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# On the Bilingual Inscriptions of the Fārūqī Sultans of Khandesh

Luther Obrock

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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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# On the Bilingual Inscriptions of the Fārūqī Sultans of Khandesh

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University of California, Berkeley

## 1. Introduction

In the 1580s, the Fārūqī Sultan ʿĀdil Shāh IV (also known as ʿĀdil Khān IV) undertook a noteworthy architectural and epigraphic campaign. In 1584 and 1590, ʿĀdil Shāh dedicated two mosques, one in the hill fort of Asirgarh and one in the city of Burhanpur, both located in the south of the present-day state of Madhya Pradesh. Asirgarh and Burhanpur were two important sites for the Fārūqīs, the ruling family of the small but relatively long-lived Sultanate of Khandesh. ʿĀdil Shāh Fārūqī dedicates these mosques with bilingual Arabic-Sanskrit inscriptions placed in the *mihrāb* in both Asirgarh and Burhanpur. Each inscription is rather brief: the *Asirgarh mosque inscription of ʿĀdil Shāh IV*, the shorter of the two, has two lines of Arabic over three lines of Sanskrit, while the longer *Burhanpur mosque inscription of ʿĀdil Shāh IV* consists of three lines of Arabic over six in Sanskrit. The Arabic text, written in Naṣḥ, contains a benediction, Qurʿānic quotations, a cursory genealogy of the Fārūqī Sultans, and a date. In a mixture of verse and prose, the six lines of Sanskrit contain a praise of God, called the *ṣṛṣṭi-kartṛ*, the ‘agent of creation,’ a lineage of ʿĀdil Shāh, and a date for the construction of the mosque. In both inscriptions, the Arabic and the Sanskrit text are parallel in structure, however the Sanskrit is far more fulsome in its praise of the Islamic God and its genealogy of ʿĀdil Shāh and much more detailed in its dating; the Sanskrit also provides the year, calculated in two reckoning systems, and exact astrological moment.

While bilingual inscriptions are not rare in South Asian epigraphical history, these tend to use Sanskrit and a regional vernacular such as Kannada or Tamil.

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1 I would like to thank Pushkar Sohoni for first drawing my attention to the Sanskrit inscriptions in the Burhanpur Mosque and the Asirgarh Fort, and for the many illuminating conversations I have had with him on related topics.

The transregional elite languages of Muslim religion, literature, and trade appear next to Sanskrit in a smaller yet significant body of bilingual inscriptions. These bilingual inscriptions combining Arabic or Persian with Sanskrit tend to be either epitaphs or commemorations of pious donations of more “secular” spaces, for instance gardens and wells. To my knowledge, these Fārūqī bilingual inscriptions are unique given their placement within the *miḥrāb*, the site of religious focus in the mosque. The bilingual Sanskrit-Arabic inscriptions of ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī are doubly marked both by the tension between two languages of religion and power and by their architectural context in a site of Muslim worship. However, the visual and material presence of the bilingual inscriptions at such a prominent place suggests that each of these languages were doing work recognised as the legitimate sphere of each language, and that this work was legible in the juxtaposition of the two languages embodied in the two scripts.

In this brief essay, I introduce and contextualise ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī and his epigraphical project to examine the continuing prestige and the new elasticity of Sanskrit epigraphical culture in the Sultanates. While the history of representations of Islamic power in Sanskrit in South Asia stretches back as far as the presence of Islam in the Subcontinent, Sanskrit has tended to be portrayed as completely indifferent to Islamic religion, Islamicate cultural practices, and Muslim people in general. Yet its use in this highly visible religious context shows that various actors continued to valorise the language and that it retained powerful expressive possibilities even in Islamic spaces and sultanate<sup>2</sup> politics. While the Fārūqīs are marginal within the history of pre-Mughal sultanate polities and while bilingual inscriptions using Islamic languages of prestige are marginal in the history of Sanskrit epigraphy, ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī’s mosque inscriptions can serve as instructive examples for the diverse and often surprising habitations of Sanskrit in the sultanate period.

The question thus arises: why was Sanskrit, a language deeply connected to the religious texts and practices of Hinduism, used to consecrate an Islamic place of worship? This basic question, which can help destabilise and recontextualise a priori assumptions about historical periodisation and cultural divisions, leads to further, perhaps more salient questions about this particular use of Sanskrit in a charged religious and political setting. What is the relationship

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2 Here and throughout I use the adjective “sultanate” with a lower-case “s” as a shorthand for a historical moment between the stabilisation of the first Islamic polities and the rise of the Mughal imperium. In such a way the sultanate period, or the period of the plural sultanates, is taken as a time without clear centralised political or cultural power, in which different regional polities are negotiating their own power, prestige, and representation.

between the Arabic and the Sanskrit portions of the inscription? How are the languages presented in stone? How does the inscription relate to architecture? How does it speak to elite political and religious practice? Finally, how does this single (and perhaps singular) use of Sanskrit enrich and complicate both the history of Sanskrit and the history of elite Hindu-Muslim interactions in the sultanate period?

At the outset it must be stressed that the bilingual inscriptions of ‘Ādil Shāh IV belong to a completely Islamic context. Unlike in the well-known Veraval Sanskrit-Arabic bilingual inscription, there is no invocation of Hindu religious or political agents.<sup>3</sup> While the Veraval inscription seems to speak to different political, social, and religious communities in different languages, the Fārūqī inscriptions are present an integrated vision of the Fārūqīs, their temporal power, and their pious largesse. The inscriptions themselves appear on the *mihrāb*, the focus of Islamic worship in the mosque. These inscriptions do not mark sites of encounter or a liminal space of cross-cultural exchange. The interplay between Sanskrit and Arabic must then point to some other salient feature of language and self-presentation in sultanate South Asia. As an experiment toward thinking through the tensions and possibilities of bilingual inscriptions in the sultanate period, this paper reads the Sanskrit-Arabic mosque inscriptions of the Fārūqī Sultans and asks what work does such an inscription do that an inscription entirely in Sanskrit or Arabic could not. In the words of Sheldon Pollock (2006, 502), language deployment represents “choices of cultural-political actors in response to differential cultural-political circumstances.” While this introductory essay cannot hope to present a new “theory” of Sanskrit in the sultanate world, a careful reading of the bilingual inscriptions of ‘Ādil Shāh IV provides some insight into the “life” of Sanskrit in relation to emergent languages, religions, and polities in the complex ecology of elite culture in sultanate South Asia.

