

# THE Viśvarūpa(Visvarupa) ICONOGRAPHIC TRADITION

North Indian Images of Viśvarūpa Viṣṇu

5th - 13th Centuries CE

*The Archaeological Reports of Professor T. S. Maxwell*

A scientific collaboration between

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and

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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORTS

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT**

Vaikuṅṭha-Viśvarūpa Vol. II : The Fall 1991 and Spring 1992 Campaigns -  
Western & Central India

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**D:REPORT.GUJARAT, MADHYA PRADESH AND UTTAR PRADESH**

**1991/1992 F:BERICHT.92**

FELDFORSCHUNGSPROJEKT 1991/92

Februar 1994 - März 1995

DFG-Az.: Ma 1069/3-1

Kennowrt: **Vaikuṅṭha-Viśvarūpa**

Fortsetzung der Berichte an die D.F.G.

Von 30.06.1990,

**BERICHT**

UBER DIE IKONOGRAPHIE, CHRONOLOGIE UND INTERPRETATION DES  
ARCHAOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS

**TEIL 2**

DIE ERSTEN ERGEBNISSE DER AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1991 UND FEBRUAR -  
APRIL 1992 UNTERNOMMENEN FORSCHUNGSREISEN

**T. S. Maxwell**

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D: Viśvarūpa/Vaikunṭha 1992, DFG-Bericht (2)/F: Bericht.92  
FELDFORSCHUNGSPROJEKT 1991/92  
DFG-AZ.: Ma 1069/3-1  
Kennwort : Vaikunṭha-Viśvarūpa  
Fortsetzung des Berichtes an  
die D.F.G. vom 30.06.1990

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- Einführung
- Die ersten Ergebnisse
- Landkarten
- Katalog

D: Viśvarūpa/Vaikunṭha 1992, DFG-Bericht (2)/F: Bericht.92

FELDFORSCHUNGSPROJEKT 1991/92

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Kennwort : Vaikuṅṭha-Viśvarūpa

Fortsetzung des Berichtes an

die D.F.G. vom 30.06.1990

## LISTE 1

### *GESAMTAUFLISTUNG*

*DES IM AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1991 UND IM FEBRUAR/MÄRZ 1992*

*UNTERSUCHTEN ARCHÄOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS*

Nr.	Fundort und	Typus
01.	Samalaji:	Viśvarūpa
02.	Oganaj:	Viśvarūpa
03.	Kathlal:	Viśvarūpa
04.	Vadavi:	Vaikuṅṭha
05.	Harsundal:	Vaikuṅṭha
06.	Harsundal:	Viśvarūpa
07.	Mahudi:	Vaikuṅṭha
08.	Mahudi:	Viśvarūpa
09.	Valam:	Vaikuṅṭha
10.	Valam:	Viśvarūpa
11.	Gunja:	Vaikuṅṭha
12.	Sandera:	Vaikuṅṭha

13. Patan: Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
14. Patan: Viśvarūpa
15. Dethali: Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
16. Siddhapur: Trailokyamohana
17. Visala: Trailokyamohana
18. Balaram: Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
19. S.Raj.: Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
20. Privat: Viśvarūpa
21. Khajuraho: 'Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ-Viśvarūpa'
22. Khajuraho: 'Viratarupa'
23. Khajuraho: Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
24. Khajuraho: Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
25. Khajuraho: Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
26. Khajuraho: Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
27. Thuvon: Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
28. Varanasi: Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
29. Kalinjar: Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
30. Garhwa: Viśvarūpa
31. Manwadhi: Viśvarūpa
32. Dalmau: Viśvarūpa
33. U.P.: Viśvarūpa
34. Bhuali: Viśvarūpa
35. Kanauj: Viśvarūpa
36. Kanauj: Viśvarūpa
37. Kanauj: Viśvarūpa
38. Kanauj: Viśvarūpa
39. Bhuili: Viśvarūpa

- |     |          |           |
|-----|----------|-----------|
| 40. | Mathura: | Viśvarūpa |
| 41. | Nalanda: | Viśvarūpa |
| 42. | Aghat:   | Viśvarūpa |

## LISTE 2

### *IKONOGRAPHISCHE TYPOLOGIE UND FUNDORTE*

*DES IM AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1991 UND IM FEBRUAR/MÄRZ 1992  
UNTERSUCHTEN ARCHÄOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS*

#### *I: Vaikuṅṭha-BILDWERKE*

- |     |      |           |                  |
|-----|------|-----------|------------------|
| 01. | #04. | Vadavi    | (Gujarat)        |
| 02. | #05. | Harsundal | (Gujarat)        |
| 03. | #07. | Mahudi    | (Gujarat)        |
| 04. | #09. | Valam     | (Gujarat)        |
| 05. | #11. | Gunja     | (Gujarat)        |
| 06. | #12. | Sandera   | (Gujarat)        |
| 07. | #13. | Patan     | (Gujarat)        |
| 08. | #15. | Dethali   | (Gujarat)        |
| 09. | #18. | Balaram   | (Gujarat)        |
| 10. | #19. | S. Raj.   | (Rajasthan)      |
| 11. | #23. | Khajuraho | (Madhya Pradesh) |
| 12. | #24. | Khajuraho | (Madhya Pradesh) |
| 13. | #25. | Khajuraho | (Madhya Pradesh) |
| 14. | #26. | Khajuraho | (Madhya Pradesh) |
| 15. | #27. | Thuvon    | (Madhya Pradesh) |

16. #28. Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh)
17. #29. Kalinjar (Uttar Pradesh)

#### 1-A: Vaikuṅṭha-VERWANDTES MATERIAL

01. #16. Siddhapur (Gujarat):  
Trailokyamohana
02. #17. Visala (Gujarat):  
Trailokyamohana
03. #22. Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh):  
'Viratarupa'

#### II: Viśvarūpa-BILDWERKE

01. #01. Samalaji (Gujarat)
02. #02. Oganaj (Gujarat)
03. #03. Kathlal (Gujarat)
04. #06. Harsundal (Gujarat)
05. #08. Mahudi (Gujarat)
06. #09. Valam (Gujarat)
07. #14. Patan (Gujarat)
08. #20. Privat (Madhya Pradesh)
09. #30. Garhwa (Uttar Pradesh)
10. #31. Manwadhi (Uttar Pradesh)
11. #32. Dalmau (Uttar Pradesh)
12. #33. U.P. (Uttar Pradesh)



- |     |      |         |                 |
|-----|------|---------|-----------------|
| 13. | #34. | Bhuali  | (Uttar Pradesh) |
| 14. | #35. | Kanauj  | (Uttar Pradesh) |
| 15. | #36. | Kanauj  | (Uttar Pradesh) |
| 16. | #37. | Kanauj  | (Uttar Pradesh) |
| 17. | #38. | Kanauj  | (Uttar Pradesh) |
| 18. | #39. | Bhuili  | (Uttar Pradesh) |
| 19. | #40. | Mathura | (Uttar Pradesh) |
| 20. | #42. | Aghat   | (Uttar Pradesh) |
| 21. | #41. | Nalanda | (Bihar)         |

#### II-A: Viśvarūpa-VERWANDTES MATERIAL

- |     |      |           |   |
|-----|------|-----------|---|
| 01. | #21. | Khajuraho | (Madhya Pradesh): 'Vaikuṅṭha-Viśvarūpa' |
|-----|------|-----------|---|

### LISTE 3

#### CHRONOLOGISCHE / DYNASTISCHE AUFTEILUNG DES IM AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1991 UND IM FEBRUAR/MÄRZ 1992 UNTERSUCHTEN ARCHÄOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS

##### I: SPÄT-KUṢĀṆA KÖNIGREICH (4. Jh.n.Chr.)

- |     |      |         |                  |           |
|-----|------|---------|------------------|-----------|
| 01. | #40. | Mathura | (Uttar Pradesh): | Viśvarūpa |
|-----|------|---------|------------------|-----------|

##### II: GUPTA KÖNIGREICH (5. Jh.n.Chr.)

- |     |      |       |                  |           |
|-----|------|-------|------------------|-----------|
| 01. | #30. | Garwa | (Uttar Pradesh): | Viśvarūpa |
|-----|------|-------|------------------|-----------|

### III: FRUH-KALACURI (?) KÖNIGREICH (5. -6. Jh.n.Chr.)

- |     |      |          |            |           |
|-----|------|----------|------------|-----------|
| 01. | #01. | Samalaji | (Gujarat): | Viśvarūpa |
| 02. | #02. | Oganaj   | (Gujarat): | Viśvarūpa |

### IV: MAITRAKA (?) KÖNIGREICH (7. Jh.n.Chr.)

- |     |      |         |            |           |
|-----|------|---------|------------|-----------|
| 01. | #03. | Kathlal | (Gujarat): | Viśvarūpa |
|-----|------|---------|------------|-----------|

### V: GURJARA-PRATĪHĀRA KÖNIGREICH (8.-9. Jh.n.Chr.)

- |     |      |          |                   |           |
|-----|------|----------|-------------------|-----------|
| 01. | #20. | Privat   | (Madhya Pradesh): | Viśvarūpa |
| 02. | #31. | Manwadhi | (Uttar Pradesh):  | Viśvarūpa |
| 03. | #32. | Dalmau   | (Uttar Pradesh):  | Viśvarūpa |
| 04. | #33. | U.P.     | (Uttar Pradesh):  | Viśvarūpa |
| 05. | #34. | Bhuali   | (Uttar Pradesh):  | Viśvarūpa |
| 06. | #35. | Kanauj   | (Uttar Pradesh):  | Viśvarūpa |
| 07. | #36. | Kanauj   | (Uttar Pradesh):  | Viśvarūpa |
| 08. | #37. | Kanauj   | (Uttar Pradesh):  | Viśvarūpa |
| 09. | #38. | Kanauj   | (Uttar Pradesh):  | Viśvarūpa |
| 10. | #39. | Bhuili   | (Uttar Pradesh):  | Viśvarūpa |
| 11. | #42. | Aghat    | (Uttar Pradesh):  | Viśvarūpa |

### VI: CANDELLA KÖNIGREICH (10. -11. Jh.n.Chr.)

01.	#23.	Khajuraho	(Madhya Pradesh):	Vaikunṭha
02.	#24.	Khajuraho	(Madhya Pradesh):	Vaikunṭha
03.	#25.	Khajuraho	(Madhya Pradesh):	Vaikunṭha
04.	#26.	Khajuraho	(Madhya Pradesh):	Vaikunṭha
05.	#27.	Thuvon	(Madhya Pradesh):	Vaikunṭha
06.	#28.	Varanasi	(Uttar Pradesh):	Vaikunṭha
07.	#29.	Kalinjar	(Uttar Pradesh):	Vaikunṭha
08.	#21.	Khajuraho	(Madhya Pradesh):	'Vaikunṭha-Viśvarūpa
09.	#22.	Khajuraho	(Madhya Pradesh):	'Viratarupa'

### LISTE 3 (2)

#### VII: PALA KÖNIGREICH (10. Jh.n.Chr.)

01.	#41.	Nalanda	(Bihar):	Viśvarūpa
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#### VIII: SOLAÑKĪ KÖNIGREICH (10.-14. Jh.n.Chr.)

01.	#04.	Vadavi	(Gujarat):	Vaikunṭha
02.	#05.	Harsundal	(Gujarat):	Vaikunṭha
03.	#07.	Mahudi	(Gujarat):	Vaikunṭha
04.	#08.	Valam	(Gujarat):	Vaikunṭha
05.	#11.	Gunja	(Gujarat):	Vaikunṭha
06.	#12.	Sandera	(Gujarat):	Vaikunṭha
07.	#13.	Patan	(Gujarat):	Vaikunṭha
08.	#15.	Dethali	(Gujarat):	Vaikunṭha

09.	#18.	Balaram	(Gujarat):	Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
10.	#19.	S.Raj.	(Rajasthan):	Vaikuᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
11.	#06.	Harsundal	(Gujarat):	Viᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
12.	#08.	Mahudi	(Gujarat):	Viᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
13.	#10.	Valam	(Gujarat):	Viᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
14.	#14.	Patan	(Gujarat):	Viᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇᅇ
15.	#16.	Siddhapur	(Gujarat):	Trailokyamohana
16.	#17.	Visala	(Gujarat):	Trailokyamohana

D: Viśvarūpa/Vaikunṭha 1992, DFG-Bericht /F: Bericht.92

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## **BERICHT**

UBER DIE IKONOGRAPHIE, CHRONOLOGIE UND INTERPRETATION DES  
ARCHÄOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS

### **TEIL 2.1**

SKULPTUREN DES Vaikuṅṭha - UND Viśvarūpa-  
TYPUS IN REGION 5  
(GUJARAT)

**T.S. Maxwell**

### **TEIL 2.1 (1)**

EINFUHRUNG

-KURZFASSUNG DER ERSTEN ERGEBNISSE

-LANDKARTEN

D:DFG-Bericht 1992(2)/F:Labels etc.

FELDFORSCHUNGSPROJEKT 1991/92

DFG-Az.: Ma 1092/3-2

Kennwort: Viśvarūpa-Vaikuṅṭha

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL  
FOUND IN GUJARAT  
WITH REFERENCE TO Viśvarūpa AND Vaikuṅṭha ICONOGRAPHY

T. S. Maxwell

**FIRST RESULTS**  
(Outline: not finalised)

Some of the results of the 1991 fieldwork in Gujarat are summarised in the following pages. This is an intermediate report (Zwischenbericht) only.

1.

**The Viśvarūpa cult in pre-Solaṅkī Gujarat**  
**6th - 7th centuries AD**

In the absence of epigraphical evidence from the region, the 5th/6th-century rulers of the northern Gujarat area around the adjacent sculptural centres of Devni Mori and Samalaji on the Mesvo River, and the political boundaries of their rule, have not been positively defined. Schastok<sup>1</sup> suggests that between circa 520 and 550 AD, Samalaji, Dungarpur, and Mandasor formed an art-historically identifiable entity within western Malwa, with the capital city at Mandasor<sup>2</sup>; on this cultural basis, western Malwa at that time would have consisted of the Mandasor, Dungarpur, Cittaaur, Kota, and Sabarkantha Districts on the boundaries of modern Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat<sup>3</sup> after the decline of Buddhism at Devi Mori, the Huna invasion (circa 510 AD), and the re-establishment of Indian control by Yasodharman Aulikara circa 527-533 AD. It is proposed that the only political power strong enough to have dominated this region

during the 6th century after these events was the early Kalacuri dynasty based at Mahismati on the Narmada River<sup>4</sup>, south of Mandasor and Ujjain.

In terms of this theory. Viśvarūpa sculptures of the Samalaji type (Sculpture 01 in this Report), including that found in Oganaj village (Sculpture 02 in this Report), were products of this cultural zone in the northwestern provinces of the Aulikara/ territories under yasodharman or even earlier; they can be dated as early as AD 530-550.

According to information provided by the inhabitants of Oganaj in 1991, the Viśvarūpa sculpture now installed in the temple there was unearthed in the village fields.

Nevertheless it seems unlikely that it was locally made, being entirely of Samalaji style and iconography. It is however possible that at the time of its making, in the 6th century, the sculpture was exported to the Oganaj area, only about 80 kilometres south-west of Samalaji, but even this distance would indicate that the pre-Solankī Viśvarūpa cult was of a considerably greater geographical extent than has hitherto been known. If the sculpture was conveyed from Samalaji by boat, on the River Mesvo, it would only have been necessary to transport it some 25 kilometres overland to the west bank of the Sabarmati, where Oganaj stands. The westernmost region of the western Malwa culture-zone might therefore be expanded to incorporate Gujarat downriver from Samalaji at least as far as Ahmedabad, and therefore probably also to the coast at the head of the Gulf of Khambat/Cambay, although Samalaji appears to have remained the production centre for the region.

That the Viśvarūpa cult centred on Samalaji was also known at a slightly later stage farther to the east is proved by the pillar-relief at Mandasor<sup>5</sup>, showing a multiheaded Viśvarūpa image of the Samalaji type, which probably dates to the last quarter of the 6th century. The spread of the Viśvarūpa cult from Samalaji to Oganaj and Mandasor tends to confirm Schastok's thesis concerning the existence of such a culture-zone, and thereby implies a unified and fairly extensive political power in the region.

The southward contact indicated by the Oganaj Viśvarūpa would explain the remarkable image (Sculpture 03 in this Report) found at Kathlal in Kheḍā/Kaira. The sculpture was

discovered there while digging out the foundations for a new school in the 1920s, not far from the village of Pithai, where sculptures of the 7th century were seen in 1991. This accords with the date I have suggested for the Kathlal Viśvarūpa (Maxwell Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990: S.61-63), so that a considerable centre of sculptural activity must have existed in this area at that time. It was in the 7th century that the Maitraka dynasty

expanded from Valabhi/Vallabhipur in peninsular Gujarat to the northeast, their military of advance proceeding as far as Ujjain in AD 610<sup>6</sup>. As Oganaj lies directly on this line of advance, the initial Maitraka contact with the Viśvarūpa cult may well have been made there, and the Kathlal sculpture is therefore quite possibly a 7th-century version of that image, representing an eastward expansion of the cult within the growing Maitraka kingdom. This sculpture is the latest known Viśvarūpa image of the Samalaji type.

The early Viśvarūpa cult in Gujarat therefore arose at Samalaji in second quarter of the 6th century under the early Kalacuri dynasty, spread southward and eastward during the same century, and was perpetuated farther to the south-west under the Maitraka dynasty in the 7th century, after which it appears to have died out.

## 2.

### The Vaikuṅṭha and Viśvarūpa cults in the Solankī kingdom

#### BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

In the late 1930s. Professor M. R. Majumdar conducted "a preliminary study of rare Hindu sculptures in Gujarat", with assistance from the University of Bombay (prior to 1947. Ahmedabad/Amdavad and Kaira/Kheḍā still formed part of the old the Bombay Province, while Mehsana/Mahesana, on the northern frontier of the Bombay administration, was governed from Baroda/Vadodara). His report, published in the



Indian Historical Quarterly<sup>7</sup> in 1940, concentrated on the Vaikuṅṭha, Ananta, Trailokya-mohana, and Viśvarūpa forms of Viṣṇu which are described in the Rūpa-maṇḍana<sup>8</sup>, a Sanskrit text compiled in Chittor/Cittaud (Rajasthan) in the 15th century, and on twelve sculptures of Solankī style that he found in Mahesana District, identifying them iconographically on the basis of the text. This article, and some contemporary notices published by Sankalia<sup>9</sup>, constitute virtually all that is known about multiple iconography in Gujarat. Unfortunately, the text of Majumdar's report suggests very strongly that he relied less on fieldwork and first-hand examination of the sculptures to support his findings, than on photographic evidence alongside that of the Sanskrit text. That this kind of research can lead to error is not difficult to demonstrate.

Majumdar does not, for example, identify the locations of several of the twelve images which he illustrates, and his descriptions are inadequate. Moreover, the unconvincing identification of only one of his images as Vaikuntha<sup>10</sup> results from his even less probable suggestion that three images out of his selection of twelve represented "14-armed Viṣṇu (a form of Ananta)"<sup>11</sup>.

This unsatisfactory state of affairs appeared to me to require closer examination. The primary purposes of the fieldwork undertaken in Gujarat in 1991<sup>12</sup>, some fifty years after the work of Majumdar, were to attempt to find at least some of the sculptures mentioned by him, and to search for others, with the objective of tracing their historical and geographical background, understanding their iconographical development, and hence clarifying the peculiarities of the iconographical texts from Western India.

Majumdar regarded the twelve images which he found - all having more than four arms and nine of them having multiple heads - as "abnormal varieties in the forms of Viṣṇu"<sup>13</sup>, and accounted for this through what he termed the "latitude" permitted to local iconographic schools, deviating from "standard forms" preserved in the silpasastric texts. This statement reflects the common, but erroneous, assumption that the iconographies described in texts of the silpasastra class represent true sculptural practice, all variations of which should be regarded as deviant. In fact, it is clear that the

sculptural practice of the śilpin is the reality, and that silpasastric descriptions, though often cast in the form of prescriptions, represent the brahmanical concern with śāstra, which was written at a considerable remove from the realities of image-making<sup>14</sup>.

This divergence between text and image is clearly illustrated by the Solāṅkī-period iconography of Vaiṣṇava in Gujarat. The 12th-century Aparājitapṛcchā and the 15th-century Rūpamaṇḍana both state that the image of Vaiṣṇava has eight arms. The archaeological evidence, on the other hand, shows that those few Solāṅkī sculptures of Viṣṇu which are inscribed bear the name of Vaiṣṇava and that these images are, in fact, fourteen-armed. Majumdar<sup>15</sup> proposed to identify the fourteen-armed sculptures as representing "a form of Ananta". This proposal was made on the following improbable basis: the Rūpamaṇḍana describes the Ananta form of Viṣṇu as twelve-armed, but no examples of this type are found in the archaeological material; therefore two more arms must have been added, making fourteen, and hence the fourteen-armed sculptures, of which several examples are known, must be variant forms of Ananta. Majumdar recognised that he had no firm foundation for this suggestion: the only direct explanation he offers is made lightheartedly (a possible relationship between the fourteen hand-held attributes and the fourteen worlds), while indirectly he speaks again of sculptural decadence. None of the inscribed images had come to Majumdar's notice, of course, when he wrote this.

The brahmanical authors of the silpasastric texts, although writing at a time when inscribed images of fourteen-armed Vaiṣṇava had been developed in the Solāṅkī kingdom, yet recorded in their texts an outdated iconography in which Vaiṣṇava was said to have eight arms. There can be no doubt that the authors of the Aparājitapṛcchā and the Rūpamaṇḍana based their descriptions, not on the then existing iconography of Viṣṇu, but on an earlier textual tradition, namely that represented by the third Khanda of the Viśṇudharmottarapurāṇa of the 8th or 9th century, which speaks of the Kashmiri type of Vaiṣṇava image. It was this conceptual distance between the intellectual reality of the brahman priesthood (recorded in the textual tradition of the sastras) on the one hand, and the practical reality of the guilds of sculptors (represented by the

archaeological evidence) on the other, which caused Majumdar, and subsequent art historians<sup>16</sup>, to fail to recognise either the revision of Vaikuṅṭha iconography which is represented by the inscribed fourteen-armed images, or the importance of these new Vaikuṅṭha icons to the temple cult of the Solāṅkī kingdom.

## FINDINGS

In my 1991 fieldwork in Gujarat; I was able to document thirteen sculptures of the Solāṅkī-period Vaikuṅṭha type, four Viśvarūpa images of the same period, and three of pre-Solāṅkī date. Only five of the twelve recorded by Majumdar were found still to be in the northern districts, and one of these could not be documented due to the hostility of the temple priests; but eleven additional examples were found and documented with the assistance of the Gujarat State Archaeological Survey and the Indian Trust for Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, of which several are new discoveries, while only four are in museums. Of the six complete fourteen-armed Vaikuṅṭha icons traced, three were clearly inscribed with this name on the base.

The earliest Solāṅkī Vaikuṅṭha image which is still in situ appears on the small Viṣṇu temple at Sandera (Sculpture 12 in this Report), which Majumdar did not notice in his survey. There can be no serious doubt that the structure and its iconography should be dated to the second quarter of the 11th century, and thus associated with the beginning of the Solāṅkī rise to political power, when the new kingdom was consolidating its presence in the region around the capital city, Anahilavada.

The early Vaikuṅṭha image in the external niche of the north wall of the Sandera temple was ultimately derived from the Kashmiri form, with the multiple heads and eight arms, and the deity stands alone, without Garuḍa, but accompanied by figures representing weapon-personifications as in Kashmir. Most of the hands and attributes are broken, but sufficient remains to show that the icon held the mace and disk, bow and arrow, and the musala of Saṅkarṣaṇa. It is important to notice that the peculiarly Solāṅkī combined gesture of the two front hands, technically the "yogamudrā", comprising the vyākhyāna- and dhyāna-mudrās, make their appearance even in this early phase.

The transition to the 14-armed form of Vaikuṅṭha, which would have occurred from the end of the 11th, or the beginning of the 12th century onward, during the expansion of the kingdom under Jayasiṃha, is represented by the Harsundal and Valam images (Sculptures 05 and 09 in this Report), of which the Harsundal version is plainly inscribed on the base with the name Vaikuṅṭha.

It was discovered that, in both these cases, the new Vaikuṅṭha icon was paired with a 20-armed Viśvarūpa image. The interior layout of the Valam temple shows that these Vaikuṅṭha-Viśvarūpa pairs were placed at the centre of each side-wall of the sanctum inside Solaṅkī Viṣṇu temples. This can be confirmed at least in the case of the Valam temple, as the relief carving around the interior sanctum walls is specifically designed for the integration of these two images.

The rise of this dual cult of Vaikuṅṭha-Viśvarūpa coincide with the territorial expansion of the Solaṅkī kingdom; there can be little doubt that it is an expression of political power. That the Vaikuṅṭha cult itself was thereby elevated through its association with Viśvarūpa, is indicated by the shift of the icon from the external wall of the sanctum, as at Sandera, to the interior of the sanctum, as at Valam.

Unfortunately the Valam evidence, which alone survives to testify to the rise of the dual cult, does not clearly indicate the exact identity of the main Viṣṇu image on the altar against the rear sanctum wall; the original icon there has been replaced. In later pairs of this kind, such as the two images found at Mahudi (Sculptures 07 and 08 in this Report), the inscription identifying the 14-armed figure as Vaikuṅṭha was omitted; presumably as the cult became established, it was no longer considered necessary to affirm the identity of the 14-armed image as the same as that of the old 8-armed icon in a new and aggrandised form.

## **MAP OF REGION 5 (GUJARAT):**

## DISTRIBUTION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL KEY TO THE MAP

01. SAMALAJI / SABARKANTHA [pre-Solaṅkī kingdom]: Viśvarūpa Kalasi chokra ni Ma temple
02. OGANAJ / AHMEDABAD [pre-Solaṅkī kingdom]: Viśvarūpa Tripuri Mātā temple
03. KATHLAL / KHEDĀ [pre-Solaṅkī kingdom]: Viśvarūpa M. R. Seth High School
00. PITHAI / KHEDĀ [pre-Solaṅkī kingdom]: temple sculptures Saktipitha
04. VADAVI / MAHESANA [Solaṅkī kingdom]: Vaikuṅṭha Brahmani Mātā temple
- 05./06 HARSUNDAL / MAHESANA: [Solaṅkī kingdom]: Vaikuṅṭha + Viśvarūpa Visat Mātā nu Sthanak
- 07./08. MAHUDI / MAHESANA [Solaṅkī kingdom]: Vaikuṅṭha + Viśvarūpa Kotyarka temple
00. VIJAPUR / MAHESANA [Solaṅkī kingdom]: Viṣṇu Varāha-Svarūpa temple
- 09./10. VALAM / MAHESANA [Solaṅkī kingdom]: Vaikuṅṭha + Viśvarūpa Kṛṣṇa temple
11. GUNJA / MAHESANA [Solaṅkī Kingdom]: Vaikuṅṭha Domresar talav
12. SANDERA / MAHESANA [early Solaṅkī kingdom]: Vaikuṅṭha Viṣṇu temple / Sūrya (Śiva) temple
00. SUNAK / MAHESANA [early Solaṅkī kingdom]: Śiva temple Nilakanthesvara temple
- 13./14. ATAN / MAHESANA [Solaṅkī kingdom]: Vaikuṅṭha + Viśvarūpa Mahā-Lakṣmi temple / Gaṅgā Mātā temple

15. DETHALI / MAHESANA [Solankī kingdom]: Vaikuṅṭha Baroda Museum
16. SIDDHAPUR/ MAHESANA [Solankī kingdom]: Trailokyamohana Baroda Museum
17. VISALA / MAHESANA [Solankī kingdom]: Trailokyamohana Baroda Museum
18. BALARĀM / MAHESANA [Solankī kingdom]: Vaikuntha, Baroda Museum
19. SOUTHERN RAJASTHAN [Solankī kingdom]: Vaikuṅṭha Bombay PWMWI

***CENTRE OF  
THE Vaikuṅṭha AND Viśvarūpa CULTS IN THE SOLANKĪ KINGDOM  
(FROM 11<sup>th</sup> CENTURY A.D. ONWARD)***

The densely shaded area represents the probable maximum extent of the Vaikuṅṭha and Viśvarūpa cults in the heartland of the Solankī kingdom in the 11th century A.D. and subsequently, based on the location of the archaeological evidence. The core of this area is the region to the south and east of the Solankī capital, Anahilapataka (Patan), in the Mahesana District of northern Gujarat.

The geographical factors defining this concentrated cult centre are the Little Rann of Kacch on the west, the Thar Desert and the southern extent of the Aravalli Mountains (including Mt. Abu) on the north, and the River Sabarmati on the east.

From circa the 12th century onward, the archaeological evidence indicates that there was a marked tendency to combine the worship of the Vaikuṅṭha and Viśvarūpa aspects of Viṣṇu in the shrine-rooms of temples in this area (at Valam, Harsundal, mahudi). There is no known evidence of the expansion of the combined cult in this form beyond the boundaries of the densely shaded area shown on the map. Related

forms of the Viṣṇu, such as Trailokyamohana, spread southwards into peninsular Gujarat.

Separate Vaikuṅṭha and Viśvarūpa images of Solāṅkī style and iconography are known to the northeast, in the Abu, Udaipur (Ahar), and Dungarpur (Pith) districts of southern Rajasthan. These regions are indicated by the less densely shaded areas on the map. There is no direct evidence so far available for the combined cult of the Solāṅkīs in these regions. But the building of a post-Solāṅkī Viṣṇu temple in the Udaipur Viṣṇu images in the external devakosthas, indicates the continuation of connected cult concepts.

## TEIL 2.1 (2)

### KATALOG DES DOKUMENTIERTEN ARCHÄOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS

#### -IKONOGRAPHIE UND CHRONOLOGIE

#### -ABBILDUNGEN UND DIAGRAMME

### 01. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 137 x 73

urspr. 8 Hande

Kalasi chokra ni Ma-Tempel, Samalaji, Modasa Taluka, Sabarkantha District

#### 01.1 / 01.2 DESCRIPTION / IDENTIFICATION:

s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.6.1990, Nr.26, S.60. Bei der im September 1991 durchgeführten Forschungsreise in Gujarat wurde diese sehr wichtige Skulptur erneut dokumentiert; dabei konnte sie mit dem in Oganaj (s. Nr.2 in diesem Bericht) neuentdeckten Viśvarūpa-Bildnis stilistisch und ikonographisch verglichen werden.

