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Buddhist Lineages along the Southern Routes: On Two nikāyas Active at Kanaganahalli under the Sātavāhanas

Vincent Tournier

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Cristina Scherrer-Schaub

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and Marta Sernesi



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Cristina Scherrer-Schaub at the XIIIth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, December 2002.

*Buddhist Lineages along the Southern Routes:
On Two nikāyas Active at Kanaganahalli
under the Sātavāhanas**

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Introduction

Excavations of the Adhālaka Great Shrine (MIA *adhālaka-mahācetiya*) at Kanaganahalli, between 1993 and 1999, have uncovered a wealth of sculptural and epigraphic remains that undeniably

* Materials in this paper were presented on 4 August 2017, at the conference “From Vijayapurī to Śrīkṣetra? The beginnings of Buddhist exchange across the Bay of Bengal” held at the EFEO centre in Pondicherry, and on 3 November 2018, at the conference “Enacted Words of the Buddha: Buddhist manuscripts as mediums of transcultural interactions” held at the University of Heidelberg. My sincere thanks to the participants of both symposia for their comments, and especially to Oskar von Hinüber and to our dear honorand Cristina Scherrer-Schaub. I also wish to thank Arlo Griffiths for his input on some of the inscriptions of the EIAD corpus discussed below, and for his comments and corrections on an earlier draft of this paper. I am very grateful to Robert Arlt for generously sharing with me his insights on Kanaganahalli and some of its structural elements, and to Akira Shimada for answering my numerous questions on *stūpa*-sites in Āndhra. In February 2020, as this volume was about to go to press, I could visit the site, check readings on the stones, and document further inscribed pieces. This fieldwork was generously supported by the project DHARMA, “The Domestication of ‘Hindu’ Asceticism and the Religious Making of South and Southeast Asia,” funded by the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement no. 809994).

make it one of the most significant discoveries for the history of Buddhism in India in the last decades.¹ Since the publication in 2013 of the excavation report in the *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, the bibliography focusing on the site has steadily kept growing. Particularly worthy of mention here is the corpus of 229 inscriptions edited by Oskar von Hinüber in a book co-authored with Maiko Nakanishi in 2014, under the title *Kanaganahalli Inscriptions* (hereafter KnI), for Kanaganahalli constitutes one of the largest troves of Sātavāhana-period inscriptions, along with the epigraphic corpus of the great shrine of Amaravati.

With the edition of the Kanaganahalli inscriptions whose documentation was available to him,² Oskar von Hinüber has laid the ground for a systematic study of their contents. In his introduction, he has highlighted important aspects of the inscriptions' contents, identifying a number of directions for future research, some of which he has explored himself in publications that have appeared since.³ The present remarks aim at addressing a point touched briefly upon by the editor, namely that of the “school affiliation,” that is the monastic order or orders (*nikāya*) to which the Buddhist monks and nuns active at the site belonged. This

¹ For concurring assessments, see for instance von Hinüber 2016a: 8; Quintanilla 2017: 111; Zin 2018a: 1.

² A preliminary transcript of 270 inscriptions was first provided in Poonacha 2011 [2013], but it is more often than not unreliable, as pointed out in Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 12. A complete inventory and a fuller publication of the site's corpus remain a desideratum. For the time being, see ARIE 2014–15: B.67–310; 2015–16: B.101–153. The transliteration system used throughout the present article is the one adopted for the Early Inscriptions of Āndhradeśa (EIAD) corpus, with the exception that the *anusvāra* sign is represented here as *ṃ* and not as *ṁ*, to comply with the system adopted throughout this volume. See the conventions page at <http://epigraphia.efeo.fr/andhra> and Tournier 2018: 22, n. 1. In addition, the sign ψ renders the *nandyāvarta* symbol sometimes engraved before epigraphic formula. In the apparatus, the symbol \diamond is merely used as a separator between lemmas. I have “translated” the conventions adopted in other epigraphic publications into those of the EIAD, for the sake of clarity and in order for the reader to understand significant differences of reading recorded in my critical apparatus. When referring to inscriptions of the EIAD corpus, I will either provide the corresponding reference in Tsukamoto's corpus of Indian Buddhist inscriptions (IBH) or, when it is missing from that corpus, that of the previous edition of reference. More complete bibliographic references are (or will be) provided in the digital publication of each inscription.

³ See von Hinüber 2016a, 2016b, and forthcoming.

issue is of crucial importance, not only as a means to reconstruct Kanaganahalli's place in the institutional landscape of early Buddhism, but also because this information may shed light on the scriptural traditions that were in circulation at the site. These may in turn have interacted with—and in subtle ways informed—the rich visual repertoire at the site. In that respect, von Hinüber writes:⁴

The inscriptions do not point to any specific **school affiliation**. Although the Buddhist missionaries Majjhima and Dundubhiss[a]ra (III.3,2) are known only from the Theravāda tradition today, this is only a possibility, but by no means reliable identification of Theravāda presence or influence at Kanaganahalli. For, given the almost complete loss of the texts of numerous south Indian Buddhist schools known by name only, it is dangerous to apply the *argumentum e silentio*.

This cautious assessment summarises well the problem at hand: given the very fragmentary state of our knowledge about the textual traditions circulating in Deccan in the first centuries of the Common Era, connecting a given site to a specific school on the grounds of literary echoes only is tentative at best. Not heeding this call for caution, in a recent contribution to the understanding of the site's iconographic programme, Sonya Quintanilla (2017: 116) has taken the set of inscriptions mentioning five venerable monks including Majjhima and Dundubhissara⁵ as a clue for identifying the site with another *nikāya*, the Haimavata.⁶ The names of both these venerable monks occur in reliquaries from Sonari's *stūpa* 2 in Vidiśā, along with Kassapagotta who is called the "teacher of all the Haimavatas" (*savahemavatācariya*).⁷ However, at Kanaganahalli the label Hemavata does not qualify Kassapagotta or any of the other monks, but *yakhas* and *nāgas* of the Himalayas represented on a slab that stood on the left side of the set of slabs mentioning the "missionaries" (KnI II.8,4: *hemavata yakhā nāgā pi*). The term *hemavata* therefore certainly does not constitute a *nikāya* label—whether or not it does so in Vidiśā. Since Kassapagotta, and others, were considered venerable ances-

⁴ Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 18 (emphasis in the original).

⁵ The sequence she has reconstructed is convincing and corresponds to that proposed in Zin 2018a: 84–91.

⁶ Quintanilla 2017: 116.

⁷ Willis 2000: 85–88; 2001.

tors of several Buddhist lineages, the epigraphical presence of any one of these venerable monks in itself does not provide a conclusive clue regarding the religious descent of the sponsors of this series of slabs.⁸

Seishi Karashima has attracted attention to another epigraphical record relevant to the issue of “school affiliation,” that is to say a 3rd-century donative inscription part of a set of eight inscribed *buddha* images sponsored by the same individual (KnI II.7,A.8). There, Maitreya is described as “Bhagavant Bodhisatta Ayita (Skt. Ajita), the future Buddha” (*bhagavā bodhisato ayito anāgato budho*). Surveying a large quantity of primary sources, he notices that among the preserved early scriptures and treatises associated with given *nikāyas*, only those of the Mahāsāṅghika-Lokottaravādins (i.e., the *Mahāvastu*) and of the Saṃmitīyas⁹ (*Sanmidi bū lun* 三彌底部論, T 1649; *Karmavibhaṅga*) identify the Bodhisattva Ajita with the future Buddha Maitreya.¹⁰ Karashima thus states:¹¹

This inscription, saying that Ajita will become the future *buddha*, indicates clearly that the *stūpa* at Kanaganahalli cannot have belonged to either the Theravādins or the Sarvāstivādins, while it might have belonged to the Mahāsāṅghikas, Sāṃmitīyas or another school. I assume that this *stūpa*

⁸ This set of slabs is discussed further in Tournier in preparation b.

⁹ The current convention to spell the *nikāya*'s name Sāṃmitīya (on which see Skilling 2016: 46, n. 1 and the references quoted therein) does not appear to me to be particularly well-grounded. I thus tentatively adopt here one of the two spellings best attested in the sources of that very milieu which are preserved in Indo-Aryan languages. There are only two epigraphic occurrences of the name known so far: while a 2nd-c. inscription from Mathurā reads ... *ācariyāna samitiyāna parigrahe* ..., a 4th-c. inscription from Sarnath reads ... *ā[ca]ryyaṇaṃ sa[mma]tiyānaṃ parigraha* ... See Lüders 1961: 115–116, § 80; Vogel 1905–1906: 172, with correction in Falk 2006: 214. Likewise, in (the colophons of) works by affiliates to the *nikāya* preserved in Sanskrit sources both spellings Sāṃmatīya and Saṃmitīya are attested, respectively in Vimuktisena's *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* commentary (to be discussed below) and in Saṅghatrāta's *Abhidharmasamuccaya-kārikā*, on which see Sferra in this volume (esp. p. 659, n. 38). To be sure, Sāṃmitīya appears to be attested in Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*, but the Tibetan translation of that work reads Mang po bkur ba (= *Sāṃmatīya/*Sāṃmitīya). Cf. Pras 148.1 (with n. 1), 192.7, 276.2. Thus Sanskrit manuscripts of the work may need to be checked.

¹⁰ Karashima notes that the late (perhaps 13th-century) Theriya *Anāgatavaṃsa* also identifies both figures, in contrast with earlier Pāli works. He attributes this to an influence of the “Mahāsāṅghika notion of Ajita and Maitreya” (Karashima 2018: 188).

¹¹ Karashima 2018: 187.

might have belonged to the Mahāsāṃghikas or its sub-group. Apart from identifying Ajita and Maitreya, the fact that the scenes on the narrative reliefs in the *stūpa* agree very well with the *Lalitavistara*, which was composed probably in ca. 150 C.E. in Gandhāra by a monk of the Mahāsāṃghikas, as well as its two Chinese translations (T. 3, nos. 186 and 187), also indicates the Kanaganahalli *stūpa*'s affiliation with this school.

The presentation of the Bodhisattva Ajita as the future Buddha in inscription II.7,A.8 allows to narrow the spectrum of the scriptural traditions known by people active at Kanaganahalli towards the end of the embellishment of the Great Shrine, when the decorative programme was updated with anthropomorphic *buddha* images. This discovery is very important, and we will see below how Karashima's analysis is in part supported by other evidence. However, my impression is that the visual programme of Kanaganahalli does not straightforwardly align with any known biography of the Buddha,¹² while there is no clear evidence that the *Lalitavistara*—the earliest version of which is clearly a product of northwestern communities—circulated, in any form known to us, in Southern India as early as the 3rd century CE, when the set of *buddha* images was likely carved. To restate von Hinüber's point: our analysis of archaeological materials needs to account for the fact that most of the scriptural tradition of Buddhist communities likely present at sites such as Kanaganahalli is irremediably lost to us. We know precious little, for instance, of the biographical tradition of the Buddha known to Saṃmitīya¹³ or Śāila milieux, the last of which resist unsubstantiated identifications with the better-known “Northern” Mahāsāṃghikas.¹⁴ Finally, by its very nature KnI

¹² See the important contribution of Zin (2018a) on the iconographic programme of the dome slabs. I was unable to access the unpublished article by Mihoko Hiraoka (referred to in Karashima 2018: 187, n. 22) apparently establishing links between the biographical tradition represented by the *Lalitavistara* corpus and the *āyāka* reliefs from Kanaganahalli. See also Zin 2018b: 551–552.

¹³ See below, p. 884 and n. 78.