## 2. The Fārūqī Sultanate

Before looking at ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī’s inscriptions, the history of the Fārūqīs and the Khandesh Sultanate must be rehearsed. The Fārūqīs (Table 1) are a somewhat obscure upstart group that managed to take control of Khandesh, an area on the border of present-day southern Madhya Pradesh and northern Maharashtra. Hemmed in by larger and more powerful neighbours — most notably

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3 For the Veraval inscription, see Patel (2008).

the Gujarat and the Ahmadnagar Sultanates — the Fārūqīs managed to survive, even flourish, from their sultanate’s inception in the late fourteenth century until their eventual defeat and annexation by the Mughals in 1610. While much further research remains to be done on the Fārūqīs in Persian language accounts, a basic sketch of their history has been recounted in both Muḥammad Qāsim Firishta’s *Tārīkh* and Abū’l-Faẓl’s *Ā’in-i Akbarī*. The Fārūqī Sultans began as an upwardly mobile family in the service of the Delhi Sultans. Firishta (Briggs 1829, 803–4) recounts that the Fārūqīs were “among the most respectable nobles at the Delhi Court” and that they claimed high status through descent from the Khalif ‘Umar Fārūq. Firishta records their rise to prominence with an anecdotal account that upon receiving timely help during a hunt, the Delhi Sultan Fīrūz Tughluq granted the districts of Thalner and Karanda to a young Arab from this family, Malik Rājā Fārūqī. He served the Delhi rulers well on their southern frontier and managed to subdue several recalcitrant petty chieftains in the countryside nearby. After the death of Fīrūz Tughluq in 1390, Malik Rājā, through a combination of shrewd political alliances, military boldness, and seeming sheer luck, managed to carve out an independent principality. His son, Malik Naṣīr (r. 1399–1437), captured the important Asirgarh fort and founded the cities of Zainabad and Burhanpur on the east and west banks of the Tapti River, respectively. The sites of Asirgarh and Burhanpur figure strongly in the history and self-presentation of the Fārūqī Sultans.

While the importance of these two sites could be inferred solely from the congregational (*jāmi‘*) mosques and the prominent inscriptions patronised by ‘Adil Shāh Fārūqī, both Burhanpur and Asirgarh figure centrally in the historical accounts of Firishta and Abū’l-Faẓl. These Persian sources provide a narrative context for the bilingual inscriptions. Around twenty kilometres apart, Asirgarh and Burhanpur appear as the two major nodes of Fārūqī power. The *Ā’in-i Akbarī* puts these two sites in conversation as the most notable places in Khandesh. Abū’l-Faẓl writes: “*Asir* is the residence of the governor, it is a fortress on a lofty hill. Three other forts encompass it which for strength and loftiness are scarcely to be equalled. A large and flourishing city is at its foot. *Burhanpur* is a large city three *kos* distant from the *Tapti*.”<sup>4</sup> Citing Firishta, the *Bombay Gazetteer* (Ramsay and Pollen 1880, 234) records: “The only prosperous part of the district was near Asirgad, where Āsa, a rich Ahir, had during the famine fed the people from his grain stores and built many great works, among them the walls of Asirgad fort.” The story as told is less than flattering, in which Naṣīr *Khān* Fārūqī tricks the

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4 Translation from Jarrett and Sarkar (1949, 232), italics in original.

ruler of the fort and is able to displace its former Ahir ruler under false pretences.

Burhanpur for its part became an important religious, cultural, and mercantile centre. Originally founded by Naṣīr K̲hān in honour of the Deccan saint Burhān al-Dīn Ḡharīb, a famed Ṣūfī whose own journey mirrors that of the Fārūqīs, beginning in North India and rising in power and prestige in the Deccan. According to Muḥammad Shafī<sup>c</sup> (2012), Burhanpur “commemorates his name, for [Burhān al-Dīn Ḡharīb] had given his blessings to an ancestor of its founder, Naṣīr K̲hān Fārūqī (r. 801–41/1399–1437), when he rested here on his way to Deōgīr and foretold the rise of the Fārūqīs and their founding of the city.” The Burhanpur congregational mosque was thus central to the public persona of the Fārūqī rulers. Consecrated in 1590 by the Fārūqī Sultan ‘Ādil Shāh, the mosque was meant to stand as a testament to the longevity and power of the Khandesh Sultanate. Such self-confidence was short-lived: ‘Ādil Shāh’s son, Bahādur K̲hān, surrendered to the Mughal forces under Akbar less than ten years later. After its conquest, Akbar himself had a new inscription carved under the left *minaret* placing the mosque — and by extension the Khandesh Sultanate — in a relationship of inclusion within and subservience to a new political dispensation.

Name	Regnal dates	Attestation
Malik Naṣīr	1399–1437	chronicles, Burhanpur
Mirān ‘Ādil K̲hān	1437–1441	chronicles
Mirān Mubārak	1441–1457	chronicles
‘Ādil K̲hān II	1457–1503	chronicles
Dāūd K̲hān	1503–1510	chronicles
Ghaznī K̲hān	1510	chronicles, Burhanpur
Qaiṣar K̲hān		Burhanpur
Hassan K̲hān		Burhanpur
‘Ādil K̲hān III	1510–1520	chronicles, Asirgarh, Burhanpur
Mirān Muḥammad	1520–1535	chronicles
Mubārak K̲hān	1535–1566	chronicles, Asirgarh, Burhanpur
Mirān Muḥammad II	1566–1576	chronicles
Rājā ‘Alī K̲hān, ‘Ādil	1576–1596	chronicles, Asirgarh, Burhanpur
Bahādur K̲hān	1596–1599	chronicles

Table 5. List of the Fārūqī sultans, showing attestation of names in the inscriptions of Asirgarh and Burhanpur, and the chronicles of Abū’l-Faḏl and Firishṭa

These narratives of the Fārūqī sultans and the two main sites of political power are here told in brief to contextualise the setting of ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī’s inscriptional project. Asirgarh was an emblem of martial strength and military power, taken through the efforts of the upwardly mobile family. Burhanpur was a symbol of both the Fārūqīs’ piety and their divine ordination. The town flourished through divine favour shown by the saint and the ingenuity of the new sultanate he had chosen to honour. ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s inscriptional project is deeply imbricated in Fārūqī history and in a project of elite self-presentation. In the two bilingual inscriptions in Asirgarh and Burhanpur, ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī gestures toward Malik Naṣīr’s long and expansionist reign in his epigraphical and architectural project from the end of the sixteenth century. These two key sites of Malik Naṣīr’s reign become the stage for ‘Ādil Shāh IV to present his surprising inscriptions describing and inscribing their piety and locating it in time.

