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# Rājamahimā

Editor

Dr. N.K. Sundareswaran



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## Festschrift Rajendran

### *Praśasti* and its Congeners:

### A Small Note on a Big Topic

Sheldon Pollock

Few Sanskrit scholars in contemporary India approach their subject with the intellectual acuity, literary sensitivity, and theoretical boldness of C. Rajendran. From his first—and pioneering—book, on the *Vyaktiviveka* of Mahima Bhaṭṭa, to his most recent volume, on Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, Rajendran has consistently expanded our arsenal of both materials and ideas for rethinking the history of Sanskrit culture—a project about which few scholars have been more passionate.

A major part of that culture, but long underappreciated by scholars as literary form — and not just as repository of historical data — is the *praśasti*. Poems in praise of ruling elites constitute some of our earliest extant Sanskrit and Prakrit poetry, and this fact is not, I think, simply an artifact of preservation: the public presentation of political will seems to have been one of the principal motivations behind the development of *laukika* expressive textuality in the post-Vedic era. Such textuality begins with the (*gadyakāvya*) Sanskrit inscription of Rudradāman of 150 CE (as has been known since Georg Bühler, who argued, wrongly in my view, that this constitutes a *terminus ante quem* for the existence of Sanskrit poetry, rather than a *terminus post quem*), but contemporaneous or perhaps even earlier are several major Prakrit *praśastis* from the Sātavāhana dynasty.<sup>1</sup> And in the

following centuries, at least from the Gupta period on, *praśasti* comes to constitute a major part of the Sanskrit culture industry (Prakrit *praśasti* ceases to be produced after the fourth century). Many hundreds if not thousands of inscriptional *praśastis* blanket the vast time-space of Sanskrit, from Afghanistan to Java for almost two millennia, ending in some places only with the coming of colonial rule and widespread print culture. Suggestive of the predominance of praise-poetry in Sanskrit literary culture is the fact that nearly one-fifth of the *Saduktikarṇāmrta* (1205 CE), is devoted to praise poems of kings arranged in 54 categories.<sup>2</sup> Something of a start was made to catalogue this material in Sanskrit - though of course, *praśasti* came to be written in many regional languages as well, starting with Tamil and Kannada, largely on the model of Sanskrit - by that indefatigable list-maker Ludwik Sternbach, but it is only a start; the domain is enormous, and many pertinent inscriptions have yet to be published or even collected.<sup>3</sup>

So common was the political *praśasti*, typically inscribed on rock-face, stone slab or pillar, or copper plate, that it is not only mentioned repeatedly by Sanskrit poets but it comes to function as the basis of countless conceits. Thus Rājaśekhara can refer offhandedly to the fame of the king of Ujjain that is “rehearsed by master poets in their poems / and etched by skilled craftsmen in *praśastis*,”<sup>4</sup> and Budhasvāmin can modulate this into a figure:

That girl Kusumamālikā...

with her praiseworthy complexion and shape

is as firmly fixed in my mind as a *praśasti* with its lovely letters and form

is fixed on a Vindhya mountain wall.<sup>5</sup>

With Padmagupta in the tenth century we find the trope being pushed yet further:

Even today, my lord, your victory *praśasti* is being written, or so it seems, by the women of Murala on the walls of their moon-white cheeks with the black ink of their khol-stained tears.<sup>6</sup>

The progression from *upamā* to the full identification of a *rūpaka* follows naturally. In one such trope, the inky letters of the *praśasti* on a golden leaf (or plate or cloth, *paṭṭa/patra* are frequent variants in verses containing this figure) are identified with the dark *romāvalī* on a girl's fair skin, as in the following anonymous *muktaka*:

Upon her flesh as golden as a golden *champak* flower  
the *romāvalī* of early youth spells beauty,  
like to a panegyric (*praśasti*) written on gold plate  
in honor of Love's conquest of the world.<sup>7</sup>