¹⁴ See also Zin 2018a: 30, whose argument according to which “the Art of Andhra illustrates scriptures of the Buddhist school of the Aparamahāvinaśāilas, for which the textual tradition has been lost to us in the present day” deserves to be nuanced. Such a statement indeed overlooks much of the diversity of religious agents involved in commissioning “Art” in the Āndhra region. For the evidence at our disposal regarding the contents of the canons of the Pūrva- and Aparāśāilas, admittedly at a later period than the heyday of Āndhra art, see

II.7,A.8 does not allow identifying anyone active at the Great Shrine as a Mahāsāṅghika—or, for that matter, as a member of any other order—and does not represent in itself a decisive marker of the ordination lineage(s) of the monks who controlled it, even assuming a single *nikāya* did control such a majestic *caitya* throughout its history.

What has been missed so far is that two inscribed objects in fact do contain explicit mentions of monastic orders: one of them is admittedly very fragmentary, which explains that it has been overlooked; the other, on the contrary, is the most extensive dated record at the Great Shrine and is thus particularly significant to understand the religious identity of those who played an active role in its construction and embellishment.

1. An Inscribed Pillar from Kanaganahalli and the Seliya Network in the Śātavāhana Realm

The excavation report published by Poonacha provides the reading of two inscriptions engraved on “dwarf-pillar shafts,”¹⁵ for which no documentation was published therein. Only one of these inscriptions was documented by Nakanishi and edited anew by von Hinüber as KnI II.5,9; the second will be called here KnI II.5,11, following the numeration system of the extant corpus. These inscriptions appear, at first sight, of little significance, but their study reveals an important clue connecting Kanaganahalli to a wider religious network along the Bhima/Krishna rivers. Before considering these epigraphs, the nature, location, and function of their support needs to be clarified. According to Poonacha, the inscribed pillar shafts—the plural implying they are two—were found near structure V (STR-V), vaguely described as a “pillared platform,”¹⁶ located just outside the *vedikā*’s boundary, to the northwest of the Great Shrine. Von Hinüber remarks that no small pillars are mentioned in the report’s description of STR-V, and he thus very tentatively suggests that, instead, they might have formed

Tournier 2017: 256–259, 270–272, 278–286. For the necessity to be wary of uncritical subsumption of the Śāila lineages under the larger group of the Mahāsāṅghikas, see pp. 21–22 of the same monograph.

¹⁵ Poonacha 2011: 479.

¹⁶ Poonacha 2011: 120 with fig. 41.

part of the so-called “promenade”—which was perhaps rather a *maṇḍapa*—located to the southwest of the *mahācaitya*.¹⁷ However, as may be seen in the photograph of the *maṇḍapa* pillar stumps found *in situ*, these had a square basis (Poonacha 2011: pl. X), which does not accord with the octagonal shape of the pillar photographed by Nakanishi.

A visit to the site and a more complete documentation allows to clarify several important points (figs. 1–4). First of all, we can ascertain that Poonacha’s use of the plural is misleading: we are not dealing with two but with one octagonal limestone pillar element, bearing two inscriptions, one of which had not been documented so far. This fragmentary pillar is currently located by the western wall of STR-V (fig. 1), in the immediate vicinity of STR-IV:¹⁸ while this does not prove the connection between the pillar and any of these two structures, it is at least consistent with the location provided by Poonacha. Moreover, one can determine that this fragment used to have four plain faces, two of which—out of three partly preserved—are inscribed, alternating with four faces bearing high-relief decor (fig. 2). Two of the decorated faces preserve the upper elements of what looks like canopies with small recesses, indicating that the preserved fragment was likely positioned on top of the pillar, presumably below a capital. The latter may have been fastened onto the octagonal pillar thanks to two small holes located above the first *akṣara* of each inscribed face, unless these holes were used to hang objects, such as garlands. The fragment under discussion is best compared to another pillar element recovered from the site (fig. 5),¹⁹ four faces of which preserve a standing *gaṇa*-like dwarf. Note also that deep round tenons are carved on both ends of this element. The two similar elements from Kanaganahalli may thus have been assembled to form free-standing pillars. Poonacha’s report describes STR-IV as a square platform at the centre of which laid a rectangular hole “probably

¹⁷ Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 72. This structure is sketched in Poonacha 2011: fig. 11.

¹⁸ The fragment measures 48 cm (h.) × 36 cm (w./d.).

¹⁹ This pillar element is preserved in a covered storage space located to the north of the site’s main entrance. It is of comparable dimensions, measuring *c.* 52 cm (h.) × 38 cm (w./d.). The exact findspot of this pillar element is not recorded in Poonacha’s publication.

for accommodating the uncarved portion of a heavy pillar.”²⁰ Similarly, by the southern wall of STR-V, the stump of a large pillar is still visible (fig. 1), and by that stump lays the fragment of the octagonal shaft, bearing KnI II.5,8.²¹ The free-standing pillars of STR-IV and V may, perhaps, have borne such objects as a *dharmacakra* or a *caitya*. The *dharmacakra*-pillar is an especially common motif in the decorative programme of the Great Shrine: at least five drum and dome slabs, one of which is inscribed, contain representations of the sacred wheel erected on a pillar, the shaft of which is either octagonal or combines an octagonal section with rings decorated in high relief (see fig. 6).²² No representation of *caitya*-bearing pillars is found at the site, but it may be significant that undocumented remains of so-called “votive *stūpas*” are said to have been found in both STR-IV and V.

Further evidence supporting the interpretation of the fragments under discussion as elements of free-standing pillar shafts is found in Phanigiri. Indeed, a massive and elaborate octagonal piece, in limestone, associated to a shallow circular band and to a large disk was uncovered at the site (fig. 7).²³ The three pieces are hollowed, to be set against a harder core. The octagonal element bears high-relief “enamoured couples” (*mithuna*) on four sides, and low-relief vegetal patterns entwined with *gaṇas* on the four others.²⁴ It is thus typologically similar to the Kanaganahalli frag-

²⁰ Poonacha 2011: 118. Some of the fragments recorded *in situ* are consistent with the building blocks of a free-standing pillar. See below, n. 29.

²¹ See also Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 71. This shaft is of larger dimensions than the one bearing KnI II.5,9, with a width of *c.* 41 cm. The two inscribed fragments moreover differ in the palaeography of their record and the text layout, thereby suggesting that they belonged to different pillars.

²² (1) Poonacha 2011: pls. XXXIII, XLIX.A, LIA.1 = fig. 6; (2) Poonacha 2011: pl. LIA.2 (3) Poonacha 2011: pls. LII.B, CXVII.A = Zin 2018a: pl. 25; (4) slab bearing KnI II.3,5 and II.5,2 (general view unpublished); (5) unpublished slab preserved in the site storage, in nine fragments, bearing acc. no. 21. This list does not take into account the representations of *dharmacakra*-pillars flanked by a throne. For other reliefs representing such pillars, see for instance Burgess 1887: pl. XXXVIII, 1; LX, 3, 4; Bénisti 1961: 264–265 and fig. 2; Stone 1994: fig. 25.

²³ See also Skilling 2008: fig. 25–27. These fragments, bearing the nos. 8, 9, and 10, are currently preserved in the site’s storage. The combined height of the three limestone pieces is 76.5 cm, while the diameter of the disk is 70 cm.

²⁴ A similarly decorated hollowed octagonal element, as far as I know unpublished, and allegedly coming from Tirumalagiri, 16 km north of Phanigiri, is preserved in the storage of the Vizakhapatnam Naval Museum (acc. no. 80-45/1).

ments represented in figs. 2 and 5. The circular disk of the Phanigiri piece is adorned with auspicious symbols in low relief, which interestingly include a miniature *dharmacakra*, set on an octagonal pillar. It is thus likely that the set of three elements formed the capital of a monumental pillar, perhaps supporting a *dharmacakra* or a *caitya*. While the latter is less common, two cuboid dice from the *torāṇa* architraves at Phanigiri bear representations of free-standing pillars bearing a small *caitya*, surrounded by monks holding lotuses and paying homage (fig. 8).²⁵ Interestingly, an octagonal pillar from the northern gate of the Amaravati *mahācaitya*, adorned with fine low-relief decor on every other face, bears an inscription (EIAD 269; IBH, Amar 17) recording the donation, by the perfumer Haṃgha (Skt. Saṅgha), of such a *caitya*-bearing pillar (MIA *cetiyaḥabha*).²⁶ The erection of free-standing *dharmacakra*-pillars is better attested epigraphically, most famously in the bilingual octagonal pillar inscription from

This piece measures 34 cm (h.) × 61 cm (w./d.). The diameter of the hole is 36 cm, which would fit the tenon of a large pillar. The lower tenon of the Phanigiri pillar bearing EIAD 104 (bearing the acc. no. 6) measures, for instance, 26 cm.

²⁵ See also Skilling 2008: figs. 20–21 (respectively fragments nos. 7 and 5). Yet another pillar, the finial of which is abraded, is represented honoured by monks, on the crossbar to the left of the dice of fragment 5. This scene is set between a *nāga* shrine and a *stūpa*, both of which are interestingly revered by laymen. These three representations, according to the recent reconstruction proposed by Dhar (2019) would have been located on the same side of the *torāṇa* facing the Phanigiri *stūpa*. The basis of these three pillars may be compared to one recovered in the immediate vicinity of the *torāṇa* crossbars, to the north of the *stūpa*. See Chenna Redy et al. 2008: 17 (first photo). For another representation of *caitya*-bearing pillars in relation with a *stūpa*, see for instance the drum slab of Nagarjunakonda site 3, Nagarjunakonda Archaeological Museum, acc. no. 34.

²⁶ This pillar is on display at the British Museum (acc. no. 1880,0709.109). See Knox 1992: 192–194; Shimada 2013: 207. Another pillar, smaller and rectangular, yet also richly adorned, was found on the left side of the *mahācaitya*'s Southern entrance, and bears an inscription recording the donation of a *caitya*-bearing pillar provided—interestingly—with relics (*cetiyaḥabho sadhādūko*), by the merchant Kuṭa. See EIAD 286 (IBH, Amar 34); Burgess 1882: 5–6. This pillar is preserved at the Chennai Government Museum (acc. no. unknown), where another inscribed pillar from Amaravati relevant to the present discussion is preserved (acc. no. 179). This consists in the lower fragment of a small (h. 83 cm; w./d. 23 cm) and unadorned octagonal pillar with a tenon. It bears an inscription recording the establishment of a free-standing pillar of another kind, namely a light-bearing pillar (MIA *divakambha*), by Khandā, wife of the *gahapati* Siddhattha. See EIAD 298; IBH, Amar 46. Yet another pillar, from the southern *āyāka* of the Amaravati shrine, is identified by its inscription as of a similar kind.

Phanigiri dedicated by the chief doctor of the Ikṣvāku king Rudrapuruṣadatta (r. c. 290/300–315/25), on the latter’s 18th regnal year (EIAD 104).²⁷ At present, I know of four more examples from Āndhra: (1) A pillar base or capital from Amaravati (EIAD 264; IBH, Amar 12), dedicated by the “notable” (*gahapati*)²⁸ Kahutara, during the reign of the Sātavāhana king Vāsetṭhīputta Siri-Puḷumāvi (r. c. 85–125 CE);²⁹ (2) An octagonal pillar fragment from Dharanikota, near Amaravati (EIAD 407; IBH, Dhar 12), dated on palaeographical grounds to the 2nd century CE, and dedicated by the “high officer” or “minister” (*amaca*, Skt. *amātya*) Atabera; (3) An octagonal pillar from Alluru (EIAD 49; IBH, Allu 2), erected in the eighth regnal year of the Ikṣvāku king Siri-Ehavalacāntamūla (r. c. 265/75–290/300) by the village headman (*gāmika*) Veṇhusiri (Skt. Viṣṇuśrī);³⁰ (4) Last, a small fragment of a (possibly octagonal) pillar from Nagarjunakonda (EIAD 84), whose donor is not named.³¹ This record is in Sanskrit and can be

See EIAD 272 (IBH, Amar 46), l. 8. Unfortunately, the object is lost and its inscription is only available through an eye copy, see Prinsep 1837: pl. X.

