices to the sacred fire. A gift to a non-Brahmin is equal, a gift to a Brahmin in name is double, a gift to a Brahmin advanced in his studies is a thousandfold, a gift to a Brahmin skilled in the Vedas is endless in rewards."[280] David Brick notes that in Brahmanical literature on gift

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[277] *Yajnavakyasmṛti* 1.315-20. This section immediately follows instructions on the appointment of ministers AND priests, potentially signaling that the priests the text refers to may occupy their own kinds of 'offices,' not in the official sense, but in the sense that their actions receive royal sanction. "He should appoint ministers who are wise, from a family of ministers, dependable, and pure. Together with them, or else with the Brahmins, he should deliberate about the affairs of government, and afterwards think about it himself. He should appoint priests who are astrologers, grounded in the śāstras, who know the administration of justice and the hymns of the Atharva-veda. And so he should select priests for the sake of the rites prescribed by the laws and the vedas, and he should duly perform sacrifices giving abundant offerings." Ibid, 312-314. Critically, this logic does not work as neatly if it is also applied to Buddhist elites. The reference to the Atharva-veda is significant here, since it was through their role as ritual practitioners that Brahmins were able to maintain their power even under Buddhist rule. See: Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won*, 225-235.

[278] *Manusmṛti* 7.133.

[279] Brick, introduction to *Brahmanical Theories of the Gift*, 26

[280] *Manusmṛti* 7.84-85

giving "the gifts that receive the most extensive treatments are overwhelmingly lavish ones ….

Such gifts are unambiguously the focus of this literature and only kings and other extremely rich

persons could possibly have afforded to give them."[281]

Buddhist texts likewise recognize the importance of gifts, although to my knowledge

there is not a specific Buddhist literature insisting that kings and others should give them gifts, as

there is in the Brahmanical case. However, Maitraka grants would appear consistent with

Buddhist practices as well. One Buddhist law code "rules that the name of the donor must be

inscribed on the object given and, in fact, puts in the mouth of the Buddha himself a donative

formula that is virtually identical to some of what we find in actual North Indian donative

inscriptions."[282] This type of instruction, about how grants should be inscribed, is similar to the

passage from the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* above. Furthermore, Maitraka grants are given by the king

mayā matā-pitroḥ puṇy-āpyayānaiḥ — "for the increase of the merit of my mother and father."

This construction usually appears at the beginning of the specifics portion of the grants, and thus

appears to relate to the terms of the grant. Similar constructions are found in Buddhist donative

inscriptions. One donor at "makes his gift *mātāpituna aṭhāyā,* 'for the benefit of his mother and

father.'"[283] However such a transfer of merit, Schopen notes, to a certain extent runs contrary to

the proscriptive literature, rather than complying with it.[284]

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[281] Brick, introduction to *Brahmanical Theories of the Gift*, 53.

[282] Gregory Schopen, "Art, Beauty, and the Business of Running a Buddhist Monastery in Early Northwest India," in *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India*, Studies in the Buddhist Traditions (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 24. The formula in the donative inscriptions referenced by Schopen was on small objects, not royal land grants.

[283] Gregory Schopen, "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism," in *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 6.

[284] Ibid.

These land grants were, theoretically, permanent and tax-free. As the above passage from

the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* states, grants were written for "the reference of all good future kings." The

exhortations that conclude Maitraka grants are consistent with this. A typical concluding section

would read thus, for a grant to Brahmins:

> In order that they may enjoy living in the *brahmadeya* in the proper way; ploughing it or
> directing (another to plough) it; it should be inhabited with prohibitions made by no one;
> by good kings in the future and my own lineage, understanding that kingly power is
> changeable, men are perishable, and the reward of a gift of land is common, this gift should
> be sanctioned and protected; and he who snatches this away or permits it to be snatched
> away is conjoined with the five great sins and minor sins; also even in this respect there
> are sacred utterances of Vyāsa, who is endowed with the breadth of knowledge …
> [concluded by the verses discussed above].[285]

Grants to *vihāras* typically differ in the first phrase, as they of course do not endow a

brahmadeya.[286] Otherwise, this section, like the royal genealogy, does not differ according to

affiliation of the recipient. Critically, the grants imagine a future beyond the reign of the

Maitrakas: "by good kings in the future *and* my own lineage." These good kings, then, may not

be in the Maitraka lineage at all.

The idea that the grant is permanent also appears in the specifications section of the grant.

Grants are frequently specified to "remaining contemporaneous with the moon, sun, waves,

earth, rivers, and mountains," and in the case of grants to Brahmins, "to be enjoyed by the

succession of (their) sons and son's sons."[287] The grants listed a variety of taxes from which the

lands granted are to be exempt, and/or which are to be given to the new landholders rather than

the king. This idea of permanent applies not only to the land granted, but to various rights

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[285] Grant 30, l. 29-32.

[286] See Grant 49, l. 28: "That they may enjoy it as has been written above; it should by separated or driven off by no
one…"

[287] E.g. Grant 87, l. 58. This construction does not appear in grants to *vihāras* which, as institutions, are not inherited
in this way.

attached to it. The grants specify, among others, fixed taxes (*udraṅga*), minor taxes (*uparikara*), the tax on farmhouses (*sa-śaibara*), the king's grain share and taxes in cash (*sa-dhānya-hiraṇya-adeya*), income arising out of a change of the natural phenomena (*sa-bhūta-vāta-pratyāya*), taxes in accordance with the principle of cultivating the land for the first time and enjoying it free of taxes as a result (*bhūmi-cchidra-nāyena*), the right to get unpaid labor from tenants as required (*utpadyamāna-viṣṭika*), the right to punish and realize fines for the ten offenses (*sa-daśa-aparādha*). Sometimes the grants specified that the whole gift is free from tax (*sarva-dāna-kara-viśuddha*), or that the land should henceforth not be disturbed by royal agents (*sarva-rājakīya-ahasta-prakṣepaṇīya*). These exemptions, or the transfer of these taxation rights, further disentangles the object of the donation from the king.

Given the great lengths taken to emphasize their no-strings-attached nature, these gifts are difficult to explain from a functionalist perspective. What can have been the purpose of a land grant meant to endure even beyond the end of a dynasty? Following Heesterman, Schulman suggests that the purpose of land grants was to offset the potential harm to the Brahmin when he performed sacrifices to offset, in turn, the generally un-*dharmic* actions the king had done while performing his kingly *dharma* (e.g., punishing people or engaging in warfare). "Thus we find the king offering his portion ... to the Brahmins, or to the god. But this gift, while allowing the sacrificial order of *dharma* to survive another hour under the aegis of the donor king, is never enough: it ties down both the Brahmins and the temple deity in uncomfortable ways; and it can never finally free the king from his ever-accumulating burden of evil."[288] This interpretation makes sense in Shulman's context of 600-1600 CE South India, where Brahmanism was well established and held a largely unchallenged political dominance. It makes less sense in the north

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[288] Shulman, *The King and the Clown in South Indian Myth and Poetry*, 34.

Indian context of the Maitrakas and their contemporaries, when grants were being made to a range of religious practitioners and institutions. Buddhist *vihāras* could not incur sacrificial danger. Furthermore, these gifts were a transregional phenomenon and survived through several political shifts in Indian history, suggesting that whatever nuanced meanings they may have taken on at particular moments and in particular circumstances, the logic behind the practice of land granting was flexible and durable enough to fit into many political regimes.

In practice, the copper plates reveal that land grants were not entirely inalienable gifts to the recipients. Maitraka grants on occasion named the previous owner of the land being donated, but it is not always clear what role that individual might have played in the fabric of elite society, or if the land previously the subject of a royal grant. Dhruvasena, for example, granted "in Hastavapra district, in Madkana village, 140 PVs, the holding of the householder Isvara, and the step well of 16 adjacent PVs, then again the Tapasiya village, 140 PVs, the holding of Dhindaka, then again in Tinishaka village on the north-east border 100 PVs together with a step well [*vāpī*] to the brahmins Jarabhajyi and Kumarasarma."[289] In all, five grants of Dhruvasena I,[290] two grants of Dharasena II,[291] and three grants of Śīlāditya I[292] granted land that is the "holding" (*pratyaya*) of another individual. One grant of Dharasena III[293] and one grant of Śīlāditya III[294]

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[289] Grant 2, l. 16-17.

[290] Grant 2; Grant 7; Grant 8; Grant 10; Grant 19.

[291] Grant 29; Grant 30.

[292] Grant 43; Grant 44; Grant 48

[293] Grant 58.

[294] Grant 85.

granted land of a "householder" (*kuṭumbī*). One additional grant of Śīlāditya III granted land that had been cultivated by Kikaka.[295]

These grants demonstrate that a king was within his rights to alienate land from landowners, householders and cultivators, but do not necessarily imply that these individuals previously held royal grants themselves. An unusual Vākāṭaka grant states that the king "would commit no theft if he revoked the grant" should the Brahmin donees in question commit treason, murder another Brahmin, wage war, or harm other villages.[296] This sets the bar quite high for land grant revocation. It certainly could be done in extreme circumstances. One grant of Harṣa described the king revoking a grant he deemed to be a forgery:

> Let it be known that the village Somakuṇḍikā has been enjoyed by the Brahmin Vāmarathya by means of a fraudulent royal grant. This having been considered, I broke it then took [the land] away. Ending at its boundaries, together with the *udraṅga* tax, joined with all the taxes which in future would come to the house of the king and all exceptions … to Bhaṭṭa Vātasvāmin … and to Bhaṭṭa Śivadevasvāmin … I have given it.[297]

In this case, the grant was rendered fraudulent before it was destroyed and the land re-granted. The process of declaring the previous grant to be fraudulent involved not only a declaration but the physical destruction of the forged grant. In general, these grants were materially and rhetorically extremely durable, and clearly could be deployed long into the future in an attempt to guarantee land access. In order to void the forged grant, Harṣa needed to physically destroy it, himself. There is therefore a royal intimacy with the form of the grant as well as its contents, and a recognition of the power of its unique material form. The fact that this grant specified the

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[295] Grant 87.

[296] Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 338.

[297] Dines Chandra Sircar, "No. 5 – Madhuban Copper-Plate Inscription of Harsha – [Harsha] year 25 (631 A.D)," in *Select Inscriptions Bearing on Indian History and Civilization: From the Sixth to the Eighteenth Century A.D.*, vol II, (Delhi: Motilal Bandarsidass, 1983), 225-226.

reasoning behind the revocation, while the Maitraka grants did not, implies a) that the revocation of grants was a special circumstance requiring explanation and b) that the Maitraka grants of previously owned land were likely not grants of land previously grants.

Land grants themselves, along with Sanskrit literature on gift-giving, have a clear anti-revocation perspective. Grants from Śīlāditya I on most often contained a clause stating that the donee will enjoy all rights to the granted land "with the exception of what was previously given to Brahmins, as a Brahmadeya, or to gods."[298] The consequences of violating a land grant were steep. A grant of Dhruvasena II laid out a fairly typical explanation of the consequences for someone who violates the grant:

> Even a slight damage or doubt should be made by no one. By kings in the future and my own lineage, understanding that kingly power is changeable, and men are perishable, and the reward of a gift of land is common, this gift should be sanctioned. And he who snatches it away or permits it to be snatched away is conjoined with the five great sins and minor sins.[299]

The Brahmanical literature on the *dharma* of gift giving concurs with this stance. The *Dānakāṇḍa* of the *Kṛtyakalpataru*, a twelfth century text which compiles passages on gift-giving from earlier *smṛtis*,[300] reproduced some of the same verses which occurred in Maitraka grants on the subject of the ill-fate of gift-violators.

The Āditya Purāṇa states:

32. When a man gives land measuring even a mere gocaraman, he is freed of all sins and goes to the world of Viṣṇu. 33. A giver of land dwells in heaven for sixty thousand years, but one who violates such a gift or permits its violation dwells in hell for that long. 34.

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[298] *pūrvva-pratta-deva-brahmadeya-brāhmaṇa-viṅśati-rahitaḥ*

[299] Grant 12, l. 6-9.

[300] Brick, introduction to *Brahmanical Theories of the Gift*, 22.

When a man steals land, whether given by himself or another, he becomes a worm and sinks down into a pile of excrement together with his ancestors.[301]

Verse 33 of Book 10 of the *Dānakāṇḍa*, is nearly identical to the verse (a) quoted in Maitraka inscriptions.[302] Verse 34 above shares its first half with Maitraka verse (b).[303]

Even outside of the context of the *Dharmaśāstras*, in literature usually considered more practically oriented, the confiscation of land is the exception rather than the rule. As Ray has argued:

> The Arthasastra (II.1.10; I.14.3) is sometimes misquoted to suggest that the king had the right to confiscate land or to transfer it from one person to another. A reference to the context makes it clear that this right was limited to newly settled or colonized lands, and as such lands which were originally state property. Besides, the sole objective of the state behind the colonization was to get the lands cultivated and to derive revenue from this. Under these circumstances it had a right to punish defaulters.[304]

The land grants made clear, through their references to Yudhiṣṭhira as the "zealous guardian of gifts" in the verses at the end of the grant, that the king was considered the ultimate overseer of land, but that, in this context, did not seem to equal having unlimited rights to it. Literary sources — both those from more orthodox Brahmanical sources and from courtly, yet still Brahmanical, sources — and the grants themselves agreed that granted land should be considered the rightful property of the recipient. Given the breadth of consensus on this issue, there is no reason to argue that granted land was transferable (as under the ideals of Euroepan feudalism), or that this was

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[301] Lakṣmīdharabhaṭṭa, *Brahmanical Theories of the Gift: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of the Dānakāṇḍa of the Kṛtyakalpataru*, Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 77, trans. David Brick (Cambridge: The Department of South Asian Studies Harvard University, distributed by Harvard University Press, 2015), 174.

[302] There is a one word difference: *modati* in the Maitraka grants for *vasati* in the *Dānakāṇḍa*.

[303] In the *Dānakāṇḍa* the second half reads "he becomes a worm and sinks down into a pile of excrement together with his ancestors," *sa viṣṭhāyāṁ kṛmirbhūtvā pitṛbhiḥ saha majjati*. In the Maitraka verse the second half reads "he will suffer the sin/guilt [kilbiṣa] of the killer of 100,000 cows," *gavāṁ śata-sahasrasya hantuḥ prānopti*.

[304] Ray, *Monastery and Guild,* 94.

simply the transfer of some revenue in the form of applicable taxes. The taxes were given with

(*sa*) the land, further disentangling the land and the rights to it from the royal domain.

THE GIFT OF LAND

In keeping with their sensitivity to Brahmin literature, the Maitrakas made grants

primarily to Brahmins, either individually or in groups, although as noted above the invocation

of Brahmanism in the Maitraka grants encompasses what was actually number of sides in a

lively debate about the future of Brahmanism — the orthodox, the Śaivite, the Vaiṣnavite, the

temple and the ascetic among others. A table laying out which types of recipients received which

types of gifts from each king can be seen below (Table 4). Out of 119 grants, 22 grants either

did not preserve the information relating to the particulars of the grant (in most cases because

only the first plate is extant, although some fragmentary second plates can not be read as well),

or they were published without an edition and this information was not offered in the publication.

This leaves 97 grants with information about the particulars of the grant. Among those, 51 went

to single Brahmins, while 19 went to groups of two or more. Thus, over two thirds of the grants

were directed toward Brahmins without any institutional mediation. In fact, only four grants

were made to temples. The temples in the grants are the temple of the goddess Panduraja in

Hastavapra-ahara (granted by Droṇasiṁha), a temple of Siva in Vatapadra (by Śīlāditya I), a

Surya temple in Bhadrenika (also by Śīlāditya I), and a temple of the goddess Kottammabika in

Tṛsaṃgamaka(by Dhruvasena II). Interestingly, the grant to the goddess Kottammbika in

Tṛsaṃgamaka by Dhruvasena II mentions that the earlier grant (by Droṇasiṁha) had suffered an

"interruption."[305] The village of Tṛsaṃgamaka itself was granted to the Panduraja temple in the

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[305] *vicchitim,* Grant 64 l. 12.

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earlier grant. The subsequent grant reaffirms this, and adds an allowance of 1 *rupaka* per day, making the Kottammabika temple is the only temple to receive paid support.[306]

Table 4 - Objects and Recipients of Grants

King	Grant to Single Br.	Grant to Mult. Brs.	Total No. Grants to Brs.	Grant to Vihara	Grant to Temple	No. Padavartas Granted	Grant of Village to Brs.	Total Villages Granted to Brs.	Grant of Villages to Vihāras	Total Villages Granted to Viharas
Droṇasiṃha	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Dhruvasena I	11	7	27	3	0	3196	2	2	2	2
Dharapaṭṭa										
Guhasena	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	5
Dharasena II	8	4	16	3	0	2921	5	5	2	3
Śīlāditya I	1	2	47	7	2	631	2	2	5	6
Kharagraha I	2	0	2	0	0	50	0	0	0	0
Dharasena III	2	0	2	0	0	118	1	1	0	0
Dhruvasena II	4	3	9	2	1	550	1	1	2	2
Dharasena IV	2	1	5	2	0	216	1	1	1	1
Dhruvasena III	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
Kharagraha II	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Śīlāditya III	7	2	12	2	0	917	1	1	2	2
Śīlāditya IV	6	0	6	0	375	0	4	4	0	0
Śīlāditya V	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	4	0	0
Śīlāditya VI	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	3	0	0
Śīlāditya VII	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
TOTALS	**52**	**19**	**135**	**23**	**4**	**8974**	**26**	**27**	**17**	**22**

The difference between how the grants treated small groups of Brahmins as opposed to temples may reflect a wider notion at the time that temple Brahmins were inferior to Brahmins who spent their time performing ritual and contemplating esoteric knowledge.

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[306] Ibid, l. 17.

[W]ithin Brahmanical circles there has been relatively little esteem for Brahmins who offered their services to temples. Traditional brahmanical religious practice, it may be recalled, had no place for temple worship, nor indeed for images of gods. The transition to a time in which there were Brahmins connected with temple and image worship appears to have been difficult, with internal divisions among Brahmins as to the suitability for Brahmins to perform such functions. Literary evidence shows that Brahmins involved in temple and image worship (sometimes called *devalaka*) were despised by their more orthodox confreres; sometimes their very brahmanical status was doubted.[307]

Temples were also considered places of ill-repute, where all manner of prostitution and spying was likely to take place.

In the *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* ascribed to Bhāsa, the list of unsavory types found at a temple gets longer still. We first see, as seems fit, seated on the plinth or porch of the temple (*deva-ula-pīṭhiāe, devakula-pīṭhikāyāṃ*) what seems to be a (*ḍiṇḍika*, an ill-defined type taken to be a "beggar," a kind of "rogue," a "geunilleux (a vagabond clothed in rags)," or some kind of religious ascetic associated, perhaps, with the Pāsupatas. He does not seem to have all his wits about him: he is mumbling and talking to himselfand, for example, accuses the Śiva painted on the wall of stealing his bowl of sweets (*modaka*). Nearby is "a young celibate . . . misbehaving in several ways" (*bahmaārī bahukehi rūvehi aviṇaaṃ karedi, brahmacārī bahukai rūpair avinayaṃ karoti*). They are soon joined by a man who appears to be really crazy, an apparent *unmattaka*, and what has been taken to be a "Buddhist monk," although this might not be so since he is called simply a *śramaṇaka*. Notice that this unsavory cast of characters would be — if this were an actual temple — the first thing a man or woman going to the temple would encounter: this motley group was sitting on the porch.[308]

Even the *Arthaśāstra* describes "a long list of suspicious characters that one would expect to find first of all — quite literally — at temples. Here again temples are grouped with a long list of disreputable places: alehouses, gambling dens, etc., and — notably — empty or 'deserted places.'"[309] The fact that the Maitraka grants treated temple-Brahmins and non-temple Brahmins differently indicated that the Maitrakas were endorsing the solitary, contemplative Brahmin, as the *Manusmṛti* instructs.

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[307] Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won*, 132-133.

[308] See: Gregory Schopen, "On the Underside of a Sacred Space," in *Buddhist Nuns, Monks, and Other Worldly Matters*, Studies in the Buddhist Traditions (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 438.

[309] Ibid, 440.

The difference between the temple priest or brahmin and the orthodox/mainstream brahmin implicates their living conditions as well as their religious outlook. The land granted to Brahmins typically constituted, according to the grants a *brahmadeya* — a term very close to *agrahāra*,[310] which itself denotes something very similar to *aśrama* when it comes to living conditions.[311] These essentially constituted Brahmin ascetic dwellings, where Brahmins could live and practice rituals outside of society yet supported by it. Such a dwelling is depicted in the Ramayana:

> The *Rāmāyaṇa* tells us that Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā come to the *āśrama* of the *muni* Bharadvāja, situated at or near the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā.188 Bharadvāja is described as being surrounded by deer, birds and *muni*s (Rām 2.48.17: *mṛgapakṣibhir āsīno munibhiś ca samantataḥ*), no doubt an indication of the peaceful treatment accorded also to animals. Bharadvāja is further said to have performed the Agnihotra (v. 11: *hutāgnihotra*), as we might expect from the chief inhabitant of an *āśrama*. However, we then learn that there are people from town and countryside nearby (v. 22: *ita āsannaḥ paurajānapado janaḥ*) who might come and disturb the *āśrama* out of curiosity to see Rāma and his companions. To preserve the peace, Rāma decides to stay somewhere else, along with his brother and wife.[312]

These dwelling places themselves, as Bronkhorst argues, are deeply entangled in systems of royal gifting. "Gifts of land to Brahmins, as these and other inscriptions suggest, were not merely rewards for services rendered in the past but also spiritual investments for the future.… The sacral responsibilities of the Brahmins in their *agrahāra*s usually concerned rites they could carry out on their own."[313]

Unlike the Brahmins, for whom the ideal and patronized dwelling involved solitude and minimal interaction, Buddhists lived in institutional systems called *vihāras*. Not only was the

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[310] Bronkhorst, *Buddhism in the Shadow of Brahmanism*, 77.

[311] Ibid, 84-85.

[312] Ibid, 93.

[313] Ibid, 83.

vihāra a communal institution, "at least one Buddhist monastic code has an explicit rule that requires that its nunneries — it calls them *varṣakas* — be located, unlike male monasteries, inside towns or cities."[314] From rules prohibiting nuns from hurling the contents of their chamber pots over nunnery walls without looking (and the contents of said pots landing on the head of a passing brahmin with an apparently comedic intent),[315] to law codes "represent[ing nuns] as perfectly capable of burying an unsuspecting monk alive, and attacking a fellow nun with sharp instruments — monks here are in fact explicitly instructed to determine if nuns are carrying concealed weapons before admitting them to a vihara,"[316] the Buddhist nun and her dwelling place were clearly imagined as both urban and deeply worldly and social. The monk, also according to Buddhist law codes was "a construction fore-man, an art promoter, a banker, an entrepreneur, sometimes a shyster, and sometimes a saint."[317] Monasteries were described as places of great beauty. They are places of such great beauty that in fact this beauty moves visitors to make donations to them.[318] However, they were subject to various safeguards (mostly that they were not to be left unattended) to avoid them having the same bad reputation as temples.[319]

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[314] Gregory Schopen, "On Emptying Chamber Pots without Looking and the Urban Location of Buddhist Nunneries in Early India Again," in *Buddhist Nuns, Monks, and Other Worldly Matters: Recent Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India*, Studies in the Buddhist Traditions (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 23.

[315] Ibid, 40.

[316] Ibid, 42.

[317] Schopen, "Art, Beauty, and the Business of Running a Buddhist Monastery in Early Northwest India," 20.

[318] Ibid, 31.

[319] Schopen, "On the Underside of a Sacred Space," 441.

In copper-plate grants the Buddha himself was sometimes considered a resident of these monasteries and even received some land donations and material support.[320] The Buddha made such an appearance in Maitraka grants,[321] which apparently "were intended to provide for the needs of two groups, both of which appear to have been thought of as residing in the local monasteries: Buddhas and monks."[322] In fact, the Buddha may have been the only consistent occupant of the *vihāra*.

> our passage says that the Buddhas were "established" *(pratiṣṭ(h)āpita-)* in the monastery, but the monks were "dwelling" *(prativāsi-)* in it. This verbal difference may be thought to be significant, and perhaps it is. However, it is important to remember that the first meaning of *prati √ sthā* is "to stand, stay, abide, dwell," and that the causative — which we have here — has marked tones of "permanence," "fixity," and "continued existence over time." *Prati √3. vas,* on the other hand, need imply none of this and is not infrequently used in the sense of "to lodge, receive as a guest." The Buddhas, then, may have been considered the only permanent residents of a monastery.[323]

This residence is echoed in the structure of *vihāras* of this period: an alteration to an older square plan with cells for residents on three or four sides included a special shrine in the center of the back wall — the Buddhas residence.[324] Unlike monks who passed through these places and travelled on to other *vihāras*, the Buddha, in the form of a stone sculpture, was literally installed there.[325]

Nearly one quarter of Maitraka grants went to *vihāras*. Unlike the grants given to Brahmins and temples, which seem to represent one-off forms of patronage rather than long-term

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[320] Gregory Schopen, "The Buddha as an Owner of Property and Permanent Resident in Medieval Indian Monasteries," in *Bones, Stones and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India*, Studies in the Buddhist Traditions (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 261.

[321] E.g. Grant 16, Grant 36.

[322] Ibid, 262.

[323] Ibid, 263-264.

[324] Ibid, 275.

[325] Ibid, 277.

investment, Maitraka grants provide evidence that the kings of the dynasty actively cultivated and maintained relationships with *vihāras*. Of the 23 grants to *vihāras*, several re-patronized a *vihāra* which had already received a previous Maitraka grant: the *vihāra* built by Sthiramati received two grants (from Dharasena II and Śīlāditya III), the *vihāra* built by Śīlāditya I received two grants from its builder and the *vihāra* built by Duḍḍa at Valabhī remarkably received 6 grants: one from Dhruvasena I, two from Guhasena, one from Śīlāditya I, one from Dharasena III and one from Dharasena IV. The Maitrakas and their relatives also directly patronized *vihāras* by supporting their construction. Śīlāditya I did this himself, as did Duḍḍa, who was Dhruvasena I's sister's daughter. She is described in the grants as a great lay-worshipper (*paramopasika*). Guhasena I is also characterized this way, in place of the usual *paramamāheśvara*, in the last known of his grants.[326] This practice indicates that the relationships between the Maitraka dynasty and the *vihāras* were durable and significant; it was not enough that the dynasty had made grants in the past (which presumably it continued to honor), new kings felt it important to reinvest in these institutions.

Most of the grants to *vihāras* (15/23) were made to *vihāras* in Valabhī itself, which was the seat of a well known Buddhist monastic complex as well as the Maitraka dynasty. Duḍḍa's *vihāra* received a grant of four gardens and four wells inside Valabhī. This was the only land granted from inside the capital. Two *vihāras*, the *vihāra* built by Sthiramati and the *vihāra* built by Skandhabutta, received villages in the nearby and politically significant Hastavapra-ahara. However, land needed to not be near the *vihāra* for it to be granted (although this does seem more normal), the *vihāra* built by Duḍḍa also received the grant of four villages (the largest

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[326] Grant 25.

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number of villages given in any single grant) in Khetaka-ahara, which is located off the Saurāṣṭra peninsula, near modern Ahmedabad.

Two important conclusions can be drawn from the locations of these grants: First, Maitraka kings were not using these *vihāras* (exclusively) to cultivate peripheral land or land that had not yet been brought under cultivation. If they were willing to give land in their capital and land in Hastavapra-ahara to these *vihāras*, I argue that they were giving land that was already productive, and potentially valuable to the dynasty due to its location in their heartland. Second, these grants demonstrate that *vihāras* were capable of administering land and drawing support and revenue from it at a considerable distance. Therefore, they must have had some administrative apparatus to oversee their landholdings.

Another distinguishing feature of grants to *vihāras* is the type of grant which received. Twenty-two villages were granted to the *vihāras* in 17 grants, as seen in Table 4. This is proportionally much higher than the villages granted to Brahmins, since the total number of grants to *vihāras* is lower — one village is granted to a temple, 27 were granted to individual or groups of Brahmins in 26 grants. Of the 23 copper plates which record grants to *vihāras*, 17 gave one or more villages, and in the other cases the object(s) granted were not preserved. Only the earliest grant (the lone grant of Droṇasiṁha) granted an entire village to a temple. Clearly villages could be given in a grant to any kind of grantee, but the frequency with which they were given to *vihāras* indicates that this was the customary type of donation given to these institutions. It is difficult to determine what this means about the value of the grants in absolute terms, because while the size of fields and wells is usually specified, the size of villages is not. One possible implication of the granting of villages rather than defined land may be that the granting of villages likely also meant the granting of villagers. While villagers would not have become

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the property of *vihāras*, the taxes they paid (of the kind which usually went to the king) were designated to the *vihāra*. This presents additional problems when the villages were granted at a distance from the grantee. Practically, it is difficult to imagine agents of many *vihāras*, temples and Brahmins criss-crossing with the tax collectors of the *rāja*. However, given the proscription on royal agents disturbing granted land which is often included (*sarva-rājakīya-ahasta-prakṣepaṇīya*), it is certainly possible that granted land was under the direct administration of donees. It is also possible to imagine a scenario, further enabled by the portable form of the copper-plates, where a donee produced the royal grant to show royal agents that he or they should be given their share. As the process of tax extraction is not discussed in the grants, it is impossible to know how tax collection, apparently standardized for tax-payers but with multiple payees, functioned.

In contrast to the aforementioned grants where Maitraka kings reassigned ownership of land, another set of grants reaffirmed ownership of land. Five grants of Dhruvasena I,[327] and one grant of Śīlāditya I[328] granted land that "previously had been enjoyed and continues to be enjoyed"[329] by the recipients. This suggests that, in some cases, the kings were merely acknowledging and affirming an existing *de facto* or *de jure* ownership. Significantly, three of these grants (both of the grants which went to a *vihāra* and one grant going to a group of Brahmins) granted whole villages which were already being enjoyed by the donees. In these cases at least, it seems that the *vihāras* (and the one Brahmin recipient) already had control over the tax revenue of the granted villages. I consider it unlikely, therefore, that the royal taxation

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[327] Grant 5; Grant 9; Grant 11; Grant 14; Grant 18.

[328] Grant 47.

[329] *pūrvva-bhukta-bhujyamākāḥ*

apparatus was *always* used to extract taxes. Perhaps these grants were a way of homogenizing the bureaucratic landscape in addition to acknowledging the reality that the king did not have total control of his territory. A grant could have made these relationships official, benefiting both the king (by acknowledging his ultimate, if theoretical control over land) and also the religious institution (by granting them access to a royal guarantee and taxation standards). This relationship is again reinforced by the material form of the grant. A copper grant would be more durable than the palm leaves we must assume to have formed the normal documents of the state, thus guaranteeing the future presence of the grant. In turn, the act of keeping and, we must assume, producing it perpetuated the relationship between the recipient and royal donor.

While grants of whole villages have important administrative implications, grants of discrete units of land could also be quite large. The largest amount of measured land given in a single grant was 832 *pādāvartas* of land given by Dhruvasena I in the form of two fields and six step wells to two Brahmins. Grants totaling 4787 *pādāvartas* were given to single Brahmins. An additional 3480 *pādāvartas* were given groups of Brahmins throughout the dynasty, meaning a total of at least 7267 *pādāvartas* of land were given to Brahmins by Maitraka kings, out of 8974 *pādāvartas* given in all the known grants. The remaining 495 *pādāvartas* were granted to temples. The area measured by *pādāvartas* seems to indicate edges of the area being measured, hence "an area of 100 *pādāvartas* being 100 feet each way, i.e. 10,000 square feet."[330] This is not an enormous amount of land, coming out to 2.41 sq. miles total. This, along with the 48 villages granted, by no means indicates a kingdom where the management of land was severely fractured. Although it is safe to assume that the actual amount of land granted was higher (because some grants do not have the donation preserved and there must have been more grants

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[330] *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, s.v. "pādāvarta."

than those that have survived), it does not seem that land granting by the Maitrakas would have, on its own, fractured the administration of the kingdom.

Nonetheless, the grants indicate the willingness of Maitraka kings to allow others to administer land and draw taxes from it. The land grants indicate that while land and revenue were certainly important for Maitraka kings (also evidenced by their expansion and annexation of Ujjain – further discussed in Chapter 4), normal practice for kings included giving up some of that land, removing its revenue stream and allowing the taxation infrastructure of their kingdom to benefit others. They also must have allowed other landowners to administer their landholdings throughout the kingdom, in tandem with their own administration.

CONCLUSION

The Maitrakas were neither divorced from nor dependent on the political schema laid out in religious texts. There are parts of the texts on *rājadharma* which clearly appealed to them, and which they found useful enough to present in their grants; there were ways in which they deviated from the instructions and world-views of these texts.

The rhetoric of the grants is very Brahmin-leaning. In fact, Maitraka kings were more comfortable identifying specific traditions and texts to which they adhered than they were in identifying other kings in their grants. By specifically naming Manu and Yudhiṣṭhira, the grants cast the Maitraka kings as upholding a vision of *varṇa* and royal policy which was suited to Brahmin interests. It is likely that they called upon these traditions, especially early in the dynasty, in order to establish themselves among larger and arguably more powerful kingdoms. The anti-imperial logic of the *Mahābhārata* and the cooperative relationships stressed by Brahmanical *rājadharma* texts fits well with the early Maitraka kings who emphasized their

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excellence as *sāmantas*. The same logic was flexible enough to support expansion and conquest as the dynasty grew in strength and influence.

Their rhetoric is not entirely Brahmanical either. Much as the Guptas had used symbols like Garuda which could be read in both the Buddhist and Brahmanical worlds, the Maitraka grants also demonstrate a range of religious flexibility. A title like *cakravartin*, for example, resonates across traditions, and rulers were happy to name their relatives, and on one rare occasion themselves, as prominent Buddhist lay-worshippers. Their grants to *vihāras* show that they had a good knowledge of the practical and theoretical workings of these places. As noted in the plate of Dhruvasena I:

> For the Buddhists who have all intelligences combined and are blessed, to make use of oils, lamps, flowers, incense and scents and for the purpose of repairing what is chipped, burst, fallen and broken, at the vihāra, for the saṃgha of monks who reside at the vihāra of both kinds, having come from the four directions, and for the sake of use in giving alms, having a seat to rest, giving healing and faith to the weak, and cooking, this has been given.[331]

Furthermore, their treatment of *vihāras* highlights the Maitrakas' strong relationships with these institutions. Multiple grants were given to the same *vihāra*, and it is the construction of *vihāras*, not temples, for which the Maitraka kings and their relatives take credit. They likely leveraged their taxation system to support these institutions, and granted them dominion both over land in their own capital and land that required long-distance management. This support is not trivial; it is not a relationship with a monastery that is leveraged to bring wild land on the far outskirts of a kingdom under cultivation. Donations of whole villages to Brahmins and monasteries alike, but especially to the monastery at Valabhī, in their capital, indicate deep ties between the institution and both the ideology of the king and the kingdom's administrative system.

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[331] Grant 6.

Valabhī, with its famous its famous *vihāras* so intimately tied to Maitrakas is thus an odd seat for a Śaivite dynasty, especially one so concerned with the Laws of Manu. The acrimonious debates between Brahmin and Buddhist scholars with which I began in this Chapter certainly would not sanction this behavior. That the Maitrakas were able to embed themselves so deeply in Brahmanical thought and Buddhist institutions simultaneously speaks not only to their ability to navigate the elite sphere, but to their own courtly elite voice. In Chapter 4, I explore Valabhī more thoroughly – considering its life and afterlife as preserved in grants, literary sources and archaeological remains. I also expand the corpus of theoretical debates which shaped Maitraka rule and consider the courtly literature on *rājya*. Building on the previous two chapters, which have exclusively considered literary sources and clues in the Maitraka grants pertaining to their relevance, I will examine how a broader range of evidence can inform on the dynasty's actions and goals.

CHAPTER 4

Om, good fortune from Valabhī!

As the Maitraka relationship with the Buddhist monastery at Valabhī shows, even the dynasty's seat of power was not exclusively their own. Both the Maitraka's royal ideology and their physical presence was subject to a certain amount of negotiation. It is not unheard of for Indian dynasties of this period to share their physical space with other elite bodies: take the Vākāṭaka royal site of Mansar, for example, where excavators found palace remains closely associated with the remains of a Śiva temple and a Buddhist stupa.[332] These intellectually and physically close relationships have been taken to indicate a pattern of religious tolerance in kings of the Gupta and post-Gupta age.[333] I am hesitant to ascribe such a spirit of peaceful magnanimity to early medieval Indian kings; instead, I suggest that both their interventions into religious debate and their aspirations for conquest suggest a more complicated relationship..

Literary sources, especially *kāvya* (poetry), describe and depict cities with formulaic regularity. However, "images of the early Indian city that we get are not, in most cases, specifically co-relatable to individual historical cities, but draw on the distilled and *universalized* essence of the experience of urbanism as perceived and preserved by the genre."[334] *Kāvyas*, as

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[332] Jagat Pati Joshi and A.K. Sharma, "Excavation at Mansar, Distt. Nagpur, Maharashtra — 1997-2000," *Purāttava: Bulletin of the Indian Archaeological Society* 30 (1999-2000): 129-131.

[333] See: Hans Bakker, "Royal Patronage and Religious Tolerance: The Formative Period of Gupta—Vākāṭaka Culture," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24:4 (2010), 472-473.

