

Chapter - 1

INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN EPIGRAPHY

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Chapter - 1

INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN EPIGRAPHY

Epigraphy is a *sine qua non* for constructing the political and cultural history of ancient India. Generally, any historical information is acknowledged as true blue when it is substantiated by an epigraphical record. So too in the study of the history of literature and language, epigraphy has a vital role to play. To go over the inscriptional data with respect to any discipline a rudimentary knowledge of epigraphy is prerequisite. So, this chapter concerns itself with some of the fundamental features of epigraphy.

What is an inscription ?

The word epigraphy is derived from two Greek words viz., '*epi*' which means 'on or upon' and '*graphie*' meaning 'to write'. Basing on this, Epigraphy may be defined as any descriptive and analytical study of the epigraphs. The word 'Inscription' is also most commonly used as a synonymous with epigraph. This word has been derived from a Latin word *Inscribere* which also gives the meaning 'to write upon.' According to Dr. D. C. Sircar,

“Inscription literally means only writing engraved on some object.”

The Encyclopedia Britannica states that “Inscriptions are the documents, incised on some hard permanent material in the form of letters or other conventional signs, for the purpose of conveying some information or preserving a record. They are, therefore, to be distinguished on the one hand from manuscripts or documents written on papyrus, parchment, paper or other more or less smoother surfaces by means of a brush reed or pen and some coloured flint.” *J. F. Fleet* has tried to present a summed up description of inscription, like this :

“The inscription are notifications, very frequently of an official character and generally more or less of a public nature, which recite facts, simple or complex, with or without dates and were intended to be lasting records of the matters to which they refer.”

In India, rocks as well as lithic, metallic, earthen or wooden pillars, tablets, plates and pots as also bricks, sheets, ivory plaques and other objects were generally used for incising inscriptions. Often writing in relief such as the legends on coins and seals, which are usually produced out of moulds or dies and also records pointed on cave walls or written in ink on wooden tablets are also regarded as inscriptions, although these writings are not actually

engraved. Inscriptions may greatly vary in point of length sometimes on epigraphs contain only a mark or one single word or expression indicating the name of an individual.

After considering all these definitions and descriptions above, two important characteristics of inscriptions become palpable;

1. Inscriptions are engraved or written on hard, unyielding and long lasting materials but not on delicate paper like materials.
2. They are pretty nearly of official trait and meant for public observation.

Nature, Scope and Importance of Epigraphy:

Nature:

An epigraphical study is primarily a study related with the letters and words. The nature of the subject is more literary and speaks about the rights and conditions of the days when it was written.

Epigraphy embraces three distinctive stages of study. The **first stage** is taking the copy of the inscription and this is generally called as taking estampages. The **second stage** is identifying the letters in the inscription one by one meticulously and reading the literary text. This stage is technically called as deciphering. The **third stage** is applying the literary data for writing of history and this

stage is called as analysis and interpretation. After deciphering an inscription applying it to write the history in various respects is where the rubber meets road.

Scope:

In India, there is a lot of scope for epigraphy or study of inscriptions strewn over the whole of the country and extended over the centuries. We know that the earliest writing in India belongs to the greatest civilization that existed in this part of the continent, the Sindhu valley civilization. But yet, it has not been successfully deciphered; and final conclusions about this are yet to be arrived at. Leaving aside this, we begin to get a completely developed and decipherable script (i.e. Braṁmi) from the period of the great Mouryan emperor *Devanampriya Priyadarsi* alias *As'oka*, who can be credited with the forerunnership of a new tradition of writing inscriptions.

The scope of epigraphical study is limited to the so called ancient and medieval period in history. It starts from the third century B.C. When the inscriptions first appeared in India and chronologically at the most it can be extended up to the end of seventeenth century A.D. In the context of India, the fortunes in history have changed after the European intervention. With the advanced discoveries in the field of printing the generation said adieu to epigraphs. Hence the Pre-European period can be taken for epigraphical studies.

Importance:

We can never forget the indispensable help rendered by inscriptions to know about some historical personages and events when there were no other sources of information, about them, Apart from being vital political documents, inscriptions are endowed with great cultural significance. Perhaps, there is no aspect of life, which has not touched upon in inscriptions.

The edicts of great sovereign king Asoka Maurya, have played a very important role in the construction of Indian history. The gist of Asoka's edicts¹ is what he calls *dharma* which refers to a code of morals which he believed to be the teachings of Buddha, However, his records do not refer to the Buddhist doctrines found in Buddhist religions literature, i.e., the canonical form of Buddhism. Asoka's teachings relate to practical code of morals but not to metaphysical or theological in nature. In his edicts, he asseverates the virtuous qualities like compassion, liberality, truthfulness, politeness, self control, purity in thoughts, speech and deeds, respect for parents and elders, moderation regarding accumulation and expenditure of wealth, absence of vanity, violence, ruthlessness and anger, abstention from slaughter or injury to the living beings only can marshal us towards the Heaven, These noble values of humanity which are pretty acceptable to all in

everywhere in all times, constructed the Asòka's concept of Dharma. Perhaps he was the only king in history who ever strived his subjects to indoctrinate with all such golden values. Though Asòka was influenced by the teachings of Buddha, he says in his edicts that other faiths should never be disparaged. He was impartial in his consideration of all religious faiths. He did many benevolent activities for the benefit of the people. He practiced what he preached and so he claims that his propagation of 'dharma' led to the increase of virtuous qualities among the people. This Asòka has remained as one of the most remarkable personalities in the history of the world, as revealed by the inscriptions left by him. He was a great conqueror and builder of empire, statesman and administrator, religious and social reformer and above all a philosopher and saint, endeavouring for peace and happiness, not only of the subjects of his own empire but also those outside. Thus the edicts of Asòka give us a detailed picture about the personality of this great exemplary king.

If the *Prayaga Prasasti*² of Samudragupta would have not been available then we would not have known the political conditions prevailing at that time. This inscription gives us an exhaustive account of political career of Samudragupta and the kingdoms conquered by him. Inscriptions also give us glimpses, regarding the social

conditions of the ages to which they belong. In an inscription³ of the Vijayanagara king Bukka, we are told that the emperor settled the disputes between a *Vaiṣṇava Jeer* and a Jain teacher by making them agree to be friends and raise no points of dispute.

