The Process of Vernacularization in South Asia[1]

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Review of Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men:
Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (A Philip E. Lilienthal
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Un prākrit n'a d'existence que par la volonté de l'écrivain qui l'emploie; il
naît le jour où il plaît à ses auteurs de le créer pour la vie littéraire.[2]

Introduction

In a fascinating, recent monograph Sheldon Pollock investigates two suc-
cessive and related processes in Indian culture: the adoption of Sanskrit,
the Old Indian language of ritual and liturgy, in worldly, public docu-
ments, which started around the beginning of our era, and next, its gradual
replacement in this domain by the local, or vernacular, languages which
began at the end of the first millennium.[3] Both developments were not
restricted to South Asia, Sanskrit's homeland, but took place practically
simultaneously in the so-called indianized regions of Southeast Asia such
as Cambodia and Java as well as in Europe, in the latter case with Latin as
Sanskrit's counterpart. As Pollock argues, both the introduction of San-
skrit and subsequently that of the vernaculars in public documents and

worldy literature had a political background; for, while Sanskrit expressed the ambition on the part of the rulers to transcend the local, to be cosmopolitan, the use of the vernaculars coincided with a form of regionalization and the desire to be regarded as a son of the soil.

   In what follows I intend to have a closer look at the vernacularization process in India. I will try to show that we are dealing with a development which was much more differentiated than Pollock argues. Furthermore, vernacularization seems to have started much earlier than assumed by him, for its origins can be traced to well before the beginning of our era. Moreover, on closer consideration vernacularization in reality seems to have been a kind of Sanskritization, as the vernacular languages were accommodated again and again within the literary tradition of Sanskrit. Vernacularization proper probably only started in the colonial period. However, before discussing the matter in more detail I will try to summarize Pollock's main findings concerning the processes of Sanskritization and vernacularization, in order to make clear from which point we start.

Sanskritization and Vernacularization

Sanskritization

The history of the use of Sanskrit in public documents such as inscriptions[4] is the history of Kāvya literature. The adoption of Sanskrit in inscriptions in the beginning of our era does indeed coincide more or less in time with the appearance of wordly literary texts. These so-called Kāvya texts, which include long epic poems and plays, mainly deal with kingship and court life. Apart from that Kāvya is literature as an art form, characterized by complex meters or else long, convoluted prose sentences. Kāvya texts further abound in grammatical puzzles which explore the possibilities of the Sanskrit language. The manner in which things are described (including elaborate circumscription, dense imagery, and many linguistic experiments) is clearly more important than what is being described. Inscriptions, and in particular the so-called *praśasti* parts, in which the royal

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[4] There are many types of inscriptions, for instance, panegyric ones on commemorative monuments, those (mainly on copper plates) detailing land grants, votive inscriptions, labels, etc.; see R. Salomon, *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and the other Indo-Aryan Languages* (New York-Oxford, 1998): 110-26. In our case we are mainly concerned with panegyric inscriptions, or *praśasti*s.

donors' genealogies are given and their deeds praised, are veritable Kāvya texts and some of these *praśasti*s are indeed literally styled *kāvya*s.[5] *Mutatis mutandis*, there is concrete evidence which suggests that the poets of the Kāvya texts were heirs to, if not the same people as, the scribes who were employed in the royal chanceries for drawing up the king's correspondence and who were responsible for the *praśasti*s.[6] This correspondence would naturally also have included legal documents, such as the tax exemptions and land grants which made up the second, or transactional, part of the inscriptions, in particular those on copper plates.

In Pollock's definition one can only speak of vernacularization when the use of the vernacular is a matter of choice. In the case at hand this comes down to the conscious replacement of Sanskrit by a vernacular. This implies that there was no vernacularization before the beginning of our era. In any case, the first inscription in Sanskrit only dates from approximately 150 AD, which roughly coincides with the dates for the first Sanskrit poet, Aśvaghoṣa. The inscription commemorates the repair of a tank near Girnār in Gujarat which was carried out by King Rudradāman. The second set of Sanskrit inscriptions dates from the Gupta period from the middle of the fourth century, which coincides with a renaissance period in Sanskrit poetry. However, this use of Sanskrit in inscriptions was an innovation. Before that time inscriptions were not written in Sanskrit but in the languages used at the respective courts; that is to say, local vernaculars. Thus, the so-called Aśoka inscriptions from the middle of the third century BC were written in the language that was used in the royal chanceries in Magadha in the east of India. In the versions of the inscriptions found in the extreme west and northwest of India the texts have been translated into the respective "local" administrative languages, which included Greek and Aramaic. Another set of non-Sanskrit inscriptions belongs to the Sātavāhanas and their successors in the Deccan. In Pollock's view these examples do not function as instances of vernacularization because the composers of these texts would not really have had a choice between a language that was exclusively used for written documents and one used for the daily deliberations at the court. As I will try to show, however, this

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[5] H. Tieken, "Some Literary Embellishments in the Gupta Inscriptions." *Archiv Orientalní* 74.4 (2006a): 456, n. 3.

[6] H. Tieken, "Aśoka's Fourteenth Rock Edict and the Guṇa *mādhurya* of the Kāvya Poetical Tradition." *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 156.1 (2006b): 95-115.

notion that they indeed did not have a choice remains to be seen. In addition to that, Pollock's use of the term Prākrit for the languages of the inscriptions by Aśoka and the Sātavāhanas is somewhat confusing.[7] For one thing, the term belongs to the Kāvya tradition and it is uncertain if that tradition already existed in the third century BC. More importantly, the term refers to a group of literary dialects which were used in Sanskrit literature to imitate the spoken languages and to characterize the speakers concerned as uneducated people who were far removed from the learned speakers of Sanskrit. Prākrit implies Sanskrit and to describe the languages in the Aśoka and Sātavāhana inscriptions as Prākrits is therefore not self evident. Later in this essay, the language use in these inscriptions will be considered more closely. However, at this point it may already be noted that any explanation should also take into account that the use of Prākrits in inscriptions after Aśoka is apparently restricted to dynasties south of the Vindhyas or on the fringes of the heartland of Sanskrit culture.[8] Moreover, the dynasties from the south of India (Sātavāhanas, Kadambas, Ikṣvākus, Vākāṭakas, and Pallavas) appear to have continued to use Prākrits up to the sixth century, while the Guptas in the north had already long switched to Sanskrit.

Vernacularization in South India

A similar distinction between North and South India can be seen if we turn to the process of vernacularization. But in this case the roles are reversed, for the process begins in the Dravidian south of India, in inscriptions, and it is North India which lags behind. At first the South Indian vernaculars were only used in the second part of the inscriptions, which mainly supplied concrete and practical information concerning, for

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[7] E.g. Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 331: "All ruling lineages expressed their political will first in Prakrit (beginning with Ashokan edicts in the mid-third century B.C.E) and then, in the dramatic shift recounted earlier (chapter 3.1), exclusively in Sanskrit."

[8] In this connection mention may also be made of the Hāthīgumphā inscription of Khāravela from Orissa. Orissa is not in the south but at the time, like India south of the Vindhyas, it was an "outpost." Later I will briefly come back to the two other groups of "Prākrit" inscriptions, namely those found in Buddhist sites such as Sāñchī, Bhārhut, Nāgārjunakonda, Amarāvatī, and Sri Lanka and those inscriptions in so-called Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit, see T. Damsteegt, *Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit: Its Rise, Spread, Characteristics and Relationship to Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit* (Leiden, 1978). However, it should be noted here that in both cases we are dealing with inscriptions that only consist of short labels.

instance, the measures of the land given away or the taxes waived. It was only later that they came to be used in the *praśasti*s as well. We can trace this development of the vernacular from being a language for practical information to a language for literary fiction step by step. What we see first is that in the introductory, *praśasti*-like parts Sanskrit replaces the usual Prākrit, which latter language is relegated to only the transactional part (e.g. Bāsim plates of the Vākāṭaka king Vindhyaśakti II). Subsequently, and leaving out of consideration a few Pallava inscriptions which are entirely in Sanskrit, the Prākrit in the transactional part is replaced by the vernacular (e.g. Pallava inscriptions beginning with those of Simha-varman III, ca 525-550). It is only in the Pandya inscriptions of the ninth century that the vernacular language, in this case Tamil, is raised to the status of a literary language used for fiction and comes to be used in the *praśasti*. This process took place in two steps. First, with the Pandyas in, for instance, the Velvikudi inscription there are two *praśasti*s, one in Sanskrit, which is followed by one in Tamil. Next, with the Cholas Sanskrit is finally dispensed of entirely and there is only one *praśasti*, in Tamil, though of a markedly less grand style than those of the Pandyas. The use of Tamil for historical and genealogical information in the *praśasti*s as seen in the Pandya and Chola inscriptions coincided in time with the composition of courtly poetry in that and other South Indian languages (Kannaḍa and Telugu) and the appearance of treatises on vernacular grammar and poetics.[9]

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[9] For the date of classical Tamil poetry, otherwise known as Caṅkam poetry, see H. Tieken, *Gonda Indological Studies, vol. 10: Kāvya in South India: Old Tamil Caṅkam Poetry* (Groningen, 2001). In this book an attempt has been made to show that Caṅkam poetry is not as old as has been generally claimed. Instead of dating from the first centuries of our era, it would date from the eighth or ninth century. The book appeared at the beginning of 2001 but for Pollock this was apparently too late to take it into consideration, see Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 384, n. 6. Pollock's treatment of Tamil, which with its early date does not fit the historical sequence he tries to establish, is curious. In fact, he tries as best as he can to sweep Tamil under the carpet. Thus we find only brief references to, for instance, the "historiographically convoluted case of Tamil" (p. 304). On p. 468 Pollock compares Tamil with Irish: "Other apparent moments of vernacularization outside of this time period [first five centuries of the second millennium, H.T.] are either problematic in their history, as in Tamil country in the early first millennium, or entirely divergent in their literary-cultural character, as in Ireland during the same period." No doubt Pollock was also kept from including the new, late date of classical Tamil poetry in his study because of the type of criticism it was received with. A rejoinder to the reception of my book will appear in 2008, see H. Tieken, "A Propos Three Recent Publications on the Question of the Dating of Old Tamil Caṅkam Poetry." *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques.*

The situation in Cambodia in the tenth and eleventh centuries is in certain respects comparable to the one met with in South India. Apart from inscriptions which are entirely in Sanskrit, that is, *praśasti* and trans-actional parts, and those entirely in Khmer, which only consist of transactional parts, there are inscriptions in which the two languages are combined. As is the case in South India, Sanskrit is used in these bilingual inscriptions for the *praśasti* and Khmer for the transactional part.[10] At the same time, however, there is no evidence of a Khmer literature or, for that matter, of a literature in Sanskrit in Cambodia.

In Java as well, Javanese started to appear in inscriptions side by side with Sanskrit, Javanese being restricted to the transactional parts (in 804 AD). After that, things went quickly. The first Javanese *praśasti* dates from 824 and from around the same time date the first belletristic texts in Javenese. After this, Sanskrit almost completely disappeared from inscriptions.

Vernacularization in North India

Compared to the south of India, in the north the vernaculars appeared only late. Furthermore, their appearance in inscriptions was not foreshadowed by Prākrits, as was the case in the south. For instance, the first, brief, inscription in Gwaliayari, which mentions the construction of a temple, dates from 1405 and the first vernacular *praśasti* in Gujarati from 1489.[11] The first literary texts seem to have seen the light of day only a little earlier. Another striking difference with the south is the absence of grammars codifying the vernaculars. Although in the south these appear almost simultaneuously with the literary use of the languages, in the north the first grammars are late, most of them dating only from the colonial period.

Pollock compares the difference in pace and character of the vernacularization processes in North and South India to the vernacularization processes in Europe in regions with Romance languages which had directly derived from Latin, on the one hand, and those with Germanic languages, on the other. In Italy, for instance, people pronounced their Latin in an Italian way so that they would at first not have noticed the difference. It should be noted, however, that for the Indian situation this explanation

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[10] See also G. Coedès and P. Dupont, "Les stèles de Sdok Kak Thom, Phnom Sandak et Prāh Vihār." *Bulletin d'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 43 (1943-1946): 75.

[11] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 292.

can be ruled out, because in India the "vernacular" pronunciations of Sanskrit were clearly distinguished from Sanskrit and in literature had a function of their own.

One of the conclusions arrived at by Pollock is that the rise of the vernacular languages was not the result of a demotic or religious protest movement, at least not in the initial stage. Instead, it was patronized by the same courts which had stimulated Sanskrit. The themes and poetics of the vernacular texts were indeed largely derived from Sanskrit literature. This also applies to the vocabulary, which was often highly sanskritized and which in some cases resulted in the so-called Maṇipravāla ("jewels and coral") style, in which Sanskrit and vernacular lexemes were used pell-mell.[12] In this connection Pollock speaks of a cosmopolitan vernacular. In addition to that he distinguishes a second process of vernacularization, which would have taken place outside the court and outside the influence of Sanskrit literature. The first traces of this development would be found in the work of the thirteenth-century Kannaḍa poet Āṃḍaya, which was purged of Sanskrit loanwords and only contained pure Kannaḍa words.[13] As a mature example of the second round of vernacularization Pollock mentions the *vacana*s of the Vīraśaivas from northeastern Karnataka, which were in prose, anti-aesthetic, anti-brahmin, and anti-caste. Another characteristic besides these, which is supposed to distinguish works of the second round of vernacularization from those of the first, is that they were not written down by the authors themselves. For instance, the *vacana*s by Basava (1132-86) were not committed to writing before the fifteenth century. The same applies to the poems of Narasiṃha Mahetā (ca 1414-80) from Gujarat, who is said to have refused to write down his compositions himself.[14] These works thus differ from those belonging to the first round of

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[12] According to Pollock, Maṇipravāla represented an initial stage in the process of vernacularization: it "embodied the very process of localization of the Sanskrit universal (sic.) . . . with the vernacular at first supplementing Sanskrit and later taking on an ever-increasing proportion as vernacularization gained power and confidence" (Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 323). I am not certain, though, if Pollock is right in seeing Maṇipravāla as an initial stage in the process of vernacularization. For one thing, the instances of the phenomenon he refers to on pp. 322, 324-6 are either dated too early (see, for instance, p. 322, n. 69) or not significantly earlier than the first literary texts. Furthermore, rather than with a gradual process of a vernacular encroaching upon a well-established literary language, we seem to be dealing with a piece of linguistic bravura, which as such presupposes two languages of equal status.

