

A Vedic Word-Concordance

(A monument of life-long and devoted effort of a 20-scholar team)

[14 PARTS]

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Pūrvā Meaning Prasasti

By

B. CH. CHHABRA, *Ootacamund.*

There are fossils in the field of linguistics, too, in the sense that a particular word, evidently once invested with a certain meaning, has, by the passage of time, lost it so completely that even lexicons provide no guidance.¹ To recognise its past life, one has to collect specimens and subject them to comparative study. Such obsolete terms or petrified expressions, so far as Sanskrit is concerned, abound specially in old inscriptions. *Pūrvā* happens to be one such expression, and we propose to discuss it in the present note.

The term *pūrvā* occurs in quite a number of ancient epigraphs in a context where, as will presently be demonstrated, it cannot mean anything else but *prasasti* 'eulogy' or 'laudatory poem', though nowhere has it been taken as such. Those who had to translate it or comment on it have taken it as an adjective, qualifying some such word as *prasasti*, which, they say, is understood and is to be supplied. The cumulative evidence of the instances cited below militates against such a hypothesis and tends to show that the word *pūrvā* is a substantive and itself means *prasasti* in the given context.

Before proceeding with the examples, we may observe that the inscriptions, so far discovered, containing the term under discussion, range in time from the 5th century to the 12th century A.C., and are scattered over a large area, comprising Nepāl, Uttar Pradesh, Rājasthān Union, Madhya Bhārat, Madhya Pradesh and Hyderābād. This mirrors the life-history, so to say, of the word *pūrvā* in its peculiar sense of *prasasti*. Its sway was thus fairly extensive and lasted for a very long time.

It may, in passing, be remarked that the term *pūrvā* is found used in early inscriptions in another context as well, namely in that of details of the

1. In the Centenary Volume (1845-1945) of the *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, New Series, Vol. I, Colombo, 1950, pp. 33-5, Dr. E. J. Thomas deals with some linguistic fossils of a different type. He refers to the English equivalents of certain Pāli terms, that emanated from pioneer Indologists and, though wrong and inadequate for rendering the original, have gained currency even among the present-day scholars. After pointing out, for instance, that the word *dhamma* (Skt. *dharma*) is often rendered by 'law' in English, whereas it really signifies 'teaching' or 'doctrine', he remarks: "The term 'law' is now a mere fossil, which originated before the real meaning of the Buddhist teaching or doctrine was known."

date of a particular epigraph.² This may be akin to the *pūrvā* discussed below, but it has been left out of consideration here, as it is not very material to the point at issue. We now proceed with the relevant examples.

I

Let us first examine the celebrated stone inscription of Mandasor (Madhya Bhārat) of the time of Kumāragupta I and Bandhuvarman. Its object is to record the erection of and, later, repairs to a temple of the Sun by a guild of silk-weavers. It comprises as many as fortyfour stanzas in various metres. It is a poetic work by one Vatsabhaṭṭi who introduces himself in the last hemistich thus :

पूर्वा चेयं प्रयत्नेन रचिता वत्सभट्टिना ।

meaning 'and this *pūrvā* has, with particular care, been composed by Vatsabhaṭṭi.' Dr. J. F. Fleet, who edited the inscription, however, supplies the word *praśastiḥ* after *pūrvā* in the hemistich cited above.³ This would imply that the poet, who had carefully composed the poem, omitted or could not fit in the word *praśastiḥ* where it was most needed. Fleet's emendation could have been accepted, had the present instance been a solitary one of its kind. We have, on the other hand, more instances, some of which are more explicit on the point. It is, therefore, better to take the term *pūrvā* in the present context as a synonym of *praśasti*.