[334] Shonaleeka Kaur, *Imagining the Urban*, (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010), 32.

Shonaleeka Kaur argues, routinely portray religious institutions (both monasteries and temples) as being located outside the city.[335] She notes that this is supported by archaeological evidence which supports the typical vision of the *kāvyas*. However, this correlation is problematic because there is a general paucity of evidence from this period. As Hawkes notes, a lack of evidence from this period was once seen to indicate mass de-urbanization, but there is good reason to call that into question:

> Theories of a phase of de-urbanization and a decline in craft production, trade, and monetized exchange were "proved" by an apparent absence of archaeological material dating to the early medieval period from excavations. Yet, as a critical appraisal of this evidence shows, current archaeological evidence cannot support these theories. The possibility that stratigraphic layers previously identified as predating and postdating the early medieval may, in fact, date to the early medieval period itself means there is every chance that the perceived decline in activities or break in occupation at many sites is imaginary. This, together with the likelihood that the main areas of early medieval occupation at many sites may not have been excavated adds further questions to theories regarding a decline in the scale or nature of activities (craft production, trade, and the use of coins) that are based on a perceived absence of archaeological evidence.[336]

While most of the available archaeological evidence does align with descriptions found in *kāvya*, there are exceptions where monasteries are found within city walls, such as at Kapilavastu and Kauśāmbī.[337] More commonly monasteries are "twin sites" located in close proximity to the city walls: "whether it is Saheth (Jetavana) 400 meters west of Maheth (Śrāvastī), or Amarāvatī (stupa site) near Dhanyakakata, or Venuvana outside New Rajgir, or the Buddhistic mounds in the vicinity of Vishal ka garth (Vaiśālī) or outside Bairat (Virāṭanagara)."[338] (She notes that

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[335] Ibid, 68-69.

[336] Jason Hawkes, "Finding the 'Early Medieval' in South Asian Archaeology," *Asian Perspectives* 53, no. 1 (2015): 75.

[337] Kaur, *Imagining the Urban*, 124.

[338] Ibid, 125.

"Venuvana lies outside the inner fortification but inside the outer one.")[339] As Valabhī itself has not been extensively excavated, it is impossible to say whether the Valabhī monastery lay within the city or beside it, within some walls but not others, etc. The language of the land grants does not distinguish between them. The grants are issued from Valabhī, the monastery is located in Valabhī, the land granted also may fall in Valabhī.

In this chapter, I will argue that the overlapping uses of the city derive from its presence as both a physical and a conceptual space. The Maitrakas did not make Valabhī. The concept of the city, and likely its physical presence, preceded the dynasty. A city named Valabhī is referenced in the Puranas. "In the Purāṇas Valabhī is associated with Saryāti, son of Vavasvata Manu."[340] More proximately to the Maitrakas in time, Valabhī was a *tirtha*, or holy place, of the Jains.[341] The schism between the Digambaras and the Śvetāmbaras occurred in Valabhī, according to the Jain tradition.[342] While Jain literary sources hold Valabhī in high regard, and even mention relationships with Maitraka kings, these relationships are not reflected in Maitraka epigraphic records.[343] It is therefore difficult to correlate the Jain record with the more temporally secure dynastic record.

This chapter will explore the ability of the city to draw in multiple elite centers. I make the argument here that the control of ideologically significant places, such as Valabhī, were key to the Maitraka's success and part of a wider pattern in the subcontinent of geographic politics. The seeming instability of the political situation from a dynastic point of view, with the fission

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[339] Ibid, 125, n. 16.

[340] Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 96.

[341] Verma, *Economy and Society in Ancient India*, 106.

[342] Shastri*, Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 96.

[343] Verma, *Economy and Society in Ancient India*, 105-107.

and fusion of dynasties, the making of new kingdoms and complex webs of alliances, was countered by a perseveringly stable conceptual and political geography. Drawing upon Sheldon Pollock's theory of cosmopolitan geographies, I will examine how such kings may have defined themselves through place, even when their direct control over land was tenuous and/or under stress from multiple competitors.

COSMOPOLITAN GEOGRAPHIES

Concepts of place have a broad significance in Indian political history. It is clear from Sheldon Pollock's work that cosmopolitan geographies (one might also call them sacred, or imaginary, geographies, but Pollock's theory fits them better than most) were a defining aspect of elite Sanskritic culture, especially as it spread through and beyond South Asia. The world of Sanskrit geography was "vast yet delimited in its vastness and completely named and known."[344] This space could be relocated, stretched or condensed and, critically to Pollock's argument, replicated to produce a kind of cosmopolitanism which he argues is unique. Pollock notes that the circulation of Sanskrit texts through South and Southeast Asia "requires conceiving of South Asian space itself as exceeding its concrete landmass."[345] It is for this reason, he argues, that Xuanzang declared that "People of distant places with diverse customs generally designate the land they admire as India," and that Mount Meru, along with other mythic names from the *Mahābhārata* can be found in Java as well as India.[346] He notes that India itself underwent a process of "Indianization" in the medieval period as well. "In the far south, cities, regions,

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[344] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 189.

[345] Ibid, 234.

[346] Ibid.

political zones, mountains, and rivers were being named for celebrated northern cites…. [There were] Gaṅga rivers seemingly everywhere."[347]

This cosmopolitan geography also presents a locus where we can see similar ideals of kingship cut across religious discourses. The most widely recognized form of universal kingship in ancient India was surely the *cakravartin*, as previously discussed. This title had special significance in Buddhist philosophy, as Strong explains:

> Traditionally, the cakravartin is portrayed in quite extraordinary terms. He is said to exhibit the thirty-two bodily marks of the Great Man (Mahapurusa), and to be endowed with the seven jewels or emblems of sovereignty, the most important of which is the wheel…. [The wheel] then leads him in a great cosmic conquest of the four continents. It takes him East, South, West, and North as far as the great ocean, and, wherever it rolls, he encounters no resistance; the power of his Dharma, symbolized by his wheel, is such that local kings immediately submit to him. Finally, his wheel leads him back to his *capital at the center of the world*, and there it remains, miraculously suspended in mid-air over the royal palace, as an emblem of his sovereignty.[348]

The situation is not entirely different in the great anti-Mauryan *Mahābhārata*. Pollock (who classifies the *Mahābhārata* as "India's most sustained and profound discourse on power"[349] analyzes a similar act of total conquest in the epic: "Yuddhisthira, the eldest of the Pandavas, sends out his four brothers to conquer the 'four directions' – not 'in the four directions' but the whole known world that had political meaning."[350] He goes on to describe how, through this device and others the *Mahābhārata* defines the world:

> Thus at every turning point of the main narrative – the royal consecration before the war, the survey of a world soon to be at war that is the very object of that war, the reaffirmation of dominion after the war, the ritual death march at the end of the story – the *Mahābhārata* continually insists on *placing* the action and thereby producing a specific macrospace, one

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[347] Ibid, 236.

[348] Strong, *The Legend of King Aśoka*, 46, emphasis added.

[349] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 223-224.

[350] Ibid, 226.

with uniformity, coherence, and salience that manifest themselves everywhere in the narrative.[351]

As he goes on to explain, this act of mapping not only had significance within the narrative but is actually put into practice through the spread of the text.[352] The text made the places and then the places made the text, as they bought into its narrative.

Many kings found it critical to define their reign as universal, precisely by situating themselves in such a conceptual geography. Pollock gives an example from a ninth century praśasti of the Gurjara Pratīhāras, which describes king Nāgabhata as the ruler of a kingdom both cosmically and physically defined. He explains the text thusly:

> [F] our points of a very particular compass function as the armature of imperial power: Andhra in the south, Sindh in the west, Vidarbha in the central region, and Kaliṅga in the east. If these had by this time primarily become placeholders for large regional spaces, they are once more given denser texture by specific reference to places in between: Ānartta in today's Gujarat, Matsy in central Rajasthan, Mālava to the east in Madhya Pradesh, Turuṣka in the far north, Vatsa contoured on the city of Kauśāmbī on the Yamunānear Allahabad, with the Kirātas standing for pastoral nomads throughout this space. Real power, at this historical epoch, could be nothing less than this – but it also would be nothing more….

> The epigraphical texts thus enunciated a vision of a coherent space that extended *diganta*, "to the horizons" though everyone knew there was, so as to speak, space beyond the horizons – an represented the arena for a particular kind of political action…. The same claims being made in Mālava in the west were also being made in Aihoḷe in the south and in Bengal … and in the north …, and often simultaneously, without apparent contradiction, however mutually exclusive the claims.[353]

This way of claiming space is simultaneously specific and abstract.[354] It shows both a knowledge of the physical geography of conquest and an ability to claim a cosmic and cosmopolitan type of

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[351] Ibid, 227.

[352] Ibid, 228.

[353] Ibid, 245.

[354] It is not that unusual, historically or globally, for space to be thought of in a way that differs from the firm bounded areas of modern states and cities. E.g. E.Valentine Daniel, *Fluid Signs: Being a Person the Tamil Way* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 74, argues that villagers drawing maps "began not with the periphery of the village but at its center, with the noting of the important places, such as the temple, the priest's

power. The Maitrakas never achieved anything resembling universal dominion, but their pattern of conquest shows an affinity for cosmically prominent sites: Valabhī, Ujjain. Even when the dynasty was at its weakest, in their final years, Śīlāditya IV issued a grant from a camp near Vadnagar, the site of a prominent monastery (and many less famous temples).

In this context, kings worked to gain control over multiple centers of power. Daud Ali has traced how the powerful families of the fourth century onward worked to consolidate their power along the *rājamaṇḍala* model of the *Arthaśāstara*. This type of political order, where kings derive their strength from alliance (and more interestingly, from a series of ally/enemy relationships that pull other dynasties into their spheres of influence), meant that multiple ruling families needed each other in order to successfully rule, and that to become a *cakravartin* necessarily implied the existence of other kings and dynasties who might one day take your place.[355] Rather than seeing this social situation as running contrary to the (particularly Brahmanical) vision of *rājadharma*, I seek to situate these royal dynamics in the context of rising Brahmanical political and social power. While kings were likely far less dependent on the religious knowledge of their Brahmin advisors than those advisors made it seem in their texts, the anti-imperial logic of the *Mahābhārata* and similar texts, as well as the emphasis on maintaining the order of varnas, and of keeping kings from becoming *too* totalizing and ambitious, likely appealed to these smaller dynasties. If one of the morals of the *Mahābhārata* is that conquering the world is likely to end it, the petty king can cast himself as an important

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house, the crossroads, and so on. Only then did attention shift to the periphery." Similarly, the Greek *polis* had a territorially ambiguous meaning. Jonathan M. Hall, "The Rise of State Action in the Archaic Age," in *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government*, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World, ed. Hans Beck (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 9, summarizes the *polis* thus: "In authors of the Classical period, the term *polis* simultaneously designates: (i) an urban center, in which administrative and judicial functions are housed; (ii) the territory controlled by that urban center; and (iii) the political community that resides in both the urban center and its hinterland."

[355] Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, 31-36.

bulwark against cosmic annihilation, all the while seizing upon a common geography to situate his rule.

THE CITY IN SITU

The current state of archaeological research means that we can know far more about the imagination of Valabhī than its physical presence. While some small excavations have been performed at the site, none have been fully reported. R.N. Mehta has published a survey of the site undertaken in 1963. He notes that Valabhī is bordered by the river Ghelo, and that the central area of the site is occupied by the modern town.[356] Mehta surveyed an area to the west of the modern city and summarized earlier work, noting that "historical data are amply supported by the spread of the archaeological deposit."[357] He estimates the total area of occupation as occupying a linear area of 3 x 0.5 kms.[358] In addition to the presence of bricks, he notes that his team collected amphora (these were mis-identified at the time and are, in fact, torpedo jars)[359], Red Polished Ware, crude (now called coarse) red and black ware, painted red ware, grey ware, and plain red ware.[360] All of these materials roughly correlate to the first half of the first millennium CE and are similar to remains found at Devnimori, Nagara, Baroda, Timbarva, Vadgnagara, and Shamalaji among others, thus spanning the entirety of modern Gujarat.[361] A shared ceramic culture does not, of course, guarantee a shared political affiliation. The presence

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[356] R.N. Mehta, "Valabhi of the Maitrakas," *Journal of the Oriental Institute* 13 (1963-1964): 244.

[357] Ibid.

[358] Ibid, 245.

[359] see: Roberta Tomber, *Indo-Roman Trade: From Pots to Pepper*, (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 2008), 39-42.

[360] Mehta, "Valabhi of the Maitrakas," 247.

[361] Ibid, 249.

of similar types of local wares at this range of sites only serves to confirm that they were, roughly speaking, contemporary, and that, perhaps, they were served by a shared network of artisans. However, the finds of similar trade wares at most of these sites, in addition to numismatic evidence,[362] indicates that these sites were connected by a trade in elite goods, and that they represent points of shared elite interest. Furthermore, given that only elite sites — temples, Buddhist monasteries, political centers — have been the subject of archaeological attention, it is possible that this ceramic culture is, at least in part, an elite ceramic culture, and might indicate a shared preference for certain types of goods. Only further archaeological work outside of elite centers could confirm this.

The results of my survey and examination of collections from Valabhī at Maharaja Sayajirao University roughly correlate with Mehta's findings. I found the same types of wares in both the survey and the existing collection. I also noted the presence of Micaceous Red Ware, which can be dated to roughly the same period, and one piece of medieval glazed ware (see: Figure 2; Figure 3). I surveyed 6 sets of transects across three areas (1 and 1x; 2; and 3/1, 3/2 and 3x), as shown on Map 2. The ceramic densities, in sherds/sq m are represented on Map 3. Each set contained two transects beginning near the modern town and heading away from it. The transects are paired separated by 5m at their centers (see: Diagram). Collections were made every 20m or every 30m, depending on the density of artifacts and the nature of the terrain. Collections units 1a/b to 5a/b of transect set 1 had a radius of 1.5m all other units had a radius of 2m. Transect set 1 is 870m in length at 290º to N. Transect set 1x runs perpendicular to 1, and is

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[362] "The site of Devnimori, in North Gujarat, continues in this period as well, since Phase III, dated to the sixth century CE, is the last phase at this site that contained coins of Sarvabhattaraka, the first Maitraka ruler. The find of silver Sassanian coins, points to the site being a part of a wider network." Susan Verma Mishra and Himanshu Prabha Ray, *The Archaeology of Sacred Spaces: The Temple in Western India, 2nd century BCE – 8th century CE* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 88.

170m in length at 210º to N. Transect set 2 is 140m in length at 25º to N. It is positioned 60m from the beginning of transect 1. Transect set 3a is 430m in length at 260º to N. Transect set 3/2 begins 95m south of the end of transect pair 3/1, and runs parallel to it in the same direction. It is 260m in length. Transect set 3x is perpendicular to transect set 3/1 and is 120m in length at 125º to N. It is positioned at the end of transect set 3/1. These transects are located in the same areas which Mehta explored, to the west of the modern town, with the exception of transect set 2, which I chose to survey because ancient bricks had been reported in the area. However, transect set 2 yielded very little in terms of surface remains.

Figure 2 - Medieval Glazed Ware (Khambat type) from Valabhī
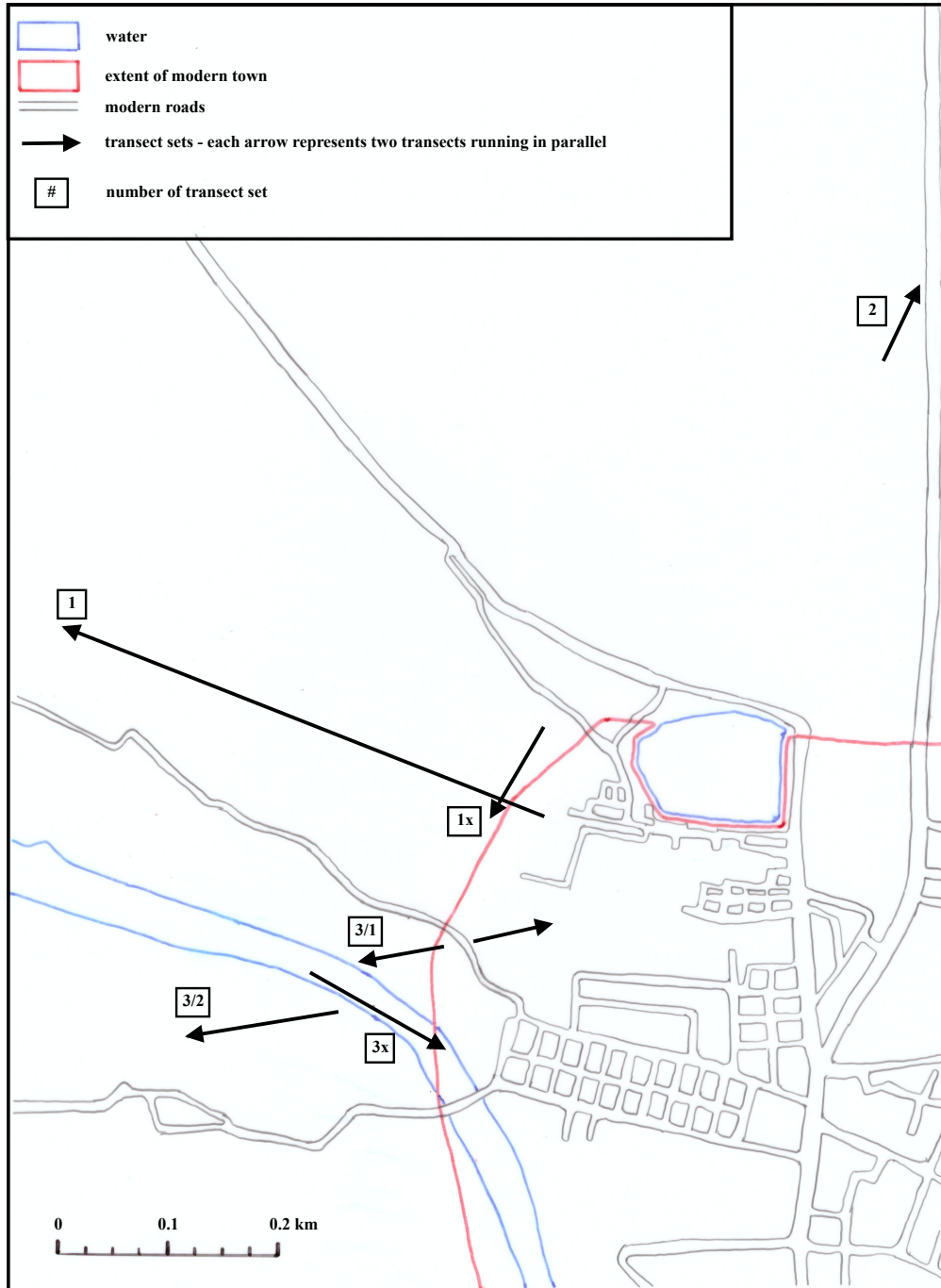
Map 2 - Valabhī Transects[363]

Each arrow on this map shows the direction in which the transects were surveyed, and accounts for two parallel transects, of which the centers are 5m apart.

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[363] This map as well as Map 3 and Map 4 have been drawn by combining GPS data taken in the field by the author with information from Google Maps. Modern roads and the extent of the modern town are based on Google's rendering.
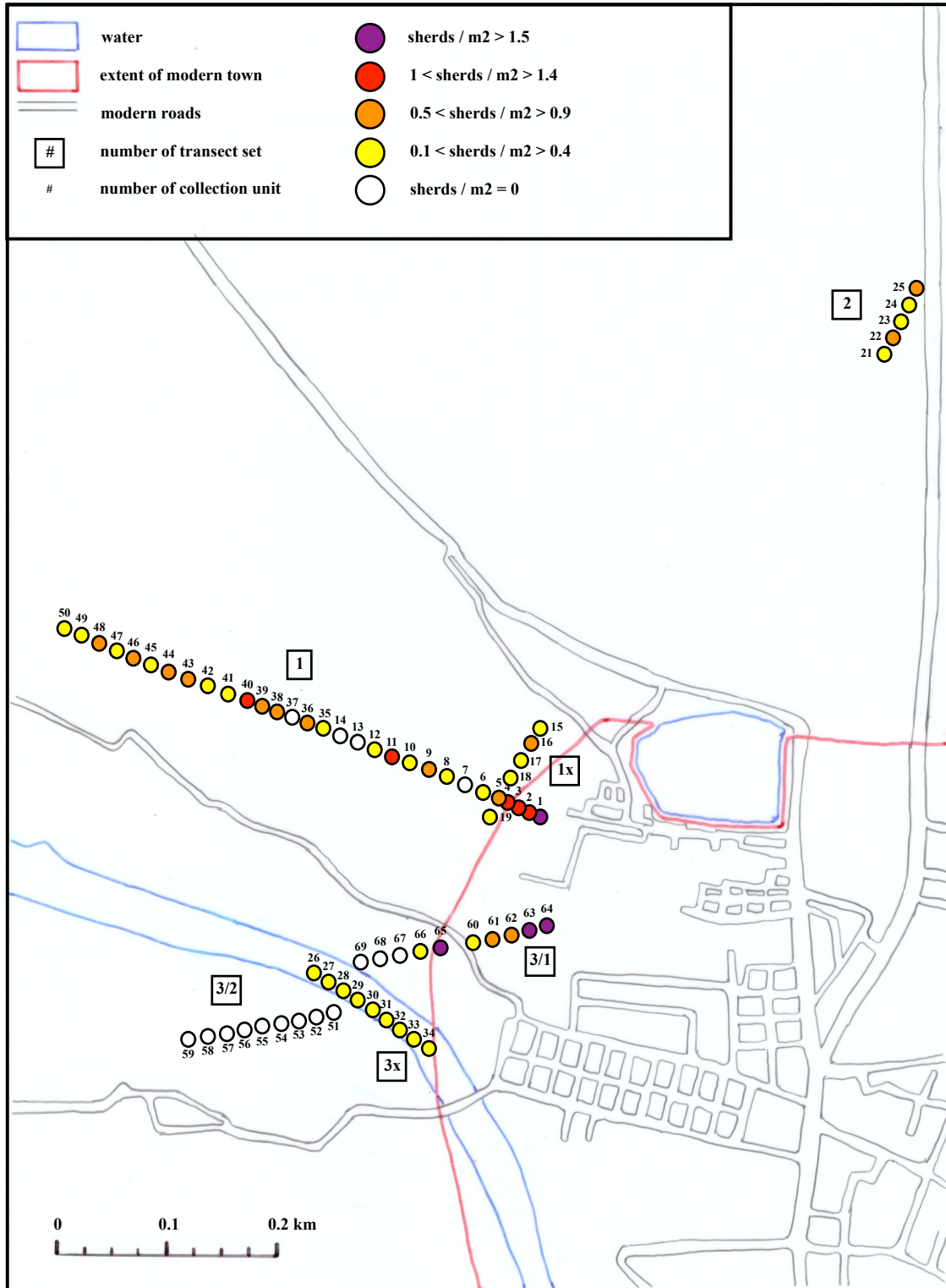
Map 3 - Ceramic Densities in Valabhī Collection Units

Each marked and numbered unit represents the average sherds/m² of two collection units, of which the centers are 5m apart. See Diagram 1 for the arrangement of these units.

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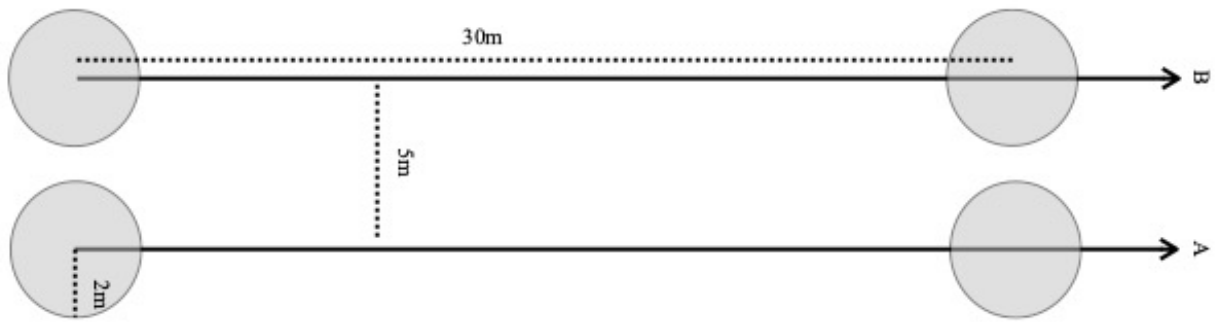
Diagram 1 - Arrangement of Collections Units on Transects[364]

Figure 3 - Micaceous Red Ware from Valabhī

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[364] Note: Not all collections units are reflected by the measurements represented here, but these were the most common distances and sizes used. All transects A and B are separated by 5m.

I was also able to collect some remains from a water tank trench being dug by farmers just to the west of the town, south of my survey transects. This location is recorded as CMM (after the initials of the landowner) and falls at N21° 53.249' E71° 52.400'. These remains were in better condition than the other survey finds and included portions of red plain ware pear-shaped jars. As seen below in Figure 4, jars of this type are also found at Devnimori, and can be distinguished by paddle marks on the exterior of the vessel and knuckle marks on the interior. All of these findings confirm the general conclusions of Mehta, regarding both the types of artifacts found at the site and the comparable contemporary sites in the region.

Figure 4 - Pear Shaped Jars

L: example from Valabhī CMM
R: excavated example from Devnimori, MSU collections

While the survey transects shown in Map 2 produced ceramic material at a maximum of 0.9km from the modern town (there were no notable remains after VLB 43 in transect set 1, or in transect set 3/2, on the opposite side of the river from the town, ceramic remains in transect set 2 did not exceed 0.8 sherds per sq. m), the ancient settlement area may have been much larger. Villagers reported having found bricks in two areas to the north of the town, and in one area in the town, during construction projects. In an interview with an elderly well-digger from the town, we were told that, in the context of digging wells, large amounts of brick are routinely found approximately 7 m below the modern ground surface. Based on this information, surface survey is not the best way to determine the extent of the ancient settlement. In the future, non-invasive subsurface techniques such as ground penetrating radar or resistivity survey may help to better define settlement extent.

Map 4 shows the survey transects, the water tank location as CMM, and the locations of reported brick finds. In all of the survey transects (with the exception of sets 3/2), both nearly complete bricks and fragments of bricks were regularly recovered. Most of the bricks show fire damage to the point of vitrification; it is not clear whether this is the result of over-firing in production, large fires when the city was occupied, or post-occupational burning. As mentioned in the Introduction to this dissertation, we have textual evidence that the city of Valabhī was subject to attacks, but it is not possible to definitively correlate the heat damage to the bricks with any of these recorded events. Figure 5 shows a sample of bricks found in the survey area, and Figure 6 shows two partial bricks in transect set 1 in situ. Due to their large size and storage limitations at MS University, most large bricks were not collected, and small fragments were chosen as samples to show the presence of bricks throughout the transects. Due to this collection

methodology, I cannot estimate the relative density of bricks throughout the survey area. While

Mehta found the presence only of bricks and not of fortifications surprising for a political center

(which, he argues, would have been in need of fortification),[365] I would argue that the ubiquitous

presence of bricks is evidence of a city-sized settlement, and that, given the depth at which the

villagers normally encounter remains, further research and excavations are necessary to

determine the nature of the ancient settlement. Using the transects where bricks were found

along with the locations of the recorded bricks, I can estimate that the premodern built

environment extended over a minimum of 1.7 km north to south and 2 km east to west. Given the

low grade ceramic and brick remains everywhere north of the Ghelo River,[366] and the reports by

residents of both ceramic and brick remains when digging in the area around the town, the

ancient settlement area must have been quite large.

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[365]Mehta, "Valabhi of the Maitrakas," 245-246.

[366] Note: The Ghelo River seems to be considerably dynamic, with the old river bed farther north than the current river. The current river is also dammed near the city, at the end of transect set 2. I am thus not suggesting that the ancient settlement was bounded by this river.
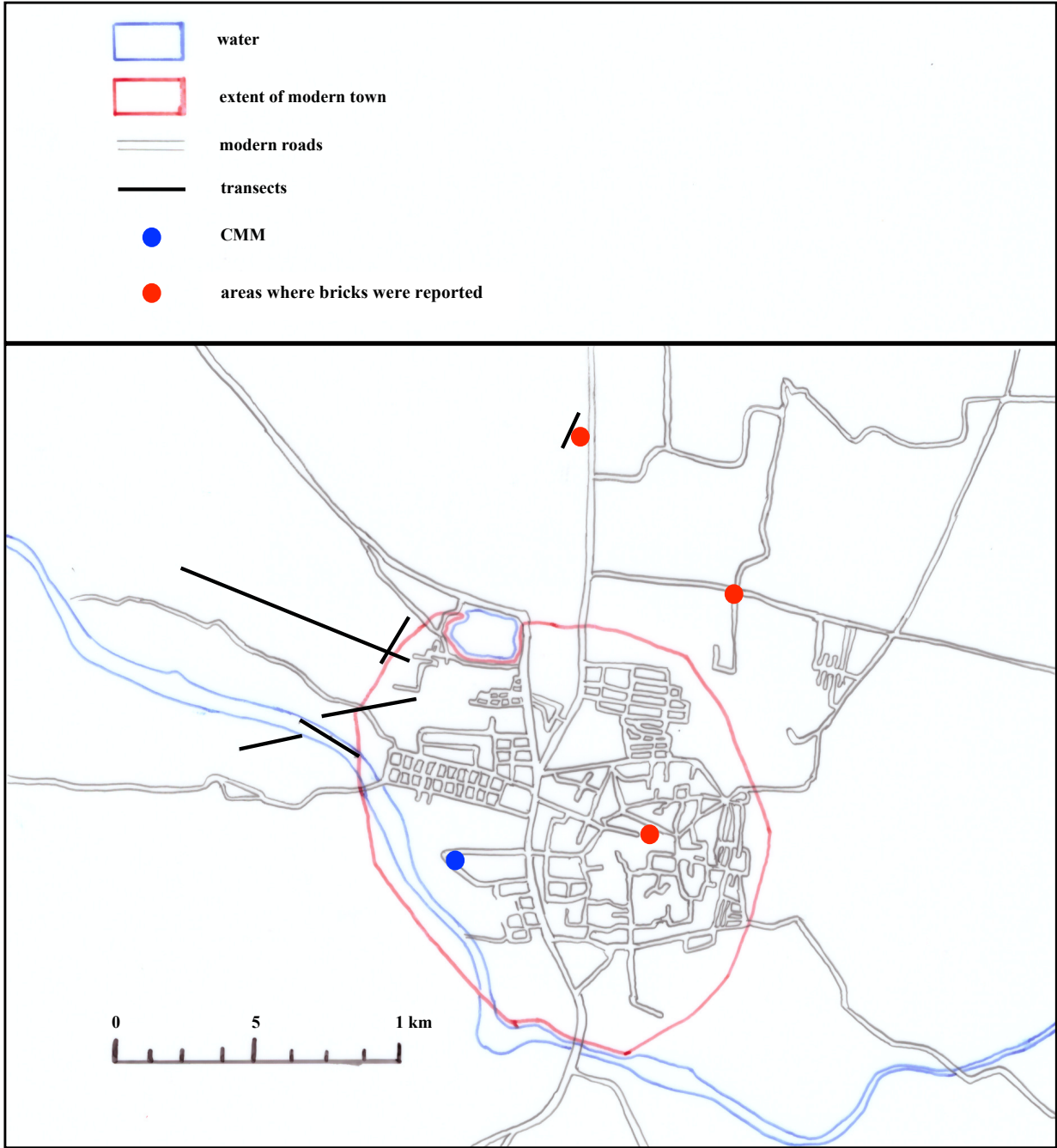
Map 4 - Locations of Reported or Observed Archaeological Activity

See Maps 2 and 3 for details of survey transects.
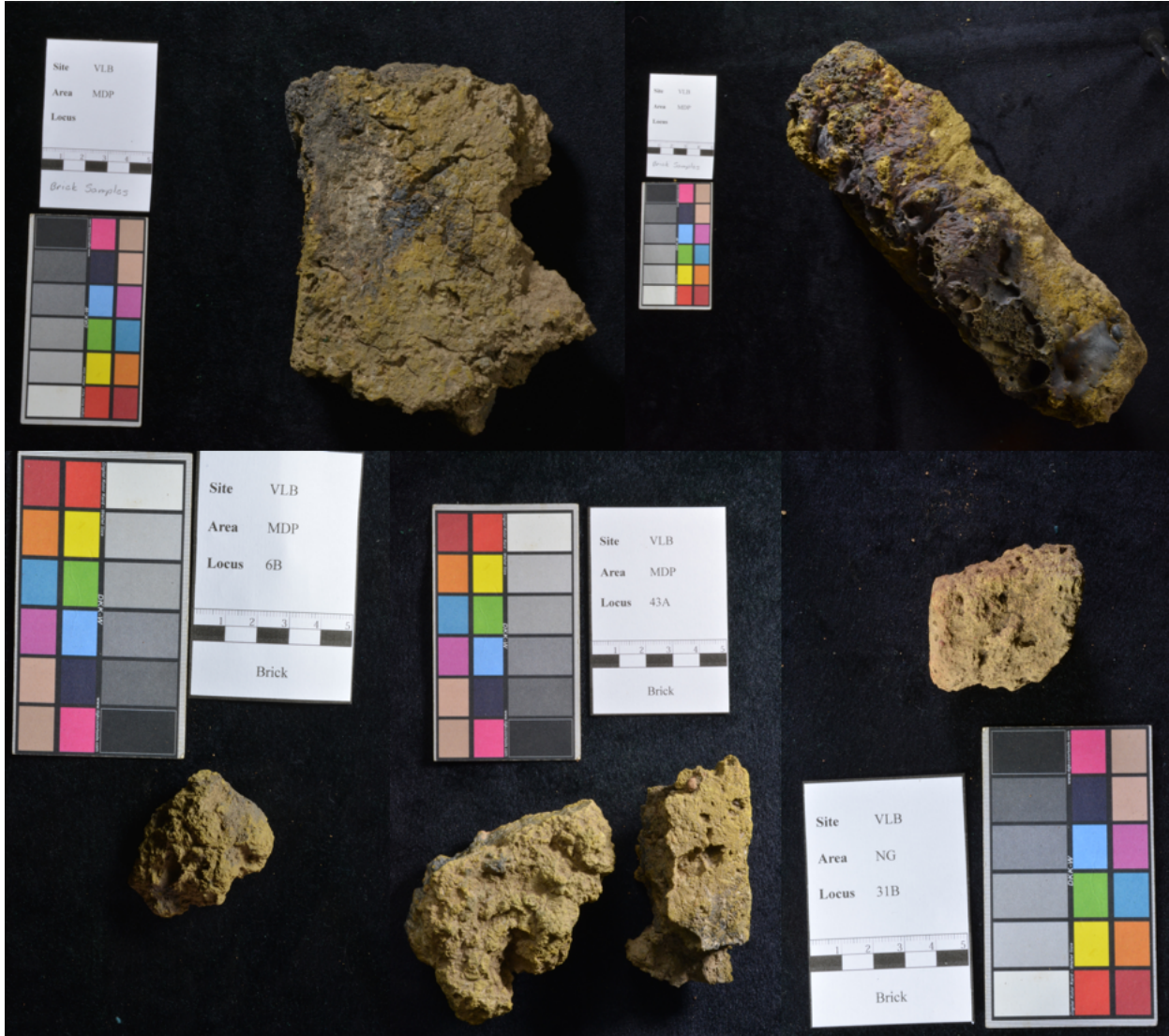
Figure 5 - Brick Samples from Valabhī

Figure 6 - Bricks in Situ, Valabhī Transect Set 1

THE ATTRACTIVE POWER OF PLACE

  Ceramics and bricks can tell us only so much about the city and its inhabitants. We cannot determine, without further and much more extensive excavations, whether the Buddhist monasteries were located within the main walls of the city, how large the palace structures were, if there were any Jain monuments, or the antiquity of any of these structures. Indeed. given the location of the modern settlement, some of these questions may never be answered. A large stone

Nandi as well as several *lingam* have been found in the town,[367] indicating that Śiva worship was practiced and likely patronized in antiquity. Some of the lingam, namely the miniature lingam recovered from the site, date from the first to the fourth centuries BCE, indicating a long Śaivite presence at Valabhī.[368] The Nandi and the lingam of various sizes are now located at the village temple, with villagers reporting that the larger artifacts were recovered from the Ghelo River. However, as Valabhī has never been the subject of a large-scale excavation, it is not possible to know the size, layout or location of any temples or viharas that may have existed in antiquity.

Valabhī was likely an important trade center, given its proximity to the Ghelo river, and thus to the Gulf of Khambat. This is supported by the presence of torpedo jars among the archaeological remains (see: Figure 7). Torpedo jars have the following features:

> A handle-less amphora, previously recorded in India as Roman, is not paralleled among Roman types. It has a distinctive tall, narrow base, and barrel-shaped body, torpedo-like in shape. The fabric is unlike typical Indian ones, but not dissimilar to the Late Roman Ampora i (LR1) fabric, although it is generally fine and better sorted with finger impressions rather than wheel marks on the inside. This so-called 'Torpedo Jar' was produced between the late Parthian and Early-Islamic periods and at least some of the vessels appear to have reached India during the Sasanian period (AD 224-651) … Although no kilns are known, Mesopotamia is a likely source. A bitumen lining …, visible on most vessels, indicates that they were used for the transportation of liquid. Like their Roman counterparts they probably contained wine, as a wine-drinking culture existed in Mesopotamia …. The thick black lining helps to distinguish Torpedo sherds, for in India this is much better preserved than on Roman vessels.[369]

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[367] See: Kantilal F. Sompura, *Structural Temples of Gujarat (up to 1600 AD)* (Ahmedabad: Gujarat University, 1968), 83; Mishra and Ray, *The Archaeology of Sacred Spaces*, 177 argue that the presence of these monumental scale artifacts implies the presence of a Śiva temple at Valabhī.