[13] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 432.

[14] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 434.

vernacularization and, for that matter, from Sanskrit Kāvya compositions in general, which in Pollock's view are written compositions axiomatically. The replacement in Java of the highly sanskritized *kakawin*s by *kidung*s with their indigenous meters, vocabulary, and themes would belong to the same process. Finally, in this context Pollock also refers to the many Bhakti poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in North India, such as Kabīr and Dādū, who combined "resistance at the social and the literary levels."[15] Kabīr is also mentioned by Pollock in another context: his work would traditionally have been classified as song and the genre of song would fall outside the category of courtly literature, or Kāvya.[16] However, as I will try to show below, Pollock seems to have misinterpreted the Kāvya poetical tradition and in particular the place of so-called popular songs within that tradition. As a result he seems to take the claims concerning these popular songs—their oral performance and oral transmission—much too literally. Finally, the type of linguistic gleansing as found with Āṃḍaya can be seen in courtly poems composed within the Kāvya tradition as well.[17] Therefore, when all is said and done, it is doubtful if the introduction of this second process of vernacularization is really necessary.

Prākrits

As I see it, it is of vital importance for the study of vernacularization in India to have a clear idea about what a Prākrit is and what its function is within the literary tradition. How else will we be able to understand those textual passages in which the vernacular languages were labelled as Prākrits? One such passage is an eighth-century inscription from Vātāpi in South India. This inscription opens with nine lines in Sanskrit, which record its date as being in the third year of the reign of Vijayāditya Satyāśraya on the full-moon day of the month Jyaiṣṭha of Śaka 621. The grant portion, which follows in lines 11-5, is written in archaic Kannaḍa. This part is,

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[15] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 435.

[16] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 393 and 300-2 respectively.

[17] A case in point is classical Tamil poetry, which avoids Sanskrit loanwords, see H. Tieken, "The Nature of the Language of Caṅkam Poetry." In *Publications du Département d'Indologie, vol. 94: Indian Horizons: Felicitation Volume for François Gros on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, eds. J.-L. Chevillard and E. Wilden (Pondichéry, 2004): 365-87. For classical Tamil poetry as an adaptation of Kāvya poetry, see Tieken, *Kāvya in South India*.

however, introduced with the words "After that (the Sanskrit portion), these verses were given in the Prākrit language."[18] Another instance is found in the Old Javanese *Sumanasāntaka*, in which the poet (Moṇaguṇa, ca 1200) tells us himself that he had "prākritized"[19] Kālidāsa's Sanskrit *Raghuvaṃśa*. A third and much later case is found with the seventeenth-century Gujarati poet Akho, who in one of his poems observes that "Sanskrit is studied with the help of Prakrit [i.e. Gujarati]."[20] As I have already shown elsewhere, Old Tamil Caṅkam poetry would show that these references to the vernacular as a Prākrit should be taken literally.[21]

The first task therefore seems to be to try to determine what Prākrits and their functions are. It should already be mentioned here that the category of Prākrit also includes Apabhraṃśa. An important question in this connection concerns the relationship between the various Prākrits and Sanskrit. At least in classical Sanskrit literature the Prākrits were used side by side with Sanskrit and each time one has to ask what meaning might be expressed by the use of a Prākrit instead of Sanskrit. The origins of the Prākrits are further also a matter of debate. For most scholars they represent the spoken languages which were transfered just like that to texts. It is clear, however, that, if this is the case, we are dealing with highly polished versions of the spoken languages. But, once this is accepted, we could also argue that we are dealing with imitations of the spoken languages in Sanskrit. Something like this can indeed be seen in the fabrication of a dialect for popular songs in drama, which as I will try to show, is based on an existing Prākrit to which one particular feature was added to distinguish it from its old form.

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[18] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 346, n. 31 and, again, 374, n. 94. In the latter note Pollock refers to the publication of the inscription in *Indian Antiquary* 10: 60-1 by Fleet, according to whom the "Prākrit" portion was illegible. On the basis of Fleet Pollock noted that whether the language in question was Kannaḍa was uncertain. On p. 346, however, Pollock refers to *Karnatak Inscriptions* vol. 1 by R. S. Panchamukhi who had somehow been able to read the second part quite well, and noted that it was archaic Kannaḍa.

[19] *pinrākṛta*; Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 389.

[20] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 374, n. 94, with reference to S. Yashaschandra, "From Hemacandra to *Hind Svarāj*: Region and Power in Gujarati Literary Culture." In *Literary Culture in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. S. Pollock (Berkeley, 2003): 581.

[21] Tieken, *Kāvya in South India*.

Śaurasenī Prākrit, the Language of Conversation About Ordinary Topics

As said, the term Prākrit belongs to the Kāvya literary tradition.[22] A full range of Prākrits is found in Sanskrit drama, in which certain characters speak Sanskrit and others a Prākrit. Sanskrit is spoken by learned and high-status people, such as the king and his brahmin advisors. It is the language of scholarly topics, of science, and literature. Women generally speak a Prākrit. However, depending on the topic of conversation (for instance, if it concerns matters of learning), they may switch to Sanskrit.[23] In the same way a speaker of Sanskrit, when drunk, may lapse into Prākrit. The Prākrit of women like the queen, her companions, and the courtesan, is a general, unmarked form of Prākrit. This form came to be called Śaurasenī (Ś.), that is, the language of Śūrasena, the central part of North India. This Śaurasenī also functioned as a kind of primer. That is to say, if the playwright wanted to introduce a speaker from Magadha he made him speak this general language, in which some specific, so-called eastern features were introduced, such as *–e* for the ending *–o, l* for *r, ś* for *s*, and *hage* "I" (from *ahage*) for *aha(ka)m*.[24]

In Sanskrit drama the dialogue is interspersed with verses. The verses of speakers of Sanskrit are normally in Sanskrit and those of speakers of Prākrit normally in Prākrit. However, this Prākrit differs from that of their prose; it has become known as Māhārāṣṭrī (M.), i.e. the language of Maharashtra. The standard form of Māhārāṣṭrī seems to be found in those verses which are recited by women. These verses are in many cases marked as (love) songs, either in the stage directions or in the text itself.[25] The

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[22] The languages of the Buddhist Theravāda canon, known as Pāli, and the Śvetāmbara Jaina canon, known as Ardha-Māgadhī, or "half-Māgadhī," are excluded from the present investigation. These two languages are used in contexts which, at least at first sight, seem to be different from those of the literary Prākrits. But, on the language of the Buddhist canon, see this article, 187-8.

[23] For a discussion of several instances of this phenomenon, see M.-C. Porcher, "L'énigme de Vasantasenā." In *Publications de l'Institut de Civilisation Indienne, vol. 55: Dialectes dans les littératures Indo-aryennes*, ed. C. Caillat (Paris, 1989): 329-40.

[24] A list of such regional shibboleths is found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, an early handbook on drama, M. Ramakrishna Kavi, V. M. Kulkarni, T. Nandi, eds. *Nāṭyaśāstra of Bharatamuni with the Commentary 'abhinavabhāratī' by Abhinavagupta, vol. 2, Gaekwad Oriental Series 68* (Baroda, 2001): 17, 57-62. For instance, the people living between the Ganges and the ocean are made to use the ending *–e* (as in *bāle* "young boy") instead of the regular Śaurasenī ending *–o* (*bālo*).

[25] Stanzas *Ratnāvalī*, M. Lehot, ed. *Harṣa Ratnāvalī* (Paris, 1933): 1, 13-5 and *Priyadarśikā*: G. K. Nariman, A. V. Williams Jackson, and Charles J. Ogden, eds. *Priyadarśikā. A Sanskrit*

Māhārāṣṭrī of these songs seems to have served as a kind of primer in the same way as Śaurasenī did. That is to say, those characteristics which distinguish the male characters' prose Prākrit from the women's Śaurasenī are inserted in their verses as well, distinguishing the Māhārāṣṭrī of their verses from that of the women's songs.[26] All this seems to show that both Śaurasenī and Māhārāṣṭrī, despite their names which refer to specific regions but which have been introduced relatively late anyhow, do not function as regional languages or dialects. They are the languages of prose and song respectively.

Leaving aside some new types of formations such as the passive, which in Śaurasenī—and the same applies to Māhārāṣṭrī—has been built on the present tense stem rather than on the passive stem (e.g. *aṇuciṭṭhīadu* versus Sanskrit (Skt) *anusthīyatām*; note also the substitution of the personal ending of the medium-passive by that of the active), Śaurasenī is very close to Sanskrit. This becomes particularly clear by comparing certain forms to the corresponding ones in Māhārāṣṭrī. For instance, the Śaurasenī absolutive *kadua* is still recognizably connected with Skt *kṛtvā*, while M. *gaṃtūṇa* is a different type of formation from Skt *gatvā*. The same applies to words like Ś. *īdisa* (Skt *īdṛśa*) versus M. *erisa* and the abstract nouns Ś. *citta-dā* (Skt *citra-tā*) versus M. *cirajīva-ttaṇa* (cp. Vedic –*tvana*).

In fact, the sanskritic appearance of Śaurasenī seems initially to have been far greater than one might gather from its classical form as has been standardized in the indigenous grammars[27] and as found in modern

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Drama by Harsha. Columbia University Indo-Iranian Series 10 (New York, 1923): 3, 8-9 are marked as songs in the stage directions, and *Śakuntala*: R. Pischel, ed. *Kālidāsa's Çakuntalā* (Kiel, 1877): 3, 71 is a song which the heroine of the play has scratched on a leaf with her nails.

[26] The male Prākrit speaking characters in Śūdraka's *Mṛcchakaṭika*: N. B. Godabole, ed. *The Mṛchchhakaṭika or Toy Cart. A Prakaraṇa by King Śūdraka* (Bombay, 1896): vol. 1 use the Śaurasenī absolutive in their prose (e.g. *paviśia* p. 84, line 79, *pekkhia* p. 122, 1. 3) and the Māhārāṣṭrī absolutives in their verses (e.g. *daṣṭūṇa*, p. 83, verse 2, and *āhaṇiūṇa*, p. 122, verse 20). The form *daṣṭūṇa* shows the ending –*ūṇa* as in M. *daṭṭhūṇa* as well as the consonant cluster *ṣṭ*, which is peculiar to the particular character's, the "shampooer's," prose.

[27] The first grammatical treatment of the Prākrits is found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, a handbook on Sanskrit drama (see n. 24). The text defies exact dating but may be dated sometime between the second century BC and the second century AD, see L. Bansat-Boudon, *Publications de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, vol. 169: Poétique du théâtre indien: Lecture du Nāṭyaśāstra* (Paris, 1992): 38. The oldest Prākrit grammar is the *Prākṛtaprakāśa* attributed to Vararuci. Its date is uncertain. On the traditional Prākrit grammatical tradition, see L. Nitti-Dolci, *Les grammairiens prakrits* (Paris, 1938).

editions.[28] That is to say, Śaurasenī had undergone a dramatic transformation in between its first attestation in the fragments of the Buddhist plays by Aśvaghoṣa from the first or second century[29] and its appearance in the classical plays of, for instance, Kālidāsa (fourth or fifth century), or at least in our editions of the latter plays. Thus, while the Śaurasenī in Aśvaghoṣa's plays, which is usually labeled as "Old Śaurasenī," has *tava* "of you," which is identical to the Sanskrit form, most manuscripts and editions of later plays have *tuha* or *tujjha*. "Sanskritic" *vayaṃ* "we" was replaced by *amhe, tuvaṃ* "you" by *tumaṃ, amhā[k]aṃ* "of us" by *amhāṇaṃ*, and the locative singular ending of feminine *ā*-stems *–āaṃ* by *–āe*. However, these changes seem to have been the result of a gradual process. This becomes clear from a comparison with play texts from South India, in which one may find a "new" form like *amhe* still side by side with "old" *vayaṃ*. The South-Indian tradition, which as far as Tamilnadu is concerned, may have had its origin only in the sixth century, that is well after Kālidāsa, seems to have caught the development halfway and subsequently turned the variation into the linguistic norm. Incidentally, this would suggest that the linguistic features in Kālidāsa's plays, or at least in the modern editions of these plays, are the result of a process of normalization in favor of the "new" forms. That is to say, it cannot be ruled out that Kālidāsa himself still used both the old and the new forms side by side.