²⁷ See Baums et al. 2016: 369–377.

²⁸ “Notable” constitutes my very tentative rendering of *gahapati* (Skt. *grhapati*), commonly but problematically translated as “householder,” which aligns better to its meaning in Vedic sources. In Buddhist literature and inscriptions alike, the epithet is most of the time used to qualify a man who, besides serving as the head of his “house” (i.e., of his extended family), possesses considerable economic means. See, for instance, May 1967; Chakravarti 1987: 65–93; Nattier 2003: 22–25; Bailey and Mabbett 2003: 46–51; Visvanathan 2011: 248–252. See also the contributions gathered in Olivelle 2019.

²⁹ Note that this structural element, broken in two pieces, located in the Chennai Government Museum (acc. no. 77), has the shape of an inverted and truncated pyramid with three steps, which is very similar to the two cornices represented, on both sides of the octagonal pillar, in fig. 6. Interestingly, a fragment of a typologically similar element, interpreted by Poonacha as a pillar base, was found in Kanaganahalli STR-IV. See Poonacha 2011: 188 with fig. 40, pl. XLV.C. See also, at Amaravati, Burgess 1887: pl. XLVIII.1 (EIAD 339; IBH, Amar 87); Shimada 2013: pl. 53 (EIAD 340; IBH, Amar 88).

³⁰ While a *dharmacakra* is not mentioned explicitly in this inscription, the fact that the erected object is said (l. 7) to be “a stone pillar made of the Dharma” (*dharmamayo selakhaṃbho*) is likely an allusion to its bearing such a symbol. I return to this inscription in Tournier forthcoming.

³¹ See Ramachandran 1953: 28. The findspot of this pillar is unfortunately nowhere indicated in the archaeological reports. It might stem from site 32a, from which stems another Buddhist dedicatory inscription in Sanskrit (EIAD 77; IBH, Naga 56), engraved in comparable letters on a similar variety of blue limestone.

dated, on palaeographical grounds, to the 4th century or early 5th century CE. These five pillars, bearing elaborate and, in three instances (EIAD 49, 84, and 104), distinctly flourished texts in ornate script, clearly represented prestige donations by wealthy donors. Interestingly, three of these (EIAD 49, 264, and 407) also mention Buddhist *nikāyas* (Cetikiya in EIAD 49; Puvvaseliya in EIAD 264 and 407) to which the pillar was dedicated. The hypothesis that the inscribed fragment bearing KnI II.5,9 and II.5,11 was a free-standing pillar, possibly bearing a *dharmacakra* or a *caitya*, will need testing through a thorough study of the loose structural remains at Kanaganahalli. Still, what is left of the text on both sides of this inscribed pillar shares some similarities with the above-mentioned inscriptions. As we will see, its donor (or: one of its donors) may have been a rather prominent individual, and the record mentions a *nikāya*.

Both inscriptions borne by the stone fragment under discussion are engraved in ornate *brāhmī* script dating perhaps to the 2nd century CE.³² Only the very beginning of these inscriptions is preserved, but the case endings and parallel formulae considered below suggest that they were not epigraphic labels but were part of one or two donative records. The side of the pillar not documented so far (fig. 3; KnI II.5,11) was transliterated ° *āvesanisa bali*/// in the excavation report,³³ which I would read slightly differently as ° *āvesanisa* ◊ *bala* .[i]///. The preserved text points to an *āvesani* whose name might have started in Bala-. The term *āvesani*, which occurs once on a *torāṇa*-architrave at Sanchi *stūpa* 1, was rendered “foreman of the artisans” by Bühler.³⁴ In some literary contexts, the term can also mean simply “artisan,”³⁵ but epigraphic evidence

³² The palaeographic features of these inscriptions seem to indicate a date posterior to KnI I.8 (dated 120 CE), considered below, while they look strikingly similar to the ornate inscription of King Sivasiri-Puḷumāvi (r. c. 152–160) recovered from the Sannati fort. See Poonacha 2011: pl. II.A; Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 20. A systematic investigation of the palaeography remains to be undertaken. See Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 13.

³³ Poonacha 2011: 479.

³⁴ Bühler 1892: 88; IEG, s.v. *āvesanin*.

³⁵ In a passage from Kauṭilya’s *Arthaśāstra*, the word is used twice in the plural to refer to a goldsmith’s workmen. See AŚ 2.14.1, 7; NWS, s.v. *āvesanin*. For the meaning of P. *āvesana* (Skt. *āveśana*[*śālā*]) as workshop, applied to other trades than that of gold, see for instance CPD, s.v. *āvesana*.

suggests *āvesanis* could have considerable means, and thus could be the heads of workshops (Skt. *āveśana*). The term is not recorded elsewhere in Kanaganahalli, but it is attested in six inscriptions from Āndhra, three of which from Jagayyapeta.³⁶ There, the *āvesani* Siddhattha, son of the *āvesani* Nākacanda (Skt. Nāgacandra), donates as many as five *āyāka* pillars to the *stūpa*. Such pillars, much like *dharmacakra*-pillars, are prestigious and highly visible text-bearing objects, whose commission was certainly not accessible to the most humble of donors.³⁷ In the record found on the Sanchi *torāṇa*, the donor is defined as the personal *āvesani* of the Sātavāhana king Siri-Sātakāṇṇi, thereby suggesting a direct access to the ruler.³⁸ This may be compared to a set of past Buddha images from Kanaganahalli (KnI II.7,A.1–3), where the artist Bodhigutta—great grandson of a stone sculptor (*selavadhika*)—is presented as a “royal officer” (*rayāmaca*). Moreover, among the memorial stones found at Nagarjunakonda dedicated to royalty, officials, or high militaries, one is dedicated to an *āvesani*,³⁹ a fact that appears to confirm that some “master artisans” could indeed rise to distinguished status.

Inscription KnI II.5,9 found on the pillar’s opposite face is of less straightforward meaning, but it is arguably more important (fig. 4). Only six *akṣaras*, and what is left of a seventh are preserved. Those were first transliterated as *mahānivasa bali*/// in the excavation report,⁴⁰ and re-read *mahāvinase[pa].i.///* by von

³⁶ EIAD 31, l. 2; 32, l. 2; 33, l. 2 (respectively IBH, Jaga 2, 3, and 1). A fourth fragmentary inscribed pillar belonging to this set, preserved in the reserve collection of the Amaravati Archaeological Museum (acc. no. 506) was first published on the EIAD website as no. 90, but it does not preserve the mention of the *āvesani* Siddhattha or his father. For the two mentions of *āvesani* at Amaravati, see EIAD 342 (IBH, Amar 90), l. 1; 515 (Ghosh 1969: 103, no. 38).

³⁷ It will suffice to recall here that another set of large, Ikṣvāku-period, *āyāka* pillars bearing similar texts, was recovered from site 1 at Nagarjunakonda. There, two *talavara*-wives (including the lead donor Cāntisirī), one general’s wife, and as many as three queens commissioned the *āyāka* pillars. For this set of pillars, eighteen of which (out of twenty) were recovered from the site, see recently Baums et al. 2016: 379–389.

³⁸ IBH, Sanc 384, l. 2. For tentative identifications of this king, see for instance Bühler 1892: 88; Falk 2009: 200. For this record, see also Scherrer-Schaub 2016: 8.

³⁹ EIAD 75 (Sircar 1963–1964: 16), l. 2.

⁴⁰ Poonacha 2011: 479.

Hinüber. Translating “Of the great...,” he does not comment on the string *-vinase[pa].i-* but notes: “The sequence of *akṣaras* preserved does not yield any sense.” Upon closer examination, it appears that the vocalic marker *-i*, written in this variety of script as a flourished wavy curve, flows above the penultimate *akṣara* in a way suggesting that it was originally attached to it, and not to the one immediately following. Moreover, the *akṣara* read by the editor as *pa* is in fact a *la*.⁴¹ Indeed, the vertical stroke to the right of the *la* has a characteristic horizontal rightward bend in the instances where it is modified by the vocalic marker *-i*.⁴² Finally, given that the preserved descending stroke of the last fragmentary *akṣara* is consistent with the left element of a *ya*, the reading is very likely *mahāvīnaseli[y].///*.

This allows to connect the inscribed pillar to a known Buddhist *nikāya*, that of the Mahāvīnaseliyas. This religious order, not known from literary sources but obviously connected to the larger Śāila group, is otherwise mentioned in a single inscription from Amaravati (EIAD 287), which can be tentatively dated, on palaeographical grounds, to the 2nd century CE. This lengthy 11-line inscription is engraved on a *maṇḍapa* pillar whose current whereabouts are unknown.⁴³ Based on the published estampage and lacking any better documentation (fig. 9), the inscription may be tentatively read as follows:⁴⁴

⁴¹ Indeed, the left stroke of the *akṣara* is bent and has a curly top, as in *bala-* in KnI II.5.11. This contrasts with the shape of the *pa* in this script, which is straight or ends with a small serif. See, for instance, the shapes of the *akṣaras pu* in EIAD 561 cited below (fig. 11), written in a similarly ornate script.

⁴² See, for instance, EIAD 6 (IBH, Naga 6), l. 10. At Kanaganahalli see also, on an earlier-looking script, KnI IV.6.

⁴³ In principle, the pillar should be preserved in the Chennai Government Museum, where it was still kept in 1956. Between its discovery and that time, it had been broken and part of the inscribed surface had peeled off. See Sivaramamurti 1956: 270, no. IV G, 15; 303, no. 124. It is absent from the more recent catalogue edited by Kannan (2014) and the EIAD project team was unable to locate it during its two documentation campaigns at the museum, in 2017.

⁴⁴ I noted here systematically the variant reading of the edition by Hultzsch 1883: 550–551, no. 5 (H). In the two instances where the readings provided in Sivaramamurti 1956: 303 and IBH, Amar 35 improved upon Hultzsch’s edition, they have also been noted, respectively as S and Ts.

(1) sidham nam[o] (bha)gavato °aca[r]///(iyāna) (2) mahavinaseliy[ā]na sārīpu///(tasa) + (3) mala[sa] sisihasa sa ? [pu] + + (4) gaha gūjākaḍasa dhammilavāni(5)yaputasa gadhikasa vāniyasa [dha](ṃma)(6)rikh[i]tasa sapitukasa samatuka(sa sa)-(7)bhariyakasa sabhatukasa sa[bha](ginikasa) (8) saputakasa sadhutukasa sagharas(unhaka)(8')sa sanatuka(sa) (9) sanatīkasa sanatimitabaṃdhava[sa] (10) saghadeyadhammaṃ padhānama[ḍa]vo (11) patīṭhav[i]to

1. °aca[r](iyāna) °aca(riyāna) H. ✦ 2. mahavinaseliy[ā]na mahavanasaliyāna H. The correct reading is already found in IBH, Amar 35. ✦ 2–3. sarīpu(tasa) + mala[sa] sārīpu(tāna °a)mal[ā]na H. The final *akṣara*, read *na* by Hultsch, can also be read as a *sa*, so there is no particular reason to believe that Sāriputta was addressed here in the *pluralis majestatis*. Hultsch's reconstruction of *amala-* as an epithet of Sāriputta is possible, but it cannot be excluded that the inscription originally read *vimalasa* instead. Both would likely point to Sāriputta being an *arhant*. ✦ 4. gaha gūjākaḍasa gahagūjākaḍasa H. Hultsch takes this as a long toponym, but *gaha* might here stand—either as an abbreviation, or by the dropping of three syllables—for *gahapatino*. ✦ 5. gadhikasa Here and in *sapitukasa* l. 6 and *sanatuka(sa)* l. 8', the serif of the *ka* appears unusually broad, particularly on the right side, to the extent that it could be interpreted as the mark of a *-ā* in all instances. Similarly, the *ka* of *saputakase*, l. 7 could be read *ke*. ✦ 5–6. dha[m](ma)rikh[i]tasa (si)ri(da)tasa H; (dhama)rakhitasa S; dha[ma]rakhitasa Ts. Emend *-rakhitasa*. ✦ 6. samatuka(sa) samātuka(sa) H. ✦ 7. sa[bha](ginikasa) sa ... H. The reading *bha* and the ensuing reconstruction are tentative, but this fits the number of missing *akṣaras* and the structure of the family network being involved in the gift. The mention of the sister(s) follows immediately that of the brother(s) elsewhere in the Amaravati corpus. See EIAD 303 (IBH, Amar 51); 385 (IBH, Amar 133), l. 2. ✦ 8–8'. sagharas(unhaka)sa sa(vadhujana)sa H; sagharas(unhaka)sa S Ts. The spelling *-sunha-* seems more common than *-suṇha-* in the Amaravati corpus, hence this slight divergence from Sivaramamurti's reconstruction. Compare also the closely related formula in EIAD 42 (von Hinüber 2017: 4).

