CHAPTER 2

At the Crossroads: Śaiva Religious Networks in Uparamāla

This chapter represents a crossroads: the midway point in the northwest expansion of the Pāśupata movement as charted in the SP in a region known as Uparamāla. Incorporating areas of what is today northern Madhya Pradesh and southeast Rajasthan, Uparamāla was also a crossroads in the heart of central India where many of the sub-continental trade routes converged, creating an atmosphere of social diversity and political competition. This region figures prominently in the SP account of Pāśupata origins as home to the city of Ujjain, one of the locales the Pāśupata tradition claimed as its own. As the purāṇa’s authors report, it was in the cremation ground at Ujjain that Lakuliśa commenced with the dissemination of his Pāśupata doctrine, beginning with the initiation of his first pupil, Kauśika. Ujjain was a dynamic center of religious activity, with a particular importance as an early Śaiva center, but material and epigraphic sources that survive from the period under investigation here are relatively scare. By contrast, the surrounding landscape of Uparamāla is particularly rich in epigraphic and material sources for the study of Śaivism, which have not yet received sufficient scholarly attention.

Since Uparamāla was a meeting place for so many different people and communities, the sources from this region record a polyphony of voices—including those of artisans, merchants, women, religious specialists, and kings—that constituted early Śaiva communities in the area. This chapter situates these voices in their particular geographic and social contexts and, through this emplacement, highlights significant differences in the construction and social uses of Śaiva religiosity. I begin in the plains around Daśapura, the political center from the 5th to the early 7th century, and the imposing hilltop fortress of Chittorgarh, which replaced Daśapura as the political center from approximately the mid-7th century onwards. The second half of the chapter focuses on important religious centers northeast of Daśapura—i.e. Kansuāñ, Jhālrāpāṭan, and Indragarh. Although these places were situated on the periphery of Uparamāla in remote, hilly areas, epigraphic and material evidence attests to their integration within the regional sociocultural networks of the 6th–8th centuries.
Examining sources from these two distinct sub-regions—i.e. the political centers and borderland spaces—lends needed nuance to our understanding of Śiva religion in Early Medieval India. In the political centers the invocation of Śiva served as a shared idiom for rulers and other elites, whose inscriptions adapt Śaiva theology to expressions of military victory and social ascendency. While the records of such actors have been a focus of the existing historiography, this scholarly emphasis is not an indication that the vision of Śaivism these voices promote was one held by the majority of practitioners. In locales removed from the royal cult centers, inscriptions evince a broad-based popular support for Śaiva institutions and Pāśupata religious specialists from pious individuals, local collectives, and merchant guilds. Here, Śiva was not the god of military might, donors mention protection, salvation, and the alleviation of human suffering as the motivations for their pious gifts.

1 A Region On-the-Move

A wide expanse of relatively flat plain, the physical terrain of Uparamāla is quite different from that of the self-contained geographies with clearly marked topographic boundaries (e.g. mountains, coastlines, and large inland lakes) that feature in the following two chapters. The borders of Uparamāla, by contrast, 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 made governing the region a desirable, albeit challenging, prospect for rulers and other elites seeking to control the transregional flows of commerce and culture. 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. This was a region on-the-move [Figure 9].

Uparamāla also figures as crossroads in accounts of the Pāśupata movement’s origins. Both the SP authors and Kauṇḍinya identify Ujjain as the place to which the Lord walked after assuming a human form. They also identify Ujjain’s (in)famous cremation ground as the site of his first teachings.1

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1 The city of Ujjain, 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; Alfred Fourcher, La vieille route de l’Inde de Bactres à Taxila, 2 vols. (Paris: Les Éditions d’art et d’histoire, 1947).
In addition to a destination for religious adepts, Ujjain also served as a commercial hub that was linked to the port of Broach and with the major conduits leading north and south into the Deccan. As the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* reports:

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2 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* 19.1 (2003): 57–71.
3 Lionel Casson, *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 81.
There is in this region towards the east a city called Ozéné (Ujjain), 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 Ujjain as a nodal point where routes coming from the north and east converged before making their way south, across the Vindhyā Mountains and the Narmadā River, to the Deccan. One of the few places where the Narmadā River could be crossed was located directly south of the city at Mahiṣmatī (Maheśvar). Traveling north from Ujjain, travelers would have passed through Daśapura and, continuing on, reached Mathurā. Daśapura’s central position in the Indian heartland and along the major north Indian itineraries of trade and travel made this a contested political space, much like Eran, Vidiśa, and other locales in greater Mālava.

While the preceding paragraph suggests a direct path between points, the archeological reconstruction of ancient routes is a complex undertaking. 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. As was the case with Buddhism, the expansion of Śaivism and the Pāśupata movement also relied on such byways. Inferring the existence of comparable networks

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4 Chakrabarti, "Ancient Routes," 65.

5 See Chapter 4.

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

7 On the complex political geographies and their implications in these places see Anne Casile, *Temples et expansion d’un centre religieux en Inde centrale: lectures du paysage archéologique de Badoh-Pathārī du 5e au 10e siècle de notre ère* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Paris, 2009); “Changing Landscapes in Gupta Times: Archaeological Evidence from the Area of Badōh-Pañḍhārī in Central India,” *South Asian Studies* 30.2 (2014), 245–268; Julia Shaw, *Buddhist Landscapes in Central India: Sanchi Hill and Archaeologies of Social Change, c. third century BC to fifth century AD* (London: The British Academy, 2007).

8 I have borrowed the term ‘capillary networks’ from Jason Neelis, who uses the term in charting the expansion of Buddhism. In his mapping of Buddhist networks, 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.’ J. Neelis, “Overland Shortcuts for the Transmission of Buddhism,” in *Highways, Byways, and Road Systems in the Pre-modern World*, eds. S.E. Alcock, J. Bodel, & R.J.A. Talbert (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 12–32 (16).
of byways allows us to posit connections between political centers and more peripheral sites where material and epigraphic traces of Pāśupata practices and communities remain. From this perspective, the different sites explored in the following sections are transformed from random dots on a map into traces of the complex networks (social, political, and economic) that choreographed the landscape. 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.

1.1 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 sociopolitical cohesion. My sense of region here, and in the chapters that follow, 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,9 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 embodied knowledges and practices.

Of these multiple networks, the political are the easiest to access since rulers and other elites often modified the landscape in highly visible and enduring ways. 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 kinship groups and collectives. Epigraphic references to merchants, guilds, and artisans with ties to Daśapura present it as an attractive, even prestigious, area to settle.10 Perhaps the most famous example of the cultural magnetism of Daśapura is the late 5th century

9 More specifically, parts of the Mandasor and Neemuch Districts of Madhya Pradesh and the Chittorgarh, Jhalawar, and Kota Districts of Rajasthan.
10 B.D. Chattopadhyaya’s important study of economic development in early medieval Rajasthan has similarly highlighted the importance of southwest Rajasthan, including Uparamāla, 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).
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The 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. 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 that participates in a broader regional pattern. The monument was a statement of a collective identity designed to commemorate the silk-weavers’ claim to a new place. Although it is not stated explicitly, the temple may have also functioned as an institution for the investment and redistribution of guild wealth. In addition to praising the piety of the guild and their success in their new home, the poet devotes many verses to extolling the merits of the place, which is idealized in three primary ways: for its architecture, the beauty and desirability of its natural environs, and its exceptionally pious residents. This poetic advertisement, reflects both premodern conceptions of urbanity as well as the social aspirations of the people who, by commissioning it, promoted themselves as residents of this utopian space.