However, probably during the same period a much more dramatic change in Śaurasenī's phonological make-up took place. In Śaurasenī, and in fact in all so-called Middle-Indic languages, the heterogenous consonant clusters of Sanskrit have been simplified, as in *utta* for *ukta* "is said" and *vaṇṇa* for *varṇa* "color." Apart from that, however, in Aśvaghoṣa's text single intervocalic plosives have been consistenly retained (*vicūritena, bhaṇāti, karotha*). In this respect Old Śaurasenī looks exactly like the language found in the inscriptions of the Sātavāhanas and their successors in the south. However, subsequently single intervocalic plosives seem to have been more or less systematically elided. Thus *gaja* "elephant" has become

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[28] It seems clear that modern scholars in editing the Prākrit passages from Sanskrit plays have been greatly influenced by the indigenous grammars.

[29] The fragments of early Buddhist dramatic literature have been edited by Lüders on the basis of manuscripts from the first or second century AD discovered in China, see H. Lüders, *Bruchstücke buddhistischer Dramen. Kleinere Sanskrit-Texte*. Heft 1 (Berlin: 1911a) and H. Lüders, "Das Śāriputraprakaraṇa, ein Drama des Aśvaghoṣa." *BSB* (1911b): 388-411 or in *Philologica Indica* (Göttingen, 1940): 190-213.

gaa, mada "drunkenness" *maa, mekhala* "belt" *mehala*, and *megha* "cloud"
meha. The voiceless retroflex plosives in intervocalic positions have become
voiced: *paṭa* "silk cloth" has become *paḍa* and *prathama* "first," through
paṭhama, paḍhama. The same has happened with the intervocalic voiceless
dental plosives *-t-* and *-th-*, which have become *-d-* and *-dh-* respectively.
It should immediately be added that the status of *-dh-* (from *-th-*) in
Śaurasenī is less clear than that of *-d-*.[30] Apart from that, while it is easy to
understand how a lax pronunciation of the voiceless retroflex stops could
have resulted in their voicing, it is not clear why the dentals behaved like
that as well and were voiced instead of elided like the gutterals, palatals,
and labials. Strangely enough the need to account for this exceptional
behavior of the dental plosives does not seem to have arisen as yet.

The various changes in Śaurasenī have been ascribed to the influence of
the spoken languages.[31] At first sight this explanation would agree with the
finding that they took place over a considerable period of time and came
to a standstill in South India, where indeed a completely different type of
language was spoken. On the other hand, a feature like lenition was already
available in the first century of our era, that is, in the time of Aśvaghoṣa, as
becomes clear from the Sātavāhana inscriptions.[32] This means that Old

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[30] Thus, in South-Indian manuscripts Śaurasenī *-dh-* has almost completely disappeared in
favor of *-h-* ; see W. Printz, *Bhāsa's Prakrit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1921): 16 and O. von
Hinüber, *Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Sitzungs-
berichte, vol. 467. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Sprachen und Kulturen Südasiens, Heft
20: Das ältere Mittelindisch im Überblick. 2. erweiterte Auflage* (Wien, 2001): § 86.

[31] See, for instance, H. Bechert, *Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttin-
gen. Philologisch-historische Klasse. Dritte Folge, vol. 117: Die Sprache der ältesten buddhist-
ischen Überlieferung (Symposium zur Buddhismusforschung, II)* (Göttingen, 1980): 186.

[32] The phonological appearance of the Prākrit in the inscriptions of the Sātavāhanas, which
date from approximately the second century BC to the third century AD, closely resembles
that of Old Śaurasenī. That is to say, as a rule the voiceless intervocalic plosives of Sanskrit
are maintained. Occasionally, however, one may come across an instance of voicing, e.g.
palogana, Skt *pralokana*, see M. A. Mehendale, *Deccan College Dissertation Series, vol. 3:
Historical Grammar of Inscriptional Prakrits* (Poona, 1948): § 171 (a) (i); Kaṇhēri, first or
second century AD. Besides, there are isolated examples of the complete disappearance of
an intervocalic voiceless plosive. Several instances of this complete elision concern the suffix
-ka, e.g. in *sāmiya*, Skt *svāmika*, Mehendale, *Historical Grammar of Inscriptional Prakrits*:
§ 171 (b) (i) (Nāsik IV, first century AD). Other instances are Veṇhuyā (Kuḍā, late second
or early first century BC) and *mahāsaghiya* (Karle II, second AD). But note *leghaka* (*lekhaka*),
mentioned by Mehendale, *Historical Grammar of Inscriptional Prakrits* in § 171 (a) (ii). The
majority of the instances concerned, however, is formed by place names and proper names,

Śaurasenī was already "archaic" at the time of its first attested use. On closer consideration Aśvaghoṣa's Old Śaurasenī thus seems to present only a partial and selective picture of the contemporary spoken languages. In this connection it should be noted that Old Śaurasenī was used side by side with Sanskrit. The first and foremost aim of this Prākrit in Sanskrit drama was to mark its speakers as non-Sanskrit speakers. In this connection we should seriously reckon with the possibility that Old Śaurasenī is an imitation of the spoken language in Sanskrit. That is to say, the effect of a spoken language was accomplished by introducing into Sanskrit a certain number of features characteristic of the spoken languages. It could be turned into a regional language by in addition introducing certain specific regional characteristics. At first, with Aśvaghoṣa, the aim of distinguishing Śaurasenī from Sanskrit was realized by almost token means but these

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such as Goyaṃmā, for Gotaṃmā, from Kuḍā (late second, early first century BC; see Mehendale, *Historical Grammar of Inscriptional Prakrits*: § 174 (b) (i)). See also Mehendale, *Historical Grammar of Inscriptional Prakrits*: § 171 (b) (i): Laṃkuḍiya (Junnar, between 150 BC and 150 AD), Sopāraya (Nānāghāṭ II, first century AD, Kaṇhēri, first or second century AD). See Mehendale, *Historical Grammar of Inscriptional Prakrits*: § 171 (b) (d) for Vāsāa from Padaṇa (first or second century AD), § 174 (i) for Āghāakasa from Kōl (first century AD), and § 174 (f) (i) for Paiṭhāṇa (for Patiṭṭhāṇa or Paṭiṭṭhāṇa, Skt Pratiṣṭhāna) from Kaṇhēri (first or second century AD). It appears that in the contemporary languages the wear of the intervocalic plosives had already progressed much farther than the inscriptions (or the dramatic Prākrits of Aśvaghoṣa) allow us to see. (There is evidence of the voicing of the dentals already as early as in the Aśoka inscriptions; see K. R. Norman, "Notes on the Aśokan Rock Edicts." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 10 (1967):164 ff). Furthermore, while the fricatization of the intervocalic –*s*- in other positions than in endings is generally taken to be a "late" feature belonging "only" to Apabhraṃśa, an instance is already found in Aśoka's Separate Rock Edict of Dhauli I (U) and II (L): *ehatha*, see E. Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka* (*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* I) (Oxford, 1925) (reprint: Varanasi, 1969). An additional indication of this may be had from the occasional instances of hypercorrect spelling, as in *nakara* for *nagara* (Mehendale, *Historical Grammar of Inscriptional Prakrits*: § 171 (c) Junnar, between 150 BC and 150 AD). In the inscriptions we seem to be dealing with a fixed, conservative dialect close to Sanskrit, which was kept away as well as one could from the general drift taking place in the spoken languages. A more or less systematic exception was made for personal or proper names as a concession to understandability: Goyaṃmā was known as Goyaṃmā and apparently people would not understand who was meant if Goyaṃmā was pronounced Gotaṃmā. The above is not more than a first attempt to establish the relationship between the language in these inscriptions and the contemporary spoken language(s). For an example of a detailed study of this type, see G. Fussman, "Gāndhārī écrite, Gāndhārī parlée." In *Dialects dans les literatures Indo-aryennes*, ed. C. Caillat (Paris, 1989).

were, we must assume, sufficient.[33] It is not clear, however, why the distinction was subsequently considered no longer sufficient, as Sanskrit had not changed. In this connection I would like to draw attention to the fact that the changes which took place in Śaurasenī after Aśvaghoṣa (including the exceptional treatment of the –*t*-, for which, see below), as a group, are also typical of Māhārāṣṭrī Prākrit. In fact, it is possible to argue that what we are dealing with is basically the outcome of a gradual and accidental process of the Māhārāṣṭrī-ization of Śaurasenī.

Māhārāṣṭrī, the Language of Verses and Love Songs

At the outset it should be noted that Māhārāṣṭrī, and the same applies to Apabhraṃśa (about which more later), is one of the few Prākrits which has acquired a literary life of its own. While Śaurasenī, leaving aside the curious Jaina Śaurasenī and the Prākrit in South-Indian inscriptions, is only found in drama, Māhārāṣṭrī has an extensive literature of its own. The most popular Māhārāṣṭrī text is the *Sattasaī*. In fact, it is from its use in this text that the Prākrit has acquired its name. The *Sattasaī* is a collection of short erotic poems in the musical *āryā* meter. The scenes are set in small villages in present-day Maharashtra[34] and the people, mostly women, speaking in the poems are simple villagers. The main topic is their love lives. The language is much farther removed from learned Sanskrit than Old Śaurasenī. Thus, it has *tuha* and *tujjha* instead of *tava* (Ś. and Skt), *amhe* instead of *vayaṃ* (Ś., Skt), and *gaṃtūṇa* instead of *gadua* (Ś., Skt *gatvā*). Its no doubt most striking feature, however, is the complete elision of the single intervocalic plosives, with the exception of the retroflex plosives -*ṭ*- and -*ṭh*-, and the dental plosive –*t*-, which have been voiced (-*ḍ(h)* and -*d*- respectively).[35]

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[33]) The phenomenon is well-known. A play-actor has only to clearly pronounce the final *n*s in infinitives and a Dutch audience will immediately recognize the character as one coming from the north of the Netherlands, or use a so-called soft *g* to set down a character from the south.

[34]) The vocabulary of the *Sattasaī* contains a number of so-called *deśī* words, or, regional words, which are intended to give the language of the villagers a particularly Maharashtrian flavor.

[35]) While in Śaurasenī, at least according to the indigenous grammatical tradition, which in turn has been followed by modern editors, the voicing seems to have involved both –*t*- and –*th*-, in Māhārāṣṭrī it is restricted to the unaspirated dental. It should be noted that the instances of the resultant –*d*- in Māhārāṣṭrī are best preserved in drama texts. On the basis

In the earliest Sanskrit plays, that is, the ones by Aśvaghoṣa, Māhārāṣṭrī verses are absent. The first examples are found with Kālidāsa (fourth or fifth century) and even after that the tradition is irregular.[36] Māhārāṣṭrī is considered to be an innovation in the linguistic repertory of Sanskrit drama and was introduced some time between Aśvaghoṣa and Kālidāsa. It is supposed to have been borrowed from outside the drama tradition, probably from the *Sattasaī*. The *Sattasaī* is indeed generally dated before Kālidāsa, but recently this early dating has been questioned,[37] so that the direction of borrowing from *Sattasaī* to drama can no longer be taken for granted. Whatever is exactly the case, it should be noted that the Māhārāṣṭrī verses in classical drama, and I refer here in particular to those in which women sing about love, did not enter into a vacuum. Although Aśvaghoṣa's plays, or rather, the fragments that have survived, do not contain evidence of Māhārāṣṭrī, they do contain a small fragment of a verse in Prākrit recited

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of the numerous instances in the Māhārāṣṭrī verses in the *Karpūramañjarī* Salomon even went as far as to conclude that the language of the verses concerned was Śaurasenī, see R. Salomon, "The Original Language of the *Karpūramañjarī.*" *ZDMG* 132 (1982): 119-41. However, Salomon ignored the other clear Māhārāṣṭrī features in the verses concerned. In independent Māhārāṣṭrī texts instances of the voiced dental are rare and were apparently considered an anomaly. For instance, in order to find examples of *–d-* in the *Sattasaī* one has to go through the variant readings really very carefully.

[36] Here I leave out of consideration the fourteen plays attributed to Kālidāsa's predecessor Bhāsa. Most of the plays concerned are on closer consideration relatively late plays or else late adaptations of earlier plays, see H. Tieken, "The So-called Trivandrum Plays Attributed to Bhāsa." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 37 (1993): 5-44 and H. Tieken, "'Three Men in a Row.' Studies in the Trivandrum Plays II." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 41 (1997): 17-52. The only two plays which might be attributed to Bhāsa are the *Svapnavāsavadatta* (no Prākrit verses) and the *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* (a few Prākrit verses, which typically all belong to the male roles). It should be noted that within the tradition of Sanskrit drama various traditions seem to have existed with regard to the occurrence of verses in Prākrit. For instance, in some plays (e.g. those of Bhavabhūti) only the male Sanskrit speaking roles recite verses, in their case naturally in Sanskrit. When, which is exceptional, a woman recites a verse she "resorts to Sanskrit" (*Mālatīmādhava*: M. Coulson and R. Sinclair, eds. *A Critical Edition of the Mālatīmādhava* (Delhi, 1989): 7: 1 and 3). As indicated just now, in the fourteen so-called Bhāsa plays, manuscripts of which have only been found in South India as part of a specific South-Indian performance tradition, the only Prākrit verses which are found belong to the male roles.

