

MAPPING THE PĀŚUPATA LANDSCAPE
THE SKANDAPURĀṆA, LAKULĪŚA, AND THE ŚAIVA IMAGINARY
IN EARLY MEDIEVAL NORTH INDIA (6TH-10TH CENTURY CE)

BY

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This dissertation by Elizabeth Ann Cecil is accepted in its present form by the
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VITA

Elizabeth Ann Cecil was born on September 24 1981 in Hastings Nebraska. She graduated with a B.A. in Philosophy and Religious Studies from Hastings College in 2005 and received an M.A. in Religious Studies and Sanskrit from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in 2008. Elizabeth's graduate work at Brown University began in 2008. After completing her exams in June 2011 she left to pursue her studies in the Netherlands. From August 2011-May 2013, Elizabeth was a visiting Research Fellow in the Institute of Indian Studies at the University of Groningen. In Groningen, she joined an international team of scholars working on the editing and analysis of the *Skandapurāṇa*. Her dissertation project has been inspired and supported by these meetings and interactions.

As part of the *Skandapurāṇa* research team, Elizabeth conducted fieldwork at temple sites throughout north India and assisted with archeological survey in Maharashtra between January and March of 2012. In preparation to begin her individual dissertation fieldwork she spent the Summer of 2013 in Jaipur studying Hindi at the AIIS Institute. From September 2013-December 2014 Elizabeth carried out her dissertation research at temple sites, museums, and archives in the Indian states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh. During this time she was a Visiting Scholar in the Department of Archeology and Ancient History at the M.S. University in Baroda. Additional opportunities to pursue fieldwork in South and Southeast followed in 2014, 2015, and 2016. Her research and writing have been supported by funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Social Science Research Council (SSRC), Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), American Councils for Overseas Education, International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS), American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS), Brown-India Initiative, and the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS).

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Figure 199. Rampol Lakulīśa, close view of attendant figure

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Figure 209. Lakulīśa in lintel niche from Harṣa temple complex, c. 9th-10th century Sikar Government Museum,

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Figure 215. Lonad Śiva temple, Thane. Temple fragment with panel depicting *liṅga* veneration, ascetic, and goddess Lajjā Gauri, c. 10th-11th century.

Figure 216. Image of club-bearing figure in panel on Mahanaleśvara temple in Menal, c. 11th century

Figure 217. Image of club-bearing figure in panel on Mahanaleśvara temple in Menal, c. 11th century

INTRODUCTION

Since he was the patron deity of ascetics, hermits, and other ‘outsiders,’ worship of the Hindu God Śiva often evokes a vision of antinomian practices: naked mendicants with matted hair, who spend their days stalking cremation grounds, human skulls in hand. While such activities were the purview of certain cultural agents, current scholarship is making important strides toward a more nuanced and robust vision of Śaiva¹ identity that is attuned to the social complexity and diversity of pre-modern religious communities in practice. The recent recovery of manuscripts of a Sanskrit text calling itself the *Skandapurāṇa*² provided a critical impetus for this project of rethinking early Śaiva history. Once believed lost, this source had been known only obliquely from testimonia in digests of Brahminical customs and social regulations whose authors cited passages of this enigmatic *Skandapurāṇa* to

¹ The term ‘Śaiva’ designates those things, people, and places relating to and considered sacred to the God Śiva. ‘Śaivism’ encompasses the religious communities that consider Śiva to be their supreme deity

² The *Skandapurāṇa* is the subject of an ongoing process of critical editing that was initiated by Hans T. Bakker, Rob Adriaansen, and Harunaga Isaacson and is now continued by their colleagues. The earliest stratum of text is preserved in Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts, the oldest of which is dated 810 CE. The ongoing edition, based on these and other manuscripts, is to be distinguished from a text of the same name printed by the Venkateśvara Press in 1910, which records a different textual tradition comprised of later texts that present themselves as chapters (*khaṇḍas*) of this earlier, authoritative *Skandapurāṇa*. Five volumes of the critical edition have been published thus far: *The Skandapurāṇa Volume I*, R. Adriaansen, H.T. Bakker and H. Isaacson eds. (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1998); *The Skandapurāṇa Volume IIa: The Vārāṇasī Cycle*, H. T. Bakker and H. Isaacson (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2004); P.C. Bisschop, *Early Śaivism and the Skandapurāṇa: Sects and Centers* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2006); *The Skandapurāṇa Volume III: The Vindhyavāsini*, Y. Yokochi (Leiden: Brill, 2013); *The Skandapurāṇa Volume IIb: The Vāhana and Naraka Cycles*, Edited by H. T. Bakker, P. C. Bisschop, and Y. Yokochi eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

support their prescriptions.³ This new source affords an unprecedented glimpse into the growth of the earliest community of Śiva devotees called the ‘Pāśupatas,’ (that name is derived from one of Śiva’s many epithets, Paśupati, ‘Lord of Creatures’). Likely Pāśupatas themselves, the text’s authors did advocate asceticism, together with the cultivation of somatic and mental techniques (*yoga*) that provided a means for certain accomplished practitioners to achieve union with the Lord upon death.⁴ At the same time, they acknowledge the values of the *laukikas*—the ‘people in and of the world’ (*loka*)—and praise the salvific potential of pilgrimage to Śiva’s many shrines (i.e. his ‘abodes,’ *āyatanas*) and worship of his phallic emblem (*liṅga*), definitive features of the devotional repertoire of medieval Śiva worshippers (*māheśvaras*), as they still are today.

Early Śaiva religiosity was emplaced—that is, organized around spiritually charged natural places and the shrines that proliferated around them. Praise of these sanctified spaces, and enumeration of the merits that accrue to a person who visits them are defining themes of the *Skandapurāṇa*. In mapping these various locales within the Śaiva *terra sancta*, writ large, the authors designate a small region of northwest India as the “primordial Pāśupata landscape” (*paśupateḥ kṣetram purāṇam*),⁵ a sacred region venerated as the birthplace of the Pāśupata movement. Beginning in Kārohaṇa, the locale in southern Gujarat where Śiva reportedly descended to earth, the authors envision the sanctity of this region as radiating to other important sites in northwest India where the Lord’s agents were active in disseminating the Pāśupata doctrine. The authors were also aware of

³ On these passages in the Dharmanibandha literature see *Skandapurāṇa* vol. I, pp. 14-16.

⁴ On Pāśupata *yoga* and the attainment of ‘perfection in yoga’ (*yogasiddhi*) as presented in the text see Hans T. Bakker, *The World of the Skandapurāṇa* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 140-145.

⁵ SP_s 167.136. See text and translation in Chapter 1. Although *kṣetra* means “field, area, or realm” I think ‘landscape’ is a justifiable translation since this field contains various important collocations of Śaiva features.

sacred places to the south of Kārohaṇa, but these locales are not integrated within their precise geography.⁶ Since they mention that their landscape occupies the area north of the Sahya Mountain—the northern range of the Western Ghats in Maharashtra—I have taken this feature to mark the southernmost horizon of the authors’ geographic vision.⁷ Thus, the Pāśupata landscape, as I have interpreted it, extends beyond the narrow boundaries of Kārohaṇa to claim a larger region that today comprises contiguous areas of the modern states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. Located at the very heart of the subcontinent, this landscape was at the center of the political dynamism and religious efflorescence that defined early medieval North India between the 6th and the 10th centuries CE.

To illuminate the ways in which the Pāśupata community participated in, and was shaped by, the distinctive socio-political conditions of this historical period, my dissertation brings this textual account of Pāśupata origins from the *Skandapurāṇa*, into conversation with contemporaneous inscriptions and material evidence from three critical groups of temple sites in the region. Through an interdisciplinary use of these sources, this study aims to make three valuable interventions. First, it presents a new synthesis and interpretation of the historical sources, one that privileges the voices of non-elite actors, who have too often been silenced in the existing scholarship and, through them, considers how people imagined themselves as ‘Śaiva’ in early medieval India. These ‘voices’ are not exclusively human. Inspired by Bruno Latour’s idea that the attribution of agency should extend to material objects, I also consider physical landscapes, built environments, and icons as historical agents

⁶ For example, a very brief *māhātmya* of Hariścandragiri (today called Hariścandragadh) immediately precedes the description of the Pāśupata landscape (SP_s 167. 107-109). This place, where the authors report that Rāma Jāmadagnya established a shrine, is located in the northern run of the Western Ghats near Ahmednagar in Maharashtra (i.e. the Sahya Mountain, as identified above).

⁷ SP_s 167.136. On the identification of the Sahya Mountain see Chapter 2

in order to explore the ways in which Pāśupata communities were emplaced in the regional landscape and to emphasize the use of material culture as media through which notions of belonging and identity were expressed.⁸ Finally, by exploring the ties between the self-fashioning of early Pāśupata communities and the locales in which they were embedded, I reflect critically upon the ways in which community building is coincident with place-making.

I. People and Places

Due to its geographic centeredness, the Pāśupata landscape was the meeting point for the various socio-economic networks that crisscrossed the Indian subcontinent via the primary routes of trade and travel. It was also a highly coveted political space where many ambitious elites vied for control of territory and resources. For these reasons, this landscape affords a revealing vantage point from which to explore the ways in which the Pāśupatas took part in the political and religious shifts of a pivotal period in Indian history.

An attempt to better delineate and trace the interactions of these networks is one of the aims of this study. My use of the term ‘network’ is informed by Bruno Latour’s work on ‘Actor Network Theory’ which is helpful in conceptualizing the formation and expansion of religious communities across space and time⁹ To attempt a brief summation of a complex theoretical position, I understand a network as constituted by the activities and interactions of cultural agents, ‘actors’ for Latour, and the

⁸ The relevance of Latour’s work for this study is discussed in further detail below and in Chapter 5.

⁹ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

effects that these interactions have upon the people and the groups involved. Thus, a network is not a 'social structure' in which individuals find themselves embedded; rather, it is a series of interactions through which the 'social' takes place. This is how groups are formed and identities are expressed. And, as was mentioned above, these exchanges do not only take place between human actors. Material objects, built environments, and the physical terrain are also cast as participants in networks of interactions, so they, too, are imbued with a kind of agency. This emphasis on interactions serves Latour's larger point, which is that 'society' or 'the social' is not a given; we cannot assume its existence *a priori*. Instead, we should see the social as inhering in this very process, made and remade via actors and their networks of interactions.

To bring these ideas back to the context of early medieval India, I think the idea of network is useful, in part, because it encourages us to focus our attention on people, the movement of people, and the circulation of ideas and practices that result from human contact and exchange. This same notion of movement and interaction form one of the overarching themes of the Pāśupata origin story recorded in the *Skandapurāṇa*, which, as the next chapter will discuss, is the account of the geographic expansion of a particular religious formation via a network of cultural agents and connected places. While the *Skandapurāṇa*'s presentation of a Pāśupata network is highly rhetorical, evidence from inscriptions serves to both complement and complicate the text's vision by introducing other agents, associations, and locales operating within the boundaries of the Pāśupata landscape the text's authors have drawn. These sources attest to the burgeoning of social and geographic mobility in the early medieval period: mercantile groups actively conducted trade, agriculture expanded, and areas that had previously been uncultivated or sparsely inhabited were settled. Of course, these networks did not operate in a vacuum. It is revealing that much—indeed, almost all—of what we know of the textures

and rhythms of social interactions at this time come from epigraphic sources recording acts of pious giving to temples and religious institutions. And many of these were given to places we could properly characterize as Śaiva—meaning that an instantiation of Śiva, usually in the form of a *līṅga*, was the principal deity honored in the temple. For these reasons, the Pāśupata landscape provides an exciting opportunity to recover some of the complex interactions between the diverse groups that populated the region. And this complexity is significant since it demonstrates that networks do not always conform to an established pattern, that people cross boundaries, and that interactions may be unexpected.

II. Recovering Forgotten Voices

Despite recent advances prompted by the presentation of newly edited texts, the social history of early Śaivism has yet to be written.¹⁰ Until recently, the image of the Pāśupatas that has dominated the field was informed primarily by philosophical treatises and esoteric ritual manuals and, not surprisingly, that image is one of an exclusively male community of ascetics and literati removed from the larger socio-cultural milieu of early medieval India. Some recent studies have attempted to situate the Pāśupata movement within its broader social contexts in an effort to explain the increased visibility of Śaivism in the early medieval period. The groundbreaking work of Alexis Sanderson has loomed especially large in this regard. Sanderson's seminal 2009 study described early medieval India as a 'Śaiva Age' and, in it, he outlined an historical scenario that is now largely assumed in the field of early

¹⁰ For example, Kaffle (2015), DeSimini (2013), Goodall (2004; 2007), and Acarya (2007; 2010; 2011). In addition, the *Śivadharmā* and the *Śivadharmottara* are two Sanskrit texts that outline various rituals and obligations for devotees of Śiva. These manuals address, in particular, the ritual practices associated with the worship of Śiva in the form of a *līṅga*. R.C. Hazra has discussed this textual corpus in two articles. "The Śiva-Dharma" *Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute* Vol. 10 (1952-53): 1-20. "The Śiva-Dharmottara" *Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute* Vol. 13 (1956): 19-50. Peter Bisschop and others are currently editing sections of the *Śivadharmā* corpus.

Śaiva studies.¹¹ This article attributes the popularity of Śaivism to the ingenuity of religious specialists who succeeded in adapting their religious practices and ideologies so as to be compelling to regional rulers. The adoption of Śaiva brahmin teachers in the position of royal preceptor (*rājaguruḥ*) by regional rulers marked a significant integration of these religious specialists within spheres of political power. In return for their positions of prestige in the royal court, the *rājagurus* granted kings initiation (*śivamaṇḍaladīkṣā*).¹² The position of these initiated rulers was unique since they were exempted from the usual rigors of Śaiva practice. The textual sources Sanderson has consulted emphasize instead the king's role as "head of [the brahmanical social order of] the caste-classes and religious disciplines (*varṇāśramaguruḥ*)."¹³ In Sanderson's words, "The king was considered to qualify for this less arduous route to liberation by reason of his royal obligations. He was therefore required to adhere only to the obligations of an uninitiated devotee of Śiva taught in the texts of the *Śivadharma* corpus, which in his case were principally to support the religion and its institutions and to sponsor and appear in conspicuous ceremonies in the civic domain."¹⁴

The bonds between religious specialists and spheres of political power should not be discounted; indeed, Śaivism became a popular idiom in epigraphic and visual media for expressions of

¹¹ For example, see the 'Introduction' to the 2013 Special Issue of the *Indo-Iranian Journal* by Nina Mirnig and Natasja Bosma. *Indo-Iranian Journal*, (56) 2013: pp. 201-204

¹² Alexis Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age: The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism during the Early Medieval Period" in *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*. (Tōkyō : Sankibō Busshorin, Heisei 21, 2009) pp. 41-350.

¹³ Sanderson, 255. On the textual references see notes 591 and 593.

¹⁴ Sanderson, 254.

political power and royal persona in India and beyond.¹⁵ But this is only a small part of the story. Privileging a ‘top down’ vision of Śaiva history has resulted in current scholarship paying too little attention to the participation of non-elite groups—artisans, traders, rural agriculturalists, and women. In my research, I have worked to recover some of these unheard voices through (re)readings of early medieval epigraphic sources from the region—stone inscriptions, copperplate grants, donative records, etc.¹⁶ Since these records detail specific events and cultural practices, they preserve valuable evidence of people’s daily lives that are often absent from traditional literary sources. The inscriptions that I reference in the following chapters have all been edited and published and most of them have been translated. Yet, despite being part of the established ‘Indological record’ I have found that much of the rich detail these records preserve about religion as lived and practiced has gone largely unnoticed. Historians have tended to read inscriptions selectively for details of dynastic genealogy and military history and, as a consequence, the vast majority of early medieval epigraphs have yet to be mined for a wealth of other kinds of information.

In the paragraphs above I have repeatedly referred to the agents I am concerned to study as ‘forgotten’ voices. This silence is the result of a prevailing focus on dynastic history in the contemporary historiography. Since this project has approached the historical sources with different questions, the contributions of individuals and groups from other social strata have emerged with a greater force and I have chosen to emphasize them. I should also clarify that describing these voices as

¹⁵ Alexis Sanderson, ‘Śaiva Religion among the Khmers, Part 1’. *BEFEO* 90-91 (2004):349-462; Dominic Goodall and Arlo Griffiths, ‘Études du Corps des inscriptions du Campā V: The Short Foundation Inscriptions of Prakāśadharman-Vikrāntavarman, King of Campā,’ *Indo-Iranian Journal*, (56) 2013: 419-440.

¹⁶ The pioneering work of Cynthia Talbot (2001) and Leslie Orr (2000) on South Indian inscriptions also attempts to analyze epigraphic records for evidence of social diversity and the historical contributions of groups underrepresented in the existing scholarship.

those of ‘non-elite’ agents, is not meant to suggest that I am writing a history of the ‘subaltern’ in pre-modern India. The opposite may be true. The fact that these voices are present in the historical record is significant in itself and suggestive of their social ascendance and ambition. While the endowment of temples is typically attributed to ruling elites, these monuments were much more than self-aggrandizing statements of royal power and prestige. My study demonstrates that the work of endowing and managing temples catalyzed remarkable synergies between individuals and communities from a wide variety of social strata. Artisans, traders, guilds, etc. were far more active as patrons and donors than their royal counterparts. Since Indian temples were large, highly elaborate works of art carved in stone, these investments would have required access to a substantial economic surplus and the ability to mobilize resources over time to ensure the structural and ritual maintenance of the monument. In addition to requiring the expenditure of capital, these religious centers were also storehouses of wealth, both material and symbolic. They controlled significant immovable assets (for example, market stalls and fields) and participated in the monetized economy—through rents paid in cash, and taxes paid to the institution by guilds and traders. As the products of collaborative endeavors that were designed to commemorate relationships and nurture social sodalities, the space of the temple occupied the center of a settlement or polity and marked the heart of the socialized medieval world.

III. Piety and Polity Emplaced

The grounding of this study in early medieval northwest India aligns itself with important trends in recent scholarship on this period of Indian history and thus runs counter to some of the dominant trends of earlier Indological historiography. Until relatively recently, the early medieval was a historiographical ‘Dark Age’, thoroughly obscured by the Gupta Empire’s so-called ‘Golden Age’ (4th-6th century CE). But recent contributions of scholars such as B.D. Chattopadhyaya (1994; 2003), James

Heitzman (1997), Herman Kulke (1995), and Cynthia Talbot (2001) have advanced our understanding of this period in significant ways. These works demonstrate this was a time of significant social change marked by increasingly localized political and economic networks, the flourishing of regional devotional movements, and innovations in temple and image-centered religious practices.¹⁷ In her important study of temple-centered donative practices in Kakatiya Andhra, Talbot describes the early medieval period as characterized by “the extension of agrarian settlement, a rise in the number of religious institutions, an expansion of commercial activity, and an evolution of political systems and networks.”¹⁸ Similarly, the works of Chattopadhyaya, Heitzman, and Kulke highlight the complexity of social, political and religious institutions at a regional level. Kulke grounds his model of early medieval polity in eastern India in “nuclear regions” in which agrarian expansion was largely responsible for the integration of peripheral populations into regional cultural patterns.¹⁹ Chattopadhyaya stresses the importance of localized groups of traders, artisans, and mercantile guilds in the growth of market towns in the northwest frontier. Using epigraphic evidence from Rajasthan, he shows that these groups

¹⁷ This recent scholarship represents a break with earlier, predominately Marxist studies that interpret the early medieval as a dark age of social stagnation and regression caused by increasingly rigid social hierarchies as exemplified in the caste system and in the ideology of *bhakti*-centered movements, which celebrated subservience to a powerful Lord. For a summary of these arguments and the legacy of Marxist historiography in Indology see Herman Kulke, “Introduction: The Study of the State in Pre-Modern India” in *The State in India, 1000-1700* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995) pp. 1-47; Dinkar Visakha, “Beyond the Temple Walls: The Scholarly Fate of North Indian Sculpture, A.D. 700-1200,” in *Gods, Guardians, and Lovers: Temple Sculptures from North India A.D. 700-1200*, ed. Visakha N. Desai and Danielle Mason (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1997) pp. 18-31; Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: Verso, 1974) esp. Appendix B “The Asiatic Mode of Production” pp. 462-550; David Ludden “Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge” in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* eds. Carol Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1993) pp. 250-278.

¹⁸ Cynthia Talbot, *Precolonial India in Practice* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 2.

¹⁹ Burton Stein has also used the region, in his case ecologically delineated, as the basis for a discussion of early medieval polity. On the “locality societies” as the basis for “medieval metasociety” and the nature of early state formation see Burton Stein, “The Segmentary State: Interim Reflections,” in *Rethinking Early India*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 70-90; *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

often acted quite independently of ruling elites.²⁰ The autonomy of mercantile and agricultural communities is similarly addressed in some of Donald Davis's research. Davis points to the "increased prominence of intermediate-level corporate groups in the creation and administration of law." Under the heading 'corporate group' he includes: "merchants, traders, religious specialists, soldiers, agriculturalists, pastoralists, and castes."²¹ He further emphasizes that merchant collectives (*nagara*) exerted a considerable social influence by establishing laws as well as using their influence to establish taxes on goods with which to support temples. These studies have different geographic foci, but in each case the 'region' and the 'local' take precedence as the fundamental unit by which early medieval India is studied and the temple is the site of social interaction.

In addition to detailing a more specific historical geography, the studies surveyed above also occasion a reconsideration of the distribution of power in this period, particularly when we consider the social leverage wielded by the various collectives mentioned in Davis and Chattopadhyaya's research. In thinking about the distribution of power within regions and localized polities, I have borrowed insights and perspectives from recent studies of Latin American antiquity (for instance, Blanton et al, 1996; Beekman, 2008). These studies explore two types of power strategies, the 'exclusionary' and the 'corporate.' Discussions of political power in early India have too often emphasized exclusionary strategies; that is, authority has been viewed as concentrated in networks of personal dominance. This is evident in the historiography's preoccupation with royal personality and genealogy, as in the persistent description of cultural activities as a means of 'legitimizing' a ruler's

²⁰ Chattopadhyaya (1994; 2003)

²¹ Donald R. Davis, "Intermediate Realms of Law: Corporate Groups and Rulers in Medieval India," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 48, 1(2005): 92-117.

exclusive claims to sovereignty. One side effect of this preference for exclusionary strategies is a legacy of inexact terminology to describe political formations—terms such as feudatory, vassal king, minor dynasty, etc. While these terms are common scholarly parlance, they are imprecise insofar as they suggest a stable political hierarchy rather than reflecting the reality of a highly contested political space in which multiple levels of authority were operating. If we read beyond the genealogical sections of inscriptions—and the hyperbole used to glorify particular rulers—I think we can see early Indian political relationships shaped equally, if not largely, by corporate tactics. This corporate concept does not deny hierarchy or imply that a society was egalitarian; rather, it encourages us to see power as enacted, claimed, materialized, and contested through multiple collective bodies and individuals engaged in evolving affiliations.

IV. Imagined Landscapes and Historical Terrain

Since constructions of religious topographies, space, and landscapes are at the very heart of this study, my theoretical framework incorporates recent work in archeology and anthropology on the construction and experience of place and landscape. In conceptualizing this area, I draw upon important phenomenological approaches to the study of space, place, and landscape, including those of Casey (1993), Johnson (2007), and Tilley (1994), which emphasize the human experience of place as synesthetic, interactive, and embodied. Employing these sources, I use the term ‘landscape’ to designate both natural places (mountains, caves, rivers, and so on) and cultural edifices (temples, monuments, and memorials) that together form a locus for social interaction and identity formation. I understand landscape as a “lived space,”²² a term that encompasses the physical features of a natural

²² Henri Lefebvre employs “lived space” as part of a conceptual triad that also includes “conceived” and “perceived” space. While lived space is the locus of culture and of social activity, “conceived space” is wholly abstract, homogenous, and geometric. For Lefebvre, “perceived space” is empirical and is experienced in things like networks of roads or the organization of houses in a neighborhood. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*,

landscape, the social and cultural spaces therein, and the values that the inhabitants attach to both. In an effort to craft a nuanced study, my dissertation also foregrounds the multivocality of the Pāśupata landscape, which was given shape and meaning vis-à-vis the myriad activities of individuals and communities.²³ But this region was not something acted upon as a passive backdrop upon which history unfolded, it was instrumental in the construction of religious and political identities and in shaping the realities of those people who lived it.

In addition to the study of textual sources, fieldwork has been an intrinsic element of my study of this region. The Śaiva temples and monuments in this area preserve a rich material archive recording histories of the lived religious world that cannot be accessed through textual sources. Using the material record it is possible to approximate some sense of what Barbara Bender has termed the ‘subjectivity’, of a landscape, which is to say, a material recording of human interactions in a particular time and place.²⁴ As with the *Skandapurāṇa* narrative, I approach these other historical sources as recording an ongoing conversation in which different cultural agents—religious specialists, political elites, laywomen, artisans, merchants, and others—offer their accounts of this Śaiva landscape. Accessing these accounts is not done merely to create a single integrative map that corroborates what the *Skandapurāṇa* reports. Rather, we might read these accounts as reflecting various vernacular geographies operating within a larger religious landscape.

trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991). W.J. T. Mitchell, “Preface: Place, Space and Landscape” in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) vii-xii.

²³ In Margaret Rodman’s words, “...places, like voices, are local and multiple. For each inhabitant, a place has a unique reality, one in which meaning is shared with other people and places. The links in the chains of these experienced places are forged in culture and history.” “Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality” *American Anthropologist* 94 (1992): 640-656.

²⁴ Barbara Bender, “Time and Landscape,” *Current Anthropology* 43, Supplement Aug-Oct (2002): 103-112.

V. Plan of the Dissertation

In an effort to organize this project, which spans a broad geographic area and attempts to synthesize multiple bodies of historical sources, it was necessary to limit and circumscribe the inquiry through a selective chronology, regional frame, and selective sub-regional focus.

The text of the *Skandapurāṇa* provides one set of temporal parameters. The editors have dated the text to the late 6th and early 7th centuries. The 6th century thus marks the beginning of my formal inquiry. Since one of my interests was to examine the formation of religious communities over time, I extended my temporal frame to include sites and evidence from a period up until the early 10th century. Widening my chronological focus allowed me to marshal more of the surviving evidence and thereby present a more complex historical picture.

The *Skandapurāṇa* has also inspired the geographic scope of the project—the mapping of the Pāśupata landscape in the text provided the starting point and initial parameters for my own mapping. Although, as the authors were selective in identifying particular points in their map, I was also selective in choosing the sites to include in this study. In determining the project's spatial parameters, I worked with two basic criteria: 1) that the site falls within the boundaries of the text's Pāśupata landscape and 2) that there was a sufficient material and, or, epigraphic evidence to shed some light on community formation. Point two is rather straightforward, but the first qualification requires some explanation. The *Skandapurāṇa* provides only a selective overview of key locales within the religious landscape. The areas I survey, however, are places that occupied the interstices of this narrative map. Given that this textual cartography is a rhetorical and imaginative construction, I did not feel it necessary to consider only the places explicitly marked in it. My effort to recover something of the

region as it was ‘lived’ required a survey with a broader scope. For that reason, many of the places I studied are places that the map merely takes for granted, since they fall within the broad parameters of the narrative geography.

Chapter 1 introduces the narrative of Pāśupata origins preserved in the most archaic layer of the *Skandapurāṇa*. The text’s authors designate a small region of northwest India as the ‘primordial Pāśupata landscape,’ the place where Lord Śiva purportedly descended to earth and initiated the dissemination of the Pāśupata doctrine. The author’s specify that Śiva assumed a human form as the teacher Lāguḍi (viz. Lakulīśa) at Kārohaṇa in southwest Gujarat. In the course of his terrestrial wandering, the teacher initiates four students, each of whom presided over a prestigious locale in northwest India—the storied cities of Ujjayanī, Mathurā, Jambūmārga, and Kanyakubja. In my analysis of this ‘imagined geography’ I explore the text’s rhetorical aims to present a cosmological vision of a Śaiva world while also providing a normative model for community and staking a geopolitical claim.

Using the early *Skandapurāṇa* as the *terminus post quem* for the textual construction of the Pāśupata landscape, Chapters 2, 3, and 4 take up the task of looking beyond the textual horizon. In these chapters other historical sources—inscriptions, monuments, and images—become the focal points for the construction of new narratives within this geographically circumscribed area. Each of these chapters introduces a distinct sub-region within the Pāśupata landscape: the North Konkan, upper Mālava or Upamāla, and an area of northeast Rajasthan traditionally called Sapādalakṣa. In order to organize diverse bodies of evidence, each chapter adheres to the same basic outline. I begin by introducing the region’s physical terrain and outlining the important historical events, political patterns, and economic realities that contributed to its distinctiveness. Next, I situate early Śaivism

within the regional social geography, by looking specifically at inscriptions for evidence of patronage of Śaiva institutions. When it is possible, I try to represent the range of donors and their motivations for making a donation in order to get a sense of the social embeddedness of the tradition. The third section presents and analyzes the material evidence with a special attention to patterns in iconography. My attempt to access and present something of the lived history of places as preserved in the material record has involved extensive fieldwork and multiple visits to particular places. I am certain that further study and future site visits will serve to further nuance this initial presentation.

In Chapter 2 I trace the development of Śaiva religious centers in the North Konkan coast and the Deccan hinterlands, the southernmost boundary of the Pāśupata landscape. I begin by presenting evidence to counter the dominant scholarly narrative that presents the monumental Śaiva sites as produced by the patronage of the Kalacuri rulers. I propose an alternative history by showing that unique patterns in coastal geography and regional trade in this port polity created a corporate donative culture that shaped the Śaiva religious landscape of the North Konkan, in much the same way as it had supported an earlier network of Buddhist sites. Chapter 3 moves northeast to Upamāla. Here I focus special attention on mapping and comparing expressions of Śaiva identity amongst socially ascendant groups in the urban centers of Daśapura and Chittorgarh with those of mercantile communities settled at the peripheral locales of Kansuāñ, Jhālrapāṭan, and Indragarh in the hills to the north. Evidence coming from both the center and the periphery highlights the flexibility of Śaivism, which was employed as a political idiom and expression of might for urban elites and invoked as a source of protection and alleviation of suffering by mercantile groups. Chapter 4 concludes the survey of the *Skandapurāṇa*'s mapping of a Śaiva landscape in Sapādalakṣa. I stress the importance of the region's unique geography, which was defined by a series of large saline lakes. Trade in salt from these

lakes supported the creation of the monumental temple complex on Mount Harṣa and the Pāśupata religious specialists in residence there. I compare the expressions of Śaiva identity at Harṣa with those at Kāman where, I argue, different socio-economic formations and political patterns contributed to a distinctly irenic expression of Śaivism that diverges in significant ways from the idiom at Harṣa.

Chapter 5 concerns the iconography of Lakulīśa and works to recover some of this historical contingency by reading his appearance in images as a reflection of or response to particular concerns of the developing Śaiva religious community. This chapter revisits some notable renderings of Lakulīśa images from the sites surveyed in the previous chapters, and reflects upon what these differences might reveal about the religious landscape in which they were conceived. In my analysis I pay particular attention to the formal attributes of the icons and their place in temple spaces in order to identify the multiple ways in which these icons could have been ‘read’ and interpreted. I conclude that Lakulīśa was not only a potent sign of Pāśupata identity; his various attributes signifying power, fertility, and protection reflect a multivalent persona that would have resonated with a broader religious community.

The dissertation concludes with a brief coda that moves the discussion of the Pāśupata landscape from the early medieval era to the contemporary world by introducing the complex afterlives of some of the temples presented in the preceding case studies. I introduce some of the debates that surround the preservation of these sites and consider how this material heritage has been transformed from so many sites of community building for early Śaiva groups, to a symbol of a national identity. A more in-depth consideration of these topics will be the subject of future research.

CHAPTER I

THE GEOGRAPHIC IMAGINARY

THE *SKANDAPURĀṆA*, LAKULĪŚA AND THE LOCALIZATION OF TRADITION

Summary

This chapter introduces the narrative of Pāśupata origins preserved in the most archaic layer of the *Skandapurāṇa*. Framed by a series of *māhātmyas* that eulogize the Śaiva *terra sancta* writ large, the text's authors designate a small region of northwest India as the 'primordial Pāśupata landscape,' a salvific region celebrated as the birthplace of the Pāśupata movement. The sanctity of this region is an effect of the presence of Lord Śiva himself: the authors report that in their present age, the Kali *yuga*, Śiva assumed a human form, as the teacher Lāguḍi (viz. Lakulīśa), and disseminated the Pāśupata doctrine via four students, each of whom presided over a prestigious locale in this sacred landscape—the storied cities of Ujjayanī, Mathurā, Jambumārga, and Kanyakubja. Articulated through the particular rhetorical and ideological framework of the literary genre of *purāṇa*, and its sub-genre, *māhātmya*, this literary canonization of a Pāśupata geography records an authoritative effort to localize, order, and authenticate a particular vision of community and thus records a formative moment within the larger project of Pāśupata self-fashioning. But this narrative had broader implications as well. I read the *Skandapurāṇa*'s cartography as a deeply political statement. The text's claim to colonize a region that occupied the very socio-political heart of northwest India implies, by synecdoche, a vision of Śaivism at the center of the early medieval world.

The chapter begins with a presentation of the relevant textual passages from the critically edited text of the *Skandapurāṇa* (SP_s 167.119-138) accompanied by a translation. In my analysis, I characterize this account as an imagined geography—not a fanciful representation; rather, a spatial rhetoric aimed at locating the Pāśupata tradition within a contested area of the ‘real world’. I suggest that this process of localization served three discrete, yet intertwined aims: 1) it presents a cosmological vision of a sanctified world or Śaiva *hierotopy* 2) provides a normative model for community and 3) stakes a geopolitical claim. As a preliminary consideration of the unique temporality and historical contingency of this narrative history, this first chapter lays the necessary groundwork for the detailed regional case studies presented in the chapters that will follow. These subsequent chapters will use this text as the occasion to examine other layers of the socio-cultural terrain, or ‘vernacular geographies’, within the map of the Pāśupata landscape that the text’s authors have drawn. In doing so, they will initiate a detailed reconstruction of this area as a lived space in early medieval India (c. 6th - 10th centuries CE).

I. The Narrative Frame

The most archaic layer of the *Skandapurāṇa* (i.e. the Nepalese or S-recension, SP_S)²⁵ recounts the divine origins of the Pāśupata tradition and its subsequent expansion throughout northwest India. Our story begins in a place called Kārohaṇa,²⁶ which was the center of a larger sacred region situated between the Mahī and the Narmadā Rivers, and to the north of the Sahya Mountain, in what is today southwest Gujarat [Figure 1]. It was within this area, celebrated by the authors as the ‘primordial Pāśupata landscape’ (*paśupateḥ kṣetram purāṇam*),²⁷ that Śiva is reported to descend to earth in every cosmic age. The *avatāra* of the current age is a teacher called Lāguḍi (viz. Lakuliśa, the ‘Lord with a Club’) who disseminated the Pāśupata doctrine via his four pupils, who are described as brahmins produced from Śiva’s four mouths. In the course of their wanderings, the authors report that these agents of the Lord came to occupy some of the most vital cultural, political, and economic centers of early medieval India—Kauśika in Ujjayani, Mitra in Mathurā, Gārgya in Jambūmārga, and an unnamed *brahmacārin* in Kanyakubja (see Figure 1). By localizing the Pāśupata tradition in this salvific *kṣetra*, the text’s authors offer an unprecedented new vision of this region, one that participates in, and nicely illustrates, a comprehensive effort on their part to construct an entire landscape circumscribed

²⁵ The earliest stratum of the *Skandapurāṇa* is preserved in Nepalese palm-leaf manuscripts, the oldest of which is dated 810 CE. These manuscripts comprise the Nepalese recension designated by the editors as SP_S. Detailed analysis of the interrelationships between the manuscripts of the S-recension and the formation of the text corpus is given in Yuko Yokochi’s Introduction to *Skandapurāṇa* Vol III (2013) pp. 30-55. On the editorial practices and principles that guide the ongoing edition, and the manuscript tradition(s) see *Skandapurāṇa* Vol I (1998) pp. 36-38 & 41-44; *Skandapurāṇa* Vol IIa (2004) pp 10-12. Also on the composition and transmission of the text see Hans Bakker, *The World* (2014) pp. 137-140.

²⁶ Kārohaṇa is identified with modern Karvan in southwest Gujarat. See further discussion below.

²⁷ SP_S 167.136. See text below. James Fitzgerald, ‘History and Primordium in Ancient Indian Historical Writing: Itihāsa and Purāṇa in the Mahābhārata and Beyond’ in *Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in the Ancient World*, First Edition, Kurt A. Raflaub ed. (John Wiley & Sons, 2014) pp. 41-60. Fitzgerald’s conception of *purāṇa* as a term used to communicate ‘primordial’ realities is considered in further detail below.

and dominated by the memory of the Śaiva past.²⁸ In this way, the text presents itself as an iconic geography, a map of great symbolic density that claims a Śaiva world.²⁹ While this sacred *kṣetra* is not the best known in the Śaiva world—one might think first of Vārāṇasī, the networks of *jyotirlingas*, or Himalayan locales³⁰—its relative anonymity vis-à-vis the received tradition suggests a particular historical contingency; that it was a response to the needs of certain members of the community at a particular moment in time.

Those familiar with *purāṇas* and *māhātmyas* know that the creation and celebration of iconic geographies is part of the genre's stock-in-trade.³¹ But among medieval India's many literary

²⁸ The particular portion of the text discussed here is framed by a series of *māhātmyas* that eulogize the salvific potential of places considered sacred to Śiva. Often the sanctity of these places is derived and materialized through the installation of a *liṅga*—the phallic emblem of Śiva, which served as a focus of ritual and devotional activity in medieval India, as today. The enumeration of such holy places and praise of pilgrimage is a unifying theme in the SP. Commenting on the locative vision of the text, Peter Bisschop writes, 'One who reads the text carefully is struck by the way the topographical references are intrinsically linked with the mythology of the Purāṇa.' (p. 17) Each of the published volumes addresses this theme in varying degrees. On the pan-Indian networks of holy places connected with the movement see Bisschop, *Sects and Centers* (2006); on Vārāṇasī see Ila, pp. 3-19 (2004); on the Vindhya region of Central India see Yokochi Vol III (2013); on key locales in Northeast India see Bakker (2014) Part II, 137-186.

²⁹ I have adopted this term 'iconic geography' from Nancy Khalek's discussion of medieval *faḍā'il* literature used to praise the sanctified spaces and pilgrimage circuits around Damascus. She describes these evocative literary sources as 'iconic texts'. In the case of the SP, I think it is not only the text that is iconic, but the landscape as well. This region symbolizes the premier status that the authors wish to ascribe to the religious community and its teachings. Nancy Khalek, *Damascus After the Muslim Conquest: Text and Image in Early Islam* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 136-137.

³⁰ The SP devotes considerable time to the praise of Vārāṇasī and the Avimuktakṣetra. See Hans Bakker, 'The Avimuktakṣetra in Vārāṇasī: its Origins and Early Development. Studies in Skandapurāṇa VI,' in *Visualizing Space in Banaras: Images, Maps, and the Practice of Representation* ed. M. Gaenszle and J. Gengnagel, *Enthno-Indology* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006, pp. 23-39; 'Construction and Reconstruction of Sacred Space in Vārāṇasī,' *Numen* 43, no. 1 (1996) pp. 32-55. On the networks of *jyotirlingas*, see Benjamin Fleming, 'The Cult of the Jyotirlingas and the History of Śaivite Worship' PhD Dissertation, McMaster University, 2007. On Hardwar, see James G. Lochtefeld, *God's Gateway: Identity and Meaning in a Hindu Pilgrimage Place*, (New York: Oxford University Press) 2011.

³¹ For an overview of places of pilgrimage culled from Sanskrit epic and purāṇic sources see S.M Bhardwaj, *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India: A Study in Cultural Geography*, (Berkeley: University of California Press 1973). For a

constructions of sacred landscape, the SP_s narrative is a significant cultural artifact and merits detailed attention for a number of reasons. This localized version of Pāśupata origins is the earliest one known. It is also unique to the *Skandapurāṇa* (henceforth, SP).³² This text also marks the debut in the historical record of Lāguḍi as an ectype³³ of Śiva.³⁴ As obscure as this last point may seem on its face, this mention of a human teacher—whose name is derived from variant spellings³⁵ of his signature club (*lakula*; *laguḍa*)—introduces a figure whose icons come to be emblematic of the Pāśupata tradition.³⁶ The authors report that in their present time, Śiva ‘Lāguḍi,’ descended to the terrestrial plane in order to lead other brahmins to final beatitude.³⁷ Through Lāguḍi and his pupils, the SP_s

vernacular perspective see Anne Feldhaus, *Connected Places: Religion, Pilgrimage, and Geographical Imagination in India* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

³² The record of the geographic expansion of the Pāśupata movement via Lāguḍi and his four pupils is a feature unique to the SP_s and scholars are aware of only one earlier version, that found in Kauṇḍinya's *Pañcārthabhāṣya* on the *Pāśupatasūtras*. According to Kauṇḍinya, who was writing in the 4th or 5th century, approximately two hundred years earlier than the SP_s authors, the Lord (*bhagavān*) took on the form of a male brahmin in Kāyāvātaraṇa and in this human form he walked to Ujjain where he proclaimed the teachings of the *Pāśupatasūtras*. Kauṇḍinya *ad Pāśupatasūtra* 1.1. For further discussion of Kauṇḍinya's account see, Hans Bakker “The Gospel of Kauṇḍinya: The Descent of God in Gujarat and the Practice of Imitating God,” in *Myths, Martyrs and Modernity: Studies in the History of Religions in Honor of Jan N Bremmer*, Jitse Dijkstra, Justin Kroesen & Yme Kuiper eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2010) pp. 517-518; Bisschop, pp 49-50; Pasupata Sutras with Pancharthabhashya of Kaundinya. Edit. by R. Ananthakrishna Sastri. Trivandrum Sanskrit Series CXLIII. Trivandrum, 1940.

³³ By which I mean that Lāguḍi is a kind of derivative form, a reproduction from the ‘original’ source.

³⁴ In addition to this first mention of the name (SP_s 167.129), Lāguḍi appears in one other instance in the SP_s (SP_s 167.169). In this passage, Laguḍīśvara and his pupils are mentioned in connection with eight Śaiva *āyatanas* in Magadha.

³⁵ ‘Lāguḍiḥ’ is given in the S₁ manuscript, which is the oldest dated manuscript. S₂ gives ‘Lākulī’ which more closely approximates ‘Lakulīśa’, the spelling that becomes most common.

³⁶ On the distinctive features of Lakulīśa iconography see U.P. Shah “Lakulīśa: Śaivite Saint” in *Discourses on Śiva: Proceedings of a Symposium on the Nature of Religious Imagery* ed. Michael Meister, (South Asia Regional Studies Dept: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985) p. 97.

³⁷ The SP_s identifies Śiva as Lāguḍi only once in this account of the transmission of the Pāśupata doctrine. The other two recensions of the SP used by the editors in the critical edition (The Revā and Ambikā recensions—SP_{RA}) never mention Lakulīśa, nor any established variant of the name. In (SP_{RA} 5 84-85.) Śiva is said to descend at Kārohaṇa and he offers instruction to four pupils. The names of the students and their respective locations match the account in SP_s, but here in SP_{RA} the teaching—offered by the Lord, but without the name ‘Lāguḍi’—is

populated this sacred *kṣetra* with authoritative representatives of the tradition and, at the same time, elevated Kārohaṇa as the center of an expansive territory that occupied the heart of northwest India. But the power of this map did not derive solely from a claim to a terrestrial geography. As I will show, when articulated within purāṇic registers of primordial time and space, this localization of divine presence and revelation approximates a cosmological vision.

Designating the geographic location of the tradition gestures to a social location as well. Narrating the Pāśupata landscape reflects an aim to establish the boundaries of a community by telling us not only *where* the community was, but also *who* it was. As Daniel Boyarin has commented in the context of Judeo-Christian identity politics, “[b]orders themselves are not given but constructed by power to mask hybridity, to occlude and disown it.”³⁸ In the case of the SP, I hypothesize that this textual innovation records a significant historical moment in the development of the tradition, one that hints at larger processes of transformation and dynamism within a Śaiva religious milieu. I think that the narrative was intended as a univocal expression of identity over and against the polyphony of voices on the ground. By establishing the boundaries of the tradition and socializing the landscape in this way, the narrative provides a model for a community—that is, a normative vision of the Pāśupata tradition and its place in the world. Seen from this perspective, the SP cartography is not reflective of a

referred to as *dharma* and is described as the “most excellent secret” (*rahasya vara*) According to the Nepalese recension (SP_s 167.129-130) Śiva Lāguḍi provides the students instruction in Pāśupata yoga. The appellation Laguḍīśvara appears in one other instance in SP_s 167.169. In this passage, Laguḍīśvara and his pupils are referred to in connection with eight Śiva *āyatanas* in Magadha. In this case, however, the title is not explicitly made a name of Śiva; rather it suggests a reference to a distinct person. There is no parallel for this passage in SP_{RA}. See Bisschop (2006) pp. 108; 218. According to Bakker, the name Lakulīśa itself is not attested until the 6th century in an inscription by the king of Dakṣiṇa Kosala, Mahāśivagupta, which refers to the descent of Lakulīśanātha who is born in the house of one Somaśarman. For discussion of this inscription see, Hans Bakker, “Thanesar, the Pāśupata Order and the Skandapurāṇa: Studies in the Skandapurāṇa IX” *Journal of Indological Studies* 19 (2007): 2. Bakker (2014), pp. 143-145 presents a revised translation and interpretation of the aforementioned passage of the inscription.

³⁸ Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judeo-Christianity*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2006) p. 15.

process of documentation, in which some observable ‘real’ is recorded; rather, this map reflects a discursive process that proposes an idealized ‘model for’ reality.³⁹

In addition to their cosmological and normative vision, the authors also make a geopolitical claim. This narrative of origins is also a narrative of place and the text’s laying claim to this particular region of northwest India suggests that this geographic area also had an important role to play in the SP’s construction of Pāśupata identity. Since this account of Pāśupata origins comprises part of a dated text, likely of the late 6th or early 7th century CE, a rarity in the field of purāṇic studies, it affords a unique opportunity to situate the text’s iconic geography within the dynamic socio-political history of early medieval India.⁴⁰ As mentioned above, the authors pinpoint certain locales within the landscape as authoritative seats of the tradition: the cities of Ujjayanī, Mathurā, Jambumārga, and Kanyakubja are each occupied by one of Lāguḍi’s students. These prestigious places were political capitals of considerable antiquity, sites of cultural production, and nodal points along the major conduits of trade and travel that extended from the west coast of southern Gujarat and the North Konkan, across north India. Given the cultural potency of these cities, the SP authors’ claim to this space was certainly not a neutral assertion. I think we may infer a geopolitical strategy (or strategies) at work. On the one hand, we can read the effort to colonize these prominent locales as an effort to assert the supremacy of Śaivism and the Pāśupata tradition within the socio-political networks embedded in these places. At the same time, the inclusion of these cities within the Pāśupata topography suggests a hierarchical

³⁹ This resonates with Benedict Anderson’s discussion of the function of the colonial map as aimed at a kind of ‘totalizing classification.’ Anderson cites Thai historian Thongchai regarding the emergence of map mentality: ‘A map anticipated spatial reality, not vice versa. In other words, a map was a model for, rather than a model of, what it purported to represent.’ Benedict Anderson, ‘Census, Map, and Museum’ in *Imagined Communities*, Revised Edition (London: Verso Press, 1991 [1983]) p. 173.

⁴⁰ I follow the dating proposed by the editors of the SP. See Bakker (2014) p. 12; and Yokochi’s Introduction to SP Vol III (2013).

vision by celebrating Kārohaṇa, a place of comparatively little prior prestige, as the very place where the Lord descended and thus placing this locale on a par with more historically prominent sites.

I.I Text and Translation

The narrative that outlines the geographic spread of the Pāśupata movement in the SP_s is framed within a larger narrative sequence in which the sage Sanatkumāra informs Vyāsa about Śiva's many sanctuaries (*āyatana*s). He also lists the seers and other figures from traditional narrative literature who visited these places in times past, and the religious merit that will accrue to a person who visits them today (i.e., short *māhātmyas* of these places).⁴¹ Much like its frame, the Pāśupata account is, at its core, a *māhātmya* intended to praise Kārohaṇa. It was at this *tīrtha*, situated on the northern bank of the Narmadā River, where the authors report a sanctuary of Trinetra (i.e. Śiva) is located and where they claim Vṛṣabhadhvaja (Śiva) descended (*avatīrṇa*) to earth.

Before expanding on this Śaiva connection, however, the authors employ various strategies to establish the sanctity of this place by presenting a cosmological frame in which the remarkable events will take place. They begin by explaining the meaning of the place's name by way of an etymology: this location is the place where the Prajāpati Ka—likely referring here to the sage Kaśyapa—mounted (*āruroha*) Kā, the Earth, and so the site is called Kārohaṇa.⁴² The etymology is somewhat obscure and

⁴¹ For example, the preceding verses (107-109) describe an *āyatana* of Śiva established on Hariścandragiri by Rāma Jāmadagnya. The section following praises the shrine of Avimukteśvara in Vārāṇasī and details the benefits of installing a *liṅga* at this place (SP_s 167.139-162).

⁴² *uttare narmadātīre dvīyojanapathāntare |*
kārohaṇam iti khyātaṁ trinetrāyatanaṁ mahat |
yatra kaḥ kām tapasyantīm āruroha prajāpatiḥ || no ||
āruroha yataḥ kām tām tasmin deśe prajāpatiḥ |
tasmāt kārohaṇo nāma sa deśaḥ parikīrtitaḥ || m ||
tasmin deśe 'vatīrṇaś ca bhagavān vṛṣabhadhvajaḥ |

its exact mythical referent is difficult to trace in this terse mention;⁴³ however, Bisschop's detailed study of the *nirukti* connects it with Kaśyapa's 'mounting' or reasserting control over the earth, which had been given to him earlier as a boon from Rāma Jāmadagnya, since it was in danger of withdrawing and descending to the netherworld.⁴⁴ As obscure as the etymology is, I think we can surmise that its author's rhetorical aim was to infuse this place with symbolic pregnancy by connecting it with a previous event of cosmic significance and, in doing so, evoke a sense of timelessness and eternity that underlay the empirical reality of the reader's experience.⁴⁵

One more notable detail follows. Kārohaṇa is identified as a place where Dharma is preserved in the face of cosmic degeneration, invoking the familiar trope of the decline of dharma with the passage of each cosmic age. Here, Dharma personified is said to decrease by one fourth (*pāda*) with the passing of each *yuga*.⁴⁶ But since the Lord Dharma, with his last remaining quarter, stayed in Kārohaṇa,

puṇyo 'sau sarvadeśebhyo deśo yena nibodha tat ||112||

⁴³ As Bisschop also notes in his study, SP_{RA} gives an alternative version of the *nirukti* which reports that Kaśyapa ascended to heaven at Kārohaṇa. Also significant is the mention that Brahmā emits the various units of cosmic time at Kārohaṇa:

*tatra brahmāsrjat sargaṃ yugamanvantarāṇi ca/
kāṣṭhāṃ kalāṃ muhūrtaṃ ca lavaṃ samvatsaraṃ ritum //44//*

⁴⁴ Peter Bisschop, 'The Nirukti of Kārohaṇa in the Skandapurāṇa: Studies in the Skandapurāṇa VII' in *DICSEP III*, Petteri Koskikallio ed. (Zagreb, 2002), pp.575-596.

⁴⁵ Although writing about the use of etymology in the much earlier *Brāhmaṇas*, Johannes Bronkhorst's description of their function is apt here. 'The etymologies in the *Brāhmaṇas* were believed to bring to light connections between objects that are normally hidden. Similarities between words can reveal those connections. More often than not these connections link objects concerned with the mythological realm, i.e., with a reality that is not directly accessible to our senses. The fact the multiple etymologies for a single word are frequently met with, suggests that the connections established with their help constitute a network rather than a one to one correspondence. The practical advantage of these etymologies is that they allow man to obtain knowledge about these connections with the hidden reality.' Johannes Bronkhorst, "Etymology and Magic: Yāska's Nirukta, Plato's Cratylus, and the Riddle of Semantic Etymologies," *Numen* 48 (2001): 147-203. p. 155.

⁴⁶ In this trope, Dharma is often envisioned as a cow. The four legs or pillars of Dharma—*satyam* (truth), *dayā* (compassion), *tapas* (asceticism), and *dānam* (pious giving)—decrease one-by-one with the passing of each

it is said to be a holy (*puṇya*) place.⁴⁷ And, yet, however remarkable the reported event, the reader is assured repeatedly that these things did happen in this very place (*tasmin deśe*). This recurrent phrase functions as a tether that binds two discrete geographies, one cosmic and one terrestrial.⁴⁸ This localization of events serves as a narrative foreshadowing that sets the expectation that Kārohaṇa will continue to be a site of significant events in the future.

The authors then add a Śaiva layer to this cosmological framing of Kārohaṇa's sacred geography. We are told that, in each previous *yuga* Śiva descended at this very place and offered his favor to brahmins,⁴⁹ in different forms—as Bhārabhūti in the Kṛta *yuga*, Diṇḍimuṇḍa in the Tretā *yuga*, and Aṣaḍhi in the Dvāpara *yuga*.⁵⁰ The excerpt below (SP-S 119-138)⁵¹ brings the narrative into the present age as it describes Śiva's incarnation at Kārohaṇa in the current, the Kali, *yuga*.

yuga. This image and the theme of cosmic degeneration are addressed by Heinrich von Stietencron, 'Calculating Religious Decay: The Kaliyuga in India' in *Hindu Myth, Hindu History* (New Delhi: Orient Black Swan, 2007) pp. 31-49.

⁴⁷ SP_S 167.113-114

kṣiṇe kṛtayuge vyāsa tretāyugamukhodaye |
tasmin pādaṃ mumocaikaṃ dharmo 'dharmanipīḍitaḥ |
dvitīyaṃ dvāpare prāpte tṛtīyaṃ ca kalau yuge || 113 ||
caturthenāvasthe ca yataḥ sa bhagavān prabhuḥ |
evaṃ sa dharmasaṃvāso deśaḥ puṇyatamaḥ smṛtaḥ || 114 ||

⁴⁸ The authors use this locative reminder in three instances: Verses 111, 112, and 117. See below.

⁴⁹ SP_S 167.115-117

bhārabhūtiḥ tv asau bhūtvā tasmin deśe pinākadhrk |
bhāraṃ baddhvā dvijātīnāṃ narmadāyāṃ vicikṣipe ||
kāruṇyena mahādevo martyaṇāṃ mamumukṣayā || 115 ||
tretāyāṃ diṇḍimuṇḍaś ca śirāṃsi vinikṛttavān |
dvāpare cāṣaḍhir bhūtvā nṛttenānugrhitavān || 116 ||
evaṃ pratiyugaṃ vyāsa tasmin deśe śivaḥ svayam |
avatīrṇaś cānugṛhya brāhmaṇāṃ chuddhamānasān || 117 ||

⁵⁰ SP-S 167.110-118. In his research, Bisschop has identified *tīrthas* associated with each of these three figures in the area surrounding Karvan and along the Narmadā River. Peter C. Bisschop, *Early Śaivism and the Skandapurāṇa: Sects and Centers*, (Groningen: Egbert Forsten), 2006. pp. 206-207.

vartamāne kalau cāpi jñātvā duḥkhārditam jagat /
 catvāraḥ puruṣān sṛṣṭvā svasmān mukhacatuṣṭayāt /
 provāca paramēśāno lokānugrahalipsayā //119//
 yūyaṁ yāta mahīm sarve dvijā bhūtvā tapasvinaḥ /
 mām evaiṣyatha yogīśā nūtvā viprān paraṁ padam //120//
 te tathoktās tathā vyāsa sambabhūvuh prthakprthak /
 mānuṣeṣu tadā viprā mokṣadharmaparāyaṇāḥ //121//
 ujjayanyām guruḥyēṣṭhaḥ kauśiko nāma nāmataḥ /
 dvitīyo gārgya ity eva jambumārge satāpanaḥ //122//
 tṛtīyaś cābhavan mitro mathurāyām mahāmanāḥ /
 brahmacārī caturthas tu kuruṣv eva sugotrājaḥ //123//
 bhagavān api deveśaḥ paramaiśvaryasaṁyutaḥ /
 atrivaṁśaprasūtasya nāmnā vai somaśarmaṇaḥ /
 rūpaṁ kṛtvā sitāṅgaṁ tu jagāmātrigrhaṁ śubham //124//
 sa taṁ brahmavidam vipram ātreyaṁ sakulaṁ vibhuḥ /
 yogasiddhipradānena anujagrāha śaṁkaraḥ //125//
 anugrhya tadā vyāsa sakulaṁ dvijasattamam /
 jagāmojjayanīm devaḥ śmaśānaṁ ca viveśa ha //126//
 sa tatra bhasmanātmānam avagunṭhya vṛṣadhvajāḥ /
 ulmukaṁ vāmahastena grhītvā samupāviśat //127//
 tatra prathamam ādāya śiṣyaṁ kauśikam īśvaraḥ /
 jambumārge dvitīyaṁ ca mathurāyām tato 'param //128//
 kanyakubje tataś cānyam anugrhya jagatpatiḥ /
 svasiddhāntam dadau yogam uvācedaṁ ca lāguḍiḥ //129//
 rahasyaṁ paramaṁ hidaṁ pañcārtha iti saṁjñitam /
 viprān mocayituṁ datto yuṣmabhyam martyabandhanāt /
 anayā dīkṣayā viprān prāpayadhvaṁ paraṁ padam || 130 ||
 nadūtīreṣu medhyeṣu puṇyeṣv āyataneṣu ca /
 śūnyāgāreṣv arānyeṣu vāso vaḥ saṅgavarjitaḥ || 131 ||
 vaco bhagavataḥ śrutvā śiṣyāḥ paśupateḥ svayam /
 yathājñaptam akurvanta sarve te bhavatejasāḥ || 132 ||
 dharmapādāṅkīte deśe avatīrṇo yato bhavaḥ /
 sa deśaḥ paramas tasmān mahāpuṇyatamaḥ smṛtaḥ || 133 ||
 āśramo yoginām yatra pravṛttaḥ pāpanāśanaḥ /
 aṣṭāyatanam ity evaṁ sthānaṁ tatra mahātmanaḥ /
 yad dṛṣṭvā manuḥjā vyāsa prāpnuvanti paraṁ padam || 134 ||
 kārohaṇaṁ śivasthānaṁ ye 'bhigacchanti mānavāḥ /
 garbhaśayyābhayaṁ teṣāṁ na bhaven munisattama // 135 //
 mahinarmadayor madhyaṁ sahyasya ca yad uttaram /
 etat paśupateḥ kṣetram purāṇam ṛṣibhiḥ stutam //136//
 tadāgatya naro vyāsa yady api syāt supāpakṛt /
 sarvapāpavinirmukto yatheṣṭāṁ prāpnuyād gatim // 137 //
 kārohaṇaṁ kṣetram atīva puṇyaṁ śaivāni yatrāyatanāni dhīman /
 gatvā narāś tāni mahāphalāni saṁsāragehaṁ na punar viśanti //138//

⁵¹ The Sanskrit text is reproduced from Bisschop's 2006 critical edition.

As the Kaliyuga was progressing, the Supreme Lord, aware of the world's affliction, created four men from each of his own four mouths. Out of his desire to furnish favoring assistance to [its] populations. [119] He told them: "All of you go upon the earth as brahmin ascetics. After you have conveyed brahmins to the highest place, you Lords of Yoga will come only to me." [120]

Vyāsa, when he had said this to them, those brahmins came, each one of them, to be highly honored among men as completely dedicated to the norms (*dharma*) leading to liberation (*mokṣa*). [121] The senior-most of these teachers was in Ujjain and named Kauśika. The second was the ascetic Gārgya in Jambumārga. [122] The third was the magnanimous Mitra in Mathurā. The fourth was a *brahmacārin* who was born in an excellent *gotra* among the Kurus. [123]

And then the Blessed Lord of the Gods, endowed with his supreme lordly power, took on a bodily form (*rūpam*) that had white limbs and went to the auspicious home of one Somaśarman, born in the line of Atri. [124] The Lord Śaṁkara showed favor to that brahmin of Atri's lineage, who was learned in the Veda, and to his family, by conferring upon him perfection in *yoga*. [125]

Then, Vyāsa, after he had shown favor to that excellent brahmin and his family, the God went to Ujjayanī and he entered the cremation ground there. [126] Vṛṣadhvaja (Śiva) seated himself there after he covered his body with ashes and picked up a firebrand with his left hand. [127] The Lord accepted Kauśika as his first student there, then his second in Jambumārga, the next one in Mathurā after that, [128] and having welcomed another in Kanyakubja after that, the Lord of the World, gave them his fully established teaching of *yoga*.

Lāguḍi said this: [129] "This is truly the supreme secret; it is called Pañcārtha. I have given it to you in order to free brahmins from the bond of death. Get brahmins to the highest place with this consecration. [130] Free from worldly concerns, dwell along the pure banks of rivers, in sacred shrines, in abandoned houses, and in the wilderness." [131] After they had heard these words from Lord Paśupati himself, those students, imbued with the fiery energy of Lord Bhava, all did as they were commanded. [132]

Since Lord Bhava descended in this place, marked by a quarter of Dharma, it is thus considered a supremely sacred spot. [133] The exalted one has a place there called the 'Eight-Abodes' (Aṣṭāyatana), a retreat of *yogins* where the destruction of bad deeds occurs. After seeing it, Vyāsa, mortals attain the highest place. [134] Those people who visit the abode of Śiva called Kārohaṇa have no fear of rebirth, Venerable Sage. [135] This is the primordial field of Paśupati—[located] between the Narmadā and the Mahī rivers, and north of the Sahya Mountain—celebrated by the seers. [136] Even if a man is truly an evil-doer, Vyāsa, after reaching there he would be liberated from all misdeeds and attain his desired end. [137] Kārohaṇa is an extremely sacred area where, Wise One, there are sanctuaries of Śiva. People who visit them, so richly rewarding, will never again enter the cycle of rebirth. [138]

II. An Imagined Landscape: *Purāṇa* & Place

The SP narrative scripts a compelling emplotment of divine presence and revelation using a narrative structure that adapts literary features definitive of the *purāṇa* and *māhātmya* genres to serve the authors' rhetorical aims.⁵² In this section I draw attention to the text's cosmological vision, through which the authors craft a Pāśupata world with Kārohaṇa at its center.

By narrating the divine origins of the Pāśupata movement as a series of events tied to prominent locales within a sanctified region, the SP authors created an imagined landscape. By 'imagined' I do not intend an antonym for 'real', nor do I deny that the authors themselves could have had empirical knowledge of the area, places, and social realities of the region.⁵³ My use of the term 'imagined landscape' draws upon a body of scholarship on the 'social imaginary' as the shared conceptions, ideals, or ethos of a particular group that reflects a certain normative perspective. While discussions of social imaginary are typically found in studies of modern nation building and sovereignty, I think the concept is also useful for thinking about pre-modern Indian claims to group identity and belonging. The works of Benedict Anderson and Charles Taylor have been influential in this field. Building upon Anderson's work, Taylor describes the social imaginary as follows:

⁵² This term, used by Hayden White (see below, n. 55) and others, was coined by Paul Ricoeur. According to Ricoeur, emplotment is a process a narrative configuration, what he called an act of 'grasping together'. This grasping organizes events into an intelligible whole in a way that lends the narrative telling a sense of unity and, through that unity, a cultural plausibility that makes it meaningful. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol 1, trans. McLaughlin & Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) pp. 64; 164.

⁵³ The rhetorical force of this sacred *kṣetra* would have depended, at least in part, upon the authors' and audiences' familiarity with the area, either through first-hand knowledge of certain of its features or via received tradition. Had places like Ujjayanī and Mathurā, or even Kārohaṇa, been completely unknown, the cultural purchase of the narrative would have been diminished significantly.