Nr.01: Samalaji

Kalasi chokra ni Ma-Tempel

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### 02. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 142, 25 x 83, 50

Tripura (bzw. Triguna) Mātā-Tempel, Oganaj, Daskroi Taluka, Ahmedabad District

#### 02.1 DESCRIPTION:



This extremely important sculpture is installed in the sanctum of the temple, which is modern, with some older sculptures inserted into the niches. The light brown stone has recently been painted in thick oil-based colours to transform the god and all the emanations into female figures. The sculptural details appear to have been considerably eroded; the effect is made worse by the thickness of the paint, which conceals all fine detail, and by the use of plaster to build up such broken features as the nose.

The sculpture is a variant of the Mahā-Viṣṇu or Viśvarūpa in situ at Samalaji. It is 5 cm taller and 10 cm wider at the base than the Viśvarūpa at Samalaji; the size of the Viṣṇu figure has been increased (15 cm taller), and its height is no longer the same as the base width, as it is at Samalaji. The discovery of this sculpture makes a comparative study of the style and iconography of the Samalaji Viśvarūpa (Bericht an die DFG vom 30.6.1990, S.60, Nr. 26) possible for the first time.

--See attached Comparative Table of Dimensions.

## 02.1.2 PRELIMINARY ICONOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS:

### The hand-held attributes

#### *RIGHT*

1. khaḍga (blade upright)
2. śara (point down)
3. cakra (rim to front, on head of cakrapuruṣa)
4. varada (hand partly broken)

#### *LEFT*

[rear to front]

1. kheṭaka (reversed)
2. śārngā (upright)
3. gadā (knurled top on head of gadādevī)
4. broken (? bījapūraka)

In view of other close similarities, it can reasonably be assumed that this was also the original iconography of the main Viṣṇu figure in the Viśvarūpa image installed in the Kalasi Chokra ni Ma temple on Visramaghat, Samalaji (Sculpture 01 in this Report).

## 02.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

An early cult image of Viśvarūpa, of the Samalaji type, dateable to the 6th century AD; one of the earliest Viśvarūpa sculptures in Western India.

02.

## APPENDIX

### Proportions of the Samalaji and Oganaj Viśvarūpas Comparative Table of Dimensions

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Samalaji</i>	<i>Oganaj</i>
<i>Total height</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>142.25</i>
<i>Width of plinth base</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>83.5</i>
<i>Height of Viṣṇu figure</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>Width between knees</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>55.5</i>
<i>Height of central face</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Height of central crown</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Height of Hayagriva</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18.5</i>
<i>Height of Brahma</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>19.5</i>
<i>Height of Śiva</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Height of Balarama</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Height of Rama</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>29.5</i>
<i>Height of Cakrapurusa</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>30.5</i>

The Samalaji and Oganaj Viśvarūpa sculptures are very close in size and relative proportions. The Oganaj image is slightly larger, and the size of the Viṣṇu figure has been considerably enlarged. The symmetry of the original Samalaji sculpture derives from the fact that the width of the base and the height of the Viṣṇu figure are equal; this essential proportion is missing from the Oganaj image.

Note: The dimensions and proportions of the Desai Viśvarūpa must be compared with these two, to establish further chronological evidence.

The iconography of the two sculptures is almost certainly identical; a full comparison will be possible only if the paint can be stripped away and the identities of all the surrounding figures established.

Nr. 02: Oganaj

Tripura Mātā-Tempel

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### 03. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 112 x 80

urspr. 8 Hande

M. R. Seth High School, Kathlal, Kapadvanj Taluka, Kheḍā District

#### 03.1 DESCRIPTION:

Das Bildnis wurde 1991 erneut untersucht und ausführlich dokumentiert: Viṣṇu with three crowned human heads, perhaps seated (legs broken off at upper thighs); the arms and all attributes are damaged or lost. Only the conch can be distinguished, held in the 2nd left hand. A large semicircular nimbus behind the heads is populated with miniature figures above the level of the shoulders. These consist of a central vertical register of three overlapping figures (all indistinguishable due to damage) on a raised wedge-

shaped backing piece; to either side of this originally 4 vertically overlapping pairs were shown in low relief, arranged radially, all of which are too damaged for identification. The proper left side of the nimbus has at some time been cut down and smoothed on a level with the tops of the lower figures. The iconographical conception is that of the Samalaji Viśvarūpas, but the style is considerably later, as can be seen particularly in the treatment of the hair beneath the crown rim and the jewellery.

### **03. PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

A cult image of MAHĀ-VIṢṆU or Viśvarūpa, based on the Samalaji/Oganaj series.

Nr.03: Kathlal

M.R. Seth High School

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### **04. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Marmor: 72,5 x 43

14 Hande

Brahmani Mātā-Tempel, Vadavi, Kadi Taluka, Mahesana District

#### **04.1 DESCRIPTION:**

This is a 14-armed image of Vaikuṅṭha seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa, with the 10 avatāras in the margins and a seated figure at the apex of the arch. The sculpture was found half-buried in the ground beside the south wall of the Brahmani Mātā temple on the outskirts of Vadavi village, on the bank of a lake. It was excavated with the assistance of the Sarpanch (village headman) and cleaned with water from the lake. After photography, the Sarpanch was advised to protect the sculpture by moving it inside the temple, and this was done. The importance of the sculpture was later reported to the Collector of Mahesana, who undertook to move it to a place of safety.

#### **04.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

Cult image of 14-armed Vaiṣṇuṭha.

Nr. 04: Vadavi

Brahmani Mātā-Tempel

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## 05. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 68 x 43

20 Hande

Visat Mātā nu Sthanak, Harsundal, Mahesana Taluka, Mahesana District

### 05.1 DESCRIPTION:

Harsundal village is 20 km south of Mahesana, 6 km from Mandali village, and 4 km west of the Ahmedabad-Mahesana road. At the back of the village stands a platform with a solid wall, painted blue, at the western end, and a cubicle at the centre for the symbol of Visat Mātā. Several loose sculptures from a Solankī temple of the 11th century are cemented into the wall to left and right of the Mātā shrine. These are dominated by two Viṣṇu images, which I designated "A" (Harsundal 1), on the left, and "B" (Harsundal 2), on the right. Both sculptures represent three-faced Viṣṇu seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa. The animal faces have ringed crowns, the central face a solid crown. The sculptures are of white marble, and severely damaged. They form a matched pair (cp. the sanctum layout at Valam).

Sculpture A (Harsundal 1) is 20-armed. The left face is that of Varāha, the right of Narasiṃha. The two uppermost hands were originally raised above the heads. Viśvarūpa appears seated directly upon Garuḍa, without a throne. All the attributes are destroyed except the eroded remains of the kamandalu in the lowered left hand. The front hands originally made the dhyāna/vyākhyāna-mudrā in front of the body. There are avatāra figures down both margins of the slab.

## 05.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

A Solankī-period cult image of 20-armed Viśvarūpa.

Nr. 05: Harsundal

Visat Mātā nu Sthanak

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## 06. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 71 x 42

14 Hande

Visat Mātā nu Sthanak, Harsundal, Mahesana Taluka, Mahesana District

### 06.1 DESCRIPTION:

Harsundal village is 20 km south of Mahesana, 6 km from Mandali village, and 4 km west of the Ahmedabad-Mahesana road. At the back of the village stands a platform with a solid wall, painted blue, at the western end, and a cubicle at the centre for the symbol of Visat Mātā.

Several loose sculptures from a Solankī temple of the 11th century are cemented into the wall to left and right of the Mātā shrine. These are dominated by two Viṣṇu images, which I designated "A" (Harsundal 1), on the left, and "B" (Harsundal 2), on the right. Both sculptures represent three-faced Viṣṇu seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa. The animal faces have ringed crowns, the central face a solid crown. The sculptures are of white marble, and severely damaged. They form a matched pair (cp. the sanctum layout at Valam).

Sculpture B (Harsundal 2) has 14 arms and is inscribed on the base with the word Vaikuṅṭha. The left face is that of Varāha, the right of Narasiṃha. The god appears seated on a throne behind Garuḍa. The front hands are in the dhyāna/vyākhyāna-mudrā. Also preserved to some degree are the gadā and varada-mudrā, as well as the kamandalu. There are avatāra figures down both margins of the slab.

## 06.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

A Solankī-period cult image of 14-armed Vaikuṅṭha.

Nr. 06: Harsundal

Visat Mātā nu Sthanak

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## 07. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor: 74 x 42

14 Hande

Kotyarka-Tempel, Mahudi, Vijapur Taluka, Mahesana District

### 07.1 DESCRIPTION:

The Kotyarka temple is a large modern structure, built in the 1930s on the west bank of the Sabarmati river. There are two Solankī sculptures in white marble, set into the outer wall of the sanctum on the east side, flanking the entrance. They both represent three-headed Viṣṇu seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa, and their dimensions suggest that they form a matched pair (cp. Valam temple), although specific iconographical and even stylistic differences (e.g. the treatment of Garuḍa) could indicate a time-difference. I designated the left-hand image Sculpture "A" (Mahudi 1), and the right-hand image Sculpture "B" (Mahudi 2).

Sculpture A (Mahudi 1) is 14-armed. The left face is that of Varāha, the right of Narasiṃha. The front hands are in the dhyāna/vyākhyāna-mudrā. There are no separate avatāra figures.

## 07.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

A Solāṅkī-period cult image of 14-armed Vaiṣṇu.

Nr. 07: Mahudi  
Kotyarka-Tempel  
(Majumdar 1940)

Nr. 07: Mahudi  
Kotyarka-Tempel  
(Maxwell 1991)

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## 08. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor: 73 x 41

20 Hande

Kotyarka-Tempel, Mahudi, Vijapur Taluka, Mahesana District

### 08.1 DESCRIPTION:

The Kotyarka temple is a large modern structure, built in the 1930s on the west bank of the Sabarmati river. There are two Solāṅkī sculptures in white marble, set into the outer wall of the sanctum on the east side, flanking the entrance. They both represent three-headed Viṣṇu seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa, and their dimensions suggest that they form a matched pair (cp. Valam temple), although specific iconographical and even stylistic differences (e.g. the treatment of Garuḍa) could indicate a time-difference. I



designated the left-hand image Sculpture "A" (Mahudi 1), and the right-hand image Sculpture "B" (Mahudi 2).

Sculpture B (Mahudi 2) is 20-armed. The left face is that of Varāha, the right of Narasiṃha. The front hands are in the dhyāna/vyākhyāna-mudrā. There are no separate avatāra figures.

## 08.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

A Solankī-period cult image of 20-armed Viśvarūpa.

Nr 08: Mahudi  
Kotyarka-Tempel  
(Majumdar 1940)

Nr.08: Mahudi  
Kotyarka-Tempel  
(Maxwell 1991)

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## 09. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 99 x 66

14 Hande

Kṛṣṇa-Tempel, Valam, Visnagar Taluka, Mahesana District

### 09.1 DISCRIPTION:

The Kṛṣṇa temple at Valam faces north. It has recently been brightly painted, inside and out, obscuring all sculptural detail (cp. the Oganaj Viśvarūpa). Damaged images have clearly been 'restored' with plaster (e.g. the faces, which would have been broken)

before painting, which further complicates interpretation. The temple and its sculpture, which appears to be in its original location is of the Solankī period.

The sanctum interior is lined by many forms of Viṣṇu (the exact number is unknown, as the temple strongbox blocks the northwest corner) and other deities sculpted in relief between pilasters. Of these, the central image on the east and west walls is magnified and set in a large niche with pillars, a chadya and a makara-torana. I designated the figure on the left/east Sculpture "A" (Valam 1), and that on the right/west Sculpture "B" (Valam 2).

Sculpture A (Valam 1) has three faces (Varāha left, Narasiṃha right) and 14 arms, and is seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa.

## 09.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

A Solankī-period cult image of 14-armed Vaikuṅṭha.

Nr.09: Valam

Kṛṣṇa-Tempel

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## 10. DREOKOPFIGHER VIṢṆU

Stein: 100 x 65

20 Hande

Kṛṣṇa-Tempel, Valam, Visnagar Taluka, Mahesana District

### 10.1 DESCRIPTION:

The Kṛṣṇa temple at Valam faces north. It has recently been brightly painted, inside and out, obscuring all sculptural detail (cp. the Oganaj Viśvarūpa). Damaged images have

clearly been 'restored' with plaster (e.g. the faces, which would have been broken) before painting, which further complicates interpretation. The temple and its sculpture, which appears to be in its original location, is of the Solankī period.

The sanctum interior is lined by many forms of Viṣṇu (the exact number is unknown, as the temple strongbox blocks the northwest corner) and other deities sculpted in relief between pilasters. Of these, the central image on the east and west walls is magnified and set in a large niche with pillars, a chadya and a makara-torana. I designated the figure on the left/east Sculpture "A" (Valam 1), and that on the right/west Sculpture "B" (Valam 2).

Sculpture B (Valam 2) has three faces (Varāha left, Narasiṃha right) and 20 arms, and is seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa.

## 10.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

A Solankī-period cult image of 20-armed Viśvarūpa.

Nr. 10: Valam  
Kṛṣṇa-Tempel  
(Majumdar 1940)

Nr. 10: Valam  
Kṛṣṇa-Tempel  
(Maxwell 1991)

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## 11. DREIKOPFIGER STEHENDER VIṢṆU

Stein: 91 (Viṣṇu-Figur 76) x 71  
urspr. 8 Hande

In situ:

Domresar Talav (Nordufer), Gunja, Visnagar Taluka, Mahesana District.

### **11.1 DESCRIPTION:**

Gunja village is about 10 Km NW of Visnagar in a straight line, but difficult to find by road. The Domresar talav is a large expanse of water beside which the village stands. The remains of a temple stand in the water, linked to the west bank by a stone causeway. There is a considerable mound along the north bank, with a cleft running from the village down to the water, used by the villagers and their cattle. The mound represents the remains of at least one temple, parts of which were found by the waterside. I have reported the position of the sculpture to the Collector of Mahesana, with the recommendation that it be removed to a place of safety before further damage occurs.

The damaged sculpture was found on the east side of the cleft, lying exposed halfway up the slope. It is a block from a temple wall, sculpted on two sides. The front side represents a niche containing a standing figure of Viṣṇu with three heads (Varāha left, Narasiṃha right) and probably eight arms, flanked by the āyudhapuruṣas and two camaradharinis. The side-heads have ringed crowns. Vaikuṅṭha and the cāmara-bearers stand upon lotuses.

### **11.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION**

Vaikuṅṭha integrated with the external iconographic programme of an early Solankī Viṣṇu temple (compare Sandera).

Nr. 11: Gunja

Domresar Talav

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## 12. DREIKOPFIGER STEHENDER VIṢṆU

Stein: 50 x 26 (Rahmen 74 x 42)

8 Hande

Viṣṇu-Tempel, Sandera, Patan Taluka, Mahesana District

### 12.1 DESCRIPTION:

Sandera (Sanderav, Sander) lies 15 km SW of Unjha in a straight line, 8 km SW of Sunak, and some 16 km SE of Patan (Anahilavada, the Solankī capital). It has become an important place of pilgrimage with the rise of the cult of Sanderi Mātā. There are five temples in a compound, all facing east. From south to north: (1.) a large modern structure; (2.) the ancient Viṣṇu temple; (3.) the ancient 'Sūrya' (Śiva) temple; (4.) the modern Sanderi Mātā shrine; and (5.) another old temple at the northern edge of the compound. The Viṣṇu temple consists of maṇḍapa, vimāna, and śikhara. It faces east and has three bhadra images: Narasiṃha (south), Varāha (west), and three-headed Viṣṇu with the faces of these two avatāras (north). It is an early Solankī temple of the 11th century; the Viṣṇu sculpture -- particularly in the position of the front pair of hands, showing separate dhyāna and vyākhyāna-mudrās -- is therefore of great importance to the origin and development of Vaikuṅṭha and Viśvarūpa imagery during the Solankī period. This is one of the very earliest such images of the rising Solankī power, as indicated by its proximity to the capital. Its iconographical logic is explicitly shown by positioning it after those of Narasiṃha and Varāha.

### 12.2 CHRONOLOGY:

The geographical location of Sandera (see above) places it in the immediate vicinity of the Solankī capital. The temple would most probably have been erected during the reign of one of the major Solankī kings of the 11th century: Bhīma I (ca. AD 1022-1064), Karna (ca. AD 1064-1094), or possibly Jayasiṃha (ca. AD 1094-1143). The lesser rulers of this century were the three successors to the founder of the dynasty, Mularaja: Camunda (ca. AD 996-1022), Vallabharaja (who ruled for only six months during AD

1009/1010), and Durlabha (ca. AD 1010-1022); these are assumed to have been relatively unpretentious, and no inscriptions from their reigns are known.

The known epigraphical evidence most closely associated with the Sandera temple is the Sunak inscription on two copper plates of Maharaja-Trailokyamalla-Karnadeva, ruling in the capital, Anahilapataka, who grants land in Laghu-Dabhi for the maintenance of a tank in Sunaka. Laghu-Dabhi is the modern village of Dabhi, 1.5 kilometres south-west of Sunak; Sandera lies only 3 kilometres beyond it to the south-west. The inscription is dated in the capital, in the reign of Karna, in the Year VS 1148 = AD 1091. (EI I: 316; DHNI: 963-964).

In view of the proximity of Sandera to the capital, and the diminutive size and simplicity of ornament of its Viṣṇu temple, it may be assumed that this shrine was erected in the reign of either Bhīma I (the contemporary of Mahmud of Ghazni, who led his army in the attack on Somnath, passing through Bhīma's domains by way of Anahilapataka and therefore very close to Sandera, in AD 1025), or of Karna; at any event before the imperial expansion of the Solankī kingdom through the conquests of Jayasimha (ca. AD 1094-1143). The small Sandera temple, and its image of Vaikuṅṭha, can thus safely be assigned to the period AD 1029-1094. This might reasonably be narrowed down to the reign of Bhima after the invasion of Mahmud and to the period when he is known to have been issuing land grants from the capital (in AD 1029, 1030, and 1036), among others to Vaiṣṇava Brahmans named Vāsudeva and Govinda (DHNI: 948-949). A date in the second quarter of the 11th century (ca. AD 1025-1050) is therefore acceptable.

### **12.3 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

One of the earliest Solankī-period 8-armed standing Vaikuṅṭha images, integrated with a temple iconographic programme (cp. Gunja).

Circa AD 1025-1050+.

Nr. 12: Sandera

### 13. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor: H. 60

14 Hande

Gaṅgā Mātā-Tempel, Patan, Patan Taluka, Mahesana District

#### 13.1 DESCRIPTION:

Patan is the ancient capital of the Solāṅkīs (Anahilavada). There are very few remains from Solāṅkī times. The Gaṅgā Mātā temple is modern, consisting of many shrines closely grouped within a fairly large compound.

The image of three-headed Viṣṇu, with 14 hands, two of which are raised above the shoulders, is a very late piece in shining white marble. It is installed in one of the peripheral shrines to the left inside the gateway, a few yards from the priest's office. My notes on this image, including the dimensions, were lost later in the day. The sculpture stands on a shelf-like altar, and is about 60 cm in height.

#### 13.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

A late Solāṅkī-period cult image of 14-armed Vaikuṅṭha.

Nr. 13: Patan

Gaṅgā Mātā-Tempel

(Majumdar 1940)

Nr. 13: Patan

Gaṅgā Mātā-Tempel  
(Maxwell 1991)

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## 14. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor: 37 x 20,5

20 Hande

Mahā-Lakṣmī-Tempel, Patan, Patan Taluka, Mahesana District

### 14.1 DESCRIPTION:

Patan is the ancient capital of the Solāṅkīs (Anahilavada). There are very few remains from Solāṅkī times. The Mahā-Lakṣmī temple is modern and prosperous; a sculptured torana and a new doorframe were being erected during my visit. It is a large temple, with three very large sculptures in the elongated sanctum.

To the right of the main entrance, between the corner of the temple and the priests' private entrance, is a small Śiva shrine with a Liṅga and a Nandi bull in the centre of the floor. On a low ledge against the back wall are ranged seven miscellaneous sculptures, all of the Solāṅkī period and in white marble (including Viṣṇu-and-Lakṣmī, Gaṇeśa, Sūrya). The fourth sculpture from the left is a small white marble image of 20 armed, three-headed Viṣṇu, mounted on anthropomorphic Garuḍa.

### 14.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

A small Solāṅkī-period cult image of 20-armed Viśvarūpa, probably a domestic icon.

Nr. 14: Patan

Mahā-Lakṣmī-Tempel



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## 15. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor

14 Hande

Baroda Museum AC.2.3 aus Dethali, Siddhapur Taluka, Mahesana District

### 15.1 DESCRIPTION:

A white marble cult image of three-headed Viṣṇu seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa. The god has 14 arms, the front two hands being held in the characteristic vyākhyāna-/dhyāna-mudrā. The raised rear hands, in later periods represented as empty, here hold pāśa and kheṭaka. Three of the attributes on the right side and one on the left are broken. The remainder are clearly represented and well preserved:

- |                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| 7. pāśa            | kheṭaka   |
| 6. cakra           | gadā      |
| 5. ----            | aṅkuśa    |
| 4. ----            | śaṅkha    |
| 3. ----            | ----      |
| 2. varada/akṣamālā | kamaṇḍalu |
| 1. vyākhāna        | dhyāna.   |

The centre of the base is inscribed with the name VIKUMTHA (cp. the 14-armed inscribed figure at Harsundal, No.6 in this Report).

### 15.2

A Solankī-period cult image of 14-Vaikunṭha.

Nr. 15: Baroda (Museum)  
aus Dethali

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## 16. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor

16 Hande

Watson Museum (Rajkot), aus Siddhapur, Siddhapur Taluka, Mahesana District.

### 16.1 DESCRIPTION:

A white marble cult image of three-headed Viṣṇu seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa. The god has 16 arms, the front two hands being held in the stiff and somewhat crudely represented combined vyākhyāna- and dhyāna mudrās. The four-headed, 16-armed, Garuḍa-mounted Viṣṇu is named Trailokyamohana in both the Aparājitapṛcchā (219.38-41) and Rūpmaṇḍana (3.60-62). The same attributes are given in both texts, and in the same order: Right: gadā - vajra [ARP] / cakra [RM] - aṅkuśa - bāṇa - śakti - cakra - varada - yogamudrā // Left: mudgara - pāśa - śārṅga - śaṅkha - padma / abja - kamaṇḍalu / kundika - srṅga - yogamudrā.

Some of the attributes in the sculpture are damaged, and the rest are not represented in precisely the order given in the texts. The combined gesture of the front hands, characteristic since the 10th century, is here termed the yoga-mudrā. The curiously shaped object in the uppermost left hand, opposite the mace, is identified by both texts as mudgara, the hammer-weapon. The four heads are given in these texts as human, Narasiṃha. Boar (sukara), and Kapila, as represented in certain Kashmiri icons and prescribed by Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa III; Viṣṇu images having the first three faces only (without the Kapila mask at the back) are known in Gujarat. A small seated figure (not mentioned in the texts) appears at the right side of the plinth.

## 16.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

A late Solankī-period cult image of 16-armed TRAILOKYAMOHANA.

Nr. 16: Rajkot (Museum)  
aus Sidhapur

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## 17. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor

16 Hande

Baroda Museum AC.2.48, aus Visala, Mahesana District

### 17.1 DESCRIPTION:

A white marble cult image of three-headed Viṣṇu seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa. The god has 16 arms, the front two hands, though damaged, clearly having been held in the combined vyākhyāna- and dhyāna mudrās. The main figure is shown against an arched stele with the ten avatāras represented on the margins, beginning with Matsya and Kūrma on the plinth (cp. Vadavi, No.04 in this Report), the raised uppermost hands are empty. The long object held in one of the left hands is the mudgara, or hammer-weapon, mentioned in the Aparājjitapṛchhā and Rūpamaṇḍana.

### 17.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

A late or post-Solankī-period cult image of 16-armed TRALOKYAMOHANA.

Nr. 17: Baroda (museum)  
aus Visala

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## 18. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor

14 Hande

Baroda Museum, aus Balaram, N. Gujarat (keine präzisere Information vorhanden)

### 18.1 DESCRIPTION:

A white marble cult image of three-headed Viṣṇu seated on anthropomorphic Garuḍa and flanked by two diminutive standing figures. The god has 14 arms, the front two hands, though damaged, clearly being held in the combined vyākhyāna- and dhyāna mudrās. Behind the main figure, the stele is provided with compartmented margins and an arched top, suggesting that the ten avatāras were to have been represented at the sides; the sculpture appears to be unfinished. Three attributes on the right and one on the left are too damaged to be identified; the remainder are:

7. cāmara	kheṭaka
6. cakra	gadā
5. ----	śaṅkha
4. ----	śārṅga (dhanus)
3. ----	----
2. varada/akṣamālā	kamaṇḍalu
1. vyākhyāna	dhyāna.

The centre of the base is inscribed with the name VAYAKUMTHU (cp. the 14- armed inscribed figures at Harsundal and from Dethali, Nos.6 and 15 in this Report).

### 18.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

A Solankī-period cult image of 14-armed Vaikuṅṭha.

Nr.18: Baroda (Museum)

aus Balaram

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## 19. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Marmor: H. 36

urspr. 8(?) Hānde

Bombay (PMMWI No. 95), aus Sud-Rajasthan (genauer Fundort unbekannt)

### 19.1 DESCRIPTION:

This well known and frequently published white marble fragment of a three-headed Viṣṇu image conveys much of the essence of the early Solāṅkī-period sculptural aesthetic. The idealised human and animal faces, the intricately represented crowns and headbands, and the integration of the three heads into a convincing unity, are the work of a master sculptor. It clearly represents an historical moment during the northward expansion of Solāṅkī power into the Abu region of southern Rajasthan in the late 10th or early 11th century, when it was still stylistically acceptable to represent the animal side-heads as large iconographic portraits of the Lion and Boar incarnations, before the compressed abbreviations of these profiles became conventional. The object below the Boar's head is the elbow of the right arm of a figure of Lakṣmī, the god's principal Śakti, who in the complete sculpture would have appeared seated on his left thigh and embracing his neck. This enables a reconstruction of the image-type to be made: Lakṣmī could not appear in this position if Viṣṇu were seated, and he therefore was depicted riding on Garuḍa; and at this early date, before the number of arms was increased to fourteen and the side-faces were compressed, Viṣṇu was probably still eight-armed.

### 19.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

Fragment of an early Solāṅkī-period 8-armed Vaiṣṇava, mounted on anthropomorphic Garuda and accompanied by Lakṣmī.

Nr. 19: Bombay (Museum)  
aus Sud-Rajasthan

D: Viśvarūpa/Vaikunṭha 1992/F:Bericht.92

FELDFORSCHUNGSPROJEKT 1991/92

DFG-Az.: Ma 1069/3-1

Kennwort: Vaikuṅṭha-Viśvarūpa

## BERICHT

### UBER DIE IKONOGRAPHIE, CHRONOLOGIE UND INTERPRETATION

### DES ARCHAOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS

#### TEIL 2.2

#### SKULPTUREN DES Vaikuṅṭha- UND Viśvarūpa-

#### TYPUS IN REGIONEN 6/1 UND 7

(NORDLICHES MADHYA PRADESH UND UTTAR PRADESH MIT  
WESTLICHEM BIHAR)

T. S. Maxwell

#### TEIL 2.2 (1)

#### EINFUHRUNG

-KURZFASSUNG DER ERSTEN ERGEBNISSE

-LANDKARTEN

D: DFG-Bericht 1992(2)/F:Research etc.  
FELDFORSCHUNGSPROJEKT 1991/92  
DFG-Az.: Ma 1092/3-2  
Kennwort: Viśvarūpa-Vaikunṭha

**THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL  
FOUND IN CENTRAL AND CENTRAL-NORTH INDIA  
WITH REFERENCE TO Viśvarūpa AND Vaikunṭha ICONOGRAPHY**

**FIRST RESULTS**

(Outline: not finalised)

Some of the results of the 1992 fieldwork in Northern Madhya Pradesh and Central Uttar Pradesh are summarised in the following pages. *This is an intermediate report -- Zwischenbericht -- only.*

**1.**

*The Viśvarūpa and Vaikunṭha cults  
in the Gurjara-Pratīhāra Empire  
and in the peripheral Rajput Kingdoms  
of Central, Northern, and Western India  
8th - 10th centuries AD*

In the first period of Gurjara-Pratīhāra expansion northward in the 8th century, the Viṣṇu-cult along the Ujjayini-Kanyakubja axis was characterised by the icon of Viśvarūpa Viṣṇu. This is demonstrated by four images and fragments: the Tumain



Viśvarūpa (s. Maxwell, Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990: S.172-177, "The Viśvarūpa Fragment from Tumain"), the Private Collection Viśvarūpa (Sculpture No.20 in this Report), and the Eskenazi and Russek Fragments (Maxwell, Viśvarūpa, New Delhi 1988: 249 and P1.65).

When the Pratīhāra capital was subsequently shifted from Ujjayini/Ujjain to Kanyakubja/Kanauj in the early 9th century, images of Viśvarūpa continued to be established in temples along the whole length of the new primary power axis in the Gangetic plain for a hundred years, from Etah through Kanyakubja to Mirzapur. This can be seen in the ten Viśvarūpa images and fragments from Aghat, Manwadhi, Kanauj, Dalmau, Bhuali and Bhuli (Sculptures 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42 in this Report).

In the 8th and 9th centuries, the Viśvarūpa icon was a hallmark of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra imperium throughout Central North India.

In the mid-10th century, the Gurjara-Pratīhāra empire, with its political centre in Kanyakubja/Kanauj, still controlled the Gangetic plains axis from the vicinity of Delhi/Etah to the Varanasi/Mirzapur area. About AD 945, imperial forces drove a secondary axis southward from Kanyakubja to secure Ujjayini, their starting point and former capital, which had been taken by the Paramaras of Dhara/Dhar DHNI. II. p. 847 (Parmāra K. Vairisiṃha II). The Gurjara-Pratīhāras succeeded in retaking Ujjayini, and installed a provincial governor (Mahāsāmanta-Daṇḍanazaka Mādhava, in PPartabgarh Inocr. (DHNI.I.p. 586) there. The Ujjayini governor administered various feudatory Rajput areas to the north, for example the kingdom of the Cahamanas of Partabgarh-Mandasor and points farther north up to Jhalrapatan and Kota.