[368] Debala Mitra, ed., "I. Explorations and Excavations: Gujarat: 28. Excavation at Valabhi, District Bhavnagar," *Indian Archaeology, a Review 1979-80* (1983): 24.

[369] Tomber, *Indo-Roman Trade*, 39-42.

Figure 7 - Torpedo Jar fragments from Valabhī: interior (L) and exterior (R)

Torpedo jars have been reported at Valabhī by Mehta, and in my own survey I collected torpedo jar fragments from the CMM water trench at levels 1 and 3. The presence of trade wares reinforces the image created by Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracarita,* which called the kings of Valabhī "seafaring lords whose wealth was equal to the king of the Guhakyas (Kubera)."[370] I discuss Maitraka relations with the wider world in Chapter 5.

South Asia in general in this period was characterized by "dispersed foci of political power,"[371] as I have discussed in Chapter 2. The question then becomes through which theory of politics do we understand these 'dispersed foci?' Chattopadhyaya proposes that the essential characteristic of states in this transition period was that they began a process by which local elites and their lineages were incorporated into territorial states.[372] "The political exigency of this integration from the Gupta period specially – and I posit *political* integration as a counterpoint to the decentralized polity of the feudal model – lay in the interrelatedness of polities caused by what I have called the horizontal spread of state society and represented, geographically, by the lineages at their varied bases."[373]

Chattopadhyaya has proposed a fission model for this period, and, where there is fission the possibility of fusion may be implied. Local elites who were subsumed into a fledgling state may have been able, under the right circumstances, to assert their own claims. In the Satavāhana state (or empire) "the empire was characterized by periods of greater political centralization and

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[370] *guhaky-endra-tulya-vibhavasya nāvika-pater*, in *Daśakumaracarita* 11.127.

[371] Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 212.

[372] He suggests this model in opposition to the model of a 'segmentary state' in which "the major integrative factor is 'ritual sovereignty' rather than 'political sovereignty.'" Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India,* 213-214.

[373] Ibid*,* 218. Chattopadhyaya located the genesis of these processes in the early medieval period (around the sixth century) but similar issues have been noted in much earlier Indian states.

more effective administration that correlated with the reigns of particularly capable rulers who were able to both achieve and consolidate military success."[374] The Satavāhanas derive their power from particular agents who formed capable administrative systems out of the existing landscape. "In the *intense competition* [emphasis added] among the numerous rival states that comprised South Asia during the Early Historic Period, the Satavāhanas can be counted among the major political and military players and were *occasionally transcendent* [emphasis added], able to conquer and incorporate rival polities."[375] The trend in South Asia of forming empires out of an existing elite fabric may run quite deep. It is possible to characterize even the Mauryan empire in similar, but differently focused terms.

> The Mauryan state was an empire to the extent that it did control a large territory with culturally differentiated peoples …. That it was unable to restructure to a greater degree the economy of the core and peripheral areas would perhaps explain why it was short-lived. Its primary concern was extractive revenue from existing resources…[376]

Even larger imperial formations, then, relied upon existing resource bases, if not political units.[377]

The picture that begins to emerge is that, for quite some time, intense competition between various leaders and would-be leaders led to (often rapidly) shifting loci of power. The commonality here is, to borrow Chattopadhyaya's turn of phrase again, "dispersed foci of

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[374] Carla Sinopoli, "On the Edge of Empire: Form and Substance in the Satavahana Dynasty," in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, ed. Susan E. Alcock et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 177.

[375] Ibid, 178.

[376] Romila Thappar, *The Mauryas Revisited* (Calcutta: Published for Centre for Studies in Social Sciences by K.P. Bagchi & Co., 1987), 28-29.

[377] This is not at all unusual in ancient empires - even ones traditionally considered well administered and highly consolidated. See: Rachel Mairs, *The Hellenistic Far East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), who has argued that the Achaemenids simply picked up a well working resource extraction system in Bactra, with few alterations. The Indian empires then, are quite different from the British (and even from the properly Medieval empires which would come in the second millennium) but, perhaps not so different from their contemporaries.

political power." However, unlike Chattopadhyaya, the cases above present good evidence that this state of dispersed power was not simply an artifact of a transition period (between, say Buddhist and Hindu empires) but rather was a prominent and durable feature of the Indian political landscape. My suggestion is that this was not an accident — it was not simply that kings could not get their acts together — but that these kinds of diffuse power were in the interest of at least some of the factions who were competing to define power, both theoretically and in practice.

These foci of power are first and foremost places, which come to be associated with particular lineages[378] only under the right circumstances. Suvrathan has studied how these dynamics might play out from the perspective of local elites (or more precisely, locally elite places). Her work at Banavasi, which, like Valabhī, played host to a great diversity of elite groups, concentrates on understanding how a locally important place could be bound up in different empires and states, shed from them, and make its own claims to power while maintaining its own distinct identity. Her "survey at Banavasi has shown that regional organization in peripheral areas is extremely complex and cannot be reduced to explanations based solely on incorporation within a 'core' or on independent 'peripheral' development."[379] Critically, she shows that the place itself, rather than simply the people or dynasties that occupied it, is the critical unit of analysis. "The oft repeated phrase — 'the Kadambas of

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[378] For a discussion of the rise and proliferation of royal lineages in the first millennium see: Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India*, 32-37. Even as these royal households negotiated matters of title and inter-relationships among themselves, they were almost always intimately bound to their seats of power. As these royal houses came to occupy expanding positions of power, they also integrated in to a set of relationships with each other (for Ali "courtly culture" for Pollock the "Sanskrit cosmopolis.") "The appearance of new royal houses in the epigraphic record indicates the passage of pre-state forms of social organization into monarchial states as well as the integration of local political structures into wider regional and pan-regional political networks." Ibid, 33.

[379] Uthara Suvrathan, "Complexity on the Periphery: A study of regional organization at Banavasi, c. 1st – 18th century A.D.," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2013), 258.

Banavasi'—might, in fact be inaccurate. Banavasi existed before the Kadambas, was one of their core areas at the height of their power, and continued after the early Kadambas."[380] This is due in part to the site's status as a religious center although, as with the royal elites who occupied the site, the religious elites were also not necessarily stable residents. Even in the first centuries CE, when the site is most strongly associated with Buddhism in the literary record, "while stupas are among the earliest religious structures in the region, the excavation of two apsidal structures may indicate the presence of early Hindu religious structures as well."[381] In the sixth century, the site shows a mix of Brahmanical and Jain presences, only becoming more uniformly Hindu in the tenth century.[382]

It was common for many elite groups to share interest in a site. While it is common for historiographical research, especially historiography interested in the *longue durée* to portray the shifting affiliations of a site or region in terms of which interest groups won or lost,[383] close examinations of specific sites reveal that they could comfortably host elites with widely ranging interests. Evidence for a Śaivite, Buddhist and Jain presence is found at Valabhī in addition to the royal presence there. "The developments here demonstrate that the Brahmanical religion seems to have been the earliest at the site, and while it continued, the site also became important to the Buddhist and the Jaina communities."[384] In addition to the Śaivite artifacts found at the site

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[380] Ibid, 262.

[381] Uthara Suvrathan, "Spoiled for Choice? The Sacred Landscapes of Ancient and Medieval Banavasi," *South Asian Studies,* 30, no. 2 (2014): 226.

[382] Ibid.

[383] See: Romila Thapar, *Somnatha – The Many Voices of a History* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2004), 22; Bronkhorst, *Buddhism in the Shadow of Brahmanism*; Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won: From Alexander to the Guptas;* Verardi, *Hardships and Downfall of Buddhism in India.*

[384] Mishra and Ray, *The Archaeology of Sacred Spaces*, 176.

which have been mentioned earlier in this chapter, and the Buddhist monastic presence evidenced by the land grants discussed in Chapter 3, "[t]he sculptural evidence from the site is a Jaina metal image dating to the sixth century CE. In 363 CE, tradition records that the Jaina friars held a synod at Valabhi in Saurashtra, and another such synod was held at Valabhi once more, between 5[0]3 and 516 CE."[385] Sites which held importance for multiple traditions do not follow a clear or consistent trajectory of development, and the presence or strength of any given community at a particular site seems to be highly contingent.[386] Valabhī's trajectory is that of a site which comfortably hosted and even nourished many elites. "Thus, it is noticed that while the site had initially a single religious affiliation, over time it became important to other religions as well. The point to be noticed here is that all three religions existed side by side, and the growth of one did not cause the decline of the other."[387] In the mid-first millennium, the presence of multiple competing elites in the same sites was the norm, not the exception.

Suvrathan's work is important to this discussion because it both bridges gaps in the scholarly literature (primarily between epigraphers — or historians who rely mostly on epigraphy — and archaeologists) and demonstrates how the political and religious landscapes functioned over time. What we see is that a focus on the importance of place — the "dispersed foci of political power" — brings elites of all stripes into the frame. Banavasi, in Suvrathan's argument, was not a Kadamba site, or a Satavāhana site, nor was it Buddhist, Brahmin, or Jain. This mass of competing interests is less visible in the literary record, but it is nonetheless critical to read that record knowing that in this period these various interest groups closely interacted.

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[385] Ibid, 178.

[386] Ibid, 183-184.

[387] Ibid, 178.

The question cannot simply be how Buddhism fell and how Brahmanism came to dominate the religious and political spheres, but how we can understand their coexistence in the space of the Indian political sphere for at least half a millennium (and possibly much longer).

Suvrathan's work goes further to suggest that fixed places (that were, perhaps, also cast into certain kinds of cosmopolitan geography, or could call upon it when necessary) also held special and durable significance,that could allow for petty kings to form a base of power through their control of these localities. As she notes, Banavasi is folded into the Buddhist narrative about Aśoka, making an appearance in the Mahāvaṃsa.[388] "Banavasi's importance, [she] argue[s], lies in its early development as a regional administrative and especially as a sacred center."[389] This has implications for understanding Valabhī as well, both as a seat of the Maitraka dynasty and as a place that existed outside of and parallel to that dynasty. Bronkhorst has argued that kings and their courts played a central role in bringing together members of different religious orders through hosting debates.[390] As noted earlier, a story about one such debate being held at Valabhī is preserved in the Jain tradition. In this story, the Jain saint Mallavādin debated and defeated the Buddhists at the court of one of the Śīlādityas.[391] In some versions of this story, the ultimate result is that the Buddhists were expelled from Valabhī after their defeat, portraying the high stakes involved in a defeat before the king. While these stories come to us from texts written long after the Maitraka dynasty had ended, and likely exaggerate

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[388] Suvrathan, "Complexity on the Periphery," 29.

[389] Ibid, 68.

[390] Bronkhorst, *How the Brahmins Won*, 182.

[391] Virji, *Ancient History of Saurashtra*, 181-183

the event in favor of the Jains, they demonstrate the significance of these debates as well as the idea that Valabhī was a city where events of such significance would take place.

The Maitrakas may have seized upon the power of place in two ways: by binding their capital to the powerful monastic complex at Valabhī, and then again by capturing the more normatively significant city of Ujjain, a move which allowed them to make their own claims to universal kingship. It should not be surprising that an Ujjain featured in the *Mahābhārata* as the capital of Avanti — a great prize for a king who wishes to build an empire. It has significance in more local political history as well, as the king Rudradāman, a Kṣatrapa king of the second century whose inscriptions are found along with the Aśokan inscriptions at Junagadh in Sauraṣṭra, ruled from Ujjain.[392] This provides the potential fission to accompany Chattopadhyaya's argument about fusion — these foci of power may have always had the potential to break away and make their own claims, because the places themselves enabled their rulers' claims to power. While many of the theoretical texts produced in this period are difficult to locate in space (and often in time as well) the dynasties were always intensely local, even when they made cosmopolitan and imperial claims.

As for Valabhī itself, Suvrathan's work, along with Pollock's study of cosmopolitan geographies, suggests that the place would have attracted attention from many elites looking to make a claim to power. The more elites and the more types of elites that became associated with the place, the more powerful it would become. The concentration of power in the city then allows that power to carry beyond it. It may, therefore, have been in the Maitraka's interest to attract as much attention to Valabhī as possible. Support for Buddhists in the city would only

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[392] Ibid, 10.

enhance its renown. Ultimately, Yijing would claim that centers of Buddhist learning at Valabhī were on par with Nalanda. With Valabhī as their base, the Maitrakas were able to pursue their own ambitions of conquests and establish themselves as the de-facto paramounts of Saur,aṣṭrara, even when they themselves limited their activity in Saurasṭrara to a small area. Urbanism, then, is also a critical element of this political fabric. It is the place from which kings issue their inscriptions, the seat of a dynasty, the court where poets are patronized, and where religious elites are brought to debate. Cities that are imagined in epic are also the target of very real conquest.

MAKING SPACE

Valabhī was the main, but not only, seat of Maitraka power. While the vast majority of Maitraka grants were issued from Valabhī (*svasti Valabhītaḥ*), grants were also on occasion issued from royal military encampments. These encampments are marked as "victorious camps" (*(vi)jayaskandhāvāra*) and their place of establishment is given. Dhruvasena I issued two such grants from the village Khuḍḍavediya,[393] and one from Kasalakujagrahāra village.[394] Dharasena II issued four grants from a camp at Bhadrapatanaka.[395] Verma identifies this location as modern "Bhabod, 4 miles north-east of Mahuva and 20 miles from Talaja."[396] Śīlāditya I issued one grant from Bhadreśvara and one grant from Homba.[397] Both of these "victorious camps" were located outside the gates of Valabhī – *valabhīpradvāra.* He also issued a grant from the camp at

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[393] Grants 15 and 16 (village name unclear in 16).

[394] Grant 17.

[395] Grant 33.

[396] Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India*, Appendix II, no. 23.

[397] Grant 49; Grant 50.

Devīsaras.[398] Karagraha I issued one grant from the camp at Ujjayanī (Ujjain).[399] Dharasena II issued one grant from outside the gates of Kheṭaka.[400] Verma identifies this location as modern "Kheda, the headquarters of the Kaira district,"[401] located roughly halfway between Vadodara and Ahmedabad. Dhruvasena II issued one grant from a camp at Vanditapallī.[402] Dharasena IV issued two grants from a camp at Bhārakaca (modern Bharuch).[403] Dhruvasena III issued one grant from a camp at Sirisimmiṇika.[404] Kharagraha II issued one grant from a camp at Pulindaka.[405] Śīlāditya II issued one grant from a camp with a now illegible name,[406] one grant from a camp at Pulindaka[407] (as with Kharagraha II) one grant from a camp at Khetaka[408] (as with Dharasena II), two grants from a camp at Meghavaṇa (possibly modern "Meghavedar, 3 miles south west of Sihor"),[409] one grant from a camp at Picchīpalli (possibly "near Valabhī, it may be identified with Pacchegam"),[410] and finally a grant from a camp at Dhānanda.[411] It is

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[398] Grant 53.

[399] Grant 56.

[400] Grant 58.

[401] Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India*, Appendix II, no. 125.

[402] Grant 66.

[403] Grants 70 and 71. The name of the location partially illegible in grant 70 (Buhler reads the first line as "*aum svasti ijayaskandhāvārād-bhara – – – vāsakāt ...*") See: Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India*, Appendix II, no. 30.

[404] Grant 76.

[405] Grant 78.

[406] Grant 82.

[407] Grant 83.

[408] Grant 84.

[409] Grant 85 and 87. Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India*, Appendix II, no. 153.

[410] Grant 86. Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India*, Appendix II, no. 170.

[411] Grant 88.

possible that Śīlāditya II did not issue any grants from Valabhī, as the place of issue is not legible in his three remaining grants. Śīlāditya III issued one grant from a camp at Purnikagrāma,[412] one grant from a camp at Kheṭaka (as with Dharasena II and Śīlāditya II),[413] and one grant from a camp at Savandika, which "may be identified with Savaikot, a place near the find-spot of the grant. It is 9 miles to the north of Kamelj."[414] Śīlāditya IV was the last Maitraka king to issue a grant from Valabhī.[415] He also issued two grants from a camp at Kheṭaka (as with Dharasena II, Śīlāditya II and Śīlāditya III).[416] Śīlāditya V issued one grant from a camp at Goḍraka, which "may be Godhra, the capital of Panchmahal district."[417] Śīlāditya VI issued one grant from a camp at Anandapura, which is "identified with present Vadnagar."[418]

Where these locations are identifiable, they all fall to the north and west of Valabhī, confirming that Maitraka interests lay inland, and the locations are noted on Map 5. The region of Hastavapra-ahara figures prominently in the grants and would have been most proximate to their base at Valabhī. The ancient port of Hathab (mentioned in the *Periplus Maris Erithrei*) was found in that region. That, as well as Dharasena IV's grant from a camp near Bharuch, reinforce the image of the Maitrakas as kings with a heavy influence in trade, an image bolstered by the presence of imported torpedo jar vessels at the capital. Why, then, did the Maitrakas not locate their capital at Junagadh, which had been a center of Mauryan, Kṣatrapa, and Gupta power?

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[412] Grant 92.

[413] Grant 96.

[414] Grant 99. Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India*, Appendix II, no. 194.

[415] Grant 95, of which there is no edition, is identified as being issued from Valabhī in 701 C.E. See: Keilhorn, F. "A List of Inscriptions of Northern India from about A.D. 400." *Epigraphia Indica* 5, Appendix (1898-1899): no. 493.

[416] Grants 100 and 101.

[417] Grant 103. Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India*, Appendix II, no. 90.

[418] Grant 104. Verma, *Society and Economy in Ancient India*, Appendix II, no. 10.

| 1 - Bhabod | 3 - Ujjain | 5 - Bharuch | 7 - Pacchegam | 9 - Godhra |
| 2 - Valabhī | 4 - Kheda | 6 - Meghavedar | 8 - Savaikot | 10 - Vadnagar |
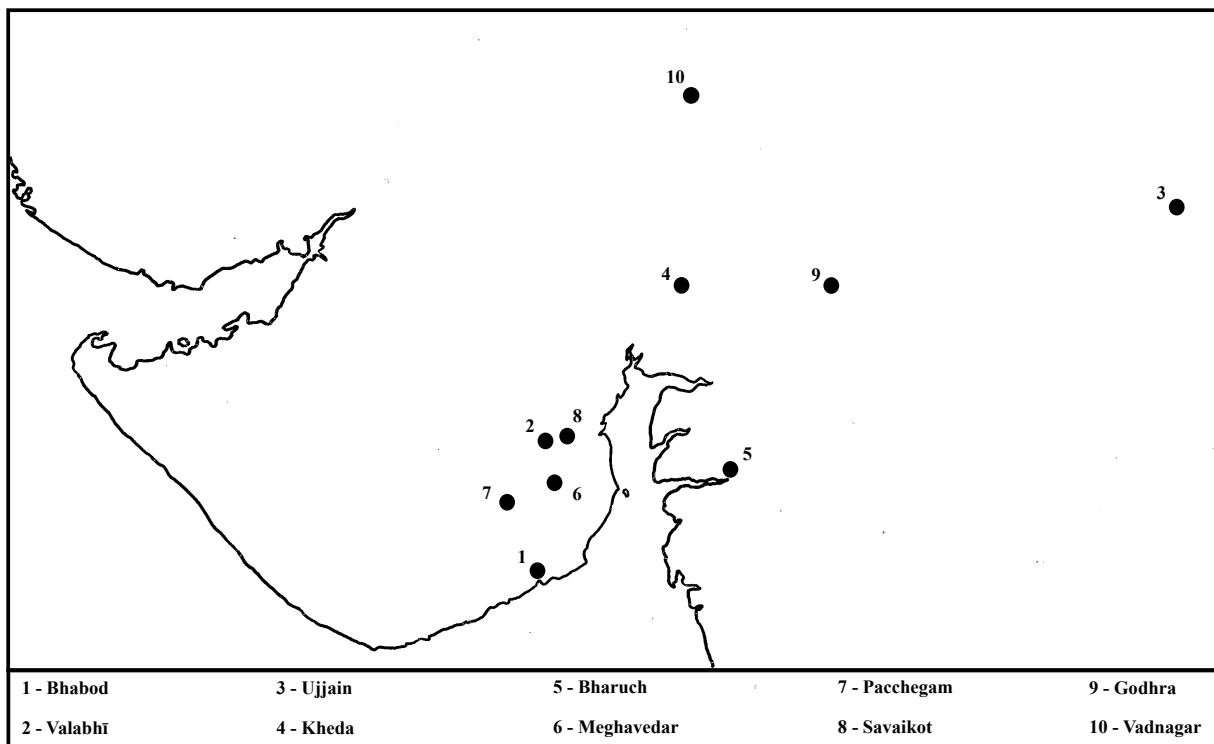
Map 5 - Maitraka Encampments[419]

Certainly, they could have pursued their trade interests on the western coasts of Sauraṣṭra and controlled a place much more well established and much more famous than Valabhī. Perhaps they did not situate themselves there for practical reasons, now lost.

However, I would suggest that their base at Valabhī allowed them to pursue a trajectory that would have been much more difficult from Junagadh. Valabhī's position near the edge of the Gulf of Khambat gave them ample access to trade routes, while allowing them to simultaneously pursue their ambitions of 'main land' style kingship, as well as giving them a place from which to interject in the cosmopolitan geography of the subcontinent. As Pollock has argued, this geography was always 'in-the-making:' places could be moved, reduplicated, given greater

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[419] Note: The locations are numbered in the order they first appear in the grants. These locations follow the identifications made by Verma. Not all place names have a probable modern identification.

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significance through their various associations. The Maitrakas very well may have been attempting to craft their own legacy and make their own interventions into cosmic space. Building monasteries, and perhaps hosting various important Jain figures, would have given them ample material to craft their own narrative, both rhetorically and spatially, all the while remaining intelligible to the wider Sanskrit cosmopolis.

CONCLUSION

What stands out most sharply about the Maitraka legacy is how unsuccessful they seem to have been. They were not recognized as great kings of the four directions, but rather as "seafaring lords" by their courtly contemporaries. Buddhists and Jains have had a much more longstanding and widely recognized association with Valabhī than the kings who ruled there. There is no Allahabad pillar inscription of the Maitrakas, laying out a vision of *rājadharma* for future great kings.[420] With that said, they had an enduring impact in less normative ways, shaping the way inscriptions were written and supporting a base for Buddhist and Jain traditions (with the side benefit of making their way into such accounts). Their behavior, both in terms of their movement around the landscape and their epigraphic record, indicates aspirations on par with the Guptas and Vākāṭakas, but these ambitions were ultimately never borne out. In spite of perhaps not living up to their own aspirations, the Maitrakas provide an excellent demonstration of how the small dynasties of the Early Medieval period functioned and fit themselves into political, geographical and theoretical landscapes.

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[420] There are a few Maitraka stone inscriptions, listed in Appendix C, but all are too fragmentary to gain any literary insight.

CHAPTER 5

Seafaring Lords whose Wealth was Equal to Kubera

In or around 640 CE[421] a Buddhist pilgrim from the Tang Empire, located in and around modern China, Xuanzang, visited the court of Dhruvasena II. His account is the only outsider perspective on the Maitraka court, and thus provides a critically important historical perspective, as it allows modern historians to examine an account that, while biased in its own ways, has a presumably different set of biases than Indian sources. It also stands as a testament to the Maitrakas' (and many other Indian kings') involvement in the world beyond South Asia. In Xuanzang's case it was religious entanglements — namely Buddhism — which brought him to the subcontinent. His journey is one of the cases in which trade and political ties further enmeshed the *mahārājas* of India with surrounding powers. In the mid first millennium, India was flanked by Sasanian Persia in the west and the Tang Empire in the east. Tang and Sasanian records both indicate an ongoing interaction with South Asia's elite traditions. These relationships were nothing new. The Indian Ocean trade stretches back to the third millennium BCE,[422] and firmly established India's economic place in Eurasia. Alexander had shown interest in the "naked gymnosophists" of India, and the Alexander Romances gave several versions of

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[421] See: Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī*, 59.

[422] See: Klaus Karttunen, "India and World Trade: From the Beginnings to the Hellenistic Age," in *Melammu: The Ancient World in an Age of Globalization*, ed. Markham J. Geller (Berlin: Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, 2014), 329-339, http://mprl-series.mpg.de/proceedings/7/; Daniel T. Potts, "South and Central Asian elements at Tel Abraq (Emirate of Umm al-Qaiwain, United Arab Emirates), c. 2200 BC-AD 400," *Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae*, Series A1 (1993): 615-628.

this interaction.[423] Buddhism came to China between the first century BCE and the first century CE.[424] While the relative strength and quality of these interactions varied over the years, Indian elites – kings, merchants, and religious leaders – had continuous contact with their Eurasian counterparts long before the Maitrakas came to power.

The majority of evidence for the above sphere of elite interactions comes from archaeology and extra-Indian sources. For reasons that will be explored below, including the features of Sanskrit political cosmology discussed in the previous chapter, Indian sources are largely silent or vague when it comes to their foreign counterparts. Hints of contact in Sanskrit sources point to an elite awareness of India's neighbors, but the relationship between South Asian kings and their counterparts in greater Asia is not fully theorized in courtly texts. Whereas brief nods to Sanskrit literary sources found in inscriptions can be matched with and confirmed by their Sanskrit referents (see Chapter 3), the more oblique references to the Persians and Chinese and their wares do not correlate to an easily accessible ancient tradition of scholarship on the world beyond India. The absence of such a tradition, however, does not mean that these mentions were obscure or illegible in their time. The evidence from outside India, particularly from the Sasanian and Tang courts, indicates deep and meaningful relationships between Persian and Chinese rulers and their Indian counterparts.

Caution is in order when reconstructing this relationship from fairly one-sided sources. We cannot know, for certain, whether Indian kings found their foreign counterparts as deeply fascinating as the Persians and Chinese found them. Foreign accounts can be inaccurate. The

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[423] See: Aleksandra Szalc, "Alexander's Dialogue with Indian Philosophers: Riddle in Greek and Indian Tradition," *Eos* 98 (2011): 7-25.

[424] Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 23.

Romans, for example, largely based their impression of India on Greek sources, and their interest in the subcontinent was driven by their desire for a totemic outer limit to their empire.[425] In spite of interest among Romans in the idea of India, they had very little to go on. "[T]his fascination was more notional than the result of actual contact."[426] There is good reason to take the Persian and Chinese accounts more seriously. In contrast to the fanciful (and wildly inaccurate) vision of India espoused by the Romans and their antique Christian descendants, Sasanian and Tang accounts of India display such particular similarities to Indian sources and known history that they could not have been constructed through mere passed down and passed over accounts and ideas of India.

For my purposes, these accounts are relevant because they demonstrate that the kings of India were legible to their neighbors. Divergent textual traditions, religious debates about the nature of kingship, and a throng of small dynasties may create the impression that rule and royalty in the mid-first millennium was chaotic, perhaps even inscrutable. Much scholarly work has emphasized the uniqueness of Indian elite practices. For example, Pollock notes that

> The practices of literary communication that actualized these modes of belonging in southern Asia and western Europe show remarkable chronological and formal symmetries, but profound differences, too, in both the mentalities and the modalities of social and political action to which the new communicative practices related and which they underwrote. These differences are consequential both for modern theory, which they disrupt, and for modern practices, which they open up.[427]

Contemporary foreign sources show that the world of the Indian elite was fascinatingly unique, even to the rulers of the world's most powerful empires, but it was far from inscrutable. Kings

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[425] Grant Parker, *The Making of Roman India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 309-310.

[426] Ibid, 311.

[427] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 578.

were recognized as kings by their peers, and the religious and political knowledge of the Indian elite was considered novel and valuable.

This chapter explores the Tang and Sasanian accounts of India, alongside evidence drawn from Indian sources and archaeological remains that evidences sustained and deep connections between Indian kings and inter-regional powers. I argue that the long recognized economic and religious/philosophical entanglements between Indian kings and their foreign neighbors do not tell the whole story, and that foreign powers understood and tried to absorb Indian political knowledge, itself derived from the very debates which shaped and were shaped by Maitraka rule. Foreign interest in Indian politics in this period indicates that, while India may not have been consolidated by an imperial ruler, its kings and political traditions were considered legible and valuable. For the Sasanians, this value seems tied to a quest for scholastic victories among courtiers, while for the Tang, Indian kings provided a valuable model of purportedly Buddhist kingship. Indian political knowledge circulated in an inter-regional sphere of kings and courts as a form of royal technology, and it did so without extra-Indian powers going to a special effort to determine how close or far their own political systems were from ancient Indian systems.

By examining both the specificity of the movement of knowledge between India and its Asian neighbors, as well as the ways in which those neighbors sought out, absorbed and adapted that knowledge, I make two main arguments: First, that foreign interest in Indian politics demonstrates that Indian political knowledge was held in high regard, indicating that such knowledge in this period was not considered, by their contemporaries, to have regressed from an earlier ideal or to be the products of a dark age, but rather to be a significant part of an inter-regional political system. Second, I argue that members of this inter-regional system of the first millennium, unlike those of the modern international system, were not concerned with

establishing the "sovereign equality of states,"[428] and demonstrated an ability to move the political technologies they accessed across cosmological spheres with comfort and ease.

XUANZANG'S ACCOUNT OF THE MAITRAKAS

Xuanzang did not arrive in India as an emissary of the Tang court. "In 627, though still relatively unknown in China, Xuanzang set out on his pilgrimage to India without formal authorization from the Tang court."[429] In fact, when he left China, an official ban on emigration was in place.[430] His goal was not to establish diplomatic relationships between the Tang and the kings of India, but rather to obtain original Sanskrit versions of Buddhist texts.

> Though the Buddha was born in the West his Dharma has spread to the East. In the course of translation mistakes may have crept into the texts, and idioms may have been misapplied. When the words are wrong the meaning is lost, and when a phrase is mistaken the doctrine becomes distorted. Hence the saying, "It is necessary to use correct names." What is valuable is the absence of faults![431]

Over the course of his journey, he would obtain some 657 Buddhist texts.[432] Driven, as he was, to enhance the dept of knowledge of Chinese Buddhism by the collection of Indian Buddhist texts, he needed to develop a strategy for his safe return. His meetings with Indian kings served this goal. Sen considers it likely "that Xuanzang initiated the meetings on his own. He may have thought that temporal support would make his travels in India and his ultimate return to China,

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[428] Bartelson, "The Concept of Sovereignty Revisited," 474.

[429] Tangsen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600-1400*, Asian Interactions and Comparisons (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 17

[430] Li Rongxi, translator's introduction to *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions ((Taishō Volume 51, Number 2087)*, BDK English Tripiṭaka Series, trans. Li Rongxi Moraga, CA: Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai America, Inc., 1996), xiii.

[431] Xuanzang, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, 15.

[432] Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade*, 206.

unlike his departure, hassle free. Or, perhaps, he wanted Emperor Taizong, the principal

audience of his work, to appreciate the personal and intimate contacts he had had with the

powerful rulers of foreign lands."[433] When he sought to reenter Tang territory at the conclusion

of his journey, he "sent a letter to the Tang emperor from Khotan. Seeking the permission to

reenter China, Xuanzang underlined his role in dissemination of the Chinese civilization and the

propagation of the emperor's virtues."[434]

In the course of his strategic meetings, he formed relationships with kings of varying

levels of influence. His most famous relationship was with the emperor Harṣa (whom he called

Śīlāditya, a name also used by a number of Maitraka kings), but he made it his business to make

a political map of India, especially the regions of importance to his Buddhist faith. Thus he

comes to Valabhī, a land which, he notes, boasts not only, "more than a hundred monasteries

with over six thousand monks," but also "*Deva* temples [that] number several hundreds and the

heretics are quite numerous."[435] Valabhī was important in Buddhist history: "When the

Tathāgata was living in the world he repeatedly visited this country, and King Aśoka erected

monuments and built stupas to mark the places where the Buddha had sojourned. Sites where the

three past buddhas sat, walked up and down, and preached the Dharma are located at

intervals."[436]

Following this introduction, Xuanzang described Valabhī's king (Dhruvasena II):

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[433] Tangsen Sen, "In Search of Longevity and Good Karma: Chinese Diplomatic Missions to Middle India in the Seventh Century," *Journal of World History* 12, no. 1 (2001): 5.

[434] Sen, "In Search of Longevity and Good Karma," 9.

[435] Xuanzang, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, 301-302.

[436] Ibid, 302.

The reigning king, called Dhruvapaṭu (known as Changrui, "Permanent Acuteness," in Chinese), is a *kṣatriya* by caste and a nephew of the former king Śīlāditya of the country of Mālava and the son-in-law of the present King Śīlāditya of the country of Kanyākubja.

[Dhruvapaṭu] is a hot-tempered man of shallow intellect, but he sincerely believes in the Triple Gem. Every year he convokes a great assembly for seven days to offer the best delicious food to the monks and present them with the three types of clerical robes and medicine, as well as the seven kinds of valuable gems and jewels. After presenting the gifts he redeems them with a payment of double their monetary value.[437] He esteems virtue, honors good people, respects the Way, and emphasizes learning. He pays special reverence to eminent monks coming from afar. Not far from the city is a great monastery built by the arhat Ācāra, where the bodhisattvas Guṇamati and Sthiramati stayed and composed treatises that are widely circulated.[438]

This description of Dhruvasena II, which portrays him as a mediocre ruler, establishes some interesting details about the king, namely that he was "the son-in-law of the present King Śīlāditya of the country of Kanyākubja." Kanyākubja is Kanauj, and its ruler King Śīlāditya is Harṣa, giving us evidence that the Maitrakas were, at this time, allied to Harṣa by marriage. Recall, from Chapter 2, that Dhruvasena II, in keeping with his immediate predecessors, did not take any titles. His inscriptions note that he meditated upon the feet of his ancestors (*not* some external paramount lord) and he, following Śīlāditya I, used the practice of double-naming, taking on the name Bālāditya. In other words, his inscriptions do not paint the image of a subservient king, showing that, even while allied to the objectively more powerful kingdom of Harṣa, Dhruvasena II presented himself as an independent monarch.

Additionally, we may note that, in contrast to Dhruvasena II's description of himself, Xuanzang portrays the king of Valabhī and his court through a Buddhist lens. While the land of Valabhī may have contained "numerous heretics" Xuanzang does not discuss Maitraka patronage of Brahman elites. Rather, he portrayed Dhruvasena II, who, like all other Maitraka kings called

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[437] I am not aware of Sanskrit literature which discusses this or a similar practice. It may be an interpretation based on Xuanzang's own context.

[438] Xuanzang, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, 302.

himself *paramāheśvara*, only as a Buddhist patron. He noted Dhruvasena II's patronage of monks and can be argued to have suggested that he is something of a spiritual leader. A key gift is that of "the three types of clerical robes." "The Buddhist robe in the early Tang period represented the transmission of Buddhist teachings. Especially within the Chan[439] tradition, it symbolized the transmission of the doctrine from India to China and then from one generation of Chan patriarch to another."[440] Xuanzang does not state explicitly that Dhruvasena II was himself devout, only that he "respects the Way." Nevertheless, Xuanzang's account shows that the king, whatever his personal beliefs were, related to Buddhists in a way that was, according to Xuanzang's assessment, appropriate (in that he knew of and gave appropriate and Buddhist specific gifts) and beneficial (in that he routinely, "every year," convened an assembly to patronize monks and received Buddhist visitors with enthusiasm).

Xuanzang seems to have been well treated at the Maitraka court ("He pays special reverence to eminent monks coming from afar."), even if he was not exactly impressed. However, he gave a much more favorable endorsement to Śīlāditya I, the eighth Maitraka ruler and uncle to the current king. He noted that Dhruvasena II was "a nephew of the former king Śīlāditya of the country of Mālava." The capital of Mālava was Ujjain, the very city Śīlāditya I had captured at the height of Maitraka imperial ambitions (see Chapter 4). It is significant that Xuanzang associated Śīlāditya I with Mālava and Ujjain and not directly with Valabhī, suggesting that Śīlāditya I, at least, was successful in associating himself with a place of more power and significance than Valabhī. Xuanzang gives an extremely positive description of the long deceased Śīlāditya I:

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[439] This refers to the Buddhist tradition which developed in China.

[440] Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade*, 41.

It is recorded in the local history that sixty years ago the king, named Śīlāditya, was a person of brilliant wisdom and resourcefulness with broad and profound knowledge. He protected and fostered all living begins and venerated the Triple Gem. From his birth up to his old age he was never angry with anyone and never killed living beings. He was so kind that even the drinking water for elephants and horses was filtered before it was given to them, lest insects in the water would be injured. During his reign of more than fifty years, wild animals were friendly with people and in the whole country the people never killed or harmed them.[441]

Śīlāditya I's three grants issued from "victorious camps" (see Chapter 4) and Karagraha I's grant issued from the "victorious camp" at Ujjain itself do not paint the same picture. Indeed, it seems that Śīlāditya I was quite bellicose and it is unlikely his capture of Ujjain was bloodless. However, there was good reason for Śīlāditya I to be remembered as a great king, at least in the Buddhist tradition. He sponsored the building of a monastery ("the vihara for which he himself caused the foundation in Vaṅśakaṭa-svatala"),[442] and issued two grants, that we know of, for that monastery's support (see Chapter 2). Altogether, six of Śīlāditya I's thirteen extant grants patronize *vihāras*, while two went to temples, three went to Brahmins, and the recipients of the remaining two cannot be determined. For Xuanzang, Śīlāditya I, like Dhruvasena II, was a Buddhist king. Might this impression have been created by Śīlāditya I's own enthusiastic patronage of *vihāras*, and perhaps the institutional memory preserved by the monks who frequented them?

