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Medieval Endowment Cultures in Western India: Buddhist and Muslim Encounters – Some Preliminary Observations

Abstract: Endowment cultures based on Buddhist, Hindu-Brahmanical, and Jain traditions flourished in pre-Islamic India. The donative practices influenced each other, and the extant records testify to a consensus among the followers of different religions with regard to the merit drawn from pious grants. Several rulers of the Maitraka dynasty were patrons of a Buddhist endowment culture in sixth to seventh-century Kathiawar. After the eighth century, patronage in favor of Buddhist monasteries apparently declined in Gujarat and Maharashtra. However, this decrease does not seem to have been caused by the first, short-term Muslim inroads into the region in the early eighth century, as the Hindu-Brahmanical endowment culture continued to prosper. On the contrary, there is epigraphic evidence that Muslim nobles, in their capacity as vassals of the indigenous Rāṣṭrakūṭa rulers, made religious grants on the west coast in the tenth century, following the pattern set by the native kings. According to Arab sources, the first mosques were also built on the Konkan coast in the tenth century. With the dissemination of Islamic rule in northern India in the thirteenth century, Muslim rulers seem to have confiscated land and other resources that had been bestowed on monasteries and temples, probably with the aim of increasing state revenues and of patronizing the institution of Islamic endowments (*waqf*).

Keywords: Western India, Maitraka, Rāṣṭrakūṭa, endowments, inscriptions

In this paper, I focus on Buddhist and Muslim encounters in the western part of the subcontinent, where, for geographical reasons, we might expect some of the earliest evidence for interaction and exchange between Muslim and indigenous Indian communities. The region came to prominence with the expansion of Arab armies into Sind (in southeast present-day Pakistan) in the early eighth century. I address the subject of endowment cultures for several reasons: The source material for early medieval endowment practices is particularly abundant. Medieval endowments have strong religious connotations and, at the same time, are a complex phenomenon that touches “on all areas of a society: religion and politics, social structures, the economy and welfare, art, gender or

regional development.”¹ Although I emphasize Buddhist and Muslim encounters, at least one other party, that is, Brahmins, and perhaps other groups (for example, Jains), were long involved in South Asian contexts. In India, interreligious activities are much older than the encounter between Buddhism and Islam, and mutual religious influences were especially important in the field of gift giving and endowments.

Flourishing endowment cultures based on Buddhist, Hindu-Brahmanical, and Jain traditions of gift giving (*dāna*)² existed in pre-Islamic India. For clarification, we should add: The term ‘endowment’ (*Stiftung* in German) denotes a permanent donation of non-transferable wealth. The revenues of the wealth were dedicated to serve specific long-lasting religious and charitable purposes – in contrast to a gift in a more general sense.³ Although there was no exact equivalent for the term ‘endowment’ in premodern India, the concept of pious grants that were intended for eternity did exist. Stone and metal were the most important media on which to inscribe endowments in pre-Islamic India, and vast numbers of such title deeds are extant from late antiquity and the medieval period. Thousands of documents engraved on copper plates registered royal grants of land or whole villages to religious recipients. The majority of the early medieval donations supported Brahmins; but Buddhist monasteries, Hindu temples, and Jain institutions benefited from this practice as well. Competition among various potential recipients, either individuals or institutions, for patronage by royal figures and other elites was probably keen.

The expectations of donees of different denominations were not necessarily the same. This is evident in the specific wording of Buddhist, Brahmanical, and Hindu grants,⁴ which were made to last “as long as the moon and the sun, the oceans and the earth, rivers and mountains exist.”⁵ Various expressions were used for such endowments, for example, *dharmadeya* or *dharmadāya* for ‘religious gifts’ in a more general way, *brahmadeya* or *brahmadāya* for ‘gifts to Brahmins,’ and *devadāya* or *devadāna*, for ‘gifts to gods.’⁶ Despite these

1 Borgolte 2014: 14.

2 See, e.g., Heim 2004.

3 Or, as Leslie Orr (2011: 151) states, “Within the vast and extremely important category of the gift, we may distinguish gifts of a particular type, for which the English word ‘endowment’ is a convenient label. An endowment is a gift where the transfer of property is accompanied by the expectation that the gift will be able to provide permanent and ongoing support to its recipient or for the gift’s intended purpose.”