### 3. Contextualising the Fārūqī Sultan’s bilingual inscriptions

The two bilingual inscriptions of ‘Ādil Shāh IV are placed at sites of architectural and religious focus in congregational mosques. Such a prestigious placement makes the interplay between languages, materiality, and ideology all the more salient. Through their spatial position and material durability, the public linguistic juxtaposition of Sanskrit and Arabic demands a careful theorisation. Unlike manuscripts, which may circulate only in rarefied elite circles, inscriptions confront the viewer; similarly, even if the viewer had no knowledge of Sanskrit (or Arabic for that matter), the difference in script is clearly manifest. There was no escaping the implied conversation of these two languages played out on the walls of Islamic religious buildings. The Sanskrit text was certainly meant to be seen, and to be seen in the context of political and religious practice of the congregational mosque.<sup>5</sup> It was placed firmly in the Islamic visual mode (as the letters are raised in the fashion of many Perso-Arabic elite inscriptions rather than incised), yet the different script highlights a disjunction between the two languages, or at least implies that these two languages operated in different spheres. The *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur mosque inscriptions* stand as invitations to think through the interplay of language, political power, religion, and architecture in pre-Mughal sultanate South Asia. To put it more bluntly, they call into question simple notions of religious community bounded by language,

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5 See for instance Insoll (1999, esp. chapter 2).



architecture, and practice, and demand a language practice long defined by Hindu and Muslim religious communities in premodern South Asia.

While scholars like Steven Vose have studied the relationship of the Jainas and the Delhi Sultanate and Audrey Truschke has investigated the complex ties between the Sanskrit literati and the Mughal Court, there remains much to uncover. In particular, a careful study of the inscriptional record can highlight the diverse habitations of Sanskrit, still important enough to be commemorated in stone and flexible enough to speak to diverse communities in diverse spaces. Rather than speaking of large-scale processes of state or identity formation, this paper attempts a beginning of a microhistory, to see how languages frozen in time, embedded in stone, and set in architectural spaces can illuminate, and perhaps complicate, histories of language, piety, identity, and elite self-presentation in medieval South Asia.

While discussions of religion and power often begin with ideology or belief, the physical presence of ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s inscriptions within a built space invites centring materiality and public practice in their contextualisation. Materiality and architecture have recently begun to take more prominent place in reconstructing the history of both sultanate polities and Hindu-Muslim interaction in South Asia. In particular, Finbarr Flood’s *Objects of Translation* (Flood 2018) and Richard Eaton and Phillip Wagoner’s *Power, Memory and Architecture* (Eaton and Wagoner 2014) have fruitfully brought material culture and architecture into the discussion of the formation of Indo-Islamic elite practice. Flood’s *Objects of Translation* in particular looks at the negotiation of power and difference in material culture. In particular, his attention to “the mutual imbrications of animate subjects and inanimate objects” and his sensitivity to “the constitutive relationships between subjects, objects, and political formations” (Flood 2018, 12) is a guide to thinking through the complex web of relations that the bilingual inscriptions in context illuminate.

The use of language then can be seen as taking part in the same web of constitutive relationships that the inscriptions’ material forms instantiate. How then to see the relationship between Arabic and Sanskrit in the inscriptions? This question is especially salient given both Sanskrit and Arabic’s status as “cosmopolitan” languages. At a basic level, “cosmopolitan” means a learned language that transcends regional particularity and historical contingency. However, a cosmopolitan language tends to be defined against an “other,” a living vernacular language. In the case of Sanskrit, Sheldon Pollock (1996) argues that the “Sanskrit Cosmopolis” is an order of languages centred on Sanskrit in relation to South Asian vernaculars. Pollock bases his theory of the Sanskrit Cosmopolis on epigraphical data, particularly on how Sanskrit is articulated as a

language of power. This often comes into relief in the epigraphical record when Sanskrit is inscribed next to a regional language, a vernacular. While Pollock's theory has been deployed to explain South Asian cultural and literary history largely in terms of the cosmopolitan and vernacular divide, I would like to return to the basis of his theory, the order of languages in epigraphy. Pollock distinguishes two portions of the text, the documentary and the workly. "Our public poets did not confuse these two realms, they usually (and as time passed invariably) segregated them by a differentiation of codes, with two different kinds of truth, operative in two different kinds of worlds" (Pollock 1996, 242). These two different codes spoke to different concerns: Sanskrit transcended particularity and operated as the language of aesthetics and politics, while the vernacular spoke to worldly and temporal concerns.

Such a model holds for bilingual inscriptions in early Sanskrit epigraphical history. Sanskrit bilingualism works differently, however, when put next to the Islamicate languages of Arabic and Persian. Most obviously, while Sanskrit and the vernacular are different languages, they often use the same script. When Sanskrit comes next to Arabic, the difference in script is pronounced. While bilingual Sanskrit-Arabic and Sanskrit-Persian inscriptions are relatively well-known, reading the two portions of such an epigraph demands a careful contextualisation as to why each language was deployed in the context of the inscription. Given that Sanskrit is the language of public piety and political self-presentation in Hindu contexts and Arabic (and Persian) plays that role in Islamic contexts, the presence of both in a single inscription calls out for a reading of their interaction. While a clear-cut order of languages in the sense of cosmopolitan and vernacular is not present in the inscriptions of 'Ādil Shāh IV, the presence of two languages demands a theorisation for their division of labour.

The Fārūqī inscriptions present their Sanskrit text in the *praśasti* style, a way of writing in inscriptions that stretches back to the first instantiations of Sanskrit as a language of political power in the world. Elite inscriptions thus use *praśasti* to articulate kingship. Sanskrit *praśastis* thus establish the genealogy of the dynasty, highlight the dynasty's merits, and praise the current ruler. Yet in bilingual inscriptions especially, *praśastis* and their stress on succession, sovereignty, and royal qualities are informed by the interplay between the "work" done by different languages in different portions of the inscription. To return to Pollock's model, "cosmopolitan" Sanskrit depends on what he calls "the division of labour" which exists "between cosmopolitan and vernacular language use, the one expressive and the other documentary" (2006, 121). The Sanskrit is expressive: it took part in the political aesthetic which supported all claims

toward sovereignty. The vernacular languages then took “the quotidian status and function they had in everyday life” (2006, 118).

