

Abstract

King Rudrasena II: his Capital, his Wife, and his Sons
A Formative Episode of the Vākāṭaka History Revisited

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Since I published my Vākāṭaka book in 1997,¹ major developments in the historiography of the kingdom of the Eastern Vākāṭakas have taken place. These new developments are partly due to epigraphical evidence that has been published in scholarly journals for the first time,² but a real increase of our knowledge was brought about by the sensational excavations in Mansar since 1998 by A.K Sharma and the late J.P. Joshi. Simultaneously, research by Michael Willis in the history of the Guptas has generated new insights and accentuated the parallellism of the developments in Udayagiri and Rāmagiri.³ These new developments were subject of two conferences, in Groningen in 2002, and in the British Museum in 2008, the proceedings of the first published in 2004,⁴ of the second in 2008 in the form of an e-book.⁵ The research contained in these two publications focus on Mansar and the later history of the Vākāṭakas, Guptas and their successors. The early formative period of the Vākāṭaka culture remained somewhat underexposed.

In my talk at the 14th World Sanskrit Conference I intend to deal again with the earlier history, the time of the Vākāṭaka king Rudrasena II and his wife, the Gupta princess Prabhāvatī. I will argue that already in the time

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- 1 Bakker, Hans, *The Vākāṭakas. An Essay in Hindu Iconology*. Groningen 1997. Gonda Indological Studies vol. V.
 - 2 E.g. Shastri, Ajay Mitra & Chandrashekhara Gupta, *Māṇḍhaḥ Plates of Vākāṭaka Rudrasena II, Year 5*, in: ABORI 78 (1997) [1998], 143–157; Shastri, Ajay Mitra & K.D. Kawadkar, *Miregāon Plates of Prabhāvatī Gupta, Year 20*, in: ABORI 81 (2000) [2001], 136–151.
 - 3 Willis, Michael, *Later Gupta History: Inscriptions, Coins and Historical Ideology*, in: JRAS 15 (2005), 131–150; Willis in: Bakker 2004 and Willis *forthcoming*.
 - 4 *The Vākāṭaka Heritage. Indian Culture at the Crossroads*. Edited by Hans T. Bakker. Groningen 2004. Gonda Indological Studies XIII.
 - 5 Bakker, Hans (ed.), *Mansar. The Discovery of Pravareśvara and Pravarapura, Temple and Residence of the Vākāṭaka King Pravarasena II*. Proceedings of a Symposium at the British Museum London, 30 June – 1 July, 2008. Library of the University of Groningen : <http://mansar.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/>

her husband was still alive, queen Prabhāvatī was the driving force behind the religious patronage activities of her husband. To this effect Rudrasena II's *Mandhal Plates, Year 5* will be reexamined. This will lead also to a new interpretation of the so-called *Unfinished Durg Plate* (CII V, 76ff.), which I propose to ascribe to Rudrasena II. The Plate remained unfinished due to the sudden and untimely death of the king. It shows, however, that Padmapura was the early political centre of the Vākāṭakas. The dowager queen moved her residence to Nandivardhana. Seals found in the Mansar excavations, finally, suggest that the queen mother remained a powerful figure behind the scenes at the court of her youngest son Pravarasena in Pravarapura.

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