11 D.C. Sircar, Select Inscriptions vol. 1 (1965), 299–307; “Mandasor Stone Inscription of Kumaragupta and Bandhuvarman: The Malava Years 493 & 529,” CII 3, 79–88. The inscription records repairs completed in 473/4 CE to a temple originally built 437/8 CE. On this inscription see also A.L. Basham, “The Mandasor Inscription of the Silk Weavers,” in Essays on Gupta Culture, ed. Bardwell L. Smith (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), 93–106.

12 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 Toraman (Vadodara: University Archaeology Series 14, 1978); K.V. Ramesh, “Three Early Charters from Sañjeli in Gujarat,” EI 40 (1973–74): 175–186. 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 Aranyavāsini after moving away from Vaṭanagara (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). R.R. Halder, “Samoli Inscription of the Time of Siladitya; [Vikrama-Samvat] 703,” EI 20 (1919–20): 97–99; “Dabok Inscription of the Time of Dhavallapadeva; [Harsha] Samvat 207;” EI 20 (1929–30): 122–124. These examples evince the close connections between merchant communities, market towns, and the temples around which social and economic life were oriented.

13 prāsādamālābhīh alaṃkṛtāni dharāṁ vidāryyaiva samutthitāni / vīmānamālāsadṛśāni yattra gṛhāṇi pūrṇendukarāmalāni //12// (Upaqāṭi)
yad bhāty abhiranyasarida[dy]vayena capalormniṇā samupagūḍhaṁ / rahasi kucaśālinibhyāṁ prītiratibhyāṁ smarāṅgam iva //13// (Ārya)
satyakṣamādamaśamavratasacacudhairyyasyavāddhyāyavṛttavīvayasthitibudhyupetaiḥ / vidyātaponidhiḥhrib asmayitaś ca viprair yyaad bhrājate grahagaṇaṅh kham īva pradīptaṁ //14// (Vasantaṭilakā)
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]

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Notably, the inscription also attests to the 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 some cultivated other skills.  

While Daśapura and Chittorgarh were ostensibly the regional capitals, material evidence suggests that as early as the 5th century, these locales were part of a significantly larger region with strong ties to a northward-leading corridor via Jhālrāpāṭan. Shared architectural features and iconographic conventions indicate that networks of artisans, or an atelier, facilitated the spread of embodied knowledge and practices between Daśapura and areas of northeast Uparamāla. Joanna Williams has drawn attention to some of these regional artistic patterns in her early work. In addition to the sculptures from Daśapura that Williams has discussed, like the Mātṛkā and Śūrya images currently on display in the Mandasor Museum, there are other examples that expand the geographic connections she has traced to include the more remote areas in the hills of Uparamāla. For example, the facial features and rendering of the hair in these images and other 5th–6th century sculptures of Śiva, and

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14 Verses 15–19: Some of the guild members continue in the silk-weaving tradition as 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); some are knowledgeable in astrology (jyotiṣa), or occupied with the pursuit of true dharma (samyaḍdharmanmaprasaṅgaparāyaṇa) and still others are brave in battle (samarapragalbhā).

15 Williams 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), 137; “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), 133–141.
an unfinished nāga from Daśapura, are very similar to those observed in the candraśālā musician from the 5th century Mukundara Śiva temple located north of Jhālrāpāṭan [Figures 10, 11, & 12]. Comparable, too, are the facial features of the Daśapura Śiva in Figure 10 and a remarkable early 7th century sculpture of Ardhanārīśvara found near Jhālrāpāṭan. [Figures 13]. The well-preserved sculpture shares the same wide face, heavy lower lip, and incised pupils that are rendered in the same soft naturalistic manner in the Daśapura images.

16 These ties are also observed by Cynthia Atherton who also connects the Mukundara temple with architectural embellishments at Chittorgarh. C. Atherton, *The Sculpture of Early Medieval Rajasthan* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).
A remarkable Lakuliśa image found near Indragarh (c. late 6th century), exhibits very similar features and echoes the naturalistic details in physicality that Williams observed in the figural sculpture from Daśapura which, she argues, distinguishes this later work from more ‘generalized' bodies in earlier Gupta period art.17

17 For this image see Chapter 5, Joanna Williams, “On the Edge of What?” 133–141. Compare also the similarly rendered hair and incised pupils in the images of the eight-faced īṅga from Daśapura (pre-restoration) published in Williams, Art of Gupta India, Plates 10.2 & 10.3.
**Figure 12** Candraśālā musician from the Mukundara Śiva temple
PALI ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM (AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INDIAN STUDIES PHOTO ARCHIVE)

**Figure 13** Ardhanārīśvara, c. 7th century
JHALAWAR ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM (AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INDIAN STUDIES PHOTO ARCHIVE)
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. 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, Mānavāyani, 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 Daśapura, 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 asserted their independence by the early 6th century under Prakāśadharman, a power further augmented by his successor Yaśodharman.18 The Aulikaras enhanced their prestige under Yaśodharman, whose victory over Toramāṇa's successor, the Hūṇa Mihirakula, was memorialized with a pair of monumental inscribed columns erected 4 km south of Daśapura near the village of Sondhni.19 These pillars, and the contemporaneous sculptural remains from Sondhni, are the most significant material traces of Aulikara sovereignty and patronage [Figures 14 & 15]. Despite their impressive military feats, the period of Aulikara rule was relatively short-lived. The circumstances contributing to the decline of the lineage are not known, but they may have succumbed to pressure from competing political groups such as the Maukharis and Vardhanas. By the late 7th century, the locus of political...

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18 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. 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 (25–27). More recently, Hans Bakker has made further strides in untangling these relationships. See Bakker, *The World of the Skandapurāṇa*, 34; "Theatre of Broken Dreams: Vidiśā in the Days of Gupta Hegemony," in *Interrogating History, Essays for Herman Kulke*, eds. M. Brandtner and S.K. Panda (New Delhi: Manohar, 2006), 165–187.

19 “Mandasor Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman,” *CII* 3, 142–148; Sircar, *Select Inscriptions* vol. 1, 418–420; "Mandasor Duplicate Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman," *CII* 3, 149–150; “Mandasor Stone Inscription of Yaśodharman (Mālava 589 = 532 CE),” *CII* 3, 150–158; Sircar, *Select Inscriptions* vol. 1, 424–426.
power had shifted from the plains of Daśapura to the northwest and the hilltop fortress of Chittorgarh.

Chittorgarh's location along the western boundary of Uparamāla made it a centralized stronghold for rulers seeking to control areas further to the west and the south. The early political history of Chittorgarh is difficult to reconstruct since the current location of the early inscriptions reported from the site are unknown and no estampages of these inscriptions were made. The fragmentary 6th century Naigama records found in the fort were mentioned above and attest to political links with Daśapura. A family calling themselves Mauryas may have succeeded the Naigamas in the late 7th or early 8th century.

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20 K.C. Jain, Malwa Through the Ages: From the Earliest Times to 1305 A.D. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972), 323–325.
21 The inscription was reported on a column near the Suraj Kund. James Tod, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan (London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1830), 703. Bhandarkar’s list calls this inscription the ‘Mānasarovara Column Inscription’ and reports that it gave the lineage: Māheśvara—Bhīma—Bhoja—Māna. The other inscription referring to one Mānabhāṅga (perhaps the same Māna Maurya of Tod’s record) was reported by N.P. Chakravati near
FIGURE 15
Dvārapāla, Sondhni site
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inscription reported by James Tod (dated VS 770/713 CE) referred to one Māna, whom Tod understood to be Māna of the Maurya lineage who, according to the later bardic tradition of Rajasthan, was the founder of the fort.22 If the Mauryas continued to control the area into the late 8th century, they would have competed with Gurjara-Pratīhāra rulers like Nāgabhaṭa I and his successor Vatsarāja.23 In the 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.24 The struggle between the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and Gurjara-Pratīhāras for control of the fort continued in the 9th century.