II

The date of the record just adverted to has been calculated to be 473 A. C.⁴ Two more lithic records, not dated, but palaeographically of about the same period, Buddhistic in content, are found at Ajanṭā in Hyderābād. One of them occurs in Cave XXVI. It has been edited by Pandit Bhagwanlal Indrajī and Professor G. Bühler. It records the excavation of the cave temple (Cave XXVI) by a Buddhist monk, Buddhahadra by name, who himself is the composer of the *pūrvā*, as expressly stated in the first half of the last verse (Verse 19) :

पूर्वापि चेयं तेनैव द्वि(द)ग्धाचार्येण सौगीती ।

2. Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar has briefly discussed the connotation of the word *pūrvā* in the *New Indian Antiquary*, Vol. I (1938), pp. 142-3. His emphasis is, however, more on its use in connection with dates. He has recognised the fact that the word is a substantive and not an adjective. According to him, it denotes 'detailed order' or 'descriptive sequence,' vaguely applying to both *date* and *eulogy*.

3. Fleet's Gupta Inscriptions (*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, Calcutta, 1888), p. 84 and fn. 2. His translation, on p. 87, accordingly, runs as follows: "and this (*eulogy*) that precedes was, with particular care, composed by Vatsabhaṭṭi."

4. In fact, the record contains two dates, one for the construction of the temple and the other for its restoration. The first is the expired year 493 and the second is the expired year 529, both according to the Mālavā reckoning, corresponding respectively to 437-38 A.C. and 473-74 A.C. This latter is supposed to be the date of the inscription, too.

'and this *praśasti* of Sugata has likewise been composed by the self-same Ācārya (Buddhabhadra).'

This example teaches us further : *Saugatī* is an adjective derived from Sugata, and it qualifies *pūrvā* which is clearly a noun here.

Notwithstanding all this, the editors of the inscription have missed the true import and have treated the *pūrvā* in the text quoted above as an adjective. It may be pointed out that the latter half of the verse has suffered damage and consequently a few words there have been lost to us. Bühler surmised that one of these lost words must have been *praśasti*. His note runs as follows : "it must remain doubtful if *saugati* or *saugatim* is the correct reading. In the former case the word would have to be taken with *praśastih*, which doubtlessly stood in the last pāda of the mutilated *anuṣṭubh*; in the latter it belongs to *lokaci[ntām]*."⁵ He was more inclined to the former alternative, as is evident from his translation of the passage : "And this Buddhistic [*inscription or eulogy*], given above, has been likewise composed by the Ācārya..."⁶

Against this view, it may be observed that the addition of an adjunct like *pūrvā* to *praśasti*, as Bühler would have it in this instance, the whole phrase reading *īyaṃ pūrvā Saugatī praśastih* (in prose order), is neither necessary nor compatible with Sanskrit idiom. If, on the other hand, the word *pūrvā* is taken to mean *praśasti*, no such ungainliness arises. In that case we would simply have *īyaṃ saugatī pūrvā*.

The next illustration is a little more instructive inasmuch as the position of the expression *pūrvā* there does not admit it to be interpreted as 'given above' or 'that precedes.'

III

The other Ajaṅṭā inscription occurs in Cave XVI. It has likewise been edited by Bhagwanlal Indrajī and Bühler. Lately it has been re-edited by Professor V. V. Mirashi. It records the excavation of a cave-dwelling by Varāhadeva, who was a minister of the Vākāṭaka monarch Hariṣeṇa. Appropriately enough, a considerable part of the *praśasti* in the beginning is devoted to the description of the Vākāṭaka rulers of the Vatsagulma branch. In the very first verse, the composer of the inscription, after paying homage to the Lord Buddha, informs us of his object thus :

पूर्वां प्रवक्ष्ये क्षितिपानुपूर्वीम् ।

'I am going to utter a *pūrvā*, which contains (*also*) the lineage of kings.'

5. *Archaeological Survey of Western India*, Vol. IV (Report on the Buddhist Cave Temples and their Inscriptions, by Jas. Burgess, London, 1883). 134, fn. 6.

6. *Ibid.*, 136.