I think it is necessary to rehearse Pollock’s arguments about *praśastis* in bilingual inscriptions here because they form the basis for his use of the term “hyperglossia,” that is to say, the order of languages in South Asia with Sanskrit on top. The aesthetic resources of Sanskrit “enabled the writer to say or write things not yet sayable or at least not yet inscribable in any of the other languages of southern Asia” (2006, 136). This model theorises the relation between South and Southeast Asian vernaculars, yet when Sanskrit is placed next to Arabic, an increasingly important elite language in South Asia, what sorts of claims are being made? What “work” do these languages do, and what does their juxtaposition mean in the context of Fārūqī elite discourse? A careful reading of the Sanskrit *praśastis* in bilingual inscriptions can shed light on elite self-presentation between Indic and Islamicate modes in the sultanate period.

In her book *Precolonial India in Practice*, Cynthia Talbot argues that instead of dealing with large-scale models of civilisational processes, careful analyses of a complex of localised factors can provide a way to think through received colonial and post-colonial notions of community, religion, state, and power that colour scholarship on medieval South Asia. This is especially salient given the highly politicised place of religion, particularly in terms of national and communal conflict, in contemporary India. Talbot (2001, 14) privileges a “micro-history so that the biases encoded in colonial forms of knowledge can be overcome; macroscopic portrayals and master-narratives impute western forms of knowledge, thus one must get as close to the ground as possible in order to minimise their influence.” She argues that microhistorical projects and thick descriptions should provide the basis of historical work in South Asia since with these types of studies, scholars avoid “creating abstract models of reality that suppress its complexity and ambiguity” (*ibid.*).

The two inscriptions of ‘Ādil Shāh IV present such an opportunity to think about large issues on a small scale: how can we imagine the role of the Sanskrit language of praise poetry operating in the premier space of religious power and legitimacy in the heart of the Khandesh Sultanate? This paper argues that the division of labour in the Fārūqī mosque inscriptions shows that languages were used to do different things: Arabic was used to frame donative piety in quotations from the *Qur‘ān* and Hadith. Sanskrit was used for praise of God and kings and for locating the mosque precisely in time. This division of labour is different from that which characterised Pollock’s “cosmopolitan” bilingual inscriptions; however, it seems that elite actors within the Khandesh Sultanate still recognised the political and aesthetic power inherent in epigraphical Sanskrit and

deployed it next to the sacred language of Islam. In so doing, the *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur* inscriptions present a new sort of language politics deploying the prestige of Arabic and Sanskrit into new and unexpected relation.

#### 4. The Arabic inscriptions

To begin with the Arabic portions of ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s inscriptions, both are similar in placement, calligraphy, and content, and do similar ideological work. Both are placed in the prayer niche of a congregational mosque, both contain a number of lines in Arabic positioned over the Sanskrit inscription, and both are inscribed in relief — that is to say, unlike most Sanskrit and Indic-language inscriptions and like many Arabic and Persian inscriptions, the letters are raised with the negative space carved away. The similar style of letters is not surprising, given that the same person, one Muṣṭafā son of Nūr Muḥammad, is said to be the scribe for both inscriptions. The *Asirgarh inscription* consists of five lines, two of Arabic and three of Sanskrit. The *Burhanpur mosque inscription* contains three lines of Arabic and six of Sanskrit.

Outside of their physical placement and aesthetic appearance, the contents of both the *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur* inscriptions are largely parallel. They both do similar work, focusing on the building of the mosque and the pious merit that accrues from such a construction. The Arabic inscription in both begins with two quotations praising the construction of mosques — one from the *al-Jinn* chapter of the *Qur’ān* (72.18): “And verily mosques are built for God, invoke no other God but Him” and a Hadith quotation: “And the Prophet, may peace be on him, says, ‘One who builds a mosque for Allāh, even if it be as small as the nest of a Qaṭāt bird, Allāh builds for him a house in paradise.’”<sup>6</sup> This statement is found in the fourth chapter, “Mosques and Congregations” of the *Sunan ibn Mājah*: “It was narrated from Jābir bin ‘Abdullāh that the messenger of Allāh said ‘Whoever builds a mosque for the sake of Allāh, like a sparrow’s nest or even smaller, Allāh will build him a house in Paradise’ (Khattab 2007, 1:485). This quotation is a clear reference to learned discussion of the meritorious efficacy of building a mosque and the merit that will accrue to the donor of a mosque. This short portion of the Arabic text finishes with the statement that “This auspicious mosque, which is one of the bounties of the time and like a mole on a beautiful face, was built by the order of our lord and master, the Sultan.”<sup>7</sup>

6 Translation from Rahim (1961, 56–57), typo corrected.

7 Translation from Rahim (1961, 57).

When comparing the two texts, the Arabic portion of the *Asirgarh inscription* is much simpler. After discussing the meritorious nature of mosque construction, it states that it was ordered by “‘Ādil Shāh, son of Mubārak Shāh, son of ‘Ādil Shāh al-Fārūqī, al-‘Umarī, al-‘Adawī” and asks that God “accept (appreciate) his pious actions through the holy Prophet and his companions and descendants!”<sup>8</sup> This rather truncated genealogy focuses on ‘Ādil Shāh and only goes back three generations. The *Burhanpur inscription*, by contrast, goes back six generations: “‘Ādil Shāh, son of Mubārak Shāh, son of ‘Ādil Shāh, son of Ḥasan Khān, son of Qaiṣar Khān, son of Ghaznī Khān, son of Rājā Malik al-Fārūqī, al-‘Umarī, al-‘Adawī [...]”<sup>9</sup> In both Arabic inscriptions, the genealogy is rather simply stated. Each consists merely of names connected by patrilineal descent to the current ruler. Finally, both Arabic inscriptions end with a wish for God to accept the donation.

To return to what “work” the Arabic does, the focus of the Arabic is completely on the central place of the mosque in the *Qur‘ān* and the meritorious nature of the donation of a mosque. Beyond a formulaic benediction, there is no praise of God or *bismillāh* in this portion of the inscription. The Arabic portion of the inscription is an argument centred on the physical presence of the mosque and its social and political implications. The inscriptions move from Qur‘ānic quotation to Hadith quotation to locating the mosque as the “auspicious mark” of the age, to connecting it to Sultan ‘Ādil Shāh IV and his lineage. The spiritual merit gained by the construction is further located in this specific site and in the person of the sultan and his family. While the Arabic takes pride of place, being positioned above the Sanskrit in the topmost portion of the *mihrāb*, the “worldly” portion of the text — the praise of God, the praise of kings, and the exact auspicious moment of its construction — is recorded in Sanskrit. At this point we need to turn to the Sanskrit portion of the inscription which, by its very presence, supplements, reinforces and even questions the Arabic portion, and brings us back to the question of the order of languages that ‘Ādil Shāh’s inscriptions imply.

