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# Use and Functions of the Coronation Name During the Somavamśin Dynasty

Amandine Wattelier-Bricout

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Self-Representation  
and Presentation of Others  
in Indic Epigraphical Writing

Edited by  
Dániel Balogh and Annette Schmiedchen

Asien- und Afrika-Studien 63  
der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

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# Use and Functions of the Coronation Name During the Somavaṁśin Dynasty

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## 1. Introduction

Within the corpus of the Somavaṁśin dynasty from Odisha, consisting of forty-eight records, the ruling king is very often referred to by two distinct names to which honorific and sectarian titles are affixed. Indeed, he is generally called in the date section by his personal name and in the notification part by his coronation name,<sup>1</sup> the latter generally alternating between Mahābhavagupta and Mahāśivagupta. These coronation names ending in *-gupta* are almost never used alone, but are often found together in a long compound and are linked by the expression *pādānudhyāta*, whose meaning has been discussed by Ferrier and Törzsök (2008). From this meaning, one can argue that the issuer king uses the whole compound in order to legitimate his position by a direct succession from father to son. Although this practice seems to be attested in all the land donations made by the kings of this dynasty, the coronation name does not always appear in donations made by third parties, and seems to be absent from stone inscriptions. Also noteworthy is the fact that the coronation names are totally absent from Indraratha's record, even though a detailed genealogy has confirmed his legitimacy. Surprisingly, the same Indraratha is omitted in the genealogies of his successors. Is the coronation name only the result of a religious consecration ceremony? Does it contribute to a claim of legitimacy? Or is it simply reserved for direct succession from father to son? If this coronation name confers legitimacy, why is it not mentioned systematically? Does its presence indicate a political stability and its absence the opposite? This paper will

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1 The term 'coronation name' will be used in this paper for the designations Mahābhavagupta and Mahāśivagupta because several scholars (J. K. Sahu 1979; Shastri 1995a) referred to them by a similar term.

seek to track the use and to determine the functions and the scope of the coronation name within the Somavaṁśin dynasty. It will be based on a diachronic and synchronic study of the different names used by the Somavaṁśin kings to designate themselves and of those used by their contemporaries, whether relatives or subordinates. For this survey, all the published sources available today have been consulted.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. The corpus of the Somavaṁśin dynasty

First, it is necessary to define exactly what is meant here by the Somavaṁśin dynasty. Indeed, more than one king claims to belong to the lunar lineage (*somavaṁśa*) and yet not all the kings from the Soma lineage are representatives of the Somavaṁśin dynasty. The origins of the latter are still a subject of discussion among historians today,<sup>3</sup> since the last known king of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśin dynasty — Śivagupta Bālārjuna — describes himself as belonging to the Soma lineage in several of his grants.<sup>4</sup> However, while the Pāṇḍuvaṁśin and Somavaṁśin dynasties share some common features, and while it is still possible that the latter is descended from the former,<sup>5</sup> they differ radically in certain respects that

- 
- 2 In the framework of the ERC-DHARMA project, I have carried out a survey of all the inscriptions identified as belonging to the Somavaṁśin dynasty. These have been gathered from all the volumes of the *Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy*, as well as the works of Shastri (1995a; 1995b), of Tripathy (2010), and of Acharya (2014). Inscriptions previously published in the journal *Epigraphia Indica* or in the volume dedicated to this period by Rajaguru (1966) have also been consulted. Of course, it is always possible that an inscription has escaped my vigilance. In addition, the as yet unpublished records unfortunately could not be taken into account in my survey. For the sake of brevity and ease of reference, I refer to each record by its DHARMA identifier rather than its title. A full list of all the inscriptions consulted, complete with titles and, where necessary, bibliographical references, can be found at the end of this paper.
- 3 On this topic, see Panigrahi (1981, 104–9) or the discussion in Shastri (1995b, 172–76).
- 4 *Bārdulā plates of Śivagupta, year 9*, l. 4, *Boṇḍā plates of Śivagupta, year 22*, ll. 4–5, *Lodhiā plates of Śivagupta, year 57*, l. 4, *Malhār plates of Śivagupta, undated (presumably year 6)*, l. 4, *Malhār plates of Śivagupta, undated*, ll. 4–5: *soma-vaṁśa-sambhavaḥ*.
- 5 The hypothesis of an affiliation comes from the strong similarities between the records coming from the last two representatives of the Pāṇḍuvaṁśin dynasty (Tivaradeva and Bālārjuna) and the first ones of the Somavaṁśin dynasty. Both claim to belong to the lunar lineage, and jointly use the prefix *mahā-* and the suffix *-gupta* in their (probably) coronation names, which they attach to their birth names. Some scholars, such as Hunter and Sahu (1956), have proposed to see a father-son relationship between Śivagupta Bālārjuna

make us distinguish between the two.<sup>6</sup> Thus the records of the Somavamśin dynasty discussed in this paper are those published, for the most part, by Rajaguru (1966) and by Shastri (1995a, 167–367). For a general idea of this dynasty and an overview of its members, the lineage tree of succession proposed by Shastri (1995a, 199), shown in Figure 1, is very useful, but it can only serve as a starting point, as it contains information on dates, succession order or familial relationships that still remains based on hypothesis.<sup>7</sup> As regards the dynastic period, the only chronological clue available can be deduced from two donations issued by a member of another dynasty, the Bhauma-Kara: the *Baud plates (A and B) of Tribhuvanamahādevī, year 158*. Lines 17–22 (plate A) and lines 16–22 (plate B) of these two grants mention Svabhāvatuṅga, who is certainly the same Svabhāvatuṅga mentioned in Somavamsin00002 as the father of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya.<sup>8</sup> Panigrahi (1981, 110) and Tripathy (2000, 53) date this plate to 894.

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and Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya. This hypothesis is nowadays inadmissible since the records never mention Bālārjuna as the birth name of Janamejaya's father, whom they call Svabhāvatuṅga.

- 6 There is a real split between the records from the last representative of the Pāṇḍuvamśin dynasty and the first ones from the Somavamśin dynasty. This split seems to be temporal, palaeographic, and geographical: the scripts differ but are said to be from one century (Shastri 1995b, 175); their areas of influence would not be the same; and lastly, the kings of these two dynasties did not decorate their seals in the same way.
- 7 For instance, in this lineage tree, the filial relationship between Śivagupta and Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya was just a hypothesis in 1995, which has now been confirmed thanks to the discovery of a set of copper plates from Gopalpur issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya in his first regnal year (see Shastri and Tripathy 2011–12). On the other hand, the dates given by Shastri (1995b, 199), those proposed by Panigrahi (1981, 106) or even those suggested by Shastri and Tripathy (2011–12) all differ and remain approximate and hypothetical. Indeed, the inscriptions of the Somavamśin dynasty are all dated in regnal years and do not refer to any particular era. I am currently working on a dynastic tree that better reflects the grey areas and doubts raised by the epigraphic evidence.
- 8 Since the discovery of Somavamsin00002, it is known that Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya was born from Svabhāvatuṅga (see Somavamsin00002, vv. 5–6). For further details, see Shastri and Tripathy (2011–12, 104–6).

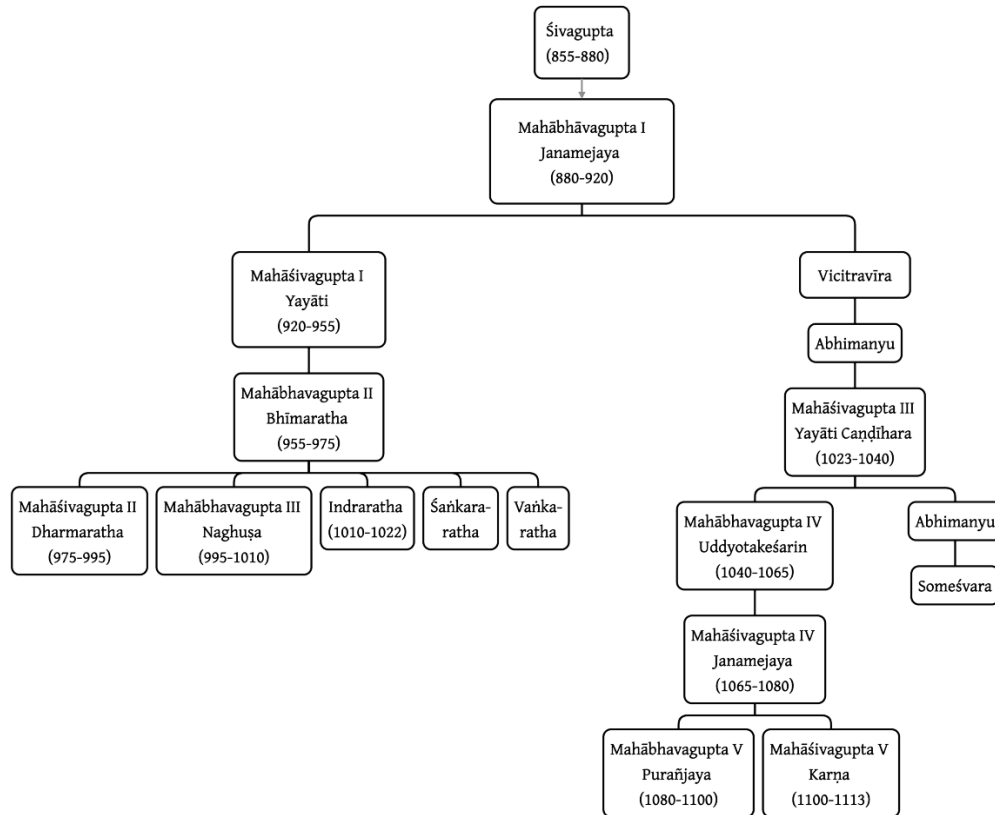


Figure 1. The Somavamśin dynasty according to Shastri (1995a, 199)