[37] The *Sattasaī* seems to subsume the *Kāmasūtra*, which latter text dates probably only from the early Gupta period, see Tieken, *Kāvya in South India*: 72 ff. and the introduction to the translation of the *Sattasaī* by Khoroche and Tieken to appear with the SUNY Press, New York.

by a courtesan, which by its meter (*āryā*) and its erotic content seems to anticipate the Māhārāṣṭrī verses of the female Prākrit speaking roles in classical drama. The fragment reads: *suradavimaddakkha[ma]*, "capable to bear the violence of love making."[38] It is typical that in this verse we find one of the few instances of lenition, namely in the word *surada* "love making," from Skt *surata*.[39] Unfortunately, it is impossible to make out if, rather than being a copying mistake, we are dealing with a regular and systematic feature of the language of verse as opposed to the language of prose. It is unfortunately also impossible to ascertain if as far as the plosives are concerned the voicing of –*t*- to –*d*- was the only phonological change.[40] Especially the latter point would be interesting, for a possible explanation of the exceptional voicing of the –*t*- in Māhārāṣṭrī amidst general lenition is that this lenition was secondarily applied to a language the single most striking phonological marker of which was the voicing of –*t*- to –*d*-. The latter sound might have been exempted from lenition, precisely because it was the language's single most striking phonological characteristic.[41] Admittedly, in that case we will have to explain why lenition had to be introduced in the language of songs which women sing to themselves and if this

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[38] Lüders, *Bruchstücke buddhistischer Dramen*: 43.

[39] The other instances of lenition in Aśvaghoṣa are -*āhi* for -*ābhis* in *vannīkāhi* and *bhujjitāhi*, see Lüders, *Bruchstücke buddhistischer Dramen*: 37-8. For an alternative derivation of the ending –*āhi*, see S. Insler, "The Prakrit Ablative in –*āhi*." *ABhORI* volumes 72 and 73 (for the years 1991 and 1992) (*Amṛtamahotsava [1917-1992] volume*) (1993): 15-21. *hoti*, for *bhoti* (Skt *bhavati*, Lüders, *Bruchstücke buddhistischer Dramen*: 53 and 55), is already found in Pāli, the language of the Theravāda Buddhist canon.

[40] On the basis of *vimadda* A. B. Keith in *The Sanskrit Drama in its Origin, Development, Theory and Practice* (Oxford, 1924) (reprint: Delhi, 1992): 89 concluded that we could not be dealing with anything like Māhārāṣṭrī, which has *vimaḍḍa*. However, precisely in the case of Skt *vimarda* there apparently was some scope for variation as becomes clear from *vimadda* in *Gauḍavaho*: S. P. Pandit and N. B. Utgikar, eds. *The Gauḍavaho. A Prakrit Historical Poem by Vākpati. Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series No. 34* (Poona, 1927): 364. However, note the context in the latter case: *niddā-vimadda*.

[41] The argument may also be applied to the preservation in Ardha Māgādhī of Sanskrit –*k*- as –*g*-. Thus, while in certain manuscripts the single intervocalic dental, palatal, and labial plosives are elided Sanskrit –*k*- is often preserved as –*g*-. In Ardha-Māgādhī the elision of the plosives is most likely a secondary development, showing the influence of Māhārāṣṭrī Prākrit, which dialect also otherwise has exerted a great influence on the Jaina textual tradition. Thus, the Jainas developed their own variety of Māhārāṣṭrī, known as Jaina Māhārāṣṭrī. See also H. Tieken, "The Distribution of the Absolutive in –*ūṇa(ṃ)* in *Uttarajjhāyā*." *Asiatische Studien/ Études Asiatiques* 52 (1998a): 261-86 on the instances of the Māhārāṣṭrī absolutive in the *Uttarajjhāyā* (and the language of the Nijjutti commentaries).

development took place in the context of drama or outside of it, for instance, in the *Sattasaī*. Without going any further into this, I would like to note, however, that we do have evidence, albeit indirectly, of a literary language in which of all the plosives only *t* is voiced. I refer here to Paiśācī, in which this situation is reversed by the systematic devoicing of all *d*s (intervocalic as well as in word-initial position). Paiśācī is also otherwise close to Māhārāṣṭrī.[42]

Apabhraṃśa

Whatever may exactly have been the case, the main purpose of the above discussion was to show that Śaurasenī (and in particular Old Śaurasenī) is not simply a spoken language which in its entirety was raised to a literary status. We are evidently dealing with a literary language which had been subjected to a rigorous process of normalization or polishing-up. It is even not unlikely that we are actually dealing with an imitation in Sanskrit of the spoken language. In this connection it should be noted that Śaursenī was used side by side with Sanskrit and was supposed to represent the spoken language of conversations about ordinary topics as distinct from Sanskrit, the language of learned topics. One may ask whether what applies to Old Śaurasenī does not also apply to Māhārāṣṭrī and whether the latter language was not a fabrication as well that was meant to represent the language of songs about love in drama or the language of simple farmers living in the countryside in the *Sattasaī*. As such this language of intimate song and rustic types is not just different from Śaurasenī but at the same time farther removed from Sanskrit than Śaurasenī, which latter language is after all used by a person like the queen. Unfortunately, the distinction between Śaurasenī and Māhārāṣṭrī has become blurred as a result of what may have been a process of the Māhārāṣṭrī-ization of Śaurasenī. South

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[42] This is especially evident if we look at the systematic features of Paiśācī, such as the absolutive ending *-ūṇa* (id. in Māhārāṣṭrī) and its passive suffix *–iyya* (which closely resembles M. *–ijja*). Paiśācī was the language of the *Bṛhatkathā*, which text itself has been lost. Only fragments have been preserved in Hemacandra's Prākrit grammar, for which, see R. Vijayalakshmy, "The Tamil *Peruṅkatai* and its Relationship to the *Bṛhatkathā*." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 24 (1982): 27-36. The scene of the *Bṛhatkathā* is set in Kauśāmbī in the eastern part of India. This might explain the presence of a few (incidental, as opposed to the systematic features mentioned just now) eastern features, which may have served as so-called *deśī* words (see above, n. 34), introduced to give the text an eastern flavor.

India has caught and preserved this process halfway. In the North it has been completed, if not in the manuscripts tradition itself then by the editors of the modern text editions.[43] The Prākrit to be discussed next is Apabhraṃśa, the language of popular songs. These songs are different from those sung by women in private and as such seem to have required a language different from and still farther removed from Sanskrit than Māhārāṣṭrī. As I will try to show below, initially the language of these songs was Māhārāṣṭrī, in which one additional feature had been introduced to distinguish it from Māhārāṣṭrī.

Apabhraṃśa, the Language of Popular Songs

According to Pollock the vernacular languages came to be used for literary (and political) purposes only around the beginning of the second millennium. He writes: "Before that moment of transformation, the existence of many vernacular languages could be conceptually registered, even in texts that promulgated the restrictive triad of literary languages [i.e. Sanskrit, Prākrit, and Apabhraṃśa, H.T.], but they were never regarded as potential media for composing literate workly texts. On the contrary: they were located outside the sphere of literary culture, in the realm of the oral, specifically, the sung (*gīta, gītā, gīti, gāna*, etc.)."[44] With "texts that promulgated the restrictive triad of literary languages" Pollock does not refer to literary texts proper but to poetical and technical treatises such as the *Mānasollāsa*, which mentions Kannaḍa besides Sanskrit, Prākrit, and Apabhraṃśa. With regard to the supposedly oral character of vernacular songs Pollock refers to their prosody, based on stress accents (Sanskrit has mainly quantative meters), and the use of end-rhyme (absent in Sanskrit, except in the *Gītagovinda*).[45] Clearly, Pollock has a kind of popular song in mind here which is different from, for instance, the Māhārāṣṭrī songs of the *Sattasaī* or those sung by women in Sanskrit drama. I have to admit

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[43] The assumed process of Māhārāṣṭrī-ization might thus also be behind the voicing of the dental plosives in Śaurasenī. It is in any case typical that the voicing of –*th*- to –*dh*-, which is not found in Māhārāṣṭrī, is irregular in Śaurasenī as well. That is to say, in the South-Indian manuscript tradition all –*th*-'s (or –*dh*-'s) have become –*h*-'s (see above, n. 30).

[44] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 288.

[45] Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 472. On the *Gītagovinda*, as a "translation" into Sanskrit of an "Apabhraṃśa" composition, see H. Tieken, "The Genre of Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda*." In *2nd International Conference of Indian Studies: Proceedings. Cracow Indological Studies IV-V*, eds. R. Czekalska and H. Marlewicz (2003a): 587-608.

that I am unable to follow Pollock on these points. For one thing, popular song was part of the Kāvya literary tradition almost from the very beginning. Secondly, these songs had their own type of language, which differed from the Māhārāṣṭrī of the Prākrit speaking roles' songs and verses in drama. In fact, Pollock seems to overlook completely that Apabhraṃśa, the third of the literary languages referred to above, was used for rendering popular songs within the Kāvya tradition. A third point, and probably the most important one, concerns the transition from Apabhraṃśa to New Indo-Aryan. Apabhraṃśa is generally taken to represent a linguistic stage between Prākrit and the New Indo-Aryan vernaculars. As the medieval North Indian authors hardly ever expressed themselves on the language they used, the identification of the language has to be made by ourselves. In this connection it appears, however, that a label like Old Gujarati is often used all too readily, while we are actually dealing with Apabhraṃśa. In fact, it could be argued that in North India vernacularization is only a very recent phenomenon and that well into the eighteenth century authors were writing in Apabhraṃśa or at least were thinking they were writing in Apabhraṃśa.

Apabhraṃśa is the language of popular songs and dances such as *phāgu*s, *rāsaka*s, and *carcarī*s. Besides compositions like these, Apabhraṃśa literature includes texts based on such compositions, like the *Saṃdeśarāsaka*, epics, Purāṇas (e.g. *Mahāpurāṇa, Paumacariya*), and didactic texts. Thus, the metrical structure and the instances of rhyme found in the latter type of texts clearly betray their indebtedness to popular song. It would seem that the epic-purāṇic and didactic texts are the result of a secondary development, which is comparable to the later use of Māhārāṣṭrī, originally the language of love songs, for long epic poems such as the *Setubandha* and *Gauḍavaho*.

The Apabhraṃśa songs and dances were performed during festivals by groups of women in public places.[46] As such they are different from the Māhārāṣṭrī songs, which were sung by women in private and as it were to themselves. For festival songs in Apabhraṃśa, note the definition of the *carcarī* (meter and type of composition) in Hemacandra's *Chandonuśāsana*, which provides a description of a scene of a crowd at a festival in celebration of the Jina's birth:

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[46] Some parts of the following exposition have been dealt with by me earlier in Tieken, *Kāvya in South India*: 174 ff.

> *caccari cāru cavahiṃ acchara ki vi rāsau khellahiṃ ki vi ki vi gāyahiṃ varadhavala*
> *rayahiṃ rayaṇasatthia ki vi dahiakkhaya giṇhahiṃ ki vi jammūsavi tuha jiṇadhavala,*[47]

> Some Apsarases shout a lovely *carcarī*, others dance a *rāsaka*, others sing a good *dhavala*, others again draw beautiful *svastika*s, and others take (handfuls of) buttermilk and unbroken grain, all this, o hero of a Jina, during the festival of your birth.

In this connection it is also interesting to refer to the distinction made in Bhoja's *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* (eleventh century) between *prekṣaṇaka*s and *nartanaka*s.[48] The category of *nartanaka*s, which includes, among other things, minor dramatic scenes, or *lāsya*s, in Māhārāṣṭrī, is performed by one actress "in an assembly hall or on a stage" (*sadasi*). Typical Apabhraṃśa song compositions like the *rāsaka* and *carcarī* are included in the category of *prekṣaṇaka*s. These are performed by many actresses and the scenes are set on the street, on busy crossroads, etc.

In the *carcarī* and *rāsaka* we are dealing with literary compositions involving festival songs. These songs are in the local language, as becomes clear from, for instance, a description of a water festival found in the *Harivaṃśa*: the songs referred to there are explicitly said to be in the language of the region, or the *deśabhāṣā*.[49] This is precisely one of the roles of Apabhraṃśa in literature. Note the following explicit reference to Apabhraṃśa as the language of the region, taken from the preface of the *Kīrtilatā* by Vidyāpati (1350-1440) and evidently meant as a recommendation of the composition itself, which is in Apabhraṃśa:

> *sakkaya vānī buhaana bhāvai pāuṃa rasa ko mamma na pāvai*
> *desila vayanā saba jana miṭṭhā taṃ taisana jampau avahaṭṭhā*

> Sanskrit appeals to the learned, but who does not grasp and relish natural speech? To everyone the speech of his region is sweet, and so one should speak in *avahaṭṭha* (= Apabhraṃśa).[50]

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[47] *Chandonuśāsana*: H. D. Velankar, ed. *Chando'nuśāsana of Hemacandrasūri. Singhi Jain Series No. 49* (Bombay, 1961): 7,47 (p. 224).

[48] *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*: V. Raghavan, ed. *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa of Bhoja. Part 1.* (Cambridge-Massachusetts, 1998): 723-4.

[49] See *Harivaṃśa*: P. L. Vaidya, ed. *The Harivaṃśa Being the Khila or Supplement to the Mahābhārata.* vols. 1 (Critical Text) and 2 (Appendices) (Poona, 1969, 1971): (App. no. 29D): *cikrīḍur anyāśca tathaiva tāsāṃ* taddeśabhāṣā*kṛtiveṣayuktā* (188-9), "And other women amused themselves, using the languages and dressed in the costumes of the regions they lived in"; cp. *gītāni* taddeśa*manoharāṇi svaropapannāny atha gāyamānāḥ* (334-5), "Singing pleasing and beautifully sounding songs typical of the regions they came from."