## 5. The Sanskrit inscriptions

While it might seem that within an inscription recording the pious construction of a mosque and placed within the mosque itself, the main “religious” work of

8 Translation from Kuraishī (1926, 1).

9 Translation from Rahim (1961, 57).

the inscription would be done in Arabic, the Sanskrit portions of the Fārūqī mosques draw this into question. As in the case of the Arabic inscriptions, both the *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur* Sanskrit texts are similar; however, the later *Burhanpur inscription* is an expansion and polishing of the earlier *Asirgarh inscription*. While they are not identical, they both use similar words, phrases, and concepts and can be fruitfully read together to give a sort of large field in which to place the translation of Islamic religion and Fārūqī power into Sanskrit. While the Arabic portion locates the mosque within Qurʿānic traditions, the Sanskrit portion does three discreet things: first, it praises the Islamic God; second, it eulogises the Sultanate Dynasty; and third, it provides an exact date for the construction of the mosque based on Indic calendrical models. Here I will read each of these portions in turn.

Both the *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur* inscriptions begin with a similar benediction. As would be expected in any Sanskrit royal inscription, the Fārūqī mosque inscriptions eulogise a deity; here however we find the Muslim God placed into Sanskrit categories. The *Asirgarh inscription* begins:

Homage to the divine person (*puruṣa*) as the maker! Homage to you, who are the essence (*ātman*) of all qualities (*guṇa*) [yet] without qualities (*nirguṇa*), whose inherent form is [both] manifest [and] unmanifest,<sup>10</sup> whose essence is the bliss of consciousness,<sup>11</sup> the support (*ādhāra*) of the universe (*viśva*).<sup>12</sup>

The *Burhanpur mosque inscription* for its part uses similar language to praise the Islamic God in Sanskrit. The inscription states:

Homage to the illustrious maker of creation! The unmanifest (*avyakta*), pervading (*vyāpaka*), permanent (*nitya*), beyond qualities (*guṇātīta*), essentially consciousness (*cidātmaka*), the cause (*kāraṇa*) of what is manifest — I praise that Lord (*īśvara*), manifest and unmanifest (*vyaktāvyakta*).<sup>13</sup>

In each inscription we have the same key words repeated: manifestation (*vyakta*), quality (*guṇa*), consciousness (*cit*), and eternity (*nitya*). While none of these concepts would be foreign in the praise of a Hindu deity, the two Sanskrit

10 Or following Ḳuraishī, “manifest yet hidden.”

11 Or following Ḳuraishī, “inherent in *chit* (mind) and *anand* (happiness).”

12 *Asirgarh mosque inscription*, l. 1: *śrī-kartṛ-puruṣāya namaḥ | guṇātmane nirguṇāya vyaktāvyakta-svarūpiṇe | cid-ānāndātmane nityam viśvādhārāya te namaḥ ||*. I would like to thank Dániel Balogh for the emendation of Ḳuraishī’s (1926) text *viśvādhārayate* to *viśvādhārāya te*. Here and throughout, translations from Sanskrit are my own.

13 *Burhanpur mosque inscription*, l. 1: *śrī-sṛṣṭi-kartre namaḥ | avyaktam vyāpakam nityam guṇātītam cid-ātmakam | vyaktasya kāraṇam vaṇde vyaktāvyaktam tam īśvaram ||*.

texts marshal them in order to address specific aspects of Islamic theology in Sanskrit. The language here relies on certain notions of creation as well as the connection between a god that is beyond all qualities (*gunātīta*) yet still somehow present. The Burhanpur mosque is just one of many examples of how the Sanskrit language attempts to include Muslim conceptions of God. As Richard Salomon (1998, 307) noted in reference to his translation of line 1 of the *Burhanpur mosque inscription*, “this invocatory verse is so phrased as to be acceptable to both Muslim and Hindu beliefs.” Such a statement seems true, yet why use such language at the religious focal point of an Islamic place of worship?

While I know of no other uses of Sanskrit language descriptions of the Islamic God within the religious space of a mosque, the Fārūqī inscriptions’ Sanskrit description resonates with other examples from the first Sultanates. For instance, in the northwest of the Subcontinent, the mint of Maḥmūd of Ghaznī in Lahore struck a remarkable set of coins in 1027–1028.<sup>14</sup> The *dirhams* (called in Sanskrit *ṭāṅkas*) bear the Islamic profession of faith (the *kalimat*, “there is no god but God and Muḥammad is the messenger of God”) on one side in Arabic, with a “translation” on the other side written in Sanskrit in the Śāradā script. The Sanskrit translation reads *avyaktam ekam muhamadaḥ avatāraḥ nṛpatiḥ mahamūdaḥ*, “The unmanifest (*avyaktam*) is one. Muhamada is [his] *avatāra*. The king is Mahamūda.” While drawing a direct line between the Fārūqī inscriptions and the Ghaznavid coin legend is tenuous at best, it is striking to see similar language being used to make the Islamic God legible in Sanskrit.

While the languages are similar, the difference in material form and context can be instructive. In both the bilingual *dirham* and the mosque inscriptions, the essential question is about legibility: who were these different languages meant to be legible to? In the case of Maḥmūd of Ghaznī’s coin, the two sides of the coin are not direct translations, but rather separately address different elite groups across the stretch of territory where the legends of the coin would be circulated. With its connotations of mobility, exchange, and a shared language of value, Maḥmūd of Ghaznī’s bilingual *dirham* stands at the beginning of a long and experimental process of state formation and cultural negotiation underlying the stabilisation of Muslim states in South Asia. The “translation” of the praise of God in the Fārūqī inscriptions stands at the other end of this process and shows a much more complex relationship than just two complementary “sides” doing the same thing. The two halves of the inscriptions, Arabic and Sanskrit, must be read in terms of complementary legibility. Within the sacred

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14 This coin has of course garnered a fair amount of scholarly attention. For an account, see A. K. Bhattacharya (1964), and Goron and Goenka (2001, xxvi–xxvii).

and elite precincts of the mosque, the physical instantiation of the two languages portrays the ideological stabilisation of Fārūqī power. It does not matter that neither the Sanskrit nor the Arabic would be actually understandable outside of small circles of elite specialists; the work that they do would be translated by elite valorisation of their actual physical presence of the languages and their scripts.