4 For Buddhist influence on the wording of endowment deeds, see von Hinüber 2013: 376.

5 *Ācandrārkaṃṇavakṣītisaritparvatasamakālīna*. See e.g., Schmiedchen 2014: 143.

6 Sircar 1966: 60–61, 87–88, 92. Other terms focus less on the differences of the recipients, as e.g., *agrahāra/agrāhāra* or *akṣayanivī*; see Sircar 1966: 10–11, 15.

differences, the common, trans-religious goal of all those donations was to gain religious merit (*puṇya*). Pre-Islamic endowment traditions influenced each other; the extant epigraphs are evidence that there was a kind of consensus among the followers of the various beliefs regarding the merit of pious grants.⁷ Future kings were requested to preserve existing donations. In Brahmanical, Hindu, and Buddhist royal endowments we find stanzas like:

*ṣaṣṭim varṣasahasrāṇi svarge tiṣṭhāti bhūmidāḥ
ācchettā cānumantā ca tāny eva narake vaset*

For sixty thousand years, the giver of land rejoices in heaven.

He who confiscates or approves [the confiscation of a grant] shall live for the same [number of years] in hell.

*vindhyāṭaviṣv atoyāsu śuṣkakoṭaravāsinaḥ
kṣṣṇāhaya hi jāyante bhūmidānaṃ haranti ye*

[Those] who take away a land grant are [re]born as cobras

living in dry hollows in the waterless Vindhya woods.

*pūrvadattāṃ dvijātibhyo yatnād rakṣa yudhiṣṭhira
mahīm mahīmatāṃ śreṣṭha dānāc chreyo 'nupālanam*

Land already given to the twice-born, preserve with care, O Yudhiṣṭhira.

The protection [of a grant] is more meritorious than the making of a grant, O best of kings.⁸

These stanzas were also popular under the kings of the Maitraka dynasty of Valabhī, who ruled over the peninsula of Kathiawar from the fifth to the eighth centuries. Seventy percent of their known corpus, that is, the majority of the more than one hundred extant Maitraka copper plate charters, are (like those of other contemporary royal lines) grants to Brahmins and unrelated to temples. Most donations were bestowed on individual recipients, only a few were for larger groups of Brahmins.⁹ But the Maitraka rulers also patronized a Buddhist endowment culture. One-quarter of their epigraphs recorded grants in favor of Buddhist institutions. Twenty-six Buddhist donations are extant, and among the donees were monasteries for monks (*bhikṣuvihāra*), nunneries (*bhikṣuṇīvihāra*),

⁷ The strongest modification of this concept is perhaps related to the different approach of Mahāyāna Buddhism toward the concept of the transfer of *puṇya*. 'All beings' (*sarvasattva*) should benefit from religious merit accumulated by individuals or groups; Schopen 1997 [1985]: 39.

⁸ Pargiter 1912: 249–251; Kane 1941: 862, 1271–1277; Sircar 1966: 170–201; Schmiedchen 2014: 157.

⁹ For the Brahmanical endowments in general, see Shastri 2000: 417–452; for a group of forty-four Brahmanical recipients, see Bhadkamkar 1911–12.

and a few Mahāyāna institutions (a *mahāyānikavihāra* and a Tārā shrine).¹⁰ The Buddhist endowments of the Maitrakas were second in number after the Brahmanical ones and were much more numerous than those to Hindu temples. There are only five inscriptions for grants to Hindu deities: one for Mahādeva (Śiva), two for the sun god, and two for female goddesses.¹¹

Buddhist (Mahāyāna) textual influence can be found in three Buddhist (non-Mahāyāna) Maitraka charters dating from the second half of the sixth century¹², i.e., a stanza from Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā*,¹³ sometimes in a slightly corrupt version, which also occurs in the *Subhāṣitaratnakaraṇḍakathā*¹⁴:

*lakṣminiketam yadapāśrayeṇa prāpto 'si lokābhimatam nṛpatvam
tāny eva puṇyāni vivardhayethā na karṣaṇīyo hy upakāripakṣaḥ*

You should increase the very same religious merits, on the basis of which you have obtained the royalty respected by the people, which is the abode of [royal] fortune, as the supporters [i.e., the merits] are not to be weakened.¹⁵