[50] Text and translation have been taken from R. S. McGregor, *Hindi Literature from its Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century. A History of Indian Literature* 8/6 (Wiesbaden, 1984): 30.

In this connection it is interesting to see in what way Apabhraṃśa differed from the other literary Prākrits. Leaving aside some minor differences in its phonological make-up,[51] the main differences between Śaurasenī and Māhārāṣṭrī, and Apabhraṃśa lie in the area of morphology. For instance, while the case endings and the personal endings of Śaurasenī and Māhārāṣṭrī are in general directly derived from those of Sanskrit (Skt -*anti* 3rd p. plur. > Ś. and M. -*aṃti*), those of Apabhraṃśa (-*ahiṃ*) no longer have any clear connection with those of Sanskrit. Another innovation which may be mentioned here is the lengthening of the ending of participles and adjectives when used as predicates. Thus, while in Apabhraṃśa final long vowels are normally shorthened (e.g. Ś. and M. *gharo* "house" becomes *gharu*) the past participle *daḍḍhu* "burned" when used as a predicate, ends in –*ā*, as in *daḍḍhā . . . gharu* "the house has been burned." Alternatively, the final short syllable –*u* of the participle is extended to—*au* as in *bhagg*au . . . *ṇiaabalu* "the own army has been defeated."[52]

The Oldest Example of a Popular Song in Sanskrit Literature

Apabhraṃśa is thus meant to represent the language of songs as heard on the streets of (North) India. Furthermore, it represents the (or: a) local language. In this connection it is interesting to have a closer look at what seems to be the oldest example of a popular song in Sanskrit literature.[53]

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[51] Phonologically, Apabhraṃśa does not differ much from the Māhārāṣṭrī, with the exception that most final long vowels are shorthened, *bālo* "child" becoming *bālu*. As far as lenition is concerned, in Apabhraṃśa it has been extended to include –*d*- (from –*t*-), thus completing a process already noticeable in the Māhārāṣṭrī of, for instance, the *Sattasaī*. In addition -*s*- within words has become -*h*- (e.g. *ehu* from *esa*, Skt *eṣaḥ*). However, it should be noted that the spirantization of -*s*- within a word has already been attested as early as in the inscriptions of Aśoka (*ehatha* side by side with *esatha*; see above, n. 32). Therefore, rather than wondering about its systematic appearance in Apabhraṃśa one may wonder about the rareness of this phenomenon in Śaurasenī and Māhārāṣṭrī. Another peculiar development of Apabhraṃśa concerns the intervocalic –*ṛ*- in, e.g. *hrada* (Skt *hṛdaya*).
[52] On this phenomenon, see H. Tieken, "The Distribution of the Variant Endings -*u, -aü* and -*ā* in the Apabhraṃśa Verses in Hemacandra's Prākrit Grammar." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 41 (1998b): 1-31.
[53] When Bhayani, a well-known Apabhraṃśa scholar wrote: "not a single complete Ap[abhraṃśa] work definitely earlier than the ninth century is preserved," he was writing about independent compositions, in H. C. Bhayani, *Apabhraṃśa Language and Literature. A Short Introduction* (Ahmedabad, 1989): 23, not about quotations in plays or other texts. Bhayani also did not include Buddhist Apabhraṃśa literature either, with the *Dohākoṣa* by

This is a festival song which is indeed literally plucked from the streets and brought to the court to be performed in the king's presence. The song is furthermore interesting for its language. It does not resemble the Apabhraṃśa described above. In fact, it is Māhārāṣṭrī with one new feature added to it. As such, however, it closely resembles the language of the so-called *dhruvā*s, which, as I will argue, is a language that functions like Apabhraṃśa.

The song in question is found in the *Ratnāvalī* by the seventh-century playwright Harṣa. In the first act of the play the king and his companion the *vidūṣaka* look on from the palace at a *carcarī* performed on the streets below as part of the spring festival (*vasantotsava*) dedicated to the god of love. The dancing is accompanied by songs and music. Next, two servant girls enter, who have obviously just returned from the festival. One of them, still full of the festivities, is singing a song, thus bringing the imaginary festival from the streets over to the scene of the drama performed on stage. The song, which consists of two verses in the *āryā* meter followed by a verse in the *gīti* meter, is called a *dvipadīkhaṇḍa*:

> Madanikā (*gāyati*)
> *kusumāuhapiadūao maulāiabahucūao*
> *siḍhiliamāṇaggahaṇao vāai dāhiṇapavaṇao*   (13)
> *virahavivaḍḍhiasoao kaṅkhiapiaaṇamelao*
> *paḍivālaṇaasamatthao tammai juvaisatthao*   (14)
> *iha paḍhamaṃ mahumāso jaṇassa hiaāi kuṇai mauāiṃ*
> *pacchā vijjhai kāmo laddhappasarehi kusumabāṇehiṃ*   (15)

> Madanikā (sings)
> The southern breeze, dear friend and messenger of the God of Love, is blowing, opening the buds on many a mango tree and melting lovers' anger.   (13)
> Young girls languish, their grief increased by their lovers' absence, despairing at meeting them, unable to wait any longer.   (14)
> Here, first, Spring makes the hearts soft, and then Kāma pierces them with arrows which meet no resistance.   (15)

A noteworthy feature of *dvipadīkhaṇḍa* is its composite nature. Interestingly, the change of meter signalled by the third verse (in *gīti* meter) coincides with a change in perspective, the *gīti* as it were providing a comment

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Kāṇha, who is dated to the around 700 by M. Shahidullah, *Les chants mystiques de Kânha et de Sahara* (Paris, 1928): 25-9. At the same time, however, Bhayani's conclusion could be a good reason to reconsider this early date for Kāṇha.

on the two preceding *āryā* verses. Note in this connection the word *iha*, "here," with which the *gīti* opens. Furthermore, the feet of the two *āryā* verses rhyme: e.g. *kusumāuhapia*dūao *maulāiabahu*cūao. Due to these features the *dvipadīkhaṇḍa* resembles types of composition typical of later Apabhraṃśa literature.

As indicated, all later examples of festival songs are in Apabhraṃśa. The above composition is clearly not in Apabhraṃśa. For instance, the shortening of the ending *–o* to *–u*, a feature typical of that language (see the word *rāsau* in the above quotation from the *Chandonuśāsana*), is absent. In fact, the language appears to be regular Māhārāṣṭrī. At the same time, however, I would like to draw attention to a linguistic peculiarity in the two *āryā*s: the extension of all free-standing words with the *(k)a*-suffix (the *kaḥ svārthe* of the Sanskrit grammatical tradition. Note that the *–k-* is deleted as a result of lenition: *dūa(k)o, cūa(k)o, gahaṇa(k)o, pavaṇa(k)o*, etc.). This suffix is absent from the "comment" in the *gīti*. It is also otherwise extremely rare in Māhārāṣṭrī or, for that matter, in the dramatic Prākrits in general.[54] On the other hand, the same *ka*-suffix is typical of literary Apabhraṃśa (as in *bhagga(k)u… ṇiaabalu*, quoted above, from Hemacandra's grammar).

The Language of the Dhruvā *Songs in Sanskrit Drama*

The structure of the composition and the occurrence of rhyme seem to suggest that we are indeed dealing with an early precursor of Apabhraṃśa festival songs. But, once again, the language is still far removed from Apabhraṃśa. In this connection, however, it may be interesting to note that the language of the *dvipadīkhaṇḍa* closely resembles that of the so-called *dhruvā*s, which language seems to play the same role as Apabhraṃśa. *dhruvā*s are songs sung by the members of the dramatic troupe when there is a lull in the action, for instance when an actor is silently moving from one side of the stage to the other. These songs are not part of the playwright's text but are improvised by the actors. It is therefore more or less by chance that we have some examples of these *dhruvā*s, from the *Vikramorvaśīya*, a play by Kālidāsa, and from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, a treatise on drama.

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[54] An exception is the dialect of the so-called Śakāra, a despicable rapist, in the *Mṛcchakaṭika*.

In the fourth act of Kālidāsa's *Vikramorvaśīya* the hero Purūravas wanders around in the forest in search of his beloved Urvaśī. Every time he moves around on the stage a *dhruvā* is sung. For some reason Kālidāsa included the *dhruvā*s in the text. Their content seems to be more or less standard: most of them describe an elephant (*gaiṃdao*), which "roams around." As an example I may quote verse 23:

> *vijjajjharakāṇaṇalīṇao*
> *dukkhaviṇiggahabāhuppīḍao*
> *dūrosāriahiaāṇaṃdao*
> *aṃbaramāṇe bhamai gaiṃdao,*

> Living in the *vidyādhara* forest, suffering from an unstoppable flow of tears of grief, the kingly elephant as high as the sky roams around, pleasure banished from the heart.

As in the *dvipadīkhaṇḍa* of the *Ratnāvalī*, all free standing words in this *dhruvā*, except for *ambaramāṇe*,[55] have been extended by the *(k)a*-suffix (*līṇa(k)o, pīḍa(k)o*, etc.).[56] This is also a regular feature of the language of the *dhruvā*s quoted in the thirty-second chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.[57] It seems that in the *dvipadīkhaṇḍa* and *dhruvā*s we are actually dealing with one and the same language. In addition to that in both compositions the language seems to have the same function. Thus, while the language of the *dvipadīkhaṇḍa* is meant to represent the language one might hear in the street, that of the *dhruvā*s is supposed to be a language one might hear on stage when the actors abandon the playwright's script and start improvising. These actors, who in principle belong to any part of (North) India, may speak any language. In both cases we seem to be dealing with a language which an author would not normally use in his works for prose conversations and love songs but only when he wants to quote a song in the (or: a) local language.

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[55] In the commentary *ambaramāṇe* is translated as if it were an instrumental (*ambaramāṇena*), which case, however, fits the context only poorly.

[56] In the stage directions this *dhruvā* has been identified as a *khuraka*, which is a kind of song. The *khuraka* is as far as I could see not found among the examples of the *dhruvā*s supplied in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

[57] To quote just one line from an example provided by the *Nāṭyaśāstra*: 32: 72: *mehaṇiruddha*o *ṇaṭṭhajohṇa*o *ṇiccaṇippahao esa canda*o.

The Flexibility of the Language of Popular Song

The language of the songs in the *Ratnāvalī* and *Vikramorvaśīya* is basically
a form of Māhārāṣṭrī with, as an additional feature, the extension of the
nouns by the *(k)a*-suffix. While as far as we can see, in these songs all single
intervocalic plosives have been elided, in the *dhruvā*s quoted in the
Nāṭyaśāstra the intervocalic –*t*- is generally maintained as voiced –*d*-.
However, as seen above, this phenomenon is typical of Māhārāṣṭrī, espe-
cially in drama texts. Another peculiarity found in the *dhruvā*s in the
Nāṭyaśāstra is the occurrence of two types of absolutives side by side,
namely the one ending in –*ia* (e.g. *pekkhia* in 32: 91 and *suṇia* in 32: 89)
and the other ending in –*ūṇa* (e.g. *daṭṭhūṇa* in 32: 91 and *pekkhiūṇa* in
32: 107). We are dealing with the absolutives of two other literary Prākrits
here: one of (prose) Śaurasenī and the other of (verse, song) Māhārāṣṭrī
respectively. The alternation between these two absolutives is another
problem, to which I will come back later.

As I see it, the language seems to provide a good example of how within
the Kāvya literary tradition a "new" Prākrit was fashioned, in this case one
for the local languages of popular songs. As such, this language had to
differ from both Śaurasenī and Māhārāṣṭrī, which, though less learned and
polished than Sanskrit, were still too "civilized" (or too close to Sanskrit)
for the language of popular songs sung on the street. As far as its phono-
logical pattern is concerned the new Prākrit seems to have been grafted on
Māhārāṣṭrī (and Śaurasenī), to which at least one systematic feature was
added to distinguish the new Prākrit from the latter. Interestingly, this one
extra feature, which belongs to the area of morphology (the –*(k)a*-suffix),
appears to foreshadow later Apabhraṃśa, which differs from the other
Prākrits mainly in developing new sets of endings besides those inherited
from Sanskrit.