Inscriptions also throw light on other social customs. For example, the Brahmadeyam inscription refers to the sati⁴ committed by the queen of Rajendra Cola I. The Uttarameruru inscription⁵ of a Cola king Parantaka I gives a conspicuous picture of the structure and systems of a local governing body at Caturvedimangalam. Sohaura Bronze plaque inscription speaks of the measures taken by the king to deal with occasions of distress among the people.

Many inscriptions have some references to education and learning during their respective times. For instance, Salotgi inscription of Rashtrakuta Krishna III (10th century A.D.) records the construction of a *Sala* (School) by his minister Narayana. The record states that the *Sala* attracted students from all over India to pursue their studies. A similar reference to a *Pathas'ala* is available in an inscription⁶ at Nagai in Gulbarga district belonging to the Kalyana Chalukya dynasty. It gives a detailed description of the school.

There are some inscriptions which inform the prevalence of the tradition of dance and music. Perhaps, the earliest reference to dance is found in an inscription from Jogimara cave (Second century B.C.) It mentions a Sutanuka a temple dancer and her lover Devadatta, a sculptor from Varanasi. Kudimiya malai inscription from Tamilnadu is one of the earliest inscriptions referring to music. In Karnataka an inscription from Galaganatha in Halebidu district belonging to the reign of Chalukya Vikramaditya (11th century A.D.) refers to a person named Mokha Barnayya who has been described as '*Battisaragabahukalabrahma*', meaning 'one who has achieved mastery in reciting 32 ragas.' An inscription⁷ from Hulikunta in Ballari district belonging to the period of Vijayanagara king Acyutaraya refers to the celebrated maestro Ramamatya who wrote the *Svaramelakalanidhi* and who was a great musicologist as well as a virtuoso.'

'uÉÉaaÉáÉMüÉUuÉrÉÉÁxÉÉæUÉqÉrÉÉqÉÉirÉvÉáZÉUÈ'

Ancient Indians developed cultural and trade contacts with south-east Asian countries like Java, Sumatra, Cambodia and Borneo. A large number of inscriptions found in these places which are very much akin to Indian epigraphs in respect of their language and script reflect the expansion of Indian culture in these countries.

Inscriptions are also useful in understanding the economic life of the past. Agriculture was the primary occupation as disclosed by many records. Our forefathers bestowed great care and alternation to the system of irrigation. The Junagadh inscription of Saka Rudradaman⁸ states that the *Sudars'ana* lake was constructed during the reign of Candragupta Maurya and its conduits were set up during the time of Asoka. Later on it was repaired, first during the reign of Rudradaman and subsequently in the Gupta period, during the reign of Candragupta II as known from their inscriptions. On the other hand, it refutes the conviction of certain scholars that ancient Indians did not possess historical sense.

Inscriptions of post-Mouryan period contain terms like *Sresthi*, *Sarthavaha* and *Vanik* all denoting traders. Inscriptions also throw light on the weights and measures used in the ancient and medieval periods.

There are many inscriptions which have stood as a testimony for the religious conditions prevailed through the ages. For, instance the Besanagara Garuda Pillar inscription⁹ of Heliodoras (113 B.C.) attests to the strong Vaishnavite movement i.e. the Bhagavata cult in north India. The inscription states that Heliodoras who was an Indo-Greek ambassador in the court of Bhagabhadra, installed a Garuda pillar in front of the Vasudeva temple. Such an

admiration towards a Hindu deity shown by a foreigner is in fact worthy of approbation and indicates to the tolerance and equanimity among the different religious sects. The Mandasor inscription records the repairs carried out in the year 473-74 A.D. by the guide of silk-weavers to the temple of sun God (Dipta-rasmi).

Inscriptions are also endowed with high literary value. As early as the 1st century A.D. elements of Sanskrit poetry start appearing in the North Indian inscriptions. Thus we come across some ornate meters in the Mola well inscription and later Junagadh inscription¹⁰ of Rudraman dated 150 A.D. the development of the ornate style of Sanskrit prose. The Prayaga pillar inscription¹¹ which has the eulogy of Samudragupta composed by Harisena, clearly proves that the Sanskrit kavya style was fully developed by the middle of the 4th century A. D. And in South India this credit goes to the Talagunda inscription¹² of Kadamba Kakusthavarma written by his court poet Kubja and the Aihole Pras'asti¹³ of Pulakesi II composed by Ravikirti.

Besides, inscriptions are very helpful for studying the development of Indian scripts and languages. Such studies can be undertaken on more detailed basis of different regions and various languages. And, particularly since early inscriptions for Dravidian languages like Tamil, Telugu and Kannada are available, the history of these

languages could be traced for centuries and a systematic account given. And actually some work has been done in this direction by producing historical grammars of these languages based on a study of inscriptions.

Thus for understanding the history and culture of the Indian people from the time of Mauryan emperor Asoka (3rd Century B.C.) to the late medieval period we are almost entirely dependent upon the study of the inscriptions in view of the dearth and of contemporary historical works except a few literary works like *Harsacarita* of Banabhatta, *Rajatarangini* of Kalhanabhatta, and *Vikramaditya Charita* of Bilhanabhatta which are not very reliable from the historians point of view and which require corroboration. It is only from a patient and painstaking study of a large number of connected inscriptions that a reconstruction of not only the political and dynastic history but also of the social, religious, administrative, economic, educational and geographic conditions of a particular period or reign or region could be undertaken, And thanks to the tireless efforts of a large number of foreign and Indian scholars during the last two hundred years, foundations of political and dynastic history both for North India as well as South India have been laid, though there are many gaps yet to be filled therein by future discoveries. These scholars have also briefly touched on other topics mentioned above though, abundant of epigraphical

materials now available, require a detailed study of these topics for different periods and regions.

Types and Format of Inscriptions:-

Broadly speaking, there are two types of inscriptions, they are-

- i. Royal or official
- ii. Private or individual

On the basis of their contents, the inscriptions may be classified as below;

1 Administrative - The first set of inscriptions belonging to this type is found among the Edicts of Asoka. They were written with an intention to broadcast the orders issued by the king among the citizen.

2 Eulogistic - Inscriptions dealing with the eulogy (*Prasasti*) form the most important type from the political point of view. Broadly, they are distinguished into sheer eulogy and mixed with other types.

The first specimen of an utter eulogy is found in the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela and the Allahabad pillar inscription¹⁴ of Samudragupta.