After the eighth century, the patronage in favor of Buddhist monasteries apparently declined in western India. But this decrease does not seem to have been caused by the first, short-term Muslim inroads into Gujarat and Maharashtra in the early eighth century; in fact, the Hindu-Brahmanical endowment culture continued to prosper. The last extant Buddhist grants of the Maitraka kings date from around 675 CE,¹⁶ while donations to Brahmins continued to be made until the end of the Maitraka rule (that is, until 765 or 766 CE).¹⁷ Maitraka grants to Hindu temples seem to have ceased even earlier, shortly after 640 CE, when

10 On the Buddhist endowments in general, see Shastri 2000: 417–452; for the *mahāyānikavihāra* as a grantee, see Bhandarkar 1872.

11 Bühler 1880; Banerji 1931–32; Parikh / Shelat 2000; Jackson 1898.

12 Bühler 1876: lines 13–14; Bühler 1877: line 30; Acharya 1925.

13 Kern 1943: 166, stanza 25.28.

14 Mirashi 1961. This is stanza 1.6: *lakṣminiketam yadupaśrayeṇa prāpto 'si lokābhimatam prabhutvam / tāny eva puṇyāni vivardhayetha na karṣaṇīyo hy upakāripakṣaḥ*; Hahn 1983: 331–332.

15 Speyer (1971 [1895]: 233) translated this stanza as: “It is by pursuing meritorious actions that thou obtainedst the royal dignity, a thing highly esteemed by men and the abode of bliss. That very store of merit you must enlarge, thou shouldst not enfeeble the ranks of the benefactors.” The stanza was translated by Mirashi (1961) as: “The religious merit by virtue of which you have obtained [this] lordship respected in the world, which is the abode of royal fortune, should be augmented; the obliging ally [i.e., your religious merit] should not be harmed.”

16 For the last dated Maitraka endowment to a Buddhist monastery, see Diskalkar 1925: 57–63, no. 18.

17 For the last dated copper-plate charter of the Maitrakas, a Brahmanical grant, see Fleet 1888.

the Buddhist endowment culture still flourished. There are vague references to disturbances in a Buddhist nunnery at the beginning of the seventh century: One Maitraka copper plate inscription which records the renewal of an older grant (the original charter being lost), mentions that a certain convent no longer existed and that the nuns had moved to the Yakṣasūravihāra in Valabhī.¹⁸ But the reasons for this change could have been manifold, and the date was too early for any Muslim involvement. Although in the eighth century, the Maitraka kings no longer made grants to Buddhist monasteries, one eighth-century endowment record of the Saindhava king Ahivarman to a Buddhist nunnery in western Kathiawar has been preserved: a copper plate charter from Ambalasa in the Junagadh District¹⁹ was found together with two Maitraka title deeds in favor of monasteries for monks, which date from the early sixth and early seventh centuries, respectively.²⁰

By contrast, there is some evidence that internal reasons may have contributed to a decrease in royal patronage of Buddhism. This is clear from a comparison of the Buddhist and the Brahmanical endowments of the Maitrakas. The early sixth-century grants were called *brahmadāya*; later, from the end of the sixth century onward, donations to Brahmins were mostly labeled with the more general term *dharmadāya* ('religious gift'); this last usage was probably influenced by the terminology used in Buddhist endowments. While these Brahmanical grants were formally "bestowed as *dharmadāya*," it is stated that they ought to be utilized "according to the proper condition of a *brahmadāya*." A complete phrase of this kind might read, for example,

Therefore not even a slight hindrance should be made or [any] objection [be raised] by anyone against the one [i.e., the Brahmanical donee] who is, according to the proper condition of a gift in favor of a Brahmin, enjoying [the land/village], cultivating [it], having [it] cultivated, or assigning [it to others for cultivation].

(*yato 'syocitayā brahmadāyasthityā bhūñjataḥ kṣataḥ karṣayataḥ pradiśato vā na kaiścit svalpāpy ābādḥā vicāraṇā vā kāryā*).²¹

This regulation entitled the recipient to simple usufruct as well as to – at least *de iure* – more complex usages of the object donated. In particular, when plots of arable land were singled out and then bestowed, the stipulation can be seen as even more important, because it permitted the beneficiaries to carry out different degrees of agricultural activity.

¹⁸ Gadre 1934: line 22.

¹⁹ Shastri / Dholakia 1969–70a.