Rather than using the term "Proto-Apabhraṃśa" for this language,[58] I
would like to describe it as presenting the idea of Apabhraṃśa, or: how did

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[58] In this connection it should be noted that in Kālidāsa's *Vikramorvaśīya*: [No editor].
Vikramorvaśīyam of Kālidāsa with Three Commentaries. Sanskrit Academy Series No. 14
(Hyderabad, 1966) the *dhruvā*s are found side by side with Apabhraṃśa songs and that the
two types of songs are strictly kept apart. This is a point I have overlooked in my earlier
discussion of the passage in Tieken, *Kāvya in South India*: 174 ff. While the *dhruvā*s are
sung by the actors at the time when the main character is silently moving about on the
stage, the Apabhraṃśa verses, which usually follow immediately upon the *dhruvā*s, are sung
by the main character Purūravas himself. In some cases this is explicitly indicated, as on

one present a local dialect used in popular songs in literature? The first independent Apabhraṃśa texts do not seem to date from before the ninth century. The language was first codified by Hemacandra in the twelfth century. The Apabhraṃśa in these later sources is an entirely different language from that of the *dvipadīkhaṇḍa* and *dhruvā*s. As said, Apabhraṃśa is marked by, among other features, completely new sets of endings, in which those of Sanskrit are no longer easily recognized. The transformation does not seem to be a matter of gradual development but rather of the replacement of one language by another. Even so the question arises how this could have been possible in the case of these songs. In this connection it should in the first place be noted that the term Apabhraṃśa, literally "falling away, corrupting,"[59] unlike Śaurasenī and Māhārāṣṭrī, does not refer to a specific region.[60] It refers to a linguistic stage, that is, to languages as a group and within this group one may of course expect considerable variation. It is in fact not unlikely that the alternation met with in the *dhruvā*s in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of the absolutives of Śaurasenī and Māhārāṣṭrī is to be understood precisely against this backgound. It might have served as a token of the variation one may expect within the category of "Apabhraṃśa." Furthermore, we should take into account that the language of popular songs is supposed to represent a language which is not codified or regulated by grammar and which as a result is bound to change from region to region as well as over time. In fact, if these considerations are indeed relevant in connection with the transformation of the language of songs from a kind of Māhārāṣṭrī-plus to Apabhraṃśa as described in Hemacandra's grammar, they may be equally relevant for the subsequent history of Apabhraṃśa literature. In this connection it is interesting to look at the picture emerging from the available Apabhraṃśa grammars, a tradition

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p. 219: "after this *kuṭilikā* [a *dhruvā*] follows a *carcarī* [a song in Apabhraṃśa] by him (*tena*), that is, by Purūravas." It should be noted that these Apabhraṃśa songs are again followed by a verse in Sanskrit recited, again, by Purūravas. One wonders what the author's intention might have been with these three layers of songs and verses in this particular part of the *Vikramorvaśīya*, if they indeed all go back to the author.

[59] Instead of Apabhraṃśa one may come across the term Avahaṭṭha, which means "fallen away (from Sanskrit), corrupted" (see the quotation given above from Vidyāpati's *Kīrtilatā*).

[60] We are dealing with a paradox here, in the sense that Śaurasenī and Māhārāṣṭrī, despite their names which refer to specific regions, are, in drama at least, not regional languages, while Apabhraṃśa, which does not refer to any region, stands for the regional languages, though for these languages as a group.

which runs from the twelfth to the seventeenth century and covers the entire north of India. It appears that the endings given by Hemacandra (western India, twelfth century), on the one hand, and Kramadīśvara (eastern India, thirteenth century), and Mārkaṇḍeya and Rāmaśarma (eastern India, seventeenth century), on the other, show considerable and significant differences.[61] It would seem that the idea of change and transformation was indeed built-in in Apabhraṃśa.

Apabhraṃśa and the Vernacular Languages

As we have seen, it is Pollock's contention that in North India the vernaculars made their entry into literature in the course of the second millennium through popular songs, which genre would have fallen outside the domain of the Kāvya, that is, the courtly literary tradition. At the same time, in agreement with the indigenous poeticians, Pollock includes the language of these songs, Apabhraṃśa, among the languages of Kāvya. In this connection it is to be noted that Pollock did not recognize the language as Apabhraṃśa. Part of this confusion is due to the fact that modern scholarship in general indeed does not have a clear idea about the transition from Apabhraṃśa to the vernaculars.

In the linguistic history of India Apabhraṃśa is taken to represent a linguistic stage which ultimately gave way to the New Indo-Aryan languages, such as Hindi and Gujarati. However, claims about what are the first Hindi or Gujarati texts are mostly only made retrospectively, as the authors seldomly expressed themselves on the language they used.[62] It is,

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[61] A synoptic table of the differences is provided in Shahidullah, *Les chants mystiques de Kânha et de Sahara*: 45-53.

[62] Note Pollock, writing about his use of the language name Gwaliari: "the name is not consistently used in the region itself" (Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 292). See also p. 288 where he writes: "While nomenclature like 'Kannada' or 'Gujarati' has to be used to refer to the languages, the linguistic, conceptual, and even cognitive boundaries that underwrite such terminology must have been blurry until vernacularization itself was well underway and the work of sharpening languages differences through the production of corpora of literary texts had begun." Going by the available word indexes neither Tulsīdās's *Rāmcaritmānas* nor Sūrdās's *Sūrsāgar* contains any reference to the respective languages as Avadhi or Braj. In the Sanskrit introduction to his commentary in "Brajbhasha" on Bhartṛhari's *Nītiśataka* Indrajit of Orcha refers to that language as "his own [spoken] language" (*svabhāṣā*), see R. S. McGregor, *The Language of Indrajit of Orchā: A Study of Early Braj Bhāṣā Prose* (Cambridge, 1968): 17. Typically, specific labels like "Hindi" or "Brajbhasha" (or rather, "the language of Braj") were first used in the

however, hardly ever made clear why these texts were necessarily in, for instance, Old Gujarati rather than Apabhraṃśa. For instance, the *Bharateśvarabāhubalighoro* of Vajrasenasūri (ca 1170) and the *Bharateśvarabāhubalirāso* of Śālibhadra (ca 1185) are generally taken to be the earliest texts in Gujarati. The language of these two texts is labeled Old Gujarati or, "according to the different fashions of modern scholarship," Maru-Gurjar or Old Western Rajasthani.[63] But could we not be dealing with—and this question does not only apply to these two texts but to others and even much later ones as well—a more or less "regular," classical Apabhraṃśa with an occasional regional element thrown in here and there?[64] The uncertainty as to the nature of the language on the part of scholars is, unwittingly, expressed by Yashaschandra, who writes: "From out of the numerous native dialects of the large area of the Chaulukya kingdom and beyond, a single literary regional language, intelligible to readers and listeners all over the region, was fashioned (*in part through the mediation of Apabhraṃśa*) into a vehicle for new literary activity."[65] Furthermore, regarding the two

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Indo-Muslim community. But in this case Hindi (*hindukī, hindugī, hindavī*) meant Indian speech as opposed to the community's own Persian language (see McGregor, *Hindi Literature from its Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century*: 6-7, R. S. McGregor, *The Formation of Modern Hindi as Demonstrated in Early "Hindi" Dictionaries* (Amsterdam, 2001): 23-4, and R. S. McGregor, *Devotional Literature in South Asia* (Cambridge, 2003): 916). If not the term, the idea of a literary language from Braj is likewise first found in a Persian source: Mīrzā K̲h̲ān's *Tuhfatu'l-Hind* (ca 1675). The language of the Braj people is described by him as "the most eloquent of languages.... [containing] poetry full of colour and sweet expressions and of the praise of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā [and] favoured among poets and cultivated people," see McGregor, *The Formation of Modern Hindi as Demonstrated in Early "Hindi" Dictionaries*: 26. Typically, among the Indo-Aryan languages Marathi goes with the South-Indian languages: the name is attested in circa 1290 in the *Jñānēśvarī*, see Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 381-3. The proverbial exception seems to be the sixteenth-century poet Bhālaṇ, "who, in his *Naḷākhyān* (Tale of Nala), was the first to use the word *gujarabhāṣā* (Gujarati language) to describe, self-consciously, the language of his poetry," see Yashaschandra, "From Hemacandra to *Hind Svarāj*": 580. A special case is the *Mānasollāsa* (twelfth century), which, besides a *karṇāṭā bhāṣā* (Kannada), mentions a *lāṭī bhāṣā* (Gujarati), see Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 301.

[63] Yashaschandra, "From Hemacandra to *Hind Svarāj*": 575.

[64] A question like this was also asked by Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 285-6. His answer is that we should simply look carefully at the distinctions made, and the names used, by the authors of texts themselves. However, he himself is often the first to ignore this principle. It seems that Pollock does not really know what to do with the absence of specific names for the languages in North-Indian texts.

[65] Yashaschandra, "From Hemacandra to *Hind Svarāj*": 576-7. Italics mine.

texts referred to above as well as other so-called Old Gujarati texts, that same author observes that their prosody, thematics, and poetics are those of Apabhraṃśa texts.[66]

The main question, of course, is what were the authors thinking themselves: were they writing in the vernacular or in the literary language Apabhraṃśa? I think it is difficult to answer this question on the basis of the linguistic properties of the language, as in the case of Apabhraṃśa it was apparently normal practice to adapt and change the language to ever new times and ever new places. In this connection, however, I would like to mention two points. The first is the fact that many authors who are supposed to have written vernacular texts have also written texts in Sanskrit, Prākrit, or Apabhraṃśa. Cases in point are Kāṇha and Saraha, who composed *caryā*s in "Old Bengali" (this label is not mine) and *dohā*s in Apabhraṃśa,[67] and Vidyāpati (1350-1440), who wrote a Sanskrit text (*Puruṣaparīkṣā*, "The test of man"), a text in Apabhraṃśa (*Kīrtilatā*, "The creeper of fame"), and songs in "Maithili" (*Padāvalī*, "The Collection of Pada songs"). Other examples are Jayaśekharasūri (fourteenth century), who translated his own Sanskrit poem, *Prabodhacintāmaṇi* (Philosopher's stone of awakening) into "Gujarati" under the title *Tribhuvanadīpakaprabandha* (The light of the triple world) and Jinavardhanasūri (fifteenth century), who wrote Sanskrit commentaries on poetical treatises and a "Gujarati" poem entitled *Pūrvadeśatīrthamālā* (The garland of holy places in the east).[68] These examples can easily be multiplied. In this connection it should be noted that in the texts concerned so-called vernacular forms are found side by side with Sanskrit forms. Thus, in the *Vīsaḷadevarāsa* the Sanskrit 3rd person plural ending *–aṃti* is found side by side with the "new" ending *–ai*.[69] Evidently, their authors had Sanskrit in the back of their minds and could, when the meter required it, fall back on it.[70]

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[66] Yashaschandra, "From Hemacandra to *Hind Svarāj*": 574-6.

[67] Shahidullah, *Les chants mystiques de Kânha et de Sahara*.

[68] Yashaschandra, "From Hemacandra to *Hind Svarāj*": 578.

[69] See J. D. Smith, *The Vīsaḷadevarāsa: A Restoration of the Text* (Cambridge, 1976): 41 and 48, note 31.

[70] The influence of Sanskrit is also noticeable in Apabhraṃśa. A case in point is the occurrence side by side of the nominative endings *-u*, *-au*, and *-ā* in Hemacandra's Apabhraṃśa stanzas in, for instance, subject-predicate constructions, see Tieken, "The Distribution of the Absolutive in *–ūṇa(ṃ)* in *Uttarajjhāyā*." In these verses one may find the Sanskrit pattern *cañcalu jīviu* "life is uncertain" (R. Pischel, ed. *Hemacandra's Grammatik der Prākritsprachen (Siddhahemacandram Adhyāya VIII), mit kritischen und erklärenden*

The second, and probably most important point to be noted here, is the fact that there are no indigenous, traditional grammars of any of the North-Indian vernaculars before well into the colonial period and the ones that do exist have been specifically compiled for "foreigners." Admittedly, there are a few word lists by Nanddās from the late sixteenth century but these consist mainly of so-called hard words and as such seem to testify to an increasing use of Sanskrit loanwords in Brajbhasha poetry.[71] One of the earliest grammars, however, the seventeenth-century *Taḥfatu'l-Hind* "A present from India" (ca 1765-1700) by Mīrzā Khān, is a study, grammar, and dictionary of Brajbhasha poetry, which was compiled specifically for the benefit of the Indo-Muslim community.[72] In time these works were almost immediately followed by dictionaries and grammars by westerners like François Marie of Tours (1703) and Ketelaar (1698).[73] However, at the same time the production of grammars of Sanskrit, and in particular of the Prākrits and Apabhraṃśa continued well into the seventeenth century. All this seems to suggest that the authors thought that the languages they were using were already sufficiently covered by the grammars of Apabhraṃśa. So the question as to what language the authors were thinking they were using might have to be answered with "Apabhraṃśa." And, as we have

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Anmerkungen (Halle, 1877-1880) (reprint: Osnabrück, 1969): 418, 4) side by side with the New Indo-Aryan ones: *daḍḍhā… gharu* "the house has been burned" (343, 2) and *bhaggau… ṇiaabalu* "the own army has been defeated" (354a). The selection of *-u* instead of either *-ā* or *-au* was undoubtedly determined by metrical considerations. Furthermore, in Apabhraṃśa we may come across sentences like *samaraṅgaṇu samau dasāṇaṇeṇa* "the war with Rāvaṇa," V. Bubenìk, *Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science. Series IV—Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, vol. 165: A Historical Syntax of Late Middle Indo-Aryan (Apabhraṃśa)* (Amsterdam, 1998): 83, in which the postposition *samau* is found before the word to which it belongs. (For this phenomenon, see also N. Brown, "Some Postpositions Behaving as Prepositions in the Old Gujarātī Vasantavilāsa." *IL* 19 (1958) (*Turner Jubilee Volume I*): 228-31); or *acchai dūri bhamantu* "he is wandering far away," Bubenìk, *A Historical Syntax of Late Middle Indo-Aryan (Apabhraṃśa)*: 109 or *āsi kiu amhahiṃ ko avarāho* "(we don't know) that such a sin was committed by us," Bubenìk, *A Historical Syntax of Late Middle Indo-Aryan (Apabhraṃśa)*: 124-5, in which the copulative verbs are found before the participles. The words are Apabhraṃśa (or New Indo-Aryan) but the freedom seen in the word order is typically that of a synthetic language like Sanskrit.