The poet of this *pūrvā* displays a marked predilection for alliteration, as pointed out by Mirashi.⁷ And he gives us a sample of it in the fourth *pāda* of the very first verse just quoted. It has, however, not been construed as we have done it. Naturally, one, who cannot even suspect that an ordinary word like *pūrvā* can be a noun synonymous with *praśasti*, would never construe the passage as we have done it. And, as we have remarked above, in the present context, the *pūrvā* cannot be rendered as 'preceding' or 'given above.' We thus find that Bhagwanlal Indrajī took it to mean 'early,' while Bühler, and, following him, Mirashi explained it by 'ancient.'⁸

The reason why these scholars could not even suspect that the word *pūrvā* here might denote something different is obvious. The compound *kṣitīpa-ānupūrvā*, which we have taken to be of the *bahuvrīhi* type, can equally be taken as one of the *tatpuruṣa* kind. In the latter case, it simply means 'lineage of kings.' If *bahuvrīhi*, it signifies 'that which contains a lineage of kings.' In other words, the noun and the adjective in one construction change positions in the other. They took *pūrvā* as an adjective and rendered the passage by "I shall describe the ancient succession of kings." We take it as a noun and translate the passage as "I am going to utter a *pūrvā*, which contains the lineage of kings."

Let us now see as to which of the two explanations is more to the point. Apparently there is nothing wrong with the first one. In fact, this was the only explanation possible as long as the possibility of the word *pūrvā* meaning *praśasti* was not thought of. Now, with that possibility gaining ground, the other explanation has an equal chance. Nay, it appears even more acceptable when we consider that the author of the inscription intended primarily to describe the minister's charity in a laudatory fashion and that the account of the ruling house came in only as a secondary something, however obligatory from the minister's point of view. This receives support from a cognate inscription at Ajañā itself. This inscription occurs in Cave XVII. It has been dealt with by the aforesaid three scholars. It does not mention *pūrvā* or *praśasti*, but has something else which amounts to that. As in the case of the inscription in Cave XVI, herein, too, the obeisance to the Lord Buddha is followed by the author's declaration as to his object, in the very opening verse, in these words:

विहार-दातुर्व्यवदात-कर्मणो गुणाभिधानोपनयः करिष्यते ॥⁹

7. *Hyderabad Archaeological Series*, No. 14—Vakāṭaka Inscription in Cave XVI at Ajañā, Hyderabad, 1941, p. 4.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 13. For Bühler's interpretation, see *ASWI*, IV, p. 126; and for Bhagwanlal Indrajī's rendering, see *ASWI*, Memoir No. 10 (*Inscriptions from the Cave Temples of Western India*, 1881), p. 71.

9. *ASWI*, Memoir No. 10, p. 73; *ASWI*, IV, p. 129; and *Hyd. Arch. Series*, No. 15, p. 10.

'(by me) will set forth a description of the excellences of the pious donor of the *vihāra*.'

It seems that the *pūrvām pravakshye* of the one record stands paraphrased by the *guṇa-abhidhāna-upanayaḥ kariṣyate* of the other. It is, after all, a *guṇa-abhidhāna-upanaya* 'the presenting of a laudatory account' that is meant by *praśasti* and, we may now confidently say, also by *pūrvā*. This claim of the latter is further substantiated by the illustrations that follow.

IV

The next instance, in chronological order, is afforded by a stone inscription hailing from a village near Haṛāhā far in the north, in the Bārā Bankī District of Uttar Pradesh. The inscribed slab is now housed in the State Museum at Lucknow. It has been edited by Pandit (later Dr.) Hirananda Shastri. It records the restoration and renovation of a Śiva temple by a Maukhari prince in *Samvat* 611 (554 A. C.). The poem, consisting of twenty-three verses, is of considerable merit. Its author is one Raviśānti who introduces himself in the concluding stanza thus :

कुमारशान्तेः पुत्रेण गर्गराकटवासिना ।
नृपानुरागात् पूर्व्वेयम् अकारि रविशान्तिना ॥

The translation of the learned editor, who, in common with other scholars, was unaware of the exact connotation of the word *pūrvā* in the original, runs as follows : "Raviśānti, the son of Kumāraśānti and resident of Garggarākaṭa, composed the preceding [*praśasti*] out of regard for the king."¹⁰ While presenting the the text, he corrected the original *pūrvā* into *pūrvvā*,¹¹ Now we know that neither this correction is necessary nor the word *praśasti* need be introduced in the translation, the *pūrvā* itself standing for that.