2.1 What a Tangled Web: Political Networks in Daśapura

The early historiography has 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.25 Yaśodharman's inscriptions may suggest a universal sovereign, but these self-aggrandizing claims are rhetorical flourishes of the praśasti genre, rather than indications of an historical reality. Richard Salomon's study and translation of the Rīsthal Inscription of Yaśodharman's predecessor, Prakāśadharman, made

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22 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 been the same person called Dhavallapadeva in an inscription found northeast of Chittorgarh at Dhoḍ (GE 407/726 CE). R.R. Halder, “Samoli Inscription of the Time of Siladitya; [Vikrama-Samvat] 703,” EI 20 (1929–30): 97–99; “Dabok Inscription of the Time of Dhavallapadeva; [Harsha] Saṃvat 207,” EI 20 (1929–30): 122–124.

23 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 Rājapraśastimahākāvya, 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 legitimize their claim to the site. This is also reflected in the Eklīṅgī Māhātmya. D.C. Sircar, The Guhilas of Kiṣkindhā (Calcutta, 1965). See also Ulrike Teuscher, “Changing Eklīṅgī,” Studies in Indian History 21.1 (2005): 1–16.

24 Aulikaras of Mandasor,” 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.’
significant strides in situating the Aulikaras within the region’s political networks by showing that the Aulikara dynastic title was shared by as many as four familial sub-groups. Normalizing Yaśodharman—that is, seeing him as integrated within a larger corporate network of power—is also helpful in understanding the endowments recorded in the region’s inscriptions, in which, as shown below, the Aulikara’s allies emerge as prominent 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 not yet been explored.

In addition to the Aulikaras, two other clans—i.e. the Mānavaṇyanis and the Naigamas—played a particularly vital role in regional religious life. The most important evidence showing the imbrication of regional economic and political networks in the area concerns the Naigamas, a merchant family that occupied a hereditary position as ministers to the Aulikara rulers in Daśapura and exerted some political power in the Chittorgarh-Nagarī area as well. In the so-called ‘Mandasor Inscription of Yaśodharman,’ Verses 10 & 11 eulogize Śaṣṭhidatta, of the ‘pure’ Naigama lineage.

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26 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, “Aulikaras of Mandasor,” 11–12; Bakker, The World of the Skandapurāṇa, 33, Figure 3.

27 Salomon takes Naigama as a family or lineage name, although he acknowledges that naigama can designate a merchant. The word is derived from niigama, a term used to denote a market center occupying a somewhat intermediary position between a village and a developed township. Chattopadhyaya, The Making of Early Medieval India, 134; A. Ghosh, The City in Early Historical India (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1973), 38; 46–7.

28 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’ (“Aulikaras of Mandasor,” 16). 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, The World of the Skandapurāṇa, 241–247.

29 “Mandasor Stone Inscription of Yaśodharman,” Verses 10–11:

\[
\text{tasya prabhôr vvasamśakrtam nrpanam pādāśrayād viśrutapunyayaktih} / \\
\text{bhṛtyah svanabhrtajitārīśatka āśid vasīyān kila śaṣṭhidattah} //10// (Indravajrā) \\
\text{himavata īva gāngas tuṅgamanmaḥ pravāh̄aḥ śaśabhṛta īvā revśīrīrśiḥ prathīyān} / \\
\text{param abhīgamanīyaḥ śuddhimān anvavāyo yata uditarimunos tāyate naigamānām} //11// (Mālinī) \\
\]
The servant of the kings who founded the family of that lord [i.e. Yaśodharman] was Śaṭhidatta, 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]

Given that the poet offers no further geographic data or a more specific family name, I suggest we understand this designation as both a clan name and an occupational title. It could be that the nīgama (market town) this group hailed from was the well-established commercial center of Daśapura itself. Other members of this Naigama group are mentioned in two early 6th century fragmentary inscriptions from Chittorgarh that record donations by one Viṣṇudatta and his son.30 Viṣṇudaṭṭa is described as the ‘best of merchants’ (vaṇijāṃ śreṣṭho)31 and Viṣṇudatta’s son is named as govenor (rājasthānīya) of Daśapura and Madhyamā (Madhyamikā-Nagarī).32 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 Mānavāyanis, is more challenging to parse. Sircar has suggested that members of this family, calling themselves descendants of ‘Manu’, were aspirational kṣatriyas, 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.

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30 D.C. Sircar and G.S. Gai, “Fragmentary Inscriptions from Chittorgarh,” EL 34 (1961–62): 53–57. Inscriptions are dated paleographically by their resemblance to the script of Yaśodharman’s inscription of 532 CE.
31 Sircar & Gai, “Chittorgarh,” 57, A side, Line 3.
32 Sircar & Gai, “Chittorgarh,” 57, B side, Line 3.
rulers. Following Sircar’s suggestions, it is plausible that the upwardly mobile Mānavāyani sought to increase their own prestige though an Aulikara alliance.

3 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 communities and temples to enshrine the bellicose mother goddesses. 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. Close examination of the donative inscriptions reveals the ways in which Śaiva idioms were mobilized in political discourse as a means to elevate particular rulers, clans, and social practices.

3.1 Divisions of Donative Labor

To commemorate his victory over the Hūṇas, Prakāśadharman’s Rīsthal Inscription (515 CE) records the offering of certain commodities and spoils of war taken from Toramāṇa as ritual gifts. He also commissioned a tank for the

33 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 an alliance or association. See Salmon, “Aulikaras of Mandasor,” 21; Sircar, Select Inscriptions vol. 1, 130.

34 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 12 (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 26 (1941–2): 130–132; a shrine for fierce Mātṛs and a Viṣṇu temple 423/4 CE: “Gangdhar Inscription,” cII 3, 72–78; a Buddhist stūpa (467/8 CE): M.B. Garde, “Mandasor Inscription of Malava Samvat 524,” EI 27 (1947): 12–15; D.C. Sircar, “Two Inscriptions of Gauri,” EI 30 (1953–54): 120–132.

35 The edition and translation referred to here are from Salomon’s edition, “Aulikaras of Mandasor,” 1–36.

36 ā toramāṇanārpater nṛpamauliratnajyotsnāpratānaśabdaliṅktapādāpīthā/ hūṇādhipyasya bhūvī yena gataḥ pratiṣṭhāṁ nīto yudhā vitathatām adhirājaśabdadāḥ //16// saṅgrāmanārddhāni vipāṭhanapātīnāṁ tasyaiva yena madavārīmucāṁ gaḍānām/ āy(ām)idantahātāṁ taponidhī(h)y(o) bhadrāsanāṁ niveditānī //17// tasyaiva c(ā)havamukhe tarasā jītaṁ yena maṅgaliṣṭṭhirakṣaṁ jīvitaṁ //18//
At the Crossroads: Śaiva Religious Networks in Uparamāla

sake of augmenting the religious merit of his grandfather, Vibhīṣaṇavardhana.37 Following these donations, Verse 20 mentions a temple (sadman) constructed in honor of Śiva initiated by Prakāśadharman.38 In Verse 22 a temple of Śiva is mentioned again, here called the Prakāśeśvara temple (prakāśeśvarasadman).39 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 sociopolitical 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 Puṣpaketu

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37 rājñe pitāmahavibhīṣaṇavarddhanāya ślāghyānubhāvagurupunyaphalaṃ nivedya / vistāri bindusarasah pratibimbabhūtam etad vibhīṣaṇasaras samakhāni tena //19//

38 etac ca nṛttarahasaskhalitendulekhhāvāntāṇsuvicchuritamecakakānḍhabbāsah / sthāṇos samagrabhubavanattrayasṛṣṭhetoh prāleyaśaśilata(ta) ka]lpam akāri sadma //20//

39 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 linga 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.
(Kāma) was blooming within the 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 the same monument. Verse 21 marking the date also marks the beginning of a new section of the inscription in which certain donative acts promised or intended by Prakāśadharman, are actually carried out by his Naigama minister, 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 & 27. Bhagavaddoṣa made a series of other donations, apparently of his own volition, that included a temple (mandir) for Brahman, learned institutions to shelter devotees and ascetics who practiced Sāṃkhya and Yoga, as well as gardens, monasteries, wells, shrines for unnamed deities, and other pious gifts (deyadharma-s).