Indeed, Valabhī itself would remain a place renowned for Buddhist learning in Chinese sources. Yijing, writing between 687 and 691 CE, noted that study at Valabhī is a suitable alternative to study at the famous Nalanda monastery: "after that one receives instructions from a tutor for two or three years, mostly at Nālandā Monastery in Central India, or in the country of

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[441] Xuanzang, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, 299.

[442] *Vaṅśakaṭa-svatala-niviṣṭ-āsmat-kārita-vihāra* Grant 54, l. 22

Valabhī in Western India."[443] This passage may indicate the continued presence of Tang students of Buddhism at Valabhī, especially if they were expected to reside there for a lengthy period of study, as Yijing claims.

Xuanzang seems to have, at the same time, gained impressively extensive knowledge of Indian courts and deep misunderstandings about them. Like the Greek historian Megasthenes,[444] Xuanzang was simultaneously a reliable narrator and was influenced by his own objectives and cultural perspective. It is therefore interesting that, in spite of his interpretation of these kings through a Buddhist lens, Xuanzang portrays the Maitraka kings as kings very similarly to how they portray themselves. They are just that: simply, kings. He does not say they are subservient, he certainly does not say they are vassals, and he does not give any impression that they were not dominant in their own spheres of power.

Xuanzang's contemporary account stands in contrast to modern scholarly efforts to rank and order the kings of mid-first millennium India into a unified hierarchy. The many kings and kingdoms he encountered were perfectly intelligible, even to a Chinese pilgrim familiar with his own imperial context. He saw them as potential allies in his quest for Buddhist knowledge, and, indeed, his journey and subsequent relationship with Harṣa likely opened the way for diplomatic relations between Harṣa and the Tang.[445] His political goals extend beyond fostering friendly relations between his own rulers and the rulers of the land of the Buddha. Xuanzang portrays Harṣa "as an idealized Buddhist ruler and … as a *speculum*, or a 'mirror,' held before

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[443] Śramaṇa Yijing, *Buddhist Monastic Traditions of Sothern Asia: A Record of the Inner Law Sent Home from the South Seas (Taishī Volume 54, Number 2125)*, BDK English Tripiṭaka 93-I, trans. Li Rongxi (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2000).149.

[444] See: Thomas R. Trautmann, "Elephants and the Mauryas," in *The Clash of Chronologies: Ancient Indian in the Modern World* (New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2009), 232.

[445] See: Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade*, 250 n. 7

Taizong."[446] Taizong was not receptive to direct criticism, leading Xuanzang and other advisors to develop indirect ways to advance their philosophical objectives.[447] This may have lead Xuanzang to shorten Harṣa's lineage so that it was the same length as that of Taizong out of a desire not to offend the Tang emperor by writing about an idealized ruler with a longer lineage.[448] Perhaps, for similar reasons, Xuanzang gives no hint of Dhruvasena II's long lineage, associating him only with Śīlāditya I and Harṣa himself, both of whom, it should be noted, Xuanzang also portrayed as Buddhist leaders.

SEAFARING LORDS

Xuanzang's account is the only direct foreign testimony of the Maitraka kings, but the Tang were neither the closest foreign power to the Maitrakas nor the most consistent presence. As is evident from their grants, the Maitrakas were in control of the seaport of Hastavapra-ahara, which may also be identified with the Astakapra of the *Periplus Maris Erithraei*. Indian as well as Chinese sources identify Valabhī, its kings and its inhabitants as the location of great wealth. Recall that Daṇḍin called the kings of Valabhī "seafaring lords whose wealth was equal to the king of the Guhakyas (Kubera)."[449] Xuanzang reports that "[t]he inhabitants are prosperous, possessing enormous wealth."[450] Given their proximity to a flourishing sea trade and these

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[446] Max Deeg, "The Political Position of Xuanzang: The Didactic Creation of an Indian Dynasty in the Xiyu ji," in *The Middle Kingdom and the Dharma Wheel: Aspects of the Relationship between the Buddhist Saṃgha and the State in Chinese History*, Sinica Leidensia, vol. 133, ed. Thomas Jülch (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 100.

[447] Ibid, 123-125.

[448] Ibid, 120.

[449] *guhaky-endra-tulya-vibhavasya nāvika-pater*, in *Daśakumaracarita* 11.127

[450] Xuanzang, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, 301.

accounts of their vast wealth, we may safely assume that the Maitrakas, at the very least, benefited from this exchange.

Trade flowing into and out of the Gulf of Khambat in the Maitraka period would have been going to and from Sasanian Persia. Archaeological evidence indicates a vibrant sea trade. Distinctive ceramic torpedo jars (discussed in Chapter 4 above), the shipping containers of the Sasanian and early Islamic world, are found at nearly every elite site in Gujarat, including Bet Dwarka,[451] Somnath,[452] Valabhī itself,[453] Vadnagar,[454] and Devnimori[455] The sites listed here show that torpedo jars and therefore the imported and likely elite goods they contained are present throughout Gujarat, to the border of Rajasthan and beyond. As mentioned in Chapter 4, many early reports misidentified these artifacts as amphorae, an error that mischaracterized Indian Ocean trade as primarily a trade between the Mediterranean and the Indian coast. Unlike Roman amphorae, which in India usually indicate a dating around the 1st c. CE,[456] torpedo jars found in West India can be dated from the 3rd to the 10th c. CE,[457] comfortably covering the period of Maitraka rule. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the economic shift from

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[451] K. Krishnan and R. Balvally, "Assessing the Early Historic Indian Ocean Trade Through Ceramics," in *Imperial Rome, Indian Ocean Regions and Muziris: New Perspectives on Maritime Trade*, ed. K.S. Mathew (New York: Routledge, 2015), 245. Ritvik Balvally has studied the torpedo jars found in Western India in Ritvik Balvally, "Torpedo Jars in Indian Ocean Trade: An Appraisal," (unpublished M.A. Diss., Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, 2013).

[452] Krishnan and Balvally, "Assesing the Early Historic Indian Ocean Trade Through Ceramics," 245.

[453] R.N. Mehta, "Valabhi of the Maitrakas," *Journal of the Oriental Institute* 13 (1963-1964): 247.

[454] Y.S. Rawat, "Vadnagar Excavations: Discovery of Ancient Buddhist Monastery," *Asian Renaisance* 1, no. 3 (2017), 43-54.

[455] R.N. Mehta and S.N Chowdhary, *Excavation at Devnimori: a report of the excavation conducted from 1960 to 1963* (Baroda: Dept. of Archaeology and Ancient History, Faculty of Arts, M.S. University of Baroda, 1966), 77

[456] R.N. Mehta, *Excavation at Nagara* (Baroda: Dept. of Archaeology and Ancient History, Faculty of Arts, M.S. University of Baroda, 1968), 17.

[457] Krishnan and Balvally, "Assesing the Early Historic Indian Ocean Trade Through Ceramics," 245.

Mediterranean to Central Asian goods may have been an element of Sasanian policy rather than an accident of geography.

Further evidence of the strength and duration of this trade comes from the presence of Indian Red Polished Ware (RPW) in the Persian Gulf and East Africa. RPW is a fine ware, rare in all assemblages, which is normally considered a luxury good. RPW is considered a luxury good because of its association with the Indian Ocean trade and the fact that it is made from a highly processed clay, distinguishing it from other wares made in Gujarat at that time.

> The vessels are made from a fine levigated paste, usually fired to a light red or reddish yellow color (Munsell 2.SYR 6/6 and SYR 7/6), which sometimes appears as black or brown…. Slipped surfaces are notable for their highly burnished quality. The slip is well bonded to the body and, for the most part, has not flaked with age. It is generally red in color (Munsel 2.5YR 5/8). All slips in the catalogue are burnished unless otherwise noted.[458]

Many types of vessels are produced in this ware, including jars, bowls, spouted vessels and sprinklers (a vessel type with a an elongated neck with a narrow opening less than 5 mm).[459] The sprinkler along with a type of globular jar with a beaded interior ledge are the only new vessel forms to appear along with RPW, and appear exclusively in this ware type.[460] It is traditionally associated with Early Historic sites and has been found in conjunction with Kṣatrapa coins in some places.[461] Within Gujarat, "[c]lusters of similar pot shapes and rim styles may imply a

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[458] Nancy Pinto-Orton, "Red Polished Ware in Gujarat: A Catalogue of Twelve Sites," in *Rome and India: The Ancient Sea Trade*, eds. Vimala Begley and Richard Daniel De Puma (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 48.

[459] For a catalogue of RPW from Gujarat see: Nancy Pinto-Orton, "Sea-going Trade in Early Historic Gujarat (ca. 100 BC – AD 500)," (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2001), 159-170. See also: Pinto-Orton, "Red Polished Ware in Gujarat: A Catalogue of Twelve Sites," 51-81; Nancy Pinto-Orton, "Red Polished Ware in Gujarat: Surface Collections from Inland Sites," in *Connections and Complexity: New Approaches to the Archaeology of South Asia*, ed. Shinu Anna Abraham et al. (Walnut Creek: Routledge, 2013), 209-220.

[460] Pinto-Orton, "Sea-going Trade in Early Historic Gujarat," 157-159.

[461] Bendapudi Subbarao, *Baroda Through the Ages: being the report of an excavation conducted in the Baroda area 1951-1952* (Baroda: Faculty of Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, 1953), 35-36.

consensus of use, an acceptance of cultural variables such as food, personal enhancements such as perfumes, medicines or oils, or religious identification."[462] However, RPW in the Gulf has been dated from the 5th to the 6th centuries CE.[463] It is also present in both Sasanian and pre-Sasanian levels at Suhar.[464] RPW in East Africa dates from the 7th to the 9th centuries CE.[465]

Figure 8 - Sample of RPW sherds collected from Kadvar (note the badly eroded surface)

L: exterior; R: interior

The production of RPW does not appear to have been centralized, but it likely originated in Gujarat.[466] Only one production site, which was likely one among many, has been identified.[467] While RPW likely originated on the coasts of Sauraṣṭra, by the 2nd-3rd century CE,

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[462] Pinto-Orton, "Red Polished Ware in Gujarat: Surface Collections from Inland Sites," 201.

[463] Derek Kennet, *Sasanian and Islamic Pottery from Ras al-Khaimah: classification, chronology and analysis of trade in the Western Indian Ocean* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), 65–6.

[464] Monique Kervan, "Indian Ceramics in Southern Iran and Eastern Arabia: Repertory, Classification and Chronology," in *Tradition and Arcaheology: Early Maritime Contacts in the Indian Ocean*, eds. Himanshu Prabha Ray and Jean-François Salles (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2012), 42.

[465] Jason D. Hawkes and Stephanie Wynne-Jones, "India in Africa: Trade goods and connections of the late first millennium," *Afriques. Débats, méthodes et terrains d'histoire* 6 (2015): 17.

[466] Ibid, 18.

[467] S. Gupta, "Pottery from Kamrej excavations–2003," *Journal of Indian Ocean Archaeology* 1 (2004): 34-77.

it was found at numerous coastal and inland sites in Gujarat.[468] In my own archaeological research, RPW was a consistent feature of the elite sites I studied. At both Valabhī and Kadvar, RPW was abundant. At Kadvar (Figure 8), RPW accounted for 5.51% of the total number of potsherds collected, and 2.91% of the total weight. This is exceptionally high, especially given that, due to the location of the collection area on a beach, more than 60% of the total number and weight of sherds alike were too eroded to be identified; however, most RPW could be identified, even when the surface had been completely eroded away, on the basis of its unique fabric. This may have lead RPW to have been over-identified in my survey sample. Based on research of published site reports throughout India, Hawkes and Wynne Jones note that "precise quantities [of ceramics] are rarely recorded in the published reports; yet, where they are, RPW accounts only for between 2.8 and 0.06% of the ceramic assemblage in any one stratigraphic layer."[469] The unusually high frequency at Kadvar may indicate that the site, conveniently located at the mouth of the Gulf of Khambat (see: Map 6; Map 7), was either a trading center, or near to a manufacturing center.

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[468] Pinto-Orton, "Red Polished Ware in Gujarat: Surface Collections from Inland Sites," 201.

[469] Hawkes and Wynne-Jones, "India in Africa," 19.
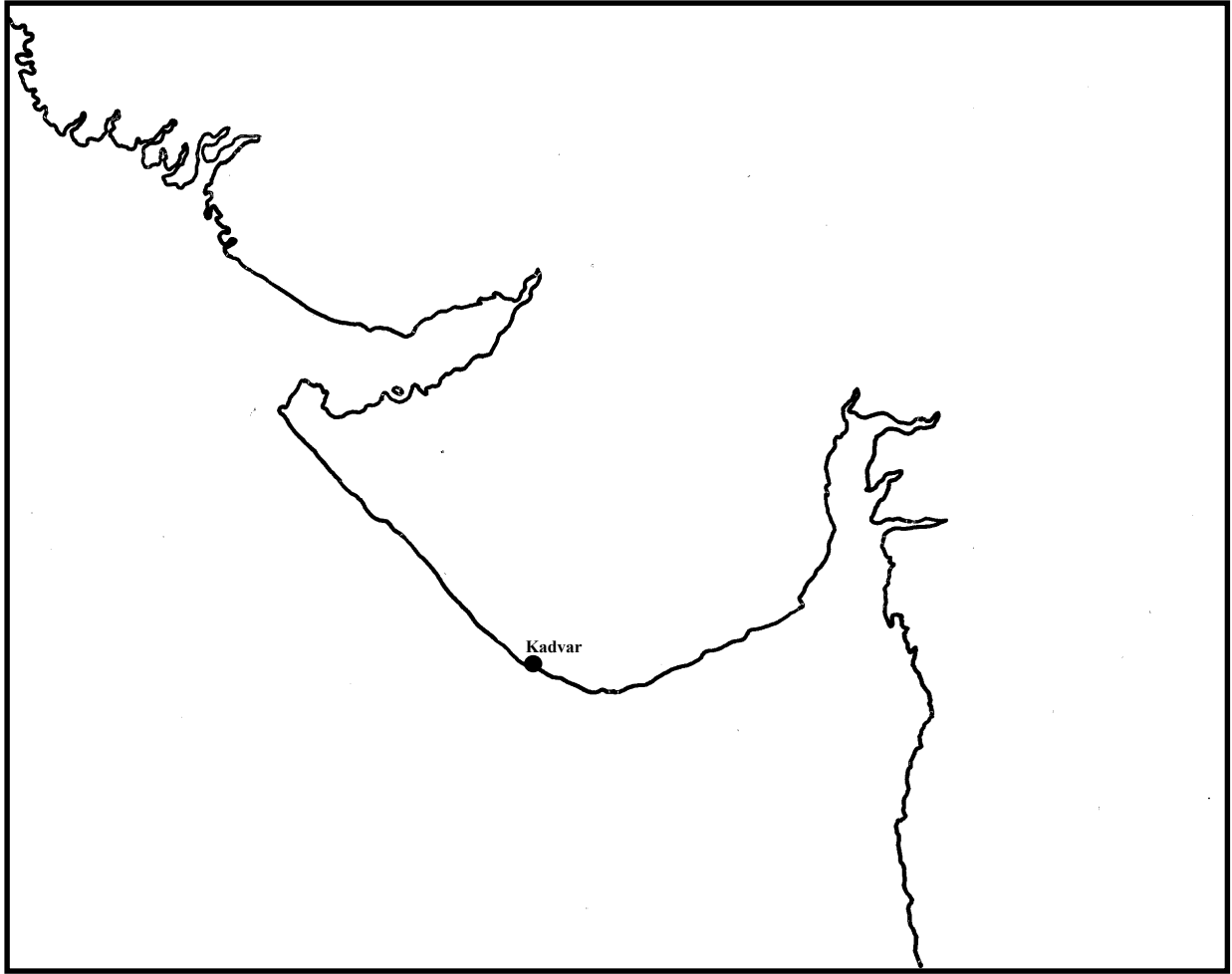
Map 6 - Location of Kadvar
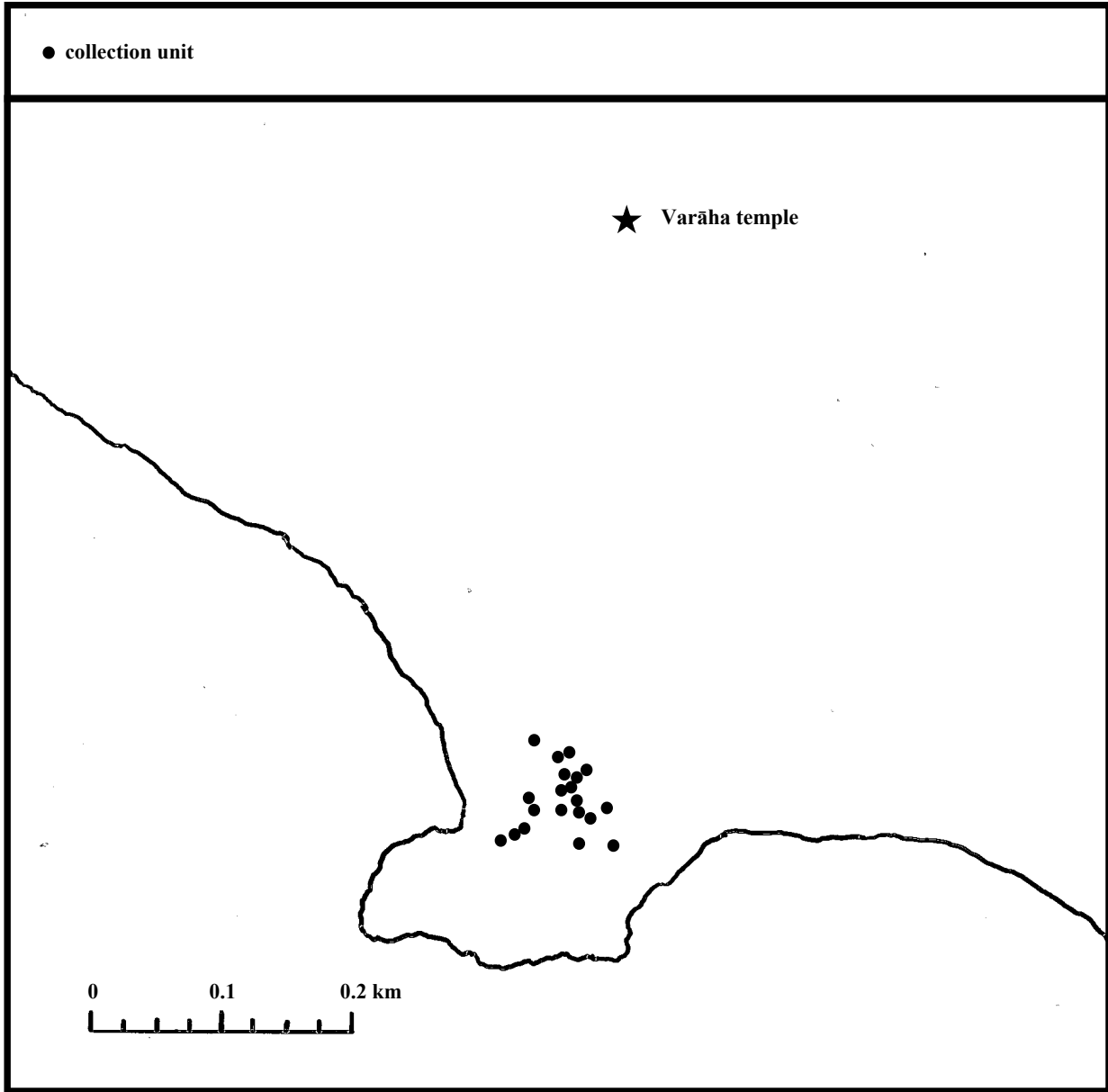
Map 7 - Location of Kadvar Collection Units Relative to Varāha Temple

Figure 9 - A small RPW pot from Valabhī, recovered from local farmer's water-tank digging.

RPW sherds were also recovered in my survey at Valabhī (Figure 9). There, they account for a more normative 0.74% of the total number of sherds collected on the surface, and 0.23% of the total weight. As mentioned in Chapter 4, I was also able to collect artifacts from a trench being dug by a local farmer for a well. RPW accounted for 3.87% of the total number and 2.89% of the total weight of sherds collected from this location. That said, due to the nature of the farmer's work, we were only able to collect obvious remains, perhaps accounting for the higher number. Nevertheless, the presence of RPW along with torpedo jars at Valabhī indicates that the material culture of Valabhī mimicked the material culture of other contemporary elite sites within Gujarat as well as the Indian Ocean at large and demonstrates the participation of Valabhī's inhabitants in these larger regional networks.

These archaeological clues to regional dynamics do not paint a complete picture of the Indian Ocean trade at the time of the Maitrakas. Torpedo jars and RPW only accounted for part of the trade. Like Roman amphorae, they were likely used to transport wine.[470] This conclusion is drawn from the fact that torpedo jars were lined with a thick layer of bitumen, waterproofing the vessels. In his excavation at Kush, a 5th-13th C CE mound in the northern Oman Peninsula, Kennett notes that RPW is simply one among a suite of Indian ceramics recovered in excavations, the majority of which were coarse plain wares.[471] In addition, Torpedo jars were also not the only Sasanian ware to appear in Gujarat, as Sasanian glazed ware, believed to have been manufactured in southern Mesopotamia, also has been documented at four sites.[472]

While the presence of non-local ceramics points to the importance and extent of maritime trade, it is difficult to draw anything other than extremely general conclusions about the Indian Ocean trade from archaeological remains due to persistent problems in dating the wares which mark it. As mentioned above, torpedo jars have been routinely misidentified in archaeological reports from India. RPW fares only slightly better. Jason Hawkes explains the persistent problems in dating Early Medieval South Asian sites:

> Even more concerns are apparent when we consider how the early medieval layers have been dated. With scientific dating methods being reserved for older pre-historic layers, the chronologies of later historical periods tend to be based on the evidence provided by coins and key pottery types. This is, of course, standard practice around the world but strange as it might sound, early medieval layers are rarely dated with reference to the coins and ceramics that are found in those layers. A scarcity of early medieval coins in the archaeological record means that the use of coins for dating stratigraphic layers tends to be limited to the analysis of earlier coin types. At many sites across India, coins dating to the early centuries CE have been used to date the stratigraphic layers in which they are found, as well as the other artefacts in those layers, to the centuries in which the coins were

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[470] Roberta Tomber, *Indo-Roman Trade: From Potts to Pepper* (London: Duckworth, 2008), 39-40.

[471] Kennet, *Sasanian and Islamic Pottery from Ras al-Khaimah*, 69-71.

[472] Ritvik Balvally et al., "Sasanian Glazed Ware from Western India," *Heritage: Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Arcaheology* 6 (2018): 300.

produced. However, as it is now widely recognised, such use of coins as direct dating evidence is highly uncritical. It ignores both their potential residuality (something that is especially pertinent when we consider the potential for the mixing of artefacts of different dates within the same broadly-defined layers), and the rule of terminus post quem …. When viewed in this light, we are forced to consider the possibility that the presence of early coins in any given stratigraphic layer may simply be due to their later deposition, and that the layers in question may be later in date.[473]

The use of problematic wares like torpedo jars and RPW to date layers only compounds this issue.[474] In addition, both torpedo jars and RPW have date ranges so wide that it is impossible to correlate them to any single dynasty. Both wares pre- and post-date the Maitrakas. Stratigraphic excavations and fine-scale analyses may help to resolve these issues in the future; for now, our evidence highlights the importance and prevalence of interactions and the movement of both vessels that would have held liquid commodities, and of relatively rare and likely highly valued finely made red polished wares, used in dining or ritual.

TRADERS AND KINGS

Literary sources can buttress the archaeological evidence which connects sites in Gujarat with the Indian Ocean trade. The Sasanians considered the Persian Gulf to belong to their domain and made several interventions in the Indian Ocean trade, even if they did not control it fully.[475] The Sasanian king Bahram V took a South Asian wife in what appears to have been a political alliance focused on trade routes.[476] "In conformity with the tradition, followed by the

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[473] Jason Hawkes, "Chronological Sequences and the Problem of Early Medieval Settlement in India," *Purāttava* 44 (2014): 212.

[474] Ibid, 213.

[475] Touraj Daryaee, "The Persian Gulf in Late Antiquity: The Sasanian Era (200–700 c.e.)," in *The Persian Gulf in History*, ed. L.G. Potter (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 58.

[476] Suchandra Ghosh, "The western coast of India and the Gulf: maritime trade during the 3rd to 7th centuries A.D.," in *Intercultural Relations between South and Southwest Asia: Studies in Commemoration of E.C.L. During Caspers*, eds. Eric Olijdam and Richard H. Spoor (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2008), 368.

Sasanians, of building fortresses at the key strategic points along the maritime routes, Bahram V or one of his successors built the fortress of Rattokot near Daibul for protecting the fort which was usually flooded with merchandise brought by the sea-going vessels."[477]

The Indian Ocean trade also figured in the ongoing conflict between the Sasanians and the Byzantines. The Sasanians had an apparent monopoly on the silk which was transported via the Indian Ocean, resulting in what amounts to an international incident. We learn from Procopius that Justinian attempted to circumvent the Sasanians by allying with the Ethiopians, who occupied a region of the East African coast far enough south to be out of Sasanian reach. Recall Procopius' description of the Indian Ocean trade: "it was impossible for the Aethiopians to buy silk from the Indians, for the Persian merchants always locate themselves at the very harbours where the Indian ships first put in, (since they inhabit the adjoining country), and are accustomed to buy the whole cargoes."[478] Thus, Justinian's plan to go around the Sasanians by seeking silk via Ethiopia failed.[479] At this point, the apparent Sasanian embargo on silk, and the conflict it caused with the Byzantines, drew in the interest of even more regional powers, involving alliances between Sogdians and Turks in an effort to out-maneuver the Sasanians, and was eventually circumvented by wily Nestorian monks who smuggled silk-worms into the Byzantine Empire.[480]

The Maitrakas then were, by all accounts, kings of great wealth, associated with the ocean, who had access to at least prominent ports on a trade route in which their Persian

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[477] Ibid.

[478] Procopius, *Procopius*, The Loeb Classical Library, trans. H.B. Dewing (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 193.

[479] Touraj Daryaee, "The Persian Gulf in Late Antiquity," 64

[480] Hadi Hasan*, A History of Persian Navigation* (London: Meuthen & co. ltd., 1928), 70.

neighbors were deeply interested. There is no direct evidence that they were key players in the Indian Ocean trade, but they must at a minimum have been aware of it, and the presence of Sasanian goods at Maitraka centers suggests they also benefitted from it. This makes it likely that Maitraka kings were aware of the key players in this complex maritime network. Yet, there is no mention in their grants of sea-trade or even the importance of ports. They could not have been ignorant of such a powerful influence and rich source of economic gain, so why this absence in this important medium? Perhaps, like their oblique references to unnamed paramount lords, the Maitrakas omitted reference to foreign powers more due to the narrative they were crafting in their grants which was characterized by a general unwillingness to indicate specific relationships with other powers, than due to the practical circumstances of their rule. While there may well have been other more economically oriented sources that have not survived, the omission of references to foreign powers further reinforces my argument that Maitraka copper-plates portrayed a carefully crafted vision of the dynasty. Furthermore, through the distribution of those same inscriptions, they were advertising a particular version of royal events to elites in their territory.

Contemporary kings in Gujarat made clearer references to the importance of the Indian Ocean and of the key role of traders in their royal grants. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Saindhavas whose kingdom was located in the north-western portion of Sauraṣṭra, called themselves "lords of the Western Ocean."[481] This title displays a royal consciousness of the importance of the Indian Ocean, but does not necessarily imply the importance of trade — it could, for instance, also refer to military prowess. For an example of direct royal engagement

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[481] *apara-samudr-ādhipati.* See: A. S. Altekar, "Six Saindhava Grants from Ghumli," *Epigraphia Indica* 26 (1941-42): 185-226.

with traders, the best Maitraka adjacent example comes from the Charter of Viṣṇuśena, a king in Gujarat whose relationship to the Maitrakas is not entirely clear. This remarkable document is, to my knowledge, unprecedented. D.D. Kosambi has called it "the greatest of the published charters."[482] In this set of copper-plates Viṣṇuśena, who is entitled "the great *kārttākṛtika*, the great judge, the great gate keeper, the great peer-king, the great king,"[483] and thus used the same sequence of terms used in some grants of the Maitraka king Dhruvasena I, issued an order (*pātra*) that outlines several privileges to a merchant community or guild occupying the village of Lohāṭa.

While the subsequent endorsement of the order called it a gift (*datta*)[484], this grant does not follow the normal formulae for such grants. Not only were the beneficiaries of the order not members of the religious elite, but the grant actually spelled out specific conditions and taxes/fees for the merchant recipients. Unlike the tax-free grants to Brahmins, temples and viharas, these merchants were not awarded the benefit of the normal taxes to be drawn from their lands, but instead received a secure and permanent claim to their land. That said, the grant followed the normal four-part division of genealogy, terms, exhortation and colophon, although both the genealogy section (which here describes only a single king) and the final exhortations/threats are considerably shortened.[485] In spite of this structural difference, it does

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[482] D.D. Kosambi, "Indian Feudal Trade Charters," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 2, no. 3 (1959): 285.

[483] D.C. Sircar, "Charter of Vishnuseshena, Samavat 649," *Epigraphia Indica* 30 (1953-54): 179, l. 1.

[484] Ibid, 181, l. 33.

[485] In fact, Viṣṇuśena is not given a genealogy, as such, at all. The first three lines read as follows: Good fortune from the abode of Lohāṭa! He who meditates on the feet of the glorious (paternal relation) bāva, the highest lord, the great kārttākṛtika (meaning unknown), the great judge, the great gate keeper, the great peer-king, the great king, glorious Viṣṇuśena, being in good health, to all his own kings, princes, governors, noble-minded officers, sub officers, taxation officers, thief catchers, custodians of presents, irregular and regular soldiers and others as they are concerned this order has been dispersed; and also to the grain collection officers this is ordered. Ibid, 179, l. 1-3. The final portion of the order is also abbreviated, but shares similarities with the exhortations to longevity found in

share features with Maitraka grants — including the titles used by the king, the officials to whom

the grant was addressed and perhaps even the name of the king himself [486] and thus an awareness

on the part of the author of the predominant local practices of land granting of its time. The grant

dates to 592 CE, and the later endorsement appended to the end of the grant to 605 or 676 CE.[487]

The portion of the text issued by Viṣṇuśena framed the order as an order of protection: "Let it be

known that this has been reported: I am showing favor to a guild of merchants as in these matters

our country has gathered benefits, the customary orders being in place. By me, the order being

established for the protection of their own settlement being of a former and new community has

been graciously bestowed."[488] This order of protection was reaffirmed some years later by a

sāmanta named Avanti, who appended the following text to the original order:

> Good fortune from Darpapura! The peer-king Avanti, being in good health, to all his own
> [officials] and others as they are concerned takes notice [of this order]. Let it be known that
> by me the inhabitants of the village of traders being remembered in Lohāṭa village which
> is this ruling having been established as is written above, given by Viṣṇubhaṭa, this even is
> approved by me. The ruling on this order having been established is written above; this is
> declared for the inhabitants by their own trade and of themselves. Let no one oppose it.[489]

As seen here, this Avanti did not give any further indication of his political affiliations. This

endorsement is a feature not seen on any Maitraka copper-plates and speaks to both the

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Maitraka grants: "Which [conditions are listed here] and other customs from ancient times these have been
authorized by me. Which, even by future kings of my own lineage or another as is common, remaining
contemporaneous with the moon, sun, waves/sea foam, planets, stars and the earth, for the succession of (their) sons
and son's sons, having the fruits of fame and wealth, this order has established the favor granted by me by my desire
is to be approved and protected." Ibid, 181, l. 28-30.

[486] Ibid, 167-168. In addition to the list of titles given above, Sircar points to the inclusion of the *dhruv-ādhikaraṇa*,
'the office of the collector of the king's share of the produce of the fields from the farmers,' among the officials (this
particular official is unique to Maitraka grants), and the kings name alternates between Viṣṇuśena and Viṣṇubhaṭa
(Dhruvasena is called Dhruvapaṭu, i.e. Dhruvabhaṭa in Xuanzang's account).

[487] Ibid, 166-167.

[488] Ibid, 179, l. 3-4.

[489] Ibid, 181, l. 32-34.

important physical durability of these documents, and also, potentially, to Viṣṇuśena's lack of importance, as his grant needed to be re-recognized.

Another way in which this copper plate simultaneously referenced granting standards and deviated from them is that it shifted privileges usually reserved for the Brahmin elite to the trader community. "Whereas, first, now forthwith the property of one without a son is not to be seized [by royal authorities]. The breaking of the threshold is not to be done by the king's men."[490] This extended a Brahmin privilege to the merchant guild by guaranteeing that their land would not be seized by the king, even if a merchant were to die without an heir.[491] The grant thus obliquely recognized the importance of this merchant guild as members of the land-owning elite, even if they were not the recipients of royal land grants. By extending Brahmin-like privileges to these merchants, the grant extended to them a particular type of royal-relationship making. The grant goes on to note that royal officers are banned from demanding food and shelter from this guild: "When a peer king/neighbor, minister, messenger or others approach [this place] a bed, a dwelling place, and cooked food should not be obligated to be given."[492] This further bolstered their claim to their land and their dominion over it.

Critically for this discussion, Viṣṇuśena's grant recognized that special rules have to be crafted for foreign traders. Protections were offered for foreigners who come to the town: "A guest merchant having come on business from a distant kingdom is not to be seized on account of a distant injury (perhaps suspicion of distant people?)."[493] The order also recognized that

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[490] Ibid, 179, l. 4.

[491] See: *Vaiṣṇava Dharmaśāstra* 17.4–13. My thanks to David Brick for providing this reference and pointing out the relevance to this passage.

[492] Sircar, "Charter of Vishnuseshena, Samavat 649," 179, l. 6.

[493] Ibid, 179, l. 7.

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merchants may have spent significant amounts of time traveling, and that the normal fees and taxes should be adjusted accordingly: "A merchant with a year having passed is not obliged to pay an entrance fee upon his return; he should pay an exit fee."[494] There is some debate about the precise referents of this passage. Sircar sees it as applying to merchants who stay overseas for a year before returning, and notes that it "may also refer to foreign merchants coming and staying in the kingdom for a year."[495] Kosambi takes this passage to refer only to foreign merchants who have come to stay in Lohāṭa on a yearly basis.[496] In either case, the grant recognized both the need to protect foreign merchants and the need to enable long distance and long term activities for the larger merchant community.

This order listed 72 conditions for the merchant community. These cannot be considered authoritative for all merchant guilds at the time, indeed, if these were the normal rules and protections, there would be no need for such an order. However, the fact that the order was issued using a copper plate, and that it extended protections reserved for the religious elite to merchants marks not only the growing importance of the merchant community but the adaptability of royal strategies for dealing with powerful non-royal elites. After all, the order doesn't grant any new land to the merchants, it simply recognized and offered further protection for land they ostensibly already controlled. In this way, it is similar to some of the Maitraka grants discussed in Chapter 3, which granted to Brahmins and *vihāras* land which they already "enjoyed." To issue orders to merchants with extensive conditions on copper plates was never common-place, indicating that perhaps Viṣṇuśena was taking creative liberties with the medium,

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[494] Ibid, 180, l. 21.

[495] Ibid, 176.

[496] Kosambi, "Indian Feudal Trade Charters," 288.

but it was certainly not an illegible royal act, or the order would not have been reasserted by Avanti.

The Sasanians were not alone in their interest in the Indian Ocean. For their part, both Pulakeśin II and Harṣa had economic and political interests in Gujarat and the surrounding areas of the Western coast. Gosh argues that the Cāḷukya ruler Pulakeśin II's "establishment of a feudatory in Gujarat appears to have facilitated contacts with Persia and other western areas."[497] Harṣa also pursued economic dominance in the area, and his interest and military engagements in Malava may have been tied to the region's economic potential.[498] As discussed in Chapter 4, Śīlāditya I had brought Ujjain, in Malava, under Maitraka rule. This placed the Maitrakas directly in Harṣa's path, and in the middle of a dispute between the Vardhana and Cāḷukya kingdoms. Pulakeśin II seems to have taken Mālava from the Maitrakas, as his Aihole inscription records it among his conquests.[499] Harṣa in turn, focused his aggression on the Maitrakas. A grant of the Gurjara king Jayabhaṭa tells us that, during the reign on the Gurjara king Daḍḍa II, a king from Valabhī, having been defeated by Harṣa, took refuge at the Gurjara king's court. "Glory covered [Dadda] as a canopy, like shining clouds surrounding him, because he produced deliverance for the lord of Valabhi having been overcome by the eminent lord Harṣadeva."[500] It seems that, after facing defeat from Harṣa, Dhruvasena II, the same king who would later entertain Xuanzang, fled to the court of the Gurjaras, who were at that time under the influence of the Cāḷukyas, in the hope of gaining Cāḷukya protection from Harṣa's aggression.

