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Edited by
Nalini BALBIR and Peter FLÜGEL

Sanskrit Studies Centre,
Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand



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The *Taraṅgavatī* and the History of Prakrit Literature

Andrew Ollett

memini me fiere pauum (Ennius)

Introduction

The history of Prakrit literature, like the history of Indian literature more generally, presents two major difficulties.¹ First, the earliest material is difficult to situate in a historical framework. Not very much of it seems to survive, at least from the references to now-lost luminaries of Prakrit literature in works of metrics, poetics, and grammar.² And to the material that does survive, scholarship has assigned widely divergent dates: a range of four centuries for Vimala's *Deeds of Padma*, and at least that for Hāla's *Seven Centuries*, perhaps the most widely-read and intensively studied work of Prakrit literature.³ In this respect, and many others, early Prakrit literature bears comparison to early Tamil literature. The texts have come to us through a manuscript tradition that tells us little about where and when the texts were composed. And unlike the major texts of Sanskrit literature, research has not yet produced a consensus on their historical context.

Second, even more than in the case of Sanskrit and Tamil, the terms that are available to us to tell the history of Prakrit literature are very often problematic. Take, for example, the word "Prakrit" itself. The word has meant many things to many people. According to one understanding of the term, Prakrit refers to an undercurrent of popular speech that is always already there, from the Ṛgveda onwards. According to another, Prakrit is whatever fails to be fully Sanskrit. These notions are not completely made up by modern scholars. They are based in what some people actually said about Prakrit in premodern India, although they often compound premodern prejudices with modern ones. I am more concerned here with the historical positivity of Prakrit literature, which these ahistorical and negative characterizations lead us away from. For there were texts that identified themselves as Prakrit, and they are always texts of a certain kind, produced in certain times and under certain circumstances.

Another example is the varieties of Prakrit. In some cases, modern scholarship has simply taken over the premodern names (e.g., Mahārāṣṭrī, Śaurasenī), although the history of the

¹ This paper revises and expands upon a brief discussion of the *Taraṅgavatī* in my dissertation (Ollett 2015: 116–123).

² Consult, for example, the list of authors—most of them mere names to us—cited in the ninth-century metrical handbook of Svayambhū (see the appendix of Velankar's edition), and the writings of H. C. Bhayani about lost Prakrit authors (1993b).

³ For the controversy over the date of the *Seven Centuries*, see the overview in my dissertation (2015: 81–85).

use of these names forms an important part of the history of Prakrit. In other cases, modern scholarship has invented new names by adding qualifications to old names, which represents both a taxonomic intervention (i.e., Jain Mahārāṣṭrī is a variant or variety of Mahārāṣṭrī) and a historical fact about the study of Prakrit (i.e., Mahārāṣṭrī was studied first, and then Jain particularities of Mahārāṣṭrī were noted). As these qualifications pile up—the work I will discuss here is described as having been written in “archaic Jain Mahārāṣṭrī”—they reflect ever more clearly the “etic” taxonomies of Prakrit that modern scholars have constructed, but move further away from the “emic” categories from which they started. This is not a problem in itself, but it leads us to see the history of Prakrit literature in different terms than the people who actually made that history, and, I would argue, to impose anachronistic divisions onto that history. The use of the phrase “archaic Jain Mahārāṣṭrī,” for example, implies among other things that the history of Prakrit is actually two histories, one Jain and another non-Jain. And for the most part, this is actually how the history of Prakrit literature has been told. This paper presents, by contrast, some reasons for thinking that the most important phase of this history occurred “before the divide” into Jain and non-Jain varieties of Prakrit.

This problem brings us to the definition of “literature,” which can be understood broadly, as a collection of texts, or narrowly, as a collection of expressive texts, or even more narrowly, as a collection of expressive texts that reflect a self-conscious adherence to a broadly shared poetic imaginary. The last is relatively easy to identify with *kāvya*, although the precise limits of *kāvya* vis-à-vis other discursive forms are sometimes hard to establish. The history of *kāvya* is still almost exclusively seen as the history of Sanskrit *kāvya*, at least in its origins. A number of views have been advanced regarding the position of Prakrit in this history, but the fact is that Prakrit supplies some of the earliest unambiguous examples of *kāvya* that survive, which no history of *kāvya* can afford to neglect. The history of Prakrit literature thus should have profound implications for the history of language and literature in India more generally—if, that is, it ever revealed its secrets to us.

The *Taraṅgavatī* is not exactly a secret. It is a romance written in Prakrit verse by the Jain monk Pālitta. Hermann Jacobi was told of this text by Munirāja Vallabhavijaya, and through the efforts of Keshavlal Premchand Mody he was able to get a transcript of a manuscript along with fifteen folios of the original. In 1920, he gave these materials to Ernst Leumann, who published an abridged German translation very soon afterwards.⁴ As Jacobi and Leumann realized, the manuscript was not the *Taraṅgavatī* itself, but a later abridgement in 1640 Prakrit gāthās called the *Taraṅgalolā*. Nevertheless its historical importance was clear. Leumann put the composition of the original at the beginning of the common era, and the abridgement about a thousand years later. Leumann never finished an edition. The *Taraṅgalolā* was first edited by Kastūravijaya Gaṇi in 1944. But H. C. Bhayani found this edition very defective, and reedited the text on the basis of further manuscript evidence in the 1970s. His edition was first published serially in *Sambodhi*, and then as a monograph in 1979, together with a Gujarati translation. He also edited another version of the *Taraṅgavatī* story, the *Taraṅgavaikāhā*, found in Bhadreśvara’s twelfth-century collection of stories (*Kahāvalī*). This version consists of 425 Prakrit gāthās. Bhadreśvara typically stays quite close to his sources.⁵ By comparing the two versions, and by tracing references to Pālitta’s poetry in other texts, he came to the conclusion that the *Taraṅgalolā* is a relatively faithful abridgement of an older original.⁶ He corroborated this conclusion with a study of the language of the *Taraṅgalolā*, which presents forms only otherwise found in very old Prakrit texts. It is much more likely that the redactor retained

⁴ Jacobi (1921: xviii), Leumann (1921).

⁵ On the date of Bhadreśvara and his relationship to earlier sources, see Malvania (1983).

⁶ Bhayani (1993a), first published in 1974.

them from the original than that he introduced them in his retelling.⁷

Here we may pause to strengthen Bhayani's theory about the relationship between the *Taraṅgalolā*, the *Taraṅgavaīkahā*, and the original *Taraṅgavatī* with two further arguments. First, although 90% of the *Taraṅgavaīkahā* corresponds to parts of the *Taraṅgalolā*, there are a few episodes in the former that are not in the latter.⁸ Either Bhadreśvara himself added these episodes, which seems unlikely, or Bhadreśvara got them from the original *Taraṅgavatī*, or at least from a version of Pālitta's story that was longer and more complete than the *Taraṅgalolā*. Second, there are a few cases where the *Taraṅgavaīkahā* and the *Taraṅgalolā* read the "same" verse, but with a slight difference in wording. Given that the redactor of the *Taraṅgalolā* claims to have edited out most of the "regional" vocabulary of the original text, we should expect to find some "regional" words in the *Taraṅgavaīkahā* that are replaced by Sanskrit-derived words in the *Taraṅgalolā*. And this is exactly what we do find.⁹

Thus, although the length of the original *Taraṅgavatī* is unknown, the two surviving versions can give us a more or less reliable idea of the language, style, and content of the original text. Thanks to Leumann and Bhayani, the story of the *Taraṅgavatī* was saved from complete loss. The Jain community, which had preserved the story to begin with, took a special interest. The monk Ajitasāgara published a Sanskrit retelling in 1950, and in his introduction, his colleague Hemendrasāgara gave detailed notices about the *Taraṅgavatī* and its author, Pālitta. Pritam Singhvi rendered Bhayani's Gujarati translation into Hindi in 1999. And A. K. Warder gave a prominent place to the *Taraṅgavatī*—based on Leumann's translation of the *Taraṅgalolā*—in his *History of Kāvya Literature*.¹⁰

The *Taraṅgavatī*, however, has not received anywhere near the attention it deserves, either on account of its considerable literary merits or on account of its unique position in the history of Prakrit literature. It is, as many premodern readers already knew, one of the foundational works of the Prakrit tradition.¹¹ And as A. K. Warder already surmised, it helped to establish Prakrit as a literary language. Beyond its language and metrical form, it shares an aesthetic and sensibility with that other early monument of Prakrit literature, the *Seven Centuries* compiled by Hāla. That these two texts participated in the same imaginative world is evident from their many parallels in imagery, in figurative technique, and in phrasing; in one case they share an entire verse. But there are also good reasons to credit the traditions that make Pālitta a contemporary and court poet of Hāla, a Sātavāhana king. Hāla's court is traditionally said to be located at Pratiṣṭhāna on the Godāvarī river, but was at any rate within the Sātavāhana domains of the Deccan. His date is also unknown—the Sātavāhanas ruled from the early first century BCE to the early third century CE—but some details in the story of Pālitta suggest a date in the first century CE (see p. 34). These two poets, one a Jain monk and the other a king, would make Hāla's court one of the epicenters of the *kāvya* movement. The *Taraṅgavatī* is thus a missing link between one tradition of Prakrit literature that traces itself through Jain teachers and occupies itself with Jain commentary and storytelling, and another tradition that aligns much more closely with royal courts, between the Jain and non-Jain histories into which Prakrit literature is usually always already divided, between, so to speak, the Bhadrabāhus and the Hālas. The goals of

⁷ Bhayani (1979).

⁸ See verses 52–56, for example. The context is *Taraṅgavatī*'s "final examination" in identifying flowers, and whereas the *Taraṅgalolā* simply has the gardener certify that *Taraṅgavatī* gave the correct answer, the *Taraṅgavaīkahā* includes a short back-and-forth between the gardener and *Taraṅgavatī*'s father about how the gardener acquired her knowledge.

⁹ E.g. *maghamaghie* (verse 28) corresponding to *duddiṇe* (*Taraṅgalolā* 132, obscure) and *dhoinī* (verse 51) corresponding to *vāvaḍā* (*Taraṅgalolā* 169).

¹⁰ Warder (1990 [1974]: §§834–851).

¹¹ This is also Bhayani's estimation (ed., p. 283: *prākṛt kathāsāhitya nuṃ ek aṅmol ratna*).

spirituality (*dharma*) and love (*kāma*) are combined in the *Taraṅgavatī*, as early generations of readers noted, and so are the corresponding aesthetics of didactic and romantic storytelling. And despite its characterization as “archaic Jain Mahārāṣṭrī” in modern scholarship, the *Taraṅgavatī*’s language is a link between an early generation’s creative outpouring in Prakrit and a later generation’s attempt to describe and systematize the language.

The *Taraṅgavatī*, then, provides a missing link between traditions, literary programs, and varieties of language that modern scholarship tends to treat as distinct. But how should we understand it in historical terms? How, in other words, can we use it to tell a story about the production of literature, in Sanskrit as well as Prakrit, in the early centuries of the common era? First, we must acknowledge that there really was such a thing as “Prakrit literature,” a discrete historical phenomenon that took shape at royal courts and served as the primary vehicle for the imagination and realization of political, ethical, and aesthetic ideals that cut across geographic and confessional boundaries. Second, this tradition would arguably not exist without Jain authors like Pālitta. Even kings cannot grow a literary culture out of nothing: it has to be nurtured in the soil of preexisting textual practices. In the case of Prakrit literature, those included the use of the *gāthā* meter, facility with a more or less standard language, and the art of storytelling. These practices effectively “catalyzed” the tradition of courtly literature in Prakrit. This pattern of catalysis would be repeated centuries later, when Jain authors pioneered the use literary use of Kannada.