I speak of imaginary because I'm talking about the way ordinary people 'imagine' their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms; it is carried in images, stories, and legends . . . the social imaginary is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy . . . Our social imaginary at any given time is complex. It incorporates a sense of the normal expectations that we have of one another, the kind of common understanding which enables us to carry out the collective practices that make up our social life. This incorporates some sense of how we all fit together in carrying out the common practice. This understanding is both factual and 'normative'; that is, we have a sense of how things usually go, but this is interwoven with an idea of how they ought to go, of what missteps would invalidate the practice.'⁵⁴

The essence of an imaginative construction is the narrative emplotment of the purportedly factual data it imparts.⁵⁵ The larger social imaginary determines the localization of events and the way the sanctity of the region is storied in order to create an idealized and coherent picture, a narrative that 'works'.⁵⁶ Genres of historical writing, *purāṇa* included, are what Hayden White has termed 'discursive writing' in which a series of events become rhetorically powerful and also plausible through narrative emplotment. As White explains, 'Considered as potential elements of a story, historical events are value neutral. Whether they find their place finally in a story that is tragic, comic, romantic or ironic . . . depends upon the historians decision to *configure* them according to the imperatives of one plot structure or mythos rather than another . . . This is essentially a literary, that is to say a fiction-making

⁵⁴ Charles Taylor, 'Modern Social Imaginaries', *Public Culture* 14 (2002): 91–124; *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004; Claudia Strauss, 'The Imaginary', *Anthropological Theory* vol. 6(3): 322–344, 2006.

⁵⁵ Hayden White draws attention to the disjunction or distinction between historical events and the way they are narrated or emplotted. In his argument, the events themselves do not determine the narrative frame—a series of events can be rhetorically cast in a narrative to achieve very different ends depending on the intention of the author. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in 19th century Europe*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973) p. 9

⁵⁶ In mining historiographical texts for useful information, historians may disregard the ideological features that make their source culturally plausible. Dominik LaCapra calls this the 'worklike' aspect of a text, which he distinguishes from its documentary elements. Dominik LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell University Press, 1983) p. 30.

operation. And to call it that in no way detracts from the status of historical narratives as providing a kind of knowledge.⁵⁷

While *purāṇa* is a kind of historiography, its mode of narrative emplotment is one uniquely Indian and not typically recognized as historical, since *purāṇic* texts, and their sub-genre, *māhātmya*, are both literary traditions that purport to record the past while eschewing chronological historical details and obscuring the identities of individual authors.⁵⁸ These features lend the text an aura of timelessness, as something preternaturally revealed rather than recorded by a human hand. In Sanskrit, the word '*purāṇa*' signifies something ancient; but the word may also refer to the literary genre that records what is ancient, indicating the intentions of the authors to locate the events of the narratives in the 'primordial' past, to adopt James Fitzgerald's terminology. As a literary genre, *purāṇa* was influenced by the earlier, related *itihāsa* tradition.⁵⁹ Both *itihāsa* and *purāṇa* are narrative traditions strategically constructed and employed as tools for the dissemination of a brahminic account of the past and the continued renewal of brahminic forms of knowledge and (embedded)

⁵⁷ Hayden White, 'Historical Text as Literary Artifact' in *The History and Narrative Reader*, ed. Geoffrey Roberts, (London: Routledge, 2001) pp 221-236.

⁵⁸ The issue of *purāṇic* authorship is another vexed question. The editors of the SP text presume that the authors were members of the Pāśupata community themselves since the text contains multiple references to Pāśupata-yoga or a Pāśupata *vrata* and also concludes with a section on Pāśupata yoga. Hans Bakker, R. Adriaensen, and H. Isaacson, 'Towards a Critical Edition of the *Skandapurāṇa*,' in *Indo-Iranian Journal* no. 37 (1994): 327.

⁵⁹ *Itihāsa* narrative, which is often translated into English as 'history,' and whose title is taken from the formulaic phrase '*iti ha āsa*,' 'so it was' that was used to end such accounts were concerned with the past and represent a system of knowledge maintained by Brahmin specialists and used to resolve issues of interpretation of Vedic hymns or rules concerning the proper execution of a sacrifice. We might describe them as myths that provide a template for human action. The origins of the genre are then primarily that of exegesis of the hymns of the Vedas. An assumption of a shared ritual vocabulary allowed the authors to delve into other issues and they concerned themselves primarily with establishing the 'origins, meaning, and *raison d'être* of the ritual acts to be performed and to prove their validity and the significance and suitability of the mantras and chants used as well as the mutual relations of the acts and their connections with phenomenal reality.' Jan Gonda, Vedic Literature (Saṃhitās and Brāhmaṇas) in *A History of Indian Literature* vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975) p. 339.

norms. Much like Islamic *hadith*, or ancient Greek *mythos*, *itihāsa* specialists used accounts of past events and deeds as a source of authority that was brought to bear on situations in the present.⁶⁰ The defining element of these narrative reports was their authority and reliability. As Fitzgerald explains, 'Whether we see the formula [*iti ha āsa*—thus it was] as simply an asseverative utterance—a reporter's assurance that he has given a correct and true narration—or as a set label signifying 'true report,' the word seems to give some kind of assurance to the hearer regarding the veracity of the report,' as a body of knowledge transmitted as an authoritative teaching.⁶¹ Like *itihāsa*, the *purāṇas* often style themselves as oral reports.⁶² We can see traces of this discursive structure in the text of the SP, which is cast as a dialogue between the sages Vyāsa and Sanatkumāra. The use of vocative asides to punctuate narrative junctures gives the impression that the text presents a transcript of an extended conversation.⁶³ This presentation of orality lends the written word the *gravitas* of an authoritative utterance and, at the same time, heightens the reader's experience of the story by bridging temporal

⁶⁰ In this way, the *itihāsa* tradition is comparable to Bruce Lincoln's description of the function and authority of myth in ancient Greek culture; it was an authoritative utterance to be respected and obeyed rather than a fictional account whose limitation to the realm of the fabulous excluded the possibility of veracity. Myth was designed to '[...] provide unshakable assurance to the audience internal to the text [...] as well as that outside its confines (all hearers and readers), that however fabulous the events of Odysseus's narrative may seem [...] still we are justified in regarding his story as not just true, but edifying, exemplary, authoritative.' Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship*, (Chicago: UC Press, 1999) p.13.

⁶¹ James Fitzgerald, 'Surrounding History with Pre-History,' Conference on *Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in the Ancient World*, Brown University, Dec. 13, 2008.

⁶² Such dialogic frames are a common feature of Sanskrit narrative literature and could as Michael Witzel has argued, preserve traces of the old structure of Vedic sacrificial ritual. 'On the Origin of the Literary Device of the Frame Story in Old Indian Literature', in *Hinduism and Buddhism: Festschrift for Ulrich Schneider*, Harry Falk ed. Freiburg: Hedwig Falk, 1989. 380-414. The larger question of purāṇic orality has been the subject of extended scholarly discussion, which I will not rehearse here in detail since my interest is in the text itself. On the history of these debates see the useful summary in Adheesh Sathaye, *Crossing the Lines of Caste*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) pp. 19-24.

⁶³ For example, up above in verses 121 & 125 before the introduction of critical passages concerning the localization of the pupils and the activities of Lakulīṣa. There are also multiple instances in verses 134-138, which celebrate Kārohaṇa and emphasize its sanctity.

and narrative distance so that the ‘present’ in which the revelation occurred becomes the immediate present of the audience.⁶⁴

The purāṇic mode of emplotment is also effective because of the way it is brought to life by the text—as an image meant to be visualized and experienced. This purāṇic landscape functions as what Nancy Khalek has described as an iconic text. Such texts are ‘portraits of imagined landscapes . . . that irradiated with the meaning created by the relationship of those landscapes with the past. . . .’⁶⁵ In the case of the Pāśupata landscape, it is not only the literary rendering that achieves an iconic status, but the geographically circumscribed area itself. The purāṇa’s authors crafted an ‘iconic geography’ of great symbolic density insofar as it represented, at least at that time, an authoritative vision of the tradition’s place in the world. And this vision is a memorable one in its simplicity. The map is uncluttered; the cast of characters limited, and the account is not burdened by superfluous detail. This relatively straightforward presentation of a series of remarkable events allows this iconic geography to function as a narrative *aide-mémoire*, a textual image called easily to mind.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Commenting on these dialogic conventions as ‘faux orality’ in the context of Vālmiki’s Rāmāyaṇa, Sheldon Pollock writes, [...]we are being given not a realistic depiction but a sentimental ‘fiction of written culture’. What these literary conventions express is ‘nostalgia for the oral and a desire to continue to share in its authenticity and authority’. *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) pp. 78-79.

⁶⁵ Khalek, p. 137.

⁶⁶ Fentress and Wickham explore the transmission of social memory via narrative and image. Their comment on the power of the image in transmitting memory is apt in light of the strong visual element of the SP text. As they explain, ‘social memory is not limited to the memory of words [...]’ ‘they draw attention to the role of images, [...] the images held in social memory are composite: they are composed from a mixture of pictorial images and scenes, slogans, quips, and snatches of verse, abstractions, plot types and stretches of discourse, and even false etymologies [...] Images can be transmitted socially only if they are conventionalized and simplified: conventionalized because the image has to be meaningful for the entire group’ James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory: New Perspectives on the Past* (Blackwell, 1992) p. 47.

II.I Pāśupata Cosmology

Although the *purāṇas* as written texts have shown a certain flexibility over time, there are certain distinguishing characteristics that designate a narrative as part of the *purāṇic* tradition, as distinct from other forms of popular narrative, and thus a reflection of a certain elite brahmin ideology.⁶⁷ Some of the *purāṇas* define the genre as characterized by five marks (*pañcalakṣaṇa*) that provide a cosmological and genealogical frame within which the drama of the past unfolds.⁶⁸ What the *purāṇas* demonstrate with their genealogies and cosmogonies is that historical events are not isolated occurrences—the cultural relevance of the *purāṇic* account resides in its storying the past as a cyclical and continuous unfolding in time and place. On this point Fitzgerald's comments are also apt: 'Some uses of the word *purāṇa* also conveyed the additional, critically important sense of *being the first instance of something that is still current*—primacy, primordially—a sense which not only contains within it a sense of the normative but also often awakens senses of sacredness, of transcendent holiness, by virtue of the breathtaking way something vast in space or time dwarfs the human subject

⁶⁷ The manuscript traditions like that of the *Skandapurāṇa*, give evidence of a wealth of stories characterized by a high level of textual flexibility that has allowed for variant readings, the addition of stories over time, and the loss of others. As a distinct genre, the *purāṇas* reflect the developing sectarian *bhakti* theologies that begin to be articulated in the Gupta Period (320-600 CE); although it is important to note that versions of many of the narratives would have been familiar at an earlier time. These narratives are thus part of an extended cultural memory that circulated in oral and performative contexts. The *Skandapurāṇa* is perhaps an extreme example of this textual flexibility. For an overview of other *purāṇas* see Ludo Rocher, *The Purāṇas*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1986).

⁶⁸ These five marks include: *sarga*, the accounts of the creation of the universe; *pratisarga*, the story of the recreation of the universe after its dissolution; *vaṃśa*, genealogies of the Gods and other divine beings or forces; *manvantara*, the history of a *Manu* (king) of the fourteen *Manu*-intervals in each *kalpa* (vast period of time); and *vaṃśānucarita*, a history of the kings in the particular *manvantara* in question. The *pañcalakṣaṇa* represent a particular way of understanding, organizing, and expressing views about the past. Willibald Kiefel, *Das Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa: Versuch einer Textgeschichte Language*. (Bonn: Kurt Schroeder Verlag, 1927); Fitzgerald, 'History and Primordium', 40; V. Narayana Rao, "Purāṇa as Brahminic Ideology," in *Purāṇa Perennis: Reciprocity and Transformation in the Hindu and Jaina Texts* ed. Wendy Doniger (New York: SUNY Press, 1993) p. 99.

who contemplates it, and arouses a sense of awe.⁶⁹ In the case of religious communities, this rhetoric of primordality anchors the tradition in the timeless past and situates teachings and teachers within a larger cosmological framework of revealed knowledge.

We have already seen that the SP locates Śiva's descent as Lāguḍi in the Kali *yuga*, the degraded age of the relative present in which his appearance promises the alleviation of human suffering and the possibility of salvation. The Lord's appearance in Kārohaṇa is narrated as a continuous cyclical process of appearance and revelation such that it achieves a kind of timelessness. The repetition also serves to highlight the immediacy of the past and the spatial proximity of those marvelous events, thereby adding a new, and potentially salvific, dimension to the everyday or phenomenological experience of time as the ordered succession of past-present-future. The cosmological frame is first intimated in *ślokas* 115-117 where we are told of Śiva's previous descents in Kārohaṇa. Hans Bakker has earlier commented on this trope of the cyclical return as an innovation of the purāṇic authors. 'The first thing that strikes us when we compare the *Skandapurāṇa*'s account of the well-known descent of Śiva in Kāyāvataṛaṇa . . . with that of Kauṇḍinya is that the uniqueness of this mystical event is no longer maintained. Reflecting the general Hindu and Buddhist conception of time, viz. that a Buddha or a god incarnates on earth again and again in various forms and persons, the *Skandapurāṇa* makes Śiva's descent in Gujarat a cyclic event: each world period (*yuga*) has its own incarnation . . .⁷⁰ I suggest that this adaptation by the SP authors serves their larger rhetorical agenda; namely, to elevate Kārohaṇa as the center of the Śaiva world.

⁶⁹ Fitzgerald, p. 49-50.

⁷⁰ Bakker, 'Origin and Spread', 22.

In addition to introducing this cyclically temporal *yuga*-framework, I think we can observe another cosmological vision at work in the presentation of the origin of the students. The SP account does not present the *pañcalakṣaṇa*, *per se*, but emulates the pattern of purāṇic cosmogony through the implied rhythm of *sarga* and *pratisarga*—the pattern of creation, reabsorption, and recreation that structures each cosmic age.⁷¹ We are told in verse 119 that Śiva produces—here the authors use a form of *√srj*, the verbal root typically adapted to express acts of cosmic or divine emission—the four brahmin ascetics who will act as his terrestrial representatives from each of his four mouths, the ultimate source of his revealed teaching. They are extensions of the deity and the word of God in corporeal form. Then, in verse 120 they are told that after they have accomplished the task of achieving the salvation of brahmins (i.e. getting them to the *param padam* or ‘highest place’) they will return to him. This image of a divine emanation and subsequent reabsorption clearly approximates a cosmological pattern, albeit on the scale of a social microcosm. It is a synoptic cosmology.

As a final note, I think we may also read echoes of a cosmological rhythm in the structure of the narrative itself, and in the unfolding of the image of the sacred *kṣetra*. For just as the authoritative teachers are derived from a single source—that of the Lord’s mouth—the cardinal points of the Pāśupata landscape are linked to the sacred center at Kārohaṇa through the continuity of the lineage deriving from Śiva as Lāguḍi. Kārohaṇa serves as the geographical and the narrative source from which the story unfolds. As Śiva’s students were sanctified by their emanating from him, so the other locales incorporated within this narrative arc are rendered sacred by virtue of their ties to the terrestrial source of the revelation. And similar to the way the students will eventually return to be

⁷¹ These patterns of cosmology are discussed in Madeleine Biardeau, *Cosmogonies Purāṇiques*, vol.1 of *EMH* (Paris: École Française D’Extrême Orient, 1981) ‘Part 1 : Yuga and Avatāra’.

‘reabsorbed’ by Śiva, this narrative also circles back to Kārohaṇa in the final verses to reassert the supreme sanctity of this *kṣetra*.

III. Narrating ‘Community’: Borders & Belonging

In narrating the origins of their *terra sancta*, the SP authors simultaneously offer their vision of a Pāśupata community. Like the landscape itself, this image of the tradition is a carefully curated representation that serviced a particular epistémé.⁷² I earlier proposed we read this vision of community as a normative idealization. I now elaborate this suggestion, considering the ways in which the narrative construction of sacred geography and lineage work together to realize the authors’ vision. The rhetorical force of this narration of community is cast in higher relief by considering some of the earliest epigraphic and material attestations of Pāśupata identity, which diverge from the norm found in the SP.

Before turning to the characters selected as representatives of the Pāśupata tradition, it is useful to consider first the narrative frame in which they were embedded. The SP account functioned as a compelling expression of a larger imagined social identity thanks, in part, to the distinctive narrative form of action through which it was expressed. In his reflections on the social function of narrative, philosopher David Carr emphasizes its ‘practical’ thrust.⁷³ In Carr’s words, narrative is

⁷² As once defined by Michel Foucault in an interview, epistémé is the ‘strategic apparatus which permits of separating out from among all the statements which are possible those that will be acceptable within, I won’t say a scientific theory, but a field of scientificity, and which it is possible to say are true or false. The episteme is the ‘apparatus’ which makes possible the separation, not of the true from the false, but of what may from what may not be characterised as scientific.’ Foucault, ‘Truth and Power’ in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other Writings 1972-77* (Vintage Press, 1980) p. 197.

⁷³ David Carr, ‘Narrative and the Real World An Argument for Continuity,’ in *The History and Narrative Reader* ed. Geoffrey Roberts, (New York: Routledge, 2001) pp. 143-156; p. 128. For similar perspectives on narrative see Carr, ‘Narrative Explanation and its Malcontents’ *History and Theory* 47 (2008): 19-30.

'literally constitutive of the group'. . . . 'Narrative is not a description or account of something that already exists independently of it and which it merely helps along. Rather, narration, as the unity of story, story-teller, audience, and protagonist, is what constitutes the community, its activities, and its coherence in the first place.'⁷⁴ The narrative form facilitates the formation of a social identity as individuals not bound by traditional ties like kinship or location become a 'we' through the narrative arc that tells of a group's origins and looks ahead to its future. Like the cohesive power of the place-centered vision, the narrative progression, too, organizes the story within a coherent and meaningful structure that mimics the teleological structure of events that we as humans impart to story the events of our own lives.⁷⁵

Since the Pāśupata tradition's claim to authority hinges on its possession of a revealed and secret teaching, it is critical that the authors establish an authoritative line of transmission that derives from Śiva himself. His agents—the brahmin ascetics Kauśika, Gārgya, Mitra, and the fourth, known only by topographic reference, 'from the Kuru land'—embody the revelation. And they also function as tethers that tie the places and teaching back to its divine source (here, Śiva as Lāguḍi) and to the geographic location of its origin, Kārohaṇa. In the text's cartographic icon, the four students function as a means to establish boundaries and socialize the geo-spatial parameters of the community by their

⁷⁴ David Carr, 'Narrative and the Real World,' p. 153.

⁷⁵ To quote Carr, 'Whatever else 'life' may be, it is hardly a structureless sequence of isolated events. It might be objected that structure is not necessarily narrative structure. But is there not a kinship between the means-end structure of action and the beginning-middle-end structure of a narrative? In action we are always in the middle of something, caught in the suspense of contingency which is supposed to find its resolution in the completion of our project. To be sure, a narrative unites many actions to form a plot. The resulting whole is often still designated, however, to be an action of larger scale: coming of age, conducting a love affair, or solving a murder. The structure of action, small-scale and large, is common to art and to life.' Carr, 'Narrative and the Real World,' p. 147.

occupying prestigious places at its cardinal points.⁷⁶ Furthermore, the repeated emphasis that they are male brahmin ascetics and that their message is for the salvation of brahmins establishes a set of narrow and elite socio-cultural parameters.⁷⁷ Considering only the SP_s Pāśupata genealogy presents us with an unequivocally brahmin-centric community, but its geographically emplaced vision actually suggests a more inclusive tradition.⁷⁸ In the concluding verses we learn that while the Lord's teaching and revealed doctrine of Pañcārtha are reserved for brahmins, the sacred *kṣetra* itself promises salvation for others who may not meet the social qualifications for initiation.⁷⁹ By visiting Kārohaṇa, even an evil-doer has the potential to reach the *param padam* promised to brahmins, that is, to escape from the cycle of *saṃsāra*.

While earlier studies have hypothesized that the four students were historical persons,⁸⁰ Bakker characterizes this lineage as an 'invented tradition,'⁸¹ designed to foster group cohesion by

⁷⁶ This aim to socialize space through the authority of the teachers is quite evident in the case of the fourth student whose name—he from the 'Land of the Kurus'—is basically a toponym. One wonders if the SP authors added this character simply to complete the set of four teachers?

⁷⁷ Even Somaśarman—who features as the Lord's first initiate—is clearly situated within a revered lineage of *ṛṣis* hailing back to the legendary sage Atri, one of the *saptarṣi*. The role of Somaśarman in the SP_s narrative raises certain questions. Like Lakulīśa, he is absent from Kaṇḍinya's account, and is not mentioned in SP_{RA}, but later purāṇic sources identify Somaśarman as the penultimate Śiva *avatāra*, while in the *Kāraṇamāhātmya* he is said to be Lakulīśa's grandfather. Somaśarman is addressed further below.

⁷⁸ The idea of emplacement is articulated by Edward Casey in *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press) 2009. See Chapter 1 'Implacement'. By using 'emplacement' here I refer to the process of localizing and concretizing a cosmogonic origin story in a demarcated geographic space. For comparable uses of the term in studies of Asian pilgrimage and sanctified space see Barbara Ambros *Emplacing a Pilgrimage: The Oyama Cult and Regional Religion in Early Modern Japan*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008; Wei-Cheng Lin *Building a Sacred Mountain*, University of Washington Press, 2014, p. 90.

⁷⁹ On these specifications see below.

⁸⁰ As was mentioned above, Kuśika appears as the Lord's student in Kaṇḍinya's account. And a lineage of *māheśvaras* going back to a teacher named Kuśika is mentioned in the 4th century Mathurā Pillar Inscription of Candragupta (see below). A certain Kosikaya (Kauśikeya in Sanskrit) is mentioned in a set of Prakrit inscriptions

effectively obscuring an historical reality of multiple, competing, teachers and lineages.⁸² Following Bakker's argument, the text invokes Lakulīśa as a unifying symbol—a narrative strategy designed to join multiple lineages under the authority of a single teacher.⁸³ Drawing attention to the use of *purāṇa* as the medium for this Pāśupata history, Bakker further suggests that this account signals the expansion of the Pāśupata community from 'an elitist faith of ascetic virtuosi,' to a considerably more inclusive movement, situated within broader Indian intellectual and religious currents.⁸⁴ I concur with this understanding, but I want to add a further layer of interpretation with regard to the emplacing of tradition, an element of this process that seems not yet to have been addressed explicitly. The SP author's goal of crafting a unified vision of the Pāśupata tradition hinges not only on describing a synthetic lineage but, equally importantly, on the localization of that lineage. This revelation is one that takes place *in* Kārohaṇa. The dissemination of the revelation via the students is, likewise, place-

from a site near Mumbai. Found on Padaṇa hill, identified as the residence of ascetics (see Chapter 2). Bhagavanlal Indrajī, "Antiquarian Remains at Sopara and Padaṇa," in *The Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* vol XV (1881-1882): 323-325. Later inscriptions from the 10th, 12th, and 13th centuries are aware of the lineage relationship of Lakulīśa and Kuśika. 'The Ekliṅgi Stone Inscription VS 1028/971 CE,' D.R. Bhandarkar, *JBRAS* 22, (1907), pp. 151-165; The Pālḍi Inscription of Gulhila Arisimha VS 1173/ 1116 CE, *EI* 30 1933-1944, pp. 8-12; 'The Cintra Praśasti of Śaraṅgadeva VS 1343/1287 CE,' *EI* 1 (1892), pp. 271-287. A 12th century inscription from Somanātha in Gujarat mentions Gārgya. 'Somnāthapattan Praśasti of Bhāva Brhaspati VS 850/1169 CE, V.G. Ozha,' *WZKM* 3, pp. 1-19. The final student possessed of a name is not known from epigraphic lineages although some speculative connections have been proposed in M.C. Choubey, *Lakulīśa in Indian Art and Culture*, (Delhi, 1997). p. 87-88 and D. Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas: Two Lost Śaivite Sects*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972) pp. 181-182. See also Bisschop, pp. 44-50 and Bakker, *The World*, pp. 145-147.

⁸¹ Hans Bakker, "Thanesar, the Pāśupata Order and the Skandapurāṇa: Studies in the Skandapurāṇa IX" in *Journal of Indological Studies* no. 19, (2007), 2. I think what Bakker means here is generally in line with the kind of imagined and rhetorically informed vision of history and community that I have described above, rather than the sense of 'invented traditions' described in the work of Eric Hobsbawm in which the 'tradition' refers to a kind of practice or ritualized activity developed to create a sense of historical continuity in response to social change., "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition* ed. Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) pp. 1-14.

⁸² Bakker, 2-6.

⁸³ Bakker, "Origin and Spread," 33.

⁸⁴ Bakker, 33.

bound. Thus, the landscape is not a passive background against which the Pāśupata history unfolds; rather, it actively helps to constitute the tradition. Together, the canonization of lineage and landscape convey a unified vision of who, what, and where the Pāśupatas were.

To return to the idea of the ‘iconicity’ of the text and its geography, it is worth pointing out that the image of the teacher with four students in attendance is a particularly compelling picture. It is an archetypal image that expresses a visual plenum. The four students represent the tradition, writ large. As I will show in Chapter 5, there come to be images of Lakulīśa and his students in temples and these serve a comparable function. The central teacher figure shown with two students on either side creates a balanced and ‘total’ composition. And the proximity and position of student and teacher articulate the same continuity of revelation and hierarchy communicated in the text. It is possible that the SP authors could have had this kind of visual archetype in mind as cultural agents drawing upon a larger set of shared images to express their particular ideology. To suggest this is not to say that historical persons did not inspire the model of the four students, but that the rhetorical force of the textual account did not depend upon such a historicity. Moreover, it is curious that the fourth student is not explicitly named; he is simply introduced as a *brahmacārin* from the Kuru land and established in Kanyakubja. Might it be that this fourth student was thought to be necessary in order to complete the picture and fulfill the ‘totality’ of tradition that the authors had in mind?

III.I Community and Communities

In hypothesizing the social motivations or pressures that might have inspired this vision of community we should also refer to the external pressures of competition in a highly diverse religious landscape.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ As has been done by Bakker (2014), Sanderson (2009), Davidson (2002), and Wedemeyer (2013).

But I think that the SP_s does not only reflect a religious community seeking to define itself or affirm its own continuity over and against competing groups. To assert that would assume that there was already a 'Pāśupata community' to speak of—a bounded group defined and recognized by some degree of commonality in belief and practice and which saw itself as distinct from other similarly demarcated communities. But did such a Pāśupata 'community' exist in this historical period? And is 'community' an apt term to describe the modalities of 'belonging' that we may glean from the historical sources? Certainly there were individuals and lineages of religious specialists who were called and styled themselves Pāśupatas prior to the composition of the SP. What is less clear, however, is how these individual agents and localized lineages were connected and how they interacted with one another. The early sources offer intriguing hints about these Pāśupatas, but we lack evidence of a larger, unifying infrastructure. In attributing to the SP_s an imagined 'model for' a community, what I intend is a vision of this kind of larger network of associations. By populating their landscape with the select few who were representatives of an authoritative lineage and through them summoning a unified and univocal vision of a single tradition, the authors offered a narrative response to a plurality of Pāśupata groups on the ground.

There is certainly more that can be said on the topic of belonging and community, but I would like to bracket off these larger questions for the time being since I will return to them in the following chapters, which present a good deal of new evidence that bears upon this important theme. In the meantime, the following paragraphs offer a brief synthesis of what some of the earliest sources tell us about a Pāśupata community by giving some hint as to the varieties of practices and people that

populated the Śaiva *ecumene*. Not surprisingly, these sources present a Pāśupata tradition that is more multi-faceted and polyphonic than the SP narrative admits.

IV. Pāśupatas in Practice

Regarding the SP authors, the editors of the text presume that they were Pāśupatas themselves, comprised of a ‘mixed group of the learned, *laukika* pandits and initiated *ācāryas* headed by a main redactor. . .’⁸⁶ They note that the text contains ‘numerous references to ‘Pāśupata-yoga’ or a Pāśupata *vrata* and concludes with a section on Pāśupata yoga.’⁸⁷ But while the text presents the Pāśupatas as essentially comprised of male brahmins, earlier studies have also commented on the fact that the vision of Pāśupata identity in the SP seems far more ecumenical—directed toward or at least cognizing a lay community—in its scope than, for example, the earlier normative visions proffered by Kauṇḍinya.⁸⁸ Bakker has earlier commented that the use of *purāṇa* as the medium for this imaginative history signals the growth of the Pāśupata community from “an elitist faith of ascetic virtuosi” to a considerably more inclusive movement by situating the Pāśupata movement, and Lakulīśa, within broader Indian intellectual and religious currents.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Bakker, *The World*, p. 151.

⁸⁷ Hans Bakker, R. Adriaensen, and H. Isaacson, “Towards a Critical Edition of the *Skandapurāṇa*,” in *Indo-Iranian Journal* no. 37 (1994): 327.

⁸⁸ Peter Bisschop has outlined some of the differences between what he calls the “esoteric” teachings of the *Pāśupatasūtras* and the “exoteric” teachings of the SP. For example, he observes that the *Pāśupatasūtra*’s recommended practice of behaving in such a way as to incur dishonor (*avamāna*) is absent from the SP section on Pāśupata praxis. The style of the text also lends itself to mass appeal. He points to the SP authors’ use of an amusing story to introduce the Pāśupata *vrata* (i.e. bathing oneself in the ashes). In this tale, the Gods become accidental Pāśupatas when, having been frightened by a fierce manifestation of Śiva’s consort, Devī, they tumble into a pile of ashes. The Goddess then declares all the Gods to be Pāśupatas. Bisschop, *Sects and Centers*, 38-40.

⁸⁹ Bakker, Thanesar, p.22.

According to later Śaiva classificatory schemes, the Pāśupatas fall under the heading of the Atimārga, distinguishing them from the more inclusive Siddhānta stream of the Mantramārga that welcomed married householders as well as initiated ascetics.⁹⁰ But in the SP this division does not appear to have been realized strictly. For example, in the context of praising Vārāṇasī as one of Śiva's many *āyatanas*, the text describes various Pāśupata *siddhas*, or adepts, who have attained union with Śiva (*śivayoga*) in this holy place. Here we find 'lords of yogins' (*yogīśvara*), whom the text also describes as have bright white, ash-smeared bodies, and who may have followed an ascetic regime similar to that prescribed by Kauṇḍinya. The third are those who still keep the Vedic fires (*vaitānikavratāḥ*), a detail that points to their status as householders.⁹¹ And the fourth, those whose sectarian marks were not visible (*avyaktalingin*), may be some kind of advanced initiated practitioners, as was recently suggested by Diwakar Acharya.⁹² A second important piece of evidence for this internal diversity comes from the section of the text translated above, in which the authors report that the Lord visited the home of the brahmin Somaśarman and granted him *yogasiddhi* together with his family (*sakulam*). This is a significant point, which has also been discussed in Bakker's recent publication.⁹³ He suggests that the teaching imparted to Somaśarman was distinct from the Pañcārtha doctrine disseminated to the four pupils, and given the same name in Kauṇḍinya's commentary.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ On this division, and further divisions that emerge from later sects of the Mantramārga, see Sanderson, "Lākulas

⁹¹ SP 29.60-63. Text and synopsis in *Skandapurāṇa* vol IIa. The significance of this passage for understanding the diversity within the early Pāśupata community is discussed in detail by Bakker, *The World*, pp. 139-140.

⁹² Diwakar Acharya 'Pāśupatas' in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 2011) p. 460.

⁹³ Bakker, *The World*, pp. 145-146

⁹⁴ A number of newly edited medieval texts have revealed further complex divisions of schools, details of practices related to initiation, and the subtleties of doctrinal distinctions within early Śaiva traditions. A full rehearsal of these important works would require a separate study. Aciri (2008; 2011), Kafle (2014), DeSimini

IV.I Memorials and Place-Making

One of the primary concerns of this study, as I explained in the Introduction, is to explore the materiality of early Śaiva religiosity and the imbrication of community building and place-making. Some of the earliest epigraphic attestations of Śaivism in practice from the Pāśupata landscape preserve important evidence for these kinds of emplaced practices. Attention to these details shows that, in addition to textual expressions of doctrinal differences and lineage distinctions, early Śaiva identity was also articulated through the demarcation of shared ritual spaces, meritorious acts of pious giving, and by establishing and tending memorials for the dead. One of the earliest sources referring to these kinds of activities is the Mathura Pillar Inscription of Candragupta II G.S. 61 (380/381 CE).⁹⁵ [Figures 2 & 3] This inscription is a fascinating record of donative and commemorative practices involving Śaiva religious specialists. Although the text of the inscription itself has been the subject of extended debate,⁹⁶ these discussions have not yet considered fully the significance of the material object on which the record is inscribed and the ritual practices it enjoins.

(2013), Goodall (2004; 2007), Acharya (2007; 2011, 2013). The reader is referred to the bibliography for full references of these and other recent works.

⁹⁵ D.R. Bhandarkar, 'Mathura Pillar Inscription of Chandragupta II: G.E. 61'. *EI* XXI (1931): 1-19.

⁹⁶ Discussion of this inscription features in numerous publications on early Śaivism and debates still remain regarding certain details of the edition and translation and the identity of the small *daṇḍa*-wielding figure who appears at the base. A recent article by Diwakar Acharya has challenged some of the long-held assumptions about the Pāśupata movement by revisiting the inscription, which has often been cited as the earliest evidence for the Lakuliśa Pāśupatas. While Lakuliśa's name does not appear in the inscription, the image of a small nude figure holding a staff (*daṇḍa*) carved on the base of the pillar was earlier identified by D.R. Bhandarkar as Lakuliśa. Bhandarkar's identification is problematic since the image lacks the defining features of Lakuliśa's iconography; nevertheless, it was repeated, albeit with some reservations, in later studies by U.P. Shah and David Lorenzen. Based on his revision of a problematic line in the inscription, Acharya suggests that the image represents Lord Caṇḍa rather than Lakuliśa. As he explains, "Caṇḍa or Caṇḍeśvara, one of the ascetic forms of Śiva, was a particular sectarian deity of the Pāśupatas, at least of the Vaimalas of Mathurā..." Diwakar Acharya, "The Role of Caṇḍa in the Early History of the Pāśupata Cult and the Image of the Mathurā Pillar Dated Gupta Year 61," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 48 (2005): 207-222. On the Vaimalas see Bakker, "Somaśarman," p. 6. On the subject of Caṇḍeśa and the Mathurā pillar image see also Dominic Goodall, "Who is Caṇḍeśa" in *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*. (Tōkyō : Sankibō Busshorin, Heisei 21, 2009) pp 351-423.

First, a brief summary of the contents: The donor is a Śaiva preceptor called Ārya Uditācārya, who claims to be tenth in the line of descent from the Bhagavat Kuśika, a lineage progenitor suggestively called by the same name as that given to Lakulīśa's first disciple and initiate in the SPs. The inscription records that Uditācārya established two memorials in honor of the teachers Upamitavimala and Kapilavimala.⁹⁷ The memorials were named after the preceptors—to their names (Upamita and Kapila, respectively) the suffix *-īśvara* was added. Given that these preceptors were Śiva devotees, we may safely assume that these memorials were *liṅgas* or small *liṅga* shrines and may have been installed at the site of their *samādhi*.⁹⁸ The *liṅgas* were housed in a *gurvāyatana*, presumably a structure or shrine erected in honor of deceased teachers. This act of commemoration provides some important early evidence for what becomes a widespread practice of installing and enshrining a *liṅga* in someone's honor, living or deceased. This act created a tangible and often enduring memorial that commemorated the deep reverence or even affinity between the individual and their chosen deity by homologizing the iconic form of Śiva with the individual being honored.⁹⁹ This act of piety benefits both the deceased and the donor. The inscription tells us that these memorials were erected for the sake of publicly commemorating (*kīrtya[rtham]*) the teachers as well as to augment Uditācārya's own religious merit (*puṇya*).¹⁰⁰ As a final point, it is important to note that these shrines were not private; Uditācārya intended that the larger Śaiva community would revere and tend these *liṅgas*. His wishes are communicated as follows:

⁹⁷ Following Bakker, Acharya reads the *-vimala* suffix as indicating the affiliation of these teachers with the specific Vaimala school of Pāśupata Śaivism mentioned in the *Niśvāsaguhya* and the *Svacchandatantra*.

⁹⁸ Michael Willis, *The Archeology of Hindu Ritual: Temples and the Establishment of the Gods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) p. 134.

⁹⁹ See, for example, the discussion of the Risthal Inscription in Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁰ Bhandarkar, Lines 8-9.

This is not written for celebrity but as a reminder and to make a request of the worshippers of Śiva. The request is this: “Having understood: ‘This is the property of the preceptors for all time to come,’ they should vigilantly maintain the property without hesitation, primarily by preforming *pūjā*.”¹⁰¹ [Willis]

From these lines we may reconstruct some sense of the religious practices that the *māheśvaras* in Mathura engaged in. We may infer that the rituals of lustrating and honoring the *liṅga* (practices implied by the term *pūjā*), the veneration of Śaiva preceptors, and the meritorious donation and tending of memorials were closely intertwined.¹⁰² These practices were not limited to an initiated few; rather the larger community of Śiva devotees was ritually enjoined. And while the presumed reference to the *liṅga* cult depicts a quintessentially Śaiva practice,¹⁰³ the installation of these memorials and the commemorative practice enjoined by the inscription also evokes a wider, shared repertoire of ritual concerns and practices, what Michael Willis has called a ‘pan-Indian doxy’,¹⁰⁴ oriented around the creation of sanctified spaces and the propitiatory and donative practices that occurred within them.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹*naitat khyātyartham abhili[khyate] [l*] [atha*]
māheśvarāṇāṃ vijñaptiḥ kriyate saṃbodhaṇaṃ ca
yathā kā[le]nācāryāṇāṃ parigrahaṃ iti matvā
viśaṅka[m] pūjāpuraskāra[m] parigrahapāripālyaṃ
kuryyā[d] iti vijñaptir iti [l*]
Lines 10-14*

¹⁰² Such practices may lend further support to the idea that early Śaiva religious praxis was closely tied to existing Buddhist praxis. See Willis on related practices in Buddhism and the creation of *siddhāyatana*, p. 135.

¹⁰³ The importance of *liṅga* worship for early Śaiva lay communities (along with other practices like pilgrimage and pious giving) figures prominently in the *Niśvāsamukha*, which was critically edited in the recent dissertation of Nirajan Kafle. As Kafle points out, emphasizing patterns of intertextuality in the *Niśvāsa* and *Śivadharmaśāstra* the practices surrounding the creation, installation, and worship of *liṅgas* was a definitive element of early *laukika* religiosity. Nirajan Kafle, ‘The Niśvāsamukha, the Introductory Book of the Niśvāsattvasaṃhitā,’ unpublished dissertation, Leiden University, 2015. Similar practices relating to the creation and installation of *liṅgas* and the other lay practices recorded in the *Śivadharma* were presented by Peter Bisschop at a workshop of the ERC: *Asia Beyond Boundaries* project held November 2015 at SOAS.

¹⁰⁴ Willis, 137.

¹⁰⁵ Willis suggests that the added condition that the *pūjā* for these deceased teachers be done without hesitation (*matvā viśaṅkaṃ*) assures the community has nothing to fear of the spirits of these teachers (compare to the

While the discussion thus far has focused on the contents of the textual register of the inscription, it is important to keep in mind that the meaning of this object was derived equally from its materiality and the function that the material object would have performed in the context of the space in which it was displayed. The pillar is now in the Mathura Museum so it is not possible to determine its original context; however, some significant points may still be inferred. Since the text refers to a shrine or sanctuary for the (deceased) preceptors (the *gurvāyatana*) I think this pillar would have served to demarcate this sanctified space. We can imagine that this substantial stone marker (of approximately 4 feet) was positioned at the entrance or another highly prominent, visible spot in the shrine. The fact that pillar is, in fact, a trident, the weapon emblematic of Śiva, makes a powerful statement and would have triggered the immediate realization for the viewer that this was a Śaiva space. The small figure carved at the base seems to reinforce this association by serving as a kind of personification of the weapon, a *triśūlapuruṣa* [Figure 4]. Although this figure carries a staff in his hand, the gesture is non-threatening; he appears to be keeping watch rather than ready to attack. Taken as a whole, the monument and the text evince a concern to claim and demarcate a Śaiva space, a space in which a community identity is enacted and reinforced through a set of shared ritual practices performed in honor of the *lingas* commemorating the deceased *gurus*, the human agents in whom the authority of the Lord was vested.

The example from Mathura suggests that the space of the shrine was envisioned a space of Śaiva ritual activity and was clearly marked as such by the *triśūla* pillar. In contrast, early inscriptions from Bāgh, a town in modern-day Madhya Pradesh that is located within the Pāśupata landscape as

Bāgh inscription below). On textual evidence for propitiatory practices in early Śaivism see Peter Bisschop 'Invoking the Powers that Be: The Śivadharmā's Mahāśānti Mantra,' *South Asian Studies* vol 30, no. 2 (2014): 133-141.

outlined in the SP_s point to Pāśupata religious specialists operating outside of strictly Śaiva contexts, as affiliated with Viṣṇu and *mātr̥ka* shrines.¹⁰⁶ Pāśupatācāryas are some of the recipients named in these donative records of the Valkhā rulers, along with other religious specialists who tended the temple grounds and engaged in agricultural activities on the adjacent lands.¹⁰⁷ Notably, one grant records the donation of land in honor of a shrine to the *mātr̥s*, which had been previously established by Pāśupatācārya Bhagavat Lokodadhi. This shows that these Pāśupatas were not only residents and ritual specialists in temples, but like Uditācārya, they also invested in the sanctification of these places by making pious donations.¹⁰⁸ These Pāśupatas may have also been involved in tending memorials. A mention of another shrine in honor of Bappapiśācādeva could refer to a localized form of Śiva, but it may also be the case that, as the inscriptions' editors suggest, this curious appellation refers to a deceased person and the grant records an endowment for a kind of shrine or memorial in his honor.¹⁰⁹ As permanent residents of temple sites, these Pāśupatas fulfilled priestly services in temples dedicated to non-Śaiva deities, tended memorials, and would have served a diverse population as one of several groups of religious specialists and residents. Taken together, this evidence suggests a more

¹⁰⁶ K. V. Ramesh & S. P. Tiwari, *A Copper-Plate Hoard of the Gupta Period from Bagh, Madhya Pradesh*, (New Delhi: Archeological Survey of India, 1990).

¹⁰⁷ In these grants the Pāśupatas are mentioned along with other temple residents and servants. Ramesh & Tiwari, (Plate IX, pp. 20-21). According to the charters of the Valkhā king Bhuluṇḍa, the donations were for the maintenance of a variety of deities—Nārāyaṇa, the *mātr̥s*, Skanda, Bappapiśācādeva, and Indrasena (Plate VI, pp. 11-14, also Plate III, pp. 6-8, and Plate XIII pp. 28-30). Another grant records the donation of a shrine to the *mātr̥s* by Pāśupatācārya Bhagavat Lokodadhi showing that these *ācāryas* acted as donors themselves (Plate X, pp. 22-23).

¹⁰⁸ Ramesh and Tiwari (Plate X, pp. 22-23)

¹⁰⁹ Bappapiśācādeva could refer to a localized form of Śiva, Ramesh and Tiwari offer the plausible hypothesis that "*piśāca*" may indicate the soul of a person who had met with an unnatural death and Bappa Piśāca may represent the soul of the father of the lady Bandhulā who had the memorial installed. Ramesh & Tiwari, xiii.

extemporary and wide-ranging set of practices and social interactions than was recommended in most of the normative and prescriptive texts.

V. Pāśupatas in Prestigious Places

The third rhetorical aim that informed the SP_s authors' mapping of the Pāśupata landscape was their desire to make a geo-political claim by situating the Pāśupata tradition, and the sacred center of Kārohaṇa, at the very heart of early medieval northwest India and in specific places steeped in the early Indian imagination as preeminent cultural, economic, and political centers. To gauge the broader stakes of this claim and possible motivations for it requires that we look beyond the brief textual charter to consider the wider socio-political milieu in which Lakulīśa and his disciples operated.

V.I Places of Origin

In the pages above, I discussed the strategies the SP authors employed to establish and promote the sanctity of Kārohaṇa, a place that, while obviously central to the account of Pāśupata origins, did not possess the same level of prestige as some of the other historic locales in which Lāguḍi's students were established. In the geographic imaginary of the authors, however, Kārohaṇa was the sacred 'center'. This was the place where the Lord had descended to Earth not just once, but on four separate occasions.

Scholars typically identify the village of Karvan in southwest Gujarat as the site of the purāṇic Kārohaṇa. The surviving material evidence, while not extensive, would seem to support this

association.¹¹⁰ No structural remains of temples have survived, but the brick foundations of three 7th century temples were excavated between 1974-78 by the ASI [Figures 5 & 6]¹¹¹ This must have been a significant temple complex. Only one small, yet significant, image remains at the site, a Lakulīśa carved in a niche with a crouching figure (perhaps a devotee) on his left. The image is abraded, but part of the signature club is still clearly visible in the figure's left hand. It also appears that the image was ithyphallic, which is a characteristic mark of the Śaiva ascetic and a ubiquitous feature of Lakulīśa iconography [Figures 7 & 8]¹¹² It is evident from walking the area that Śaivism was popular in Karvan from an early period: numerous *lingas*, some of them dating from the early medieval period are currently under worship in the numerous small modern shrines that surround the town's central tank. In addition, at the time of my visit in January 2016, an old damaged *linga*, nearly two meters high, stood exposed in the dry tank [Figure 9]. It is also significant that this area of southern Gujarat immediately surrounding Karvan developed a distinctive form of Lakulīśa iconography that depicts the teacher seated cross-legged in front of a *linga*. An early 7th century example of this type from Timbarva, (?km south of Karvan) is currently displayed in the Archeology Department at M.S. University¹¹³ [Figure 10] It is also noteworthy that both the veneration of Lakulīśa and his unique iconic form still persist in Karvan [Figures 11 & 12].¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Michael Meister described Kārvaṇa (viz. Karvan) as "a preeminent seat of Pāśupata Śaivism from Maitraka to medieval times" and he reports that excavations revealed the base of a 7th century brick Śaiva temple complex, but "no ancient stone structural temple survives..." *Encyclopedia of Indian Temple Architecture: North India Period of Early Maturity*, American Institute of Indian Studies, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), 357-358.

¹¹¹ For further details see IAR 1974-75 pp. 15-16; 1975-76 p. 15; 1977-78, pp. 22-23.

¹¹² It seems unlikely that the image appears in its original structural context, but it could certainly belong to the excavation site and could be dated to c. 7th century.

¹¹⁴ The 'reinvention' of the Lakulīśa tradition in Karvan will be the subject of a separate study.

Yet, while the material evidence from the village of Karvan suggests it was an important Pāśupata site, the authors of the SP_s do not imagine Kārohaṇa as a particular place. From the narrative description, it is difficult to discern where exactly Kārohaṇa was. One reason for this uncertainty could be the fact that the sacred center was not understood to be a single site, but a region (*deśa*) or collocation of places connected with the Lord's various descents. At the same time, I think we can also read this geographic indeterminacy as intentional and reflective of the authors' aim to elevate Kārohaṇa as the site of Pāśupata origins and to imbue it with a sanctity that is not explicitly attributed to the other locales mentioned in the narrative. Kārohaṇa's borders are not clearly demarcated since it was not a city one could pinpoint on a map. It was a *tīrtha*. *Tīrthas* ('fords' or 'crossings') are the earliest examples of Indian pilgrimage sites and are held sacred because they permit pilgrims to 'bridge the gap' by serving as a point of contact between the mundane world and the celestial world of the gods. Elka Weber's description of early Christian pilgrimage resonates well with the Indian conception of *tīrthas*. "Pilgrims strain against the boundary that separates heaven from earth. They believe that at some geographical points, in some places, the line between human and divine is less defined, less rigid, and perhaps more permeable than the division they know. Somehow, a few physical locations transcend the limits of the physical world and act as gateways to the spiritual one."¹⁵ In the case of the SP_s, the sanctity of Kārohaṇa is not only envisioned as extending vertically, to permeate the boundary that divides the human from the divine realm, it also extends horizontally, across the landscape. In the text above, verses 135-139 equate Kārohaṇa as the entire sacred *kṣetra* located between the Narmadā and the Mahī rivers. Seen in this way, Kārohaṇa *was* the Pāśupata landscape.

¹⁵ Elka Weber, *Traveling Through Text: Message and Method in Late Medieval Pilgrimage Accounts* (New York: Routledge, 2001) pp. 26-27.

V.II Political Places

This spiritually charged landscape revered by early Śaivas was also a highly charged political space. The waning of Gupta-Vākāṭaka hegemony in the 5th century created a space for local and regional networks of political elites to stake new claims and expand their territories in the period between the 6th and the 10th centuries. Inscriptions from this period record the political ambition of numerous lineages: Aulikaras, Maitrakas, Pratihārās, Cālukyas, Kalacuris, and Rāṣṭrakūṭas, not to mention the families of *rājaputras* carving out fortified towns in the deserts and mountains of what is today the state of Rajasthan. Significantly, the urban settlements in which Lāguḍi's students were located were highly contested spaces since these centers were located along critical 'nodal points' or intersections along the major trade networks that facilitated the spread of people, goods, and ideas across the Indian subcontinent. A ruler who could assert a claim over this circumscribed region would have benefited from a strategic military position and the ability to monopolize the flow of resources along the overland channels that linked the coastal ports to the mercantile and agricultural centers in the hinterlands. As the following chapters will demonstrate, regional rulers operated according to a common political strategy aimed at controlling these major routes and nodal points that connected the ports of western India with the hinterlands.

But what has any of this to do with religious landscapes and Pāśupatas? In studies of pre-modern India kings are typically invoked as the primary architects of the religious landscape and integral to the advent of the 'Śaiva Age'. Indeed, the attribution of temples and religious institutions to 'royal patronage' is nearly axiomatic. Despite the popularity of this narrative, inscriptions and material evidence record a different story. For example, the Pratihārā and Rāṣṭrakūṭa kings who controlled much of early medieval northwest India have left a rich epigraphic archive detailing donations to

brahmins, but little to no evidence of temple building. I think this suggests that in the medieval period endowing and giving to temples was not yet part of the Imperial rulers' repertoire. This historical discrepancy arises, in part, from that assumption that religious ideologies are coincident with religious institutions. Or, expressed in another way, that material expressions of piety in the form of Śaiva monuments, temples, etc. were motivated by some of the same ideological expressions recorded in textual sources, expressions that were often directed toward elites.¹¹⁶ While we do not see political actors investing significantly in the built Śaiva landscape in the early medieval period (i.e. between the 6th-10th century), they do embrace Śaivism in other ways. Most notably, invocations of Śiva are incorporated within a language of power and military might, as a political idiom that becomes integral to the expression of early medieval royal personae and prestige. These idioms are adopted by rulers in their inscriptions as well as by those who aspire to power—the many ministers, and other socially ascendant individuals echo these idioms as a way to enhance their own status and secure their place within regional networks of elites.

V.III The Cosmopolitan Marketplace

A cursory glance at a map of the primary trade routes reveals the extent to which the movement of Lakuliśa's pupils in the SP_s account follows the arc of the major northern route.¹¹⁷ And these routes were conduits for ideologies, practices, and the human agents who disseminated them, as well as for

¹¹⁶ It is also worth noting, as Peter Bisschop has reminded me, that much of the textual precedent for the works like Sanderson's 'Śaiva Age' come from Tantric sources in which the connection between rulers and religious specialists is articulated more forcefully than in other sources relevant for the study of early Śaivism like the *Skandapurāṇa* and the *Śivadharma*. (Peter Bisschop, personal communication, April 5th, 2016)

¹¹⁷ Jason Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011) p. 185; Deloche, Jean. *La Circulation en Inde avant la Révolution des Transports*, Tome I: *La Voie de Terre*. Paris: Publications de L'École Française d'Extrême Orient, CXXII, 1980, p. 93; The route from Karvan to Ujjain and Jambumārga seems to track a pilgrimage route detailed in the *Mahābhārata* 3.80.59-61. On this see Bakker, 'Origin and Spread,' p. 30

material goods. While the numbers and fortunes of ruling families in this period appears in a state of dynamism and shift, these regional nodal points and primary traffic routes serve as relatively stable points and trajectories around which we can begin to orient the development and expansion of the institutions (e.g. temples, *maṭhas*, and other monuments) that defined the built Pāśupata landscape. For these institutions to thrive and support their ritual practices and resident religious specialists, they required an economic surplus. Religious specialists are not typically those who produce an economic surplus themselves, so we should look for them in places where such a surplus did exist and could be mobilized and diverted towards pious giving. For evidence of regional economic patterns, donative records by merchants and guilds are particularly helpful. Many such examples will be discussed in the following chapters. Here I briefly two inscriptions that were found not far from Kārohaṇa. One provides an important testament to the political autonomy and power enjoyed by these networks of economic agents. The other establishes what will be a recurring theme in this project: namely, that practices of temple building and maintenance were synonymous with place-making and community building.

One important record that suggests the prominence of merchant communities is the Charter of Viṣṇusena (649 V.S. /592 CE). It comprises a list of seventy-two allowances made for a merchant community in Lohāṭakagrāma, a village in southern Gujarat located near the port city of Broach.¹¹⁸ The inscription was issued by a local ruler at the behest of the merchant community (*vaṇig grāma*) and guarantees the protection and support of the community (*lokasaṃgrahānugrahārtham*) that was residing in the area under his rule. Various kinds of trade, merchants, and artisans are mentioned in

¹¹⁸ D.C. Sircar, *EI* 30 (1953-4) pp. 163-181; D.D. Kosambi, "Indian Feudal Trade Charters" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* vol. 2 (1959): 281-293.

the individual legal proscriptions, which attests to the diversity of economic activities and exchange that took place. This extensive list of rules and regulations insured the merchants' autonomy, their ability to engage in trade without restrictions and taxes, and freed them from obligations to rulers and local landowners. This record affords valuable insight into the dynamics of power that existed between local economic organizations and rulers and highlights the degree of influence that the merchant community enjoyed in this area. The early sixth century Sañjeli copper plates from the time of Torāmaṇa provide important evidence concerning the activities of merchants and traders in religious life, more specifically.¹¹⁹ These records provide some details about the local economy in the area. Here, traders and merchants, both local residents and others from throughout India, agree to impose certain taxes on non-prestige goods (i.e. molasses, salt, cotton, and grain) the collection of which will support worship at a local Viṣṇu temple. This donation is undertaken to increase their own religious merit.

While neither of these inscriptions records donations for Śaiva institutions specifically they evince some important patterns in the economic landscape of this time that we will see repeated and expanded in the following case studies, which will address these and other examples in greater detail. At the center of these interactions between various networks, both local and trans-local, was the temple. The motivation to create places and socialize spaces was one I interpret as being keenly felt by mercantile groups. Which is not to say that political elites and others did not entertain similar urges, but from the surviving sources the impetus seems to weigh more heavily on the side of economic actors and those residing in what we could call 'market towns.' This motivation is a reaction to

¹¹⁹ R.N. Mehta & A.M. Thakkar, "M.S. University copper plates of the time of Toramana," (M.S. Vadodara: University Archaeology Series 14, 1978)

practices and lifestyles that were often itinerant and involved contact with a wide variety of people and groups. As Stallybrass and White describe it,

A marketplace is the epitome of local identity (often indeed it is what defined a place as more significant than surrounding communities) and the unsettling of that identity by the trade and traffic of goods from elsewhere. At the market center of the polis we discover a comingling of categories usually kept separate and opposed: center and periphery, inside and outside, stranger and local, commerce and festivity, high and low.¹²⁰

The creation and support of religious intuitions—and Śaiva institutions in particular, as the following chapters will show—helped to mediate some of the socio-spatial tensions that Stallybrass and White point out. The temple, in particular, served as a space in which these oppositional forces could be negotiated. And, as monuments that materialized notions of stability and permanence, they offered a material counterpoint to travails of travel and itinerancy.

VI. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the geographic imagining of the Pāśupata landscape presented in the SP_s, considered the rhetorical and ideological underpinnings of this narrative account, and worked to understand some of the broader implications of this particular, emplaced vision of belonging and community that the authors presented. To initiate the larger project of contextualizing this narrative history, I included a brief discussion of contemporaneous depictions of Pāśupata communities and a summary overview of the geo-political context of the area of early medieval northwest Indian in which the authors situated themselves. The Pāśupatas were certainly not the only group that endeavored to stake a claim to this landscape. I suggested that we should read this spatialization of the Pāśupata community, in part, as a geo-political statement. Claiming some of the most prestigious sites in early

¹²⁰ Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 1986, 27.

medieval India for the Pāśupatas served to elevate the status of the community and unify what were likely multiple lineages and localized traditions operating on the ground. Integrating themselves within a dynamic political and economic region also gestures to a certain strategic and entrepreneurial spirit, which will become increasingly clear in the chapters that follow.

While the SP_s is a historical source of great importance for this study, attempting to access the text's temporality as a means to recover something about the motivations of its authors and the larger socio-political stakes of their claims tells us only part of the story. The textual account is but one kind of memory and its temporality, perhaps paradoxically, makes it possible to move beyond it, to consider what it does not say, and to seek out different voices and tellings of this Pāśupata history. Acknowledging the limits imposed by this particular body of evidence requires that we consider other accounts that are preserved in the material archives of this Pāśupata landscape. The next chapters present a preliminary effort to examine these other sources and, through them, access the Pāśupata landscape not only as a spatial rhetoric, but as a lived space as well.

CHAPTER II

IN THE SHADOW OF THE SAHYA MOUNTAIN

ŚAIVISM IN THE PORT POLITY OF THE NORTH KONKAN

Summary

The first of three case studies, this chapter initiates the project of ‘materializing’ the *Skandapurāṇa*’s literary imagining of a Pāśupata landscape by examining what traces remain of early Śaiva communities in the regions surrounding the Sahya Mountain (i.e. the North Konkan and the western Deccan), which is the southernmost limit of the authors’ map. The existing scholarship on this region’s religious history proposes that the monumental Śaiva cave temples extending from both flanks of the Sahya Mountain were Pāśupata centers supported by the patronage of the early Kalacuri rulers. Despite the popularity of this hypothesis, a critical review of the epigraphic and material evidence offers little with which to tie these rulers to the North Konkan or these religious sites. I argue that the attribution of the North Konkan sites to Kalacuri patronage reflects a prevailing historiographical focus on dynastic history and royal personality, a preoccupation that has often relegated the activities of other social groups to the margins of scholarly attention. As an alternative scenario, I propose that the growth of early Śaivism in this region was not contingent upon the fortunes of ruling elites; rather, religious institutions were deeply enmeshed in the flourishing trade networks of the cosmopolitan North Konkan coast where they were supported by multiple, corporate patronage networks consisting of merchants, traders, and other local collectives.

This study begins by introducing the landscape as an empirical reality. I then work to integrate the Śaiva centers within the complex religious, economic, and political topographies of the area and to underscore some underappreciated ties between regional and religious economies, and between the Buddhist and Śaiva religious centers. Next, I address the question of patronage and the roles of political elites in the creation of Śaiva monuments. In their epigraphic records, many rulers of the period adopted the epithet '*paramamāheśvara*', 'supremely devoted to the Maheśvara,' (namely, Śiva); yet, only rarely do these inscriptions commemorate donations or endowments to Śaiva temples. Rather than professions of an exclusive religious identity, I argue that these epithets were part of a larger, shared discourse of royal power and prestige. Using contemporaneous inscriptions, I show that, prior to the 11th century, the patronage and management of temples was the purview of local communities and merchant collectives, for whom religious giving was part of a repertoire of practices that created new sodalities from among diverse social groups. I conclude by exploring the organization and the religious imagery at the caves to identify evidence for Pāśupata activity.

I. The Sahya Mountain and Śaiva Centers

Purāṇic locales are often indicative of a region or direction rather than a specific pinpoint on a map.¹²¹ For example, I understand the *SP* authors' use of the phrase 'Sahya Mountain' as a regional label designating the area surrounding the Sahyādri range¹²² —the northern portion of the Western Ghats that divides the North Konkan coast from the Deccan hinterlands.¹²³ While this area is not explicitly incorporated within the text's narrative boundaries, the North Konkan and the western Deccan are critically important for the historiography of early Śaivism because some of the earliest surviving monumental Śaiva religious centers, in the form of massive rock-cut cave temples, are located in these regions. Of these, the three most important North Konkan sites are now located in the modern city of Mumbai—the cave-temples located on Elephanta Island in Mumbai Harbor, the Jogeśvarī caves on Gupha Tekdi in the suburb of Jogeśvarī East, and the Maṇḍapeśvar caves on Mt. Painsur in Borivili West. In addition to these coastal sites, the network of Śaiva religious centers extended into the Deccan.¹²⁴ Cave temples were excavated near Aurangabad, Bhokardhan, and the village of Takli-

¹²¹ For example, the *Skandapurāṇa*'s authors use 'Kārohaṇa' as a heading that refers both to the specific *tīrthas* where Śiva is incarnated in each *yuga* and, more broadly, to designate the entire sacred *kṣetra* between the Mahī and the Narmadā rivers. For the literary outline of the Pāśupata landscape in the *SP* 110-119 see Chapter 1.

¹²² According to Das's survey of traditional geographies, the title 'Sahyādri' refers specifically to the portion of the Western Ghats that extends from the Tapti River south to the Nilgiri Mountains. Hans Bakker notes the reference to Ajanta Cave XVII as the Sahya Mountain in an inscription of Vākāṭaka Hariṣeṇa. Local residents of the Nasik District also refer to the portion of the Ghats in their region as the Sahyādri or Sahya. Dipakranjan Das, *Economic History of the Deccan* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967) p. 8; Hans T. Bakker, *The Vākāṭakas: An Essay in Hindu Iconology* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1997), pp. 35-36.

¹²³ The term 'Deccan,' derived from the Sanskrit *dakṣiṇa* (right hand/ south), can be taken to refer to the whole of peninsular India south of the Narmada River or to only the region of the Deccan Plateau. For the purposes of my study, I have focused on the northwest Deccan traditionally called Aśmaka (i.e. the region of the Western Godavari River valley directly connected to the North Konkan via the passes in the Ghats). According to contemporary state divisions, this includes portions of the Nasik, Aurangabad, Pune, and Ahmednagar Districts of Maharashtra. On the history of the use of term Deccan see Das, pp. 1-18.

¹²⁴ The extent to which the Deccan sites can be classified as reflecting a specifically 'Śaiva' sectarian affiliation is addressed in the final sections.

Dhokeśvar in western Maharashtra.¹²⁵ These cave temples are vital material archives for the study of early Śaiva religiosity, yet much about their early history and the identity and motivations of the patrons who initiated their construction is unknown. As a consequence, we know little about how these places functioned within the regional religious landscape and, more specifically, how they may have contributed to the articulation of an early Śaiva identity.

Perhaps the most serious obstacle to scholarly understanding is the absence of donative inscriptions from the North Konkan Śaiva sites and from the contemporaneous sites in the northwest Deccan. This absence, combined with the complexity of the political history in these areas, has made the attribution of patronage a particularly vexed question.¹²⁶ Despite such significant lacunae in the historical record, it is widely accepted that the North Konkan cave temples were commissioned by the early Kalacuris, a ruling family active in northwest and central India between the mid-6th and early 7th century.¹²⁷ The ‘Kalacuri hypothesis’ was first proposed by the eminent Indian historian V.V. Mirashi

¹²⁵ The network of caves temples was not restricted to the examples mentioned here. Caves were also excavated near the villages of Mahur and Ter, in Pune, and at Hariścandragad in Maharashtra. Additional monumental sites were established under the patronage of the Cālukya rulers—the religious centers at Bādāmi (the Cālukya capital of Vātāpi), Aihole, Paṭṭadakal, and Siddanakollā in addition to another center, Bhairavakoṇḍa, to the east of Bādāmi. Since these sites fall outside the geographic scope of this project, they are not discussed here. See *EITA* vol II pp. 276-315. K.V. Soundara Rajan, *Architectural Survey of Temples, No 3: Cave Temples of the Deccan*, (New Delhi: ASI, 1981), pp. 298-312; Hemanth Kadambi, ‘Sacred Landscapes in Early Medieval South India: The Chalukya State and Society (AD 550-750)’ unpublished dissertation (University of Michigan, 2011).

¹²⁶ The account of the Portuguese explorer Diogo de Couto (1603) mentions an inscription that was reportedly taken from the Elephanta Caves to be translated. As the removal of the inscription allegedly took place before de Couto’s visit to the island, and has not been seen since, its existence is impossible to confirm. De Couto’s report is summarized in *Maharashtra District Gazetteer: Kolaba District*, pp. 785-787. See also Charles Dillard Collins, *The Iconography and Ritual of Śiva at Elephanta*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988) “Appendix A. Evidence for a Dedication Panel at Elephanta,” pp. 151-155.