40 taner naṁ pūrṇena pāyunātyasūnūna/rajasthaniya bhagavaddosena ādasaṅgina //26//
etaj jaladhihrepī viśālam khañitaṁ sarah/idañ ca jalodolekhi śālinas sadma kāritam //27//
41 aśrayaṁ yatīnāṁ ca sāṅkhyayogābhvaṁ śatam//vyadhatta krṣṇāvasathain bujukāvasathain ca yaḥ//24//
sabhākūpamathāramān sadmāni ca divaśasām/yonyāṁ śācitāya vimukho deyadharmān acikarat //25//

Salomon translates ‘shrine to Krṣṇa and Bujjuka as a refuge for ascetics who devoted themselves to (the practice of) Śaṅkhya and Yoga.’ As a definition for avasatha Sircar’s Glossary includes “dharmaśālā” or a “college”. As an alternative translation, I would suggest instead: ‘and he established the learned institutions of Krṣṇa and Bujjuka to shelter students intent upon the (study of) Śaṅkhya and Yoga’. Rather than take Krṣṇa and Bujjuka as names of deities as Salomon does, I think they may refer to the head teachers or administrators of the avasatha-s. See Sircar, Indian Epigraphical Glossary, s.v. avasatha.

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 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. 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
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 offerings of prestige items to honor ascetics, his ancestors, and Śiva, his chosen deity, 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 serves to elevate and idealize him and, by extension, the Naigama lineage; 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 contributes an additional layer of meaning as 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.

3.2  **Piety as Political Idiom & Aspirational Practice**

Prakāśadharman’s inscription employs Śaiva devotion as a political tool by opting to commemorate a significant military victory with a temple to the deity. This connection between Śiva, power, and military victory is expressed even more forcefully in the pillar inscriptions of the Aulikara ruler Yaśodharman in the first half of the 6th century. These inscriptions begin with the praise and invocation of Śiva as Paśupati, the god to whom even the Hūṇa kings bowed down. It is clear from the language and imagery throughout the inscription that the god whom Yaśodharman invoked was one representing unassailable power and dominion.

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43 “Mandasor Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman,” *cII* 3, 142–148. The inscription recorded on this pillar is reproduced in duplicate on a second pillar about 20 yards away; “Mandasor Duplicate Pillar Inscription of Yaśodharman,” *cII* 3, 149–150.

44 See Bakker, *The World of the Skandapurāṇa*, 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* 3, 162, v. 4; 143–5.
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.45

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 columns 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. Although the inscription does not directly homologize the column to a dhvaja, the reference to Śiva’s banner as bearing the Bull-insignia certainly encourages such an interpretation. Such an association would also participate in the wider deployment of the dhvaja-symbolism observed at contemporaneous sites.46 The crowning elements of both of Yaśodharman’s columns are now missing, but I think that each would have been topped with the image of the bull.47

In composing the verses that would be engraved upon the column(s), the poet clearly had the object in mind. The text was deliberately designed to complement the object upon which it was carved and one could even imagine that the sight of the column inspired the poet’s verse. The language of the inscription highlights and adds to this visual language by repeatedly and poetically evoking the physicality of the object. The column is likened to the arm of the king: the strong arm of the warrior, calloused by the rub of the bowstring; the arm that supports the earth when she is weary from the oppressive energies of unrighteous rulers. The metaphor is driven home in the final verses, which

\[\text{Translation of Hans Bakker, }
\text{Monuments of Hope, Gloom, and Glory. 24th J. Gonda Lecture }
\text{(Amsterdam: KNAW, 2017), 30.}\
\]

Elizabeth A. Cecil and Peter C. Bisschop, “Columns in Context: Venerable Monuments and Landscapes of Memory in Early India,” *History of Religions* 58.4 (2019): 355–403.

Since the crowning elements of one of the columns are displayed at ground level at the site, it is possible to see the circular pattern of carved joins set around a central socket on top of the lion-carved abacus. This is a clear indication that there was a final crowning element, which has been lost.

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45 veṃveṇaṃ yasya bhūṁstaniṭabhaḥ yasumudbhṛntaadityā digantāḥ
ṣrīṅgāhātaḥ sumeror vighatitadṛṣadah kandara yah karoti /
ukṣaṇaṃ taṃ dadhānaḥ kṣitidharaṇayādatta[ā]paṅcāṅgulāṁ
drāghiṣṭaḥ śūlapāneḥ kṣapayatu bhavatām śatrutejāṃsi ketuḥ //1// (Sragdharā)
Translation of Hans Bakker, *Monuments of Hope, Gloom, and Glory*. 24th J. Gonda Lecture (Amsterdam: KNAW, 2017), 30.

46 Elizabeth A. Cecil and Peter C. Bisschop, “Columns in Context: Venerable Monuments and Landscapes of Memory in Early India,” *History of Religions* 58.4 (2019): 355–403.

47 Since the crowning elements of one of the columns are displayed at ground level at the site, it is possible to see the circular pattern of carved joins set around a central socket on top of the lion-carved abacus. This is a clear indication that there was a final crowning element, which has been lost.
likens Yaśodharman’s arm to the column, and to the particular column he erects as an arm of the earth, raised up in testament to his greatness.

By that illustrious Yaśodharman, who reigns the earth with a steady, club-like arm as beautiful as a column, this column (stambha) that will last till the end of the Age, has been erected here, as if to measure the earth from above, to count the multitude of stars, and to point out to the highest skies, as it were, the path of his glory achieved by his heroic deeds.”

(A column) that is, as it were, a raised arm of the earth….

This poetic metaphor, while suited perfectly for the two columns, is not unprecedented. The inscribed column of Samudragupta at Allahabad evokes the same image in remarkably similar language some two-hundred years earlier.

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 Bhagavaddoṣa’s successor, Abhayadatta. This record invokes a supremely powerful, but seemingly benevolent Lord, who is imagined smiling.
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 lightning 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, Svayambhū is obedient to (his) commands, for the sake of the maintenance of 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]

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).51 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.52 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 should not lose sight of the larger connection: that the well and the literary praise in the inscription both serve to construct and communicate the Naigamas’ identity as trustworthy merchants, generous patrons, and government servants—the

51 Verse 4; Verse 22.
52 sukhaśreyacchāyaṁ pariṇatīhitasvāduphaladāṁ, Verse 23.
very same ideals expressed succinctly in the description of the lineage progeni-
tor Šaṣṭhidatta.53

Like the Naigamas, the Mānavāyanis employ Šaivism in a similarly as-
pirational manner. This lineage group also invokes Šiva, but somewhat
indirectly.54 For example, in the late 5th century record (VS 547/491 CE) from
Chhotī Sādrī,55 Gauri of the Mānavāyani family praises Šiva as Ardhanārīśvara
(the ‘Lord who is half female’) in which form he is fused with the powerful
Devī, whose temple the inscription endows.56 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 them-
sons rājaputras (i.e. Rajputs).57 This temple commissioned by Gauri, for the
sake of gaining the grace of the goddess (devyāḥ prasādārthinā)58 was likely
built to enshrine the Mānavāyanis’ lineage deity (kuladevī).