The most important specimens of mixed eulogy are found in the Nasik cave inscription¹⁵ of Gautamiputra Satavahana, the Junagadh rock inscription¹⁶ of Rudradaman,

Talagunda inscription¹⁷ of Kakuasthavarma, Gudrur inscription¹⁸ of Ravivarama and Aihole inscription¹⁹ of Pulakes'i II.

3 Donative - The largest number of inscription belongs to this type. This had been a very popular practice in ancient and medieval times to record any grant or donations made by the king or any authority or a person by engraving an inscription in which the details of the grant are also furnished. Some of the donations recorded are the donations of caves, stupas, images, lands, villages, worshiping articles to the deity at a temple and monetary donations etc.

4 Commercial - The periods of Indian history subsequent to the Indus valley civilization have not yielded so far specimens of commercial seals or any extensive records of commercial nature.

The Nigamas and Srenis has the power of making their coins and seals and use of writing for their commercial purposes through such commercial records on perishable materials could not survive for a long time.

5 Magical - The Sindhu Valley furnishes the earliest specimens of this types. Many seales containing magical formula. The inscriptions very likely contain the names of invocations to the deities represened by the animals peculiar to their sects on the seals. Magical formula

continued to be written on metals as well as on brick-bark and other perishable materials.

6. Religious or Didactic - The type includes all those inscriptions, which deal with the statements, the positions and the preaching of religion or morality, So far seals and tables discovered in the Sindhu Valley, containing religious formula. The next set of inscriptions is of Asoka containing the didactic edicts (*Dhamma lipi*). The Besanagar Garuda pillar inscription²⁰ of Heliodoras, though Votive in character contains a moral precept in its latter part.

7. Votive or Dedicative - The first deciphered example of this type is found in the short Piprahva Buddhist vase inscription which records the donations of the relic casket of Lord Buddha.

8. Commemorative - The inscriptions of this type record the events such as birth, any spectacular achievements of martyrdom from the life of a Saint or Hero and death of a king or a protagonist or a warrior.

9. Literary - There are a few inscriptions which are utter literary in nature. Some inscriptions of ancient India record pieces of poetic compositions and dramatic works and their purpose is purely literary. For example, from the *Mahavihara Stupa* at Kusinagara was discovered a copper

plate containing thirteen lines and recording the *Udana-Sutta* of Buddha.

Format of Inscriptions -

As far as the format of an earliest set of inscriptions i.e the Ashokan edicts is considered, they were most simple and unadorned. They were not elaborate and intricate. The central theme of Asoka's edicts was to edify the people, so as to ameliorate their disposition and to inculcate them with the elements of what he did call it as *Dharama*.

But the inscriptions of later period belong to a different category from that of the edicts of Asoka. These are observed gradually more comprehensive and embellished. The majority of them are donative in character while some are secular in nature regarding the construction of a well, canal etc. These inscriptions are broadly divided into two categories viz., stone inscriptions and copper-plate inscriptions, while stone records are found literally in thousands in different parts, the copper-plates are naturally limited in number though quite a large number of them have been discovered in later periods. The copper-plate inscriptions purport to register the gift of land or other privileges mostly to individuals and in a few cases to temples or institutions. A majority of them are thus title-deeds of land-grants made to Brahmanas-individually or collectively. These charters are drawn up according to

certain prescribed rules or procedures which are found in the works of Smṛtikaras like Yajñavalkya, Brhaspati, Vyasa and Katyayana.

According to them, a copper-plate should be drawn up by the royal official, Sandhivigrahin i.e a minister for peace and war, by the king's order. It should first record the place of issue of the charter, then describe the genealogy of the donor, who is generally the ruling king, for three generations i. e. the father, grandfather and great grandfather (Sometimes from the founder of the dynasty). The royal charter should be addressed to the concerned officials and different communities. Then, the pedigree of the donee should be given including their special attainments and the charter should record the name and boundaries of the gift-land or village and the name of the division and subdivision in which it is located. The details of the date of the grant should be mentioned and the privileges attached to the gift must be specified. The names of the writer as well as the engraver should be cited and the royal seal should be affixed to the grant.

Cf.?

“SiuÉÉ pÉÓqÉÇ ÌÍÉÓÍKÉÇ uÉÉ MxiuÉÉ sÉZrÉÇ iÉÑ MüÉUrfáÉÇ |

AÉafÉÍqÉpÉSilÉ#ÉÍiÉmÉÉUYÉÉÍÉÉÉÉ mÉÉÍj ÉuÉÈ ||

mÉOñ uÉÉ iÉÉqÉ#ÉÓOñ uÉÉ xuÉqÉÍStÉÉUÍcÉÍÁúÉqÉÇ |

these donative stone records is more or less the same as that of the copper-plate inscriptions described above. There are several inscription of secular nature also, which record the construction of tanks, wells canals, water-sheds etc, for the benefit of the public.

Mention may be made of another class of records known as hero-stones and mahasati-stones. These are memorials found in large number in Karnataka and to some extent in Andhra-Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. The hero-stones consist of 3 or 4 sculptured panels depicting the fighting scene of the hero who died in defending the village or in some battle against the enemy, other scene in which hero is being carried by the celestial nymphs to the heavenly world and the third scene in which the hero is depicted as enjoying the presence of the God. These hero-stones often contain inscriptions which give the information about the hero, the cause of his fight, the name of the ruling king on whose behalf the hero fought, the date of the event, the name of the person who set up the hero-stone in honour of the dead and also the nature of the reward made by the ruler on that occasion.

The mahasati- stones depict the figures of a woman or only a symbol showing her right hand raised upwards, in memory of the woman dying on the funeral pyre of her dead husband, a custom which was in vogue in several

parts of the country in ancient days. Many times these mahasati stones also contain inscriptions giving information about the woman to which the stone is meant for.

However a general format of overall inscriptions can be summed up as follows-

1. Initiation:

We do not find any initiatory part in the earlier inscriptions like the Ashokan edicts, Piprahva Buddhists vase inscription etc. It is found for the first time in the Nasik cave inscription of Gautamiputra Satavahana, the Satavahana king and in the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela, belonging to the last quarter of the first century A. D. The opening word starts with *Siddham*. Even the foreign powers like the Kusanas and the western Ksatrapas adopted this which was believed to ensure success and perfection. The other auspicious initiations are *Om*, *Omsvasti*, *Sriam*, *Subhamastu*, *Om Svami mahasena*, *Namah Sivaya* etc.