²⁰ Shastri / Dholakia 1969–70b; Shastri / Dholakia 1970–71.

²¹ See e.g., Sukthankar 1919–20: lines 19–20.

A similarly complex equivalent was also used in some Buddhist endowments of the Maitraka rulers, for example,

Therefore, no impairment should be caused by anyone against the one [i.e., the order of monks] who is, according to the proper condition for the noble orders of Buddhist monks, enjoying [the villages], cultivating [them], or having [them] cultivated.

(yato 'syocitayā śākyāryabhikṣusaṃghasthit[ya]ā bhujjataḥ kṛṣataḥ ka[rṣa][ya*]to vā na [kai]ścit pratiṣedhe vartitavyam).*²²

But often the formula was altered – perhaps after a request by monastic clergy for an appropriate Buddhist adaptation. Such a modified phrase reads, for example,

Therefore, no impairment should be made or [any] objection [be raised] by anyone against those appointed there, who are having what grows there collected.

*(yataḥ tatrādhikṛtānāṃ yat tatropadyate tad udgrāhayatām na kenacit pratiṣedho vicāranā vā kāryā).*²³

Under the king Śilāditya I, a particular formula, stressing the rather passive approach of Buddhist beneficiaries, was used:

And therefore, [the endowment,] being enjoyed according to the proper condition of a rent-free holding in favour of a deity,²⁴ shall not be obstructed by anyone.

*(yata ucitayā ca devāgrāhārasthityā bhujyamānakaḥ na kaiścit paripanthaniyaḥ).*²⁵

In comparison to Brahmanical endowments, this somewhat ambiguous handling of the prescriptions in Maitraka grants to *viḥāras* may be explained by the Buddhists' generally strict attitude toward agriculture and their lack of interest in getting involved in farming. The Chinese pilgrim Yijing, who visited eastern India in the second half of the seventh century, reports:

When I for the first time visited Tāmralipti, I saw in a square outside the monastery some of its tenants who, having entered there, divided some vegetables into three portions, and having presented one of the three to the priests, retired from thence, taking the other portions with them. . . The priests in this monastery are mostly observers of the precepts. As cultivation by the priests themselves is prohibited by the great Sage, they suffer their taxable lands to be cultivated by others freely, and partake of only a portion of the

²² Bühler 1875b: lines 12–13.

²³ Bühler 1875a: lines 23–25.

²⁴ The term *devāgrāhāra* seems to denote grants for collective religious bodies. For *agrahāra/ agrāhāra*, see Sircar 1966: 10–11.

²⁵ See e.g., Kielhorn 1885: line 29.

products. Thus they live their just life, avoiding worldly affairs, and free from the faults of destroying lives by ploughing and watering fields.²⁶

However, opinions on how to cope with this dogmatic problem (related to the undesirable nature of involvement in agriculture) seem to have differed (from region to region), for Yijing also says:

According to the teaching of the Vinaya, when a cornfield is cultivated by the Saṅgha (the Brotherhood or community), a share in the product is to be given to the monastic servants or some other families by whom the actual tilling has been done. Every product should be divided into six parts, and one-sixth should be levied by the Saṅgha; the Saṅgha has to provide the bulls as well as the ground for cultivation, while the Saṅgha is responsible for nothing else. Sometimes the division of the product should be modified according to the seasons.

Most of the monasteries in the West [i.e., India] follow the above custom, but there are some who are very avaricious and do not divide the produce, but the priests themselves give out the work to the servants, male and female, and see that the farming is properly done.²⁷

In many parts of India, a certain decline in Buddhist donations by royal figures can be observed during the early medieval period. Inversely, Brahmins (and later, increasingly, Hindu temples) were favored on an even larger scale. As mentioned, one reason for this development might have been the comparative lack of interest the Buddhist monasteries showed in the village life; their traditional base in India was in towns and cities rather than the countryside. Brahmins, by contrast, seem to have fulfilled the ‘expectations’ of the kings and shaped the rural landscape much better – quite a number of them were personally active in agricultural activities, particularly those that received small, individual plots of land, not whole villages.