Success! Homage to the Bhagavant! This hall for spiritual exertion has been established as the pious gift—directed to the Saṅgha—of Dhammarakhita, merchant perfumer, son of the merchant Dhammila, a notable (?) from Gūjākaḍa ... of the stainless, *sisiha*, Sāriputta of the Mahāvinaseliyas, together with his father, mother, wife, brother(s) and sister(s) (?), son(s), daughter(s), daughter(s)-in-law from a (respectable) house, grandsons, granddaughters; together with his kinsmen, friends, and relations.

The contents of this record are overall clear, but because of the lacuna found in l. 3, and of the uncertain interpretation of the term *sisīha*,⁴⁵ the junction between the introductory part (ll. 1–3), dealing with a member of a monastic lineage, and the rest on the record, focusing on the gift made by a lay donor and his extended family, remains somewhat obscure. In other words, the nature of the relation between the lay donor Dhammarakhita and the venerable Sāriputta is uncertain, although we may assume that the former was in one way or another devoted to the latter.

It is worth noticing, in the context of the present discussion, that the monk's *nikāya* affiliation appears, in the genitive plural, at the very beginning of the donation formula, immediately following *siddham* and the homage to the Buddha. In shorter donative records of the Sātavāhana period, which generally do not include liminal invocations, the indication of the donor belonging to a lineage—whether familial or religious—commonly features in first position, often in the genitive plural. The tendency is for a lay donor to focus on family descent, and not to connect himself with a religious lineage, by contrast with what is done in EIAD 287. For instance, EIAD 298 (IBH, Amar 46) characteristically opens (ll. 1–2) with *siddham* ◊ *jaḍikiyānaṃ sidhathagahapatīsa bhariyaya khadaya*, “Success! Khandā, wife of the notable Siddhattha, of the Jaḍikiyas (i.e., the Jaḍikiya family)...”⁴⁶ Monastic donors, by contrast, use similar formulations to focus on their religious pedigrees: in several instances, the use of genitive plural points to their *nikāya* affiliations.⁴⁷ Two examples of inscriptions found on archi-

⁴⁵ The interpretation of this term is unsure. Hultsch (1883: 551) commented: “Für *sisīhasa* ist vielleicht *sisīyasa* zu lesen. Jedenfalls muss ein Wort für Schüler in der Lücke gestanden haben.” The hypothesis of *sisīha* standing for *sisīya* is accepted by Tsukamoto. However, the presumed phonological development *ṣya* > *siya* > *siha*, although theoretically possible, is not supported by coeval evidence from Āndhra, while the form *sisā* (cf. P. *sisā*) is attested in another inscription from Amaravati, EIAD 290 (IBH, Amar 38).

⁴⁶ This term was incorrectly understood as a school label in Lamotte 1958: 580, no. 47. See also Shimada 2013: 160. For a similar use of the genitive plural to indicate the family background of a lay donor in Kanaganahalli, see KnI II.1.1.

⁴⁷ In inscriptions connected with the *stūpas* of deceased monks, the genitive plural may also, for instance, be used to refer, in the *pluralis majestatis*, to a single defunct. In some cases, such uses have been mistakenly interpreted as pointing to members of a given school. Hence, in the case of EIAD 324 (IBH, Amar 72), Schopen (1991) was able to show convincingly that the sequence °*a°irānaṃ*

tectural elements from Amaravati and Gummadidurru should suffice to illustrate this point, also considering that a third example from Kanaganahalli itself (KnI I.8) will be discussed below:⁴⁸

EIAD 537, *āyāka* panel, Amaravati (fig. 10)⁴⁹

ψ sidhaṃ theriyāna mahavinayadharasa therasa bhayatabudhisa °atevāsikasa daharabhikhuno haṃghasa haṃghāya ca culahaṃgh[ā]ya ca deyadhama paṭo sa ?///

mahavinayadharasa *mahāvinayadharasa* Sk. ✦ **daharabhikhuno** *jaharabhikhuno* Sk. ✦ **culahaṃgh[ā]ya** *culihaṃghāya* Sk. The head of the *la* has a tail, which Sarkar misinterpreted as a *-i*.

Success! A slab, together with ...: the pious gift of the young monk (*daharabhikkhu*)⁵⁰ Haṃgha—pupil of the venerable, reverend Buddhi, a great Vinaya expert, of the Theriyas—and of Haṃghā and Culla-Haṃghā.

EIAD 561, coping stone of the *vedikā*, perhaps from Gummadidurru (fig. 11)⁵¹

purimamahāvinaseliyāna °atevāsiniya sidhathāya dāna vetikāya tini hathā

⁴⁸ *°utayipabhāhīnaṃ* does not refer to an unknown *nikāya*, as hypothesized by several scholars before him (e.g., Lamotte 1958: 583–584) but instead to the deceased monk, who may have been referred to as the “Luminary of Utaī.”

⁴⁸ The apparatus of the two editions marks the variant readings respectively of Sarkar 1970–1971: 9–10 (Sk) and Sarma 1980: 19 (Sm).

⁴⁹ Another *āyāka* panel from Amaravati, originally located on the northern *āyāka* and now kept in the Chennai Government Museum (acc. no. 279), is of similar measurements and style, and bears inscription EIAD 340 (IBH, Amar 88). See Shimada 2013: 104–105 and pl. 53. Although not by the same hand, this inscription is engraved in a script very similar to EIAD 537, and it is likewise preceded by a *śrīvatsa*. Both inscriptions also share a rare terminological marker (see next note), which may suggest that the two pieces belonged together.

⁵⁰ EIAD 537, misread in this important passage by Sarkar, shares with EIAD 340 its use of the title *daharabhi(k)khu* to qualify the donor. Interestingly, this title is also known in Pāli literature, occurring as a compound at the commentarial level. See, for instance, DP, s.v. *dahara*. While EIAD 340 does not mention the name of the donor’s lineage, it may be significant that Haṃgha belongs to the Theriya *nikāya*. For further terminological affinities between Andhra inscriptions connected to the Theriya lineages and Pāli literature, see Tournier 2018.

⁵¹ This site is the find-spot indicated in IA-R 1977–1978: 60–61 and Krishnan 1986: 41, B. 27. However, the inscribed piece is ascribed to Amaravati in Sarma

purimamahāvinaseliyāna *purima mahāvinaseliyāna* Sm. ✧ °**atevāsiniya** °*antevāsiniya* Sm. ✧ **sidhathāya** *sidhathyāya* Sm. ✧ **tīni** *tīni* Sm. ✧ **hathā** *hathi* Sm.

Three *vedikā* copings: gift of Siddhatthā,⁵² pupil of the Purimamahāvinaseliyas.

In light of EIAD 287 and of these two further parallels, there is ground to suggest a reconstruction of KnI II.5,9 as *mahāvina-seli[y](āna)*. This fragmentary inscription thus constitutes clear evidence of the fact that this inscribed pillar was donated by someone wishing to stress his connection to the Mahāvinaseliya *nikāya*.

If this individual is himself a monastic of that particular religious order in part depends on whether one considers KnI II.5,9 and II.5,11, likely carved by the same engraver, to record two separate gifts or a single one. In the former case, inscription II.5,9 would (as in EIAD 537 and 561) record the gift by a Mahāvinaseliya monastic of a part of the pillar, and II.5,11 that of another element by the “master artisan.”⁵³ In the latter case, the fragmentary formula *mahāvinaseli[y]///(āna)* should mark the beginning of the record (as, again, in EIAD 537 and 561), and *āvesanisa* ✧ *bala.[i]///* a second part of the formula. Following this scenario, the donative record would thus have begun by stressing the donor’s connection or devotion to a monk of the Mahāvinaseliya lineage, before presenting the lay follower himself, thereby

1980 and Gupta 2008: 45, perhaps because it is kept in the Amaravati Archaeological Museum (acc. no. 542).

⁵² In short donative records like this one, the status of the donor is often not specified, so in principle we cannot be sure that Siddhatthā was a nun. The title *antevāsini/antevāsini* does however seem to refer exclusively, in Buddhist contexts (whether literary or epigraphic), to monastic pupils. Out of the twenty-one occurrences of the epithet in the EIAD corpus, twelve make it clear that the person thus qualified is a monk or a nun, while nine remain more ambiguous, because the formula is either brief or fragmentary. But I know of no case—whether in the EIAD corpus or elsewhere—where the title is used to qualify a donor who is otherwise characterised in terms that indicate that (s)he is a lay person. See also Collett 2015: 35–38. For possible cases of the use of *antevāsini* in Jain contexts where the donor might be a lay person, see Lüders 1961: 50–51.

⁵³ Two separate donative records occur once on a single dome slab in Kanaganahalli: one records the gift of the slab proper (Kn II.3,5), and one the gift of a *dharmacakra* (KnI II.5,2), which is, probably, the engraving of the wheel onto the slab. Cf. Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 58–59.

perhaps following a pattern similar to that observed in EIAD 287.⁵⁴ A last hypothesis would be for an expression such as *parigahe* (Skt. *parigrahe*, meaning “in the possession of”) to have followed *mahāvinaseli[ya](āna)*. The term is, for instance, used in the above-mentioned *dharmacakra*-pillar inscription from Amaravati.⁵⁵ The formula of allocation of a gift to a particular *nikāya*, in the inscriptions of Āndhra usually include the mention of the “masters” in the genitive plural (MIA *ācariyānaṃ*) before the name of the *nikāya*, but it does not, for instance, in EIAD 264. Also, the *parigahe* phrase usually occurs towards the end of donative formulas, but there is at least one case in Āndhra where it is placed at the beginning.⁵⁶ Unless other fragments of the inscribed pillar are uncovered, it seems impossible to opt for any of the above hypotheses. Yet, despite the uncertainty, one should not lose sight of the important information preserved on the neglected pillar: indeed, the foregoing discussion allows to suggest that the Adhālaka-Mahācetiya was part of a network of sites in which early Śāila milieux were active.

Another roughly contemporary inscription from Amaravati (EIAD 321; IBH, Amar 69) sheds further light on the elusive Mahāvinaseliyas. It marks the gift of a dome slab to the *mahācaitya* by the monk Pasama (Skt. Praśama), who lives on alms and resides on the “Great Forest” (*mahāvina*) mountain.⁵⁷ Although EIAD 321

⁵⁴ This pattern can be represented schematically as follows: name of the *nikāya* (in gen. pl.) + name of a monk (gen. sg.) [missing juncture] title of the lay donor (gen. sg.) + name of the donor (gen. sg.) + *deyadhammaṃ* (nom. sg.) (+past participle of *pratiṣṭhā* or the like).

⁵⁵ EIAD 264, l. 2: ... *ceṭikiyānaṃ nikā(ya)sa parigahe* ◊ *°aparadāre* ◊ *dha[m]macakaṃ de(ya)dhamma[m] ṭh]āpita*.