2. Invocation:

Just after the opening formula in an epigraph, invocation were addressed to the God, deities, Tirthankaras, Buddha, Siddhas, Saints etc, in order to seek their presence as a witness to the deeds executed in the records and to

pray for their help and blessings for the successful completion of the undertaking. This was not vogue in the beginning, still there are instances like *Sukiti* (Buddha) in the Piprahava vase inscription, *Devanampriya* in Asokan edicts and *Devadeva* in the Besnagara Garuda pillar inscription.⁸

With the development and bifurcation of various cults, the practice of invocation became more and more common and some established invocations are *Namo Bhagavata Budhasa*, *Namo arhato Vardhamanasa* etc.

3. King/Donor:

The details of the donor who is granting the donation recorded are of two types. In one case, the entire genealogical details of the donor who is generally the ruling king is described. Many times the progenitor of the family of the donor is ascribed to any one of the personalities of mythical fame. Or some times, the origin of the family is traced from Brahma-Sun (*Suryavamśa*) or Moon (*Candravamśa*) etc. In the second case, only the donor with a small note of two or three generations or even without that note is mentioned.

4. Date

This is optional in the Indian context and the earlier records do not have any date at all. Only the regnal year of

legends in Dharmas' astra such as Vedavyasa, Manu etc.
For instance

ΕΕΩϞ ϞΕ ρΕαΕυΕΙΕΕ υΕαSurΕΕxΕαΕ urΕΕxΕαΕ - - - -
qΕIΕϞΕIIEE vsΕΕαMυΕΕ - - - - etc.

And following are the most common imprecatory verses recited in the inscriptions;

xuES' EEÇ mEUS' EEÇ uEE rEEa WuäE uEXENKEUEÇ |
wE1' uEWEXEWoxEEIhE luE_ÉrEEÇ eÉErEiEa IÇüfQEÈ ||
IE luEWÉÇ luEWÉIqEirEEWÖE SaüEXuEÇ luEWÉqEñCrEiEä
luEWÉqEäMüEIMüIEÇ WuIIE SaüEXuEÇ mEñEñEÇEMüqEÇ ||
oEWÖpÉuEixEIKÉE pÉIEüE UÉeIÉpÉxxEaEUÉISIpÉE ||
rÉxrÉ rÉxrÉ rÉSE pÉÖqÉxiÉxrÉ iÉxrÉ iÉSE TüsÉqEÇ ||
luEIKrEEOmEÍluEiEEäEExEN zvEMMüMüEäDUuEÉIxÉIEE |
MñhEEWurEEä IWü eÉErEiEa pÉÖqESEIEÇ WuIIE rEa ||

Finally, the concluding formula was not fixed for long till the early history of Indian Paleography and even later, And even when it became customary to end a document with some formula there was no uniformity about it. However it generally included the name of the composer who was generally an officer, called *sandhivigrahi* and the name of the engraver along with the royal signature.

For all the above contents of the inscriptions that we have gone through, we see that all these did not prevail in the initial stage, but with the passage of time and development we see them followed.

Technique of writing inscriptions-

1. Orientation of individual signs and letters:

Beginning from the Sindhu=Valley script, upto the *Brahmi* and *Kharosthi* scripts and subsequent periods, one can very easily see that the signs and letters are formed almost in a uniform manner as in the Sindhu Valley writings with animals design.

2. Direction of writing:

The direction of writing in the Sindhu=Valley writings is still a matter of speculation. In that, most of the men-signs face to the right. The *Brahmi* script is nice written in boustrophedon style i. e. the lines alternately written from left to right. The direction of the *Kharosthi* script is from right to left.

3. Line :

The undeciphered Sindhu=Valley signs are more or less arranged in a straight horizontal line. In the early age of Indian paleography, letters had no headlines (*Sirsaka*), the Indians had developed a sense of straight writing and to ensure it they conformed to an imaginary or temporary or dim line. In doing so all the letters were written in a horizontal straight line and the medial signs (*matkas*) of equal height were placed above the line.

4. Grouping of letters and words:

During the early times much attention was not paid to the grouping of the words, clauses and sentences. They did not use regularly even signs to demarcate the one sentence from the other. They used to write letters continuously without a stop up to the end of a word, line, verse or other divisions.

5. Punctuation:

Ancient Indian writers did not realize the absolute necessity of punctuation or inner punctuation upto vary late times and even when the need of punctuation dawned upon their mind, they remained indifferent to its proper use. It is impossible to trace the use of punctuation in Sindhu valley script. We find some attempt at punctuation only one sign - a stroke - either strait or curved in the early Brahmi Script. From the 1st century A. D. a number of complex signs for punctuation developed but they were not regularly used. There are regular and proper punctuation marks especially in metrical inscriptions which occur during 4th century A.D. onwards.

6. Pagination :

Regarding pagination we do not find them in stone inscriptions but find them on the leaves and copper plate inscriptions. Indian system was to number only the leaves

(*pattras*) but not the pages (*prsthās*). In the north, there is the page numbered on the second page called *Sankha-prsthā*, while in the south they are found from the first page of the leaf itself.

7. Corrections :

Various devices were used for correcting errors in the inscriptions on the stones and metals. Some of them were as follows.

- a. The scoring out of the erroneous words and passages. (Asòkan edicts)
- b. The beating out of erroneous words and passages
- c. The placing of short strokes above or below the line containing errors.

8. Abbreviations :

The tendency for abbreviation is appeared in the Kushan period and also latter inscriptions. We find them in inscriptions for the sake of economy in space and for increase in speed. Some of the abbreviations are;

Samvatsara	-	Samvat, Sam
Dutaka	-	Du
Suddha/Sukla	-	Su
Panā	-	Pa

10. Omissions :

The available cases of omissions are less in number than those of corrections and the processes of completing the sentences or passages were simpler.

- a. The addition of omitted words or phrases above or below the line without any sign indicating the place to which they belong. (Ashokan edicts)
- b. The insertion of omitted words in the interstices between the letters.
- c. The addition of omitted words in the margin or between the lines with a small upright or inclined cross, called *Kakapaḍa* or *hamṣapaḍa* indicating the spot of omission.
- d. The use of a Svastika instead of cross for denoting the place of omission.
- e. The use of a cross for indicating intentional omission.
- f. The use of dots on the line or short strokes.