The double axis of the empire at this point provides a classic example of the T-shape formed by the major corridors of the historical South Asian power structure, as described by Schwartzberg (A Historical Atlas of South Asia, Chicago 1978: 260-261): the dominant axis lies along the Gangetic plain from west to east (Delhi/Etah area to Varanasi/Mirzapur), from which the southward axis runs from Kanyakubja down though

the fortified Gopadri/Gwalior area to Ujjayini at the foot of the Vindhya mountains. This double axis defines the skeleton of Schwartzberg's geopolitical 'North Center' zone (Schwartzberg 1978: 254-255, Figures 14.1 and 14.2). Even while conforming to this historical pattern of power assertion, however, the Pratīhāra empire could not, in the mid-10th century, retain its imperial control for more than a generation. At the very moment of re-forging this axis between the new and the old power-centres of Kanyakubja and Ujjayini, the flesh on the imperial skeleton was melting away in numerous autonomous state (starting with the Candellas) DHNI.I.p. 593), south of the Gangetic plains axis, and to east and west of the reasserted north/south linkage.

The link between Kanyakubja and Ujjayini was tenuous; before AD 954 (Dhaga's iasa.) Candellas had taken the fourteen of Gopadri/Gwalior, thus controlling the southern axis of power, and the Paramaras under Vairisiṃha II, temporarily driven south and west by the empire, were regrouping, and within two generation would retake Ujjayini and the whole of Malava/Malawa. Sensing the weakness at the centre, the feudatory Rajput states on both-sides of the power-axis began to assert their independence. This occurred in the period circa AD 950-970.

In the 10th century, in the new temples of the independent Rajput kingdoms, as they detached themselves from the old imperial structure, the Viṣṇu image became that of Vaikuṅṭha. This is demonstrated by the 10th/11th-century Vaikuṅṭha images at Thuvon, Khajuraho, Kalanjara, and Varanasi in the Candella kingdom (Sculptures 21 - 29 in this Report); at Bilhari in the later Kalacuri kingdom (R. N. Misra, *Sculptures of Dahala and Dakshina Kosala*, Delhi 1987: 83-84, 88-89, P1.XVIIIB); in the Kota and Jhalrapatan areas in the Cahamana principedom (Maxwell, *Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990*: S.36-37, 38-39); at Nagahrada/Nagda in the Guhila kingdom (Maxwell, *Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990*: S.22-27); at Nilakantha in the kingdom of the Independent Pratīhāras of Rajyapura/Rajor (Maxwell, *Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990*: S.46-52); at Harasnatha/Harasnath in the kingdom of the Cahamanas of Sakambari (R. C. Agrawala, *Lalit Kala* 16, 1974: Fig.14); probably at Jhajjar in the kingdom of the

Tomaras, which I have yet to investigate; and in the Solankī kingdom in Gujarat. as demonstrated in the first part of this Report.

It is therefore abundantly clear that the Viśvarūpa cult was closely associated with the Gurjara-Pratīhāras, both shortly before their rise to imperial status, and even more after they had taken Kanauj and begun to rule the North Indian axis. In the kingdoms of their vassal Rajputs, the Viśvarūpa icon was unknown. This state of affairs lasted for over 150 years, from before AD 800 to the mid-10th century. In the context of the empire, this prolonged containment of the Viśvarūpa-area within the Yamunā-Gaṅgā valley can only mean that Viśvarūpa was equated exclusively with the imperium itself, not with its provincial possessions. The geographical extent of the cult must therefore have been politically determined, and an association between the Gurjara-Pratīhāra emperor and the Viśvarūpa icon has to be assumed. The concentration of Viśvarūpa images in the imperial capital, Kanyakubja/Kanauj, supports this assumption.

At the historical moment of greatest imperial weakness, in the mid-10th century, the former Rajput possessions of the empire to the south, southwest, and west of its borders, began to break away as independent states. Simultaneously, Vaikuṅṭha images were created in these newly independent states, where no Vaikuṅṭha icons had been known before. The most striking instance, and the earliest, is Khajuraho, the temple-city of the Candellas, where the first major sacred edifice (the so-called Laksman temple) was dedicated, iconographically and by inscription, to Vaikuṅṭha, in AD 954. In the context of the aftermath of the Pratīhāra hegemony in the North, Vaikuṅṭha must therefore be seen as an icon of independent political power.

The Laksman temple inscription names the Indian Northwest as the place of origin of an original Vaikuṅṭha icon, indicating a knowledge of the geographical source of the iconography, but there is little or nothing to suggest that the theology behind it was genuinely understood. The iconography of the Vaikuṅṭha image in the sanctum similarly does not suggest familiarity with the Panacaratra tenets as contained in the 8th-century Samhitas; on the contrary, it appears to be an original Candella creation. The inscription

also states that the Candella king obtained it from a man who seems to have been a Gurjara-Pratīhāra prince, a representative of the empire (this can be taken as virtually certain, but it cannot be definitively confirmed). The warrior identity of Viṣṇu in the Vaikuṅṭha form is also emphasised. By implication, rather than by direct statement, therefore, it appears that in the successful breakaway kingdom of the Candellas, the Vaikuṅṭha icon was associated with Kashmir and with political independence from Pratīhāra control won by force of arms. This constitutes the most specific evidence available to support my theory that the Vaikuṅṭha cult was a royal symbol of independent Rajput power, the reflex, as it were, of the Viśvarūpa icon which had been the symbol of the old imperium. The main evidence for the theory rests on the general sweep of the historical events themselves: Vaikuṅṭha appears in the Rajput kingdoms only as the old empire fades, and as they become politically self-sustaining.

One of the implications of all this is that there existed a rivalry (perhaps only a notional one, among the feudatory Rajputs) between the Gurjara-Pratīhāra empire and the kingdom of Kashmir. It is the nature of the positive connection between Kashmir, source of Pancaratra theology and of the Vaikuṅṭha image, on the one hand, and these Rajput states on the other, which now requires investigation.

## **LANDKARTE MIT DEN FEDFORSCHUNGSGEBIETEN**

REGION 1: Rajasthan und das nor lliche Grenzgebiet Gujarats.

REGION 2: S.W.-Uttar Pradesh mit N.W. Madhya Pradesh.

REGION 3: Himachal Pradesh

REGION 4: Kashmir.

REGION 5: Gujarat.

REGION 6: Madhya Pradesh.

REGION 7: ostliches Uttar pradesh mit westlichem Bi

Regionen 1 und 2: s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990 und vgl. Land- karte, S.11 und 121.

Regionen 5, 6, 7:

s. nachstehenden Bericht.

Forchungsreisen in den Regionen 3 und 4 (Himachal Pradesh und Kashmir) sind fur August/September 1992 und Februar/Marz 1993 geplant.

## **REGIONS 6 AND 7**

**(MADHYA PRADESH, EASTERN UTTAR PRADESH, WESTERN BIHAR):**

### **DISTRIBUTION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL KEY TO THE MAP**

20. [Pratīhāra empire]:

Viśvarūpa.

21.-26. KHAJURAO [Candella kingdom]:

6 Vaikuṅṭha variants.

27. THUVON [Pratīhāra-Candella border area]:

Vaikuṅṭha.

28. KASI [Candella kingdom]:

Vaikunṭha.

29. KALINJAR [Candella kingdom]:

Vaikunṭha

30. GARHWA [Gupta empire]:

Viśvarūpa.

31. MANWADHIA [Pratīhāra empire]:

Viśvarūpa.

32. DALMAU [Pratīhāra empire]:

Viśvarūpa.

33. [Pratīhāra empire]:

Viśvarūpa.

34. BHUALI [Pratīhāra empire]:

Viśvarūpa.

35.-38. KANAUJ [Pratīhāra capital city]:

4 Viśvarūpa image.

39. BHUILI [Pratīhāra empire]:

Viśvarūpa.

40. MATHURA [early Gupta empire]:

Viśvarūpa.

41. NALANDA (BADGAON) [Pala kingdom]:

Viśvarūpa variant.

42. AGHAT [Pratīhāra empire]:

Viśvarūpa.

### **KNOWN CENTRES OF THE Viśvarūpa CULT IN THE EASTERN GURJARA-PRATĪHĀRA EMPIRE (8th AND 9th CENTURIES A.D.)**

The shaded areas represent radii of 70 kilometres around the archaeological findspots of 9 Viśvarūpa sculptures and fragments (at Aghat, Kanauj, Manwadi, Dalmau, Bhuali, Bhuli) which are stylistically datable to the 8th and 9th centuries. The heavily shaded circle indicates Kanyakubja (Kanauj), centre of the cult and political capital of the empire from the early ninth century onward.

The geographical distribution of the archaeological material shows that the cult flourished on a northwest-southeast axis along the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab from Etah to Varanasi, with offshoots in the territories to the north between the Gomati and Ghaghara. One further fragment now in Lucknow, without recorded provenance, originates from this general area,

There is a noticeable gap in the material linking Kanyakubja to an extension running back into older areas of Gurjara Pratīhāra occupation to the southwest (Tumain). This is almost certainly to be bridged by three privately owned Viśvarūpa fragments, without established provenance, which probably originate from this Guna-Jhansi-Gwalior region.

## CENTRES OF THE Vaikuṅṭha CULT IN THE INDEPENDENT RAJPUT KINGDOMS OF CENTRAL NORTH INDIA MID-10th CENTURY A.D.

In the mid-10th century, the Gurjara-Pratīhāra empire, with its political centre in Kanyakubja/Kanauj (1), controls the Gangetic plains axis from the Vicinity of Delhi/Etah (2) to the Varanasi/Mirzapur area (5). About AD 945, imperial forces drive a secondary axis (1-6) southward from Kanyakubja to secure Ujjayini/Ujjain (6), their place of origin and former capital, which has been taken by the Paramaras of Dhara/Dhar. The Gurjara-Pratīhāras succeed in retaking Ujjayini, and install a provincial governor there. The Ujjayini governor administers various feudatory Rajput areas to the north, for example the kingdom of the Cahamanas of Partabgarh-Mandasor and points farther north up to Jhalrapatan and Kota (9).

The double axis of the empire at this point provides a classic example of the T-shape formed by the major corridors of the historical South Asian power structure, as described by Schwartzberg (1978: 260-261): the dominant axis lies along the Gangetic plain from west to east (Delhi/Etah area to Varanasi/Mirzapur), from which the southward axis runs from Kanyakubja down through the fortified Gopadri/Gwalior area to Ujjayini at the foot of the Vindhya mountains. This double axis defines the skeleton of Schwartzberg's geopolitical 'North Centre' zone (1978: 254-255, Figures 14.1 and 14.2).

Even while conforming to this historical pattern of power assertion, however, the Pratīhāra empire cannot, in the mid-10th century, retain its imperial control for more than a generation. At the very moment of re-forging this axis between the new and the old power-centres of Kanyakubja and Ujjayini, the flesh on the imperial skeleton is melting away in numerous autonomous states, south of the Gangetic plains axis, and to east and west of the reasserted north/south linkage.

But the link between Kanyakubja and Ujjayini (1-6) is tenuous; the Paramaras, temporarily driven south and west by the empire, are regrouping, and within a generation will retake Ujjayini and the whole of Malava/Malwa. Sensing the weakness at



the centre, the feudatory Rajput states on both sides of the power-axis begin to assert their independence. This occurs in all the shaded areas in the period circa AD 950-970.

In the first period of Gurjara-Pratihāra expansion northward in the 8th century, the Viṣṇu-cult along the Ujjayini-Kanyakubja axis was characterised by the icon of Viśvarūpa Viṣṇu. When the Pratihāra capital was subsequently shifted from Ujjayini to Kanyakubja in the early 9th century, images of Viśvarūpa continued to be established in temples along the whole length of the new primary power axis in the Gangetic plain for a hundred years, from Etah through Kanyakubja to Mirzapur (1-2-3-4-5).

In the 10th century, in the new temples of the independent kingdoms, as they detach themselves from the old imperial structure, the Viṣṇu image becomes that of Vaikuṅṭha. The shaded area on the map, all located in the newly independent Rajput kingdoms, represent the regions in which 10th-century Vaikuṅṭha images have been found.

### **KNOWN CENTRES OF THE Vaikuṅṭha CULT IN THE CANDELLA KINGDOM (10th AND 11th CENTURIES A.D.)**

The shaded areas represent radii of 70 kilometres around the archaeological findspots of 6 Vaikuṅṭha cult-images or fragments (at Thuvon, Khajuraho, Kalinjar, Varanasi) which are stylistically datable to the 10th and 11th centuries. The heavily shaded circle indicates Khajuravahaka (Khajuraho), centre of the Candella Vaikuṅṭha cult in the 10th and 11th centuries, where 3 cult-images and 7 images with variations of Vaikuṅṭha iconography are known.

The geographical distribution of the archaeological material shows that the cult flourished in the Candella heartland and also on or near the political frontiers of the kingdom on the west, north, and east.

Evidence for the existence of the cult on the southern marches of Candella territory has come to light in the form of a Vaikuṅṭha image discovered at the ancient site of Bihari (Jabalpur District; 24 48' N x 80' 19' E), contiguous with the Khajuraho region

(Chhatarpur and Panna Districts), in the then hostile kingdom of the Kalacuris of Tripuri. The sculpture is in 10th-century Kalacuri style. The area around Bilhari and Tripuri is indicated on the map by the cross-hatched circle.

This discovery extends the southward spread of knowledge of the Vaikuṅṭha cult in mediaeval Central India from the Ken and Betwa rivers down to the banks of the Narmada.

## TEIL 2.2 (2)

### KATALOG DES DOKUMENTIERTEN ARCHAOLOGISCHEN MATERIALS

-IKONOGRAPHIE UND CHRONOLOGIE

-ABBILDUNGEN UND DIAGRAMME

#### 20. FUNFKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 47.7 x 45.7 x 7.6

4 Hande

Privatbesitz

##### 20 .1 DESCRIPTION:

The sculpture appeared recently in a private collection. Exactly where it was found is not known, but both the post-Gupta style, of Mathuran inspiration, and the iconographical composition indicate a point of origin on the western Madhya Pradesh borderlands. When complete, the sculpture represented a form of the god Viṣṇu with four arms and multiple emanations, around the head, standing against a densely populated, flat-topped rectangular stele having rounded upper corners. There has been considerable damage to the details on the top edge of the stele and some to the central face of the god, and three of the arms and both legs of the main figure are lost, as is the lower extent of the stele, particularly on the proper left. The material is a buff flecked sandstone. In its present condition, this fragment has a maximum height of 47.7 cm, is 45.7 cm in width, and the slab is 7.6 cm thick. The subject matter is a cult icon representing of Viṣṇu as Viśvarūpa, the source and axis of all creation, which is represented by its archetypes surrounding the god. Although in this and in its design it is an image of a well known (though comparatively rare) type, it has considerable stylistic interest; and the logic of its symbolic structure, which is unique to each Viśvarūpa image, is of considerable importance to understanding the evolution of North Indian

Vaiṣṇava thought concerning the nature of the Hindu universe.

### 20.1.1 The central figure

The god was represented with a considerable dehanchement, the hips being deflected to the right and the weight carried on the straight right leg, while the left knee was bent forward, as can be seen from the remains of the left thigh. The torso leans correspondingly to the left, producing a pronounced but not exaggerated ābhaṅgha posture. The front right arm is lowered, the empty hand turned to the centre and resting in a stylish gesture of ease, with thumb and forefinger splayed, on the rolled sash which crosses the upper thighs. Behind it, the second upper arm on the right was lowered at the same angle, but the forearm was brought forward, as can be seen by the position of the break below the elbow. Both left arms, now broken off well above the elbows, were also lowered; the front left hand held the upright conch-shell (śaṅkha) supported at the base by the fingers, resting against the palm, and with the point tilted in towards the left hip. As there are no fracture marks on the surface of the stele, it is safe to assume that no weapons such as the sword and shield, or bow and arrow, were shown being wielded in the rear pair of hands. These hands must therefore have been lowered to the sides, and in this position they can only have rested on the heads of two weapon-personifications (āyudhapuruṣas) standing on the plinth. In order to complete the symbolism of a four-armed Viṣṇu figure, these must have been the embodiments of the mace (gadā) and disk (cakra), namely Gadādevī and Cakrapuruṣa. Thus the complete set of attributes was gadā-śaṅkha-cakra, with the first right hand being left empty and resting near the right hip (a form of katyavalambita), on the thigh.

The torso appears to be bare except for a short, double-strand pearl necklace with a central gem in a jewelled setting. Its physical volumes are rounded and unmuscled, and the physique is in part unusually slight, resulting in a certain anatomical imbalance, often seen in early post-Gupta work, between the slenderness of the abdominal region and the depth of chest and breadth of shoulder. A light double line down the left side of the torso indicates a plain yajñopavīta faintly delineated. The upper hem of the

adhoṃśuka or lower garment is indicated by a double line, and the girdle below it sits very low on the hips, with a central ornament, similar in design to the necklace pendant, above the groin. The folds of the garment, dhoti-like, are wound around the right thigh and fall straight down on the left. The upper arms are encircled by triple-wound keyuras with splayed ends, and heavy ear-ornaments hang from extended pierced lobes to the level of the collar-bones. Strands of hair hang beside them on the shoulders. The remains of a thin vanamālā encircle the shoulders and fall through the crook of the right elbows to the stele (visible on the right), whence the garland doubtless continued to loop under the knees. The contours of the face are rather plump, making the head appear somewhat large in relation to the body. The crown is of the truncated-pyramid shape (kirīṭa-mukuṭa), with a frontal diadem.

Rising diagonally in the right-angle formed by the shoulders and the sides of the face and crown appear the foreparts of the animal avatāras Kūrma (Turtle) and Matsya (Fish) on the right, and the heads of Narasiṃha (Man-Lion) and Varāha (Boar; now a mere broken stump above the lion-head) on the left. Behind these emanating incarnations, a semi-circular fan-like shape is spread behind the crown; this appears to be a cluster of serpent-heads, expressed as a series of cobra-hoods. This feature identifies the central figure with Saṅkarṣaṇa or Balarāma, brother of Kṛṣṇa and the first vyūha of Vāsudeva in the Pancaratra-based cosmogony. This iconography therefore identifies the god represented in this sculpture as Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva and Saṅkarṣaṇa-Balarāma combined in one deity, namely Nārāyaṇa Viṣṇu, who is the source of the avatāras.

### **20.1.2 The figures on the stele**

There are at least forty miniature figures, all eroded and several of them broken or damaged, carved in relief on the remaining surface of the broken stele. These are arranged in five groups, though originally there may have been six. They are conceived as manifesting themselves within the nimbus (prabhāmaṇḍala) of Viṣṇu, a sculptural concept which was developed at Mathura in the fifth century to give visual expression to

the phenomenon of spiritual emanation as a form of divine, or pure, creation<sup>1</sup> (suddhasrsti); the stele is to be regarded as representing this creative effulgence emanating from the god, and the figures within this radiance are to be seen as representing the immortal yet created beings which are similarly his emanations (see Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990: p.130- 131, C.3.1-3.7).

### **20.1.3 The central axis**

Above the flat-topped crown of Viṣṇu rise three figures, one above the other, to the central apex of the composition. Although they are damaged, these can be identified as, first, Vāmana the Dwarf incarnation, followed by Hayagrīva the Horse-headed (both displaying the abhaya-mudrā), and finally caturmukha Brahma, three of whose four heads were represented.

These vertical emanations, which together with the figure of Viṣṇu define the axis of symmetry of the whole sculpture, further identify Viṣṇu as the giant form (virāta-rūpa) known as Trivikrama (the colossal transformation of Vāmana), as Vedagarbha and Vacaspati/Vagisa (source of Hayagrīva, Lord of Speech, therefore origin of the Vedas, and hence of all knowledge), and as Nārāyaṇa/Śeṣaśayyin (the Lord floating on the ocean of pralaya. symbolised by the serpent Ananta/Śeṣa -- whose cobra-hoods resemble those of Saṅkarṣaṇa around the heads of Viṣṇu -- source of the creation of the contingent world through Brahma as demiurge). These three, together with Viṣṇu, form a cosmic unity: Viṣṇu is the source of all; the Dwarf incarnation, through his transformation as the giant Trivikrama, measures and defines space; Hayagrīva with his voice pervades space with sacred knowledge; and in this prepared but empty space Brahma as Vidhātṛ (the Organiser or Controller) constructs and populates the universe<sup>2</sup>. It is this organised and populated cosmos which is symbolised by the remaining groups appearing on the surface of the stele.

### **20.1.4 Group 1: the leading individual gods**

Across the top of the stele, to left and right of Brahma located at the centre, appear a

number of individual deities.<sup>3</sup> Those to the proper left of Brahma are the following. First, adjacent to the axis, stands the Vaiṣṇava incarnation Rāma Dāśarathī, hero of the Rāmāyana epic, with the bow. Riding towards him is Indra, king of the Vedic gods, mounted on his elephant, Airāvata. The next two figures are damaged beyond recognition, but on the basis of the Viśvarūpa stele from Tumain at the National Museum, New Delhi, one can be fairly certain that the first of them represented Agni, the Fire-god, mounted on his symbolic animal, the goat. The other is unfortunately too badly damaged, both in this sculpture and in the Tumain fragment, to permit of identification; judging by the character of the previous two, it may well have been another Vedic god. Below Indra appears Virupaksa, the god of dying (marana), seated on a camel, holding the reins in his right hand and carrying his emblem, the danda, consisting of a skull on a stick, sloped on his left shoulder.<sup>4</sup> The figure seated cross-legged below Virupaksa to his left is probably his consort, Nirrti, the embodiment of death (mrtyu); she may hold the noose (pāśa) in her left hand, as the Viṣṇudharmottara describes, but in her right she holds up a bowl and tilts it toward her face, suggesting that it is a kapala (skull-bowl, made from a human cranium) containing blood. The two standing male figures to her immediate left and right cannot be individually identified, but they appear to be ṛṣis.

The counterpart of Rāma Dāśarathī, to the proper right of Brahma is the second (Bhargava) Rāma, known as Paraśurāma, standing with his long-hafted axe resting against his right shoulder. The two damaged figures to his right are Śiva, with Pārvatī seated on his left knee, depicted as a conventional Umāmaheśvara icon. In the Tumain image, the next two represent their sons, the elephant-headed Gaṇeśa and Skanda-Kārttikeya, the war-god; these identifications are less certain in the case of this sculpture because of damage. The same applies to the one or two smaller figures below Śiva and Pārvatī.

### 20.1.5 Group 2: The Ādityas

Below the individual gods to the proper left of the axis, there appear six identical standing figures: a row of four level with the Narasiṃha head, and two more below them. They are crowned, and hold up indistinct objects in both hands, in such a way that these objects in the hands of one figure overlap those held by the adjacent figures to each side, thus forming two continuous friezes. All the evidence from other Viśvarūpa icons indicates that these are six of the twelve Ādityas, the twelve aspects of the annual solar cycle. Each is represented as a miniature Sūrya image: they amount to a group-representation of the Sun-god. The remaining six Āditya images would have appeared lower down, on the now destroyed part of the stele.

### **20.1.6 Group 3: The Rudras**

On a level with the foreparts of the Kūrma and Matsya incarnations, on the proper right half of the stele, appear two more lines of identical figures containing five in the upper row and four in the lower. Each has a piled-up hairstyle, places the empty left hand on his chest, and holds a trident (triśūla) in his right. This weapon is the emblem of Śiva, who appears above them, and these figures, called Rudras, are aspects of him, in much the same way that the Ādityas are aspects of Sūrya on the opposite side of the stele. The standard number of Rudras is eleven (ekadasa-rudrah); the remaining two are to be conceived of as concealed behind the heads of the Turtle and Fish incarnations.

### **20.1.7 Group 4: The Ṛṣis**

Further down on the proper right side of the stele, opposite the now broken part on the left, are ten small figures, the top row containing four and the two lines below them three each. Their piled ascetic's hairstyles, similar to those of the Rudras, and the folds of their robes over their left shoulders, can still be seen in some instances. The right hands are held up, palm forward, in the abhaya-mudrā. The first two rows alone would be identifiable as the primary group of seven sages (saptarsayah), who also appear in other Viśvarūpa icons. They are Marici, Atri, Angiras, Pulaha, Kratu, Pulastya, and Vasistha. The reason for a decade of sages appearing in this sculpture is that the



designers clearly referred to the lists given in the Mahābharata and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, in which three more (Pracetas, Bhr̥gu, and Nārada) are said to have been created by Manu; these ten sages (also called Prajapatis) then generated all creatures (prajas), including the gods and men.

One of the functions of the Viśvarūpa concept in ancient Indian mythology and iconography to reconcile or mediate between spiritual, ritual and social opposites. The concept finds typical expression in this image through the juxtaposition of creative and destructive forces, in the shape of the Prajapati-Sages and the Rudras, on the proper right side of the stele, while the Viṣṇu figure, as axis, mediates between the forces of light and the forces of darkness, represented on opposite halves of the stele by the Ādityas and the Rudras.

### **20.1.8 The periphery of Bhairava masks**

On the edges of the stele appear two series of four faces or masks, one above the other, which meet on either side of the rear of the apical Brahma figure. The faces have bulging eyes, short noses, slightly open mouths which reveal fangs, and they are topped by various ascetic hairstyles (jatabharas). These can only represent the eight Bhairavas, which are ferocious aspects of the eight-bodied (astatanu) god Śiva. The source of this peripheral imagery is Mathura, where the two earliest surviving Viśvarūpa fragments (fifth century A.D.) have either Śaiva ascetics or true Bhairava faces in this position. Their original purpose was to depict, in terms of standard Śaiva iconography, the many fierce devouring faces of Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa transformed into the god of destruction, Viśveśvara Viśvarūpa, as described in the eleventh Adhyaya of the Bhagavad-Gita (see Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990, p.144-146, F.2, and Thematic Index). By the late seventh or early eighth century, when this image was made, they had become a standard feature of all Viśvarūpa icons.

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## **21.2 CHRONOLOGY:**

Post-Gupta stylistic considerations -- the anatomy of the torso and the restrained use of jewellery to ornament it -- and the iconographic structuring of the stele, both point to a date in the early 8th century, during the expansion of Gurjara-Pratīhāra power, and within the territories of eastern Avanti (Malava) on the Malwa Plateau which were controlled by that dynasty at the time. The sculpture was most probably made in the triangle between Guna, Ujjain (ancient Ujjayini / Avanti), and Vidisa, in the first half of the 8th century.

### **21.3 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

An early mediaeval Gurjara-Pratīhāra version of Viśvarūpa, representing Viṣṇu as Vāsudeva combined with Nārāyaṇa as the source of creation, and as the giant cosmic form Virātarūpa, emanating six avatāras directly from himself along with the demiurge Brahma; and emanating other avatāras, the Vedic devas, the Hindu gods of Time and Death, the Twelve Ādityas, the Eleven Rudras, and the ten Ṛṣis, in his nimbus, which is bounded by the Eight Bhairavas.

Malwa, c. 725-750 AD.

Nr. 20: Privatsammlung

Malwa

## **21. ZEHNKOPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Stein: Hohe 110

8 Hande

Citragupta-Tempel, Khajuraho: sudliche Außenwand des Sanktums

### **21.1 DESCRIPTION:**

The Citragupta temple on which this image appears is apparently dedicated to the sun-god Sūrya. Its iconographical programme on the maṇḍapa and mahāmaṇḍapa is

destroyed. The external sanctum images, however, are still partly intact, showing the following sequence:

South wall: Brahma with Sarasvati above the ten-headed figure (lower niche destroyed);

West wall: Śiva with pārvatī above Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha above Brahma;

North wall: Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī above Varāha (lower niche destroyed).

This is therefore an image of Viṣṇu as a parsvadevata in the central niche of the south external wall of the sanctum of a sun-temple. The figure stands in ābhaṅga to the left, with the weight on the left foot. Originally eight-armed, the image retains only the rearmost left hand, which holds a circular kheṭaka, now partly broken. The figure wears the usual ornaments and a tall kirīṭa.

This figure is usually described as eleven-headed (Krishna Deva, ASI 1966 repr. 1987: 30; Avasthi, Agra 1967: 127), i.e. as having the face of Viṣṇu surrounded by ten smaller heads, on close examination, only nine heads can in fact be seen around the central face, suggesting that the main figure represents Viṣṇu identified with one of his avatāras, very probably Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa as Vaikuṅṭha (see iconographical interpretation below).

## 21.2 ICONOGRAPHICAL INTERPRETATION:

The iconography of this unique ten-headed image was created by augmenting the front view of a standard Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha icon, which has the profiled heads of two of the animal avatāras, namely the lion-head of Nṛsimha and the boar-head of Varāha, positioned to the proper left and right respectively of the central face of Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu alias Vaikuṅṭha. These same animal profiles appear in their standard places flanking the central face of this ten-headed image on the Citragupta temple.

The remaining seven avatāra-profiles were then added in the following manner: a human face was inserted below that of the lion, and two below that of the boar; a third human profile was added beyond the muzzle of the lion, which is shorter than that of the

boar; and a fourth human face appears immediately above the lion-profile; then the head of a horse (representing the last incarnation, Kalkin) was placed above that; and the heads of the fish and turtle incarnations were made to appear above the boar-head. There are thus four additional profiles on the Nṛsiṃha side of the Vaikuṅṭha icon, and five on its Varāha side, in the following configuration:

		turtle
horse		fish
human	lion	boar
		human
human		human

In the absence of any hand-held attributes, and given the unusual ordering of these profiles, the separate identities of the four human side-heads was clearly not considered a matter of importance. It became impossible to represent the heads of the avatāras in their usual incarnation sequence vertically once the decision had been made, as it obviously was, to use the Vaikuṅṭha icon as the basis for this new image: because the Nṛsiṃha and Varāha profiles had to be laterally opposed. Representing the incarnations in ascending or descending pairs (fish and turtle, boar and lion, etc.) is theoretically possible, and this method was indeed put into practice at other places (see Forschungsbericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990, pp.85-87, 5.2-5.2.2: the 11th-century Viśvarūpa from Bhusawar at Bharatpur), but not at Khajuraho. The arrangement of the nine additional heads in this image was apparently decided by the sculptor on aesthetic grounds, the principal intention being to produce an icon of Viṣṇu as a single figure incorporating all ten incarnations, rather than an exposition of the avatāra doctrine. The adherence to the basic Vaikuṅṭha iconography indicates that the three heads of the icon, as seen from the front, were all taken to represent avatāras in early 11th-century Khajuraho.