¹²⁷ See Mirashi, *CII* IV, clxvii; Walter Spink, “Monuments of the Early Kalacuri Period,” *Journal of Indian History*, (1968): 263-70; “The Great Cave at Elephanta: A Study of Sources,” in *Essays on Gupta Culture* ed Bardwell L. Smith (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983) p. 238.

and elaborated further by the prolific American art historian Walter Spink in the 1980's.¹²⁸ The pervasive influence of Spink's work is reflected throughout the entire canon of scholarly studies on this region and period, which have echoed his hypothesis and expanded upon it to attribute the construction of Śaiva sites in the Deccan and northwest India to Kalacuri patronage.¹²⁹ Spink has identified the Kalacuri ruler Kṛṣṇarāja as the patron of the Konkan monuments since, he argues, the "very grandeur of the Great Cave at Elephanta, which could only have resulted from a vast expenditure of time, labor, and money, suggests that it is a royal monument."¹³⁰ The excavation of the cave temples did, certainly, require significant economic surplus, not to mention the work of many highly skilled artisans, but the underlying assumption that sponsoring monumental architecture was a self-aggrandizing tactic restricted to ruling elites needs rethinking. As the following pages will show, there is little evidence that places the Kalacuris in the North Konkan during the time the caves were supposedly constructed, nor do their inscriptions mention any such endowments.

¹²⁸ Spink, "The Great Cave at Elephanta," pp. 257-76; "Bāgh: A Study," *Archives of Asian Art*, 30, (1976-77): 53-84 (pp. 55-59). V.V. Mirashi, *CII IV. The Konkan Mauryas, and Western Cālukyas* have also been suggested as possible patrons of the cave sites, but these theories have been far less popular and influential. Sadashiv Gorakshakar and Karl Khandalavala attribute the Konkan cave temples to the patronage of the Konkan Mauryas. See S. Gorakshakar, "A Harihara Image Recovered from Jogeshwari and the Problem of Dating Gharapuri (Elephanta)" in *Madhu: Recent Researches in Indian Archeology and Art History* ed. M.S. Nagaraja Rao (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1981), pp. 247-52; Karl Khandalavala, "Rock-Cut Temples" in *Maharashtra*, ed Saryu Doshi. (Bombay: Mārg Publications, 1985); K.V. Soundara Rajan connects the caves to Cālukya patronage. Rajan, *Architectural Survey of Temples, No 3: Cave Temples of the Deccan*, (New Delhi: ASI, 1981).

¹²⁹ For evidence of the long-ranging influence of Spink's theories see C.D. Collins, *The Iconography and Ritual of Śiva at Elephanta* (Albany: SUNY Press) 1988, pp. 4-9; Pia Brancaccio, *The Buddhist Caves at Aurangabad* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2010), p. 205; Sara L. Schastok, *The Śāmalājī Sculptures and 6th Century Art in Western India* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985) p. 44; pp. 96-97; Geri Hockfield Malandara, *Unfolding a Maṇḍala: The Buddhist Cave Temples at Ellora* (New York: SUNY Press, 1993) pp. 5-6. These studies have extrapolated the influence of the Kalacuris from the North Konkan caves to early stages of building at Ellora, sculpture in Aurangabad, in the Mandasor area of Madhya Pradesh, and at Śāmalājī in Gujarat.

¹³⁰ Spink, 242. In his conclusion, Spink builds upon the previous work of V.V. Mirashi who identifies the Kalacuris as the probable patrons of Elephanta. See Mirashi, *CII IV* pt 1, cxlvii-cxlviii. In his work, Mirashi cites a Marathi-language source by Y.R. Gupte (1942).

Given that it is not based directly upon warranting evidence, I think that the attribution of the North Konkan sites to Kalacuri patronage reflects instead the prevailing historiographical focus on dynastic history and royal personality.¹³¹ This preoccupation has often relegated the activities of other social groups to the margins of scholarly attention. A critical review of the historical sources reveals that the rulers' connection to these sites was tenuous, at best. At the height of their power, the North Konkan occupied the extreme periphery of Kalacuri territory, which was confined to central Mālava and extended only as far as the northwest Deccan, making it unlikely that they ever had direct control over the coast. More importantly, their epigraphic records contain no references to the construction of temples or religious monuments; rather, all of their donations were land-grants to Brahmins. A survey of inscriptions from the North Konkan and the surrounding area shows that during the early medieval period, endowing temples had *not yet* become a ubiquitous feature of a ruler's religious repertoire. Of the royal inscriptions that do record the endowment and building of temples, examples of Śaiva temples are actually quite rare. In lieu of royal patronage, epigraphic sources from this particular region indicate that the work of temple building, funding, and maintenance was often a corporate enterprise.

I.I The North Konkan as Port Polity

To understand the history of the cave temples requires that we first see them in their geographic context and as an integral part of the North Konkan's 'port polity'. An alluvial strip of land, barely 50

¹³¹ Aside from cautionary remarks, like that of Sara Schastok that the "broader cultural and commercial ties between Mālwa and the corridor to the south should not be overlooked," (p. 97) and the questions raised about Kalacuri patronage in the MA Thesis of Jack C. Laughlin (McMaster University, 1993) discussed below, there has been not been, to my knowledge, a published study that reconsiders the history of these sites. A survey of the secondary literature shows that even when the history of the North Konkan caves is disputed, due to lack of epigraphic or other evidence supporting a particular dynast as patron, the issue is resolved by ascribing the construction of these monuments to a different ruling family. These patterns are not unique to studies of the North Konkan sites. For an overview of similar patterns in scholarship on Ellora's patronage see Lisa N. Owen, *Carving Devotion in the Jain Caves at Ellora* (Leiden: Brill) 2012, pp. 160-163.

km wide, on India's western coast, the North Konkan (or Aparānta, as it was traditionally known) is bordered by the Arabian Sea on the west, the Sahyādri Mountains on the east, and the Narmada and Tapti Rivers to the north. With the exception of coconut and betel palm, this region is ill suited for agriculture and, from approximately 200 BCE, trade has driven the regional economy.¹³² The success of the North Konkan as an exchange center can be attributed to its distinctive terrain. Prior to the efforts of land reclamation initiated by British and Portuguese colonizers, the coastal area was a cluster of islands dotted with numerous estuaries, littoral ports, and navigable tidal rivers that extended deep into the interior¹³³ [Figure 13]. Many of these littoral ports were small trading posts that serviced local networks, while others, like Sopara, Kalyan, Chaul, Sanjan, and Elephanta, were cosmopolitan centers of long-distance and international exchange [Figure 14].¹³⁴ Analysis of settlement patterns in the region also evinces close ties to the regional economy.¹³⁵ For example, in the course of excavations around Elephanta Island in the late 1990's, marine archeologists discovered material and numismatic evidence indicative of settlement, commerce, and long-distance exchange from as early as the 1st century BCE

¹³² But the coconut palm was an important 'cash crop.' Note the inscription from the Nasik Caves about the donation of a grove of coconut trees. Senart "The Inscriptions at the Caves at Nasik" *EI* VIII (1905-6), pp. 59-96.

¹³³ On the different varieties of ports in the Konkan see Jean Deloche, "Geographical Consideration in the Localization of Ancient Sea-Ports of India," *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 20, (1983): 439-448 (especially pp. 441-2); Deloche, *La Circulation en Inde*, p. 93.

¹³⁴ See V.K. Jain, *Trade and Traders in Western India* (Munshiram Manoharlal: Delhi, 1990), p. 18. Excavations undertaken at some of these ports provide evidence for international commercial activity and extended periods of habitation. For studies on particular ports see A.K. Ranade: "Contribution of Kalyān to the Cultural Development of Konkan" *Studies in Indian Epigraphy* XXVII; Vishwas D. Gogte, "Discovery of the Ancient port of Chaul" in *Man and Environment* XXVIII (I): 2003, pp. 67-74; also on Chaul, Rahul Oka, 'Resilience and Adaptation of Trade Networks in East African and South Asian Port Polities' unpublished dissertation (University of Illinois at Chicago, 2008) pp. 30-41. On Sanjan see the series of article by Ranabir Cakravarti in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* (1986, 1990, 1998); Rukshana J. Nanji, *Mariner and Merchants: A Study of the Ceramics from Sanjan, Sanjan Reports vol. 1* (BAR International Series, 2011) pp. 8-22.

¹³⁵ Deloche, 'Local of Sea Ports' p. 442. "Together with the towns in the estuaries at points where the tides carry in the boats, are formed two, sometimes even three degrees of marine penetration. At no other part of the western coast is this parallelism so obvious."

through the period of Portuguese colonization in the 16th century.¹³⁶ As with settlements, the growth of sanctified spaces was also conditioned by the distribution of ports.¹³⁷ Prior to the excavation of the Śaiva caves, Buddhist communities had established an extensive network of religious institutions in the region.¹³⁸ In the North Konkan, the patterned siting of Śaiva centers in close proximity to Buddhist caves—both excavated in hills overlooking navigable coastal rivers and in close proximity to littoral

¹³⁶ S. Tripathi and A.S. Gaur, “Onshore and Nearshore Explorations along the Maharashtra Coast: With a View to Locating Ancient Ports and Submerged Sites,” *Man and Environment* XXII, 2 (1997): pp. 73-83; “Exploration of an Ancient Port: Elephanta Island (Bombay),” in *Hemakuta: Recent Researches in Archeology and Museology*, ed. Narasimha A.V. Murthy (Bharatiya Kala Prakashan 2001), pp. 89-95. The archeologists’ reports reveal that the island had three jetties—Mora Bander, Raj Bander, and Shet Bander—that were active at different historical periods as evinced by the range of structural, material, and numismatic remains unearthed in the course of excavations. They also note the remains of an extensive brick wall, now largely submerged in the intertidal zone, which they date to the Gupta period based upon the bricks. Other discoveries include Chinese pottery and Roman amphorae and many premodern anchors found submerged around the island, which are evidence of ship-going trade. Many varieties of copper and silver coins, including Roman, Sātavāhana, Kshatrapa, Traikūṭaka, and Kalacuri issues, were also discovered. On the coins see also *Indian Archeology: A Review* (1956-57), p. 81. Ongoing excavations at nearby Sanjan have similarly demonstrated that coastal settlement was oriented around the littoral ports Rukshana Nanji, *Mariners and Merchants: A study of Ceramics from Sanjan* (British Archeological Reports, 2011) 8-22; 212-223.

¹³⁷ Perhaps the earliest evidence attesting to this pattern is a group of eleven fragmentary Prakrit inscriptions and symbols dating from the 1st to the 6th century CE surrounding a natural cave from a site called Padaṇa Hill that suggest the presence of Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, and Buddhist communities. The site is now the suburban area of Goregaon, eleven miles north of Mumbai and six miles west of the Kanheri caves. It was roughly a kilometer or two from the Mithi River, which flows into Mahim Bay. Inscription K records the Buddhist creed; Inscription G records the ‘step of Rāma’; Inscriptions E and I refer to an ascetic (*siddha*) named Musala. Inscription C refers to the hill as ‘the abode of siddhas (religious specialists or adepts)’ [*pavato abhūnto sidhavasati / parvatebhyantaḥ siddhavastīḥ*]. There are several sets of footprints accompanied by the names of sages. Bakker has suggested a possible connection between the Musala (mentioned in E & I) and the Pāśupata sect called the Mausula derived from the teachings of Musulendra, who was said to be a pupil of the Pāśupata founder Lakuliśa. H. Lüders, “A List of Brahmi Inscriptions from the Earliest Times to about A.D. 400 with the exception of those of Asoka, EI 10 (1912): 973-983; Bhagavanlal Indrajī, “Antiquarian Remains at Sopara and Padaṇa,” in *The Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* vol XV (1881-1882): pp. 323-325; Bakker, “Somasarman, Somavaṃśa, and Somasiddhānta: A Pāśupata Tradition in Dakṣiṇa Kosala, Studies in Skandapurāṇa III,” in *Harānandalaharī: Volume in Honor of Professor Minoru Hara on his Seventieth Birthday* ed. Ryutaro Tsuchida & Albrecht Wezler, (Reinbek: Dr. Inge Wezler Verlag für Orientalistische Fachpublikationen, 2000). p. 5.

¹³⁸ For example, details of the excavation of the settlement mound and Buddhist *stūpa* at the port of Sopara—dated to approximately 160 BCE based on Indrajī’s analysis—are summarized in the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Thana District Revised ed. 1982 (First ed. 1882). B.L. Indrajī (1881-2). On the siting of Buddhist centers such as Kanheri see E.W. West (1861, 1862); H.P. Ray (1994, 1987).

ports and centers of trade—created a multi-layered, shared religious landscape suggestive of deep ties to the regional economy.

Despite its rather insular geography, the north Konkan maintained ties to the Deccan via three important passes in the Sahyādris—the Thalghat, Nanaghat, and Bhorghat [Figure 15]. Travel via these passes and routes fostered interregional economic ties between the North Konkan and the agrarian hinterlands of the Deccan, which produced cotton as well as valuable mineral resources and precious stones from its rich ‘black cotton’ soil.¹³⁹ Via these overland routes, and through intercostal trade with the famous port of Broach in southern Gujarat (Lāṭa), the North Konkan was integrated within pan-Indian itineraries.¹⁴⁰ To reach the coastal area of Lāṭa from the Deccan via overland routes, travellers would have faced formidable natural boundaries, most significantly the Narmada River, which limited travel to particular routes. The primary point of crossing was at Māhiṣmatī (also called Māheśvar),¹⁴¹ a prosperous city and a significant landmark in the geography of pre-modern India. This important crossing point facilitated travel between the prosperous agricultural and commercial

¹³⁹ Rich in nutrients, particularly lime, and extremely moisture retentive, this volcanic soil is excellent for growing cotton as well as wheat, millet, and pulses. Numerous historical sources also make reference to the mining of gemstones and gold in the Deccan. As reported in the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, mineral wealth and cloth produced from Deccan cotton eventually made its way to coastal Gujarat and Broach. Lionel Casson, *Periplus Maris Erythraei: Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Princeton University Press 1989), p. 83; Das, *Deccan*, pp. 91-171; D. Schlingloff, ‘Cotton Manufacture in Ancient India,’ *JESHO* 17-1 (1974): 81-90

¹⁴⁰ In addition to the major passes, other small passes or trails were also utilized for trade and transport between the Konkan and the Deccan. Some of these are mentioned in the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency* Kolaba District, pp. 114-116; Nasik District pp. 125-137. See also D. Chakrabarti, *The Archaeology of the Deccan Routes: The ancient routes from the Ganga plain to the Deccan* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2005) pp. 114-118; H.P. Ray, ‘Early Historical Urbanism: The Case of the Western Deccan,’ *World Archeology* vol. 19 no. 1 (1987): 94-104.

¹⁴¹ H.D. Sankalia, B. Subbarao, S.B. Deo *The Excavations at Maheshwar and Navdatoli*, 1952-53. (Deccan College, Pune & M.S. University, Baroda 1958); O.P. Misra & R.K. Sharma, *Archaeological Excavations in Central India: Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh*, (New Delhi: Mittal Pub., 2003).

centers of the Deccan and the cities of Ujjain and Mathura, critical junctures, or ‘nodal points’, along the major northern routes¹⁴²

I.II Regional Economy and Religious Landscape

The preceding outline of regional geography and trade routes is important not only as a general orientation, but also because patterns in this region’s economy contributed in significant ways to the development of the religious landscape. The dense clustering of both Buddhist and Śaiva caves sites along this stretch of coast [Figure 16] is compelling evidence that the area, with its many busy ports, provided a sufficient economic surplus to fund the construction of elaborate religious and residential centers and provide support to the ascetic populations that inhabited them as either permanent or seasonal residents.¹⁴³ The interactions of regional and religious economy have been explored most thoroughly in scholarship on the networks of Buddhist religious centers in the area. The historiography on the Early Historic period (500 BCE-500 CE)¹⁴⁴ of this region, by H.P. Ray and others, has emphasized the patterned embedding of Buddhist religious centers and monastic establishments at the heads of

¹⁴² For authoritative studies of these routes see M. Chandra, *Trade and Trade Routes in Ancient India* (New Delhi: Abhinav Pub, 1977); N. Lahiri, *The Archeology of Indian Trade Routes up to c. 200 BC: Resource use, Resource access and Lines of Communication* (Delhi: Oxford University) 1992; D.K. Chakrabarti, *Archeology of the Deccan Routes*; Jean Deloche, *La Circulation en Inde avant la Révolution des Transports*, Tome I: *La Voie de Terre* (Paris: Publications de L’École Française d’Extrême Orient, CXXII) 1980.

¹⁴³ At both the Buddhist and Śaiva sites there is evidence of settlements nearby. All of the North Konkan cave sites, Buddhist and Śaiva, have extensive facilities (e.g. tanks, cisterns, and wells) for the collection and storage of water, they likely served an important ‘practical’ function as well. Water storage was critically important in the Konkan and the lack of fresh water outside of the monsoon period (June-September) has been the primary factor barring extensive industry and agriculture in the region. Ray, *Monastery and Guild: Commerce under the Sātavāhanas* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 17.

¹⁴⁴ Special attention is paid to the period between the 1st and the 4th centuries CE as it was during this time that the excavation of Buddhist caves flourished and trade between India, Rome, and Egypt also flourished under the Sātavāhana rulers who had established their capital at Paithan.

mountain passes and at crossroads along caravan routes.¹⁴⁵ A pattern that is interpreted as evidence of the close association, even interdependence, of monastic communities and trade economy. Inscriptions from the Buddhist caves at Kanheri that record donations from merchants and guilds, some of them from places a great distance from the religious center itself, further support the interconnectedness of Buddhism and trade in this area.¹⁴⁶

The dynamic interactions of Buddhist centers and regional economy are relevant for the study of the Śaiva landscape as well since religious centers dedicated to both of these communities were built in close proximity to one another. And some Buddhist centers, like Kanheri, were still in active use in the 6th and 7th centuries when the Śaiva caves were excavated. The multi-layered character of the religious landscape is most clearly evident on Elephanta Island [Figure 17]. The Śaiva excavations at Elephanta represent only the best preserved of several religious sites on the island. An earlier Buddhist center occupied the hill directly opposite the Śaiva caves in the vicinity of Mora Bandar, the oldest of the island's three jetties, where the remains of a Buddhist *stūpa* and an early settlement site were excavated¹⁴⁷ [Figures 18-21]. Like the Elephanta caves, the Śaiva caves of Jogeśvarī and Maṇḍapeśvar

¹⁴⁵ Ray connects the patterns in the construction of Buddhist caves with the periods of greatest success for Sātavāhana polity, 100-20 BCE and between 50 CE and the third century CE. She argues that construction lapsed during the intervening period of political strife. Ray, *Monastery and Guild*, 87; Heitzman, 1984, p. 131; Neelis, pp. 215-217.

¹⁴⁶ A number of inscriptions from the Buddhist caves at Kanheri mention donors from the surrounding port cities of Chaul, Kalyan, and Sopara, as well as Nasik and range in dates from the 1st through the 6th centuries CE.. Lüder's List 100, 996, 988, 985 ; Kanheri Plate of the Traikūṭakas K.S. 245 (493/4 or 494/5 CE) *CII* IV, pp. 29-32. In particular, note the inscription from Kanheri Cave 3 that record the collaborative donative efforts of merchants and monastics in the excavation of a *caitya*. Bühler ASWI V no. 4; EI X Appendix, no. 987.

¹⁴⁷ A small series of simply excavated caves were also found on this same hill, along with cisterns, a well, and tanks for collecting and storing water. It is difficult to ascertain whether these caves were originally affiliated with the Buddhist community or the Śaiva community. At the time of the Portuguese explorer De Couto's report the caves had a Brahminical, possibly Śaiva, affiliation. One was a *liṅga* shrine and two multi-armed goddesses occupied another. The reports of De Couto, Burgess and Cousens, and other 19th century reports summarized in

were also constructed in close proximity to Buddhist institutions and strategically placed in economically advantageous areas near ports and navigable coastal rivers. It may have also been the case that Śaiva communities co-opted earlier Buddhist excavations. For example, K.V. Soundara Rajan suggests that the southernmost cave at Maṇḍapeśvar was originally a simple Buddhist excavation that was further excavated and expanded by the Śaiva community. Unlike Elephanta and Jogeśvarī, it does not seem that the main temple sanctum originally held a *liṅga*.¹⁴⁸ Given that workable sites for constructing monuments were limited by various conditions of the physical geography, it would make sense that members of the Śaiva community would avail themselves of an advantageous locale used by earlier patrons. One of the advantages of Maṇḍapeśvar was its proximity to centers of economic exchange. The spatial logic of the Śaiva religious landscape gestures to the Buddhist model—both were designed to capitalize on the economic surplus generated by the coastal economy.

While economic realities have been emphasized in studies of Buddhism, these factors have been paid little attention in studies of Brahmanical religion in the early medieval period. This is due to the assumption, nearly axiomatic in the historiography of the period, that trade and commercial networks were crippled by the waning of the Gupta-Vākāṭaka Empire and the subsequent growth of what is commonly termed medieval ‘feudalism.’ This perceived decline in market economies is

the Bombay Gazetteers also record the remains of small brick shrines along the island’s coast where a number of loose images were found. The images reported may include those of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, and Maḥiṣāsūramarḍinī recovered from the island and now held in the Prince of Wales Museum in Mumbai. Burgess also reports many *liṅgas* were deposited around the tank near the village. One early *liṅga* was found near the *stūpa* site during my last visit in January 2016.

¹⁴⁸ Rajan reports, “Within the door-frame is a square chamber [...] without any apparent indication of a provision for *liṅga pīṭha* or *liṅga* of the monolithic type on its floor [...] Although there is a pestle like stone kept in its center inside the depression, it has no relationship either with the pit as cut original or with the pristine character of the chamber itself.” Rajan 94-98.

thought to have made the village an autonomous and non-monetized economic center.¹⁴⁹ In this view, villages were “individually self-sustaining units, devoid of channels connecting them with other kinds of production or with centers of commodity exchange.”¹⁵⁰ Anjali Malik’s statement summarizes accurately this popular scholarly position. “In the post-Gupta period [...] internal trade had decreased because the need to distribute necessary articles had been obviated on account of the rise of self-sufficient units of production [...] The insecure atmosphere rendered internal distribution of merchandise very difficult. We have no literary or archeological evidence that large-scale trading continued in this period.”¹⁵¹

Recent work of archeologists and historians shows that the theory regarding the dearth of trade in the early medieval period has been largely overstated.¹⁵² In fact, long-distance trade continued to flourish in the early medieval period, albeit along modified trajectories.¹⁵³ In his work on Indian Ocean trade, K.N. Chaudari has characterized maritime trade voyages in the early medieval period as following two main patterns: between commercial cities of the Red Sea area and Persian Gulf and the

¹⁴⁹ B.D. Chattopadhyaya, “State and Economy in North India” in *Recent Perspectives of Early Indian History*, ed. Romila Thapar, (Delhi: Popular Prakashan, 1995) pp. 322-23.

¹⁵⁰ Chattopadhyaya summarizing (rather polemically) the position of Kosambi (1965), Sharma (1965), et al.

¹⁵¹ Anjali Malik, *Merchants and Merchandise in Northern India AD 600-1000* (Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1998), p 93.

¹⁵² For example, see H.P.Ray, ‘The Artisan and the Merchant in Early Gujarat, Sixth-Eleventh Centuries,’ *Ars Orientalis* 34 (2004): pp. 39-61; Ray stresses the autonomy of merchants and artisans in relation to state and political power. Also Andre Wink *Al-Hind: The Making of an Indo-Islamic World* (New Delhi: Oxford, 1990) pp. 45-64. Wink rejects even the hypothesis that Roman trade declined during this period and cites the continued activity of Greek and Byzantine traders in Indian Ocean commerce.

¹⁵³ Overseas and trade with the Roman Empire and the Mediterranean declined, yet studies of Arab and Persian sources show that international trade continued and that new networks were established, particularly from the 8th and early 9th century. Patterns in early medieval trade in the North Konkan are addressed in a series of article by Ranabir Chakravarti (1986; 1990; 1996; 1998)

other a trans-regional voyage that included India as well as ports in South East Asia and China.¹⁵⁴ Recent studies of ceramics provide corroborating evidence for these patterns of exchange as early as the 6th and 7th centuries. Most notably, Roberta Tomber's recent work on the distribution of amphorae in India demonstrates that while the distribution of Early Roman amphorae was concentrated in the 1st century BCE to 2nd century CE around the port of Chaul, and the nodal trade centers of Nasik and Paithan in the Deccan, later styles of amphorae—such as Red Sea amphorae and Torpedo jars produced in modern Aqaba in Jordan from the 4th through the 7th century—are found almost exclusively at Elephanta and the ports of south-west Gujarat.¹⁵⁵ The presence of these unique pottery styles lends further evidence for the continued dynamism of exchange networks along the North Konkan coast in the 6th and 7th century, in which places like Elephanta played a central role.

II. Politics and Patronage

Control over the North Konkan and northwest Deccan would have been of considerable economic advantage for the many medieval families aspiring to political power in the centuries following the decline of Gupta-Vākāṭaka hegemony. As a borderland between more stable polities to the north and the south, this area was a repeated site of contestation in which political boundaries were routinely redrawn as a result of military incursions and raids, and political hierarchies ever shifting as political alliances were dissolved and reconfigured.¹⁵⁶ Inscriptions from multiple ruling families between the 6th-

¹⁵⁴ K.N. Chaudari, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985), p. 15.

¹⁵⁵ See Roberta Tomber, "Beyond Western India: The Evidence from Imported Amphorae," in *Indian Ocean Commerce and the Archeology of Western India*, Tomber, Blue, and Abraham eds. (London: BASAS, 2010) pp 42-57.

¹⁵⁶ On the larger political context of this historical period see Bakker (2014), esp 'Part 1: The World of Power,' pp 25-133.

9th centuries—including the Traikūṭakas, Mauryas, Sendrakas, Kalacuris, Cālukyas, Gurjaras and Rāṣṭrakūṭas, among others—record competing claims of sovereignty. The distribution of epigraphic records indicates that the influence of the region's ruling elites was narrowly constrained, and political competition was most fierce around the 'nodal points' and along the regional trajectories at the heart of the northwest Indian economy (i.e. in Lāṭa around Broach, Ujjain, and the Nasik District of the northwest Deccan). In addition to these ruling dynasties, inscriptions also record the activities of various generals, local elites, merchant collectives and guilds who emerge as important players in the political arena, often operating with a great deal of autonomy.¹⁵⁷ It is significant, however, that royal inscriptions are not found in significant number in the North Konkan itself. This pattern could indicate that the coastal area was a distinct, and perhaps relatively autonomous, polity.

After a brief survey of the political terrain, this section explores the religious landscape and considers what role regional political elites may have played in the construction of Śaiva religious sites. Although the Kalacuris, and other ruling elites, proclaim devotion to Śiva in their records, a closer look reveals these professions of religious identity are less straightforward than has been assumed, and in their acts of patronage, rulers tended to favor gifts to brahmins over temples. To understand the patterns in religious giving that could have contributed to the creation of the monumental Śaiva cave temples, I focus on the networks of merchants and local collectives also active in these regions. The sources indicate that these communities were more invested in religious life 'on the ground' than were

¹⁵⁷ Romila Thapar, *A History of India* Vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1966), pp. 110-112; K.K. Thaplyal, *Guilds in Ancient India: A Study of Guild Organization in Northern India and the Western Deccan from 600 BC to 600 AD*, (New Delhi: New Age International) Chapter 7 "Guild and the State," pp. 121-139; These groups often served as 'banks' with which endowments and donations for religious institutions were routinely invested.

rulers at the time. Examining these alternative networks of patronage will afford us a new perspective on the development of the built religious landscape.

II.I The Political Landscape

In the late 5th and early 6th century, inscriptions of the Traikūṭaka rulers found in southern Gujarat, around Nasik, and in the South Konkan suggest they were the sovereigns of the greater region. Four sets of copper plates of the Traikūṭakas have survived. Three were issued by the rulers themselves, and that fourth, a set of copper plates from the Kanheri caves in Mumbai, refers itself to the period of their rule.¹⁵⁸ These kings claimed Aniruddhapura as their capital, but the exact location of this city is uncertain—previous scholars have proposed a location on the west coast (perhaps Surat in southern Gujarat).¹⁵⁹ This location could be accurate, but these rulers may have positioned their political center in a more strategic location around Nasik and the Thalghat, near their namesake ‘three-peaked mountain’ (*trikūṭa*), which likely refers to the range of the Sahyādris on the western border of the Nasik District.¹⁶⁰ To my knowledge this has not been proposed earlier, but the Nasik area would have been a strategic and central locale from which these rulers could expand their power-base in the northeast,

¹⁵⁸ Surat Plates of Vyāghrasena KS 241 (490 CE). Pārḍī Plates of KS 207 (457 CE), found 50 miles south of Surat. The first was issued from their capital at Aniruddhapura, and the second from a victorious military camp, Āmrakā, presumably in the Surat District. Both record the donation of land to Brahmins. *CII* IV pp. 22-32 and Plates. Two additional grants were found south of Mumbai in Maṭṭvaṇ (Ratnagiri District of Maharashtra), the first issued by Madhyamasena in 256 A.S. (505 CE) and the second by Vikramasena in 284 A.S. (533 CE).

¹⁵⁹ Mirashi suggests a location in the Surat district for Aniruddhapura since two of the Traikūṭaka’s grants were issued from villages near Surat. Mirashi, *CII* IV, xlv; 27-28; The name of the city could be a reference to its being somehow unconquerable, unrestrained, or unchecked (*aniruddha*) and, we understand the reference to the city of *aniruddha* to refer to one of the Vṛṣṇis, the name could also signal their Vaiṣṇava affiliations (see below).

¹⁶⁰ Mirashi and Rajgor follow Kalidāsa (*Raghuvamśa* 4.58-59) in identifying *trikūṭa* with the Sahyādris, i.e. the Sahya Mountain. The reference to the *pūrvatrikūṭaviṣaya* in the eighth century Anjaneri Plates (Nasik District) supports this identification. The Nasik Cave 10 inscription (cf note 51) refers to the mountain there as *triraśmi* (three-rayed), which could allude to the three peaks (Mirashi, *CII* IV, xli).

around Surat where they had established military camps, and southeast toward the Ratnagiri district where their copper plates were also found. As far as their religious identity and donative practices are concerned, the Traikūṭakas identified themselves as devotees of Viṣṇu (i.e. Bhāgavatas) in their coins and inscriptions. In both the Surat and Pārḍī Plates, for example, the rulers Vyāghrasena and Dahrasena are eulogized with the epithet *bhagavatpādakarmakara* (servant at the feet of the Bhagavat, i.e. Viṣṇu).

The Traikūṭakas faced considerable competition for hegemony over their namesake region from political rivals to the south, east, and north. For example, Viṣṇukuṇḍin Mādhavarman III claimed to have been the lord of Trikūṭa in the mid-fifth century.¹⁶¹ A similar claim was made by the Vākāṭaka Hariṣeṇa in an inscription from Ajanta Cave XVI in the late fifth century.¹⁶² Inscriptions of the Mauryas found in the South Konkan attest to the political ambitions of these local kings.¹⁶³ And to the north, around Broach, a ruler named Saṅgamasimha issued a grant in KS 292 (541 CE) donating land in the '*antar narmadā viṣaya*' to brahmins from Broach.¹⁶⁴ Since this area would have included land on both sides of the Narmada River, it would have bordered the Traikūṭaka-controlled region quite closely.

¹⁶¹ *EI* XXVII 312ff, Though the Viṣṇukuṇḍin central locus of power was in Andhra, their power may have extended into the southwestern Deccan—inscription found in Khanapur in the Satara District of Maharashtra. See also Bakker, *Vākāṭakas*, (1997).

¹⁶² Bakker, *Vākāṭakas*, (1997) pp. 34-35; Sircar (1965) no. 453; *CII* IV 22-25

¹⁶³ See GS Gai, Bandora Plates of Maurya Anirjitavarman, Year 29," *EI* XXXIII (1960) 293-297; DC Sircar, "A Note on the Goa Copper Plate Inscription of King Candravarman," *ABORI* (1942), 510-514;

¹⁶⁴ Saṅgamasimha calls himself a *mahāsāmanta*, suggesting he was a political subordinate to a larger power, but this superior is unnamed making it difficult to situate Saṅgamasimha within the broader political landscape. Saṅgamasimha may have been a subordinate of the Kalacuris since the area around Broach was claimed by the Kalacuri Śaṅkaragaṇa in the late sixth century. *CII* IV "Sunao Kala Plates of Saṅgamasimha" KS 292/541 CE. On the '*antar narmadā viṣaya*' Fleet *IA* XXXII, 56ff.

In addition to the political rivals mentioned above, a reference in the Matvan Plates of the Traikūṭaka king Vikramasena (KS 284) 533 CE could indicate that the Kalacuri rulers also made a claim to Traikūṭaka territory. These plates, along with an earlier set found at the same location, appear to record a transition or perhaps even a struggle for power between the Kalacuris and the Traikūṭakas. The first set of Matvan Plates was issued from Aniruddhapura in 506 CE, which is described as the “victorious city of the Traikūṭakas” (*vijayāniruddhapurāt traikūṭakānām*). In the second set of Matvan Plates, issued in 533 CE, the name of the Traikūṭakas was replaced with the Kalacuris [variant spelling] (*vijayāniruddhapurāt kaṭaccurīṇām*). The Traikūṭaka king, Vikramasena, is still identified as the ruling sovereign, but Aniruddhapura is called the ‘victorious city of the Kalacuris’.¹⁶⁵ Based upon this change, Mirashi and Gokhale suppose that the Traikūṭakas became political subordinates of the Kalacuris in the 6th century. It is difficult to gauge the political situation from this single reference, a difficulty compounded by the fact that the exact location of the city is contested. But if my hypothesis that Aniruddhapura was located near Nasik is correct, then the Kalacuri claim to this area fits within the general geographic distribution of their inscriptions, as shown below.

While it is uncertain if the Kalacuris ever had a capital city to speak of, the historiography of the period associates them closely with the town of Māhiṣmatī on the Narmada.¹⁶⁶ This connection is plausible since the sphere of Kalacuri political influence was northwest and central India, specifically around Ujjain, Vidiśā, and sites in south-central Gujarat where they had established military camps.

¹⁶⁵ V.V. Mirashi, *CII* IV, clxvii.; “The Riddle of the Māṭvaṇ Plates of the Traikūṭaka King Vikramasena: Ābhira year 284,” in *Literary and Historical Studies in Indology*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975); Shobhana Gokhale, “Matvan Plates of the Traikutaka king Vikramasena K.S. 284” in *Studies in Indology and Medieval History: Professor G.H. Khare Felicitation Volume*, Mate and Kulkarni eds. (Poona: Joshi & Lokande Prakashan, 1974) pp 86-94.

¹⁶⁶ Some have argued that this connection is anachronistic as it is based on the reading of later Kalacuri (i.e. Haihaya) records in which the rulers claim descent from Arjuna Kartavīrya, legendary king of Māhiṣmatī See *CII* IV, xlv.

This pattern is illustrated in the accompanying map of the find-spots of their inscriptions and of donated villages mentioned in their records [Figure 22]. To control sites both north and south of the Narmada would have necessitated some control of Māhiṣmatī since this location was one of the only places the Narmada could be crossed safely. Some of the lands granted in the inscriptions were located in what is now the Nasik District of Maharashtra, an indication that their political influence extended to the western Deccan as well. The villages granted in the Nasik District were a considerable distance away from their military encampments, but would have afforded access to the Thalghat, one of the three most important passes through the Western Ghats. The Kalacuris were not unique in adopting this strategy of economic control. Control over the Deccan routes was integral to the success and expansion of Satāvāhana polity and inscriptions of Kalacuri contemporaries were also found near the same nodal points.

There are five known early Kalacuri inscriptions. The earliest known grants were issued by Śaṅkaragaṇa, who is thought to have ruled from approximately 575-600 CE.¹⁶⁷ In his records he praises his father Kṛṣṇarāja, the first known Kalacuri king. No records issued by Kṛṣṇarāja have survived, but copper coins bearing the legend 'Śrī Kṛṣṇarāja' with a couchant bull on the reverse have been found in the Deccan and the North Konkan.¹⁶⁸ His silver coins, dispersed even more widely, were found in

¹⁶⁷ Śaṅkaragaṇa's inscriptions include the Lapkaman grants K.S. 345, 347 (595 CE, Ahmedabad District), which record the donation of lands in south-central Gujarat. These were followed by the Abhoṇa grant K.S. 347 (596-97 CE) issued from a military camp at Ujjain and found at Abhona in the Nasik District and record the donation of lands in Bhogavardhana (Bhokardhan), the specific village named is Vallisika (Valsa) 7 miles south of Bhokardhan in Aurangabad District. The Saṅkheda grants (Baroda District, northwest of Broach) were issued from a military camp at Nirguṇḍīpadraka, in southeast Gujarat, by Śaṅkaragaṇa's general Śantilla. This record is undated, but is thought to be from the late 6th century based upon the dates of Śaṅkaragaṇa's other inscriptions.

¹⁶⁸ CII IV, xlv; R.K. Sharma, *Coinage of Central India: Early Coins from the Narmada Valley*, (New Dehi: Aryan Books International, 2011) p. 5; 33-34; On the silver coins, Cunningham, ASI Report IX (1879) p. 29; Fleet, IA XIV, p 68.

Rajasthan, the North Konkan, and in Vidarbha. Śaṅkaragaṇa's son, Buddhārāja issued two grants in the early 7th century, one from a military camp at Vidiśā, and the other from a military camp at Ānandapura (modern Vaḍnagar, approximately 100 km north of Ahmedabad in northern Gujarat).¹⁶⁹ The Kalacuris may have also extended their authority via political allies in southern Gujarat. One hint at such an alliance is from a grant dated (KS 346) 595-6 CE in which one Taralasvāmin is described as the 'light in the house of the Kalacuri family' (*kaṭaccurikulaveśmapradīpa*).¹⁷⁰ Following the defeat of Buddhārāja in the early 7th century, likely at the hands of Cālukya Pulakeśin II (see below), the identity of his successors and their activities is difficult to trace with certainty.¹⁷¹

Returning to the Kalacuri political map, I think that by visualizing the key locales mentioned in their inscriptions it is evident that the rulers' military and political strategy was aimed at controlling 'nodal' points along the major trade routes and, more specifically, those points at which regional, subsidiary routes joined with the major north-south trajectories (for example, Broach, Ujjain, and Vidiśā). Kalacuri control over these places also offers a compelling explanation for the widespread distribution of Kṛṣṇarāja's coins, including those found on Elephanta Island. The presence of Kalacuri

¹⁶⁹ His Vāḍner Plates K.S. 360 (610 CE, Nasik District) issued from a military camp at Vidiśā and his Sarsavni Plates K.S. 361 (610 CE, Vadodara District) issued from a military camp at Ānandapura (modern Vaḍnagar, approximately in northern Gujarat J.F. Fleet, *IA* XIX, 1890: 7-20.

¹⁷⁰ Mirashi deems the grant spurious, since Taralasvāmin does not mention his political superior who, judging from the Abhona grant issued in the following year, would have been Kalacuri Śaṅkaragaṇa. But it may be that Taralasvāmin was a member of a subordinate (or even a competing) family that was also attempting to lay claim to Broach 'Spurious Mankani Plates of Taralasvamin, (KS 346)' *CII* III no. 33 Plate XXVII, pp. 160-165. Taralasvāmin may have been connected in some way to Saṅgamasimha (*cf* p. 19 & note 55), whose grants from Broach were dated in the Kalacuri era. Majumdar, p. 197.

¹⁷¹ It may be that they continued to rule under the control of the Cālukyas or they moved east toward Jabalpur (Tripuri) where later branches of the dynasty are attested from inscriptions in the mid-8th century. According to Mirashi, the next known actor from the Kalacuri camp is Vāmarāja (675-700 CE) who, after the death of Harṣa in the latter half of 7th century, took control of Kalañjara fort, which had long been a site considered sacred to Śiva. See Bakker, *The World*, p. 213.

copper coins on the island is commonly cited as proof of Kalacuri patronage of the cave temples. Shobana Gokhale and Spink offer the unconvincing hypothesis that these coins were paid to the laborers working in the caves.¹⁷² These coins are, in fact, not unique to Elephanta. As remarked above, Kṛṣṇarāja's copper coins were found elsewhere in the Deccan and his silver coins have been found throughout northwest and central India where they could have been circulated through commerce and the movement of merchants and traders between the Konkan ports and the Kalacuri-controlled hinterlands. Nor are finds of copper coins unique to Elephanta as Spink has claimed.¹⁷³ Burgess and Indrajī reported the discovery of more than one thousand copper coins at Vihar near the Kanheri caves on Salsette Island in the mid-nineteenth century, some of which are comparable in size to the Kalacuri copper coins.¹⁷⁴ As a final point, since Kṛṣṇarāja's coins were still in use in the Deccan 150 years after the period of his rule—as evinced by the mention of taxes paid in '*kṛṣṇārāja-rūpakas*' in an early 8th century inscription—we need not assume the distribution of the coins indicates the geographic extent of Kṛṣṇarāja's territory.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² One of Kṛṣṇarāja's silver coins was found in the courtyard of the Rāmeśvara cave temple at Ellora and this find has been cited by Spink as evidence for Kalacuri patronage there. Shobhana Gokhale "Elephanta Hoard of Copper Coins of Kṛṣṇarāja," *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, 38 pt. 2 (1976): 89-91; Mirashi, CII IV, xlvi. R.K. Sharma, *Coinage of Central India: Early Coins from the Narmada Valley*, (Aryan Books International: New Delhi, 2011) pp. 5; 33-34.

¹⁷³ Spink, "Elephanta," 236. Since Spink reports that many, if not most, of the copper coins found at Elephanta are extremely corroded, it is possible that they are not all Kalacuri issues.

¹⁷⁴ According to Burgess's report, "During the excavations in making a path round the upper contour of the great reservoir at Vihar in Salsette, in January 1855, upwards of a thousand copper coins were dug up in an earthenware pot... Many are corroded, half a dozen are distinctly Muhammadan, others have some variation of a cross symbol with four cardinal points marks." Dimensions reported by Gokhale: round diam: 1.02 cm to 1.5 cm). See Burgess and Indrajī, *Inscriptions of the Cave Temples of Western India* (Bombay: Government and Central Press, 1881 [1976]), 66.

¹⁷⁵ Anjaneri Plates (First Set) of Bhogaśakti K.S. 461 (709/10 or 710/11 CE), CII III no. 31.

II.II What's in a Name: The Politics of Religious Identity

Considering the dynamism of the political landscape from the survey above, it seems implausible that the construction of the Śaiva monuments was the work of one particular ruling family. Moreover, the geographic extent of Kalacuri territory makes it unlikely that they were the patrons of sites in the North Konkan since crediting them with these monuments would require positing that their domain was significantly larger than is otherwise known. Although these rulers identified themselves as Śaivas—an affiliation expressed through epithets and names given in their inscriptions—their donative records contain no mention of temples or religious monuments, which is a striking omission. To resolve this apparent paradox between royal epithets and the reality of donative practices requires that we reconsider the politics of religious identity in this historical period.

Religious identity was clearly an important facet of the Kalacuri political persona. Śaṅkaragaṇa, for example, describes himself as a *paramamāheśvara*, “completely devoted to the Maheśvara, (namely, Śiva)” and declares that his father, Kṛṣṇarāja, was devoted to Paśupati (*paśupatisamāśraya*) from birth.¹⁷⁶ No inscriptions issued by Kṛṣṇarāja have survived, but his coins bear the legend *paramamāheśvara* and the image of a bull on the obverse has been interpreted as representing Śiva's *vāhana*. The family preference for Śaivism is affirmed by Śaṅkaragaṇa's son, Buddharāja who also identifies as a *māheśvara* and copies verbatim the Pāśupata affiliation from his father's inscriptions. Buddharāja's wife, Anantamahayī, follows suit, calling herself *pāśupatarājñī*.¹⁷⁷ The names of many of the individuals involved in the issuing of their inscriptions further indicate the

¹⁷⁶ *CII IV* n.12, p.VI. In addition, the suffix *-gaṇa* in the name Śaṅkaragaṇa could indicate this was a Śaiva initiation name.

¹⁷⁷ *CII IV* n.14 p.VIII.

influence of Śaivism within their political circle.¹⁷⁸ In light of this preference for Śaivism, the fact that none of the known Kalacuri inscriptions allude to the construction of religious monuments or temples is significant. If Kṛṣṇarāja had sponsored a monument on a par with Elephanta, one would expect some mention of it in records of his successors, which praise him at length.¹⁷⁹

The widespread use of the epithet *paramamāheśvara* among political elites suggests that it was becoming a political idiom. Contemporaneous epigraphic records show that the Kalacuris were in esteemed company in adopting this title. Members of competing and ruling families in northwest India—including the Maitrakas, Gurjaras, and Sendrakas—also adopted the moniker,¹⁸⁰ but the vast majority of these records commemorate land-grants to brahmins rather than donations to Śaiva temples.¹⁸¹ In fact, widespread royal patronage of Śaiva institutions in this particular area did not

¹⁷⁸ Mention the possible significance of the names specifically, and the Sarsavni record composer was named Śivarāja. That the *dūtaka* for the Lapkaman and Abhona Plates was himself named Pāśupata lends further support for a connection between Śaivism and the early Kalacuris. On this topic see also Annette Schmiedchen, 'Patronage of Śaivism and Other Religious Groups under the Dynasties of the Kaṭaccuris, Gurjaras and Sendrakas from the 5th to the 8th centuries' *Indo-Iranian Journal* 56 (2013): 349-363.

¹⁷⁹ In the Abhona Plates, Kṛṣṇarāja is lauded primarily for his military prowess. Mention is made of his generosity and charitable donations made for the sake of gaining religious merit, but these statements are communicated in a general way and no specific details or events are mentioned.

¹⁸⁰ For example, certain of the Maitraka rulers called themselves *māheśvaras*: In the Maila Plates of Dharasena II this king describes the lineage progenitor, Bhaṭaraka as a *māheśvara* (*CII* III no 38. Plate XXIV). Guhasena adopted both the epithets *paramopāsaka* and *paramamāheśvara*, suggesting affiliations with both Buddhist and Śaiva communities (*IA* VII, 66; IV 174-76). Beginning in the mid-late 7th century the Śaiva epithet is also adopted by the Gurjara rulers beginning with Dadda III and Jayabhāṭa III (*CII* IV liv; *IA* V, 109). Sendraka Allaśakti also professes to be a devotee of Maheśvara in his Kasare Plates (KS 404; 653 CE) *CII* IV no. 25 Plate XVIII.

¹⁸¹ Annette Schmiedchen has also explored this topic in a recent article (2013). She similarly concludes that there is little evidence for the patronage of Śaiva groups by rulers in these regions. Exceptions being the aforementioned Sendraka grant of Allaśakti, which records the donation of land to a Yajurvedic brahmin to support the worship of a deity (a local form of Śiva) called Alaṅghyeśvara and a Cālukya grant by Dharāśraya Jayasimha to support worship of the deity Kāpāleśvara. (pp 355; 356).

flourish until the 10th century under the Śilāhāra rulers.¹⁸² In their donations, the Kalacuris chose, like their political contemporaries, to extend their patronage to Brahmins through grants of land and villages to support the continuation of their ritual practices. Rather than endowing monuments, showing support for Brahmins and acting as the patron of their sacrifices remained some of the defining aspects of the king's royal persona. By normalizing this popular royal epithet, my intention is not to exclude the possibility of Kalacuri donations to temples or otherwise downplay the participation of rulers within the *māheśvara* community. I only wish to emphasize that there is no evidence that Śaiva religiosity entailed the 'monumental' context of a temple, nor did every temple constructed during this period function as a 'royal center'. The construction of the Śaiva cave temples would have required a surplus of time and capital and such undertakings may not have aligned with the larger Kalacuri political strategy¹⁸³ as they worked to maintain their control over the nodal centers of trade and exchange in central India and the Deccan.

II.III Building Temple & Community

Even if the patronage of Śaiva centers was not yet a ubiquitous part of the religious repertoire of rulers, the question of who sponsored the Śaiva caves, and why, remains unanswered. Given the paucity of epigraphic evidence from the sites themselves, an historical alternative must be constructed inferentially. In addition to the activities of political elites, the epigraphic record preserves evidence of

¹⁸² The important contributions of the Śilāhāras to the North Konkan Śaiva Landscape is the focus of a separate article, entitled 'Power and Piety in 'Emplaced Politics' Temple Patronage and Donative Practice under the North Konkan Śilāhāras (9th-12th CE) forthcoming, 2017.

¹⁸³ In the relatively short temporal span represented in the records, the Kalacuris were operating from military camps in northwest and central India and these rulers had no fixed capital city to speak of. The connection of the early Kalacuris with the town of Māhiṣmatī on the Narmadā is likely anachronistic as it is based on the reading of later Kalacuri (i.e. Haihaya) records in which the rulers claim descent from Arjuna Kartavīrya, legendary king of Māhiṣmatī. See CII IV, xlv.

patronage by groups and individuals outside, or on the peripheries, of the political sphere (i.e. merchant groups, guilds, artisans, village collectives, etc.) Donors from such groups contributed significantly to Buddhist institutions in the North Konkan and Deccan in the early centuries CE. In inscriptions from the North Konkan Buddhist site of Kanheri, for example, merchants, traders, and craftsmen are mentioned as donors, along with the monastic residents themselves.¹⁸⁴ Although the inscriptions at Kanheri largely predate the supposed mid-6th- early 7th century date of Elephanta, the preceding pages have shown that trade and commerce in the area had not significantly diminished, as has been assumed. Given the relative stability of the region's economy, it is possible that these well-established patronage networks and patterns sustained the Śaiva community as well.

As I briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, merchants, traders, and other collective bodies held positions of considerable influence in the early medieval period and they were instrumental in the support and management of temples. Patronage of religious institutions was not undertaken primarily or exclusively by political elites; rather, religious giving and the growth of temple-centered religion was enacted through complex networks and exchanges between multiple individuals and groups. These religious institutions were integral to the creation of larger social sodalities that forged connections between 'local' people and broader, supra-local networks and institutions. That the cave temples of the north Konkan may have been part of the formation of these kinds of social sodalities stands in accord with the patterns observed in the surrounding area, as well as with the patterns of patronage that can

¹⁸⁴Lüder's List (984-1034) Many of these donors were residents of the nearby ports—Kalyan, Chaul, and Sopara are mentioned in the donative records—and from the Deccan around Nasik. Their gifts included money, agricultural tracts, and they sponsored construction projects of water cisterns and halls.

be observed in later records from the 9th and 10th centuries.¹⁸⁵ I provide a few summary examples below.

The late 6th century Charter of Viṣṇuṣeṇa (VS 649 / 592 CE)¹⁸⁶ affords valuable insight into the dynamics of power that existed between local economic organizations and rulers and highlights the degree of influence that the merchant community enjoyed in this area. Composed by a local ruler who would have been a contemporary of the Kalacuris, this inscription comprises a list of seventy-two allowances made for a merchant community in Lohāṭakagrāma, a village in southern Gujarat—perhaps the ancient port of Lothal, approximately 150 km northwest of Broach on the Gulf of Khambhat. This extensive list of rules and regulations insured the merchants' autonomy, their ability to engage in trade without restrictions and taxes, and freed them from obligations to rulers and local landowners.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ For example, a series of records from the port of Sanjan records the creation and maintenance of a Devī *maṭha*. Endowed by a family of brahmins at the beginning of the 10th century, the administration of the *maṭha* also involved the local governor of Arab origins, Madhumatī. Since Madhumati is further qualified as *tājikānvaya* (of Arab descent, in Verse 17), Sircar is no doubt correct in understanding this name as a Sanskritized version of Muhammad.). In his duties, Madhumatī was assisted by collectives of goldsmiths, stonemasons, carpenters, and others. Sircar, 'Rāṣṭrakūṭa Charters from Chinchani', *EI* XXXII (1957-8) pp 45-76; Mirashi CII V no. 12.

¹⁸⁶ D.C. Sircar, *EI* 30 163-181; D.D. Kosambi, "Indian Feudal Trade Charters" *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* vol. 2 (1959): 281-293. The charter was then ratified in K.S. (605 A.D.) by another local ruler in the area. We may also infer the proximity of Lohāṭā to a port from the mention of various taxes levied on goods carried by boat in regulations 53-61.

¹⁸⁷ For example, the first item (Lines 1-2) concerns the inheritance of property and ensures that property of one without an heir would be inherited by the guild rather than by a local ruler. Lines 11-13 state that guild members would not be required to pay taxes and dues to rulers, nor could they be called to labor for the rulers without pay. Line 24 prohibits the seizure of peasants traveling to markets by rulers or local landowners for labor in their fields. The inscription also records some of the duties and requirements for guild members along with detailed lists of the permissible taxes on different kinds of merchandise from bamboo to wine (Lines 25-72)

In addition to reflecting the autonomy of merchant communities, a set of early 6th century copper plates from Sañjeli show clearly the extent to which economic actors and local collectives were involved in the religious life of the area.¹⁸⁸ These records make provisions for the support of a local Vaiṣṇava temple dedicated to the deity Jayasvāmī. The temple was endowed by Virādhyikā, the mother of local ruler Mahārāja Mātṛdāsa, but the records shows that the maintenance and support of this religious center involved people from various social strata and economic means. The first plate records donations by a group of local residents and foreign businessmen—coming from as far as Daśapura, Ujjain, and Kanuaj—who agree to impose certain taxes on non-prestige goods (i.e. molasses, salt, cotton, and grain) to support worship at the temple.¹⁸⁹ This was done for the increase of their own religious merit. The temples in this area were clearly important *loci* of social interaction between merchant groups, both local and supra-local, craftspeople, agriculturalists, as well as political elites. In addition to the various pilgrims, religious specialists, and temple servants who resided on the temple grounds.¹⁹⁰

In the village of Jayapura near Anjaneri in the Nasik District.¹⁹¹ Bhogaśakti, a ruler from a branch of the Cālukya family, issued these two sets of copper plates along with an affiliated officer named Tejavarmarāja in 710 CE. In the first set of plates, Bhogaśakti donates eight villages to the

¹⁸⁸ R.N. Mehta & A.M. Thakkar, "M.S. University copper plates of the time of Toramana," (Vadodara: M.S. University Archaeology Series 14, 1978); K.V. Ramesh, "Three Early Charters from Sanjeli in Gujarat," *EI* 40, pp. 175-186.

¹⁸⁹ Ramesh & Thakkar ed. Lines 3-4, p 14.

¹⁹⁰ These people are mentioned in Lines 3-5, which specify provisions to be made for their care and special meals. *Ibid*, p. 15

¹⁹¹ Anjaneri Plates (First Set) of Bhogaśakti K.S. 461 (709/10 or 710/11 CE), *CII* III no. 31.

temple of Nārāyaṇa called Bhogeśvara.¹⁹² The naming of the deity after the local ruler is presumably meant to memorialize him and his pious donation. The care of the enshrined deity, temple, and its property is then entrusted to the collective body of the town's merchants.¹⁹³ The inscription also mentions that the interest acquired from the rental of temple-owned lands was to be used by the same collective to supply incense for the temple rituals.¹⁹⁴ A contemporaneous inscription from nearby Thane in the North Konkan evinces comparable modes of corporate patronage. The Mānor Plates dated (SS 671/749-50 CE), record the donation of a village to the Śiva temples of Bādeśvara by a collective of local brahmins.¹⁹⁵ While the donors acknowledge the sovereignty of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa ruler Dantidurga, the king was not directly involved in the endowment.

III. Śaiva Spaces in the North Konkan

The idea that the North Konkan caves were the result of multiple and complex consortiums of donors and patrons is evident also in the structure and execution of the three cave complexes mentioned earlier—Jogeśvarī, Maṇḍapeśvar and Elephanta. The articulation of these spaces could be evidence of the different social purposes they served and the communities to which they catered. Despite significant differences, however, there are striking and unmistakable continuities in their artistic

¹⁹² Line 30.

¹⁹³ Third Plate, first side; Lines 42ff; Mirashi p. 151.

¹⁹⁴ In the second set of plates from approximately the same time, Bhogaśakti granted additional privileges to the merchant communities in villages under his jurisdiction (CII IV no. 32 Plate XXVI). These inscriptions are not dated, but based on the repeated mention of Tejavarmarāja from the first Anjeneri inscription, Mirashi concludes that these two sets of plates were composed around the same time. Mirashi, p 156.

¹⁹⁵ Similarly, a village collective (*mahājana*) of Brahmins (Traividyas), though not explicitly a merchant group also donated a temple in 749/50 CE. The donation was of a village (Tambasāhika) to the temple of Bādeśvara. V.V. Mirashi "Mānor Plates of Rāṣṭrakūṭa Dantidurga: Śaka Year 671." *IHQ* 1959 35: 183-188. Found buried in Mānor in the Thana District along with Mangalarasa Plates (Śaka 613/AD 691) see *EI* vol XXVIII 17-22.

features and style. This aesthetic resonance could implicate a common atelier of artists active in the region for a series of generations. The following pages attempt to thematize these shared features while also considering these monuments as individual monuments. Previous studies of the caves¹⁹⁶ share a similar chronological frame for the Konkan caves, positing Jogesvarī as the oldest, followed by Mandapeśvar and Elephanta. This schema may be accurate, yet the similarities in iconographic themes and idiom provide a strong case to see these monuments as broadly contemporaneous, and presumably active at the same time.

III.I Tracing A Pāśupata Presence: Jogesvarī

In addition to being the earliest of the three North Konkan sites, the cave complex at Jogesvarī is also the largest and, in many respects, the most complex of the three sites. And, perhaps of greatest significance for this study, is the fact that Jogesvarī is the only one of the three cave temples that preserves compelling evidence for a Pāśupata affiliation.

The caves are oriented along an east-west axis, with the primary access point being the east descent [Figure 23]. That the east was intended to be the main entrance is clearly articulated by the structure of the monument and the iconographic program, which usher the devotee through a series of entryways framed by important iconic scenes. This extended descent into the center of the cave structure culminates with the encounter of the central *liṅga* shrine. The first doorway is framed by a Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti panel, now largely destroyed [Figure 24]. The visitor then enters a long hall with subsidiary shrines on each side framed by a series of pillars. On the left, there are faint traces of a *mātrka* panel, which can be inferred by the series of areolae and the remaining female head with a

¹⁹⁶ Rajan (1981); EITA (1988), Spink (1983; 1978), Collins (1988)

child's head on the proper lower left side. Opposite the *mātrkāś*, on the other side of the hall, are three panels of which only the Gaṇeśa in the central niche can be clearly identified. The image is under active worship [Figure 25]. Images of Durgā and Skanda may have occupied the spaces to the left and right, respectively, of Gaṇeśa, but these are too damaged to identify clearly.¹⁹⁷ The inclusion of these deities within a space so clearly framed as Śaiva serves to integrate them, and presumably their worship, within the monument as a whole. The next doorway is framed by a dancing Śiva, with two kneeling figures visible in the foreground [Figure 26]. On either side an extended scene was carved, but only three stout *gaṇas* on the left remain. Passing through the final entryway the devotee again encounters images of important mythological scenes: the depiction of the wedding of Śiva and Parvatī, and the couple playing dice [Figures 27 & 28]. Since much of the iconography is damaged, it is difficult to reconstruct how visitors would have experienced this place. Yet, a few things may still be inferred. The long descent accentuates the experience of entering a cave and the multiple entryways with their carved architraves encourage the visitor to pause and linger at these junctures. The carved panels in the pillared hall similarly encourage the visitor to stop, and they contribute to the slow and graduated flow of the monument as a whole. The inclusion of these smaller shrines in a separate space, preceding the main *linga* shrine, could also be read as a spatial articulation of a divine hierarchy. These deities are included within the cave's pantheon, but the central shrine is reserved for Śiva. We might assume that the deities depicted in these large panels would have been subjects of distinct worship and ritual practices, much as the Gaṇeśa image still is today.

¹⁹⁷ The sculptures in the panels to the left and right of the Gaṇeśa are heavily damaged. The far left may have contained an image of Durgā, as Collins suggests. An image of Yogeśvara is a second possibility—there are remains of what looks like a human torso seated on a kind of pedestal. The right contained a standing male figure with three smaller figures positioned in front. One of these smaller figures has a goat's head, perhaps Naigameṣa. An image of Skanda with attendants could have occupied this panel. See Collins, Figure 85.

Finally the visitor enters the main sanctum and it is here that the Pāśupata affiliation is clearly expressed. The *liṅga* shrine is framed by two images of Lakulīśa [Figures 29 & 30]. One appears in the doorframe to the main entrance. The other is carved on the backside of the *liṅga* shrine. In the image that frames the shrine [Figure 30], the teacher is shown surrounded by four figures who may have been intended to represent his four students. While I earlier suggested that the textual icon of the four students in the SP_s gestures to a kind of totality or visual plenum, I think we can see a comparable idea articulated visually in this icon. The inclusion of the four surrounding figures creates a totality or a 'set.' Yet, the fact that these accompanying figures are not depicted in exactly the same way also indicates a certain diversity with this set. I would suggest that these figures were intended to represent not only Lakulīśa's students, but different registers of the Pāśupata community as well. The figures in the upper left and right corner appear aged and their beards and matted hair suggest asceticism. By contrast, the figures in the foreground appear youthful and they do not bear ascetic marks. Perhaps these two represent a younger generation of initiates or even laypeople. The image of Lakulīśa here is also unique. He projects a powerful physical presence and, notably, he does not appear to be ithyphallic. Thus he is absent one of Lakulīśa's key iconographic features that is a significant marker of the Śaiva ascetic. The image is a synoptic icon, a visualization of the community that gestures to a totality while also acknowledging the internal diversity of the community. The Lakulīśa on the back of the shrine is shown alone and framed by a floriated arc. It is also worth noting that this icon is not ithyphallic.

III.II Maṇḍapeśvar and Elephanta

While the Jogeśvarī temple is gradually revealed as the visitor is slowly ushered through the cave, the temples of Maṇḍapeśvar and Elephanta are articulated in a very different manner. Rather than the sense of entering a cave and a feeling of interiority, these spaces are far more open and accessible.

Maṇḍapeśvar is a relatively simple excavation framed by a pillared hall [Figures 31 & 32]. The main cave at Elephanta is far more grand and imposing a monument, but similarly opened and accessible.

In their iconography, the three North Konkan sites depict many of the same key mythological tableaux. For example, the icon of the dancing Śiva, which appeared above the second doorframe at Jogeśvarī also appears, and is rendered in remarkably similar fashion, at Maṇḍapeśvar and Elephanta [Figures 33 & 34]. The *mātr̥s* are incorporated prominently within the program at Elephanta as well [Figure 35]. Charles Collins has explored the overall iconographic programs and stylistic resonance between these sites in great detail.¹⁹⁸ Yet, for all their shared artistic features, neither Elephanta nor Maṇḍapeśvar present compelling evidence of a Pāśupata presence. I do not agree with Collins' identification of the Yogeśvara icon, located in the west wing of the main cave at Elephanta, as Lakuliśa since there is no clear indication that the figure held a club.¹⁹⁹ Maṇḍapeśvar, however, does include a Lakuliśa [Figure 36] (this icon is also faintly visible in Figure 33, upper right, on the framing wall), but the position and presentation of the image suggest that it was not a significant component in the overall program at the site. For one, the 'cut-in' technique used to carve this sculpture is different than the relief style of carving in the other panels. This difference in execution could indicate that the image was carved at a different time; that is, it was not conceived as part of the program. And rather than occupying a place of prominence over the *liṅga* shrine, as we saw in the case of Jogeśvarī, at Maṇḍapeśvar Lakuliśa appears as a kind of iconographic afterthought, nearly hidden on an interior wall adjacent the dancing Śiva panel. Locating a Pāśupata presence in the North Konkan clearly requires further consideration. It is evident that both Maṇḍapeśvar and Elephanta were important

¹⁹⁸ Collins (1988).

¹⁹⁹ Collins, Figure 18

places for the early medieval *māheśvara* community, along with other locales in the vicinity like Parel, where monumental images of Śiva were recovered [Figures 37 & 38]. Yet, despite the popularity of Śaivism in the early medieval North Konkan, only Jogeśvarī presents us with compelling evidence for a Pāśupata affiliation.

IV. Alternative Cartographies: Śaiva Centers in the Deccan

A single theory is not sufficient to explain the geographic distribution of both the North Konkan and the Deccan sites. Unlike the North Konkan caves, the Deccan Śaiva centers do not align as easily with the major caravan routes—the clusters of rock-cut caves in the hinterlands were dispersed much more widely, often at a considerable distance from one another and from the major trade routes. The pages that follow offer only a preliminary analysis. The material is too copious and the geographic range too expansive to permit a detailed treatment at this stage. The discussion following serves only to present the Deccan sites as an illuminating set of comparanda that, I hope, may support my hypothesis about the North Konkan by showing how the growth of Śaivism was shaped by regionally specific conditions.