⁵⁶ See EIAD 20 (IBH, Naga 41), l. 1 where, after a long homage to the Buddha and a dating formula, the donative record starts with (*°a*)[*caṃ*]tarājācariyānaṃ ... *theriyānaṃ* ◊ *taṃbapa[m]ṇakānaṃ* ◊ *suparigahe*. For this important inscription, see Tournier 2018: 55–65.

⁵⁷ EIAD 321 (IBH, Amar 69), l. 2: ... *peṇḍapātikasa mahavinas[e]lavathavasa pasamasa* ... Hultzsch (1883: 557) reads the second word *-vanasala-*, while Sivaramamurti (1956: 279) instead reads *-vanasela-*. In the showroom of the Chennai Government Museum where the slab is preserved, the inscribed part is covered by a casing that effectively makes it impossible to check the reading on the stone or to redocument this inscription. Still, the reading proposed here on the basis of the published estampage is relatively secure. It is consistent with EIAD 287, KnI II.5,9, and the five other inscriptions of the EIAD corpus to

does not speak explicitly of an affiliation of the monk Pasama to a self-standing *nikāya*, but only of residence, comparison with EIAD 287, and now, with KnI II.5,9, suggests that the (permanent) residents on this mountain had developed a sense of belonging, which at some point had crystallized into a distinct *nikāya* identity. From this group, whose head monastery of Mahāvina was likely located in the vicinity of Dhānyakaṭaka (MIA Dhañṅakaḍa, mod. Dharanikota near Amaravati), the Aparamahāvinaseliyas as well as the Purimamahāvinaseliyas/Puvvaseliyas would then have come forth.⁵⁸ The scenario of the spread of the Mahāvinaseliya lineage, or at least the travel of individual monks, from Dhānyakaṭaka to the Adhālaka-Mahācetiya, is further supported by other inscriptions from the latter site. Indeed, the toponym Dhañṅakaḍa is the most common in the corpus of Kanaganahalli inscriptions, with at least eleven occurrences, showing that an important contingent of donors—at least one of whom was a nun (KnI IV.8)—came from this city.⁵⁹ One should recall here that Dhānyakaṭaka along with the lower Krishna valley passed under the Sātavāhana rule during the reign of Vāsīṭṭhīputta Siri-Puḷumāvi (c. 85–125 CE).⁶⁰ It is thus imaginable that the new integration into the imperial domain stimulated members of a key religious lineage of that region to travel—and possibly settle—upstream as far as Kanaganahalli. Since KnI II.5,9 is, incidentally, the only early epigraphic evidence that the Śāila schools, so deeply rooted in Āndhra, branched out beyond its confines, it remains to be determined how important and lasting their spread really was.⁶¹

preserve the sequence *-vinaseliya-* as part of a *nikāya* name. See EIAD 5, 6, 21, 48, 561 (respectively: IBH, Naga 14, 6, 21, 58, and Sarma 1980: 19, no. 88). As a result, Hultzsch's interpretation that the name would correspond to Skt. Mahāvanaśālā should be dismissed. Cf. Hultzsch 1886: 344; Lüders 1912: 144 (no. 1230), 151 (no. 1272); Lamotte 1958: 580 (nos. 51–52). Still, the element *vina* must be related to Skt. *vipina*, P. *vipina*, alongside *vivina*, and Sinhalese *vinī*, which all mean forest. Cf. CDIAL, s.v. *vipina*; AMÜ § 181. It probably derived from *vivina*, with subsequent haplology of the medial *-vi-*.

⁵⁸ I return to this issue in Tournier forthcoming.

⁵⁹ Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 16, 144.

⁶⁰ Bhandare 2016.

⁶¹ For the mistaken association of Aparasāilas with the sites of Ajanta and Kanheri in Maharashtra, see Tournier 2020: 185–188. For the presence of Śāila monks in Magadha during the Pāla period, see Tournier in preparation a.

Although this discovery makes it possible to begin to locate Kanaganahalli in an institutional landscape, the evidence naturally does not establish that the site was, as a whole, dominated by the Mahāvinaseliyas.⁶² Indeed, bearing in mind the likely belonging of the inscribed pillar to a structure located outside of the Adhālaka-Mahācetiya, it remains unclear whether Śaila groups were in any way involved in overseeing the building and successive embellishments of the monument. A second set of evidence rather suggests that a different milieu, originating from the other side of the Sātavāhana domain, actively contributed to the construction of the Great Shrine.

2. *The Kaurukullas and the Adhālaka-Mahācetiya*

KnI I.8, the longest inscription recovered from Kanaganahalli, is of critical importance for the history of the development of the Great Shrine. It is engraved in large, deeply carved letters on a limestone slab measuring 60 cm (h.) × 97 cm (w.) × 4 cm (d.), and is thus, like the inscribed free-standing pillars discussed above, a good example of “exposed writing.” Dated to the 35th regnal year of King Vāsiṭṭhīputta Siri-Puḷumāvi (c. 120 CE), it records the covering of the whole upper *pradakṣiṇapatha* with slabs by a prominent donor, the nun Dhammasirī.⁶³ This enterprise might have been part of a larger renovation campaign of the *mahācetiya* under the rule of Siri-Puḷumāvi and his successor. In any case, as we shall see below, it can be connected to several other donative acts emanating from the same milieu. This inscription has already been served by two competent editions, so that only minor improvements on the reading may be suggested (fig. 12):⁶⁴

⁶² Compare Zin 2018b: 551–552.

⁶³ The name Dhammasirī is also mentioned in another inscription, on a piece of lower balustrade (*puṣṭagrahaṇī*) encircling the upper *pradakṣiṇapatha*. See KnI II.2,12. On *puṣṭagrahaṇīs* in general, see von Hinüber 2016b.

⁶⁴ Apart from their systematic non-marking of punctuation spaces (noted with ◊), variant readings by Falk (2009: 202; F) and von Hinüber (vH) are noted in the apparatus. The edition in Poonacha 2011: 458, no. 75 is too faulty to be included in the apparatus. Note that the photograph taken by Luczanits in 2000, which he kindly allowed me to reproduce in this article, is the best available documentation for KnI I.8. Indeed, the slab, found broken in ten fragments, has since been restored with concrete, and it has deteriorated due to its exposure to the elements. It is an urgent desideratum that this important historical document be preserved properly.

(1) sidha || na[mo] bhagavato samasabudhasa ◊ °adhālaka-
mahā(2)ce[t]iyasa [ra]ño vāsethīputasiripulumāvisa (3) sava-
chare 30 5 gi[m]h(ā)na pakhe 2 10 ◊ korukulana (4) bhi-
khuniya ◊ dhamasiriyāya ◊ °agarik[o] paṭasa(5)tharo ca deya-
dhama ◊ saha °a[mā]p[itu]hi ◊ saha ca me (6) upajā°ehi bha-
yatava[ra]nabhutihi ◊ sahi ca bhayata(7)[s]ihehi ◊ savasatāna
ca hitasughatha

1. sidha vH; *siddha* F. ◊ 2. °adhālakamahāce[t]iyasa *śudhalakamahāce[t]iyasa* F; °adh[ā]laka-mahāce(t)iyasa vH. ◊ vāsethī[p]utasiripulumāvisa F; vāsethī[p]uta siri pulumāvisa vH. ◊ 3. gi[m]h(ā)na [gimhana] F; gi(m)h(ā)na vH. ◊ 4. bhikkuniya bhikkuniye F vH. ◊ 4–5. °agarik[o] paṭasatharo °akhar[i]kapāṭa satharo F; °agarak[o] paṭasatharo vH. The -i is marked by a vertical wave, instead of a semi-circular stroke. This unusual shape is explained by the limited space left by the long descender of the *akṣara ka* in the preceding line. Unusual -i and -ī markers, adapting to similar constraints, may be observed elsewhere, for instance in EIAD 40 (IBH, Naga 19), ll. 7 (in -nī-) and 8 (in -nī-). ◊ 5. °a[mā]p[itu]hi °a[māpitu]hi F; °a[māpītū]hi vH. ◊ bhayatava[ra]nabhutihi F; bhayata va[ra]nabhutihi vH. ◊ 6–7. sahi ca bhayata[s]ihehi saha ca bhayata [s]ihehi F vH. Emend saha. ◊ 7. savasatāna vH; savasa[ta]na F.

Success! Homage to the Bhagavant, the Perfectly and Com-
pletely Awakened One! In year 35 of King Vāsethīputta Siri-
Puḷumāvi, in fortnight 2 of the summer, (on day) 10, an *agarika*
and a covering of slabs are the pious gifts—for the Adhālaka
Great Shrine⁶⁵—of (me,) *bhikkhunī* Dhammasirī, of the Koru-
kullas, together with (my) mother and father, with my precep-
tor the reverend Varāṇabhūti, and with reverend Siha; for the
well-being and happiness of all beings.

⁶⁵ Both Falk and von Hinüber take the genitive *adhālakamahācetiya* as part of the liminal homage to the Buddha. This interpretation might seem called for by the syntax, yet consideration of comparable formulae and of the text layout (Fr. *mise en pierre*) suggests it is problematic. Inscriptions of the Nagarjunakonda corpus, which often contain liminal homages to the Buddha, show a strong tendency—whatever the length of that homage—for (*sammāsaṃ*)*buddhasa* to be placed in final position; only in some cases is it followed, in inscriptions of the Great Shrine, by *dhātuvaraparigahitasa*. Moreover, I know of no instances in early *brāhmī* inscriptions where the invocation to the Buddha is in any way localised. When invocations are followed by a toponym or a reference to a *caitya* (commonly, in the locative) in the beginning of the following sentence, this toponym does not form part of the homage but opens the donative sequence. For further discussion of this pattern, see Baums et al. 2016: 384–386. The impression of a break in the flow of the text after *samasabudhasa* is further supported by the consistent use of punctuation spaces in this inscription. With

I am unable at the moment to propose a satisfactory interpretation for *agarika*, which likely pointed to a structural element of the great shrine⁶⁶ sponsored by Dhammasirī along with the covering of slabs. What I would like to propose is a new interpretation of *korukul(l)a*, occurring in the genitive plural at the beginning of the donative formula, and suggest it marks the monastic order of the donor.

This epithet has attracted the attention of former editors of the inscription, and their arguments deserve to be briefly reviewed here. Falk (2009: 202–203) interpreted it as a place name, which he connected to Κορούγκαλα in Ptolemy’s *Geography*,⁶⁷ and he identified it with modern Warangal in present-day Telangana. He believed that the name occurred another time in Kanaganahalli, “once referring in the gen.pl.m. to the male ‘teachers from Korugāla,’ *korugālakāna acariana*.” The inscription alluded to by Falk must be KnI II.1,4, engraved on an *āyāka* panel, and whose beginning is read by von Hinüber as *[s](i)dha || korugālakāna °ācari[ā]na....*⁶⁸ On the basis of this formula, the latter reconstructs the reading *korugālakāna* in another inscription (KnI II.1,3), engraved on a related *āyāka* panel. Interestingly, these two records are among the four inscriptions recovered from the site (along with KnI I.8 and the fragment VI.8) to name Kanaganahalli’s shrine. KnI II.1,3 may be quoted here, for its reading and interpretation can be improved:

(sidha | korugālakāna) /// [°ā]cari°āna bhayatasatikaṇa ◊ °ate-
vāsiniya [pa]va°itāya [b]udharakhitāya ◊ °āyākapaṭā ◊ °adh[ā]-
lakacetiyaḍhamara°ika◊deyadhama paṭiṭhāpit[ā] [t](i)

the exception of the spaces left on each side of the donor’s name—likely used there as a means to highlight this particular word—spaces unmistakably reveal an effort to divide the text into syntactic units. And so the clear break after *samasabudhasa* may be understood as marking the conclusion of the liminal invocation. I thus propose to understand *adhālakamahācetiya* as a genitive assuming the function of a dative, and I have translated it accordingly.