In other poems, a lover's red nail marks on his mistress's saffron-smeared breasts are the “copper-plate inscription that is a victory *praśasti* of the king, the god of love”; Damayanti's thighs, with Nala's scratches upon them, are like a pair of golden victory pillars with a *praśasti* in honor of Rati and Kāma incised upon them; the red lac from his mistress's foot upon a lover's head is described as a “*praśasti* of the grandeur of her beauty.” And, in a *vīrarasa* register, the adventurous playwright Murāri describes Rāvaṇa first as “a craftsman who used the pearls from Airāvaṇa's temples as letters in an alphabet to compose a *praśasti* at his oft-repeated conquest of the world”, and later—in a verse bringing the figure to its ultimate complexity—as one “whose victory pillar is the body of Indra himself, where the writing consists of the god's thousand eyes acting as letters for the composition of Rāvaṇa's *praśasti*.”<sup>8</sup>

The formal structure of the political panegyric will occupy us further in what follows. But *praśasti*, or *praśasti*-like,

compositions came to be written, from a relatively early date, for other worthy persons besides kings and princes. These include ascetics, for example, as in a little known but moving poem (undated, but probably twelfth century) in praise of one Vipulaśrīmitra found in the ruins of Nālandā. Unlike the political *praśasti* these are often completely untrope, and all the more moving for that:

In Somapura there lived an ascetic

named Friend-of-Compassion [Karuṇaśrīmitra].

He cultivated the Buddhist virtues

by showing compassion to all living things

and by bringing them happiness and welfare.

From Bengal came armies, they threw fire

in his dwelling, and it burst into flames.

Clutching the Buddha's lotus feet

the ascetic went to heaven.<sup>9</sup>

Poems were also written in praise of merchant guilds, as in the celebrated Mandasor inscription that tells of the migration of Lāṭa silk-weavers to the village of Daśapura (in today's Madhya Pradesh) in 436 CE.<sup>10</sup> Another related genre is the verse form known as the *kavipraśamsā* or *kavistuti* (or *cāṭu*), poems written in praise of other poets. These can be either *muktakas*, of the sort that are found in anthologies as early as the *kavistutivrajyā* (no. 50) of the *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* (c. 1150)—some of these are taken from dramas, in which the dramatist offered self-praise when describing the play in the introductory scene—or the linked verses that come to be placed at the beginning of literary works, starting with Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*.<sup>11</sup>

Aside from these quite common usages, we find a subgenre, also often termed *praśasti* (*praśastīśloka*, *praśastīgāthās*, etc.), consisting of autobiographical (or perhaps biographical) accounts

appended to literary or shastric works. These describe the lineage of the author and, often, the patron of the work to which it is appended. It is as yet unclear to me how common this convention may have been, or indeed how usual it was to apply the term *praśasti* in reference to it; I do not recall ever having seen the convention mentioned in Indological scholarship let alone subjected to detailed study. But some examples seem to be old: the *praśastis* at the end of Ratnākara's *Haravijaya*, for example, Padmagupta's *Navasāhasāṅkacarita*, or Svayambhu's *Paūmacariu*. Some sense of the form can be derived from a few verses from one example each of *kāvya* and *śāstra*. First the *praśastīśloka* of Māgha:

1. There once was a high official of King Śrī Varmala, whose one and only business was good deeds, who was ever free of covetousness and passion—like another god, indeed, was this Suprabhaddeva.
2. Without coaxing, merely to do what was most advantageous the king always took his advice— as a sensible man takes the advice of the Buddha— for it was timely, to the point, true, and beneficial for the future.
3. He had a son named Dattaka, who was noble, forbearing, gentle, and righteous. Seeing him people could finally comprehend what the words of Vyāsa in praise of Yudhiṣṭhira's virtues meant.
4. He got himself a second name—he who was without a second — a figurative name — he who was first of men/primary meanings: All the people, whom he filled with delight, gave him the blameless name, "Support-of-All."
5. It is his son, in a desperate hope to win the fame great poets have won, who composed this poem called *Śīsupālavadha*, pleasing if for nothing else

than singing Krishna's deeds, its every chapter ending beautifully marked with the name of Śrī.<sup>12</sup>

Next, the *praśasti* verses at the end of *Nyāyakandalī* of Śrīdhara Bhaṭṭa:

3. Once there was, in southern Rāḍhā [district in Bengal], a village of Brahmans who performed all the sacred rites.

It was called Bhūriśreṣṭi, and was home to guildsmen of many sorts [*bhūriśreṣṭi*].