The connection between Buddhist centers and trade is also less apparent in the Deccan than in the North Konkan, and efforts to argue such linkages display a certain degree of circularity: since the Buddhist caves of the Deccan are assumed to have developed along trade routes, the presence of a Buddhist cave site is thus taken to indicate the presence of a trade route.²⁰⁰ The major Buddhist sites are not always positioned along the most direct or geographically accessible routes between the market towns and settlements, but since Buddhist sites are taken as “fixed points” on the route, they

²⁰⁰ Chakrabarti, *Deccan Routes*, 65.

must be accommodated within the itinerary.²⁰¹ As Kathleen Morrison has noted, remains of Buddhist centers are conspicuously absent from the Sātavāhana political centers of the Deccan, like Paithan.²⁰² Yet, the difficulty in locating religious centers (both Buddhist and Brahmanical) conveniently along the major routes does not mean that these places were isolated from economic networks. Local and regional routes would have provided alternative channels. Evidence from archeological excavations at Deccan sites like Kaundinyapur, Shisupalgar, and Nevasa also highlights the vitality of localized patterns of mobility. Analysis of the material evidence shows that while these hinterland areas were not cosmopolitan centers for the exchange of exotic or 'prestige goods,' short-distance trade flourished.²⁰³ In terms of how they are embedded within the physical terrain, however, the Deccan sites were, like their North Konkan counterparts, placed in elevated areas and nearby water sources. And like the coastal caves, systems of water collection and storage suggest the important practical function of these sanctified spaces, particularly in the dry season.

²⁰¹ Chakrabarti, *Deccan Routes*, 65.

²⁰² Kathleen Morrison "Trade, Urbanism, and Agricultural Expansion: Buddhist Monastic Institutions and the State in the Early Historic Western Deccan," *World Archaeology* vol 27 (2): 1995 pp. 203-221, 216. P.K. Reddy also challenges the idea that Buddhist sites were located consistently along trade routes and similarly calls for consideration of other factors influencing the development of the Buddhist landscape in Andhra. Reddy, "God, Trade, and Worship: A Glimpse into the Religion of Early Āndhradeśa," *East and West* 48 no. 3/4 (1998) pp 291-311.

²⁰³ For example, Monica Smith's analysis of ceramics from Kaundinyapur shows that the region developed its own traditions of pottery making. Summarizing the results of her excavation, Smith concludes, "it is not surprising that pottery and other durable goods were made of local materials rather than transported hundreds of kilometers from the coasts. The trade networks of central India were constructed primarily to meet the local demands with regional materials, and did not depend on coastal peoples for any but the most exotic of goods (such as shell for bangles)." This evidence suggests that regional networks of exchange contributed a significant amount of the daily use and household goods excavated at the site. Monica Smith, "Systematic Surface Survey at the Early Historic Site of Kaundinyapur, India", *Man and Environment* 25(1): 75-87; *The Archeology of an Early Historic Town in Central India*, (Oxford: BAR International Series 1002, 2001). The results of these surveys relating specifically to trade are summarized in Smith "Role of Local Trade Networks in the Indian Subcontinent" *Man and Environment* 27(1): 2002.

IV.I Śaiva Caves? Questions of Community and Identity

The Deccan sites have garnered far less scholarly attention than the Konkan caves. This is, in part, because they are less well preserved, but also because their artistic features make an easy classification impossible. The most important recent study of the region is Pia Brancaccio's work on the Aurangabad caves, which provides an illuminating study of Buddhist religious life at the site. In her discussion of patronage in the Deccan, Brancaccio opts in favor of the Kalacuri hypothesis and concludes, based upon stylistic connections between Konkan monuments and those of Aurangabad, that the "early Kalacuri dynasty may have functioned as a bridge between these regions not only for the diffusion of a new visual idiom but also for the dissemination of the Śaiva ideology it expressed."²⁰⁴ While stylistic analysis may indeed point to connections between the Aurangabad and North Konkan caves, inferring the movement of artisans and ateliers provides a more likely explanation. Rajan's positing of stylistic connections between the Deccan sites and those further south is an indication that this region was something of an artistic crossroads, preserving traces of multiple influences and inspirations.²⁰⁵

Since we lack documented evidence for patronage at any of these sites, and the Kalacuris have been discussed at length above, in this final section I focus on what the organization of these spaces and the variety of religious imagery preserved might reveal about Śaivism in the early medieval Deccan, looking specifically at evidence from the caves at Aurangabad, Bhokardhan, and Takli-Dhokeśvar. When compared with the iconography of the North Konkan caves, those of the Deccan show a greater degree of diversity and eclecticism. In the North Konkan sites, the high level of skill

²⁰⁴ Pia Brancaccio, *The Buddhist Caves at Aurangabad*, Leiden: Brill (2010), 205. For an overview of similar patterns in scholarship on Ellora's patronage see Lisa N. Owen, *Carving Devotion in the Jain Caves at Ellora*, Leiden: Brill, 2012. 160-163.

²⁰⁵ In Rajan's catalogue, these sites are connected with the patronage and influence of the Cālukyas—albeit somewhat tentatively qualified as 'Provincial,' a designation that distinguishes them from the royal centers like Ellora or Bādāmi. pp. 160-167.

displayed in the carving and the relatively univocal presentation of the iconographic program, in which key scenes from Śaiva mythology were repeated across the three sites, suggests that this region was developing a Śaiva religious community as distinct from among the larger religious milieu. In contrast, the Deccan caves reflect a more multivocal religious identity in which quotidian concerns for protection, fertility, and prosperity are foregrounded. The absence of Lakuliśa images at these sites also suggests that these places were not integrated within a Pāśupata network.

IV.II The Brahmanical Cave at Aurangabad

The so-called ‘Brahmanical Cave’ in the series of cave temples on the outskirts of Aurangabad preserves important traces of a shared religious landscape. The Aurangabad cave complex was part of the extensive network of such Buddhist sites in the Deccan, such as the well-known caves at Ajanta and Ellora. The series of nine completed caves occupy the western and eastern faces of the hills and were excavated between the late 4th and early 7th centuries CE.²⁰⁶ Only one of these caves in the eastern group contains iconographic evidence of Brahmanical and, more specifically, Śaiva-related religious activity [Figures 39 & 40]. The front-facing wall contains a large image of Gaṇeśa and an image of Durgā *Siṃhavāhinī* on the proper left side of Gaṇeśa. The left interior wall contains a large panel depicting the *mātr̥s* flanked by Śiva as Vīrabhadra. Perhaps due to a lack of space, the image of Cāmuṇḍā is carved on the adjacent wall to the right side of Gaṇeśa [Figure 41]. This simple cave shows evidence of a series of additions over time; for example, in the different carving styles used to create the two Buddha images seated in *padmāsana* in the right interior wall: one placed upon a projected platform and the other, adjacent image, now severely damaged, is a set-in carving [Figure 42].

²⁰⁶ I have followed the chronology and dating of the caves proposed by Brancaccio.

In his analysis of the iconographic program, Rajan interprets the inclusion of the *Saptamātrkā* panel as evidence of the superseding of Buddhism by the Brahmanical tradition. He comments, “The importance of the cave would perhaps lie in the fact that it presents a striking evidence of a supplanting by Brahmanical art of the Buddhist in the same cave, thus marking the twilight hours of Buddhist activity at Aurangabad and around Ellora [...]”²⁰⁷ Rajan’s assessment that Buddhist activity was in a state of decline in the Western Deccan by the end of the 7th century may be accurate, but the language of ‘supplanting’ is perhaps too strong in this case as the presence of Śaiva-related deities in a single cave of a much larger Buddhist complex does not seem sufficient evidence to infer a general dominance of the Brahmanical pantheon over the Buddhist.²⁰⁸ The placement of the Gaṇeśa image in the center of the front panel is suggestive of a hierarchy, as the devotees’ eyes would fall first upon this deity. But the images of the Buddha on the right side remained undisturbed, a suggestion that the engagement with the Goddesses, their accompanying members of the Śaiva pantheon, and the Buddha did not present an incongruity to the visitors who used the space.²⁰⁹ Brancaccio similarly characterizes the relationship between the Śaiva and the Buddhist communities as essentially agonistic and she interprets the prominence of the Buddhist deity Vajrapāṇi within the sculptures of the eastern caves as evidence of a Buddhist iconographic retaliation (via the militant deity) to a growing Śaiva presence.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Rajan, 157.

²⁰⁸ In her study, Brancaccio also comments on this anomalous cave and the challenges posed by its iconographic program, as well as its place within the larger chronology of the Aurangabad caves. (p 202.)

²⁰⁹ At the time of Rajan’s work both of the Buddha images in the cave were intact and largely undamaged. This has changed since, at the time of my visit in 2013, one of the images had been badly damaged.

²¹⁰ pp 171: “The growing popularity of Vajrapāṇi in the caves of the western Deccan during the sixth century may be directly linked to the growing challenges that Buddhism faced in the area from the Śaiva tradition, strongly supported by the Kalacuris and the feudal elite at the time. In order to survive, Buddhism had to come to grips with the other religious traditions and use all weapons available, including Vajrapāṇi’s *vajra* to protect the dharma and those that opposed it. “

Yet, the fact that Vajrapāṇi's iconography incorporates characteristic Śaiva elements (snake armlet; *āyudhapuruṣa*—see below) would suggest a dialogue rather than a confrontation. Alternatively, we could interpret the iconographic program in this cave as important evidence of a shared and even competitive ritual space rather than an overtly hierarchical expression of Brahmanism over Buddhism.

In her work on the site, Brancaccio has also emphasized the strong presence of a diverse Buddhist lay-community, traces of which she observes in the incorporation of images of Lajjā Gaurī, in the repetition of votive panels, and in the artistic depiction of lay devotees, many of them women²¹¹ [Figures 43, 44 & 45]. In a similar vein, the inclusion of the Śaiva *mātrkāś* is not anomalous if we also consider the iconography of the surrounding caves on the eastern slope and the prevalence of female deities in them. In Cave 7, for example, a sculpture of Avalokiteśvara is depicted with six accompanying goddesses with lotuses and an image of the Buddha in the gesture of granting boons (*varadamudrā*) [Figure 46]. Brancaccio identifies these females as the six *vidyārājñīs*, goddesses associated with the power of mantras and magic.²¹² As she also notes, the goddesses of Cave 7 appear “to have been created after the blueprint of the Śaiva *mātrkāś*.”²¹³ This resonance between the Śaiva imagery and the panel of Cave 7 could also indicate a shared set of values (i.e. fertility, protection, etc.) connected to these female figures and reinforced by the images of Avalokiteśvara, the protective deity *par excellence*, and the wish-granting Buddha.

²¹¹ Brancaccio, 127

²¹² Brancaccio, 175-7; citing Macdonald (1962) and Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa in which the goddesses are named as Pāṇḍaravāsīnī, Tārā, Bhṛkuṭī, Prajñāpāramitā, Locanā, Uṣṇīṣarājā.

²¹³ Brancaccio, 174

The groups of *mātrkas* or ‘mother goddesses’ are a feature shared by many, though not all, of the Śaiva caves of the North Konkan and Deccan. Guided by Katherine Harper’s work, Laughlin interprets the presence of the *mātrkās* as a sign of royal patronage and their presence is one of his criteria for classifying a site as a ‘royal’ religious center as opposed to a popular center.²¹⁴ But the martial potential inherent in the *mātrkā* figures, a potential which would have made them attractive to rulers or those seeking power, is, as I have argued in a previous study, an echo of their ambivalent or ambiguous character.²¹⁵ Thus, while the mothers would have been compelling figures for those aspiring to power, we must also acknowledge that these highly charged female figures would have resonated with a much wider audience. As figures intimately connected with the fears and anxieties surrounding fertility, childbirth, and the health and well-being of children, the larger community would have also had been invested in the propitiation of these powerful, but deeply ambivalent females.²¹⁶

IV.III The Bhokardan Caves

Approximately 75 km northeast from Aurangabad another cave complex was excavated at Bhokardan that dates to the mid-seventh century. The main series of caves were excavated in a low-lying area on the left bank of the Kelnā River, [Figures 47 & 48].²¹⁷ Additional caves in varying states of excavation line the rock facing the river. The main excavation consists of a series of seven small shrines, roughly

²¹⁴ Laughlin (pp 84-109). Brancaccio also draws a connection to the presence of the *mātrkās* and religious sites associated with the Kalacuris and early Cālukyas, implying that the ubiquity of the mothers’ images at these places could be evidence linking the rulers to the sites (p. 202). However, the popularity of the *mātr̥s* at early medieval temples was common throughout northwest India, not only at places associated with these ruling families.

²¹⁵ E. Cecil, “Childless Mothers and Rejected Wives: A New Perspective on the Mātr̥s, Paper presented at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the AOS

²¹⁷ Based upon the excavation reports, the ancient settlement, represented by a series of mounds that spanned both the right and left banks of the Kelnā, where the modern town of Bhokardan is situated, and also the left side. The village of Alapur now sits atop the left bank mounds. Jamkhedkar, 6.

equal in size approached through an entryway of two rows of six unadorned pillars. The walls on both sides the entry courtyard are filled with a variety of images carved in relief, some of which can still be identified [Figures 49-52]. No images remain within the seven shrines. The images in the caves represent a variety of Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, and Goddess-centered themes and it may be that the seven shrines housed a variety of such deities as well. Rajan suggests they may have contained an image of Viṣṇu in the center and images of Sūrya, Durgā, Kārttikeya, Gaṇeśa, Śiva, and Brahmā in the surrounding shrines.²¹⁸ In Rajan's assessment, the affiliation of the caves would have been predominately Vaiṣṇava.²¹⁹ But this does not take into account the three relief carvings depicting *līṅga* veneration, which Rajan does not mention in his report [Figures 53 & 54]. One of these scenes appears clearly in a frieze in the entryway wall. The other two appear in a panel on the opposite wall. They are badly damaged only one can still be seen in a photograph [Figure 55].

IV.IV The Takli-Dhokeśvar Śaiva Caves

In comparison to the caves at Bhokardan and Aurangabad, the excavation at Takli-Dhokeśvara²²⁰ can be properly classified as 'Śaiva' since religious life at the site was oriented around the *līṅga* shrine that occupies the center of the cave [Figures 56 & 57]. This site is interesting because we can still observe traces of the various religious concerns and values articulated within this 'Śaiva' space.

The cave opens to the east, the exterior entryway framed by sculptures of the river Goddesses Gaṅgā and Yamunā, and consists of a single *līṅga* shrine that is still in active use. In the interior

²¹⁸ Rajan, 164.

²¹⁹ Rajan, 163.

²²⁰ These caves are set up in the hills overlooking the Kalu river and reservoir a few kilometers north-east of the village of Takli, off of the Poona highway in the Ahmednagar District.

entryway (*mahāmaṇḍapa*), the north and south walls preserve important sculpted panels. On the south side a large panel depicting the *mātr̥s*—Brāhmī, Maheśvarī, Kaumarī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Aindrī, and Cāmuṇḍa, identifiable by the associative images carved beneath them—flanked by Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeśa [Figure 58]. The lush foliage and fruiting mango trees carved above them and the children in their arms convey clearly their associations with fertility and prosperity. Their place of prominence in the *mahāmaṇḍapa* suggests the important role these goddesses played in the religious life of this site. The inclusion of the *mātr̥s*, could suggest royal patronage as some scholars have argued, but in my judgment it is more likely that these powerful goddesses symbolize widespread concerns for fertility, prosperity, and protection that were not restricted to a particular class or social group. On the east-facing wall just adjacent the panel a skeletal figure is shown, perhaps Bhṛṅgiriṭi. Opposite the *mātr̥ka* panel, the north wall of the entrance shows an eight-armed image of Tāṇḍava Śiva [Figure 59].

The images to either side of the door guardians are not immediately recognizable. On the proper right, the stout seated figure, flanked by *mālādharas*, is carved over a niche containing four smaller figures [Figure 60]. The images are highly abraded and, as such, there are few visual clues with which we can reconstruct their identities. The position of the seated figure with the right hand raised in what could have been a gesture of teaching, while the presence of the four smaller figures below—their smaller stature and subordinate position are a cue that they could be devotees or attendants of the larger seated figure—could express the charismatic and venerable persona of a guru. At the same time, the active postures of the attendant figures, which appear to be carrying things, do not resemble the meditative or devotional poses typically assumed by students in such tableaux depicting teacher

and students.²²¹ I think it is most likely that this figure was intended as a *nidhi*, a figural embodiment of prosperity, richness, and the fecundity of the natural world.²²² The stoutness of the figure and his seated posture does bear some resonance to images of Kubera, although the coin-purse and other defining attributes of this deity are missing. As a more generalized representation of some of the same ideals that Kubera represented, the decision to depict this *nidhi* figure in such close proximity to the *linga* shrine seems a clear indication of the importance placed upon values of prosperity and fertility and a desire to articulate a clear association of these values with Śiva.²²³

The image on the right side of the shrine is also not easy to identify [Figure 61]. Commenting on the heavy bags the figure is carrying over the left shoulder, Rajan tentatively suggests that this figure could represent Kubera. If so, this would be an anomalous representation of this deity, whose mongoose moneybag is typically much smaller and held in one hand. In addition, the thin body of this figure does not connote wealth and prosperity, as does Kubera's large belly. As an alternative interpretation, I suggest this figure represents what is called today a Bhiṣṭī, a professional water carrier, who traditionally transported water in large goat-skin bags. Often, two of these bags were strung together and carried over the shoulder in exactly the fashion shown in this sculpture.²²⁴ Moreover, the

²²¹ Compare the depictions of Lakulīśa with the four students surveyed in Chapter 6. See also Tamara Sears, 'In the Gaze of the Guru: Shikshadana Scenes at Khajuraho,' in *Art, Icon, and Architecture in South Asia essays in honor of Dr. Devangana Desai*. (Delhi: Aryan Book International, 2015) pp. 151-168.

²²² For a discussion of the *nidhi* vis-à-vis comparable figures like *yakṣas* in a Buddhist context see Claudin Bautze-Pincron, 'Nidhis and other Images of Richness and Fertility in Ajaṇṭā,' *East and West* vol 52 (2002): pp 225-284.

²²³ It could be argued that a similar resonance is observed in the famous Mansar Śiva (Bakker, 1997 pp 149-151), which has been compared (even identified) as a *nidhi* and as a representation of Kubera. See Tarakov, 1969; Schastok, 1981.

²²⁴ The Takli water-bearer could be comparable to similar figures, called simply 'carriers' by Bakker, found carved at multiple places on Kalinjar hill. I think the Kalinjar images may also gesture to the *kavad* ritual. Bakker, *The World*, pp. 205-209.

image of this water bearer also gestures to the ritual of *kavad* in which water is carried from sacred rivers, often at a long distance, and used to bathe the *linga*.²²⁵ The placement of the water-carrier within the iconographic program at Takli would have been fitting considering the importance of the site as a major water collection facility. At short distance from the cave, channels were cut in the rock face to direct water that flows down from the hilltops in the rainy season into vast caverns where it is collected and stored beneath the excavated site [Figures 62 & 63].²²⁶ The presence of small, simply excavated caves to the south of the *linga* shrine accessed via carved footholds in the rock face could have been residential, a development that was perhaps also connected to the presence of water [Figures 64 & 65].

V. Conclusions

Analysis of the siting of Śaiva religious centers in the North Konkan supports my inferring the existence of strong ties between religious institutions and the dynamics of regional economy and ruling powers, which I postulate to be evidence that, as with the Buddhist communities that preceded them, the growth of the Śaiva centers was conditioned by this cosmopolitan port polity. While the lack of epigraphic data from the North Konkan and the Deccan sites poses a significant challenge for scholars, this absence provides certain opportunities as well—it serves to redirect the scholarly gaze and to encourage us to consider these places not as the product of a particular dynasty, but as part of a much larger and diverse social landscape. When we consider the North Konkan sites within the larger region, it is not surprising that the monumental cave temples of Elephanta, Maṇḍapeśvar, and

²²⁵ On these rituals in Maharashtra see Feldhaus (1995).

²²⁶ During my visit during the height of the dry season, the collection area was still quite full. The caretakers reported that this was consistently the case.

Jogeśvarī developed in such a commercially active and cosmopolitan area. Much like the urban melting pot of Modern Mumbai, this region attracted people from across the subcontinent and beyond, provided religious specialists with ample opportunities for patronage, while furnishing highly skilled artisans to call these monumental centers into material form. And it was at these sites—where religious competition was the most intense and in which the religious landscape was most dense—that a Śaiva presence was articulated most distinctly in the iconographic program. And, in the case of Jogeśvarī, it is where we see the strongest evidence for a Pāśupata presence through the strategic placement of Lakuliśa images.

The patterns that characterize the North Konkan, however, do not emerge as strongly in the Deccan sites. The more modest Deccan caves serve as an illuminating contrast and illustrate the ways in which differences in regional geography, settlement patterns, economy, and politics conditioned the development of the religious landscape. The hinterland sites represent the polysemy of religious identity and accommodated a variety of religious concerns. Unfortunately, my study does not do justice to these places, and it ignores others located further south and east. Yet, however incomplete my treatment, I think I have contributed to the discussion by showing that the Śaiva communities of the northwest Deccan may have developed in relative independence from the Konkan sites and in conversation with the regions further south.

The distinction that has emerged between the Konkan and Deccan sites also serves to delineate the borders of the Pāśupata landscape and the trajectory of the Pāśupata movement with a greater clarity. I interpret the presence of Lakuliśa images at Jogeśvarī as an indication of Pāśupata activity at the site. We might assume some Pāśupata presence at Maṇḍapeśvar based upon the single

Lakulīśa image, but here the traces become much more faint. The western Deccan sites I surveyed preserve no material traces of Pāśupata activity. Clearly the worship of Śiva around the Sahya Mountain took multiple forms and accommodated a wide range of religious values and concerns. Evidence of a specifically Pāśupata presence, however, indicates that the development of that particular religious network was oriented in the vicinity of the cosmopolitan economic centers.

CHAPTER III

AT THE CROSSROADS

ŚAIVA NETWORKS AND THE RELIGIOUS GEOGRAPHY OF UPARAMĀLA

Summary

This chapter represents a crossroads. It marks the midway point of this study, as well as of the northwest expansion of the Pāśupata movement as charted in the SPs. I have hypothesized that the major trajectories of travel and exchange served also as conduits for the dissemination of Śaiva ideologies and so the area of central India traditionally called Upamāla (or Northern Mālava) would have been of particular importance. Incorporating areas of what is today northern Madhya Pradesh and southeast Rajasthan, Upamāla was a borderland or transit zone in the heart of central India where many of the sub-continental trade routes converged creating an atmosphere of social diversity and dynamism, not to mention political competition. Upamāla was also home to the storied city of Ujjayinī, medieval Mālava's preeminent socio-political center and one of the locales the Pāśupata tradition claimed as its own. As the *Skandapurāṇa*'s authors report, it was in the cremation ground at Ujjayinī that Lakuliśa commenced with the dissemination of his Pāśupata doctrine, beginning with the initiation of his first pupil, Kauśika.

Perhaps because Upamāla was a meeting place for so many different people and communities, the sources from this region record a polyphony of voices. But such a chorus can easily become a cacophony. In this chapter, I work to situate these voices in their particular geographic

contexts to determine what significant patterns emerge and, after that, consider what light these patterns may shed on the ways in which early Śaiva communities were constituted. I begin in the center; that is, around the political capitals of Daśapura, the regional center from the 5th to the early 7th century, and the imposing hilltop fortress of Chittorgarh, which was the political center from approximately the mid-7th century onwards. The second half of the chapter focuses on the important religious centers northeast of Daśapura—i.e. Kansuāñ, Jhālrapāṭan, and Indragarh. Although these places were situated on the periphery of Upamāla in rather remote hilly areas, my research shows that they were still integrated within the socio-cultural networks of the 6th–8th centuries. Considering evidence from both center and periphery highlights the different social uses of Śaiva religiosity. In the political centers the invocation of Śiva provided a shared idiom for rulers and other elites, whose inscriptions adapt Śaiva theology to expressions of military victory and social ascendancy. In the peripheral locales, removed from the royal cult centers, inscriptions and material evidence evince broad-based popular support for Śaiva institutions and Pāśupata religious specialists from pious individuals, local collectives, and merchant guilds. Here Śiva was not primarily the God of military might; rather, acts of pious giving were motivated by a desire for protection, salvation, and the alleviation of human suffering.

I. A Region On-the-Move

The previous chapter on the North Konkan worked to show how the interactions of economic, political, and religious networks at a micro-regional level produced distinctive religious landscapes in circumscribed geographic areas and around particular features of the physical terrain. This approach is not so easily adapted to the study of Upamāla [Figure 66]. A wide expanse of relatively flat plain, the physical terrain of Upamāla was quite different from that of the North Konkan, which was a self-contained geography with clearly marked topographic boundaries. In contrast, the borders of Upamāla are far more porous. It was here that the major trajectories of human movement across the subcontinent (and beyond) converged and this history as a crossroads, as I will show, made governing the region a desirable, albeit challenging, prospect for rulers and other elites seeking to control the cross-regional flows of commerce and culture.²²⁷ As the *madhya deśa* (the 'land in the middle') that people were constantly moving to and through, the topography of the region was also shaped in significant ways by migrations of merchant and artisan communities. In short, this was a region on-the-move.

Mālava also figures as a kind of crossroads in accounts of the Pāśupata movement's origins. Both the SP₃ authors and Kauṇḍinya identify Ujjayani as the place to which the Lord walked after assuming a human form. They also identify Ujjayani's (in)famous cremation ground as the site of his first teachings. In addition to a destination for religious adepts, Ujjayani also served as commercial hub

²²⁷ The regional capital of Ujjayani, for example, was connected to prominent locales in the northwest. P.H.L. Eggermont, 'The Murundas and the Ancient Trade-Route from Taxila to Ujjayani,' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 9 (1966): 257-296; A. Fourcher, *La Vieille Route de l'Inde de Bactres à Taxila* 2 vols. (Mémoires de la Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan 2). Paris: Les Éditions d'art et d'histoire, 1942-7.

that was linked to the port of Broach and with the major conduits leading north and south into the Deccan.²²⁸ Regarding Ujjayanī, the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*²²⁹ reports:

There is in this region towards the east a city called Ozéné (Ujjayinī), the former seat of the royal court, from which everything that contributes to the region's prosperity, including what contributes to trade with us, is brought down to Barygaza (Bharukaccha).

In his archeological reconstruction of the Deccan routes, Dilip Chakrabarti similarly stresses the importance of Ujjayanī as a nodal point where routes coming from the north and east converged before making their way south, across the Vindhya Mountains and the Narmada River, to the Deccan.²³⁰ One of the few places where the Narmada could be crossed was located directly south of the city at Mahiṣmatī (Maheśvar).²³¹ Traveling north from Ujjayanī, travelers would have passed through Mandasor (ancient Daśapura) and, continuing on, reached Mathurā.²³² Not surprisingly, Daśapura's strategic position in the Indian heartland and along the major north India itineraries of trade and travel made this a contested political space, much like Eran, Vidiśa, and other locales in greater Mālava.²³³ Since the significant, albeit meager, historical evidence supporting the identification of Ujjayanī as an important early Śaiva center has been well documented in previous studies,²³⁴ my

²²⁸ Dilip K. Chakrabarti, R. Tewari, & R.N. Singh, "From the Ganga Plain to the Eastern and Western Deccan: A Field Study of the Ancient Routes" *South Asian Studies*, 19 no. 1 (2003) pp. 57-71.

²²⁹ Lionel Casson, *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 81

²³⁰ Chakrabarti, 'Ancient Routes', p. 65.

²³¹ See Chapter 2.

²³² Moti Chandra, *Trade and Trade Routes in Ancient India*, (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1977), 23-24.

²³³ On the complex political geographies and their implications in these places see Casile (2009; 2014), Shaw (2007), Bakker (1997; 2006).

²³⁴ Bakker (2014), Bisschop (2006).

research focuses on the northern area of Malāva. This region is particularly rich in epigraphic and material sources for the study of Śaivism, which have not yet received sufficient scholarly attention.

While the preceding paragraph plots a rather direct path, it worth bearing in mind that the archeological reconstruction of ancient routes is a highly speculative undertaking. And even when a major conduit is approximated, this does not mean that travelers followed a single path. The idea of a ‘route’ does not suggest a single road so much as a general corridor that would have been supplemented by additional ‘capillary networks’ that carried people and ideas to and through Uparamāla, as elsewhere.²³⁵ In his mapping of Buddhist networks, Jason Neelis has emphasized that routes of travel in ancient India were not as restricted as one might imagine. As he explains, ‘rather than adhering to a regular pattern of diffusion from one monastic center to another on major routes where sufficient economic surpluses were available, the transmission of Buddhism across pre-modern Asia was largely due to travelers who took shortcuts in a decentralized network of capillary byways’.²³⁶ It is plausible that the expansion of Śaivism and the Pāśupata movement also relied on such byways.

Assuming the existence of comparable networks of byways that connected peripheral sites where material and epigraphic traces of Pāśupata practices and communities remain, allows us to see these locales as various *termini* connecting the cosmopolitan political centers like Daśapura and Chittorgarh to locales beyond [Figure 67]. In this way, the different sites surveyed in the following pages emerge not as random dots on a map; rather, they are traces of the complex networks (social,

²³⁵ I have borrowed the term ‘capillary networks’ from Jason Neelis, who uses the term in charting the expansion of Buddhism J. Neelis, ‘Overland Shortcuts for the Transmission of Buddhism,’ in *Highways, Byways, and Road Systems in the Pre-modern World* 1st ed. S.E. Alcock, J. Bodel, and R.J.A. Talbert eds. Wiley-Blackwell (2012), pp. 12-32; p. 16.

²³⁶ Neelis, p. 16.

political, and economic) that choreographed the religious landscape. By using categories like ‘cosmopolitan center’ and ‘periphery’, what I envision is a socio-urban continuum, rather than a rigid relational distinction. Centers were not static since political formations evolved and were routinely reconfigured. Similarly, peripheral areas were actively integrated within the center through the expansion of settlement areas, increased agricultural production, and the growth of land-holding temple complexes. I think tracing these networks spatially and temporally is of critical importance because it prompts us to extend our gaze beyond a single ‘site’—and the all-too familiar approach of considering particular places, and different bodies of evidence, in temporal and geographic isolation—to an intercontextualized geography of places.

I.I Conceiving of a Region

In the preceding pages I have presented Uparamāla as a crossroads and a transit zone, while also referring to it as a region, a term that suggests, perhaps paradoxically, a kind of socio-political cohesion. My sense of region here is not based primarily on the uniformity of geographic terrain. In this case, the ‘region’ emerges from tracing the intersections and connections between the various social networks active in the area as reconstructed by inscriptions and material evidence. As a regional designation, ‘Uparamāla’ may now span contemporary state borders,²³⁷ but historical sources from as early as the 5th century suggest interregional political connections and economic ties. The diffusion of an artistic idiom similarly implies the movement of artisans and the dissemination of knowledges and practices.

²³⁷ More specifically, parts of the Mandasor and Neemuch Districts of Madhya Pradesh and the Chittorgarh, Jhalawar, and Kota Districts of Rajasthan.

Of these networks, the political are the easiest to access since rulers and other elites often modified the landscape in highly visible and enduring ways. As I will discuss in detail in the pages following, evidence of political ties and activities from the late 5th century on are clustered most densely around Daśapura, and then around Chittorgarh from the 7th century onwards. In addition to the political, we can observe echoes of other cultural flows involving the movement of families and collectives. Epigraphic references to merchants, guilds, and artisans with ties to Daśapura and the surrounding area suggest that this was an attractive, even prestigious, area to settle.²³⁸ Perhaps the most famous example of the cultural magnetism of Daśapura is the late 5th century inscription recording the construction and repair of a Sun temple by a silk-weaver's guild whose members had migrated from Lāṭa in southern Gujarat.²³⁹ The fact that this migrant group chose to build a temple to commemorate their move and mark their presence in a new locale is a significant early example of what becomes a larger regional pattern.²⁴⁰ This monument was a material statement of a collective identity designed to commemorate their claim to a new place. And, while it is not stated explicitly, the

²³⁸ B.D. Chattopadhyaya's important study of economic development in early medieval Rajasthan has similarly highlighted the importance of southwest Rajasthan, including Upamāla, for early medieval centers of exchange. This pattern and concentration of economic activity in southwest Rajasthan can be seen clearly in his map on p. 101 of *The Making of Early Medieval India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

²³⁹ Sircar, *Select Inscriptions* vol 1 (1965) pp. 299-307; J.F. Fleet *CII III* (1888) 'Mandasor Stone Inscription of Kumaragupta and Bandhuvarman: The Malava Years 493 & 529,' (1888) pp. 79-88; The inscription records repairs completed in 473/4 CE to a temple originally built 437/8 CE.

²⁴⁰ For example, the 6th century copper plates from Sañjeli in southern Gujarat, mention a consortium of traders and artisans who joined local merchants to establish taxes on certain goods (e.g. molasses, salt, cotton, and grain) to fund ritual practices at a local Viṣṇu temple. R.N. Mehta & A.M. Thakkar, 'M.S. University copper plates of the time of Toramana,' (M.S. Vadodara: University Archaeology Series 14, 1978); K.V. Ramesh, 'Three Early Charters from Sañjeli in Gujarat,' *EI* 40 pp. 175-186. Lines 3-4 p 14. (See also Chapters 1 & 2). Similar patterns are recorded in inscriptions from Rajasthan. The mid-7th century Samoli inscription of Jetanka records that merchants (*mahājanas*) established a temple (*devakula*) of Aranyavasini after moving away from Vāṭanagara (Vasantgarh) to set up a mine. Also comparable is the contemporaneous inscription from Dabok, near Udaipur detailing donations to a religious institution in a market town (*haṭṭa*). *EI* 20 pp. 122-125; 197-99. These examples evince the close connections between merchant communities, market towns, and the temples around which social and economic life were oriented

temple may have also functioned as an institution for the investment and redistribution of guild wealth. In addition to praising the pious act of the guild and their success in their new home the poet devotes many verses to praising the beauty of the city itself, its landscaped environs, multistoried homes, and exceptional residents.²⁴¹ Notably, the inscription also attests to a degree of social mobility that members of this guild enjoyed in Daśapura—they were not (or, perhaps, were no longer) socially restricted by their hereditary occupation. Some continued in the family business of weaving, while other cultivated other skills.²⁴²

Stylistic similarities and evidence of a regional idiom in the art of Upamāla similarly suggest a degree of regional cohesion. The accompanying map approximates the spatial distribution and the regional chronology of Upamāla's early monuments [Figure 67].²⁴³ Politically and aesthetically the

²⁴¹ Verses 5-14 praise the city's architecture, environs, and its residents. Although this is certainly an idealized and poetic vision, it seems reasonable to assume that Mandasor was a large and well-developed urban area.

*prāsādamālābhir alaṁkṛtāni dharāṁ vidāryyaiva samutthitāni /
vimānamālāsadrśāni yatra grhāṇi pūrṇendukarāmalāni //12// (Upajāti)
yad bhāty abhiramyasarid[d]vayena capalormmiṇā samupagūḍhaṁ
rahasi kucaśālīnībhyāṁ prītiratibhyāṁ smarāṅgam iva //13// (Ārya)
satyakṣamādamaśamavrataśaucadhairyyasvāddhyāyavṛttavinayasthitibudhyupetaiḥ/
vidyātaponidhibhir asmayitaiś ca viprair yad bhrājate grahagaṇaiḥ kham iva pradīptaiḥ //14// (Vasantatilakā)*

Here, cleaving asunder the earth, there rise up homes which are decorated with successions of stories; which are like rows of aerial chariots; and which are as pure as rays of the full moon. [12]

The (city) is beautiful being embraced by two charming rivers, with tremulous waves, as if it were the body of Smara (embraced) in secrecy by (his wives) Prīti and Rati, possessed of (heaving) breasts. [13]

Like the sky with the brilliant multitude of planets, it shines with Brahmins endowed with truth, patience, self-control, tranquility, religious vows, purity, fortitude, private study, good conduct, refinement, and steadfastness (and) abounding in learning and penances, and free from the excitement of surprise. [14] (Fleet)

²⁴² Verses 15-19: Some of the guild members continue in the silk-weaving tradition (inferred by the reference to their own work (*svakarmaṇi*) in Verse 17. Others become skilled in archery (*dhanurvaidya*) or are knowers of various tales (*vicitrakathāvid-s*); some are knowledgeable in astrology (*jyotiṣa*), or occupied with the pursuit of true dharma (*samyagdharmmaprasaṅgaparāyaṇa*) and still others are brave in battle (*samarapragalbha*).

²⁴³ My chronology draws on studies by Williams (1981; 1982; 2004), Meister 1981; 1991; 1998), and Viennot (1973; 1976).

Daśapura area was linked with other regional religious centers to the north. Not only are these sites roughly contemporaneous, but certain similarities in architectural features and iconography could also indicate that networks of artisans, or an atelier, facilitated the spread of conventions and practices between Daśapura and areas of northeast Upamāla. These dispersions suggest different directions of cultural movement and perhaps also point to capillary corridors traversed by artisan groups. The map approximates these flows: we can observe one corridor moving northwest across the plains, skirting the low mountains, to Chittorgarh. The other, along a more difficult path, heads north toward Mathurā through the mountains.

Joanna Williams has pointed to some indications of these regional artistic patterns.²⁴⁴ In addition to the sculptures from Daśapura discussed in Williams's work, like the Sūrya and mātṛkā images [Figures 68 & 69], there are others that further expand the geographic sphere of connections she has noted and suggest shared idioms with the peripheral areas of Upamāla. The facial features and rendering of the hair in these images and other 5th-early 6th century sculptures of Śiva, and an unfinished *nāga* [Figures 70 & 71], also at the Mandasor museum, are very similar to those observed in the *candraśālā* musician from the 5th century Mukundara Śiva temple [Figure 72].²⁴⁵ The floriated pattern on the *torāṇa* [Figures 73 & 74] and that framing the musician are similarly rendered at the early 7th century temples at Makanganj, a short distance northeast of Nagarī. [Figure 75] A similar circular motif adorns the pillars at both sites [Figures 76; cf Figure 73]. We might also compare the

²⁴⁴ J. Williams (1981; 1982; 2004). She refers to possible ties between Daśapura, Chittorgarh, and the Kota region of Rajasthan. See Williams, *Art of Gupta India: Empire and Province* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982) p. 137.

²⁴⁵ These ties are also observed by C. Atherton who also connects the Mukundara temple with architectural embellishments at Chittorgarh. C. Atherton, *The Sculpture of early Medieval Rajasthan*, (Leiden: Brill, 1997) p. 91.

facial features of the Daśapura Śiva in [Figure 70] with a remarkable early 7th century sculpture of Ardhanārīśvara found near Jhālrapāṭan. [Figures 77 & 78] This well-preserved image has the same wide face, heavy lower lip, and incised pupils that are rendered in the similarly soft and naturalistic manner in the Daśapura sculpture. The Lakulīśa image found near Indragarh [Figure 79] c. 7th century, exhibits very similar features and echoes the naturalistic details in physicality that Williams observed in the figural sculpture from Mandasor which, she argues, distinguishes this later work from more ‘generalized’ bodies in earlier Gupta art.²⁴⁶ While the face of the *candraśālā* image of Lakulīśa (c. 7th–8th century) [Figures 80 & 81] is nearly destroyed, the row of small face-framing curls and patterns of hairstyle and ornamentation are not unlike those from the Ardhanārīśvara image.²⁴⁷

It may be difficult to gauge how revelatory these kinds of stylistic similarities may be since the recognition of such features in art can appear subjective. With that said, I think drawing attention to these shared artistic idioms points to a degree of regional connectivity that is simply not to be recovered from our usual epigraphic sources. While Daśapura and Chittorgarh were ostensibly the regional capitals, the material evidence suggests that even in the 6th and 7th centuries, these locales were part of a significantly larger region with strong ties to a northward-leading corridor via Jhālrapāṭan.

²⁴⁶ Joanna Williams “On the Edge of What? Reconsidering the Place of Mandasor in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries” in *The Vākāṭaka Heritage: Indian Culture at the Crossroads*, ed. Hans T. Bakker, (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2004) pp. 133-141.

²⁴⁷ Compare also the similarly rendered hair and incised pupils in the images of the eight-faced liṅga from Daśapura (pre-restoration) published in Williams, Plates 10.2 & 10.3.

II. Shifting Centers: from Daśapura & Madhyamikā-Nagarī to Chittorgarh

Having sketched the regional boundaries, the pages that follow look specifically at the development of the political and the religious landscape. I focus on the individuals and communities who invested in the early Śaiva community by drawing from epigraphic sources and material remains. This story begins in the metropolitan areas of Daśapura and Chittorgarh and concludes in Indragarh, to the north.

From the late 5th-6th century three allied kinship groups, calling themselves Aulikaras, Mānavāyanis, and Naigamas, respectively, controlled the Daśapura area. The Aulikaras were the most powerful of these three clans and their capital was presumably in Daśapura itself. The Naigamas occupied positions of power in Daśapura and near the fortress of Chittorgarh. Mānavāyani inscriptions were found in Mandasor, in Chhotī Sādrī, and in Nagarī. While it is most likely that the Aulikara clan(s) first came to power as allies of the Imperial Guptas, they seem to have asserted their independence by the early 6th century under Prakāśadharman, a stance further augmented by his successor Yaśodharman.²⁴⁸ The Aulikaras enhanced their prestige under Yaśodharman, whose victory over Toramāṇa's successor, the Hūṇa Mihirakula, was memorialized with a pair of monumental inscribed pillars erected at Soṇḍni, 4 km south of Daśapura.²⁴⁹ These pillars, and the contemporaneous sculptural remains from Soṇḍni, are the most significant material traces of Aulikara power and

²⁴⁸ Presumably, they were allied in the 5th century, but the fact that the Aulikaras use the Mālava rather than the Gupta era to date their records could suggest a degree of independence. Under Yaśodharman the case for independent status is clearer since the Aulikara records make no explicit reference to the Guptas. The debates on this Gupta-Aulikara relationship are summarized in Richard Salomon, "New Inscriptional Evidence for the History of the Aulikaras of Mandasor" *Indo-Iranian Journal* 32 (1989): 1-36. pp 25-27. More recently, Hans Bakker has made further strides in untangling these relationships. See Bakker, *The World*, p 34.; 'Theatre of Broken Dreams: Vidiśā in the Days of Gupta Hegemony,' in *Interrogating History, Essays for Herman Kulke* eds. Brandtner, Martin & Panda (New Delhi: Chapter 9, 2006), pp. 165-187.

²⁴⁹ Mandasor Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman, Fleet (1888), 142-8; Sircar (1965), 418-20; Mandasor Duplicate Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman, Fleet (1888), 149-50; Mandasor Stone Inscription of Yaśodharman (Mālava 589 = 532 CE) Fleet (1888) 150-158; Sircar (1965), 424-6.

patronage [Figures 82-85]. Despite their impressive military feats, the period of Aulikara power was relatively short-lived. The circumstances contributing to the decline of this lineage are not known, but they may have succumbed to pressure from competing clans like the Maukharis and Vardhanas.²⁵⁰ By the late 7th century, the locus of political power had shifted from the plains of Daśapura to the northwest and the hilltop fortress of Chittorgarh.

The fort's strategic location along the western boundary of Mālava made it a strategic and centralized stronghold for rulers seeking to control areas further west and south.²⁵¹ Also, rulers may have sought to capitalize on the growth of market towns and commercial centers in southwest Rajasthan during this time. The early political history of Chittorgarh is difficult to reconstruct since the current location of the early inscriptions allegedly found at the site is unknown and no estampages of these reported inscriptions were made. The fragmentary 6th century Naigama records found in the fort were mentioned above and suggest it was politically linked to Daśapura. A family calling themselves Mauryas may have followed the Naigamas. An inscription reported by James Tod and dated VS 770/713 CE referred to one Māna, whom Tod understood to be Māna of the Maurya lineage, who according to the rich bardic tradition of Rajasthan was the founder of the fort.²⁵² A ruler by the name of Dhavala of the Mauryas is also referenced in the early 8th century Kansuāñ inscription (see below) and may have

²⁵⁰ See Bakker, *The World*, 'Maukharis', pp. 41 ff; 'Reshuffle of Power in Madhyadeśa,' pp 77ff.

²⁵¹ K.C. Jain, *Malwa Through the Ages: from the Earliest Times to 1305 A.D.* (Delhi, 1972) pp. 323-325.

²⁵² James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 1830, vol 1 pp 703. The inscription was reported on a column near the Suraj kund. Bhandarkar's list calls it the 'Mānasarovara Column Inscription' and reports that it gave the lineage: Māheśvara—Bhīma—Bhoja—Māna. The other inscription referring to one Mānabhaṅga (perhaps the same Māna Maurya of Tod's record) was reported by N.P. Chakravati near the Śaṅkar ghat. NP Chakravati, Report on Epigraphy: ASI Annual Report, 1934-35, 56-57. The Śaṅkar ghat inscription reportedly mentioned the building of structures within the fort, but the portion of the inscription recording the date was damaged and VS 7[??] was all that could be read, indicating it dated to a period between 644-743 CE.

been the same individual called Dhavalapadeva in an inscription found northeast of Chittorgarh at Dhoḍ (GE 407/726 CE).²⁵³ The Mauryas may have continued to control the area into the 8th century, but they likely did so in active competition with Gurjara-Pratihāra rulers like Nāgabhaṭa I and his successor Vatsarāja. To add a further layer to this contested history, the Guhila clan has been linked to Chittorgarh as early as the 8th century, although this connection is likely anachronistic.²⁵⁴ Competition continued in the 9th century when the Gurjara-Pratihāras faced considerable pressure from the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. In his early 9th century Nesarika grant (VS 727/805 CE), Rāṣṭrakūṭa Govinda II claims to have overtaken Mālava and to have subjugated the region's rulers, the Gurjaras included.²⁵⁵ The struggle between the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and Gurjara-Pratihāras for control of the fort continued in the 9th century.

II.I What a Tangled Web: Political Networks in Daśapura

The early historiography has tended to cast Aulikara Yaśodharman as a pivotal figure in the post-Gupta political world, to the exclusion of the broader political networks in which he was enmeshed and which presumably supported his rise to power.²⁵⁶ Yaśodharman's inscriptions may suggest a universal

²⁵³ *EI* 20 pp. 122-125; 197-99

²⁵⁴ According to later bardic sources compiled by Tod, it was Bappa Rāval of the Guhila clan who claimed control of the fortress from 'Mān-mori' (Maurya?) before 753 CE. Sircar, however, in his work on the early history of the Guhila clan has shown the connection of Bappa Rāval to Chittor is claimed for the first time in the *Rājaprasastimahākāvya*, a text of the 17th century (1675 CE). Bappa's earliest mention comes in the Ekliṅgī Inscription (971 CE), which locates his rule in Medapāṭa in the Nagda/Ahar area near Udaipur. However, the Guhilas do come to control Chittor in the 13th century. Claiming Bappa Rāval conquered the fort as early as the 8th century likely reflects an effort to further legitimate their claim to the site. This is also reflected in the *Ekliṅgī Māhātmya*. See also Ulrike Teuscher, "Changing Ekliṅgī" *Studies in Indian History*, 21 no.1 (2005) pp. 1-16.

²⁵⁵ D.C Sircar, *The Guhilas of Kīṣkindhā* (Calcutta, 1965), p. 35.

²⁵⁶ Richard Salomon, "New Inscriptional Evidence for the History of the Aulikaras of Mandasor" *Indo-Iranian Journal* 32 (1989) pp. 1-36. Salomon challenges the established narrative reflected in the repeatedly quoted statement by R.C. Majumdar that Yaśodharman 'rose and fell like a meteor.'

sovereign, but these self-aggrandizing or hyperbolic claims are better interpreted as rhetorical flourishes of the *praśasti* genre, rather than indications of an historical reality. Richard Salomon's study and translation of the Risthal Inscription of Yaśodharman's predecessor, Prakāśadharman, made significant strides in contextualizing the place of the Aulikaras in the region's politics by showing that the Aulikara dynastic title was shared by as many as four familial sub-groups.²⁵⁷ Normalizing Yaśodharman—that is, seeing him as integrated within a larger 'corporate' network of power—is also helpful in understanding the practices of pious giving recorded in the region's inscriptions, in which, as shown below, the Aulikara's allies emerge as important donors. While the royal genealogies have been mined extensively, the significance of the donative details of the records, in terms of what they tell us about the politics of pious giving and the role of the Aulikaras and the other elites of Daśapura in the development of a Śaiva religious landscape, have yet to be discussed.

In addition to the Aulikaras, two other clans—i.e. the Mānavāyanis and the Naigamas—played a particularly vital role in regional religious life.²⁵⁸ Perhaps the most important evidence showing the imbrication of regional economic and political networks in the area concerns the Naigamas,²⁵⁹ a merchant family that occupied a hereditary position as ministers to the Aulikara rulers

²⁵⁷ The connections between these clans, and possible overlapping of their dates, is difficult to determine although Salomon notes that it is unlikely that they followed each other in neat succession. Rule over this region was likely shared by a number of these kings at one time. Salomon, pp. 11-12; Bakker, Figure 3, p. 33.

²⁵⁸ 'Mandasor Inscription of Yaśodharman', Verse 6. Ref to those kings who bear the *aulikara* mark (*lañchana*), presumably the emblem or banner of the family. Fleet proposes the 'hot-rayed sun' or the 'cool-rayed' moon. Exact meaning is unclear. See Fleet (1888) 151 n. 4; Sircar (1965) 413, n. 3.

²⁵⁹ Salomon takes Naigama as a family or lineage name, although he acknowledges that *naigama* can designate a merchant. The word is derived from *nigama*, a term used to denote a market center occupying a somewhat intermediary position between a village and a developed township.' B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994) p. 134; A. Ghosh, *The City in Early Historical India* (Simla, 1973) pp. 38; 46-7.

in Daśapura and exerted some political power in the Chittorgarh-Nagari area as well.²⁶⁰ In the so-called ‘Mandasor Inscription of Yaśodharman,’ Verses 10 & 11 offer praise of Śaṣṭhidatta, of the ‘pure’ Naigama lineage.²⁶¹

The servant of the kings who founded the family of that lord [i.e. Yaśodharman] was Śaṣṭhidatta, the fame of whose religious merit was known far and wide through the protection of (their) feet; who by his resoluteness conquered the six enemies (of religion) (and) who was indeed very excellent [10]

As the torrent, flowing high and low of the Gaṅgā (spreads abroad) from Himavat, (and) the extensive mass of the waters of Revā from the moon, (so) from him, whose dignity was manifested, there spreads a pure race of Naigamas, most worthy to be sought in fellowship [11] (Fleet).

Given that the poet offers no further geographic data or more specific family name, I suggest we understand this designation as both a clan name and an occupational title. It could be that the *nigama* (market town) this group hailed from was the well-established commercial center of Daśapura itself. Other members of this Naigama group figure in two early 6th century fragmentary inscriptions from Chittorgarh that record donations by one Viṣṇudatta and his son.²⁶² Viṣṇudatta is described as *vaṇijām śreṣṭho* (best of merchants)²⁶³ and Viṣṇudatta’s son is named as *rājasthānīya* of Daśapura and

²⁶⁰ Bhagavaddoṣa of the Naigama line served as the *rājasthānīya* under Prakāśadharman, his brother, Abhayadatta under Prakāśadharman or Yaśodharman, and Abhayadatta’s son, Dharmadoṣa, under Yaśodharman. See Salomon’s ‘Genealogical Chart 2,’ pg. 16. It is perhaps significant to note that administrators with names ending in *-datta* also appear in a set of 5th century copper-plate inscriptions found at Darmodarpur in Bangladesh, which record land transactions under three Gupta rulers in the area. See Bakker 2014.

²⁶¹ ‘Mandasor Stone Inscription of Yaśodharman alias Viṣṇuvardhana,’ Fleet (1888) *CII III* no. 35; Sircar (1965) no. 53

*taśya prabhor vvaṁśakṛtām nṛpāṇām pādāśrayād viśrutapūṇyakīrttiḥ /
bhṛtyaḥ svanaibhṛtyajitāriṣatka āsīd vasīyān kila śaṣṭhidattaḥ // 10 // (Indravajrā)
himavata iva gāṅgas tuṅganamraḥ pravāhaḥ śaśabhṛta iva revāvārirāśiḥ prathīyān /
param abhigamanīyaḥ śuddhimān anvavāyo yat uditagarimṇas tāyate naigamānām // 11 // (Mālinī)*

²⁶² “Fragmentary Inscriptions from Chittorgarh,” D.C Sircar & G.S. Gai, *EI* 34, pp. 53-57. Inscriptions are dated paleographically by their resemblance to the script of Yaśodharman’s inscription of 532 CE.

²⁶³ Sircar & Gai, A side, Line 3

Madhyamā (Madhyamikā-Nagarī).²⁶⁴ An alliance with a newly independent and successful group of political elites like the Aulikaras would certainly have elevated the social status of the Naigama family. The Aulikaras, too, would have benefitted from their ties to this prominent local merchant group, who may have helped them to control the surplus from trade and commerce in the area.

The relationship among the Aulikaras, Naigamas, and a third group, the Mānavāyani, is more opaque. Sircar thinks that perhaps member of this family, calling themselves descendants of 'Manu', were 'new' *ksatriyas*, who claimed descent from the mythic progenitor Manu to legitimize their claim to an elevated social status. One particular ruler from this clan, Gauri, is mentioned in a donative record from Chhotī Sādrī, and another from Mandasor in which he appears to be allied with the Aulikara rulers.²⁶⁵ Perhaps we can assume the upwardly mobile Mānavāyani sought to increase their own prestige through an Aulikara alliance. Of course, there could have been an atmosphere of political competition as well since this warrior lineage was making donations, and therefore making a claim to land and resources, in the vicinity of the Aulikara-controlled Daśapura.

III. Inscribing Śaivism: A Metropolitan Scenario

The religious landscape of the greater Daśapura area in the early 5th – 6th century was extremely diverse: inscriptions commemorated temples to Viṣṇu, pious donations to Buddhist monastic

²⁶⁴ Sircar & Gai, B side, Line 3

²⁶⁵ This alliance is assumed on the possibility, still arguable, that the Ādityavardhana mentioned in this grant is an epithet for Gauri. Given the prevalence for names ending in *-vardhana* amongst the Aulikaras, it could be evidence of some alliance or association. If, on the other hand, Ādityavardhana is a separate individual, then we could be dealing with two separate lineage groups. See Salmon, p 21; Sircar, p 130

communities and temples to enshrine the bellicose mother goddesses.²⁶⁶ We can, however, see Śaivism gaining in prominence among the rulers and elites of the 6th century. Invocations of Śiva and Śaiva theology become part of a political idiom employed in Aulikara inscriptions and in those of the Naigamas and Mānavāyanis. Since inscriptions recording ritual acts of giving to religious institutions provide the primary sources for understanding the embeddedness of social relations, this section looks specifically at the epigraphic corpus to better understand the patterns that shaped pious giving and the motivations that inspired particular donors. My discussion of the donative inscriptions in this section aims to show how this Śaiva idiom served as an authorizing discourse that was used to elevate particular rulers, clans, and social practices. And, more specifically, what role Śaivism played in these identity politics.

III.I Divisions of Donative Labor

To commemorate his victory over the Hūṇas, Prakāśadharman's Risthal Inscription (515 CE)²⁶⁷ records the offering of certain commodities and spoils of war taken from Toramāṇa as ritual gifts.²⁶⁸ He also

²⁶⁶ For instance, the dedication of a Viṣṇu temple in (404/5 CE): H.P. Shastri, "Mandasor Inscription of the time of Naravarman; Malava Year 461," *EI* XII (1913-14): 315-321; a reservoir for Buddhist monks (417/418 CE): S.N. Chakravarti, "Bihar Kotra Inscription of Naravarman's Time; Malava Year 474" *EI* XXVI (1941-2): 130-2; a shrine for fierce mātṛs and Viṣṇu temple 423/4 CE: Gangdhar Inscription, Fleet, 72-78; a Buddhist stūpa (467/8 CE): M.B. Garde, "Mandasor Inscription of Malava Samvat 524," *EI* XXVII (1947): 12-15; D.C. Sircar, *EI* XXX. 120-132.

²⁶⁷ The edition and translation referred to here are from Salomon's edition, "New Inscriptional Evidence for the History of the Aulikaras of Mandasor" *Indo-Iranian Journal* 32 (1989) pp. 1-36. In this article he proposes new readings and interpretations of previous editions by K.V. Ramesh and S.P. Tewari (1983) and V.V. Mirashi (1984).

²⁶⁸ *ā toramāṇanṛpater nṛpamauliratnājyotsnāpratānaśabalīkṛtapādapīṭhāt/
hūṇādhipasya bhuvī yena gataḥ pratiṣṭhām nīto yudhā vitathatām adhirājaśabdaḥ //16//
saṃgrāmamūrdhani vipāṭhanipātītānām tasyaiva yena madavārimucām gajānām/
āy(ām)idantaghaṭītāni taponidhi(bh)y(o) bhadraśanāni rucimanti niveditāni //17//
tasyaiva c(ā)havamukhe tarasā jitasya yenāvarodhanavarapramadāḥ pramathya/
lokaprakāśabhujaṅg[r]amacihnaheṭor viśrāṇitā bhagavate vṛṣabhadhvajāya //18//*

commissioned a tank for the sake of augmenting the religious merit of his grandfather, Vibhīṣaṇavardhana.²⁶⁹ Following these donations, Verse 20 mentions a temple (*sadman*) constructed in honor of Śiva initiated by Prakāśadharman.²⁷⁰ In Verse 22 a temple of Śiva is mentioned again, here called the Prakāśeśvara temple (*prakāśeśvarasadman*).²⁷¹ While the ritual gifts were varied, this specific donation of a temple dedicated to Śiva figures as the donative act with the most symbolic density, since it materializes a matrix of socio-political relationships.

And he also built this temple, which resembles the slopes of the snowy mountains (the Himālayas), of Sthāṇu (Śiva), the source of creation of the entire three worlds, whose dark throat shines with the mingling of the rays poured forth by the crescent moon that has slipped down (from his head) in the violence of his dance [20]

When five hundred years, to which is added seventy years plus two more, had passed [i.e. in the year 572], in the summer when Puṣpakuṭu (Kāma) was blooming within the

He falsified in battle the Hūṇa overlord's title of 'Emperor,' which (had) become established on the earth up to (the time of) Toramāṇa, whose footstool was colored by the rays of light from the jewels in the crowns of kings. [16]

He presented to holy ascetics beautiful (ivory) seats made from the long tusks of the rutting elephants of that same (Toramāṇa), which he brought down with his arrows at the forefront of the battle. [17] And he carried off and dedicated to Lord Vṛṣabhadhvaja (Śiva) the fairest ladies of the harem of the same (Toramāṇa) whom he had defeated easily in the thick of battle, as a token of the power of his arms which illuminate the world. [18] (Salomon)

²⁶⁹ *rājñe pitāmahavibhīṣaṇavarddhanāya ślāghyānu bhāvagurupūṇyaphalaṃ nivedya / vistāri bindusarasah pratibimbabhūtam etad vibhīṣaṇasaras samakhāni tena //19//*

He (had) constructed this broad Vibhīṣaṇa lake, which is a mirror-image of the Bindu Lake, dedicating to his grandfather, King Vibhīṣaṇavardhana, its great meritorious fruit of excellent dignity [19] (Salomon)

As Salomon notes, the comparison here is to the Himalayan Lake Bindusaras near Gangotri cf. Dey 1971.

²⁷⁰ *etac ca nṛttarabhasaskhalitendulekhāvāntānsuvicchuritamecakakaṇṭhabhāsaḥ / sthāṇos samagrabhuvanattrayasṛṣṭihetoḥ prāleyaśailataṭa(ka)lpam akāri sadma //20//*
sadvyabdasaptatisamāsamudāyavatsu pūrṇṇeṣu pañcasu śateṣu vivatsarāṇām / grīṣmerkkatāpamṛditapramadāsanāthadhārāgrhodaravijrmbhitapūṣpaketau //21//
lakṣma bhāratavarṣasya nideśāt tasya bhūkṣitaḥ / akārayad daśapure prakāśeśvarasadma yaḥ //22//

²⁷¹ This verse does not explicitly identify the temple as a Śaiva dedication, but I think the inference is justified considering the common practice of naming a *līṅga* in honor of a particular individuals. Moreover, it seems quite likely that the reference in Verse 27 to a temple of Śiva (*śūlinas sadma*) refers to the same shrine as in Verses 20 & 22 since it is not preceded by any reference to a second temple.

fountain rooms that were peopled by young women who were overcome by the heat of the sun [21]

He (Bhagavaddoṣa) had constructed in Daśapura the Prakāśeśvara Temple, the symbol of Bhāratavarṣa (India), at the command of that King (Prakāśadharman) [22] (Salomon)

Although the connection between the shrine introduced in Verse 20 and that of Verse 22 is not entirely explicit, I think they refer to one and the same monument. Verse 21 marking the date also marks the beginning of a new section of the inscription in which, I think, certain donative acts promised or intended by Prakāśadharman, are actually carried out by Bhavagaddoṣa. As with the temple, it appears that the excavation of the Vibhīṣana Lake intended to honor the memory of Prakāśadharman's grandfather, was actually undertaken by Bhagavaddoṣa as recorded in Verses 26 & 27²⁷² Bhagavaddoṣa made a series of other pious donations, apparently of his own volition: a *mandir* for Brahman, residences to shelter devotees and ascetics who practiced Sāṃkhya and Yoga,²⁷³ as well as gardens, monasteries, wells, and halls along with shrines for other unnamed deities along and other pious gifts (*deyadharma-s*).²⁷⁴

²⁷² *tenaiva nṛpates tasya pūrvvajāmātyasūnūnā/
rājasthānīya bhagavaddoṣeṇādoṣasaṅginā //26//
etaḥ jalaṇidhihrepī viśālam khānitaṁ saraḥ/
idaṁ ca jaladollekhi śūlinas sadma kārītaṁ //27//*

²⁷³ *āśrayāya yatīnāṁ ca sāṅkhyayogābhīyog(in)ām/
vyadhata kṛṣṇāvasathaṁ bujjukāvasathaṁ ca yaḥ //24//*

Salomon translates 'shrine to Kṛṣṇa and Bujjuka as a refuge for ascetics who devoted themselves to (the practice of) Sāṅkhya and Yoga.' As a definition for *avasatha* Sircar's *Glossary* includes "*dharmasālā*" or a "college". As an alternative translation, I would suggest instead: 'and he established the learned institutions of Kṛṣṇa and Bujjuka to shelter students intent upon the (study of) Sāṅkhya and Yoga'. Rather than take Kṛṣṇa and Bujjuka as names of deities as Salomon does, perhaps they refer to the head teachers or administrators of the *avasatha-s*? See Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, s.v. *avasatha*,

*sabhākūpamaṭhārāmān sadmāni ca divaukasām/
yonyāṁś cānyāyavimukho deyadharmaṁ acikarat //25//*

²⁷⁴ In a recent article Peter Bisschop has also discussed these passages from the Rīsthal inscription. According to his interpretation, these donative acts articulate a hierarchical religious vision in which Śiva is presented as the

These donative details, while perhaps mundane, are significant because they evince the levels of social participation that accompanied the building of a temple or religious monument and highlight the multivalent character of the gift itself. Prakāśadharman's gifts of prestige items to honor ascetics, his ancestors, and his tutelary deity (i.e. Śiva) underpin the notion of an ideal and righteous sovereign. These donations might also signal a kind of redistribution of wealth if we assume the monuments were funded, in part, from the spoils of war. Bhagavaddoṣa's participation in these donative acts provides a means to present a meritorious and idealized version of himself and, by extension, the Naigama line; not as a ruler, but as a 'model citizen' by materializing his commitment to social welfare through charitable acts. Bhagavaddoṣa's construction of the *linga* shrine in the name of the king was also an act of memorialization that linked the minister, his overlord, and the deity in a highly visible and tangible way. This example makes clear the ways in which devotion to Śiva could be integrated within discourses of power and political hierarchy.

III.II Piety as Political Idiom & Aspirational Practice

Prakāśadharman's inscription incorporates Śaivism into the political sphere by opting to commemorate a significant military victory with a temple to the God. This connection between Śiva, power, and military victory is expressed even more forcefully in the pillar inscriptions of the Aulikara

foremost deity. In his view, this notion of hierarchy, or rather a re-ordered and distinctly Śaiva hierarchy, is central to the success of Śaivism in the medieval period. This Śaiva supremacy, he argues, is evident in the inscription by the fact that the Śiva temple, the "symbol of Bhāratavarṣa," is established in the name of the king. By contrast, the many other donative acts in the list are paid less attention. I agree with Bisschop's general point, but I would also argue that the social dimensions and implications of this inscription are of equal significance—particularly if we want to account for the popularity of Śaivism as a religious movement. Here Śaivism clearly functions as a political idiom, and the collaborative acts of piety converging around the Śaiva temple also serve to manifest publicly the relationships between the ruler and those who, like the merchant ministers, are close to him. Peter Bisschop, 'Śaivism in the Gupta-Vākāṭaka Age' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* Series 3, 20, 4 (2010): 477-488. pp. 481-482.

ruler Yaśodharman in the first half of the 6th century.²⁷⁵ These inscriptions begin with the praise and invocation of Śiva as Paśupati, the God to whom even the Hūṇa kings bowed down.²⁷⁶ It is clear from the language and imagery throughout the inscription that the God whom Yaśodharman invoked was one representing unassailable power and dominion.