### 21.2.1 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

Iconographically, the sculpture represents Vaikuṅṭha embodying the ten avatāras

simultaneously; it is a Candella magnification and interpretation of the Vaikuṅṭha icon. It is not Viśvarūpa in the classical sense of the Bhagavadgītā, though in its depiction of the multiple forms of one god it could well have been known by that name. The term Vaikuṅṭha-Viśvarūpa describes it most accurately.

Khajuraho, circa AD 1000-1025.

Nr. 21: Khajuraho

Citragupta Temple, Außenwand

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## 22. ZWOLFKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 104 x 61,5

urspr. 12 oder 14 Hände

Lakṣman-Tempel, Khajuraho: östliche Innenwand des Mahāmaṇḍapa, Nordseite des Eingangs

### 22.1 DESCRIPTION:

The figure stands on a shelf-like base, ornamented with fan-palm motif on front and sides, which is built into the interior east wall of the mahāmaṇḍapa (facing west), on the north side of the entrance. Adjacent to it on the north wall is an image of Vāmana in an elaborate niche. On the opposite side of the entrance, in the location corresponding to that of the multiheaded Viṣṇu, appears three-headed Sadasiva, adjacent to an image of Śiva in a large niche which faces the icon of Vāmana.

The central figure stands in ābhaṅga to the proper left. Originally it had 12 or 14 hands, of which only three survive: the front left rests on the left thigh; the right front appears to have held a lotus; the rear right holds the cakṛa. On the right beside the cakṛa, the head of the gadā can be seen. The proper right head is that of Nṛsiṃha, the proper left of

Varāha; the central face is destroyed. Above these, forming the nimbus, is an arch of 9 uncrowned human faces (4 on each side and 1 at the apex); the lowest face in the arch on either side is concealed behind raised attributes.

Brahma sits in the top (proper) right corner of the stele, at the apex of the right-hand pilaster of the framework, and Śiva (headless) in the top left.

Figures on the base: To the immediate right of Viṣṇu's feet stands a small corpulent male figure with a jaṭā hairstyle, his left hand in abhayamudrā and his right holding a gadā at his right hip, like sword. The figure to the left beside Viṣṇu's feet is damaged, the left leg and arms, and the face, being lost; he appears to have worn a crown, and holds the khadga upright in his right hand. The outer figure to the right of Viṣṇu's feet is female and faces the centre; she is seated on a round stool, with her left foot resting on it and her right foot on the floor. Her hands are joined in the namaskāramudrā. The outer figure to the left of Viṣṇu's feet kneels in the flying posture. The head and both hands are destroyed. The left hand was lowered to the left thigh, and the right hand was raised in salutation. A cape-like covering over the left shoulder is pointed at back, apparently in the form of a wing. (The wing and the flying posture suggest that this was Garuḍa.)

## 22.2 INTERPRETATION:

In the abstract, it would be possible to suggest that this is a Candella modification of the classical Viśvarūpa image, from which it retains only the central Vaikuṅṭha icon and the arch of heads which originally appeared on the periphery of the nimbus, the rest of the complex imagery being completely omitted. But it cannot be identified as the classical Viśvarūpa of the Bhagavadgītā, nor does it resemble the Gurjara-Pratihāra Viśvarūpa images of Kanauj or elsewhere.

The placement of the image in the iconographical programme of the temple, indeed, indicates a different interpretation. The image is placed on the inside of the east wall of the mahāmaṇḍapa facing west, to the immediate north of the entrance. Adjacent to it,

on the north wall facing south, is located an image of equal size representing the dwarf incarnation Vāmana. The clear implication is that the three-headed image is Vaikuṅṭha as the transformation of Vāmana, the giant cosmic form of Viṣṇu known as TRIVIKAMA or, in the terminology of Rao and Banerjea, VIRĀTARŪPA (EHI 1.1.174; DHI 418). The image would represent the Virātarūpa at the moment of transformation, prior to the taking of the three strides as Trivikrama. The arch of nine heads (possibly a reference to the Navagrahas) would indicate the cosmic nature of the giant form, as in Viśvarūpa images. The counterpart of the Virātarūpa appears in the corresponding location on the opposite side of the mahāmaṇḍapa doorway: multiheaded Sadasiva as the transformation of Śiva.

The terminology used for the Virātarūpa revealed to Bali in the Vāmana-purāṇa (in both versions of the Vāmana myth), in addition to Mahākāya, Mahārūpa etc., is SARVADEVAMAYA-RUPA (10.48, 66.9), The Form Consisting of All the Gods. The arch of heads above the image may be a reference to this; or to the celestial bodies (jyotimsi), perhaps conceived here as the Navagrahas, the Nine Planets as a halo of nine heads, with reference to Vāmanapurāṇa 10.58:

sarvajyotimsi yaniha tapasca paramam mahat

tasya devadhidevasya tejah prodbhutam uttamam

"The highest manifested light of the God of Gods (Viṣṇu as Vāmana) is the fire of religious austerity and the light of the celestial bodies."

### **22.2.1 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

A Candella modification of the Vaikuṅṭha icon representing the Virātarūpa (Trivikrama) of Viṣṇu, the multiform cosmic transformation of Vāmana.

Khajuraho, AD 954.

Nr. 22: Khajuraho

## 23. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 208 x 187

urspr. 4 Hande

Khajuraho, Laksman- Tempel, Hauptikone, innere westwand des Sanktums

### 23.1 DESCRIPTION:

This is the largest and iconographically the most complex of all the multiheaded Viṣṇu images at Khajuraho. Its iconography has never been fully described, analysed, photographed, or published before.

A full photographic documentation was carried out for the first time in 1991 and 1992 as an important part of this research project. The descriptive analysis follows.

#### 23.1.1

The sanctum of the Laksman temple, Khajuraho:

Height: 300 (pilasters) x width 246 x depth 333.

Axis of the sanctum threshold: E 7° S (97°).

The sanctum ceiling is a lantern roof with friezes of flying musicians. Iconography of the exterior walls: Varāha(S) - Nṛsiṃha(W) - Hayagrīva (N).

The sanctum doorframe:

Architrave:



SŪRYA	UNIDENTIFIED GODDESS	BALARĀMA
BRAHMA	UNIDENTIFIED GODDESS	ŚIVA

### Pilasters:

left	right
VĀMANA	PARAŚURĀMA (only axe remains)
VARĀHA	NṚSIMHA
MATSYA	KURMA (amrtamanthana)
4-ARMED DVĀRAPĀLA	4-ARMED DVĀRAPĀLA

## 23.1.2

### The icon in the sanctum:

The sculpture consists of 4 frames surrounding the central image: (1) an outermost, (2) an outer, (3) an intermediate, and (4) an inner. Each frame is populated with multiple figures, which in aggregate define and identify the main central image. (Note: all seated figures appear in lalitāsana with the left foot on the seat and the right on the ground.)

### 23.1.2.1

#### The outermost frame (Frame 1):

Left side:

1. (base) cāmara-dharini, crowned: padma in raised left hand, cāmara in lowered right.

2. (2nd up) SARASVATI. Crowned, seated, 4-armed:

front hands hold vina;

upper right padma, lower left pustaka.

3. (3rd up) elephant, warrior, vyala.

4. (above crossbeam) makara-head with warrior in jaws.

Right side:

1. (base) cāmara-dharini, reflex of Left:1.

2. (2nd up) GAṆEŚĀ, seated, 4-armed:

padma-----(broken)

stem of lotus(?)---bowl of modaka.

3. (3rd up) elephant, vyala, warrior.

4. (above crossbeam) makara-head with warrior in jaws.

## 23.1.2.2

### The outer frame (Frame 2):

Top centre:

SŪRYA:

seated in dhyanasana, crowned, with 4 arms: front hands in dhyāna-mudrā, rear hands raised holding 2 pointed lotus-buds.

## Pilasters:

### Base of left pilaster:

Standing figure, severely damaged; only remaining attribute: śaṅkha in lower left hand.

The remaining figures on this outer frame appear on the pilasters and represent 8 aspects of 4-armed Viṣṇu in human shape, seated, all flanked by 2 female attendants.

### Left pilaster:

1. (base) VIṢṆU seated with śaṅkha-----cakra (facing)

padma-----gadā (lowered)

2. (2nd up) VIṢṆU seated with padma----- (broken)

śaṅkha-----cakra (facing)

3. (3rd up) VIṢṆU seated with gadā-----śaṅkha

cakra-----śaṅkha (edge-on). - or more likes padma.

4. (top) VIṢṆU seated with gadā-----padma

cakra-----śaṅkha (damaged).

### Base of right pilaster:

Standing figure, severely damaged; only remaining attribute: śaṅkha in lower right hand.

### Right pilaster:

1. (base) VIṢṢṢU seated with śaṅkha-----gadā

bijapuraka(?)--cakra (facing)

2. (2nd up) VIṢṢṢU seated with cakra (facing)-----gadā

śaṅkha-----bijapuraka

3. (3rd up) VIṢṢṢU seated with cakra (edge-on)--gadā

śaṅkha-----bijapuraka(?)

4. (top) VIṢṢṢU seated with gadā-----cakra

abhaya---śaṅkha

### 23.1.2.3

#### The intermediate frame (Frame 3):

##### Top:

makara-torana with 6 vidyādhara bearing garlands on each side, and a vyala on either side beneath. (This arch flanks the Sūrya image at the apex of Frame 2.)

##### Left side:

1. (base) VĀMĀNA, seated, chattra in left hand, right hand in abhaya.

2. KRṢṢṢNA, standing, holding kridayasti (behind Vāmana).

3. Forequarters of a seated elephant, surmounted by a rampant vyala mounted by one

warrior and attacked by another.

4. Flying figure.

5. makara-head with standing figure behind.

### **Right side:**

1. (base) unidentified seated figure, crowned, 2-armed, both hands broken off.

2. BALARĀMA/SANĀKARṢAṆA, standing, with snake-canopy, 2-armed, holding hala head-down under left hand (behind seated figure 1).

3. Forequarters of elephant seated on lotus, surmounted by a rampant vyala with 2 warriors as before.

4. Flying figure with flute.

5. makara-head with standing figure behind.

### **23.1.2.4**

### **The inner frame (Frame 4):**

#### **Top centre:**

#### **SŪRYA:**

Seated in dhyanasana, front hands in dhyānamudrā, upper hands holding 2 long pointed lotuses (buds), flanked by

#### **MATSYA and KŪRMA.**

Beneath Sūrya, on the pilasters and pilaster bases, appear the following figures, 5 to a

side.

### **Base of left pilaster:**

Seated figure, now headless, arms broken, end of robe held in left hand.

Behind stands a female figure, left hand holding a lotus tendril, right hand on thigh.

### **Left pilaster:**

1. (base)

Seated devotee, hands in namaskāra, facing central image.

2. (2nd up)

VARĀHA (boar head, human body), striding toward central image, 4 armed:

top right broken; top left holds cakra against chest, with Bhūdevī seated on the raised left elbow (behind right elbow of the main image); lower right holds śaṅkha; lower left rests on thigh.

3. (3rd UP)

Seated skeletal ascetic with triśūla held aslant in left hand; right hand in abhaya.

4. (4th up, at top of pilaster)

BRAHMA, seated, 4-armed:

sruk-----pustaka

abhaya---kamaṇḍalu.

5. (top, flanking Sūrya)

MATSYA on a lotus, with 4 standing figures behind.

### Base of right pilaster:

KALKIN

*mounted on a horse (now headless); reins in left hand. Behind is a standing male figure, probably anthropomorphic GARUḌA, with hair on end and a snake headband; left hand broken off, right hand in vismaya-mudrā.*

### Right pilaster:

1. (base)

*Seated devotee, reflex of 1:left.*

2. (2<sup>nd</sup> up)

*NṚSIMHA, 4-armed, upper hands raised in vismaya, lower hands disembowelling Hiraṇyakaśipu.*

3. (3<sup>rd</sup> up)

*Damaged seated figure; right hand in abhaya, left hand holds a stick-like object (mace? plough?).*

4. (4<sup>th</sup> up, at top of pilaster)

*ŚIVA, seated, 4-armed:*

*triśūla-----sarpa*

*abhaya-----kamaṇḍalu.*

5. (top, flanking Sūrya)

*KŪRMA with 2 standing figures behind (deva and asura, pulling the rope around the churning stick which stands in a pot on a lotus on the Kūrma's shell).*

### 23.1.2.5

Central group on base (at the feet of *Vaikuṅṭha*): *Left and right of Vaikuṅṭha stands a male figure, severely damaged, unidentifiable; the outer hand rests on the thigh in each case. In front of them, on lotuses, also severely damaged, are 2 seated female figures with hands in namaskāra.*

Beneath the feet of *Vaikuṅṭha*, on the front of the plinth, is a group of three, set on a single lotus without a stem, comprising:

BHŪDEVĪ in the centre, seated cross-legged on a turtle (KŪRMA), having a canopy of three snakehoods, with a pot in her left hand, and the right raised in abhaya;

Bhūdevī is flanked by 2 NĀGAS, half human and half serpentine, their hands in namaskāra, their serpentine bodies intertwined beneath the turtle, and having three snakehoods in their canopies, like the goddess.



## 23.2 HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION AND CHRONOLOGY:

In view of the inscription that was discovered in the ruins of the Laksman temple (Archaeological Survey of India XXI: 65; name of the temple corrected in EI I: 122, n.1), there appears to be no doubt that the sculpture represents VĀSUDEVA in the form of multiheaded Vaikuṅṭha.

This is a Candella interpretation of Viṣṇu as the god of 24 forms (caturvimsati-murtayah), in which the form of Vaikuṅṭha is made to predominate. The 24 forms, as represented in this image, are: ten avatāras on Frame 4, plus eight seated forms of Viṣṇu on Frame 2, plus six other deities - Bhūdevī, Gaṇeśa, two Sūryas, Brahma, Śiva - which are also to be understood as aspects of Viṣṇu. In that it manifests the multiple forms of Viṣṇu, the image could well be termed Viśvarūpa; certain features have, in fact, been adapted from pre-Candella North Indian Viśvarūpa iconography, such as the placing of the Earth-goddess between two Nāgas at the base of the vertical axis, the aligning of gods (in this case, two images of the Sun-god) with its upper extent, and the array of numerous divinities around this axis. Like the other multiheaded Viṣṇu images at Khajuraho, however, it contains no reference to the Bhagavadgītā, but essentially represents a greatly magnified version of the Vaikuṅṭha image. The inscription in the ardhmandapa of the Laksman temple makes it clear that Vaikuṅṭha, not Viśvarūpa, was at the centre of the cult for which the temple was built.

The inscription, of Candella Dhanga, son of Candella Yasovarman (alias Laksavarman) and dated in VE 1011 / AD 954, also insists on the Kashmir<sup>1</sup> (or at any rate the northwestern) origin of the Vaikuṅṭha icon-type:

"(The image of) Vaikuṅṭha (which) the ornament of princes, the illustrious king Yasovarman, who crushed his enemies, has set up (here), - the lord of Bhota obtained it from the Kailasa, and from him Sahi, the king of Kira, received it as a token of friendship; from him afterwards Herambapala obtained it for a force of elephants and horses, and (Yasovarman himself) received it from Devapala, the lord of horses (Hayapati), the son of (Herambapala)."

(Epigraphia Indica I, F. Kielhorn, XIX.1: 'Inscriptions from Khajuraho': 134, stanza 43.)

The king of Kira is interpreted to mean the king of Kashmir, the lord of Bhota to refer to the Tibetan ruler. More probably, by Kira was meant Campa (Chamba), while Bhota may have referred loosely to Kashmir, and Kailasa of course to the high western Himalaya; thus the inscription would mean that the image was first sent from Kashmir to Chamba - a movement which incidentally is also in accordance with the earlier art-historical transmission of Vaikuṅṭha iconography in the 9th century. From there, in Kielhorn's reconstruction, it went to Kanyakubja (Kanauj), to the late Gurjara-Pratīhāra prince Devapala, for whom Kielhorn cites the date VS 1005 / AD 947-948 from the Siyadoni inscription (modern Siron Khurd, between Lalitpur and Jhansi: Kielhorn. Epigraphia Indica I: 162-179; and see DHNI I: 579; 581; 585).

The Candella king Yasovarman (Laksavarman) thus must have received the original Kashmiri image, and the story of its provenance, either from the city of Kanauj, or from those Pratīhāra territories administered by his immediate overlord Devapala, in the final years of his reign, circa AD 945-950. (Even Dhanga, as late as AD 954, makes the obligatory mention of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra emperor, Vinayakapala, in the last lines of the inscription, though this is the very last such acknowledgement of the Kanauj imperium by the Candellas.)

The place where Yasovarman acquired the icon may well have been in the area of Siyadoni/Siron, on the western borderlands of the Candella kingdom at that time (to the north-northwest of Lalitpur), since the remains of one of the earliest surviving stone images of Vaikuṅṭha in the Candella style was found at Rakhetra/Thuvon, roughly 50 kilometres to the southwest of Siyadoni (see Sculpture 27 in this Report; cp. no.25). From there he most probably transferred it to his temple-centre (and presumed capital city) at Khajuraho, where the two stone versions of it were made for the Laksman temple (Sculptures 22 and 23), and thence it seems to have been taken to Kasi/Varanasi (see Sculpture 28 in this Report), probably by his son, Candella Dhanga.

There is of course no image from Northwest India (whether from Kashmir or Chamba) in the Laksman temple or elsewhere at Khajuraho today, but clearly it was there in AD 954 after Yasovarman's death, and the main image in the Laksman temple must to some extent be a copy of it in Candella style. The wording of the inscription in stanza 43 makes it clear that it was Yasovarman himself who established the god Vaikuṅṭha at Khajuraho. Immediately, and for some time thereafter, several similarly multiheaded forms of Viṣṇu were created there (at least seven of which are known: see Sculptures 20-26 in this Report). The first of these was the large Vaikuṅṭha sculpture in the sanctum of the Laksman temple, and the second was a three-headed version, with an arch of nine more heads above, of the Virātarūpa (Trivikrama), the cosmic form assumed by Viṣṇu after his appearance as the dwarf Vāmana and before taking the three strides, which was positioned inside the entrance to the mahāmaṇḍapa of the same temple, on the east wall opposite the sanctum containing the Vaikuṅṭha image (Sculpture 22). The Virātarūpa, like the Vaikuṅṭha, was given the side-heads of the Man-Lion and Boar incarnations. The poet Madhava, composer of the temple inscription, draws attention to the new iconography by opening his eulogy of Yasovarman with references, in the very first line, to these two images: Vaikuṅṭha (yah kiripurusasimho . . . asuramukhyan . . . jaghana trin ... kapiladin .... sa Vaikuṅṭhah) in the first stanza, and the three strides of Hari (devasya vikrantayah ... tisras ... hareh : line 1) in the second. The third verse refers to the unshakeability of Viṣṇu at the churning of the ocean, and the fourth by implication compares King Yasovarman to the god. It is the association of Yasovarman with the original Vaikuṅṭha icon that is the basis of the creation of multiheaded Viṣṇu images at Khajuraho, not Kashmiri theological influence. The unsuitability of this copying of one iconographic form to represent different aspects of Viṣṇu is immediately obvious (the Virātarūpa of the Vāmana story has no direct connection either with Narasiṃha and Varāha or with the Kashmiri concept of Vaikuṅṭha); the copying results simply from the adoption of a particular image of Viṣṇu favoured by an illustrious king. That Vaikuṅṭha to the Candellas was merely a name, and not a theological concept, is evident in the mythology of demon-slaying which the composer of the praśasti, the poet Madhava, invents to explain the three additional

heads of the original Kashmiri icon: the raudra face which appears at the back of such icons he represents as the likeness of an asura (demon) whose form Vaikuṅṭha Viṣṇu assumed in order to destroy him. But the original Kashmiri name of the rear face of Vaikuṅṭha, Kapila, is preserved in the inscription, confirming the northwestern origin of the icon and of the superficial lore that came with it. One would therefore be ill-advised to attempt to place Pancaratra interpretations upon the multiheaded Viṣṇu images of Khajuraho: though the iconography of this theological system was in part adopted by the Candellas, as was the name of its chief icon (Vaikuṅṭha), the theology itself certainly was not.

The Vaikuṅṭha icon came to Khajuraho, by sheer historical accident, at a time when the Candellas still acknowledged the imperial glory of Kanauj (though they had little respect for the late Gurjara-Pratīhāra kings who ruled there and who were nominally their overlords) but were on the point of achieving an independent kingdom; the icon came from Kanauj itself, accompanied by a Himalayan pedigree, symbolising the imperial status which they themselves sought to achieve, and which they felt to be within their grasp under kings of the calibre of Yasovarman. It was surely in this (and not in theological influence from Kashmir) that the attraction of the multiheaded Viṣṇu image lay, as a symbol of political greatness. It is this which explains the magnification of the Candella version of Vaikuṅṭha in the sanctum of the Laksman temple, where Dhanga made the final brief reference to the Pratīhāra emperor as protector, and it explains also the appearance of Vaikuṅṭha-like images in the northern, eastern and western borderlands of the Candella kingdom (at Kalanjara/Kalinjar, Rakhetra/ Thuvon, and Kasi/ Varanasi: see Sculptures 29, 27, 28 respectively in this Report).

### **23.2.1 ICONOGRAPHICAL INTERPRETATION:**

It is clear from the iconography of this, one of the earliest and certainly the most resplendent of all Candella images of Vaikuṅṭha, and from the iconography of exterior walls of its sanctum (Varāha-Nṛsiṃha-Hayagrīva: see above, 23.1.1) that the Candella royalty and priesthood did not adopt Pancaratra theology along with the iconography of

Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha. Such a shift in theological position would have required the settlement in Khajuraho of a Kashmiri priesthood versed in Pancaratra beliefs, mythology, and ritual performance, and of course the creation of the appropriate iconographical and architectural forms, which are not present in the Laksman temple. Instead, the Candellas either created a new mythology, or revived and elaborated an existing alternative one, which was seen as appropriate for a royal cult centred on Yasovarman. This is clear from the first line of the Laksman temple inscription, in which the three additional heads of Vaikuṅṭha are explained as those of demons, whose forms Viṣṇu had to assume in order to defeat them: a mythology which is not attested elsewhere in the known Sanskrit texts available in the mid-10th century. Vaikuṅṭha was regarded as the supreme demon-slayer in the same way that King Yasovarman was regarded as the destroyer of his mortal enemies. This idea was the crux of the new Candella cult of Vaikuṅṭha: the poetic metaphor of a man becoming a man-lion (nara-simha) in battle, or a wild boar (varāha) in rescuing the kingdom, or a demon (asura) in his destructiveness, was elevated to the realm of theology in this cult. The transformations of Viṣṇu were thus regarded less as incarnations in terms of the orthodox avatāra-doctrine, than as specific metamorphoses undergone for the purpose of destroying demons. Once this new doctrine had been established, it became possible to substitute metamorphic identities other than those of the demons Nṛsiṃha, Varāha, and Kapila, for the additional heads of the original Vaikuṅṭha image. That other such identities of the warring Viṣṇu were of importance to the new cult from the date of its establishment, is clear from the Iconography of the walls of the Laksman temple sanctum in which the first great icon of Vaikuṅṭha was enshrined: these walls show Viṣṇu as the Varāha and the Man-Lion (corresponding to the left and right side-heads of the Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha iconography), but also, on the third or northern wall, as Hayagrīva instead of Kapila. This substitution cannot, of course, be explained in terms of Pancaratra doctrine, but only in terms of the new Candella demon-slaying mythology: Hayagrīva was a demon whose form Viṣṇu assumed to defeat him (EHI.I.1.260 citing the Devibhagavata). The reason for this substitution is most probably to be explained on the grounds that the Kashmiri iconography of the Vaikuṅṭha image,

and hence also the identity of Kapila as a demon-like (but not inherently demonic) form, was not understood in its own terms at Khajuraho. That this substitution of Hayagrīva for Kapila continued to be made at Khajuraho is proved by the large four-headed Viṣṇu image now in the site museum there (see Sculpture 24 in this Report), in which the face on the rear - the correct place for the head of Kapila in the original Kashmiri iconography - is that of a horse (haya); and in the ten-headed icon of Viṣṇu, representing Vaikuṅṭha bearing the identities of his ten transformations (though not of the conventional ten avatāras) simultaneously, on the south wall of the Citragupta temple sanctum at Khajuraho (see Sculpture 21 in this Report), the horse - head of Hayagrīva appears among the metamorphoses of the god.

The Laksman temple image is therefore to be seen, not as the Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha, but as a Candella deity based on Vaikuṅṭha iconography, and representing Viṣṇu as the apotheosis of the concept daityari (Demon-Foe), in which Kapila was already starting to be replaced by Hayagrīva, as the iconography of the sanctum walls suggests.

Once the iconography of the Vaikuṅṭha figure at Khajuraho is seen to be a new Candella creation, not conforming either to Pancaratra or orthodox Veda-based texts, then it becomes equally inadvisable to attempt to explain the iconography of the four massive populated frames, which surround this image with a multitude of minor forms, in terms of those texts. In fact, no such attempt has succeeded, so that the entire iconography of this image has remained without a coherent interpretation.

There can be no doubt that this image is partly based upon the existing iconography of Viśvarūpa as it appears in sculptures of Viṣṇu in this cosmic form in the Gurjara-Pratīhāra kingdom. As the Pratīhāra were the overlords of the Candelas, and since Yasovarman acquired his original Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha image from Devapala, a Pratīhāra prince, this influences understandable. The images of Viśvarūpa made in the Pratīhāra Capital. Kanyakubja (Kanauj), in the late 8th and early 9th centuries (almost certainly during the reign of Nagabhatta II Pratīhāra, C. AD 783-833), at least some of which must still have been installed in the temples there in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> include among many

others the following features: the heads of Nṛsiṃha and Varāha on opposite sides of the face of the main icon; the Earth-Goddess between Nāgas on the plinth between the feet of Viṣṇu, and vertical line of deities above his crown; Gaṇeśa on the right side of the stele; and the concept of surrounding the Viṣṇu icon with a host of minor figures. These significant details, though in modified form, all occur also in the Laksman temple image of Vaikuṅṭha. The animal-heads and the Earth-Goddess derive from Kashmiri iconography, and would also have been features of the original Vaikuṅṭha image which Yasovarman acquired; but the vertically placed gods over the head of Viṣṇu, the curious insertion of Gaṇeśa on the right, and the notion of representing Viṣṇu at the centre of a mass of other deities, are elements and concepts which stem directly from Viśvarūpa iconography at Kanauj. That the Candella sculpture was not intended to depict the Pratīhāra Viśvarūpa concept, however, is clear both from the absence of the same internal logic as that which governs the Kanauj images, and from the nomenclature used in the Candella inscription in the Laksman temple.

The concept of Viṣṇu having 24 forms (the caturvimsati-murtayah), on the other hand, was evidently known in Khajuraho, since the numerology, if not the full iconography, was applied to this image. I have shown above (see 23.2) that the number of āvaraṇa-devatās is twenty-four. Eighteen of these are iconographically identifiable as Viṣṇu, while six are iconographically other deities; non-Vaiṣṇava deities being aspects of the one god Viṣṇu is a concept which is at least as old as the Bhagavadgītā, which forms the unifying basis of the iconographical section of the Viṣṇu-dharmottara-purāṇa, and which is restated in visual terms in every Viśvarūpa icon ever produced.

The 18 Vaiṣṇava forms are the 10 avatāras plus 8 other aspects, which represent one-third of the 24-forms. (There is no basis for calling them vyūhas in the Pancaratra sense; though some of them could theoretically be so identified, for the most part anachronistically on the basis of later texts such as the Rūpamaṇḍana, the iconography of all eight as represented in this sculpture, is not found in the Sanskrit lists.)

The remaining six non-Vaiṣṇava forms are Bhūdevī, Gaṇeśa, Brahma, Śiva (all inherited from the Kanauj iconography of Viśvarūpa, and partly from Kashmir), and two aspects of Sūrya.

Taken as a whole, therefore, this Laksman temple image represents a new iconographical concept, namely Vaikuṅṭha Caturvimsatimurti.

### **23.2.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

The image represents VASUDEVA VIṢṆU, God of Light integrated with the Sun-god (namo bhagavate vasudevaya is the opening and closing invocation of the inscription, coupled at the end with namah savitre), and God of Twenty-four Forms, shown as a glorification of the Kashmiri icon of VIṢṆU Vaikuṅṭha which was associated with King Yasovarman and which symbolised the imperial aspirations of the Candella dynasty.

Khajuraho, AD 954.

Nr. 23: Khajuraho

Laksman Temple, Sanktum

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## **24. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Stein: 145 x 83 x 40

urspr. 4 Hande

Khajuraho, Archaeological Museum

### **24.1 DESCRIPTION:**

This sculpture was evidently regarded as an image of great importance, intended to be set up in its own sanctum: the height of the Viṣṇu figure is 116cm, only slightly smaller



than that of the main Vaikuṅṭha figure in the sanctum of the Laksman temple (126cm, originally about 130+).

### 24.1.1 The main figure

The image has the Lion and Boar profiles (damaged, with karanada-mukuṭa, on the proper right and left respectively) on either side of the central face of Viṣṇu (with kirīṭa-mukuṭa), as in conventional Vaikuṅṭha icons.

The figure stands between the pillars of a makara-tōraṇa, leaving the rear of the image visible. On the back of the central head of Viṣṇu is carved a stylised animal-head (Avasthi 1967: citra 63) in high relief, which has been variously interpreted as representing that of a cow or bull (Pathak 1960: 14) or of a horse (Ibid., footnote 4 by Krishna Deva; Avasthi 1967: 135). The features are, in fact, curiously anthropomorphised, with slanting eyes and eyebrows, a long thin nose, and a small mouth; it does not resemble the horse-head of Hayagrīva in the northern sanctum niche of the Laksman temple, which is relatively naturalistic in treatment. On the other hand, the face bears no likeness whatever to the Bhairava-like krodharsi features of Kapila, whose face appears in this position on the back of Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha icons, and also in the same position on the Candella version from Kāśī (see Sculpture 28 in this Report). Krishna Deva and Avasthi examined this face personally, and both scholars formed the opinion, despite the anthropomorphisation and certain damage, that a horse-head was intended. Since the sculpture is now permanently installed against a wall in the Khajuraho site museum and cannot be moved, one must for the time being to accept their view; in explanation of the combination of equine with human features, upon which neither scholar comments, I would suggest that this distortion could well be the result of an attempt to depict the demonic features of the asura Hayagrīva (EHI I.1. 260; see Interpretation below).