4. From out of this village there arose a Brahman, like an earthly moon from out of the ocean by reason of the bliss he gave the world, and venerable as Bṛhaspati himself.

5. From him was born Baladeva, a vast ocean of gems—his perfect virtues; a fast tree where hung many a branch of knowledge, a man of pure thoughts, and whose strength was heightened by the ever-moving currents of the rivers of his fame.<sup>13</sup>

6. This illustrious, virtuous man had a wife, daughter of a pure lineage: Abbokā, who was praised for her virtue.

7. Of her was born Śrīdhara, tall tree to grant the needy their every wish, offering shade to the good, and rich fruit/rewards of merit, with many branches [of learning; of the Vedas], where twice-born [birds/Brahmans] can rest.

8. It was he who produced this *Nyāyakandalī* [Plantain of Logic] a lovely tree useful to bees/useful for understanding the six categories, and fit to be heard by those advanced in learning.

9. At the bidding of Pāṇḍudāsa, Śrīdhara Bhaṭṭa composed this *Nyāyakandalī* in Śaka year 913.<sup>14</sup>

While it is the particulars of the category *praśasti* itself that concern us here, it is necessary to comment on the historicity and authenticity of these biographical texts. In a way that of course holds for the political texts of the *praśasti* proper, those aspects of the texts are unaffected by the question of authorship: Someone, whether the author himself or a later interpolator, was attempting to make claims that could be held to be both historical and authentic, which makes them so in an important, if secondary and not primary, sense.<sup>15</sup>

One striking aspect of the *praśasti* industry is the apparent cleavage between *praśastikavis* and *kāvya-kavis*, so to put it. Poets who wrote court poems or plays only rarely wrote political encomiums, and those who wrote the latter rarely wrote the former. The *praśastis* ascribed to *kāvya-kavis* such as Bhavabhūti and Murāri that are found in the *praśastivrajyā* of the *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* (no. 46), although they exhibit one important genre trait I discuss below, cannot be traced to any extant inscription and indeed were almost certainly not in origin epigraphical. It is far more likely to believe that they were inscription-like *praśastis* embedded in now-lost literary works than that somehow the anthologist Vidyākara had access to the lithic or copper-plate texts upon which they were hypothetically engraved (there is no evidence that inscriptional *praśastis* ever circulated on palm-leaf or birch-bark, though chancelleries did indeed preserve manuscript copies of inscriptions, which could be updated over the course of a king's reign). At all events, among the many hundreds of *praśastis* and *kāvyas* we possess, I find only a handful of authors known to have written in both genres.<sup>16</sup>

This cleavage is further manifested in the almost complete indifference shown by Sanskrit literary theory toward the definition and nature of *praśasti*, which indeed makes my rather imprecise use of the term *praśasti* — covering praise-poems of

kings, ascetics, merchant guilds, and poets, and the autobiography (or biography) of poets and scholars — more easily pardoned than it might otherwise be. For indeed, the big “problem” in my title is the one we confront here, namely, that of genre definition.<sup>17</sup> While many of the works mentioned do self-identify as *praśasti*, above all the royal panegyrics,<sup>18</sup> and while these works in particular share certain textual properties that indicate a stable literary form, we have no serviceable collection of the former and no sustained analysis of the latter. And the Sanskrit *alaṅkāra* tradition, perhaps precisely because of the division of labor already mentioned, fails to provide us—and it is a curious failure, given the magnitude of the genre—virtually any guidance at all. Reviewing the data that are available shows just how exiguous the information is.