Following the conventions of the Sanskrit *praśasti* genre, the inscription moves from the benediction to the *vaṁśa-prastavana*, the praise of the lineage of the donor. Interestingly, the Sanskrit highlights the longevity of the Fārūqī lineage rather than the mosque. While the Arabic-language inscriptions centre the mosque, it is not mentioned until the very end of the Sanskrit inscriptions, which rather focus on praise of God and of the king. Both the *Asirgarh* and the *Burhanpur* inscriptions are similar:

*Asirgarh*:

As long as the moon, sun, and stars remain in the sky [and] the Gaṅgā River on the earth, so long may that faultless lineage of the Phārukis remain upon the earth.<sup>15</sup>

*Burhanpur*:

As long as the moon and sun and stars remain in the sky, so long may the lineage of the Phārukis rejoice long on the earth!<sup>16</sup>

Similar statements are found throughout the Sanskrit epigraphical record; it is a common stock phrase in epigraphical Sanskrit and many inscriptions even have the sun and moon carved into the top of the record to artistically represent the durability of which the inscriptions speak. However, it is noteworthy that this wish for permanence is not for the pious donation, the mosque, but rather for the patron's family.

From this statement, we move on to a general lineage of the Fārūqīs. While the *Asirgarh inscription* does not go into the lineage in any poetic detail, the *Burhanpur inscription* places the dynasty within Sanskrit poetic expectations. To

15 *Asirgarh mosque inscription*, v. 2: *caṁdrārkkā-tārā gaṁgādi tiṣṭhanti gagane bhuvī| tāvat phāruki-vaṁśo 'sau vimalo bhuvī tiṣṭhatu||*.

16 *Burhanpur mosque inscription*, v. 2: *yāvaca candrārkkā-tārādi-sthitiḥ syād ambarāṁgaṇe| tāvat phāruki-vaṁśo 'sau ciraṁ naṁdatu bhū-tale||*. Accepting Salomon's (1998) *sthiti* for Hira Lal's (1907–08) *kṣiti*.



begin with the *Asirgarh* version, the inscription marshals the possibilities of Sanskrit compounding to give a short encomium of ʿĀdil Shāh IV. The text states:

[The inscription<sup>17</sup>] of the Overlord of the Kingdom of Victory, the illustrious Khandesh (*ṣānadeśa*), Ādila Śāha (ʿĀdil Shāh IV), son of Mubārakha Śāha (Mubārak Khān), son of the emperor (*pātaśāha*), the seven times illustrious Ādila Śāha (ʿĀdil Shāh III), [that ʿĀdil Shāh IV who is] the sun of splendour (*pratāpa*) that is dear to those risen (*udita*) in the illustrious family of the Phārukīs,<sup>18</sup> the full moon that bestows joy on the *cakora* birds of allies (*mitrajana*), dedicated to thinking on the God without Qualities (*nirguṇeśa*).<sup>19</sup>

Although this part of the inscription is in prose, it utilises the ornate, compound-heavy style that harkens back to the first royal *praśastis* preserved in Sanskrit. Similarly, it deploys the term *pratāpa*, ‘heroic vigour or strength, royal splendour,’ which is key to the ideological vocabulary of kingship in Sanskrit; and likewise, the image of the king as the sun and the moon, gladdening different groups of people, is a stock trope, as is the *cakora* bird that survives by drinking moonlight. The inscription also presents the king’s sectarian affiliation in purely Sanskritic ways, saying that he is fully intent on or engaged in (*parāyaṇa*) thinking about (*cintana*) the God without Qualities (*nirguṇeśa*). Here too the Sanskrit negotiates similarity and difference; while the format is the same as would be expected for Hindu kings, the specific form of God beyond qualities is again highlighted, reinforcing the Islamic eulogy at the beginning of the inscription. It is perhaps also noteworthy that ʿĀdil Shāh is presented as ‘thinking about’ (*cintana*) rather than the more common ‘meditating upon’ (*dhyāna*) used in reference to Indic deities. Perhaps these words are merely synonyms, but it seems to me that perhaps a qualitative difference of practice is being flagged, with *cintana* being the functional equivalent of something like the Arabic *zīkr*.

The genealogy in Sanskrit follows the Arabic text, referring to only two ancestors, Mubārak Shāh (r. 1535–1566) and ʿĀdil Shāh III (r. 1510–1520).<sup>20</sup> Perhaps noteworthy is the use of the Arabic *bin*, spelled in Sanskrit as *bina* to indicate

17 The word *adhipateḥ* is in genitive case without a clear antecedent. It could be taken with the mosque, the inscription, or perhaps the year from what follows.

18 The *akṣara ṣi* in the inscription could be a mistake for *kī*. It could also, however, be an attempt to transcribe the Arabic *q*.

19 *Asirgarh mosque inscription*, ll. 2–3: *śrīmat-phāruṣī-kulodita-prīta-pratāpa-dinakara-mitrajana-cakorānaṃda-kara-pūrṇacaṃdra-nirguṇeśa-cīntana-parāyaṇa-pātaśāha-śrī-śrī 5 ādilaśāha-bina-mubārakhaśāha-bina-ādilaśāha-vijayarājya-śrī-ṣānadeśādhipateḥ*.