May that flying banner of Śūlapāṇi (i.e. Śiva) destroy the forces of your enemy; the banner that bears the Bull, who is marked by the five fingers of the daughter of the mountain (i.e. Pārvatī), due to whose terrific bellowing the quarters vibrate and the demons are gripped with fear, and who cracks the rocks of the cliffs of Mount Sumeru by the pounding of his horns.²⁷⁷ (Bakker)

In the text's eulogy, Yaśodharman's power as sovereign is homologized to the majesty of his clan deity. These sentiments are communicated, arguably even more forcefully, in the material form of the massive lion-topped pillars upon which the inscriptions are engraved. These monuments must have been an intimidating symbol of the king's power and authority, particularly for those people for whom such massive free-standing monuments would have been a novelty. These proclamations seem to indicate his preference for Śaivism, yet the object of the inscriptions is the praise of Yaśodharman and his military prowess; these records offer little with which to reconstruct an image of religious life 'on the ground'. The presence of two large *dvārapālas* near his pillar inscriptions at Soṇḍni, could be traces

²⁷⁵ *CII III* (1888) No 33, Plate XXIB. The inscription recorded on this pillar is reproduced in duplicate on a second pillar about 20 yards away; *CII III* (1888) 35 Plate XXII.

²⁷⁶ See Bakker, *The World*, 38-39. Yaśodharman's Pillar Inscription refers to this ruler as the one to whom Mihirakula was bowed, having before only bowed to Śiva. This is perhaps a reference to the latter's Gwalior Stone Inscription, which refers to Mihirakula's own bowing in devotion to Paśupati. Fleet *CII III* (1888) 162, v 4; 143-5.

²⁷⁷ *vepante yasya bhīmastanitabhayasamudbhrāntadaityā digantāḥ
śṛṅghātaiḥ sumeror vighaṭitadr̥ṣadaḥ kandarā yaḥ karoti /
ukṣāṇaṃ taṃ dadhānaḥ kṣitidharatanayādatta(pañcāṅgulā)ṅkaṃ
drāghīṣṭaḥ śūlapāṇeḥ kṣapayatu bhavatāṃ śatrutejāṃsi ketuḥ //1// (Sragdharā)*

Translation of Bakker, *The World*, p 37

Fleet, "Mandasor Stone Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman," *CII III* no 33; pp. 142-148.

of a monumental temple, but the inscriptions themselves do not allude to any such construction.²⁷⁸

But the language of Śaivism was not exclusively or even primarily used to express the 'language of war.' It was also adapted and employed to suit other cultural registers. For a compelling example of this we can return to the Naigama family of Daśapura, whose 6th century inscription from Mandasor commemorates the excavation of a well by Dakṣa, the nephew of Bhavaddoṣa's successor, Abhayadatta. This record invokes a supremely powerful, but seemingly benevolent Lord, who is imagined smiling.²⁷⁹

Victorious is he (the god) Pinākin, the lord of the worlds, in whose songs, hummed with smiles, the splendor of (his) teeth, like the luster of lightening sparkling in the night, envelops and brings into full view all this universe [1]

May Śambhu, confer many auspicious gifts upon you, employed by whom in the rites of (effecting the) continuance and the destruction and the production of (all) things that exist, (the god) Svayambhū is obedient to (his) commands, for the sake of the maintenance of (all) the worlds; and by whom, leading (him) to dignity in the world, he has been brought to the condition of being the father (of the universe) [2]

May the serpent of the creator of existence accomplish the allayment of your distress, (that serpent) the multitude of whose foreheads, bowed down afar by the pressure of the heavy weight of the jewels in (their) hoods, obscures the radiance of the moon [on Śiva's head] (and) who binds securely on [Śiva's] head the chaplet of bones which is full of holes (for stringing them) [3] (Fleet)

²⁷⁸ A large *sahasra līṅga* is preserved under the banyan tree within the enclosure. It may have been the case that a temple was intended for the site, but construction was never completed?

²⁷⁹ *sa jayati jagatām patiḥ pinākī smitaravagīṣu yasya dantakāntiḥ /
dyutir iva taditām niśi sphuranti tirayati ca sphuṭayaty adas ca viśvaṁ //1// (Puṣpitāgra)
svayambhūr bhūtānām sthītilaya[samu]tpattividhiṣu prayukto yenājñāṁ vahati bhuvanānām vidhṛtaye/
pitṛtvaṁ cānīto jagati garimāṇaṁ gamayatā sa śambhur bhāyānsi pratidiśatu bhadraṇi bhava[tām] //2//
(Śikhariṇī)
phaṇamaṇigurubhār[ākk]r[ā]ntidūrāvanamraṇi sthagayati rucam indor mmaṇḍalam yasya mūrdhnām /
sa śirasi vinibadhnan randhṛṇīm asthimālām srjatu bhavasrjo vaḥ kleśabhaṅgaṁ bhujangaḥ //3// (Mālinī)*

On this inscription see also Bisschop, p. 481. He draws attention to the reinterpretation of the typical divine hierarchy. Here it is Śiva who is imagined as the supreme deity and Brahmā owes his position to him. Bisschop points out an even stronger articulation of this hierarchical inversion from the *Skandapurāṇa* in which Brahmā realizes he is, in fact, Śiva's son.

In this case, the Naigama donative record suggests a full-fledged theology that promises the potential for protection and the alleviation of pain through Śiva. The verse immediately following introduces their gift of a well (*udapāna*).²⁸⁰ This donation, it is explained later, was to honor Abhayadatta who had died prematurely. In the salutary praise offered in his memory, he is likened to a tree (*druma*) that afforded pleasant shade and yielded sweet and wholesome fruits.²⁸¹ It would be difficult to imagine a less threatening or more benevolent image. By beginning the inscription in this way, the donative act undertaken in Abhayadatta's memory is framed by the poetic theology of Śaiva devotion. The Naigamas' charitable gift is thereby imbued with a deeper resonance as an extension, or further manifestation, of the Lord's divine benevolence. The stone medium lends this message an added *gravitas*. Finally, we cannot lose sight of the larger connection: that the well and the literary praise in the inscription serve the same purpose—namely, to construct and communicate the Naigamas' identity as trustworthy merchants, generous patrons, and government servants. Ideals that were expressed succinctly in the description of the lineage progenitor Ṣaṣṭhidatta²⁸²

As I argued in the case of the Naigamas, I think the Mānavāyani employ Śaivism in a similarly aspirational manner. This lineage group also invokes Śiva, but somewhat indirectly.²⁸³ For example, in the late 5th century record (VS 547/491 CE) from Chhotī Sādri,²⁸⁴ Gauri of the Mānavāyani family

²⁸⁰ Verse 4; Verse 22.

²⁸¹ *sukhāśreyacchāyam pariṇatihitasvāduphaladam*, Verse 23.

²⁸² See above

²⁸³ B-side, Line 1. Record is fragmentary so it is uncertain what the donation is. Sircar and Gai suggest Śiva shrines based on the opening invocation of this deity. D.C Sircar and G.S. Gai, "Fragmentary Inscriptions from Chittorgarh" *EI* XXXIV, pp 53-57.

²⁸⁴ *EI* XXX, D.C. Sircar, "Two Inscriptions of Gauri" Chhoti Sadri Inscription VS 547/491 CE; Mandasor Fragmentary Inscription, pp 120-132. The inscription was found above a ventilator in the Bhramaramātā temple in Chhotī

praises Śiva as Ardhanarīśvara (the ‘Lord who is half female’) in which form he is fused with the powerful Devī, whose temple the inscription endows.²⁸⁵ In this case, the social status aspired to is that of the warrior, as is made clear in Verse 3 of the record. This lineage could be an early example of the later warrior clans who styled themselves *rājaputras* (i.e. Rajputs).²⁸⁶ The temple commissioned by Gauri, for the sake of gaining the grace of the goddess (*devyāḥ prasādārthhinā*)²⁸⁷ was likely built to enshrine the Mānavāyanis lineage deity (*kuladevī*).

Victorious is the Goddess who bears a sharp spear that tears asunder the demons (or the demon Mahiṣāsura); the luster emitted from whose jeweled crown makes a tremulous flow; whose rapidity is impetuous owing to her being seated on a chariot attached to a fierce lion; (and) whose anger is concentrated in her frowning glance. [1]

Victorious again is she who, out of devotedness (to the god) assumes half of the body of the moon-crested Hara (and) who, out of her kindness to the devotees, sustains the worlds just like a mother full of tenderness arising from her affection for her own children.[2]

After having bowed down to her, I am dealing, just a little, with the bright glory of the kings (the glory) that is made of a mass of good qualities; (the kings) who were born in the Mānavāyani family (and) made their race pure (by their deeds); who dedicated themselves permanently to the dignity of the Kṣātra status (and) were skilled in war [3] (Sircar)

Sādrī. I visited the site in March 2014, but the temple has been extensively renovated and I found no material evidence that dated to this early period.

²⁸⁵ *devījayaty asuradāraṇatīkṣṇaśūlā prodgīrṇṇaratnamakuṭāmśucalapravāhā /
 siṃhograyuktaratham āsthitacaṇḍavegā bhrūbhaṅgaḍṣṭiviniṣṭaroṣā //1//
 bhūyo’pi sā jayati yā śaśīsekharasya de[hā]rddham udvahati bhaktatayā harasya /
 yā bhaktavatsalatayā prabibhartti lokān mātēva [svā]kṛyasutapremṇavivṛddhasnehā** //2//
 tasyai praṇāmya prakaromy aham eva jasraṇ kīrttiṃ śubhāṇ guṇagaṇaughamayīn nṛpāṇām /
 ye mānavāyaṇikulodbhavavaṇśagaurāḥ kṣātre pāde satatadīkṣitayuddhaśauṇḍāḥ //3//
 (Vasantatilaka)*

*I have adopted Sircar’s emendations in reproducing the text above

²⁸⁶ But like the Naigamas, Gauri and the Mānavāyanis commission other pious gifts such as wells, tanks, and public buildings presumably around the city of Daśapura where one of their inscriptions was found. The example below refers to donation by Gauri that were made in honor of his (deceased) mother. Sircar, *EI XXX* ‘Two Inscriptions of Gauri; Fragmentary Inscription from Mandasor’

²⁸⁷ Verse 12

We can read these invocations as reflections of a personal preference for a deity; but as ‘public’ records of a ritualized act of donation by individuals with ties to the region’s ruling family, they are also identity markers that serve to communicate the ties between these ambitious families and the established political elites. While the tutelary deity of this warrior clan is clearly the martial Goddess, the poet’s praise of her acknowledges a broader Śaiva theology with the reference to Ardhanarīśvara. In this case, the creation of this composite deity is attributed to the agency of the Devī, who becomes Śiva’s ‘other half’ out of her devotion to him. It is thus perhaps not surprising that we find a reference to Ardhanarīśvara in the opening verse of the Rīsthal inscription as well.²⁸⁸

IV. Material Traces: Religion in the Cosmopolitan Centers

In the preceding pages, I have emphasized the prominence of Śaivism in the inscriptions from Daśapura, but Śaivism’s popularity as a political idiom or language of power did not mean that Śiva was the only deity in Daśapura. The Rīsthal Inscription records donations for a wide variety of institutions and deities and is thus a rich example of the religious diversity in Daśapura’s metropolis. The diversity of this religious landscape would also have brought an array of different kinds of people into close proximity—from ascetics, scholars, and temple servants to the many donors and devotees whose pious gifts ensured the continued life of these holy places. This cosmopolitanism is also evident in the material evidence found in Daśapura and the surrounding area, some notable examples of

²⁸⁸ *vāmena sandhyāpraṇipātakopaprasaṅginārdhena vighattayamānam /
pinākinaś śānt(i)v[*i](dheya)m a[*r]ddha[*m] v[*ā]m[*e]taraṁ vaś śivam ādadhātu //1//*
May that peaceable right half of Pinākin (Śiva), which is being rent from his left half that grows angry
at his bowing to Sandhyā (the Twilight), bestow blessings upon you. [1] (Salomon)

which have already been introduced.²⁸⁹ Other remarkable examples of Daśapura's artistic legacy were found along the Shivana River in the Gajendra Ghat area, among them the massive eight-faced *liṅga* currently enshrined in the Pāśupatināth Temple. [Figure 86].²⁹⁰ Williams dates these material traces to be more or less contemporaneous with the Yaśodharman pillar inscriptions and the monumental *dvārapālas* found *in situ* at Soṇḍni. The Daśapura sculpture is likely also contemporaneous with the Nagarī *torāṇas*, which provide important evidence for the establishment of early Śaivism in this area (c. 5th-6th century). The sculpted panels depict foundational narratives. One shows Arjuna's obtaining of the Pāśupata weapon from Śiva, who was disguised as the *kirāta*. And the other, according to a new interpretation by Bakker and Bisschop, represents scenes from the Devadāruvana myth, which gives an account of the origins of *liṅga* worship²⁹¹ [Figures 87 & 88].

This material evidence shows clearly that Daśapura and its environs constituted a major center of Śaiva activity. Given that Daśapura was such a diverse and dynamic place, we might infer that networks of Pāśupata specialists were also part of the scene, although the epigraphic evidence does not mention communities of ascetics or lineages of preceptors. The earliest evidence for Pāśupata lineages in the region comes from an early 8th century inscription found in Indragarh, north of Daśapura (discussed below). If we take the presence of Lakulīśa images as a sign of Pāśupata activity, then this also appears to be a slightly later development. The two temple lintels at the Mandasor

²⁸⁹ Joanna Williams, "On the Edge of What? Reconsidering the Place of Mandasor in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries" in *The Vākāṭaka Heritage: Indian Culture at the Crossroads* ed. Hans Bakker, Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2004. 135

²⁹⁰ Based on the other sculptures found here—including the Kārttikeya and an enigmatic double-liṅga figure sometimes identified as Lākulīśa—Williams suggests that this may have been the site for a number of 6th century Śiva shrines; Williams, 135-137. See images 10.12 & 10.13.

²⁹¹ Williams (1972; 1982), Bakker (2014), Bakker & Bisschop (forthcoming, 2016).

museum, which display Lakuliśa in the central niche likely date from the 8th (possibly even the 9th) century. [Figures 89, 90 & 91].²⁹²

IV.I Religious Cosmopolitanism at Chittorgarh

The earliest material remains at Chittorgarh add a further layer to the already complex picture presented in Daśapura. The oldest temples within the fort were constructed in the late 7th or early 8th century, but they have been extensively rebuilt and renovated as construction at the site continued well into the late medieval period (c. 15th-16th century). Examples of late-7th and 8th century sculpture are often removed from their original architectural contexts and can be seen scattered throughout the many still-active temples within the fort and repurposed to adorn various archways and gates. Art historians generally connect the fort's earliest monuments to the Maurya rulers, but this is speculative. We have no dedicatory inscriptions with which to prove such ties.²⁹³ The issues of rebuilding and questions of patronage aside, the earliest monumental structures—the Kālikā Mātā and Kumbhaśyāma temples—strain the canonical art historical frameworks of style and idiom.²⁹⁴ As Cynthia Atherton observes, 'The temples present a hybrid assemblage of stylistic and iconographic elements that reflects the shifting realities of this politically confused era and the site's location at a geographical interface.'²⁹⁵ But I think it is not only political competition that has shaped the religious landscape at the fort. The spatial distribution and variation in the placement and size of the oldest

²⁹² Similarly, remains of early medieval temples from nearby Afzalpur are also later. The massive rock-cut Brahminical and Buddhist shrines at Dhamnar offer a fascinating study of the diversity of the religious landscape, but a Pāśupata voice cannot be heard clearly either

²⁹³ The *EITA* labels Chittorgarh a Maurya site.

²⁹⁴ Meister (1993)

²⁹⁵ Atherton, *Sculpture of Early Medieval Rajasthan*, 89.

structures reflect a space in which multiple religious communities interacted and where people of various economic means participated in donative practices. But even within this complex space, it is possible to identify that much of the earliest material layers were commissioned by donors with Śaiva affiliations, broadly conceived.²⁹⁶

Traces of this kind of wide-ranging and ‘unscripted’ donative and building practices can be seen throughout the massive fort area—tanks, stepwells, and remains of small shrines cover nearly every inch of ground. One particularly interesting group of shrine foundations and ruins are clustered in an area of the fort popularly called the ‘*satī* ground’ and near the natural spring called the ‘Gomukh kuṇḍ’, which is still an active place of pilgrimage today [Figures 92 & 93]. These structures evince modes of patronage that serve as a contrast to the monumental or royal dispensations like the Kālikā Mātā and Kumbhaśyāma temples. The fact that a number of these shrines contain *lingas* may be a further indication that they were intended as family shrines or memorials for local people [Figures 94 & 95]. It could be that only the stone foundations of some of these small shrines have survived because the remaining portions were constructed of a more perishable, (i.e. cost effective) material like brick or wood. Discussing one of these shrines, Cynthia Atherton points to what she views as a curious mix of deities carved on the exterior of the shrine—Śiva atop the bull, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, Brahmā, and Sarasvatī are all represented along with the typical *dikpālas*. Atherton describes the shrine as an ‘ecumenical’ blending of deities. Rather than use the term ecumenical, which has certain Christian connotations, we could simply interpret the distinctive iconographic patterns as indicative of individual preferences rather than a conscious effort to unite different ‘sectarian’ programs or deities within a single

²⁹⁶ This is not to say the earliest layers are exclusively Śaiva. There is also a mid-9th century shrine called the ‘Kṣemankarī Temple’ by art historians after the prominent image of this goddess on the back exterior niche of the shrine. Small votive *stūpas* were also reported within the complex. *EITA*, vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 284; Plate 635.

monument. As a concluding aside, given that a number of these structures are *liṅga* shrines, I would suggest that the large residential structure nearby may have been originally conceived as a Śaiva *maṭha*, although it may date to a later period in the development of the fort. [Figures 96 & 97]

Another of the oldest Śaiva layers in the fort is the small *liṅga* shrine called Kukkreśvara, which is surrounded by a stepwell. The shrine itself has been extensively rebuilt, but judging by some of the pillars and noteworthy early sculpture found in the niches around the stepwell, it could conceivably be contemporaneous with some of the oldest surviving structures in the fort [Figures 98, 99 & 100]. The image of Śiva and Pārvatī from the stepwell niche dates from the same early period, as does a Gaja-Lakṣmī with a nearly identical hairstyle and ornamentation, preserved in a modern Devī temple nearby [Figures 101 & 102].²⁹⁷

The previous examples have highlighted small scale or sub-monumental constructions, but two of the fort's oldest monumental temples, the Kālikā Mātā (c. late 7th century) temple and the Kumbhaśyāma temple (c. early 8th century), can also be classified as having Śaiva layers since both include images of Lakuliśa in their iconographic programs. Now dedicated to the Goddess, the Kālikā Mātā temple was clearly constructed as a Sūrya temple and multiple images of this deity grace the interior and exterior niches as well as the doorway to the inner sanctum.²⁹⁸ [Figures 103, 104 & 105] The Kumbhaśyāma temple also has a complex, layered history.²⁹⁹ [Figure 106] The temple's iconographic program suggests an original Śaiva dedication and the attributes of many of the *alaṃkāradēvatās* on

²⁹⁷ Note also the similarities between the hairstyles and the circular 'ring' formed of hair (or perhaps other ornamentation) on the two goddesses with a similar convention on the Lakuliśa from the Kālikā Mātā temple.

²⁹⁸ *EITA* vol.2, pt. 2, pp. 285-291; Plates 645-665.

²⁹⁹ *EITA* vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 291-297; Plates 666-683.

the walls surrounding the *garbhagrha* and the temple exterior bear Śaiva attributes as noted by Meister (e.g., *triśūla*, *nāga*, and *vṛṣa* mount).³⁰⁰ The temple was later rededicated to Viṣṇu, but exactly when this transformation took place is uncertain. The fifteenth century is the *terminus ante quem*, based on inscribed Vaiṣṇava images in the temple that date from the rule of Rana Kumbha of Mewar, but the transition could have been initiated earlier. If the Mauryas did, in fact, cede control of the fortress to the Gurjara-Pratihara in the 9th century, the change in dedication could have been tied to a broader political shift. Another possibility is to see this rededication as evidence of the revival of Vaiṣṇavism in the later medieval period, in part a reaction against an increasingly esoteric Śaivism. Observing that certain details of the deities on the exterior appear incomplete or unfinished, and that some of the Vaiṣṇava icons appear to date to an early period, Meister questions whether the temple as a Śaiva monument was fully realized before its rededication to Viṣṇu commenced.³⁰¹ One could also question whether the standing Lakulīśa image, with the attendant figures and garland drapery typical of Viṣṇu icons, was conceived (or perhaps even recut) to reflect a Vaiṣṇava context [Figure 107].

As the emblematic figure of the Pāśupata community, the presence of these early images could be read as a significant indication of Pāśupata activity within the fort in its earliest material layers.³⁰² Yet, the place of these images within the temples themselves and within the wider religious

³⁰⁰ Meister comments that ‘The iconography of the sanctum’s Dikpālas, of vedibandha niches, and of the outer wall’s images should make clear that the original intentions of its builders was for this to be a Śaiva shrine.’ *EITA* vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 295-296.

³⁰¹ *EITA* vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 296-297. Meister comments specifically on the icons of Trivikrama and Narasiṃha framing the *prāggrīva* and an image of Balarāma in a south exterior niche, which in his view appear contemporaneous with the temple’s early iconography. He tentatively suggests that ‘[...] the temple was never completed as a Śaiva shrine but rather was converted at an early period to Vaiṣṇava worship.

³⁰² The later Śiva temples in Chittorgarh, like the renovated Samidheśvar temple, lack Lakulīśa images. The temple now called the Samidheśvar was originally a Jain temple of Jina Ariṣṭanemi built c 1230-1235. After its

landscape of the fort raises many questions. Lakuliśa's inclusion within the iconographic program of the Chittorgarh temples suggests that this figure had gained a broad popularity within the regional religious landscape such that even architects of the Sūrya temple were compelled to include him within the iconographic program. At the same time, the fact that his images appear on the temple exterior, rather than in the lintel niche that frames a *liṅga* shrine, indicates that they no longer served as a definitive marker of a Pāśupata affiliation; rather, they were intended to serve a different function within the monument since the symbolic association between the instantiation of Śiva and the Pāśupata teacher that this framing effects is no longer expressed clearly. In the case of Chittorgarh, we might interpret Lakuliśa's move from temple interior to temple exterior as an indication that his cultural relevance had expanded such that he was not (or was no longer) tied exclusively to a particular religious community or tradition. These questions are considered in greater detail in Chapter V.

V. Śiva on the Periphery: Jhālrapāṭan, Kansuāñ, and Indragarh

The previous section has shown how Śaivism was adapted to express ideologies of power and social prestige by elite groups in the cosmopolitan centers like Daśapura and Chittorgarh. The rulers of the region championed Śiva as their emblem of war and victory. Socially ascendant merchant groups and other clans with political aspirations similarly invoked Śiva in their donative records, perhaps as a means to enhance their own prestige by gesturing to the religious culture favored by the region's elites. Outside of the political center of Daśapura, however, the language of Śaivism was employed to express different kinds of social aspirations and ideologies. Donative inscriptions that commemorated the

desecration in the fourteenth century is was rededicated as a Śiva temple.. M.A. Dhaky, 'The Creed-Affiliation of the Samidheśvara Temple in Chittodgadh', *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, XIV (1984-85), pp.25-42.

construction of Śiva temples in Jhālrapāṭan, Kansuāñ, and Indragarh give voice to facets of the early Śaiva community for whom pious giving provided a means to ensure protection and personal salvation.

In order to contextualize these voices, this section moves away from the center to explore Śaivism on the periphery; that is, in places at a distance from the political capitals and urban centers. To better understand why Śaivism was a compelling ideology in these places, I focus on a group of three contemporaneous inscriptions from northwest Upamāla, which are some of the region's most valuable, yet under-theorized, sources for our knowledge of early Śaiva religiosity in practice: The Durgagana Stone Inscription from Jhālrapāṭan (VS 746/689-90 CE); the Kansuāñ Stone Inscription of Sivagana (VS 795/738 CE); and the Indragarh Stone Inscription of Naṇṇapa (VS 767/710-11 CE). These early records are also important because they can be connected to contemporaneous structural remains and iconography that suggests ties to the Pāśupata tradition.

V.I Precatory Religion: Ideologies of Prosperity and Protection

Since the inscriptions from Kansuāñ and Jhālrapāṭan bear certain similarities and because the temple remains that have survived in these respective places are also comparable, I will address them first. Both of these records list the gifts of pious individuals with only the faintest ties to political elites. Perhaps because these donors were not explicitly motivated by political aspirations, the tone is rather somber and Śiva is invoked as a refuge, protector, and bringer of prosperity in a world where such things were insecure, at best.

The Kansuāñ Inscription³⁰³ is still located *in situ* on the exterior of the Mahādeva temple a few kilometers outside of Kota, Rajasthan [Figures 108, 109 & 110]. The temple is still under active worship and is located in a scenic spot along the banks of a spring where pilgrims gather [Figure 111]. At the time of the inscription's composition the temple was reportedly located in the hermitage of the sage Kaṇva (Kaṇvāśrama) from which the modern Kansuāñ is derived. While the donor, Śivagaṇa, praises the rulers of the Maurya line, he seems to have no official relationship with the current ruler Dhavala. The purpose of the inscription is to record the construction of the temple. The opening verses invoke a benevolent and protective deity.³⁰⁴

Adoration to Śambhu, who makes (men) cross the whole sea of mundane existence, (and is) a support for (their) hands when they fall into the pit of darkness (that is hell) [1]
(Kielhorn)

The ethic of protection is echoed in subsequent verses with the repeated request that Śambhu be a source of protection and preservation for the world.³⁰⁵ It is also likely that his name, with the *-gaṇa* suffix, is an initiation name.³⁰⁶ Indeed, the act of piety and the precative tone of the inscription are

³⁰³ Kielhorn, "Kanaswa Inscription of Śivagaṇa" *IA* 1890 pp. 55-61

³⁰⁴ *namaḥ sakalasaṃsārasāgarottārahetave /
tamogartābhisaṃpātahastāmbāya śambhave //1//*

*jñātvā janma jarāviyogamaraṇakleśair aśeṣais citam
svārthasyāpy ayam eva yoga ucito loke prasiddhaḥ satām /
tenedaṃ parameśvarasya bhavanaṃ dharmātmanā kāritaṃ
yaṃ dr̥ṣ[ṭ]vaiva samastalokavapuṣāṃ naṣṭam kaleḥ kalmaṣam // 16//
(Śārdūlavikrīḍita)*

While this inscription does not reference specific visions of hell or different hells, the idea is that Śiva saves from hell his devotees, as well as the ancestors of those who offer him devotion. Those people are granted the status of being his *gaṇas*, a privileged position in which one is freed from suffering. On this theme see *Skandapurāṇa* vol. 11b (2014) especially the story of Sukeśa and his ancestors that precedes the detailed accounts of the various hells (SP 35. 1-37).

³⁰⁵ The phrase *śambhor jaṭaḥ pāntu vaḥ* (may Śambhu's matted hair protect you) is repeated twice, and *sthānor vaḥ pātu mūrdhnā* (may Sthānu's head protect you) is given once.

³⁰⁶ Goodall (2007) has identified names ending in *-gaṇa* as indicative of initiation in Śaiva Siddhānta.

apparently inspired by Śivagaṇa's personal preference for Śiva. Verse 14 tells us that the individual's name, designating him one of Śiva's *gaṇas*, is fitting given his devotion to the Lord.³⁰⁷ The inscription closes with a sentiment similar to those expressed in the opening, with the hope that the pious gift of the temple will be a source of salvation in a world characterized by suffering.

Having found out that life is burdened with every affliction, old age, separation, and death,
(and being aware that) this is the only fit employment of one's wealth, well known all over
the world to the good—he, pious minded, had this dwelling of the supreme Lord made,
having but set eyes on which everybody in the world is freed from the stain of the Kali-age
[16] (Kielhorn)

It is worth noting that the salvific potential of the pious gift Śivagaṇa offers is not restricted to the donor and his immediate family. According to the inscription, even the rulers of the land who are entreated to protect the temple will, through that act of piety, reach Śiva's abode.³⁰⁸

The temple at Kansuāñ has been extensively rebuilt, although traces of the original moldings and repurposed pillars can be found throughout the complex [Figures 112 & 113]. The open area facing the central *līṅga* shrine is also significantly rebuilt and now bordered by stone walls that have altered the structure of the space. Prior to the addition of these walls, I think this area contained additional shrines and possibly a *maṭha* as well. The structure that can be seen to the left of the temple [Figure 114] is rebuilt, but it was at one point a two-storied building that could have served as a monastic dwelling. If the images of Lakulīśa [Figures 115 & 116] are any indication, Pāśupata ascetics or religious specialists could have been in residence within the larger complex. The remains of small shrines are scattered throughout the complex [Figure 117]. On the whole, these foundations are rebuilt and thus also difficult to date. The most important sculptural remains of the larger complex are two *caturmukha*

³⁰⁷ *śivasya nūnaṃ sa gaṇo yena tadbhaktatām gataḥ*

³⁰⁸ *pālayantu nṛpāḥ sarvve yeṣāṃ bhūmir iyaṃ bhava[t]/
evaṃ kṛte t[e] dharmmārthaṃ nūnaṃ yānti śivālayaṃ //21//*

liṅgas [Figures 118 & 119]. These sculptures are difficult to date, especially since most of the faces have been recut. But the original faces, as shown in the figures, could suggest they are broadly contemporaneous with the temple. The face of Figure 119 is quite similar to the Lakulīśa sculpture of Figure 116 and they could both date to approximately the same period. The presence of these additional *liṅgas* provides us just a hint of the larger religious life at the site.

While perhaps somewhat less dramatic in tone, the context and expressions in the late 7th century inscription from the Śītalesvara temple in Jhālrapāṭan resonate with the Kansuāñ inscription.³⁰⁹ The opening lines provide little with which to contextualize the donor. The poet refers to the reign of Durgagaṇa, who is not known from other records, and, as far as can be said, was a localized ruler or landholder. The donor himself is named Voppaka, who is mentioned along with his brother, Deva. While we might typically expect a more extensive genealogy or laudatory praise of the family's accomplishments, that is not the case here. Of Deva we learn that he was grateful (*kṛtajña*) and a man of his word (*sthīravāc*).³¹⁰ Voppaka is described as someone who acts as the treasurer in a dicing hall of wealthy princes (*pravṛddhakośakṣitipadyutasabhā*). Voppaka's occupation indicates he was likely a person of means, but the language of his donative record expresses disillusionment with material wealth and, much like Śivagaṇa's inscription, comments on the pitiable human condition. Voppaka's pious donation of a temple for Śiva is undertaken following the cognition that this act of piety is a means to escape the suffering to which humans are inevitably subject.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ G. Bühler, 'Two Inscriptions from Jhālrapāṭan,' *Indian Antiquary* vol 5 (1876) pp. 180-183

³¹⁰ Verse 6.

³¹¹ *tenedam akāri candramauler bhavanam janmamṛtiprahāṇahetoḥ/
 prasamikṣya jarāvīyogaduhkapratatiṃ dehabhṛtām anuprasaktām //8// (Aupacandasika)
 dharmma eva sakhāvyabhicārī rakṣa[nāpi]kṛtinaskhaliteṣu/
 prayanepy anugatiṃ vidadhāti pretya yanti suhṛdaḥ kimutārdhā //9// (Gītāryā)*

He, seeing that a chain of sufferings, produced by old age and separation, clings to embodied beings, built this temple of the moon-crested God, in order to avoid future births and deaths [8]

Spiritual merit alone is a constant friend, protects the steps of the pious, and follows them even in death, After men die, friends and—how much more!—their possessions leave them. [9] (Bühler)

The similarities between the Kansuāñ temple and the shrine memorialized in the Jhālrapāṭan record extend to their physical settings as well. Today called Śītaleśvara Mahādeva, the temple in Jhālrapāṭan is positioned along a scenic bend in the Candrabhāgā River [Figures 120 & 121]. Little of the original structure and iconography have survived, with the exception of some early incised pillars within the shrine interior that likely date to the 7th century [Figure 122]. The architectural frame surrounding the *garbhagrha*, with a small image of Lakuliśa in the central niche also dates to an early phase in the life of the temple [Figures 123 & 124]. As mentioned, no remarkable iconography survives *in situ* at the shrine, but there is an abundance of *līngas*—some of which could date from the 7th and 8th century [Figures 125 & 126]. An early *sahasra līnga* is under active worship in a small shrine along the riverbank [Figure 127]. It is possible that some of these *līngas* may have been enshrined within the complex itself. Remains of some ancillary shrines of a later period (8th-9th century) survive within the complex, and there may have been others that were destroyed or built over [Figures 128 & 129]. Alternatively, damaged *līngas* from shrines in the surrounding area could have been deposited at the Śītaleśvara temple. Like its counterpart in Kansuāñ, the Śītaleśvara complex has had a long and rich life as a religious center. Monumental 9th century sculptures of Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardinī, Cāmuṇḍā, and Śiva Naṭeśa held in a storage shed on site and in the Jhalawar Museum attest to the continued vitality of artistic production in the area [Figures 130, 131 & 132]

V.II Pāśupatas in Practice: The Religious Community of Indragarh

Neither of the inscriptions from Jhālārāpāṭan nor Kansuāñ mentions Pāśupatas directly, but the images of Lakulīśa placed prominently within the temple complex at both of these sites indicate ties to Pāśupata Śaivism. These material links are corroborated with epigraphic evidence in the early 8th century inscription from Indragarh (dated V.S. 767/ 710-711 CE)—a site approximately 70km northeast of Mandasor city, and 40km west of Jhālārāpāṭan [Figure 133]. This record has not yet been translated, nor have previous discussions considered it in light of its material and historical context. In fact, scholars have focused only on the first few lines, which name the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Naṇṇapa as the current ruler at the time of the record's composition.³¹² The identity of Naṇṇapa has proved elusive and efforts to determine his place within the complex Rāṣṭrakūṭa lineage(s) have been inconclusive. At best, we may assume that he was a local ruler of a subsidiary branch of this expansive dynasty. Since earlier studies have considered only this small portion, the majority of the record, and its significance for the reconstruction of religious life in this region, remain unexplored. The subject of the record is the building of a temple through a collaborative process that united an enigmatic lineage of Śaiva religious specialists, a local collective, a merchant community, and three pious women in the construction and maintenance of an enduring edifice to Śaiva community. Because it highlights the contributions of actors whose roles in shaping the religious landscape are often relegated to the margins of the scholarly purview, this is an important source for reconstructing the social history of medieval religion. In addition, the involvement of a local merchant family and a town corporation in the maintenance and support of this temple highlight the extent to which Śaiva religious institutions were embedded within local administrative networks and regional economy.

³¹² K. Deva, 'Indragadh Inscription of Naṇṇapa, V.S. 767,' *EI* 32 (1957-58): 112-117; H.V. Trivedi 'The Indragarh Stone Inscription of the Time of Naṇṇapa,' *JBRs* XLI 1955, 249ff; H.V. Trivedi, 'New Light on the Rāṣṭrakūṭa House,' *IHQ* vol XXX (1954).

Following the opening lines in praise of Śiva, and the aforementioned Naṇṇapa, the inscription introduces two Śaiva religious specialists, a Pāśupata *ācārya* named Vinītarāśi and his student Dānarāśi—both with names ending in the suffix *-rāśi* commonly ascribed to Pāśupatas. Verses 5-8 provide some further details concerning the identity of these Pāśupatas. In Verse 5, Vinītarāśi is described as the foremost of the Rudra Śṛṅkhalikas. The only other attestations of the Śṛṅkhalika community, or sect, of Pāśupatas, are found in inscriptions from Nepal. A mid-7th century inscription from Nepal records donations made to an assembly of *muṇḍa-śṛṅkhalika-pāśupatas*.³¹³ In a contemporaneous record, gifts are made to *śṛṅkhalika-pāśupatas*.³¹⁴ Following Hans Bakker's discussion of these Nepalese inscriptions, I understand Śṛṅkhalika to designate a particular Pāśupata tradition, and the additional designation of *muṇḍa*, to specify a particular sub-group within this larger network.³¹⁵ I have not yet found any other mention of Rudra Śṛṅkhalikas, specifically.³¹⁶ Perhaps these *rudra* Pāśupatas belonged to a regional lineage or advocated a particular practice or teaching that distinguished them within the more expansive Śṛṅkhalika tradition to which they belonged.³¹⁷

³¹³ During the reign of King Jiṣṇugupta (624-632 CE). Verman & Singh, *Corpus of Lichchhavi Inscriptions of Nepal* (R.V. Bhavan: New Delhi, 1994) no. 119; D.R. Regmi, *Inscriptions of Ancient Nepal*, (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1983) pp. 177-178.

³¹⁴ Regmi, num. 118—undated inscription of Narendradeva's time (643-79 CE).

³¹⁵ Reference is to the fact that these particular ascetics shaved their heads. Bakker (cf Acharya) 2014, pg. 149.

³¹⁶ There is a description of a *-rāśi* ascetic as '*rudra*' in Gandharveśa Temple Inscription from Sirpur. *EI* XXXIX, 151 verse 3; Bakker (2007; 2014)

³¹⁷ *āsīt pāśupatācāryo rudraśṛṅkhalikāgrāṇīḥ /
vinītarāśisaṃjño yaḥ śāntaḥ prasavagocārī // 5 //
yaḥ khyāto bhūtalesmin prakāṭapṛthuyasāḥ satyayuktaḥ suśānto
vidvāṇ jñānī kṛtājñāḥ sakalavasumatīmaṇḍano bhāvitātmā /
nityaṃ rājñāṃ samūhair natacaraṇayugaś śabdaśāstre svabhijño
niṣpannair śiṣyasamghair anavaratam abhiṣṭūyamānaḥ suśīlaḥ // 6 // (Sragdharā)
abhavat tasya śiṣyo yas tapaśśākyā jvalann iva /
dānarāśir iti khyātaḥ śāśāṅkakaranirmalaḥ** // 7 //
śāstrārthapṛavicāranirmalamatir vāgmī guṇair bhūṣitaḥ
śāntātmā prathamāḥ prakāśayaśasāṃ nityaṃ dayāḥ bhṛṣaṃ /
yogābhyāsavaśād atīndriyagatajñānena yo viśrutaḥ*

There was a Pāśupata teacher who was known as Vinītarāśi, the foremost of the Rudra branch of the Śṛīkhalika Pāśupatas; a married (yet) dispassionate householder. [5] (Cecil)

He whose extensive glory was familiar to all on this earth, intent upon the truth, tranquil, learned, intelligent, who knows what is to be done, (and) whose soul was fully developed (through meditative practice); he was an ornament of the entire world. He whose feet were always saluted by multitudes of kings, highly skilled in the science of language, pious, (and) lauded incessantly by the groups of students (that) descended from him. [6]

He (Vinītarāśi) has a student called Dānarāśi, who seems on fire with the power of his ascetic heat (and) who is as bright white as the rays of the moon.³¹⁸[7]

He whose mind is clear in reflecting upon the meaning of authoritative texts, eloquent, adorned with virtues, (and) tranquil, the foremost of those whose glory is bright, always greatly compassionate. He who is celebrated by virtue of (his) knowledge that transcends the senses through the power of yogic practice, whose mind is intent upon the instruction of his students, who takes extreme pleasure in the service of the Lord. [8]

This holy stone temple of the Self-Existent 'Lord of the World,' which is the equal of Mt. Mandara, is commissioned by this pious one himself. [9]

Following the praise of these learned Pāśupata teachers, Verse 9 records the endowment of the temple itself, which is credited to Vinītarāśi's student Dānarāśi. Dānarāśi's central role in the establishment of the temple marks a shift from the endowments of the preceding centuries. It is also important to note the role of these Śaivas in popular forms of temple-centered religious practice. While early 4th century inscriptions from Mathurā and Bāgh show that Śaiva religious specialists were involved in the creation of memorials for deceased teachers and resided in temple complexes, the Indragarh inscription is the earliest in Northwest and Central India to credit Pāśupatas with the endowment of a temple. While

śiṣyādhyāpanasaktadhīr atitarām īśasya kārye rataḥ // 8 // (Śārdūlavikrīḍita)
svayambhor lokanāthasya śailam śilavatā svayaṃ /
tenedaṃ kāritaṃ divyaṃ mandiraṃ mandaropamaṃ // 9 //

******Edition reads *śaśāṅkaranirmalaḥ*

³¹⁸ The reference to Dānarāśi being as bright or white as the rays of the moon could be a reference to the Pāśupata practice of smearing one's body with ash, which gives it a bright white appearance.

Dānarāśi's endowment may have been the impetus for the temple's construction, Verses 10 and 11 include further details regarding its management³¹⁹

The repair of whatever is broken or damaged, and the autonomy with regard to worship³²⁰ here are done by the Corporation itself, which is providing full assistance.
[10] (Cecil)

But even someone else, standing with the permission of the Corporation, can make a repair that has been authorized by it (i.e. by the Corporation). [11]

The maintenance of this structure was the responsibility of the '*nagara*.' By '*nagara*' I infer a 'collective' or 'corporation' composed of local residents, or perhaps members of a mercantile association. James Heitzman has addressed the ties between such *nagaras*—as administrative bodies—and temples in his work on early Cola period South India. Heitzman describes the *nagara* as an organization that dealt with "...corporate responsibilities toward the temple, collected deposits that yielded interest for temple rituals, and guaranteed supplies for temple worship."³²¹ B.D. Chattopadhyaya's study of epigraphic records in early medieval Rajasthan also foregrounds the important role of mercantile and trade collectives in supporting temples—often by donating shops and using the revenues to fund temple activities.³²² These medieval corporate bodies are comparable to the modern temple 'trusts' that administer the financial affairs and maintenance of temples in India today.

³¹⁹ *khaṇḍasphuṭitasamskāraḥ svātantryaṃ cātra kīrtane /
nagareṇaiva kartavyaṃ sarvasānāthyakāriṇā // 10 //
aparo 'pi hi yaḥ kaścin nagarānumate sthitaḥ /
punaḥ karoti samskāraṃ tasyānujñātam eva hi // 11 //*

³²⁰ I am interpreting *kīrtana* in Verse 10 as referring to the religious practices and rituals performed in the temple. While the term *kīrtana* (also *kīrtanā*; *kīrti*) is used to refer to temples or monuments, this term could be used to refer to meritorious deeds or pious activities like the funding of temple rituals. These acts, like the building of a monument, could be considered as enhancing one's reputation and augmenting the prestige of the patron. See Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, s.v. *kīrtana*.

³²¹ James Heitzman, *Gifts of Power: Lordship in an Early Indian State*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997. 9-10; 92.

³²² B.D. Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*, 111-113; 89-119.

My hypothesis regarding the ties between the temple and local merchants gains further support with the mention of the Prāgvāṭa *jāti* in the concluding prose section of the inscription.³²³ These lines record a further donation of a shop to the deity Guheśvara by the three daughters of Kumāra of the Prāgvāṭa *jāti*.³²⁴ The donation here is not as explicitly precative as those from Jhālrapāṭan and Kansuāñ, which sought an end to suffering through devotion to Śiva; yet, the daughters' gift to honor their deceased father is expressed in soteriological terms.

There was one Kumāra of the Prāgvāṭa *jāti*. His three daughters—Deullikā, Takṣullikā, and Bhoginikā—present, of their own initiative, (this) donative 'vessel.' This eastward-facing shop, which belongs to them, here in this spot within the fortified area, is given as a gift. The shop of which the boundaries (are): to the east, a courtyard (with a) barbershop³²⁵ and a proper street; to the south, the border of the last house; to the west, the edge of the western gate; to the north, the border of the wall of the same shop. (This shop) its four boundaries specified in this way, has been offered to [the deity] Guheśvara for the sake of attaining to the next world. Here in the fortified area, in the vicinity of the western gate, there is an eastward-facing dwelling whose boundaries are the chariot-road to the east and the path to the south. [Lines 15-19]

The inscription also provides an important clue to the identity of these female donors. The title, Prāgvāṭa is a geographic designation for the Mewār region of south-central Rajasthan and it also came

³²³K. Deva suggests that the concluding prose section was likely not created by the same person who drafted the verse, but the uniformity in the incising of the characters suggests that the engraver was the same.

³²⁴*prāgvāṭajātīyaḥ kumāraḥ tasya duhitarāḥ deullikā takṣullikā bhoginikā tisro'pi svapratipatyā pratigrahapātraṃ prayacchanti ya deśa āsām ** iha koṭṭābhyantare āvārikāḥ *** pūrvābhīmukhaḥ saḥ pratigrahāya dattah yasyāghāṭanāni [/] pūrvataḥ aṅgaṇaṃ kṣurabhogyam suvīthi ca dakṣinataḥ antimagrhamaryādā paścimato [prato]likāpāṭa **** uttaratas asyaivāvavarakabhittimāryādā [/] evaṃ caturāghāṭanopalakṣitaḥ paralokasādhanārthe guheśvarāya pratipādita iti // iha koṭṭābhyantare paścimapratolisamūpe pūrvābhīmukhaṃ grhaṃ yasyāghāṭanāni pūrvataḥ rathyā mārgaḥ dakṣinataḥ*

** Edition reads *ya deśāsām*; I am reading this as double sandhi for *deśe āsām*

*** Edition reads *avavaraka*. K. Deva takes *avavaraka* as synonymous with Pali *ōraraka* meaning 'store room.' I take it as a variant spelling of *āvarikā*, 'shop; stall'.

**** Edition reads *paścimato likāpāṭa*. Perhaps a case of haplography given that *paścimapratolī* is written in the following line. '*pratolikā*' is attested in Sircar, *IEG* as synonymous with '*pratolī*'. Perhaps *pāṭa* means something like a 'corner' or 'edge.'

³²⁵ The meaning of *kṣurabhogyā* is not entirely clear. I take it as a further description of the courtyard (*aṅgaṇa*) which has an area that is used for shaving (i.e. a place where a barber is conducting business). I thank Peter Bisschop for suggesting this interpretation to me.

to designate the merchant class that originated in this area.³²⁶ Donations by members of the Prāgvāṭa *vaṇīkṣāti* are found in a number of inscriptions from the 10th and 11th century, which attest to the importance of members of this group as donors and patrons whose endowments supported both Brahminical and Jain temples across Rajasthan and Gujarat.³²⁷ This Prāgvāṭa family may have also been members of the '*nagara*' mentioned in the previous lines. The revenues of the shop donated to the temple could have been used to support the activities of ritual and structural maintenance. And since the shop donated to Guheśvara was located within a fortified area (*koṭṭābhyantara*) and in proximity to a large road (*rathyā*) and a smaller road or footpath (*mārgaḥ*), it would have been ideal location from which to attract both locals and travellers en route to the markets of northwest India.

The inscription was discovered during the course of a series of excavations at Indragarh during the mid to late 1950's.³²⁸ Indian archeologists reported the remains of a modest sized, yet thriving, settlement of which ramparts, fortifications, and many structural remains survived. Within this settlement area, they also discovered the remains of a sandstone temple with a *liṅga* reportedly found *in situ*.³²⁹ Based upon the large number of ancillary shrines excavated around the temple and the variety of iconographic remains—including images of Śiva, Bhairava, Pārvatī, and as well as sculptures of the *mātrkas*, Viṣṇu, Sūrya, and Kubera, dating from the 8th to the 11th century—this place had a long

³²⁶ Similar examples of merchant families deriving their caste name from their region of origin include the Śrīmālas and Oswāls. See Jain, 16; Chattopadhyaya, 111.

³²⁷ Chattopadhyaya, 111-113; Jain, 32; Examples from Mt Abu, Kiradu, and Nadol: *EI* vol IX, p. 149; 62-3; *EI* vol. II, pp. 43-6;

³²⁸ *IAR* 1956-57, p. 11; 1957-8, p. 26; 1958-59, pp. 27-29.

³²⁹ The copious sculptural remains (c 7th-12th century) from the area are now housed in the Government Museums in Indore and Bhopal Museum as well as the Yaśodharman Museum in Mandasor and the Y.R. Holkar Museum in Bhanpura. Unfortunately, at the time of my visit in May 2014 the excavated area described in the ASI reports was no longer visible since the land was being used for agriculture.

and active history as a religious center [Figures 134 & 135]. The surviving sculpture also attests to a high level of craftsmanship. Clearly this area produced a sufficient economic surplus to support the work of skilled artists and artisans

The Śaiva imagery from Indragarh and its environs is particularly significant. The Government Museum in Indore preserves a remarkable image (c. late 7th – 8th century) that the curators have labeled as Lakulīśa, although the signature club is not visible since the arms of the sculpture are broken from the shoulder [Figures 136 & 137] From what remains, it appears the image was originally two-armed. It is also ithyphallic and seated in a meditative posture. While there is little clear formal evidence that the sculpture represented the ‘Lord with a Club’, the four small ascetic figures beneath the lotus seat could be a gesture to Lakulīśa’s four students. The middle figures each make a gesture of reverence. The figure on the far left holds a rosary in the right hand. The far right image is broken, but may have held a manuscript in his left hand. If this image was intended to represent Lakulīśa then it presents a very different visual imagining of the ascetic teacher than was seen in the contemporaneous image in Figure 79.

VI. Conclusions

From the early political centers of Daśapura and Chittorgarh to the idyllic riverside temples of northeast Upamāla, this study has worked to situate the early Śaiva communities of the 6th-8th century in their geographic contexts. The perspectives I have presented are undoubtedly skewed by the availability of historical sources and the kinds of materials that have survived in these different locales. That being said, it is still possible to make some concluding remarks about the different voices from the early Śaiva tradition recorded in these materials: about their motivations for pious

giving and about how they were shaped by the different socio-cultural milieus in which they were embedded.

The multivocality of the early Śaiva community emerges with great clarity in the historical sources from this region. Evident, too, is the adaptability of the Śaiva tradition, which served as a means to commemorate military triumph for those in power, while offering solace and hope to others whose eyes were opened to a world characterized by suffering. In the earliest evidence from Daśapura, Śaivism is adopted as a political idiom, a language of power used to commemorate the victories of the Aulikara rulers while also commemorating and publicizing a complex network of political relationships between these kings and other ambitious lineage groups. On the periphery we observed the ways in which Śaivism could also be adapted to address the concerns of those in the market towns, for whom it offered a respite from life's suffering. It is also in these peripheral areas, and in Indragarh in particular, that we see the earliest evidence for a Pāśupata presence. Pāśupata ties are expressed visually in the iconography and recorded in the Indragarh inscription. I take this evidence to suggest that these peripheral, yet prosperous, locales provided the economic stability needed to support religious institutions and networks of religious specialists.

Among the donors whose acts of pious giving have survived through the enduring medium of stone, aside from ruling elites, the voices of merchant groups are particularly prominent and their investment in the built religious landscape was significant. Their practices, I think, point to the role of temples and shrines in ordering and structuring a 'familiar' world for communities creating a home in an unfamiliar area. Travel and itinerancy, a common feature of the lives of merchants and traders, are practices that dislocate people. These inscriptions indicate that religious institutions provided a

counterpoint to itinerancy since the investment in monumental architecture is a practice that emerges out of a commitment to a particular place and provides a stable center to counter the anxieties and travails of travel.

CHAPTER IV

ŚIVA AND SALT PĀŚUPATAS AND ŚAIVA CENTERS IN SAPĀDALAKṢA AND ŚŪRASENA

Summary

The last of three case studies, this chapter concludes the survey of the *Skandapurāṇa*'s mapping of the Pāśupata landscape in the area of northeast Rajasthan traditionally known as Sapādalakṣa. A vast, arid region dominated by spurs of the Aravelli Mountain Range, Sapādalakṣa is home to three large salt lakes: Ḍiḍvānā, Sāmbhar (Śākambharī), and Sikar. These lakes and their environs constituted a critical zone of economic, political, and religious development from the 7th through the 10th century CE as active centers of economic exchange, or 'nodal points', along the northern caravan routes, where trade in salt and other goods flourished. Control over these nodal points and routes also served as an important gauge of political power and prestige. Asserting dominance over Śākambharī and Sikar facilitated the rise of the early Cāhamāna rulers, whose descendants were the Chauhan clan of Rajputs celebrated in the later bardic chronicles of Rajasthan. This flourishing regional economy also attracted Śaiva religious specialists, who found generous patrons among the socially ascendant merchant families and local elites. Epigraphic sources and temple iconography indicate that by the early 10th century, networks of Pāśupata religious specialists were deeply embedded within the political and economic landscape of the region. These networks, in turn, were instrumental in the creation of monumental temples and monasteries, significant remains of which still survive. While the precise location of Jambumārga—the locale the SP identifies with Lakulīśa's third student, Gārgya—remains

uncertain, I propose that this Salt Lakes region presents a compelling possibility for the location of this early Śaiva center.

Perhaps due to the position of this region in an underdeveloped part of Rajasthan, the significance of Sapādalakṣa for the growth of early Śaiva institutions has passed largely unnoticed, and the historical sources have not yet been subjected to a critical synthesis and study. This chapter presents this region as a preeminent center for the institutionalization of Śaiva religiosity. My study focuses specifically on the important religious center on Mt. Harṣa, near Sikar, and briefly surveys contemporaneous evidence from Kāman, an important locale in the adjacent region traditionally known as Śūrasena. In the historical sources recovered from these places, Śaivism emerges as a particularly compelling symbol system, one that succeeded in catalyzing remarkable social synergies between individuals and communities from a wide variety of social strata. The resulting collaborative efforts and acts of piety converging around Śaivism established enduring institutions and proved a powerful tool for the articulation of political personae for the fledgling Cāhamāna dynasty. At the same time, in Kāman we can observe the articulation of a more irenic vision of Śaivism adapted to express the values of a prosperous community of merchants and artisans.

I. ‘Emplaced Polities’: Approaching Sapādalakṣa’s Historical Terrain

Northwest India of the 8th and 9th centuries was on the cusp of a period of social change and economic growth. As B.D. Chattopadhyaya’s influential work³³⁰ has demonstrated, the regions now included within the modern state of Rajasthan³³¹ exemplify well the patterns that characterized early medieval India’s dynamic historical landscape: namely, the expansion of agrarian and settlement areas in what had previously been uncultivated or sparsely-inhabited regions, combined with the increased power and influence of localized political elites—many styling themselves *rājaputras*. The move of the Imperial Pratīhāras eastward, from their early capital at Mandor, just north of Jodhpur in Rajasthan, toward the highly coveted city of Kanauj created an opportunity for local clans to pursue new political aspirations, and marked the inception of the Rajput dynasties that would come to dominate the area in subsequent centuries. The fortified towns founded by these local rulers became active commercial centers that attracted collectives of merchants and traders who established new communities in these emergent settlements.³³²

Coming to terms with the political and cultural formations initiated during this historical period is critical to developing our understanding of religious life in this, as with subsequent, periods. Building upon Chattopadhyaya’s emphasis on the localization of power and resources in this period, I suggest the term ‘emplaced polity’ as an analytical category that describes these emerging powers. By

³³⁰ Chattopadhyaya (1994).

³³¹ These regions included: Sapādalakṣa, Śūrasena, Upamāla, Meḍapāta, Arbuda, and Mārudeśa. See also the regional map provided in Atherton, p. xiv.

³³² Chattopadhyaya, ‘Merchants and Markets,’ pp. 89-119. For example, groups like the Dhūsara and Dharkaṭa merchants (*vaṇīks; śreṣṭhīs*) figure as temple donors in inscriptions from Khandela, Sakrai, and Mandikila Tal in northeast Rajasthan. These records are discussed in further detail below. *EI* vol. 34: 159-163 & 77ff; *EI* vol. 24: 27ff. See Chapter III for similar examples from Upamāla.

adopting this term, I am deliberately avoiding the established nomenclature—e.g. feudatory, minor dynasty, ‘little king’, etc. While these terms are common scholarly parlance, they are imprecise insofar as they suggest a stable political hierarchy and thereby obscure the reality of a political space in which multiple levels of authority were operating. In addition to accounting for a corporate structure of power, ‘emplaced polity’ also characterizes more precisely the region’s unique geopolitics, which was oriented around the control of localized centers of production and commerce, as well as sites of cultural significance. The utility of this term will be fleshed-out in greater detail in the following pages.

Despite Sapādalakṣa’s³³³ unforgiving landscape,³³⁴ this ‘Salt Lakes’ region exemplifies well the broad historical patterns that Chattopadhyaya has outlined [Figures 138 & 139]. While the sweep of Imperial politics moved eastward towards Kanauj, evidence from Sapādalakṣa indicates an active socialization of new spaces on what had once been the edges of the northwest frontier—suggested in inscriptions by the increased use of terms for small, market towns (e.g. *haṭṭa*; *maṇḍapikā*) and reference to fortified areas (e.g. *koṭṭa*).³³⁵ This pattern of settlement expansion was accompanied by the proliferation of religious centers. In fact, the majority of the records that attest to the growth of exchange economy are inscriptions recording donations made to temples and religious institutions. It

³³³ The term ‘*sapādalakṣa*’ is apparently a general heading to refer to territories with 1^{1/4} lakh villages. The Kumārikhaṇḍa of the *Skanda Purāṇa* makes reference to several such ‘*sapādalakṣas*’. The Cāhamānas belonged specifically to the Śākambharasapādalakṣa. See Dasaratha Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, (New Delhi: S Chand & co, 1959) pp. 11-12; cf note 38. Sharma cites later Muslim historians who call this territory ‘Siwālik,’ which contained 125,000 towns and villages and had Ajmer as its capitol. Sharma citing in Raverty’s trans of *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsir*.

³³⁴ This arid landscape is evoked in the region’s second appellation, ‘Jāṅgaladeśa’. Sharma, 11.

³³⁵ See Chattopadhyaya, pp. 130-154. While *maṇḍapikā* is usually understood as a ‘toll-station’ or ‘customs house,’ it is used to refer to the larger marketplace as well since, as Sircar comments, toll-stations were often situated in marketplaces. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, s.v. *maṇḍapa*.

impresses Chattopadhyaya as ‘paradoxical’ that evidence of commercial growth should be gleaned from records of religious giving. I think that this link is not at all surprising. Temples were storehouses of wealth, both material and symbolic. While Chattopadhyaya’s skilled synthesis of the epigraphic and material evidence has shed important light on the geographic patterns of settlement and mobility, a consideration of the ‘social location’ of these groups and practices lies somewhat outside the scope of his analysis. By the 8th century the building and endowing of Śiva temples in eastern Rajasthan was becoming increasingly popular, a development represented in the epigraphic sources as the result of cooperation between Śaiva religious specialists, merchant communities, guilds, artisans, and local political elites. These religious centers controlled significant immovable assets (for example, market stalls and fields) and participated in the monetized economy—through rents paid in cash, and taxes paid to the temple by guilds and traders.

The flourishing of religious institutions in Sapādalakṣa was intimately connected with regional patterns of economic and urban development. These ties are evident in the archeological record as well as the epigraphic sources. For example, unlike the trends I observed in the North Konkan and Upamāla, where the Śaiva religious landscape was literally built atop or in direct proximity to the earlier Buddhist centers, in Sapādalakṣa the monumental religious centers of the 8th century onwards developed in new areas, often to the west of early sites like Bairat, Sonkh³³⁶, and

³³⁶ Sonkh was another prominent settlement and economic center very near Mathurā. Herbert Hartel, *Excavations at Sonkh: 2500 Years of a Town in Mathura District* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1993). Sonkh appears to fit the larger pattern; namely, that sites from the Kuṣāṇa period were somewhat stagnant or at least not experiencing the same degree of active use in later times (i.e. they were not being built up continuously). Caravanserai at Structural level 11 9 or Excavation level 11) suggests trade, but the number of coin finds declines markedly in period V-VIII (i.e. post-Gupta).

Rairh.³³⁷ This geographic expansion also marked a cultural shift by integrating Śaiva centers next to what had been a predominantly Vaiṣṇava and Buddhist religious landscape. Bairat was arguably the most famous and ancient of these three places. This important Mauryan city flourished between the 3rd century BCE and the 1st century CE.³³⁸ In light of the monumental *stūpa* and *caitya* complex excavated there, it was presumably the region's preeminent religious center [Figure 140].

Concerning Śaiva religious centers, more specifically, my research has revealed clear connections with the unique physical terrain of the area west of the Aravallis where there are numerous saline lakes.³³⁹ The three largest of which are Ḍiḍvānā (ancient Ḍeḍavānaka), Sāmbhar (Śākambharī), and Sikar [Figure 141 & 142]. The production, harvesting, and sale of salt from these lakes has been, and continues to be, the major commercial enterprise dominating the regional economy.³⁴⁰

³³⁷ The third important excavated site was Rairh (Rairh Newai) in the Tonk District, south of Jaipur, which flourished between the 3rd to 2nd centuries, but was active into the Gupta period as well. Rairh yielded hoards of hundreds of punch-marked coins suggestive of trade and commerce. Jain, pp. 121-130.

³³⁸ Traditionally identified as Virāṭa the capital of the Matsya *janapada*, it was one of the sixteen *mahājanapadas* of the early Buddhist and Jain literature. The development of Bairat may well have been linked to its copper mines. Hoards of copper coins were found in the course of excavations. Silver punch-marked coins (Greek and Indo-Greek) were also found at the excavated *stūpa* site. On Bairat see: IAR 1962-3, p. 31; D. Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, (Calcutta: 1971); D.R. Sahnī, *Archeological Remains & Excavations at Bairat*, (Jaipur: Jaipur State, 1937); *Arch of Ancient Indian Cities*, D. Chakrabarti, (Delhi: Oxford University Press,), p 220.

³³⁹ These lakes are more accurately defined as 'playas', i.e. "flat-bottom depressions found in interior desert basins and adjacent to coasts within arid and semiarid regions, periodically covered by water that slowly filtrates into the ground water system or evaporates into the atmosphere, causing the deposition of salt, sand, and mud along the bottom and around the edges of the depression." The lakes were likely formed from the dispersed drainage patterns of old river channels. Formation of larger lakes, like Sāmbhar and Ḍiḍvānā, is attributed to structural depressions. Salt is harvested from these playas in various ways: for example, by digging trenches and collecting the salt deposits after evaporation and by using wells and surface tanks to collect saline water and salt post-evaporation. M.D. Kajale & B.C. Deotare, "Field Observations and Lithostratigraphy of the Three Salt Lake Deposits in Indian Desert of Western Rajasthan," *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute* vol 53 (1993): 117-134; V.C. Misra, *The Geography of Rajasthan*, (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1967).

³⁴⁰ Competition for control over this area and salt industry raged fiercely in the 14th century between the Sultans of Delhi, rulers of Gujarat, and the Rāṇās of Mewar. See Jain, pp. 192-3. Complex networks for salt manufacture and trade were also observed and reported by colonial officials in Rajputana. In his report, Richard M. Dane,

Of these three, The Śākambharī Lake is particularly important for this discussion since it was the largest of the salt lakes and it was also the site of an ancient settlement (now called Naliasar, located approximately 6km from Sāmbhar). The rise of the Śākambharī area as a commercial, religious, and political center may have followed the gradual leveling off of development in Bairat and other early settlements, where excavation stratigraphy shows a gradual plateau or even decline in development in the post-Kuṣāṇa times.

By contrast, excavations at Naliasar reported evidence of a large settlement and industrial center³⁴¹ dating from at least the 3rd-4th and which was at its height between the 5th and 7th centuries. The enormous deposits of iron slag (the refuse of large-scale craft production) found in the course of excavation “suggests full-time craft specialization and production for a wide market.”³⁴² Much of the roughly 6 km excavation area has been largely filled in, but some remains of the settlement area are still visible [Figures 143 & 144]. Settlement continued in subsequent centuries, but the stratigraphy of the site indicates that new construction had nearly ceased after the 7th century.³⁴³ I suggested earlier

Commissioner for North Indian Salt Revenue 1898-1907, made special note of the elaborate and lucrative pre-colonial systems of taxation in place for salt trade in Rajasthan. It is therefore not surprising that establishing a monopoly on salt production and trade was one of the first undertakings of the BEIC in 1780. See Richard M Dane, “The Manufacture of Salt in India,” *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* vol 72 (1924): 402-418. At the time of my fieldwork in 2013-14, I observed active salt production and harvesting at the three major salt lakes.