In terms of the political and military events in western India in the first half of the eighth century, Sind was conquered by the Arab forces in 711 CE, and according to Muslim sources, the first mosques were built in that region in the eighth century.²⁸ In 736 CE, the Gurjara king Jayabhāṭa IV, who ruled from Bharukaccha (Bharuch) in southeastern Gujarat and was a traditional rival of the Maitraka kings, was praised for beating the Tājikas (the Arabs) in or near Valabhī.²⁹ A few years later, in 739 CE, the Tājikas reached Navasārikā, the

²⁶ Takakusu 1982 [1896]: 62.

²⁷ Takakusu 1982 [1896]: 61.

²⁸ Wink 1990: 203.

²⁹ See, for instance, Mirashi 1955: 85, no. 24, line 4; cf. also Virji 1952: 72–74. For the expression *tājika* as a term for ‘Arab,’ derived from the Middle Persian word *tāzik*, see Pingree 1981–82; Sundermann 1993.

capital of the Lāṭa branch of the Cālukyas, some 90 kilometers south of Bharukaccha.³⁰ But unlike the invasion of Sind (and Punjab), Arab inroads into Gujarat seem to have been limited, as the Cāhamāna Bhartṛvaddha is known to have reigned from Bhṛgukaccha (Bharukaccha/Bharuch) in 756 CE. According to his Hansot grant,³¹ Cāhamāna Bhartṛvaddha acknowledged the suzerainty of a ruler named Nāgāvaloka, who can most likely be identified with Pratihāra Nāgabhaṭa I, who ruled over parts of northern India from around 730 to 760 CE and is said to have ousted the Arabs (*mleccha*) from Ujjayani.³² The information on the contemporary events at Valabhī is not very clear. In or shortly after 766 CE, Kathiawar was invaded again, this time by Amru b. Jamāl of Sind, who probably ended Maitraka rule.³³ During another Arab invasion in 776 CE, Valabhī is said to have been destroyed.³⁴

Thus, the early eighth-century invasion of Valabhī by the Tājikas came half a century after the last extant Buddhist grants of the Maitrakas. Although Buddhist monasteries, especially those situated in Valabhī itself, may have been destroyed during these raids, the Maitrakas recovered from the attack, ruled for at least another fifty years, and continued to make endowments to Brahmanical grantees. In this context it is striking that copper plate charters do not seem to have been issued from the city of Valabhī after the year 705–706 CE,³⁵ rather, all the later Maitraka grants were issued from military camps, mainly from Kheṭaka (Kheda).³⁶ The donations recorded in these title deeds were also not related to Valabhī: this is true in regard to the donees and the land bestowed on them. In the seventh century, many of the Brahmanical grantees had lived in the Maitraka capital.³⁷ The concentration of endowments to Buddhist monasteries based in and around Valabhī was apparently even higher than that of grants to Brahmins residing there. Many of the *vihāras* for

30 Mirashi 1955: 141, no. 30, line 33.

31 Konow 1913–14.

32 Majumdar 1925–26: 107.

33 Fleet 1888: 171; Majumdar 1960: 226.

34 Majumdar 1960: 227; Ahmad 1966. For another date, i.e., 788 CE, see Shastri 1989: 61; Shastri 2000: 90–91.

35 On the topic of the last extant attestation of Valabhī as a place of issue, see Shastri 1956. Approximately half of the charters from the Maitraka corpus were issued from Valabhī.

36 See e.g., Shastri 1967–68.

37 See e.g., Diskalkar 1925: 28–31, no. 7. But Brahmins from Valabhī still appear as beneficiaries in some ninth-century endowments of the Lāṭa branch of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas; cf. Salomon 1998: 284–296, no. 10; Sircar 1963–64.

monks and all the convents for nuns were situated in the city of Valabhī.³⁸ Thus, we can assume that the destruction in the Maitraka capital during one of the Arab invasions must have affected the Buddhists to a larger extent than the Brahmins. Unfortunately, thus far, major excavations have not been carried out at this site, mostly because it is still inhabited (or inhabited again); all past excavations were confined to some edges of the current settlement.³⁹

As mentioned, endowments to Buddhist monasteries in Gujarat did not come to a complete end with the Maitrakas. An eighth-century Saindhava grant is known to have been issued to a nunnery in the Junagadh area.⁴⁰ Two copper plate charters of the Lāṭa branch of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in favour of a monastery for monks date from the late ninth century.⁴¹ We do not know the exact locations of these two title deeds, but interestingly enough, one mentions that the monastic order – the beneficiary of the donation – hailed from Sindhuviṣaya.⁴² This information may be interpreted as an indication of the exodus of Buddhist monks from the Sind region.