The lineage tree based on Shastri's hypothesis (1995a, 167–367) highlights two interesting features of the dynasty. First, it seems to be essential to designate the Somavamśin kings by two different names to dispel ambiguities, and even this double designation remains equivocal in one case, because there are two Mahāśivagupta Yayātis. The regular alternation of the coronation names between Mahābhāvagupta and Mahāśivagupta and the redundancy of the birth names lead to several problems of correct identification when only one name is mentioned. I shall address this issue in section 3. Secondly, this lineage tree brings to light that some of the members of the Somavamśin royal house were ruling kings, while others were not. What is particularly striking is that Indraratha appears in this lineage tree as a king who did reign but did not have the typical name in Mahā...gupta, even though he seems to be the last direct and legitimate heir before the rise to power of a Somavamśin king born in a collateral line. The latter, Yayāti Caṇḍihara, bears the coronation name Mahāśivagupta, which alternates with the presumed predecessor of Indraratha, viz.,

Mahābhavagupta Naghuṣa. The Mahā...gupta names are understood by scholars to imply a coronation ceremony. For instance, Sahu (1979) speaks of “coronation sobriquets” which he defines as *abhiṣekanāman*, suggesting a name acquired during and used after a coronation ceremony. When he compares and lists the common features between the Pāṇḍuvamśin and Somavamśin dynasties, Shastri (1995a, 172) first shows that both dynasties use names beginning with *mahā*- and ending in *-gupta*, and then adds, “these names, which were perhaps assumed at the time of coronation and are thus indicative of regnal power, were different from the personal names, which are often met with in the *praśasti* portion or in connection with the specification of date (*sic*) in many inscriptions.” Thus, the absence of a coronation name for Indraratha may indicate that his coronation ceremony did not take place. But on the specific question of Indraratha’s non-use of this name, Shastri (1995a, 213) remains rather vague:

Indraratha assumed all the sectarian and regnal titles found employed for other Somakula monarchs but did not adopt the *gupta*-ending coronation name for reasons that cannot be ascertained at present.

Then, considering the meaning of the compound linking the two alternative coronation names by the word *pādānudhyāta*, one might believe that Indraratha’s rise to power was illegitimate, unlike that of his successor, Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara. However, Indraratha’s grant issued in his fourth regnal year suggests the opposite: Indraratha appears here as the legitimate heir who saved the kingdom from Abhimanyu’s illegal seizure of power.<sup>9</sup> From these observations, it appears that resorting to the coronation name in a royal charter is the most common legitimation strategy, but not the only one. This leads to several questions about the particular use of the names in Mahā...gupta. What is their function? Why do they appear on copper plates and not on stone inscriptions? When, why, and by whom were they used? A brief look at the records reveals that some of the coronation names shown by Shastri are not attested. Thus, it is also necessary to check if the alternation of Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta really occurred (and if so, in which contexts), or if the alternation is rather a pure supposition. By doing so, it may be possible to find out the reason why Indraratha did not use it, whereas his successor did.

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<sup>9</sup> From the information contained in the grant issued by Kolāvati (Somavamsin00030), it is known that Abhimanyu was the father of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara.

Like many other epigraphical corpora, the corpus attributed to the Somavāṁśin dynasty is sparse and incomplete;<sup>10</sup> its distribution among issuer kings and media is disproportionate, and many records are uncertainly attributed (see section 3 below). For instance, as Figure 2 shows,<sup>11</sup> almost half of the copper plates available today are dated to the reign of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, and nearly a fifth of them were issued by his successor Mahāśivagupta Yayāti. In the case of some kings, such as Indraratha and Dharmaratha, only one record is available. Hence, the analysis of the designations based on the records issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya may result in the identification of some usage trends, but this will not be the case when there is only a single inscription extant. Within the whole corpus, there are forty-three copperplate records and only five stone inscriptions.<sup>12</sup> Within the copperplate charters, thirty-one were issued by Somavāṁśin kings, while eight sets were commissioned by third parties (feudatories of the Somavāṁśin kings or members of the royal family). None of the five stone inscriptions were issued by a Somavāṁśin king. Consequently, the data coming from the third-party records will be more difficult to interpret. Thus, even though this survey takes all the available data into account, the features of the Somavāṁśin corpus limit the results, and one must always consider them with great caution, keeping in mind that what is not observable may nonetheless have existed or that a seemingly unique use could be a regular one.

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10 The copperplate records are mostly sets of three plates recording land grants. Four of them are isolated or incomplete plates and could not be used in this study (Somavamsin00045, 00035), or could only be used in part (Somavamsin00044, 00033).

11 The figure also indicates the remaining doubts in identifying the issuers (see section 3 below).

12 Somavamsin00027, 00029, 00030, 00034, and 00048.



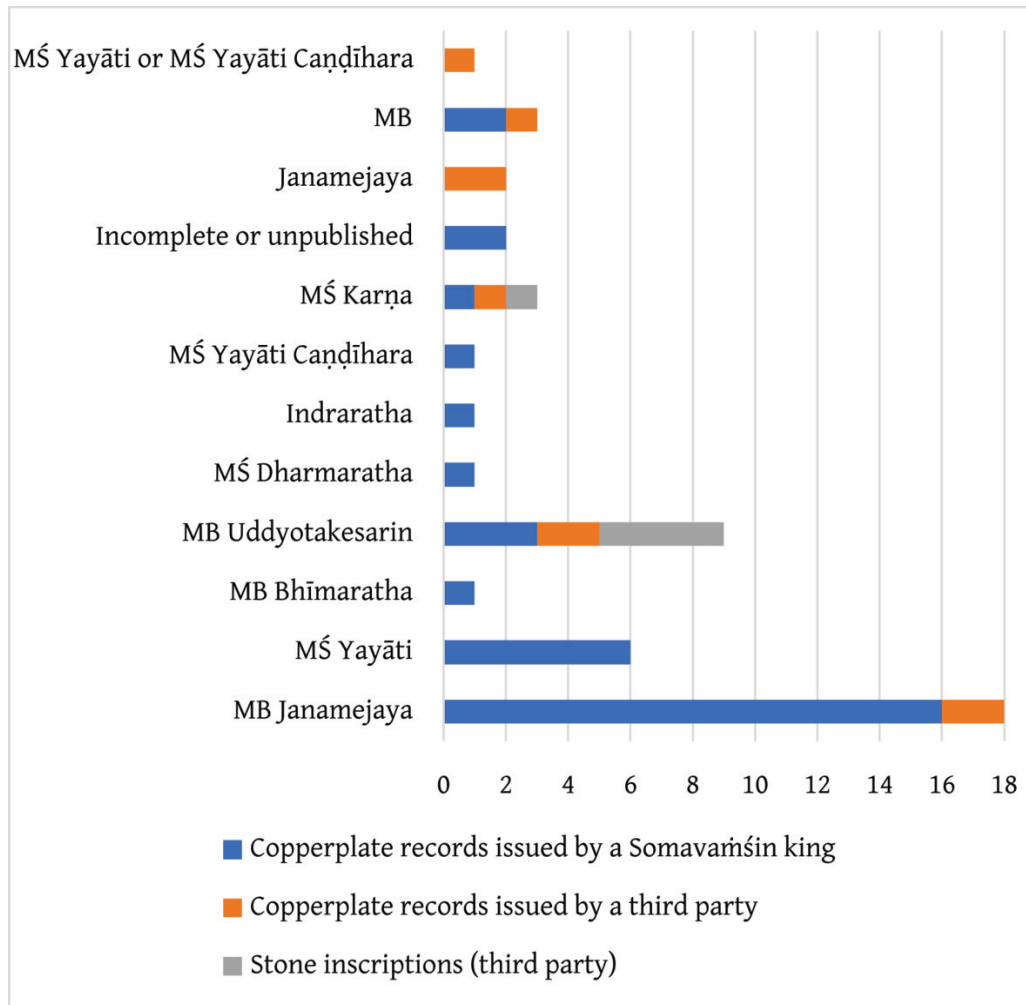


Figure 2. Distribution of copperplate and stone inscriptions. MB stands for Mahābhavagupta and MŚ for Mahāśivagupta.