The figure, standing in slight ābhaṅga to the right with the weight on the right foot, was originally four-armed, but the arms are broken off below the shoulders, with the consequent loss of all attributes.

The feet of Viṣṇu stand upon a small plinth composed of cyma recta and cyma reversa curves, as if a double-lotus had been intended but left uncarved; a plain central block connects the lower and the upper segments. Between the feet, and rising from the surface of this plinth, appear the thighs and central pearlstring of a diminutive anthropomorphic figure, the remainder of which is broken off except for the hands, which rest upon the upper surfaces of the god's feet. This therefore seems to have been an small image of BHŪ-DEVĪ, the Earth-Goddess, who in Kashmiri Vaiṣṇava iconography is shown emerging from the pedestal and supporting the soles of the feet of the god with her hands; like so much foreign imagery, the placement of the hands, and their supporting function, has been misinterpreted - or freely adapted - by the Candella sculptor. (This detail would have been copied, inaccurately, either from a Kashmiri image such as Yasovarman's original Vaikuṅṭha figurine, or from one of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra images of Viśvarūpa at Kanauj, which also depict the Earth-Goddess in this position.)

#### **24.1.2 The base and frame**

To either side of Viṣṇu stand a male and female attendant, the latter holding a cāmara. In front of them, on the corners of the central salient of the plinth, sit two female worshippers. On the first lateral step of the base to the proper right stands a small figure of BUDDHA (as an avatāra of Viṣṇu), the left hand holding the end of his robe and the right raised in the abhaya mudrā, in front of a larger image of RĀMA DĀŚARATHĪ holding an arrow against his right shoulder, with VARĀHA on a pedestal above. At the end of the plinth on this side stands VĀMANA, the Dwarf incarnation, holding a parasol. In the corresponding locations to the proper left appear KALKIN riding a horse in front of SAṆKARṢAṆA / BALARĀMA, with NARASIṆHA on a pedestal above, and at the end PARĀŚU- (BRARGAVA -) RĀMA. The remaining two avatāras. MATSYA and KŪRMA, appear on small lateral projections to the proper right and left respectively, at the top of the frame, behind BRAHMA and ŚIVA who sit at the tops of the pillars of the makara-tornana. The sequence of the ten incarnations is therefore to be read from top to bottom of the composition, as in the case of the greater Vaikuṅṭha composition in the sanctum

of the Laksman temple (see Sculpture 23 in this Report). The other minor figures on the uprights are worshipping devotees and attendants.

## **24.2 INTERPRETATION:**

The appearance of the Varāha and Narasiṃha incarnations among the plinth-figures makes it clear that the Lion and Boar side-heads of the main figure are not to be regarded as those of these avatāras, but as the heads of demons, whose forms Viṣṇu assumed to defeat them according to the Khajuraho mythology (see Sculpture 23 in this Report); the half-man, half-horse face on the back of the image can therefore also be understood as that of a demon (Hayagrīva), which at Khajuraho replaced the original Kapila-face of the Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha icon (see 23.2.1 in this Report).

The style of the sculpture, plus the fact that the image was clearly intended as a major icon serving the local Vaikuṅṭha cult while it was still at the height of its power, indicate a date in the 11th century.

### **23.2.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

The sculpture represents a major sanctum image, intended for installation in its own temple at Khajuraho, of the Candella VIṢṆU Vaikuṅṭha, as it was understood within its royal cult at Khajuraho, with the Earth-Goddess at its feet, and surrounded by the Ten Incarnations.

Khajuraho, 11th century AD.

Nr. 24: Khajuraho

Archäologisches Museum (1)

Nr. 24-1: Khajuraho

Archäologisches Museum (1)

Rückansicht (Foto Avasthi)

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## 25. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 29 x 23 x 15 (Fragment)

urspr. 16 Hande

Khajuraho, Archaeological Museum

### 25.1 DESCRIPTION:

A fragment of a small Viṣṇu image which originally would have stood about 75-80 cm in height. The remaining portion consists of the central face and most of the crown, the torso down to the abdominal region, the stumps of arms on the stele. Although found at Khajuraho, the piece bears a close stylistic affinity to Gurjara-Pratīhāra sculpture of 9th-century Kanauj, for example in the treatment of the lotus in the nimbus, of the crown and its size in relation to that of the head, of the hairline, and, to a certain extent, of the jewellery.

The main figure represented Viṣṇu with the side-heads of the Lion on the proper right (preserved, in a naturalistic rendering as compared to the typical Candella stylisation), and of the Boar on the left (broken off). The stumps eight arms or possibly more can be seen on the proper right side, one of which was raised above the head; originally, the figure was at least 16-armed. The torso is ornamented with a hara and graiveyaka, both of which are clearly proto-Candella in style, the śrīvatsa-sign, and a pearlstring yajñopavīta. The trirekhā on the throat, the high arched eyebrows, and the centrally parted hair, are all prominently shown. The crown is a small kirīṭa with pearlstrings and a central pendant.

The prabhāmaṇḍala is an eight-petalled lotus with small pointed tips between the main petals, and the interstices are pierced; the lotus is enclosed in a plain circular band edged with pearls. To the right of the god rises a plain pilaster with a moulded top, above which a pair of flying figures approach the nimbus, the male bearing a garland

and the female holding her hands in the namaskāramudrā. The reliefs on the right-hand margin of the stele are destroyed except for the head of a vyala.

The style indicates a date in the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1</sup>, during the reign of Yasovarman. This and the Thuvon fragment (see Sculpture 27 in this Report) are parts of the two earliest Candella Vaikuṅṭha images so far known; both are 'proto-Candella' in style, and they may be dated to the moment at which Yasovarman acquired a Kashmiri image of Vaikuṅṭha from Pratīhāra Devapala on the western border of his kingdom, or soon thereafter, circa AD 945. The two fragments date from the early years in the formation of the Candella Vaikuṅṭha cult.

## **25.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

Fragment of one of the earliest Candella versions of the VIṢṆU Vaikuṅṭha icon, augmented by sixteen hands to hold a wide range of attributes.

Khajuraho, circa AD 945.

Nr. 25: Khajuraho

Archaeologisches Museum (2)

## **26. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Stein: 74 x 40

urspr. 8 Hande

Khajuraho, Kandariya Mahādeva Temple, auBere Sudwand des Sanktums, Anfang des inneren Pradaksinapatha

### **26.1 DESCRIPTION:**

The image is placed in a pillared devakostha well above eye-level, on the external wall of the sanctum, in the first position on the pradakṣiṇāpatha of this Śiva temple.

The main image represents Viṣṇu, with the side-heads of Lion and Boar on the proper right and left respectively; the crowns are kirīṭa for the central face and karanda for the animal profiles. A plain nimbus encircles the heads. The figure stands in ābhaṅga to the left, with the weight on the left foot. There were originally 8 hands, of which all but three are broken off: the uppermost right holds the cakra on a level with the Lion-head, the front right holds what appears to be a lotus, and the front left holds the conch-shell in a lateral grip. (Avasthi 1967: 135 claims to have seen the remains of three arrows on the proper left, but these are no longer visible.)

A remarkable feature of this image is the head and shoulders of a diminutive anthropomorphic figure with a kirīṭa-shaped crown shown superimposed on the cakra, over the central tassel. Avasthi (1967: 135) does not notice this in his description. The figure seems to be emerging from the Nṛsiṃha side-head of Viṣṇu, and may conceivably represent the Cakrapuruṣa, although a depiction of this personification in such a form and location and would be exceptional.

The Viṣṇu figure stands between pilasters: at the top of that on the proper right sits BRAHMA, with anthropomorphic GARUḌA holding a snake at its foot; on the left-hand pillar sits ŚIVA, with LAKṢMĪ holding a lotus standing at its foot. In front of the flanking figures sit two devotees with lowered heads and hands joined in the namaskāramudrā. Outside the pilasters stand two guardian figures, that on the proper left holding a small blossom.

## 26.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

VIṢṆU Vaikuṅṭha, in the Candella understanding of the form, eight-armed, accompanied by Garuḍa and Lakṣmī

Khajuraho, circa AD 1025-1050, in the reign of Vidyādhara.

Nr. 26: Khajuraho

Kandariya Mahādeva Tempel, Pradaksinapatha

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## 27. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU (FRAGMENT)

Stein: 46 x 55 x 29

urspr. 6 oder 8 Hande

Thuvon am Ufer des Orr-FluBes, Madhya Pradesh bei Chanderi

### 27.1 DESCRIPTION:

Damaged bust of a Vaikuṅṭha image which originally would have stood about one metre in height. The preserved portion extends from the hairline of the head to the abdomen, with the upper parts of three arms on either side. A section of the side of the crown, and the upper part of an animal head (boar) stretching downward from it, remains on the proper left, with a segment of the serrated nimbus still attached at the back. The figure wore a series of narrow necklaces and a wider one with elongated-diamond shaped pendants; longer strings hanging between the breasts, with pearlstrings running toward the back; the diamond-shaped śrīvatsa at the centre of the chest; and elaborate keyūras on the upper arms.

Note: The base of a frame (85 x 108 x 33), probably for this image, was found standing nearby. The feet of the deity remain on the surface of a base lotus, beneath which Bhūdevī sits between two Nāgas, their serpentine bodies interlinked in a knot beneath her; to the proper left, Cakrapuruṣa (with a kneeling female, hands in namaskāra, in front) and a female attendant, with above the remains of a seated figure holding a spear or arrow aslant across his body, beside the forequarters of an elephant; to the proper right, Śaṅkhapuruṣa (with a kneeling female, hands in namaskāra, in front) and a male attendant, with above a quiver of arrows (and possibly the diminutive figure of Banapuruṣa), beside the forequarters of an elephant.

### 27.2 CHRONOLOGY:

Thuvon seems to be Rakhetra, "on the right bank of the River Or within the limits of the village of Rakhetra, not far from the old site of Chanderi" (ASI 1924-25: 168; DHNI I: 585). It was under Gurjara-Pratīhāra control up to VS 999-1000/AD 942-943, when Vinayakapala alias Mahipala, late Pratīhāra king of Kanauj, issued an inscription from there. This date falls within the reign of Candella Yasovarman alias Laksavarman (c. AD 925-950). In the Khajuraho inscription of Candella Dhaṅga in the Laksman temple (dated VE 1011/AD 954), Dhaṅga describes Yasovarman, his father, as "a scorching fire to the Gurjaras", and Rakhetra was no doubt one of the areas in which Yasovarman led military campaigns against the territories of Kanauj while extending his own kingdom westward. Dhaṅga already possessed Gopagiri/Gwalior, one of the greatest natural fortresses in India to the north, having inherited from yasovarman, and he still held it in AD 954; but Kacchapaghāṭa Vajradaman took it from the south, and so Rakhetra/Thuvon along with it, by VS 1034/AD 977. The early sculptures in Candella style to be seen at Rakhetra/Thuvon can therefore reasonably be dated to a brief period (about 32 years) of Candella occupation under Yasovarman and Dhaṅga between ca. AD 944-976.

Now Yasovarman is said in the Laksman temple inscription (VS 1011/AD 954) to have acquired a Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha icon from Devapala, whom both Kielhorn and Ray identify with a Gurjara-Pratīhāra prince of that name operating up to VS 1005/AD 948-949 only 50 kilometres to the northwest at Siyadoni/Siron, where he is mentioned in a Pratīhāra inscription.

It is therefore almost certain to have been in this area of fluctuating frontiers, in the 50-kilometre stretch of land between Rakhetra/Thuvon, once it fell to the Candellas, and Siyadoni/Siron, governed by the Pratīhāras, that Yasovarman acquired the original Vaikuṅṭha icon from Devapala. The date of this icon coming into Yasovarman's possession would be around AD 944, the earliest date on which the Candellas could have occupied Rakhetra, and the fragmentary Vaikuṅṭha sculpture discovered there is probably part of the earliest stone copy made of it.



The broken stone Vaikuṅṭha at Rakhetra has several similarities to the sculpture in the sanctum of the Laksman temple at Khajuraho, but is stylistically and iconographically less sophisticated. It may be dated to the moment when the Candellas most probably took Rakhetra/Thuvon from their Gurjara-Pratīhāra overlords and acquired the Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha icon (more than likely in the same campaign), late in Yasovarman's reign and before the much larger stone Vaikuṅṭha image was made for the Laksman temple in AD 954. A reasonable date is therefore c. AD 945.

### **27.2.1 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

A Candella version of the Vaikuṅṭha image, similar in concept to the main icon in the sanctum of the Laksman temple at Khajuraho (see Sculpture 23 in this Report), but smaller both in size and in the number of surrounding deities. Western borderlands of the Candella kingdom circa AD 945.

Nr. 27-1: Thuvon

Pipal ki parh

Nr. 27-2: Thuvon

Pipal ki parh

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## **28. VIERKOPFIGER VIṢṆU (FRAGMENT)**

Stein: Dimensionen unbekannt.

arme abgebrochen

Entdeckt ca. 1920 in Varanasi von B. C. Bhattacharya (Indian Images, part One, Calcutta 1921: pl.IV); 1930 in der Tapa-Sammlung, Rangpur, heute Bangladesh (Niradbandhu Sanyal, Annual Report of the Varendra Research Society 4, Rajshahi 1930: figs.1-2).

## 28.1 DESCRIPTION:

An armless bust of crowned four-headed Viṣṇu, preserved from the top of the crown to the abdominal region. The torso is ornamented on the front and back with a large circular necklace having pointed pendants. On the front, but not on the back, there are two smaller round necklaces within this - a thick twisted torque and a string of pearls, from which a cross-shaped pendant hangs at the centre. A longer four-strand necklace, consisting of pearls and other beads on the front but plain at the back, hangs on the centre of the chest, with a cross-shaped fixture on its lowest curve; the plain strands of this necklace are fixed in the centre of the back with a jewelled clasp and, above this, with a loosely tied knot. The yajñopavīta cord is shown on the front and back.

At the centre of the chest, within the loop of the larger necklace, appears the cross-shaped śrīvatsa jewel.

The idealised front central face is ornamented with circular jewelled kuṇḍalas, and wears a tall kirīṭa crown hung with ornamental strings suspended from a diadem in the form of a kirttimukha-mask.

The area of the proper right side-head extending from the brow to the muzzle is broken off, but most of the lower jaw remains; this was clearly the lion-head, with the ears and mane preserved, while the proper left side-head represents the boar. These heads are very large, realistically rendered, and project almost horizontally from the sides of the central face, elevated well above the shoulders of the torso.

The rear face has the tall jaṭā-mukuṭa hairstyle of an ascetic. The features of this face are derived from Śaiva iconography, showing a lined forehead and tight stretched skin around a gaping, grinning mouth, from which the tongue appears to have protruded downwards. A thin moustache spreads over the upper lip and curves on the cheeks. The eyes are large and bulbous, with a round lump between them above the root of the broad nose.

## 28.2 HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION AND CHRONOLOGY:

This is the only surviving Candella Viṣṇu-image of the Vaikuṅṭha type (Viṣṇu having the side-heads of lion and boar) which is known with certainty also to have the Kapila face on the rear. Its combination of these four aspects indicates that it was intended iconographically as a copy of a Kashmiri/Himachali original. Though clearly made by a local sculptor in the Candella style of Khajuraho, the elevation of the animal heads, well clear of the shoulders and parallel to them, is a feature of Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha icons, quite different to the downward slanting side-heads which are typical of the indigenous Candella style; this confirms that it is a copy.

The reality of this contact between Candella sculptors and an original Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha icon is conveyed by the words of Candella Dhaṅga's inscription in the Laksman Vaikuṅṭha temple at Khajuraho, where an icon of Vaikuṅṭha from the Western Himalaya ("Kailasa") is said to have been received by his father, King Yasovarman / Laksavarman (stanza 43). In view of the Kashmiri iconography of its four heads, and the elevation of the side-heads, this Kāśī / Varanasi image is clearly the closest surviving Candella copy of that lost Himalayan original. But the earliest Candella version was almost certainly either the fragmentary sculpture at Thuvon / Rakhetra or the image in the sanctum of the Laksman temple, which is dated by inscription to VE 1011 / AD 954, not long after Yasovarman / Laksavarman had received the Kashmiri original from the Pratīhāra Devapala, who was active in the adjacent Lalitpur-Bhopal region to the west of the Candella kingdom in AD 947-8. As the copy made for the Laksman temple was designed to stand with its back concealed against the rear sanctum wall, the identity of its rear face (if it was given one) cannot have been a matter of importance at Khajuraho; and indeed the Kapila face is not found on the back of the two free-standing Vaikuṅṭha-type images there.

The Kāśī bust, on the other hand, has all four heads, carefully sculpted in the round, and clearly all intended to be seen, as in the Vaikuṅṭha icons from Kashmir and Chamba. The obvious inference is that the Candella sculptor who made this image was

not working from the multiheaded Viṣṇu sculptures that were created at Khajuraho, which means that he was not working at Khajuraho at all; he was trained elsewhere in the Candella kingdom, and he had the original Kashmiri icon (or a very exact copy) in front of him.

A not unlikely explanation of this curious circumstance would be that the Kashmiri icon was a portable bronze figurine, of which a number are known, and that the Candella king Dhaṅga carried it with him to Kāśī. Its talismanic properties must have been considerable, associated as it was with the sacred Himalaya, imperial Kannauj, and with Dhaṅga's illustrious' father, Yasovarman / Laksavarman, scourge of the Gurjaras. That it should have travelled with his son to the frontiers of the kingdom, where copies of it were made in stone and installed permanently in temples, makes sense in view of the occurrence of Vaikuṅṭha sculptures not only in the Candella heartland at Khajuraho, but also at Thuvon/Rakhetra, Kalanjara, and Kāśī, located respectively in the western, northern, and eastern borderlands of the expanding Candella territories (see Sculptures 27 and 29 in this Report).

### **28.2.1 CHRONOLOGY:**

Despite the Ghaznavid raids of AD 1020 and 1022 from the northwest, the Candellas included Kāśīka / Varanasi within the eastern frontier of their kingdom between the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century and the first quarter of the 11<sup>th</sup> century; Kāśīka was taken by the Ghaznavids in AD 1034. In very rough terms, therefore, the image could have been installed in a Candella temple at Kāśīka / Varanasi (where it was found by Bhattacharya in the early 1920s) at any time between ca. AD 950 and 1025.

There are, however, two specific epigraphically attested dates with which the image can reasonably be associated. Since it was the long-lived Candella king Dhaṅga, son of Yasovarman / Laksavarman, who completed the Laksman temple at Khajuraho and ordered the making of the magnificent image of Vaikuṅṭha in its sanctum in AD 954 (VE 1011), it would be consistent to date this Kāśīka / Varanasi image also within the dates of Candella Dhaṅga's independent reign, while the Vaikuṅṭha cult in the Candella

kingdom was at its height, and while the original kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha icon was presumably still in Candella possession: that is, ca. AD 954 - 1002. The second date can be reduced by fourteen years to VS 1055 / AD 988, the year in which Dhaṅga was sufficiently strong in Kāśī / Varanasi to issue the Nanyaura copper-plate land-grant (Ray, DHNI II: 679) from there.

Kāśī / Varanasi, circa AD 955 - 990.

### **28.2.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

Stylistically, this can only be a sculpture produced in the Candella kingdom.

Iconographically, the four heads of the image, particularly the Sive-like raudra face of Kapila at the back, unquestionably identify it as Vaikuṅṭha according to the Kashmir and Chamba iconography of the 9<sup>th</sup> century onward.

Vaikuṅṭha in the Candella understanding of the name.

Nr. 28: Varanasi

Rangpur

a. Vorderansicht

Nr. 28: Varanasi

Rangpur

b. Ruckansicht

## 29. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Steinplatte: 67 x 105 x 16

Visnufigur: 48

Inschrift: 6 x 15

urspr. 4 Hande

Steintor oberhalb des Nilakantha-Temples, Befestigung Kalanjara/Kalinjar, Banda District, Uttar Pradesh.

### 29.1 DESCRIPTION:

A rectangular slab of grey stone, carved in relief with four friezes of figures and a fifth band of Śivaliṅgas at the top; at the centre, on a slightly projecting ledge, stands a figure of three-headed Viṣṇu, damaged and eroded. The slab belongs to a recently recognised category of Hindu sacred Sculptures which are termed silapattas or devapattas; these have been brought to light chiefly by Dr. N. P. Joshi since 1989 in the following publications:

"Gvaliar sangrahalaya ka varanasi silapatta tatha anya samakalina ankana", Puratana VI, 1989: 151-153;

"Varanasi Silapattas and other Similar Slabs in Mediaeval Sculptures of Central India", Proceedings of the Bhopal Seminar 1989;

"Devapattas: A Less-Known Chapter of Medieval Hindu Iconography", T. S. Maxwell (ed.), Eastern Approaches, Delhi 1992: 133-140.

The present devapatta was found within the fortifications of Kalanjara (modern Kalinjar), at an altitude of 1,300 feet (400 metres), on the northwestern edge of the extensive plateau on the summit of the mountain, built into the southwest face of an arched stone darwaza, overlooking the rock-cut Nilakantha temple complex (see Map of Kalanjara in

this Report). I am grateful to Dr. N. P. Joshi of Banaras and to Dr. S. K. Sullerey of Jabalpur for drawing this piece to my attention.

The composition of the tablet consists of five horizontal friezes in low relief aligned one above the other on the rectangular backslab, which is bisected by a standing figure of Vaikuṅṭha in high relief placed vertically at the centre on a projecting ledge. The base is plain except for the brief inscription (see 29.1.2 below) beneath the Vaikuṅṭha image.

The severely damaged and eroded Vaikuṅṭha figure stands in a pronounced ābhaṅga posture with the left hip thrown out, the weight pivoting on the left foot, and the abdominal region turned to the right; at the same time, however, the upper torso, the broken central face, and both feet appear to have faced the front. There were originally four arms, all now broken. The remains indicate that all the upper arms were lowered, the inner pair perhaps resting the hands on the haloes of two diminutive flanking figures; from the remains of the outer pair, the left hand appears to have rested on the hip, while the right may have been raised in a (?vyākhyānamudrā) to the chest. The central and right face have been struck off, but the damaged left face was that of an animal with gaping jaws, apparently that of a maned lion (which, presumably representing the face of Nṛsimha, would thus appear opposite its usual position on the proper right). The body-ornament consists of a short necklace with elongated pendants, a longer necklace hanging on the centre of the chest, a prominent yajñopavīta, a girdle and looped sashes. The pair of small flanking figures consists of a female on the proper right holding a cāmara in her left hand, and a male on the proper left with left hand resting on his left thigh; this positioning, and their postures, suggests that they were copied from a pair of āyudhapuruṣas, with the male Cakrapuruṣa (personification of the disk of Viṣṇu) under one of his left hands, and the female Gadadevi (the personified mace) below one of the right hands.

The emblems and figures on the five friezes which form the background for this Vaikuṅṭha icon are the following:

5.) The top band represents a row of 14 Śivaliṅgas, of which the sixth from the left is now missing; the rest are all damaged in greater or lesser degree. The 1st, 7th, 10th and 11th from the left have clearly incised brahmasutras; the 2nd and 12th are Ekamukhalingas; and the 13th has a relief on the shaft representing a fight between a man and a rampant lion.

4.) The fourth band represents a row of nine four-armed figures seated in lalitasana on very low stools, their knees turned outward, the right foot on the ground and the left on the edge of the seat. These are arranged in a group of five on the observer's left and four on the right. Their faces and hand-held attributes have all been damaged beyond recognition. Dr. Sullerey thinks they may have been "a cluster of Camundas or the Navadurga" (proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Gorakhpur: 2).

3.) The third band contains a group of five Gaṇeśas on the observer's left, seated in the same posture as the nine figures in the register above. These appear to have been four-armed, with the axe in one of the right hands; the remaining attributes are unrecognisable due to erosion. On the observer's right in the same register appear a further six figures. The First three form a group, standing in samābhāṅga with their front hands joined in the namaskāramudrā and their rear arms lowered; their faces and attributes are damaged beyond recognition. The next three figures are seated goddesses, the first a Matrka with a child on her left knee, the second representing Sarasvati with a vina held transversely across her body, and the third an unidentifiable deity.

2.) The left half of the second band consists of a frieze of seven apparently identical Surya (Āditya) figures holding a lotus in each hand. A group of similar figures on the right side was most probably intended to represent the remaining five of the 12 Ādityas; they are also severely eroded. At the right-hand end of this register there appears a corpulent male figure squatting with what seems to be a large mace laid across his knees (Sullerey refers to this as a siddha-puruṣa with a yogapatta around his knees, but this is inaccurate).



1.) The lowest band contains 12 apparently identical standing figures, six to a side, representing four-armed Viṣṇu.

The background of the Vaikuṅṭha image thus contains:

14 Śivaliṅgas

9 Durgās

5 Ganapatis

3 gods and their 3 consorts (?)

12 Ādityas

12 Viṣṇu aspects

1 unidentified figure.

The three upper registers (5, 4, 3) represent deities associated with Saivism and Saktism; while the two lower friezes (2, 1) contain 24 ironic forms (caturvimsatimurti) of the Viṣṇu-and-Surya cult.

### **29.1.2 INSCRIPTION:**

The inscription appears on the front of the slight projecting ledge on which the main central figure of the tablet stands, a damaged surface measuring only 6 x 15 centimetres. The characters have been seriously eroded and are legible only in part. Dr. Joshi has not commented on it to my knowledge, but Dr. Sullerey claims to be able to read the following text: (sri) Vaikuṅṭha (sya pattah) karitah (unpublished Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Gorakhpur: 3). Due to the breakage and erosion, I was not able to distinguish all these characters, but my decipherment of the second word is the same, though I cannot see the -sya of a genitive ending. From my observations, sketches and photographs I read the visarga of a nominative, thus: [sr]i ve/Vaikuṅṭhah.

(See copies of the name Vaikuṅṭha in the Khajuraho and Kalanjara inscriptions attached to this Report.)

### **THE NAME Vaikuṅṭha**

## IN INSCRIPTIONS OF THE CANDELLA KINGDOM

### A.

Vaikunṭhaḥ in the inscription of Candella Dhaṅga

Lakṣmaṇ temple, Khajuraho

### B.

Vaikunṭhaḥ in the devapaṭṭa-inscription

Kalanjara Fort

This reading, combined with the location of the tablet in the most famous fortress of the Candellas some 75 kilometres northwest of Khajuraho, makes the identification of the central figure as Vaikuṅṭha, in the specifically Candella understanding of the term, conclusive. I cannot agree with Dr. Sullerey that this proves the existence of Pancaratra influence, either at Kalanjara or at Khajuraho (see Sculpture 23 in this Report). The worn condition of the characters precludes a highly detailed palaeographical comparison; but the style of the aksaras employed in the name Vaikuṅṭha on the Kalanjara tablet and in the Dhaṅga inscription in the Laksman temple at Khajuraho (AD 954) appear similar, but certainly not identical, in the formation of va-, ka-, and the conjunct n- (the anusvara is not used in the name, either at Kalanjara or Khajuraho), though the vowel-sign for-u seems to follow a different convention. Dr. Sullerey thinks that the Kalanjara inscription "may belong to the 10th-11th century A.D." (unpublished proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Goraphpur: 3).

## 29.2 HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION:

The question must arise as to why the god Vaikuṅṭha is represented at Kaianjara on a small devapatta, along with numerous other deities, rather than as a major god in his own temple, as at Khajuraho.

The fortress on the plateau of Kaianjara mountain, at an altitude of 1,340 feet (408 metres: "so high that it impedes the progress of the sun at mid-day": Khajuraho inscr. of Candella Dhaṅga, AD 954. stanza 31), entirely surrounded by rocky slopes which are particularly steep on the northern and western flanks, ranked with Gopadri/ Gwalior as the most secure stronghold in mediaeval India.

It was held by the Gurjara-Pratīhāras of Kanauj from circa AD 836 (DHNI II: 741) until taken by the Rastrakutas under Kṛṣṇa III sometime before the mid-10th century; it was then swiftly captured from them by Candella Yasovarman at some point before AD 954 (Khajuraho inscription of Candella Dhaṅga, VS 1011/AD 954), after which it remained in Candella hands for a considerable period.

Kalanjara/Kalinjar was well known to the Islamic forces of Mahmud of Ghazni, who beseiged it in vain, while it was held by the Candellas, during their campaign of AH 413/AD 1022; Nizam ud-Din, in his *Tabaqat-i- Akbari*, wrote that Kalanjara "has no equal in the whole country of Hindustan for strength and impregnability" (DHNI: 692. Circa AD 1030, al-Biruni wrote in his *Kitab al-Hind*:

"Marching from Kanoj [Kanyakubja/Kanauj] towards the south-east, on the western side of the Ganges, you come to the realm of Jajahuti [Jejakabhukti], 30 farsakh from Kanoj. The capital of the country is Kajuraha [Kharjuravahaka/Khajuraho]. Between this town and Kanoj there are two of the most famous of the fortresses of India. Gwaliyar [Gopadri/Gwalior] and Kalanjar [Kalanjara/Kalinjar]". (Sachau I: 202).

Kalanjara was wrested from the Candellas by the Ghaznavid army under Qutb ud-Din Aibak in AH 599/AD 1202. The Candella king, Paramardi, and later his chief minister,

submitted to Aibak, as Hasan Nizami recorded in his contemporary account in the Taj ul-Ma'athir (AD 1205-1217):

"On Monday, the 20th of Rajab, the garrison, in an extreme state of weakness and distraction, came out of the fort and by compulsion left their native place empty ... and the fort of Kalinjar which was celebrated throughout the world for being so strong as the Wall of Alexander" was taken, and "the government of Kalinjar was conferred on Hazabbaru-d-din Hasan Arnal." (DHNI II: 720-722)

It appears to have been taken back, however, by the successor of Paramardi. Candella Trailokyavarman, sometime after ca. AD 1205 (DHNI II: 726-727).

From late in the reign of Dhaṅga (circa AD 954-1002) onwards, Candella kings took the title Lord of Kalanjara (kalanjaradhipati, kalanjaragiripati: DHNI II: 679, 698, 713) as a sign of military strength.