Yet, there is also epigraphic evidence that Muslim nobles not only engaged in military campaigns toward India's west coast, but also acted as subordinate lords under the main Rāṣṭrakūṭa line that reigned over Maharashtra, Gujarat, and large parts of Karnataka from the eighth to the tenth centuries. As vassals of these indigenous kings, some Arab leaders seem to have made endowments following the pattern set by the native Indian rulers. One of the most striking examples is the famous Chinchani charter of Tājika Madhumati Sugatipa from the Śaka year 848⁴³ (926 CE). This deed records a grant for a Hindu *maṭhikā* (a temple college) of the goddess Daśamī Bhagavatī. Endowments to Hindu temples were still relatively rare in western India in the tenth century, thus, it is quite remarkable that a Muslim donor made this endowment to support worship at this temple college.

The content of the Chinchani charter of Tājika Madhumati (i.e., Muḥammad) and its form clearly reflect pre-Islamic Indian traditions. The epigraph is written in Sanskrit and engraved on a copper plate in the usual way.

³⁸ The Duḍḍāvihāra was a renowned monastic complex in Valabhī; see e.g., Bühler 1875a and 1875b. The Yakṣaśūravihāra was a Buddhist nunnery in Valabhī; see e.g., Gadre 1934.

³⁹ For this general problem at many early medieval sites, see Kennet 2013.

⁴⁰ Shastri / Dholakia 1969–70a.

⁴¹ Bhandarkar 1900–01; Altekar 1933–34. Some endowment deeds from the famous Buddhist monastic complex at Kanheri near Mumbai, recorded on stone, also date from the ninth century; see e.g., Kielhorn 1884.

⁴² Altekar 1933–34: 75, lines 53–54.

⁴³ Sircar 1957–58. Madhumati's charter is the first of a series of five epigraphs jointly discovered at Chinchani.

Its introductory stanza is dedicated to the Hindu goddess Pārvatī and the god Śiva. It begins with a genealogy of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa overlords (stanzas 5–15) in classical Indian literary style (*kāvya*), followed by a description of the Tājika Madhumati (Rāṣṭrakūṭa Indra III's vassal) (stanzas 16–20), who administered the province of Saṃyāna, north of present-day Mumbai.⁴⁴ Then the record mentions a minister of Madhumati named Puvvaiya (stanza 21), and describes the Brahmin Annaiya, who founded the *maṭhikā* in Saṃyāna as a friend of minister Puvvaiya (stanza 22). From the subsequent prose passage on the endowment to the *maṭhikā* we learn that Tājika Madhumati acted on a request of Annaiya (here: Annamaiya) and after obtaining the consent of Indra III, his overlord. With the approval of the highest tax collector of Saṃyāna, a clerk composed the text of the copper plate charter by order of the Tājika, who, for his part, received instructions from Indra III. From all these details we can deduce that the Arab vassal was somehow sandwiched between various levels of the indigenous hierarchy. In order to grant the revenue from villages of the territory he administered, he had to ask for the formal permission from his Rāṣṭrakūṭa overlord, and had to consult the officials responsible for tax collection. Furthermore, the Muslim Madhumati acted on the request of a Brahmin who was apparently well-connected to the court.

A particularly beautiful passage on the concept of religious merit (*puṇya*) appears in the stanzas on protecting the endowment and serves as a prominent illustration of the Hindu-Brahmanical spirit of the charter of Tājika Madhumati Sugatipa:

*yas tv ajñānapaṭalāndhitadṛṣṭir anilabalāhatasarittaramgabhaṃguraṃ tṛṇāgralagnāvaśyā-
yānavasthiraṃ karikalabhakarṇāgralolaṃ śrāntavihagagalacapalaṃ prakupitabhujagajihvā-
taḍitkṣaṇadiṣṭaṃ naṣṭaṃ pratikṣaṇam anavasthitaṃ gatijī[vi]tam anālocya ihāmutra ca
ya[ś]aḥsaukhanidānaṃ dānāt puṇyasaṃcayam anādṛtyādṛṣṭaphalānabhijñō durmatir
ācchindyād ācchidyamānaṃ vānumodeta sa paṃcabhir mahāpātakaiś sopapātakaiś ca
saṃyukta[ḥ*] syād [/*]⁴⁵*