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[497] Ghosh, "The western coast of India and the Gulf," 369-370.

[498] Ranbir Chakravarti, *Warfare for Wealth: Early Indian Perspective* (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1986), 146.

[499] Devahuti, *Harsha*, 59.

[500] *parameśvara-Śrī-Harṣadev-ābhibhūta-Valabhīpati-paritrāṇ-opajata-bhramad-adabhra-śubhr-ābhra-vibhrama-yaśo-vitānaḥ* See: Bhagwanlal Indraji, "A New Gurjara Copper-Plate Grant," The Indian Antiquary, 13 (1884): l. 4-5.

Subsequently, Xuanzang would record that Dhruvasena II was "the son-in-law of the present King Śīlāditya," indicating that, subsequent to this military defeat, Harṣa allied with the Maitrakas by giving his daughter to Dhruvasena II. They subsequently had a friendly relationship.

> The Matrimonial alliance with the Maitraka king was an act of great political astuteness on Harsha's part. The security resulting from such a connection weaned Dhruva-sena away from Pulakeśin's circle of influence. Dhruvasena now probably had an assurance of independence greater than he could have expected from the Chālukas. Throughout his reign Harsha possessed the friendship and loyalty of the Maitrakas and was assured of the safety of the western extremity of his empire. In the course of his western campaign Harsha, we believe, captured certain parts of Mālava, which he apparently made over to Dhruvasena.[501]

This relationship with Harṣa, both when it was beneficial and detrimental to the Maitrakas, shows that these small but largely independent kings were not cut off from the imperial machinations of larger states. In fact, their possession of territory on a well established and apparently extremely profitable trade route made them significant targets and important allies to larger powers.

'KOSMOS OF POWER'[502]

The fact that the Maitrakas omitted references to the Indian Ocean trade and the political powers invested in that trade in royal inscriptions is not nearly so surprising when put in the context of other Sanskrit sources and their references to foreign powers, or the significant lack thereof. Both Harṣa and the Cāḷukya king Pulakeśin II were contemporaries of the Maitrakas, and both of these powerful king also seem to have had extended contact with foreign powers, but references to these contacts in their own sources are rare and lack specificity.

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[501] Devahuti, *Harsha*, 62.

[502] This terminology is borrowed from Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 260.

The Sasanians and the Tang, on the other hand, were more open about their contacts with these Indian kings. Al-Tabari, a 9th century Persian historian who seems to have worked from Sasanian records, narrates an embassy from Pulakeśin II to Kushraw II:

> It happened that Furumisha, king of India, wrote to us in the thirty-sixth year of our reign, having sent a delegation of his subjects to us. He wrote about all sorts of things and sent to us and to you, the ensemble of our sons, presents, together with a letter to each one of you. His presents to you – you will recall them! – comprised an elephant, a sword, a white falcon, and a brocade coat woven with gold. When we looked at the presents he had sent you, we found that he had written on his letter to you, in the Indian language, "Keep the contents of this secret."[503]

The Sasanians, it seems, had friendly relationships with Indian kings, and in addition to their interest in controlling trade routes, were particularly interested in elephants.[504] However, this embassy is not mentioned in any extant Sanskrit source regarding Pulakeśin. Even his Aihole inscription, which deals with foreign affairs to the extent that it addresses his defeat of Harṣa, makes no mention of these overseas friends.

That Harṣa sent envoys to the Tang lends credibility to Tabari's account of Pulakeśin II's embassy. An analysis of diplomatic missions between Harṣa and the Tang by Devahuti concludes that "[s]ix missions were sent, three by each ruler, in the short space of less than eight years between A.D. 641 and 648."[505] Like Pulakeśin's embassy, these missions are known only from Chinese sources. Chinese sources represent Harṣa as subservient to the Tang rulers. "In the fifteenth year of Chên-kuan[506] [A.D. 641], Śīlāditya assumes the title the King of Magadha, and

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[503] Al-Tabarī, *History of al-Ṭabarī: The Sāsānids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids, and Yemen*, vol. 5, SUNY series in Near Eastern studies, trans. Clifford Edmund Bosworth, (Albany: State University of New Yok Press, 1999), 389.

[504] Thomas R. Trautmann, *Elephants and Kings: An Environmental History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 250-256.

[505] D. Devahuti, *Harsha: A Political Study* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 251.

[506] Zhenguan

sent an envoy to pay tribute."[507] However, Harṣa initiated contact with China when he was at his most powerful,[508] and Sen concludes that "[r]ather than a gesture of prostration, as the Chinese records would have us believe about any correspondence from foreign rulers, the letter from Harsha to the Chinese emperor may have just been a self-introductory communication."[509] Harṣa's announcement that he had become king of Magadha was likely intended to give an impression that his power had increased considerably. Magadha was not only an important Buddhist center, but had been the seat of the Mauryan and Gupta dynasties.

Given abundant evidence of these exchanges, from a range of near-contemporary Chinese sources, there is little doubt that they occurred. Yet, as is the case with the Cāḷukya records, the records of Harṣa's dynasty make no mention of this blossoming relationship. While there are no narratives that explain these embassies from the Indian side, glimpses of this wider world appear in the art (both physical and verbal) of the subcontinent. A painting in Cave I at Ajanta was, for many years, taken to be a depiction of Pulakeśin's embassy. However, Walter Spink and others now dispute that claim. Spink argues that it is a depiction of a Jataka tale, which represents that tale's king in Persian garb. While the image does not depict an embassy, Spink nevertheless concludes that there are numerous figures at Ajanta in Sasanian dress. "It is clear that not only were many Sasanian traders or workers present in Central India at this time, but they were objects of considerable interest and therefore worthy of inclusion in the highly sophisticated

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[507] Devahuti, quoting from the Chiu t 'ang-shu, *Harsha*, 243.

[508] Ibid, 253.

[509] Sen, "In Search of Longevity and Good Karma," 7.

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paintings of the day."[510] Not only were they figures of fascination, but they apparently had some association with royalty, allowing their depiction in this royal scene.

We know from Bana's *Harṣacarita* that both Sasanian and Tang dress figured in the author's imagination of a world-encompassing royal court. At Harṣa's court, one could find Chinese silk, *chīn-āṁśuka*,[511] as well as kings adorned in *vārabāṇa*, "a thick protective armor that was current in Sasanian Iran."[512] The word *vārabāṇa* appears to have been taken from the Pahlavi *barvān* .[513] The *vārabāṇa* coat was made of *stavaraka* cloth (Pahlavi *stavrak*), which is commonly found on contemporary Surya images.[514] The *cīnacolaka*, a type of Chinese dress, also features in the royal court.[515] Other kings wear the *ācchādanaka*, a green knotted cloak, also Sasanian, and found depicted at Ajanta.[516] When Bana imagined the royal court, he saw the whole world contained therein. Given the clear association of these forms of dress with royalty in the Harṣacarita, I find it unlikely that the figures discussed by Spink at Ajanta were simply merchants.

Canepa has argued that the Sasanians and Byzantines formed a whole visual language of royalty which allowed them to communicate across linguistic and cultural barriers. Clothing was especially significant, and in the Sasanian case, regulated by sumptuary laws.[517] "Silk clothes

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[510] Walter Spink, "The Persian Embassy," in *Ajanta: History and Development,* vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 183.

[511] Devahuti, *Harsha*, 169.

[512] Vasudeva S. Agrawala, *The Deeds of Harsha (Being a Cultural Study of Bana's Harshacharita* (Varanasi: Prithivi Prakashan, 1961), 104.

[513] Ibid.

[514] Ibid, 183-184.

[515] Ibid, 185-186.

[516] Ibid, 186-187.

[517] Such sumptuary regulations regarding silk were also present in the Tang empire. See: BuYun Chen, "Material Girls: Silk and Self-Fashioning in Tang China (618–907)," Fashion Theory, 21, no. 1 (2017): 8. "Tang sumptuary

were a luxury supposedly available only to the nobility."[518] It is notable that they invested a trade good — the Sasanians did not produce silk themselves — with such importance. Canepa shows that this visual language formed a '*kosmos* of power.' "Both [Sasanian and Byzantine] sovereigns prominently and carefully displayed these motifs in their official representations. In doing so, they skillfully portrayed themselves as participating in and controlling an international system of symbolic capital."[519] The ongoing animosity between the two courts ruled this exchange, but some aspects of this symbolic capital reference India as well. In addition to the elephants, mentioned in Tabari's account of Pulakeśin's embassy and found in a depiction of the royal hunt at Taq-e Bostan,[520] Ardašīr II appears standing on an Indian style lotus in the depiction of his investiture at Taq-e Bostan.[521] The elephant image made its way to Byzantium through this symbolic exchange and appears on the Barberini ivory of Justinian I, although the Romans were using this royal emblem as a symbol of Persia, not India.[522] Given the movement of Indian symbols from India through Persia and then to the Mediterranean, as well as the images and material references to the Sasanians in India, I would argue that a similar *kosmos* of power existed between India and Persia.

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legislation sought to protect the old sartorial regime by controlling the use and production of mate- rials and, insofar as it was successful, operated as both social regulation and economic policy…. Access to patterned silks, precious stones, and metals was a privilege reserved for the aristocratic court, emphasizing the symbolic function of luxury goods in maintaining the idealized regime of appearances."

[518] Canepa, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 190.

[519] Ibid, 206.

[520] Trautmann, *Elephants and Kings*, 253-254.

[521] J. Kröger, "Sasanian Iran and India: Questions of Interaction," in *South Asian archaeology, 1979: Papers from the fifth International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists*, Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe (Berlin: D. Reimer Verlag, 1981), 443.

[522] Trautmann, *Elephants and Kings*, 255.

The Chinese also had an interest in rare and powerful goods and knowledge from India. The main concern for Chinese embassies was to advance the cause of the Chinese Buddhist elite. "Rather than execute strategic foreign policies through Buddhism, the Tang embassies seem to have undertaken a series of Buddhist endeavors for the contemporary Chinese Buddhist community and performed activities related to the personal and spiritual welfare of the Tang rulers."[523] The magical and medicinal potential of Indian materials and knowledge were of great interest to foreign rulers, leading to the collection of various objects and technologies by these embassies. Emperor Taizong sought a special "Brahman expert on life-prolonging drugs" from India.[524] Chinese Buddhist monks were also instrumental in seeking out sugar-making technology.[525] As previously mentioned, Xuanzang collected a large number of Buddhist texts in India. Images also made their way to China, including "[a] model of the famous Nalanda Monastery, an image of the Mahabodhi Monastery, and other Buddhist illustrations [which] were also brought to China by the monk Huilun in the seventh century."[526] This indicates that in addition to the spread of textual knowledge from India to China, objects, images and technologies moved as well, along the same elite lines. This shared world of images and objects joins the Tang and Indian kings in a *kosmos* of power with a shared visual language.

THE IMAGE OF INDIA

     Physical goods and symbols may have served as markers of the exotic as well as the

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[523] Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade*, 35.

[524] Ibid, 47.

[525] Ibid, 40.

[526] Ibid, 206.

cosmopolitan royal, but they could also be transferred with little direct contact, over great distances and over long periods of time. For example, Sasanian dress had been a marker of royalty since the Gupta period.[527] Yet, unlike the Romans, who held a great fascination with the idea of India and not so much of an interest in what was actually happening there, the Sasanians and the Tang both had immediate political interests in the subcontinent. Although Chinese missions to India may have been largely motivated by Chinese Buddhist interests and even shaped by their goals, there is ample evidence that Tang rulers took a particular interest in India. As mentioned above, Emperor Taizong believed that India was the location of certain kinds of magical, and not necessarily Buddhist, knowledge — namely expertise on how to enhance his longevity. The ambassador Li Yibiao also signaled to Emperor Taizong that there were some (non-Buddhist) Indian kings who were interested in Chinese sacred texts.

> In response to the Indian king's request, the emperor ordered Daoist priests, in collaboration with Xuanzang, to translate the Daoist work Daode jing into Sanskrit. The reluctant Xuanzang, however, tried to convince the court that it was not worth translating the Daoist text. First, Xuanzang explained, it would be linguistically impossible to translate Chinese words into Sanskrit. Second, he argued, since the belief system of the Indians was completely different from that of the Chinese, it would be difficult for them to understand Daoist philosophy. Xuanzang bluntly warned that the translated text might become a laughingstock. Certainly, the Buddhist monk did not want any part in the promotion of a rival doctrine in his Holy Land.[528]

The emissary Wang Xuance, who led a mission that arrived shortly after Harṣa's death, even engaged in military skirmishes with one king Aruṇāśa.[529] These military maneuvers took place in the context of Taizong's relationship with not only India, but Tibet, and signaled Taizong's willingness to insert itself into regional politics in a very direct manner.

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[527] Agrawala, *The Deeds of Harsha*, 42.

[528] Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade*, 45

[529] Ibid, 22-24.

The Sasanians likewise took an interest in Indian politics and ritual/religious knowledge. Their military maneuvering, like Taizong's seems to have been restricted to the edges of the South Asian world. We see similar patterns in Sasanian and Tang interactions with India – an interest in magical knowledge and/or products, accompanied by a fascination with the possibilities of translation. Whereas the Chinese were motivated by their own Buddhist elite, and thus were particularly invested in understanding one particular Indian cosmological system, the Sasanians had no particular reason to seek out or advocate for any particular religious order within India. Their attention to the subcontinent seems to be more openly political in nature. In fact, the Sasanian world was theorized through a radically different cosmology than Buddhist China or any of the elite theoretical systems of India. For a Zoroastrain empire to reach out to India as the source of supernatural secrets and political knowledge speaks to their ability to read and interpret politics across contexts. Their interactions with India echo, on a larger scale, the interpretive moves performed by kings, Brahmins and Buddhists within India as they vied to fold each other into their own theoretical and cosmological schemes. This was not a case of these theoretical systems reconciling or becoming homogenized, rather, they sought each other out and interacted while preserving their own cosmologies and social theories.

Like the Tang, the Sasanians also engaged in the direct translation of Sanskrit texts. One of these translations is preserved (and later Syriac and Arabic versions) as the *Kalīlah wa Dimnah*. This text is a translation into Pahlavi of at least two Sanskrit sources — the *Pancatantra* and the 12th book of the *Mahābhārata*.[530] The *Pancatantra* is a book of fables which serve to educate kings. The 12th book of the *Mahābhārata* records a dialogue between

[530] François de Blois, *Burzōy's Voyage to India and the Origin of the Book of Kalīlah wa Dimnah* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1990), 13.

Yudhishtira and Bhisma on the subject of how to be a king. That the Sasanians targeted these books in particular shows that they valued Indian political knowledge. The Sasanian translation combined these sources and changed out the frame story: rather than a dialogue between a king and his dying teacher, or a desperate attempt by Brahmins to educate the irredeemably stupid offspring of a king, the *Kalīlah wa Dimnah* tells how the Persian physician Burzōy went to India to recover this valuable knowledge.[531] The various versions of the frame story indicate that Burzōy set out, not to translate texts, but to bring back a plant which could revive the dead (recall that the Tang also believed that India held the secret to prolonging life).[532] While there, he discovered that the magical secret was actually texts, not a plant, and set about acquiring them for his patron, Khoshrow I.

The translation of large portions of Indian texts is evidence of a very close relationship indeed. The translators would have had to be literate in Sanskrit, to start off. The choice of texts indicates that the Sasanians looked at Indian politics with fascination and respect. The seemingly chaotic debates among the Indian elite were not taken, by their neighbors, as a sign of weakness or disorganization, but rather as a rich and valuable source of royal technologies.

The Sasanians also learned how to play chess, which originated in India as *caturanga*, named after the four-fold division of the Indian army. This game, which is mentioned in the *Harṣacarita*,[533] also features in the middle Persian text *Wizārišn ī Čatrang ud Nihišn ī Nēw-Ardaxīr* ("The explanation of chess and the invention of backgammon"), and is mentioned in

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[531] Ibid, 18.

[532] Ibid, 40-41.

[533] Michael Mark, "The Beginnings of Chess," in *Ancient Board Games in Perspective: Papers from The 1990 British Museum Colloquium*, ed. Irving L. Finkel (London: British Museum Press, 2007), 140.

some other Middle Persian texts.[534] The *Wizārišn ī Čatrang ud Nihišn ī Nēw-Ardaxīr* tells the

story of how Khoshrow I acquired knowledge of the game. According to the story, an Indian

king sent the game to him as a challenge, and it puzzled all of his advisors. After three days, the

king's advisor Wuzurgmihr announced that he had figured out the game. He then, in response,

made his own game – backgammon – which was in turn sent back to the Indian king. None of

the Indian courtiers were able to figure out Wuzurgmihr's game, and thus the Indian king paid

tribute to Khoshrow.[535] This account parallels a story about a puzzle which the Byzantine king

sent to the Sasanians – a story which occurs after the story about chess in Firdowsi's *Shahnameh*,

an epic account of the pre-Islamic kings of Persia. This is an obviously fictionalized account, but

it does a good job of representing the political role of chess. The Persian sources cast this war-

game as an intermediary between kings, and perhaps a very genteel substitute for battles.

Chess came to Persia along with a repertoire of elite knowledge which the Persians

collected from the West and the East:

> The literary works which came from India were on such subjects as logic (Middle Persia:
> *tark*; Sanskrit: *tarka*) and rhetoric (*kōšak*; Sanskrit: *kośa*; Middle Persian: *āwyākrn*;
> Sanskrit: *vyākaraṇa*). From the Greek world, works on geometry (Middle Persian: *zamīg-
> paymānīh*) and Ptolemaios μεγιστή (Middle Persian: *mgstyg*) are well known.[536]

The Sasanian elite prized such knowledge. Chess even featured as an aspect of training and

prestige as elites acquired *frahang*, a term Daryaee parses as 'culture,' and which required both

physical and mental excellence.[537] The Sasanians seem to have been able to comfortably adapt

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[534] Touraj Daryaee, "Mind, Body, and the Cosmos: Chess and Backgammon in Ancient Persia," *Iranian Studies* 35, no. 4 (2002): 283.

[535] For a full translation of this incident see: Touraj Daryaee, "Mind, Body, and the Cosmos," 303-306. Note that Daryaee also traces the origins of backgammon to India.

[536] Ibid, 288.

[537] Ibid, 283-284.

such foreign elite technologies to their own culture. The chess pieces in the Indian game, as mentioned above, represent the Indian army, but the Persians did not use chariots, and so replaced the chariot with the *rukh*.[538] Along with chess, the Sasanians also borrowed backgammon from India.[539] With backgammon, the Sasanians interpreted their Zoroastrian cosmology into the game, thoroughly flipping it from its Indian context into their own.

> The *Chatrang-namak* is also of interest for the way in which the various aspects of the game of nard are related to the cosmos. The black and white pieces are compared with night and day, their movements with the movements of the constellations and with the revolution of the firmament. The spots on the dice are compared with the creator (one), heaven and earth (two), words, works and thoughts (three), the four humours of man and the four points of the world, the five lights, that is the sun, the moon, the stars, fire and the light which comes from heaven, and the creation of the world in the six eras of the *Gahanbar*.[540]

The Sasanian elite was, seemingly, unbothered by these changes and adaptations, acknowledging the Indian origin of chess, and at the same time folding it into their own elite practice. Indeed, their explicitly Zoroastrian cosmological interpretation through such games shows the ease with which elite knowledge could flow across radically different spheres of knowledge, cosmology, and political practice.

This way of shifting knowledge across cosmologies is explored by Chakrabarty as a method of one-to-one transfer, a sort of terminological barter.[541] Chakrabarty's argument is that, rather than translating ideas through an imagined empirical universal, premodern systems encountered translation directly, shifting terms and the ideas behind them across cosmologies

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[538] Mark, "The Beginnings of Chess," 145.

[539] Daryaee, "Mind, Body, and the Cosmos," 288.

[540] Ibid, 143.

[541] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 84-85.

without first reconciling them to the universal norm. In this sense, what Chakrabarty describes is very similar to Canepa's *kosmos* of power, which is based more on the visual encounter than on any reconciling of cosmic or historical norms.[542] The Sasanians were thus able to smoothly adapt Indian political knowledge for their own use. Both the closeness of the relationship and the apparent interest on the part of the Sasanian elite speaks to an ability of the ancient elite, and ancient kings, in particular, to act both within and outside of their own contexts, and to both adapt to their circumstances and adapt their circumstances to themselves.

CONCLUSION

The exchange of objects, emissaries, texts and ideas between Indian kings and their Tang and Sasanian neighbors shows us, above all else, that however open to interpretation the political world of the Maitrakas may have been, it and they were perfectly intelligible to foreign powers. The fact that the Sasanians and the Tang could lift elements of Indian politics and cleanly fold them into their own political cosmologies speaks to a *kosmos* of power which reached across Eurasia. These kings inhabited a royal sphere populated by the goods and knowledge of the elite, and they invested heavily in it. Even the Sasanians, who are normally represented as being primarily concerned with the Romans, seem to have considered the royal technologies of India equally significant.

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[542] A good example of this is the very different understandings of the Achaemenids held by the Sasanians and the Byzantines. See: Capena, *The Two Eyes of the Earth*, 44-51. The Sasanians privileged an Avestan understanding of their own history and understood the Achaemenids in terms of the mythic Kayānid dynasty. However, the Byzantines saw the Sasanians as heirs of the Achaemenids, and Darius I in particular, and understood their military campaigns as the Sasanians attempting to rebuild the Achaemenid empire. The Sasanians incorporated the Byzantine understanding into their own ideology, likely because it was effectively threatening to the Byzantines. These different understandings of history and cosmology were no barrier to the exchange of ideas and visual culture.

This vast sphere of shared royal technologies makes the little mistakes, the small cases where some aspect of the Indian was not understood or relayed, even more significant. The Sasanians, for example, replaced the chariot with the *rukh*, but then, while elaborating on the appearance of all other pieces, said nothing about the new *rukh*.[543] Xuanzang carefully mapped out the domains of Indian kings and their relationships to each other, but mistakenly identified Śīlāditya I as the king of Mālava, portrayed by Xuanzang as a domain separate from Valabhī. The memory of Śīlāditya I associates him with his loftiest title, and not with his dynasty's long-held seat of power at Valabhī. The Chinese elite didn't seem to have a grasp on the complex political geographies of India, even when it came to more significant kings like Harṣa who, when he announced his acquisition of Magadha, was interpreted as offering tribute to the Tang emperor. Chinese and Persian sources thus selectively relayed information about Indian and its kings, especially when it came to Indian political cosmologies.

Given the seriousness with which the Sasanians and Tang regarded their Indian contemporaries, it is all the more remarkable that they are not mentioned in Indian sources. However, this obvious omission is consistent with the way that Indian kings treated their contemporaries. Recall the Maitrakas' unnamed paramount lord. Mentions of other kings, where they occur, are used to enhance the power of the author's patron. Pulakeśin II declares that he *defeated* Harṣa. Dadda II gave refuge to the *defeated* Maitraka king. Cases where kings, like the Gārulakas, mention their overlords are the exceptions. Recall from Chapter 4 that the ultimate goal of a victory-seeking king was a conquest of the four directions, and that multiple kings, at the same moment, would claim to have accomplished this feat. The way that Indian kings (and their biographers and scribes) crafted their own narratives shows more that they were carefully

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[543] Mark, "The Beginnings of Chess," 145.

controlling their image than that they were ignorant of their neighbors. It speaks to their engagement with and manipulation of narratives rather than a lack of awareness or political knowledge. Given that scholarly engagement with the world outside India was relatively rare,[544] and that Indian philosophical sources gave kings many immediate options on which they could draw, it seems that foreign connections weren't a prestige-enhancer in the world of Sanskrit politics.

Nevertheless, drawing on the foreign engagements with Indian elites and royal philosophy, I emphasize that the Indian kings were perfectly legible to foreign kings. We may imagine them as members of a sort of trans-continental royal fraternity. The very debates and philosophies that Indian kings drew upon and sought to mold were considered valuable, and perhaps even magical, by their foreign peers. From the modern perspective, Maitraka period India's constant political and philosophical shifts, its many kings and centers of power, create a theoretical problem, yet to their contemporaries, India was a land of boundless solutions for the king in need.

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[544] Only the Buddhists, who were much more heavily engaged with the world outside of South Asia seemed to have a sustained interest in foreign systems of thought. See: David Pingree, "Astronomy and Astrology in India and Iran," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 104, no. 3 (2014): 172-173: "We have previously mentioned the fact that the Buddhists introduced nakṣatra astrology into Iran and Central Asia. The Śârdûlakarṇâvadâna, which contains a thorough exposition of this system, was extremely popular in this area. It was summarized in Chinese by the Parthian prince An Shih-Kao in the second century A.D. and fully translated twice in the third. A long fragment of the Sanskrit text written in about 500 A.D. was among the Weber manuscripts found south of Yarkand, and fragments of fifth-century manuscripts of the Mahâmâyûrîvidyârâjñî, which also deals with nakṣatra astrology to some extent, are preserved among the Bower and Petrovski manuscripts from Kashgar. To reach these places the texts most probably passed through Buddhist communities in the eastern provinces of the Sasanian Empire; and one finds the remains of this Buddhist influence in the second chapter of the Bundahishn, where the twenty-eight nakṣatras are listed with Persian names."

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

Over the course of this dissertation, I have examined the various ways in which the Maitrakas of Gujarat formed relationships with other elite individuals and groups, both royal and non-royal, South Asian and non-South Asian. I have also emphasized how they represented themselves in these relationships or, indeed, whether they chose to represent themselves at all. A couple of key themes have come to light. First, the Maitrakas, although they communicated using traditional media and referenced established discourses of power, exercised a great deal of choice in their self-representations. They made critical choices in how they presented themselves to other elites and should be viewed as highly strategic. Second, the Maitrakas and their contemporaries worked through and between elite traditions with radically different worldviews. Sometimes, as discussed in Chapter 2, these traditions were in open competition, debating each other and vying for royal attention. At other times, as discussed in Chapter 5, these traditions existed in parallel, never coming into direct conflict. Even when cosmological traditions did not directly compete, they did not serve as a barrier to the flow of elite goods, knowledge, or individuals. In this chapter, I will step back from the Maitrakas to examine how these themes might be construed within the context of Indian historiography, and ancient historiography more broadly.

In this conclusion, I explore four key themes — the *rājamaṇḍala*, history, empire, and legitimation/sovereignty. I begin with the *rājamaṇḍala*, a theory expounded in the *Arthaśāstra*.

In this theory, kings are imagined in terms of their relationships to enemies and allies. Theorizing the king in primarily relational terms, I argue, largely fits with the social and political practices of the Maitrakas explored in this dissertation, but the theory needs to be expanded to include other non-royal relationships critical to Maitraka kings. Next, I explore the Maitraka relationship to their own history, as described in their grants. Granting practices, as I have argued throughout, did a lot more work than simply effecting the transfer of land. The most consistent portion of the grants, the genealogy, falls in with a Sanskrit literary genre, *praśasti*, which was typically used to set out royal theories. The copper plates, I argue, are a particular variant of this genre which, enabled by their materially iterative nature, allow kings to write themselves into history and attempt to exert control over that history through their relational significance.

The final two themes engage modern theorizations and political categorizations as they are applied to premodern Indian history in general and the Maitraka in particular. One such category, empire, has been defined in social theory primarily through a set of ideologies and actions which empires are thought to share. The Maitrakas, I argue, engaged in all of the practices typical of an empire, yet fell short of being what is normally considered an imperial polity because they were clearly in the direct orbit of more powerful states (several of whom do seem to be more normatively imperial). I contrast paramountcy with imperialism and suggest that pre-modern Indian political theory and polities indicate that sociological definitions of empire likely miss some key element. Finally, I discuss now the *maṇḍala* might be read in contrast to political theories of legitimacy and sovereignty. I suggest that studying pre-modern India through these categories is limiting because it forces scholars to draw internal and external boundaries where *maṇḍala* do not, and where inter-regional relationships did not see any such

boundary to exist. A broadly comparative analysis of the first-millennium world would be better

served by using a category legible to both modern and pre-modern audiences — the king.

THE RĀJAMAṆḌALA

The Maitraka grants show us that the *rājamaṇḍala* is both expansive and adaptable, and

that it cuts across categories and cosmologies. As discussed in Chapter 2, Daud Ali has argued

that the *Arthaśāstra*'s *rājamaṇḍala* theory serves as a contemporary theory of dynastic

relationships.

> This political order is described in the *Arthaśāstra,* the final composition of which may be placed in the Gupta period, as a 'circle of kings', or *rājamaṇḍala,* a concentrically conceived structure of contiguous and overlapping relationships of allies and enemies. At the centre of this structure stood the ambitious king, or *vijigīṣu,* who formed the 'ego' of the policy recommended by the treatises. This king was to direct his diplomatic policy towards other political agents within the circle, by warring with bordering kings and allying with other kings spatially contiguous with his enemies. As other kings could operate with the same policy, the *rājamaṇḍala* was not so much the blueprint of an imperial state as a theory of dynastic relationships. It formed the basis of political strategy and diplomatic thinking at the courts of Gupta and post-Gupta India.[545]

Thus, even theoretical texts envision a world thickly populated by kings. While they can be

brought into a clear order, as the process of conquest described by the *Arthaśāstra* (and also by

the *Mahābhārata*) shows, that process is messy, and never fully supplants the kingship of other

kings. Sanskrit political theory, for the most part, made the assumption that kings would be many

in number and proximate to each other in space.

This has several implications for how we may envision the state ruled by the king of

ancient India — among them that the state assumes the presence of competitor states and that it

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[545] Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval*, 33.

defines itself less in terms of its own internal organization (as a Weberian theory would propose) and more in terms of its relationships with others.

> The theory of the kingdom itself, which included the 'ally' (whose territory was not contiguous with that of the aspiring king), was conceived less as a fixed territory than as a set of shifting relationships. The 'boundaries' of the kingdom, so conceived, were always deeply entangled in the wider structure of entities which comprised the multi-nodal and potentially polycentric structure of the *rājamaṇḍala.* The discourses on polity focus on the ambitious king, his acquisition of a territory with subjects, wealth and allies as a generic and universal problem. Beyond general remarks on the king as 'supporter of the world' and protector of the social estates of his realm, the manuals on polity were principally concerned with how a lord could protect his realm or office only to the extent that acquiring and retaining possession of it was an end in itself.[546]

In other words, according to the *Arthaśāstra*, more than being the ruler of a state, a king was a manager of elite relationships. The king existed always among other kings, whether below or above them in rank or prestige, allied to them or enemies with them.

If these royal relationships were so critically important, why did the Maitrakas not explicitly name them in their grants? Certainly, they had that option, as the Gārulaka grant which names Dhruvasena as the Gārulaka overlord shows. Maitraka references to their peers (likely peers with considerably more power than they themselves had) were always oblique. Recall from Chapter 2 that Droṇasiṁha described himself as *parama-bhaṭṭāraka-pāda-anudhyāta* — "one who meditates on the feet of the highest lord." Later grants say that he was *akhila-bhuvana-maṇḍal-ābhoga-svāminā parama-svāminā svayam-upahita-rājy-ābhiṣeka-mahā-viśrāṇ-āvapūta-rājaśrī* — "one who by the lord of the circle of territories of the whole world, the highest lord himself was given kingly splendor, being purified by his great gifts, in the royal inauguration." In these cases and others, through the way they described themselves, they referenced trends in the royal self-expression of their contemporaries. They were bellicose, and proficient in both

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[546] Ibid, 74.

conquering their enemies and making strategic alliances. Bhaṭārka, was both *atula-bala-sapatna-maṇḍal-ābhoga-saṁsakta-samprahāra-śata-labdha-pratāpaḥ* — "one who obtained glory in a hundred battles having encountered the circle of territories of enemies of unequalled strength" — and *nurakta-maula-bhṛta-mitra-śreni-bal-āvāpta-rājaśrī* — "one who obtained kingly splendor through the strength of the range of his friends/allies and hereditary mercenaries attached [to him]." This description of Bhaṭārka, portraying him as a king among and over other kings, opens every single Maitraka grant (with the exception of the lone grant of Droṇasiṁha).

Ali expands the *Arthaśāstra*'s circular theory, written from the point of visualizing the king who has triumphantly conquered his peers, to more of a social theory which conceives of a "multi-nodal and potentially polycentric structure."[547] In theorizing these rings among rings, it is critical to remember that not only kings were theorized in a *maṇḍala* structure. Groups of Buddhist *vihāras* were also called *maṇḍalas*. As the Maitraka grants have shown, kings not only carefully managed their relationships to other kings, but to religious elites as well. They knew, as their grants tell us, that the king was an important figure in Brahmanical social theory. Therefore, they must also have known that the king did not (theoretically speaking at least) serve the same role as a Brahmin, yet Droṇasiṁha and Dhruvasena II were compared to Manu, among the most orthodox of Brahmanical thinkers of his time. This was not an error on their part. I would argue that it is possible to read these grants, both in the acts of granting they record and in the presentation of the dynasty to religious elites, as an attempt to pull powerful non-royal elites into royal circles of power. Looking back to Chapters 3 and 4, such a reading of the grant would combine the *rājya*, court centric theories of the king with the Maitraka's insertion of themselves

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547 Ibid.

into theories and debates about *rājadharma* found in the *Dharmaśāstras* and Buddhist texts. In this sense, the grants serve a purpose of social organization on the part of the king.

Interest in forming these relationships was not one sided. There are four known forged Maitraka grants.[548] One grant purports to have been given by Guhasena, two by Dharasena II and one by Dharasena IV. Recall from Chapter 2 the example of Harṣa who destroyed a forged grant in order to grant the land in question to others. Forging such land grants seems to be a fairly common practice. This speaks both to the social and political power of these grants as material guarantors of land rights, and to the broad recognition of the importance of kings. For example, one of the forged grants of Dhruvasena II was analyzed by Bühler, who declares it a forgery on the following grounds: 1) Guhasena is called the son of Bhaṭārka, rather than a descendant; 2) Dharasena is called Dharasena-deva, a style of naming the kings taken from the grants of the later Śīlādityas, and not seen on plates of Dharasena II himself; 3) the seal of the grant depicts Nandi standing rather than lying down, and used the name of Dharasena rather than Śrī Bhaṭārka, as all other Maitraka seals do; 4) portions of the forged grant, namely parts 2-4 of the grant, are largely copied from grants of the Gurjara king Dadda II.[549] I would add that, in addition, the descriptions of the kings in the genealogy differ from the standard as well, which is nearly non-existent in Maitraka grants. The forger was clearly familiar with the grants of the Maitrakas (even if only the later Maitrakas), and even more so the Gurjaras. Interestingly, the forger seemed to desire to possess a Maitraka copper-plate more than a Gurjara copper-plate. The existence and probable use of these forged grants speaks to their importance among objects

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[548] See Appendix C: Forged Maitraka Plates.

[549] G. Bühler, "No. XVI.– A Forged Grant of Dharasena II, Dates Śaka Saṁvat 400," *The Indian Antiquary* 10 (1881): 278-280.

critical to elite material culture, and to the enduring power and desirability of possessing such plates.

If the grants are, as I argue, an instrument of social organization, they also tell us that the society the king was interested in ordering was not coterminous with the populace that Weber saw as the key to royal legitimacy. The Maitrakas were most interested in other elites. They ruled among an elite heterarchy that was just as diverse and decentralized as the kings themselves. Brahmins, Buddhists and Jains had no church, no pope or ultimate authority. There were traditions within traditions, as the nasty relationship between temple Brahmins and Brahmins in *brahmedeyas* has shown in Chapter 3. The Maitrakas see no issue in invoking both Śiva and Viṣṇu, nor do they represent any major difference between forming relationships with Brahmins and Buddhists. Indeed, the only place where differences can be found in the grants is in the second part of the grant which specifies the object granted and the donees. There it is possible to note both practical differences (discussed in Chapter 2) and some differences in specialized vocabulary.[550] I do not intend to imply that the king had no immediate politically functional motivation behind making these grants. An examination of the early temples and Buddhist cave sites of Gujarat shows that they ringed the coast.[551] With Brahmanical and Buddhist institutions sitting along important trade routes, and the Maitrakas themselves having a vested interest in trade (see Chapter 5), they would have been even more motivated to maintain good relationships with their elite neighbors.

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[550] See: Oskar von Hinüber, "Behind the Scenes: The Struggle of Political Groups for Influence as Reflected in Inscriptions," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 56 (2013): 365-379.

[551] J.M. Nanavati and M.A. Dhaky, "The Maitraka and the Saindhava Temple of Gujarat," *Artibus Asiae, Supplementum* 26 (1969), Figure 1.

The king, then, operated at the intersection of many *maṇḍalas*. Copper-plate grants were a technology through which the king could effectively reach into non-royal *maṇḍalas* and exert both his authority and his worldview. If a king's status and prestige was enhanced by having kings under him, would it not be enhanced by bringing non-royal elites into the kingly sphere as well? The *Arthaśāstra* tells only part of the story, as all theoretical texts do. By its own declaration, it is a manual for conquest. Clearly, kings had means other than conquest by which to form relationships with non-royal elites and bring them into their orbit.