### 3. Reassessing the identities of issuers

The systematic survey of coronation and birth names throughout the corpus has resulted in a reassessment of the attribution of some sets, and in new designations for some others, to reflect only what is found in the engraved text. Indeed, in order to offer the most reliable and accurate study of the use of the coronation name by one Somavamśin king or another, it was necessary first to ascertain the correct attribution of each set. Nonetheless, the identity of the king mentioned in a few of the copperplate sets (Somavamsin00021, 00026,

00028, 00039, 00040, and 00046) remains subject to doubt and debate, as I shall discuss below.

### 3.1. Scenario 1: Only a coronation name is mentioned

As explained above, when the birth and coronation names are not mentioned together, it is sometimes difficult to identify the king to whom the text refers. So, when only the coronation name is used, there are many possibilities, as in the case of three copperplate sets in which a king is referred to only by his coronation name Mahābhavagupta (Somavamsin00028, 00039, 00026). The striking similarity of the first two of these sets indicates that they were issued by the same king, whose identification, however, remains a matter of debate.<sup>13</sup> At the current state of my research, I cannot confirm any of the suggested attributions, so these two cases will be considered independently in the results presented below.<sup>14</sup>

Unlike these two sets issued by an unidentified Somavaṃśin king, the third one, Somavamsin00026, was issued by a third party. Kielhorn (1896–97b) suggested on the basis of palaeographical criteria that this set had been composed at the time of Mahābhavagupta Bhīmaratha, which should be reassessed since we now have access to more charters from the Somavaṃśin dynasty than when this set was first published. Shastri (1995b, 263) and Tripathy (2010, 88) agree with Kielhorn without noting the disagreement of Rajaguru (1966, 241), who asserts that this set was composed at the time of Mahābhavagupta Uddyota-keśarin. Consequently, we should remain cautious and think that the identification of this set remains to be confirmed by various clues.

### 3.2. Scenario 2: Only a birth name is mentioned

The identification of three other sets raises questions because they mention only the birth name of the ruling king, Janamejaya (Somavamsin00021, 00037, 00040). These sets may have been issued in time of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya or of Mahāśivagupta Janamejaya. Shastri (1995b, 358) dates Somavamsin00021 to the time of the latter, but he justifies this dating neither in his edition (Shastri 1995b, 358–61, esp. 360 n. 25), nor in his introductory volume (Shastri 1995a, 218–19). The issuer of this set is named Dharmaratha and designated as a

<sup>13</sup> The following identifications have been proposed: Naghuṣa (Tripathy 2010, 88), Uddyota-keśarin (Panigrahi 1981, 37; Shastri 1995a, 186), the immediate predecessor of Janamejaya (Panda, Chopdar, and Nayak 2002, 77; Acharya 2013), the grandfather of Janamejaya (J. K. Sahu 1979, 1120).

<sup>14</sup> The problem of identification arising from these inscriptions was the subject of a paper presented in January 2023 in Pondicherry (Wattelier-Bricout 2023).

*yuvarāja* (heir-apparent). We know from several Somavamśin records that the Somavamśin king Mahāśivagupta Dharmaratha was the great-grandson of the first Janamejaya. Shastri argues that since Somavamsin00021 is dated in the fifth regnal year of Janamejaya, this Dharmaratha is not Mahāśivagupta Dharmaratha, and this Janamejaya is the second one. But once the former is accepted, then this Janamejaya could very well be the first one, or even a third Janamejaya otherwise unknown and belonging to a collateral line of the Somavamśin dynasty. A further clue in Somavamsin00021 is the name of the *mahāsandhivigrahin* Malladatta and his title *rāṇaka*. A *mahāsandhivigrahin* of the same name is mentioned in eight grants issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, without a title in the earlier ones, and with the title *rāṇaka* from the seventeenth year onward.<sup>15</sup> In several of these royal charters, Malladatta is described as the son of Dhāradatta, but given that his lineage is not recorded in Somavamsin00021 and that the repetition of names in a lineage is a common practice, the identification cannot be asserted. Other clues (such as the scribe's name, the wording, the script, the format of the set, etc.) deserve to be studied in greater depth, but this cannot be undertaken here. That said, even though the attribution of this set remains uncertain, the data collected in this set will be included in my study.

The set Somavamsin00037, although it was issued by a third party, can be probably attributed to the time of the first Janamejaya. Among the clues noted by Shastri (1995b, 348 n. 4, 353 n. 67), the most noteworthy is the name of its engraver, Saṅgrāma, and his lineage (son of Rāyaṇa Ojhā), which totally match with the name and the engraver's lineage indicated in four grants issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya.<sup>16</sup>

As for the set Somavamsin00040, its first editor Nayak (2012) attributes it to Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya. Since then, to my knowledge, no study has addressed the question of whether it can be ascribed to the first or the second Janamejaya. However, the evidence for this attribution is pretty thin. Nayak (2012, 72) dates the script and language to the ninth century, but without further argument. Although he advances the dating of this set with caution, he attributes it to the first Janamejaya without even considering another possibility or arguing this claim. A more detailed study of the script and language, for example, could possibly help to date the set, but for now, it would be more prudent

15 Malladatta is mentioned without a title in Somavamsin00004, 00006, 00007, 00008 (of the years 12, 6, 6, and 8 respectively), and with the title *rāṇaka* in 00009 and 00010 (year 17); and in 00011, 00042, 00043 (year 31).

16 Somavamsin00001, 00002, 00003, 00008. Of these, 00002 and 00003 had not yet been discovered when Shastri (1995b, 348 n. 4, 353 n. 67) noticed that the engraver of 00037 also worked on 00001 and 00008.

to hold that the attribution to the first or the second Janamejaya has not yet been established.

### 3.3. Scenario 3: Doubt despite the presence of both names

Finally, in some cases doubt may remain despite the joint mention of the coronation and birth names, because there are two homonymous kings Mahāśivagupta Yayāti.<sup>17</sup> Of the eight sets presenting this scenario, six mention the immediate predecessor of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti by his birth name (Janamejaya), allowing for firm identifications. Therefore, only two sets remain problematic. One of these (Somavamsin00024) is a grant issued by the king himself in his fifteenth regnal year, which, while it does not mention the immediate predecessor, shares features with another record linked to the first Mahāśivagupta Yayāti dated in his eighth regnal year (Somavamsin00022), namely that these two sets come from the same place; they were written by the same person Utsavanāga or Uchchavanāga, son of Āllava or Āllavanāga;<sup>18</sup> they were approved by the same *mahāsandhivigrahin rāṇaka* Dhāradatta;<sup>19</sup> and finally, they share a concluding verse specific to these two donations alone. All together, these elements establish that this set (Somavamsin00024) was certainly issued by the same person, namely the first Mahāśivagupta Yayāti.

The second set (Somavamsin00046) is more problematic as it is a grant issued by a third party. Rajaguru (2011, 101–2) suggests dating this charter to the time of the second Mahāśivagupta Yayāti. His argument is based on the following common features between this set and another one found in the same place

17 Somavamsin00016, 00017, 00018, 00022, 00023, 00024, 00025, 00046.

18 Pointed out by Shastri (1995b, 244 n. 61). Āllava being the *kāyastha* in a set issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya (Somavamsin00008, ll. 43–44), it is possible to imagine that his son Utsavanāga / Uchchavanāga continues the profession of his father under the reign of the immediate successor of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, i.e. the first Yayāti.

19 This *mahāsandhivigrahin rāṇaka* Dhāradatta is also mentioned in two other grants. In Somavamsin00012, issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya in his thirty-fourth regnal year, the charter is said to be written at the permission of *mahāsandhivigrahin rāṇaka* Dhāradatta (ll. 51–52: *likhitam idam tāmra-śāsanam mahāsandhivigrahika-rāṇaka-śrī-dhāradattasyābhimatena*). In Somavamsin00025, issued by Mahāśivagupta Yayāti during his twenty-fourth year, it is said that the text was written with the knowledge of *mahāsandhivigrahin rāṇaka* Dhāradatta (ll. 63–64: *likhitam idam śāsanam mahāsandhivigrahira-rāṇaka-dhāradattāvagatena mahāsandhivigraha-kāyastha-tathāgatene*). So, it seems that *mahāsandhivigrahin rāṇaka* Dhāradatta was a person of influence from the end of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya's reign to the twenty-fourth year of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti's reign.