The earliest reference to *praśasti* in Sanskrit poetics already complicates the matter for us, since it introduces a type we have not even noticed yet. *Nāṭyaśāstra* 19.104 describes as the last of the fourteen *nirvahaṇasandhyaṅgas* — what in fact constitutes the final verse(s) of a drama — as follows: *ṛṣpadeśapraśāntiś ca praśastir abhidhīyate* (“Propitiation of a king or region is called *praśasti*”). This is Abhinavagupta’s reading of the line, and he adduces *Ratnāvalī* 4.22 presumably as an instance of the propitiation of region (*urvīm uddāmasasyāṃ janayatu visrjan vāsavo vṛṣṭim iṣṭām*, “May Indra bring the rains we need and fill the earth with grain”); Bhoja gives for *pāda* a *ṛṣpadevādīśastiś ca*, citing the final verse in *Veṅīsaṃhāra* for the latter (and the same *Ratnāvalī* v. for the former, which makes very good sense.) The *Daśarūpaka* more neutrally defines the *praśasti* as “a benediction” (*śubhaśaṃsanam*), and it is this formulation that is most commonly referenced by commentators on drama.<sup>19</sup>

After the *Nāṭyaśāstra* we find no reference, of any sort, to *praśasti* until Rudraṭa’s *Kāvyaṅkāra* (c. 850, probably Kashmir),

along with the commentary thereon of Namisādhu (1068):

One species of literature is merely descriptive: the panegyric (*praśasti*), the extended section (*kulaka*), and so on; another is drama and its sub-varieties....  
(*Kāvyaṅkāra* 16.36)

Here Namisādhu notes: “A *praśasti* is where a lord’s lineage is described so as to enhance his fame.” What is important to register in this rare reference to *praśasti* is, first, that for Rudraṭa and his commentator the panegyric does indeed constitute a part of “literature” (*kāvya*), second, that it is descriptive (unlike drama), and third and more important, that it is essentially genealogical. Finally, and confusingly at first, it is associated with the syntactically connected subsection of a *mahākāvya* known as the *kulaka*. The confusion vanishes once we actually look at an inscriptional *praśasti*, for exactly like the *kulaka* the *praśasti* by convention consists in part of multiple verses conjoined by relative clauses (“in whom ... ; from whom ... ; by whom ...” etc.).<sup>20</sup> One need look no further than the celebrated Aihole Inscription of Pulakeśin II, composed by Ravikīrti in 634-635, where vv. 15-32 form this sort of large syntactic structure, while otherwise providing a paradigmatic example of the rest of the *praśasti* form ignored by Rudraṭa (the inscription begins with an invocation, in this case to the Jina, and then to the Cālūkyā family as a whole, followed by a reference to the ancient dynast of the family, with the genealogy proper occupying vv. 4-14; the history of Pulakeśin is then narrated, his victory over neighboring kings, vv. 17-31, his settled rule, the text ending with an account of the temple of Jinendra—to which the *praśasti* is affixed—which the poet himself built with the patronage of the king).<sup>21</sup> Rudraṭa’s definition explains both the kind of materials selected by the *Subhāṣitaratnaḥ* for the *praśasti* of kings (sec. 46), which present themselves as

syntactically open, connected with materials that precede and follow, and the distinction the anthology implicitly draws between these materials and what it calls *cāṭus*, or poems of flattery of kings (sec. 41), with their syntactically closed form.

Following Rudraṭa the only other reference in *alaṅkāraśāstra* pertinent to our discussion is found in Viśvanātha's *Sāhityadarpaṇa* (c. 1250, probably Orissa), but here, too, we are introduced not to *praśasti* per se but to yet another of its sub-types:

A literary work consisting of prose and verse is called a *campū*. A eulogy of a king that consists of prose and verse is called a *viruda*, such as the "Jewel Garland of *virudas*." A *karambhaka* is composed in a multitude of languages, as, for example, my "Necklace of *praśastis*", which uses sixteen different languages. (6.337)

