

I beat him	<i>Men antugur.</i>
How old are you ?	<i>Sen myéché äseapar.</i>
Those three men	<i>Ush ishio</i>
Is the food ready ?	<i>Ashwa mé yurter.</i>
Have you eaten ?	<i>Pugin ash.</i>
I understand	<i>Pilé.</i>
I do not understand	<i>Pilmés.</i>

3. BIMBOHANA.

DEAR SIR,—Childers offers no etymology for Pâli *bimbohana* ‘pillow’ or ‘bolster.’ Hemacandra (Deçî. vi. 98), cites *bimbovanaya*=*ucchîrçaka*. The Jaina-prâkrit equivalent is *bibboyana* ‘gaṇḍuka’ (Spec der *Nâyâdhammakahâ*, f. 22.)

The former part of the compound ‘*bimb*’=Skt. *bimba*, offers no difficulty; but it is not, at first sight, easy to see what is the corresponding Sanskrit term to *ohana*. Bearing in mind such Prâkrit forms as *parihâna*=Skt. *paridhâna* (see H. D. vi. 4), we can have no objection to identify *ohana* with **odhâna*=Skt. *upadhâna* (Cf. Skt. *upasakta* with Pkt. *osatta* for change of *upa* to *o* through *uea*, *ua*).

So Pâli *bimbohana*=**bimbodhana*=*bimbopadhâna*; while Prâkrit *bibboyana*=*bimbovana*=**bimbovahana*=**bimbovadhana*=*bimbopadhâna*.—Yours faithfully,

RICHARD MORRIS.

4. A NEW VARIETY OF THE SOUTHERN MAURYA ALPHABET.

Vienna, May 1, 1892.

SIR,—Prof. Bühler addressed the following letter to the *Academy* of the 28th May, 1892:—

During some excavations which Mr. Rea, Archaeological Surveyor to the Madras Government, lately undertook in the already despoiled Stûpa of Bhattiprolu in the Kistna District, he has had the good fortune to discover some relic

caskets,¹ which bear nine votive inscriptions. Impressions of the latter were sent to me by Dr. Burgess; and, after a prolonged study, I have succeeded in making out their contents, and have arrived at the conclusion that these documents are written in a new variety of the Southern Maurya or Lât alphabet, the characteristics of which may be briefly stated as follows.

(1) Twenty-three letters of the Bhattiprolu inscriptions—viz., the initial vowels, *a, á, u, o*, and the consonants *k, kh, chh, ñ, t, th, n, t, th, dh, n, p, ph, b, y, r, v, s* and *h*—agree exactly with those ordinarily used in the Edicts of Aśoka. The letter *g* has both the ordinary angular Maurya and the rare one with the rounded top, which occurs a few times in Aśoka inscriptions—*e.g.* in *matesu* (Pillar Edict vii. 2, 2)—but is used invariably in the later inscriptions. The unaspirated palatal tenuis *ch* has a tail, the vertical stroke being continued beneath the semicircle. The unaspirated lingual media, *d*, shows strokes slanting somewhat more strongly than in the abnormal *da* in *ambâvadikâ* (Queen's Edict, Allahâbâd, 1. ३). The corresponding dental *d* exactly resembles the Maurya letter, but is turned round, the opening of the curve facing towards the right, as in the Devanâgarî *da*.

(2) Five letters are entirely abnormal: (a) *Gh* is expressed by the sign for *g*, with a small curve attached to the right side, which denotes the aspiration, the letter being formed according to the same principle as the Maurya *chha* from *cha*, *dha* from *da*, and *pha* from *pa*. It occurs only in personal names—*e.g.* *Satugho*, i.e. *Satrughna*, *Vaghavâ*, i.e. *Vyâghrapâd*. (b) *J* has the angular form, which occasionally—*e.g.* Girnâr Rock Edicts ix. 1, in the word *râjâ*—is used by Aśoka's scribes, and regularly in all later inscriptions, without the central horizontal bar. It therefore consists of a vertical stroke, with horizontal bars at the upper and lower ends. It occurs repeatedly in the words *majûsa* or *majusam*, in Sanskrit *mâñjûshâ*, a box or casket. (c) *M* is

¹ Described by Dr. J. Burgess in the *Academy* of last week (p. 497).

turned topsy-turvy, the circle standing above, and the two strokes, forming an open angle, below. It occurs in the last-mentioned word, and in well-known names like *Mâha*, i.e. *Mâgha*, *Samano*, i.e. *Sramana*. (d) *L* differs from the Maurya sign by the omission of the small horizontal bar to the left of the curve, and by the addition of a long slanting line, attached at an acute angle to the right of the vertical stroke. It thus somewhat resembles the Greek *Lambda* of the ancient Papyri. It occurs only in names—e.g. *Odalô*, *Kelo*, i.e. *Kaila*, *Pigalo*, i.e. *Pingala*. (e) The lingual sibilant *sh* is a development of the form in the Kâlsî version of Aśoka's Rock Edicts. The whole letter has been turned round, and the upper curve has been converted into a cross-bar. It thus looks exactly like the *kra* of the later inscriptions. It occurs in *tesham*, the Pali genitive of the pronoun *tad*, in the termination of the genitive singular of vowel-stems—e.g. in *Kurasha*, from *Kuro*, *Sivasha* from *Sivo*—in the word *shamugo*, i.e. *samudga*, a small box, and in names like *Samanadâsho*, i.e. *Sramanadâsa*.