⁶⁶ One may think of the term *agārika*, derivative in *-ika* from *agāra*. However, as also prescribed by Pāṇini (AA 4.7.70) *agārika* only occurs at the end of compounds in the sense of a person appointed to a particular “chamber.” See NWS, s.v. *agārika*. Interestingly, one such officer is mentioned in KnI V.2,7: ///sa *bhaḍākārikasa mak[o]samasa dāna*, “Gift of the keeper of the storehouse (Skt. *bhaṇḍāgārika*) ... Makosama.” Compare Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 111.

⁶⁷ Renou 1925: 39 (VII.1.93).

⁶⁸ Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 43.

bhayatasatikaṇa *bhayata sat[ikana]* vH. Read *-kana*, as in KnI II.1.4. ✧ **[pa]va°it[ā]ya** *[pa]vajit[ā]ya* vH. The three wavy lines (as opposed to three or occasionally four dots in the inscriptions of earlier periods) marking the *akṣara* °i are clear enough from the published photograph. This shape of the °i is not uncommon in the inscriptions of the Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda corpus. See, for instance, the initial °i of *ikhaku-* in EIAD 20 (IBH, Naga 41), l. 1; 45 (IBH, Naga 43), l. 6. See also, °*isilasa* in EIAD 264 (IBH, Amar 12), l. 1. This shape is also recorded at <http://www.indoskript.org/>. The form *pava°itā* may be compared to *pava°itikā* in an inscription of Kanheri cave 76. See Tournier in press: n. 31. ✧ **-dhamara°ika-** *-dhamarajaka* vH. The new reading is a much better match for Skt. *dharmarājika*, which is the title one would expect for the Great Shrine. Indeed, the intervocalic evolution *j > y > ø* precisely corresponds to that observed in *pava°itā* (Skt. *pravrajitā*) in the same inscription. Besides the common evolution *j > y*, the dropping of *-y-* is also found in *ācariāna*. See also Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 15. Von Hinüber’s reading, by contrast, would imply to assume a standardised MIA form **dharmarājaka*⁶⁹ or the mistaken omission of the vocalic marker *-i* by the engraver. But while the lack of vocalic lengthening is common in the corpus under discussion, the omission of other vocalic marks is rarer. Other MIA forms of the technical term *dharmarājika* occur in the epigraphic corpora of Mathurā and Gandhāra to stress the “imperial” legacy of *stūpas*. The concept is indeed closely associated in Buddhist literature—and, if it is genuine, in a *kharoṣṭhī* inscription (CKI 256)—with Aśoka’s legendary foundation of 84,000 such *stūpas*. In all its epigraphic instances, we see forms that correspond to Skt. *dharmarājika*: these parallels further support the present reading. See CKI 60 (Baums 2012: 237, no. 30), ll. 2–3; CKI 256 (Salomon 2007: 273), l. 1; Falk 2012: 13, 15–16. For a literary allusion to the foundation of a *dharmarājika cetiya* in Sindh in the epilogue of a late Saṃmitīya poem, see Hanisch 2008: 249, st. 371 (we shall see below how this literary tradition is relevant to Kanaganahalli). Despite the punctuation space, I suggest *-dhamara°ika-* should be taken as forming a compound with *deyadhama*, similarly to *saghadeyadhamma* in EIAD 287, l. 10, discussed above. Finally, note that II.1.4 probably had the same compound: instead of vH’s reading the last preserved *akṣaras* [°ay].—hence his reconstruction [°ay](*āgapatā*)—one must read °*adh. [l]*. Comparison with II.1.3 allows to reconstruct °*adh(ā)[l](akacetiya-dhamara°ika)-*. ✧ **patīṭhāpit[ā t](i)** *patīṭhāpit[ā] ? ///* vH. Enough remains visible of the *t*. to make the reading secure. The restoration of a final quotative (*i*)*ti* is supported by several parallels in the EIAD corpus. Cf. EIAD 5 (IBH, Naga 14), l. 11 (*thāpitā ti*); EIAD 6 (IBH, Naga 6), ll. 9 (*patīṭhāpitā ti*), 13 (*thāpitā ti*); EIAD 31, l. 6; 32, l. 7; 33, l. 7 (*patīṭhāpitā ti* in all three cases, see IBH, Jaga 2, 3, and 1 respectively).

Success! *Āyāka* panels were established as the pious gift—pertaining to the *dharmarājika* Adhālaka Shrine—of the renun-

⁶⁹ He notes (Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 43): “In spite of the spelling (instead of *dharmarājaka*?), an interpretation as ‘King of the Dharma’ as a not uncommon designation of a Caitya seems preferable to an interpretation as *dharmaraṇjaka* ‘(a donation) to please the Dharma.’”

ciant Buddharakkhitā, pupil of master reverend Sa(ṃ)tika (from Korugāla).

Von Hinüber's reconstruction's of *korugālakāna* in KnI II.1,3, on the basis of the similar formulation in II.1,4, is quite plausible. I would moreover agree with him that the first word of both inscriptions likely contains a toponym (*korugāla*) which, suffixed by *-ka*, is meant to mark the provenance of reverend Sa(ṃ)tika. Koru(ṃ)gāla is indeed a close match to Κορούγκαλα, but the link between this toponym and the contents of KnI I.8 is not as straightforward as Falk initially thought. Indeed, von Hinüber remarks that “[t]he connection of Korukula to a place name... does not seem to be possible. For place names referring to the origin of persons are given in the singular, while the plural is used for family names...”.⁷⁰

Accordingly, von Hinüber proposes to understand *korukulāna* as “from the Koru family.” There is however a serious problem with this interpretation. A genitive plural, to be sure, can be used to mark a donor's family background, but in such cases the term *kula* is entirely redundant. An occurrence of the term in the genitive plural in this context would in fact be distinctly odd: there is no reason for *kula* to be in the plural if it means family, and had Dhammasirī wished to stress her belonging to a putative Koru family, she—or whoever composed the inscription on her behalf—could less ambiguously have either used **korūna* or—using a derivative of *kula* attested, for instance, in EIAD 42 (von Hinüber 2017: 4), l. 1—**korukulikasa*. Moreover, we have seen earlier that, especially in instances where monks and nuns act as donors, the genitive plural tends to be used not so much to mark “family names,” but instead another kind of pedigree, directly connected to an ordination lineage.⁷¹ And indeed, the term *korukul(l)a* perfectly matches the name of a known (if rather unfamiliar) Buddhist *nikāya*.

⁷⁰ Nakanishi and von Hinüber 2014: 43.

⁷¹ For epigraphic formulae expressing the family connections of monastic donors, see Clarke 2014: 39–45. While the inscriptions surveyed by Clarke do contain two instances of formulae marking matrilineal (IBH, Bhar, 33) or patrilineal filiation (EIAD 322; IBH, Amar 70), none refer to the broader family background of the monastic donor, using constructions such as the genitive plural.

In literature posterior by several centuries to KnI I.8, members of this lineage are known as the Kaurukullas. By then, they were closely related—if not identical—to the major school of the Saṃmitīyas. So far, the only instance in Middle Indo-Aryan or Sanskrit sources of the *nikāya* name Kaurukulla was found in the following final rubric of Vimuktisena's *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* commentary, preserved in two distinct manuscripts:⁷²

kṛtiḥ sukṛtikarmaṇo mahāyānasamprasthitasya śākyabhikṣor
āryavimuktiṣeṇasya kaurukullāryasaṃmatīyasyānekodāravihā-
rasvāmyācāryabuddhadāsanaptuḥ ||

[This treatise is] the composition of the one of virtuous deeds, the *śākyabhikṣu* Ārya-Vimuktisena, who has set out on the Mahāyāna, a Kaurukulla, Ārya-Saṃmatīya, who is the grandson of Master Buddhadāsa—the patron (*svāmin*)⁷³ of many illustrious monasteries.

Considering that Vimuktisena lived in the 6th century⁷⁴ and assuming the *śāstra*'s final rubric was transmitted relatively faithfully in later manuscripts, there is a gap of nearly four centuries between the first mention of the Kaurukullas in Kanaganahalli and their emergence in the literary record.

⁷² Lee 2017: 20. The transliteration by Skilling (2016: 32) of the colophon from the early 12th-century Ms. A (NGMCP A 37/9) is faulty on several accounts, in particular his reading of the school name as *kaurakulla*. His translation appears to be based on the Tibetan translation, which takes *anekodāravihārasvāmin* as an epithet of Vimuktisena instead of his ancestor. See also Obermiller 1932: 155–156.

⁷³ On this title, commonly held by lay sponsors of monasteries, see the classical study by Schopen 1996. For the proposal to translate this office as “patron,” and the suggestion that it might not always point to ownership, see Scherrer-Schaub, Salomon, and Baums 2012: 146–147.

⁷⁴ According to Tāranātha, Vimuktisena was born in 'Bar ba'i phug, on the border between Madhyadeśa and Southern India. See Nakamura 2014: 20; Skilling 2016: 53, n. 124. 'Bar ba'i phug is also known, under the name of Dzwa li ni'i brag phug (i.e., *Jvālini cave), in Daśabalaśrīmitra's *Samskṛtāsamskṛtaviniścaya* as the cave where the Buddha spent his 18th and 19th summer retreats after his Awakening. See D 3897, *dBu ma, Ha*, 314a7–b4; see also Roerich 1976, vol. I: 23–24. Closely related lists of the retreats of the Buddha are preserved in the *Sengqiēluocha suoji jing* 僧伽羅刹所集經 and the *Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā*. In these works, the toponym corresponding to *Jvālini are Zheli (EMC: teiaw-li) 柘梨(山) and Cāliya(pabbata) respectively. See T 194, IV, 144b1–22; Bv-a 3.18–34. See also DPPN, s.v. Cālikapabbata, Cālikā, Jālikā. These three passages deserve to be

This *nikāya* is also referred to in the writings of one of Vimuktisena’s contemporaries, Bhāviveka (c. 500–570). One of the three accounts of the formation of the *nikāyas* transmitted in his **Nikāyabhedavibhaṅgavyākhyāna* and incorporated into the *Tarkajvālā* refers twice to the Kaurukullas. There, they are presented, along with the Avantakas, as either another name or as a regional branch of the Saṃmitīyas.⁷⁵ Thus, the Kaurukullas do not appear to be defined as a “subschool” (*nikāyabhedā*) of the Saṃmitīyas, as they are in later sources.⁷⁶ Later on in chapter 4 of the *Tarkajvālā*, the Mādhyamika master provides an unsourced citation from the scriptures of the “Ārya-Saṃmatīyas who reside on Kurukul(l)a” (Tib. *’phags pa mang pos bkur ba ku ru ku la’i gnas pa*). This is part of the citations drawn by him from the scriptures of the “eighteen *nikāyas*” to respond to the Śrāvakas’ critique of the Mahāyāna as a movement prescribing veneration of lay individuals.⁷⁷ There, three stanzas attributed to Ānanda praise as many events in the Bodhisattva’s last life before he renounced the world, thereby offering a glimpse of a Saṃmitīya tradition about Śākyamuni’s biography.⁷⁸ This quotation is also interesting because it is the only citation attributed to the Saṃmitīyas in that section, which would appear to confirm that, in the informed understanding of the “historian” Bhāviveka,⁷⁹ the Saṃmitīyas and Kaurukullas

systematically compared. While they do seem to support the location of the cave in Madhyadeśa, they naturally do not confirm the late Tibetan tradition connecting Vimuktisena to the **Jvālīnīguhā*. For further remarks on Vimuktisena’s life, see Seyfort Ruegg 1968: 305–306 and Nakamura 2014: 19–27. I thank the latter for kindly sharing with me his unpublished dissertation.

⁷⁵ Eckel 2008: 113, 114; 309.19–21, 310.14–17.