But the one who, because his eyes are blind due to the veil of ignorance, does not understand that life, which is [determined] by destiny, is transient, short-lived, and instable, breakable like a wave in the river, moved by the force of the wind, perishable like the frost adhering to a blade of grass, fluttering like the tip of the ear of a young elephant, seesawing like the neck of a tired bird, ephemeral like the moment of the quick darting of an agitated snake; the one who does not take into consideration that the accumulation of merit through munificence causes fame and happiness in this world and in the hereafter; and the one who should, as a fool who does not recognise merit and guilt, take away the

⁴⁴ Before the grant, the administration of Saṃyāna had been handed over to him by Rāṣṭrakūṭa Kṛṣṇa II, the grandfather of Indra III (stanza 17).

⁴⁵ Sircar 1957–58: lines 45–50.

endowment, or approve its seizure, shall be afflicted with the five great and the small offenses.

In many respects, Tājika Madhumati Sugatipa was a rare exception. Most of the Muslims coming to India, like the local converts to Islam, supported their religion (and only their religion). According to Arab sources, the first mosques were erected in Sind in the eighth century and on the west coast in the tenth century.⁴⁶ Initially, the foundations of Islamic rulers were recorded in Sanskrit,⁴⁷ and apparently, even as late as the sixteenth century, it was not at all unusual to register a Muslim endowment entirely in Sanskrit and with the traditional Indian terminology. A Sanskrit inscription of ‘Ādil Shāh above the entrance portal of the Jāma Masjid in Burhanpur in Madhya Pradesh, dated 1590 CE, ends with the sentence: “This mosque was erected [by ‘Ādil Shāh] for the protection of his religion” (*masītir iyam nirmītā svadharmapālanārtham*).⁴⁸ But already, from the late twelfth century onward, it was more common to use Arabic and later also Persian.⁴⁹ With the growing Muslim influence in western India, the institution of Islamic endowments (*waqf*)⁵⁰ was introduced as well, and for the first time, a clear term and concept of endowment appeared in the subcontinent. Unfortunately, the early phase of this development has not been well explored. But, for example, at the end of the twelfth century, the Ghūrid sultan Muḥammad b. Sām is said to have granted a village as *waqf* to the Jāma Masjid of Multan (in present-day Pakistan).⁵¹

We have two inscriptions of Muslim endowments in Gujarat at the south coast of Kathiawar and related to the famous medieval Hindu site of Somanātha (Somnath)⁵²: a Sanskrit epigraph engraved on a stone now fixed in the wall of a temple at Veraval (a few kilometers to the west of Somnath), and an Arabic inscription on a slab now built into the facade of a mosque, also at Veraval, both dated 1264 CE.⁵³ From the content, we can conclude that the Arabic inscription, which is two months later than its Sanskrit counterpart, is a shorter, altered