(Somavamsin00026):<sup>20</sup> both issuers come from the Māṭhara lineage; they received the grace of the goddess Kāleśvarī; they both bear the title *māṇḍalika-rāṇaka*. While these are rightly pointed out and are rather useful for an attempt at dating, when Rajaguru (2011, 241) does so, he bases his argument on the palaeographical dating proposed by Kielhorn (1896–97b) — namely that the script would date from the twelfth century — but he omits the fact that Kielhorn himself considers Somavamsin00026 to have been composed at the time of Mahābhavagupta Bhīmaratha, who reigned from 955 to 975 according to Shastri (1995a, 208). Thus, Rajaguru retains Kielhorn’s dating but not his attribution, and conjectures that Somavamsin00026 dates from the time of Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin. Considering the script of Somavamsin00046 to be older, Rajaguru proposes dating it to the time of Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin’s predecessor, i.e. the second Yayāti, Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara. Without an in-depth palaeographic study of Somavamsin00046,<sup>21</sup> but assuming that its script is indeed older than Somavamsin00026 — given that Tripathy (2010, 86) and Shastri (1995a, 209; 1995b, 263) both suggest dating the script to the mid-tenth century and both attribute Somavamsin00026 to the time of Mahābhavagupta Bhīmaratha — it would also be possible to infer that Somavamsin00046 was issued during the reign of the first Mahāśivagupta Yayāti. Therefore, the attribution of the set Somavamsin00046 remains doubtful.

#### 4. Use of the coronation name in grants issued by the Somavamśin kings

Now that the grant attributions have been ascertained as precisely as possible, it is possible to analyse the use and the functions of the coronation name within the royal grants. Indeed, while the dynastic tree proposed by Shastri gives the impression that the use of the coronation names, the alternation of Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta, and a double designation of kings (with birth and coronation names) are the specific features of the Somavamśin dynasty, the absence of a coronation name in the royal grant issued by Indraratha calls these statements into question and calls for a reassessment of the role that the coronation name can play in the royal grants. In order to observe the legitimating

20 As seen above (section 3.1), Somavamsin00026 presents only a duo of coronation names of the ruling king (Mahābhavagupta) and his predecessor (Mahāśivagupta), opening up numerous attribution possibilities.

21 For the time being, such a study is not possible, as Rajaguru (2011) gives no information on the current place of preservation of the set. As for the photos of the set, they are of very poor quality.

strategies deployed by the Somavamsin chancellery in the royal grants, I have carried out a precise survey of the kings' designations, keeping track of the person to whom they refer (the king, his immediate predecessor, his ancestors), the honorific titles by which they are accompanied, and the part of the text in which they appear. As each part of a royal grant bears a specific function, the presence of the coronation name in one particular part may contribute to its function, while its co-occurrence with titles or the immediate predecessor could shed light on the relationship of the ruling king with his predecessor and reveal how his position is legitimated by this relationship.

#### 4.1. *Praśasti* part

The grants issued by the Somavamsin kings do not systematically include a long sequence of glorifying or genealogical verses<sup>22</sup> and the *praśasti* part in the Somavamsin corpus does not have a fixed form: it sometimes includes a long genealogy, sometimes only a few lines of glorification, and sometimes these references are found at the end of the copper plates rather than at the beginning.<sup>23</sup> What distinguishes this “*praśasti* part” from the “notification part” is first that the former is in verse, whereas the notification part is in prose, and second, that the content of these two parts differs. The purpose of the eulogistic part is to emphasise the valour of the ruling king and his lineage by telling their heroic deeds, and to sanction the rise to power of the ruling king through his genealogical account. Consequently, the presence of the alternation of Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta in this part may reinforce the legitimation strategy deployed by indicating a continuous transmission of the coronation names.

The results of the survey show that eulogies, where present, typically use the birth name of the reigning king as well as his predecessors, and never mention any coronation name.<sup>24</sup> The records of the first four kings generally contain

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22 For instance, there are no verses of glorification in the three grants commissioned by the first Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya (Somavamsin00001, 00003, 00006), in one amongst those issued by the first Mahāśivagupta Yayāti (Somavamsin00024), and in the unique record of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara (Somavamsin00016). Similarly, the two sets whose attribution is problematic (Somavamsin00028 and 00039) contain no genealogical details.

23 The various practices of the royal eulogy within the corpus deserve to be studied in greater detail, but this cannot be done here.

24 All the following sets contain a eulogistic section: Somavamsin00002, 00004, 00005, 00007, 00008, 00009, 00010, 00011, 00012, 00013, 00015, 00017, 00018, 00019, 00020, 00022, 00023, 00025, 00031, 00037, 00038, 00041, 00042, 00043, 00047. The birth names are found in all

just a few verses: they refer to the ruling king, his immediate predecessor and sometimes to his grandfather only by their birth names. One can observe a turn in the practice with Indraratha's grant (Somavamsin00013), in which fourteen verses are devoted to his genealogy and deeds. Next, there is no eulogistic part in the unique grant of Indraratha's successor, Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara (Somavamsin00016). His rise to power is not explained by any genealogical details. From the time of his son and successor Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin, a kind of standard genealogical account seems to be created and reused.<sup>25</sup> This time, the eulogistic part retraces the history of the Somavamśin dynasty up to the first Janamejaya, but without ever mentioning the coronation names, which could have given cohesion to the whole.

#### 4.2. Notification part

The notification part of the royal grants consists of the administrative details of a donation (the place, the identities of the donor and of the recipient(s), the description of the gift, its purpose, the witnesses, etc.). The description of the king as the donor is the most relevant information for the present study. The data collection points out two major facts: first, all the royal grants introduce the king by using a specific compound linking the ruling king to his immediate predecessor or his parents by the word *pādānudhyāta*; second, as mentioned in the introduction, all the royal grants use the coronation name to designate the donor, except the one issued by Indraratha.

Of the thirty-one sets for which data can be studied,<sup>26</sup> twenty-seven use the following expression: *parama-bhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja-parameśvara-śrī-mahā-[X]-gupta-deva-pādānudhyāta-parama-māheśvara-parama-bhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirāja-parameśvara-soma-kula-tilaka-trikaliṅgādhīpati-śrī-mahā-[Y]-gupta-rāja-devaḥ*.<sup>27</sup> The formula is only absent in four sets. Of these, Somavamsin00028 and 00039 were certainly issued by the same person, but, as noted above (section 3.1), the identity of that king is still a subject under discussion. The formula is replaced

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these records, except for 00011, 00012, 00042, and 00043, in which the reigning king is named Dharmakandarpa.

25 The three grants issued by Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin (Somavamsin00015, 00038, and 00047) contain the same eleven verses. The unique record of Mahāśivagupta Karṇa (Somavamsin00031) has the same eleven verses, adding eight more to complete the genealogical account up to Karṇa's rise to power.

26 Somavamsin00001, 00002, 00003, 00004, 00005, 00006, 00007, 00008, 00009, 00010, 00011, 00012, 00013, 00015, 00016, 00017, 00018, 00019, 00020, 00022, 00023, 00024, 00025, 00028, 00031, 00038, 00039, 00041, 00042, 00043, 00047.

27 I quote here one instance of the expression. The order of the titles is almost the same, but the number of the immediate predecessor's titles can be less than that of the ruling king.

by *mātā-pitṛ-pādānudhyāta* in these. The latter formula also appears in Somavamsin00013, issued by Indraratha, Mahāśivagupta Dharmaratha's brother or half-brother. Finally, the formula is altogether absent in Somavamsin00031, issued by Purañjaya's brother Mahāśivagupta Karṇa, who is referred to only with his coronation name and the usual honorific titles. From these observations, it can be deduced that the full-length *pādānudhyāta* compound is a kind of official formula that certifies the authority transmitted by a direct succession line, since it is always used in a father-son relationship. When the *pādānudhyāta* compound mentions only the two parents or is not present, this may indicate the accession to power of a new royal authority, either through the foundation of a new dynasty or following a discontinuity in the succession line.