³⁴¹ Structures from the Kuṣāṇa and Gupta periods, large finds of terracotta, pottery, and materials for stone-cutting and polishing. Excavation report published by Sahni also shows Śaiva terracotta imagery from Gupta period (i.e. Umā-Maheśvara and Mahiṣāsura-mardini plaques) *ARES* Plate V a,b.

³⁴² George Erdosy, “City States of North India and Pakistan at the time of the Buddha” in *The Archaeology of Early Historic South Asia: The Emergence of Cities and States* ed F.R. Allchin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) p. 112.

³⁴³ On these excavations see T.H. Hendely, ‘Buddhist Remains near Sambhar, in Western Rajputana, India’ *JRAS* 17 vol 1(1883):29-37; D.R. Sahni, *Archeological Remains and Excavations at Sambhar* (Jaipur: Jaipur State Dept,) *Encyclopedia of Indian Archeology* vol. II s.v. Sambhar

that Naliasar could have been the Jambumārga of the SP_s and the chronology of the site supports this hypothesis. While Jambumārga was evidently a well-known locale at the time of the text's composition, the lack of references to this place in later sources suggests that it had lost its relevance as a prosperous and culturally significant site.

II. The Politics of Prestigious Places

By the 8th century, the Pratihāras' sovereignty extended over a substantial expanse of northwest India, and their power was augmented significantly by Mihira Bhoja (c. 836-892) in the second half of the 9th century. The success of this ruling family was due, in large part, to the relatively stable network of local clans mobilized in their support.³⁴⁴ These networks would have been of critical importance as the Pratihāras sought to augment their royal prestige by leaving their early stronghold at Mandor (i.e. Māṇḍavyapura) to establish a capital much further east, at Kanauj, the coveted political center of the Gangetic north for centuries to come.³⁴⁵ The Śākambharī Cāhamānas were one such local family whose

³⁴⁴ The exact nature of power relations between 'Imperial' dynasties and regional, subordinate ruling families in medieval Rajasthan, as elsewhere, can be difficult to construe. The Pratihāras were certainly a dominant power in this part of India, however, on the borders and hinterlands of their territories local rulers operated with a good deal of autonomy. For example, inscriptions from Ghaṭiyālā (i.e. Rohinsakūpa)—one carved on a stone slab in a Jain temple and another on a nearby pillar—dating from the reign of Mihira Bhoja, record the works of Kakkuka, a local ruler whose genealogy suggests ties to the Pratihāra lineage. But Kakkuka does not acknowledge a Pratihāra superior. The gentrification of Ghaṭiyālā memorialized in the inscriptions (which was reportedly achieved through the eradication of the Ābhira population) construction of markets and roads, and the establishment of a *mahājana* community, are presented as his deeds alone. M. Deviprasad & F. Kielhorn, "Ghaṭiyālā Inscription of the Pratihāra Kakkuka of Vikrama Samvat 918," *JRAS* (1895), pp.513-21; *EI* 18 (1925-26), pp. 87-99; *PRASWC* (1906-07), pp. 34-35.

³⁴⁵ The Pratihāras controlled Kanauj for approximately 150 years. They eventually lost control of the capital to the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. On the socio-cultural preeminence of Kanauj in the early medieval period see Andre Wink "Kanauj as the Religious and Political Capital of Early Medieval India" in *The Sacred Center as the Focus of Political Interest* ed. Hans Bakker (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1992), 101-117. On the political significance of Kanauj during the time of the *Skandapurāṇa*'s composition see the *Introduction* and pp. 77-94 in Bakker (2014).

military feats and marriage alliances served to distinguish them within the Pratihāra court.³⁴⁶ But the Cāhamānas were not destined to remain subordinate to the Pratihāras. By the 11th century they controlled much of northeast Rajasthan.

II.I The Śākambharī Cāhamānas & Sapādalakṣa's Geopolitics

The early history of the Śākambharī Cāhamānas,³⁴⁷ like so many of pre-modern India's ruling clans, is rather obscure. The literary sources most commonly cited by D.S. Sharma in his authoritative study—the *Prthvīrājaviṣaya*, *Prabandhakōśa*, and the *Khum māṇa Rāso*—were composed centuries after their rule. The genealogy recorded in the Bijolia Inscription (VS 1226/1170 CE) is also relatively late.³⁴⁸ The brief historical narrative provided in the *EITA* locates Cāhamāna origins in the 7th century, and sketches a hypothetical rebellion against Pratihāra administrators that culminated in their assertion of political independence in the 10th century, as recorded in the Harṣa Stone Inscription (discussed below).³⁴⁹ Certainly we must be cautious in using these accounts; but if we overlook the vagaries of dynastic genealogies and accounts of military exploits, the one stable feature of the Cāhamāna narrative is geography. In both the aforementioned literary sources and in their earliest inscriptions, the Cāhamānas are represented consistently as an 'emplaced polity' deeply rooted in the Sapādalakṣa

³⁴⁶ Members of the Cāhamāna and the Guhila clans were important players in the expansion and support of the Pratihāra court. The inscription of Guhila Bālāditya records the various deeds undertaken in service of the Pratihāras. Cāhamāna Gūvaka II solidified his ties to the Pratihāras through the marriage of his sister, Kalāvati, to Bhoja. D R Bhandarkar, 'Chatṣu Inscription of Baladitya' *EI* 12 (1913-14) pp.9-17 ; Sircar, 32; Sharma, p. 26.

³⁴⁷ Like so many of medieval India's ruling clans, the Cāhamānas were comprised of a number of regionally specific lineage groups (for example, based in Broach, Pratapgarh, and Nadol). See Sharma, pp. 14-22.

³⁴⁸ A.K. Vyas, 'Bijolia Rock Inscription of Chahamana Somesvara V.S. 1226,' *EI* 26 (1941) pp. 84-112.

³⁴⁹ The Śākambharī Cāhamānas are discussed in Chapters 33, 50, & 60 of the *EITA*. M.A. Dhaky's entry (Chapter 50, p. 95) is particularly imaginative in charting the expansion of the Cāhamāna power through the defeat of various Pratihāra generals and subordinates. Since Dhaky cites no primary sources to support his account, we must assume he is expanding upon and embellishing the narrative given in Sharma's monograph.

region, and particularly in the region situated between Puṣkara and their ancestral homeland, a tract called Ananta, near Sikar.³⁵⁰ Epigraphic and material evidence permits an even more precise localization around two prominent features of the regional landscape: the Śākambharī Lake³⁵¹ and the Harṣagiri (located near Ananta) [Figures 145 & 146]. From atop the imposing Mount Harṣa, the Cāhamānas proclaimed their independent status as memorialized in a massive stone inscription (dated 973 CE/ VS 1030)³⁵² recording the endowment of a monumental temple for the clan deity (*kuladeva*), Śiva, eulogized as the Lord Harṣa.

While the existing historiography on the period tends to attribute the elevation in Cāhamāna rank to their Pratīhāra ties,³⁵³ I would suggest that geopolitics were equally significant. The Cāhamānas' political success was contingent upon the ability of these rulers to exert control over places of regional economic and political significance within the topography of Sapādalakṣa and to shape these places both symbolically and materially, through building and donative practices. Claiming two of the regional

³⁵⁰ The locale or tract called Ananta is used as a toponym first in the mid-10th century Harṣa inscription as the Cāhamāna homeland and as the place where a '*tantrapāla*' named Kṣamāpāla attacked Vākpati, grandfather of Cāhamāna Vighararāja II. (See below; Verse 16). This place is mentioned again in the 13th century Bijolia Inscription as the homeland of the Cāhamāna Sāmanta. Here it also appears to be a regional designation as Sāmanta is reportedly from Ahichatrapura within the Ananta region. 'Bijolia Inscription' Verses 11-12; Sharma, pp. 10-13.

³⁵¹ The earliest of the Cāhamāna rulers that can be connected with the Lake is Vighararāja II, but as Sharma records, the fourth chapter of the *Prthvīrājaviṣaya* explicitly connects the 7th century Cāhamāna ruler, Vāsudeva with the Sāmbhar Lake, which was supposedly given to the king as a gift by a *vidhyādhara*. Sharma, 23

³⁵² The inscription has been edited three times: E. Dean, *Journal of the Asiatic Society* (1835); F. Kielhorn, *Epigraphia Indica* (1894). D.R. Bhandarkar, *The Indian Antiquary*, XLII (1913), p. 57 ff.

³⁵³ "[...]it is certain that the [Cāhamāna] lineage increased its potency by affiliation with the Pratīhāra state." *EITA*, 225. It is not my intention to reject this statement entirely, only to question what, if any, information it actually provides given its generality. The expansion and augmenting of early complex polities, both the Cāhamānas and the Pratīhāras alike, was achieved through the control and manipulation of prestigious places. The Pratīhāras were concerned with the supra-regional capital of Kanauj. The Cāhamānas claimed sites of regional renown close to their ancestral home.

landscape's most prominent features was a deft political maneuver that allowed the Cāhamānas to reinforce and materialize their own royal power through control of the physical terrain itself. This political strategy was not simply a symbolic gesture. By commanding the Salt Lakes region, the Cāhamānas would have been able to monopolize the lucrative salt trade so integral to the regional economy. At the same time, by overseeing the Śākambharī-Harṣa route, they could monitor the critical supra-regional trade route that ran north from Ujjain, via Puṣkara, to the market towns of northwest and east to Mathurā. The salt trade contributed to the religious landscape as well. As I will discuss below, taxes remitted by salt merchants and horse traders were integral to the support of the Śaiva temple at the Harṣagiri.

III Political Rhetoric and Temple Patronage

Religious life in medieval Sapādalakṣa was inextricably bound up in the region's politics, the textures and complexities of which tend to be obscured by a scholarly focus on the fortunes of the Pratīhāras. While these rulers left a significant corpus of inscriptions, the majority of these are copper plates recording gifts to brahmins. No inscriptions recording the construction of temples have survived.³⁵⁴ Here again is evidence of the same pattern that emerged in the previous case studies—namely, that the so-called 'Imperial' dynasties appear quite removed from temple-based donative practices and the quotidian activities of temple care and management. The seeming reluctance of rulers of such expansive powers to engage in temple donation is a widespread historical phenomenon that, no doubt, has multiple explanations and contingencies. With that caveat, it is important to note that the act of endowing a temple or enshrining a deity created a tangible, and often enduring, link between

³⁵⁴ The only clear epigraphic evidence for Pratīhāra building practices comes from the inscription at Sāgar Tāl, a tank just outside Gwalior. This record refers to the building of a palace complex or seraglio (*antaḥpurapuram*). *EI* 17 (1925-6), pp. 99-114; Sircar, *Select Inscriptions* 1983 ed. pp. 242-46. This record is also discussed in Willis, 'Royal Patronage' in *Gods, Guardians, and Lovers*, ed. Mason. pp. 49-65.

the donor and a specific place or monument. Such practices would have served the interests of an emerging, emplaced polity like the Śākambharī Cāhamānas, whose ability to inscribe themselves upon the regional landscape served as a highly visible manifestation of their political prowess.

While I have stressed the ties between the Cāhamānas and Mount Harṣa more than once in the preceding pages, this locale is not only significant for mapping political history. The remains from the temples on the Harṣagiri preserve significant evidence for the reconstruction of Śaiva religious life in Sapādalakṣa and reflect the ways in which a monument was used to materialize ties between the power of a deity and that of pious patrons. At Harṣa, these connections were communicated through the artistic features of the monument and via the medium of a monumental stone inscription found on the mountain. Stone inscriptions were not mobile or private documents, like the ubiquitous copperplate charters; rather, like the temples to which they were typically affixed, they evoked power, substance, and permanence. As characterized by Tamara Sears, stone inscriptions '[...] functioned as new instantiations into the physical environment, which carried the potential to significantly transform both the meaning and experience of encountering a physical place.'³⁵⁵ By inferring a connection between political rhetoric and temple patronage in this section's title, I intend just the kind of encounter that Sears describes. The experience of a sanctified space can also be rhetorically framed by the efforts of rulers to intervene upon or manipulate a space in order to express their political ambitions.

³⁵⁵ T. Sears, *Worldly Gurus and Spiritual Kings* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 2014) p. 46.

III.I Harṣagiri as Royal Center

A monumental object covering a black stone approximately three feet square [Figure 147], the Harṣa inscription³⁵⁶ can be divided into four thematic sections. The first of these includes praise of Śiva and the beauty of the mountain itself. This is followed by an extensive royal eulogy detailing the exploits and victories of the Cāhamānas and their donations to the shrine of the their *kūladeva*, Harṣa. The temple that the inscription commemorates was reportedly completed in 956 CE³⁵⁷ [Figure 148]. The third section praises the lineage of resident Pāśupatas and commemorates their donations and pious acts. The concluding prose section records subsequent donations made prior to V.S. 1030/973 CE

Following the opening invocation of Gaṇeśa³⁵⁸, the poet's first imperative is to eulogize the Lord Paśupati who dwells on the mountain peak as the Lord Harṣa. The epithet Harṣa likely refers to the local form of the God, the tutelary deity of the mountain that dominates the surrounding landscape. The poet expands this regional significance to connect the epithet 'Harṣa' with the tale of Śiva's destruction of Tripura.

³⁵⁶ The inscription has been edited three times: E. Dean, *Journal of the Asiatic Society* (1835); F. Kielhorn, *Epigraphia Indica* (1894). D.R. Bhandarkar, *The Indian Antiquary*, XLII (1913), p. 57 ff. F. Kielhorn, *EI* vol. 2 pp. 116-140. As reported by Kielhorn (p. 116), the inscription was discovered by G.E. Rankin and E. Dean in 1834. It measures approximately 3 feet square and is carved on black stone. Their reports were published in the *JAS-Bengal* vol. IV, 1835: pp. 361-400. The inscription is now housed in the Sikar Government Museum. Other small inscriptions (seven recorded) are engraved on pillars and other parts of the temple's remains. These date primarily to the 12th century. One, from the 15th century, carved on the left side of the doorway records the names of a group of masons. Bhandarkar has suggested that the temple was renovated at this point and the masons were involved in the work. *PRASWC*, March 31st, 1901 55ff; VS Srivastava, "Ancient Shiva Temple at Mt Harsha, Sikar," *Researcher: Bulletin of Rajasthan's Archeology and Museums* (Jaipur: Directorate of Archeology and Museums, 1964-5), pp 17-32.

³⁵⁷ There are three dates recorded in the inscription: 1) VS 1013/956 CE, the date at which the temple constructed by Allaṭa was reportedly completed. 2) VS 1027/970 CE, the date of Allaṭa's death. 3) VS 1030/973 CE, the concluding date for subsequent donations made to the temple after its completion.

³⁵⁸ The edition and translation used are those of Kielhorn unless otherwise noted. V 1. Kielhorn suggests here the epithet *gajānana*, supplying the missing *akṣaras* in the last *pada* of Rathoddhatā meter. Kielhorn, 119 n. 8-10.

He who—full of joy (*harṣa*) after he incinerated the enemies of the gods at Tripura with his burning arrow (and) was worshipped by a multitude of joyful gods led by Indra, who praised and bowed to him—took up residence here on the mountain peak under the very name Harṣa out of favor for Bhārata, May that moon-crested one, now with a second residence, dwell (here) in the form of the *liṅga* for your well-being. [7] (Cecil)

When the gods saw how his own nature broke forth, like a mighty fire issuing from the hollow of his eye, frightening the creatures with its scorching rays, darkening the quarters with thick volumes of smoke of the trees which were consumed by its flames all around, roaring terribly in its impetuous progress, (and) annihilating the god of love, they became afraid lest the destruction of the world had come, out of season. [8] (Kielhorn)

May this mountain Harṣa, which grazes the clouds on high (and) on which the God Harṣa, the destroyer of Pura, resides, purify you! [9]³⁵⁹ (Kielhorn)

In a manner characteristic of the literary genres of *purāṇa* and *māhātmya* these verses work to incorporate the specific locale of Mt. Harṣa within the Śaiva mythic topography, writ large. This localization of sanctity involved the mapping of a rhetorical landscape in which temporal and geographic distinctions were effectively collapsed in order to elevate this site of regional sanctity by subsuming it within the established Śaiva ecumene. This was accomplished in a threefold manner: 1) by the repetition of the name Harṣa, which effectively assimilates the physical terrain of the mountain

³⁵⁹ *nūnaṃ vāṇāgnidagdhattripurasaruripu[r.jā]tahaṣaḥ sahaṣair
indrādyaṭ devavṛndaiḥ kṛtanutinatibhiḥ pūjyamāno 'ttra śaile |
yo 'bhūn nāmnāpi harṣo giriśikharabhuvor bhāratānugrahāya
sa stād vo liṅgarūpo dviguṇitabhavanaś candramauliḥ śivāya // 7//
(Sragdharā)
niryannetrā[d][akhā]ṇḍānaṇudahanaruci* ploṣasaṃbhrāntasattvaṃ
prāntajvālāvalīḍhadrumabahalamaḥādhūmadhūmrāyitāśam/
saṃraṃbhāraṃbhabhīmasvanam asamaśarocchedi yasyāśaśaṅke
dṛṣtvā devaiḥ [sva]rūpaṃ kim iya[m] asamaye saṃhṛtir [bbobhuvīti]** //8//
(Sragdharā)*

*Edition reads *niryannetrā[ṇḍa][bhā]ṇḍānaṇudahanaruci* **Edition reads *bbobhuve[dya]*. Emending to read *bbobhuvīta* as an Intensive formed from the weak stem of *√bhū*

*devaḥ puradhag adhyāste yam abhramkaṣam uccakaiḥ /
harṣakhyātiḥ sa harṣākhyo girir eṣa punātu vaḥ //9//
(Anuṣṭubh)*

with the deity, Śiva, who is said to dwell there in person³⁶⁰ 2) The epithet 'Harṣa' (i.e. joy) is then used to create a further layer of significance, as this 'joy' was expressed following Śiva's victory over Tripura, a victory also celebrated on Mt Harṣa 3) Finally, the text hints at yet another level of connection in Verse 7 by introducing Mt Harṣa as Śiva's second mountain abode, a sort of local counterpart for his established Himalayan home on Mt Kailāsa.³⁶¹ It is by virtue of these intimate, interwoven associations with Śiva that the site derives its power and sanctity. As the poet concludes the section:

The water of the torrents which flows here is indeed not that of the Ganges; here there is not the charming beauty of the garden of paradise; nor are there [palaces] here which glitter brightly all around with their jeweled and gilded pinnacles. Yet this hill possesses another, superior, unrivalled beauty; for that Śambhu dwells here in person is surely a paramount cause of loveliness. [10] (Kielhorn)

Since the eight-formed (*god*), the lord of the eight perfections, himself dwells here, this mountain possesses supreme grandeur which baffles description. [11]³⁶² (Kielhorn)

³⁶⁰ This identification is made explicitly in *padas* c & d of verse 9 and repeated more generally in Verse 11. This association would have also been compelling because of Śiva's connection with mountains, more broadly. Anne Feldhaus (2000) has explored this *topos* in the context of Maharashtra.

³⁶¹ This interpretation is not conveyed clearly in Kielhorn's translation. I understand *dviguṇitabhavanā*s (Verse 7a) referring to both his specific manifestation as the *liṅga* enshrined in the temple (i.e. his *liṅgarūpa*) and his divine form that dwells on the mountain. The two kinds of abodes then being the *liṅga* and the mountain. A similar kind of duality is expressed in *giriśikharabhuvos* which does not refer to two peaks on Mt Harṣa, but could indicate the two peaks of Mt Harṣa and Mt Kailāsa. Here I disagree with Bhandarkar's argument for a literal interpretation that there were two shrines. There is no indication of a second, distinct temple in another location on the mountain, nor does the mountain have two distinct peaks.

³⁶² *gāṁgaṁ no nirjha[rāmbha]ḥ pravahati na śubhā nandanodyānalakṣmīḥ
sadratnasvarṇaśṛṅgāmalavidharuco naiva — [s ta]thāttra /
anyāṁ dhatte tathāpi śrīyam atīṣayinīm eṣa śailo 'dvitīyāṁ
sākṣāc chaṁbhur yad āste tad api hi paraṁ kāraṇaṁ ramyatāyāḥ//10//
(Sragdharā)
aṣṭamūrttir yam adhyāste siddhyāṣṭakavibhuḥ svayam/
mahimā bhūddharasyāsyā paramaḥ kopi — U U //11//
(Anuṣṭubh)*

These verses describing the beauty of the mountain itself are followed by a description of the glorious temple of Harṣadeva that, in the typical hyperbole of such epigraphic records, is said to be comparable to Mt Meru.³⁶³

Glory to this palace of the Lord Harṣadeva, with its many true delights! Blessed in its precincts and its most excellent main pavilion, which is resplendent like the golden egg. Charming like the (five) sons of Pāṇḍu, its enclosure furnished with a ring of raised structures on its edge. Lovely with the well-crafted bull at its arched entry—looking like the peak of Meru! [12] (Cecil)

While Verse 3 praises Śiva as the Lord whose dancing animates and directs the cosmos, he is also invoked as a victorious warrior, whose destruction of Tripura was celebrated by the gods. This reference to Śiva's martial victory would have been a compelling image for the Cāhamānas who used the same locale to memorialize the military victories of their own lineage.³⁶⁴ In the same vein, it is certainly no accident that this inscription also records the first instances of Cāhamāna Simharāja's use of the title *mahārājādhirāja*.³⁶⁵ Simharāja is also credited with donating funds for the construction and decoration of a monumental temple to honor his *kuladeva*—who was credited as the source of the clan's success. The poet tells us in no uncertain terms:

³⁶³ [eta]t svarṇṇāṇḍakāṁtipravaratamamahāmaṇḍapābhogabhadraṁ
prāntaprāsādamālāviracitavikaṭāpāṇḍuputrābhirāmam*/
meroḥ śrīṅgopamānaṁ sughaṭitavvṛṣasattoraṇadvāraramyaṁ
nānāsadbhogayuktaṁ jayatī bhagavato harṣadevasya [harmmyam] //12//

*Edition reads *vikaṭā* (*metri causa*). Although the meaning of 'vikaṭa' as enclosure is not attested from other (lexical) sources, it is used again with this meaning, and with short 'a', in Verse 33, which describes the well-crafted enclosure (*sughaṭitavikaṭam*) made for the Harṣa temple by the Pāśupata Allaṭa. I take this to mean the area immediately surrounding the temple (i.e. the *pradakṣiṇapatha*) along which a series of smaller shrines had been built. Since renovations to the larger courtyard (*prāṅgaṇa*) are described in Verse 42, I think there is a distinction to be made between the temple enclosure and the courtyard.

³⁶⁴ Verses 13-23

³⁶⁵ This epithet is used in the concluding prose section (Line 34)

This row of great kings had the origin of their virtues in devotion to Śambhu. The holy Harṣa is their family deity; through him has the family become illustrious [27] ³⁶⁶

In the verses that follow, the poet further describes how the sanctity of this mountain was materialized and augmented by various actors, beginning with the Cāhamāna kings. In the language of cultural geographers, the lines evince of the use of the mountain temple as a ‘cultural capital.’ Where here the term ‘capital’ refers both to money and to monumental sites that, as cultural resources, were manipulated by various elites.³⁶⁷ In order to reinforce the connection between the Cāhamāna lineage, the Lord Harṣa, and the monument itself, the poet repeatedly identifies the splendor of the lineage with that of the deity; the fame of one seemingly augmenting that of the other. This is done first by describing the temple as a manifestation of the fame of the lineage progenitor Gūvaka.³⁶⁸ Although the structure would likely have postdated this ruler’s time, it is still invoked as a tangible trace of early Cāhamāna sovereignty as the origins of the lineage are preserved in the structure itself. The connection with the lineage is again reinforced by the materiality of the temple in Verse 18,³⁶⁹ this time by the augmenting of the structure with gold. ³⁷⁰

³⁶⁶ [mahā]rājāvalī cāsau śambhubhaktiguṇodayā/
śrīharṣaḥ kuladevo ‘syās tasmād divyaḥ kulakramaḥ //27//
(Anuṣṭubh)

³⁶⁷ Chris Philo & Gerry Kearns, “Culture, History, Capital: A Critical Introduction to the Selling of Places” in *Selling Places: The City as Cultural Capital Past and Present* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993) pp 1-32.

³⁶⁸ First came the lord of men known as the illustrious Gūvaka, of the Cāhamāna family, who attained preeminence as a hero in the assemblies of the foremost princes of the world, the illustrious Nāgas and the rest; whose fame, remaining on the earth in visible form, as an excellent dwelling for the holy Harṣadeva, even now endures here and illumines with great [...] 13

ādyah śrīgūvakākhyāprathitanarapatiś cāhamānānvayo ‘bhūt
śrīmannāgādyalokapravarāṇṛpasabhālabdhavīrapatiṣṭhaḥ /
yasya śrīharṣadeve varabhavanamayī bhautalī kīrttimūrttir
lloke ‘dyāpi sthiraiṣā pratapati paramaiḥ __U__ __U__ [gai?]: //13//
(Sragdharā)

³⁶⁹ And on Śiva’s dwelling he set a golden dome (?), his own fame in bodily form, resembling the full moon [18]

III.II Pāśupatas and ‘Pious People’

Ostensibly the Cāhamāna cult center, this inscription and the temple it commemorates preserve traces of the combined efforts of multiple social networks: religious specialists, mercantile communities, and lay devotees all invested in this site. Thus, the Harṣa inscription served as a medium to communicate different registers of belonging, sodality, and community.

After the royal eulogy, the inscription praises the Pāśupata religious specialists associated with the temple. The record provides some important evidence of a growing trend in which the religious specialists take on an increasingly central role as temple patrons in the 10th-11th century, a phenomenon also noted by Tamara Sears.³⁷¹ In the Harṣa record the religious specialists appear autonomous, which could be taken as an indication that they operated within somewhat distinct ‘networks of social control’. There is, however, a significant geographic connection—as mentioned below, the Pāśupata lineage preceptor, Viśvarūpa, is said to hail from *anantagocara*, (the region or perhaps here the lineage of *ananta*?) the very same area the Cāhamānas claimed as their homeland.³⁷²

haimam āropitaṃ yena śivasya bhavanopari /
pūrṇācandropamaṃ svīyaṃ mūrttaṃ ya[śa] U [piṇ?]daka[m]// 18//
(*Anuṣṭubh*)

³⁷⁰ There is some uncertainty regarding the translation of this verse. Kielhorn interprets this passage to refer to the installation of a golden dome, which is likened to a physical manifestation of the ruler’s *yaśas*. It could also be the case that this verse refers to the gilding of the ceiling of the *mahāmaṇḍapa*. These intricately carved ceilings are typically arched or vaulted, so the allusion to a bright and shining full moon makes sense in the context. Also since the *mahāmaṇḍapa* is typically the gathering place for devotees and the site of ritual practice it would be a prominent place for a wealthy patron to display a gift.

³⁷¹ Sears, pp. 46-48.

³⁷² Verse 28.

The Pāśupata preceptors included in Viśvarūpa's lineage are described with a number of significant epithets and descriptions. Viśvarūpa, as was just mentioned, hailed from the area around Mt. Harṣa. He is further characterized as *pañcārthalākulāmnāye*³⁷³ and a devotee of Uttareśvara. This description of Viśvarūpa is particularly significant since 'Pañcārtha' is the same term used to describe the Pāśupata doctrine expounded by Kauṇḍinya in his *Pañcārthbhāṣya* on the *Pāśupatasūtra* as well as Lakuliśa's teaching in the SP_s.³⁷⁴ In Viśvarūpa's lineage, comes Praśasta, who is not connected with a specific doctrine or lineage. He is described as a Pāśupata who has undergone initiation (*dīkṣā*).³⁷⁵ Praśasta's student was Allaṭa (a.k.a. Bhāvarakta) and he is described as a Vārṇāṭika brahmin from the village of Rāṇapallikā, near Harṣa.³⁷⁶ Unlike his predecessor, Allaṭa is *sāmsārikakulāmnāya* (of a worldly lineage?). Allaṭa's student Bhāvadyōta, is described as *dīptapāśupatavrataḥ* (whose is as if shining with the *pāśupata vrata*, which could be reference to a glowing white body smeared with ash). This lineage could indicate a localized tradition. If we assume that Mt. Harṣa's history as a regional religious center pre-dated the construction of the temple, perhaps this genealogy records a lineage tradition with deep ties to the local topography.

While the Cāhamāna rulers are credited with significant donations to Lord Harṣa, it was the Pāśupata teacher Allaṭa who reportedly commissioned the temple using funds obtained from pious

³⁷³ In his edition, Kielhorn does not connect Viśvarūpa to the Lākula tradition as he takes *pañcārthala* as the first member of this compound.

³⁷⁴ SP_s 129-130.

³⁷⁵ Verse 29

³⁷⁶ Verse 30. Rāṇapallikā is further qualified as being near Harṣa (*harṣasyāsannato grāmaḥ prasiddho rāṇapallikā*).

donations.³⁷⁷ After his death, Bhāvadyota followed his teachers command to continue work on the temple by making further improvements to the temple grounds: including a courtyard, garden, well, and stone cistern to provide water for cattle.³⁷⁸ These details hint at a kind of qualitative division of ‘donative labor.’ Whereas the connection of the rulers to the temple was primarily through monetary donations or gifts of land, the specific constructions undertaken by the religious specialists are recounted in detail.

We learn more about the donative patterns at Harṣa in the inscription’s concluding section, which memorializes gifts received before VS 1030/973 CE. The summary list begins with villages³⁷⁹ donated by the Cāhamāna kings and their officers. Following these royal dispensations, donations made by two different merchant groups are mentioned. The first are dealers in salt³⁸⁰ from Śākambharī who agreed to donate one *viṃśopaka* on every measure (*kūṭaka*) of salt that they sold. In addition, horse traders ‘from the north’ (*uttarāpātha*) agree to contribute one *drama* on every horse.³⁸¹ Although the reference to the provenance of the horse dealers is vague, a contemporaneous inscription from Pehowa records comparable acts of tithing by a confederation of horse-dealers coming from various

³⁷⁷ Verse 33, (*dharmavittaiḥ*) ‘with wealth obtained from pious people’, Kielhorn trans.

³⁷⁸ Verses 37-39 & 42.

³⁷⁹ Some of these villages end with the suffix *-kūpaka/kūpa* that likely refers to a well (Line 38) Another ending in *-lāvaṇapadra* could be evidence of salt production or trade (Line 40).

³⁸⁰ The title given for this collective is *samastaśrībhammahadeśya* (Line 38)

³⁸¹ These horse merchants called *heḍāvikas* (variant *heṭāvuka*) are known from other epigraphic sources. C. Gupta, ‘Horse Trade in Northern India: Some Reflections on Socio-Economic Life,’ *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, (1983-4): 86-206.

locales.³⁸² Despite these very terse descriptions, the mention of these two high-profile trading networks suggests that the Harṣa temple had attained sufficient renown to solicit patronage from local and supra-local groups at what might have been a prominent site at the junction of trade routes. It seems likely that the sheer size of the mountain would have contributed to its importance as a regionally important landmark and point of convergence for traders and travelers.³⁸³

The donative charter concludes with gifts by unnamed individuals. Presumably persons without a specific social rank, the donations of fields for the enjoyment of the god by these ‘pious people’ (*puṇyātmabhir dattāni devabhuḥjyamānakṣetrāni*) is further evidence for an established pattern of lay patronage at Mt. Harṣa.³⁸⁴ Although the donors are anonymous, the fact that these gifts are mentioned alongside those of the ruling family suggests they were deemed significant enough to record for posterity.

IV. Sapādalakṣa’s Built Landscape

In addition to inscriptions, Sapādalakṣa preserves an extremely rich material archive of art and architecture which art historian Cynthia Atherton has described as, “some of the most decoratively

³⁸² Buhler, ‘The Peheva Inscription from the Temple of Garībnāth,’ *EI* vol 1, (1889-92) pp. 184-190. An inscription from Kiradu (1161 CE) in northwest Rajasthan mentions horse trade *IA* vol. 61 pp. 135ff.

³⁸³ Although I cannot confirm this, in his description of the site Dean claims that the mountain, and even the face with the temple, is visible from as far as Jaipur. As described in his report: “On arriving at the building which had principally excited my curiosity front the plain below, I found it occupied a site about quarter distant from the southwesterly end of the top of the hill, and on the precipitous verge of the northern face. The guide and officiating brahmans informed me, that it may be distinctly seen from the hills round Jaipur, thirty-five coss S.E. from Sambhar, thirty coss south of Midag, and when standing in relief against the dark background of a rainbow, it has frequently been seen from thence and Baudra, two villages or towns in the said territory, distant forty-five coss N.E. by E. Such is the native account, which I think is entitled to belief, as I have myself seen it from Taen, a distance of about forty miles, at least I imagine so, without taking much trouble to find it out.” (Dean, 168)

³⁸⁴ We might infer the same from the names of the craftsmen mentioned in the inscription—Caṇḍaśiva and his father Virabhadra. These names are indicative of a preference for Śiva. Verse 43.

refined and inventive imagery to be seen in this part of western India—or for that matter, northern India generally—in the eighth and ninth centuries.”³⁸⁵ While sources like Atherton’s authoritative study and the often-cited *Encyclopedia of Indian Temple Architecture (EITA)* are essential sources that have been groundbreaking in charting the chronology and regional variety in Indian material culture, much remains to be done to consider how these temples were integrated within the broader economic and political networks of the complex early societies in which they were produced. Too often, monuments are considered in isolation, both from each other and from their larger cultural, economic, and even geographic milieu. This has been the case, in particular, for the material remains of places like Harṣa and Kāmān (discussed below). These sites are surveyed in the *EITA*, but are noticeably absent from Atherton’s study of the art of Sapādalakṣa.³⁸⁶ I think that such lacunae in the region’s historiography can be attributed to two factors: the perceived remoteness of the region and the difficulties in connecting the sites to a particular artistic ‘style’ and source of patronage. In the small body of work published on the material remains of Harṣa its perceived ‘remoteness’ or isolation is invoked repeatedly. Having praised the artistry of some of the panels from Harṣa scattered in American and European museums, Martin Lerner concludes,

... Most perplexing is the problem of how such a remarkable sculpture came into existence in an area where one might expect a more provincial workshop. We have at Harshagiri nothing which suggests the beginnings of a stylistic sequence or that smacks of experimentation, but rather a confident, fully-developed style presaging the great eleventh-century sculpture of Khajuraho.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁵ Atherton, *Art of Medieval Rajasthan*, (Leiden: Brill) 1997, p. 60.

³⁸⁶ In addition to Atherton’s work, this area of Sapādalakṣa is also a blank in the study by Meister, Cort & Babb on Rajasthan’s medieval temples (2008).

³⁸⁷ Martin Lerner, “Some Unpublished Sculpture from Harshagiri” *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, vol 56 no. 10 (1969): 354-364.

Werner's incredulity, expressed in the quote above, echoes that of R. C. Agrawala who, commenting on the same sculptural legacy, marvels at the possibility of finding such important early medieval works "lying in complete oblivion at a remote place like Sikar."³⁸⁸ Certainly visiting Sikar today one feels oneself out on the margins of a rapidly modernizing nation, but this would not have been the case in the early medieval period. As my research has shown, by the 7th and 8th century the Salt Lakes region was thriving, and its remarkable artistic legacy is indicative of an economic surplus substantial enough to support ambitious building projects. Rather than being some province, this region was a major center in its own right.

Since not all of the monumental sites of the region preserve temples of a Śaiva dedication, the challenge is to map more precisely the currents of Śaiva activity within this richly built landscape and to consider how such currents might reflect the political and economic climate of the period. Architectural and iconographic remains from the southern border of Sapādalakṣa (around Jaipur) like the stepwell at Choṭī Khāṭū (c 8th century), the massive stepwell at Ābānerī (c 8th century) and the slightly later temple of Harṣat-mātā (c early 9th century) also preserve an invaluable material archive of the region's artistic traditions. But I have found little evidence for a dominant Śaiva presence, or a specifically Pāśupata influence, in this area. Although one could invoke the common criticism that the evidence from this historical period is simply too fragmentary to support any firm conclusions, it is nonetheless significant that in the material record from the southern areas of Sapādalakṣa there is little that points to an institutionalized Śaivism. This absence might indicate that this area was not so tightly integrated within the regional Pāśupata network. The most significant Śaiva material is preserved in the Salt Lakes region where the social, political, and economic conditions supported a

³⁸⁸ R.C. Agrawala, "Sikar", *Marg: A Magazine of the Arts* (1959): 69-71, p. 71.

flourishing Śaiva religiosity and networks of religious specialists were able to secure patronage.

IV.I The Horizons of ‘Cāhamāna Patronage’

The question of patronage is also an ever-present issue in the study of this material legacy. The authoritative body of art historical work on Sapādalakṣa attributes the region’s monumental art and architecture to Cāhamāna patronage.³⁸⁹ On one level, this attribution can be a useful scholarly hypothesis that provides a strategy for positing connections between regional sites with similar artistic styles. At the same time, there are obvious problems with attributing a macro or ‘regional’ style to a particular ruling family without corroborating evidence from inscriptions or other sources. If the Cāhamānas were involved in the patronage of these sites and temples, no epigraphic evidence of this has been preserved. When they became regional sovereigns in the 9th - 10th century, the rulers designated Mt Harṣa as their royal center. This act implies that both this remarkable site of cultural magnetism and Śaiva devotion, and the established network of religious specialists in residence there, were tied closely to an ascendant Cāhamāna political persona. Moreover, as I have shown in the analysis of the inscriptions above, records of pious giving indicate broad social participation in the establishment of religious centers, such that we need not posit the Cāhamānas as the unifying bond that accounts for regional artistic trends or patterns. Ateliers were mobile and the dissemination of artistic style via skilled artisans is a more convincing explanation. The pattern of settlement expansion and socialization described above would certainly have attracted skilled artists and artisans along with the myriad other groups mentioned in these records.

³⁸⁹ The *EITA* connects several 9th-10th century temples to the period of Cāhamāna rule and patronage. See Chapter 33, p 222ff.

IV.II Celebrating Śiva on the ‘Mountain of Joy’

The remains from Mt Harṣa are particularly important because they afford us the relatively rare opportunity (in pre-modern north India) to integrate the rhetorical and material constructions of a landscape. The inscription from the Harṣagiri commemorates publicly the ties between royal power, Pāśupata identity, and various other local and supra-local groups through the common idiom of Śaiva religiosity. But these acts of commemoration were not restricted solely to linguistic or textual expressions. The temples, monuments, and images that populate the site serve a corroborative function—they are the material traces of these collaborative expressions of piety.

Although the main temple itself has been extensively rebuilt and renovated over time, the structures and iconography attest to a thriving religious center organized around a central *liṅga* shrine. This shrine contains what may be a medieval *caturmukha liṅga*, although a second shrine, directly behind the rebuilt temple, also preserves an early *liṅga* [Figures 149 & 150]. As described in the inscription, smaller shrines within the courtyard surround the central temple. Also still preserved at the site are the remains of a *maṇḍapa* and at which sits a massive carved *vr̥ṣabha* [Figures 151 & 152].³⁹⁰

The atmosphere of joy and celebration evoked by the name of the mountain and its tutelary deity is materialized in the iconography from the site itself, examples of which are preserved within the complex and in the Government Museum in Sikar. Depictions of joyful devotion, dance, and music provide one of the dominant themes of the iconographic program [Figures 153]. Images of a dancing

³⁹⁰ Verse 12.

Śiva also appear as a repeated iconographic *topos*, again seemingly materializing the vision of Śiva recorded in the inscription [Figure 154].³⁹¹

Victorious is that Paśupati, the bestower of compassion on all, who is named Harṣa, the holy, at whose dancing the whole world verily changes its position; [for] the earth, resting on Śeṣa's hoods, bends low beneath the tread of his feet, while the sky with the sun and moon rises high with the lifting up of his arms. [3] (Kielhorn)

Gestures to the multivocality of the larger *māheśvara* community can be observed in the many sculpted panels of dance and devotion. A similar multivocality of tradition is also expressed in sculptures showing *līṅga* worship—ascetics and gurus as well as members of a broader, *laukika* community are depicted engaged in the quintessential Śaiva practice of *līṅga pūjā* [Figures 155 & 156].

While the *māheśvara* community was clearly diverse, specific emblems of the Pāśupata community also figure prominently in the many images of Lakulīśa, the tradition's legendary *guru* [Figure 157]. These icons consistently show Lakulīśa with multiple arms, wielding the club and other familiar Śaiva attributes (*triśūla*, *nāga*, etc.). Since the temple complex is still an active religious center, many of the structures have undergone significant renovations and rebuilding. This is the case for the current temple lintel in the main *līṅga* shrine, which has clearly been rebuilt using architectural fragments from a temple that presumably had a Vaiṣṇava dedication since a small image of Viṣṇu occupies the central niche [Figure 158]. It is highly probable that an image of Lakulīśa would have originally appeared in the doorframe above the central *līṅga* shrine to signal its Pāśupata affiliation. Based upon the dimensions of the doorframe, I think the broken lintel preserved within the temple

³⁹¹ *pādanyāsāvanunnā namati vasumatī śeṣabhogāvalagnā*
[vā (bā)]hutkṣepaiḥ sa[mān ?]_ UUUUUU __ U __ rkkacandraiḥ /
bhinnāvasthaṁ samastaṁ bhavati hi bhuvanaṁ yasya nṛtte pravṛtte
sa śrīharṣābhīdhāno jayati paśupatir ddattaviśvānukampah // 3//
(Sragdharā)

courtyard, in which Lakulīśa appears in the central niche (Figure 157), could have been the one originally housed in the temple.

IV.III The Structure of ‘Śaiva’ Spaces

Although the Harṣa inscription clearly styles the mountain as a Śaiva space, this preference on the part of the rulers and religious specialists does not imply that Śiva was the only deity enshrined on the Harṣagiri. The temple dedicated to the Cāhamāna *kuladeva* was one of many in the extensive complex and the material record preserves evidence of Śaivism alongside a broader and dispersed set of religious practices and concerns. Two significant examples of sculpture depicting Śaiva themes and motifs—the *lingodbhavamūrti* and a *pañcāyatana līnga*—are currently housed in the Ajmer Museum. It is striking, however, that more monumental sculptures of Śiva himself have not survived [Figures 159 & 160].

Yet, religious hierarchies can also be expressed spatially. During my fieldwork, I noted the remains of at least twelve temple foundations, in addition to the extensively renovated *maṭha*, that houses an active Bhairava shrine [Figure 161]. Since some of these foundations are significantly smaller, they could well have been dedications by non-elite donors and serve as further evidence for the multiple individuals and groups who sought to inscribe themselves upon this sacred mountain.³⁹² The Śaiva hierarchy was materialized by locating the *līnga* shrine at the center of the complex where it served as the primary focal point around which the other smaller shrines were clustered.

³⁹² EITA editors also note the smaller shrines, which they take to be roughly contemporaneous with the main temple. They also confirm that the uneven arrangement and size of the smaller sub-shrines means it was not originally conceived as a *pañcāyatana* complex. EITA, 107

Some of these temples may have had a Vaiṣṇava dedication judging from iconographic remains. Three displaced lintels are preserved at the site in which Viṣṇu appears as the central deity [Figure 162]. One of these was also repurposed in the Harṣanātha *līṅga* shrine as noted above. Other notable images of Viṣṇu in his Śeṣaśāyī and Vaikuṇṭha forms are preserved in the Sikar Museum [Figures 163 & 164].

One of the most prominent deities represented at the site is Sūrya. Judging from the remains it is likely that there were also temples for this deity on the mountain. One of the storage sheds also contains a rare image of one of Sūrya's wives, Chāyā. [Figure 165]. The intervisibility of Śiva and Sūrya in early medieval Rajasthan is striking, and the remains at Harṣa are but one example of the prominent trend. As will be discussed below, the remains from Kāman evince a similar affinity. This pattern merits further study and research in the relevant textual sources.

The variety of images and iconography is significant because it points to the existence of a richly varied and complex religious center, one that would have accommodated a range of ritual concerns and practices. Notions of religious hierarchy and authority were not necessarily expressed through strategies of exclusion. We may also assume that much like some of the early examples³⁹³ of Pāśupata religious specialists integrated within temple-centered communities those *ācāryas* in residence at Harṣa would have performed a variety of ritual functions, some of which would have involved non-Śaiva deities. Indeed, their own donations allude to broader concerns for the overall ambiance of the site and general well-being of the community.

³⁹³ These inscriptions are discussed in Chapter 1. See also Bakker, *The World*, 171.

IV.IV Śiva and the Goddess(es)

Of all of the deities accompanying Śiva in the religious centers of Sapādalakṣa, the most prominent and widely worshipped was the Goddess. In her various manifestations: as Śiva's companion Pārvatī, the demon-slaying Durgā, or the fearsome Cāmuṇḍa in addition to the composite form of Ardhanārīśvara, which was favored in the region.³⁹⁴ Images and icons depicting Pārvatī are popular throughout the region. Also of particular interest for the artists were scenes depicting Pārvatī's *tapas* [Figure 166] These icons were popular at Mt Harṣa and also at an 8th century shrine located just adjacent to the Dīḍvāṇā Salt Lake. This goddess temple has been extensively rebuilt, but within its narrative panels are preserved scenes of Pārvatī's *tapas* and transformation on Gauri Śikhara.³⁹⁵ [Figures 167 & 168] In addition to the Goddess *par excellence* as embodied in Pārvatī, Harṣa's sanctified spaces abound in representations of the various subordinate, yet still powerful, goddesses sometimes associated with her, i.e. the *mātr̥s/mātr̥kas* [Figure 169 & 170]. Locating the worship of these deities within the Harṣa temple complex can be difficult especially considering the rebuilding and renovation of active centers; however, the concentration of Goddess imagery within the area I consider to be the rebuilt *maṭha* is striking. Much of the activity there now is centered on an underground temple to Bhairava and this area of the complex could have long-standing ties with these commonly associated deities [Figures 171]

V. A Textured Landscape: Merchants and Pāśupatas in Śūrasena

Thus far, this chapter has shown how the control over the Salt Lakes region served to augment the fortunes of emplaced polities and further legitimize the Cāhamāna's fledgling royal identity. Śaiva religiosity clearly provided a powerful vocabulary for sovereignty; yet, as we saw with the Harṣa

³⁹⁴ On the popularity of this form see also Chapter 3

³⁹⁵ See Meister, 2009; Yokochi SP III.

inscription, the mobilization of resources and control of prestigious places were not practices restricted to elite actors. Other individuals and communities also participated actively in temple life. For the merchant communities expanding their lineage communities in new settlement areas, temples were also integral to processes of community-building and mapping some kind of 'shared social space'.

Kāman provides an illuminating companion study to Harṣa. Despite the richness of the sources, there has not yet been an effort to evaluate the early material legacy of this place together with the epigraphic sources or in light of the contemporaneous material evidence from Satwas, only a few kilometers away. I think there are two reasons for this historiographical anonymity. Kāman was not a major political capital, nor are its inscriptions revelatory of Imperial dynastic history or genealogy. Second, nothing is where it once was. The material remains are all removed from their original architectural contexts. The town is a palimpsest, layered with hybrid structures that were refashioned over time with materials from different historical periods. Other important sculptures from Kāman are distributed across several of Rajasthan's government museums. Despite these challenges, I think it is worth the effort to attempt to isolate a particular historical moment—a period from the end of the 8th century to the early years of the 10th century when this area was truly flourishing. Albeit preliminary, the pages that follow will work to show that Kāman's religious institutions were the *loci* through which notions of belonging and socialization were manifest. In particular, I argue that the epigraphic evidence depicts community building as coincident with place-making, and that both were materialized through a distinctive iconographic vision.

V.I Kāman: Community & Collective

Kāman and Satwas are located in an area that straddles the borders of the Bharatpur and Alwar Districts of Rajasthan, approximately 60 km northwest of Mathurā and approximately 300 km east of Harsa. In the late 8th century Kāman emerged as a boomtown—one instance of a larger medieval pattern characterized by the growth of new markets and fortified towns, somewhat off the beaten track. We know from inscriptions found in the village that Kāman (or Kāmyaka, as it was called) was such a fortified town (a *koṭṭa*) and a market or exchange center (a *haṭṭa*) populated by merchant collectives, artisans, and lineages of Śaiva religious specialists, among others. Kāman's strategic position in the regional landscape no doubt contributed to its prosperity—the settlement was located at a geographic interface where trade networks coming from the south and the northwest converged and continued on toward Mathurā. The town was positioned within a naturally fortified area, enclosed by a run of low lying hills and a river on the northeast side [Figures 172 & 173]. From the satellite images the old settlement mound is clearly visible and the old fortification wall that encircles the city is also faintly visible. The significant early medieval material remains (inscriptions and architectural fragments) are localized on the top of this mound. This pattern would seem to indicate that the temples and religious institutions that once stood in this place served as a point of orientation, a central axis around which the market town developed. The fact that the earliest inscriptions and material evidence both appear from the late 8th century could signal that this was a moment of historical transition occasioned by a significant increase in economic prosperity and settlement expansion that marked the inception of the fortified market town.

In addition to marking a clear geographic center within the settled area, Kāman's religious institutions also provided an ideological center around which expressions of social identity and

belonging were enacted and materialized. Kāman's medieval residents were active donors who gave liberally to religious institutions, including to temples of Viṣṇu, Śiva, the Goddess, and Sūrya. Among the donors whose acts of pious giving have survived through the enduring medium of stone, the voices of merchant groups, traders, and artisans are particularly prominent. And the area's remarkable artistic legacy—preserved in the remains of monumental architecture and finely crafted sculpture—similarly indicates an economic surplus sufficient to support ateliers of skilled artisans and craftspeople. The most compelling evidence for the imbrication of community and place comes from two 'collective' inscriptions that record a series of donations made between the late 8th and early 10th century. Collective records like this one, for which comparable examples have been found at Āhār and Sīyaḍonī,³⁹⁶ were composed over a considerable period of time and demonstrate the extent to which a sanctified center becomes a site for community building by recording an extremely wide range of social participation. In this case donative activity was directed, in particular, toward the temple of Kāmyakeśvara—presumably a *līṅga* shrine dedicated to a locally venerated form of Śiva, the tutelary deity of the eponymous town. While it would be impossible to confirm that it is the shrine named in the inscription, I did visit an old *līṅga* called Kāmyakeśvara still under active worship within the fortified center of the town [Figures 174 & 175].

V.II Corporate Religion

Three stone inscriptions have been reported from Kāman. Two of these are now part of a wall in a local mosque called the Chaurāsī Khambhā [Figure 176]. This mosque was built of repurposed architectural fragments from Hindu temples with some surviving Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava iconography.³⁹⁷ Judging by the

³⁹⁶ *IA* XIX, pp 52 ff.; *EI* I, pp 162 ff.

³⁹⁷ Reuse of the Hindu temple materials is discussed in Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and the Hindu-Muslim Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp. 144-150.

varieties of stone and the different artistic patterns on the reused pillars and fragments, I think that at least five temples were utilized in the construction of this mosque, possibly more. Another inscription was reportedly found in a well outside of the city. All three of the inscriptions are heavily damaged, but we can still recover some significant details.

One inscription is carved on a pillar that is now positioned on its side and built in the interior of the entryway [Figure 177]. It is undated, but has been assigned by Indrajī to the 8th or 9th century based on paleography.³⁹⁸ It records the donation of a Viṣṇu temple by Vachikā, the grandmother of Śūrasena ruler Vatsadāman.³⁹⁹ The inscription also provides a genealogy of seven rulers of this ‘dynasty,’ as it has been termed, although this record is the only one of two inscriptions attesting to their presence in the region. The other Śūrasena inscription was found in a place to the south of Kāman called Bāyāṇa, which was at the time an important commercial center, the Śrīpatha Maṇḍapikā (the Highway Toll or Customs House?). This Śūrasena donation could indicate that Kāman, while not a regional seat of power, was well integrated within regional political and economic networks, perhaps as a satellite market center.

The second stone inscription dated H.S. 180-299/ 786-87—905-6 CE, was found in a well outside the city.⁴⁰⁰ It records seven dates from the Harṣa era when donations were made. The record was badly damaged and is difficult to reconstruct in full, but some important details have been preserved. It begins with an invocation to Śiva and praise of a Brahmin by the name of Kakkuka who,

³⁹⁸B. Indrajī, ‘Inscription from Kāmā or Kāmavana’, *JA* 10 (1881) pp 34-36.

³⁹⁹ According to Indrajī based on its similarity to the Jhālrapāṭan Inscription (cf Chapter 3).

⁴⁰⁰ V.V. Mirashi, ‘Kaman Stone Inscription,’ *EI* vol. 24, 1938)pp. 329-335.

together with his sons, contributed to the construction of a *maṭha*.⁴⁰¹ This *maṭha* appears to have been a Pāśupata center since the names of two of the *ācāryas* end with the *-rāśi* suffix common amongst initiated Pāśupatas—for example, we have mentioned here Guṇarāśi and Pramāṇarāśi.⁴⁰² The repeated reference to students also suggests that it contained a lineage.⁴⁰³ After the record of the endowment of the *maṭha* and the Pāśupata lineage, seven individually dated sections follow that commemorate donations made to the temple of the deity Kāmyakeśvara—which, as I mentioned, was the Śiva of Kāmyaka. It seems that the monastic complex was part of, or perhaps a later addition to, the temple complex.

Some of these donations were in the form of endowments by artisan collectives or guilds (*śreṇi*). For example, a potter's guild agreed to pay one *pana* per wheel each month for the maintenance of the temple.⁴⁰⁴ A guild of gardeners pledged a permanent endowment of garlands to shrines of Viṣṇu and Cāmuṇḍā, presumably located within the same Śaiva temple complex.⁴⁰⁵ The carpenters (*sthapati*) living in Kāman also give a kind of tithe of one *dramma* per month. Other donations were made by individuals and included small measures of land and market enclosures. Bhadra, the shell-cutter, (*śāṅkhika*) donated two enclosures (*āvāris*).⁴⁰⁶ Kāmān was also an active commercial center. A donation made in 905 CE, mentions a cattle market (*kambalīhaṭṭa*) that had

⁴⁰¹ Lines 4 & 8

⁴⁰² Guṇarāśi appears in Line 10 end-Line 11. Pramāṇarāśi is mentioned in the final donation at Lines 22-24.

⁴⁰³ Lines 9,10, & 11

⁴⁰⁴ Donation made in H.S. 229; Lines 13-17.

⁴⁰⁵ Donation made in H.S. 232; Lines 17-18.

⁴⁰⁶ Donation made in H.S. 180; Line 21-22.

enclosures (*āvārikās*) with shops (*vīthīs*), details that seem to suggest that this was not a seasonal fair, but, rather a permanent market.⁴⁰⁷ The final section of the record contains some interesting evidence attesting to the entrepreneurial spirit the Śaiva religious specialists—here a donation to the temple deposited with the Pāśupata Pramāṇarāśi, was, after his death, invested with a *goṣṭhī* by his successor, Cāmuṇḍaka.⁴⁰⁸ The Kāmyakeśvara temple was clearly integrated within the local economy—even the Śaiva *ācāryas* were investing in local market real estate. And the fact that the guilds specifically identify themselves as residents of Kāmyaka in their donations indicates the mutual identity of devotee, temple, and town.

The third inscription is located on the exterior framing wall, of the mosque and is dated H.S. 263/869 CE [Figure 178] It records the pious works of a collective body of trustees who are evidently devotees of Śiva (*maheśapriyā goṣṭhikāḥ*).⁴⁰⁹ In particular, three sons of Ísana are mentioned (Nāgaṭa, Siddhanāga, Śivaviṣṇu) who oversee the building of a tank (*vāpī*) and a monastic residence (*maṭha*) in honor of their father.⁴¹⁰ In Line 20, *padas* c & d of verse in Śārdūlavikrīḍita meter seem to refer to a temple established for (at least) three deities: *kaścīn madhyakṛtālaya U U U _ _ _ U _ _ U _ _ _ _ U harau hariś ca bhagavān sadgoṣṭhikai sthāpitāḥ*. I suggest that we consider Sūrya as the third member of a presumed triad of deities. We could amend the line to read ‘*pūjyau sūryaharau hariś ca bhagavān*.’⁴¹¹ I

⁴⁰⁷ Lines 13-17 record a donation in H.S. 229 to Kāmyakeśvara for two sections of land in the fortified area (Line 13; Line 15 refers to the *koṭṭa*) of the town made by one *vaṇik* named Vajjrata (Line 13). Further references to the structures within the city area in Line 22-24; Donation is from H.S. 299.

⁴⁰⁸ Donation made in H.S. 299; Lines 22-24

⁴⁰⁹ Sircar, ‘Three Inscriptions from Rajasthan’ *EI* vol. 36, (1961) pp. 47-56. Line 11.

⁴¹⁰ Line 10; 14-15.

⁴¹¹ Thanks to Peter Bisschop for the suggestion of ‘*pūjyau*’

admit that this is rather speculative, but in addition to conforming to the meter—which Umā or Pārvatī does not; Brahmā is also unlikely since he is very rarely the recipient of a temple—the addition of Sūrya here also fits well with the material remains from Kāman and Satwas, not to mention larger regional patterns, which I mentioned earlier in relation to material from Harṣagiri.

V.III Sūrya and Śiva in Satwas

Satwas preserves remains of two Sun temples. One of the temple lintels is pictured here with Sūrya in the central niche [Figures 179 & 180]. Directly beside it are remains of a Śiva temple—the Lakulīśa in the central framing niche is an indication of a Pāśupata affiliation, which echoes details of the second Kāman inscription [Figure 181 & 182]. These temple doorframes are obviously rebuilt with contemporary structural elements, and my initial impression was that, in the process of rebuilding, they might have been switched. The lintel with Sūrya in the niche frames a *liṅga* shrine and the Lakulīśa frames a shrine with Sūrya images inside. This seems strange since we might expect a correspondence between the enshrined image and the deity shown in the lintel niche. Switched or not, I do not think these doorframes have travelled far from their original contexts. In addition to their spatial proximity, other features suggest that they were originally conceived as part of a set. For example: their nearly identical size, artistic features (framing *vyālas*, details of pillars, etc.), the proximate size of the central images, and the shared *navagraha* frame. The spatial proximity of the *liṅga* and Sūrya shrines similarly suggests an affinity, or ‘intervisibility’, between these deities. A comparable expression of this intervisibility appears in composite forms of Śiva and Sūrya, that become increasingly popular in this region in the late 9th century. [Figures 183 & 184] While I have not found examples of composite icons in Kāman, the paired Śiva and Sūrya shrines could reflect a developing regional trend. I now question my initial judgment that the doorframes were switched.

This juxtaposition of the Śaiva and Sūrya icons and images could reflect a conscious decision on the part of the artists or donors to give visual expression to a theological concept.

V.IV Irenic Śaivism

The inscriptions acknowledge a number of deities and shrines, but it is Śiva who figures as the town's patron deity. Unfortunately, these sources do not provide us with descriptions of the God or references to mythological events and narratives that might indicate how his devotees imagined him. For these clues we must rely on the iconography. And here the artists are remarkably consistent in their vision [Figure 185]. All of the images I have found from Kāman (thus far) depict Śiva as a family man using two popular iconographic tropes 1) his marriage to Pārvatī (Kalyāṇasundara) and 2) the affectionate Umā-Maheśvara-type with Skanda and Gaṇeśa at the couple's feet [Figure 186]. Neither of these visualizations is particularly unique for this time period or region. What is significant, I think, is that they are deployed exclusively and consistently in Kāman. Unlike nearby Śaiva sites like Harṣagiri (also a place with Pāśupatas in residence) we have no images of Bhairava or other fearsome depictions of Śiva, no *yoginīs* adorned with garlands of skulls, and no scenes suggestive of asceticism. In the Kāman image, Śiva's *yogapaṭṭa* remains visible to us, but his gaze is fixed on his beautiful wife.

This iconography communicates a distinctly irenic vision of Śaivism—that is, a peaceful, institutionalized, and socially supported religion. It is interesting to consider then how this vision was intended to inform the viewer's reading of the framing panel, which depicts the installation of a *liṅga*, its lustration by devotees (likely temple priests, not ascetics) and Śiva's manifestation in it [Figure 187].

VI. Conclusions

As with the other prestigious places—Ujjayanī, Mathurā, and Kanyakubja—pinpointed in the SP's mapping of the Pāśupata landscape, Sapādalakṣa was integral to the regional nexus of settlement, commerce, and politics. Epigraphic and material evidence from the region provides compelling evidence to posit that this area was of foremost significance for the institutionalization of Śaivism in the early medieval period. Rather than Imperial powers, rulers of what I have termed 'emplaced polities' were instrumental in the development of temple-centered religion. And these temples were not simply places of worship, but institutions through which new social sodalities and communities were constituted. The richness of the iconography and the variety in the structural articulation of the religious monuments similarly reflects the varieties of religious concerns and practices that were accommodated within what were ostensibly 'Śaiva' spaces.

The success, and indeed dominance, of Śaivism in this region was tied to these powerful places where networks of political elites, religious specialists, and economic actors converged. In light of this evidence, one could ask if Sapādalakṣa was the site of the SP's Jambumārga? My working hypothesis that the large settlement excavated near the Sambhar Salt Lake could correspond to this purāṇic locale is certainly speculative, but the chronology of the site confirms that it was thriving at the around the same time the text was composed. And like the SP's Jambumārga, the importance of the Sambhar declined after the 7th century when the regional political and economic networks moved north.

CHAPTER V

SEEKING THE ‘LORD WITH A CLUB’ ENCOUNTERING LAKULĪŚA IN THE PĀŚUPATA LANDSCAPE

Summary

As the emblem of Pāśupata identity, representations of the deified teacher called Lakulīśa (the ‘Lord with a Club’) became a prominent feature of Śaiva religious centers in early medieval northwest India. This chapter works to recover some of Lakulīśa’s historical contingency by reading his images as a reflection of or response to particular concerns of emergent Śaiva religious communities. While Chapter 1 presented Lakulīśa as a textual paradigm and considered the significance of his literary debut in the Nepalese recension of the *Skandapurāṇa*, this study traces significant patterns in the evolution of his visual biography. This intervention is timely since the majority of the available work on Lakulīśa’s iconography was produced long before the recovery of the *Skandapurāṇa* and thus does not take this important textual evidence into account. Moreover, the existing scholarship is also silent on the social life of his images, their integration within sanctified spaces, and the multiple ‘readings’ to which these icons would have been subject. Since the *Skandapurāṇa* presents a textual *terminus ante quem* for Lakulīśa, we are now able to situate his iconographic inception within a particular historical period and, in doing so, begin to trace the ways in which the textures of early medieval society and polity may have conditioned articulations of his identity. More pointedly, my study indicates a gradual shift in Lakulīśa’s material imagining, whereby early icons of a distinctly human, ascetic teacher are gradually replaced by a divinized figure that is nearly indistinguishable from Śiva. In this process,

Lakulīśa's icons also move from the sanctum doorway, where he serves as the Pāśupata emblem guarding the *limen*, to the temple exterior where he is integrated within a larger pantheon of deities adorning a monument. I interpret these transformations as indicative of the subsumption of Pāśupata identity within more widely intelligible and culturally compelling articulations of Śaivism.

In addition to reading Lakulīśa's iconography as reflecting shifts in the historical terrain, I also work to locate his images more precisely within the regional landscapes and sanctified spaces surveyed in Chapters 2, 3 & 4. Since temple complexes were vital *loci* of interaction across a wide spectrum of social groups and religious communities, even ostensibly Śaiva centers would have accommodated a range of deities, religious practitioners, and devotional repertoires. Given the multivocality of these places, I propose that Lakulīśa images would have been subject to multiple 'readings' or interpretations. He functioned not only as a potent sign of Pāśupata identity, but was gradually reinvented as a multivalent persona with attributes signifying power, fertility, and protection that would have resonated with a broader religious community. To conclude, I propose we see Lakulīśa as an agent of transculturation. His icons are emblematic not only of the Pāśupata tradition, but can be read as moments in an ongoing dialogue between religious communities and cultural agents.