3. There is further the lingual *l*, which does not occur in Aśoka's inscriptions. Its form resembles a Maurya *pa*, with a horizontal bar attached in the middle to the right of the vertical stroke; and it may be compared to the *sha* of the later inscriptions. It occurs in the word *phâl-igashamugam*, i.e. *sphâtikasamudga*, a casket made of crystal. The initial vowels, *i*, *î*, *û*, *e*, and the consonants *jh*, *dh*, and *ś* do not occur. *Bh* may occur in two doubtful names, where I have noticed a sign resembling the Maurya *bha*, but turned the other way.

4. The notation of the medial and final vowels presents two remarkable peculiarities: (a) The short *a* is invariably marked by the horizontal stroke, which denotes long *â* in the Maurya alphabet, except when an Anusvâra follows; and the position of this stroke is much the same as that of the *â* stroke in the Maurya alphabet, i.e., it is usually attached to the top of the consonant, but to the middle of the vertical *n* and of *j*. Hence the *ja* of the Bhattiprolu alphabet is exactly like the angular form of the letter in

Aśoka's Edicts. The omission of the stroke before an Anusvāra is probably due to the fact that the native lists of *mātrikās*, or radical letters, invariably note the Anusvāra by *am*. Hence the Anusvāra came to be considered as equivalent to this syllable. (b) The long *á* is marked by a horizontal stroke and a short vertical one hanging down from its end. In other respects, the notation of the medial and final vowels agrees mainly with that used in Aśoka's inscriptions. The *o* is, however, more commonly expressed by a bar, projecting to the right and to the left of the top of the consonants than by two separate strokes. The former notation occurs in Aśoka's inscriptions, sometimes, *e.g.* in *nigohāni* (Pillar Edict vii. 2. 2), but rarely. In the syllables *ni* and *ní*, the vowel is attached to the middle of the vertical stroke, *e.g.* in *Kánītho*.

To judge from the general appearance of the letters, the Bhattiprolu inscriptions are probably only a few decades later than Aśoka's Edicts. If one places the Edicts on one side, and the Nānāghât, Hathigumphá, and Bharhut Torana inscriptions, which all belong to the middle of the second century B.C., on the other side of the Bhattiprolu inscriptions, one can only come to the conclusion that the latter hold an intermediate position between the two sets, but are much more closely allied to the documents of the third century B.C. than to those of the second. On this evidence, which, as every epigraphist knows, *may* mislead under certain conditions, but which, though not absolutely safe, is for the present alone available, the Bhattiprolu inscriptions cannot be placed later than 200 B.C., and may even be a little older. If this estimate is correct, their characters prove (what, indeed, is also made probable by facts connected with Aśoka's Edicts) that during the third century B.C. several well-marked varieties of the Southern Maurya alphabet existed. For they contain a perfectly worked out system, which cannot have sprung up in a short time, but must have had a long history.

The importance of this result lies herein, that it removes one of the favourite arguments of those scholars who believe

the introduction of writing into India to have taken place during the rule of the Maurya dynasty, or shortly before its beginning. It has been stated repeatedly that one of the facts, proving the Aśoka Edicts to belong to the first attempts of the Hindus in the art of writing, is the absence of local varieties among the letters of versions incised at places between which lie distances of more than a thousand miles. This argument is based, as I have pointed out more than once, on imperfect observation; and it may be met also by the obvious objection, that Aśoka's Edicts were all issued from the same office, and that the importance naturally attributed to the writing of the royal clerks at Pātaliputra might be expected to influence the copyists in the provinces, and to induce them to imitate as closely as possible the shape of the letters used at headquarters. Nevertheless, if the Bhattiprolu inscriptions now show a system of writing which in some respects is radically different, and which may be reasonably supposed to be coeval with that in Aśoka's Edicts, they furnish a very great help to those who, like myself, believe the art of writing to have been practised in India for centuries before the accession of Chandragupta to the throne of Pātaliputra.