It is remarkable that only two sets use birth names in the notification section of the text. One of these is Somavamsin00013, which, as discussed above, uses a compound linking Indraratha to his parents by the formula *pādānudhyāta*. The other is Somavamsin00016, which uses the coronation names of the donor king and his predecessor, but also mentions the birth name of the donor king in the following way: *śrī-mahābhavagupta-pādānudhyāta-mahārājādhirāja-paramēśvara-praṇamita-rājanyopasevita-pādāravinda-yugalaḥ śrī-mahāśivagupta-śrī-yayāti-devaḥ*.<sup>28</sup> The way in which this king is presented in his own record differs from the other royal epigraphs in two particular respects in addition to the combined use of coronation and birth names: each name is preceded by *śrī* in a kind of emphasis, and the coronation name of the predecessor is not preceded by the usual honorific titles. These two sets are particularly noteworthy since Somavamsin00013 was issued by Indraratha who, according to the same set, came to power with the approbation of the best *dvijas* after killing Abhimanyu, who had acquired power without the authorisation of his predecessor,<sup>29</sup> while Somavamsin00016 was issued by Abhimanyu's son, who is said to have acquired the title *trikaṅgādhīpati* by his own arm and to have been chosen by the countries as in a *svayamvara*.<sup>30</sup> The version of the event told by his wife Kolāvati is slightly different, as in her stone inscription he is said to have been brought to power by the unanimous agreement of the ministers.<sup>31</sup> These two sets originate from

28 Somavamsin00016, ll. 17–18.

29 Somavamsin00013, v. 14: *yo vidvān abhimanyum apy anucitaṁ prāptādhīpatyam bhuvamśasyānadhikāriṇaṁ raṇa-bhuvi vyāpādayad dveṣiṇaṁ | tal-lakṣmīṁ dvija-sattamair anumatām āsādyā senādhīpaiḥ traīrājyaṁ ca turaṅgakena jagṛhe yenātha rājyāntaram||*.

30 Somavamsin00016, l. 14: *kaliṅga-koṅgodotkala-kośala-svayamvara-prasiddhaḥ* and l. 15: *svabhujopārjita-trikaṅgādhīpatiḥ*.

31 Somavamsin00030, v. 7.



a period in Somavamśin history that was characterised by internecine struggles for power.

To explore the formula further, it is necessary to look in more detail at the context in which the coronation names Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta are used. It should be recalled that these names are never used alone but almost always in combination with various honorific titles. The titles usually used in compounds are as follows: *parama-māheśvara*, *parama-bhaṭṭāraka*, *mahārājā-dhirāja*, *parameśvara*, *soma-kula-tilaka*, *trikaliṅgādhipati*, *rāja-deva* or *deva*. Considering the restricted and occasional use of the coronation name and its conjunction with honorific titles, it may be necessary to question that the epithets Mahābhavagupta and Mahāśivagupta are “coronation names” in the customary sense, implying that the person thus named has been consecrated as king by a ceremony. Given that this *pādānudhyāta* formula was used in its fixed form in case of a succession of power from father to son, and that some titles may have a religious connotation, we could see in them the affirmation of a divine transmission of power: the son presenting himself as authorised by his father, both being the *protégés* of Śiva and enthroned by him.<sup>32</sup> The fixed form and repetitive structure of the *pādānudhyāta* formula set a kind of solemn and official tone to the royal grants. Its function may be political by establishing legitimacy through filial transmission, and may be religious by asserting the divine protection of Śiva. That said, a more in-depth study of the exact composition of the honorific titles used for the ruling king and his immediate predecessor should be undertaken, as the initial survey shows that there are some divergences in practice: sometimes the honorific titles are exactly the same on either side of the term *pādānudhyāta*; sometimes the predecessor’s title is omitted, while in one case there is a striking imbalance (Somavamsin00016).

### 4.3. Date

Since dates in the Somavamśin corpus always refer to the regnal year of a particular king, a coronation name on its own would be impracticable due to the confusion caused by the alternation of these names, while birth names could identify kings more unequivocally. Indeed, of the thirty-four copperplate sets issued by the Somavamśin kings, the overwhelming majority mention the birth name alone without associating it with the coronation name, as Figure 3 clearly shows.<sup>33</sup> This means that the use of a coronation name in the date could be seen as a deviation from the regular pattern. For this reason, I analyse the cases of

32 On the possible divinisation of the Somavamśin kings, see Smith (1991, 92–94, 105).

33 There is no information available for Somavamsin00033, 00041, 00044, and 00045.

deviation hoping to gain a better understanding of the function of the coronation name. There are three scenarios of deviation: the date may be recorded without name; with the coronation name alone; or with both the coronation and birth names.

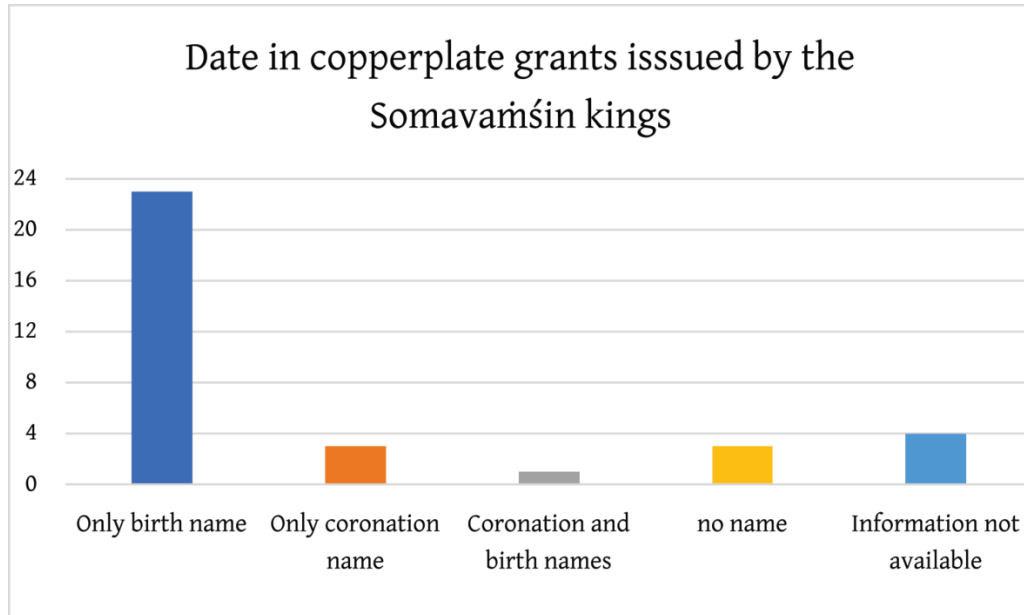


Figure 3. Use of coronation and birth names in the date section of Somavamśin copperplate sets

The three sets without a name in the date (Somavamsin00020, 00028, 00039) give no clue to the use of coronation or birth names in date. But it is noticeable that in the whole text of two of them, the king is only designated by his coronation name (see section 3.1 above).

The three sets which use only the coronation name (Somavamsin00011, 00042, and 00043) can be considered as a single case since they were issued by the same king, on the same day of the same year, to the same recipient, and contain almost the same text (except for the details of the villages granted). This triple grant to a single person, Sādhāraṇa, son of Śobhana, who is none other than the minister of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya and who was already the minister and the recipient of the king's grant issued in the first year of his reign (Somavamsin0002), confers an exceptional nature upon these three sets. They also have one feature in common: their text designates Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya with the sobriquet Dharmakandarpa, which is found only in one other

grant.<sup>34</sup> As the seal of one of these three sets attests to the mention of a coronation name (see 4.4), it should be noted that these three sets are atypical within the corpus in their use of the coronation name.

The single set that uses both coronation and birth names in the date (Somavamsin00016) is particularly interesting because it is the only one that can be attributed with certainty to Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara. The text of this donation mentions that Yayāti won his glory by his own arms and that he was appointed by the ministers. Given that there seems to have been some confusion in the succession when Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara ascended the throne, the joint use of the birth and coronation names in the date could be interpreted as a reaffirmation of the royal authority or legitimacy of the ruling king.

The birth name is generally accompanied in the date by honorific titles much the same as those in the notification part, although in half of all cases, the three titles indicating religious affiliation (*parama-māheśvara*), the lineage (*soma-kulatilaka*) and geographical dominion (*trikaliṅgādhipati*) are omitted from the date. There are also some exceptions, but their analysis does not lead to any straightforward explanation.

#### 4.4. Seals

As the seal is used in particular to authenticate a donation, the presence of a coronation name on it might have a stronger authentication value than the birth name. The authenticity of the seal is essentially based on the emblem of the dynasty emblazoned on the seal, but the accompanying legend also contributes to it. If the coronation name is used on these seals, we can deduce that this designation also plays a part in the seals' function as certificates of authenticity.