⁷⁶ The **Samayabhedoparacanacakraṅkāyabhedopadarśanasāṅgraha* by Vinīta-deva (c. 690–750) opens with stanzas undertaking to subsume the proverbial group of “eighteen *nikāyas*” under four larger units (*mahānikāya*). In this context, it presents the Kaurukullas (Tib. *sa sgrogs ris*), Avantakas, and Vātsīputrīyas as the three subdivisions of the Saṃmitīyas. See D 4140, *Dul ba, Su*, 154b3–5; Vogel 1985: 107. An identical list of eighteen subschools, listed under the headings of the four *mahānikāyas*, is preserved in the *Mahāvvyūtpatti*. See *Mvy* (S) 9076–9098; (I&F) 9014–9035. For the framework of the four *mahānikāyas*, see Tournier 2017: 262–263, n. 29.

⁷⁷ For these citations, see Skilling 1997a: 609–610; Eckel 2008: 171, 353.23–30.

⁷⁸ A sketch of the Buddha biography is also provided in the frame-story of the *Mañicūḍajātaka*, a 12th-century poem by the erudite Saṃmitīya master Sarvarakṣita. See Hanisch 2006: 142–152; 2008: 213–216, st. 8–36.

⁷⁹ For the historical dimension of Bhāviveka’s analytical method, see Scherrer-Schaub 2013–2014; 2018: 118 and n. 6.

constituted one and the same *nikāya*. It is possible that this was already the case in the 2nd century, and this could explain why the latter title stood instead of what was to become a much more common designation of the transregional lineage.

The identification of the regional background of the Kaurukullas, to which we shall now turn, would appear to confirm that they were active at places where Saṃmitīya groups left a strong legacy. The rendering of the school label into Tibetan by the translators of the above-mentioned scriptural quotation provides a clue to the understanding of the name Kaurukulla. This is consistent with the explanation provided in the **Nikāya-bhedavibhaṅgavyākhyāna*: in the same way that the Avantakas were named after their residence in Avanti, the Kaurukullas were thus called “because they live on Mount Kurukul(l)a” (*ku ru ku la'i ri la gnas pa'i phyir ku ru ku la pa'o*).⁸⁰ This plausible interpretation known to the Mādhyamika master would thus situate this *nikāya* among the groups deriving their name from a place like, for instance, the Mahāvīnaseliyas discussed above, who were originally residents of the Mahāvīna mountain.⁸¹ Similarly, the Kaukkuṭikas, whose name is first attested in a c.1st-century BCE inscription from Deorkothar (in the MIA form *kokuḍika*), plausibly derived their name from the Kukkuṭārāma in Kauśambī.⁸²

Mount Kurukulla does not have the early pedigree of the Kukkuṭārāma and, as far as I am aware, is little known, if it is known at all, in early Buddhist literature and Mahāyāna scriptures. It becomes more frequently referred to in esoteric Buddhist texts

⁸⁰ Eckel 2008: 114, 310.16–17.

⁸¹ Bateau (1955: 122) appears to have disregarded this evidence, when he interpreted the Kaurukulas (with one *-l-*) as “ceux de la famille des Kurus,” later proposing to locate these in Kurukṣetra. This interpretation might perhaps have been influenced by the Tibetan rendering of their name in the *Mahāvīyutpatti* as *sar sgrog rigs kyi sde*. Cf. *Mvy* (S) 9086; (I&F) 9023. But the reading Kaurukula is very likely a *lectio facilior*, and the final rubric of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* commentary must preserve the correct orthography of the name.

⁸² Salomon and Marino 2014: 33–35. Incidentally, the early occurrence of the term *korukula* uncovered at Kanaganahalli renders particularly unlikely the hypothesis that both the Kaurukullas and Kaukkuṭikas might have derived their names from a single MIA form, or could even be identical. Compare Cousins 1991: 49, n. 100; Eckel 2008: 115, n. 50.

centred on another of its residents, the goddess Kurukullā.⁸³ As far as I know, these *sādhana*s themselves do not locate this mountain. However, a clue to its whereabouts comes from the paratextual information transmitted with a famous *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript copied in 1015 CE in Nepal, and preserved in the Cambridge University Library.⁸⁴ This manuscript comprises a lavish set of 85 illuminations, occurring at chapter ends and at the beginning of the entire book. With the exception of the last images, centred on the eight major episodes of the Buddha’s life, the cycle of illustrations is entirely accompanied by captions connecting deities, *stūpas* and *caityas* to given places. This has the effect of providing a remarkable map of the Buddhist world, the importance of which did not escape Alfred Foucher, whose seminal “Étude sur l’iconographie bouddhique de l’Inde d’après des documents nouveaux,” published in 1900, constitutes an extensive commentary of this and a related manuscript preserved at the Asiatic Society of Bengal.⁸⁵ The left-side miniature of folio 179b (fig. 13) contains a representation of the four-armed Kurukullā, clearly sitting in a mountainous landscape. The accompanying “legend” reads: *lāhtadeśe kurukulā śikhare kurukulā*, which should be understood as *lāṛadeśe*⁸⁶ *kurukullāśikhare kurukullā*, “In the country of Lāṛa, on Mount Kurukulla: Kurukullā.” Giuseppe Tucci, the first—and, as far as I know, the only—scholar to connect this legend with the colophon of Vimuktisena’s work, considered it likely that the Kaurukulla “*vihāra* took its name from

⁸³ The *Tārodbhavakurukullāsādhana*, for instance, defines her as *kurukullāparvatasthita*, and the *Kurukullāsādhana* as *kurukullāparvatodarānī* (ed.: -kullā). Cf. SM II.347.17, 392.5.

⁸⁴ This composite manuscript transmits the *Aṣṭasahasrikāprajñāpāramitā*, prefaced by the *Prajñāpāramitāstotra* and followed by the *Vajradhvajaparīṇāmanā*. See the detailed catalogue entry, authored by C. A. Formigatti:

<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-01643/>.

⁸⁵ The iconographic programme of this manuscript was studied more recently by Kim 2013 (on which see von Hinüber 2016c) and 2014.

⁸⁶ As remarked by von Hinüber 2016c: 376–377, the conjunct *-hta-* is used here and in the three other allusions to Lāṛa in this manuscript (fol. 99b, 169a, and 188a) to mark the retroflex flap *-ṛ-*, being the result of the development, also attested by Al-Bīrūnī’s transcriptions, of Lāṛadeśa to Lāṛadeśa. The same conjunct is also found in Kaṭṭhadvīpa as equivalent to *Kaṭṭhadvīpa, which corresponds to Kēdah in the Malay peninsula.

a mountain and that it was located in Gujarat.”⁸⁷ Given the time-span separating the *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript and the Kanaganahalli inscription, it is necessary to support this hypothesis with further evidence.

It is significant that the location of Mount Kurukulla in Lāṭa (in present-day Southern Gujarat) is consistent with what is known of the spread of Saṃmitīya groups. In the 7th century, Yijing noted for instance that the Saṃmitīyas dominated in Lāṭa and Sindh, while they were also represented in Magadha and Eastern India and, in smaller numbers, in Southern India.⁸⁸ Xuanzang’s own census of monasteries, in the regions he visited, suggests that they were the largest group in his day in the subcontinent, and particularly dominated the Western part of India, Valabhī in Kathiawar (Surāṣṭra) being one of their major centres.⁸⁹ The trajectory of individual Buddhist luminaries confirms that characterisation of Valabhī: Paramārtha (499–569 CE), for instance, who was born in Ujjayinī, in Avanti, and studied in Valabhī, was likely ordained as a Saṃmitīya.⁹⁰ Although the Saṃmitīya(-Kaurukulla) *nikāya* is not explicitly mentioned in the epigraphic corpus of Valabhī, these inscriptions do contain evidence that seem consistent with the picture derived from Chinese sources. In particular, it may be worth noting here that one of the grants issued by Dhruvasena I in 536/37 CE records the royal endowment of a monastery, apparently located within the larger monastic complex (*vihāramaṇḍala*) commissioned by Queen Duḍḍā. The first aim of this endowment is to honour the Buddha(s) established “in the [perfumed] chamber in the monastery commissioned by the master, reverend Buddhādāsa” (*ācāryyabhadanta-buddhadāsakāritavihāraḥkutyāṃ*).⁹¹ The founding of this particular

⁸⁷ Tucci 1963: 151.

⁸⁸ T 2125, LIV, 205b3–8; Takakusu 1896: xxiv, 8–9. See also Bareau 1955: 121; Lamotte 1958: 602. For the Saṃmitīyas’ presence in Sindh, and the likely characterisation of their communities as Saindhavas (Tib. Sendhapa) in the Pāla domain, see Skilling 1997b: 106–108; Hanisch 2008: 208; Dimitrov 2017: 59–60.

⁸⁹ Lamotte 1958: 599.

⁹⁰ See Okano 1998: 58–59; Funayama 2008: 145–146; Skilling 2016: 13–14.

⁹¹ Bloch 1895: 383, ll. 17–19. I thank Annette Schmiedchen for sharing with me her forthcoming edition of this grant. I tentatively follow here the interpretation of the compound suggested by Schopen (1990: 186–187), which implies emending the reading into *-kāritavihāre* (*gandha*)*kutyāṃ*. Lévi (1896: 231)

monastery would define Buddhadāsa as its *de facto vihārasvāmin*. It is thus tempting—if impossible to prove at the moment—to identify this wealthy monastic donor with Vimuktisena’s grandfather, all the more since later Tibetan historiography associates him with Western India.⁹²

The evidence considered above strengthens the possibility, raised by the legend of the *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript illumination, that Mount Kurukulla and the lineage attached to it were situated in the south of present-day Gujarat. The establishment of the Kaurukullas and the Avantakas in two neighbouring regions would in fact provide a meaningful background to the explanation of the branches of the Saṃmitīyas found in Bhāviveka’s treatise. It would also have the advantage of tying the *nikāya* under discussion to a region likely subsumed under Aparānta which,

took *kuṭī* as pointing to “une construction supplémentaire” belonging to the Duddāvihāra, while Njammasch (2001: 204) comments: “Vielleicht handelte es sich hier eher um ein selbständiges, möglicherweise kleineres Gebäude als ein *vihāra*, das Buddhadāsa bauen ließ.” Even if Schopen’s suggested emendation was not accepted, the fact that *buddhas* (or the Buddha Śākyamuni, addressed in the plural of majesty) are said to be established in that particular *kuṭī* supports understanding it as pointing to the *cella*, as also accepted by Schmiedchen. If the locative ending *vihāre* was not mistakenly omitted, then the full compound could alternatively be translated “in the monastery’s *sanctum* commissioned by the master, reverend Buddhadāsa.” This could imply that the monastery was not commissioned by the venerable monk. However, since the *gandhakuṭī* constitutes the choicest space in a *vihāra*, we have grounds to assume that it was generally dedicated by the owner/patron of the *vihāra*. This is the case, for instance, of cave IV at Ajanta, where the *vihārasvāmin* Māthura left a donative record on the pedestal of the main cult image in the *cella*. Similarly, the donor of the *vihāra* cave XVII makes clear that he was also responsible for the excavation of the *gandhakuṭī*, here identified as cave XIX. See Cohen 2006: 284, no. 17 (re-edited in Tournier in press); 320–322, no. 77, st. 27.