Kalanjara was also known to the Candellas as "the dwelling place of Nilakantha (Śiva)": nilakanthadhipasam ... kalanjaradrim (Khajuraho inscription of Dhaṅga in the Laksman temple. VS 1011/AD 954: stanza 31; see Epigraphia Indica I: 127-128). The mountain appears in fact to have been a stronghold of Saivism at least since the 5th-6th century: J. N. Banerjea (Development of Hindu Iconography, Calcutta 1956: 182-183) notes that among the clay seals discovered by Marshall at Bhita, one depicts a mound of round rocks with a Sivalinga at the top and a wavy line below, bearing the legend in Gupta characters kalanjara-bhattaraka: Lord of Kalanjara. The cave temple complex of Śiva as Nilakantha, set in a rocky depression on the northwestern edge of the summit of Kalanjara mountain, is still known by this name today (February 1992). References in the Mahabharata indicate that the sanctity of the mountain is far older even than the Gupta period:

atra kalanjaram nama parvatam lokavisrutam tatra devahrade snatva gosahasraphalam  
labhet yah snatas tarpayet tara girau kalanjare nrpa svargaloke mahiyeta naro nasty  
atra samsayah

(Mahabharata, Vanaparavan, Tirthayatra parvadhya: 85.56-57)

The sacred lake (devahrada) mentioned in this passage as conferring vast material and spiritual benefits, would refer to one of the natural pools still to be found on the summit of the mountain (see Abbreviated Map of Kalanjara in this Report).

The importance of Kalanjara mountain to the Candellas - as an almost impregnable stronghold on their northern frontier (75 kilometres northeast of Khajuraho), as a symbol of royal power, and as a holy place-cannot therefore be underestimated.

The Candella and other Hindu temples on the mountain were converted into mosques in AD 1202 on the orders of Qutb ud-Din Aibak, "the very name of idolatry was annihilated" (Hasan Nizami, Taj ul-Ma'athir: DHNI II: 720-721), and the only important Hindu centre to remain is the Nilakantha cave complex. There is therefore no significant surviving evidence for the historical existence of any cult other than that of Śiva on the mountain, except for the devapatta near the ancient Nilakantha cave-temples.

It may be the case that this small votive tablet is the only manifestation of Vaisnavism on Kalanjara precisely because of the otherwise exclusive association of the mountain with the cult of Śiva. The row of Śivaliṅgas and the group of Durgās at the top of the stele would thus represent the prevalent cult practised on the mountain, into which the central Vaikuṅṭha figure was introduced as a relatively junior deity. The reason for the introduction of this god, with his royal and foreign associations, to the ancient stronghold of Śiva, is almost certainly connected with the strategic importance of Kalanjara in protecting the Candella kingdom (particularly its sacred centre at Khajuraho) on its northern frontier. The Candella image of Vaikuṅṭha was above all a symbol of Candella royalty, from the time of Yasovarman onward. It would therefore have been politically important to establish the Vaikuṅṭha cult on Kalanjara, but this move may well have been resisted by a conservative Śaiva priesthood which had been established on the mountain for at least 500 years. In this sensitive situation, a votive plaque representing the Candella Vaikuṅṭha, yet containing Śaiva symbolism and attached to an existing Śaiva temple at Kalanjara, rather than the creation of a separate Vaikuṅṭha shrine on

the mountain, was probably the only acceptable solution. The Vaikuṅṭha tablet would thus represent a compromise between political and religious requirements. This would explain the appearance of Vaikuṅṭha in the diminutive form of a tablet, and the iconographic content of that tablet, but the question remains as to its date.

### 29.2.1 CHRONOLOGY

It is known that the god Vaikuṅṭha was established at Khajuraho late in the reign of Candella Yasovarman (circa AD 925-950), and that his son Dhaṅga had completed a temple dedicated to Viṣṇu in this form by AD 954 (see Sculpture 23 in this Report). Stone images of Vaikuṅṭha, or similar multiheaded images of Viṣṇu, were made there, and at Rakhetra/Thuvon and Kāśī/Varanasi on the western and eastern frontiers of the kingdom (see Sculptures 27 and 28 in this Report), from about that time onward. Two temples of later date at Khajuraho, the Citragupta temple of Surya (circa AD 1000-1025) and the Kandariya Mahādeva temple of Śiva (circa AD 1025-1050), include images of the Vaikuṅṭha type in their iconographic programmes (see Sculptures 20, 21, 26 in this Report). Two decontextualised images of the Vaikuṅṭha type in the Archaeological Museum at Khajuraho (see Sculptures 24 and 25 in this Report) can also be dated, on stylistic grounds, to the 10th/11th century.

The iconography of Vaikuṅṭha thus existed at Khajuraho, and elsewhere in the Candella kingdom, at least during the hundred years between circa AD 950 and 1050. It is therefore reasonable to date the Vaikuṅṭha tablet on Kalanjara mountain to this period or somewhat later. Although the majority of Candella inscriptions from Kalanjara are dated in the reigns of later rulers, Madanavarman (circa AD 1128-1163) and Paramardi (circa AD 1167-1203), there is no other evidence that images of the Vaikuṅṭha type were any longer being produced in the 12th and 13th centuries in Bundelkhand, although Dr. Joshi (T. S. Maxwell, ed., *Eastern Approaches*, Delhi 1992: 134) dates the Kalanjara Vaikuṅṭha plate to the 13th century, but without adducing evidence. Dr. Sullerey (unpublished Proceedings of Indian History Congress, Gorakhpur: 3-4), on the other hand, assigns it to the reign of Candella Yasovarman (circa AD 925-950).

Yasovarman had taken Kalanjara (most probably from the Rastrakutas) before AD 954, when the mountain is included in the landmarks of his son Dhaṅga's kingdom in his Khajuraho inscription. It is perfectly possible that Yasovarman had at least one stone copy made from the Kashmiri Vaikuṅṭha icon that he acquired from Pratīhāra Devapala in the Siyadoni/Siron - Raketra/ Thuvon region circa AD 945 (see Sculpture 27 in this Report). But the artistic style, both of the Raketra/Thuvon fragment and of the Vaikuṅṭha sculpture in the sanctum of the Laksman temple at Khajuraho, is quite different to that of the Kalanjara figure. The pronounced ābhaṅga posture, the placement of the left hand on the hip, the simplified jewellery of the necklace and the arm-rings, and the very large size of the remaining animal-head, all indicate a later date. The Kalanjara figure of Vaikuṅṭha in fact bears a striking stylistic resemblance rather to the 11th-century Vaikuṅṭha/Viśvarūpa sculpture in the Rajasthan State Museum at Bharatpur (T. S. Maxwell, "The Viśvarūpa from Bhusawar at Bharatpur", *Eastern Approaches*. Delhi 1992: 155-167), which includes on the top of its framework two bands of group-deities aligned in friezes very like those on the Kalanjara tablet, and in which the central figure is in the same ābhaṅga posture and wears similar ornaments. I am therefore inclined to assign both to the 11th century, between the dates suggested by Sullerey (10th century) and Joshi (13th century); Sullerey admits that the characters of the inscription could be either of the 10th or 11th century (unpublished Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Gorakhpur: 3).

The principal Candella successors to Dhaṅga (circa AD 954-1002) in the 11th century were:

- 1.) Vidyādhara (circa AD 1019-1051), the most powerful military leader in North India during the first half of the 11th century, who is known to have held Kalanjara during a long siege laid by Mahmud of Ghazni in AH 413/AD 1022 without giving battle;
- 2.) Vijayapāla, his son, about whom very little is known:
- 3.) Devavarman (active in AD 1051), elder son of Vijayapāla; and

4.) his younger brother Kirtivarman, whose only known date is AD 1098, and who appears to have restored the kingdom after the depredations of the Kalacuris of Dahala under Lakṣmī-Karna (circa AD 1042-1070; described by Bilhana in the Vikramankadevacarita as "the God of Death to the Lord of Kalanjara" : kalah kalanjaragiripater yah: DHNI: 698); the Prabodha-candrodaya of Krsnamisra in one passage compares the valorous chief minister of Kirtivarman, Gopala, both to the Man-Lion incarnation (nṛsiṃharūpa) and to the Varāha (mahāvarāha), thus conceivably reflecting the iconographic imagery of Vaikuṅṭha sculptures current at the time.

Of these four kings, it is clear that Vidyādhara has the strongest association with Kalanjara; and he was recognised by the Muslim writers as the most powerful North Indian ruler of the time. On the other hand, Kirtivarman and his minister Gopala are highly praised in Sanskrit literature as well as in inscriptions for saving the kingdom. There is no basis for making a final decision as to which of these rulers was in control of the Candella territories when the Vaikuṅṭha tablet was installed in Kalanjara fort; though until more evidence becomes available, it can be provisionally dated to the 11th century. In my view, a date late in that century, in the reign of Kirtivarman, appears more probable, as the style of the tablet is not comparable to sculpture on the Kandariya Mahādeva temple at Khajuraho (the latest there to contain Vaikuṅṭha iconography), which was erected in the second quarter of the 11th century.

Kalanjara, late 11th century.

### **29.2.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

In view of both the iconography (Vaiṣṇava, with an animal side-head) and the inscription ([sr]i Vaikuṅṭhah), there can be no doubt that the central figure on this tablet represents Vaikuṅṭha in the Candella understanding of the name. Indeed, this is the only Viṣṇu icon of the animal-headed type discovered in the Candella kingdom which bears an inscription directly attributing this name to the god.



The Śivaliṅgas, Nava-Durgās, and Panca-Gaṇeśas on the stele represent the Śaiva cults already existing on Kalanjara mountain, while the Ādityas and multiple Viṣṇus represent the many forms of Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu which were considered subsidiary to his Vaikuṅṭha form.

The tablet as a whole represents the installation of the royal Candella Vaikuṅṭha icon on Kalanjara in a diminutive form acceptable to the long established Śaiva priesthood of the mountain.

Nr. 29: Kalanjara

Nilakantha - Tempelbezirk

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### 30. MEHRKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 24 x 28

6 Hande

Gadhwa, Allahabad District, Uttar Pradesh (SML/B223.8)

#### 30.1 DESCRIPTION:

A detailed description and discussion of this image is given in my book, *Viśvarūpa* (1988: 131-136). It was re-examined and re-documented in 1992, in the course of which certain details were observed which are recorded below in relation to the descriptions of *Viśvarūpa* given in the *Bhagavadgītā*.

The *Viśvarūpa* image forms the centrepiece of a long stone slab, at the ends of which appear the sun- and moon-gods, from whom processions issue and proceed toward the centre; some of the participants, who appear to be pilgrims, are shown being served with food in a building near the centre.

The Viśvarūpa image is shown standing inside a small square room, evidently a temple sanctum, with a wall to its right and an entrance to its left. Before the image, just inside the entrance, kneels a man with his hands apparently in the attitude of worship, while a bearer stands outside in the antechamber (the back wall of which is shown), holding a parasol - an emblem of very high status - through the doorway and over the head of the devotee, who must therefore be regarded as a man of noble rank.

### 30.1.2 HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION:

The historical importance of this piece lies mainly in the following factors:

1. It proves that in the late 5th century AD, the Viśvarūpa cult extended over a considerable part of the northern Gupta territories, though perhaps restricted to the Yamuna valley, from the region north of Mathura (one Viśvarūpa fragment was found in Bhankari in Aligarh District) to the area south of the confluence with the Ganges (Gadhwa lies 40 km S. of Allahabad).
2. It indicates that the Viśvarūpa cult at this time and in this region was definitely established as a temple-cult associated with pilgrimages and popular festivals, and that the principal devotees were men of high (kṣatriya) status. This latter point suggests that the image did indeed represent the Viśvarūpa of the Bhagavadgītā, and that the kṣatriya devotees regarded Arjuna as their archetype. Some later Viśvarūpa images continued to include in their composition a figure of Arjuna kneeling at the feet of the deity.
3. The figure shows that several features of the Bhagavadgītā descriptions were incorporated into the iconography of the images: chiefly the mass of fire and light, the multiplicity of heads, the worshipping kṣatriya figure, and the Vaiṣṇava identity of the deity (indicated in the sculpture by the vanamālā, the tall kirīṭa-crown, and the two pairs of flanking figures - presumably the saktis and the āyudhapuruṣas; close inspection shows that the object under the lowered left hand of the god, resting on the head of the outer left figure, was the spoked disk or cakṛa, as conventional in Viṣṇu iconography).

4. There is a suggestion, not by any means conclusive because of the condition of the piece, that already at this stage a horse-headed figure (Hayagrīva) was associated with multi-formed and multi-headed Viṣṇu; this association persists later in both the Gurjara-Pratīhāra and the Candella territories. Attention should therefore be given to the possibility of further evidence of this nature from the Gupta period being brought to light.

5. The profile head of the Boar (Varāha), can still be seen angled upward to the proper left of the human face of the god; although the corresponding Lion (Nṛsiṃha) profile cannot be seen on the right, the presence of the Varāha head indicates that at Gadhwa as at Mathura, it was the figure of three-faced Viṣṇu with two animal-avatāra side-heads which formed the basis of the Viśvarūpa icon.

6. Close inspection of the surrounding disembodied heads within the fire-nimbus shows that some, possibly all, of these were represented with open mouths; this important detail conforms to the descriptions of Viśvarūpa in the Bhagavadgītā (see below, 30.1.3), where the god in this form is seen as devouring the creation.

### **30.1.3 ICONOGRAPHICAL INTERPRETATION:**

There can be no doubt that the textual source for the iconography of this image was the Bhagavadgītā. The chief characteristic elements of the composition of the sculpture were clearly based directly on portions of this text, though interpreted through existing iconographic forms:

The central figure is that of Mahayogesvara Hari (BhG. 11.9), conceived in terms of the conventional cult image of Vāsudeva-Viṣṇu with two extra arms. The god in this form is said to wear a waistcloth and a garland (ambara, malya: BhG. 11.11), body ornaments (abharana: BhG. 11.10) and the royal crown (kirīṭa: BhG. 11.17,46), and to hold the two weapons (āyudha: BhG. 11.10), mace and disk (gadā, cakra: BhG. 11.17,46). The figure of the deity in the Gadhwa relief corresponds to this description, with the addition of the Varāha (and Narasiṃha) side-heads (borrowed from the iconography of Mathura, where these two heads define the anthropomorphic god as Viṣṇu, source of the

avatāras), the two saktis, the two weapon-personifications, and an extra pair of hands, apparently added to indicate so support the cluster of heads.

The many heads represent the numerous mouths (anekavaktra, bahuvaktra: BhG.11.16, 23) which face in all directions (viśvatomukha: BhG. 10.33, 11.11) and represent Time (kala: BhG. 10.33). These fiery mouths (vadanair jvaladbhih: BhG. 11.30) are described as gaping (vyattanana: BhG. 11.24), like the Fire of Time (kālāgnisannibhah: BhG. 11.25). The nimbus of flame in the sculpture represents Time in this imagery of devouring fire (Kālāgni), which is inseparable from the metaphor of licking, devouring mouths; it is this which gives rise to the mass of light blazing on all sides (tejorasim sarvato diptimantam) which has the brilliance of the sun and fire (diptanalarkadyuti: BhG. 11.17).

The figure at the apex, which seems to be two-armed and horse-headed, and to emerge from the crown of Viṣṇu, may in part be a visual reference to BhG. 10.27, where Kṛṣṇa says that among horses he is Uccaihsravas, although the appearance of the avatāra Hayagrīva in iconographic combination with Viṣṇu is an ancient phenomenon, particularly in Viśvarūpa iconography; this Gadhwa relief may represent one of the earliest examples of this association.

## 30.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

Viśvarūpa of the Bhagavadgītā as a cult-icon installed in the sanctum of its own temple, the focus of both aristocratic and popular worship.

Gadhwa, AD 475-500: circa AD 485.

Nr. 30: Gadhwa SML

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## 31. MEHRKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 64 x 37.5 x 14

urspr. 8 Hande

Manwadhi, Sitapur District, Uttar Pradesh (SML/H124)

Sonderbericht: Revised and expanded at Lucknow, 20.02.1992

## THE Viśvarūpa SCULPTURE FROM MANWADHI

T. S. Maxwell

### 31.1 General description

The sculpture was discovered at Manwadhi in Sitapur District, Uttar Pradesh, to the north of Lucknow<sup>1</sup>. The top of the sculpture is broken off, and the upper portion of the remainder is damaged on both sides; in its present condition, the piece is 64 cm in height. In a different context, it has been published by Professor Parimoo<sup>2</sup>. The piece consists of a stele with a narrow base having three figures upon it, above which at the centre rises a standing figure of Viṣṇu with four avatāra faces. The margins of the stele, both on the base and above, are densely populated with minor figures; the narrow edges of this extraordinarily thin slab are also carved.

#### 31.1.1 The central figure

The main figure of Viṣṇu, slightly ābhaṅga with the weight on the right foot, was originally eight-armed. In the left hands, from top to bottom, are held the kheṭaka, cakra (edge on), its surfaces carved with lotus petals in place of spokes, dhanus (the double-curve type, with the bowstring turned to the front, and personified by a male figure holding a small flower in the raised right hand), and śaṅkha; on the right, one hand is missing, while the remaining three held the gadā (its presence implied by the position of

the raised left arm), bānā (personified, as pointed out by Parimoo, in the form of a diminutive figure holding a cone-shaped quiver containing three or four arrows), and khaḍga (the blade of which is broken).

The jewellery consists of ear ornaments (damaged), a double necklace of pearls with central jewel, a long double-beaded yajñopavīta, triple-wound keyūras, and plain bracelets, a decorated girdle, and the vanamālā. The clothing consists of an adhoṃśuka with a rolled waistband and pleats on the left thigh.

The avatāra heads are those of the MATSYA above NARASIṂHA on the right, and of KŪRMA above VARĀHA on the right (P1.2); the snout of the Varāha is concealed behind the cakra. The central face of Viṣṇu and the crown are entirely broken off.

### **31.1.2 The figures on the base**

From the centre of the base arises BHUDEVI, the Earth-goddess, the point of her emergence from the surface of the plinth being concealed by the looped serpent-body of a Nāga. The upper body of the goddess is naked but for a single-strand pearl necklace and bracelets: the top of a lower garment appears below the navel. Her head rises between the feet of Viṣṇu, which she supports on the palms of her out-turned hands.

Bhūdevī is flanked by two NĀGAS, their human torsos larger than hers and their heads backed by five cobra hoods. The looped snake-body which conceals the lower body of Bhūdevī cannot logically belong to either of them, but is merely an artistic device. Their tails descend in undulating lines to the face of the plinth, where they are laterally intertwined and terminate in a curl. Their hands are extended and support the hands of Bhūdevī in holding up the figure of Viṣṇu.

A seated figure appears at each extremity of the plinth. That on the proper left represents a stout figure whose hair is combed straight back and who wears a necklace and long pendant ear-ornaments; the left leg is bent up under the belly in the kuncita

position (the right is not visible). A dish is held on the palm of the right hand above the shoulder. The left hand, balled into a fist and resting on the thigh, originally held a long object, the damaged remains of which can be seen on the left knee. This appears to represent KUBERA or Dhanada, the Wealth-god. On the right end of the plinth kneels ARJUNA wearing a high crown (kirīṭa; Arjuna is called kirīṭin when he pays terrified obeisance to Viśvarūpa: Bhagavadgītā 11.35) with a diadem, necklace and bracelets, his hands joined in namaskāramudrā. In front of him, behind the body of the right-hand Nāga, stands his discarded bow, called Gandiva. This depiction of Arjuna worshipping the transfiguration of Kṛṣṇa after discarding his bow accords with the descriptions of him in the Bhagavadgītā: gandivam sramsate hastat; visrjya sasaram capam; krtanjaliṛ vepamanah kiriti namaskrtva bhuya evaha kṛsnam sagadgadam bhitabhitah pranamya: 30,47; 11.35).

### 31.1.3 The figures on the stele

Two figures stand on pedestals on either side of the Viṣṇu figure, and smaller figures appear above them on the margins of the stele. To the immediate left of Viṣṇu stands LAKṢMĪ, her body bent to the left and her right hand raised to her breast; she holds no attributes. In the corresponding position on the right stands GARUḌA in fully anthropomorphic shape, a snake held in his left hand and his right raised on top of his head in salute. Beside Lakṣmī, on the left margin of the stele, stands a male figure in atibhaṅga posture, with the left hand on his thigh and the right raised to shoulder level holding a flower; the lower part of the bow held in the front left hand of Viṣṇu stands behind him and he is to be seen as the personification of this weapon, DHANUSPURUṢA. The left arm, extended downward with the elbow thrust out, represents the shape of the bow. In the corresponding location on the right edge stands the male figure holding the conical quiver beneath Viṣṇu's lowest right hand and representing the personified arrows, BANAPURUSA.

The remaining miniature figures on the higher margins of the stele are identifiable as follows. There are three on the proper left side, between the bow and the shield of

Viṣṇu, and another above, between the shield and disk. The first is a GANDHARVA in the flying posture, the right hand raised in abhayamudra<sup>3</sup>. Above this is a figure mounted on an animal, who could easily be mistaken for Revanta, the son of the Sun, as a horseman (prsthe 'sve suryavat karyo revantas ca: Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa 3.70.5) with the royal parasol above his head, where a rounded surface, partly broken, appears in the relief<sup>4</sup>. This has been correctly interpreted by Joshi<sup>5</sup>, however, as a "semicircular fluttering cloth." Close examination of this miniature figure shows that the damaged arc is incised with curved lines on the underside, representing folds of cloth, and that although the left hand is broken, the other end of this cloth is held by the right hand, which is just visible immediately below the elbow of the cakra-arm of Viṣṇu. This minute detail proves that the figure represents VAYU, or Pavana, the purifying Wind-god, holding the ends of his wind-filled garment in both hands (vayvapuritavastras ... grhitavastrantah karabhyam pavano: Viṣṇudharmottara 3.58.1c/2cd). The depiction of the vāhana as a horse, rather than as an antelope<sup>6</sup>, therefore appears to be a sculptor's error.

Thirdly, behind the shield, an ascetic figure with beard and jaṭābhāra is shown kneeling and holding what appears to be a kamaṇḍalu in his left hand against his chest<sup>7</sup>; being an isolated figure rather than one of a group, this probably represents AGNI, the Fire-god. Between the shield and the disk rises a small crowned figure holding two lotuses; the remains of other figures, now broken, to his right, indicates that this was one of a group of ĀDITYAS, the twelve aspects of the Sun-god, which originally appeared at the top of the stele on this side.

In the corresponding portion of the stele on the proper right, two figures are preserved. The lower of these represents YAMA holding the yamadanda in his right hand, mounted on the buffalo; the head of the animal is tilted upward, as if sharply reined-in, as in other miniature images of this god occurring on Viśvarūpa sculptures from the same region<sup>8</sup>. The upper figure depicts INDRA wearing a crown like that of Arjuna below, though without the diadem, holding an indistinct object (intended to represent the vajra) in his right hand, and mounted on the elephant Airāvata. A damaged figure higher up on this



side, above the Matsya head of Viṣṇu, has the right hand raised in abhayamudrā; this may have been a small image of one of the avatāras, or one of a group of eleven Rudras.

### **31.1.4 The edges of the stele**

As noted above, the narrow sides of the stele are also sculpted with reliefs which are invisible from the front.

#### **31.1.4.1 The posts**

On each side, behind the bow and quiver of Viṣṇu, a post with a thickened top is represented. A monkey sits on the top of the proper right post. A rope is shown tied around the top of each of the shafts, apparently tied to a cloth which streams out to the sides of the stele.

#### **31.1.4.2 The Bhairava faces**

Above the post and ropes on each side and further to the rear, on the very narrow edge of the stele, rose two vertical rows of Bhairava faces. The series on the proper right began behind the figures of Yama and Indra, where only one face is preserved; that on the proper left, represented now by two faces, behind Vāyu and the flying Gandharva. These damaged remains indicate that each face was set upon its own trirekhā-marked neck, encircled by a necklace of rudrākṣa-beads, and that they were all provided with the vertical third eye of Śiva at the centre of the forehead and crowned with differing jaṭā-hairstyles.

### **31.2 Iconographical interpretation and chronology**

The five surrounding gods on the plinth and stele (\*31.1.3) appear to refer to the horizontal directions of space, for they are all Dikpālas: the east, south, and north respectively are protected by Indra, Yama, and Kubera; Vāyu and Agni are the gods of the north-west and the south-east. The three missing deities from the standard

purāṇic list of eight would be Varuṇa, Nirrti, and Īśāna. These might have been shown on higher portions of the stele which are now lost, but this must be unlikely since above them begins the periphery of Bhairava faces, which in related icons from the same region contains the groups of Ādityas and Rudras. The full set of eight may not have been intended, the five which appear making adequate reference to the lateral directions. This is indeed suggested by the interposition within this group of two other figures on the base and higher up on the opposite side, which appear to symbolise the vertical dimensions of space: the earth, represented by Arjuna at the same level as the Earth-goddess at the centre, and the atmosphere above it indicated by the antarikṣaga or Gandharva figure. The tails of the Nāgas undulating across the base of the sculpture below the Earth-goddess extend this vertically downward, depicting the watery netherworld<sup>9</sup>. This spatial symbolism, though incomplete, provides sufficient iconographic indication of the traditional divisions of space which the giant central figure of Viṣṇu as Viśvarūpa penetrates and transcends: Arjuna in the Gītā says that he sees neither beginning, nor middle, nor end of his cosmic form<sup>10</sup>.

The sculpture belongs to the Viśvarūpa tradition which flourished north of the Ganges, chiefly represented by the Pratīhāra Kannauj Series; it may be regarded either as anterior to that series, the product of a different tradition, or as an early example of it. A date in the 7th century has been suggested, but in the evolution of Viśvarūpa iconography the image is a more immediate predecessor of the images produced by the Pratīhāras of Kanauj, and it is more properly datable to the 8th century. Within this period it could be associated with the reign of Yasovarman of Kanauj (circa AD 700-740) and the northern territories under his control; or it may have been produced in the aftermath of the defeat of Yasovarman by Lalitaditya Karkota of Kashmir, during the reigns in Kanauj of the vassal kings Indrayudha (dated AD 783, subject to Vatsaraja Pratīhāra) and his successor Cakrayudha (vassal of Dharmapala of Gauda). A later date, circa AD 800, would place the sculpture in the period of Nagabhatta II Pratīhāra, who at that time was pressing upon Kanauj and probably took it.

On balance, it seems most probable that the sculpture, with its pronounced spatial symbolism which was no doubt intended to reflect the geo-Political ambition of its patron, is a product of this early Pratīhāra contact with the area around the imperial city. Parts of previous Viśvarūpa images of this kind, which can be dated earlier in the 8th century, stem from territories already well under Pratīhāra control to the south-west; these are represented by the Tumain nimbus (see Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990, S.172-177) and associated fragments (Eskenazi, Russek).

### **31.3 Preliminary identification**

The sculpture shows Viṣṇu with four avatāra heads, flanked by small figures of directional deities and supported by both the Earth Goddess and Nāgas, being worshipped by Arjuna, in a clear reference to the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavadgītā. The image represents Viṣṇu as Viśvarūpa.

Late 8th century.

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Nr. 31: Manwadhi SML

## 32. FONFKOPFIGER VISNU

Stein: 101 x 61 x 24

Fragment 1: 53/33 x 57 x 13

Fragment 2: 48/68 x 61 x 24

urspr. 8 Hande

Dalmau, Rae Bareilly District, Uttar Pradesh (SML/66.233+44.46)

### 32.1 DESCRTPTION:

This remarkable sculpture was recovered in two pieces, on two separate occasions, from the village of Dalmau in Rae Bareilly. In view of the corresponding dimensions and lines of breakage on both halves, and the matching segments in the region of the head - which appears, as in so many cases, to have been struck off in historical times - there is no doubt that the fragments belong together.

Due to their separation, however, secondary damage has evidently occurred along the fracture lines, causing discontinuity in the iconography of some of the smaller figures. Both pieces have suffered additional damage and scarring, particularly the lower, on which several figures as well as the feet and all but one of the arms of the main figure have been broken off. The fragments lay a long time face-down on the ground, resulting in an obliteration of all fine sculptural detail and considerable erosion; this deterioration of the surface has erased or blurred most of the iconographical features, making a precise analysis exceedingly difficult.

The image represented a standing figure of Viṣṇu with emanating avatāra-heads, surrounded above the shoulders by a rectangular nimbus with rounded corners; the nimbus is encircled by a series of disembodied heads, bisected by a vertical register of deities, and densely populated with minor figures positioned at differing angles in the

two sides. The reunited halves measure 101cm, suggesting an original height, with plinth, of some 115-120cm.

### 32.1.1 The central figure

The main figure represented the god VIṢṆU with eight arms, standing in ābhaṅga to the right with the weight on the right foot. The deity wore the cylindrical kirīṭa-crown, the outline of which can still be seen, kuṇḍalas hanging down to the shoulders, where long ringlets also appear, a triple-strand pearl necklace with a central pendant, triple-wound Keyūras with a large central motif, a plain bracelet on the remaining right wrist, plain udarabandha and ornamented girdle with a looped chain below the clasp and long pendants, a long pearl-yajñopavīta hanging low on the right thigh, and the vanamālā which loops above the knees. The adhoṃśuka is finely ridged with wavy folds (Dr. Joshi terms it a satavallika garment <sup>1</sup>), and ends above the knee on the right leg; around it, at the level of the thighs, hangs a scarf or loose uttariyaka.

The remains of the outer two left arms are raised, indicating that the hands would originally have held the kheṭaka and cakra adjacent to one another. Below these arms, a winged figure, somewhat eroded, with hands joined in the namaskāramudrā, may have represented GARUḌA. The third left hand would have held the śaṅkha, and the fourth, extended downward, the dhanus. The front right hand, of which the upper arm remains, probably held the khaḍga. The lowered arm behind it reaches down to a quiver of arrows, on the ends of which the hand rests; the head of a male figure in front of the quiver would have represented the BANAPURUSA, and the female head beside this, LAKṢMĪ. The other two arms on the right are completely destroyed.

From the proper left side of the crown emerges the profile of the VARĀHA, and farther down, at what would have been the level of the crown rim, emerging from behind the left ear of Viṣṇu, the damaged profile of the MATSYA can be seen. Opposite the Varāha appears the head of NARASIṂHA, angled towards the front; a broken area below this marks the point at which the shell and head of the [KŪRMA] incarnation would have been sculpted.