Although twenty-six royal seals have come down to us,<sup>35</sup> there are only two seals for which the editors explicitly mention that they do not bear a legend (Somavamsin00012, 00015), and only four that bear a known and legible legend (Somavamsin00001, 00028, 00039, and 00043), plus two that are illegible but

<sup>34</sup> This is Somavamsin00012, which is dated in the thirty-fourth regnal year. The sobriquet is used in two verses glorifying the king and his minister Sādhāraṇa. These two eulogistic verses can also be found in Somavamsin00009 and 00010 (both dated to the seventeenth regnal year), but without the sobriquet (see Shastri 1995b, 216 n. 35).

<sup>35</sup> Somavamsin00001, 00002, 00003, 00004, 00006, 00007, 00008, 00009, 00010, 00011, 00012, 00013, 00015, 00016, 00017, 00018, 00019, 00020, 00022, 00023, 00024, 00025, 00028, 00031, 00033, 00038, 00039, 00041, 00042, 00043, 00047.

conjecturally restorable (Somavamsin00011 and 00042).<sup>36</sup> Seven seals cannot be involved in the study because their legends have not been reported accurately,<sup>37</sup> while eleven are illegible due to corrosion.<sup>38</sup> Of the four seals with a known legend, only one mentions a Somavaṁśin king by his birth name (Somavamsin00001), while three use the coronation name (Somavamsin00028, 00039, and 00043), to which we could very hypothetically add Somavamsin00011 and 00042.

All the occurrences of the coronation name on a seal are attached to sets exhibiting some special features. The three similar sets Somavamsin00011, 00042, and 00043 issued by Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya in his thirsty-first regnal year name the king with his coronation name in the notification part, but in the eulogy part use a sobriquet (Dharmakandarpa) not found in any other of his grants issued before this date, and employ only the coronation name in the date (see 4.3 above). The other two seals bearing a coronation name (Somavamsin00028 and 00039) are attached to sets whose identification remains particularly problematic, especially as the royal symbol represented on these seals, a bull, diverges from all the other dynastic symbols on the Somavaṁśin seals, which represent a Gajalakṣmī. These grants are dated in a regnal year but without mentioning any names. The results of this survey are obviously difficult to interpret, but they seem to indicate that a coronation name on a seal is used in specific cases.

#### 4.5. Summary

From the whole systematic survey of the coronation name within the grants issued by the Somavaṁśin kings, several trends can be identified. First, the coronation name is never found in the eulogy part (where only birth names are used). Its absence and the preference for birth names could certainly be explained in various ways, but the most likely reason might be that birth names, often drawn from the epics, favour the elaboration of praise, making it easier to draw laudatory comparisons with mythological characters. Another reason

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<sup>36</sup> Except only the details of the villages granted, the text inscribed on these two sets is similar to Somavamsin00043, for which Fleet (1894–95) reads the coronation name of the king in the seal legend. Obviously, it cannot be taken for granted that this applies likewise to Somavamsin00011 and 00042, but it is highly likely. The presence of an illegible legend is only mentioned for the seal attached to 00011, while the seal of 00042 is completely corroded.

<sup>37</sup> Somavamsin00005, 00013, 00016, 00022, 00025, 00038, 00041.

<sup>38</sup> Somavamsin00002, 00003, 00004, 00006, 00008, 00009, 00018, 00019, 00020, 00024, and 00047.

could be specific to the Somavamśin dynasty: a genealogical account requires a clear identification of the kings, which the alternation of Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta does not guarantee.

The notification part typically employs the *pādānudhyāta* formula linking the coronation name of the ruling king to that of his immediate predecessor. Thus, the use of the coronation names is rather confined to the administrative part of the grants and belongs to a formal protocol composed by the chancellery. The alternation of Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta along with a list of honorific titles certainly serves to establish the king's authority and legitimacy (as shown by the adaptations of the formula in case of contentious succession). All the deviations observed from this formula are from problematic cases of succession: Indraratha (Somavamsin00013); his successor Mahāśivagupta Yayāti Caṇḍihara (Somavamsin00016); Mahāśivagupta Karṇa, brother of Purañjaya (Somavamsin00031); and probably the issuer of Somavamsin00028 and 00039. Consequently, the functions of the coronation name are both political and juridical.

Coronation names are occasionally found in the date, but the custom seems rather to be the use of the birth name there. Given that coronation and birth names also occur in seal legends, either of these two designations seems to be suitable for authentication, although a pattern cannot be established due to the scarcity of preserved seal legends.

It should be noticed that the coronation name is hardly ever used alone and that, although the alternation of Mahāśivagupta and Mahābhavagupta is a well-attested practice among the Somavamśin kings in the royal grants, this alternation is not attested for all the kings of the dynasty. In fact, Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya always refers to his predecessor as Śivagupta, without the initial *mahā-*. In addition, there is no evidence of coronation names for four subsequent kings: Naghuṣa, Indraratha, the second Janamejaya, and Purañjaya. Considering that there is only one case where a Somavamśin king is designated by both his coronation and birth name (Somavamsin00016), one may wonder whether it is correct to speak of Mahābhavagupta III Naghuṣa, Mahāśivagupta IV Janamejaya and Mahābhavagupta V Purañjaya as Shastri (1995b) and Acharya (2014) do in all the titles they give to the records.<sup>39</sup>

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39 Rajaguru (1966) and Tripathy (2010) are much more cautious in naming the grants and only use the names attested in them.

## 5. Use of the coronation names in non-royal grants

Among the forty-eight records available, nine copperplate grants<sup>40</sup> and five stone inscriptions<sup>41</sup> were issued by a royal relative or a third party. My objective is to observe how such grants adapt the *pādānudhyāta* formula and the patterns and trends detected within the royal grants, and whether they refer to the ruling king by his coronation name as well as by his birth name.

### 5.1. Issued by a family member

Three records were issued by a royal relative. Two of them are copperplate grants (Somavamsin00021 and 00032), both problematic. The first, issued by Dharmaratha born in the Soma family and designated as *yuvarāja* and *kumārādhirāja* (both meaning an heir-apparent or crown-prince), only mentions the birth name of the ruling king, leaving open two options for attribution.<sup>42</sup> The second was commissioned by Someśvaradeva, a member of the Somavamsin family styled *kumārādhirāja*, and is dated to the first year without specifying a king as point of reference. The third record is a stone inscription (Somavamsin00030) engraved on the wall of a temple recording its construction, issued by the queen Kolāvati during the reign of her son Uddyotakeśarin. Its content differs from the structure of the copperplate grants as it does not have a notification part and, consequently, does not include the *pādānudhyāta* formula. Nevertheless, this record can speak to how the Somavamsin kings are designated in the *praśasti* part and how the date is given.

Concerning the *praśasti* part, Somavamsin00030 is the only record to include a genealogical account. Its details are extremely valuable since the troubled period after Dharmaratha's death is explicitly mentioned, stating that the grandfather and father of Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin were named Abhimanyu and Caṇḍihara. Here, as in the royal copperplate grants, the Somavamsin kings are all designated by their birth names. The coronation name is thus absent here, just as in the *praśasti* of royal inscriptions.

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40 Somavamsin00014 (time of Karṇa), 00021 (uncertain dating), 00026 (uncertain date), 00032 (time of Uddyotakeśarin), 00035 (incomplete plate not used in my study but probably contemporary of 00032), 00036 (time of Janamejaya), 00037 (time of Janamejaya), 00040 (uncertain dating), 00046 (uncertain dating).

41 Somavamsin00027, 00029, 00030 (time of Uddyotakeśarin); 00048 (certainly from the time of Uddyotakeśarin) and 00034 (time of Karṇa).

42 See section 3.2 above.

The notification part can be observed only in the two copperplate sets issued by men designated *kumārādhirāja*.<sup>43</sup> As one can infer a filial relationship to the reigning king from this title, the presence of the *pādānudhyāta* formula could be expected within the notification part. In Somavamsin00021, Dharmaratha, the issuer, is described with several titles used by ruling kings as well as by a regional title (*paścima-kaliṅgādhipati*), but without the *pādānudhyāta* formula. Despite its absence, the honorific titles seem to give a royal touch to his grant. In Somavamsin00032, Someśvaradeva is designated with five honorific titles very close to those used by the Somavamśin ruling kings: *parama-māheśvara*, *parama-mahā-bhaṭṭāraka*, *kumārādhirāja*, *parameśvara*, and *paścima-laṅkādhīpati*. The exact identity of Someśvaradeva and his familial relationship to Uddyotakeśarin are not yet clarified (Sircar 1949–50, 324) and the text of this set is rather corrupted. It employs the *pādānudhyāta* formula and refers to Uddyotakeśarin by both his birth name and a coronation name, in addition to styling him *parama-māheśvara*, *parama-mahā-bhaṭṭāraka*, *mahārājādhirāja*, *parameśvara*, and *trikaliṅgādhipati*. The coronation name is, however, anomalously Mahāśivagupta instead of Uddyotakeśarin's regular Mahābhavagupta. This anomaly is imputed to the scribe by both Shastri (1995b, 319 n. 8, 322 n. 56) and Tripathy (2010, 468 n. 1723). Given the corruption of the text, it is difficult to conclude whether the *pādānudhyāta* formula is used here to confer legitimacy to Someśvaradeva, but it seems that the text reflects more or less the chancellor's discourse found in the notification parts of the Somavamśin ruling kings.