This essay will therefore proceed in five sections. First, I will summarize the story of the *Taraṅgavatī*, especially for English readers who are presently limited to Warder’s brief and second-hand synopsis. Then, I will tell the story of the story—that is, what has happened to the *Taraṅgavatī* in the many centuries since Pālitta wrote it. This includes appraisals of the stories from earlier generations of readers, and the motivations of those who produced the versions available to us today. Third, I discuss some of the major themes, narrative strategies, and poetic techniques of Pālitta’s work, which lead us to consider it to be both a powerful story (*kathā*) and a well-crafted poem (*kāvya*). Fourth, we can extend our analysis of the *Taraṅgavatī* beyond the text, to a set of significant intertexts, including the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Seven Centuries*. These intertexts situate the *Taraṅgavatī* in an imaginative and aesthetic matrix. The fifth section is an attempt to locate this matrix more specifically in history. I do this by sifting out the various layers in the traditional biographies of Pālitta, and by corroborating M. A. Dhaky’s argument that the oldest layer reveals a learned Jain monk who produced his most significant work, the *Taraṅgavatī*, at the Sātavāhana court in the first or second century CE.

The Story of the Taraṅgavatī

The summary I present here is based on the *Taraṅgalolā*. After a group of Jain invocatory verses and the redactor’s apology, discussed below (p. 137), the story opens with a few details about its author, the monk Pālitta from the city of Kosala. The frame story takes place in the city of Rājagṛha under the reign of king Kuṇika, at the house of one Dhanapāla, who was the chair of the city administration (*nagaraseṭṭhī*). There is a residence of Jain nuns not far from the house, run by the abbess Suvratā, and one day a nun, whose name we will soon learn is Taraṅgavatī, and two novitiates arrive at house on a round of begging for alms. The nun’s beauty astounds the household servants and Dhanapāla’s wife Somā. After providing food, Somā asks the nun to tell a religious story (*dhammakahā*). The nun is happy to oblige, and dilates on the benefits of telling and listening to such stories. After some time, however, Somā importunes the nun to tell the story of her own life. With some hesitation, the nun agrees (see p. 139).

The nun describes her birth and childhood in the city of Kauśāmbī under the reign of Udayana. Her father, Ṛṣabhasena, was the chair of the city administration (*nagarasetthī*), like Dhanapāla in Rājagṛha in the outer frame, and a Jain layman. He was skilled in the *arthaśāstra*.¹² After seven sons, Ṛṣabhasena and his wife finally had a daughter, whom they named Taraṅgavatī. Her infancy and childhood is described, and her education in the fine arts and in the principles of Jainism. Taraṅgavatī's devoted and knowledgeable servant, Sārasikā, is introduced. One day a gardener enters the family's sitting room and announces the arrival of autumn, bringing with her a basket of flowers from a *saptaparṇa* tree. Ṛṣabhasena decides that it is time for Taraṅgavatī's "final exam," so he asks her why one of the flowers is yellow rather than white. Taraṅgavatī explains that there must be a pond near the *saptaparṇa* tree where lotuses grow, and after visiting one of these lotuses, a bee flew over and transferred the yellow lotus pollen onto the white *saptaparṇa* flower. The gardener confirms that Taraṅgavatī is correct, and Ṛṣabhasena decides that he will now entertain offers for Taraṅgavatī's hand in marriage. Taraṅgavatī's mother then proposes that all of the women of the household go for a picnic in which they will see the *saptaparṇa* tree and lotus pond in person. Taraṅgavatī takes care to note that she ate and slept well the night before their journey. As they proceed out of the house and through the city of Kauśāmbī, they attract the attention of the townspeople, whose reactions are described. They reach the parks outside of the city and locate the *saptaparṇa* tree, at which point they each go off on their own to pick flowers. Taraṅgavatī is soon after chased by bees, who mistake her face for a lotus, into a grove of banana trees. Her faithful servant Sārasikā finds her and calms her down, and from the grove they find the sought-after lotus pond. Upon seeing the beauty of the lotus pond, and especially the *cakravāka* birds, Taraṅgavatī faints. When she comes to, she swears Sārasikā to secrecy and tells her about the past life that she suddenly remembered.

Taraṅgavatī was once herself a *cakravāka* bird who lived with her devoted mate along the Gaṅgā. One day a majestic bull elephant came to bathe in the river, followed by a fierce-looking hunter. The hunter aimed an arrow at the elephant but missed and hit the male *cakravāka* bird, who piteously stumbles into the river and dies. The female bird laments her mate's death, and out of remorse the hunter builds a pyre and performs the male bird's final rites. The female bird jumps into the pyre after her mate.

Taraṅgavatī swears to Sārasikā that she will find the person in this life who was her mate in her prior life, and if she does not succeed in seven years she will become a Jain mendicant. In the meantime, she is beside herself with grief and longing. Under the pretense of a fever, she asks her mother for permission to return home early. Her parents arrange for a doctor to visit, who quickly concludes that the illness is psychological rather than physical. The family prepares for the Kaumudī festival that marks the first full moon of autumn and is an occasion for giving gifts to Jain mendicants and temples. Part of the festivities include decorating one's house for curious passers-by, and here Taraṅgavatī has an idea. She prepares a kalamkari painting that depicts the Gaṅgā scene in full and hangs it from the wall of her family's house, and instructs Sārasikā to watch the reactions of passers-by closely so that she might identify the person who recognizes his own past life in the painting. Then she goes off to sleep, but has a dream that she climbed a tall and many-splendored mountain. She wakes up and asks her father about the dream, who tells her that its significance is that she will soon be married. Taraṅgavatī is not at all happy to hear this, since she does not want to be married off to anyone besides her erstwhile mate. As she anxiously lies awake, Sārasikā comes and tells her what had happened in the meantime. Sure enough, towards the end of the night, a group of boys passed by the house, and one of them fainted when he saw the painting. Sārasikā pretended to be doing some household work in the courtyard, and one

¹² *Taraṅgalolā* 96; *niṇṇattha-sattha-paramattha-jāṇao savva-sattha-nimmāo | nihaso purisa-guṇāṇaṃ vavahārāṇaṃ ca savvesiṃ* ||

of the boys asked who painted the wall-hanging. Sārasikā tells him, and then follows him back to his house. Thus she found out the name and address of Taraṅgavatī's former mate, who is a boy named Padmadeva, the son of the caravan-trader Dhanadeva.

Some time afterwards, Taraṅgavatī learns from Sārasikā that Dhanadeva had actually asked for Taraṅgavatī as his son's wife, but Rṣabhasena had rebuffed the offer on the grounds that the fate of a caravan-trader's wife is to be miserably separated from her husband most of the time. Taraṅgavatī is devastated, but writes a love letter to Padmadeva on birch bark and instructs Sārasikā to deliver it with whatever message she thinks is appropriate. Sārasikā then goes to Padmadeva's house, and pretending to be a newly-hired servant, she finds an audience with Padmadeva. He is sitting with a Brahman, whose self-importance and foolishness provides some comic relief: he mistakes her Prakrit greeting *ahivāe te* (Sanskrit *abhivādaye tvām*) as *ahih pāde te*, "there is a snake by your foot." He is finally dismissed by Padmadeva, and Sārasikā conveys the letter and a message. After choking with tears, Padmadeva eventually tells Sārasikā what happened to him on the night of the festival: how he saw the painting and fainted, how he was pained by longing, how he told his father to ask for Taraṅgavatī's hand, how the request was denied, how his friends hatched a plan to steal Taraṅgavatī for him anyway, and how he said that he would rather die than dishonor their families. He sent Sārasikā back with a letter for Taraṅgavatī to read. Since the letter told her to wait patiently, Taraṅgavatī suspected that Padmadeva was not really serious about her and grew despondent, requiring Sārasikā to console her once again. Taraṅgavatī then decided that she would risk dishonor to her family and visit Padmadeva in person to force his hand, threatening to kill herself if Sārasikā did not comply.

Around evening Taraṅgavatī puts on her best clothes and sneaks out with Sārasikā to Padmadeva's house. She sees him for the first time, sitting with his friends at the front of his house, but he does not see her. As Padmadeva makes his way towards his bed, he sees Sārasikā and asks her about Taraṅgavatī. When the latter appears in person, they happily embrace for a long time. Then, however, Padmadeva begins to get worried: what will happen when their parents find out? They hear, however, a group of people singing songs on the street below that inspire them to capture the moment, and they decide to elope immediately. Taraṅgavatī sends Sārasikā to fetch her jewelry from home, but Padmadeva is anxious and convinces Taraṅgavatī to leave without her. By now it is night time. They make their way straight for the city gate and reach the shore of the Yamunā river, where they commandeer a boat and start sailing downriver. Immediately they hear the inauspicious sound of a jackal. Once they have been sailing for a while, the gravity of their situation dawns on Taraṅgavatī and she becomes afraid, but Padmadeva consoles her, and promises that they will be welcomed by his aunt downriver at the town of Kākandī. They consummate their marriage according to the Gandharva rite. Dawn on the Yamunā river is described. When they land their boat to wash up in the morning, they realize that they are surrounded by robbers. Padmadeva regrets that he has forgotten his weapons at home. He initially thinks to attack one of them, steal his weapon, and chase off the rest, but Taraṅgavatī dissuades him from this feat of valor. They are captured, and all of their jewelry and valuables are loaded up and led back to the robbers' village, which is described in detail. Padmadeva especially attracts the attention of the women in the village. They are brought before the chief, who simply stares them down. They hear him whisper to another robber, however, that the two will be sacrificed to the goddess Kātyāyanī to celebrate the end of the rainy season. They are led out, and Padmadeva is put in chains, which leads to a lament from Taraṅgavatī. She tells the robber who is guarding them that their parents are rich merchants in Kauśāmbī and that they can promise lots of money in exchange for their freedom, but the robber says that they are not interested in money, only in placating the goddess. The couple is hopeless.

They hear men singing songs about boldness in the face of death in the village's drinking-hall. This leads Padmadeva to become philosophical: he consoles Taraṅgavatī by

saying that their current situation is an unavoidable result of their past karmas. The other prisoners ask how the couple came to be captured, in response to which Taraṅgavatī tells the full story, starting with their lives as *cakravāka* birds. At this point one of the robbers comes in and whispers to Padmadeva that he intends to free the two of them. He tries to get them to eat meat, but they refuse. When night falls, he undoes the chains and leads them out into the wild jungle, and after leading them some way, he tells them how to get to the next village. Padmadeva expresses his sincere gratitude and they take their leave. After painfully forging ahead the rest of the night, they reach a village which a cowherd boy identifies for them as Kṣāyaka. They drink from the local tank, and attract the attention of curious villagers. Taraṅgavatī is very hungry by now, but Padmadeva insists on waiting to find suitable vegetarian food. Hence they rest at the village's temple to Sītā. While they are there, however, they spot a youth on horseback. Taraṅgavatī hides behind a pillar, but Padmadeva recognizes him and runs over and greets him.

The youth is Kulmāṣahastin, who briefly recounts what happened in Kauśāmbī after Padmadeva and Taraṅgavatī left. Their parents heard the full story from Sārasikā, and then made a great effort to find their lost children by sending their people throughout the city and countryside. Kulmāṣahastin delivers a letter from their parents that puts Padmadeva's mind at ease. They then tell Kulmāṣahastin what has happened to them, and he arranges for them to finally eat at the house of a local Brahman. They then proceed to the city of Prañāsaka, where Kulmāṣahastin sets them up with a family friend. There Padmadeva sends a letter home, indicating that they are safe, and after a few days they thank their hosts and proceed to the village of Vāsāliya, where Mahāvīra spent one of his rainy seasons, and make a short pilgrimage out of it. They then move on to the villages of Egāgihatthi and Kāligāma and reach the city of Sāhaṃjanī, where they again spend some time at the house of family friends. As they make their way back to Kauśāmbī, Kulmāṣahastin continues to point out sites of interest. They approach Kauśāmbī, where they are greeted by their friends and relatives. As they go through the streets of the city, they realize that they have become celebrities, since everyone is talking about their story. They make their way to Padmadeva's house, and although Taraṅgavatī is ashamed of her impetuous deeds, both of their families greet them warmly. Taraṅgavatī tells of what happened to them, and the arrangements for a proper marriage are made. At their marriage, they formally become Jain householders.