### 32.1.2 The axis

Three seated gods appear in a vertical sequence above the top of the crown of Viṣṇu, bisecting the nimbus. The first of these is the Vaiṣṇava avatāra HAYAGRIVA with a long equine head and four arms. The front left hand, holding an object which is too eroded to identify, appears to have rested on the left knee, while the corresponding right hand seems to have been raised in the abhyamudrā; the rear left hand held an elongated object (perhaps, since Hayagrīva is said to have rescued the Vedas, a manuscript or pustaka), and the rear right holds an upright mace.

The second seated figure, immediately above Hayagrīva, appears in human form, two-armed, with loose unbound hair hanging down to the shoulders, and a broad sash, which must represent the yogapatta of an ascetic, slung diagonally across the torso from the left shoulder. Both the hands are destroyed, and there is a damaged area in front of and above the left arm.

It is therefore possible to accept, though tentatively, the suggestion of Joshi that this is an image of the Śaiva incarnation LAKULISA, assuming that the damaged portion represented the club (laguda), and although the figure is not ithyphallic.

Following these two incarnations, the third figure at the apex of the axis is the god BRAHMA, also wearing the yogapatta across the chest and abdomen. Three of the four heads of the god are shown, crowned with piled-up jaṭās, and he is two-armed, the left hand holding the kamaṇḍalu on the left knee, the right raised in the abhayamudrā.

### 32.1.3 The periphery of heads

From the multiple heads of Brahmā, a series of disembodied heads descends on either side of the stele to the level of the head of Viṣṇu; at that point, although the edges of the stele continue straight down, the line of heads curves inward toward the shoulders of the Viṣṇu figure, clearly indicating that they demarcate the boundary of his nimbus. Fourteen remain on the proper right side, and thirteen on the proper left; the two series

are interrupted by damage around the fracture line, but on the basis of the visible evidence one must assume that the total number of these heads was 28. Like all other sculptural details, the facial features of these heads are severely eroded, but they do of course have a strong similarity, both in positioning and general appearance, to the Bhairava-faces around the margin of other Viśvarūpa sculptures; there seem to be no marked differences between them, and those whose features can still be seen appear to be masculine. Evidently they were introduced in this sculpture as an alternative and more numerous group in place of the Bhairavas<sup>2</sup>

Dr Joshi <sup>3</sup> suggests that, on the basis of their number, these faces can most reasonably be taken to have represented the 28 NAKṢATRAS, The constellations or asterisms marking the 'path' of the moon<sup>4</sup>. The implications of this identification require some discussion, which is deferred to \*32.2 (Iconographical Interpretation) below.

### **32.1.4 Figures within the nimbus**

Despite the considerable damage which the upper fragment has sustained, a total of 47 figures can be seen in both sides of the nimbus of this image. The original number was no doubt somewhat larger, as several small figures in the region of the main fracture line appear to have been destroyed. It is possible to identify the main groupings of deities and some of the individual figures, but others have unfortunately been so completely effaced by erosion that they will never be identifiable. This is particularly regrettable in view of the degree of creativity evident in this sculpture.

#### **32.1.4.1**

#### **Figure in the left side of the nimbus**

1-12. The largest group of deities in the proper left half of the nimbus represents the twelve ADITYAS. These appear as miniature Surya-images, crowned and holding two lotuses, arranged in three rows of 5, 4, and 3 in the lower portion of the nimbus on this side.

13. An interpolated figure at the beginning of the second row, adjacent to the crown of Viṣṇu, represents BHARGAVA (PARAŚU-) RĀMA, holding a large axe in the left hand and making the abhayamudrā with the right.

14-19. Above the Ādityas is a line of six standing figures, each holding a kamaṇḍalu or similar object in the left hand, and raising the right in the abhayamudrā. The faces of four of these figures are broken, but the first and the fifth are to some extent preserved, showing that they did not have the usual jaṭābhāra hairstyle of ascetics (who conventionally hold the kamaṇḍalu), but hair combed back and falling behind the ears, like that of the heads on the periphery of the nimbus. The group may be an abbreviated representation of the GRAHAS (Planet-deities, usually a group of nine [navagrahas], but variations are known, both in text and image); this identification is supported by the disembodied head (no.20, below), and by the proposed identification of the peripheral heads as the Constellation-gods.

20. Above the last of these six figures, perhaps as a seventh member of the same group, appears a disembodied head, which as one of the Grahas would represent RAHU, the Eclipser.

21. Adjacent to the disembodied head, a figure holding a long arrow or spear in the left hand and seated on a vāhana having a triangular head is almost certainly to be identified as SKANDA holding the sakti and riding the peacock.

22-24. A cluster of three figures next to Skanda cannot be identified.

25. The figure in the top row adjacent to this cluster may represent the Fire-god AGNI, with lines suggesting flames around the head.

26. At the top, facing Brahmā, the figure of YAMA can be recognised, riding the buffalo and holding the yamadanda in the form of a rod with a skull attached to the top.

27. Below Yama appears INDRA mounted on the elephant Airāvata; both the anatomy of the elephant and the object(s) held in the hands of Indra are severely eroded.



### 32.1.4.2

#### Figures in the right side of the nimbus

In the proper right half of the nimbus, a total of 19 figures can be distinguished.

28-34. In the lower corner, above the right shoulder of Viṣṇu, appears an irregular group of six figures and one partly preserved head. Four of these, and the damaged head, have the jaṭā-hairstyle of ascetics, and in four cases a combination of the kamaṇḍalu held in the left hand and the abhayamudrā displayed with the right can be discerned or reasonably assumed. It is therefore almost certain that this group represented the SAPTARṢIS.

35. Above the ṛṣi-group, adjacent to the crown of Viṣṇu, appears a figure with piled hair, a bow held in the left hand against the shoulder, and what appears to have been an arrow in the right hand. This would represent the incarnation DĀŚARATHĪ RĀMA.

36. Immediately adjacent to Rāma stands the larger four-armed figure of BALARĀMA (Sañkarṣaṇa). The iconography is fairly well preserved: a canopy of five cobra-heads surrounds the head, the front left hand holds a small drinking vessels, the front right is raised above the head in the gesture characteristic of this incarnation, the rear left holds a long object which would have represented the plough (hala), and the rear right holds the staff-like shape of the pestle (musala).

37-47. The remaining figures, which fill the rest of the nimbus on this side, represent the eleven RUDRAS. These are depicted as two-armed, with the jaṭā-hairstyle of ascetics, holding the triśula in the left hand and making the abhayamudrā with the right. Certain minute, eroded elements near the trident-staff of four of these figures might conceivably have represented animal heads<sup>5</sup>.

The positioning of the Rudras is of stylistic interest. The first of these figures appears upright beside Balarāma, but the remainder are turned through an arc of ninety degrees, so that the group meets the central axis of gods almost head-on. The turning-

point about which this curving movement takes place, is the tilted head and raised arm of Balarāma, who seems to hurl the Rudras around him with a sweeping gesture.

If the Rudras are considered agents of darkness, what is depicted is the dispersal of them by a Vaiṣṇava avatāra, agent of light.

### 32.2. Iconographical interpretation:

The image appears to have incorporated only eight of the Vaiṣṇava avatars<sup>6</sup> in the region of the nimbus: the Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha and Narasiṃha forms represented as heads emanating from behind the crown of the Viṣṇu figure, the three Rāmas (Paraśurāma, Rāma Dāśarathī, Balarāma) also positioned adjacent to the crown, and the Hayagrīve incarnation seated at the top of the crown. This grouping of the incarnations may well indicate that the Viṣṇu figure at their centre is also to be understood as representing Kṛṣṇa who is not separately depicted. The positioning of the three Rāmas is interesting: they are shown in a line commencing with Paraśurāma among the Ādityas, agents of light, on the observer's right, and continuing to the left, where it ends with Balarāma sweeping aside the Rudras, the forces of darkness. The Ādityas stand at the base of their half of the nimbus, while the swirling Rudras curve across the upper reaches of their side. The Vedic devas and the group of the seven ṛṣis are therefore also diagonally opposed. Corresponding groups within in the rounded nimbus thus appear alternately, suggesting a rotation of the whole surface, contrasting with the fixed vertical and horizontal axes of incarnations and gods centred on the face of Viṣṇu.

Although a departure from the sculptural iconographic tradition, the substitution of Nakṣatras for Bhairavas on the periphery of this image would accord with the portions of the Bhagavadgītā which are relevant to the vision of Viśvarūpa: Kṛṣṇa explicitly says that he is Viṣṇu the Sun amid the solar phases, the sun as the greatest of all celestial bodies, and the moon among the constellations (adityanam aham visnur jyotisam ravir amsuman ... naksatranam aham sasi: BhG. 10.21), and the vision of Viśvarūpa at Kurukṣetra is visibly identified with the sun and moon (sasisuryanetra; tvam ...

sasankah: BhG. 11.19,39) . The integration of the Nakṣatras with the Viśvarūpa image at Dalmau could therefore be regarded as an example of a well known icon being revised as the result of a review of its textual basis.

Beyond this internal innovation within the Viśvarūpa cult, however, it is clear that this integration of the Star-gods with the Cosmic Viṣṇu would also represent the merging of two traditional conceptions of a multiple deity, namely Viśvarūpa and nakṣatrapuruṣa. In the Bṛhatsaṃhita, Varahamihira's encyclopaedic Sanskrit text of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the conception and worship of the Nakṣatrapuruṣa is described. For ritual purposes, the Puruṣa is to be conceived as anatomically composed of the 28 asterisms:

The worship of this Nakṣatrapuruṣa should commence with the feet in the month of Caitra as the moon passes through the Mula asterism; and be continued when the moon is in Rohini, with the worship of the knees of the Puruṣa, and so forth. The relevant asterism (nakṣatra, dhiṣṇyā) and the god Viṣṇu are to be worshipped together (visnum sampujya dhisnyam ca; kuryat kesavapujanam svaividhina dhisnyasya pujam tatha: BrS.105.6, 8) by those wishing to influence favourably their condition in a future life.

Although the asterisms or constellations themselves are regarded as goddesses (the 28 wives of the Moon-god, for example in the Viṣṇu-dharmottarapurāṇa: 3.68.6-11), the presiding deities of these star-clusters were believed to be almost exclusively masculine. Thus the Bṛhatsaṃhita lists the "Lords of the Luminaries/Asterisms" (īśvara bhanam: BrS. 98.4-5) predominantly as gods (the exceptions being Aditi and Nirrti. The Bṛhatsaṃhita list of the Nakṣatra deities can be taken as indicative of this tradition: they are the Aśvins, yama, Agni (Dahana), Brahmā (Kamalaja), Moon-god (Sasin), Rudra-Śiva (Sulabṛht), Aditi, Jiva (=Bṛhaspati; Jupiter), Phana, the Pitrs, Yoni (regent of Purvaphalguni), Aryaman, Savitṛ (Dinakṛt), Tvaṣṭṛ, Vāyu (Pavana), Indragṇi (Sakragṇi), Mitra, Indra, Nirrti, Toya, Visve [devah], Brahmā (again), Viṣṇu (Hari), Vasu, Varuṇa, Ajapada, Ahirbudhnya, and Pusan. That a systematic iconography was developed on

the basis of such conceptions is clearly improbable (four of the twenty-eight are themselves dual or group deities).

The proposal that the circle of similar or identical heads in this sculpture represents the Nakṣatra-Regents (Joshi employs the term *nakṣatra-mālā*) as a numerologically defined group without individual characteristics (which is how the eight Bhairavas are represented on other icons of this type) is therefore a reasonable one. A combination of conceptual and sculptural factors could have suggested the innovation of sculpting an expanded group of similar faces, representing the stellar deities of the ecliptic, around the periphery of this Viśvarūpa image: (1.) the near-circular shape of the nimbus, (2.) the identification of Viṣṇu with the sun and moon, (3.) the already existing tradition of depicting a series of virtually identical faces (of the Bhairavas) on the margin of the stele, and above all (4.) the similarity between Viśvarūpa and the Nakṣatrapuruṣa concept as a single figure embodying multiple identifies.

This feature of the Dalmau sculpture suggests that there was an active awareness of the essential relationship between a range of such widely diffused cultural concepts as *puruṣa*, *vastu-puruṣa*, *kala-puruṣa*, *nakṣatra-puruṣa*, *virāta-puruṣa* and the cult image of Viṣṇu Viśvarūpa; that these concepts were to a certain extent interchangeable; and that this awareness found sculptural expression in the creation of new cult images. In this image, a creative development of the symbolic potential of the Viśvarūpa image -- beyond its classic purpose to depict the vision of Arjuna -- is partly apparent. This reinterpretation of the Viśvarūpa figure is significant in view of the variety of variant forms which subsequently arise in the 10th and 11th centuries in the Pala, Candella, and Solāṅkī kingdoms (See Sculptures 6, 8, 10, 14, 21, 22, 41 in this Report). The Dalmau sculpture (along with the Deogarh version) appears to represent one of the earliest of these variants, in the Pratihāra empire.

This is a change in emphasis, however, not yet an abandonment of the classic Viśvarūpa vision: at the lower end of the chain of heads on the proper right side of the sculpture, just outside the periphery of the god's nimbus, appears, damaged and

eroded, a small figure with hands in namaskāramudrā who clearly represents ARJUNA worshipping Viśvarūpa, as he is portrayed in the Bhagavadgītā.

The cult at Dalmau that was centred on this image appears to have selected for special worship the great concentration of light which is emphasised in the Bhagavadgītā (11.12,17,19,24,29) descriptions of Arjuna's vision; this is apparent not only in the series of Nakṣatra-Regents on the periphery of the nimbus, but also in the dramatic and unique representation of the dispersal of the Rudras, agents of darkness, by the Balarāma incarnation of Viṣṇu. The Bṛhatsaṃhita states that the constellations and Viṣṇu are to be worshipped in conjunction, and this image, which superimposes the Nakṣatrapuruṣa and Viśvarūpa concepts, may well have been created as a means of performing this ritual before a single image <sup>7</sup>.

### 32.3 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

The sculpture represents Viṣṇu Viśvarūpa as cosmic god of light, integrated with the Nakṣatrapuruṣa.

Dalmau, early 9th century AD.

Nr.32: Dalmau SML

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## 33. FRAGMENT EINES VISNUBILDWERKS

Stein: 15 x 15.25 x 5.5

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Uttar Pradesh, genauer Fundort unbekannt (SML/H78)

### 33.1 DESCRIPTION:

This small fragment, damaged and eroded, is the top of a flat sandstone slab on which the figures of four deities, executed in low relief, are partly preserved. The two lower figures overlap those above them.

At the top left corner appears YAMA, god of Death, mounted on the buffalo riding from left to right. The god is two-armed, holding the yamadanda in the right hand and resting on the right shoulder; the left hand appears to be raised in the abhayamudrā. The head of the buffalo is slightly raised, but not abruptly tilted upward as in other representations.

In front of Yama, also riding from left to right, is VAYU, the Wind-god. The hands hold the ends of the curving, wind-filled garment (vayvapuritavastra) over the head, as described in the Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa (3.58.1c/2cd). The vāhana is clearly an antelope, which is depicted leaping gracefully with front legs folded back, and the head turned to face the god.

Below Yama, presented facing the front, appears SURYA the Sun-god. The figure is seated in the squatting posture typical of the Kuṣāṇa-period iconography of this god; unfortunately the type of headgear worn (turban or crown), and the objects held in the hands (varsman or lotus) cannot be distinguished.

Adjacent to Surya and below Vāyu is a figure, possibly representing [SKANDA] the War-god, mounted on a long-necked bird which appears to be the peacock with the long elevated tail shown from the side. The deity is shown riding from right to left, but with his torso turned to the front. He has long hair dressed in piled locks (not a jaṭābhāra) which would correspond to the elaborate hairstyle typical of Skanda images, and raises the right hand in the abhayamudrā above the head of the peacock. The left hand holds a long attribute which might correspond to the sakti of Skanda iconography, but it appears to be slightly curved and to have ended in a large round object, thus strongly resembling a lotus.

### **33.2 CHRONOLOGY:**

Dr. Joshi dates this fragment to circa 10th century <sup>1</sup>, but this suggestion cannot be accepted in view of the style and iconography of the reliefs. The squatting posture of the Surya figure in particular indicates an early date: the Ādityas, represented as a group of twelve fully developed miniature Surya images, appear as standing figures in every North Indian post-Gupta sculpture identifiable as Viśvarūpa, not seated in the manner shown here. Animal- and bird-mounted deities similar to the figures of Yama, Vāyu, and Skanda on this fragment appear in the nimbus of the Tumain Viśvarūpa, which I date to the 8th century. They also occur, however, in the nimbus of a recently discovered and unpublished Mathura Surya image of late-Kuṣāṇa (ca. 4th century) date. I therefore suggest that this fragment should be placed in the 4th-8th century bracket, and that within this period an early date, in the 6th century, is reasonable.

### **33.3 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

Since groups of gods of the kind shown here appear predominantly, if not exclusively, in Viśvarūpa images, it may be assumed that this is a fragment of the nimbus of an early Viśvarūpa sculpture. As the peripheral gods, Yama and Vāyu, are shown proceeding to the observer's right, it is probably part of the upper quadrant of the nimbus on the proper right side. The primary importance of this fragment is as an indicator of the existence of Viśvarūpa sculptures in North India from the early Post-Gupta period; further field-research is required to trace more such fragments and bridge the 300-year gap between the Gupta and the Pratīhāra examples.

Nr. 33: Uttar Pradesh gFu SML

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## **34. FUNKOPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Stein: 97 x 64 x 8.5

mind 4 Hande

Bhuali, Mirzapur District, Uttar Pradesh (SML/63.361)

### 34.1 DESCRIPTION:

This is a large Viṣṇu cult image in sandstone, so severely eroded and savagely damaged on every surface that almost none of the individual iconographic features can be discerned. It consists of a plinth, the front of which appears to have been cut off, and a stele of which the upper portion has been broken and smashed in five places.

The central figure represented Viṣṇu standing, with four or more arms, a long vanamālā reaching to below the knees, and a tall crown. The remains of profile faces of four animal avatāras can be seen in the area of the head: these appear to have represented Narasiṃha above matsya on the proper right, and Varāha above Kūrma on the proper left. The upper faces were level with the rim of the crown, the lower pair emerged from the junction of neck and shoulders. A slight rise in the plinth beneath the feet of Viṣṇu suggests that some figures, probably three Nāgas or two Nāgas and the Earth-goddess, were originally represented there in relief.

Two arms of the Viṣṇu figure were lowered so that the hands rested on a nimbus on either side which was shared by two smaller standing figures: presumably dvārapālas and āyudhapuruṣas. At least two figures were depicted rising from behind these shared haloes on both sides, up to the base of the large nimbus of Viṣṇu; their identities cannot be determined because of their damaged condition, but the upper figure on the proper right appears from its posture to have been a Vedic god, such as Indra or Yama, mounted on an animal vāhana.

The circular nimbus of Viṣṇu was enclosed by a series of probably eight Bhairava heads, of which six shattered outlines remain. This circle was tightly closed, so that the first head on either side seems to emanate directly from the upper arm of the god. That on the proper right preserves traces of the third eye, jaṭābhāra, short necklace, and large vrttakundalas.

The individual figures in the nimbus are impossible to identify, but those of which traces remain in the lower portion of the proper left half seem to have formed part of a group,



probably of Ādityas. Long objects held in the left hands of two partly preserved figures in the proper right half suggest that they were Rudras armed with tridents.

The compositional structure of this image suggests a date in the mid or late 9<sup>th</sup> century.

## 34.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

Viṣṇu Viśvarūpa.

Bhuali, circa 850+ AD.

Nr. 34: Bhuali SML

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## 35. FRAGMENT EINES VISNUBILDWERKS

Stein: 19 x 27 x 7.5

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Kanauj, Uttar Pradesh (PTS)

### 35. 1 DESCRIPTION<sup>1</sup>:

This fragment represents the upper quadrant, on the proper left side, of the nimbus of a Viśvarūpa sculpture. Eleven figures can be seen on the surface, and three Bhairava faces on the edge.

The largest of the figures on the surface of the fragment represented the avatāra Dāśarathī RĀMA standing on a small ledge, holding the top of his bow in the left hand; the right hand probably held an arrow, but the relief is effaced at that point. To his left, three figures of diminishing size, two male and one female, stand beneath the curving edge of the nimbus, their right hands in the abhayamudrā; these cannot be identified. Below them stand eight (out of an original group of twelve) Ādityas in two rows of four. They wear low crowns and Kavacas, and hold small lotuses in their raised hands.

The Bhairava faces appear to be the upper three from a series of four on this side of nimbus periphery; four more would have appeared on the now missing half. They have differing forms of the ascetic jaṭā-hairstyle, the third eye, and short rudrākṣa necklace. The faces are carved in low relief at ninety degrees to the nimbus surface, and are therefore all but invisible from the front. This virtual concealment of the peripheral Bhairava faces is a consistent feature of the Viśvarūpa images produced at Kanauj.

Stylistically, the reliefs suggest a date in the late 8<sup>th</sup> or very early 9<sup>th</sup> century.

### **35.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

Fragment from the upper proper left quadrant of a Viśvarūpa image Kanauj, ca. late 8th century AD.

Nr. 35: Kanauj PTS

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## **36. FUNFKOPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Stein: ca. 90 x 45

8 Hande

Kanauj, Uttar Pradesh. Privatbesitz..

### **36.1 DESCRIPTION:**

The iconography of this sculpture is analysed in some detail, as a comparative piece, in my book Viśvarūpa (New Delhi 1988: 265-269). To distinguish it from other images of the type produced in the Gurjara-Pratīhāra capital, I termed it there 'Kannauj-4'.

I was able to negotiate access to this privately-owned piece in Kannauj in February 1992. At the same time, through correspondence with Harvard and Banaras, and the

assistance of Professor M. A. Dhaky, I was also able to obtain prints of the rare black-and-white photographs of the Piece taken some years ago by Professor Pramod Chandra and now stored in the Photographic Archive of the American Institute of Indian Studies. The following remarks, based on my personal examination of the sculpture conducted on 22.2.1992, are intended to supplement my description published in 1988.

The circumstances of this examination unfortunately did not permit the taking of measurements. As it is kept in the shrine-room of a private residence (where it is liberally, though harmlessly, coloured with the red powder and yellow paste used during worship), there is no indication that this important sculpture will become available to a public museum collection or even for temporary public exhibition in the near future.

Viśvarūpa SCULPTURE (Kannauj-4): T. S. Maxwell, *Viśvarūpa*, New Delhi 1988:265-269;

Additional remarks based on the examination of the sculpture carried out on 22.2.1992.

A number of iconographical observations were made during my examination of this sculpture. These are recorded below, and related to my discussion of it published in 1988. My 1992 examination made a number of amendments possible, and a more complete assessment now emerges.

S.265 \*3:

The stylistic and iconographic comments made here remain valid. The aesthetic impact of the sculpture is considerable; to achieve this effect, however, the sculptor re-organised and abbreviated the iconography to such an extent that its symbolic force is lost.

S.266 1:

The proportions described here, made on the basis of photographic evidence available in the 1980s, appeared during my examination to remain valid; but there must remain

some element of doubt as long as detailed dimensions are unavailable. The composition of the stele indicates that, as stated in my book, ellipses were not used; indeed, compositional parallels with the rather square-cut stelae of the Tumain Viśvarūpa and associated pieces were observed.

S.266 2:

The identity of the apical figure must be confirmed, on the basis of my examination, as BRAHMĀ; there are no features suggestive of Śiva, so that a symbolic connexion between this figure and the peripheral Bhairava-faces can be ruled out. The extreme narrowness of these Bhairava-masks is a feature of all Gurjara-Pratīhāra Viśvarūpa images; they are intended to be seen in profile only, from the front.

S.266 3 / S.267 1:

The identities of PARĀŚURĀMA and RĀMA DĀŚARATHĪ (and hence of LAKSMANA) to the immediate proper right and left of the central axis respectively were confirmed by my examination; the identificatory weapons, axe and arrow, are clearly visible. The identification of the first of the subsidiary figures in the proper left half of the nimbus as Brahmā, however, becomes dubious in view of the iconography of the apical figure; the most probable alternative identification is that this figure - in front of Indra represents the Fire-god, AGNI. The identity of INDRA is confirmed; though a walking figure, without the elephant, the vajra can clearly be seen in the right hand. Erosion and blurring of detail make the identification of the third figure as BHIKṢĀṬĀNA (Śiva) uncertain; although the confirmation of the apical figure as Brahmā, and not Śiva, plus the symbolic opposition with (Paraśu-) Rāma Jamadagi, mentioned on p.267 1, support it, my examination of this minute sculpture indicates that the object held against the left shoulder, though unusual in this position, may be the mongoose-sack of KUBERA.

S.267 2:

The eleven Rudras are arranged in three rows of 3-5-3 figures, each holding the trident in the left hand (presumably to facilitate the showing of the abhayamudrā with the right). The twelve Ādityas are positioned in two rows of 4 above the cakṛa and kheṭaka, a single Āditya stands below the kheṭaka, and the remaining 3 are aligned beneath the raised left arms of Viṣṇu, Their lotus-emblems are large, single blossoms.

My examination shows that the figure below these three is GAṆEŚA, seated behind the bow. Below, in front of the bow, stands one of the saktis, probably PUṢṬI, holding to her breast a small flower in her right hand; her coiffure suggests the presence of naga-heads, but this is not so. The figure behind her, advancing in a bowing posture, is her maidservant. Directly below Puṣṭi, in the surface of the plinth, appears an almost obliterated figure, possibly female, seated with knees drawn up; the identity of this figure is unknown. To the proper right of Puṣṭi, with left arm akimbo in imitation of the bow in front of which it stands, is the male āyudhapuruṣa, CAPA- or DHANUS-PURUṢA.

In the corresponding location in the lower part of the stele on the opposite (proper right) side, the following figures were noted during my examination. The figure at the base of the Bhairava-series on this side is VAYU, the Wind-god. Below him, facing outward, is a two-armed male figure seated on a bird and holding a stick-like object against the left shoulder; the bird has a long tail, and the hair of the rider appears to be divided into three, which makes his identity almost certainly SKANDA KĀRTTIKEYA, the War-god and son of Śiva, holding the spear (sakti; though it resembles rather a club) in his left hand. This is not, as the photographic evidence had previously suggested (S.269\*1), the last of the avatāras Kalkin. Directly below him, adjacent to the mace of Viṣṇu, stands the avatāra BALARĀMA, as suggested in my book, with a triple nāga-hood and the goblet in his right hand. Below the lotus on which he stands appears a SQUATTING FIGURE with animal ears, resembling the 'monkey' squatting on a post in the same location on the stele of the Manwadhi Viśvarūpa (see Sculpture No.31 in this Report, \*31.1.4.1); this figure remains to be identified. Still lower, at the very base, stands a dwarfish figure which is too damaged to be identified. The base-area to his left is completely broken. Above this appears a male figure seated with ankles crossed,

looking up at the main figure of Viṣṇu; he holds a large arrow in his hands, and a bow (the string of which is clearly shown) stands upright in the crook of his left arm. This appears to be ARJUNA, depicted in a most unusual posture, gazing at the vision of Viśvarūpa. Above him is the quiver of arrows on which the third right hand of Viṣṇu rests; the figure embracing it is the personification of the arrow, BANAPURUṢA. The female figure standing behind him, severely damaged, would have represented the primary consort, ŚRĪ-LAKṢMĪ; she holds a large lotus on a short curving stalk in her left hand, and an indistinct object in her right.

### S.269 2:

The damaged figures of the TWO NĀGAs, whose serpentine coils support the feet of Viṣṇu, appear to have held their hands in the namaskāramudrā. My identification of the central figure as a THIRD NAGA (S.269 \*2) was confirmed by my inspection of the plinth: although at Khajuraho in the mid-10th century (see Sculpture No.23 in this Report, \*23.1.2.5) the Earth-goddess appears, with nāga-hoods, in this central plinth position, the Kannauj sculpture shows signs, both at the base of the body and on the front of the plinth, that in this case a Nāga (or Nagi) was definitely intended. Moreover, there are no indications that this figure was originally depicted with arms extended to support the feet of Viṣṇu, which would have indicated the presence of Bhūdevī. This feature is so unexpected, and marks such a clear symbolic discontinuity with the iconography of the other two intact Kannauj Viśvarūpa images (Ram-Laksman temple), that my 1988 proposal to place this sculpture later than the others produced at the Pratīhāra capital appears to be confirmed.

### S.268 \*2:

The question of aesthetic symmetry overriding symbolic balance in this sculpture, dealt with in this paragraph, was confirmed by my examination. The clockwise sequence of the avatāra-heads around the face of Viṣṇu is confirmed as: KŪRMA-MATSYA-VARĀHA-NṚSIMHA; read in this order, they break the standard sequence of the avatāra-lists -- and of the other Kannauj Viśvarūpa images -- by reversing the order of

the Matsya and Kūrma; reading these heads as laterally opposed pairs (Kūrma-Nṛsiṃha and Matsya-Varāha) also yields no symbolic meaning, and this discontinuity further supports my proposal of a later for this sculpture.

## 36.2 HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION:

Despite its aesthetic elegance, this sculpture does mark the onset of an intellectual decline in the very icon which was virtually the exclusive hallmark of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra empire as it extended beyond Rajasthan. On stylistic grounds it can scarcely be dated later than the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, soon after the establishment of Pratīhāra political power at Kannauj. A possible implication of this is that in adapting to a new cultural environment the Pratīhāra priesthood lost its grip on the old symbolism; or in Kannauj a new guild of sculptors may have been employed, who failed to understand it. Whatever the cause, the break is clearly legible in the iconological disintegration of this image, and that break occurs early, in the opening years of the Pratīhāra occupation of the holy city.

Nr. 36: Kanauj

Privatbesitz

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## 37. FUNFKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 173 x 82 (20+)

8 Hande

Ram-Laksman-Tempel, Kanauj, Uttar Pradesh: Mittelschrein

### 37.1 DESCRIPTION:

This sculpture, together with No.38 in this Report, was discovered in fields around Kanauj and installed in a small temple, the Ram-Laksman Mandir, on the south-west

outskirts of the city. It is regarded by the local people as an image of Rāma. I have already analysed this sculpture in considerable detail in my book (*Viśvarūpa*, New Delhi 1988: 251-258, Table 6.1, and P1.66), where I refer to it as Kannauj-1. That analysis was based on a first examination which was conducted before the temple was structurally re-organised; at that time the sculpture was partly concealed by the concrete of the wall into which it had then been set, and lighting conditions inside the temple were very poor.