[71] McGregor, *The Formation of Modern Hindi as Demonstrated in Early "Hindi" Dictionaries*: 6.

[72] McGregor, *Devotional Literature in South Asia*: 942-3.

[73] McGregor, *The Formation of Modern Hindi as Demonstrated in Early "Hindi" Dictionaries*: 6-7.

seen, this is also how they expressed themselves, if we may include Apabhraṃśa under the general heading of Prākrit as well. This was not only the case with the late, seventeenth century Gujarati poet Akho but also with the eighth-century composer of inscriptional documents from Karnataka and the thirteenth-century author of the Old Javanese *Sumana-sāntaka*. Tamil Caṅkam poetry provides a special case, being a well-circumscibed corpus of eight anthologies of short poems on the love lives of villagers, on the one hand, and on bards and their royal patrons, on the other. As I have tried to show elsewhere, the love poems are adaptations in Tamil of certain types of Prākrit and Apabhraṃśa texts of the North-Indian Kāvya tradition.[74] That is to say, in Caṅkam poetry the Tamil language is given the function of Prākrit and Apabhraṃśa.

Language Policy

The Prākrit of the Sātavāhana Inscriptions and those by Aśoka

As indicated, Pollock sees a direct connection between the language of the so-called Aśoka inscriptions of the third century BC and those of the Sātavāhana dynasty and their successors in the Deccan from the second century BC to the sixth century AD.[75] It is assumed that both for Aśoka and the Sātavāhanas the use of Sanskrit in their inscriptions was simply not yet an option and therefore there was no need to explain the use of a "Prākrit."[76] In that case Pollock's use of the term Prākrit for the languages in these two sets of inscriptions is sligthly misleading. For, the term has its origin within the Kāvya tradition and applies to languages used to charac-terize illiterate people speaking their own patois instead of Sanskrit. At the same time, I think there is some evidence to suggest that in the case of the

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[74] For more details, see Tieken, *Kāvya in South India* and H. Tieken, "Old Tamil Caṅkam Literature and the So-called Caṅkam Period." *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 40.3 (2003b): 247-78.

[75] As I have tried to show in H. Tieken, "The Role of the So-called Aśoka Inscriptions in the Attempt to Date the Buddha." *Rivista di Studi Sudasiatici* 1 (2006c): 69-88, the term "Aśoka inscriptions" is a misnomer in the sense that the attribution of them to Aśoka, that is, the Aśoka of Buddhist legends, cannot be taken for granted.

[76] E.g. Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 253-4: "Here an increasingly important and ultimately dominant component (*unavailable to the Mauryas or the Sāta-vāhanas*) was a language of cosmopolitan stature…" (italics mine); see also above, n. 7.

Sātavāhanas we are indeed dealing with a Prākrit in the classical sense of the word. Thus, it can be shown that the Sātavāhanas could have used Sanskrit. In that case we have to try to find out what their reasons might have been to opt for a Prākrit instead. The evidence of the role of Sanskrit in the Aśoka inscriptions is of a more indirect nature. Apart from that, if Aśoka indeed had a language choice it need not necessarily have been the same kind of choice as the one of the Sātavāhanas. In fact, on closer consideration it will appear that Aśoka's had much in common with the one of the Buddha.

In their inscriptions the Sātavāhanas present themselves as supporters of brahmins, who performed sacrificial rituals for them.[77] One of the kings is even described as a "unique brahmin" (*eka-bamhaṇa*).[78] It may be assumed that through employing these brahmins the Sātavāhanas would have been able to avail themselves of Sanskrit. And indeed, the Pallavas, one of the successors of the Sātavāhanas, use Prākrit and Sanskrit side by side. Thus, the Gunapadeya inscription of the Pallava queen Carudevi, which is in Prākrit, is concluded by two verses pronouncing curses upon those people who would dare to violate the agreement. These imprecations, in accordance with their solemn character, are in Sanskrit.[79] Apparently, as in drama, each of the two languages, Prākrit and Sanskrit, had a domain of its own. Apart from that, the language of the inscriptions of the Sātavāhanas and their successors is almost identical to the Old Śaurasenī found in Aśvaghoṣa's plays. It is a phonologically (e.g. no clusters of heterogeneous plosives) and morphologically (e.g. no imperfect and aorist tenses) simplified Sanskrit.[80]

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[77] In this connection mention should be made of the Nānāghāṭ Cave Inscription of Nāgaṃnikā, see D. Ch. Sircar, *Select Inscription[s] Bearing on Indian History and Civilization* (New Delhi, 1993) (reprint): vol. 1: 192ff., which provides a long list of the ritual sacrifices performed by the king and queen and an equally long list of the sacrificial fees (*dakṣiṇā*s) they gave to the brahmins.

[78] Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi in the Nāsik Cave Inscription: Sircar, *Select Inscription[s] Bearing on Indian History and Civilization*: 203-7, esp. p. 204, end line 7.

[79] T. V. Mahalingam, *Inscriptions of the Pallavas* (Delhi, 1988): no. 4. See also S. Lévi, "Sur quelques termes employés dans les inscriptions des Kṣatrapas." *JAs* 19 (1902): 113, who mentions the Sanskrit formula *svasti go-brāhmaṇa-lekhaka-vācaka-śrotṛbhya iti* in an inscription of the Pallava king Śivaskandhavarman, for which, see Mahalingam, *Inscriptions of the Pallavas*: no. 3, esp. p. 39.

[80] For some information on the phonological pattern of the language, see above, n. 32. As Lévi, "Sur quelques termes employés dans les inscriptions des Kṣatrapas": 112-3 wrote: "Les

As to the question why Prākrit was used instead of Sanskrit it should be noted that all the dynasties concerned belong to India south of the Vindhya Hills: the Sātavāhanas, Kadambas, Ikṣvākus, Vākāṭakas, and Pallavas. The Vindhyas formed a threshold between the traditional heartland of Sanskrit culture in the north of India and the south, which was only gradually sanskritized. In that region, languages were spoken which were entirely different from the Indo-Aryan languages of the north. In fact, in literary legend the Sātavāhanas are portrayed as ignoramuses, who could not speak Sanskrit, which appears to have led to serious misunderstandings with their wives, who were imported from the north.[81]

It is not very likely that the use of Prākrit in the inscriptions of the Sātavāhanas is a matter of the brahmins having refused to put their holy and learned language at the disposal of their royal patrons, whatever they may have thought of these hillbillies. Rather, it is to be taken as an expression of pride on the part of their patrons in their own culture and their own language. It may even have contained a tinge of disdain for the so-called superior culture from the north.[82] At the same time it is typical that they did not opt for one of the languages spoken in their extensive realm but chose Prākrit instead. This is a point to which I will come back later.

As indicated, it is assumed that in Aśoka's time it was simply not yet done to compose inscriptions or any public documents in Sanskrit. However, as far as I can see, it is not at all certain that Sanskrit had not been available at Aśoka's court. In this connection I would like draw attention to a passage in Rock Edict 9.[83] In that edict Aśoka introduces a distinction

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scribes qui rédigeaient en prâcrit les panégyriques royaux... n'avaient à fair qu'un effort insignifiant pour tourner la louange en sanscrit; ils effleurent le sanscrit de si près qu'ils semblent s'en garder plutôt que d'y prétendre; mais résolument ils ne franchissent pas la limite précise qui sépare leur prâcrit du sanscrit classique."

[81] The story of the uncouth Sātavāhana king and his genteel wife is found in Book 1 of the *Kathāsaritsāgara*; see C. H. Tawney, *The Kathā Sarit Sāgara or Ocean of the Stream of Story* (Calcutta, 1880): vol. 1: 36-40.

[82] Should the description of King Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi as a "unique brahmin" (*ekabamhaṇa*) perhaps be understood in this light? In any case, it seems to echo the term *ekavidya*, "unique scholar," for the *viṭa* in Sanskrit drama, who is a brahmin making a living as a kind of pimp in the courtesans' quarters. There is also something extremely absurd in the long enumeration in Prākrit of Vedic sacrifices and the fees paid to priests found in the Nānāghāṭ Cave Inscription (see above, n. 77). With it the Sātavāhanas seem to say: "See how great and powerful we are despite the fact that we do not know Sanskrit."

[83] For the texts of the Aśoka's edicts, see Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka*.

between ordinary ceremonies and *dharma*-ceremonies. *dharma*-ceremonies include correct behavior toward slaves and servants, respect toward persons deserving respect, self-control in one's dealings with animals, and liberality toward Buddhist monks and brahmins. The ordinary ceremonies include those performed in cases of illness, marriage, childbirth, and going abroad. It is said that these latter ceremonies are in particular performed by women but that they are no less useful for that. However, as the text says:

> this type of ceremony is full of risks. (For with these) one might or might not obtain the desired result. (Apart from that) the effect is restricted to this life only. That *dharma*-ceremony, on the other hand, is timeless. (That is to say,) if one does not manage to obtain the desired result in this life, one will in any case produce a great amount of merit for the life hereafter. If, on the other hand, the desired result is obtained in this life, there will be profit twice over: there will be profit in this life and at the same time, with this *dharma*-ceremony, one will produce a great amount of merit for the life hereafter.

The distinction introduced here between ordinary ceremonies and *dharma*-ceremonies, the former having effects obtained in this life, the latter having invisible effects obtained only in the life hereafter, seems to foreshadow the distinction between *dṛṣṭārtha* and *adṛṣṭārtha* in later Pūrva-mīmāṃsā. Add to this the many references in the edicts to *svarga*, or heaven, as the final goal, and it is almost as if we hear a *mīmāṃsā* specialist explaining to Aśoka the purpose (heaven) and technical details of vedic ritual sacrifice. As a result it cannot be ruled out that Aśoka knew the language of these specialists, that is, Sanskrit, and could have availed himself of that language in his edicts if he had really wanted.

Another question then is why Aśoka might have forgone the use Sanskrit in his edicts. In this connection it should be noted that the *dharma* (as in the *dharma*-ceremonies referred to just now) taught by Aśoka is his own invention, as is made abundantly clear in the inscriptions. It is the outcome of his regrets after the massacre committed in Kaliṅga (referred to in Rock Edict 13), his visit to the Saṃbodhi tree under which the Buddha had received enlightenment (Rock Edict 8), and his visit to the (or rather: a) Buddhist Saṃgha (Rūpnāth Rock Inscription). Aśoka literally calls himself "the first to practise (altruism)" (Rock Edict 5). The change brought about by this New Order is an important theme in the Rock Edicts. Thus, Rock Edicts 4-6 and 8 first mention the past, in which, for instance, many living beings were killed. Next the focus shifts to Aśoka's own time, in which the killing of living beings has almost come to an end. Edicts 4

and 5 even go one step further and announce measures undertaken by the emperor which should ensure that in the future the situation will not relapse, but instead improve even more. Furthermore, Aśoka is constantly concerned with the propagation of the new *dharma*. In case of problems people may approach him at any time, wherever he is (in the harem or bedchamber) and whatever he is doing (eating) and he will personally see to the matter immediately (Rock Edict 6). In fact, there is no Indian king of which we possess such a personal biography. At the same time, however, Aśoka's biography closely resembles the one of the Buddha, who likewise discovered his own, personal path to enlightenment after a long process of experimenting with various alternative courses. In instructing his followers in this path toward enlightment the Buddha, like Aśoka, did not make use of Sanskrit but of the spoken language of his region. In fact, when his followers offered to translate his words into Sanskrit the Buddha told them not to do so.[84]

The *dharma* discovered and propagated by Aśoka and the Buddha differs from the brahmanic *dharma*. The latter was based on the Veda, which was eternal and in whose production no agent was involved. As such, the brahmanic *dharma* lacked authorial intention (*vivakṣā*). These ideas are reflected in speculations about the brahmins' language itself: Sanskrit was not considered to be a human invention but something which had always been there. It may be argued, therefore, that by using Sanskrit Aśoka and the Buddha would have created the wrong impression. For, both wanted to stress, most likely in direct opposition to the Sanskrit *dharma* which had always been there, that they had discovered something new.

Apart from this Aśoka and the Buddha, or rather the Buddhists, seem to have shared a similar pragmatic attitude toward language, allowing their words to be adapted to the various local language situations and thus maximizing the action radius of their respective messages. In the versions of Aśoka's Rock Edicts in the west and northwest the language is marked by features supposedly typical of the languages of these regions. In the northwest the texts have even been translated in Greek and Aramaic, which were the administrative languages there. The word of the Buddha has likewise been translated. Thus we have texts in Pāli, Gāndhārī, Chinese, Tibetan,

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[84] See J. Brough, "Sakāya Niruttiyā: Cauld kale het." In *Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse. Dritte Folge, vol. 117: Die Sprache der ältesten buddhistischen Überlieferung (Symposium zur Buddhismusforschung, II)*, ed. H. Bechert (Göttingen, 1980): 34-42.

and even, against the Buddha's wish, in a kind of Sanskrit.[85] The same type of Buddhist Sanskrit is also found in inscriptions, mainly short labels, in Mathurā and its environs from the first centuries of our era.[86] The circumstances responsible for the origin of this specific type of Buddhist Sanskrit are as yet not entirely clear.[87] At the same time it should be noted, however, that we are not dealing with proper, classical Sanskrit as codified in the grammatical literature.