I. An Objectified History

In this chapter I circle back and reconsider some of the questions posed earlier in Chapter 1 concerning Lakulīśa's identity, his relevance for Pāśupata communities, and the role this teacher and his students played in demarcating and socializing the Pāśupata landscape. While the questions are recurring, the historical sources have changed. Instead of interrogating a textual history, here I explore the visual objectification of that narrative. Material histories as recorded in objects—i.e. relics, icons, pottery, monuments and so on—have been afforded an increasingly prominent position in recent scholarship on Asian religions and history.⁴¹² Examining a wide variety of materials and historical contexts, the underlying impetus for these studies is to reveal the ways in which the consideration of 'things' and the value that inheres in them is integral to the project of studying the past. As recent scholarship has amply demonstrated, interactions with material culture are constitutive of social identities and communities. This is not simply to say that artifacts may be ordered and chronologically arranged as in a museum, and through that arrangement provide a visual corroboration of a textual account. Rather, like words woven together to communicate a complex and multifaceted message—the fundamental action implied by the word 'text'—material things too communicate complex metaphors and layers of associations.⁴¹³ Object and image are not merely echoes of the word, however closely they may be

⁴¹² Some recent and important contributions include: Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture an the 'Hindu-Muslim' Encounter* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); *Material Culture and Asian Religions: Text, Image, Object*, eds. Richard Mann & Benjamin Fleming (New York: Routledge Press, 2014); James McHugh, *Sandalwood and Carrion: Smell in Indian Religion and Culture* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012). New perspectives and approaches to the methodological integration of material, visual, and literary cultures in the study of Asian religions were presented at the recent conference 'Materializing Sanctity, Enacting Authority: Text, Image, and Performance in India and China' held at Brown University in March 2016.

⁴¹³ Some of significant scholarly considerations of the ways that social contexts or 'social arenas' condition the valuation and interpretation of material objects and how that valuation may be transformed and renegotiated over time are in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* ed. Arjun Appadurai, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. In particular the contribution of Arjun Appadurai, 'Commodities and the Politics of Value' and Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process'

related. As Christopher Tilley puts it, “material forms complement what can be communicated in language rather than duplicating or reflecting what can be said in words in a material form. If material culture simply reified in a material medium that which could be communicated in words it would be quite redundant. The non-verbal materiality of the medium is thus of central importance.”⁴¹⁴ In the case of Lakuliša we are not only examining material objectification, but also personification as a particular and powerful kind of objectification. For not only are these icons constitutive of the ‘person’ or persona they represent, but they also become media for the objectification of other kinds of social identities and relationships.

Earlier, I used the work of Bruno Latour to support my argument that we should see the physical landscape itself as an agent in this Pāśupata history. Latour has argued convincingly that objects, too, have agency and they provide us with a means to understand the dynamics of social formations. As he has explained in vivid prose, the material and the social are inseparable.⁴¹⁵ Privileging the ties between things and communities allows us to see an iconic representation of Lakuliša as possessing the potential for a kind of effective agency. As I will show, images of the teacher did not only reproduce a static vision of Pāśupata identity, they were also sites where multiple, and even competing, visions of this identity were negotiated. As the three preceding case studies have

⁴¹⁴ Christopher Tilley, ‘Objectification’ in *The Handbook of Material Culture* eds. Tilley, Keane, et al. (London: Sage Publications, 2006), p. 62. Tilley here summarizes some of the main points from his earlier book *Material Culture and Text: The Art of Ambiguity* (London: Routledge Press, 1991).

⁴¹⁵ Latour explains that “To distinguish a priori ‘material’ and ‘social’ ties before linking them together again makes about as much sense as to account for the dynamic of a battle by imagining a group of soldiers and officers stark naked with a huge heap of paraphernalia—tanks, rifles, paperwork, uniforms—and then claim that ‘of course there exists some dialectical relation between the two.’ One should retort adamantly ‘No!’ There exists no relation whatsoever between ‘the material’ and ‘the social world’, because it is their very division which is a complete artifact. To reject such a divide is not to ‘relate’ the heap of soldiers ‘with’ the heap of material stuff: it is to redistribute the whole assemblage from top to bottom and beginning to end.” Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). pp. 75-76.

demonstrated, expressions of early Śaiva identity were not univocal. Regionally distinct historical geographies, formed by the interactions of social, political, and economic networks over time, engendered different modes of expressing belonging that were not always in accord.⁴¹⁶ The 'Lord with a Club' has figured prominently in these chapters, all of which examined images of Lakulīśa as they appeared in the frame of temples and sanctified spaces. Since the majority of the sites explored in these chapters occupied the interstices and peripheries of the text's canonical landscape, they give a good indication of the local inflections that have imbued his icons with a varied visual cadence. Thus, from the initial consideration of Lakulīśa's debut in the purāṇic landscape of the SP_s, to tracking his manifestations within various vernacular geographies, this project has provided an indication of the many faces this 'founding figure' has adopted.

The current chapter works toward a coherent resolution of ideas so far presented piecemeal by subjecting some of the visual and material evidence presented earlier to a more detailed analysis and synthesis. Its aim is to map the significant patterns that have emerged through the study of multiple sites, which have not been considered in the existing scholarship.⁴¹⁷ The majority of the

⁴¹⁶ As was discussed in the Introduction, certain of these expressions of identity could be described as 'encompassing the contrary', to borrow Dumont's term. Louis Dumont (1979).

⁴¹⁷ Earlier works have produced useful typologies and relative chronologies of Lakulīśa imagery, but the discussion has rarely moved beyond the description of surface features to reflect critically upon the multiple ways in which these images would have been viewed and interpreted when encountered within sanctified spaces. For example, M.B. Choubey, *Lakulīśa in Indian Art and Culture* (Delhi: Sharada Publishing House, 1997); U.P. Shah, 'Lakulīśa: Śaivite Saint', in *Discourses on Śiva Proceedings of a Symposium on the Nature of Religious Imagery*, ed. by M. Meister (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), pp. 93-102; N.P. Joshi, 'Early Forms of Śiva', *Discourse on Śiva*, pp. 47-61; D.R. Bhandarkar, 'Lakulīśa,' *Archeological Survey of India, Annual Report*, 1906-7, pp. 169-192; B.P. Majumdar, 'Lakulīśa-Pāsupatas and their Temples in Mediaeval India', *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, 39 (1953), pp. 1-9. One exception is R.N. Nandi, *Social Roots of Religion in Ancient India* (Delhi & Calcutta: KP Bagchi & Company, 1986), pp.102-105. In Chapter 9, 'Social Significance of the Variant Lakulīśa Images', Nandi discusses images from the Deccan and the possible significance of the different position of his club attribute.

images I will discuss in the following pages date from the early 8th to the early 10th centuries CE, a period in which we see the greatest variation and dynamism in Lakulīśa's iconography. I draw attention to two significant shifts in the articulation of Lakulīśa's persona that can be observed across the various northwest Indian locales my project considers. One shift concerns the formal features of the icons themselves, and the other points to changes in the ways the icons were displayed. These changes encourage us to view Lakulīśa not only as an emblem of Pāśupata identity, but also an agent of transculturation; i.e. a figure through which pivotal moments in an extended dialogue between religious communities, cultural agents, and sanctified spaces were recorded.⁴¹⁸

Before moving forward, I will detail these two iconographic changes in a bit more detail. The first is a gradual supplanting of the image of the human club-bearing teacher in favor an image displaying the 'multiplicity'⁴¹⁹ and accouterments of Śiva—that is, an icon that uses visual idioms to communicate a divine presence. Judging from the evidence I have gathered, this transformation was underway in the 8th century and continued with a resolution by the early 9th century, after which time icons of Lakulīśa that depict him as a human teacher become extremely rare in the region of northwest

⁴¹⁸ In his recent work, Flood uses the idea of transculturation to broadly comparable social processes. He explains, “. . . *transculturation* denotes a complex process of transformation unfolding through extended contact between cultures. . . . Like the French *trastornée*, with its connotations of a simultaneous movement across and within, this notion of *transculturation* acknowledges that cultural formations are always already hybrid and in process, so that translation is a dynamic activity that takes place both *between* and *within* cultural codes, forms, and practices.” Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 9.

⁴¹⁹ Here I refer to the so-called ‘multiplicity convention’ as it has been termed by art historian Doris Srinivasan. In her work, Srinivasan explains the convention of depicting Hindu deities with multiple body parts as a way to signal divinity by a visual allusion to the immense creative potential inherent in the deity. Doris M. Srinivasan, *Many Heads, Arms, and Eyes: Origin, Meaning, and Form of Multiplicity in Indian Art* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). Some of Srinivasan's methods and assumptions have been brought under scrutiny in a review by Hans Bakker (1999), but I think the basic premise, i.e. that multiplicity becomes a conventional way to signal divinity in art, is still useful.

India I have studied.⁴²⁰ In Chapter 1 I suggested that the SP_s authors might have introduced the Lāguḍi ectype as a way to co-opt or at least acknowledge an existing figure. The presence of early Lakulīśa icons from Mathurā seems to support this hypothesis by attesting to the (regional?) popularity of such a club-bearing teacher prior to the time the editors think the SP_s text was in wide circulation [Figure 188]. By adopting Lāguḍi, the text implies the incorporation of the identity of this figure within the more expansive persona of Śiva. I think the material evidence evinces a parallel conversation in which the distinct persona of the ‘Lord with a Club’ is alternately emphasized and deemphasized in different contexts. By the end of the 9th century, however, the conversation had moved on. Lakulīśa’s icons depict him as a visual ectype of Śiva, and the club becomes one of the many weapons in the Lord’s arsenal.

While the relationship between text and image is a topic of considerable importance for this study, it is certainly not the only issue critical for understanding how Lakulīśa’s images were ‘read’. Some visitors to temples would not have recognized Lakulīśa as a figure with a distinctive Pāśupata affiliation, since this identification reflects a specialist reading informed by a certain initiated point of view. When encountered within the temple, the interpretation of Lakulīśa’s images would have been informed by his various iconic attributes and by the larger contextual frame in which they were encountered. The second aim of this chapter is to explore some of these factors; particularly the ways in which changes in context could have inspired different readings of these images, for those within

⁴²⁰ One exception to this general pattern can be seen in Karvan, Gujarat. This is the place where the Lakulīśa tradition purportedly originated and it has been revived in modern times. Karvan has also retained a localized mode of representing Lakulīśa in a ‘human’ or two-armed form in front of a *līṅga*. An early example of this iconic style was discussed in Chapter 1, and the modern image installed in the Lakulīśa temple in Karvan adheres to the same pattern. I treat this pre-modern material and explore its contemporary revival in a separate article currently under preparation.

the Pāśupata community and those outside the Śaiva milieu.⁴²¹ For example, In considering the haptics⁴²² of spaces, an image placed over the sanctum door and one placed in an exterior niche could be experienced at different moments in a temple visit, be incorporated within different stages of a ritual practice, and, as a result, be subject to divergent interpretations. A consideration of structural context is particularly pertinent for this study since, in the 8th and 9th centuries, Lakulīśa images were no longer confined to the niche above the temple sanctum, but incorporated in new places within temple complexes.

I.II Lakulīśa Present and Absent

Until quite recently, the inception of the Lakulīśa manifestation of Śiva was difficult to trace. He is absent from the earliest known account of the origins of the Pāśupata movement found in Kauṇḍinya's *Pañcārthabhāṣya*, a commentary on the *Pāśupatasūtras*,⁴²³ a foundational text that details tenets of Pāśupata praxis. According to Kauṇḍinya, who was writing in the 4th or 5th century CE, the Lord assumed the form of a male brahmin and descended in Kāyāvataṛaṇa.⁴²⁴ In this human form he walked

⁴²¹ Richard H. Davis's idea of the 'community of response' addresses some of these questions by assuming that visitors to temples would bring a multiplicity of interpretations to bear on a single image. Davis also considers issues of display and the how the placement of icons conditions interactions with deities. R. H. Davis, *The Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 9-10.

⁴²² I use 'haptic' to refer to the embodied, synesthetic, and tactile experience of places in the built landscape. My use of this term is informed by the broader phenomenological approach summarized in the Introduction

⁴²³ For further discussion of Kauṇḍinya's account see H.T. Bakker, 'The Gospel of Kauṇḍinya: The Descent of God in Gujarat and the Practice of Imitating God', in *Myths, Martyrs and Modernity: Studies in the History of Religions in Honor of Jan N Bremmer*, ed. by J. Dijkstra, J. Kroesen & Y. Kuiper (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 517-529 (pp. 517-518); 'Origin and Spread of the Pāśupata Movement: About Heracles, Lakulīśa and Symbols of Masculinity,' in *Pūrvāparaprajñābhīnandanam, East and West, Past and Present: Indological and Other Essays in Honour of Klaus Karttunen*, ed. by B. Tikkanen & A. M. Butters (Helsinki: Studia Orientalia 110), pp. 21-37 (pp. 22; 29). See also P.C. Bisschop, *Early Śaivism and the Skandapurāṇa: Sects and Centers* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2006), pp. 49-50. *Pāśupatasūtra with the Pañcārthabhāṣya of Kauṇḍinya*, ed. R. Ananthakrishna Sastri, Trivandrum Sanskrit Series CXLIII, (Trivandrum: University of Travancore, 1940), Kauṇḍinya *ad Pāśupatasūtra* 1.1.

⁴²⁴ Called Kārohaṇa in the SPs, Kāyāvarohaṇa, Kāyāvataṛa, and Kāyāvataṛaṇa are all attested variants for this 'place of bodily incarnation.' On Kārohaṇa see also M. Hara, *Pāśupata Studies*, ed. by J. Takashima (Vienna: Publications of the De Nobili Research Library XXX, 2002) pp.145-148.

to Ujjain where he took up residence in a shrine. It is here that the Lord's first disciple, Kuśika, approached him for instruction, inquiring as to whether or not a permanent remedy for suffering existed.⁴²⁵ While Kauṇḍinya's account of Śiva's manifestation as a human teacher bears some resemblance to the Lakulīśa of the SP_s, he is not mentioned by name in this early account of Pāśupata origins. The late 4th century Mathura Pillar Inscription of Candragupta II⁴²⁶ provides a further indication that the histories of the Pāśupata movement, and that of Lakulīśa were not yet adjoined. The genealogical list of ten Śaiva *ācāryas* recorded in this inscription does not mention Lakulīśa; these *māheśvaras* (devotees of Śiva) trace their lineage back to the Bhagavat Kuśika.⁴²⁷ This early textual absence makes Lakulīśa's appearance in lists of the twenty-eight incarnations of Śiva included in the later *Vāyu*, *Kūrma*, *Līṅga*, *Śiva*, and (later) *Skanda Purāṇas* all the more striking.⁴²⁸ The SP_s provides a differing history that represents the intermediate period, between Kauṇḍinya's writing and these later purāṇic systemizations. In Chapter 1 I suggested that the author's introduction of 'Lāguḍi' as an ectype of Śiva was a strategic innovation. The textual icon of the Lord-as-teacher and his agents claiming the cardinal points of the Pāśupata landscape was intended to represent the Śaiva ecumene as it was

⁴²⁵ Kauṇḍinya *ad Pāśupatasūtra* 1.1.

⁴²⁶ D.R. Bhandarkar, 'Mathura Pillar Inscription of Chandragupta II: Gupta Era 61,' *Epigraphia Indica*, XXI (1931-32), pp. 1-9.

⁴²⁷ See Chapter 1; Discussing the comparably complex hagiography of Ch'an founder Bodhidharma, Bernard Faure's description of the lineage founder as a murky figure in the historiography is perhaps relatable to the case of Lakulīśa. Faure describes the first patriarch as "... a blank space on which one may project all the necessary 'biographical' elements. In other words, there is no real origin to the patriarchal tradition, no real 'founder.' The character who plays that role is, to use Levi-Strauss's expression concerning myth, a 'virtual focus,' a virtual object whose shadow alone is real. His 'biography' will proliferate around this obscure source, and historical details will soon turn into legend." Bernard Faure, 'Bodhidharma as Textual and Religious Paradigm' *History of Religions* 25 (3) 1986: 187-198, p. 197.

⁴²⁸ The identification of Lakulīśa as the twenty-eighth and final incarnation of Śiva and proponent of Pāśupata doctrine in these lists reflects a more fully realized Pāśupata lineage, which was likely the product of centuries of Sanskrit narrative historiography. For a comprehensive discussion of these lists see Bisschop, *Sects and Centers*, pp. 41-44; See also Chapter 1.

imagined by a particular group of literate cultural producers at a particular historical moment, a formative period when Lakulīśa's role within the tradition was still nascent. Certainly, one could argue that Kauṇḍinya's account of God enfleshed as an itinerant teacher anticipates Lakulīśa, but this human founder still does not have an identity distinct from that of the Lord.⁴²⁹

As a final point in this brief review of the textual sources, it is a significant and also a curious, feature of textual transmission that only the oldest layer of the text, preserved in the Nepalese recension, mentions Lakulīśa. In Peter Bisschop's edition, the later recensions of the text, labeled 'R' and 'A', form an edition distinct from the 'S' manuscripts. In SP_{RA} Śiva is said to descend at Kārohaṇa and he offers instruction to four pupils. The names of the students and their respective locations match the account in SP_S, but here the Lord, who is not identified as 'Lāguḍi', offers the teaching. The Lord's teaching is also not referred to as specifically Pāśupata, nor is it called Pañcārtha as it was in SP_S. In the case of SP_{RA}, the teaching is called *dharma* and it is described as the 'most excellent secret' (*rahasya vara*).⁴³⁰ This is a puzzling omission. One would expect the later versions of the narrative to expand or build upon the contributions of the previous authors, thus producing the voluminous literary traditions so typical of the purāṇic genre. That this did not happen in the SP_{RA} version of the Pāśupata movement's history suggests that this recension reflects a different phase in the growth of

⁴²⁹ On this point Bisschop comments '...the absence of the name Lakulīśa in Kauṇḍinya's *bhāṣya* also seems significant, for this could represent an early stage as well, in which the identity of the Lord was not yet fixed. Alternatively, one would have to assume that Lakulīśa's name was avoided deliberately by Kauṇḍinya" (p. 45). This is an interesting idea; unfortunately, he does not elaborate on the possible motivations for such an elision.

⁴³⁰ SP_{RA} 5.83-89; Summary in Bisschop, p. 85.

Śaivism and perhaps the work a different (non-Pāśupata) community, for whom a symbol of a distinctly Pāśupata identity held no value.⁴³¹

To summarize, the appearance of Lakulīśa at a particular historical moment in the development of the Pāśupata tradition reflects a time when this growing Śaiva community worked to articulate a distinct identity and secure patronage in a highly competitive religious landscape. Lakulīśa's iconographic inception preceded his textual debut in the SP_s and the dynamism and variation in the subsequent articulation of his image materializes an ongoing dialogue about who this teacher was, why he was venerable, and how he related the Pāśupata movement to Śiva.⁴³² But just as Lakulīśa's appearance and disappearance in the SP_s indicates the contingency of his popularity as a symbol of Pāśupata identity, the social value of images of Lakulīśa as a human teacher also declined and gradually his image was phased-out of temple iconography altogether.

II. Embodying the Teacher

Thus far, I have emphasized the role of Lakulīśa as an important figure in the self-fashioning of Pāśupata communities. Yet, this was not only a case of the Pāśupatas representing themselves to a broader Śaiva world; they also had to distinguish themselves from amidst the competing religious communities that occupied the region. Northwest India of the 6th and 7th centuries was a locus of intense political and religious competition, much of which was localized in prominent settlements along the very same route traversed by Lāguḍī's pupils and in the area demarcated by the SP_s as the Pāśupata landscape. The previous chapters have revealed the extent to which the movements of

⁴³¹ The spelling 'Lāguḍīḥ' is given in the S₁ manuscript. S₂ gives 'Lākulī' which more closely approximates 'Lakulīśa', the spelling that becomes most common.

⁴³² Shah, 'Lakulīśa,' p. 97; also Choubey, *Lakulīśa*, p. 115.

Lakulīśa's pupils in the SP_s account trace the arc of the major northern routes of trade and travel that connected coastal Gujarat with the greater plains of northern India and the Deccan to the south.⁴³³ These routes, I have argued, were instrumental in the geographic expansion of the Pāśupata movement, much as they were for Buddhist communities who had previously established their own religious centers at critical junctions and passes along these trajectories.⁴³⁴ Epigraphic records also attest to the wide range of religious communities supported by the political elites that controlled key locales in the region.⁴³⁵ Prominent members of medieval political families identified themselves as devotees of Śiva (*māheśvaras*), but they also extended patronage to Buddhist and Jain communities. The introduction of Lakulīśa as a visual marker of the Pāśupatas may have been one way for communities to distinguish themselves and their religious places within the pre-existent religious topography of the region in which the boundaries between sanctified spaces and ritual repertoires were often blurred. The visible and public marketing of religious institutions would have served a strategy to attract and monopolize resources from political elites and the established merchant and trade communities settled in the area.

II.I Crossing Boundaries

Some early depictions of Lakulīśa as renunciant teacher are clearly informed by the same iconographic vocabulary used to craft representations of human teachers and holy men in Buddhist and Jain

⁴³³ On these trade routes see A. Malik, *Merchants and Merchandise in Northern India 600-1000 AD* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 1998); M. Chandra, *Trade and Trade Routes in Ancient India*, (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1977); Jean Deloche, *La Circulation en Inde avant la Révolution des Transports*, Tome I: *La Voie de Terre* (Paris: Publications de L'École Française d'Extrême Orient, CXXII, 1980).

⁴³⁴ On these patterns in the Buddhist landscape see Jason Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

⁴³⁵ Annette Schmiedchen addressed these patterns in patronage in a recent article. A. Schmiedchen, 'Patronage of Śaivism and Other Religious Groups in Western India under the Dynasties of the Kaṭaccuris, Gurjaras, and Sendrakas from the 5th to the 8th centuries,' *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 56 (2013), pp. 349-363.

imagery [Figures 188, 189 & 190].⁴³⁶ The visual resonance between the seated, meditative figures is immediately evident. The use of conventional gestures (*mudrās*) to represent the act of teaching is also a shared feature of some images of the Buddha and Lakulīśa. These similarities reflect the shared cultural spaces that these communities inhabited. Representing Lakulīśa in ways that parallel images of the founding figures of these traditions may have been a particularly efficacious strategy for communicating his authority as a teacher and ascetic in areas where Buddhist and Jain communities were also well established. Sculpture from Mathurā attest to the importance of this place as a shared religious space from an early period. We also have evidence of sites of cultural contact in north-central India (Uparamāla) from the 7th and 8th centuries. The area surrounding Mandasor preserves numerous excavated Buddhist cave sites. Some, like the monastic cave complex at Dhamnar share the hillside with Śaiva temples. Votive *stūpas* were also reported in the Chittorgarh fort.⁴³⁷ Jainism was also beginning to flourish in places like Vasantgadhi (northeast of Mt. Abu in the Sirohi District of Rajasthan) where a massive hoard of inscribed bronze Jain images was discovered, some dating as early as the 7th century.⁴³⁸ Vilasgarh, a village near Jhalawar, Rajasthan was another important Jain

⁴³⁶ This similarity has been observed in previous studies. Bisschop attributes it to the shared humanity of these teachers. In his words, "...The iconography and life-story of Lakulīśa and the Buddha have shared characteristics. Both icons depict a human being in a seated posture, possessed of various divine and auspicious attributes. But for the distinctive features of the erect penis, the club and the matted hair, there is a strong resemblance between early depictions of Lakulīśa and the Buddha...When we look at the life-story of Lakulīśa, the most striking feature is its emphasis on the humanity of God's descent. This is not the cosmic type of *avatāra*, as tends to be the case with the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, but it is the story of a God taking on a human form, who wanders from place to place. . . This conjures up the image of the Buddha wandering through Magadha." Bisschop, "Śaivism in the Gupta-Vākāṭaka Age" *JRAS* Series 3, 20:(2010), 486. For more on iconographic similarities between Lakulīśa and the Buddha see M.C. Choubey, *Lakulīśa in Indian Art and Culture*, (Delhi: Sharada Publishing House, 1997); U.P. Shah, pp. 98-99.

⁴³⁷ *EITA*, vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 284; Plate 635.

⁴³⁸ U.P. Shah, 'A Bronze Hoard from Vasantgadhi', *Lalit Kala: A Journal of Oriental Art, chiefly Indian*, 1-2 (1955-56) pp. 55-65.

center where hundreds of recently uncovered early medieval Jain images found in the area are being collected in a newly built museum⁴³⁹ [Figure 192].

The connections between Lakulīśa images and those of other charismatic teachers may suggest, on the one hand, a self-conscious imitative strategy intended to popularize a Śaiva figure through the use of visual idioms popular amongst ‘the competition’. This may, in turn, have aided the Śaiva community in attracting devotees from among their religious contemporaries. Yet, given the reservations expressed earlier about seeing religious communities as so clearly boundaried and distinct, I prefer to frame this visual resonance in terms of a common idiom of sanctity, holiness, and the authority of the teacher that was widely intelligible, rather than one community deliberately appropriating the iconographic vocabulary of another. The spatial proximity of these religious groups also points to a common cultural world that we see manifest in the ‘intervisibility’ of visual and material cultures. Nancy Khalek uses this term to characterize material interactions between Christian and Muslim communities in medieval Syria, but her description is applicable to the Indian context as well. “The intervisibility of these two groups, then, came...not as a result of their being able to stand apart and gaze upon one another’s worlds with the detached view of outsiders, but from their intimately familiar and intensely connected lives.”⁴⁴⁰ Of course, intervisibility does not imply univocality; cultural agents were self-aware and strategic in their decisions. The incorporation of the club signals that Lakulīśa was a distinct persona not to be confused with other similar representations of ‘the teacher’.

⁴³⁹ These images have not been studied and I lack sufficient expertise to assign them a date. Although, based on the structural remains of the Vilasgarh temples, it is not implausible that some could date to the 8th century.

⁴⁴⁰ Nancy Khalek, *Damascus after the Muslim Conquest*, 165.

II.II Negotiating Humanity & Divinity

The sense of dialogue that underpins the idea of transculturation implies a movement across as well as within. The following paragraphs survey some instances of dialogue within the community as they can be read in the iconography. As the religious landscape of early medieval India assimilated a growing and gradually more institutionalized form of Śaivism with its many shrines and temples, the charismatic authority that Lakulīśa represented was ‘fleshed-out’ in regional and site-specific processes of bricolage that situated this relatively ‘new’ deity by using visual tropes that were common to the wider religious landscape. But even when depicting the club-bearer as the human teacher, early instances show that there was not yet a clear consensus as to how this image should be depicted.⁴⁴¹ In the secondary lit he is cast uniformly and quite narrowly as a teacher and emblem of Śaiva asceticism.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴¹ In their respective studies of Lakulīśa, both U.P. Shah and M.C. Choubey cite the *Viśvakarma Vāstuśāstram*, a text of the eleventh to twelfth century, which specifies that images should depict this figure as ithyphallic (*ūrdhvamedhra*), sitting on a lotus in *padmāsana*, holding a club (or *daṇḍa*) in his left hand and a citron in the right. The *yogapaṭṭa* supporting the knees in meditative posture is another common feature of his images.⁴⁴¹ Despite the gradual crystallization of his iconography in the form outlined above, images from the 7th to 9th century did not always conform to this pattern. Shah, ‘Lakulīśa,’ 96; Choubey, *Lakulīśa*, p. 114; Majumdar, ‘Lakulīśa,’; R.C. Agrawala, ‘Some Interesting Sculptures of Lakulīśa from Rājasthān,’ *Artibus Asiae*, 21 (1958): 43-46, pp. 43-44.

⁴⁴² Tamara Sears’ work, while sensitive to issues of space and context, does not consider the different meanings these images would have conveyed to different viewers. For example, her focus on Lakulīśa as reinforcing or embodying the values of the ascetics living in monastic dwellings (*maṭhas*) is perhaps apt, but it is also important to remember that these monastic complexes were only one feature of larger, elaborate temple complexes. And while the *maṭha* may have been closed to outsiders, the rest of the temple complex was largely a public space shared by many different kinds of people. It may also be worth noting that images of Lakulīśa do not appear in the space of the *maṭha*, they appear on the temple. Tamara Sears, ‘From Guru to God: Yogic Prowess and Places of Practice in Early Medieval India,’ *Yoga: The Art of Transformation*, edited by Debra Diamond (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2013), 47-57; ‘Encountering Ascetics On and Beyond the Indian Temple Wall,’ in *History and Material Culture in Asian Religions*, edited by Benjamin Fleming and Richard Mann (London: Routledge, 2014), 172-194.

The variability of early Lakulīśa images is well illustrated by comparing, for example, an early 7th century image from the Mandasor district of northwest Madhya Pradesh (now preserved in the Bhopal State Archeological Museum) with another image of Lakulīśa, c. 6th century, from the Jogeśvarī Caves in coastal Maharashtra [Figures 79 & 30]. Both of these regions contain extensive material remains that suggest they were important Śaiva religious centers from as early as the 6th century, but the representations of the Pāśupata teacher diverge in significant ways. The image from Mandasor is strikingly naturalistic and generally conforms to the vision we might expect based on his description in the SP_s—the matted hair, third eye, and erect phallus all characteristic of a Śaiva ascetic—while the framing aureole designates him a venerable figure. In the North Konkan, where the religious landscape was so densely populated with Buddhist and Śaiva centers, it is striking that the Lakulīśa panel from Jogeśvarī departs from the ascetic model. Here, the teacher's powerful physicality, elaborate hairstyle, and heavy ornamentation evoke wealth, power, and a royal ease. His club bears a closer resemblance to a royal scepter or mace than the *lakuṭa* of his counterpart from Mandasor. Also notably absent in the Jogeśvarī image is the erect phallus characteristic of the ascetic. Unlike the Mandasor image, however, the panel from Jogeśvarī includes a significant detail: this is the earliest known image that depicts Lakulīśa with the four attendant figures that could be read as his four students. In addition to gesturing to the four students of the SP, these attendants might also have been intended as a representation of the Pāśupata community. The differences in their appearance—the upper two resemble aged ascetics with their thin limbs, matted hair and beards, while the lower pair appear youthful and absent the typical markers of asceticism—is a visual indication of the internal diversity of the community. The result is a kind of synoptic icon that could be read as encompassing the initiated and lay facets of the tradition.

Although broadly contemporaneous, the images from Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra represent different regional contexts. But within the same region variety also occurred. Images from 8th century sites in Uparamāla show that even within a circumscribed geographic area Lakulīśa was subject to multiple visual interpretations. The Gupteśvara Cave temple—located along a rocky outcrop in the deep ravine behind the fort in Mandalgarh, Rajasthan, approximately 80 km northeast of Chittorgarh—contains two early Lakulīśa images.⁴⁴³ [Figures 193 & 194] These images both represent a two-armed ascetic with hair in *jaṭamukūṭa* and knees supported by the *yogapaṭṭa*. Another image from the 8th century Karṇeśvara temple in Kansuāñ (100 km east of Mandalgarh) similarly depicts an ascetic figure framed by two *mālādharas*, but the presence of four arms, rather than two, suggests a divine rather than a simply human figure⁴⁴⁴ [Figure 116].

Iconographic variety also reflects a blurring of the lines that separated Lakulīśa from, for example, other weapon-bearing figures of the broader Śaiva pantheon, like Caṇḍeśvara, a deified Śiva *bhakta* whose icons are widespread throughout South India⁴⁴⁵ Forms of Śiva, such as Yogeśvara are

⁴⁴³ The Lakulīśa images were repurposed in the cave temple (c. early sixteenth century) along with two sculpted doorframes and other loose images dating to the seventh or the eighth century. During my visit to the site in April 2014 I observed extensive architectural fragments, dressed stones, and pieces of broken sculpture scattered around the cave temple, along the bottom of the ravine, and around the old tank. It is possible that the early doorframe and images reused in the cave were previously part of an earlier temple at the site. On Mandalgarh see M.W Meister and M.A. Dhaky eds. *Encyclopedia of Indian Temple Architecture* vol. 2, pt. 2, *North India: Period of Early Maturity, c. A.D. 700-900* [henceforth, *EITA*, vol. 2, pt. 2] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) p. 283.

⁴⁴⁴ The Karṇeśvara temple is dated by a foundation inscription. F. Kielhorn, 'Kanaswa Stone Inscription of Sivagana; The Malava Year 795 Expired,' *The Indian Antiquary*, 8 (1890), pp. 55-62.

⁴⁴⁵ A number of recent articles have addressed aspects this iconographic overlap and the often-blurred identity of Lakulīśa and Caṇḍeśa (or Caṇḍeśvara): E. af Edholm, 'The Lakulīśa of Aritṭapaṭṭi,' in *Being Religious and Living Through the Eyes: Studies in Religious Iconography and Iconology. A Celebratory Publication in Honor of Professor Jan Bergman*, ed. by P.Schalk (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1998), pp. 43-55; P. C. Bisschop, 'Once Again on the Identity of Caṇḍeśa in Early Śaivism: A Rare Caṇḍeśvara in the British Museum?' *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 53 (2010), pp. 233-249; D. Goodall 'Who is Caṇḍeśa' in *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, ed. by S. Einoo (Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo), Institute of Oriental Culture Special Series, 23 (2009), pp. 351-

often similarly ithyphallic and meditative in posture. So closely do they approximate the image of Lakulīśa as teacher that some have been identified as such, even when the namesake club is missing [Figure 195]. The 8th century image from Jhālrapāṭan, Rajasthan (now preserved in the Jhalawar Government Museum) provides a good example of this overlapping of identities [Figure 196]. The image shares much in common with Lakulīśa including the meditative posture and the connection with teaching and knowledge as represented in the manuscript held in the proper upper left hand—but the namesake club is missing. Examples of iconographic blending serve as a visual testament to what Phyllis Granoff has characterized as Śiva's 'composite' nature as a deity possessed of a dynamic identity that expanded to accommodate the many other related deities that his cult absorbed over time.⁴⁴⁶ A similar argument could be made for viewing Lakulīśa's iconographic persona as a hybrid.

III. Multivocal Sites

Thus far we have seen variations in Lakulīśa's images within regional contexts. Now, I narrow the frame even further to explore what I argue is significant variation within particular temple complexes using examples from Chittorgarh and the temple complex atop the Harṣagiri. The hilltop fortress at Chittor provides the most striking examples. Four broadly contemporaneous Lakulīśa images are preserved from Chittorgarh—three of these remain in the fort and one is now displayed in the National Museum in New Delhi—and each of these is distinct. Like so many of the rebuilt monuments and repurposed images at the site, the images are difficult to date with certainty, but it would not be implausible to estimate a date of the 8th century for all four of them. To attempt a working chronology,

423; D. Acharya, 'The Role of Caṇḍa in the Early History of the Pāśupata Cult and the Image on the Mathurā Pillar dated Gupta Year 61', *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 48 (2005), pp. 207-222.

⁴⁴⁶ Phyllis Granoff, 'Mahākālā's Journey: From Gaṇa to God,' in *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali* vol. LXXVII (Roma: Istituti Editoriali E Poligrafici Internazionali, 2004) pp. 95-114, (p. 95).

I think the earliest of the four is the one now affixed to the exterior of the Rampol, one of the four gates that punctuate the extended ascent to the top of the hill. Like the images from Mandalgarh, this panel presents us with a the human ascetic teacher, seated on the lotus, ithyphallic, knees supported in the *yogapaṭṭa*, and with no attribute other than the club cradled in the crook of his left arm [Figure 197]. But in this case the ascetic elements are not emphasized as forcefully. The hair is not in a *jaṭa*, nor do the heavy earrings and necklace suggest renunciation. This is easily contrasted with the four figures that surround him, who were likely intended to represent his four students. Certainly a totality is intended and these smaller, subordinate attendants are rendered as ascetics. Some of their features are distinct, but they are nearly mirror images of one another. This, and their similar attributes, encourages us to interpret them as a set [Figure 198 & 199]. The two seated at the bottom corners of the image hold manuscripts in their proper left hands and the one on the left holds a rosary in the proper right. The two standing figures have different attributes than the sitting figures. They are both shown hefting large jackfruits above their shoulders, this gesture of display would seem to present us with the tangible ‘reward’ for their hard work. The jackfruit (or other, similar fruit), as I discuss below, becomes one of Lakulīśa’s, as other deities, iconic accessories and it has had a longstanding cultural relevance as a symbol of prosperity and plenty.⁴⁴⁷ The student on the left also holds something resembling a box—perhaps this too was intended to hold a manuscript? Taken as a total composition, the figures gestures suggest a bi-directional movement. With one hand, they clearly and publicly display the manuscripts and the fruits to the viewer. Perhaps we could understand the fruit as representative of a boon that Lakulīśa offers—i.e. the boon of his teachings and the ‘fruits’ that this

⁴⁴⁷ An alternative interpretation would be to see these bowls of fruit. This interpretation is certainly possible, but I do not think that it radically alters the overall symbolic thrust of the image, which is to present the viewer with a substantial or ‘heavy’ image of plenty and prosperity. If we assume, as I think is likely, that this image was affixed to the exterior niche of a temple above the sightline of the viewer, this would serve to heighten the sense of the gesture as one of display rather than offering.

knowledge will yield. At the same time, the students' other arms are kept close to the body engaged in the private act of counting the rosary. The box cradled close to the body of the upper left figure is rather mysterious and this could, indeed, have been the artist's intent. This image of secrecy and concealment could hint at another facet of Lakulīśa's beneficence that is intended only for a privileged audience.

In contrast to the image repurposed in the Rampol, the other three early Lakulīśa images from Chittorgarh emphasize the figure's divinity, albeit in different ways. One from the Kālikāmātā temple is four-armed with the front proper right in the gesture of granting boons (*varada mudrā*) while the left wields the club. His upper left and right hands display a lotus flower and a rosary [Figure 105]. The second, a standing Lakulīśa image from the Kumbhaśyāma temple has only two arms—one bearing a serpent-entwined club and the other a fruit called *sītāphal* (discussed in the following section)—but the image of the standing figure framed by aureole and flanked by two small attendants similarly suggests divinity [Figure 107]. The third and final image, now displayed in the National Museum in Delhi is the most overtly martial of the three, although the museum placard reads 'Śiva as Teacher' [Figure 200]. Here Lakulīśa is shown standing, ithyphallic, with three of his four arms holding weapons: the trident, axe, and club.⁴⁴⁸ Based on its size (84 cm x 69 cm), I think this third image would also have occupied an external temple niche. The variation in the number of arms and postures of these images points to a process of negotiation through which his identity(ies) as the peripatetic teacher, Pāśupata ascetic, and manifestation of Śiva were alternately emphasized.

⁴⁴⁸ It is uncertain what was displayed in the fourth hand (proper lower right). It would seem to have been something small since no indication of the object (or gesture?) is visible in the upper part of the image

III.I Iconic Affinities: Chittorgarh

In addition to showing variation in the representation of Lakulīśa as human, divine, or somewhere in between, the structural contexts in which the Chittor images are found raise interesting questions about the place of this figure in the broader religious landscape.

Now dedicated to the Goddess, the Kālikāmātā temple was clearly constructed as a Sūrya temple and multiple images of this deity grace the interior and exterior niches as well as the doorway to the inner sanctum⁴⁴⁹ It is likely that sections of this temple have been rebuilt and not all of the structural features are original to the 8th century building. Having acknowledged the temple's hybrid character it is still remarkable that a Lakulīśa icon appears in a niche on the exterior on the front left side. Given the rededication of the temple, it might be tempting to consider this image as a somewhat later addition as we would not typically expect this figure to be incorporated within the program of a Sūrya temple. Yet, given the affinity between Śiva and Sūrya that is suggested in other sites from northeast Rajasthan, like Kāman, Harṣa, and Jhālrapāṭan, and without firm evidence to the contrary, I will assume that Lakulīśa was originally part of the program.⁴⁵⁰ Perhaps the most compelling evidence for his original affiliation with the Sūrya temple is the lotus flower he presents in his proper upper left hand. While the discussion so far has served to emphasize the variation possible in Lakulīśa iconography, the lotus is unconventional and I know of only one other instance (see below). Given the ubiquity of this symbol in images of the Sun god, I propose we interpret it as a visual 'tell' that serves to integrate this image within the temple hierarchy. Within the temple, we find the motif of the lotus

⁴⁴⁹ *EITA* vol.2, pt. 2, pp. 285-291; Plates 645-665.

⁴⁵⁰ Chapter 4 details evidence from Harṣagiri and Kāman that supports the close association or regional integration of these two deities. The popularity of Revanta—a son of Sūrya with regional Śaiva associations—at Chittorgarh provides further evidence of a Śiva-Sūrya connection.

attribute repeated and presented in the hands of *dikpalas* like Indra, Yama, and Varuṇa for whom it also appears as an unconventional attribute [Figures 201 & 202]. It seems evident that the artists employed this symbol deliberately and strategically to signal that Lakulīśa, as the other deities with whom it appears, were integrated within the larger hierarchy of the Sūrya temple. The ‘Lord with a Club’ retains his signature attribute, but his position in the temple exterior, and the lotus in his hand, creates a visual homology with Sūrya, the deity enshrined in the temple. I think we have another example of the same homology in a Lakulīśa from Jhālṛāpāṭan. Jhālṛāpāṭan in the 8th and 9th centuries was an important place for the worship of Sūrya and Śiva and, here again, Lakulīśa displays Sūrya’s lotus emblem [Figure 203].

The Kumbhaśyāma temple also has a complex, layered history.⁴⁵¹ The temple’s iconographic program suggests an original Śaiva dedication and the attributes of many of the *alaṃkāradēvatās* on the walls surrounding the *garbhagrha* and the temple exterior bear Śaiva attributes as noted by Meister (e.g., *triśūla*, *nāga*, and *vṛṣa* mount).⁴⁵² The temple was later rededicated to Viṣṇu, but exactly when this transformation took place is uncertain. The fifteenth century is the *terminus ante quem*, based on inscribed Vaiṣṇava images in the temple that date from the rule of Rana Kumbha of Mewar, but the transition could have been initiated earlier. Observing that certain details of the deities on the exterior appear incomplete or unfinished and that some of the Vaiṣṇava icons appear to date to an early period, Meister questions whether the temple as a Śaiva monument was fully realized before its

⁴⁵¹ *EITA* vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 291-297; Plates 666-683.

⁴⁵² Meister comments that ‘The iconography of the sanctum’s *Dikpālas*, of *vedibandha* niches, and of the outer wall’s images should make clear that the original intentions of its builders was for this to be a Śaiva shrine.’ *EITA* vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 295-296.

rededication to Viṣṇu commenced.⁴⁵³ One could also question whether the standing Lakulīśa image, with the attendant figures, crowning headdress, and garland drapery typical of Viṣṇu icons, was conceived to reflect a Vaiṣṇava context.

These images of Lakulīśa from Chittorgarh show that multiple interpretations were possible even within the same historical period and site. Since Chittor was a massive complex that would have attracted artisans from throughout India, this variety may reflect different regional conceptions. At the same time, it could show that even in the eighth century, Lakulīśa's identity retained a degree of fluidity. While Lakulīśa is perhaps most commonly seen as an emblem of the Pāśupatas, his inclusion within the iconographic program of the Chittorgarh temples is a significant indication that in the early eighth century his identity was not so narrowly circumscribed. He was also recognized as a deity, or venerable figure, outside of exclusively 'Śaiva' circles.

III.II Divine Hierarchies: Harṣagiri

As a final example, the inclusion of Lakulīśa within a larger icon of Pārvatī performing the 5-fire penance (*pañcāgnitapas*) at Harṣagiri is also striking and unconventional in its depiction.⁴⁵⁴ This icon, which depicts the Goddess performing asceticism, appears at several early medieval sites in Northern Rajasthan. Pārvatī holds a lotus flower in each of her hands and the blooming flowers typically reveal the fruits born of her *tapas*, i.e. her two children Skanda and Gaṇeśa. But in the Harṣa exemplar,

⁴⁵³ See Chapter 3 n. 300 & 301.

⁴⁵⁴ This image is discussed briefly in Chapter 4. As nearly all the materials from Harṣa, the sculpture is no longer in its original context, but appears affixed to the rear wall of the liṅga shrine alongside other *surasundarī* images that may once have appeared on the temple exterior.

Skanda has been replaced by the club-bearing Lakuliśa⁴⁵⁵ [Figures 204 & 205]. This image is not easy to contextualize since the other example of a similar icon from Harṣa is damaged, making it impossible to determine if Lakuliśa would have appeared in the lotus opposite Gaṇeśa in this case [Figure 206].

If we compare the other three Lakuliśa images from Harṣa, this depiction of Lakuliśa appears all the more unique. Judging by their dimensions and the remnants of the architectural framing that surrounds them, all of these images were part of shrine lintels⁴⁵⁶ [Figures 207, 208 & 209]. These images are rather uniform in size and style and in their depiction of the figure—the club, *triśūla*, and *nāga* are standard attributes of the ithyphallic and matted-haired figure.⁴⁵⁷ Unlike in Chittor, the Lakuliśa icons from Harṣa are deployed in a consistent manner as Pāśupata emblems presiding over the sanctum. This uniformity makes the Pārvatī image even more striking as a departure from the norm. Given the prevalence of Goddess and *yoginī* imagery at the site, as was discussed in Chapter 4, the incorporation of Lakuliśa in this icon could be read as asserting a clear hierarchy. The diminutive figure dwarfed by the Goddess becomes subordinate to her and part of her retinue.

There are, of course, many more examples to mention and comments to make on the interesting cases already presented. But perhaps it is a good moment now to pause and consider what all of this might mean. On a fundamental level, all of these images depict Lakuliśa—that is, his namesake club is present in all of these icons. Beyond this, it is worth questioning what common

⁴⁵⁵ I thank Hans Bakker for pointing out this remarkable detail to me and for supplying the excellent photographs reproduced here.

⁴⁵⁶ There are three in total. One is removed from its original architectural context, but is still *in situ* on the mountain. This image was discussed in Chapter 4 where I suggested it was originally placed in the doorframe of the central *liṅga* shrine. The other two are displayed in the Sikar museum..

⁴⁵⁷ The only variety is in the gesture of the front, proper right hand. Two display the gesture of teaching and the other holds a fruit.

thread or sense of ‘identity’ holds all of these images together? In some respects, the images from the Harṣagiri permit a more straightforward analysis. We know from the dedicatory inscription that this site was a Pāśupata center where lineages of religious specialties were in residence. The three Lakulīśa icons from the shrine lintels support this affiliation by conforming to the function we typically expect a Lakulīśa to perform—i.e. he frames the *liṅga* shrine. The images also conform to the general post-9th century form in that they clearly approximate Śiva through the incorporation of multiple arms and attributes. The figure in Pārvatī’s lotus, however, clearly departs from this model. Here the Pāśupata emblem is put to work for the Goddess. He retains a privileged and elevated position, but his identity is clearly derivative and subordinate to hers. When encountered within a site with such strong Pāśupata affiliations, this must have been a striking image. Chittorgarh presents a far more complex case. This may be, in part, because the Pāśupata institutions and lineages were not present or dominate to the same degree that they were at Harṣa. The site itself is more polyphonic and diverse. In representing Lakulīśa this polyphony is clearly echoed. He appears as human teacher, visual epithet of Śiva, and part of the regional pantheon, more broadly. Unlike at Harṣa, the integration of his images in the Sūrya and Viṣṇu temples seems less indicative of a hierarchical expression than it is a gesture to a kind of comprehensiveness. Given his regional popularity, his inclusion in the iconographic programs was perhaps deemed necessary.

IV. A Wider World: Expressions of Protection, Prosperity, and Fertility

Although the preceding pages have presented Lakulīśa primarily as a Pāśupata emblem, albeit one whose presentation was adapted to particular contexts, I think Lakulīśa’s multivalent persona would have resonated with those outside of the Pāśupata milieu as well. To recover some of the alternative

readings these images could have received, it is helpful to reflect upon how the symbolic associations of his iconographic attributes and the placement of his images within their structural frames contributed to the construction of his identity. Here Davis's conception of 'communities of response' is useful. Davis argues that, much like texts, images are subject to multiple interpretations or 'readings.' The larger setting or context in which an image is experienced and viewed, as well as the particular concerns and 'interpretive strategies' of the viewer, condition these readings.⁴⁵⁸ Since early medieval temples were vital *loci* of interaction across a spectrum of social groups and religious communities, Lakuliśa images could have been subject to multiple interpretations.

While the SP presents a more inclusive and accessible Pāśupata Śaivism than the esoteric texts, like Kauṇḍinya's writings, which imagine an audience of initiates—as, for example, in the description of Somaśarman being favored by the Lord together with his family and the text's emphasis on emplaced practices like establishing *lingas* and going on pilgrimage—it tends toward a brahmin-centered vision of the early community. The community on the ground was more socially complex and varied than these texts admit. Visual evidence portrays a tradition in which women and perhaps other non-initiates participated. Sculpted panels depicting *linga* veneration from early medieval temples depict varied groups of people involved in this definitive Śaiva ritual practice [Figures 210; 155 & 156]. Groups of ascetics, women, couples, and lay-people are all depicted venerating the *linga*. And we have seen in the previous chapters that temples complexes were only rarely, if ever, exclusively Śaiva.

⁴⁵⁸ Davis, *Indian Images*, pp. 9-10.

The club is Lakulīśa's defining attribute and a seed-filled fruit becomes a standard accessory by the end of the 8th century.⁴⁵⁹ The semantic range of these ubiquitous attributes has not yet been given sufficient attention. The club (*lakuṭa*) is clearly a defining feature of Lakulīśa and a mark of the ascetic, but what might this attribute have communicated to the layperson or uninitiated devotee? An ethic of protection seems the most natural. Wielding his club, Lakulīśa is not unlike the many attendant and guardian figures that populated shrines and temples in the early medieval period. Śiva's own trademark *triśūla* was personified in iconography and Śiva's *gaṇas* are also commonly depicted as holding weapons, clubs and staffs among others. Revealing examples include the image of the *daṇḍa*-holding figure on the base of the fourth century Mathura pillar that recorded a donation in memoriam of deceased Śaiva preceptors [Figure 4]. Such figures do not represent Lakulīśa *per se*, but I think they anticipate his iconography and provide a context for interpreting the later images. In addition to contributing to the power of his persona as teacher and holy man, Lakulīśa's club would have also communicated an ethic of protection commensurate with the wider range of protective deities and attendant figures who, with their respective weapons, protected devotees and shrines from potentially harmful forces. Particularly when combined with the gesture of protection (*abhaya mudrā*), as in this eighth century image from the Ajmer Museum it is clear that for Śiva's devotees the club was not to be seen as a threat⁴⁶⁰ [Figure 211]

⁴⁵⁹ In my fieldwork and survey of Lakulīśa images in Rajasthan and northern Madhya Pradesh I have not seen the fruit incorporated in Lakulīśa images prior to the early eighth century. Shah (p. 94) has identified the sixth or seventh century as the period when it became a common attribute of Lakulīśa, but based on my research I think this is far too early.

⁴⁶⁰ The museum placard identifies the images as dating from the 8th century. I think it may be earlier than this, perhaps 7th century. This assessment is based on the similarities between this image and its surrounding ornamentation and another image of Lakulīśa dated to the Gupta period and preserved in the Government Museum in Mathura.

A second common attribute of Lakulīśa icons, albeit a later addition that becomes popular in the mid to late 8th century, is the fruit typically called a citron, (see Figure 203, proper lower left hand of image) this is a somewhat misleading appellation since the fruit does not belong to the citrus family. I have earlier argued that this fruit is the *sītāphala* or ‘custard-apple’ found in western India and the Deccan. Made up of myriad seeds enclosed by a sweet edible flesh, its lumpy outer rind is similar to the texture often given to Lakulīśa’s fruit. A second possibility is to read this attribute as a depiction of a young jackfruit. Michael Meister has undertaken a full treatment of the jackfruit and its uses in Indian iconography as a symbol of plenty and prosperity.⁴⁶¹ I find his interpretation compelling because he is able to show an iconographic precedent for the use of the fruit in scenes of *liṅga* veneration and devotion, such as in these images from the Government Museum in Mathura [Figure 212 & 213]. Moreover, the large size of the jackfruit seems a better match with the icons, many of which depict a very substantial fruit nearly half the size of the figure’s torso.⁴⁶²

It may be impossible to arrive at a precise identification of the fruit. In my opinion, this is not a critical point since both the *sītāphala* and the jackfruit, as with other fruits incorporated within iconographic contexts, like the mango, communicate a shared set of symbolic associations. Regarding Lakulīśa’s attribute, Choubey has commented that its many seeds represented the countless atoms of the universe.⁴⁶³ This understanding may have held for some, but for other viewers, the significance of this multiplicity may have had a less ‘cosmic’ and more immediate, worldly connotation. Images of fruit and fruit-bearing and flowering trees were commonly used in Indian temples as a decorative

⁴⁶¹ Michael Meister, ‘Exploring Kafirkot: When is a Rose-Apple not a Rose’ *Pakistan Heritage* 1: (2009) pp. 109-128.

⁴⁶² The jackfruit can weigh more than 30 lbs when fully ripe. A *sītāphala* is roughly the size of a baseball.

⁴⁶³ Choubey (referring to *Viśvakarma Vāstuśāstram*), *Lakulīśa*, p. 116.

motif to represent fecundity and the rich creative potential of nature.⁴⁶⁴ In addition to becoming a common attribute of Lakulīśa, a similar fruit is a common feature of *yakṣa* imagery, specifically Gomukha and Kubera. In her recent work on the Jain caves at Ellora, Lisa Owen has drawn attention to the use of the jackfruit as an attribute of Jain *yakṣas*. According to her analysis, this fruit, bursting with plentiful seeds, was a familiar image connoting prosperity and fecundity.⁴⁶⁵ Frequently, images bearing the fruit and a heavy coin-purse greeted devotees as they entered the shrines [Figure 214]. It may be that Lakulīśa's fruit served a similar purpose as a sign that he, too, was a potential source of well-being, prosperity, and fertility for devotees of Śiva. This notion of the conferral of boons may have informed the Chittorgarh image from Rampol gate in which Lakulīśa's attendants prominently display the fruit, which we could interpret as a gift from the Lord.

A connection with these quotidian values would have made Lakulīśa a compelling figure since fertility was, as it still is today in India, of paramount concern for married couples and the worship of the *liṅga* has long ties to cults of fertility. A similar idea is communicated in a panel from the 10th century Śiva temple in Lonad, north of Thane in Maharashtra, through juxtaposed images of *liṅga* veneration, a stout ascetic, and an image of the fertility goddess typically called Lajjā Gauri [Figure 215]. We could interpret the same association of Lakulīśa with quotidian values in some of the panels that embrace the exterior base of the 11th century Mahanaleśvara temple in Menal. Here images of a club-bearing figure are interposed with depictions of *liṅga* veneration and amorous couples [Figures 216 & 217].

⁴⁶⁴ For example, Chapter 2 notes the motif of fruit trees and rich foliage framing the entry to the *liṅga* shrine in Jogeśvarī and the mātṛka panel in the Takli-Dhokeśvar caves.

⁴⁶⁵ L. Owen, *Carving Devotion in the Jain Caves at Ellora* (Leiden: Brill, 2012) p. 95.

IV.I Location, Location, Location

The old adage that the value of a property is determined solely by its location can be applied to temple real estate as well. Just as Lakulīśa's iconographic accessories explicate certain facets of his persona, the placement of his images in their temple contexts is equally important. Attention to location provides cues as to how visitors would have encountered his images within the physical space of the temple and determined the meaning of those images vis-à-vis the synesthetic experience of the temple as a whole. A shift in an icon's placement would have also implied a shift in the symbolic value attached to that image. This is relevant when considering the gradual movement of Lakulīśa's images from their place in the temple interior to the niches on the exterior of the monument.

With the exception of Karvan's temple (see n. 8), Lakulīśa images were not enshrined in the sanctum of Śaiva temples; the *garbhagrha* was typically occupied by a *liṅga*. In the majority of the early examples from the 7th and early 8th centuries he appears in the door lintel, in entryways or thresholds. The significance of this pattern of placement is not difficult to discern, but it has not been made explicit in the existing scholarship. At intermediate places of transition and crossing (i.e. 'liminal' spaces) apotropaic images are a familiar adornment of doorways and thresholds in India as elsewhere. Accompanied by his attributes of power and protection (*lakuṭa*) as well as prosperity (seed-filled fruit), Lakulīśa served as a guardian of the *liṅga* within the sanctum. These thresholds were elaborately adorned with floriated patterns, symbols of plenty (*pūrṇaghata*), and other auspicious images (e.g. *nāgas*, *makaras*, and *kīrttimukhas*). His place of prominence within these larger decorative frames further points to his role in the glorification of Śaiva space. For devotees entering the shrine, the icon of the 'Lord with a Club' and the *liṅga* would have been encountered simultaneously in a single visual frame. This intervisibility would have reinforced their mutual

connection. For those initiated members of the Pāśupata community, Lakulīśa's presence would have served as a potent symbol of a shared identity. For those uninitiated devotees, he could have signified the well-being and prosperity the benevolent Lord conferred upon his devotees.

Over time, Lakulīśa's presence becomes manifest in new contexts within the temple structure as he moves from the interior to the exterior niches. This shift in location is not articulated at the same historical moment or in the same manner across the sites I have studied; however, it does seem to be a development that occurs in the 8th and 9th centuries and thus is broadly coincident with the phasing-out of the human representations of the teacher. The move of Lakulīśa icons from the doorway where he functions as the Pāśupata emblem guarding the *limen*, to the temple exterior where he becomes part of the larger pantheon of deities adorning the monument is a significant transition and change in his status. In the discussion of the Chittorgarh images, we have seen that Lakulīśa appears on the exterior of temples along with the familiar *dikpālas*. That some of these were not original Śaiva dedications suggests that, over time, Lakulīśa's appeal was recognized outside of the Śaiva milieu. On the temple exterior, his icons would not have been encountered together with the enshrined *liṅga*. This visual and spatial disassociation could indicate a wider popularity; such that the earlier connection with the *liṅga* was no longer possessed the same kind of potency. At the same time, I think this wider popularity also signifies a certain dilution of his symbolic value as an emblem of Pāśupata identity and could reflect a broader social reality in which the Pāśupata movement was superseded by other Śaiva communities and traditions.

IV.II Identity Crisis

This chapter proceeded from the assumption that the earliest Lakulīśa images had a specific and shared resonance for those who viewed them—they depicted an image of a human ascetic teacher and

were potent markers of Pāśupata identity. I think the early uniformity of the images and their consistent deployment in the temple lintel supports this interpretation. As we saw in the preceding discussion, however, the particular meaning that the icons express is not stable. Shifts in Lakulīśa's attributes and location indicate a gradual transition from a specific emblem to a more widely accessible figure. This process can also be tracked in space and time as Lakulīśa transitioned from the door lintel to the temple exterior. His iconographic identity becomes nearly indistinct from that of Śiva or is leveraged to articulate new hierarchies and glorify other deities. In the later examples from Menal, the repetition of the club-bearing figures on the external panels points to a significantly diluted symbolic value that resulted in Lakulīśa becoming a kind of iconographic trope or motif.

This reduction to a visual trope presages the eventual disappearance of Lakulīśa from the temple altogether. Some of the latest Lakulīśa icons I have found from the region come from Hinglajgarh in Upamāla and date c. 11th or 12th century. Later Śiva temples in Chittorgarh, like the renovated Samidheśvar temple, also lack Lakulīśa images.⁴⁶⁶ As Lakulīśa decreased in popularity, the niche above the sanctum door was most commonly filled by Vināyaka (Gaṇeśa), another potent symbol of protection, prosperity, and well-being. The curious figure of a seated, ithyphallic Gaṇeśa above the shrine door in the 9th century Jaleśvara temple in Mandalgarh could have been a Lakulīśa image recut to depict the elephant-headed god.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁶ The temple now called the Samidheśvar was originally a Jain temple of Jina Ariṣṭanemi built c 1230-1235. After its desecration in the fourteenth century it was rededicated as a Śiva temple. Dhaky has identified some inscribed columns repurposed in the building as belonging to the original Samidheśvar temple, which was probably north of the current temple near the Gomukha Kuṇḍa. M.A. Dhaky, 'The Creed-Affiliation of the Samidheśvara Temple in Chittodgadh', *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, XIV (1984-85), pp.25-42.

⁴⁶⁷ At the time of my visit in May 2014 the image had been coated with layers of paint, which made the details difficult to capture in a photograph. A clearer image is published in the entry on Mandalgarh in *EITA* vol 2, pt. 2, pp. 304-307; Plates 691-694.

V. Conclusions

Considering the ways in which communities have engaged and used material and visual forms to express notions of identity and belonging is an essential component of this project. In this brief survey of images, I have worked to show that Lakulīśa was a multivalent persona, whose icons would have been intelligible to a Śaiva audience, as well as to the many others who encountered him in the bustling religious centers of northwest India. As a representation of the authoritative teacher, ascetic, and holy man, his images blend recognizable attributes of a Śaiva ascetic with those used to express similar ideals in Buddhist and Jain imagery. Bearing fruit and club while guarding the threshold of the temple sanctum, Lakulīśa would have also been a widely recognizable symbol of protection, fertility, and well-being. The process of transculturation reflected in his imagery is, I think, evidence of the larger processes by which Śaiva communities adapted shared iconographic idioms in order to communicate their relevance as a source of authority and sanctity to a diverse audience.

CODA

TEMPLE, COMMUNITY, AND HERITAGE MAKING

The preceding chapters have explored the ways in which the creation of Pāśupata identity was realized through text and in places. Examining the narrative mapping of the Pāśupata landscape in the SPs, I proposed we read the text's geographic imaginary as an effort to constitute a community and locate that community in time and in space. In addition to being a powerful rhetoric, this imagined landscape served to stake a geopolitical claim. The previous case studies have considered the implications of that claim by mapping the patterned interactions between Pāśupata communities and early medieval India's political and economic networks. This historical mapping looked beyond the textual horizon to consider the vernacular geographies that existed on the ground using inscriptions and material evidence from the built landscape (i.e. temples, monuments, and images). Finally, I examined the iconography of Lakulīśa, the ascetic teacher and emblem of Pāśupata identity. I suggested that we might read gradual changes in his material representation and variation in his placement within temple spaces as recording significant moments in an ongoing conversation between Pāśupata communities and the polyphonic regional landscapes in which they were embedded.

In each of the preceding chapters, attention to place has been a central concern. By examining the inscriptions that record evidence of temple donation and maintenance, I have shown that

endowing and constructing temples in early medieval India was one facet of a larger repertoire of practices centered around ritualized and often public acts of donation, commemoration, and memorialization. Donations were motivated by the desire to gain religious ‘merit’ which accrued to the donor and her family members, living and deceased, by virtue of these acts of piety. Thus, investments in places held salvific potential and donative records were often framed in soteriological terms. But investments in temple complexes were not necessarily individual undertakings. Collective or corporate donations by trading diasporas, artisans, and guilds, created tangible links to places where community identities and connections could be expressed and renewed. The various motivations that informed these pious acts reflect different facets of the social function of temples as media through which a wide range of social relationships and senses of ‘belonging’ were affirmed and reaffirmed (i.e. kinship groups, community identities, political alliances, economic bonds, and so on) Finally, in addition to serving as material instantiations of interpersonal relationships, religious institutions also served to socialize space by marking the geographic center within the lived spaces of settlements and polities.

As has also become evident through the sources surveyed in the preceding chapters, commissioning a temple was not a singular act, but a process that was realized over an extended period of time. As monuments intended to last ‘as long as the sun and the moon should endure’ according to a common epigraphic trope, medieval temples required regular maintenance and temple complexes were periodically augmented and renovated. These repairs and addition were funded through various means—pious donations as well as taxes on trade goods, tithes, and revenues from real estate and agrarian land-holdings. Some of the inscriptions surveyed in the previous chapters—the Indragarh record, for example—explicitly mention such additions. In other cases, like Kāman, we can observe the process ‘in action’ through the donations recorded over extended periods of time.

While a foundation inscription may name an individual donor, the task of maintaining the life of a temple required a collaborative effort. These examples show temples to be dynamic parts of equally dynamic religious landscapes that provided potential for merit making long after their foundations were laid.

Now some one-thousand years or more after their foundations were laid, many of the early Śaiva temples I have studied are listed as ‘protected monument’s by the Indian government. These protected temples have become vital media for the expression of highly politicized representations of India’s ‘primordial’ culture and its enduring ‘national heritage.’ And the marketing of these early temples as ‘heritage’ has introduced global networks of transnational agencies (like UNESCO) and new flows of people and economies via tourism. But this heritage making often involves fraught politics and I have witnessed the tensions between the values of local communities who want to continue to use, maintain, and worship within these monuments, and the machinations of state and government funded agencies, which often marginalize the role of these communities as the custodians of the nation’s tangible heritage. These debates about heritage making take many forms, but I think the central issue, and source of much of the conflict centers, on the issue of preservation. Practices and modes of temple repair often put local communities at odds with these organizations and agencies since the very notion of what it means to ‘preserve’ is so deeply contingent. For heritage agents, the monuments are a symbol of the past conceived as a static entity, the integrity of which depends on its preservation as something unchanging and fundamentally distinct from the vicissitudes of the present. For many communities, however, the conception of the past that informs their engagement with material culture is more akin to *purāṇa*—i.e. something rooted in the primordial but, at the same time, renewable, able to be made and re-made. Albeit brief, this reflection on the complex ‘afterlives’

of the temples of the Pāśupata landscape opens up a space for new questions and considerations of the ways in which the value of the 'past' inheres in material culture.