After the marriage, Taraṅgavatī asks Sārasikā what happened after she eloped with Padmadeva. Sārasikā explains that when she returned to Padmadeva's house with the jewelry, the couple had already left. She had two alternatives: either disclose Taraṅgavatī's secret and tell her family, or accept all of the blame herself. She opts to tell the family the truth: Ṛṣabhasena is angry, Sārasikā apologizes up and down, and Taraṅgavatī's mother laments. Eventually, however, they get the happy news that Taraṅgavatī and Padmadeva are coming back. Their enviable household life is described briefly—Taraṅgavatī's father sent a play as a wedding gift to Padmadeva— followed by the passage of the seasons: first autumn (and here we come to know that all of the events so far described took place in a matter of weeks), then two seasons of winter (*sisira* and *hemaṃta*), and then *spring*. When spring arrives, Padmadeva and Taraṅgavatī decide to take an outing in a nearby grove.

There, under an *aśoka* tree, they encounter a Jain monk, whom they greet reverentially. He gives them a long lecture about Jain doctrine, going into detail about topics such as *jīva* and *ajīva*, *karma*, *saṃsāra*, and *mokṣa*. At the end, Padmadeva asks a question much like the one that Somā asked the nun at the beginning of the story: why has he become a mendicant in the prime of youth, rather than waiting until later in life? The monk answers that he was born to a family of hunters somewhere in the western region of Campā. He was named Amoghakāṇḍa for his skill with the bow. He explains the rules for hunting that his family observed, and his wife Vanarāji. He relates the incident of the elephant and the *cakravāka* birds, but adds that he was so distraught by his accidental killing of the bird that he continued to add sticks to the pyre after the female bird jumped onto it, and when it was big

enough, he immolated himself there as well. His next birth was as Rudrayaśas, who grew up in a wealthy family in Vārāṇasī, but fell in with a bad crowd and became addicted to gambling. He turned to a life of crime, and eventually had to leave his family and city and join up with the forest-dwelling robbers in the village of Khārikā in the Vindhya mountains. These robbers made their living by robbing caravans and travellers. Because of his brazenness and cruelty, he rose up through the ranks and became the right-hand man of the chief, whose name was Śaktipriya. He then tells of how they captured a young couple, but before he could sacrifice them to Kātyāyanī, he overheard the girl tell the other prisoners how she came to be captured. In this final iteration, we learn that the female *cakravāka*'s name was Gaṅgāprarocakā and the male's name was Gaṅgātaraṅgatilaka. The story causes Rudrayaśas to remember his previous life as the hunter, and he sets the young couple free. Rather than returning to the village, he decides to abandon his life of maraudery and work towards final liberation. In his wanderings he encounters a beautiful garden near the town of Purimatāla, and learns from the locals that the place is called Śakaṭamukha, and a tree decorated with garlands marks the spot where Rṣabha became a Jina. Inspired, Rudrayaśas sees a Jain monk nearby and asks to be administered the vows of mendicancy. His career as a Jain monk, and especially his study of the sacred texts, is described. Padmadeva and Taraṅgavatī note with amazement that the monk in front of them is the same as the robber who freed them, and the hunter who killed Gaṅgātaraṅgatilaka in a previous life. They are impressed that such a low sinner could make such enormous strides toward liberation, and they decide that they too will strive for liberation. They announce their decision to become renunciants, first to the servants who are accompanying them, who react with disappointment and disbelief. After they pluck out their hair and take their vows, their families start to appear in the grove, having heard the news from the servants. They try to prevent Padmadeva and Taraṅgavatī from becoming renunciants, arguing that it is too early in their lives to do so, but to no avail: Padmadeva explains that the attachment of family life will only cause continued bondage and pain. They say goodbye to their families, and Taraṅgavatī notes how amazed the people of Kauśāmbī were at their renunciation. Rudrayaśas himself takes on Padmadeva as a student, and he consigns Taraṅgavatī to Suvratā. The two young people take their final leave of each other, without any ceremony or sentimentality, and Taraṅgavatī follows Suvratā back to the city to study with her.

When the nun has finished her story, we return to the outermost frame. The story has evidently had the desired effect, since Somā becomes “terrified of the ocean of existence” and solicits advice for how she might escape it. The nun encourages her to adhere to the dharma of householders, administers the vows, and then departs.

Traces of the Taraṅgavatī

This story has only barely survived into the present day. The shorter version was tucked into a relatively popular collection of stories by Bhadreśvara, and the longer version, the *Taraṅgalolā*, is attested by only two or three manuscripts. We know nothing of the person who prepared the *Taraṅgalolā*. The final *gāthā* mentions that one Yaśas wrote (*lihiyā*) the text for Nemicandra, who was a student of Vīrabhadra, the head-monk of a Jain community in the town of Hāriya. It seems that Yaśas did not produce the abridgement, but only copied out a manuscript of it.¹³

¹³ V. 1640: *hāiya-purīya-gacche sūrī jo vīrabhadda-nāmo tti | tassa sīsassa lihiyā jaseṇa gaṇinemicāṃdassa ||*. Warder thought that Yaśas wrote the *Taraṅgalolā*. Bhayani read the final *gāthā* as indicating that Yaśas was a student of Nemicandra, but the word “student” (*sīsassa*) must refer to Nemicandra himself. I have no guesses about the present location of Hāriya.

The redactor of the Taramṅalolā states his reasons at the beginning:¹⁴

Pālitta composed a long story called Taraṅgavatī,
 full of regional words, intricate and extensive.
 In some places it has captivating *kulakas*,
 in others closely-bound *yugalas*, and in still others
ṣaṭkas that are difficult for others to understand.
 Nobody recites it, nobody asks for it to be recited, nobody tells it.
 It has become the special preserve of scholars.
 Nobody else can do anything with it.
 That's why I have collected the verses that Pālitta wrote
 and removed the regional words to create this abridged story,
 in the hope that it will not entirely disappear
 from the hearts of other people. I beg forgiveness from that monk.

This tells us that by the redactor's time—which Leumann, and Bhayani following him, very tentatively put around the tenth century—the number of people who could comfortably read the *Taraṅgavatī* was approaching zero. The reason, we are told, is the poem's tendency to stretch a syntactic unit over multiple verses, combined with the poet's use of “regional” (*desī*) words. These were words in the Prakrit lexicon that are, according to one old definition, “conventionally recognized in the region of Mahārāṣṭra,” rather than being formed by derivation from a corresponding Sanskrit word.¹⁵ As such they were difficult to understand for an audience educated in Sanskrit.

At an earlier period, however, Pālitta was widely recognized as an important poet and influential Jain teacher. He and his *Taraṅgavatī* are referred to in a variety of sources: the canonical texts of the Śvetāmbara Jains in Ardhamāgadhī, commentaries on these texts, hagiographies, and literary works, all in both Sanskrit and Prakrit.¹⁶ The earliest such reference is in the *Anuyogadvārasūtra*, which was compiled no later than the fifth century and included in the Śvetāmbara Jain canon as an index of the other canonical texts. It notes that the affix *-kāra* can be used to form nouns that refer to the author of a text, and the examples given are “the author of the *Taraṅgavatī*” and “the author of the *Malayavatī*.”¹⁷ This short comment is significant because it highlights an important difference between the story of the *Taraṅgavatī* (and of the otherwise-unknown *Malayavatī*) on the one hand, and the stories that fill Jain canonical and postcanonical texts—above all the collection that Walther Schubring designated the “Āvaśyaka literature”—on the other: the latter are stories without authors, passed down from time out of mind, while the former were recognized to be productions of the historical personalities whose names are attached to them. The *Taraṅgavatī* is an authored text. This allows us to speak of it as having been composed by a particular person, at a particular place, and at a particular time, even if we don't exactly know what all of those particulars were. And it also aligns the *Taraṅgavatī* with other texts in which a similar “author function” operated, that is, texts whose authorship mattered not because the author served an authority for text's contents (like some of the early Jain

¹⁴ Taramṅalolā 5–9: *pālittaṅṇa rāyā vittharao taha ya desi-vayaṅehiṃ | nāmeṅṇa taramṅgavaī kahā vicittā ya vipulā ya || katthaiṅṇa kuvalāiṅṇa maṅoramāiṅṇa aṅṅattha guvila-juyalāiṅṇa | aṅṅattha chakkalāiṅṇa duppariallāi iyarāṅṇaṅṇa || na ya sā koi suṅṇeī na puṅṇo puccheī neva ya kaheī | viusāṅṇa navara joggā iyara-jaṅṇo tie kiṅṇa kuṅṇai || to ucceūṅṇa gāhāo pālittaṅṇa rāṅṇo | desi-payāiṅṇa mottuṅṇa saṅṅkhittayarī kayā esā || iyarāṅṇa hiyaṅṇaṅṇa mā hohī savvahā vi voccheo | evaṅṇa vicimtiūṅṇaṅṇa khāmeūṅṇa ya tayaṅṇa sūriṅṇa ||.*

¹⁵ *marahaṅṇaṅṇa-desa-saṅṅkeahi saddehi bhaṅṅṇaṅṇa desi*. The definition is Harivṛddha's (as quoted in Ratnaśrījñāna's commentary on Daṅṇḍin's Mirror of Poetry 1.33; see Bhayani (1998) and Ollett (2015: 341)).

¹⁶ Many of the following references were noted by Hemendrasāgara in his introduction (*prastāvanā*) to Ajitasāgara's Sanskrit version of the *Taraṅgavatī* story; see vv. 26–42.

¹⁷ Sūtra 308 (vol. 1, p. 339): *se kiṅṇa taṅṇa saṅṅjūhanāme? saṅṅjūhanāme — taramṅgavatikāre malayavatikāre attāṅṇasaṅṅṅhikāre biṅṇdukāre. se taṅṇa saṅṅjūhanāme.*

doctrinal works) and not because the legendary quality of the author accounted for the extraordinary quality of the text (like the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*), but because the texts were works that reflected a singular and distinctive human effort.¹⁸ It aligns the *Taraṅgavatī*, in other words, with the *kāvya* movement, and with texts like Aśvaghōṣa's *Deeds of the Buddha* and *Handsome Nanda*, Māṭṛceṭa's hymns to the Buddha, and Hāla's *Seven Centuries*.

The *Taraṅgavatī* was for a long time recognized as a seminal work in this tradition. Consider what Uddyotana says about Pālitta and the *Taraṅgavatī* at the beginning of his *Kuvalayamālā*, a story in Prakrit prose and verse completed in 779 CE:¹⁹

The words of Pālitta, Sātavāhana, and the Chappaṇṇayas are like a lion's roar,
and I'm like a young deer. How can I even take a step / write one word?
Pālitta, whose mind was pure, whose virtues were deep,
and who had the power to put the highest truths into writing,
adorned Hāla in literary gatherings (*goṣṭhīs*) like a necklace,
which had pure jewels, a strong cord,
and was rich in gems of the highest quality.
He is like that "family mountain," the Himalaya,
and his *Taraṅgavatī* is like the surging Gaṅgā River that flows from it:
pairs of *cakravāka* birds make it beautiful,
and causes delight with the charm of its royal geese.

Uddyotana literally begins his eulogy of poets with Pālitta. The order is not, or not just, chronological: Uddyotana clearly believes that Pālitta was a contemporary of Hāla (who I take to be identical with Sātavāhana), perhaps along with the mysterious *chappaṇṇayas*, but he places them before mythical figures like Vyāsa and Vālmīki, and also before a series of Jain poets.²⁰ But Pālitta takes priority because he stands, like one of the "family-mountains," at the beginning of the tradition to which Uddyotana himself belongs: a tradition of Prakrit literature, and more specifically of storytelling in Prakrit that is heavily inflected with Jain themes but nevertheless has the highest literary ambitions. This is a riverine tradition that swells with new texts, meanders as texts are passed down, and branches out as new traditions take shape.