In February 1992, after the re-structuring of the temple, I decided that a new documentation was required, since both sculptures had been detached from the rear wall into which they had previously been embedded. Several portions of the sculptures which were formerly concealed are now therefore revealed, facilitating a more complete iconographical study, and also more exact measurements. A floodlight was employed on this occasion.

### **37.1.1 ICONOMETRY:**

The full dimensions of this sculpture, now revealed, confirm my previous estimate of the scale of proportions used, namely that this is an ideal 9-tala image within a 12-tala composition (Maxwell 1988: 252):--

Total height: 173

Viṣṇu height: 128

Face height: 14.25:

$173 \text{ over } 14.25 = 12.14 \text{ talas}$ ;  $128 \text{ over } 14.25 = 8.98 \text{ talas}$ .

### **37.1.2 ICONOGRAPHY:**

The iconography of this extremely important image as stated in my book (1988) can now be augmented by the following data, recorded in February 1992.

S.252 \*2:



The 1992 examination of the sculpture revealed, under intensive lighting conditions, the remains of a further arm: this was not a 6-armed, but an 8-armed figure.

The roughly circular stump of an arm can be seen on the surface of the stele between the elbows of the śaṅkha- and cakra-arms, beside the image of Gaṇeśa. The attribute held in the hand was the bow (dhanus), the lower end of which survives, curving around the figure of Śrī-Lakṣmī, and with the tip resting on the centre of the cobra-hood canopy of the proper left Nāga on the base; the bowstring is carved on the inner surface, and is shown with a split end, the two thongs splayed and tied around both edges. The small male figure standing behind this broken end of the bow (small blossom raised to the chest in the right hand, left arm stretched straight down with the hand turned inward against the thigh) does not appear to be the Dhanuspuruṣa.

Definitive location of the corresponding right hand, and of the arrow(s) which it would have held, is impossible in the present condition of the sculpture; being placed in a deep narrow niche, the sides cannot be seen. The arm was most probably sculpted in a lowered position, with the hand holding the arrow(s) appearing beside the mace-shaft and swordblade on the extreme proper right side, in which position it would easily have been broken off. The important stylistic and chronological aspect of this negative evidence is that none of the figures on the stele or plinth on this side could have represented the Banapuruṣa; the arrows would therefore have been held directly in the raised hand, and not shown in a quiver embraced by the weapon-personification, as in earlier versions from Manwadhi and Kannauj (Sculptures 31 and 36 in this Report). This image has no āyudhapuruṣas.

### S.252 3:

After the architectural alterations, it can now be confirmed that the third right hand of Viṣṇu holds the sword upright; the blade, now broken, ran nearly parallel to the shaft of the mace, and immediately behind it, and the end emerged against the right shoulder, where the tip of the blade is still visible, below the Matsya-head.

S.254 3 / S.255 1-2:

The low reliefs on the proper right side of the stele (which could not be identified under the conditions of my previous examination), behind Puṣṭi and beneath the arms of Viṣṇu, represent the following:

1.) To the immediate proper right of the sword-pommel appears an animal head possibly that of a MONKEY. This appears to correspond to the head of the figure shown squatting atop a post in this location on the Manwadhi and the privately-owned Kanauj sculptures.

2.) Below this animal head, a standing male figure, with a broad ridged nose and a broken object on the front of the head, joins its hands in the namaskāramudrā. This is clearly to be identified as anthropomorphic GARUḌA.

3.) A standing male figure below this, with its hair dressed in a jatakalapa, holds a large arrow in both hands transversely across its body. This could be identified as Rāma Dāśarathī, but this incarnation appears already in the nimbus of Viṣṇu, beside the axis; the location of this figure suggests that it was intended to represent ARJUNA, as in the Manwadhi and the privately-owned Kanauj sculptures.

4.) In front of this appears a smaller ASCETIC FIGURE with jaṭās and elongated ears, pierced but unadorned, seated cross-legged on the surface of the plinth. It is surrounded by a shaped nimbus or other object; the left hand rests on the left knee, possibly holding an indistinct object, the right appears to be raised in the abhayamudrā.

The reliefs on the proper left side of the stele, below the stump of the third left arm, appear the following figures:

1.) In the location corresponding to that of Garuḍa on the proper right, stands GAṆEŚA, as described in this paragraph.

2.) Beneath Gaṇeśa there is a small area of completely broken stone.

3.) Lower, behind Śrī-Lakṣmī and the bow of Viṣṇu, stands the MALE FIGURE described above (see under S.252 2).

4.) Lower, seated cross-legged on the surface of the plinth, occurs an ASCETIC FIGURE, the counterpart to figure (4.) above. This figure is also surrounded by a large nimbus, holds the hands in the same positions, and is bearded.

S.256 3 / S.257 1:

The small figures positioned around the upper curved margin of the stele are more carefully sculpted than seemed to be the case under the conditions of my first examination.

The ram or goat below Indra's elephant is, of course, to be seen as the symbolic animal of Agni, the ascetic second figure at this level. The identity of the third figure -- Yama or Bhikṣāṭana -- remains uncertain, due to erosion and damage. Consistency with the Vedic character of the two in front suggests that this is Yama, rather than a form of Śiva.

On the opposite side, however, the mounted figure on the extreme proper right looks like Yama, holding the yamadanda in the right hand and riding the buffalo. The two standing male figures in front of him appear to represent the Aśvins, each holding a kamaṇḍalu in his lowered left hand, and a small plant (healing herb?) raised in his right. The identifications suggested previously {Bhikṣatana and Skanda), before the sculpture had been removed from the old wall of the temple, are erroneous.

S.257 2 / S.258 1:

The eleven Rudras in the proper right half of the nimbus are arranged in three rows of 4-4-3. The individual figures have jaṭās, rudrākṣa-necklace, yajñopavīta, the right hand raised in the abhayamudrā, and the trīśula in the left hand in the form of three closely parallel prongs mounted on a thick haft surmounted by an amalaka-like fixture.

The twelve Ādityas in the opposite half are arranged in three rows of four. The individual figures wear a necklace, the kavaca, long mala down to the knees, and the typically square, truncated kirīṭa-crown, the front surface of which is cross-hatched. The lotuses held in both hands are shown as fully opened, flat blossoms.

S.258 \*2:

There is a series of heads around the periphery of the nimbus, as suggested during my first examination when they were not visible. These are large and confidently sculpted, each with a jaṭābhāra, though the hair is variously depicted as straight or curly. They therefore are, or are immediately derived from, the Bhairava faces of the old Viśvarūpa iconographic tradition stemming from Mathura. Only seven can be seen on each side, but part of an eighth jatajuta survives on the proper right, above the mace, and it should be assumed that sixteen were intended, to be understood as two sets of the Eight Bhairavas.

### **37.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

There is no doubt that this image represents VIṢṆU Viśvarūpa, in a new formulation created by the Gurjara-Pratīhāra rulers of Kanyakubja, almost certainly in the early years of the 9th century AD.

Nr. 37: Kanauj

Ram-Laksman-Tempel

## 38. FUNFKOPFIGER VIṢṆU

Stein: 168.5 x 87

8 Hande

Ram-Laksman-Tempel, Kanauj. Uttar Pradesh: Nebenschrein

### 38.1 DESCRIPTION:

This is the companion-piece to Sculpture No.37 in this Report. It stands in a small shrine set into the back wall of the Ram-Laksman mandir in Kanauj, to the observer's left or proper right of the central Viśvarūpa. It is regarded by the local people as representing Lakṣmaṇa, that is, as the 'brother' of the central image, which they worship as Rāma. I have dealt with this piece extensively in my book (Maxwell, Viśvarūpa. New Delhi 1988: 258-269), where I refer to it as Kannauj-2. The first examination was conducted in very poor conditions for observation and photography, upon which it was possible to improve substantially in February 1992. The following observations are therefore to be read as supplementary to my first results, published in 1988.

#### 38.1.1 ICONOMETRY

The full dimensions, as now revealed by the recent restructuring of the temple, show that my earlier estimate (Maxwell 1988: 259) of the scale of proportions used was slightly on the conservative side. Compared with the almost exact 12- and 9-tala system used in Kannauj-1 (Sculpture No.37), the tala-value has been increased in this image:

Total height: 168.5

Viṣṇu height: 129

Face height: 13.75

$168.5 \text{ over } 13.75 = 12.25 \text{ talas}$ ;  $129 \text{ over } 13.75 = 9.38 \text{ talas}$ .

This stepping-up of the tala-ratio explains the greater attenuation of this image which I observed previously (Maxwell 1988: 259).

### 38.1.2 ICONOGRAPHY

The iconography of this important image as stated in my book (1988) can now be augmented by the following data, recorded in February 1992.

S.260 2:

The attributes held in the remaining hands can be confirmed in the case of those identified in this paragraph, with the following addition. The lowered fourth right hand (listed in the diagram on p.260 as 'broken off') can, in fact, be seen on the proper right edge of the stele, behind the head of the figure of Puṣṭi; it is turned outward, like the corresponding left hand which holds the bow, and appears to rest on an arrow, understood as standing in a quiver which is, however, concealed behind two figures appearing below this right hand. The absence of the sword and shield in this image is therefore confirmed.

S.261 2:

The statement here that "The functions of the Earth-godess and the serpents in Kannauj-1 have been reversed in Kannauj-2", with regard to their relationship to Viṣṇu, can be confirmed as correct.

The two figures at the extremities of the plinth, which I could not identify under the conditions of my previous examination, in 1992 were seen to be the same two bearded seated ascetic figures with a shaped nimbus or other background, as noted in this Report in the case of Kannauj-1 (Sculpture No.37). They appear to have held their hands together in the namaskāramudrā, but both are severely damaged.

The standing figure above the ascetic on the proper left, behind Śrī-Lakṣmī, is male, and holds both hands in the namaskāramudrā. The corresponding figure on the proper right, holding a bow in the left hand, was seen in 1992 to be crowned with a kirīṭa, and to be standing in the pratyalidha, the posture of an archer, advancing to the proper right but

looking back to the left; as in other Viśvarūpa images of this type, this figure is certainly to be interpreted as ARJUNA at Kurukṣetra, witnessing the vision of Viśvarūpa. Above Arjuna, and below the right hand which rests upon the arrow, appears another figure (not seen during my previous examination due to poor visibility), which has no counterpart of the proper left. It seems to be positioned on the front of the quiver, possibly in the flying posture, with the hands joined in the namaskāramudrā, and directing its glance upward at the central figure of Viṣṇu; placed in this location, and apparently flying upward, it would seem to represent the personification of the arrow, Banapuruṣa, though it does not conform to the more usual iconography of this figure which is seen, for example, in the Manwadhi image (Sculpture No.31 in this Report).

It should be noted that the carving on the stele at this level, behind the legs of Viṣṇu and between the subsidiary figures, represents rocks in the schematic form known in Indian sculpture since the Kuṣāṇa period. This pattern invariably indicates a MOUNTAIN; the exact relationship intended here between Viśvarūpa and a mountain-top requires further investigation.

#### S.262 2:

The ābhaṅga posture of the first figure arising from the crown of Viṣṇu can be confirmed. Close inspection shows that this figure does not arise from the lotus on top of Viṣṇu's crown, but was carefully sculpted so as to appear arising from behind it; a waterpot is held in the extended left hand. These two factors make the identification of this figure as VĀMANA, as in Kanauj-1, virtually conclusive; it does not appear to represent the Buddhavatāra.

#### S.263 1:

The figure to the lower right of Vāmana, standing near the crown of Viṣṇu, is not, as suggested here, in a vyākhyāna- or expository mode, but stands with a triśula in the left hand, and holds the right near the chest, in no clearly identifiable mudra. This ascetic figure is in fact ONE OF THE GROUP OF RUDRAS which dominate this half of the

nimbus; as the Rudra nearest to Viṣṇu, he is shown bowing directly to the god, and therefore his right hand is released from the abhayamudrā (which his fellows display to the worshipper), and simply held reverently upon his chest. This kind of intimate detail is typical of much Viśvarūpa iconography of the 8th and 9th centuries; the earliest examples are to be seen in the nimbus of the Deogarh Viśvarūpa. The number of Rudras appearing in this image is therefore not eight (S.264 2), but nine, out of the standard eleven.

#### S.264 2:

The 'pointed crown' worn by the ADITYAS in the left half of the nimbus, noted during my first examination in inadequate light, was seen, under better conditions in 1992, to be a realistic copy of the so-called 'Scythian cap'; clearly intended to represent a cap made of cloth, it rises, from a rim which curves down over the ears, in three circular layers to form a cone-shape, and the peak is bent over to the observer's right. The Ādityas also wear the so-called kavaca, and beaded necklaces. The lotuses which the Ādityas hold in their hands are large, upright blossoms, unlike the flat flowers held by these figures in Kannauj-1.

#### S.264 3 / S.265 1:

The sculpture having been raised from the concrete in which it was embedded at the time of my first examination, it can now be confirmed that the periphery of the nimbus is edged with a succession of faces, as I had suggested. These are clearly intended to represent the BHAIKAVAS, with protruding eyes, jatajutas, and very large circular kuṇḍalas which intrude into the composition on the surface of the stele. There are eight of these faces on either side of the centreline.

### **38.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**



There is no doubt that this image represents VIṢṢU Viśvarūpa, in a new formulation created by the Gurjara-Pratīhāra rulers of Kanyakubja, almost certainly in the early years of the 9th century AD.

Nr. 38: Kanauj

Ram-Laksman-Tempel

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### 39. FUNFKOPFIGER VIṢṢU

Stein: 146 x 92

6 oder 8 Hande

Bhuli, Mirzapur District, Uttar Pradesh (BKB)

#### 39.1 DESCRIPTION:

This sculpture resembles, insofar as a comparison can be made between two such severely damaged images, the somewhat smaller example from Bhuli (Sculpture No.34 in this Report), which should be compared with this. I have dealt with this image only very briefly, as a comparative piece, at the end of my book (Maxwell. Viśvarūpa, New Delhi 1988: 269).

It consists of a plinth and a rectangular stele. The central figure represented standing Viṣṣu with four (or possibly more) arms, and five heads, all of which are damaged and some of which are obliterated. The main face and its crown are completely lost. Projecting from the sides of this area appear the profiles of, on the proper right, NARASIṢHA above KŪRMA and, on the proper left. VARĀHA above MATSYA; the pradakṣiṇā sequence, favoured at Kanauj, is here KŪRMA-NARASIṢHA-VARĀHA-MATSYA, which does not yield a progressive sense; but the heads can be paired into KŪRMA-MATSYA and NARASIṢHA-VARĀHA, which preserves the old Mathuran opposition of Man-Lion and Boar, which also occurs in the Bhuli image (No.34).

On the face of the plinth appear three seated Nāgas with triple cobra-hoods. They are also damaged, but there appears from the remains to have been no particular distinction, of size or attribute, made between them.

It is possible that two of the lowered hands of the Viṣṇu figure rested upon the heads of āyudhapuruṣas, but this appears improbable, since none of the figures on the plinth resembles a weapon-personification. Nevertheless, the lowered proper left hand rests upon an amalaka-like object resembling the head of a mace; but this is situated between the heads of the two plinth-figures on this side, not above the head of one or the other. This is a sure sign of iconographical confusion on the part of the Pratīhāra sculptors in the Varanasi area.

The two female plinth-figures adjacent to Viṣṇu no doubt represented Puṣṭi and Śrī-Lakṣmī. The identity of the figures on the extremities of the plinth is uncertain, partly because of the inexact positioning of the mace-head, and partly due to damage. A smaller female figure emerges above these, apparently supporting a waterpot in one hand; these might represent the River-goddesses, Gaṅgā and Yamuna, although there is no comparative evidence to support this. Higher, at the level of the waist of the Viṣṇu figure, appears on each side a figure seated on a low stool, facing the god and apparently bowing in an attitude of reverence.

The nimbus takes the form of a slightly flattened circle, edged with six Bhairava heads, with jatajutas and with either empty elongated ear-lobes or large circular kuṇḍalas, on each side. The first head on either side seems to emanate directly from the upper arm of Viṣṇu, as in the Bhuali image. The vertical axis of gods above the crown of Viṣṇu, which bisects the nimbus, consists now of only two remaining figures. Both are too badly damaged to be recognisable.

Within the nimbus, the Kanauj pattern can be recognised, though few of the individual figures are identifiable. Three figures appear on each side at the top; of these, only the Moon-god, Candra, can be identified, by the large horizontal crescent behind his head, as the second figure in the proper left half. On the proper right, Rāma holding the bow

can be seen below the first figure. Otherwise, six Ādityas appear in the left half, and perhaps seven Rudras on the right side, but erosion has blurred all specific detail. In the lower part of the nimbus, these minor figures are shown in a curving configuration to conform to its shape.

The piece appears to be approximately contemporary with the Bhuali image.

## 39.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

Viṣṇu Viśvarūpa

Bhuali, circa 850+ AD.

Nr. 39: Bhuali BKB

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## 40. FRAGMENT EINES VISNUBILDWERKS

Stein: 57.5 x 48

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Mathura, Uttar Pradesh (BKB/152)

### 40.1 DESCRIPTION:

This small, irregularly shaped fragment of red sandstone, covered with low reliefs, provides some of the earliest pre-classical evidence for the beginning of an evolution of form and composition which was to generate classical Viśvarūpa iconography. Although the existence of the piece was known to me prior to 1988, published descriptions and illustrations were inadequate to provide a working basis; in March 1992, however, in the course of this project, I was able to examine and photograph it personally in Varanasi.

It consists of part of a sandstone slab on which numerous small figures, of which the remains of 23 are still visible, were depicted in relief. The right-hand side is straight and vertical, and the left-hand side curved, giving the impression that this is the left upper quadrant of an, originally circular or semi-circular stele. The figures appearing upon its surface are all eroded, and the facial features are lost in every instance; the organisation, and to a certain extent the iconography of the figures, however, provides vital information.

The front of the stele is divided into six vertical registers, each containing the remains of between three and five figures. The remains of the two, or possibly three figures on the curving outside edge, suggest that here the figures were slightly turned to face outward from the periphery. From the observer's right to left (axis to periphery), the numbers of figures partly preserved in the vertical registers are:

(1.) 5

(2.) 3

(3.) 4

(4.) 4

(5.) 4

(6.) 2

In addition, the remains of what appears to be a beaded necklace on the upper edge of the left-hand periphery (above Register 5) suggests that a 23rd figure appeared there.

The figures on the front of the stele rise one behind the other, each head overlapping the lower torso of the figure above, as if emanating upward from each other. There is no lateral emanation. This vertical emanation iconography is directly comparable to the composition of the Nand column (s. Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990, S.123-129:

"The Origin and Evolution of the Elements of Viśvarūpa iconography: The Evidence of Mathura in Relation to Nand and Samalaji"). In addition, the unmistakable presence of Vaiṣṇava (Bhagavata) iconography on this fragmentary stele (Register 2) provides a conclusive point of cult-association between these two sculptures.

#### Register 1:

This consists of 5 vertically emanating figures. These may have represented ascetics, as the damaged head-area is not elongated as in the case of crowned figures, and a small portion of one head (Figure 2) Preserves striations which seem to indicate the presence of jaṭās, They had elongated pierced ears without ornaments (Figure 3), and wore a chest-covering resembling the channavira (Figure 4) and short beaded necklaces (Figures 1, 2, 4). These were two-armed figures, the right hand held to the centre of the torso below the chest (Figures 1, 4); the left arms and hands are all lost. This fragmentary evidence is not sufficient to prove that all five figures had the same appearance,

#### Register 2:

This register consists of 3 vertically emanating figures. Each of these is a four-armed figure wearing a tall crown (kirīṭa), short necklace, and a garland or scarf looped around the shoulders and passing behind the back (not hanging on the chest). They are bare-chested. The front right hand is held across the body or at the side; it is apparently empty, but this cannot be positively confirmed due to erosion. The left front hand supports an indistinguishable object at hip-level, The raised upper right hand wields a mace or sword, which appears tilted behind the head, The raised left hand holds a 12-spoked wheel (cakra) by the lower rim, These three figures appear to have been identical in their main iconographical features, which conform to the iconography of VASUDEVA-Kṛṣṇa in the late kuṣāṇa period at Mathura (H. Hartel, "Archaeological Evidence on the Early Vāsudeva Worship", *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, SOR LVI,2, 1087: Plate Xa = Museum fur Indische Kunst Berlin, I 5378), at the historical moment of the development of Vāsudeva into VIṢṆU.

### Register 3:

There are 4 emanating figures partly preserved in this register, some of them appear to have been bareheaded (Figures 2, 4), other possibly crowned (Figure 3). They have pierced elongated ears, either unornamented (figure 4), or with pendant ear-ornaments (Figure 3). Three of them wear the *yajñopavīta* across the torso (Figures 1, 2, 4) and three have a beaded necklace (Figures 2, 3, 4); one wears the chest-covering resembling a *channavira* (Figure 3), as in the case of Figure 1.5. The right hand in all four cases is held at waist-level, apparently supporting an object which is now indistinguishable. The left hand of Figures 1 and 4 is not visible; that of Figure 2 may have held a bunch of flowers or similar object upright in front of the left side of the chest. Figure 3, the crowned figure with the *channavira*, holds what is clearly a short spear or javelin, with a long point on a thick shaft, upright in the left hand, resting against the left shoulder.

### Register 4:

This register consists of 4 vertically emanating figures. The top figure (4.1) is very similar to 3.1, apparently representing an ascetic with pierced but unornamented earlobes, *yajñopavīta*, and hands in the same positions. The figure below it (4.2) is again similar, though with the right hand raised to the chest and apparently holding a small object. The third figure (4.3) seems to have short hair, pierced ears without ornaments, and to wear a short necklace but no *yajñopavīta*. The left hand is held, empty, against the body at waist-level; the right, held slightly lower, holds a blossoming lotus on a long, stick-like stalk. At the bottom of this register, slightly offset to the left, appears a head with short wavy hair and empty pierced earlobes, encircled by plain band like a concave nimbus (4.4).

### Register 5:

This register consists of four, or possibly five vertically emanating figures. The topmost figure appears to be represented by the beaded necklace on the upper surface of this

fragment; the lowest by a head, now completely obliterated. The remaining three all wear a short necklace and a robe diagonally across the torso, covering the left shoulder. The right arms are lowered, the hands not visible; the left hands are empty and held at the level of the hip or upper arm. Remains of carving on the heads of Figures 2 and 3 clearly show looped jaṭās, suggesting that these are to be seen as ṛṣi -figures.

#### Register 6:

This consists of the remains of only two figures, apparently closely resembling those in Register 5.

### 40.2 DISCUSSION:

In both material and style, it is clear that the piece stems from the Mathura-centred workshops of the late-Kuṣāṇa or Kuṣāṇa/Gupta transitional phase (4th century AD). In composition, it is closely related to the concepts expressed iconographically in Mathura Fragment 68.9 and in the Nand column (s. Maxwell, Viśvarūpa, New Delhi 1988: 3-16; und ders., Bericht an die DFG vom 30.06.1990, S.53-55 \*23). The Vāsudeva iconography clearly identifies this stele, like the Nand column, at least in part with the early Vaiṣṇava cult. The presence of four-armed Vaiṣṇava/Bhagavata figures, deities with specific attributes such as the lotus and spear, and a group of ṛṣis, all arranged in connected groups on a single surface, makes this fragment prototypical of the organisation which occurs later Viśvarūpa nimbus iconography. The alignment of the figures into vertical registers, rather than the horizontal groupings seen within the Viśvarūpa image from the 5th century onward, is typical of Kuṣāṇa multiple iconography, in which emanation plays so important a connecting role.

It cannot be stated that this is part of a Viśvarūpa image, of course: Viśvarūpa as an icon cannot arise before the transition from the Vāsudeva-cult to the Viṣṇu-cult. Conceptually, however, this -- like a recently discovered Surya stele seen in March 1992 at Mathura museum (not yet accessioned) -- is a Kuṣāṇa forerunner of the

"assembly of gods" iconography which made the Viśvarūpa imagery of the 5th century possible.

### **40.3 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

Part of a late-Kuṣāṇa image combining numerous deities and sacred figures on a single surface, probably in connection with the dominant figure of a major deity such as Surya.

Mathura area, 4th century AD.

Nr. 40: Mathura BKB

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## **41. DREIKOPFIGER VIṢṆU**

Stein: 64 x 33.5

8 Hande

Surya-Tempel, Badgaon, Nalanda District. Bihar

### **41.1 DESCRIPTION:**

The sculpture is worshipped in the Surya-mandir in Badgaon, of which the Buddhist site of Nalanda forms a part, in western Bihar. The temple is modern, and stands within the present settlement of Badgaon village, at a remove from the Surya-talav, or Lake of the Sun-god, beside which, according to local reports, the original temple stood. The temple consists of a large main shrine-room, in which three Pala-period images are placed upon an altar (two Suryas and one goddess), fronted by a veranda, with two minor shrines at each end, which contain a miscellaneous assembly of pala sacred sculpture. The present image occupies the central position on the rear wall of the right-hand shrine.



The sculpture consists of plinth and stele, with the central figure of Viṣṇu standing. It is made of black stone, now much encrusted with the oil and coloured powders used in ritual worship. The plinth is conceived as a rectangular base, with a broad curving projection in the middle which is carved on the front as a double lotus, serving as the basis for the main deity. A semi-anthropomorphic Nāga, the hands in the namaskāramudrā, appears to each side of the lotus, facing the front. On the surface of the plinth, three figures stand to each side of Viṣṇu. These represent Gadādevī and Cakrapuruṣa, Balarāma and Ramacandra, Buddhavatara and (?) Lakṣmī. The stele has a curved top rising to a slight point at the apex, and is ornamented at the edge with a band of leaf-and-seed (or line-and-ball) design, which is interestingly executed as a right-hand spiral arching around the plain nimbus of Viṣṇu.

The main image of Viṣṇu is three-headed and eight-armed; one of the hands on the right and its attribute is missing. The hand-held attributes are: sword and shield, bow and arrow (it is the arrow in one of the right hands which is missing), mace and disk, fruit and small conch-shell. The three heads are identically crowned with three kirīṭas. The heads have human physiognomy, and there are no characteristics by which they might be separately identified.

Rising above Viṣṇu, between the triple crown and the pointed apex of the stele, are three small seated figures. There can be no doubt that this axis of deities derives directly from the Viśvarūpa iconography of the eastern Gurjara-Pratīhāra empire; the model was no doubt a late (9th-century) Viśvarūpa image from the Mirzapur/Banaras region, such as the sculpture from Bhuali or Bhuli (Sculptures 34 and 39 in this report). Their Identities are difficult to assess with certainty due to the condition of the sculpture, but they appear to be VĀMANA, HAYAGRĪVA, and three-headed BRAHMĀ or ŚIVA.

#### **41.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

The multi-headedness of the Viṣṇu figure, which is exceedingly rare in pala sculpture, coupled with the axis of gods above and the presence of two Nāgas below, makes an identification of this figure with the Viśvarūpa image of the neighbouring Gurjara-

Pratīhāra empire almost certain. The nimbus is not populated with emanatory deities, nor does the Earth-goddess or a third Nāga appear on the centre of the base, features which might well have been difficult to understand, and without immediate cult relevance, to the pala artist. The image is almost certainly a product of the first half of the 10th century, at which time the Pratīhāra empire had virtually collapsed, and its later Viśvarūpa images show a corresponding stylistic and iconographical decline (see Maxwell. Viśvarūpa, New Delhi 1988: 249-269, Chapter VI, "Kannauj, The Decline of Creativity"), which would additionally account for the laconic iconography of this derivative sculpture.

#### **41.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:**

VIṢṆU in a unique form derived from the Gurjara-Pratīhāra icon of Viśvarūpa.

Nalanda area, 10th century AD.

Nr. 41: Nalanda/Badgaon

Surya-tempel

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#### **42. FRAGMENT EINES VISNUBILDWERKS**

Stein: 12.5 x 21

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Aghat, Etah District, Uttar Pradesh (SML/G112)

#### **42.1 DESCRIPTION:**

Due to a technical problem, my own photographs of this fragment are inadequate for illustration. Thanks to the cooperation of Professor M. A. Dhaky, Research Director, I was able to obtain a black-and-white photograph of it, however, from the photographic Archive of the American Institute of Indian Studies in Varanasi.

This is a side-fragment from the proper left quadrant of a Viśvarūpa nimbus. The remains show the lower three (of an original set of four on each side) of the Bhairava faces around the periphery of the populated nimbus. These faces have elongated but unornamented ear-lobes, and show slight variations in the style of the jatajuta. On the surface of the nimbus appear, at the top, two figures, one headless, apparently ṛṣis, with jatajuta and holding a kamaṇḍalu in the left hands. Professor N. P. Joshi suggests that these might represent planets (Brahmanical Sculptures Part 2.1, Lucknow 1989: 206), but in view of the iconography of other Viśvarūpa images, this seems improbable. Ṛṣis, either as Agni, as individual figures, or as saptarṣi groups, form more standard components of the iconography. The remaining figures are six (of an original group of twelve) Ādityas, crowned, wearing the kavaca and a short necklace, and holding up two spray-like lotuses. It is of particular interest to notice, in this fragment, that one of the Ādityas (on the observer's far right, below the last Bhairava head) wears the tall cloth "Scythian cap" whereas all the others wear the flat-topped kirīṭa crown. I am inclined to date this piece fairly early (earlier than Professor Joshi, who suggests 8th-9th century), partly on account of the apparent transition from the "Scythian cap" to the kirīṭa crown in the iconography of the Ādityas (features which occur separately in the two Viśvarūpa sculptures in the Ram-Laksman mandir at Kanauj: compare Sculptures 37 and 38 in this Report), but also because of the bulky form of the lotuses.

## 42.2 PRELIMINARY IDENTIFICATION:

Fragment of a Viśvarūpa image from the western end of the northern Gurjara -Pratīhāra empire.

Aghat area, second half of the 8th century.

Nr.42: Aghat SML

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## ANHANG

Nr. 43: Bilhari

(Foto Misra)

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## ANHANG

Nr. 44: Harsanatha

(Foto Agrawala)