11. Auspicious symbols and ornamentation :

Auspicious symbols were associated with documents for adding sanctity to and for insuring the successful completion of the deeds contained in them. Some of them are *om*, *shree*, *svastika* etc.

Besides the natural elegance of a particular script used in a document, sometimes deliberate attempts were made to introduce decorative designs.

Seals (*Anka*):

The majority of grooves were incised on more than one copper-plate and the ring was passed through holes. Ultimately the seal was attached to the ring. The majority of them contain the royal coat of arms, generally the effigies of animals and birds, sacred or symbolic and of deities worshipped in the royal dynasty concerned some of the seals. In addition to such emblems there are long or short inscriptions containing the name. Some of the seals have merely an inscription of some significance.

The Language of the Inscriptions :

Although Sanskrit is the oldest language in India as furnished by the Vedic literature the language of the earliest written records i.e., the Asòkan edicts is Prakṛt. As seen before, since the Sindhu-valley script or Harappan script has not yet been successfully deciphered. It has not been possible to decide about the language of this script in spite of the persistence of various views of different scholars. Besides Prakṛt, Asòkan edicts are written in Greek and Aramaic languages also. One edict written entirely in Greek script and languages and another edict written in Greek and Aramic script and languages are found

in Skandar and Afghanistan while a record in Aramaic script and language found in Taxila (now in Pakistan) is attributed to Asòka. All the edicts of Asòka in Bhrahmi and Kharosthi scripts are written in the Prakrit language. Thus, originally the epigraphical language of India can be said to be Prakrit. Sanskrit was used in inscriptions only at a later period.

After the period of Asòka, the use of the Prakrit language continued in the inscriptions for a few more centuries. In North India, Prakrit was replaced by Sanskrit at the close of the 3rd century A.D. while it happened about a century later in South India. But even before this period, some of the inscriptions though written in Prakrit language were influenced by Sanskrit, while some records were entirely couched in Sanskrit. The epigraphs of the Kushana kings are found in a mixture of Prakrit and Sanskrit, while the Mathura inscriptions of the time of Saka Sòdasa belonging to the first quarter of the first century A.D. contain verses in classical Sanskrit in the meters like *Sardulavikranta*.²² Even earlier than this, the Besanagara (in Mandhya Pradesh) Garudá pillar inscription²³ of Heliodoras who was an ambassador from the Indo-Greek king Antialkidas at the court of king Bhagabhadra of Vidisa= belonging to the end of the 2nd century B.C. though written in Prakrit language exhibits some influence of Sanskrit. And the Ghosundi stone inscription²⁴ from Rajasthan

belonging to the latter half of the first century B.C. and of the time of king Sarvataḥa are couched in Sanskrit language.

The Junagadh (Gujarat) inscription²⁵ of Saka king Rudradaman and dated in 150 A.D. is one of the earliest prose epigraphs written in beautiful Sanskrit prose in the Kavya style. From the eastern part comes the Ayodhya inscription²⁶ of Dhanadeva (latter half of the first century B.C.) which is written in Sanskrit slightly influenced by Prakrit. Inscriptions of a little later period (1st century to 3rd century A.D.) like the Kailvan (Bihar State) inscription,²⁷ the inscription of Kaushambi and Bandargadh records are written in Sanskrit slightly influenced by Prakrit, though the later inscriptions of Bandargadh are entirely in Sanskrit. From the fourth century onwards, the Guptas came to power at Patliputra and they were great patrons of Sanskrit language and literature and hence Sanskrit became the language of the inscriptions.

In South India, Prakrit was used in the inscriptions till the 4th century A.D. though in a few records of the Ikshvaku of Nagarjunakonda, Sanskrit is employed. The inscription²⁸ of Yajñataḥakarnī (2nd century A.D) from Amaravati is considered to be the earliest Sanskrit inscription from Andhra Pradesh discovered so far. The

earlier inscriptions (4th century A.D.) of the Salankayanas of the Telugu region are in prakrit, while their later records belonging to the 5th century A.D. are written in Sanskrit. In kannada speaking area the Candravalī inscription of Mayurasarma, who is regarded as the founder of the Kadamba dynasty is written in prakrit language and is assigned to the 4th century A.D. But all the later inscriptions of this dynasty are in Sanskrit language only.

The early copper-plate inscriptions of the Pallavas of kanchi, belonging to the 4th century A.D. are written in Prakrit language and hence they are known as the Pallavas of the Prakrit charters as against the Pallavas of the Sanskrit charters of a later period (5th to 8th century A.D.). This Prakrit is of a literary style. Thus in the inscriptions of south India, Prakrit prevailed upto the 4th century A.D. or so when it was replaced by Sanskrit.

In the cave inscriptions of Tamil Nadu, the language of the Southren Brahmi inscriptions varying in dates from about the 2nd century B.C. to about 2nd or 3rd century A.D. is said to be early Tamil. But there is no unanimity in this regard. Though, more cave inscriptions in Tamil Nadu have been discovered during the last sixty years, they have not been successfully deciphered and interpreted so far.

As stated above, Prakrit was the language of the earliest inscriptions, i.e., those of Asoka, throughout the

country and also for some time after the period of Asoka and Sanskrit replaced Prakrit in the inscriptions by about the end of the third century A.D. in North India and by about the fourth century A.D. in South India.²⁹ During this intervening period, some records are seen written in Prakrit influenced by Sanskrit in the earlier period and some written in Sanskrit influenced by Prakrit in the later period. And, in exceptional cases, some later inscriptions like the Ghatiyala inscription³⁰ of Pratihara Kakkuka dated 862 A.D. is written in Prakrit language. The Dhar (in Madhya Pradesh) inscription of the time of Bhoja (c. 1000-1055 A.D) contains the text of the Prakrit poem Kurmas'ataka ascribed to Bhoja.

Some of the early inscriptions which are couched in Sanskrit, though some times with slight influence of Prakrit are ; the Mathura inscription³¹ of saka king Sodasa from the North, the Ghosundi record³² of Sarvatata from Western India, the Ayodhya inscription³³ of Dhanadeva from eastern India and from the South, the Nagarjunakonda inscription³⁴ of Ikshvaku king Ehuvala Santamula. These records range in date from the second half of the first century B.C. to the end of the third century A.D. But as already pointed out, the Junagadh inscription of Rudradaman dated 150 A.D. is composed in elegant Sanskrit prose of kavya style.