V

There is yet another inscription of the sixth century A. C. that affords us an instance of the use of the term *pūrvā* in the sense of *praśasti*. It is engraved on a rock, overlooking the Betwā, ancient Vetravati, near Deogarh in the Jhānsī District of Uttar Pradesh. It has been edited by Rai Bahadur Daya Ram Sahnī. It records the setting up of images of the *Sapta Mātṛkās*, the seven divine mothers, cut in a niche in the rock near the inscription, by one Svāmibhaṭa. The inscription is a dainty poem, significantly consisting of only seven verses. Its author is one Jāta, as stated in the first half of the concluding verse :

जातेनाकारि पूर्व्वेयं यत्तदत्ताङ्गजन्मना ।

¹⁰. *Epigraphia Indica*, XIV, p. 120.

¹¹. *Ibid.*, p. 118, fn. 1.

The learned editor of the inscription, not knowing the exact sense of *pūrvā* here, loosely renders it by 'foremost,' and translates the hemistich as follows: "This foremost (*praśasti*) was composed by Jāta, the son of Yakṣadatta."¹² In the light of the foregoing discussion, we may now translate the original by 'this eulogy was composed by Jāta, son of Yakṣadatta.'

VI

Of the seventh century A. C., we have three inscriptions, illustrating the use of *pūrvā*. All the three of them come from Rājasthān and are dated. The earliest of them is dated in *Samvat* 682 (625 A. C.). The inscribed stone was found at Vasantagaḍh in Sirohi State. It refers itself to the reign of a king named Varmalāta and records the erection of a temple of Durgā, under the name of Kṣemāryā. The inscription consists of twelve verses, followed by names of a number of persons who formed a *goṣṭhī* to which the construction is due. The last verse briefly mentions the names of the composer and the engraver of the inscription:

दिवाकरसुतस्येयं धूर्तराशे[र] द्विजन्मनः।¹³

पूर्वातिमृदुभिर्द्वयैः प्रोत्कीर्णा नागमुण्डिना ॥

'This *pūrvā* of (*i.e.* composed by) the Brāhmaṇa Divākara's son Dhūrtarāṣi has been engraved, in extremely delicate letters, by Nāgamuṇḍin.'

The inscription has been edited by Bhandarkar. He has not translated it; nor has he expressed any opinion as to the significance of the *pūrvā* occurring in the verse quoted above, though in his introductory remarks he has referred to the inscription as *praśasti*.¹⁴

VII

A more interesting illustration is afforded by an equally short inscription, dated in *Samvat* 718 (661 A. C.). The stone slab on which it is engraved was found somewhere in Mewāḍ¹⁵ and is now kept in the Victoria Hall at Udaipur. It has been edited by Professor F. Kielhorn. It records the erection of a Viṣṇu temple by a lady called Yaśomatī, wife of Varāhasimha, a military commander under the Guhila king Aparājita. The charming poem of twelve verses is modestly called, by its author, *kāvya-vidāmbanū* 'mockery of a poem'

12. *Epigraphia Indica*, XVIII, 127.