⁹² See Lévi 1896: 231–232, relying on Tāranātha, who defines Buddhadāsa as Asaṅga’s disciple, and says he lived in Western India. See Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970: 177. Cf. Njammasch 2001: 204. Lévi moreover believed that the founder of another monastery, the *ācārya bhadanta* Sthiramati, “est certainement identique au fameux disciple de Vasubandhu.” See also Njammasch 2001: 210–211; Sanderson 2009: 72. This was, however, called into question by Silk (2009: 384–385), on the grounds that “there might have been more than one Sthiramati.” The same reasoning could, admittedly, be used against the identification of the two Buddhadāsas, also considering the commonness of that name. Still, if Vimuktisena’s grandfather was able to earn the title *aneḥodāra-vihārasvāmin*, he would probably have been in a particularly good position to leave a trail in the epigraphic record of the period.

under Gotamīputta Sātakaṇṇi (c. 60–84) and his successor Vāsiṭṭhīputta Siri-Puḷumāvi (c. 85–125), belonged to the Sātavāhana domain.⁹³ This territorial unification, during the heyday of the Sātavāhanas, would have facilitated the circulation of monks and nuns belonging to Dhammasirī’s lineage along the *dakṣiṇāpatha*, and their involvement at the Adhālaka-Mahācetiya, in the same way that it would have contributed to the branching out of the Mahāvīnaseliyas from Āndhra.

Indeed, there is evidence that Dhammasirī was not acting alone, but very likely was part of a close-knit group involved in donations at the Great Shrine. In her record, the nun associates two monks to her gift, one of which, the reverend Sīha, is also named as an individual donor in four *buddhapāda* inscriptions (KnI II.6,1–4; see fig. 14).⁹⁴ These inscriptions all agree in mentioning the donor as the pupil (*antevāsin*) of reverend Buddhatrāta. It may be significant that two out of the few known Saṃmitīya figures bore, like this master, names in *-trāta*.⁹⁵ Another Buddhatrāta is indeed the author of the *Lü ershier mingliao lun* 律二十二明了論 (T 1461), translated by Paramārtha in 568 CE, while

⁹³ Sircar 1971: 225–229; Bhandare 1999: 275–285, 302–305.

⁹⁴ Note that, in von Hinüber’s edition of KnI II.6,3 and KnI II.6,4, the donor’s name is recorded in as Sīhakassapa (Skt. Siṃhakāśyapa). This would be, however, a curious name and, upon inspection of the stones, my reading and interpretation of both inscriptions differ: instead of *[bhata] s[i]hakaśapa + dāyakasa* and *bhata s(i)hakaśapa dāyakasa*, I read the phrase describing the donor as *bhatasihakaśapaṇadāya[ka]sa* and *bhatas[i]hakaśapaṇadeyakasa*, meaning “(gift) of the reverend Sīha, the giver of *kāṣāpaṇas*.” We cannot be absolutely certain that this was the same individual, but the shared title in all three records supports this identification, while the palaeography of these inscriptions suggests they belong to the same phase of patronage at the site.

⁹⁵ Monastic names are not school-specific, but given the tendency, within ordination lineages, for a pupil to inherit an element of his name from his preceptor, endings appear to have been more common in some milieux than others. For the circulation of the element *-prabha* in Pūrvaśaila (MIA Puvva-/Pubbaseliya) milieux, see Tournier in preparation a. For similar remarks on the transmission of the elements *-śrībhādra*, *-garbha*, and *-mitra* in the monastic names of distinct ordination lineages, see Jiang and Tomabechi 1996: XV, n. 18; Delhey 2015: 13, n. 62; Dimitrov 2016: 203. The late *Grub mtha’ chen mo* by ’Jam dbyangs bzhad pa’i rdo rje Ngag dbang brtson ’grus (1648–1721/22) assigns a set of names to each of the four *mahānikāyas*, thereby reflecting a tendency also evinced by epigraphic sources. Cf. Vasilev 1860: 294–295. No mention is, however, made of the element *-trāta* for the Saṃmitīyas or, for that matter, of *-prabha* among the Mahāsāṅghikas.

the *Abhidharmasamuccayakārikā* was written by Saṅghatrāta.⁹⁶ Whether or not onomastics provided a significant clue in this context, these prosopographic considerations make it possible to go beyond the single certain instance of a *nikāya*-label at the *mahācaitya*, and suggest that other monastic donors active in the 2nd century were related to the Kaurukullas. The nun Dhammasirī, who took an active role in the embellishment of the Great Shrine, was thus likely part of a community, which may have settled at Kanaganahalli.

Concluding remarks

Despite remaining uncertainties, the foregoing investigation establishes that monastic members of the Kaurukulla *nikāya*, as well as members of—or lay donors devoted to—the Mahāvīnaseliya *nikāya*, were both present at and around the Adhālaka Great Shrine. The likely encounter of members of two *nikāyas* from opposite parts of the Sātavāhana domain in the hub of Kanaganahalli raises several questions: in whose possession (Skt. *parigraha*) laid the *vihāra* located immediately to the north of the great shrine? At the moment, we may hypothesize they were Kaurukullas, but this remains to be proven. Additionally, were the members of the other monastic lineage residents of another *vihāra*, the remains of which have yet to be discovered, or temporary residents—perhaps coming from Dhānyakaṭaka—of the northern monastery?⁹⁷ Finally, was the Great Shrine controlled by members of a single *nikāya* throughout its history or could further scrutiny of the chronology of the site uncover discontinuities? In relation to the last question, one may further wonder whether the dedication of a free-standing pillar, located outside of the *mahācaitya*'s *vedikā* should be interpreted as a sign that donors associated with the Mahāvīnaseliyas were not welcome to share in the collective “patronage” of a monument where

⁹⁶ See Sferra in this volume.

⁹⁷ For the importance of accounting for the residence of monastics from different lineages in the monasteries placed in the hands of a given *nikāya*, see, for instance, with respect to Termez, Scherrer-Schaub, Salomon, and Baums 2012: 143.

Kaurukullas had been active. However, this would probably be to over-read the evidence: while inscriptions elsewhere suggest that the structural elements of a *stūpa* controlled by a given lineage should not be dismantled or transferred to another group,⁹⁸ there is, as far as I know, nothing in Buddhist prescriptive literature preventing monastics to make offerings to a shrine overseen by members of another *nikāya*. Moreover, there is epigraphic evidence suggesting that such a coexistence of monastic donors at given sites did happen. No one appears to have noticed that monastic donors belonging to two distinct *nikāyas* (the Mahāvīnaseliyas and the Theriyas) were active, at not so distant periods, at the Dhānyakaṭaka Great Shrine in Amaravati.⁹⁹ This evidence should encourage us to continue to scrutinize data relevant to religious agency at given sites, since the quest for a univocal “school affiliation” of monuments may conceal much of the complex religious, political, and economic dynamics at work in each individual context.

⁹⁸ See, for instance, the minatory formula occurring on three of the four *torāṇas* at Sanchi, equating the removal and transfer of *vedikā* or *torāṇa* elements to another lineage (MIA *ācariyakula*) to the five sins of immediate retribution (MIA *ānatariya*). See IBH, Sanc 375, 382, 390. See also Scherrer-Schaub 2016: 10–11. Compare Schopen 1994: 550–551.

⁹⁹ Indeed, the *āyāka*-panel bearing EIAD 537, dedicated by a young Theriya monk, coexisted on the *stūpa* with a dome-slab bearing EIAD 321 (Chennai Government Museum, acc. no. 269; see above, pp. 874 and 876). The first structural element belongs, according to Shimada, to the first type of drum-slab, which is given a chronological range between 50 BCE and 100 CE, a dating he recently revised to the mid-late 1st century CE. See Shimada 2013: 104–105; 2017: 185–186. The palaeography of EIAD 537 would support the revised dating. The second structural element is similar in style and iconography to a slab epigraphically dated to the reign of Yañña-Sātakappa (r. c. 170–200; EIAD 534 [Sarkar 1970–1971: 7–8, no. 60 and pl. V]). They both belong, according to the same author, to the second type of dome-slab, which is given a range between c. 170 CE and 200 CE; see Shimada 2013: 109–110. The few generations gap between the two donative acts could be interpreted as marking a shift in the religious presence at the site. Yet in view of the fact that at least five *nikāyas* are recorded in the early inscriptions of Amaravati (Cetikiya, Mahāvīnaseliya, Puvvaseliya, Apamahāvīnaseliya, and Theriya), a more likely interpretation is that it was considered unproblematic for monastic donors to express diverging religious descent at a given *stūpa* or *caitya*, even if that building may have been controlled by a single monastic order. I return to the issue of religious pluralism at sites such as Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda in Tournier forthcoming.

The hypothesis I have proposed here of a strong Kaurukulla involvement in shaping the Adhālaka Great Shrine is consistent with the findings of S. Karashima about the 3rd-century Maitreya image inscription (KnI II.7,A.8), and could suggest that, out of the variety of options considered by him, one may prefer to understand the phraseology of that record as informed by Sāṃmitīya(-Kaurukulla) sources. This should serve as an invitation to explore further echoes between the extant sources associated with that particular *nikāya* and the artistic programme at the Great Shrine, while also keeping an open mind on the diversity of groups—and with them, of scriptural heritage—that likely coexisted there. The religious pluralism of Kanaganahalli is itself best understood as the product of historical circumstances facilitating trans-regional exchanges. Indeed, the political integration of much of the *dakṣiṇāpatha* under Gotamīputta Sātakaṇṇi and his successor likely contributed to the flourishing of the Great Shrine as a cosmopolitan and religiously diverse jewel of a site. Whether or not this is the context in which flourished yet another “jewel,” the author of the *Ratnāvalī* dear to our honorand is, as Cristina Scherrer-Schaub likes to say, “another story,” one of the many that I hope she will tell in the years to come.

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https://gandhari.org/a_inscriptions.php.
- CPD Trenckner, Vilhelm et al. 1924–2011. *A Critical Pāli Dictionary*. 3 vols. Copenhagen and Bristol: Royal Danish Academy and Pali Text Society.

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- EIAD Griffiths, Arlo and Vincent Tournier, with contributions by Stefan Baums, Emmanuel Francis, and Ingo Strauch. 2017-. *Early Inscriptions of Andhradeśa*. <http://epigraphia.efeo.fr/andhra>.
- IA-R *Indian Archaeology — A Review*. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India.
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Fig. 1
General view of structure V (STR-V), to the northwest of the Kanaganahalli Great Shrine, with pillar fragment bearing KnI II.5.9 visible on the foreground (photo V. Tournier)



Fig. 2
Fragment of a limestone octagonal pillar (bearing KnI II.5,9 and II.5,11), west of structure V, Kanaganahalli (photo V. Tournier)



Fig. 3
Face of pillar bearing KnI II.5,11, Kanaganahalli (photo V. Tournier)



Fig. 4
Face of pillar bearing KnI II.5,9, Kanaganahalli (photo V. Tournier)



Fig. 5
Element of limestone octagonal pillar, Kanaganahalli storage
(photo V. Tournier)



Fig. 6
Limestone drum slab, Kanaganahalli storage
(photo V. Tournier)



Fig. 7
Elements of a pillar capital, fragments 8–10, Phanigiri
(photo A. Griffiths; courtesy of Dept. of Archaeology and Museums,
Govt. of Telangana)



Fig. 8
Cuboid dice from the *torana* architrave fragment 5, Phanigiri
(photo A. Griffiths; courtesy of Dept. of Archaeology and Museums,
Govt. of Telangana)

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Fig. 9
Estampage of the Amaravati *mandapa*-pillar inscription EIAD 287,
after Burgess 1887: pl. LX, no. 49



Fig. 10
Āyāka-panel from Amaravati, bearing EIAD 537, Amaravati State Museum
(photo J. Miles, Archeovision)



Fig. 11
Vedikā coping stone, perhaps from Gummadiidurru, bearing EIAD 561, Amaravati State Museum
(photo J. Miles, Archeovision)



Fig. 12
Inscribed slab bearing Kni I.8, Kanaganahalli (photo C. Luczanits)



Fig. 13
Prajñāpāramitā manuscript, Cambridge University Library, Add. 1643, illustration on the left side of folio 179b
(© Cambridge University Library)



Fig. 14
Buddhapāda bearing KnI II.6.2, Kanaganahalli
(photo V. Tournier)