Concerning the date part, the stone inscription (Somavamsin00030) includes it at the end and mentions the birth name of the ruling king as seems usual in the royal copperplate grants issued by the ruling kings. It is noticeable that the honorific titles associated with the birth name are those which are generally omitted in the date section of the royal grants (*parama-māheśvara*, *soma-kulatilaka* and *trikaliṅgādhipati*) but usually quoted in the *pādānudhyāta* formula. Hence, here the date is given with a kind of royal touch through the choice of specific honorific titles. In Somavamsin00021, the date is recorded at the beginning of the grant and the same use of the king's birth name accompanied by honorific titles is observed: here one can read all the honorific titles found in the *pādānudhyāta* formula, except *parameśvara*. The date of the third record (Somavamsin00032), as explained above, is quite problematic and does not feature any name or honorific title.

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43 As Shastri (1995b, 322 n. 53, 361 n. 28) points out, these are the only occurrences of this title in the Somavamśin corpus.

## 5.2. Issued by a subordinate *rāṇaka*

Among the records available, there are four stone inscriptions and seven copperplate grants issued by subordinates during the time of a Somavamśin king, one of which has been excluded from the study.<sup>44</sup> The stone inscriptions, like that of Kolāvati in 5.1 above, do not include a notification part. As their content is very short, they also do not contain a *praśasti* part. Two of the three texts engraved on cave walls at Khaṇḍagiri (Somavamsin00027, 00029) use the king's birth name in order to indicate the date of the recorded pious acts.<sup>45</sup> Contrary to what was observed in the temple inscription issued by the queen mother, no honorific title accompanies the king's birth name here. Somavamsin00034 is a label incised on an image of Sūrya, and the surviving text consists only of two damaged lines referring to the reign of Karṇa, probably to date the installation of the image. Three honorific titles are wholly or partly preserved, but Shastri (1995b, 335) goes further and reconstructs the text by adding all the honorific titles found in the *pādānudhyāta* formula. This reconstruction, although possible, remains questionable, since my previous observations point out that the convention of giving a date fluctuates within the Somavamśin corpus. It thus appears that honorific titles are used only sporadically in stone inscriptions by third parties, while a preference for the birth name of the ruling king is universal.

Among the six copperplate grants issued by the third parties, there is only one record containing a *praśasti* part (Somavamsin00037). This eulogy is devoted to the donor and not to the ruling king, but it is interesting to notice that the relationship between the donor and the ruling king is mentioned in line 14 of this *praśasti* part by quoting the latter's birth name, Janamejaya. This grant is also quite exceptional because its notification part contains the expression *mātā-pitṛ-pādānudhyāta* applied to the issuing subordinate. Yet there is no instance of the *pādānudhyāta* formula in the notification parts of the five other sets, which consist only in a presentation of the donor with his own honorific titles. Consequently, no third-party grant alludes to the ruling king in its notification part, while the *pādānudhyāta* formula is present in one of them to refer to the donor.

Conversely, all grants except Somavamsin00037 refer to the ruling king in the date section. In Somavamsin00037, the date consists only of the day and the month, and is hence given without mentioning the name of the king. In Soma-

44 Somavamsin00035 seems to be issued by a third party but as its text is incomplete, this single plate is excluded from the study.

45 Somavamsin00048 is undated.



vamsin00040, the year is linked to the king's birth name, Janamejaya. The absence of honorific titles in the date has been interpreted by the first editor of this set as a clue to a distant relationship between the issuer and the ruling king. But by taking into account that there are two other examples of a date without titles among the third-party records, it is difficult to ascertain that the issuer of this grant "enjoyed greater liberty than other chiefs and that his subordination to Janamejaya was nominal" (Nayak 2012, 73). The sets Somavamsin00014 and Somavamsin00046 start with the date, which is a little more elaborate, since it includes some honorific titles linked to the ruling king. In the royal grants, it has been observed that in half of all cases, the honorific titles *parama-māheśvara*, *soma-kula-tilaka*, and *trikalingādhīpati* are omitted in the date. Here, this is not the case. Somavamsin00046 mentions all the honorific titles usually found in the notification part of a royal grant. It also designates the king by both his coronation and birth names. All of this gives the grant a kind of royal touch and a somewhat pompous tone. The date in Somavamsin00014 also displays an accumulation of honorific titles slightly different from the usual titles: *parama-māheśvara-mahābhṭṭāraka-somavamśa-kula-kamala-tilaka-bhāskara-mahārājādhīrāja-parameśvara-śrī-karṇa-deva* (ll. 1–4). Here again, the whole seems to give to the grant an official tone.

The two remaining sets are particularly striking because both of them include the *pādānudhyāta* formula in the date. In Somavamsin00026, the ruling king and his predecessor are both designated by their coronation names and qualified by the same honorific titles on both sides of the word *pādānudhyāta*. In Somavamsin00036, the scenario is somewhat different: the date is given twice, at the beginning and at the end of the record. The first instance includes an unbalanced *pādānudhyāta* formula where the ruling king, the first Janamejaya, is qualified by more honorific titles than his predecessor. Thus, this instance reproduces the *pādānudhyāta* formula found in all the royal grants of this king. The second mention of the date is given with the birth name of the king accompanied by the two honorific titles usually observed in the date section of royal grants (*parama-bhṭṭāraka* and *mahārājādhīrāja*). Hence, in these two sets, the *pādānudhyāta* formula used at the beginning of the grant seems to reflect some knowledge of the chancellor's discourse used in the royal grants.

### 5.3. Summary

From the survey of the coronation name within the records issued by the royal relatives, the trend to designate the kings with their birth names within the eulogy part is confirmed by the unique record available. In contrast, two different trends are noticeable: first, the *pādānudhyāta* formula is not used in the case of

an heir-apparent without royal investiture,<sup>46</sup> but a royal touch is given to his grant by the accumulation and the similarity of his honorific titles to the ones of the ruling king; second, the honorific titles usually attached to the ruling king in the *pādānudhyāta* formula seem to be transferred to the date. Hence, the deference of the royal relatives to the ruling king is expressed by means of the honorific titles. None of these records use the birth and coronation names of the ruling king together.

Even if it is not possible to identify a regular manner of naming the ruling king in the third-party grants, it is noticeable that the joint use of the coronation and birth names is exceptional, and that the ruling king is generally designated by his birth name. Nevertheless, it is also observed that the honorific titles and the *pādānudhyāta* formula are sometimes used, conferring to the subordinates' grants an official tone.

## 6. Conclusion

Through the mapping of the coronation names in the different textual parts of the available records, it appears that the mention of the coronation name belongs to the chancellery's discourse and is almost always a part of an official formula, viz., the *pādānudhyāta* compound, which is found in the notification part of the royal grants. This formula seems to reflect a claim of legitimacy: in a case of regular power transmission from father to son, the compound contains the coronation names of the ruling king and his immediate predecessor, both qualified by more or less the same honorific titles; in a case of irregular transmission from an elder brother to a younger (Indraratha and Karṇa), the *pādānudhyāta* formula is slightly modified; while it is strongly altered when there is a break in the line of transmission (Somavamsin00016). Thus, the *pādānudhyāta* formula may also have a political function. When it is quoted in full with alternating coronation names and similar honorific titles associated with both names, it seems to indicate a political stability. On the other hand, when the formula is shorter or unbalanced, it conveys some prevailing instability.

The presence of a religious title within the *pādānudhyāta* formula and the meaning of the coronation names (*protégé* of Śiva and *protégé* of Bhava) seems to indicate a religious value of the whole compound, raising the question of the

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46 Although the content of Somavamsin00032 is very corrupted, lines 4–5 seem to indicate that Someśvara has been appointed at the head of a territory and invested to a kingly role.

involvement of Śaiva gurus within the political sphere. Indeed, two sets issued by two Somavaṁśin kings (Somavamsin00004, 00020) indicate that the grant was made at the request of the king's preceptor (*rājaguru*). To go further, it will be necessary to carry out an in-depth comparison of the honorific titles mentioned to better understand their political, religious, and administrative implications.