53 See above.
54 The record is fragmentary so it is uncertain what the donation is. Sircar and Gai sug-
gest Šiva shrines based on the opening invocation of this deity. D.C. Sircar and G.S. Gai,
"Fragmentary Inscriptions from Chittorgarh," EI 34: 53–57, B-side, Line 1.
55 Sircar, “Two Inscriptions of Gauri: Fragmentary Inscription from Mandasor.” The inscrip-
tion was found above a ventilator in the Bhramaramātā temple in Chhotī 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.
56 devī jayaty asurādāraṇatōṣṇaśūlāḥ / prodīṃvaratānamakutāṃśucalapraṇāṭāḥ / simhohrayukta-rathāsthitaḥ / asūra-bhrūbhahangadrṣṭivinipātānsvarātāḥ //1//
bhūyopi sā jayati yā sāsīśekharasya de[ḍ]hīṛddham udvahati bhaktataya harasya /
yā bhaktavatsalatraya prabībharti lokān māteva [svā]yasutapremṇavīryuddhasnehā**
//2//
tasyai pranaṃya prakaromy ahā eva jasram kṛttiraṁ śubhām gūṇa-gaṇa-udgaṇhāmayaṁ
nṛpāṇām / ye māṇavāyaṇikulodbha-vavāṃśa-gaurāḥ kṣatre pāde satatādikṣitayuddhāsauḍāḥ //3//
(Vasantatilaka)
*Read rathāsthita, following Sircar’s comment that samāsa was not used to preserve the
metre. Sircar note 3, p. 124.
**Editor reads premṇa as prema and svākya in the sense of svākīya. Sircar, notes 7 & 8,
pg. 124.
57 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, “Two Inscriptions of Gauri: Fragmentary
Inscription from Mandasor.”
58 Verse 12.
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 Kṣatra status (and) were skilled in war. [3]

While these invocations reflect a personal preference for a deity, as permanent records of a ritualized act of donation by individuals with ties to the region’s ruling family, they are also potent identity markers that communicate the ties between these ambitious families and the established political elites. The tutelary deity of this warrior clan is clearly the martial Goddess, but the poet’s praise of her incorporates her within a broader Śaiva theology through the reference to Ardhanārīśvara. In this case, the creation of this popular composite form of Śiva is attributed to the agency of the Devī, who becomes Śiva’s ‘other half’ out of her devotion to him.59

4 Material Traces: Religion in the Cosmopolitan Centers

The previous sections have already introduced the pair of columns that bear Yaśodharman’s inscriptions. These remarkable monuments did not stand in isolation, but provided an architectural and ideological frame for a Śiva

59 It is perhaps not surprising that we find a reference to Ardhanārīśvara in the opening verse of the Aulikara’s Rīsthal inscription as well.

vāmena sandhyāpranipātakoparasaranginārddhena vighhattyamānam / pinākinaś sâniti[ ](i)v∗[ ]dheya)m a∗[ ]rdha[ ]m v∗[ ]āv∗[ ]etaraṁ 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]’

Translation Salomon, “Aulikaras of Mandasor.”
temple. Structural remains have not survived, but a partial reconstruction is possible using the material remains that survive on site alongside the earli-
est reports and photos made by C.E. Luard.60 Luard’s reports provide a larger material context for the columns and the inscriptions, which do not mention a temple or other donative media explicitly. Luard surveyed and photographed the area immediately surrounding the two columns in 1908.61 Drawing upon local memory of the place, he identified the remains of two pillars, that may have supported a doorframe, and two massive dvārapālas (whose jaṭā, third eye, and accompanying triśūlapuruṣas clearly evince a Śaiva affiliation). Most significant, however, was Luard’s discovery of the foundation of a brick structure to the west of the columns, built upon a terraced mound approximately one-and-a-half meters above the surrounding land. This terraced mound is still clearly visible at the contemporary ASI protected site where a small staircase conveys the visitor down the small hill to the re-erected columns. According to Luard’s report, the mound was formed from a brick foundation of what was likely a larger brick structure. The remains of that structure were already lost at the time of his visit. Within the remains of the brick foundation, a mas-

sive sahasra līṅga—a phallic emblem of Śiva covered with innumerable smaller līṅgas—was found. The līṅga is still visible on top of the mound at the base of a pipal tree.62 If we assume that the līṅga is contemporaneous with the rest of the 6th century remains of the site, it would be the earliest known example of this iconographic form.63 [Figure 16]. Considered in light of other remarkable material remains and architectural fragments found scattered around the fields, the temple at Sondhni would have been dedicated to Śiva and the sahasra līṅga mentioned above may well have been the cult icon under worship.64

60 Luard’s research notes and drawings are collected in the Luard Archive at the British Library and his photos in the Kern Collection in Leiden University Library Special Collections.

61 C.E. Luard, “Gazetteer Gleanings in Central India,” IA 37 (1908): 107–110.

62 This līṅga was not reported by Fleet or Luard and the circumstances of its discovery remain unknown. Given its current location, under the pipal behind the terraced area, and given its massive proportions, it is likely not far from its original location.

63 According to von Mitterwallner, the līṅga is likely contemporaneous with the other early 6th century remains. See Gritli von Mitterwallner, “Evolution of the Līṅga,” in Discourses on Śiva: Proceedings of a Symposium on the Nature of Religious Imagery, ed. Michael Meister (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 12–31 (22).

64 Cecil and Bisschop, “Columns in Context,” 387–392.
FIGURE 16  Sahasra linga, Sondhni site
The most unique feature of Sondhni has yet to be addressed: namely, why are there two seemingly identical columns with the same inscription at the same site? The repetition of an epigraphic text on paired columns in the same location has few precedents or comparanda.\(^{65}\) This doubling could represent a desire for visual symmetry within the site effected through the framing of the temple with the two columns topped with images of the bull. We could also interpret the doubling as a materialization of the inscription’s poetic metaphor—i.e. that the columns were the two arms of the earth raised up in testament to Yaśodharman’s greatness. To the structural and symbolic functions of this pair of columns, I would add a third layer of significance. Given that the Aulikara epigraphic corpus attests to the strong alliance between the Aulikara ruling house and the Naigama merchant ministers, and their history of corporate donative efforts, these twin monuments could stand in commemoration of this political partnership. The decision to erect the columns in front of a temple to Śiva provides a way of framing the relationship between these two groups by asserting a religious preference. Affiliation with an elective religious cult, like Śaivism, here provides a means to cement relationships between people who did not share the kinship or caste bonds that traditionally constituted group identity.

The 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 museum, which display Lakulīśa in the central niche date from the 8th or early 9th century [Figure 17].

Other remarkable sculptures,\(^{66}\) 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 Paśupatināth Temple.

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\(^{65}\) The Gupta period temple at Bhilsad provides the only comparable case according to my research. Cecil and Bisschop, “Revisiting Eran and Sondhni: Innovation and Idiom in the ‘Gupta Period’,” forthc.

\(^{66}\) These sculptures are the subject of a forthcoming study.
[Figure 17]. Williams dates these material traces to be more or less contemporaneous with the Yaśodharman pillar inscriptions and the monumental dvārapālas found in situ at Sondhni. The Daśapura sculpture is likely also contemporaneous with the Nagārī torana, 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 represents scenes from the Devadāruvana myth, which gives an account of the origins of liṅga worship.