20 For a full genealogy of the Fārūqī Sultans, see Table 1 above.

‘son of.’ While the genealogy presented in the Asirgarh mosque is cursory at best, the *Burhanpur inscription* provides a more fleshed-out poetic account. In two *upajāti* stanzas, the history of the dynasty is rehearsed:

In this lineage, it is said, there was a Lord of the Fārūqīs, the king Malika (Malik Naṣīr) by name. He had a son of noble mind, an ornament to the family, the king Gajanī (Ghaznī Khān). From him [was born] the hero Kesara Khāna (Kaisar Khān). His son [was] the king Hasana (Ḥasan Khān). After him was the king Edala Śāha (‘Ādil Shāh III). He had a son, the lord Mubārakha (Mubārak Khān).<sup>21</sup>

As in the *Asirgarh inscription*, the names of kings mentioned in the genealogy match the names mentioned in the Arabic; however, here the genealogy is poeticised in Sanskrit verse. Each new generation gets a quarter or half stanza giving the notion of an orderly succession.<sup>22</sup> The genealogy culminates in a glorification of ‘Ādil Shāh:

His son, whose lotus feet are polished by the tops of the crowns of enemy kings, whose fame (*kīrti*) is real, the lord of the earth, who bows day and night to the highest *brahman* who is beyond all qualities — the illustrious King Edala (‘Ādil Shāh IV) is victorious, the crowning jewel among other kings.<sup>23</sup>

Written in the *śārdūlavikrīḍita* metre, often used for texts of praise, the verse takes the same basic elements of the prose panegyric in the *Asirgarh inscription* and polishes them into ornate poetry. Each of the four quarters of the verse focuses on a different aspect of conventionalised royal representation in Sanskrit: overlordship, fame, piety, and benedictory praise. The example of crowns polishing the overlord’s feet is a stock image for showing sovereignty, *ādhipatyā* or *aiśvarya*. As in the *Asirgarh inscription*, ‘Ādil Shāh’s *pratāpa* is specifically invoked; however, here this is paired with his great fame or renown, his *kīrti*. While the *Asirgarh inscription* spoke of the Islamic God as *nirguṇeśa*, the idea is expressed in

21 *Burhanpur mosque inscription*, vv. 3–4: *vaṁśe ’tha tasmin kila phārukīndro vabhūva rājā malikābhīdhānaḥ| tasyābhavat sūnur udāra-cetāḥ kulāvataṁso gajanī-nareśaḥ|| tasmād abhūt kesara-khāna-vīraḥ putras tadīyo hasana-kṣitīśaḥ| tasmād abhūd edala-śāha-bhūpaḥ putro ’bhavat tasya mubārakheṁdraḥ||*

22 Like the Arabic genealogy, the Sanskrit genealogy seems to skip some generations and rulers and paper over certain gaps and misremember some of the succession. This is not rare in Sanskrit epigraphy; for an example in Sanskrit during the sultanate period, see Obrock (2022, 65–66).

23 *Burhanpur mosque inscription*, v. 5: *tat-sūnuḥ kṣitipāla-mauli-mukuṭa-vyāghṛṣṭa-pādāmbujāḥ sat-kīrttir vilasat-pratāpa-vaśagāmitraḥ kṣitīśeśvaraḥ| yasyāhar-nīśam ānatir guṇa-gaṇātīte pare brahmaṇi śrīmān edala-bhūpatir vijayate bhūpāla-cūḍāmaṇiḥ||*

terms not of a Lord (*īśa*) but rather in terms of the highest *brahman*. Such an equation of a god with the *parama-brahman* is not uncommon, however it is noteworthy that the text further qualifies the *nirguṇeśa* of the *Asirgarh inscription* with clear allusions to larger theological concepts and debates coming from the Hindu tradition.

The verse concludes with an implied benediction: “the king is victorious (*vijayate*).” This simple conclusion, I would argue, is the point of this entire genealogical and panegyric section of text. The terms *vijaya* in the *Asirgarh inscription* and *vijayate* in the *Burhanpur inscription* anchor the entire genealogical/panegyric section. The culmination of the Sanskrit is a royal benediction for the king to prosper on earth. Such a desire is absent from the Arabic section, which focuses on piety and the mosque itself. Here, then, it seems that a division of labour is being worked out between two languages. While Arabic is the language of piety in the world (instantiated in the mosques themselves), Sanskrit is the language of kingship performed in the world. The positioning of the words *vijaya/vijayate* marks the performance of kingly power. On one hand, the Arabic presents the king in a documentary way as a pious donor and asks God to remember his piety. On the other, the Sanskrit is written from the perspective of ritualised praise, in which the king is the locus of genealogical pedigree, hierarchical political power, fame and renown, and religious devotion. Sanskrit poetic language here still fills the role of political self-presentation, even within the sacred precincts of a mosque.

The first two portions of the Sanskrit text speak to a translational project in which Indic notions of divinity and kingship are marshalled to serve the Fārūqī project. Again, this “work” is different from the work done by the Arabic section. However, along with the Sanskrit panegyric verses, the establishment of the date of the mosque takes up the most space in the Sanskrit inscriptions of ‘Ādil Shāh IV. In the *Burhanpur inscription*, the calculation of the exact astrological conjunction of the mosque’s construction takes up almost one third of the entire inscription. It does not simply state the year (as is given in the Arabic portion) but rather the exact astrological moment at which construction began. This speaks to a relationship between the royal court and astronomers deeply learned in Sanskrit conventions. It also implies that ‘Ādil Shāh IV began construction of the mosque at an auspicious moment in consultation with astrologers learned in Indic systems. While the year is simply stated in the Hijri era in the Arabic, the Sanskrit gives the year in two different reckoning systems and speaks of particular astronomical moments on a specific day in a particular month. It is only after the precise date and time of the construction is given that the mosque (in Sanskrit, *masīti*) itself is finally mentioned.

This final line of the Sanskrit inscription echoes some of the language and concerns of the Arabic, although in a truncated form. First is the mention of the physical space of the mosque itself, which is absolutely essential to the Arabic portion. This mosque then is placed within the field of pious donation through the Sanskrit compound *svadharmā-pālana* (for the sake of nourishing/protecting his own religion). While thus we have a return to the central concerns of the Arabic, perhaps bookending the inscription in a sort of bilingual ring structure, this seems almost an afterthought after the amount of time and energy spent on praise and astrological calculation.

To conclude this investigation of the Sanskrit section of the *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur* inscriptions, I would like to return to the larger question: what did ‘Ādil Shāh use Sanskrit to do? Both inscriptions share a common imagination of the structure of the Sanskrit and what the Sanskrit was supposed to say. Both inscriptions repeat the same general topics, although clearly the later Burhanpur text presents the most fully formed and most polished version. In this way there seems to be an underlying assumption about what Sanskrit does, its role in the political imagination of the Fārūqī sultans. To put it succinctly, in ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s inscriptions, Sanskrit is the language of praise, lineage, and auspicious occasions. To return then to Pollock’s distinction between the “workly” and the “documentary,” Sanskrit here appears to be doing the same work that it did in “cosmopolitan” Sanskrit inscriptions. Yet, the positioning of the texts — the Arabic above the Sanskrit — speaks to a different sort of language hierarchy than in earlier Sanskrit bilingual epigraphic texts.