From the 4th century onwards, with the rise of Guptas, Sanskrit became the predominant language of Indian epigraphs. It was adopted as the court language by the rulers of this dynasty and some of them like Samudragupta have been stated to be proficient in Sanskrit language. It has been presumed that the celebrated Sanskrit poet Kaṇḍaśa flourished during the Gupta period. The contemporary rulers of Guptas in central India and parts of the Deccan like the Vakatakas, the Kadambas and the Gangas of Karnataka and the Pallavas of Kanci also employed Sanskrit as the court language as found in their inscriptions. Though the earlier records of the Saṅkayanas of Andhra region are in the Prakrit Language, the later records of them are written in Sanskrit language.

Thus, Sanskrit became the epigraphical language of the country from the fourth century onwards. The Taḥḥagunda pillar inscription³⁵ of the time of Kadamba king Saṅtivarma composed by poet Kubja and Aihole³⁶ inscription of Badami Calukya king Pulakes'in II composed by the poet Ravikiḥi are the specimens of classical Sanskrit found in early inscriptions of Karnataka.

Sanskrit continued to be the language of inscriptions of all parts of India till late medieval period. Meanwhile, the regional languages also began to be used in the inscriptions. It has been already noticed that the language

of the cave inscriptions found in Tamil Nadu is presumed to be an early form of Tamil language and as such is the earliest Dravidian language to be used in the inscriptions.

At a later period, the copper-plate charters of the Pallavas, the Colas and the ~~pan~~dyas are written in both Sanskrit and Tamil languages, though some of the Pallava grants like Vunnaguruvayapalem plates of Parames'varavarman I (7th century A.D.) and Reyjru plates of Narasimhavarman II (8th century A.D.) are written entirely in Sanskrit. The larger Leiden plates³⁷ of the Cola king Rajaraja I (10 th -11th Century A.D.) are written partly in Sanskrit and partly in Tamil while the smaller Leiden plates³⁸ of Kulottunga I (11-12 th century A.D.) are written entirely in Tamil language. While early ~~pan~~dyas inscriptions are written partly in Sanskrit and partly in Tamil languages, the later records of the dynasty are written only in Tamil language.

Next to Tamil, Kannada is found used in the inscriptions from about the fifth century A.D. onwards. The Halmidī inscription³⁹ and the Vaisṇava cave inscription⁴⁰ at Badami are considered to be the earliest inscriptions written in Kannada language. All the copper plate grants of the Calukyas of Badami are written in Sanskrit language. But in stone inscriptions the latter portion containing the details of grant is written in Kannada language. Similar is

the case with the records of the next imperial dynasty of Karnataka i.e., the Rashtrakutas with a few exceptions. The British museum plates⁴¹ of the Rashtrakuta king Govinda III dated sàka-726 (804 A.D.) is written in Kannada language. For a long time, this inscription was considered as the earliest copper plate grant⁴² in Kannada language. But recently, another copper-plate grant belonging to the Alupa king Aluparasa II, has been discovered at Belānūr in South Canara district. Though it is not dated, it is assigned to the 8th century A.D. on palaeographical grounds and thus it becomes the earliest copper - plate inscription in Kannada language discovered so far. There are many inscriptions which are written partly in Sanskrit and partly in Kannada and even in the records which are composed in kannada language only, the invocatory or the benedictory verses at the beginning and the imprecatory verses at the end are in Sanskrit language. It is also interesting to note that the Kurkyaḥ (in Andhra Pradesh) inscription of Jinavallabha⁴³ brother of the famous Kannada poet Pampa, is written in three languages viz, Sanskrit, Kannada and Telugu.

Telugu language is used in inscriptions from 6th century A.D. onwards while some Telugu place names are mentioned in earlier records. The kalamalla inscription⁴⁴ of Erikal-Muthuraju Dhananjaya assigned to the last quarter

of the 5th century A.D. is considered to be the earliest record completely written in Telugu.

It is only from the 15th century onwards that Malayalam language appears in the inscriptions, although in an earlier Tamil inscription⁴⁵ of the 13th century A.D. Malayalam influence is noticed. The attingal inscription of 1452 A.D. and the Tonnal inscription of 1457 A.D. are written in Malayalam language.

The Marathi language is found used in early records of the 11th century A.D. and the earliest epigraph in which this language is used is the Dive-Agar copper plate inscription⁴⁶ dated saka 982 (1060 A.D.) Marathi language became popular in the inscriptions of the silaharas and the Yadavas of Devagiri in the Marathi speaking area.

The use of Hindi language in the epigraphs is traced to 11th century A.D. on the basis of a Jain image inscription found at Shyopur in Madhya Pradesh. But most of the other Hindi records, which also come from Madhya Pradesh region belong to the medieval period of 15th or 16th century A.D. only.

The Gujarati language is used in inscriptions of the 15th century A.D. hailing from Kathiawar region while a few inscriptions of earlier date from the same area are written in Sanskrit and Gujarati.⁴⁷ The Bengali language also appears in the inscriptions of eastern India from about

15th Century A.D. only, During the late medieval period, the copper-plates⁴⁸ of Tripura king Govindamanikya (15th century A.D.) are mainly written in Bengali language. The use of Oriya language in the inscriptions started from the 13th century A.D. though the influence of this language in records written in Sanskrit language appears as early as 10th century A.D. Some copper-plate grants are partly in Sanskrit and partly in Oriya languages while the veligalani grant⁴⁹ of the Gajapati king Kapilesvara (15th century A.D.) is written in three languages viz., Oriya, Sanskrit and Telugu.

Although, a gradual development of regional languages in the inscriptions has made its appearance from about the 5th or 6th century A.D. the position of Sanskrit was not undermined. Sanskrit had enjoyed the role of being the national language as against the local languages. Sanskrit came to be used in inscriptions, to communicate to the wider community of people, who would not understand the local language.⁵⁰

Writing materials:

A. Materials for writing or scratching:

1. **Bhurjapattra** - In Sanskrit *Bhurjapattra* literally means 'the birch leaf' and this in reality a sheet of the required size cut out of the inner bark of the *Bhurja* or birch tree grown in the Himalayas. The earliest mention of birch-bark

in the account of the Greek writer Al-Beruni said - "In central and northern India people used to write on tuz tree". In the *Kumarsambhava* of Kalidasa and Buddhist work Samyuktagamasutra, Bhurja-pattra is mentioned as a writing material.