4.1 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 early medieval 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

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

68 Hans T. Bakker and Peter C. Bisschop, “The Quest for the Pāśupata Weapon: The Gateway of the Mahādeva Temple at Madhyamikā (Nagarī),” Indo-Iranian Journal 59 (2016): 217–258.
speculative. We have no dedicatory inscriptions with which to prove such ties.\footnote{EITA 2.2 labels Chittorgarh a Maurya site.}

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. 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.’ 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 structures reflect a space in which multiple religious communities interacted and where people of various economic means participated in donative practices. Within this complex space, it is possible to discern that many of the earliest built interventions were commissioned by donors with Śaiva affiliations, broadly conceived.

Traces 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 remains is clustered in an area of the fort popularly called the ‘sati ground’ and near the natural spring called the Gomukh Kuṇḍ, which is still an active place of pilgrimage today [Figures 19 & 20]. These

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70 Atherton, Sculpture of Early Medieval Rajasthan, 89.
71 This is not to say the earliest layers are exclusively Śaiva. There is also a mid-9th century shrine called the ‘Kṣemankārī Temple’ by art historians after the prominent image of this goddess on back exterior niche of the shrine. Small votive stūpas were also found within the complex. EITA 2.2, 284; Plate 635.
structures evince modes of patronage that stand in contrast to the monumental, royal dispensations like the Kālikā Mātā and Kumbhaśyāma temples. A number of these small temples enshrined liṅgas that may have been commissioned as family shrines or memorials for religious specialists. The fact that
only the stone foundations of some of these small shrines have survived may be because the upper 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 mounted on the bull, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, Brahmā, and Sarasvatī are all represented along with the traditional dikpālas. Atherton describes the shrine as an ‘ecumenical’ blending of deities. I prefer to 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 monument as the term ecumenical suggests. As a concluding aside, given that a number of these structures are liṅga shrines, the large residential structure nearby could have been originally conceived as a Śaiva maṭha like comparable structures found at the nearby temple complex of Menal.72

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 is contemporaneous with some of the oldest surviving structures in the fort [Figure 21]. The image of Śiva and Pārvatī from the stepwell niche dates from the 7th or early 8th century, as does a Gaja-Lakṣmī with a nearly identical hairstyle and ornamentation, preserved in a modern Devī temple nearby [Figure 22].73

The previous examples have highlighted small scale or sub-monumental constructions, but 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 Lakulīśa 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 sanctum74 [Figure 23]. Within this Sūrya-centered iconographic program, the artists also included an image of Lakulīśa bearing his signature club as well as the lotus flower emblematic of the Sun god. The Kumbhaśyāma

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72 Tamara Sears, “Śaiva Monastic Complexes in Twelfth-Century Rajasthan: The Pāśupatas and Cāhamānas at Menāl,” *South Asian Studies* 23 (2007): 107–126.

73 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 Lakulīśa from the Kālikā Mātā temple.

74 *EITA* 2.2, 285–291; Plates 645–665.
FIGURE 21 Stepwell surrounding Kukkeśvara Temple, c. late 7th–8th century, Chittorgarh Fort
**Figure 22** Gaja-Lakṣmi, c. late 7th–8th century, preserved in Devī Temple, Chittorgarh Fort
temple also has a complex, layered history\textsuperscript{75} [Figure 24]. The temple's iconographic program suggests an original Śaiva dedication and the attributes of many of the \textit{alāṃkāra-devatās} on the walls surrounding the \textit{garbhagṛha} and the temple exterior bear Śaiva attributes as noted by Meister (e.g., \textit{triśūla}, \textit{nāga}, and \textit{vrṣa} mount).\textsuperscript{76} The temple was later rededicated to Viṣṇu, but exactly when this transformation took place is uncertain. The 15th century is the \textit{terminus ante quem}, based on inscribed Vaiṣṇava images in the temple that

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{EITA} 2.2, 291–297; Plates 666–683.

\textsuperscript{76} Meister comments that "the iconography of the sanctum's \textit{dikpālas}, of \textit{vedibandha} niches, and of the outer wall's images should make clear that the original intentions of its builders were for this to be a Śaiva shrine." \textit{EITA} 2.2, 295–296.
Figure 24  Kumbhaśyāma Temple, Chittorgarh Fort, unfinished image of Skanda in exterior niche
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-Pratihāras in the 9th century, the change in dedication could have 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.\textsuperscript{77} 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.\textsuperscript{78} Two other Lakulīśa images were found within the fort, but they are no longer positioned in their original architectural contexts. Judging by the size of the images, however, I think it is reasonable to assume that, like the Kālikiā Mātā and Kumbhaśyāma icons, these were positioned in exterior niches or as alaṃkāradevatās.

As the emblematic figure of the Pāśupata tradition, the presence of early Lakulīśa icons is a compelling indication of Pāśupata activity within the fort in its earliest material layers.\textsuperscript{79} Yet the place of these images within the temples themselves and within the wider religious landscape of the fort raises many questions, which are considered in greater detail in Chapter 5.

5 Śiva on the Periphery: Jhālrāpāṭan, 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

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{EITA} 2.2, 296–297. Meister comments specifically on the icons of Trivikrama and Narasimha framing the prāgger̥va 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.”

\textsuperscript{78} On this image see Chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{79} The later Śiva temples in Chittorgarh, like the renovated Samidheśvar temple, also lack Lakulīśa images. The temple now called the Samidheśvar was originally a Jain temple of Jīna Ariṣṭanemi built c. 1230–1235. After its desecration in the fourteenth century it was rededicated as a Śiva temple. M.A. Dhaky, “The Creed-Affiliation of the Samidheśvara Temple in Chittodgadh,” \textit{Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art} 14 (1984–85), 25–42.
other clans with political aspirations similarly invoked Śiva in their donative records, perhaps as a means to enhance their own prestige by participating in 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 construction of Śiva temples in Jhālrāpāṭan, 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 expressions of Śaiva religiosity in places peripheral to the political capitals. To better understand why Śaivism was a compelling ideology in these places, I focus on a group of three contemporaneous inscriptions from northwest Upāramāla, which are some of the region’s most valuable, yet undertheorized, sources for our knowledge of early Śaivism and the Pāśupata tradition in practice: The Durgāgaṇa Stone Inscription from Jhālrāpāṭan (VS 746/689–90 CE); the Kansuāñ Stone Inscription of Śivagaṇa (VS 795/738 CE); and the Indragarh Stone Inscription of Naṇṇapa (VS 767/710–11 CE).

5.1 Precatory Religion: Ideologies of Prosperity and Protection

The inscriptions from Kansuāñ and Jhālrāpāṭan share certain features and the temple remains that have survived in these respective places are also comparable. Both of these record the gifts of pious individuals with only the faintest ties to political elites. These donors were not explicitly motivated by political aspirations and the tone of their records is somber rather than hyperbolic. Here, Śiva is invoked as a refuge, protector, and bringer of prosperity in a world where such things were fleeting, at best.