Poets continued to pay reverence to Pālitta. The only author to do so who was not himself a Jain, however, was Abhinanda, the author of the *Rāmacarita* (eighth or ninth century). For Abhinanda, the relationship between the poet Pālitta and his patron Hāla was as proverbial as that between Kālidāsa and Vikramāditya, or between Bāṇa and Śrīharṣa.²¹ In the tenth century, the Jain poet Dhanapāla mentioned the *Taraṅgavatī* at the beginning of his *Tilakamañjarī*, and like Uddyotana, Dhanapāla likened the story to the Gaṅgā river through a concise expression (*samāsokti*): "The edifying story of *Taraṅgavatī* purifies the earth like the holy Gaṅgā, where pairs of *cakravāka* birds are found, with its clear and deep waters /

¹⁸ For "author functions" see Foucault (1977).

¹⁹ *Kuvalayamālā*, p. 3: *pālittaya-sālāhaṇa-chappaṇṇaya-sīha-ṇāya-saddehi | saṃkhuddha-muddha-sāraṃgao vva kaha tā payam demī || nimmala-maṇeṇa guṇa-garuyaṇe paramattha-rayāṇa-sāreṇa | pālittaṇe hālo hāreṇa va sahaī goṣṭhīsu || cakkāya-juvala-suhayā rammattaṇa-rāya-haṃsa-kaya-harisā | jassa kula-pavvayassa va viyaraī gaṃgā taraṃgavāī* ||. Chojnacki (2008: 28) translates the last verse as: "Elle donne le bonheur avec ses paires de tadornes – ses stances –, et apporte la joie avec ses oies royales – sa grâce –, cette Ondine qui émane du noble Pādalipta comme la Gaṅgā du Mont noble, j'ai nommé la *Taraṃgavāī*."

²⁰ The Chappaṇṇayas mentioned in the first verse remain a puzzle to literary history. See Upadhye (1970), Bhayani (1993c), Balbir and Besnard (1993–1994), and Balbir (1995–1996).

²¹ *Rāmacarita*, opening of chapter 33: *hālenottamaṇījayā kavivṛṣaḥ śrīpālito lālitaḥ khyātiṃ kām api kālidāsakṛtayo nūtaḥ śakārātīnā | śrīharṣo vitātāra gadyakavaye bāṇāya vāṇīphalaṃ sadyaḥ satkriyayābhinandam api ca śrīhāravarṣo 'grahīt* ||.

clear and profound style.”²² Later on, in 1199, a poet named Lakṣmaṇagaṇi, a student of the famous Hemacandra, wrote in his *Supāsanāhacariyaṃ* that everyone is thrilled to hear about the reversals of Taraṅgavatī—or rather of the “surging” (*taraṅgavatī*) river from which all other story-rivers get their sweetness.²³

The metapoetic image of the story as a river is obviously suggested by its title, but its significance goes further than that: The story is named after its main character, Taraṅgavatī, which literally means “possessing ebbs and flows.” She was named, we are told, after the Yamunā river, and in the story she is explicitly compared to the Gaṅgā.²⁴ Beyond this, much of the story itself takes place either on or in the Yamunā and Gaṅgā rivers, not only giving it a very particular sense of place, but also a clear symbolism: the constant eastward course of these rivers, their constant ebbing and flowing, calls to mind the karmic stream of *samsāra* which the story’s protagonists eventually resolve to escape. And, of course, the *cakravāka* birds that Uddyotana and Dhanapāla refer to form a major plot element of the *Taraṅgavatī*.

Themes, Strategies, and Techniques

The *Taraṅgavatī* was one of the earliest examples of the literary story, and exhibits many of the formal and thematic features of the genre. One of the formal features is the emboxed narrative. The *Taraṅgavatī* exhibits this feature on two levels, with different effects. To begin with, most of the story is actually told by Taraṅgavatī herself, who therefore functions as a primary narrator. The frame story, about a nun visiting a house in Rājagṛha, sets up a parallel between Taraṅgavatī’s story and Pālitta’s *Taraṅgavatī*. The following passage sets up the transition between the frame story and Taraṅgavatī’s narrative.²⁵

“Madam,” she said, “it will surely be painful to recount. It is not right for us to punish ourselves for no good purpose. The pleasant things that I experienced as a householder, things I used to do and enjoy, are blameworthy. Why, it is not proper for me to speak of them, even in my heart. But listen. As it can only make you

²² V. 23: *Tilakamañjarī* 23: *prasannagaṃbhīrapathā rathāṅgamīthunāśrayā | puṇyā puṇāti gaṅgevā gāṃ taraṅgavatī kathā ||*

²³ *ko na jaṇo harisijjāi taraṅgavatī-vaīyaraṃ suṇēṇa | iyare pabaṃdha-siṃdhū vi pāvīyā jīe mahurattaṃ ||*. The Taraṅgavatī is also mentioned by Candraprabha, the author of the *Vasupujjacariya*, but I unfortunately do not have access to the text. Hemendrasāgara notes the reference (v. 34 of his *prastāvanā*, see n. 16), as does Chaudharī (1973: 85), who notes that the identity of this Candraprabha remains unclear: there were two authors in the twelfth century by this name.

²⁴ *Taraṅgalolā* v. 106 (Taraṅgavatī named after the Yamunā river), v. 827: *kaṇṇā-nadī uvagayā sā te puvvāṇurāgajala-bhariyā | purisa-samudda samuddaṃ gaṅgā va imā taraṅgavatī ||* “You are an ocean, and this girl Taraṅgavatī has reached you, filled with the waters of her earlier love for you, just like the ebbing Gaṅgā reaches the ocean.”

²⁵ *Taraṅgalolā* vv. 78–85: *to bhaṇāi eva bhaṇīyā dukkhaṃ kira sāhiuṃ imaṃ gharīṇi | esa aṇatthā-damḍo nahi jujjāi seviuṃ amhaṃ || puvva-kaya-puvva-kīliya-suhāṇi gihavāsa-samaṇubhūāṇi | sāvajjāṇi na juttaṃ maṇasā vi kiṇo udīreuṃ || aha puna samsāra-dugūṃcchaṇaṃ ti aharisa-paosa-majjhatthaṃ | taṃ sunaha kahehaṃ bhe kammavivāga-pphalaṃ niyayaṃ || iya bhaṇīyamma tuṭṭhā gharīṇi tāo ya pavara-vilayāo | soyavvaucchi(?)yāo ajjāṃ vaṇḍamti savvāo | aha tāhiṃ pucchiyā sā samaṇī sāhe puvva-bhava-jaṇīyaṃ | kamma-vivāgaṃ savvaṃ tāsīṃ vilayāna savvāsīṃ || iḍḍhī-gārava-rahiyā majjhatthā tathimaṃ bhaṇāi ajjā | dhammekka-diṇṇa-diṭṭhī sarassā ceva paccakkhā || jaṃ ca mae aṇubhūtaṃ jaṃ ca suyaṃ jaṃ ca saṃbhare gharīṇi | thovuccaṇa eyaṃ suṇa vaṇṇehaṃ samāseṇa || jā bhaṇāi maṃgulaṃ maṃgulaṃ ti laṭṭhaṃ ca bhaṇāi laṭṭhaṃ ti | sabbhāve bhaṇṇamte na hoi niṃḍā pasaṃsā vā ||*

disillusioned with this world, I will relate to you the inevitable fruition of my own karmas, remaining neutral and without sinful delight.”

When she said this the madam was satisfied and all of the women, eager to hear the story, did reverence to the nun. Then, in response to their questions, that mendicant began to relate to all of those women in full the fruition of her karmas, generated in earlier lives. There the nun spoke without exaggeration or self-importance, remaining neutral, her gaze fixed upon dharma alone, like Sarasvatī incarnate.

“What I experienced, what I heard, and what I remember, madam, I will describe this in brief by collecting a few things together. Listen. So long as one says of something bad, that it is bad, and of something good, that it is good, and holds fast to the truth, there is neither blame nor praise.”

This is a programmatic statement which effectively frames both the story told to the woman and the story told to us. But Pālitta distances himself from it slightly by putting it into the mouth of a character in the story. The parallels here are productive because it is not quite exact. Pālitta is a Jain mendicant, and the values that the nun articulates are presumably his values as well. But he is also a poet, and the the nun’s narrative—which is, of course, also the poet’s narrative—is suffused with a literary sensibility that is never announced or acknowledged. Similarly, the madam and her servants model for us, the readers, a particular kind of response.

There are three main features of the nun’s statement. The first is that the story is, in a way, already written: it is nothing other than the inevitable fruition of karmas accumulated over lifetimes. The nun does not get to write her own story, so to speak. Rather, she is led into experiences by the inexorable logic of karma, and gradually learns about their significance after the fact. This alludes to the very particular mode of narrative development that Pālitta pursues, but also contrasts with it: Pālitta is, after all, writing the story, using literature to avoid the very constraints of time, knowledge, and karma that Taraṅgavatī is subject to.

Secondly, it is very important to the nun to tell the truth exactly as it happened. As the story itself makes clear, remembering one’s past can be a deeply disorienting and traumatizing experience. She needs to avoid reliving the blameworthy experiences of the past herself, and she needs to avoid ethically compromising her listeners as well. Hence she adopts a stance of neutrality. This corresponds, on my view, with the realism exhibited by the Taraṅgavatī. On this point we may bring in for discussion a classification of stories known from Haribhadra’s *Samarādityakathā* and Kautūhala’s *Līlavatī*, both composed in Prakrit around the eighth century.²⁶ Stories may be either divine (*divvā*), human-divine (*divva-māṇusī*), or human (*māṇusī*). Many popular stories, like the *Līlavatī* or the stories of Naravāhanadatta found in the *Bṛhatkathā* and its various retellings, are of the human-divine type, featuring humans, gods, and semidivine *vidyādhara*s, *yakṣa*s, and *siddha*s as characters. Jain stories, however, typically fall into the last category, and so does the *Taraṅgavatī*. Mythological figures and events enter into the story only in comparisons.

Third, the nun’s overarching goal is to produce in her listeners a sense of disgust or disillusionment with the world. This goal justifies the ethical risk of becoming attached once again to the pleasures that she is supposed to have put behind her and of producing similar feelings of attachment in her listeners. To put it all together, the project that the nun sets for herself is to turn the love-story (*kāmakathā*) that she herself experienced into a

²⁶ *Samarādityakathā* p. 2; *Līlavatī* v. 35.

religious story (*dharmakathā*) that will edify her listeners, much like the one that she had just finished telling. And this is of course Pālitta's project as well.