13. *Ibid.*, IX, p. 192.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

15. According to Bhandarkar's *List of Inscriptions of Northern India*, No. 13, it came from Nāgdā in Udaipur State.

or 'an imitation poetry.'¹⁶ The same is referred to as *pūrvā* in the last verse, wherein the poet records the fact that it was engraved, in shapely and exquisite letters, by one Yas'obhaṭa :

बालेनाजितपौत्रेण स्फुटा वत्सस्य सूनुना ।

यशोभटेन पूर्व्यम् उत्कीर्णा विकटाक्षरा ॥

'This eulogy has been engraved, in clear and acute script, by the young lad Yas'obhaṭa, son of Vatsa, (and) grandson of Ajita.'

The veteran editor in this case has likewise refrained from translating the inscription and has thus not expressed his opinion as to the meaning of *pūrvā* in the verse cited above. He has, however, given us sufficient indication of the fact that he did feel something uncanny about it, by drawing attention to the three instances, then known to him, of the similar use of the term *pūrvā*.¹⁷ He was evidently not satisfied with such interpretations of it as 'that precedes.' It need hardly be added that his suspicion stands vindicated now ; and the Gordian knot cut !

VIII

One of the three instances quoted by Kielhorn refers us to the Jhālāpāṭan (Jhālāwār State in Rājasthān) inscription of the time of king Durgagaṇa. dated in *Samvat* 746 (689 A. C.). It has been edited by Bühler. It records the construction of a Śiva temple by one Voppaka. For our purpose, this inscription is the most illuminative ; for, it is called both *praśasti* and *pūrvā* in its concluding verses. It is, however, a pity that Bühler has slightly misread the very crucial word *pūrvā* and has thereby misinterpreted the expression wherein it occurs. The *praśasti* consists of thirteen verses. Verse 12 gives information about its composer and verse 13 informs us of its engraver. In the former, the composition is called *praśasti*, and in the latter, it is referred to as *pūrvā*. The two verses run as follows :

रम्यैर् जनप्रतीतैर् अर्थानुगतैर् अकर्कशैश् शब्दैः [:]¹⁸

रचितेयम् अनभिमानात् प्रशस्तिर् अपि भट्टशर्वागुत्सेन ॥

16. This sort of minimization of the merits of one's own composition is quite common among Sanskrit poets. Compare the wistful utterance of a certain poet :

वयमपि कवयः कवयः कवयोपि च कालिदासाद्याः ।

दृषदस्तु सन्ति दृषदश्चिन्तामगयोपि हा दृषदः ॥

17. *Ep. Ind.*, IV, p. 32, fn. 4. The three instances pointed out by Kielhorn correspond to our Numbers I, VIII and XII.

18. The original does not have *visarga* and the single *daṇḍa*, marking the half of the *Gīti*. In that case the omission of *visarga* is quite grammatical, followed as it is by a *ra*.

अच्युतस्य सु[तिनेयं]¹⁹ सु(सु)त्रधारेण(ण)²⁰ धीमता ।
उत्कीर्णा वामणे²⁰(ने)नेह पूर्वा विज्ञानशालिना ॥

The reading of the last quarter is clearly as it is given above, but Bühler read it as *pūrvā-vijñāna-śālinā*, which makes a world of difference. He takes the whole of it as an attribute of Vāmana. He not only translates it by 'who was able to understand the original,' but also emphasises the point by adding an explanatory note, saying: "*pūrvavijñānaśālinā*, lit. 'who is able to completely understand the preceding,' apparently indicates that the mason was a person versed in Sanskrit."²¹ It needs no showing how wide of the mark Bühler has been in this exposition.

The two verses may be translated as follows :

"And this *praśasti* has been composed modestly, in pleasant, popular, significant and melodious words, by Bhaṭṭa Śarvagupta."

"This *pūrvā* has been engraved here (on the stone) by Acyuta's son Vāmana, an intelligent (*and*) experienced mason".