HISTORY

As I have argued above, copper-plate grants do much more than simply record the gift of land. As such, it is critical to examine these objects as more than lists of places and things with occasional references to the Maitraka social world. While much can be gained from an examination of the particulars of grants (see Chapter 2) or the places they reference (see Chapter 4), the majority of the text is actually occupied with narrating the royal genealogy. This portion of the grant is the most formulaic. As seen in Appendix B, the descriptions of kings are repeated in almost all cases nearly verbatim by their successors. Yet, it is in this section that the copper-plates participate in a tradition of Sanskrit *praśasti* — the "royal inscriptional panegyric"[552] — that both spread throughout and also was an agent of the spread of Sanskrit cosmopolitan culture.[553]

The most famous *praśastis*, and likely the most influential in their own context as well, are those found in stone inscriptions. While there are a few Maitraka stone inscriptions, they are

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[552] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 14.

[553] Ibid, 16.

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all too fragmentary to be read. As noted in Chapter 2, many of the ideals central to the ideology

of royal power, or *rājya*, originate in stone *praśastis*, which themselves originate in Gujarat.

Rudrādaman's inscription at Junagadh is the first *praśasti*, and the form of the genre form is

remarkably stable over space and time.[554] "[I]t is first and foremost the content of Rudrādaman's

inscription that arrests attention: It is a Sanskrit *praśasti*, approximating a *gadyakāvya*, or art-

prose … And it is like nothing the Sanskrit world had seen before."[555] The text of *praśastis* can

and does carry over from stone inscriptions to copper-plates. In reference to Cāḷukya grants,

Pollock states: "The agreements between the plates and the *praśasti* are dense and unmistakable,

comprising every feature from meter to trope to reference."[556] Yet, as Pollock also notes,

praśasti are intrinsically linked to their physical forms. In reference to Samudragupta's

Allahabad pillar inscription he argues that "[t]he pillar 'points out' the fame of Samudragupta by

both its very presence and the *praśasti* that it bears, and it both physically and communicatively

'points' fame's way toward heaven."[557] The copper-plate grants, then, are members of a

particular kind of literary genre, which relies on both text and form as elements of its

communicative structure.

  Certainly, the Maitraka state must have generated other documents. They were likely

written on palm leaves or a similar medium and thus did not survive. To record royal land grants

on copper plates, joined together with a royal seal, is a telling choice. The grants make textual

claims to longevity: *ā-candr-ārk-ārṇṇava-kṣiti-sarit-parvata-sthiti-samakālīnam* — "[this grant

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[554] Ibid, 220.

[555] Ibid, 68.

[556] Ibid, 157.

[557] Ibid, 143.

should] remain contemporaneous with the moon, sun, waves/sea foam, earth, rivers and mountains;" *āgāmi-bhadra-nṛpatibhiś-c-ānityāny-aiśvaryāny-asthiraṁ mānuṣyaṁ sāmānyaṁ ca bhūmi-dāna-phalam-avagacchadbhiḥ ayam-asmad-dāyo-numantavyaḥ* — "by good kings in the future and my own lineage, understanding that kingly power is changeable, and men are perishable, and the reward of a gift of land is common, this gift should be sanctioned." These claims were matched by the durable form of the grant, which differentiated them from other types of bureaucratic documents, making them more like stone inscriptions, which are famous for their durability. We can also see the durability of the land grants carried out in practice. Recall from Chapter 3 that Dhruvasena II referenced Droṇasiṁha's grant when he reestablished royal gifts to the temple at Trisangamaka.[558] It is important here that he does not re-grant the land, but rather adds an allowance to the earlier land grant. Viṣnuśena's grant to the merchant community of Lohāṭā, to which Avanti's re-approval was appended after the colophon (discussed in Chapter 5) is another good example. It was the form of the land grants that enabled these practices.

Given their durability, the uniqueness of their form, and their literary aspirations, copper-plate grants must have served as an important instrument for the kings (and by extension the state) to write and disseminate their narrative. If, as I have argued above, the land grants served to pull non-royal elites into the types of relationships through which kings sought to center themselves, then the textual content of the grant had to lay out that narrative. Indeed, the fact that forged grants recalled (if somewhat loosely) the royal genealogy of Maitraka grants would speak to a successful, if imperfect, dissemination of their genealogy and history. As seen above, references to *maṇḍalas* abound in the royal genealogy, as do references to the dharmic

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[558] Grant 64.

righteousness of kings. The way the genealogy section is formed, by taking each king's description like a set of self-appointed epithets, and repeating it verbatim throughout the dynasty, establishes not only a way for kings to position themselves among theoretical narratives but also a way of making history.

Copper-plate grants are inherently iterative in a way that stone inscriptions are not, making them ideal vessels for disseminating and reinforcing a version of history. While there are exceptions (Aśoka's edicts being the most obvious), most stone inscriptions are singular. They are meant to be as monumental and unique as the places in which they are carved. Copper-plates are neither public nor monumental. They had been in regular use in India for centuries before the Maitrakas issued their first grant. These ubiquitous yet durable textual objects formed a steadily increasing record of dynastic history. The grants themselves acknowledge this when they say that "kings in the future" should sanction them. The space which the grants create, both rhetorically and physically, lends their patrons a chance at crafting a lasting historical narrative. Not all kings, and certainly not the Maitraka kings, were a Rudrādaman or Samudragupta who would craft stone inscriptions of such unarguable importance that they would set social, political and linguistic trends for years to come. Dynasties themselves proliferated along with copper-plate inscriptions. I argue that this is more than an accident of evidence. The form of the grants themselves allowed for kings to engage in king-making in meaningful ways that were not previously accessible to them.

IMPERIALISM

Throughout this dissertation, as in my above comparison to Rudrādaman and Samudragupta, I have described the Maitrakas as something less than imperial. To be clear, the idea of 'empire' as such, does not seem to appear in Sanskrit texts The discussion there is about

paramountcy — either the acquisition of paramountcy through conquest, as discussed in the

Arthaśāstra and the *Mahābhārata*, or the ideals of paramountcy, the king unimpeded, embodied

in the *cakravartin* .

> We hear in many texts of the *cakravartin*, the great paramount king, whose chariot wheels roll everywhere unimpeded, and who is victorious over the four quarters of the earth. Buddhism made the idea of the *cakkavatti* (the Pali form of the Sanskrit *cakravartin*) and his wheel central to its politico-ethical discourse. Jain texts also talk about the *cakravartin*, the great emperor who follows the wheel and brings the whole earth under his sway without indulging in violence.[559]

As in the case of the *Mahābhārata* which theorizes "a war involving *all* kings in order to leave

one unquestioned paramount king,"[560] Sanskrit texts often imagined paramountcy as all

encompassing — a domination not only of other kings but of all things everywhere. As Singh

argues, these texts imagine a world of all things in one.

> The *Raghuvamsha* is an important text because of the comprehensiveness and elegance with which Kalidasa paints the portrait of the ideal king, weaving together attributes such as military victories, the performance of sacrifices, devotion to dharma, a complex relationship with the gods, veneration of *ṛṣis*, benevolence toward subjects, detachment, and self-control. The long poem seamlessly blends together city, palace, forest, and hermitage into an interacting and interdependent whole…. It is the creation of such an all-encompassing imperial universe couched in brilliant Sanskrit poetry that gave the *Raghuvamsha* its great importance in India and Southeast Asia.[561]

As Singh has indicated here, and as I have discussed above in Chapter 4, Sanskrit political

ideologies had a far-ranging impact. They spread and were adopted and relocated throughout

South and Southeast Asia.

    While there is ongoing debate over exactly what an ancient empire is, it is possible to

identify some key features on which there is broad scholarly consensus. Comparing two

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[559] Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 32-33.

[560] Ibid, 61.

[561] Ibid, 218.

definitions, it is possible to identify broad similarities. Sinopoli defined empires thus: "Empires are geographically and politically expansive polities, composed of a diversity of localized communities and ethnic groups, each contributing its unique history and social, economic, religious, and political traditions."[562] Furthermore, the empire is "a territorially expansive and incorporative kind of state, involving relationships in which one state exercises control over other sociopolitical entities …. The diverse polities and communities that constitute an empire typically retain some degree of autonomy."[563] Subramaniyam, presents the following criteria:

> [E]mpires would be modestly described as follows: (1) as states with an extensive geographical spread, embracing more than one cultural domain and ecozone; (2) as states powered by an ideological motor that claimed extensive, at times even universal, forms of dominance, rather than mere control of a compact domain; (3) as states where the idea of suzerainty was a crucial component of political articulation, and where the monarch was defined not merely as a king, but as a "king over kings," with an explicit notion of hierarchy.[564]

And herein lies the problem: the Maitrakas, even while they existed in the shadow of clearly more powerful empires or emperors, such as the Guptas or Harṣa who controlled almost all of North India, did all of these things.

The Maitrakas engaged in expansion through conquest. "Territorial expansion, through conquest and incorporation, is the defining process in the creation of the geographic and demographic space of empire."[565] Śīlāditya I's conquest of Ujjain would be the most obvious example of this process, but there are other hints of their territorially expansive rule. The fact that other kings clearly ruled under them — the Gārulakas — indicates that they incorporated local

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[562] Carla Sinopoli, "The Archaeology of Empires," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (1994): 159.

[563] Ibid, 160.

[564] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Written on water: designs and dynamics in the Portugese *Estado da Índia*," in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, ed. Susan E. ALcock et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 43.

[565] Sinopoli, "The Archaeology of Empires," 162.

groups into their state. The fact that the Gārulakas issued their own grants, and that other kings, like the Saindhavas, who may have ruled under the Maitrakas, made no mention of them at all, indicates that these rulers, even while overshadowed by Maitraka power, maintained some autonomy. Empires need not have exercised complete control over the places they dominated. As Sinopoli notes, "[v]ariation exists in the extent to which elites in conquered areas are incorporated into the imperial framework or displaced by imperial functionaries."[566] They fail slightly more in Subrahmanyan's definition, except that he defines the "extensive geographical spread" of empires in terms of their control of multiple cultural domains, as above, and ecozones. The Maitraka state seemed to encompass peninsular Saurāṣṭra (both the coast and inland), mainland Gujarat, and Western Madhya Pradesh — forests, coasts, and highland plateaus.

Furthermore, the Maitraka polity contained within itself a diversity of communities and traditions. For an empire to be sustained it must "transcend [individual relationships] to create an imperial system of structural connections and dependencies among diverse regions and cultural traditions."[567] Even beyond their exercise of power over lesser kings, the Maitraka land grants clearly engaged in such activity. By reaching out and forming royal relationships with the members of differing religious and theoretical traditions, the Maitrakas brought, as I have argued above, other non-royal elites into their royal orbit. Maitraka rule superseded the personal religious affiliations of any particular king. They clearly recognized the need to form relationships with elites within their own state with whom they may have personally disagreed. As I have said before, this was not unusual in India at this time. In fact, it was the norm for kings to rule and work with elites of all religious traditions. Zealotry was not a feature of *rājya*.

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[566] Ibid, 164.

[567] Ibid, 163.

The Maitrakas certainly held imperial ideologies. Imperial ideology is analyzed with two main emphases: "1. the role of ideology in motivating action, in particular, imperial expansion … and, 2. the role of ideology in providing legitimation for and explanations of extant and emerging inequalities, especially in relations between superordinate and subject populations."[568] I have discussed in the Introduction why 'legitimation' is a theoretical tool ill-suited to the context of the Maitrakas, so I will discuss ideology in terms of explanation here instead. In Chapter 3, I have discussed how Buddhist and Brahmanical ideologies simultaneously did and did not motivate conquest. Certainly, for a theoretical text like the *Arthaśāstra*, conquest was one of the main activities of the king. As I have argued above, the Maitrakas openly acknowledged their conquests and military prowess. The *Arthaśāstra*, and *rājamaṇḍala* in particular, serve to theorize the complexities of relationships between more and less powerful kings — the superordinate and the subject. Furthermore, the *rājamaṇḍala* theory, or perhaps just *maṇḍala* theory more generally, anticipates the core-periphery model so central to the modern theorization of empire. "An ideal graphic model of an empire might consist of rings depicting decreasing imperial authority with increasing distance from the imperial center."[569]

As discussed in Chapter 3, there were competing theories of how a king was to go about achieving paramountcy in Maitraka times. The Buddhist version, culminating in the *cakravartin* is closer to the imperialism of modern social theory. The Buddhist *cakravartin*/emperor not only consolidated the world under himself, but social order, so much so that he could free the world from the oppression of *varṇa*. This stands in strict contrast to the paramountcy of the *Mahābhārata* which is upheld as the ultimate goal but theorized as problematic and destructive.

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[568] Ibid, 167.

[569] Ibid, 169.

Brahmanical paramountcy does not free the king from his relational obligations — it embeds them in it further. In this sense, Brahmanical paramountcy is closer to *rājya*, discussed in Chapter 4, which imagines the king as a manager of other kings, sometimes conquering them, sometimes capturing and releasing them, and, as I have argued above, pushes kings into a deeply relational structure. This does not mean that kings did not seek universal domination (they tell us repeatedly that they did) but rather that they imagined this domination both in terms of the movable and scalable Sanskrit cosmopolis, and in terms of their ability to relate to elite powers.

Were the Maitrakas then, and all their peers, emperors? I would argue that they were not — not when they are clearly overshadowed by much larger states. Is empire then, simply a matter of scale? It cannot be. Certainly, size is a critical element of the empire, but empires in different parts of the world have existed at different scales, and it would be impossible to come up with a territorial minimum as an imperial requirement. Their size seems to be more an issue of relative importance than an absolute.[570] In addition, empires are more than what they claim to be. Empires can and have been studied through the impacts they have on their exteriors as well as interiors[571] and through their after-effects and ability to shape other imperial and non-imperial futures.[572] On those counts, the Maitrakas do not seem to qualify. While they exerted regional influence (as seen in the adoption of some of their inscriptional practices) they were not major

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[570] Compare, for example, the Wari empire, which occupied a territory roughly coterminous with modern Peru (see: Katharina Schreiber, "The Wari empire of Middle Horizon Peru: the epistemological challenge of documenting an empire without documentary evidence," in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, ed. Susan E. ALcock et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001),70-75) with Achaemenid Persia, which stretched from Egypt to the Indus.

[571] Terence N. D'Altroy, "Empires in a Wider World," in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, ed. Susan E. ALcock et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 126.

[572] Susan E. Alcock, "The Afterlife of Empires," in *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History*, ed. Susan E. ALcock et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 372-373.

players in Indian politics more generally, especially when compared with the Guptas and

Cāḷukyas.

I am not arguing that there were not empires in ancient India, simply that the Maitrakas

did not fall among their ranks. There must then have been something else, an extra factor besides

scale, that separated these imperial forms from their kingly neighbors. There are several avenues

that could be explored here. Perhaps the empire must have been the source of broad intellectual

change — we may think of the court of the Guptas, where the *Raghuvaṁśa* was composed, or,

beyond India, the Tang emperor's search for Buddhist knowledge to enhance his rule, or Timur,

who so closely associated his empire's scholastic success with his rule that he inscribed "If you

doubt our might – look at our buildings" on the gates of Samarkand, a city that was not a

militarized fortress but a city of scholars.[573] Perhaps the empire must have been at one time ruled

by an emperor who, beyond his achievements in conquest was the source of some kind of

seismic ideological change — an emperor like Samudragupta, who laid out the key elements of

rājya in his Allahabad Pillar Inscription,[574] or Aśoka whose use of the idea of *dharma* in his

inscriptions catapulted that idea from the obscure context of a single religion into the center of

Sanskrit political and social theory[575] Beyond India, Alexander would serve as an example *par*

excellence of this kind of seismic change, or Augustus, whose *Res Gestae* solidified the image of

an imperial Rome. Perhaps an empire, more so than a kingly state, must have acknowledged the

world outside of its own context — Harṣa did this, as is shown in Bana's depiction of his court,

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[573] Adam Smith, *The Political Landscape: Constellations of Authority in Early Complex Polities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) 271-272.

[574] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 253.

[575] Patrick Olivelle, "Semantic History of Dharma: The Middle and Late Vedic Periods," in *Language, Texts, and Society: Explorations in Ancient Indian Culture and Religion* (London: Anthem Press, 2011),505.

which includes men in Chinese and Sasanian garb, or the Romans who claimed that India was a province of Rome in order to assert their cosmological domination.[576]

With the sources I have examined here, I can only make suggestions about what might separate the empire from the kingly state. Certainly, the infinitely scalable and movable Sanskrit cosmopolis complicates this idea, but as a category of broad comparison it is useful. Yet, it is clear that in the Maitraka context, the empire was not the main unit of comparison. That category was, across traditions, contexts and geographical space, the king. There was broad consensus on the fact that kings were necessary and important (see: Chapter 5), and yet, even within India, disagreement on exactly what the role of the king was. The meaning of the 'king' changed even more dramatically as it moved into supra-regional contexts, as can be seen in the Tang emperor's claim that Harṣa, who certainly saw himself as the Taizong's peer, was offering tribute to him. This is precisely why sovereignty, which serves theories of modern international relations so well precisely because it reduces states to the ways in which they are equal, does not work well in the Maitraka context. When kings and their courtiers can so effortlessly flip political theory across radically different cosmological contexts, as the Sasanians do in their interpretations of Sanskrit texts and Indian war games, the issue is not the equality of states, as imagined by Chakrabarty in the need for a universal third category in modern translation, but rather the mutual recognition of mere likeness.

Instead I would suggest that a close examination of Maitraka inscriptions, and the space which they inhabited, suggests that the key unit of analysis is the king itself. Royal relationships dictated much of their rule and how proximate or ultimate those relationships were allows me to parse a multi-*maṇḍala* theory of their rule. If we take them at their word, or even accept that the

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[576] Grant Parker, *The Making of Roman India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 141-142.

political claims of rulers have real world consequences, then they were kings and conquerors, scholars and saints all in one. In order to understand where they fit in the larger world that surrounds them, I suggest that, since the king is axiomatic to their contemporary political theory, the king is the best category for broad theoretical comparison.

MAṆḌALAS AND MODERN THEORY

I began in the Introduction with a discussion of Pollock's arguments against the use of legitimation theory in premodern South Asia. In that section, I explored how legitimation theory underpins an interlinked set of political theories which have become essential to a modern understanding of politics, both in terms of the state and in terms of the international political system. My project here has been to use a single dynasty as a case study to explore how the politics of ancient South Asia functioned and were theorized without resorting to legitimation. Throughout this dissertation two key themes have emerged. First, as discussed in the previous section, is that the key political category across space and tradition was the king. This too, is foreshadowed in Pollock's critique of legitimacy: "In the historical experience of a tenth-century Indian, there had always been kings who had always exercised power in a given way. No one had ever experienced anything else; no standard of comparison existed for doubting the inevitability of kingship, which accordingly approximated a natural law." [577] Generally, this was indeed true, but there were other domains and rulers. The primary 'other' in Sansrkit political theory was the forest tribe.[578] "The forest chieftains were not considered part of the circle of

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[577] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 522-532.

[578] Further study might consider comparing these tribes to Zomia. See: James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, Yale Agrarian Studies Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

kings by political theorists, but they were recognized as a generic political force that kings had to deal with."[579] This figure appears in the *Arthaśāstra* and the *Harṣacarita* in connection with *sāmantas*: "Making a demand for gifts of treasure, troops, land or inheritance, by supporting a peer king (*sāmanta*), tribal chief (*āṭavika*), pretender from the royal family, or a prince in disfavor - this is how he should practice sowing discord."[580]

> And seated apart there were Jains, Ārhatas (Buddhists), Pāśupatas (worshipers of Śiva), followers of Pārāśarya (medicants) and Varṇins (persons having a *varṇa*; religious students), and people born from all countries, and those of non-Aryan tribes (*mleccha-jāti*) who were inhabitants of all the forests circling the edge of the oceans, and a circle of messengers/ambassadors who came from all distant countries paying homage.[581]

As seen here, the imagination of the forest tribe was expansive, and could include foreigners as well as more proximate political powers.

The presence of this 'other' makes the ability of foreigners to recognize kings more significant. Kings recognized other kings as such. I would expand Pollock's argument to say that the axiomatic nature of the king is generally true in the context of first millennium Asia and that, the international system of the time was one that was defined by the encounter (and the one-to-one translation that occurs therein, see Chapter 5), not commensuration. In the sense that the king could be recognized and theorized across systems, without those systems being particularly concerned with making sure that those kings were, in fact, the same, even when, as in the case of Brahmin and Buddhist discourses, they argued precisely over the nature of the king and kingship.

The second major theme to have emerged here is the critical importance of relationships to political practice in the Maitraka period. This stands somewhat in contrast to the first point,

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[579] Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 377.

[580] *Arthaśāstra* 7.16.6.

[581] *Harṣacarita* 28.

which I would argue is more a feature of the international system than of South Asian politics in particular. The need for embeddedness by the Maitrakas and others — evidenced by their engagement with royal and religious discourses of power, their incorporation of religious elites into their own system of power, and their interest in establishing their dynastic history in the material landscape — stands in stark contrast to political theories of the legitimation/sovereignty type which, being derived from a particular tradition of from histories of the European Medieval, have a deep concern with rupture above all else. In the Introduction, I discussed Kantorowicz, who locates sovereignty in the *separation* of the Church and the state. These ruptures are found everywhere in the political theories drawn from the Medieval, precisely because of how the Medieval was historicized.

> The division of history into ancient, medieval and modern (and the division of the historical profession into corresponding branches) … is abiding testimony to the victory that the party of the historical revolt won over its opponents in a great civil war that shook early modern Europe to its foundations. By exploding the temporal unity of the period from ancient times to the present, the humanists changed truths that had enjoyed apparently unshakable permanence into mere antiquities. They transformed things that seemed self-evidently true into things of the past that were henceforth impossible to know without a special effort…. And the unthinking facility with which historians have until recently applied the tripartite division of history into ancient, medieval, and modern, not merely to the history of Europe, or to their own profession, but to the history of the entire world,[582] merely confirms the one-sided nature of the victory.[583]

For Fasolt, history itself was and is a political project. "History is directly and systematically linked to citizenship, sovereignty, and the state. If history is the form in which we contemplate a past that is immutably divided from the present, then citizenship, sovereignty, and the state are

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[582] Periodization in pre-modern South Asia is, itself, the subject of spirited debate among archaeologists and historians. See: Ali, "The Historiography of the Medieval in South Asia;" Hawkes, "Finding the 'Early Medieval' in South Asian Archaeology;" Upinder Singh, "Introduction," in *Rethinking Early Medieval India*: *A Reader* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1-44.

[583] Fasolt, *The Limits of History*, 19-20.

the categories by which we declare our freedom to change the present into the form that we desire for the future."[584]

These ruptures, between the past and present, modern and pre-modern, sacred and secular, legitimate and illegitimate, the sovereign and the law, are pervasive, but they are also contingent. Weber, and others may have used historical sources to bolster their theories, but they are primarily theorists of the modern, necessarily separated from what came before. There are remarkable similarities across the theoretical texts I have referenced. For example, Fasolt, Davis and Bartelson all look to Jean Bodin, a 16th century French jurist and theorist, as "the man who made the theory of sovereignty common stock in trade of modern political philosophers."[585] I point this out not because I doubt it, but to emphasize that this is a particularity that goes beyond simply being "western" or "modern." I argued in the section above that universal (or at least very broad) categories are necessary and useful to an attempt to understand the premodern past in broad terms, especially beyond any given society, tradition, or region. However, these categories are markedly less useful, and perhaps even detrimental, when they obscure political practices in other places and times.

"A sovereign state is usually defined as one whose citizens are free to determine their own affairs without interference from any agency beyond its territorial borders."[586] As I have argued in Chapter 4, the concept of territory for the Maitrakas and their contemporaries was deeply embedded in a Sanskrit cosmology. When Xuanzang calls Śīlāditya I the king of Mālava, he is externally recognizing, likely without knowing, the endless relocatability of the Sanskrit

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[584] Ibid, 7.

[585] Ibid, 200.

[586] Ibid, 7.

cosmopolis and the power structures embedded within it. Moreover, as in the example of the forged grant above, land grants transcended dynasties and their ever-shifting territories. Conquest was undoubtedly important to the Maitrakas and their fellow kings, and to politics in pre-modern South Asia more generally. South Asian theorists in the first millennium and beyond not only recognized political violence but held an extended discourse on violence and non-violence, perhaps more so than any other tradition.[587] However, these conquests seem to have taken place in the context of a very different ideological structure than that which underpins the modern territorial state. That forgers would copy a Gārulaka grant and give the name of a Maitraka king gives evidence that the land grants were, as they claim, enduring beyond any single dynasty.

In a *maṇḍala* structure of circles within circles, the king is schematically enclosed. This was not a trap or restriction, but actively sought by political powers. "The modern state begins to develop wherever the monarch sets in train the process of dispossessing the autonomous, 'private' agents of administrative power who exist in parallel to him, that is to say, all the independent owners of the materials of war, and the administration, financial resources, and politically useful goods of every kind."[588] The Maitrakas sought the opposite of this in nearly every way. That is to say, they were not just bound by some traditional system (although they did care, deeply, about tradition),[589] but they actively sought out relationships and indeed gave "materials of … administration, financial resources and politically useful goods of every kind" to

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[587] Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, 6.

[588] Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *The Vocation Lectures*, ed. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004), 37.

[589] An argument could be made here about the scope of Maitraka references to Brahmanical theories, and about how this may advance our understanding of history and politics, as in Fasolt, *The Limits of History*, 7. However, such an argument would necessarily rely on a deeper study of the *śāstras* and *smṛtis* than I have given here.

other elites. This is precisely what their grants claim to do, what Sanskrit theoretical sources claim to want, and what seems, on the basis of their practices to have actually occurred. In the formation and maintenance of *maṇḍalas*, the king privileges embedded relationships above strict division.

I do not mean to paint an idyllic representation of Sanskritic politics. As seen in the Pṛthu-Vena myth, found in the *Māhābharata*, the relationship between the king and other elites is not always a happy or comfortable one.

> The dualistic model recommended by the example of Pṛthu itself is more than a little problematic. It puts strain on the Brahmins, who accept the king's gifts and the sacrificial residues that go with them; it also leaves them with more authority than they can use while the king now *lacks* the authority to act independently. One has, in short, a system of delicate balance in which a heavy surplus of evil flows outward via the Brahmin priests, under the watchful eyes of a weakened arbiter, the king, in which royal splendor, *śrī*, can only be extracted from the sacrifice, hence from an unending circulatory process that creates the Brahmin-king interdependence; and in which control over this process is always threatening to break down as both the major figures, saddled with impossible ambivalence toward each other and toward themselves, cling reluctantly to the thin lifeline of their common (and somewhat theoretical) distaste for disorder.[590]

As this example, and the counter example of Vena who, in keeping with the *Māhābharata*'s catastrophizing views on imperialism manages to cause cosmic destruction by ridding himself of these relationships, shows, what is at stake is a political system, not a utopian ideal. Nor do I intend to paint the picture of an exotic Asian other, useful only for its potential contributions to Western theory. Indeed, it is possible to look at alternative strains in the Western canon, for example the work of Gierke — who sees the corporation, the community of people, as the essential political unit, greater than the sum of its parts and possessed of its own will and agency

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[590] Schulman, *The King and the Clown in South Indian Myth and Poetry*, 88.

— that privilege relationship over rupture,[591] albeit in different ways than have been discussed here.

Pollock concludes his exploration of the Sanskrit cosmopolis by asking how a study of an anomalous historical structure might allow for the imagination of alternative futures.[592] This is certainly one potential benefit of such a study. Another would be that it may allow scholars to pick up the threads, of their own canon and others, that have been dropped, simply because they do not fit the historical/political narrative of 16th century French jurists. Such a study would necessarily be more broad than the study of a single dynasty, and even the discussion of political theory I have given here is limited by the both the fragmentary nature of the evidence I have used and the less than grandly consequential dynasty on which I have focused. The use of a study such as I have given here is that it allows for an assessment of politics under 'normal' conditions, to see if the great theoretical moves hold up when there are not great men propelling them. That the Maitrakas seem to bear out their theoretical premise is surprising given the amount of scholarly energy expended on bending them, and kings like them, into universalizing political and social models, which necessarily are at odds with some of the Maitrakas own narratives.

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[591] Otto Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Age*, trans. F.W. Maitland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[592] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 580.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Maitraka Dynasty

The following diagram places the Maitraka kings in order of their rule and shows their familial relationships. Brothers are connected by dashed lines, while fathers and sons are connected by solid lines. Before the king's name is the number of the order in which the kings ruled. Note that Derabhaṭa and Śīlāditya II did not rule. For kings where land grants have survived, the date range of the grants is given below the name of the king.

Diagram 2: Relative Relationships of Maitraka Kings

(1) Bhaṭārka

(2) Dharasena I

(3) Droṇasiṁha
502 CE

(4) Dhruvasena I
525 - 545 / 547 CE

(5) Dharapaṭṭa

(6) Guhasena
559 - 567 CE

(7) Dharasena II
571 - 598 CE

(8) Śīlāditya I
605 - 611 CE

(9) Kharagraha I
616 CE

(10) Dharasena III
623 - 624 CE

Derabhaṭa[593]

(11) Dhruvasena II
629 - 642 CE

(12) Dharasena IV
645 - 649 CE

Śīlāditya II[594]

(13) Dhruvasena III
651 - 653 CE

(14) Kharagraha II
656 CE

(15) Śīlāditya III
662 - 684 CE

(16) Śīlāditya IV
686 - 706 CE

(17) Śīlāditya V
722 CE

(18) Śīlāditya VI
740-760 CE

(19) Śīlāditya VII
766 CE

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[593] See: H.G. Shastri, *Gujarat Under the Maitrakas of Valabhī: Hitsory and Culture of Gujarat during the Maitraka Period – circa 470 - 788 AD* (Vadodara: Oriental Institute of Vadodara, 2000), 66-68 for a summary the history of these kings. It is doubtful if either king actually ruled for any significant period.

[594] Ibid.

APPENDIX B

Translations of Maitraka Grants

The following are translations of a selection of Maitraka grants. These translations are not intended to be a representative sample in terms of their contents (i.e. they do not show who many grants were made by particular kings, whom land was most often given to, or the frequency of particular phrases. Rather, they are intended to show the overall contours of the language of the grants, and to give a sense of the major developments and changes in the genealogical portion of the grants. The grants have thus been chosen to reflect the general trends in the genealogy, and on the basis of the completeness of the grant and the publication (i.e. only non-fragmentary grants where the whole edition has been published were considered). Citations of the published editions of the following grants may be found in Appendix C. The translated grants include the first and last extant grant of the Maitraka dynasty.

In the translations that follow: Sanskrit words are represented in italics, except when they are proper names. Translations of Sanskrit terms and names are given in parenthesis. Implied words are marked with brackets, and if illegible portions are marked with an ellipsis. Phrases are separated by a semicolon (the bulk of the grant would grammatically read as one very long sentence, with a large number of embedded clauses). The translations are divided as follows: The description of each king is given as a separate paragraph, these paragraphs together form Part 1 of the grant, the genealogical portion. This is followed by a paragraph containing the object(s) granted, forming Part 2 of the grant, the specifications. Next is a paragraph containing the

exhortations to the grant's permanence, being Part 3, the exhortations. Finally there is a paragraph containing the scribal information and date, being Part 4, the colophon. The language of the grants is prose, with some verses included near the end. Verses are indented.

These grants contain a large amount of technical vocabulary, especially concerning the titles of officials and land rights or the right to the benefits of certain portions of taxation. Technical vocabulary has been translated using a combination of the *Indian Epigraphical Glossary* (ed. D.C. Sircar, 1966) and *A Sanskrit Dictionary of Law and Statecraft* (ed. Patrick Olivelle, David Brick and Mark McClish, 2015). Where the glossing of a term differs significantly between these two volumes, *A Sanskrit Dictionary of Law and Statecraft* is given preference. It is worth noting that the translations of many of these terms are not very certain.

No. 1: Grant of Droṇasiṁha (502 CE)

(l. 1-2)   Om, good fortune from Valabhī! The great king, Droṇasiṁha, who meditates on the feet of the highest lord, being in good health, commends all the … appointed officials, lesser appointed officials, chamberlains, customs officers, grain collection officers, court officers, irregular and regular soldiers in his own territory.

(l. 2-6)   Let it be known that for the increase of my victories, life, *dharma*, rewards, fame, and territory and for the acquisition of all benefits and desires for a thousand years; in Hastavapra district to the goddess Pāṇarājyā, for the increase of the merit of my mother and father and for the increase of my own merit, remaining contemporaneous with the moon, sun, waves, earth, rivers and mountains, for the sake the performance of the *bali* (the offering of a portion of the daily meal of ghee, grain, rice to all creatures of every description), *caru* (an oblation of rice, barley, and pulse, boiled with butter and milk for presentation to the gods or manes), and

vaiśvadeva (an offering to all deities (said to be performed by casting a little food into fire before a meal)) and other rites being accomplished the village Tṛsaṃgamaka, to be used for perfumes, incense, lamps, oils, and garlands, for the sake of repairing the broken or fallen [parts of] the temple, to be used together with gold and with other gifts that have been given, not to be entered by irregular and regular soldiers, in accordance with the [customs for] gifts to Brahmins, with libations of water this has been granted.

(l. 7-8) That it may be enjoyed, ploughing it or directing [another to plough] itl even a slight damage or doubt should be made by no one; and he who snatches it away or permits it to be snatched away is conjoined with the five great sins and minor sins; by other kings in the future and my own lineage, the customs of a gift of land are known; also in this respect verses of Vyāsa are made:

> (l. 9) The giver of land rejoices in heaven for sixty thousand years. The one who attains the land or permits [others to attain it], they themselves will live in hell.

> (l. 9-10) Whoever seizes the land that has been granted either by himself or by another, he will suffer the sin/guilt of the killer of 100,000 cows.

> (l. 10) The land has been enjoyed/possessed by many kings, beginning with Sagara, whoever possesses the land, for all that time possesses its fruits.

(l. 11)   Bhirugavaka, artisan for the goddess. Year 183, month Śrāvana (July-August), day 15. His own [the king's] command. Written by Kumarila, the kshatryia, son of Shashtidatta.

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No. 6: Grant of Dhruvasena I (526 CE)

(l. 1-3)   Om, good fortune from Valabhī! [A king] who forcibly bent down his enemies, of the Maitrakas, who obtained glory in a hundred battles having encountered the circle of territories of enemies of unequalled strength; who procured affection by straightforwardness, honors and gifts for those who surrendered to his glory; who obtained kingly splendor through the strength of the range of his friends/allies and hereditary mercenaries attached [to him]; devoted to Maheśvara, was the glorious general Bhaṭakka.

(l. 3-5)   His son, whose head was purified, being bent down and reddened by the dust of his (father's) feet; whose shining row of five toe nails of his feet was inlaid with the gleaming head jewels of the bowed heads of his enemies; whose wealth was lived/depended upon by the poor people; devoted to Maheśvara, was the general Dharasena.

(l. 5-8)   His younger brother, whose spotless head jewel became auspicious being bowed down on his (brother's) feet; whose *dharma* comes from the performance of the rules first [taught by] Manu; by whom, like Dharmmarāja, the rules of path of proper conduct were fixed; who by the lord of the circle of territories of the whole world, the highest lord himself was given kingly splendor, being purified by his great gifts, in the royal inauguration; devoted to Maheśvara, was the great king Droṇasiṁha.

(l. 8-11)   His younger brother, who being like a lion, by [the strength] of his own arms, had victory over the armies and troops of elephants of his enemies; who was the refuge for those seeking refuge; who perceived the true meaning of the *śāstras*; who being like the wish granting tree to his constant friends, granted the enjoyment of rewards as desired; devoted to Viṣṇu, he who meditates on the feet of the highest lord, the great peer king, the great king, Dhruvasena,

being in good health, to all noble-minded appointed officials, lesser appointed officials, customs officers, chamberlains, grain collection officers, ranking court officers, policemen, irregular and regular soldiers, and others commands:

(l. 12-20) Let it be known that, in Akṣsarakaprāpa in Hastavapra district, in the village Hariyānaka on the NW border 4 pieces of a field (specifically, cultivated land); on the NE border 4 pieces of a field; thus 8 pieces of fields in which are 300 *pādāvartas;* indeed in this village on the NW border a double tank 40 contiguous *pādāvartas;* a second tank 20 contiguous *pādāvartas;* thus in the same place all together 360 *pādāvartas;* to the brahmin Dhammila, resident of the same place, being of the Darbha gotra, student of the Vājasaneya school; for the increase of the merit of my mother and father and for myself; for the sake of acquiring as I please the fruits of this world and the other world; remaining as long as the moon, sun, waves, and earth, and being contemporaneous with the rivers and mountains; to be enjoyed by the succession of (their) sons and son's sons; free from the tax contribution in forced labor, taxes and (obligatory) gifts; in accordance with the rules for waste-land; a *brahmadeya* is granted with libations of water.

(l. 20-23) In order that they may enjoy living in the *brahmadeya* in the proper way, ploughing it or directing (another to plough) it; even a slight doubt should not be made; by good kings in the future and my own lineage, understanding that the reward of a gift of land is common, this gift should be sanctioned; and he who snatches it away or permits it to be snatched away is conjoined with the five great sins and minor sins; also even in this respect verses of Vyāsa are made:

> (l. 23-24) The giver of land rejoices in heaven for sixty thousand years. The one who attains the land or permits [others to attain it], they themselves will live in hell.

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(l. 24) Whoever seizes the land that has been granted either by himself or by another, he will suffer the sin/guilt of the killer of 100,000 cows.