The Kansuāñ Inscription80 remains in situ on the exterior of the Mahādeva temple located in a scenic spot along the banks of a spring a few kilometers outside of Kota in Rajasthan. 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 appears to have no official relationship with the current ruler identified as Dhavala. The focus of the inscription is to record the construction of a temple to the benevolent and protective Śiva.81

80 F. Kielhorn, “Kanaswa Inscription of Śivagaṇa,” IA 19 (1890): 55–61.
81 namah sakalasaṃsārasāgarottārahetave /
   tamogartābhisaṃpātahastālambāya śambhave //1//

While this inscription does not refer to specific visions of hell or different hells, the idea is that Śiva saves his devotees from hell as well as the ancestors of those who offer him
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.82 The act of piety and the precative tone of the inscription are apparently inspired by Śivagaṇa’s personal preference for Śiva. Verse 14 tells us that his name, designating him one of Śiva’s gaṇas, is fitting given his devotion to the Lord.83 It is also possible that this name, with the -gaṇa suffix, signals his affiliation with a Śaiva community.84 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.85

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

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82 The phrase śambhor jaṭāḥ pāntu vaḥ (‘may Śambhu’s matted hair protect you’) is repeated twice, and sthāṇor vaḥ pātu mūrddhā (‘may Śhāṇu’s head protect you’) is given once.
83 śivasya nūnaṁ sa gaṇo yena tadbhaktatāṁ gataḥ.
84 Names ending in -gaṇa can be indicative of initiation in Śaiva Siddhānta. See Tāntrikābhidhānakośa, eds. H. Brunner, G. Oberhammer, & A. Padoux (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004), s.v. gaṇa.
85 āśeṣais citam svārthasyāpya eva yogocito loke prasiddhāḥ satām /
tenedaṁ paramesvarasya bhavanaṁ dharmātmānaṁ karitaṁ
yaṁ dṛṣṭvaiva samastalokavapuṣāṁ naṣṭam kaleḥ kalmaṣam //16//
(Śārdūlavikṛṣṭita)
inscription, even the rulers of the land who are entreated to protect the temple will, through that act of piety, reach Śiva’s abode.86

The temple at Kansuāñ has been extensively rebuilt, although traces of the original moldings and repurposed pillars can be found throughout the complex. The open area facing the central liṅga shrine is also significantly rebuilt and now bordered by stone walls that have created narrow borders around what would have been a larger complex of smaller shrines and possibly a maṭha as well [Figures 25–27]. The structure that can be seen to the left of the temple is rebuilt, but it was at one point a simple two-storied building that could have served as a monastic dwelling.87 Early images of Lakulīśa preserved on-site are a strong indication of the activities of Pāśupata ascetics or religious specialists within the larger complex [Figure 28]. The most important sculptural remains of the larger complex are two caturmukha liṅgas. Most of the

86 “Kanaswa Inscription of Śivagaṇa,” Verse 21:

pālayantu nrpāḥ sarvve yeṣāṁ bhūmir iyaṁ bhave[ī]/
evaṁ kṛte [e] dhammārthaṁ nūnaṁ yānti śīvālayaṁ //

87 The assessment is based on the similarity of this structure to that of contemporaneous Śaiva maṭhas in Rajasthan. On these see Tamara Sears, “Pāśupatas and Cāhamānas at Menāl.”
FIGURE 26  Kansuāñ inscription of 738 CE preserved *in situ* on temple wall
5. Candrabhaga, Sitaśvara temple, plan with later accretions removed.

6. Kansuan, Siva temple, plan with later accretions partially removed.

7. Candrabhaga, Sitaśvara temple, plan with later mandapa (attached ca. tenth century A.D.).

8. Candrabhaga, Sitaśvara temple. Plan showing the range of pillars implied by the pilaster ornament on the walls.

Figure 27 Plans of the Kansuan Temple and Sitaśvara Mahādeva Temple

After Meister, 1981
FIGURE 28 Lakulīśa on exterior of Kansuāñ Temple, c. late 7th–early 8th century
faces that adorn these līṅgas have been recut, but the original images that do survive are broadly contemporaneous with the temple [Figure 29].

The context and expressions in the late 7th century stone inscription from the Śītaleśvara temple in Jhālrāpāṭan resonate with those of the Kansuāñ inscription. The opening lines provide little with which to contextualize the donor. The poet refers to the reign of Durgāgaṇa, who is not known from other records. I assume he was a localized ruler or landholder. The donor himself is named Voppaka, who is mentioned along with his brother, Deva. While we might expect a more extensive genealogy or laudatory praise of the family’s accomplishments, as was the case in the inscriptions from Daśapura, the tone of this record is quite modest. We are told that Deva was grateful (kṛtajña) and a man of his word (sthiravāc). Voppaka is a treasurer in a dicing hall of wealthy princes (pravṛddhakośakṣitipadyutasabhā). Voppaka’s occupation, along with his sponsorship of the temple and inscription, are a clear indication that he was 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

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88 G. Bühler, “Two Inscriptions from Jhālrāpāṭan,” IA 5 (1876): 180–183.
89 Verse 6.
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.90

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 Jhālrāpāṭan record extend to their physical settings as well. Today called Śītaleśvara Mahādeva, the temple in Jhālrāpāṭan is positioned along a scenic bend in the Candrabhāgā River. 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 [see Figure 27]. The architectural frame surrounding the garbhagṛha, with a small image of Lakulīśa in the central niche also dates to an early phase in the life of the temple. [Figures 30 & 31]. An early sahasra liṅga is under active worship in a small shrine along the riverbank. Remains of some ancillary shrines of a later period (c. 8th–9th century) survive within the complex, and there may have been others that were destroyed or built over. 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.

5.2 Pāśupatas in Practice: the Religious Community of Indragarh

Neither of the inscriptions from Jhālrāpāṭan nor Kansuāñ mentions Pāśupatas directly, but the images of Lakulīśa placed prominently at both of these sites are compelling indications of a Pāśupata influence. These material links are corroborated by an early 8th century inscription from Indragarh (dated VS 767/710–711 CE)—a site approximately 70 km northeast of Daśapura, and

90 Verses 8–9:

tenēdaṁ akārī candrāmaulēr bhavaṇaṁ janmahbhṛtiprahāraḥetoḥ/
prasaṁkṣayā jārāvyagadūkhapratatāṁ dehabhṛtaṁ anuprasaktām //8// (Aupacandasika)
dharma eva sakhāvyabhicāri rakṣaṁ _ ākṛtinaskhaliteṣu/
prāyane ṣy anugatiṁ vidadhāti parya yanti sukhaḥrdḥ kīṁ utāṛghā //9// (Gītāryā)
FIGURE 30  Doorway to inner sanctum of Śītaleśvara Mahādeva Temple complex with outline of Lakulīśa figure faintly visible, Jhālrāpāṭan, Rajasthan
AFTER TOD, 1920
40 km west of Jhālrāpāṭan [Figure 32]. 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 a Rāṣṭrakūṭa king called Naṇṇapa as the ruler at the time of the record’s composition.91

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 inscription commemorates the building of a temple though 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 Śiva community. Since it memorializes 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 Śiva religion. In addition, the involvement of a local merchant family

91 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. 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,” Journal of the Bihar Research Society 41 (1955), 249ff.; H.V. Trivedi, “New Light on the Rāṣṭrakūṭa House,” Indian Historical Quarterly 30 (1954): 194–195.
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.

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 records donations made to an assembly of muṇḍa-śṛṅkhalika-pāśupatas. In a contemporaneous record, gifts are made to śṛṅkhalika-pāśupatas. Following Hans Bakker's discussion of these Nepalese inscriptions, I understand Śṛṅkhalika to designate a particular

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92 During the reign of King Jiṣṇugupta (624–632 CE). T.P. Verma and A.K. Singh, Licchavi Inscriptions of Nepal (New Delhi, 1994), 119. Also D.R. Regmi, Inscriptions of Ancient Nepal (New Delhi: Shakti Malik, 1983), 177–178.

93 Regmi, Inscriptions of Ancient Nepal, num. 118—undated inscription of Narendradeva's time (643–79 CE).
Pāśupata tradition, and the additional designation of *munda*, to specify a particular sub-group within this larger network.\(^{94}\) 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.\(^{95}\)

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

He whose extensive glory was familiar to all on this earth, intent upon the truth, tranquil, learned, intelligent, grateful, (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.\(^{96}\) [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

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\(^{94}\) Reference is to the fact that these particular ascetics shaved their heads. Bakker, *The World of the Skandapurāṇa*, 149.