IX

Another instance that hits the nail on the head is afforded by one of the early inscriptions in the neighbourhood of Kāṣmāṇḍu in Nepāl, jointly edited by Bhagwanlal Indraji and Bühler. The particular inscription that employs the term under discussion is dated in the year 153 of the Harṣa era, corresponding to 758 A. C. It records the dedication of silver lotuses by the members of the royal household to the Lord Śiva. It is a long and beautiful poem, consisting of thirtyfour verses, of which, we are informed, five are composed by the king himself and the rest by one Buddhakīrti.

श्लोकान् पञ्च विहाय साधु रचितान् प्राज्ञेन राज्ञा स्वयं ।
स्नेहाद् भूभुजि बुद्धकीर्तिर् अकरोत् पूर्वाम् अपूर्वाम् इमाम् ॥²²

Again, the learned editors of the inscription have taken the word *pūrvā* here as an adjective and considered the noun *praśasti* to be understood; for, their translation runs as follows: "With the exception of five verses, which the clever prince himself composed right well, Buddhakīrti, out of affection for the king, wrote the above original (eulogy)."²³ To us, the last three words of the verse mean 'this unique eulogy.'

19. This portion is not clear on the published facsimile, facing page 180, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V.

20. This orthographical mistake is noteworthy.

21. *Ind. Ant.*, V, 182 and fn.

22. *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, 180.

23. *Ibid.*, 182.

X

Another clear instance is provided by a damaged stone inscription from Sakrāi in Jaipur State of Rājasthān. It remains unpublished to this day, but has been noticed by Bhandarkar.²⁴ It is supposed to be dated in *Samvat* 1055 (998 A. C.). We happened to examine an estampage of it. In its last verse, its composer gives his name in these words :

पूर्वा विरचिता ह्येषा वराहेणाल्पमेधसा ।

'This *pūrvā* has been composed by Varāha of small wisdom.'

XI

Yet another telling instance is found in a Kalachuri record of about the eleventh century A. C. This one comes from Bilhāri in the Jabalpur District of Madhya Pradesh. It is a *pras'asti* of composite character, two separate compositions (one by Śrīnivāsa and the other by Sajjana), having been welded into one by a Śaiva Ācārya, Aghoraśiva by name, the whole running into more than eightysix verses. It has been edited by Kielhorn. It records the erection of a Śiva temple by the queen Nohalā, wife of the Chedi ruler Keyūravarṣa, and its subsequent dedication, at the hands of their son Lakṣmaṇarāja, to the Śaiva ascetics of the Mādhumateya sect.

The welding is indicated by a prose passage—*teneyam prasastih saṅgatim ānitā*—after verse 83. And verse 86 informs us that the *pras'asti* was written out (on the stone) by Nāi and was engraved by Nonna :

करणिकधीरसुतेन तु नाई-नाम्ना प्रशस्तिर् आलिखिता ।

सत्सूत्रधारसङ्गमतनूजनेन चोत्कीर्णा ॥

Preceding this, we have another *Āryā*, thrown in as verse 85, evidently composed by one Kāyastha Śiruka, wherein the *pras'asti* is referred to as *pūrvā*. The second hemistich of this verse reads :

आस्ताम् इयम् आकल्पं कृतिश् च कीर्तिश् च पूर्वा च ॥

'May this composition — this fame, this eulogy — endure as long as the creation.'

The way the author of this eloquent couplet has laid special emphasis on the contents and the merits of the poetic production by giving it three different significant appellations is really remarkable.

The three conjunctive *cakāras*, employed right in the classic style, clearly indicate that three distinct objects, though referring to one and the same thing, are intended. Yet, the learned editor of the inscription, missing the sense of *pūrvā* here, took only two: *kṛti* for 'composition' and *pūrvā kīrti* for 'the preceding eulogy.' He has left the third *cakāra* unaccounted for. It is certainly not a mere expletive in the present instance.²⁵

24. No. 97 of D. R. Bhandarkar's *List of Inscriptions of Northern India*. See also the *Progress Report, Archaeological Survey, Western Circle*, 1909-10, 57.