(l. 25-26) Riches, which have been made manifest here in righteous things by lords of men who are afraid of being poor, they are equal to yesterday's discarded garland. Who that is called a virtuous man would take it back?

(l. 26-27) Yudhiṣṭhira be the zealous guardian of those gifts already made to the twice-born, as the fruits of benefits of gifts are better than much land.

(l. 27-30) Signed by my own hand, the great peer king, the great king Dhruvasena.

The judge Mammaka is the messenger. Written by Kikkaka. Year 207, Vaiśākha (May - April), day 15.

No. 30: Grant of Dharasena II (571 CE)

(l. 1-3)   Om, good fortune from Valabhī! [A king] who forcibly bent down his enemies, of the Maitrakas, who obtained glory in a hundred battles having encountered the circle of territories of enemies of unequalled strength; who procured affection by straightforwardness, honors and gifts for those who surrendered to his glory; who obtained kingly splendor through the strength of the range of his friends/allies and hereditary mercenaries attached [to him]; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious general Bhaṭakka.

(l. 3-4)   His son, whose head was purified, being bent down and reddened by the dust of his (father's) feet; whose shining row of five toe nails of his feet was inlaid with the gleaming head jewels of the bowed heads of his enemies; whose wealth was lived/depended upon by the poor and helpless people; devoted to Maheśvara, was the glorious general Dharasena.

(l. 4-6)   His younger brother, whose spotless jewel became auspicious being bowed down on his (brother's) feet; whose *dharma* comes from the performance of the rules first taught by Manu; by whom, like Dharmmarāja, the rules of path of proper conduct were fixed; who by the lord of the circle of territories belonging to the whole world, the highest lord himself was given kingly splendor, being purified by his great gifts, in the royal inauguration, devoted to Maheśvara, was the great king Droṇasiṁha.

(l. 6-8)   His younger brother, who being like a lion, by the strength of his own arms, had victory over the armies and troops of elephants of his enemies; who was the refuge for those seeking refuge; who perceived the true meaning of the *śāstras*; who being like the wish granting tree to his constant friends, granted the enjoyment of rewards and wishes as desired; devoted to Viṣṇu, the great peer king, was the glorious great king, Dhruvasena.

(l. 8-10)   His younger brother, whose sins were entirely cleansed by washing through bowing town to the lotuses that were his (brother's) feet; by whom all the stains of the Kali age were washed by water which was his own perfectly pure acts; by whom the celebrated greater of the troops of his enemies was forcibly conquered; devoted to Sūrya, was the glorious great king Dharapaṭṭa.

(l. 10-15) His son, who obtained a rise in merit through the worship of his (father's) feet; whose second arm was a sword even beginning from childhood; the basis of whose strength was displayed by slapping the foreheads of the rutting elephants of those hostile to him; for whom the multitude of beams from the nails of his left foot were united with the shining head-jewels of his enemies who were bowed down by his might; who saws the true meaning of the word 'king' due to the rejoicing in the heart of his people because of his properly nourishing the way established

by all the *smṛtis*; who exceeded Smara the god of love with his beauty, the moon with his brightness, the himalayas with his tranquility, the ocean with his depth of profundity, Tridaśaguru the preceptor of the thirty gods with his intellect, and Dhaneśa the god of wealth with his prosperity; who discarded the fruits of all his own actions as if they were worth as little as straw because he was intent on giving [freedom from] fear; who was like the going on foot (personification?) of the delight of the whole curve of the circle of the earth; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious great king Guhasena.

(l. 15-21) His son, whose sins have all been washed off as if by the water of the river Jāhnavī by the flow of rays which originated from the nails of his (father's) feet; whose wealth and property give life to one hundred thousand of those dear to him; who, as if from a desire for beauty, is the refuge of all inviting and charming qualities; who astonished the entirely of the archers with the superiority of his innate ability and skill; who is the preserver of the dharmic gifts having been granted by prior kings; who overcomes the calamities which would to damage and by injurious to his people; who is the abode of Knowledge and Glory; whose expert valor is the enjoyment of the fortunes of the continuous ranks of troops; whose kingly glory is spotless having been obtained continuously; devoted to Śiva, the great king glorious Dharasena being in good health, to all noble-minded appointed officials, lesser appointed officials, customs officers, chamberlains, irregular and regular soldiers, chief grain collection officers, policemen, viceroys, junior members of the royal family and others as they are concerned commands:

(l. 19-29) Let it be known that for the increase of the merit of my mother and father and for myself, for acquiring as I please the fruits of this world and the other world, in Antaratrā, in Śikaka village/common land 100 *pādāvartas*, the holding of Vírasenadantika; 15 *pādāvartas* W of this; then on the W border 120 *pādāvartas*, the holding of Skambhasena; on the E border 10

pādāvartas; in Ḍombhi village on the E border 90 *pādāvartas*, the holding of Varddhaki; in the village Vajra on the W border 100 *pādāvartas* at the high point of the village; a step-well, 28 contiguous *pādāvartas*, the holding of the chamberlain Víkidinna; and in the village/common land Bhumbhusa; a step-well, 100 *pādāvartas*, the holding of the householder Boṭaka; this, together with the fixed taxes and with the minor taxes; together with the income and wealth arising from a change in natural phenomena; together with the right to unpaid labor from tenants as required; it is not even to be touched by the hand of all the king's servants; in accordance with the principle of cultivating the land for the first time and enjoying it free of taxes as a result; to the Brahmin Rudrabhūta, a resident of Unnata, being of the Vatsasa *gotra*, a student of the Vājasaneya school; for the sake the performance of the *bali*, *caru*, *vaiśvadeva*, *agnihotra* (offerings to fire), *atithi* (reception of guests), and *paṁcamahāyājñika* (the five great devotional acts); remaining contemporaneous with the moon, sun, waves, rivers, earth, and mountains; to be enjoyed by the succession of (their) sons and son's sons; is granted with libations of water.

(l. 29-32) In order that they may enjoy living in the *brahmadeya* in the proper way; ploughing it or directing (another to plough) it; it should be inhabited with prohibitions made by no one; by good kings in the future and my own lineage, understanding that kingly power is changeable, men are perishable, and the reward of a gift of land is common, this gift should be sanctioned and protected; and he who snatches this away or permits it to be snatched away is conjoined with the five great sins and minor sins; also even in this respect there are sacred utterances of Vyāsa, who is endowed with the breadth of knowledge:

> (l. 33) The giver of land rejoices in heaven for sixty times a thousand years. The one who attains the land or permits (others to attain it), they themselves will live in hell.

(l. 33-34) Yudhiṣṭhira be the zealous guardian of those gifts already made to the twice-born, as the fruits of benefits of gifts are better than much land.

(l. 34-35) The land has been enjoyed/possessed by many kings, beginning with Sagara, whoever possesses the land, for all that time possesses its fruits.

(l. 35-37) Written by Skandabhaṭa, the minister for peace and war. Year 252, Vaiśākha (April-May), day 15. Signed by my own hand, the great king glorious Dharasena. Chirbira is the messenger.

No. 49: Grant of Śīlāditya I (609 CE)

(l. 1-3)   Om, good fortune from the dwelling at the victorious camp Bhadreśvara, in front of the gate of Valabhī! [A king] who forcibly bent down his enemies, of the Maitrakas, who obtained glory in a hundred battles having encountered the circle of territories of enemies of unequalled strength; who procured affection by straightforwardness, honors and gifts for those who surrendered to his glory; who obtained kingly splendor through the strength of the range of his friends/allies and hereditary mercenaries attached [to him]; from the glorious Bhaṭakka, devoted to Śiva, there was an uninterrupted royal lineage.

(l. 3-9)   He whose stains all were cleansed by bowing down to the lotus feet of his mother and father; whose second arm was a sword even beginning from childhood; the basis of whose strength was displayed by slapping the foreheads of the rutting elephants of those hostile to him; for whom the multitude of beams from the nails of his feet were united with the shining head-jewels of his enemies who were bowed down by his might; who saws the true meaning of the word 'king' due to the rejoicing in the heart of his people because of his properly nourishing the

way established by all the *smṛtis*; who exceeded Smara the god of love with his beauty, the moon with his brightness, the himalayas with his tranquility, the ocean with his depth of profundity, Tridaśaguru the preceptor of the thirty gods with his intellect, and Dhaneśa the god of wealth with his prosperity; who discarded the fruits of all his own actions as if they were worth as little as straw because he was intent on giving protection from fear; who delighted the hearts of dear ones, friends and learned people by giving them wealth surpassing their desires; who was like the going on foot (personification?) of the delight of the whole curve of the circle of the earth; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Guhasena.

(l. 9-13)   His son, whose sins have all been cleansed as if by the water of the river Jāhnavī by the flow of rays which proceeded from the nails of his (father's) feet; whose wealth gave life to one hundred thousand of those dear to him; who, as if from a desire for beauty, was the refuge of all inviting and charming qualities; who astonished the entirely of the strong archers with the superiority of his innate ability and skill; who was the preserver of the dharmic gifts having been granted by prior kings; who overcame the calamities which would to damage and by injurious to his people; who was the abode of Knowledge and Glory; whose expert valor was the enjoyment of the fortunes of the continuous ranks of troops; whose kingly glory was spotless having been obtained continuously; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Dharasena.

(l. 13-19) His son, who meditates on his (father's) feet; who covers the entire horizon by the aggregation of his wonderful good qualities which delight the whole world; who carries the burden of heavy desires on the seat of his shoulders which possess the brilliance of the victories of a hundred battles; whose thoughts are even made pure by his mastery of all the sciences, distributed from highest to lowest, who even delights in producing happiness from a fragment of eloquence from any side; whose heart possesses a depth of profundity that is as deep as the

whole world; whose virtuous nature best manifests the superiority of good conduct; who obtain the height of fame because he cleansed the path of the kings of the Kṛtayuga which had been abandoned; for whom, from his enjoyment of wealth and happiness and riches that excel brightness of a fire from not obstructing *dharma*, is derived his second name – Dharmmāditya; devoted to Śiva, the glorious Śīlāditya, being in good health, to all noble-minded appointed officials, lesser appointed officials, customs officers, superintendents of customs, officers in charge of the recovery of stolen goods, irregular and regular soldiers, junior members of the royal family and others as they are concerned commands:

(l. 19-28) Let it be known that for the increase of the merit of my mother and father, for the *vihāra* of nuns which Yakṣaśūra caused to be founded at Valabhī itself; for the assembly of nuns who have come from the four directions to this dwelling place; for the sake of providing utensils, medicine as needed for the sick, resting places, alms/food and the dress of monks and nuns; and for causing the worship with religious objects, bathing water, sandal wood, flowers, garlands, lamps and oil of the venerable Buddha; and for repairing what [parts] of the *vihāra* are broken or burst; Amadāsaputra village near Vaṭagraha in the Ghāsaraka group of villages; together with the fixed taxes and with the minor taxes; together with income arising out of a change of the natural phenomena; together with the king's grain share and taxes in gold; together with the right to punish and realize fines for the ten offenses; together with the right to unpaid labor from tenants as required; it is not even to be touched by the hand of all the king's servants; with the exception of what has been previously granted as a *brahmadeya*; in accordance with the principle of cultivating the land for the first time and enjoying it free of taxes as a result; remaining contemporaneous with the moon, sun, waves, earth, rivers and mountains; [to be enjoyed by the nuns dwelling at the *vihāra*; this dharmic gift is issued.

(l. 28-31) That they may enjoy it as has been written above; it should by separated or driven off by no one; by good kings in the future and others of my own lineage, understanding that kingly power is changeable, men are perishable, and the reward of a gift of land is common, this gift should be sanctioned and protected; also even in this respect there are sacred utterances Vyāsa, who is endowed with the breadth of knowledge:

(l. 31-32)   The land has been enjoyed/possessed by many kings, beginning with Sagara, whoever possesses the land, for all that time possesses its fruits.

(l. 32-33)   Riches, which have been made manifest here in righteous things by lords of men who are afraid of being poor, they are equal to yesterday's discarded garland. Who that is called a virtuous man would take it back?

(l. 33-34)   The giver of land rejoices in heaven for sixty times a thousand years. The one who attains the land or permits (others to attain it), they themselves will live in hell.

(l. 34-36) The glorious Kharagraha is the messenger at this time. Written by Vartabhaṭṭi, the minister for peace and war, the chief clerk. Year 290, Bhādrapada (August-September), day 7. Signed by my own hand.

No. 87: Grant of Śīlāditya III (676 CE)

(l. 1-2)   Om, good fortune from the dwelling at the victorious camp Meghavana! [A king] who forcibly bent down his enemies, of the Maitrakas, who obtained glory in a hundred battles having encountered the circle of territories of enemies of unequalled strength; who procured affection by straightforwardness, honors and gifts for those who surrendered to his glory; who obtained kingly splendor through the strength of the range of his friends/allies and hereditary mercenaries

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attached [to him]; from the glorious Bhaṭakka, devoted to Śiva, there was an uninterrupted royal lineage.

(l. 2-6)   He whose stains all were cleansed by bowing down to the lotus feet of his mother and father; whose second arm was a sword even beginning from childhood; the basis of whose strength was displayed by slapping the foreheads of the rutting elephants of those hostile to him; for whom the multitude of beams from the nails of his feet were united with the shining head-jewels of his enemies who were bowed down by his might; who saws the true meaning of the word 'king' due to the rejoicing in the heart of his people because of his properly nourishing the way established by all the *smṛtis*; who exceeded Smara the god of love with his beauty, the moon with his brightness, the himalayas with his tranquility, the ocean with his depth of profundity, Tridaśaguru the preceptor of the thirty gods with his intellect, and Dhaneśa the god of wealth with his prosperity; who discarded the fruits of all his own actions as if they were worth as little as straw because he was intent on giving protection from fear; who delighted the hearts of dear ones, friends and learned people by giving them wealth surpassing their desires; who was like the going on foot (personification?) of the delight of the whole curve of the circle of the earth; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Guhasena.

(l. 6-9)   His son, whose sins have all been cleansed as if by the water of the river Jāhnavī by the flow of rays which proceeded from the nails of his (father's) feet; whose wealth gave life to one hundred thousand of those dear to him; who, as if from a desire for beauty, was the refuge of all inviting and charming qualities; who astonished the entirely of the archers with the superiority of his innate ability and skill; who was the preserver of the dharmic gifts having been granted by prior kings; who overcame the calamities which would to damage and by injurious to his people; who was the abode of Knowledge and Glory; whose expert valor was the enjoyment of the

fortunes of the continuous ranks of troops; whose kingly glory was spotless having been obtained continuously; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Dharasena.

(l. 9-12)   His son, who meditated on his (father's) feet; who covered the entire horizon by the aggregation of his wonderful good qualities which delight the whole world; who carried the burden of heavy desires on the seat of his shoulders which possess the brilliance of the victories of a hundred battles; whose thoughts were even made pure by his mastery of all the sciences, distributed from highest to lowest, who even delighted in producing happiness from a fragment of eloquence from any side; whose heart possessed a depth of profundity that is as deep as the whole world; whose virtuous nature best manifested the superiority of good conduct; who obtained the height of fame because he cleansed the path of the kings of the Kṛtayuga which had been abandoned; for whom, from his enjoyment of wealth and happiness and riches that excel brightness of a fire from not obstructing *dharma*, was derived his second name – Dharmmāditya; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Śīlāditya.

(l. 12-17) His younger brother, who meditated on his (brother's) feet; who himself was like Upendra, the younger brother of Indra, out of eagerness to show respect for him carried himself like a most happy bull, with the beauty or kingship fixed on his shoulders, only out of a wish to accomplish his [brother's] commands; whose possession of the quality of goodness was not stressed by exhaustion or happiness or passion; who, although his throne was covered by the color of the head-jewels of kings he had completely subdued by his might, had a disposition that was not occupied by a taste for arrogance or contempt for others; among whose means of success against an enemy retaliation was nonexistent except in bowing down those arrogant ones who were celebrated for their manliness; by whom all the manifestations of the ways of the Kaliyuga were forcibly broken, accomplishing the joy of spotless good qualities for the whole world;

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whose noble heart was not smeared by any faults because of rising above inferior people; who attained in battle the manifestation of the first among heroic men by forcibly taking the wealth of the assemblage of eminent enemy lords of the earth through his celebrated skill in many weapons; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Kharagraha.

(l. 17-20) His son, who meditated upon his (father's) feet; who eminently delighted the minds of all learned people by having accomplish the mastery of all [kinds of] knowledge; who broke chariots that were the desires of the ranks of enemies having a dispersed arrangement and being disordered by the generosity of his gift giving furnished from his strength; who had an exceedingly gracious nature because of his perception of the deepest parts of the world along with the many *śāstras* and practical arts; who was adorned with in artificial modesty, discipline and handsomeness; by whom the rise in pride of all his adversaries was destroyed with his fierce long arms carrying off the banners of victory of those who resisted him in a hundred battles; whose command delighted the whole circle of kings whose pride was overpowered by the arrows which came from his own mighty bow; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Dharasena.

(l. 20-24) His younger brother, who meditated upon his (brother's) feet; whose good conduct was superior to all previous kings; who accomplished dominions that were even exceedingly difficult to accomplish as if he were the personification of heroism; who was like Manu himself, sought for protection by his subjects whose minds were full of affection for him on account of his strong virtues; who had acquired the totality of practical arts; whose loveliness was the cause of complete satisfaction; who was [like] the moon, the lord of lotuses, without stain; who was [like] the sun that is constantly risen, having destroyed the darkness in the midst of the directions being covered by his splendor; who became supreme faith for his subjects; whose intent was to be the cause of very much love, being covered with traditional doctrine; who was skilled in the

conjoined matters of peace, war; who accomplished the production of increasing types of orders from being given instruction by those who had grown old in place; who was clever in following both [the sciences of] kingship and Pāṇini; who had a soft and compassionate heart and also superior courage, who was not proud and also [possessed of] knowledge, who was tranquil and also beautiful, who drove away the wicked and also was a steadfast friend; for whom, from his spreading of joy among the creatures of the world and generating love among his subjects on the occasion of his rise, is derived the second name – Bālāditya; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Dhruvasena.

(l. 24-27) His son, whose forehead bore the mark of the crescent moon as a scar produced by rubbing the earth bowing down to his (father's) lotus feet; whose ears were marked by the pure grace of a pearl ornament from hearing [what knowledge] is laid down even in childhood; whose tips of lotus hand was washed by the water of gifting; whose conduct was as a tender lover of the earth in that he took only mild taxes as if [taking] a young lady; who was like an arrow that seized all of its aims being like the science of archery in effectiveness; whose orders are like jewels worn on the top of the head for the circle of peer kings (*sāmantas*) who have bowed down to him; devoted to Śiva, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master, the wheel-turner, was the glorious Dharasena.

(l. 27-34) His grandfather's brother being the glorious Śīlāditya; who, as if he became the arm of the wielder of Śārṅga, Viṣṇu, bowed down his well arranged curved limbs to him (Śīlāditya); whose stainless head, as is innate to the river Mandākinya, a branch of the Ganges, made radiant the jewels that were his (Śīlāditya's) nails such that his (Śīlāditya's) lotus feet became surpassing in pure whiteness; who was a royal sage like Āgastya in spreading piety; whose bracelet of greatly white fame was a distinguished decoration for the sky and encircled entirely with a halo

the image of the moon; who was the lord of the earth pair whose of breasts are the Sahya and Vindhya mountains whose splendid peaks are like nipples because of the dark clouds; was the son of the glorious Derabhaṭa; who accomplished dominion over a multitude of kings attached [to him] who, wearing the cloth of pure fame, offered [to him] their royal glory like a garland of a self-chosen marriage; who depended on his actions of indestructible valor by which the circle of fierce traitors was bent down as if it was a sword; who accomplished the taking of the taking, by means of drawing his bow and arrow forcibly, of enemy lands in autumn; who duly seized taxes in the usual way; who whose ears were decorated by jeweled ornaments and furthermore were possessed of splendid learning by his superior listening and by gold of various kinds; the tip of whose hands were glittering from the sprinkling brought by the water of uninterrupted giving and gleaming from the beams from beautiful emerald jewels in his gold bracelets, as if sprouting young moss; who encircled the earth with his arms which became the boundary of the ocean like the large gold bracelets they possessed; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Dhruvasena.

(l. 34-41) His elder brother, whose slender form was embraced by Lakṣmī herself in a clear gesture, as if intent on removing the wicked touch of enemy kings; who attracted the great affection of all kings by his venerable actions; whose pair of lotus feet were inlaid with a multitude bright crest jewels from all his enchanted peer kings (*sāmantas*) bowing down being pleasantly enchanted by his superior affection; who has broken the pride of the multitude of his enemies with his extraordinary very long arms as he extended his mastery; who burned the lineage of all his enemies with his splendor; who gave away his wealth to the flocks of his dear ones; who, by sending out his beautiful wheel, ejected disease; who abandoned childish games; who did not disrespect the twice-born; who ornamented the surface of the earth with his singular valor; who did not sleep with or take the side of stupid men; who, being the first among the best

of men, had conduct which arranged all the orders of the classes of people like *dharma* personified; whose own lineage was delighted by his excellent and dazzling *dharma* manifest as a banner, in which the three worlds rejoiced by his acceptance of the multitude of those gifts to Brahmins and gods even which had been stolen by former kings out of their greed and desire for reaping [land] though the extension of his own most correct mind; who as the Cakravāla, a mythical range of mountains (encircling the orb of the earth and being the limit of light and darkness), filled all the five directions with his lofty fame, yet satisfaction was not produced for him through the punishment of criminals or the beginning gifts or the great fixed taxes established by his mind in favor of gods , the twice-born and teachers; whose other name is Dharmmāditya, which is true and appropriate; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Kharagraha.

(l. 41-45) Of his elder brother, who whitened the whole circle of directions with his fame as if it was the light of the moon blocking the glory of a heap of white water lilies; whose wide curving breasts were [like] the Vindhya mountains, lumps of black ointment from pieces of aloe-wood; the lord of the earth, the glorious Śīlāditya; whose son was, like the light from fresh snow, daily increased the circle [of his mastery of] the practical arts; who, like the young Indra, the lion, [embodied] royal glory; who, like the mountains of the forest region, was decorated; who, like the body of Śikhaṇḍi, was adorned with a brilliant diadem and the manifestation of fierce power; who, like the arrival of autumn, was full of splendor, a beaming lotus; who tore apart in battle, as if they were clouds, the elephants of his enemies; who, like the light of the rising sun at the moment it rose, blinded those facing him in battle and took the lives of those hostile to him; devoted to Śiva, the glorious Śīlāditya, being in good health, to everyone, commands:

(l. 45-58) Let it be known that, for the increase of the merit of my mother and father, to the Brahmin Dīkṣita, a former resident of Puṣya-Sāmbapura, master of the entire four-fold

knowledge, being of the Kuśika *gotra*, a student of the Vājasaneya school, son of the Brahmin Sāmbadatta, in Surāṣṭra, in Maḍasara district, in Maḍasara village, on the NE border, from the [land of the] king's servants, a step-well being 25 contiguous *pādāvartas*, of which the boundaries were: E – Pāṇḍvakhaṇḍa, S – the *pracīhā* Kampilikkakhuṇḍa of Datka, W – the field called Sīsagara, and N – the field cultivated by householder Saṅgilaka an administrator; then again on the N border, five pieces of land, a field being 104 *pādāvartas* in measure; wherein the first piece measuring 16 *pādāvartas* belonged to a vanished household, of which the boundaries were: E – the *brahmadeya* field of the Brahmin Aṇahaka, S – the field which was the family holding of Cacha Mātṛlaya, W – the field Maḍhavānaka and the body of water going toward the common-land Koraṭa, and N – the field called 'fort administration field;' the second piece, also of a vanished household, measuring 30 *pādāvartas*, of which the boundaries were: E – the *brahmadeya* field of the Brahmin Śaṅkara, S – the *brahmadeya* field of the Brahmin Aṇahaka, W – the field of the householder Bhoṭuka, and N – the field of the same Brahmin Aṇahaka; then the third piece, cultivated by Kikaka, measuring 43 *pādāvartas*, of which the boundaries were: E – the path going to the village Suptāvasadhī, S – the *brahmadeya* field of the Brhamin Saṅgaka, W – the fields Pattiaṇaka and Mātṛsthāna, and N – the border of the village Suptāvasadhī; the fourth piece, also cultivated by Kikaka, and measuring 10 *pādāvartas*, [of which the boundaries were:] E – the public road, S – the *śikhara* of the village temple, W – the *pracīhā* of the nobleman Varuṇa, N – the field of Karkka; then the fifth piece, also cultivated by Kikaka, measuring 5 *pādāvartas*, of which the boundaries were: E – the *brahmadeya* field of the Brahmin Camasa, S – the *brahmadeya* field called Dāsānaka, W – the public road, N – the *brahmadeya* field of the Brhamin Śaṅkara; now the boundaries of these, the step-well and fields, are clear; together with the fixed taxes and with the minor taxes; together with income arising out of a

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change of the natural phenomena; together with the king's grain share and taxes in gold; together with the right to punish and realize fines for the ten offenses; together with the right to unpaid labor from tenants as required; it is not even to be touched by the hand of all the king's servants; with the exception of what has been previously granted as a *brahmadeya* or to the gods; in accordance with the principle of cultivating the land for the first time and enjoying it free of taxes as a result; remaining contemporaneous with the moon, sun, waves, earth, rivers, and mountains; to be enjoyed by the succession of (their) sons and son's sons; with libations of water, this dharmic gift is issued.

(l. 58-59) In order that they may enjoy living in the *brahmadeya* in the proper way, ploughing it or directing (another to plough) it; prohibitions should be made by no one; by good kings in the future and even others of my own lineage understanding that kingly power is changeable, and men are perishable, and the reward of a gift of land is common, this gift should be sanctioned and protected; even in this respect there are utterances:

> (l. 59-60) The land has been enjoyed/possessed by many kings, beginning with Sagara, whoever possesses the land, for all that time possesses its fruits.

> (l. 60) Riches, which have been made manifest here in righteous things by lords of men who are afraid of being poor, they are equal to yesterday's discarded garland. Who that is called a virtuous man would take it back?

> (l. 60-61) The giver of land rejoices in heaven for sixty times a thousand years. The one who attains the land or permits (others to attain it), they themselves will live in hell.

(l. 61-62) The prince Kharagraha is the messenger. Written by Mammaka, the minister for peace and war, the chief clerk, the head door-keeper, the *sāmanta*. Year 357, Pauṣa (December-January), day 4. Signed by my own hand.

No. 104: Grant of Śīlāditya VII (766 CE)

(l. 1-2) Om, good fortune from the victorious camp, the dwelling, the illustrious Ānandapura! [A king] who forcibly bent down his enemies, of the Maitrakas, who obtained glory in a hundred battles having encountered the circle of territories of enemies of unequalled strength; who procured affection by straightforwardness, honors and gifts for those who surrendered to his glory; who obtained kingly splendor through the strength of the range of his friends/allies and hereditary mercenaries attached [to him]; from the glorious Bhaṭakka, devoted to Śiva, there was an uninterrupted lineage.

(l. 2-7)   He whose stains all were removed by bowing down to the lotus feet of his mother and father; whose second arm was a sword even beginning from childhood; the basis of whose strength was displayed by slapping the foreheads of the rutting elephants of those hostile to him; for whom the multitude of beams from the nails of his feet were united with the shining head-jewels of his enemies who were bowed down by his might; who saws the true meaning of the word 'king' due to the rejoicing in the heart of his people because of his properly nourishing the way established by all the *smṛtis*; who exceeded Smara the god of love with his beauty, the moon with his brightness, the himalayas with his tranquility, the ocean with his depth of profundity, Tridaśaguru the preceptor of the thirty gods with his intellect, and Dhaneśa the god of wealth with his prosperity; who discarded the fruits of all his own heroism as if they were worth as little as straw because he was intent on giving protection from fear; who delighted the hearts of dear

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ones, friends and learned people by giving them wealth surpassing their desires; who was like the going on foot (personification?) of the delight of the whole curve of the circle of the earth; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Guhasena.

(l. 7-10)   His son, whose sins have all been cleansed as if by the water of the river Jāhnavī by the flow of rays which proceeded from the nails of his (father's) feet; whose wealth gave life to one hundred thousand of those dear to him; who, as if from a desire for beauty, was the refuge of all inviting and charming qualities; who astonished the entirely of the archers with the superiority of his innate ability and skill; who was the preserver of the dharmic gifts having been granted by prior kings; who overcame the calamities which would to damage and by injurious to his people; who was the abode of Knowledge and Glory; whose expert valor was the enjoyment of the fortunes of the continuous ranks of troops; whose kingly glory was spotless having been obtained continuously; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Dharasena.

(l. 10-14) His son, who meditated on his (father's) feet; who covered the entire horizon by the aggregation of his wonderful good qualities which delight the whole world; who carried the burden of heavy desires on the seat of his shoulders which possess the brilliance of the victories of a hundred battles; whose thoughts were even made pure by his mastery of all the sciences, distributed from highest to lowest, who even delighted in producing happiness from a fragment of eloquence from any side; whose heart possessed a depth of profundity that is as deep as the whole world; whose virtuous nature best manifested the superiority of good conduct; who obtained the height of fame because he cleansed the path of the kings of the Kṛtayuga which had been abandoned; for whom, from his enjoyment of wealth and happiness and riches that excel brightness of a fire from not obstructing *dharma*, was derived his second name – Dharmmāditya; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Śīlāditya.

(l. 14-19) His younger brother, who meditated on his (brother's) feet; who himself was like Upendra, the younger brother of Indra, out of eagerness to show respect for him carried himself like a most happy bull, with the beauty or kingship fixed on his shoulders, only out of a wish to accomplish his [brother's] commands; whose possession of the quality of goodness was not stressed by exhaustion or happiness or passion; who, although his feet were covered by the color of the head-jewels of kings he had completely subdued by his might; among whose means of success against an enemy retaliation was nonexistent except in bowing down those arrogant ones being celebrated for his manliness; by whom all the manifestations of the ways of the Kaliyuga were forcibly broken, accomplishing the joy of spotless good qualities for the whole world; whose noble heart was not smeared by any faults because of rising above inferior people; who attained in battle the manifestation of the first among heroic men by forcibly taking the wealth of the assemblage of eminent enemy lords of the earth through his celebrated skill in many weapons; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Kharagraha.

(l. 19-22) His son, who meditated upon his (father's) feet; who eminently delighted the minds of all learned people by having accomplish the mastery of all [kinds of] knowledge; who broke chariots that were the desires of the ranks of enemies having a dispersed arrangement and being disordered by his heroism and gift giving furnished from his strength; who had an exceedingly gracious nature because of his perception of the deepest parts of the world along with the many *śāstras* and practical arts; who was adorned even with non artificial modesty, discipline and handsomeness; by whom the rise in pride of his adversaries was destroyed with his fierce long arms carrying off the banners of victory of those who resisted him in a hundred battles; whose command delighted the whole circle of kings whose pride was overpowered by the arrows which came from his own mighty bow; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Dharasena.

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(l. 22-28) His younger brother, who meditated upon his (brother's) feet; whose good conduct was superior to all previous kings; who accomplished dominions that were even difficult to accomplish as if he were the personification of heroism; who was like Manu himself, sought for protection by his subjects whose minds were full of affection for him on account of his strong virtues; who had acquired the totality of practical arts; whose loveliness was covered by being without stain; who was [like] the moon, the lord of lotuses; who was [like] the sun that is constantly risen, having destroyed the darkness in the midst of the directions being covered by his splendor; who became supreme faith for his subjects; whose intent was to be the cause of very much love, being covered with traditional doctrine; who was skilled in the conjoined matters of peace, war; who accomplished the production of increasing types of orders from being given instruction by those who had grown old in place; who was clever in following both [the sciences of] kingship and Pāṇini; who had a soft and compassionate heart and also superior courage, who was not proud and also [possessed of] knowledge, who was tranquil and also beautiful, who drove away the wicked and also was a steadfast friend; for whom, from his spreading of joy among the creatures of the world and generating love among his subjects on the occasion of his rise, is derived the second name – Bālāditya; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Dhruvasena.

(l. 28-32) His son, whose forehead bore the mark of the crescent moon as a scar produced by rubbing the earth bowing down to his (father's) lotus feet; whose ears were marked by the pure grace of a pearl ornament from hearing [what knowledge] is laid down even in childhood; whose tips of lotus hand was washed by the water of gifting; whose conduct was as a tender lover of the earth in that he took only mild taxes as if [taking] a young lady; who was like an arrow that seized all of its aims being like the science of archery in effectiveness; whose orders are like

jewels worn on the top of the head for the entire circle of peer kings (*sāmantas*) who have bowed down to him; devoted to Śiva, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master, the wheel-turner, was the glorious Dharasena.

(l. 32-39) His grandfather's brother being the glorious Śīlāditya; who, as if he became the arm of the wielder of Śārṅga, Viṣṇu, bowed down his well arranged curved limbs to him (Śīlāditya); whose stainless head, as is innate to the river Mandākinya, a branch of the Ganges, made radiant the jewels that were his (Śīlāditya's) toenails such that his (Śīlāditya's) lotus feet were pure whiteness; who was a royal sage like Āgastya in spreading piety; whose bracelet of greatly white fame was a distinguished decoration for the sky and encircled entirely with a halo the image of the moon; who was the lord of the earth pair whose of breasts are the Sahya and Vindhya mountains whose splendid peaks are like nipples because of the dark clouds; was the son of the glorious Derabhaṭa; who accomplished dominion over a multitude of kings attached [to him] who, wearing the cloth of pure fame, offered [to him] their royal glory as if out of a desire for self-chosen marriage; who depended on his actions of indestructible valor by which the circle of fierce traitors was bent down as if it was a sword; who accomplished the taking of the taking, by means of drawing his bow and arrow forcibly, of enemy lands in autumn; who duly seized taxes in the usual way; who whose ears were decorated by jeweled ornaments and furthermore were coupled with splendid learning by his superior listening and by gold of various kinds; the tip of whose hands were glittering from the sprinkling brought by the water of uninterrupted giving and gleaming from the beams from beautiful emerald jewels in his gold bracelets, as if sprouting young moss; who encircled the earth with his arms which became the boundary of the ocean like the large gold bracelets they possessed; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Dhruvasena.

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(l. 39-47) His elder brother, whose slender form was embraced by Lakṣmī herself in a clear gesture, as if intent on removing the wicked touch of enemy kings; who attracted the great affection of all kings by his venerable actions; whose pair of lotus feet were inlaid with a multitude of bright crest jewels from all his enchanted peer kings (*sāmantas*) bowing down being pleasantly enchanted by his superior affection; who has broken the pride of the multitude of his enemies with his extraordinary very long arms as he extended his mastery; who burned the lineage of all his enemies with his splendor; who gave away his wealth to the flocks of his dear ones; who, by sending out his beautiful wheel, ejected disease; who abandoned childish games; who did not disrespect the twice-born; who ornamented the surface of the earth with his singular valor; who did not sleep with or take the side of stupid men; who, being the first among the best of men, had conduct which arranged all the orders of the classes of people like *dharma* personified; whose own lineage was delighted by his excellent and dazzling *dharma* manifest as a banner, in which the three worlds rejoiced by his acceptance of the multitude of those gifts to Brahmins and gods even which had been stolen by former kings out of their greed and desire for reaping [land] though the extension of his own most correct mind; who as the Cakravāla, a mythical range of mountains (encircling the orb of the earth and being the limit of light and darkness), filled all the directions with his lofty fame, yet satisfaction was not produced for him through the punishment of criminals or the beginning gifts or the great fixed taxes established by his mind in honor of gods, the twice-born and teachers; whose second name is Dharmmāditya, which is true and appropriate; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Kharagraha.

(l. 47-51) Of his elder brother, who whitened the whole circle of directions with his fame as if it was the light of the moon blocking the glory of a heap of white water lilies; whose wide breasts were [like] the Vindhya mountains, lumps of black ointment from pieces of aloe-wood; the lord

of the earth, the glorious Śīlāditya; whose son was, like the light from fresh snow, daily increased the circle [of his mastery of] the practical arts; who, like the young Indra, the lion, [embodied] royal glory; who, like the mountains of the forest region, was decorated; who, like the body of Śikhaṇḍi, was adorned with a brilliant diadem and the manifestation of fierce power; who was like the arrival of autumn to those hostile to him; devoted to Śiva, was the glorious Śīlāditya, who meditated on the feet of the glorious Bappa, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest king.

(l. 51-53) His son, who held the highest dominion; the fire of whose great majesty shining forth was issued from the strokes of his sword, drawn in anger, which burst the temples of his enemies' elephants; who obtained a firm position among the circle of people surrounding them with a wall; whose umbrella was made by the canopy of his fame which was white like the clusters of foam which shook from the clashing and turn of the milky ocean, which possessed the whole circumference of the earth by resting it on his long arms which were naturally large; devoted to Śiva, was the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master, the glorious lord Śīlāditya, who meditated on the feet of the glorious Bappa, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master.

(l. 53-55) His son, whose lotus feet were colored by the rays which covered his nails from the head jewels of all the peer kings (*sāmantas*) who bowed down on account affection for his splendor; devoted to Śiva, was the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master the glorious lord Śīlāditya, who meditated on the feet of the glorious Bappa, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master.