2. **Tadapatra** - The Buddhist Jatakas refer to leave (panna) as a writing material. The Tadapatra (Palmyra leaves) were originally indigenous of southern India and became common in the south and then gradually in spread to the other parts of India.

3. **Cloth and Hide** - Pieces of cotton cloth (called *Patra* or *Karpasa-patra* in Sanskrit) cut according to the required size and shape were used for writing after applying on it a paste of rice or wheat powder and making its face smooth by rubbing them with conch or cowrie-shell etc. Buhler noticed a list of Jain-sutras written in ink on a piece of silk in a Jain Library at Jaisalmer.

4. **Paper** - It is generally believed that the Chinese first made paper in 105 A. D. Indians must have come to know about the paper through the Chinese travelers. The earliest paper manuscript discovered in Gujarat was copied in 1223-24 A.D.

5. **Wood** - The phalaka mentioned in the Buddhist Jataka stories as writing boards, which were used by beginners for learning alphabets. A large number of wooden sheets with

Kharosthi writings have been discovered in central Asia. There are also some Indian records written on wooden subjects.

B. Material for Engraving or Embossing :

1. **Stone** - Stone was used from the earliest times for engraving writing for the purpose of making it everlasting, (Cira-Sthitika). Inscriptions were often engraved on rocks, stone pillars or slabs, stone images or their pedestals and stone articles such as jar or their covers etc. A majority of the eulogy type (prasasti) was engraved on stone. The earliest stone engravings belong to the days of the Mouryan emperor Asoka (C 272 - 232 B. C). Certain memorial stones like hero- stones, mahasati stones and nishidi stones etc, also contain engraving along with the sculptures.

2. Earthen Objects :

The inscriptions of a number of Buddhist sutras are found to have written on bricks. Sometimes votive records were also engraved on lumps of clay which were later baked and burnt. Clay seals and sealing, both burnt and unburnt, have been discovered in various sites of north India. Earthen pots were used to inscribe generally before being burnt.

3. Shells and other Non-Metallic Objects:

Some Conch-shells were bearing with inscription and votive in character. Seals made of ivory plaques are bearing with legends and mantras are engraved on tortoise shells.

4. Metallic Objects-

Among the metals, copper is largely used for writing in ancient and medieval India. Official charters especially grants made by kings and subordinate rulers were generally engraved on copper-plates. Many bronze images bear inscription, in most cases of the pedestal. An early inscription from Sohagura, in Gorkhpur district of Uttar Pradesh is written on a small bronze plaque. Cannons of the late medieval period often possess inscriptions. For instance the Mehrauli iron pillar bears an inscription. The bells in many temples bear inscriptions recording their gift in favour of the temple.

A few inscriptions were found to have written on golden and silver objects. A golden plate having a votive inscription in Kharoshthi script has been discovered in the ruins of Takṣasīla. And among the few inscriptions on silver articles, mention may be made of the Bhatwāḍ and Takṣasīla inscriptions. The engraving of the owner's name on silver objects is old.

Ink, pen and other instruments -

Ink for writing is called masi or *Sayi*- in Indian context. It was prepared with lampblack or charcoal mixed in water with gum, sugar etc. Writing ink was generally of two kinds viz., lasting and washable, the first of which was used in copying manuscripts and the second for writing things like letter and account books of shopkeepers.

Lekhani is a general name for the stylus, pencil, brush, pen etc, *Varnaka* mentioned in early Indian literature was a wooden pen pointed at the end without a slit. It was used by young learners at the elementary schools. For scratching letters on palmyra leaves, iron pens with sharp points known as *Kanthas* were in use especially in the southern part of the country.

Writer (Lekhaka) - The word *lekhaka* and such terms used in epics indicate a professional writer. Some of extraordinary ability was chosen to work in the royal place and being special officer under the king was known as *Rajalekhaka*.

The *Arthashastra* of Kautilya gives the requirements of the *lekhaka* as,

आकृतिरेखकमेसाहारे खेतिखेक्रेतुसेवेदमेज एतेतिरेतुसा सैवेतुकेलेखक्रेतुसा
सैवेतुमे खेतिरे |

As per the epigraphical evidence regarding the profession of writing, the early reference to it is found in

the Brahmagiri minor rock edicts⁵¹ of Asoka. The last sentence of the inscription states that “this was written by a *lipikarā* (lekhaka) named Capada.”

‘cÉmÉQāÉ ÍsÉÍZÉÍā ÍsÉÍmÉMüUāÉ’ |

Scribes: - The scribe was a prominent figure in the ancient world. In many cases ornamental letters were written with the greatest care and dexterity by Scribe. Literary evidence like *Mudrarakāśa* mentions the greatness of the Scribes, who were identifiably qualified with literary talents. Sometimes the scribes were also mentioned as lekhakas. Though many times, the scribes of inscriptions were illiterates, they held in high esteem in the society and they formed a respectable group of non-agricultural mode employees. Most scribes were selected from goldsmith community who were, in inscriptions, called as aksās‘aḥ (in Kannada Arkasaḥ or Akkasaḥiga) as they are experts in dealing with the metals and similar imperishable materials. The scribes of copper-plate grants are generally called *Kayastha* and *Karanīka* or *Karanīn*. The common expression for the writer of a document or the copyist of a manuscript was lekhaka which also indicted a professional clerk. Often people of the Braḥmanā community also adopted this profession.

Problems and Prospects in Epigraphical Studies

The inscription is generally contemporaneous with the events recorded. Hence the epigraphical sources remove the

chronological problems and establish chronological continuity in the cultural setting. All the epigraphical evidence can be rechecked and any degree of exaggeration or misrepresentation can be avoided. But, in the field of epigraphical studies the researchers are generally facing certain problems for which they need solution. Some of such problems are as follows.

1. Paleographical problems:

As the writing material of the records, the stone withers away due to wind and rain and get destroyed due to vandalism. Most of the records were not well maintained and there are falling in ruins. As a result, the observer cannot find the distinctive forms of the letters prevalent in the age concerned. The appearance of different letters being similar leads to a controversy. Such a controversy cannot simply be solved. The application of metrics and grammar to such recorded literary data is always helpful in identifying the actual form of the letter to be inscribed.

2. Chronology / Dating :

The use of cyclic years along with the eras and chronograms complicate the chronology. The earlier records which have only the regnal years are very much chronologically isolated and any attempt to identify their chronological position was not at all absolute. The

application of both the paleographic and linguistic method is only means to ward off such a chronological flux.