46 Wink 1990: 69, 203.

47 Salomon 1998: 150.

48 Salomon 1998: 305–307, no. 14; especially 307, line 6.

49 Salomon 1998: 105–107.

50 For this institution in general, see e.g., Peters et al. 2002: 59–60.

51 Kozłowski 1985: 22. Even in the Mughal period, the term *waqf* was not frequently used; Kozłowski 1995.

52 For a recent discussion of the material and the often highly politicized debates on Somnath, see Thapar 2004.

53 For the Sanskrit epigraph, see Hultzsch 1882; Sircar 1961. For the Arabic epigraph, see Desai 1961: 10–15, no. 4.

version of the Sanskrit inscription. The two documents do not illustrate Buddhist-Muslim, but rather Hindu-Muslim encounters in the field of endowments. The Sanskrit epigraph follows the pre-Islamic Indian tradition and convention of recording religious foundations and grants, with the necessary adaptations for the Muslim beneficiaries. It opens with an invocation and a stanza praising Viśvanātha, ‘the lord of the universe,’ which clearly refers to Allāh.⁵⁴ The date is given in four eras: according to the Muslim Hijri calendar and according to three indigenous Indian reckonings of years.⁵⁵ The donations documented in the inscription are historically contextualized through references to the reign of the Caulukya ruler Arjunadeva, to his regional governor of Kathiawar, and to the local administrative body (*pañcakula*) of Somanāthadevapattana. The king Arjunadeva is described as an adherent of god Umāpati (Śiva), and one of the members of the local body is portrayed as a teacher of the (Śaiva) Pāśupata doctrine.⁵⁶ The grant portion of the Sanskrit inscription exemplifies possible patterns of interaction between Muslims and Hindus in Gujarat in the second half of the thirteenth century. The inscription records the construction of a mosque (*mijigiti*) and the endowment by an Arab shipowner (*nākhū[dā]*) from Hormuz for the maintenance of the religious building (*dharmasthāna*). The grant consisted of some land, an oil mill, and two marketplaces (*haṭṭa*), which had to be obtained from local Hindu community leaders before being transferred to the mosque for their new purpose. The income from the endowments was to be used for certain posts and services at the *mijigiti*; any surplus was to be sent to Mecca and Medina.⁵⁷

The Arabic version makes it clear that the grant was regarded as a *waqf*, that is, as an endowment according to Islamic prescriptions, as it uses the verbal form *waqafa* to describe the Muslim donor’s actions.⁵⁸ In the words of Himanshu Prabha Ray, the importance of the inscription lies mainly in the fact that “[i]n keeping with the legal requirements of Islamic law the mosque was definable as a *waqf* (i.e., a charitable endowment) and trustees and beneficiaries had to be appointed. The Arabic version is thus crucial to an understanding

54 Sircar 1961: 141 and 146, lines 1–2.

55 Sircar 1961: 141 and 146, lines 2–4. The Indian eras are the Vikrama, Valabhī, and Siṃha.

56 Sircar 1961: 146–147, lines 4–9: . . . °śrī-umāpativaralabdhapraudhapatāpa° . . . paramapā-śūpatācārya°.

57 Sircar 1961. For discussions of this text, cf. Thapar 2004: 88–95; Patel 2008: 145–148; Ray 2015: 297–298. For a Junagadh inscription, which dates from 1286–87 CE and commemorates the erection of a mosque by a merchant who sent pilgrims to Mecca on ships, see Desai 1961: 18–19, no. 7; Jain 1990: 76; Shokoohy 2003: 18.

58 Desai 1961: 13–14, lines 16–17; Patel 2008: 149.

of the establishment of the institution of *waqf* in western India.”⁵⁹ However, despite its being much shorter, the Arabic inscription also contains information absent from the Sanskrit text, for example, the following prayer: “[M]ay God make it [i.e., the city of Somanātha] one of the cities of Islam and [banish] infidelity and idols.”⁶⁰ Phrases like this prove that there was another agenda related to the spread of the institution of *waqf*, a goal hidden from those (many) contemporary local residents who did not comprehend Arabic.

From the early thirteenth century, a clear disruption in the indigenous endowment culture is discernible in many parts of northern and central India. This disruption resulted in the disturbance of existing grants, which had been made ‘for eternity,’ and in the decrease of new donations. As the large majority of the early medieval endowments consisted of royal revenues allocated to religious recipients, this disruption does not come as a surprise. The continuation of such grants could only be guaranteed by the rulers. But Muslim potentates are said to have often confiscated land and other sources of income that had been bestowed on monasteries and temples,⁶¹ probably to increase the taxable income of the state (like the British did later)⁶² and perhaps also in order to patronize the *waqf* culture in India. Confiscations occasionally occurred in the pre-Islamic period as well. However, with the spread of Islamic rule, the consensus about the potential meritoriousness of Buddhist, Hindu-Brahmanical, and Jain endowments was lost. But while, over the course of time, Buddhist endowments entirely ceased, the tradition of Hindu and Jain endowments continued, although on a much smaller scale than before and mostly carried on by private individuals.⁶³

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⁵⁹ Ray 2015: 298. For the implications of this, see also Patel 2008: 155–156.

⁶⁰ Desai 1961: 14, lines 6–7. For this attitude toward *kufr* and *aṣṇām*, see also Patel 2008: 148.

⁶¹ For exaggerations of the amount of Hindu endowments in Muslim sources, see Thapar 2004: 57.

⁶² For the early British attitude toward Hindu endowments, see Orr 2011: 154. On *waqf*, see Kozłowski 1987.

⁶³ Orr 2011: 153.

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