The distinct study of the third-party grants points out that members of the royal family or subordinates could designate Somavaṁśin kings by their coronation name in their donations to give them a kind of royal and official touch. Finally, the whole survey points out that the association of both the birth and coronation names to designate the Somavaṁśin kings does not reflect the convention used by the chancellery or the third party: there is only one instance of a compound joining the birth and coronation names (Somavamsin00016) among the royal grants, and another one among the third-party grants (Somavamsin00046). Both refer to Mahāśivagupta Yayāti. Hence, except for this king, it would be more appropriate to designate the Somavaṁśin kings by their birth names. Table 1<sup>47</sup> gives an updated account of the Somavaṁśin kings as they are named in the royal grants as well as in the third-party grants.

ruler	associated inscriptions
Svabhāvatuṅga Śivagupta	
Janamejaya (Mahābhavagupta)	Somavamsin00001, 00002, 00003, 00004, 00005, 00006, 00007, 00008, 00009, 00010, 00011, 00012, 00041, 00042, 00043, 00044, 00045
Yayāti (Mahāśivagupta)	Somavamsin00017, 00018, 00022, 00023, 00024, 00025
Bhīmaratha (Mahābhavagupta)	Somavamsin00019
Dharmaratha (Mahāśivagupta)	Somavamsin00020
Naghuṣa and/or Abhimanyu	
Indraratha	Somavamsin00013
Mahāśivagupta Yayāti (Caṇḍīhara)	Somavamsin00016
Uddyotakeśarin (Mahābhavagupta)	Somavamsin00015, 00033, 00038, 00047
Janamejaya	
Purañjaya	
Karṇa (Mahāśivagupta)	Somavamsin00031

Table 1. List of Somavaṁśin kings as named in inscriptions

47 The table follows a chronological order. The designations in brackets are alternative designations which are not usual in the whole corpus. In the current state of knowledge, it is impossible to assert whether Naghuṣa and Abhimanyu both reigned, and in what order if both did. The genealogical accounts found in Somavamsin00013, 00030, 00015, 00037 and 00047 tell different versions of events.

The absence of a coronation name in the case of Indraratha is unsurprising and could be explained in several ways: if the coronation name is really an *abhiṣekanāman*, its absence may simply mean that Indraratha was not yet consecrated even if he received the permission of the best *dvijas* (Somavamsin00013, v. 14); while if not, it could also be the result of a radical change of the chancellery members or an intent to present the ruling king in a new way. Indeed, the genealogical account found in Indraratha's grant asserts his Śaiva faith and his belonging to the lunar lineage, but also states that Indraratha's father, Bhīma, is an *avatāra* of Vivasvat (the Sun) on the earth. To go further, a better understanding of the history of the succession is required through an analysis and a comparison of the different genealogical accounts given by the different members of the Somavamsin family.

### Primary sources

See page xvi about references to primary sources in general, and page xvii about DHARMA digital editions with a corpus ID and a number.

#### *List of Somavamsin inscriptions*

Somavamsin inscriptions are listed here by their DHARMA identifiers matched to titles. For items in parentheses, a digital edition is not yet available, so bibliographic references follow the title. Primary sources other than Somavamsin inscriptions are listed below.

Somavamsin00001: *Vakratentali grant of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 3.*

Somavamsin00002: *Gopalpur plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 1.*

Somavamsin00003: *Gopalpur plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 10.*

Somavamsin00004: *Gopalpur plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 12.*

Somavamsin00005: *Patna plates of Mahābhavagupta I Janamejaya, Āṣāḍha month, year 6.*

Somavamsin00006: *Patna plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, Kārttika month, year 6.*

(Somavamsin00007): *Kālibhanā plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 6.* Shastri (1995b, 184–88).

(Somavamsin00008): *Satalma plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 8.* Hultzsich (1905–06).

(Somavamsin00009): *Sonpur plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 17.* Chhabra (1935–36).

(Somavamsin00010): *Gaintala plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 17.* Rajaguru (1966, N° 21).

(Somavamsin00011): *Chaudwār plates #1 of Mahābhavagupta Dharmakandarpa, year 31.* Fleet (1894–95, N° B).

- (Somavamsin00012): *Kālibhanā plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 34. Rajaguru (1966, N° 25).*
- Somavamsin00013: *Banpur plates of Indraratha, year 6.*
- Somavamsin00014: *Kamalpur plates of the time of Karṇa, year 4.*
- Somavamsin00015: *Bālijhari plates of Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin, year 4.*
- Somavamsin00016: *Jatesinga-Dungri plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 3.*
- (Somavamsin00017): *Orissa State Museum plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 4. Srinivasan (1969–70).*
- (Somavamsin00018): *Pāṭṇā plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 28. Laskar (1905, N° J).*
- Somavamsin00019: *Cuttack plates of Mahābhavagupta Bhīmaratha, year 3.*
- (Somavamsin00020): *Mahulpara plates of Mahāśivagupta Dharmaratha, year 11. Srinivasan (1967–68).*
- Somavamsin00021: *Nuapatna plates of the time of Janamejaya, year 5.*
- Somavamsin00022: *Pāṭṇā plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 8.*
- (Somavamsin00023): *Cuttack plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 9. Fleet (1894–95, N° E).*
- (Somavamsin00024): *Nibinna plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 15. Mazumdar (1911–12, N° B).*
- (Somavamsin00025): *Pāṭṇā plates of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 24. Laskar (1905, N° I).*
- Somavamsin00026: *Kudopali plates of the time of Mahābhavagupta, year 13. Kielhorn (1896–97b).*
- Somavamsin00027: *Lalāṭendukesari cave inscription of the time of Uddyotakeśarin, year 5.*
- Somavamsin00028: *Pāṭṇā grant of Mahābhavagupta, year 11.*
- Somavamsin00029: *Navamuni cave inscription of the time of Uddyotakeśarin, year 18.*
- Somavamsin00030: *Brahmeśvara temple inscription of the time of Uddyotakeśarin, year 18.*
- Somavamsin00031: *Ratnagiri plates of Mahāśivagupta Karṇa, year 6.*
- Somavamsin00032: *Kelga plates of Someśvaradeva, year 1.*
- Somavamsin00033: *Stray plate of Uddyotakeśarin from Mahada.*
- Somavamsin00034: *Gandhibedha Sūrya image inscription of the time of Karṇa.*
- Somavamsin00035: *Stray plate of a Somavamśin or Telugu-Coḍa grant from Kelga.*
- (Somavamsin00036): *Sambalpur University Museum plates of the time of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 23. Shastri (1995b, Supplement I, 343–47).*
- (Somavamsin00037): *Degaon plates of the time of Janamejaya. Shastri (1995b, Supplement II).*
- Somavamsin00038: *Sankhameri plates of Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin, year 4.*
- Somavamsin00039: *Ruchida plates of Mahābhavagupta, year 8.*
- Somavamsin00040: *Baragaon plates of the time of Janamejaya, year 13.*
- (Somavamsin00041): *Ranipur-Jharial plates of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya, year 16. Unpublished, mentioned by Acharya (2014, N° 12).*
- (Somavamsin00042): *Chaudwār plates #2 of Mahābhavagupta Dharmakandarpa, year 31. Fleet (1894–95, N° D).*
- (Somavamsin00043): *Chaudwār plates #3 of Mahābhavagupta Dharmakandarpa, year 31. Fleet (1894–95, N° C).*

(Somavamsin00044): *Stray plate of Janamejaya, year 3*. Unpublished,<sup>48</sup> mentioned by Acharya (2014, N° 21) and Tripathy (2010, N° 6).

(Somavamsin00045): *Stray plate of Mahābhavagupta Janamejaya*. Unpublished, mentioned by Acharya (2014, N° 22) and Tripathy (2010, N° 7).

Somavamsin00046: *Khandahata plates of the time of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti, year 3*.

Somavamsin00047: *Kāṇḍavindhā plates of Mahābhavagupta Uddyotakeśarin, year 3*.

Somavamsin00048: *Navamuni cave inscription, undated, maybe of the time of Uddyotakeśarin*.

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*Boṇḍā plates of Śivagupta, year 22*: DaksinaKosala00036.

*Lodhiā plates of Śivagupta, year 57*: DaksinaKosala00046.

*Malhār plates of Śivagupta, undated*: DaksinaKosala00050.

*Malhār plates of Śivagupta, undated (presumably year 6)*: DaksinaKosala00032.

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48 The field trip carried out in January 2023 enabled me to photograph and read the five legible lines. This plate, cut in half, is the third one of a set and the five legible lines include the quotation of a usual benedictive and imprecatory stanza and the mention of the date.

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