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Figure 1. The Pāśupata Landscape



Figure 2. Mathura Pillar Inscription of Candragupta II, Mathura Government Museum



Figure 3. Mathura Pillar, view of inscription



Figure 4. Mathura Pillar, Close view of figure on base of pillar

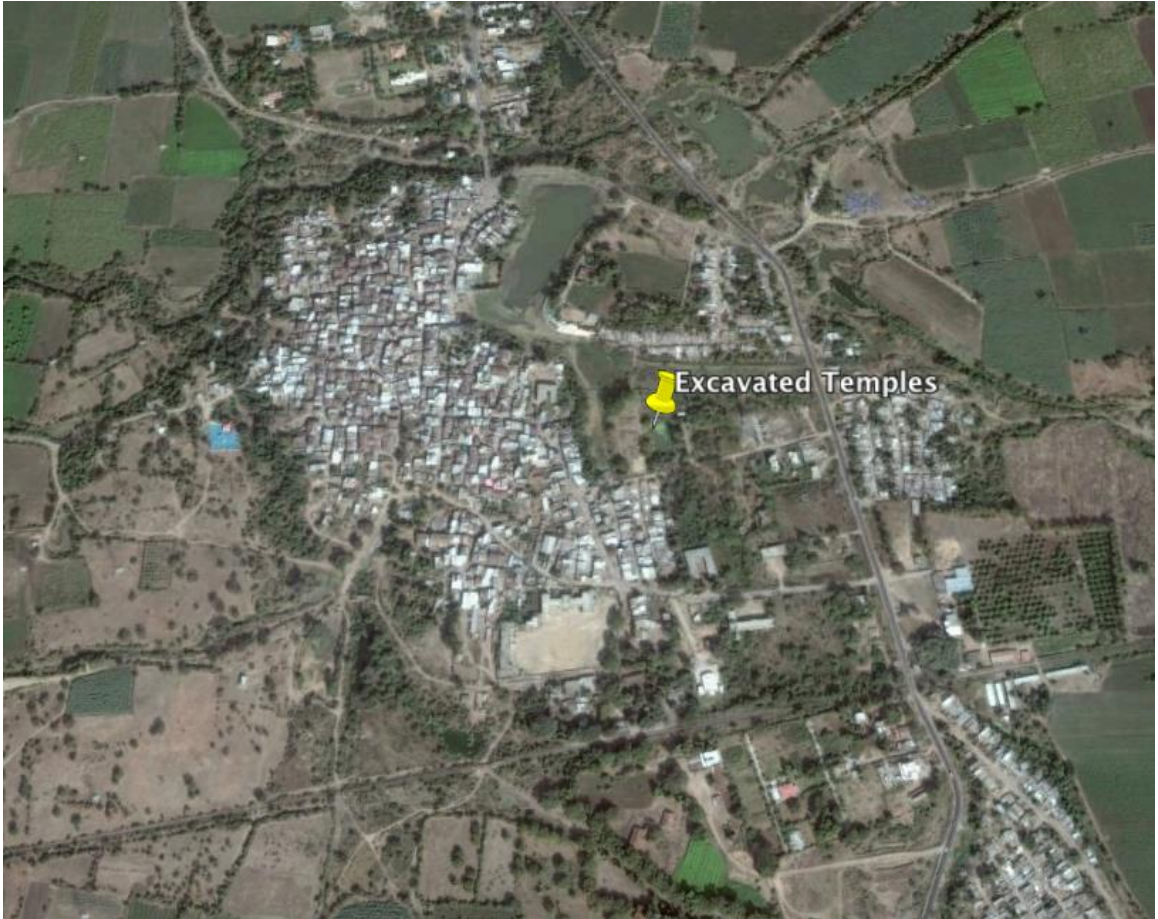


Figure 5. View of Karvan, Gujarat



Figure 6. Karvan, Site of excavated temple foundations



Figure 7. Karvan excavation site, stone fragment with Lakulīśa



Figure 8. Lakulīśa, close view



Figure 9. Karvan, līṅga exposed in dry tank



Figure 10. Lakulīśa from Timbarva, M.S.U. Archeology Dept., Vadodara



Figure 11. Karvan, modern Lakulīśa temple



Figure 12. Karvan, Lakulīśa image in temple courtyard



Figure 13. Islands of Bombay prior to land reclamation. J.G. Bartholomew, Archibald Constable and Company - Constable's Hand Atlas of India, 1893 edition



Figure 14. North Konkan Close View, Ports and Rivers

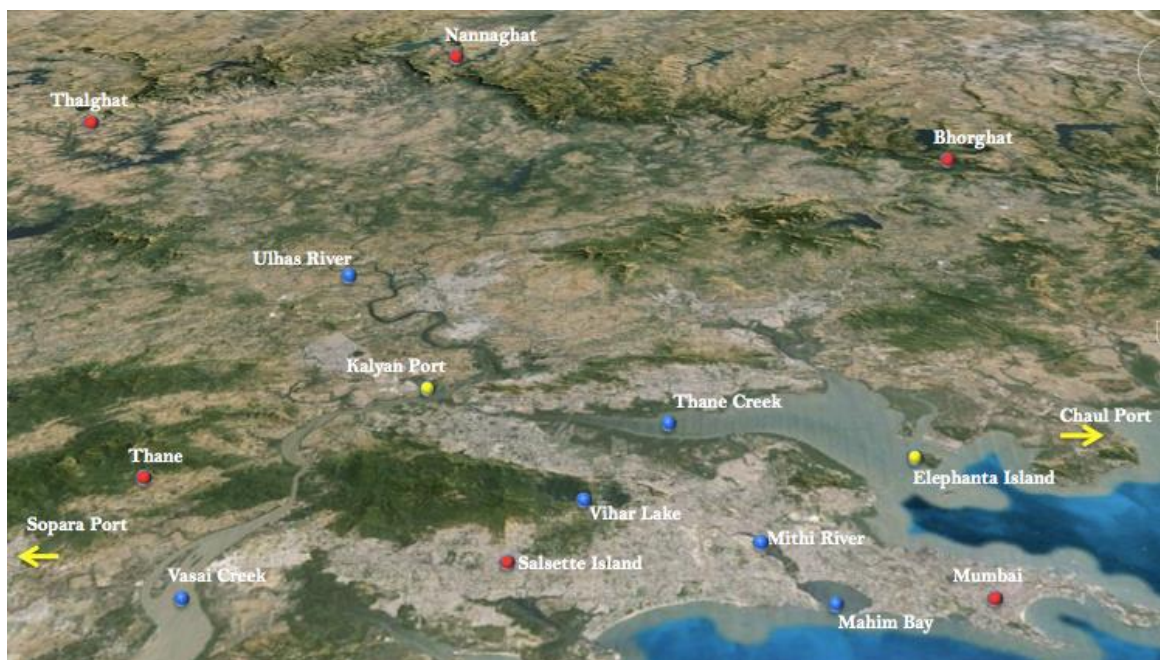


Figure 15. North Konkan Ports and Mt. Passes

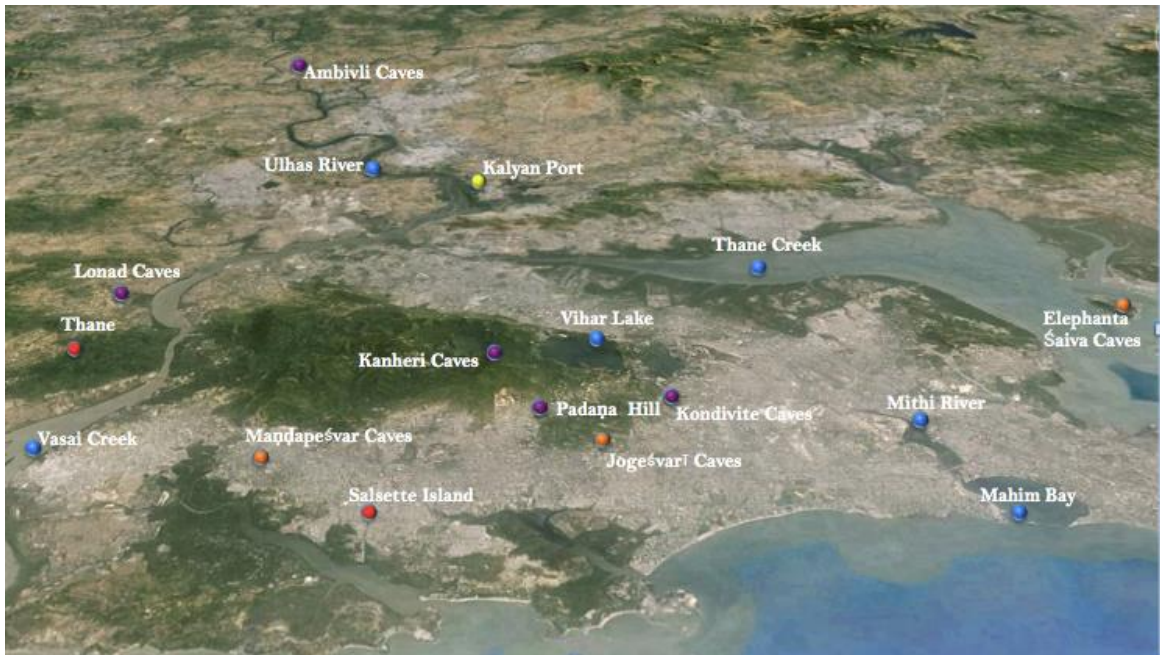


Figure 16. Religious Landscape: Buddhist and Śaiva Cave Sites

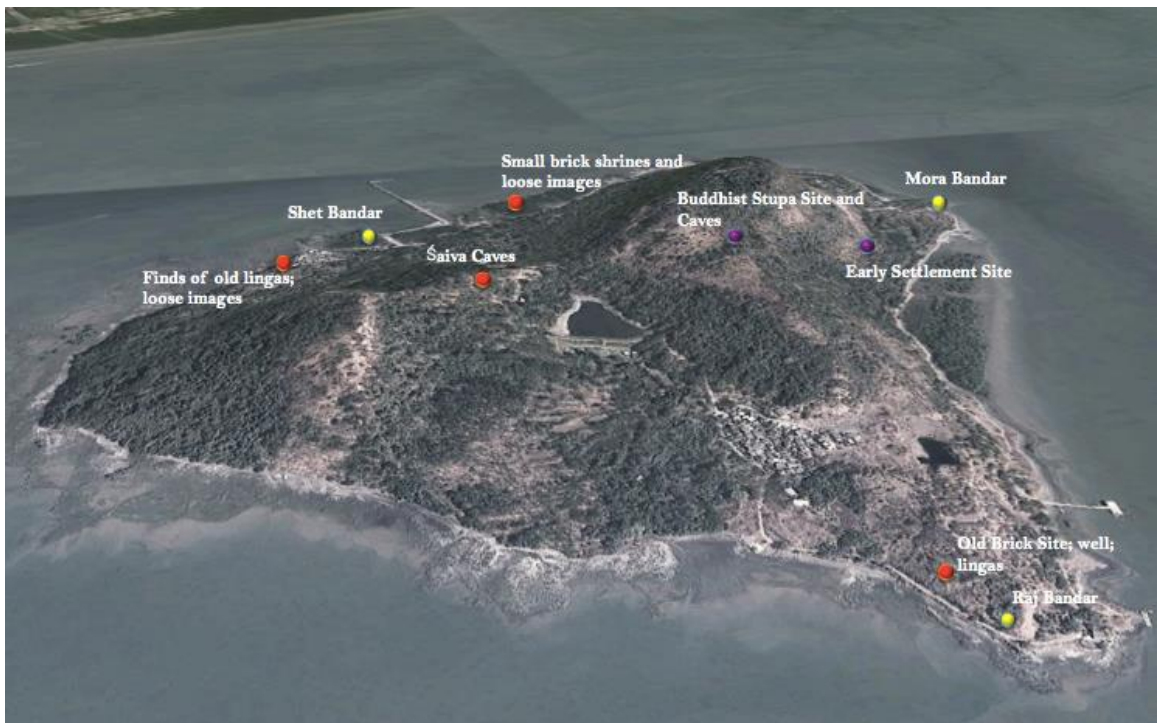


Figure 17. Elephanta Island



Figure 18. Excavated Caves near *stūpa* site, Elephanta Island



Figure 19. View of Śaiva Caves from *stūpa* site, Elephanta Island



Figure 20. View of jetty from *stūpa* site, Elephanta Island



Figure 21. Linga on path to *stūpa* site, Elephanta Island



Figure 22. Locations associated with Kalacuri Inscriptions, Red = Military Camps; Green = Granted Lands; Purple = Epigraphic findspots; Yellow = Orienting points; Orange: Supposed site of patronage at Elephanta



Figure 23. Eastern descent to Jogeśvarī Caves



Figure 24. Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti panel, Jogeśvarī Caves



Figure 25. Gaṇeśa shrine,
Jogeśvarī Caves



Figure 26. Entryway with
damaged image of Śiva
Nāṭeśa, Jogeśvarī Caves



Figure 27. Panel depicting wedding of Śiva and Pārvatī, Jogesvarī Caves



Figure 28. Panel depicting Śiva and Pārvatī playing dice, Jogesvarī Caves



Figure 29. Lakulīśa, backside of liṅga shrine, Jogeśvarī Caves



Figure 30. Lakulīśa with four attendants, Jogeśvarī Caves



Figure 31. Exterior of Maṇḍapeśvar Caves



Figure 32. View of liṅga shrine,
Maṇḍapeśvar Caves



Figure 33. Śiva Naṭeśa panel, Maṇḍapeśvar Caves



Figure 34. Śiva Naṭeśa panel, Elephanta Caves



Figure 35. Mātṛkā panel, Elephanta Caves



Figure 36. Lakulīśa, Maṇḍapeśvar Caves



Figure 37. Śiva from Parel, Maharashtra c. 6th century. CSMS Mumbai.



Figure 38. Parel stele, Mumbai c. 6th century



Figure 39. Aurangabad, Approach to Eastern Group of Caves



Figure 40. Aurangabad, Eastern Group. View of Entrance to Brahmanical Cave



Figure 41. Aurangabad, Brahmanical Cave, 6 of the Saptamatrkas with Virabhadra

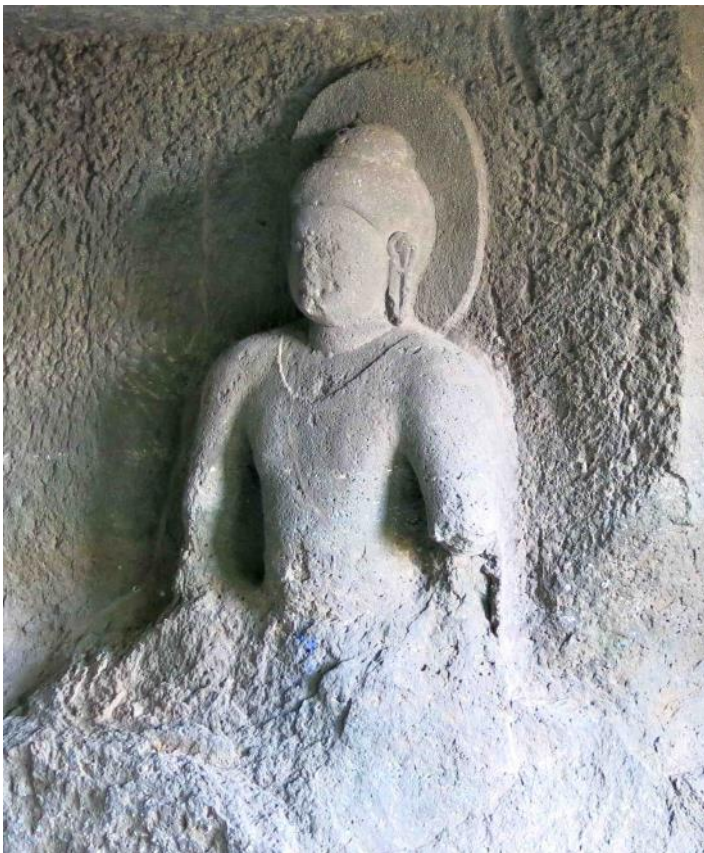


Figure 42. Aurangabad, Brahmanical Cave, Buddha



Figure 43. Aurangabad, Votive Panels in the Ambulatory of Western Caves



Figure 44. Lajjā Gaurī from Votive Panel in the Western Caves, Close View



Figure 45. Aurangabad, Female Devotees in Western Caves



Figure 46. Aurangabad, Eastern Caves. Goddesses with Avalokiteśvara



Figure 47. Bhokardan, Entrance to Caves



Figure 48. Bhokardan, View of Kelna River from Main Caves (dry season)



Figure 49. Bhokardan, Durgā close view



Figure 50. Bhokardan, Sūrya, close view



Figure 51. Bhokardan
Saṃkarṣana and Revatī



Figure 52. Bhokardan, Viṣṇu Śeṣaśāyī



Figure 53. Bhokardan, Cave entry interior Hunting scene and panel depicting liṅga veneration



Figure 54. Liṅga veneration, close view



Figure 55. Bhokardan cave entry interior. Sculpted niches showing fire sacrifice (upper) and liṅga veneration (lower).



Figure 56. Takli-Dhokeśvar. View of caves entry from north



Figure 57. Takli-Dhokeśvar
Linga Shrine



Figure 58. Takli-Dhokeśvar, Saptamātṛkā Panel with Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeśa

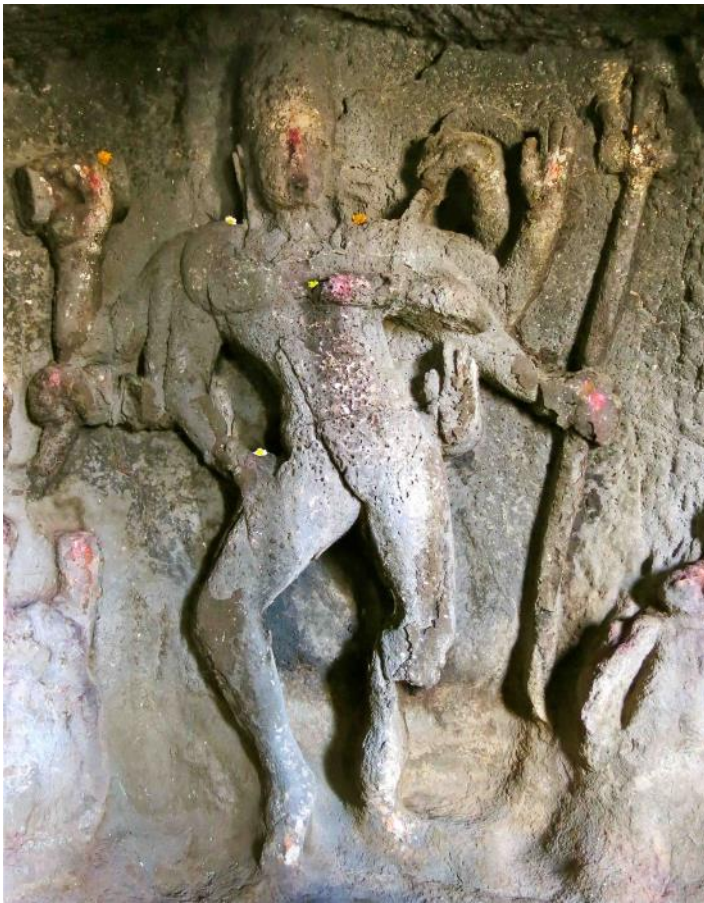


Figure 59. Takli-Dhokeśvar, Tāṇḍava Śiva



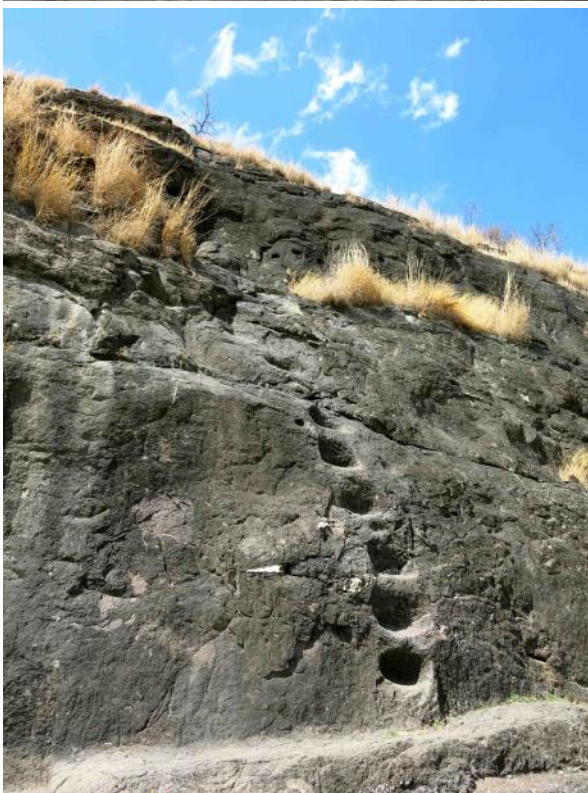
Figure 60. Takli-Dhokeśvar



Figure 61. Takli-Dhokeśvar, Bhiṣṭī
(Water Carrier)



Figures 62 & 63. Takli-Dhokeśvar,
Water Channel & Storage Tank



Figures 64 & 65. Takli-Dhokeśvar, Ladder to Residential Caves

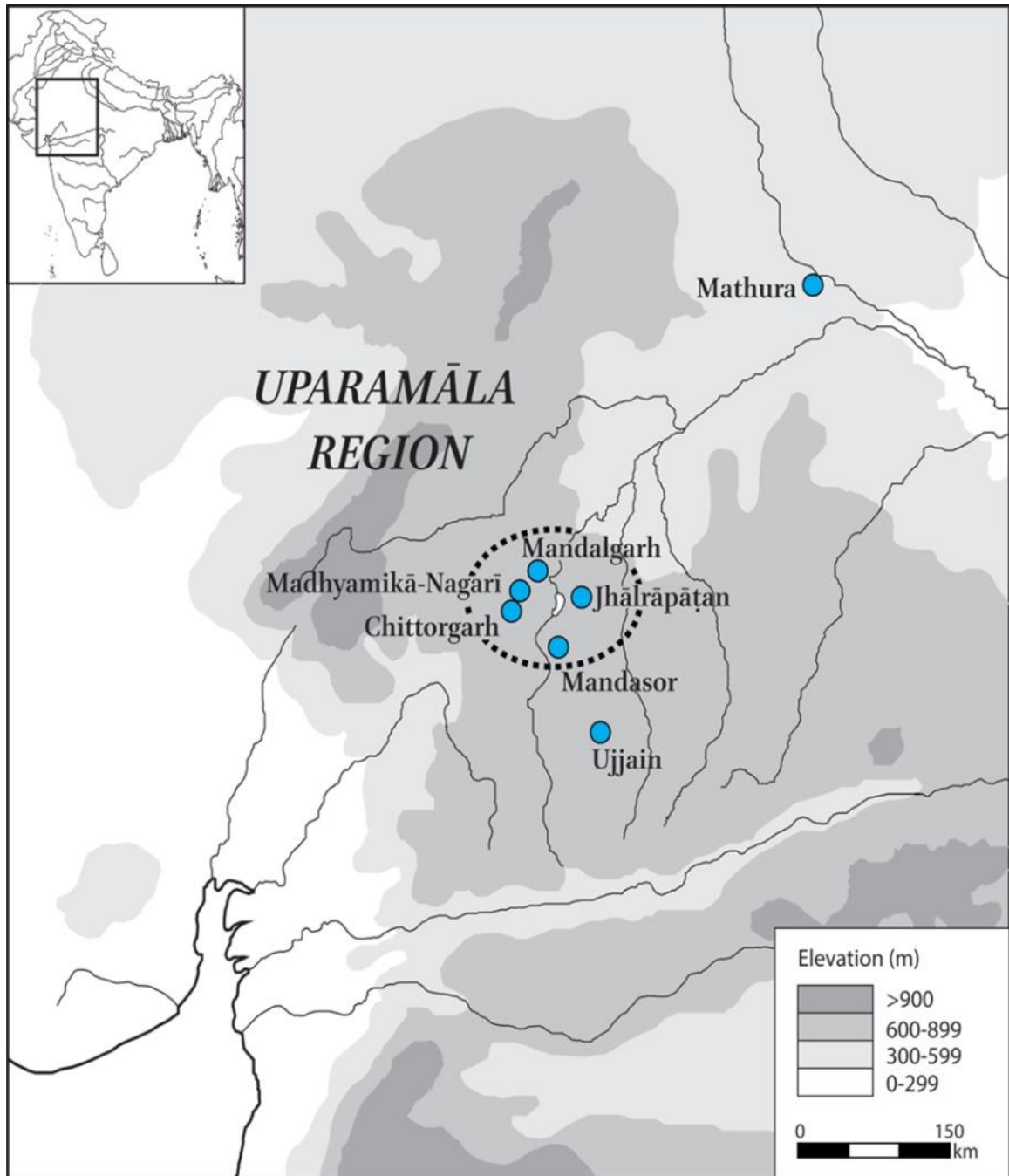


Figure 66. Regional Political and Cultural Centers in Upamāla c. 6th-8th centuries CE

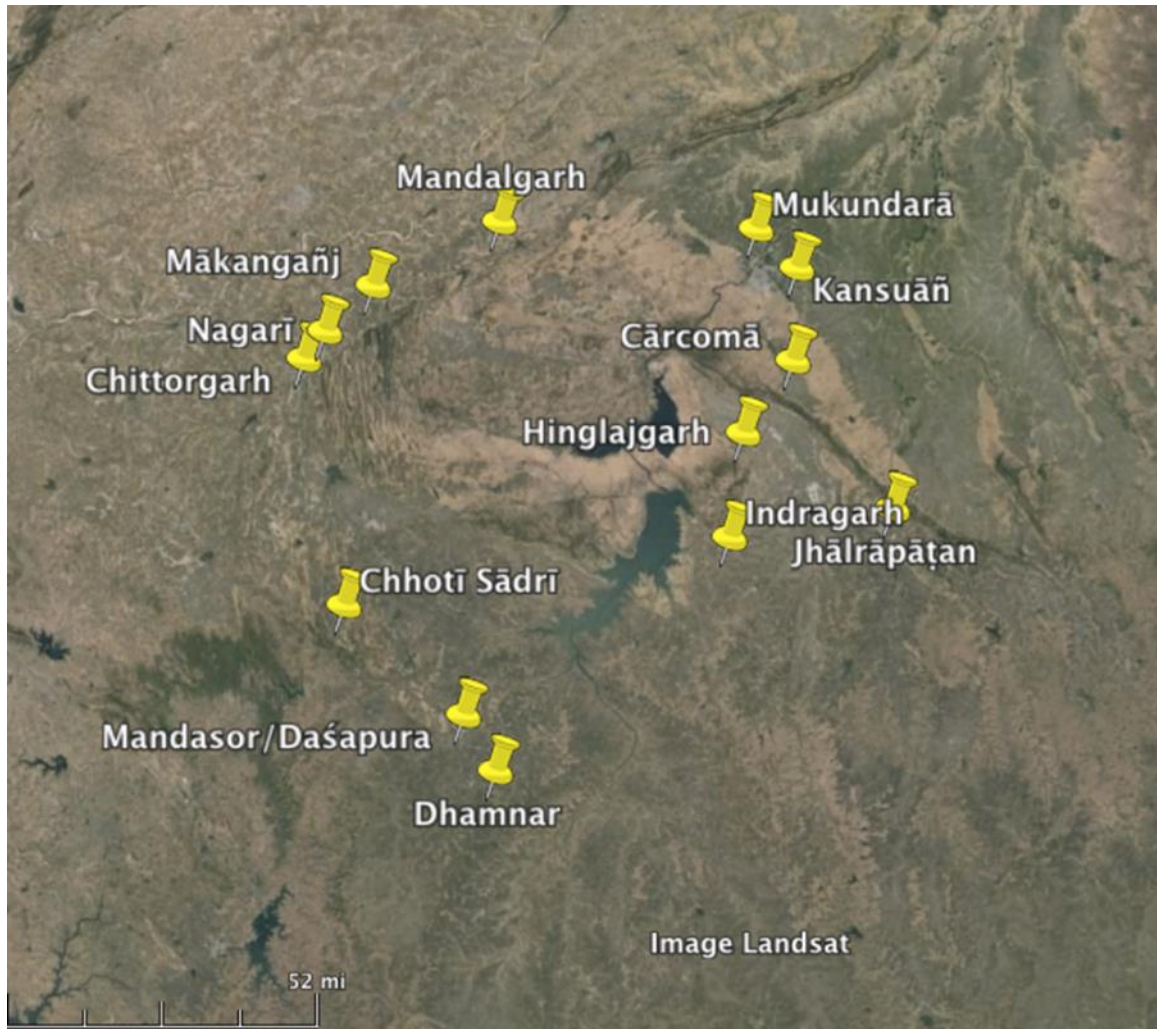


Figure 67. Temple Sites in Upamāla c. 5th-8th centuries CE

- Mukundara— c. late 5th- 6th century
- Cārcomā— c. late 5th- 6th century
- Nagarī—c. late 5th- 6th century
- Chhotī Sādrī—c. late 5th- 6th century
- Daśapura—c. 6th century
- Mākangañj—c. early 7th century
- Jhālrapāṭan—c. 7th century
- Dhamnar—c. 7th-8th century
- Chittorgarh—c. late 7th- 8th century
- Kansuāñ— c. early 8th century
- Indragarh—c. early 8th century
- Mandargarh—c. 8th century



Figure 68. Sūrya c. 5th-6th century, Mandasor Archeological Museum



Figure 69. Mātṛkā
c. 5th-6th century, Mandasor
Archeological Museum



Figure 70. Śiva c. 5th-6th century, Mandasor Archeological Museum



Figure 71. Nāga
c. 5th-6th century, Mandasor Archeological Museum



Figure 72. candraśālā musician from the Mukundara Śiva temple, Pali Archeological Museum



Figure 73. Mukundara Temple, view of entry pillars
c. late 5th/early 6th century CE



Figure 74. Mukundara Temple *torana* c. late 5th/early 6th century CE



Figure 75. *kīrtimukha*, Mākangañj Śiva Temple



Figure 76. Mākangañj Temple, detached pillar c. late 6th/early 7th century CE



Figures 77 & 78. Ardhanārīśvara
c. 7th century, Jhalawar Archeological Museum





Figure 79. Lākuliśa from near Indragarh, c. 7th century CE, Bhopal Archeological Museum



Figure 80. *candraśālā* image of Lakulīṣa with two attendants, c. 7th century CE, Jhalawar Archeological Museum



Figure 81. Close view of central niche.



Figure 82. Sonḍni site of Yaśodharman's victory pillars . The pillar on the left is no longer standing, but the fragments are preserved at the site (right side foreground).



Figure 83. View of inscribed pillar of Yaśodharman at Sonḍni site



Figure 84. *Dvārapāla*, Soṇḍni site



Figure 85. *Sahasra* linga at Sonḍni site



Figure 86. Recut eight-faced linga c. 6th century, enshrined in the Pāśupatināth Temple



Figures 87 & 88. Nagarī fragmentary *toranas* preserved at temple site c. 6th century.



Figure 89. Fragmentary temple lintel with Lakulīṣa in the central niche c. 8th-9th century, Mandasor Archeological Museum



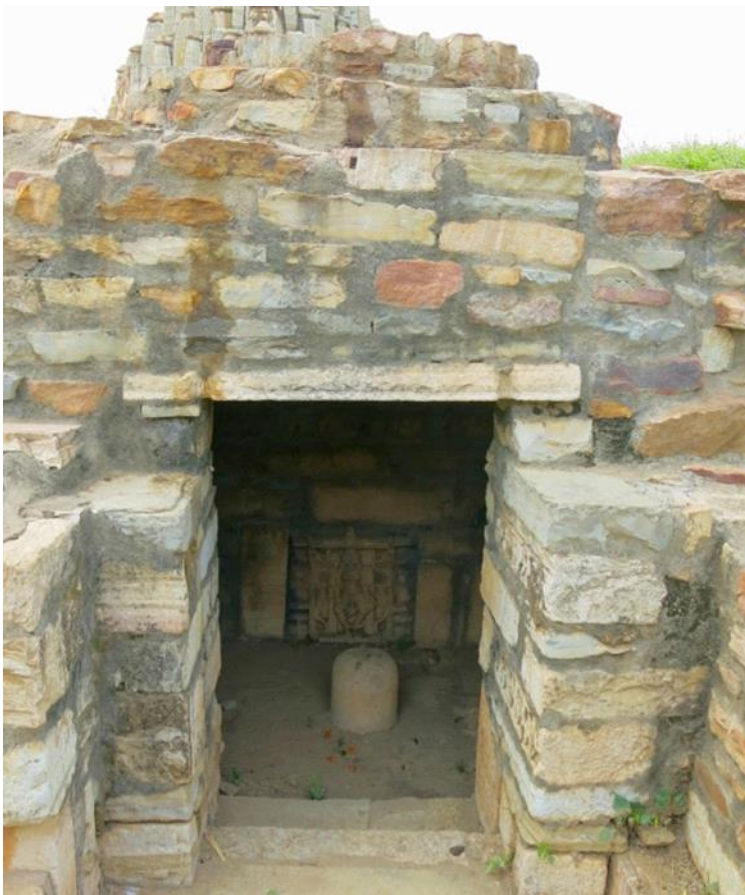
Figures 90 & 91. Fragmentary temple lintel with Lakulīśa in the central niche c. 8th-9th century, Mandasor Archeological Museum



Figure 92. Overview of Chittorgarh Fort with water of Gomukh kuṇḍ (right foreground)



Figure 93. Remains of temples at the so-called ‘saṭī ground’ in Chittorgarh Fort



Figures 94 & 95.
Additional views of 'satī
ground' temples,
a number of which are linga
shrines



Figure 96. Front view of *matha* with repurposed temple fragments, Chittorgarh Fort



Figure 97. Side view of Figure 96 with shrine foundations in foreground



Figure 98. Stepwell surrounding Kukkreshvara temple, Chittorgarh Fort



Figure 99. Kukkreshvara linga



Figure 100. View of Kukkreśvara shrine and framing pillars, c. late 7th-early 8th century



Figure 101. Śiva and Pārvatī from
Kukkreśvara stepwell,
c late 7th-early 8th century,
Chittorgarh Fort



Figure 102. Gaja-Lakṣmī
c. late 7th –early 8th century.
Preserved in Devī Temple,
Chittorgarh Fort

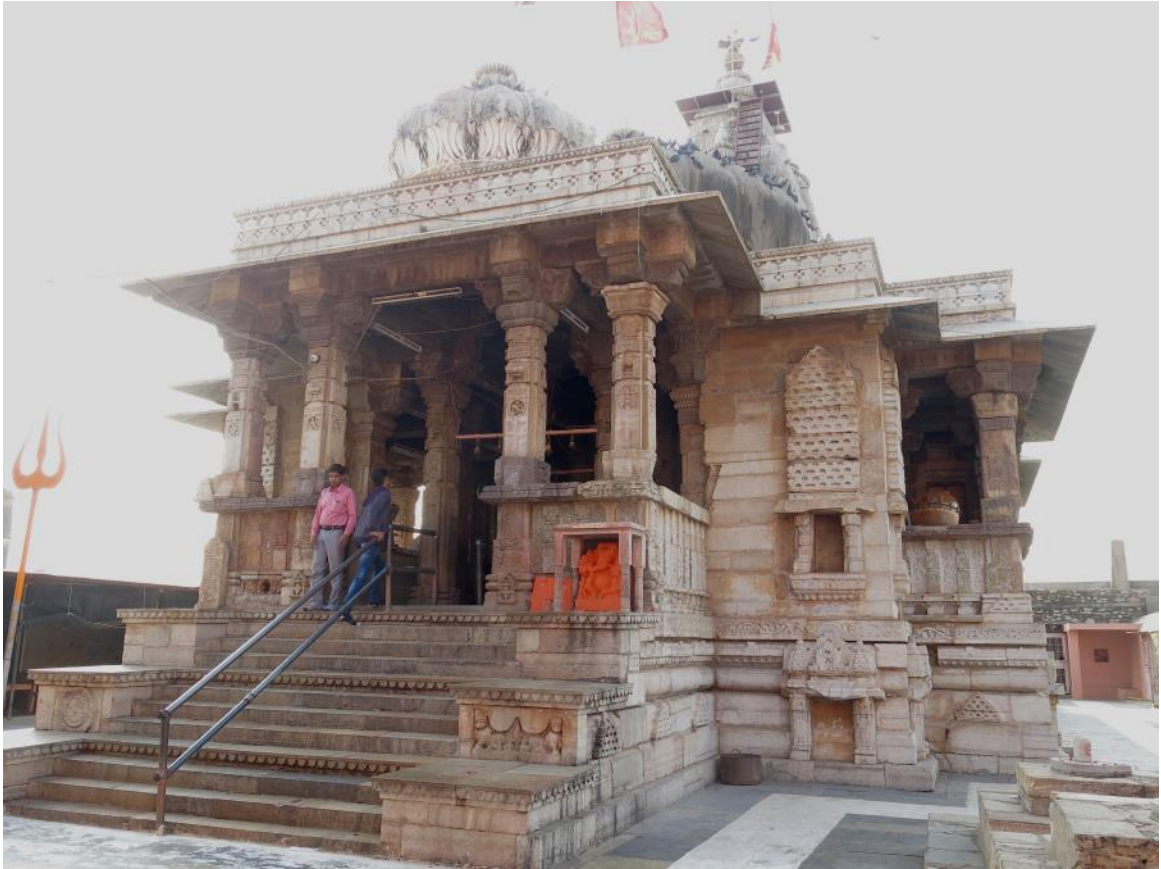


Figure 103. Kālikā Mātā temple, Chittorgarh Fort. c late 7th century

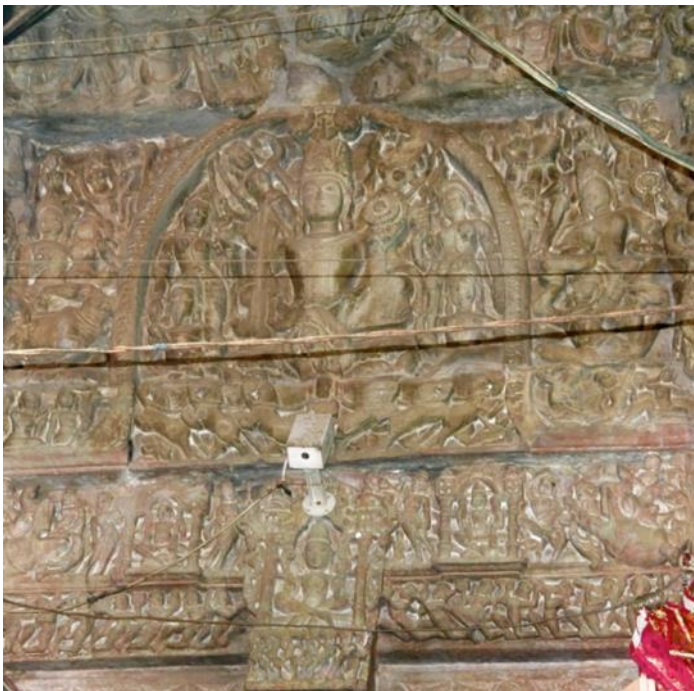


Figure 104. Kālikā Mātā temple, image of Sūrya in the lintel framing the *garbhagṛha*



Figure 105. Kālikā Mātā temple, image of Lakulīṣa in exterior niche



Figure 106. Kumbhaśyāma Temple in Chittorgarh Fort, oldest layers c early 8th



Figure 107. Kumbhaśyāma Temple, image of Lakulīṣa in exterior niche.

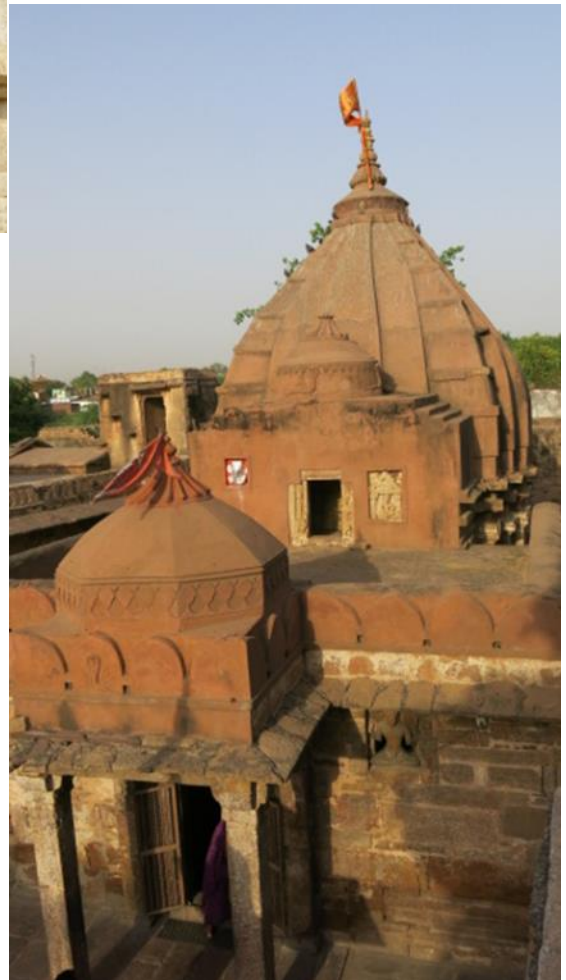


Figure 108. Kumsāñ Temple, Kota District, Rajasthan



Figure 109. Kansuāñ Inscription of 738 CE preserved *in situ* on temple wall



Figure 110. Liṅga under worship in the Kansuāñ temple



Figure 111. Spring located beside the Kansuāñ temple complex



Figures 112 & 113. Pillars repurposed in temple courtyard c. early 8th century



Figure 114. View of the larger Kansuāñ temple complex with remains of small shrines and residential complex



Figure 115. Architectural fragments and image of Lakulīśa repurposed in the upper story of the Kansuāñ temple



Figure 116. Image of Lakulīśa repurposed beside the entry of the Kansuāñ temple c. early 8th century.



Figure 117. Remains of līṅga shrines within the Kansuāñ temple complex



Figure 118. *caturmukha* liṅga c. 8th century, Kansuāñ temple complex



Figure 119. *caturmukha* liṅga, c. late 7th - early 8th century, Kansuāñ temple complex



Figure 120. Śitaleśvara Mahādeva temple complex at Jhālrapāṭan, Rajasthan



Figure 121. View of the Candrabhāgā river beside the Śitaleśvara temple



Figures 123 & 124. Doorway to inner sanctum of the Śītalesvara temple with Lakulīśa in the central niche.
c. 7th-early 8th century

Figure 122. Pillar within the Śītalesvara temple
c. 7th century

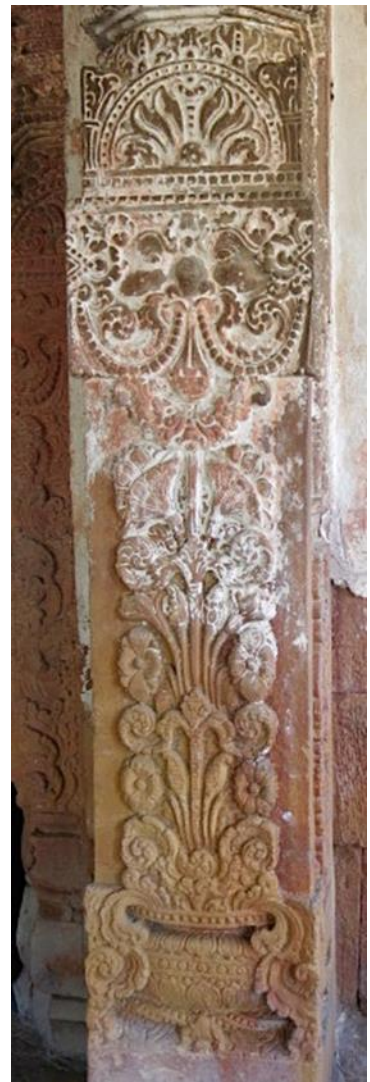




Figure 125. Damaged linga preserved at Śītalesvara Mahādeva temple complex c. 7th century



Figure 127 . *sahasra* linga in ancillary shrine, Śītalesvara Mahādeva temple complex



Figure 126. Lingas collected within the courtyard of the Śītalesvara Mahādeva temple



Figure 128. Ancillary shrines behind the Śītalesvara temple c. 8th-9th century



Figure 129. Close view of ancillary shrine (right side in Figure 64) with Lakulīśa in the central niche



Figure 130. Cāmuṇḍā c. 9th century, held in storage shed at Śītaleśvara temple complex



Figure 131. Śiva Nāṭeśa c. 9th century, held in storage shed at Śītaleśvara temple complex



Figure 132. Durgā Mahiṣāsūramardīnī c. 9th century, Jhalawar Archeological Museum

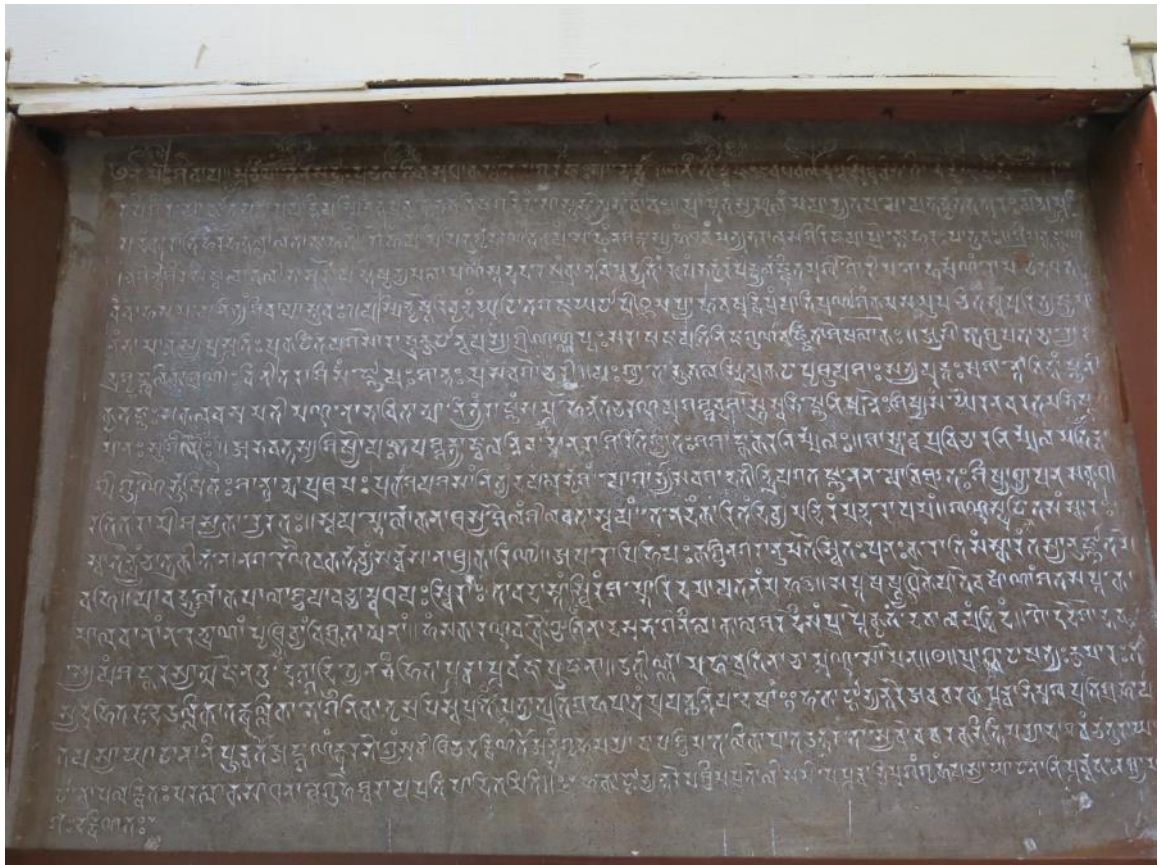


Figure 133. Indragarh Inscription of Nannapa, V.S. 767, Indore Government Museum



Figure 134. Gaja-Lakṣmī from Indragarh, c. 8th century. Bhopal Government Museum (AIIS Photo Archive)



Figure 135. Fragmentary sculpture of Viṣṇu Trivikrama from Indragarh, c. 8th century, Bhopal Government Museum (AIIS Photo Archive)



Figure 136. Lakulīśa from near Indragarh, c. late 7th – 8th century, Indore Government Museum



Figure 137. Base of Lakulīśa sculpture, close view



Figure 138. Location of Salt Lakes and Medieval Economic and Political Centers



Figure 139. Yellow Points: Salt Lakes and Cities; Blue Points: Early Medieval Market Towns



Figure 140. Bairat/Virāṭa,
Excavation site

Figure 141. Salt production at
Ḍīḍvānā



Figure 142. Śākambharī



Figure 143. Naliasar Excavation Site, 6 km from Sāmbhar



Figure 144. Naliasar Site, view with well



Figure 145. The Cāhamāna's territory c 8th/9th century CE



Figure 146. Close aerial view of Mt Harṣa adjacent small salt lake (dry season)



Figure 147. Harṣa Stone inscription, Sikar Gov't Museum



Figure 148. Remains of 10th century temple on Harṣagiri (foreground)



Figure 149. Interior linga shrine, Harṣa Temple c 10th century



Figure 150. Ruined linga shrine, Harṣa Temple Complex c 8th-9th century



Figure 151. Bull in courtyard, Harṣa Temple c 10th century



Figure 152. Remains of *aediculae* surrounding the main liṅga shrine c 9th- 10th century



Figure 153. Sculptural fragment depicting a celebratory scene from Mt. Harṣa, Sikar Gov't Museum c 9th-10th century



Figure 154. Dancing, two-armed Śiva from Mt. Harṣa c 9th-10th century, Sikar Gov't Museum



Figure 155. Scene of linga worship, Harsha Temple, interior pillar



Figure 156. Scene of linga worship, Harsha Temple, interior pillar



Figure 157. Lakulīśa, loose sculpture at Mt. Harṣa Temple complex c 9th-10th century



Figure 158. Repurposed lintel with central Viṣṇu image, Mt. Harṣa temple complex c 9th-10th century



Figure 159. līngodbhavamūrti from Mt Harṣa Temple complex, c. 9th-10th century, Ajmer Government Museum



Figure 160. *pañcāyatana* līnga from Mt Harṣa Temple complex, c. 9th-10th century, Ajmer Government Museum



Figure 161. Renovated *ma ha*, now an active Bhairava shrine, Mt Harṣa Temple Complex



Figure 162. Viṣṇu, fragment of shrine lintel at Mt. Harṣa temple complex c 9th-10th century



Figure 163. Viṣṇu Śeṣaśāyī from Mt. Harṣa temple complex c 9th-10th century, Sikar Gov't Museum



Figure 164. Viṣṇu Vaiṣṇava from Mt. Harṣa temple complex c 9th-10th century, Sikar Gov't Museum



Figure 165. Chāyā, wife of Surya, Mt Harṣa Temple complex, c. 9th-10th century



Figure 166. Repurposed sculpture depicting Pārvatī undergoing Pañcāgnitapas, Interior of Harṣa Temple c 9th-10th century



Figure 167. Scenes of Pārvatī's asceticism on Dīḍvāṇā Mātā Temple c 8th century, Dīḍvāṇā Salt Lake



Figure 168. Scenes of Pārvatī's asceticism on Dīḍvāṇā Mātā Temple c 8th century, Dīḍvāṇā Salt Lake



Figure 169. *mātrikā* sculpture from Harṣa temple complex, Sikar Gov't Museum



Figure 170. *mātrikā* sculptures repurposed in niche outside Bhairava shrine, Harṣa Temple complex



Figure 171. Dancing *yoginī*, from Harsha Temple complex, Sikar Gov't Museum

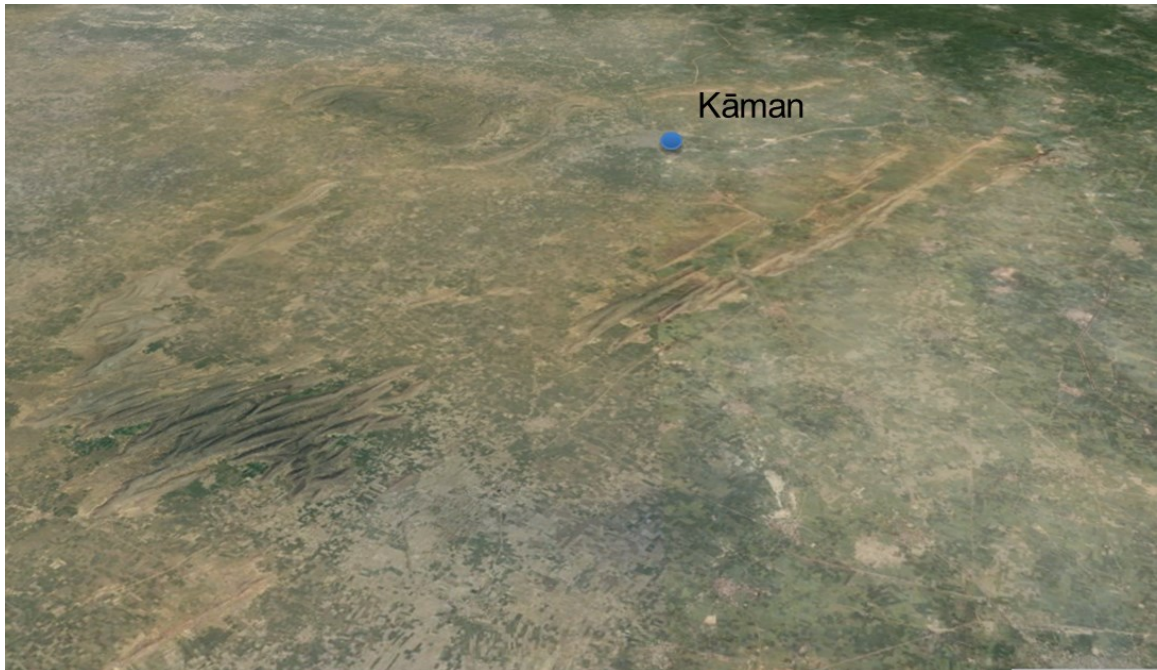


Figure 172. View of Kāman surround by natural fortifications



Figure 173. Close view of Kāman village and old settlement mound



Figure 174. Kāmān fortified center



Figure 175. linga called Kāmyakeśvara



Figure 176. View of *minbar* made of repurposed temple elements



Figure 177. Chaurāsī Khambhā, inscription in interior wall

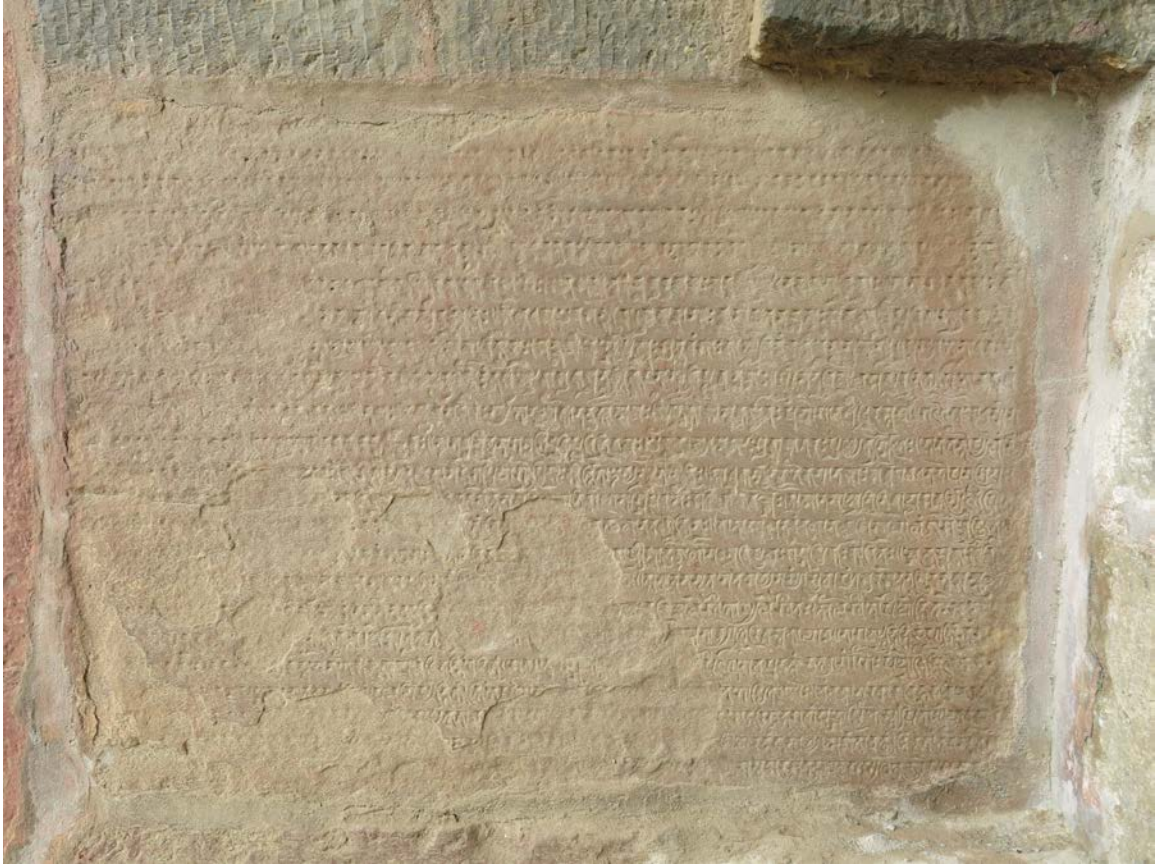


Figure 178. Chaurāsī Khambhā, inscription in exterior wall



Figure 179. Liṅga shrine with Sūrya in central lintel niche, Satwas village



Figure 180. Liṅga shrine with Sūrya in central lintel niche, Satwas village



Figure 181. Sūrya shrine with Lakulīṣa in central lintel niche, Satwas village, c. 8th-9th century



Figure 182. Lakulīṣa in central niche, close view



Figure 183. Hariharapitāmahamārtāṇḍa from Harṣagiri, Sikar Gov't Museum, c. late 9th- early 10th century



Figure 184. Śivabhāskara from Hinglajgarh, Bhopal Gov't Museum, c. 9th-10th century



Figure 185. Kalyāṇasundara from Kāman, Ajmer Gov't Museum, c. 9th century



Figure 186. Umā-Maheśvara from Kāman, Bharatpur Gov't Museum, c. 9th-10th century



Figure 187. Umā-Maheśvara, pratiṣṭhā panel, close view



Figure 188. Lakuliṣa with two attendants, c. 5th century, Mathura Government Museum



Figure 189. Panel with Buddha image, Aurangabad Caves, Maharashtra



Figure 190. Seated Jina, c. 8th century, Jhalawar Government Museum



Figure 191. Lakulīśa, Ellora Caves, Maharashtra



Figure 192. Jina sculpture, c. 8th century Visalgarh, Rajasthan



Figure 193. Interior niche of the Gupteśvar cave temple containing Lakulīśa, c. 8th century. Mandalgarh



Figure 194. Lakulīśa image installed in temple entrance of the Gupteśvar cave temple, c. 8th century. Mandalgarh



Figure 195. Śiva Yogeśvara, Elephanta Caves, c. 6th century



Figure 196. 'ūrdhvaretas Śiva,' c. ninth century, Jhalawar Government Museum.



Figure 197. Lakulīśa with four attendants, c. late 7th century Rampol, Chittorgarh Fort



Figure 198. Rampol Lakulīśa, close view of attendant figure



Figure 199. Rampol Lakulīśa, close view of attendant figure



Figure 200. Lakulīṣa from Chittorgarh Fort, c. 8th century, Delhi National Museum



Figure 201. Indra with lotus in proper left hand, c. late 7th -early 8th century, Kālikāmātā temple



Figure 202. Varuṇa with lotus in proper left hand, c. late 7th -early 8th century, Kālikāmātā temple



Figure 203. Lakulīśa from Jhālrapāṭan, c, 8th century, Jhalawar Government Museum



Figure 204. Repurposed sculpture depicting Pārvaṭī undertaking Pañcāgnitapas, Interior of Harṣa Temple c. 9th-10th century



Figure 205. Lakulīṣa seated in the lotus, close view (Photo courtesy of Hans T. Bakker)



Figure 206. Pārvatī Pañcāgñitapas
from Harṣa temple complex, c. 9th-10th
century
Sikar Government Museum



Figure 207. Lakulīṣa in lintel niche, loose sculpture at Mt. Harṣa Temple complex
c. 9th-10th century



Figure 208. Lakulīśa in lintel niche from Harṣa temple complex, c. 9th-10th century
Sikar Government Museum,



Figure 209. Lakulīśa in lintel niche from Harṣa temple complex, c. 9th-10th century
Sikar Government Museum



Figure 210. Kiradu Temple Complex, Barmer. Panel on exterior of Someśvar temple depicting linga veneration, c. 10th century



Figure 211. Lakuliṣa, Pali District, c. 7th century. Ajmer Government Museum



Figure 212. Panel depicting Gandharvas worshipping the liṅga, jackfruit visible in far upper left corner, Śunga Period. Mathura Government Museum



Figure 213. Panel depicting liṅga worship, jackfruit in decorative frame on right side, Kuṣāṇa Period, Mathura Government Museum

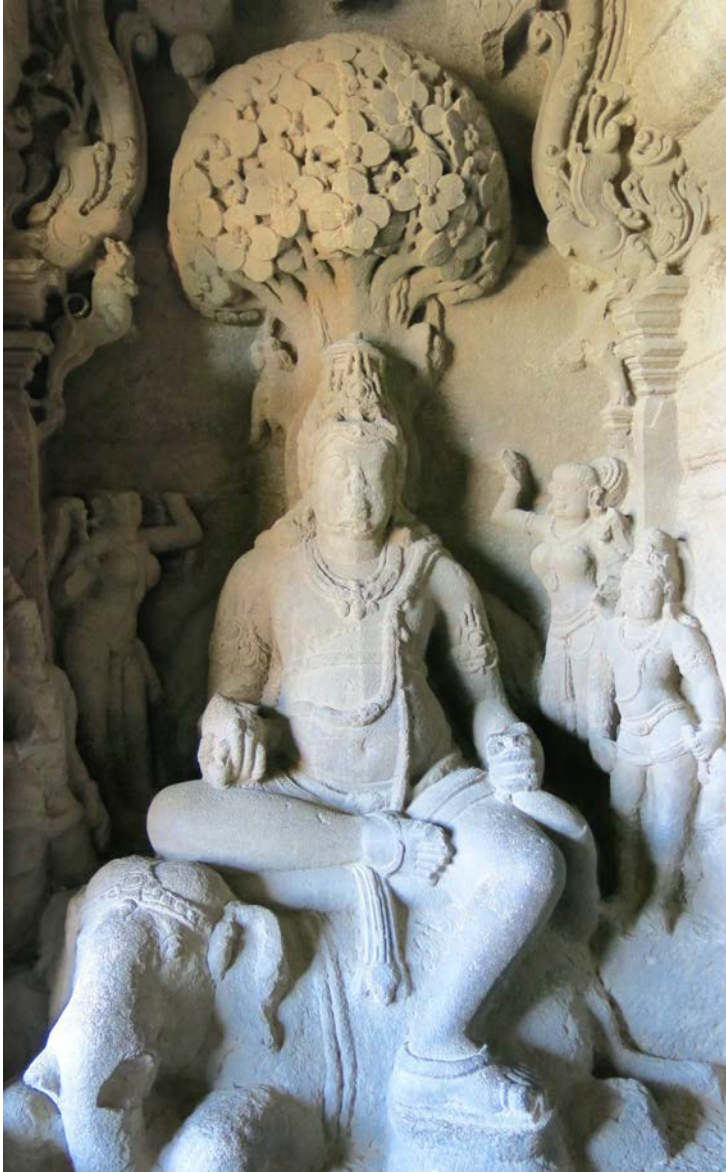


Figure 214. Ellora Cave Complex, Image of Jain *vaksya* with *sītāphal* in proper right hand, Cave 32 (Indra Sabha) c. 10th - 11th century.



Figure 215. Lonad Śiva temple, Thane. Temple fragment with panel depicting *liṅga* veneration, ascetic, and goddess Lajjā Gauri, c. 10th-11th century.



Figure 216. Image of club-bearing figure in panel on Mahanaleśvara temple in Menal, c. 11th century



Figure 217. Image of club-bearing figure in panel on Mahanaleśvara temple in Menal, c. 11th century