As is well known, *viruda* is a loan word from south Indian languages, *virutu* in Tamil, *birudu* in Kannada and Telugu, signifying in the first instance banner, insignia, honorary badge or mark, and then title. We have from an early date inscriptions providing strings of such titles, of course in prose; a dramatic example is a Kanchipuram temple inscription of the early eighth century that celebrates the Pallava king Narasiṃhavarman II by listing two hundred and fifty of his *birudas*.<sup>22</sup> While the term is occasionally found in Sanskrit literature more generally, it is relatively rare; and no other *ālaṅkārika* discusses the genre aside from Amṛtānandayogin (c. 1350, possibly Andhra). In his *Alaṅkārasaṃgraha* the *birudāvalī* is defined as a work in which the poet "describes the praiseworthy virtues cultivated by a hero"; it can be composed either in the canonical literary languages (*bhāṣābhīr vihitābhīḥ*) or in the vernaculars (*deśabhāsitaiḥ*).<sup>23</sup> For both Viśvanātha and Amṛtānandayogin, the *birudāvalī* form

was clearly part of the *literary* system.

Beyond these very sparse remarks, the record of *alaṅkāraśāstra* on *praśasti* and its cousins—*praśamsā*, *stuti*, *stava* (the *stotra* is of course a thing entirely apart, a poetic prayer directed to a deity),<sup>24</sup> *cāṭu*, *viruda*—is, so far as I can tell, a complete blank.

The lack of detailed analysis of *praśasti* or its various subspecies is especially striking given the presence in early *alaṅkāra* texts of material that seems certain to have been part of one or other of these genres. In Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaadarśa* (or *Kāvyaalakṣaṇa*, c. 700), for example, the illustrations for his definitions of figures of speech are pretty evenly distributed between love poetry and political—that is, *praśasti*—poetry. And for some figures, the sole examples are political; *aprustutapraśamsā*, praise for the irrelevant, and *vyājastuti*, praise in disguise, are cases in point—unsurprisingly, perhaps, since both are forms of praise poetry.<sup>25</sup> The following two poems illustrating the latter figure are typical:

Even as mere hermit Rāma conquered the world.

That you conquered the same while being *king* should  
be no cause for pride.

That you have taken his wealth<sup>26</sup> / Śrī from some old  
man / the primordial Male [Viṣṇu] and are enjoying  
her for yourself, my lord, is hardly becoming of you  
as an Ikṣvāku descendent.<sup>27</sup>

*Vyājastuti* becomes a, or the, dominant figure in later *praśasti*, as for example in the *praśastivrajyā* of the *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*, and perdures at least into the seventeenth century, as in Rudrakavi's *Khānakhānācarita* of 1609.<sup>28</sup>

The gap between literary theory and the practice of praise-poetry is to some degree closed in the early fourteenth century with the rise of a new genre of text: the handbook of rhetoric that actually functions itself as something like a *praśasti*. The originator of this genre is Vidyādhara, court poet of Narasiṃha of Utkala/Kalinga, who composed his great *Ekāvalī* sometime between 1282-1307. Vidyādhara makes his purpose clear at the very start of the work:

From among the three types of discourses of instruction [*Veda, iihāsapurāṇa, kāvya*] I Vidyādhara will provide an account of the discourse that has been likened to a mistress, while offering as examples poems of praise (*cāṭu*) in honour of King Narasiṃha.

There is no one aside from King Narasiṃha who is worthy of my literary craft. Who other than moon-crested Śiva is capable of bearing the waters of the Jāhnavī?<sup>29</sup>

Here is a good example of his style (Vidyādhara is discussing the nature of *lakṣaṇā*, or metonymy, where a word completely abandons its primary meaning in favour of a secondary meaning, here “lake,” which signifies “shore” of a lake):

The heroes who fall, face forward in battle,  
in the waters of your sword blade,  
come to dwell, great hero lord Nṛsiṃha,  
on the lake of the gods, so hard to attain.

The genre of *praśasti-alaṅkāraśāstra* that Vidyādhara created was to be imitated down the centuries in both Sanskrit and vernacular works, at least to the end of the seventeenth century (as in Bhuṣaṇa's Brajbhasha *Śivarājabhūṣan*).<sup>30</sup>

Daniel Ingalls once observed, with characteristic perceptiveness, that praise was part of the ritual of Indian kingship: Just as Indra in the Veda would gain strength for battle from the praises of the gods, so the praise of the earthly king was something of a magical practice: “To say a thing in ritual is to bring it to pass.” This, he argued further, and the typical anonymity, or better conventionality, of praise-poetry serve to lessen the distastefulness that modern readers are likely to experience in response to such works.<sup>31</sup> But in my view what is more important to grasp than what may or may not accord with modern taste is the radically different cultural logic, even ontology, of praise to which Ingalls calls attention, and, no doubt as a consequence of that difference, the fact that praise came to constitute one of the chief historical concerns of Sanskrit literary culture. We shall understand less of that culture the less we understand of *praśasti* and its congeners.