\(^{95}\) āsīt pāśupatācāryo rudraśṛṅkhalikāgraṇīḥ / vinītarāśisaṃjño yah śāntaḥ prasavagocarī // 5 //
yah khyāto bhūtalesmin prakaṭapṛthuyaśāḥ satyayuktaḥ suśānto /
vīḍvāṁ jīvāṁ kṛtaṁ kṛtaṁ sakalavasumatīmanḍano bhāvītātmā /
nityaṁ rajāṁ samīṁaṁ natacaṁnayuṣaṁ sabdaśāstre svabhijño /
nispannaṁ śīyasasyaṁghaṁ anavarataṁ abhiṣṭaṁ yāṁ suśāntaḥ // 6 // (Sragdharā)
abhavat tasya śīṣyaṁ yas tapasāṣaktāṁ jvalanāṁ īva /
dānarāśir iti khyātaṁ śāśāṅkakaraninmālaṁ /** // 7 //
sastraṁpravīcāraṁnīmarmanāmaṁ vāgmi guṇaṁ bhūṣitaṁ /
śāntaṁ prathamāṁ prakāśayaśaśāṁ nityaṁ dayālur bhrāṁ /
yogābhāṣayaśād atindriyaśaṭajājñēna yo viśṛutaṁ /
śīṣyāḥyāpaṁsakṣadāṁ atīṭarām īśasya kāryaṁ rataṁ / 8 // (Śārdūlavikriḍita)
svayambhor lokāśaṁyāśaṁ śaśāṁ śīlapāṁ svayaṁ /
tenedaṁ kāritaṁ īśaṁ mandiraṁ mandaṁ pamaṇaṁ // 9 //
**Edition reads śāśāṅkakaraninmālaṁ

\(^{96}\) 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.
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 Vinitarāśi’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 Pāśupatas 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 North India to credit Pāśupatas with the endowment of a temple to Śiva.

Dānarāśi’s endowment was the impetus for the temple’s construction. Verses 10 and 11 include further details regarding its maintenance.97

The repair of whatever is broken or damaged, and the independence with regard to worship98 here are done by the Corporation itself, which is providing full assistance. [10]

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

97 khaṇḍasphuṭītasamskārah svātantryam cātra kīrtane / nagareṇaiva kartavyam sarvasānāthyakārinā // 10 // aparō ’pi hi yah kāścin nagarānumate sthitaḥ / punāh karoti samskārāṃ tasyānūjātam eva hi // n //

98 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; kīrtī) is commonly 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 fame of the patron, which is the common idea behind these words. See Sircar, Indian Epigraphical Glossary, s.v. kīrtana.
ties between such nagaras—as administrative bodies—and temples in his work on early Chola period South India. B.D. Chattopadhyaya's study of epigraphic records in early medieval Rajasthan also underscores the active role of mercantile and trade collectives in supporting temples—often by donating shops and using the revenues to fund temple activities. These corporate bodies are comparable to the modern temple 'trusts' that administer the financial affairs and maintenance of many temples in India today.

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. These lines record an additional donation of a shop to the deity Guheśvara by the three daughters of Kumāra of the Prāgvāṭa jāti. The donation here is not as explicitly precative as those from Jhālrāpāṭan 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, Taksullikā, and Bhoginikā—present, of their own initiative, (this) donative ‘vessel.’ This eastward-facing shop, which belongs to them, here within the fortified area, is given as a gift. The shop of which

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99 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.’ James Heitzman, Gifts of Power: Lordship in an Early Indian State (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 9–10; 92.

100 Chattopadhyaya, The Making of Early Medieval India, 111–113; 89–119.

101 K. Deva (“Indragaḍh Inscription”) 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.

102 prāgvāṭajātīyaḥ kumāraḥ tasya duhitaraḥ deullikā taksullikā bhoginikā tisro'pi svaprati-patyā pratigrahapātraṃ prayacchanti ya āśām** iha koṭṭābhyantere āvārikāḥ*** pūrvābhimukhah sah pratigrahāya dattaḥ yasyāghāṭanāṃ [/] pūrvābhimukham kṣura-bhogvam svuṭhi ca daksinātaḥ antiṃagrhamaryādā paścimapratolikāpāta uttaratas**** asyaiviavāvaraṇaḥkabhittimaryādā [/] evam caturābhīṭhanopalaṣaṁtaḥ paralokādhanārthe guheśvaravya pratipādita iti /// iha koṭṭābhyantere paścimapratolisaṃpe pūrvābhimukham grhaṃ yasyāghāṭanaḥ pūrvataḥ rathyaḥ māryaḥ daksinātah

** Inscription reads desāsām; K. Deva amends to dāsām.

*** Edition reads avavarakah. K. Deva takes avavaraka as synonymous with Pali āvaraka meaning ‘store room.’ I take it as a variant spelling of āvārika, ‘shop; stall’.

**** Edition reads paścimato likāpāta. Perhaps a case of haplography given that paścimapratolī is written in the following line. ‘pratolī’ is attested in Sircar, Indian Epigraphical Glossary as synonymous with ‘pratolī’. Perhaps pāṭa means something like a ‘corner’ or ‘edge’.
the boundaries (are): to the east, a courtyard with a barber-shop\textsuperscript{103} 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 the highest 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 detail regarding 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 to designate the merchant class that originated in this area.\textsuperscript{104} Donations by members of the Prāgvāṭa vanikjāti 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 brahmanical and Jain temples across Rajasthan and Gujarat.\textsuperscript{105} I infer that this Prāgvāṭa family was affiliated with the ‘nagara’ mentioned in the previous lines. The revenues of the shop donated to the temple would have supported the activities of ritual and structural maintenance. 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 an ideal location from which to attract both locals and travelers 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.\textsuperscript{106} 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

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{103} The meaning of kṣurabhogy’a 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.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Dasaratha Sarma, Rajasthan Through the Ages (Bikaner: Rajasthan State Archives, 1966), 16. Similar examples of merchant families deriving their caste name from their region of origin include the Śrīmālas and Oswāls.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Chattopadhyaya, The Making of Early Medieval India, 111–113. F. Kielhorn, “Mount Abu Vimala Temple Inscription of [Vikrama-] Samvat 1378,” \textit{EI} 9 (1907–08), 148–159 (149); D.R. Bhandarkar, “The Chahamanas of Marwar,” \textit{EI} 11 (1911–12): 26–51 (43–46); F. Kielhorn, “The Chahamanas of Naddula,” \textit{EI} 9 (1907–08): 62–83 (62–63).
\item \textsuperscript{106} Indian Archaeology: A Review 1956–57: 11; 1957–8: 26; 1958–59: 27–29.
\end{itemize}
FIGURE 33  Temple foundation at Indragarh excavation site

FIGURE 34  Sculpture of Lakulīśa on fragment at Indragarh
found in situ. Based upon the large number of ancillary shrines excavated around the temple and the variety of iconographic remains—including images of Śiva, Bhairava, Pārvatī, as well as sculptures of the Mātrkās, Viṣṇu, Sūrya, and Kubera, dating from the 8th to the 11th century—this place had a long and active history as a religious center. During my visit to the site in 2016, the foundation of a temple and a few sculptural fragments were still visible. Among the surviving images was a Lakuliśa icon not noted in the earlier report [Figures 33 & 34].

6 Conclusions

From the early political centers of Daśapura and Chittorgarh to the idyllic riverside temples of northeast Uparamāla, this chapter has worked to situate the early Śaiva communities of the 6th–8th century in their geographic contexts and to consider the sociocultural 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. Moving away from the center, Śaivism was 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 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. This evidence suggests that these remote, yet prosperous, locales provided the economic stability needed to support religious institutions and networks of religious specialists.

107 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.