Early readers of the *Taraṅgavatī* noted that it partakes of both categories of story. One important site of discussion about the story and its subcategories for Jain readers were a set of *niryuktis* in the third chapter of one of the canonical texts of the Śvetāmbaras, the *Daśavaikālikasūtra*.²⁷ The *niryuktis* are verses in Prakrit that generally contain outlines for further oral or written discussion. They are traditionally ascribed to the teacher Bhadrabāhu, and likely date from around the first or second century CE.²⁸ One *niryukti* sets out the varieties of stories based on which of the three generally-accepted "human aims" (*puruṣārthas*) is predominant in them: *dharma*, *artha*, or *kāma*. Another defines the love story (*kāmakahā*) as one in which the objects of love, or more precisely of the senses, are seen, heard or experienced. Jinadāsa in his seventh-century *cūrṇi* gives Taraṅgavatī's narration of her own experiences as an example, as does Haribhadra in his eighth-century *ṭikā*, who borrows liberally from Jinadāsa.²⁹ The religious story (*dharmakathā*) has a number of subvarieties, but the most relevant to the *Taraṅgavatī* are the "disturbance-inducing" (*saṃveyaṇī*) and the "revulsion-inducing" (*nivveyaṇī*), which are meant to break down the listener's attachment to *saṃsāra*. Jinadāsa and Haribhadra include the *Taraṅgavatī* in the category of "mixed" stories, namely as a mixture of the love story and the religious story. Since the "mixed" category is very inclusive, the *Taraṅgavatī* is named an example a mixed story that is "Jain" (*samaye*), as opposed to one that is "worldly" (*loge*), like the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, or "Vedic" (*vee*), like those found in the ritual texts of the Brahmins.³⁰ Jinadāsa also refers to the *Taraṅgavatī* when discussing another *niryukti* in the eighth chapter of the *Niśīthasūtra*, which deals with the interdiction of a monk's association with women and the associated penalties. The verse claims that a love story (*kāmakahā*) is inappropriate for a Jain monk (*aṇāriyā*), regardless of whether it is "worldly" (*lokikī*) or "beyond" (*uttariyā*). Jinadāsa cites the story of Naravāhanadatta, that is to say the *Brhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya, as an example of the first type and the *Taraṅgavatī*, the *Malayavatī*, and the *Magadhaseṇā* as examples of the second.³¹ All of these texts are lost, but it is likely enough that, as in the classification found in the *niryuktis* of the *Daśavaikālikasūtra*, "worldly" refers to a story's non-Jain character. Thus Jain readers saw the *Taraṅgavatī* as both a love story and a religious story, and just as we would expect from the nun's remarks, these two aspects remained in tension: love stories are essentially stories that thematize, and perhaps cannot help but celebrate, precisely the kinds of attachment that religious stories are meant to turn us away from.

So far we have surveyed the programmatic framing achieved by turning Taraṅgavatī into a primary narrator. But the embedded narration does not stop there: throughout Taraṅgavatī's story, other characters are made to tell their own stories, who thus become secondary narrators. The most important such narrators are Sārasikā and Rudrayaśas. This strategy of secondary embedding is not used, as it is in works such as the *Lilāvātī*, to introduce completely characters and subplots. Rather, it is used to fill in the details, and to introduce new perspectives onto already-established events. Thus it dovetails with another salient feature of the *Taraṅgavatī*: the regular recurrence of narrative elements.

Consider, for example, the scene towards the end in which the monk outside Kauśāmbī relates the story of his life. When he comes to the story of the *cakravākas* that he, as a robber, heard from his female captive, we have already heard the story several times, most recently from the monk himself when relating his life as the hunter Amoghakāṇḍa. But this

²⁷ See vv. 189–207 in Dīparatnasāgara's edition.

²⁸ Balbir (1993b: 39).

²⁹ Commentaries on *niryukti-gāthā* 105 (Jinadāsa, p. 106) or 193 (Haribhadra, p. 96).

³⁰ Commentaries on *niryukti-gāthā* 109 (Jinadāsa, p. 109) or 207 (Haribhadra, p. 100).

³¹ *Cūrṇi* on *gāthā* 2343 (vol. 2, p. 415).

final iteration is notable because it provides details that we hadn't encountered previously, at least in the abridged *Taraṅgalolā*, and because of its high degree of reflexivity: remember that the nun Taraṅgavatī is telling the story of how she encountered the monk Rudrayaśas, who tells the story of how he encountered a young woman, who tells the story of her life as a *cakravāka*, and this young woman turns out to be the very person to whom Rudrayaśas is narrating his story, and also the very person who is narrating the story to us. The narration seems to represent the deeply interconnected web of *saṃsāra* that is increasingly thematized in the story.³² In the *Taraṅgavatī*, as in other stories, terms of address provide a useful way of maintaining our bearings as listeners in such potentially-confusing narrative situations. We know, for example, that Taraṅgavatī is speaking when we encounter the term *gahiṇi*, or that Sārasikā is speaking when we encounter *sāmiṇi*.

Pālitta is very aware of the constraints of knowledge and experience under which any narrator is placed. This is especially evident in the nun's scrupulous use of the particle *kira* when relating events of her childhood that she does not herself remember, or in the strategic use of Sārasikā to narrate events that happened outside of the narrow social space in which Taraṅgavatī, as a young girl in a well-to-do family, was confined. But he was also concerned to overcome those constraints, most of all by providing multiple perspectives onto critical events. The overall effect is that a narrative in which everyone else is a character in one person's story is gradually superseded by a narrative in which everyone is a character in everyone else's story. This strategy seems to implement the Jain concept of *nayas*, according to which there is an infinite number of different perspectives onto any one question, idea, or story. And the resemblance may not be accidental, since the concept of *nayas* is actually mentioned in the text as one of the things that Rudrayaśas learns when training to become a monk.³³

The *Taraṅgavatī* shows, but it also tells. Besides using narrative devices to model an interconnected and perspectival universe, and to elaborate upon the themes of knowledge and necessity, it presents a number of topics discursively, even didactically. Its didacticism, so far as we can tell from the *Taraṅgalolā*, situates it somewhere between stories that were meant purely for entertainment, such as the *Līlāvatī*, and stories that were primarily meant to convey Jain doctrine, such as the *Varāṅgacarita*. The didactic passages are not confined to Jain doctrine, but span a variety of worldly and spiritual topics: the principles of botany, when Taraṅgavatī is tested at the beginning of the story; the different kinds of fevers and their causes, when the doctor visits the lovesick Taraṅgavatī; the importance and consequences of gift-giving, during the autumn full-moon festival; the techniques of dream-interpretation, when Taraṅgavatī relates her dream to her father. The longest such passage is the Jain monk's teaching at the end of the story.

What makes the *Taraṅgavatī* a *kāvya*, as opposed to a mere story or a mere sermon, is its overarching concern with presenting the narrative in a striking and beautiful way. Thus Pālitta consistently employs poetic ornaments. Bhayani has drawn attention to Pālitta's fondness for sonorous repetitions. Sometimes the repetition is on the level of sounds (the classical tradition's *anuprāsa*), for example when *-aṃbī* occurs in every quarter of verse 89, and often it is on the level of entire words (the classical tradition's *yamaka*), which are then used in slightly different senses, such as *vṛṣabha* in verse 1498. These tendencies bear comparison to the fondness for repetition of Pālitta's near-contemporary Aśvaghōṣa.³⁴ Like

³² Thus I disagree on this point with Bhayani Saheb, who found the repetitions to be a poetic fault, although he allowed that this might not have been so in the original (ed., p. 284).

³³ *Taraṅgalolā* 1518: *nava gayā puvvā me savva-naya-payāmsayā ca vitthiṇṇā | savvesiṃ davvāṇaṃ bhāva-guṇavisesa-pāgaḍaṇā ||*. For more on this passage, see n. below.

³⁴ V. 89: *pura-vara-jaṇa-kolaṃbī tattha purī devaloya-velaṃbī | savva-jaṇa-maṇālaṃbī kosaṃbī nāma nāmeṇa ||* V.1498: *ikkhāya-rāya-vasabho vasabho kila laliya-vasabha-gāi-gāmi | āsīya bharahavāse*

many later narrative *kāvya*s—a category that includes *mahākāvya*s, *campūs*, and *kathās*—the *Taraṅgavatī* includes purely descriptive passages. In abridgements of other Prakrit poems, such passages were usually the first to be cut, so it is likely that they were more numerous and more extensive in the original *Taraṅgavatī*.³⁵ These often serve to mark out the temporal dimensions of the narrative: the beginning of the autumn, evening, nightfall, and daybreak.

But the *Taraṅgavatī* is not just a story with descriptions. It is fundamentally a descriptive story, concerned with the discursive representation of a lived experience that is full of captivating sights and sounds. To appreciate this point we need only consider the kinds of experiences that lead to the recollection of a past life in the story. For *Taraṅgavatī*, it was occasioned by seeing a real-life lotus pond. For Padmadeva, it was occasioned by seeing a painting. And for Rudrayaśas, finally, it was occasioned by hearing a story. A fine example of Pālitta's powers of description is *Taraṅgavatī*'s first glimpse of the lotus pond in the park outside of Kauśāmbī.³⁶

I held onto the maid's left arm, dazzling with golden bracelets, and looked
out upon the lotus pond. [254]
I saw a pond full of pairs of all kinds of birds that raised a loud din,
with bees crowding the charming flowers of lotuses that grew in abundance,
[255]
completely covered in red lilies,
red lotuses, white lilies, and yellow lotuses,
a multicolored flag of the park. [256]
With its red lotuses, it imitated the dawn,
with its white lilies, the moonlit night, madam,
and with its blue lotuses, the darkness of an eclipse. [257]
It seemed to sing with the buzzing of bees;
it seemed to moan with the sounds of the geese;
it seemed to dance with the graceful fingers
that are the lotuses blown gently by the wind. [258]
I saw the ospreys, loud and proud, the mynahs trying to mate,
the joyful dhṛtarāṣṭras, truly the kinsmen of pale Pāṇḍu. [259]

kumārasuyatī vasumatīe || See Bhayani's ed., pp. 284–285, for further examples. For examples from Aśvaghōṣa see Johnston's introductory essay in his edition of the *Deeds of the Buddha*.

³⁵ See Upadhye's comment about Ratnaprabha's abridgement of the *Kuvalayamālā* (pp. 91–92) in the introduction to his edition.

³⁶ *Taraṅgalolā* 254–265 (my translation differs in a few points from Bhayani's/Singhvi's): *cīra(?)* -*kaṇaya-valayacilalliyāe vāmāe bāhiyāe ahaṃ* | *avaṭhaṃbhiūṇa _cediṃ taṃ paūma-saraṃ paloemi* || *sāūṇa-gaṇa-viviha-miḥuṇabhayam* | *uiya-vāyāla-nāya-mahālaṃ* || *bhamarālīṇa-maṇohara-viyasiya-sayavatta-vaṇa-gahaṇaṃ* || *kokaṇadakumūya-kuvalaya-vimaiūla-tāmarasa-bahala-saṃchaṇṇaṃ* | *ujjāṇa-ciṃdhapaṭṭaṃ pecchāmi ahaṃ saravaraṃ taṃ* || *saṃjhāyāi vva rattuppalehiṃ joṇhāyāi vva kumuehiṃ* | *gahāyāi patta(?) nūluppalehiṃ so ya gharīṇi* || *uggāyāi vva mahuari-ruehi joyāi va haṃsa-viruehiṃ* | *naccaī va vāya-payaliya-paūma-vilāsaggahathehiṃ* || *dippaya-muhare kurare ramiyavvaya-vāvaḍāu āḍṭo* | *dhayaṛaṭṭhe ya pahaṭṭhe paṇḍuraya-sodara* (read: *paṇḍussa ya sodare*) *pāsaṃ* || *rehaṃte paūmāiṃ chappaya-vāhejjamāṇa-majjhāiṃ* | *tavaṇijja-bhāyaṇāṇi va tattha mahāṇilamajjhāiṃ* || *khoma-paḍa-dhavalā-piṇḍaliya-sacchahe puliṇa-saṃṭhiē passaṃ* | *sarayajjiya-guṇa-jāe saraṭṭahāse tahiṃ haṃse* || *niyaya-paohara-kumkuma-vicitta-rūve ya payāi-āyaṃbe* | *piya-vippaoga-kāe ya cakkavāe paloemi* || *sohaṃti cakkavāyā pomīṇi-pattesu saṃṭhiyā kei* | *kāreṇu-kusuma-niyare vva hariya-maṇi-kuṭṭimesu ṭhiyā* || *ṭsā-rosa-virahie sahayari-saṃjōya-rāya-ratte ya* | *cakkāyetha gharīṇi maṇosilā-piṃjare pecchaṃ* || *sahayariyāhiṃ* | *samagge* | *paūmiṇi-pattaṃtaresu* | *ramamāṇe* | *hariya-maṇi-kottīma-palotta-rayāṇa-kalasovamasirīe* ||

When the bees crowd into the middle of the lotuses,
they look like golden plates with sapphires in the middle. [260]
I saw the geese there on the banks, white as piles of linen,
a broad smile at all of the beauty that autumn has taken on. [261]
I looked at the cakravākas in their multicolored beauty:
red, with saffron-colored breasts, dreading being separated from their mates. [262]
Some of them were sitting on lotus leaves, looking like
heaps of karṇikāra flowers lying on emerald slabs. [263]
There I saw cakravāka birds, madam, who had no jealousy or anger,
but were simply delighted to be with their companions, red as realgar, [264]
resting on the leaves of the lotus with their companions,
lovely as pots of jewels spilled out on emerald slabs. [265]

We can note, first of all, Pālitta's skillful exploitation of the *gāthā* meter's flexibility. Often the metrical boundaries articulate the verse into discrete packets of meaning. Sometimes, however, a single compound fills the entire line. And twice here the syntax runs beyond the scope of a verse, producing a *yugala* that evidently contributed to the text's difficulty (p. 137). We can also analyze this passage in terms of its poetic ornaments (*alaṅkāras*), which are perhaps the calling card of the *kāvya* movement: Pālitta uses similes (*upamā*, 260, 263, 265), metaphors (*rūpaka*, 256), and "poetic fancies" (*utprekṣā*, 257, 258). In addition to identifying these formal features, we should also be attentive to the domains that they bring together. We have, first of all, the natural world, populated almost exclusively by aquatic flowers and aquatic birds. Then we have a world of courtly opulence, full of fine linens, gold, and gems. Finally, a world of myth is just hinted at (259). In Pālitta's poetics these worlds are overlaid on each other with affective consequences. The birds are personified, given human actions and human emotions, as if setting the stage for Taraṅgavatī's realization that she herself was one of them. And there are aesthetic consequences as well. The image of the *karṇikāra* flowers atop emerald slabs exemplifies the aesthetic of the *Taraṅgavatī*: it is a striking combination, perhaps possible only in the imagination, in which the elements enhance each other's beauty.