3. Difficulty in identifying the king / Persons:

The entire inscriptions invariably present a donor and donee and in the absence of the date as well as genealogical demonstration, the identification of the donor king or person becomes difficult. The complication is more in case of the existence of the same name and title. For instance, we know about two kings of same name Candragupta, one belonging to Maurya dynasty and other to the Gupta dynasty. The only hope regarding the solution in such cases is on paleographical grounds.

4. Linguistic Dimensions: -

When a literary text is recorded on stone, the most possible error is with the scribe. The errors in literary text are very much with the authors too. Such authorship errors may be metrical, grammatical, syntactical and orthographical.

5. Identifying the place names and administrative divisions.:

Identifying the place - names cited in the inscriptions with their modern geography is a great challenge to the researches in epigraphical studies. And also it is felt quite different to mark out the boundaries of administrative

divisions or states with much precision. For example, the Kuntalades' a. Still requires much more and meticulous investigation to delineate the territories it actually comprised.

Thus these problems stand as a hurdle in making the successful use of epigraphical sources in writing history.

History of Epigraphy in India :

The study of Indian inscriptions started thoroughly with the European intervention. However a few flop attempts were made by some Muslim kings in India like Firoz shah and Akbar to read the early inscriptions in India. In 1784 A.D the 'Royal Asiatic Society' was founded in Culcutta by Sir William Jones to study the Indian culture. The works of the pioneers like Wilkins, Colin Mackenzie, Cole Brooke, Fergusson, Babington, Dr Mill, Dr Stevenson Walter, Kittoe, Sir Walter Elliot formed a strong basement for Indian paleography and Epigraphy.

The golden era of Indian epigraphical research commenced only in 1837 A.D. with the decipherment of the *Brahmi* Script by James Prinsep. After the establishment of a central Archaeological Department it started the publication of inscriptions along with the translations and transliterations through the epigraphical journals like *Epigraphia Indica* (From 1892), *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* etc.

European scholars started the task of reconstructing the Indian history in the 18th century. Later on, many Indian scholars like V. Venkayya, H. Krishna Shastri, Bhagavanlal Indrajit, R.G.Bhandarkar, Chabra, D.C. Sircar, Bhau Daji, V.V. Mirashi also did many works. The reconstruction of the history of Karnataka was started at the end of the 18th century. In this regard, the inscriptions of Karnataka are collected in volumes like 'Journal of Asiatic Society' (in 1791), *Epigraphia Indica*, *South Indian Inscriptions* etc. The epigraphical work was started by Mackenzie, Sir Walter Elliot, and Dr. J. F Fleet. Among them, Dr. John Faithful Fleet has rendered a major contribution to the epigraphy in Karnataka. The Archaeological Survey of India has also collected a large number of inscriptions and published them in many volumes like *A.R.S.I.E*, *A.R.E.A*, *M.A.R.* etc.

In the north Karnataka, the Kannada Research Institute (K.R.I) was established by the Bombay Government in 1939. It is one of the prominent institutions of Karnataka which has collected more than 1500 inscriptions and published them in several Volumes of 'Karnataka Inscriptions'. The eminent scholars like Dr. P.B. Desai, Vidyaratna R.S. Panchamukhi, Dr. Shrinivas Ritti, Dr. K.V, Ramesh, Dr. B. R. Gopal, K.G, Kundangar, Dr. H.R. Raghunath Bhat, Dr. B.R. Hiremath, Dr. S.V. Padigar,

Dr. R.M Shadaksharayya have contributed extensive works and also undertaking several research works.

Paleography :

In the study of Indian Epigraphy, Paleography forms an essential and important part and is concerned with the decipherment of the inscriptions without reference to the contents of the records. Epigraphy requires two-fold qualifications of its votary, the ability to interpret the language and contents of the epigraphs.

Paleography is the science of studying ancient or old symbols or signs *paleo* means 'old' or ancient and *graphy* is the study of symbols (graph =symbol). It may also be taken for granted that the scripts are very much symbolic and indicate the inner meanings. That is why the scripts can be identified as symbols or signs. Paleography deals with the study of the different scripts that are very much symbolic and were used in epigraphs forming the base for the development of the present day scripts. Paleography is helpful to reveal many ancient scripts which had been shrouded in mystery for centuries.

Development of Scripts in North India :-

In the north India, the Brahmi script was over a vast area and which first appeared in the edicts of Asoka in 3rd century B.C. Besides Brahmi, Asoka's edicts are found in Kharosthi, Aramaic and Greek scripts.

At the advent of Saka Kshatrapas and the Kushanas as political powers in north India, the writing system assumed a definite change owing to the use of new writing tools and techniques. Further a perceivable change in it can be discerned during the Gupta period. The Gupta script is considered to be the successor of the Kushana script in North India. This is also called as Gupta-Brahmi script.

From the sixth to about tenth century A. D, the inscriptions were written in a script called *Siddhamatrika*. This script, from 8th century onwards developed into *Sarada* script in Kashmir, into proto-Bengali or *Gaudī* in Bengal region and into *Nagari* in other parts of north India.

In central India i.e in Madhya Pradesh, the inscriptions of the *Vakatakas*, *Sharabhapurias* and *Kosalas* were written in what are known as 'box-headed' characters. And in the inscriptions of *Satavahanas* and *Chutuks*, 'nail-headed' characters are used.

Development of South- Indian Scripts

The early inscriptions of South-India i.e the Ashokan edicts, *Satavahana* and *Chutuk* inscriptions are written in Brahmi script only. But from 7th century A.D onwards, we get a number of inscriptions in Tamilnadu, belonging to the *Pallava*, the *Cholas* and the *Pandiyas*, which are written in three different Scripts called *Tamil*, *Vatteluttu* and *Grantha* scripts.

The early form of the *Kannada- Telugu* script is found in the inscriptions of the early Kadambas, the Calukyas of Badami, the Salankayanas and the early Eastern Calukyas who ruled the Kannada and Telugu speaking areas during 4th to 7th century A.D. From 13th century onwards, the Kannada and Telugu Scripts bifurcated.

Inscriptions are available not only in our vast sub-continent but also in countries like Shrilanka, Burma, Thailand, Borneo, Nepal, Java, Sumatra, Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is interesting to note that the scripts used in the inscriptions found in these countries were evolved from the Brahmi Script.

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