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### Notes

- I wish to express my gratitude to Allison Busch and Manan Ahmad, the principal organizers of “Poetry of Praise”, the Columbia-Penn Workshop on South Asian History and Literature (February, 2013), which reignited my old obsession with *praśasti*.
1. Pollock 2006: 67-68. Aside from the well-known Sātavāhana Prakrit inscriptions (Nānāghaṭ and so on) one should also note the important *praśasti* of Rāmgarh (Falk 1991).
  2. Ingalls 1965: 291.
  3. Sternbach 1980-1985. The backlog of *Epigraphia Indica* is disheartening, to cite only one egregious example, and the number of uncollected inscriptions even of major dynasties such as the western Cāḷūkyas is astonishing.
  4. *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* 1000: ... sukavibhiḥ kāvyeṣu saṃcāritam/ utkīrṇaṃ kuśalaiḥ praśastiṣu....
  5. *Bṛhatkathāślokaśaṃgraha* 9.94-95: kanyakā kusumālikā...// praśasyavarṇasamsthānā sā me buddhau sthīrā sthītā / praśastir iva vinyastā bhittau vindhyaśilābhṛtaḥ //
  6. *Navasāhasāñjakacarita* 10.16: adhunāpi deva muralāṅganājanais vijayapraśastir iva likhyate tava/ galadāñjanāśrupṛṣatā-valicchalāl lasadindupāṇḍuṣu kapolabhittiṣu //
  7. *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* 394 (trans. Ingalls):

- romāvalī kanakacampakadāmagauryā  
lakṣmīṃ tanoti navayauvanasambhṛtaśrīḥ /  
trailokyalabdhavijayasya manobhavasya  
sauvarṇapaṭṭalikhiteva jayapraśastiḥ // This is probably  
sampling Subandhu’s *Vāsavadattā* p. 7:  
tribhuvanavijayapraśastirōmāvalīkanakapatreṇa...  
mekhalādāmnā.
8. *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* 628:  
kāsmīrapaṅkakhacitastanapṛṣṭhatāmrapaṭṭāvākīrṇadayitār-  
dranakhakṣatālī/ eṇīdṛśaḥ kusumacāpanarendradattā  
jaitrapraśastir iva citralipir vibhāti; *Naiṣadhīyacarita* 18.98:  
tatpraśasti ratikāmayor jayastambhayugmam iva śātakumbhajam;  
*Saduktikarṇāmṛta* 593: saubhāgyagarimapraśasti; *Anargharāghava*  
6.78: bhinnairāvaṇagandhasindhuraśiraḥsaṃpātibhiḥ mautkaiḥ  
śāśvadviśvajayapraśastiracanāvarṇāvalīśilpine... namaḥ; 6.25:  
śāśvad dvārabhuvi praśastiracanāvarṇāyamānekṣaṇaśreṇī  
saṃbhṛtagotrābhīnmayajayastambhaḥ yathā rāvaṇaḥ.
  9. Majumdar 1931-1932: 97-101; see also Salomon 1998: 299.  
There may be some historical relationship between such  
commemorative *praśastis* and the ancient practice of *vīragals*,  
or hero stones (see for example, Settar and Sontheimer 1982).
  10. Sircar 1965: 299; Pollock 1995b: 105-107. We find important  
regional-language *praśastis* to merchant groups such as the  
Kannada prose inscription of the “Five Hundred Masters of  
the Ayyavoḷe” guild discussed in Pollock 2006: 485.
  11. Pollock 1995a; Pollock 2003: 76-80. The convention of  
beginning a literary work with poems in praise of earlier poets  
was adopted by vernacular poets in both south and north India,  
compare Pollock 2006: 340-341 (Old Kannada). On the *cāṭu*  
genre in Andhra, see Rao and Shulman 1997.
  12. *Śīśupālavadha* pp. 5.21-5.23. The presence of Vallabhadeva’s  
commentary (unless Vallabhadeva’s original commentary was  
expanded, as the *Kuṇḍinīśambhava* commentary among others