The Confluences of the Taraṅgavatī

Now that we have an idea of how the *Taraṅgavatī* works as literature, we can examine the ways in which it recalls and refers to other literary texts. The story has different types of intertextual "confluences" that tell us a great deal about the wider literary world that it was a part of.

In one type of confluence, a character from another text appears in the *Taraṅgavatī*. Recall that when Padmadeva and Taraṅgavatī escape from the village of robbers, their first resting-place is a temple to Sītā. Their worship of Sītā can be read as Pālitta's acknowledgement of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.³⁷ At this point, however, we have been following in Vālmīki's steps for some time. The story takes place in the southern Avadh region, from Kauśāmbī in the west to a town called Praṇāśaka in the east, situated at the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Tamasā rivers. This is just to the south of the kingdom of Kosala, home of both Rāma and Pālitta.³⁸ Vālmīki's hermitage was on the banks of the Tamasā river, and it was there that he had the experience that would lead him to invent the *śloka* and to compose the *Rāmāyaṇa*: he saw a hunter kill the male member of a pair of Krauñca birds.

³⁷ As noted by Leumann (1921: 10).

³⁸ And, we might add, Aśvaghōṣa, who hailed from Sāketa, and who was similarly influenced by the *Rāmāyaṇa*. For Kosala, Sāketa, and Ayodhyā, see Bakker (1986).

That scene is surely in the background of the recurrent scene in the *Taraṅgavatī* in which a hunter kills the male member of a pair of *cakravāka* birds on the banks of the Gaṅgā river. The differences are as important as the similarities: whereas Vālmīki curses the hunter, whom we never hear from again, in Pālitta's telling the hunter is filled with grief and at that moment begins his long journey toward liberation.

An early appearance by Udayana and Vāsavadatta alerts us to the possibility that Pālitta is responding to the popular cycle of Udayana stories. Although various versions were in circulation at the time, it bears mention that according to some traditions, the great collection of stories about Udayana and his son Naravāhanadatta, the *Bṛhatkathā*, was composed at the court of the Sātavāhanas, just like Pālitta's *Taraṅgavatī*.³⁹ And with Udayana, as A. K. Warder noted, comes his contemporary Mahāvīra.⁴⁰ Just as Udayana's Kauśāmbī is the setting of the inner frame, the Rājagṛha of Kuṅika, also known as Ajātaśatru, is the setting of the outer frame, one of the centers of Mahāvīra's activity.

Mahāvīra also figures in another type of confluence, namely, the inclusion in the *Taraṅgavatī* of "fragments" of other textual genres. These fragments, besides functioning as intertexts, often form significant patterns in the story. Thus when Padmadeva and Taraṅgavatī stop at a banyan tree in the village of Vāsāliya, they hear something like a mini-*stotra* to Mahāvīra from the groundskeeper, and respond with a mini-*stotra* of their own.⁴¹ This happens again when Rudrayaśas stops at a banyan tree in the town of Purimatāla and a local tells him about Rṣabhanātha. Similarly are the inspirational songs that occur at two points in the story. When they meet for the first time, and are considering what to do next, Taraṅgavatī and Padmadeva hear people on the street below singing songs about "living in the moment" and praising deeds of courage, which inspires them to elope immediately. Later, when they are imprisoned in the robbers' village, they hear people singing songs about death and fate, and this leads them to understand their own situation as the inevitable result of karmas accumulated in the past. This second song has completely the opposite effect: the first causes Taraṅgavatī and Padmadeva to try to shape their fate by brute force, and the second inspires them to accept it as a *fait accompli*. These patterns seem to iconically suggest the overall picture of human existence that the *Taraṅgavatī* presents: *samsāra* means going around in circles, being bound to have the same kinds of experiences and undergo the same kinds of suffering, but against this cyclical pattern progress is possible, and each iteration potentially brings one closer to the understanding of the mechanisms of karma and to the possibility of final release.

One could argue, along similar lines, that one of the functions of the *Taraṅgavatī*'s "set pieces" is to form an allusive bridge with the other texts in which they occur. Hence the story includes several procession scenes and several laments, which call to mind similar elements in many narrative poems in Sanskrit and Prakrit. Some of these "set pieces" allow Pālitta to participate in a discourse of erotic poetry despite the non- or even anti-erotic message of the poem as a whole. Hence, whenever the two main characters are out in public, from the first moment that Taraṅgavatī enters Somā's courtyard to the time that Taraṅgavatī and Padmadeva are led into the robbers' village and again when they turn up in the village of Kṣāyaka, Pālitta describes the reactions of the onlookers to their beauty. These scenes are just a way of mixing the honey of erotic poetry with the medicine of religious storytelling, as Aśvaghōṣa famously claimed to do at the end of his *Saundarananda*, but form a bond between the *Taraṅgavatī* and the kind of erotic poetry that we encounter in its "sister-text,"

³⁹ For the Udayana cycle see Adaval (1970). Only the *kathāpīṭha* of the Kashmiri versions of the story places Guṇādhya at the court of the Sātavāhanas; see Tsuchida (2002).

⁴⁰ Warder (1990 [1974]: §841).

⁴¹ It is worth mentioning that the village of Vāsāliya was not recorded in the *Kalpa Sūtra* as one of the places where Mahāvīra spent his *caturmāsa*. See Jacobi's translation, p. 264, and von Glasenapp (1999: 327).

the *Seven Centuries*.⁴²

I call the *Seven Centuries* a “sister-text” of the *Taraṅgavatī* because tradition held that they came from the same court, namely the court of the Sātavāhana king Hāla. But even if we knew nothing about this tradition, the texts themselves would lead us to the same conclusion. Bhayani identified one verse in the *Seven Centuries* that is identical to a verse in the *Taraṅgavatī*.⁴³ If this is the only complete match, there are many partial matches. One of the verses translated above (263) reminded Bhayani very much of W4, the verse that essentially begins the *Seven Centuries*.⁴⁴ One of the verses with which *Taraṅgavatī* is first described—“Although my unblinking gaze wants to catch a glimpse of her entire body, it keeps getting stuck on how beautiful each part of her is”—recalls a similar idea in the *Seven Centuries*.⁴⁵ These are simply some of the clearest examples of an affinity, stretching down to the level of vocabulary and style, that deserves a much more detailed study.

The *Seven Centuries* is, according to a traditional understanding that I believe to be fundamentally correct, an anthology of verses by different poets that were collected, edited, and arranged by the Sātavāhana king Hāla, who also contributed a large number of his own verses. Unsurprisingly, Pālitta is recorded as the author of many of these verses in the commentaries to the *Seven Centuries*. These commentaries differ regarding the ascriptions, and much more work needs to be done to determine their authenticity, but here it is sufficient to note that Bhuvanapāla assigns 11 verses to Pālitta, Ājaḍa, 9, and Pītāmbara, 7.⁴⁶ There are also a number of other verses ascribed to Pālitta in various grammatical and metrical handbooks, some of which are indeed found in the *Taraṅgalolā* or are ascribed to Pālitta in the *Seven Centuries*. I will not discuss all of these verses—interested readers can consult Bhayani’s article—but two help to establish more precisely the area of overlap between the aesthetic sensibility of the *Seven Centuries* and that of the *Taraṅgavatī*.⁴⁷ W75

⁴² Saundarananda 18.64: *yan mokṣāt kṛtam anyad atra hi mayā tat kāvyadharmāt kṛtam | pātuṃ tiktam ivauṣadhaṃ madhuyutaṃ hr̥dyam katham syād iti* ||.

⁴³ *Taraṅgalolā* 1021 = W42 (*āraṃbhamāṇassa phuḍaṃ lacchī maraṇaṃ va hoi purisassa | tam aṅāraṃbhe maraṇaṃ pi hoi niyayaṃ na uṇa lacchī* ||). References prefixed with a W refer to Weber’s standard edition of the *Seven Centuries*.

⁴⁴ *Taraṅgalolā* 263 (*sohamti cakkavāyā pomīni-pattesu saṃṭhiyā kei | kāreṇu-kusuma-niyare vva hariya-maṅikutṭimesu ṭhiyā* ||) W 4 (*ua ṇiccalaṅṇipamāḍā bhisīṇvattammi rehaī valāā | ṇimmalamaraḡaabhānapariṭṭhiā saṃkhasutti vva* ||). See Bhayani (1993a: 132); I would have compared, rather *Taraṅgalolā* 260 (*rehaṃte paīmāiṃ chappaya-vāhejjamāṇa-majjhāiṃ | tavaṅṇija-bhāyaṇāṇi va tattha mahāṇīla-majjhāiṃ* ||).

⁴⁵ *Taraṅgalolā* 48 (*savvaṃgesu animisā pecchaṇalolā mae surūvaṃ ti | laggamti laggamti kahimci himvāviyā diṭṭhī* ||) W 234 (*jassa jahim cia paḍhamam tissā aṃgammi ṇivadiā diṭṭhī | tassa tahiṃ cea ṭhiā savvaṃgam keṇa vi na diṭṭham* ||), translation by Khoroché and Tiekén (2009): “On whichever part of her body / One’s eye falls first / There it stays. / No one has ever seen the whole of her body” and W271 (*kaha sā ṇivvaṇṇijaū jā jahāloiammi aṃgammi | diṭṭhī duvvalagāi vva paṃkapaḍiā ṇa uttarāi* ||) translation by Khoroché and Tiekén (2009): “How can I describe her? / Once you see her body / You cannot take your eyes off it: / They are like a helpless cow / Stuck in the mud.”

⁴⁶ Bhuvanapāla (Patwardhan’s edition): 77 (W75), 164 (W218), 200 (W575), 205 (W257), 206 (W258), 211 (W263), 406 (W391), 409 (W394), 505 (W547), 567 (W760), 569 (W584). Ājaḍa (BORI MS): 78 (W75), 163 (W217), 164 (W218), 408 (W393), 409 (W394), 567 (W584), 569 (W584), 606 (W564), 616 (W684). Pītāmbara (Weber/Jagdīsh Lal Shastri): 74 (W74, “Paulinyasya”), 400+1 (W394), 400+2 (W395), 581 (W580), 613 (W612), 626 (W623), 629 (W626). The ascriptions at least in the first *śataka* of Pītāmbara’s commentary likely need to be read with the following rather than the preceding verse, and thus need to be shifted forward. Note that Bhuvanapāla and Ājaḍa largely agree with each other but disagree with Pītāmbara.