This is, so far as I can judge at present, the chief value of the new alphabet. I do not think that it teaches us much regarding the early history of the Southern Maurya characters, and the manner in which they were derived from their Semitic prototypes. There is only one form among the anomalous letters which, it seems to me, is in all probability more ancient than the corresponding Maurya character. This is the *m*, whose shape comes so close to the full form of the Kharoshtrî (*vulgo* Bactrian Pali) *ma*—which consists of a semi-circle with two short strokes, forming a right angle, attached to its lower left side—that I am inclined to assume the evidently allied Southern *ma* to have consisted originally of a semicircle or circle with two strokes below. Hence the Maurya form would be the later one, obtained by turning the older one topsy-turvy. The case of *gh*, as stated above, which has been formed by the extension of the

principle underlying the formation of *chha*, *dha* and *pha*, is more doubtful. For, the Southern Maurya *gha* looks, *prima facie*, like an independent character. Still, there is just a possibility that it may have been derived from an inverted *ga* with a round top, to which a curve was attached in order to denote the aspirations. And in favour of this view it may be urged that the Kharoshtrî *gha* has been derived by a similar contrivance from *ga*. Regarding the new *l*, I do not dare to offer any opinion.

But the remaining anomalies appear to be developments of the corresponding Maurya forms. The *j* with two horizontal bars is to all appearance the offspring of the angular form with three bars; and the central bar has only been removed in the syllables *ju*, *jû*, *je*, and so forth, in order to obtain a convenient means of marking the short *a* of *ja*. For, the Southern Maurya *jha*, which has been derived from an imperfectly formed or perhaps a very ancient *ja*, by the addition of a short upward stroke denoting the aspiration, shows that the central bar is an essential part of the letter. Again, the lingual sibilant *sh* is in all probability a cursive form, derived from the clumsy character which is used in the Kâlsî version of the Rock Edicts. Finally, the most curious feature of this alphabet, the marking of the short *a*, seems to me, because it complicates matters, less ancient than the omission of this vowel. The Semitic original, from which the Southern Maurya alphabet was derived, had in all probability no signs for medial and final vowels. Hence, if we find in India one system of notation with five or, including the diphthongs *e* and *o*, with seven vowel signs and another with eight, the natural conclusion is that the second is the later one. This is all that I can offer at present in explanation of the origin of the very remarkable anomalies of the Bhattiprolu alphabet. I must, however, call attention to one other curious point: the fact that, so far as I know, not one of these anomalies has left any trace in the later Indian alphabets, the signs of which are all derived from the Southern Maurya characters.

The language of the Bhattiprolu inscriptions is a Prakrit

dialect, closely allied to the literary Pali. As regards their contents, the two longest, Nos. 3 and 8, which are incised on the circular lids or topstones of two relic caskets (Mr. Rea's second and third caskets), consists of strings of names. No. 3 enumerates the members of a *gothi*, i.e., *goskthi*, probably a committee or Pañch, and No. 8 certain *negamâ*, i.e., *naigamâh*, members of a guild. The remaining inscriptions record the names of the donors of the caskets, and, it would seem, of the artists who made them. I transcribe the three most interesting ones as specimens :—

No. 1, incised on the lower stone of the first casket.

Kurapituno cha Kuramâ[t]u cha Kurasha cha Siva[sha] cha majûsam-panati phâligashamugam cha Budhasarirânami nikhetu [|] Banavaputasha Kurasha shapitukasha majûsa [|].

“By the father of Kura, by the mother of Kura, by Kura and by Siva (*Siva, has been defrayed the expense of*) the preparation of a casket and a box of crystal in order to deposit some relics of Budha (*Buddha*). By Kura the son of Banava, associated with his father (*has been given*) the casket.”

No. 6, incised on the lower stone of the second casket.

Shâga[th]inigamaputânami râjapâmukhâ[nam] Sha.i.sha puto Khubirako râjâ Shihagothiyâ pâ mukho tesham annam maj[û]-s[am] phâbigashamugo cha pâsânashamugo cha.

“By the sons of the Shâgathi *nigama* (*guild or town*) chief among whom is the king—king Khubiraka (*Kuberaka*) the son of Sha.i., is the chief of the Shîha (*Simha*) *gothi*—by these (*has been given*) another casket, a box of crystal and a box of stone.”

No. 9, incised on the lower stone of the third casket.

Arahadinânami gothiyâ majûsa cha sha[m]ugo cha [|] tina kama yena Kubirako râjâ am[k]i [|].

“By the *gothi* of the venerable Arahadina (*Arhaddatta, has been given*) a casket and a box. The work (*is*) by him,

by whom king Kubiraka (*Kuberaka*) caused the carving to be done."

In conclusion, I must offer to Mr. Rea my best congratulations on the important discovery which he has made, and express the hope that future operations, which he may undertake in the same district, will furnish further specimens of this interesting new variety of the Southern Maurya alphabet, which we owe to his exertions.

G. BÜHLER.