25. *Ep. Ind.*, I, 270. If the sense taken by Kielhorn were really intended, the author could very well have said *kṛti'sca pūrvā prasastis'ca*, to avoid ambiguity.

XII

To conclude, let us notice one more instance. The inscription is found in the Sāsabahū temple at Gwalior in Mādhyā Bhārat. It is partly damaged. It is dated in *Saivvat* 1161 (1104 A. C.). It has been edited by Dr. E. Hultzsch. It records the construction of a Siva temple, though its author appears to be a Jaina ascetic of vast erudition, as he calls himself *Nirgranthanātha*. The *purvā* consists of twentyfour verses. In verse 23, we have :

.....निर्ग्रन्थनाथः ।
 यः षड्भाषाविततकविताकेतु हर्म्यं कलानां
 पूर्वाम् एताम् अकृत स मुनिः श्रीयशोदेवनामा ॥

'The illustrious monk, Yas'odeva by name, who is the leader of the Nirgranthās, (and) who is a veritable abode of fine arts, over which are (fluttering) the flags of his poetry in six (different) languages, composed this *purvā*.'

Hultzsch has not translated the inscription, but in a note he says : "Probably the word *prasastim* has to be supplied with *purvām etām*."²⁶ By now, however, we know that such a supplement is not called for.

Conclusion

The cumulative evidence of the dozen instances, cited above, illustrating the peculiar use of the word *purvā* in inscriptions from various places and various periods drives one to the conclusion that it did once signify 'eulogy' and was synonymous with *prasasti*.

It has not been possible for us to extend our search to the field of literature on this particular issue, though there are indications²⁷

26. *Ind. Ant.* XV, 202, footnote 10.

27. For example, see *purvāḥ prasastīḥ* given as a variant reading under *sāsānāni* in Bēṇā's *Kādambārī* (Nirṇāyasāgara Press, 7th ed., 1932, p. 225, fn. 5), in the description of Candrāpīḍa's *dig-vijaya*. It appears that certain expressions in this description were not properly understood. We have already shown (*Siddha-Bharatī*, Pt. I, p. 39) that *kurvaṇ kīrtanāni* is not to be understood as *hari-guṇa-gānāni kurvaṇ* 'singing praises of Hari' as the scholiasts would have it, but means 'building temples'. Now it is significant that in the *dig-vijaya* description, this *kurvaṇ kīrtanāni* should be followed by *lekḥayaṇ sāsānāni* 'causing charters to be written.' Of course, the erection of temples was usually followed by the donation of lands for which copper charters were given to the donees ; but one would expect something else also, such as setting up stone inscriptions, *prasastis* giving poetic descriptions of the buildings as well as eulogising the pious builder. It may, therefore, be suspected that Bāṇa Bhaṭṭa originally did write something like *ullekhayan purvāḥ* after *kurvaṇ kīrtanāni*, that some copyist later on added *prasastīḥ* as a gloss to *purvāḥ* to explain this less familiar term and that later copyists or collators eliminated the whole clause as something superfluous, thinking that writing or engraving of some sort of documents after all was expressed by the *lekḥayaṇ sāsānāni*.

that some corroborative material may be found there as well.

Postscript

After this article had been completed, we came across another instance of the use of *pūrvā* in the sense of *prasasti*, which is unique inasmuch as it occurs in a prose passage, whereas all the examples cited above occur in verses. It is found at the end of a partly damaged inscription, dated *Sāmvat* 547 (490 A. C.), which has not yet been published. The passage runs as follows : लिखिता चैयं पूर्व्वा अपराजितेन राजपुत्रगोभटपादानुद्धयातेन 'and this eulogy has been written by Aparājita who meditated on the feet of (or who enjoyed the favour of) Rājaputra Gobhaṭa'. It may be observed that the writer has purposely avoided the *sandhi* between *pūrvā* and *Aparājitena*, so that we may have no ambiguity whatsoever about his name being Aparājita. The composition of the inscription proper is in verse.