⁴⁷ See Bhayani (1993a). They are *Svayambhūchandās* 5.3 (*pūrvabhāga*) = *Taraṅgalolā* 543 (*āyāsa-talāe nimmalammi papphulla-camda-pāimassa | maya-bhasala-calāṇa-papphamdiyassa jonhā-rao paḍai* ||) “Within the clear lake of the sky, the pollen of moonlight fell from the full-blown lotus of the moon, forced upon by the legs of the bee that is the moon’s spot”; *Svayambhūchandās* 1.4 (*pūrvabhāga*) = *Saptaśatī* W75 (discussed below); *Siddhahema* 8.1.187 and 8.3.142 = *Sarasvatīkaṅṭhābharaṇa* 3.153 = *Kavidarpaṇa* commentary on 2.8.7 (where it is ascribed to Pālitta, *gajjaṃte khe mehā phullā nivā paṇaccirā morā | nattho camdujjo*

is ascribed by all of the commentators to Pālitta, and the ascription is supported by the ninth-century poet Svayambhū:⁴⁸

Look! That flock of parrots descending from the sky
looks like a necklace of emeralds and rubies
worn on the neck of the beautiful woman that is the sky.

Or again, W394, which the commentator Ājaḍa introduces by saying “the teacher Pālitta describes the monsoon”:⁴⁹

In the monsoon, the peacock cranes his neck to drink
a drop of water on the tip of a blade of grass,
which looks like a pearl pierced by an emerald needle.

Pālitta’s voice is not difficult to hear in these two examples: the simile that joins an image of the natural world to a far-fetched image of courtly elegance. Like most of the other verses attributed to Pālitta, the second verse quoted here is fitted to a particular season. Many scholars have pointed out that the very earliest traditions of *kāvya*, including the *Seven Centuries* as well as the Tamil anthologies, are strongly influenced by the logic of the seasons.⁵⁰

Another bridge between the tradition of narrative poetry represented by the *Taraṅgavatī* and the tradition of courtly lyric represented by the *Seven Centuries* is so obvious that it might even escape our notice: they both employ a specific literary language, Prakrit, and a specific metrical form, the *gāthā*. Both the *Seven Centuries* and the *Taraṅgalolā* actually mention that they are composed in Prakrit, which strongly suggests that their authors attached some importance to the choice of language. The *Taraṅgavatī* is a “religious story composed in Prakrit,” and the *Saptaśatī* declares itself to be “the nectar that is Prakrit poetry.”⁵¹ These are, moreover, some of the earliest references available to Prakrit as a language. A few other texts—the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the *Sthānāṅgasūtra*, and the *Anuyogadvārasūtra*—mention the dichotomy of Sanskrit and Prakrit, but they are notoriously difficult to date. We can guess, at least, that some form of the *Sthānāṅgasūtra* was around by Pālitta’s time, since he refers to it.⁵²

What, then, is this “Prakrit”? It is, linguistically speaking, a Middle Indic language, similar

vāsāratto halā patto || “The clouds thunder, the *kadambas* are in bloom, the peacocks dance, the clear moonlight is gone: my friend, the monsoon nights have arrived.”)

⁴⁸ *ua pommarāmaragaasaṃvaliā nahaalāu oarāi* | *nahasirikaṃṭhabbhaṭṭha vva kaṃṭhiā kīrariṃcholī* ||

⁴⁹ Folio 12V (corrected): *pādaliptācāryaḥ prāvṛṣaṃ varṇayati—maragayasūviddham va mottiyam piyāi āyayaggīvo* | *moro pāusaāle taṇa[gga] laggam uyayabimduṃ* ||. Note that Pādalipta is a later (and false) Sanskritization of Pālitta (see p. 153).

⁵⁰ See especially Lienhard (1971, 1975, 1977) and Boccali (1999).

⁵¹ *Taraṅgalolā* 13 (*pāyayaṭṭham ca nibaiṃ* (there is a metrical problem here, so read *pāyaya-vayaṇa-nibaddham* or something similar) *dhamma-kahaṃ suṇaha jāi na dubbuddhī* | *jo dhammaṃ suṇāi sivaṃ so jama-visayaṃ na pechihī*) || “If your mind is up to it, listen to this religious story composed in Prakrit, for the one who listens to the auspicious dharma will not see Yama’s realm”, W2 (*amiṃ pāua-kavvaṃ paḍhiuṃ souṃ ca je ṇa āṇaṃti kāmassa tatta-tattiṃ kuṇaṃti te kaha ṇa lajjaṃti* || “Those who don’t know how to recite or listen to the nectar that is Prakrit poetry but go on obsessing about the science of love—how are they not ashamed?”).

⁵² *Sthānāṅgasūtra* 553 (7.74), p. 674 l. 5 (*sakkatā pāgatā ceva duvidhā bhaṇiṃ āhitā*); *Anuyogadvārasūtra* 260 (*gāthā* 53), p. 305 l. 3 (*sakkayā pāyayā ceva bhaṇiṃ hoṃti duṇṇi u*); *Taraṅgalolā* 1513 (*sūyagaḍaṃ ca gayam me ṭhāṇasamavāyā samāṇiyā ya tato* | *sessam ca kāliya-suyam aṃga-paviṭṭham mae gahiyaṃ* ||). See also Ollett (2015:164 ff., 177 ff.).

to the languages that were used for transmitting the scriptures of Jainism and Buddhism in the last few centuries BCE. But we need to be careful not to conflate the specific literary language that Pālitta and Hāla knew as “Prakrit” with the generic category of “Middle Indic.” In the history of Jain scripture, Prakrit only comes to be used around the first century CE, when a teacher (or teachers) traditionally identified as Bhadrabāhu composed versified commentaries called *niryuktis* on many of the older Ardhamāgadhī texts. These commentaries also employ the *gāthā* meter, which is absent from the oldest layers of the Jain and Buddhist scriptures but becomes the most popular meter of later Jain texts (both canonical and postcanonical) and of Prakrit literature.⁵³

The language of the *Taraṅgavatī* is almost identical to that of the *Seven Centuries*, except that it has a number of grammatical features and words that are not attested in that text. Bhayani, in an important study that forms the basis of the following remarks, considered these features to be characteristic of “Archaic Jaina Mahārāṣṭrī.”⁵⁴ In this he was following the lead of Ludwig Alsdorf, who had invented the term “Archaic Jaina Mahārāṣṭrī” to describe the language of the *Wanderings of Vasudeva (Vasudevahimḍi)* by Saṅghadāsa, which seemed to represent a more archaic variety of “Jaina Mahārāṣṭrī.”⁵⁵ This, in turn, was the term that Hermann Jacobi had invented to describe the language that Śvetāmbara Jains used, principally for commentaries and narrative literature, from around the sixth century onwards.⁵⁶ “Mahārāṣṭrī” referred to the principal variety of Prakrit, in distinction to other literary languages such as Śaurasenī and Māgadhī that were generally used only in plays. Thus the *Seven Centuries*, which was one of the first Prakrit texts known to modern scholarship, is generally considered to have been composed in Prakrit, or Mahārāṣṭrī, without any further qualifications, while the *Taraṅgalolā*, which came to light much more recently, is considered to have been composed in “Archaic Jaina Mahārāṣṭrī.” These labels obscure the fact, which A. K. Warder already noted, that these two texts are “contrasting counterpart[s]” in “the same new language.”⁵⁷

A more detailed comparative of the language of the *Taraṅgavatī* and the *Seven Centuries* remains to be done. In the meantime, however, the *Taraṅgavatī* provides an important missing link in the history of Prakrit as a literary language. The problem is as follows. On the one hand, courtly texts such as the *Seven Centuries* and the *Building of the Bridge (Setubandha)* had long been taken to be the “textbook” examples of literary Prakrit. Daṇḍin’s massively influential *Mirror of Poetry* had even defined Prakrit, around the turn of the eighth century, as “the language in which works like the *Building of the Bridge* are composed.”⁵⁸ On the other hand, the premodern grammars of this language teach forms that are not attested in these texts. This presents a problem for the otherwise convincing argument of Luigia Nitti-Dolci that systematic grammars of Prakrit, beginning with the *Light on Prakrit (Prākṛtaprakāśa)* of Vararuci, were written in order to enable poets to compose single-verse lyrics in imitation of those collected in the *Seven Centuries*.⁵⁹ The *Taraṅgavatī* contains many forms, however, that are actually taught in premodern grammars of Prakrit and only otherwise attested, if at all, in other works of “Archaic Jaina Mahārāṣṭrī” such as the *Wanderings of Vasudeva* and even more archaic Middle Indic languages such as Ardhamāgadhī. This suggests that these works were known to, and studied by, the premodern scholars who could literally come to define what, at least in

⁵³ As noted in several of Ludwig Alsdorf’s studies (2006 [1965]; 1966; 1967); see also Bruhn (1996) and Ollett (2015: 137–147).

⁵⁴ Bhayani (1979).

⁵⁵ Alsdorf (1936), Chandra (1978), Esposito (2011).

⁵⁶ Jacobi (1886, 1908–1909, 1918).

⁵⁷ Warder (1990 [1974]: §839).

⁵⁸ *Kāvyaadarśa* 1.34: *mahārāṣṭrāśrayāṃ bhāṣāṃ prakṛṣṭaṃ prākṛtaṃ viduḥ | sāgaraḥ sūktaratnāṇaṃ setubandhādi yanmayam ||*.

⁵⁹ Nitti-Dolci (1972 [1938]: §269, §272, §275).

grammatical terms, was meant by the word “Prakrit.” It has long been assumed that the “target language” of early attempts to describe Prakrit was represented by courtly lyrics such as the *Seven Centuries*, but a case can be made that it was represented by the *Taramṅavatī* as well, and thus that the literary language was defined by a broader range of texts than previously thought.⁶⁰

The *Taramṅalolā* and the *Wanderings* use a first person singular ending *-am* for the present. Vararuci teaches this ending only for the future, but his commentator Vasantarāja notes that it can be used for the present as well.⁶¹ Vararuci teaches *-itthā* as an ending of the second person plural of the present and first person plural of the future. Pischel gives a number of Ardhmāgadhī examples of the use of this suffix, mostly in the sense of the third person *ātmanepada* singular of the preterite but also in the sense of the third person plural (where it is also found in the *Wanderings*) and in, as Vararuci teaches, the second person plural. The *Taramṅalolā* has the form at least once in the sense of the second person plural, but in a prohibitive context.⁶² Most significantly, the only form that Vararuci teaches for the preterite is a suffix *-īa*, which to my knowledge is found only in the *Wanderings* and in the *Taramṅalolā*, where it serves as the primary preterite form.⁶³ Regarding pronouns, the *Taramṅalolā* and the *Wanderings* are the only two texts that exemplify a rule of Vararuci according to which *mae* can be used as a locative.⁶⁴ A few Prakrit grammars, including the précis found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, provide a few exceptions to the general rule according to which *r* is assimilated in consonant clusters, The *Taramṅalolā* is the only text that provides examples, including *vodraha* (mentioned in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*) in the sense of “young man,” and *vaṃdra* (from *vrnda*).⁶⁵ A thorough study of the *Taramṅalolā*’s lexicon—which despite the efforts of the redactor still contains many regional expressions—may probably yield further points of contact with early systematic descriptions of Prakrit.