## 6. Conclusion

While the Arabic portion of the Fārūqī bilingual inscriptions state that “mosques are for Allāh,” the Sanskrit portion rather highlights how the mosque is for the Fārūqīs, particularly ‘Ādil Shāh IV, as it instantiates the worldly power of the Sultan, as a king and devotee. While the Arabic portion of the inscription serves to place the Fārūqīs and their mosque within an Islamic set of relations, much of the “work” of the inscription in the lived world of kingship in practice is done by the Sanskrit, especially in its utility as a language of praise and as the language of auspicious astrological calculation. In this reading then, the mosque is “for” a lot of things, and each language refers back to different traditions of elite piety and self-presentation. However, it is in the juxtaposition that ‘Ādil Shāh Fārūqī’s ideology of kingship becomes visible, as his epigraphical project puts Sanskrit and Arabic into a new and evocative relationship. Unlike the

Veraval inscription, which clearly speaks to two communities in the two languages and presupposes “insider” and “outsider” groups to religious communities, the Fārūqī inscriptions speak to one undifferentiated community of the twin poles of authority instantiated by the mosques, God, and the king. While such a juxtaposition of Sanskrit and Arabic in a mosque is not (to my knowledge) found elsewhere in South Asia, it seems to me that ‘Ādil Shāh IV is just one instantiation of the creative negotiations occurring between Sanskrit and other emergent modes of expression from the increasingly Islamicate culture in India. These negotiations continue throughout the sultanate period, and the extant fragments of Sanskrit that exist speak to the ongoing way different agents resorted to, adopted, and adapted Sanskrit literary forms for their own purposes outside of centralised courtly spaces.

When the two portions of the bilingual inscriptions are read together, a picture of the division of labour between Sanskrit and Arabic begins to take shape. Arabic is the language of piety and religion which sets the donation of the mosque within canonical Islamic ideas of piety. In the Sanskrit portion of the inscriptions, political representation takes centre stage and ‘Ādil Shāh IV uses it as the language of the public performance of power. While the meritorious nature of his pious gift is adumbrated in the Arabic, its location within the world is done in Sanskrit.

The sultanate period has been long overlooked as a site of creative engagement with the aesthetic and political utility of Sanskrit, yet as the bilingual *dirham* of Maḥmūd of Ghaznī shows, Sanskrit was an integral part of royal self-presentation for many Muslim polities from their very inception. The *Asirgarh* and *Burhanpur mosque inscriptions* stand at the end of this period of creative negotiation of new forms of political expression. In the coming decades, the Mughal Empire consolidated its political and aesthetic supremacy, and the decentralised and experimental dynamic of various sultanate polities was eclipsed as they assimilated into the Mughal Imperium. In fact, the ascendancy of Mughal power is itself inscribed on the very same sites so central to ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s project. On January 26, 1601 CE (22nd of Rajab, 1009 Hijri), the Mughal forces took the Fort of Asirgarh. Faced with the overwhelming might of the Mughal Army, the last Sultan, ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s son Bahādur Khān, submitted to Emperor Akbar’s forces. While similar events happened at numerous sultanates large and small throughout South Asia, the Fārūqī Sultans’ defeat is noteworthy for its material commemoration in a set of public inscriptions in Persian. Emperor Akbar commanded the Mughal courtier, calligrapher, and poet Mīr Muḥammad Ma‘ṣūm of Bhakkar, also known by his penname of Nāmī, to record the Mughal victory in a set of Persian verses to be inscribed at the entrance of the Asirgarh

Fort as well as on the congregational mosque in Burhanpur. On a pillar inside the mosque within Asirgarh fort, Nāmī writes:

The world-subduing and world bestowing Sovereign, Akbar Bādshāh, conquered Asir(garh) by dint of his youthful good fortune. When Nāmī sought the date of its conquest, wisdom said [the chronogram] “He took the hill of Asir.”<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, a rock outside of the main gate of the fortress also bears an inscription completed by Nāmī, commemorating the event. Another similar verse, also executed by Nāmī, is found on the base of the southern minaret of the Jamī mosque built by ‘Ādil Shāh IV Fārūqī in Burhanpur. Nāmī again writes:

His majesty the emperor with the audience hall of the sky, the shadow of God, made Burhānpur the camping ground of the victorious standards, and Bahādur Khān, having presented himself, was granted the favour of paying obeisance (and) the emperor pardoned his as well as his dependants’ lives. And the fort of Asir was taken.<sup>25</sup>

These two inscriptions, set at two of the most important sites of the Fārūqī Sultans’ power, mark the end of their two-hundred-year rule in Khandesh<sup>26</sup> at their two most important sites of power. The annexation into the Mughal imperium is marked by a new epigraphical language of power, Persian, literally inscribed over ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s creative marshalling of Sanskrit and Arabic.

In the end then, ‘Ādil Shāh IV’s project was a failure; however, attention to his epigraphical texts in material and historical contexts provides perhaps a small window into the dynamic cultural history of Sanskrit beyond cosmopolitanism. As one final note, in his edition of the Sanskrit inscription Hira Lal (1907–08, 306) writes the following note: “I have seen some Sanskrit manuscripts in Persian character in the possession of some Maulvīs of Burhānpūr, preserved as heirlooms from their ancestors, who apparently studied them under State encouragement. Unfortunately, most of these valuable records have been destroyed by the fires of 1897 and 1906 which caused damage to the extent of about 57 lakhs besides loss of life.” While in all likelihood the Sanskrit texts of the *maulvīs* are all irrevocably lost (and their families are most likely long gone from Burhanpur), such a comment reminds the modern scholar to look for traces of the vibrant and creative multilingualism of the sultanates, and to read

24 Translation from Ḳuraishī (1926, 4).

25 Translation from Rahim (1962, 73).

26 The dating is slightly problematic. The dating of the *Burhanpur mosque inscription* seems to be more accurate. See the discussion by Rahim (1961, 72–74).

inscriptional texts like those of ‘Ādil Shāh IV as hints toward the dynamic politics of language and self-presentation in sultanate South Asia. To this end, the bilingual inscriptions of the Fārūqīs of Khandesh remain as a testament to the creative deployment of Sanskrit in Islamicate or perhaps even Islamic contexts.

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See page xvi about references to primary sources.

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*Sunan Ibn Mājah* by Ibn Mājah: translation, Khattab (2007).

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<sup>27</sup> Briggs’s spellings have been updated and standardised.

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