An entirely different question is what type of language might the one used by Aśoka be? (In what follows I will leave out the language of the Buddha.) If a Prākrit is indeed to be defined as a language grafted on (classical) Sanskrit, then it is doubtful if Aśoka's language may be labelled as a Prākrit. For, the language of the original royal missives underlying the texts of the inscriptions is characterized by a feature which seems to be absent in classical Sanskrit.[88]

If not a Prākrit, in order to understand the nature of the language it is also necessary to take into account Aśoka's linguistic ambitions. We have seen that in some cases the language of the inscriptions had been adapted and that in some other cases the texts had even been translated. Though not literally, these processes were anticipated by the emperor, as can be gathered from Rock Edict 14 in which he, for instance, allows the local authorities to adapt the contents of his missives to local circumstances.[89] However, if we turn to the language of inscriptions we see that in the case of the Pillar Edicts, which are found dispersed over almost the entire

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[85] It is generally assumed that Pāli, the language of the Theravāda Buddhist canon, is the result of a kind of translation of the Buddha's own eastern dialect into a western dialect. But see H. Tieken, "The Interrogative Pronouns *kaṃ, kāni* and *kiṃti* in the Aśoka Edicts." *Acta Orientalia* 64 (2003c): esp. 60-1.

[86] The inscriptions concerned have already been referred to above in note 8.

[87] But see G. Fussman, "Review of Damsteegt 1978." *Journal Asiatique* 268 (1980): 420-6.

[88] In H. Tieken, "The Dissemination of Aśoka's Rock and Pillar Edicts." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 46 (2002): 5-42, I have tried to show that the texts of Aśoka's Rock and Pillar Edicts are compilations based on old letters retrieved from the royal archives. For the non-Sanskritic linguistic feature in the original royal missives, which concerns the introduction of indirect questions by the interrogative pronouns *kaṃ* and *kāni*, see Tieken, "The Interrogative Pronouns *kaṃ, kāni* and *kiṃti* in the Aśoka Edicts." When these old letters subsequently came to be recycled to constitute inscriptional texts some of the instances of *kaṃ* and *kāni* were replaced by the regular Sanskritic construction.

[89] What follows applies in the first place to the texts as they appear in the inscriptions. Though not unlikely, it is impossible to establish with certainty if the original letters on which the inscriptional texts were based, were adapted or translated as well.

Ganges basin, it was not adapted. The same is the case with the Rock Edicts, including the so-called Minor Rock Edicts, found in the north, east, and south. Linguistic adaptation and translation are only seen in the Edicts found in the west and northwest.[90] It is tempting to conclude that Aśoka was seriously attracted by the idea of a universal language, which could function as a kind of supra-local *lingua franca* in his realm, or rather along the trade routes that he controled. Only where he met competing networks with their own administrative languages was he sufficiently pragmatic to allow his texts to be adapted or translated. Apparently, but not surprisingly, this was only the case in the west and northwest. Obvious examples are the Greek and Aramaic translations in Taxilā and Kandahār, Greek and Aramaic having been important administrative languages in the realm of the Acheamenids and that of their successors to the northwest of India. Although the political situation at the time in Shāhbāzgṛhī and Mānsehrā, a little to the west of Taxilā, is not sufficiently clear to account for the specific type of adaptation of the language of the inscriptions found there, in the case of Aśoka's Girnār inscription there is some suggestive information to be found in the Rudradāman inscription on the very same piece of rock. From that inscription we learn that the artificial lake, which had earlier been built by a certain Puṣyagupta, a *vaiśya* by caste and a high functionary of the Maurya king Candragupta, was next provided with outlets by the Greek king Tuṣāspha on behalf of that Maurya king's son, Aśoka.[91] Although this does not account for the specific linguistic outcome—a highly sanskritized language which, in fact, is often, but probably erroneously, compared to Pāli—it does suggest that in Aśoka's time Kathiawar was administered by a relatively independent ruler. By contrast, we may safely assume that in the south such independent administrations did not yet exist or were not strongly developed and that Aśoka entered into a more or less political void.[92]

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[90] For an overview of the distribution of the Aśoka inscriptions, see F. R. Allchin and K. R. Norman, "Guide to the Aśokan Inscriptions." *South Asian Studies* 1 (1985): 43-50 and, more recently, H. Falk, *Aśoka Sites and Artefacts: A Source-Book with Bibliography* (Mainz am Rhein, 2006).

[91] Sircar, *Select Inscription[s] Bearing on Indian History and Civilization*:175-80.

[92] On the relationship between center and province in the Maurya empire, see G. Fussman, "Pouvoir central et régions dan l'Inde ancienne: le problème de l'empire Maurya." *Annales Économies Sociétés Civilisations* 4 (1982): 621-47. On India south of the Vindhyas as politically undeveloped in Aśoka's time, see S. A. Abraham, "Chera, Chola, Pandya: Using Archaeological Evidence to Identify the Tamil Kingdoms of Early Historic South India." *Asian Perspectives: The Journal of Archeology for Asia and the Pacific* 42.2 (2003): 207-23.

For all its pragmatism, all this seems to point to quite an ambitious linguistic project, if not on the part of the emperor on whose behalf the original letters were composed and whom we are accustomed to call Aśoka, then on that of the people responsible for the dissemination of the texts of the inscriptions. Even if the language was local in origin it was presumably meant to develop into a supra-local idiom, that is, a language like Sanskrit, Greek, or Aramaic.

The Stages of Vernacularization

If it is part of the definition of vernacularization that it takes place in opposition, or reaction, to a non-local, universal language, it might already have begun with Aśoka in the third century BC. Furthermore, we may now distinguish altogether six models or stages. Thus, after Aśoka we have the Sātavāhanas and their successors in South India (second century BC to sixth century AD). However, though relatively close in time we seem to be dealing with two different projects here. In the case of the Sātavāhanas we are dealing with a language which remained the same all over South India and during a period of almost sevenhundred years. According to Senart, this would indicate that we are dealing with a standardized, artificial language, for which he coined the term Monumental Prākrit.[93] In addition to that, as already noted, the language seems to be very close to Sanskrit. In fact, it is Sanskrit but for a few simplifications and adaptations in its phonology and morphology. It is not unlikely to assume that in the fabrication of this language Sanskrit played an important role and may in fact have served as the starting point. If so, it is a Prākrit like the Śaurasenī and Māhārāṣṭrī of classical Sanskrit literature. As already indicated, the language used by Aśoka does not seem to be based on classical Sanskrit and for this reason I am hesitant to use the term Prākrit or Apabhraṃśa for that language.

If in the Aśoka inscriptions we are indeed dealing with some forms of the local languages, it took another thousand years for them to make their appearance again. Thus, in the eighth century AD, we meet a form of Old Kannaḍa. However, it was not identified as such but as a Prākrit. So far, vernacularization appears to have been restricted to inscriptional sources. That is to say, there is no contemporary literature which shows parallel

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[93] E. Senart, "The Inscriptions of Piyadasi. Part III. Monumental and Literary Prakrit. Part IV. Conclusion." *Indian Antiquary* 21 (1892): esp. 258-61.

developments.[94] By contrast the fourth model belongs to literature proper. In Tamil Caṅkam literature (eighth or ninth century) Tamil was used as a Prākrit but at the same time it was explicitly identified as the local language and came to be codified as such in a grammar. This process of codification was applied to Kannaḍa around the same time as well. In the north, however, developments took a different turn. It should be noted that in the north, from the very beginning with Rudradāman (second century AD) and the Guptas (third to fifth centuries AD) until far into the Middle Ages, inscriptions remained being composed in Sanskrit.[95] In literature proper, and this makes up the fifth model, the vernacular languages were accomodated under the heading of Apabhraṃśa. As I have tried to show, within Apabhraṃśa there was scope for the introduction of specific, local features. Even so, as literary idioms the local languages were seldom individually identified and labeled, and they were not codified in grammars of their own. This happened only much later, in the sixth and final stage, which falls outside the scope of the present study, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries before and after India's Independence.

There is a marked difference between the language use in the Sātavāhana and Pallava inscriptions, on the one hand, and that in, for instance, Tamil Caṅkam poetry, on the other. The Sātavāhanas and Pallavas used Prākrit, which mainly seems to have served to underline the difference between their languages and those of the north, or rather, the one learned, written language coming from the north: Sanskrit. On the other hand, by opting for Prākrit they did not have the ambition to establish individual identities for their respective languages. In Tamil Caṅkam poetry, on the other hand, it is no longer merely a matter of distinguishing the local language from Sanskrit but of raising the language itself, albeit as a Prākrit, to the status of a literary idiom. As such this language came to be codified in a grammar. Furthermore, its usage did not remain restricted to inscriptions but was

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[94] It should be noted that the attribution of the *Sattasaī*, a compilation of village poetry in Māhārāṣṭrī Prākrit situated in the Maharasthra, to the Sātavāhanas is most likely fictional. See in this connection the introduction of the forthcoming translation of the *Sattasaī* by Peter Khoroche and myself to appear with SUNY, New York (see above, n. 37).

[95] At this point I would like to note that it is not clear to me why in the south of India the second, so-called transactional part of the inscription came to be composed in a vernacular, or to put it differently, could not be written in Sanskrit. In fact, matters such as tax exemptions are proper topics in the law books in Sanskrit. See also Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*: 273.

extended to purely literary texts as well. So we clearly seem to be dealing with a new type of feeling here concerning one's identity, one's region, and one's language. In the one case people are proud of being different, in the other they are proud to be a Tamilian.

In this respect the situation in North India seems to be entirely different. The most striking development in the north is the absence of any formal, explicit distinction between the various vernaculars; instead they were all gathered under the general heading of Apabhraṃśa. Following Pollock's reasoning this would be the case because collectively the vernaculars were not perceived to be significantly different from spoken Sanskrit. I think it is not possible to follow this line of argument. For, as Prākrit and Apabhraṃśa in literature show, the differences, however few and minor, between these languages and between these and Sanskrit were not only clearly perceived but were also made to good use. Therefore, the answer should almost certainly not be looked for in the significance of the differences between the languages concerned. Instead, it is tempting to conclude that one was simply not interested in making the differences explicit by any further atomization of the literary landscape. Whatever differences there were, they were accomodated in the broad categories of the existing traditional system. Thus, the kings of Orchā did not order the composition of a grammar of the language used by their court poets. In fact, they did something else. They claimed as their own a language already made famous by its Kṛṣṇa poetry and which as such was associated with the Braj area. At the same time they were also active in enlarging the range of functions of this poetic language by extending its use to technical prose in Indrajit's commentary on Bhartṛhari's *Nītiśataka*.[96] Apparently, the ambition of the kings of Orchā was to be part of, and to help create, a compact and complete literary tradition which transcended their own realm, or rather, did not belong to any area in particular. In North India the ambitions went beyond the local or regional: one did not wish to emphasize the peculiarities of one's own language (*svabhāṣā*) but one rather looked at what it had in common with the other languages of North India, and this was effected by classifying it together with the others under the heading of Apabhraṃśa.

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[96] McGregor, *The Language of Indrajit of Orchā*. For the claim that the language in the commentary was the writer Indrajit's own language (*svabhāṣā*), see above.

The Nature of the Vernacular Languages

The process of vernacularization in India was clearly not a matter of the vernaculars replacing a dominant literary culture but rather of finding a place for themselves within that literary culture. As we have seen, in the eighth century Kannaḍa was called a Prākrit and around the same time Tamil was assigned the role of a Prākrit or Apabhraṃśa. Moreover during almost the entire second millenium the North Indian vernaculars were gathered together, albeit implicitly, under the category of Apabhraṃśa. On closer consideration the process of vernacularization may thus be characterized as a form of Sanskritization, with the vernaculars taking on the cloak of Prākrit or Apabhraṃśa.

As already indicated, despite their names, Śaurasenī and Māhārāṣṭrī are not regional dialects. Furthermore, once they had acquired their classical form, and if we disregard scribal accidents in the textual transmission, they remained unaltered during their literary existence. Despite the fact that an Apabhraṃśa is supposed to represent a regional language, the inclusion of a regional language into the category of Apabhraṃśa almost automatically blurs, if not denies, its connection with a specific region. In this respect the Prākrits and Apabhraṃśa(s) partake of the translocal character of Sanskrit. This translocal character in its turn appears to be reflected in the languages themselves. For instance, according to Smith the language of the *Nāsaketa rī Kathā*, a work in so-called Middle Mārwāṛī, "does not answer to any single geographically definable form of speech, but is rather a compilation of features drawn from several distinct dialect-areas."[97] The same is the case with the language of Kabīr's sayings in the form in which they have come down to us and the language of classical Tamil poetry.[98] It would seem that each of these literary languages in its own way tried to avoid the impression of being connected with only one specific dialect of the regional language concerned.[99] They are "little" Sanskrits, doing what Sanskrit does, on a local or smaller scale.

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[97] J. D. Smith, "An Introduction to the Language of the Historical Documents from Rājasthān." *Modern Asian Studies* 9.4 (1975): 436.

[98] For Kabīr, see Ch. Vaudeville, *Kabīr* (Oxford, 1974): vol. 1: 63-9 and for Tamil, Tieken, "The Nature of the Language of Caṅkam Poetry."

[99] See, for instance, Yashaschandra, writing on the literary language of the Chaulukya kingdom: "From out of the numerous native dialects of the large area of the Chaulukya kingdom and beyond, a single literary regional language, intelligible to readers and listeners

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all over the region, was fashioned (in part through the mediation of Apabhramsha) into a vehicle for new literary activity," Yashaschandra, "From Hemacandra to *Hind Svarāj*": 576-7.

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