- shows was sometimes the case) suggests that the verses have considerable antiquity, though Mallinātha does not seem to comment on them.
13. The text here is unclear to me (I read — *prasyandanottoma*, but without confidence).
14. *Nyāyakandalī* pp. 787-788.
15. See my remarks on forgeries in Pollock 2011: 430-431.
16. These include Trivikrama, Cittapa, Umāpatidhara, and Someśvaradeva. See further in Pollock 2006: 134-136, and the earlier study by Diskalkar 1961.
17. The smallness of the note is the result of deadline pressures for a congratulatory volume.
18. An example ready to hand out of hundreds is Śrīpāla's Bilpaṅk Inscription in honor of Jayasiṃha Siddharāja, 1141 CE (analyzed in Pollock 2006: 144-148, 584-588; the penultimate v. of the inscription reads: *ekāhaniṣpannamahāprabandhaḥ śrīśiddharājapratipannabandhuḥ / śrīpālanāmā kavīcakravartī praśastim etām akarot praśastām //*)
19. NŚ vol. 3, p. 61 (*pādas* cd of the *Ratnāvalī* verse appear to be irretrievably corrupt); ŚP vol. 1, p. 764. *Daśarūpaka* 1.54: *praśastiḥ śubhaśaṃsanam*. Compare *Pañcikā* of Viṣṇubhaṭṭa on *Anargharāghava* with regard to the last two vv. of the play: *idaṃ ślokadvayaṃ śubhāśaṃsakatvāt praśastir nāmāṅgam; taduktam praśastiḥ śubhaśaṃsanam iti* (though neither v. conforms to the definition); so, too, *Vīrarāghava* at the end of the *Mahāvīracarita* (whose last v. can be construed as conforming rather to Abhinava's interpretation).
20. Compare Ingalls 1965: 409. Ingalls also notes that the dominant register of the *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa praśastivrajyā* is *gauḍī rīti*, something unmentioned in any traditional source but palpable in the extant materials.
21. Kielhorn 1900-1901. Even the Mandasor inscription of the Lāṭa silk weavers seems to adhere to this convention (see vv. 7-14).

22. See Mahalingam 1988: 176-181. These titles are all non-specific (e.g., *śrīpuṇyaślokaḥ śrīpārthavikramaḥ śrībhīmakāntaḥ śrībahudakṣiṇaḥ*, etc.); later *b(v)irudāvalīś* especially in the classical Hindi tradition (such as that from the *Māncarī* currently under study by Allison Busch) celebrate particular historical events.
23. *Alaṅkārasaṃgraha* 11.32-36. The *Mānasollāsa* refers to a song form called the *varṇa*, which is sung in Kannada and “fitted out with titles” (*karṇāṭabhāṣayā yas tu virudaiś ca samanvitaḥ/ gīyate varṇatālena sa tu varṇaḥ prakīrtitaḥ //* (Book 4 p. 32). Further particulars on the *birudāvalī* are cited by the editor ad *Alaṅkārasaṃgraha* 11.35 from the (I believe as yet unpublished) *Sāhityakalpadruma* (17th century?).
24. See Stainton 2013 for the best analysis of this genre.
25. This question is carefully studied in Bronner Forthcoming, who also provides those translations for the technical terms.
26. This probably stands for wife, not literally wealth.
27. *Kāvyaḍarśa* 2.342, 1343. Ratnaśrījñāna argues that the first as well as the second poem contains a *śleṣa* — presumably ascetic/ a poor wretch (*tāpasa*)— but I do not find this convincing.
28. Truschke 2012: 71-79.
29. *Ekāvalī* 1.7-8.
30. Busch 2011: 190-192.
31. Ingalls 1965: 291.