(l. 55-58) His son, who quelled the pride in strength of his enemies; whose felicity was the refuge of great victory; whose breast was caressed by the close embrace of Glory; whose unrestrained power had the strength of [the one who] rose in the form of the lion-man, Narasiṁha; who protected the whole globe from the actions of arrogant enemy kings; by whom the faces of all directions were colored by the rays from his toe-nails which were softened by the ruby diadems of great kings he had bowed down; devoted to Śiva, was the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master the glorious lord Śīlāditya, who meditated on the feet of the glorious Bappa, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master.

(l. 58-64) His son, whose wheel of irresistible heroism increased; who is the abode of good fortune; who zealously accomplished the destruction of hell; who is intent on solely accomplishing his duty of lifting the earth; whose fame appears as spotless as the light of the full moon; whose mind knows the three good qualities; who has conquered the ranks of his enemies; who is endowed with … happiness; who gives happiness; who is the abode of knowledge; who is praised as the protector of all the people; who is followed by those who hold knowledge; who is celebrated on the earth; whose most excellent body blazes with jewels; who is the multitude of types of jewels; who is endowed with the best qualities, superiority and valor; who constantly brought about benefits in all his companions; who, as if he were Janārdana (Viṣṇu) in bodily form, destroyed the pride of the wicked; whose first ability is ever killing enemy elephants in battle; who is the abode of merit; whose great splendor is sung on the earth; who is born of the lineage of kings among kings and great masters; the glorious Dhrūbhata is victorious; being the manifestation of great joy; devoted to Śiva, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master the glorious lord Śīlāditya, who meditated on the feet of the glorious Bappa, the highest lord, the great king among kings, the highest master; to everyone, commands:

(l. 64-69) Let it be known that, for the increase of the merit of my mother and father and myself, and for the sake of acquiring he fruits of this world and the other world; to the Brahmin (bhaṭṭa) Akhaṇḍalamitra, resident of the glorious Anandapura, master of the entire four-fold knowledge, being of the Śārkarākṣi *gotra*, student of the Bahvṛca school, son of the Brahmin Viṣṇu; for the sake the performance of the *bali*, *caru*, *vaiśvadeva*, *agnihotra*, and other rites; in the glorious Kheṭaka district, in Uppalaheṭa group of villages, the village named Mahilabali; together with the fixed taxes and with the minor taxes; together with the right to unpaid labor from tenants as required; together with income arising out of a change of the natural phenomena; together with the right to punish and realize fines for the ten offenses; together with a part of the eight revenues; together with the king's grain share and taxes in gold; it is not even to be touched by the hand of all the king's servants; with the exception of what has been previously granted as a *brahmadeya* or to the gods; in accordance with the principle of cultivating the land for the first time and enjoying it free of taxes as a result; remaining contemporaneous with the moon, sun, waves, earth, and mountains; to be enjoyed by the succession of (their) sons and son's sons; with libations of water this is presented as a *brahmadeya*.

(l. 69-72) In order that they may enjoy living in the *brahmadeya* in the proper way, ploughing it or directing (another to plough) it; prohibitions should be made by no one; by good kings in the future and even others of my own lineage understanding that kingly power is changeable, and men are perishable, and the reward of a gift of land is common, this gift should be sanctioned and protected; also there are sacred utterances Vyāsa, who is endowed with the breadth of knowledge:

> (l. 72-73) The land has been enjoyed/possessed by many kings, beginning with Sagara, whoever possesses the land, for all that time possesses its fruits.

(l. 73-74) Riches, which have been made manifest here in righteous things by lords of men who are afraid of being poor, they are equal to yesterday's discarded garland. Who that is called a virtuous man would take it back?

(l. 74-75) The giver of land rejoices in heaven for sixty times a thousand years. The one who attains the land or permits (others to attain it), they themselves will live in hell.

(l. 75) Those who live in dried out hollows of the waterless forest of knowledge, who are born again as black serpents because they took away gift to Brahmins.

(l. 75-78) The great chamberlain, …, the record keeper, a member of the royal family, the glorious Siddhasena, son of the glorious Śarvvaṭa is the messenger. Written by the lesser appointed official, the herald, the head of the family court, the minister Guha, son of Hembaṭa. In four centuries and forty seven years, on the fifth day of the lunar month Jyeṣṭha, year 447, Jyeṣṭha (May-June), day 5. Signed by my own hand.

APPENDIX C:

List of Maitraka Grants

The following is a list of the published Maitraka grants known to me at the time of writing this dissertation. The list has been compiled on the basis of Nita Verma's "Appendix 'I'"[595] and Marlene Njammasch's "Anhang A."[596] I have followed the numbering used by Verma, as Njammasch includes the grants of related dynasties in her list as well as forged grants. Where Njammasch has included a grant not noted in Verma's Appendix, I have given the number of the preceding grant noted by Verma followed by a, b, etc. I have not included published mentions of grants where no text is presented except where that is the only publication of a given grant. Differences in the order used by Njammasch and Verma are noted. While every effort has been made to examine each of these publications, some of the grants were published in journals too obscure to be accessed. These are marked with an (*).

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[595] Nita Verma, Society and Economy in Ancient India: An Epigraphic Study of the Maitrakas (c. A.D. 475-775) (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1992), 125-208.

[596] Marlene Njammasch, *Bauern, Buddhisten und Brahmanen: Das frühe Mittelalter in Gujarat* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001), 361-370.

Maitraka Copper-plate Grants:

No.	King	Saṁvat	Year	Reference
	Bhaṭārka			NO EXTANT GRANTS
	Dharasena I			NO EXTANT GRANTS
1	Droṇasiṁha	183	502	Barnett, Lionel D. "Bhamodra Mohota Plates of Dronasimha: The Year 183." *Epigraphia Indica* 16 (1921-22): 17-19. Jackson, A.M.T. "Two New Valabhi Copper-Plates." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 20 (1898): 1-10.
2	Dhruvasena I	206	525	Konow, S. "Five Valabhī Plates: I. Palitānā Plates of Dhruvasena I.; (Valabhī-) Saṁvat 206." *Epigraphia Indica* 11 (1911-1912): 105-109.
3	Dhruvasena I	206	525	Sukthankar, V.S. "Postscript: A Plate of Dhruvasena Dated Sam. 206." *Epigraphia Indica* 17 (1923-1924): 109-110.
4	Dhruvasena I	206	525	Gadre, A.S. "Two Valabhi Grants from Mota Machiala: A. Grant of Dhruvasēna I, Year 206." *Epigraphia Indica* 31 (1955-1956): 299-301.
4a	Dhruvasena I	206	525	Ravishankar, T.S. and Jai Prakash. "Loichandā Plates of Dhruvasena I, [Valabhī] Saṁvat 206." *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India* 23 (1997): 141-146
5	Dhruvasena I	207	526	Sukthankar, V.S. "Two New Plates of Dhruvasena [I.] from Palitana: A.–Plates of Dhruvasena I.; [Valabhi]-Sam[vat] 207." *Epigraphia Indica* 17 (1923-1924): 105-108.
6	Dhruvasena I	207	526	Hultzsch, E. "Ganesgad Plates of Dhruvasena I.; [Gupta-] Samvat 207." *Epigraphia Indica* 3 (1894-1895): 318-323.

7	Dhruvasena I	207	526	Gai, G.S. and P.R. Srinivasan. "Two Maitraka Grants: A. Charter of Dhruvasena I, Year 207." *Epigraphia Indica* 37 (1967): 167-170.
				Shastri, H.G. "Palitana Plates of the Maitraka King Dhruvasena I." *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda* 12 (1962): 51-54.
8	Dhruvasena I	207	526	Bühler, G. "Grants from Valabhī: A.–The Grant of Dhruvasena I." *The Indian Antiquary* 5 (1876): 204-206.
9	Dhruvasena I	208	527	Shastri, H.G. and P.V. Vidyā. "Valabhīnā Maitraka rājā Dhruvasena I lānuṁ dānapatra." *Svādhyāya* 7, pt. 2 (1969-1970): 235-239.
9a	Dhruvasena I			Shastri, H.P. "Maitraka rājā Dhruvasenaanuṁ eka aprasiddha dānapatra." *Svādhyāya* 3 (1966-1967) 19-24.
10	Dhruvaesna I	210	529	Sukthankar, V.S. "Bhavnagar Plates of Dhruvasena I: [Valabhī-] Samvat 210." *Epigraphia Indica* 15 (1919-1920): 255-258
11	Dhruvasena I	210	529	Konow, S. "Five Valabhī Plates: II.–Palitānā Plates of Dhruvasēna I.; [Valabhī-] Samvat 210." *Epigraphia Indica* 11 (1911-1912): 109-112.
12	Dhruvasena I	210	529	Sukthankar, V.S. "Two New Grants of Dhruvasena (I.) from Palitānā: B.–Another Plate of (of Dhruvasena I.)." *Epigraphia Indica* 17 (1923-1924): 108-109.
				Diskalkar, D.B. "The Second Half of a Valabhi Grant of Samvat 210." *Epigraphia Indica* 19 (1927-1928): 125-127.
13	Dhruvasena I	210	529	Acharya, G.V. "Notes on Some Unpublished Valabhī Copper-Plates Belonging to the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and Len to the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India: No. I.–Plates of Dhruvasena I, Dated [Gupta-] Samvat 210." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 65-66.

14[597]	Dhruvasena I	210	529	Konow, S. "Five Valabhī Plates: III.–Palitānā Plates od Dhruvasena I.; [Valabhī-] Samvat 210." *Epigraphia Indica* 11 (1911-1912): 112-114.
15	Dhruvasena I	216	535	Bühler, J.G. "A Grant of King Dhruvasena I. of Valabhī." *The Indian Antiquary* 4 (1875): 104-107.
16	Dhruvasena I	217	536	Bloch, Th. "An Unpublished Valabhī Copper-plate Inscription of King Dhruvasena I." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* N.S. 27 (1895): 379-384.
17	Dhruvasena I	217	536	Shasrti, H.G. et al. "Ghunaḍā (Khānpar) Plates of the Maitraka King Dharasena II, (Valabhī) Year 217." *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda* 22 (1972): 79-83.
18	Dhruvasena I	206-217[598]	525-536	Vats, Madho Sarup. "An Unpublished Grant of Dhruvasena I." *Epigraphia Indica* 19 (1927-1928): 302-304.
19	Dhruvasena I	221	540	Haridatt, Āchārya Vallabhjī. "A new Grant of Dhruvasena I of Valabhī." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 7 (1893): 295-301.
20	Dhruvasena I	226/228	545/547	Diskalkar, D.B. "Two Plates Making a Complete Grant of Dhruvasena I: [Gupta-] Samvat 226." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 16-18.
20a	Dhruvasena I	–	–	Diskalkar, D.B. "First Plate of a Grant of Dhruvasena I." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 18-19.
21	Dhruvasena I	–	—	Diskalkar, D.B. "First Plate of a Grant of Dhruvasena I." *Journal of the Bombay Branch The Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 20-21.

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[597] Not included by Njammasch.

[598] Dated on the basis of the scribe.

21a	Dhruvasena I	—	—	Konow, S. "Five Valabhī Plates: IV. – Palitānā Plate of Dhruvasēna I." *Epigraphia Indica* 11 (1911-1912): 114-115.
21b	Dhruvasena I	—	—	Rāvaḷ, I. "Dhruvasena I lānuṁ dānaśāna - tene lagatī Keṭalīka viśeṣa vigato." *Buddhiprakāśa* 111 (1964): 383-384.
22	Dhruvasena I	—	—	Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy 1965-1966 no 4 p 8
	Dharapaṭṭa			NO EXTANT GRANTS
23	Guhasena	240	559	Bühler, G. "Additional Valabhī Grants Nos. IX - XIV." *The Indian Antiquary* 7 (1878): 66-68.
24	Guhasena	246	565	Barnett, Lionel D. "Wala Plate of Guhasena: The Year 246." *Epigraphia Indica* 13 (1915-1916): 338-340.
				Bühler, G. "A Grant of King Guhasena of Valabhī." *The Indian Antiquary* 4 (1875): 174-176.
25	Guhasena	248	567	Bühler, G. "Grants from Valabhī: B. – The Grant of Guhasena." *The Indian Antiquary* 5 (1876): 206-207.
26	Dharasena II	252	571	Bhavnagar Archaeological Department. "Copper-plate Grant of King Dharasena II of Valabhī, found at Jhara, a village under Dhāri. Dated Valabhī Saṁvat 252." In *A Collection of Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions*, 30-35. Bhavnagar: State Printing Press, 1894.
26a	Dharasena II	252	571	Diskalkar, D.B. "Bhādvā Copper plates of Dharasena II of [Gupta] Saṁvat 252." *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 4 (1921-1922): 33-34.
27[599]	Dharasena II	252	571	*Annual Review of Indian Epigraphy* (1952-1953): 82, Appendix B, No. 569.

[599] This inscription referenced by Verma has a citation "Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions of Kathiawad" which I cannot locate

| 28 | Dharasena II | 252 | 572 | Diskalkar, D.B. "Bhādvā Copper plates of Dharasena II of [Gupta] Saṁvat 252." *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 4 (1921-1922): 33-41. |

| 29 | Dharasena II | 252 | 571 | Hultzsch, E. "Palitana Plates of Dharasena II.; [Gupta-] Samvat 252." *Epigraphia Indica* 11 (1911-1912): 80-85. |

| 30 | Dharasena II | 252 | 571 | Fleet, J.F. "Sanskrit and Old-Caranese Inscriptions. No. CXLV." *The Indian Antiquary* 13(1884): 160-162.

Fleet, John Faithful. "Maliya Copper-plate Inscription of the Maharaja Dharasena II. The Year 252." In *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. Vol. 3. Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and their Successors*, 164-171. Calcutta: Superintendant of Government Printing, India, 1888. |

| 31 | Dharasena II | 252 | 571 | Bühler, G. "Additional Valabhī Grants: No. X. – A Grant of Dharasena II." *The Indian Antiquary* 7 (1878): 68-70. |

| 32 | Dharasena II | 252 | 571 | Fleet, J.F. "Sanskrit and Old-Caranese Inscriptions. No. LX." *The Indian Antiquary* 8 (1879): 301-305. |

| 33 | Dharasena II | 252 | 571 | Bhavnagar Archaeological Department. "Copper-plate Grant of King Dharasena II of Valabhī found at Katapur, a village near Mahuvā under Bhāvnagar. Dated Valabhī Saṁvat 252." In *A Collection of Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions*, 35-39. Bhavnagar: State Printing Press, 1894. |

| 34 | Dharasena II | 252 | 571 | Gai, G.S. and P.E. Srinivasan. "Two Maitraka Charters: B. Charter of Dharasena II, Year 252." *Epigraphia Indica* 37 (1967): 170-174.

Gai, G.S. "No. 37 Two Maitraka Charters, B. Charter of Dharasena II, Year 252." In *Some Select Inscriptions*, 280-286. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1990. |

35	Dharasena II	257	576	Diskalkar, D.B. "Two Unpublished Valabhi Grants: A. – Bantia Plates of Dharasena II [Valabhi-] Saṁvat 257." *Epigraphia Indica* 21 (1931-1932): 179-181.
				Diskalkar, D.B. "Some Copperplate Grants Recently Discovered: No. I. – Bantia Plates of Dharasena II of Valabhī of (Gupta-Valabhī) Saṁ 257." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 3 (1928): 184-190.
35a	Dharasena II	252	517	Gadre, A.S. "Two Valabhi Grants from Mota Machiala (3 Plates): B. Grant of Dharasena II, Year 252." *Epigraphia Indica* 31 (1955-1956): 301-304.
36	Dharasena II	269	588	Bühler, G. "Further Valabhī Grants: A. – The Grant of Dharasena I." *The Indian Antiquary* 6 (1877): 9-12.
				Diskalkar, D.B. "No. 9 Valabhī Copperplate Inscriptions of Dharasena (I) of Gupta-Valabhī Saṁvat 269 (588 A.D.)." In *Selections from Sanskrit Inscriptions 2nd cent. to 8th cent. A.D.*, 106-121. New Delhi: Classical Publishers, 1977.
37	Dharasena II	270	589	Acharya, G.V. "No II.–Plates of Dharasena II, Dated [Gupta-] Samvat 270." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 66-69.
38	Dharasena II	270	589	Bühler, G. "Additional Valabhī Grants: No. XI. – A Grant of Dharasena II." *The Indian Antiquary* 7 (1878): 70-73.
39	Dharasena II	270	589	Gadre, A.S. "The Watson Museum Plates of Dharasena II.*" Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta* 15 (1939): 281-286.
40[600]	Dharasena II	—	—	Diskalkar, D.B. "No. V.—First Plate of a Grant of Dharasena II." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 24-26.
41	Dharasena II	—	—	Gadre, A.S. "Two Unpublished Fragmentary Valabhi Grants: The Piṭhādiā Grant of Dharasena II." *Journal of the University of Bombay* 4, pt. 1 (1935-36): 1-5.

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[600] Njammasch identifies this as the first plate of Grant no. 35. See: Njammasch, *Bauern, Buddhisten und Brahmanen*, 363, no. 38.

42	Dharasena II	—	—	Diskalkar, D.B. "Two Grants Making a Complete Grant of Dharasena II." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 21-24.
43	Śīlāditya I	286	605	Bhandarkar, R.G. "On Two Copper-plates from Valabhi." *The Indian Antiquary* 1 (1872): 46. Konow, S. "Five Valabhī Plates: V. – Palitānā Plate of [Śīlāditya I Dharmāditya; Valabhī - Saṁvat 286]." *Epigraphia Indica* 11 (1911-1912): 115-118.
44	Śīlāditya I	286	605	Kielhorn, F. "A Copper-Plate of Śīlādiyta I. of Valabhī." *The Indian Antiquary* 14 (1885): 327-330. Mandlik, V.N. "Walabhī Copper-plate from Walē, in Kāthiawāḍa." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 11 (1875): 331-363.
45	Śīlāditya I	286	605	Bhadkamar, H.M. "Navalahki Plates of Siladitya I – [Gupta-] Samvat 286." *Epigraphia Indica* 11 (1911-1912): 174-180.
46	Śīlāditya I	286	605	Diskalkar, D.B. "No. VI. – Second Plate of a Grant of [Siladitya I, *alias* Dharmaditya] of [Gupta-] Samvat 286." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 26-28.
47	Śīlāditya I	287	606	Gadre, A.S. "Five Vala Copper-plate Grants: Grant No. II. Copper-plate Grant of Śīlāditya (I) alias Dharmāditya of the Gupta Saṁvat 287 (606 A.D.)." *Journal of the University of Bombay* 3, pt. 1 (1934): 80-82.
48	Śīlāditya I	287	606	Diskalkar, D.B. "No. VII. – Two Plates Making a Complete Grant of Siladitya I (*alias* Dharmaditya) of [Gupta-] Samvat 287." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 28-31.

49	Śīlāditya I	290	609	Gadre, A.S. "Five Vala Copper-plate Grants: Grant No. II. Copper-plate Grant of Śīlāditya (I) alias Dharmāditya of the Gupta Saṃvat 290 (600 A.D.)." *Journal of the University of Bombay* 3, pt. 1 (1934): 82-85.
50	Śīlāditya I	290	609	Bühler, G. "Valabhī Grants: No. XV. – A grant of Śīlāditya I, Dates Samvat 290." *The Indian Antiquary* 9 (1880): 237-239.
51	Śīlāditya I	290	609	Gadre, A.S. "Five Vala Copper-plate Grants: Grant No. II. Copper-plate Grant of Śīlāditya (I) alias Dharmāditya of the Gupta Saṃvat 290." *Journal of the University of Bombay* 3, pt. 1 (1934): 85-87.
52	Śīlāditya I	290	609	Shastri, H.G. and P.V. Dhoḷikyā. "Maitrakarājā Śīlāditya I lānuṁ Āṃbaḷāsa dānapatra." *Svādhyāya* 8 (1970-1971): 178-184.
53	Śīlāditya I	292	611	Banerji, R.D. "The Bhadreniyaka Grant of Śīlāditya I; G.E. 292." *Epigraphia Indica* 21 (1931-1932): 116-119.
54	Śīlāditya I	—	—	Diskalkar, D.B. "No. VII. – Two Plates Making a Complete Grant of Siladitya I (*alias* Dharmaditya)." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 31-35.
55	Śīlāditya I	—	—	Diskalkar, D.B. "No. XII. – First Plate of a Valabhi Grant." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 43-44.
56	Kharagraha I	279	616	Gadre, A.S. "The Virdi Copperplates of Saṁ 297: The First Known Grant of Kharagraha I." *Proceedings and Transactions of the All India Oriental Congress* 7 (1933): 659-676.
57	Kharagraha I	279	616	Gadre, A.S. "The Amreli Copper-plate Grant of Kharagraha I." In *Important Inscriptions from the Baroda State*, vol. 3, 7-15. Baroda, 1943.
58	Dharasena III	304	623	Diskalkar, D.B. "Two Unpublished Valabhi Grants: B. – Bhavnagar Plate of Dharasena III - [Valabhi-] Saṁvat 304." *Epigraphia Indica* 21 (1931-1932): 181-184.

58a	Dharasena III	305	624	Shastri, H.G. "A Maitraka Copper-plate Grant from Kasandra." *Journal of the University of Bombay* 19, pt. 4 (1951): 1-6.
59[601]	Dharasena III	—	—	Hultzsch, E. "The First Plate of a Valabhī Grant of Unknown Date." *The Indian Antiquary* 12 (1883): 148-149.
				Bhavnagar Archaeological Department. "Copperplate found at Gopanāth near Talājā under Bhavnagar." In *A Collection of Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions*, 63-66. Bhavnagar: State Printing Press, 1894.
60	Dhruvasena II	310	629	Bühler, G. "Further Valabhi Grants: B. – The Grant of Dhruvasena II." *The Indian Antiquary* 6 (1877): 12-16.
				Bhavnagar Archaeological Department. "Copper-plate Grant of King Dhruvasena also called Baladitya of Valabhī found at Boṭād, under Bhāvnagar. Dated Valabhī Saṁvat 310." In *A Collection of Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions*, 39-45. Bhavnagar: State Printing Press, 1894.
60a[602]	Dhruvasena II	311	630	Shelat, Bharati. "Jesar Copper-plates of Maitraka King Dhruvasena II of Valabhi." *Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India* 32 (2005): 104-114.
61	Dhruvasena II	312	631	Acharya, G.V. "No. III – Plates of Dhruvasena II, Dated [Gupta-] Samvat 312." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 69-70.
62	Dhruvasena II	313	632	Diskalkar, D.B. "No. XVII. – Goras Copper=plates of Dhruvasena II: [Gupta-] Samvat 313." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 50-57.

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[601] Njammasch identifies this as the first plate of a grant of Dhruvasena II. See: Njammasch, *Bauern, Buddhisten und Brahmanen*, 369, no. 12.

[602] This grant is not mentioned by Njammasch or Verma, but by von Hinüber in "Behind the Scenes: The Struggle of Political Groups for Influence as Reflected in Inscriptions," 369, n. 18.

62a	Dhruvasena II	313	632	Parikh, P. and Bh. Shelat. "Maitraka rājā Dhruvasena 2 jānuṁ eka aprasiddha dānaśāsana, Valabhī Saṁvata 313." *Sāmīpya* 1 (1984): 77-84.*
62b	Dhruvasena II	314	633	Mehta, R.N. and K.N. Momin. "A Copper-plate Grant of Dhruvasena Baladitya from Dana, Taluka Kapadvanj." *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda* 31, pt. 1 (1981-1982): 84-88.
				Tewari, S.P. "Dana Plates of Dhruvasena (II) Baladitya, Year 314." *Epigraphia Indica* 42 (1977-1978): 106-111.
63	Dhruvasena II	319	638	Gadre, A.S. " Five Vala Copper-plate Grants: Grant No. V. Copper-plate Grant of Dhruvasena (II) of the Gupta Saṃvat 319 (638 A.D.)." *Journal of the University of Bombay* 3, pt. 1 (1934-1935): 88-91.
64	Dhruvasena II	320	639	Jackson, A.M.T. "Two New Valanhī Copper-plates: II. – Grant of Dhruvasena II." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 20 (1897-1898): 6-10.
65	Dhruvasena II	320	639	Hultzsch, E. "Two Grants of Dhruvasena II: A. – Nogwa Plates of [Gupta-] Samvat 320." *Epigraphia Indica* 8 (1905-1906): 188-194.
66	Dhruvasena II	321	640	Hultzsch, E. "Two Grants of Dhruvasena II: B. – Nogwa Plates of [Gupta-] Samvat 321." *Epigraphia Indica* 8 (1905-1906): 194-199.
67	Dhruvasena II	323	642	Shastri, H.G. "Malila Copper-plate Inscriptions od King Dhruvasena II." *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda* 10, no. 2 (1960): 123-128.
				Sircar, D.C. and J. Sundaram. "No. 38 – Amreli Museum Plates of Dhruvasena II Baladitya, Year 323." *Epigraphia Indica* 35 (1964): 282-286.
67a	Dhruvasena II	—	—	Diskalkar, D.B. "No. XIII. – First Plate of a Valabhi Grant." Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society N.S. 1 (1925): 44-46.

67b	Dhruvasena II	—	—	Diskalkar, D.B. "No. XV. – A Piece of the First Plate of a Valabhi Grant." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 48-49.
67c	Dhruvasena II	—	—	Bhandarkar, D.R. "A list of the inscriptions of Northern India in Brahmi and its derivative scripts, from about 200 A. C.," issued as appendix to v. 19-23. *Epigraphia Indica* 39, no. 3 (1983):
68[603]	Dharasena IV	326	645	Bhandarkar, R.G. "On Two Copperplates from Valabhi: Plate I." *The Indian Antiquary* (1872): 45-46.
69	Dharasena IV	326	645	Bhandarkar, Ramkrishna Gopal. "A Devanāgari Transcript and Date of a new Valabhī Copperplate, and a new Interpretation of the figured Dates on the published Grants of the Valabhī Dynasty." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 10 (1871-1874): 66-80.
				Bhandarkar, R.G. "A Tāmba Patra or Ancient Copper-plate from Kāthiāwāḍ." *The Indian Antiquary* 1 (1872): 14-17.[604]
70	Dharasena IV	330	649	Bühler, G. "Additional Valabhī Grants: No. XII. – A Grant of Dharasena IV." *The Indian Antiquary* 7 (1878): 73-75.
71	Dharasena IV	330	649	Bühler, G. "Valabhi Inscriptions, No. XVIII: A New Grant of Dharasena IV." *The Indian Antiquary* 15 (1886): 335-340
72[605]	Dharasena IV	—	—	Deshpande, M.N., ed. "H. Epigraphy: Gujarat: 10. Copper-plate Charter, Vanthavali, District Kheda." *Indian Archaeology, a Review 1972-1973* (1978): 40.

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[603] Only the translation is given, not the Sanskrit text.

[604] Only the translation is given, not the Sanskrit text.

[605] Mention only, no edition.

73	Dharasena IV	—	—	Srinivasan, P.V. "Two Fragmentary Charters of Maitraka Dharasena IV: Charter A." *Epigraphia Indica* 38 (1969): 219-222.
74	Dharasena IV	—	—	Srinivasan, P.V. "Two Fragmentary Charters of Maitraka Dharasena IV: Charter B." *Epigraphia Indica* 38 (1969): 223-224.
74a	Dharasena IV	—	—	Anderson, P. "Some Account Together with a Facsimile Devanagari Transcript and Translation of a Copper-plate Inscriptions in the Society's Museum." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3 (1846-1851): 213-223.
74b	Dharasena IV	—	—	Diskalkar, D.B. "No. XIV. – First Plate of a Valabhi Grant." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 46-48.
75[606]	Dhruvasena III	332	651	Jackson, A.M.T "Early History of Gujarat: The Valabhis (A.D. 509-766)." *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* 1, pt. 1 (1896): 92.
76	Dhruvasena III	334	653	Hultzsch, E. "XII. – A Valabhī Grant of Dhruvasena III. Dated Samvat 334." *Epigraphia Indica* I (1892): 85-92.
77	Dhruvasena III	—	—	Diskalkar, D.B. "No. IX. – Second Plate of a Grant of Dhruvasena III." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 35-37.
78	Kharagraha II	337	656	Bühler, G. "Additional Valabhi Grants: No. XIII. – The Grant of Kharagraha II." *The Indian Antiquary* 7 (1878): 76-79
	Śīlāditya II			DID NOT RULE
79	Śīlāditya III	343	622	Diskalkar, D.B. "No. X. – Second Plate of a Grant of Siladitya IIIL [Gupta-] Samvat 343." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 37-40.

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[606] Mention only, no edition. Njammasch identifies this as a grant of Dhruvasena II. See: Njammasch, *Bauern, Buddhisten und Brahmanen*, 369, no. 13.

80	Śīlāditya III	346	665	Acharya, G.V. "No. VI – Grant of Siladitya III, Dates [Gupta-] Samvat 346." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 73-75.
81	Śīlāditya III	346	665	Burns, A. "Kaira Tamba-patra, No. 1." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 7 (1838): 966-978.
82	Śīlāditya III	346	665	Acharya, G.V. "No. V. – Plates of Siladitya III, Dated [Gupta-] Samvat 346." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 71-73.
83	Śīlāditya III	347	666	Banerji, R.D. "The Jesar Plates of Śīlāditya III – The Year 347." *Epigraphia India* 21 (1931-1932): 208-211.
84	Śīlāditya III	350	669	Ojha, Vajshankar, G. "Lunsadi Plates of Śīlāditya II,; [Gupta-] Samvat 350." *Epigraphia Indica* 4 (1896-1897): 74-81.
85	Śīlāditya III	352	671	Bhavnagar Archaeological Department. "Copper-plate Grant of King Śīlāditya II. of Valabhī found at Luṇṣaḍi, near Mahuvā. Dated Valabhī Saṁvat 353." In *A Collection of Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions*, 45-54. Bhavnagar: State Printing Press, 1894.
				Bühler, G. "Valabhi Grants: No. XVII. – A Grant of Śīlāditya II, Dated Samvat 352." *The Indian Antiquary* 11 (1882): 305-309.
86	Śīlāditya III	356	675	Diskalkar, D.B. "No. XVII. – A Grant of Siladitya III [Gupta-] Samvat 356." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 57-63.
87	Śīlāditya III	357	676	Banerji, R.D. "No. 19. – The Jesar Plates of Siladitya III: Valabhi Samvat 357." *Epigraphia India* 22 (1933-1934): 114-120.
88	Śīlāditya III	357	676	Gadre, A.S. "Two Aṇustu Copper-plate Grants: IV A Grant of Śīlāditya III. G. E. 357 (676-77 A.D.)." In *Important Inscriptions from the Baroda State*, vol. 3, 16-25. Baroda, 1943.

89	Śīlāditya III	—	—	Acharya, G.V. "No. IV. – The First Plate of a Valabhi Grant." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 70-71.
89a	Śīlāditya III	—	—	Diskalkar, D.B. "No. XI. – Second Plate of a Grant of Śīlāditya III." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 40-42.
89b	Śīlāditya IV			Shastri, H.P. and P. Parikh, "Śīlāditya 3 jānuṁ Vaḍnagara dānaśāsana." *Svādhyāya* 15 (1978): 292-211.
90	Śīlāditya IV	368	687	Shastri, H.P. "Maitraka rājā Śīlāditya 4 thānuṁ eka aprasiddha tāmraśāsana." *Buddhiprakāśa* 105 (1958): 9-11.* Sircar, D.C. and J Sundharam. "Amreli Museum Plates of Śīlāditya III, Year 376." *Epigraphia Indica* 35 (1964): 281-282.
91	Śīlāditya IV	372	691	Bühler, G. "Grants from Valabhī: C. – The Grant of Śīlāditya III." *The Indian Antiquary* 5 (1876): 207-212.
92	Śīlāditya IV	375	694	Ozha, Vajshankar G. "A New Valabhī Grant of Śīlāditya III from Devali." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 1 (1887): 251-258. Bhavnagar Archaeological Department. "Copper-plate Grant of King Śīlāditya III. of Valabhī found at Devali near Talājā under Bhāvnagar. Dated Valabhī Saṁvat 375." In *A Collection of Prakrit and Sanskrit Inscriptions*, 54-63. Bhavnagar: State Printing Press, 1894.
93	Śīlāditya IV	376	695	Keilhorn, F. "A List of Inscriptions of Northern India from about A.D. 400." *Epigraphia Indica* 5, Appendix (1898-1899): 69, no. 492.[607]
94	Śīlāditya IV	381	700	Acharya, G.V. "No. VII. – Plates of Siladitya IV, Dated [Gupta-] Samvat 381." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. 1 (1925): 75.

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[607] Mention only, no edition.

95	Śīlāditya IV	382	701	Keilhorn, F. "A List of Inscriptions of Northern India from about A.D. 400." *Epigraphia Indica* 5, Appendix (1898-1899): no. 493.[608]
96	Śīlāditya IV	387	706	Parikh, P. "Talāḷānuṁ Śīlāditya 4 thānuṁ dānaśāsana." *Buddhiprakāśa* 125 (1978): 442-443.
97[609]	Śīlāditya IV	—	—	Sircar, D.C., Government Epigraphist for India, ed. *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy for 1955-56* (1959): 21, App. A, no. 79.
98	Śīlāditya IV			Shastri, H.P. "Two Maitraka Copper-Edicts from Vadnagar: A. Plates of Śīlāditya IV." *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda* 17 (1967): 59-61.
98a	Śīlāditya IV			Shastri H.P. "Sihoramāṁthī maḷeluṁ Valabhī rājyanuṁ eka aprasiddha tāmraśāsana." *Buddhiprakāśa* 113 (1965): 9-14.*
99	Śīlāditya IV	—	—	Gadre, A.S. "Two Unpublished Fragmentary Valabhi Grants: II. The Uṇḍavi Plate of Śīlāditya IV (or V?)*." Journal of the University of Bombay* 4, pt. 1, (1935-1936): 5-9.
100	Śīlāditya V	403	722	Mandlik, V.N. "Three Walabhī Copper-plates, with Remarks: Walabhī Copper-plates, Goṇḍala A." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 11 (1875): 331-358.
101	Śīlāditya V	403	722	Mandlik, V.N. "Three Walabhī Copper-plates, with Remarks: Walabhī Copper-plates, Goṇḍala B." *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 11 (1875): 331-358.

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[608] Mention only, no edition. Njammasch identifies this as a grant of Śīlāditya III. See: Njammasch, *Bauern, Buddhisten und Brahmanen*, 370, no. 19.

[609] Mention only, no edition.

102	Śīlāditya V	—	—	Shastri, H.G. "Two Maitraka Copper-Edicts from Vadnagar: B. Plates of Śīlāditya V." *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda* 17 (1967): 61-63. ———. "The Text of Two Copper-Edicts from Vadnagar." *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda* 17 (1967): 186-191.
102a	Śīlāditya VI	421	740	Shastri, H.P. "Śīlāditya VI. Āsodara dānaśāsana, V.S. 421." *Svādhyāya* 16 (1979): 440-449.
102b	Śīlāditya VI	425	744	Shastri, H.P. "Śīlāditya VI. Āsodara tāmraśāsana, (Valabhī) Saṁvata (prāyaḥ) 425." *Vidyāpīṭha* 17 (1979): 1-10.
103	Śīlāditya VI	441	760	Bühler, G. "Further Valabhī Grants: C. – The Grant of Śīlāditya." *The Indian Antiquary* 6 (1877): 171-191.
104	Śīlāditya VII	447	766	Bühler, G. "Additional Valabhī Grants: No. XIV. – Grant of Śīlāditya VI, Surnamed Dhruvabhaṭa." *The Indian Antiquary* 7 (1878): 79-86. Fleet, John Faithful. "Alina Copper-plate Inscription of Siladitya VII. The Year 447." In *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum. Vol. 3. Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and their Successors*, 171-191. Calcutta: Superintendant of Government Printing, India, 1888.

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Hulzsch, E. "An Earthenware Fragment of Guhasena of Valabhi." *The Indian Antiquary* 14 (1885): 75.[612]

Mittra, Debala, ed. "II. Epigraphy: Gujarat: 14. Maitraka Inscription, Modhava, District Junagadh." *Indian Arcaheology, a Review 1980-81* (1983): 79.[613]

Forged Maitraka Plates:[614]

Parmar, J.N. "Valabhīnā rājā Guhasena I nuṁ dānapatra." *Svādhyāya* 11 (1973-1974): 332-351.*

Bühler, G. "No. XVI.– A Forged Grant of Dharasena II, Dates Śaka Saṁvat 400." *The Indian Antiquary* 10 (1881): 227-286.

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[610] The inscription is very fragmentary, only the name Guhasena can be read.

[611] This publication lists 10 very fragmentary stone inscriptions excavated from Valabhī.

[612] This inscription is found on a "huge earthen pot," likely dating to 565 CE. The inscription preserves part of the date, the name of the king, and the word *ghaṭā*, 'large earthenware jar.'

[613] Mention only, no edition. It is unclear from the description is this is a royally issued grant or a grant by an official or other person who references the Maitraka kings: "Engraved on an undressed rectangular stone fixed in the right side of a step-well in the village, the record is in Siddhamatrika characters of about the eight century and in Sanskrit language, and refers to the rule of Maharaja Siladitya. It also records some pious act on the part of certain Isana. If the reading of the date is taken as Gupta-Valabhi Samvat 300+40+6 (i.e. 346), the king would be Siladitya III."

[614] The following grants are listed in the order of the kings to which they are ascribed.

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