The *Taramṅalolā* still uses forms of the old *s*-aorist, including the second and third person singular (*-si*) and the third person plural (*-imsu*), although such forms are far less frequent than the *-īa* preterite noted above.⁶⁶ Alongside the more common converb in *-ūna*, it also uses the suffix *-ttānaṃ*. Both of these features are also found in Ardhmāgadhī texts and the *Wanderings*, but not noted by Vararuci.⁶⁷ This only slightly weakens the hypothesis that the “target language” of early Prakrit grammars was represented, inter alia, by the *Taramṅavatī*. The forms that are missing from the *Light on Prakrit* occur in the *Taramṅalolā* as relatively infrequent variants of forms that are in fact described in the *Light*. Given that the *Light*, like most early Prakrit grammars, is not as systematic as we might prefer, it may not be a surprise that relatively infrequent variants were overlooked and omitted. On the whole, it looks as if the texts that we now classify as representative of “Archaic Jaina Mahārāṣṭrī” were rather more central to recognizing, describing, and constituting Prakrit as a literary language than this modern label suggests. And one is tempted to think that just as the Jain monk Trivikrama’s thirteenth-century grammar of Prakrit was reattributed by non-Jain authors to the legendary Vālmīki, the existing text of the *Light on Prakrit* may have come from a predominantly Jain milieu and was reattributed by non-Jain authors to the legendary

⁶⁰ Nitti-Dolci (1972 [1938]: 45) considered the *Light on Prakrit* to be an (incomplete) “grammar of Māhārāṣṭrī lyric.”

⁶¹ *Light on Prakrit* 6.3 (Vasantarāja’s commentary); Pischel (1981 [1900]: §454 and § 20); Alsdorf (1936 :321); Esposito (2011: 40–41).

⁶² *Prākṛtaprakāśa* 6.4 and 6.15; Pischel (1981 [1900]: §517); Esposito (2011: 43); Bhayani (1993a: 133). The form is *mā bhāitthā* “don’t be afraid” (1067); *paḍivaggitthā* (in Bhayani’s articles) or *paḍijaggitthā* (in Bhayani’s edition) in verse 1157 is unclear to me.

⁶³ *Prākṛtaprakāśa* 6.23–24; Pischel (1981 [1900]: §466), Alsdorf (1936: 235), Esposito (2011: 44–45).

⁶⁴ Pischel (1981 [1900]: §418), Esposito (2011: 37). Cf. *jampiyammi mae* in *Taramṅalolā* 169.

⁶⁵ Bhayani (1993a: 134); Nitti-Dolci (1972 [1938]: 65); see also *Siddhahemacandra* 8.2.80.

⁶⁶ Pischel (1981 [1900]: §516); Esposito (2011: 44).

⁶⁷ A so-far unattested form in *-uāna*, however, is mentioned by Vasantarāja on *Prākṛtaprakāśa* 4.23. Pischel (1981 [1900]: §583); Alsdorf (1936: 332); Esposito (2011: 47).

Vararuci.⁶⁸

On this point we might speculate further about the relationship between the language of the *Taraṅgalolā* and that of the *Wanderings*. Many of the features that distinguish them from later Prakrit texts are also found in the Ardhamāgadhī canon. They might therefore indicate that the Jain monks Pālitta and Saṅghadāsa were influenced by the language of their scriptures (which would characterize their language as “Jaina”), that they simply stood closer in time to the linguistic system that the scriptures represent (which would characterize it as “archaic”), or both. But the *Wanderings* is also known to be an adaptation of the lost *Brhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya, whom later traditions place at the court of Sātavāhana in Pratiṣṭhāna. This would make Guṇāḍhya a near contemporary of Pālitta, if not a member of the very same court. Perhaps the features encountered in the “Archaic Jaina Mahārāṣṭrī” texts were also found in the *Brhatkathā*.⁶⁹ And perhaps Guṇāḍhya and Pālitta were engaged in a competition to shape, through their respective stories, the literary language of the Sātavāhana court.

Thus, in terms of its language and its literary execution, the *Taraṅgavatī* does appear to belong with other Prakrit texts of the early centuries CE, including both the *Seven Centuries* and the *Wanderings of Vasudeva*. This accords with the evidence of the *Anuyogadvārasūtra*, which attests that the *Taraṅgavatī* was already well known in the fifth century (p. 137). But how good is the evidence that makes Pālitta a contemporary and collaborator of Hāla? We can easily see that the *Taraṅgavatī* is part of a wider *kāvya* movement that spanned Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Tamil. But can we believe that the Sātavāhana court was the epicenter of this movement, at least as far as Prakrit *kāvya* is concerned? Can we believe that Pālitta was an associate of the Sātavāhana king Hāla and worked with him to produce Prakrit literature as we know it?

The many lives of Pālitta

At first glance, the Sātavāhana court does not appear anywhere within the horizons of the *Taraṅgavatī*. At the beginning of the *Taraṅgalolā*, we are told that Pālitta was born in Kosala.⁷⁰

The story itself takes place mostly in and around Kauśāmbī. Thus the geography of the *Taraṅgavatī* is completely different from that of the *Seven Centuries*, which refers to the landscape of the Western Deccan. We know precious little about the history of the Vatsa and Kosala countries before their incorporation into the Kuṣāṇa kingdom at the beginning of Kaniṣka’s reign, around 126 CE.⁷¹ Pālitta refers to the Śakas, who were certainly ruling at Mathurā in the first century and perhaps further down the Yamunā river as well, but the context is a list of lower human births that must already have been conventional in the first century CE.⁷² References to Jain texts are also largely useless for localizing the *Taraṅgavatī* in time. One interesting case, however, is the *pūrvas*. These were a set of fourteen texts that were supposedly lost over the history of Jainism. Rudrayāśas claims to have mastered nine

⁶⁸ Upadhye (1941, 1956).

⁶⁹ See p. 145 above.

⁷⁰ *Taraṅgalolā* 12. Bhayani’s text reads *tattocayassa*, which he understands as *te nagarīnā (rahevāsī)*, but the Ahmedabad manuscript reads *tattovayassa*, which I understand as *tatrodayasya*.

⁷¹ Kosala and Kauśāmbī are mentioned as Indian possessions of Kaniṣka in his Rabātak inscription (Sims-Williams 2004: 56). Inscriptions dated to Kaniṣka’s reign are also found at Kauśāmbī (Goswami 1937–1938). For the archaeological record at Kauśāmbī see Sharma (1969); for the pre-Kuṣāṇa numismatic evidence see Bhandare (2006).

⁷² *Taraṅgalolā* 1353: *caṃḍāla-muṭṭhiya-puliṃda-vāha-saga-javaṇa-babbarādīsu | jāyēti ya anukammā vivihāsu maṇussa-jātsu ||*.

of the *pūrva* texts.⁷³ Pālitta sets the story within a generation of Mahāvīra, so we would expect Jain monks in the story to still have access to these texts. But the fact that nine texts are mentioned—not fourteen, the complete number known by Bhadrabāhu, or ten, the reduced number known by his student Sthūlabhadra— suggests that Pālitta was a witness to their gradual loss.

From internal evidence we now turn to external evidence. The story of Pālitta was well known in medieval Jainism and appears in several different versions. The oldest version of the story, in Prakrit verse, appears to be the *Pālittācāryakathānaka* which is found in a manuscript of 1234 CE that gathers together four narratives of influential Jain teachers. Bhadreśvara included a *Pādaliptasūrikathā* in the same collection that contains the *Taraṅgavaikāhā*. As noted above, Bhadreśvara very often simply redacts and abridges earlier material, and in this case, his narrative is a very close rendering in Prakrit prose of the *Kathānaka*. A version in Sanskrit verse is the *Pādaliptasūricarita* that Prabhācandra includes in his *Prabhāvākacarita* (1277 CE). A version in Sanskrit prose (*Śrīpādaliptasūriprabandha*) is contained in the undated manuscript 'B' (held at the Bhavnagar Jain Atmanand Sabha) that was consulted for the *Purātanaprabandhasaṃgraha*, a collection of narratives from various sources published in 1931. A very similar version (*Pādaliptācāryaprabandha*) is found in Rājasekhara Sūri's *Prabandhakośa* or *Caturviṃśatiprabandha* (1349 CE).

As M. A. Dhaky has shown, however, the story of Pālitta presented in these texts is actually the story of at least two, and more likely three, historical figures who had that name.⁷⁴ They can be distinguished on the grounds of the texts ascribed to them, the people they were associated with, and the places they were associated with. Here I will briefly summarize and refine Dhaky's conclusions.

The first Pālitta was a contemporary of the Sātavāhana and Muṇḍa (i.e., Śaka or Kuṣāṇa) kings, and therefore lived sometime between the first and third centuries. He is the author of the *Taraṅgavatī* and an astronomical text called *Astrology in a Basket* (*Jyotiṣakaraṇḍaka*), both in Prakrit. The age of *Astrology* is difficult to determine, but as it is considered an *upāṅga* by the Śvetāmbara Jains and received an old Prakrit commentary by one Śivanandi Vācaka, it could conceivably belong to this period.

The last Pālitta was the author of the *Bud of Nirvāṇa* (*Nirvāṇakalikā*), a ritual manual in Sanskrit, and the *Light on Divination* (*Praśnaprakāśa*), which is now lost. His teacher was Maṇḍanagaṇi Vācanācārya, whose teacher in turn was Saṅgramasiṃha. The date of this last Pālitta is uncertain. Umakant Shah had identified his teacher's teacher with Saṅgamasiddha, a monk who is mentioned on an inscription dated to 1008 CE at the base of the Puṇḍarikasvāmī image at Śatruñjaya. Dhaky preferred to identify his *paramaguru* with one Saṅgamasiṃha whom Yakṣadeva, a monk who wrote in Nagpur in the later ninth century, names as his teacher of *nyāya*. Dhaky later discovered that a verse from Samudrācārya's *Pañjikā* (ca. 950 CE) on Jīvadevasūri's *Jinasthānavidhi* was quoted in the *Bud of Nirvāṇa*. The *Bud* borrows heavily from Śaiva ritual manuals, and Alexis Sanderson has provided evidence that it is modelled most closely on the *Essential Handbook of Śaiva Siddhānta* (*Siddhāntasārapaddhati*), which is ascribed to Bhoja (1000–1055 CE).⁷⁵ The *terminus a quo* is provided by a reference to the *Bud* in a text of 1191 CE, Siddhasenasūri's commentary on Nemicandrasūri's *Pravacanasāroddhāra*.

From the fact that the narrative literature connects Pālitta with a king named Kṛṣṇa who ruled from Mānyakheṭa, Dhaky inferred that this last Pālitta was a contemporary of the

⁷³ See verse 1518 (in fn. 33); on the *pūrvas* see Dundas (2002 [1992]: 67–69).

⁷⁴ Dhaky (2002).

⁷⁵ Dundas (2009), Sanderson (2011, 2015).

Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛṣṇa II (878–914 CE) or Kṛṣṇa III (939–967 CE). But this inference seems unwarranted to me. The later narratives about Pālitta, written in Sanskrit, consistently mention that he was the author of the *Bud of Nirvāṇa* and the *Light on Divination*, and that his teacher was Maṇḍanagaṇi and his teacher's teacher was Saṃgamasimha. Yet the earlier Prakrit narratives mention none of these details, despite presenting more or less the same set of stories. These details, about the author of the *Bud*, were therefore inserted into an existing narrative. Pālitta's connection with Mānyakheṭa, which is found in all versions of his story, is a feature of this older narrative. Hence we have no reason to believe that the author of the *Bud* was associated in any way with Mānyakheṭa. This is a relief, because the last Rāṣṭrakūṭa kings ruled from Mānyakheṭa in the late tenth century, and the *Bud* appears to date from the late eleventh century at the earliest.

This result brings us to another of Dhaky's conclusions: in between the first Pālitta (the author of the *Taraṅgavatī*) and the last Pālitta (the author of the *Bud of Nirvāṇa*), there was another Pālitta. This "second" Pālitta is noted for his association with pilgrimage sites in Gujarat, and above all Śatruñjaya, and for his association with the legendary alchemist and magician Nāgārjuna. Dhaky assigns him to the end of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth century. This Pālitta is closely connected with the development of Śatruñjaya as a site of Jain pilgrimage: he is credited with a four-verse *stotra* of the image of Mahāvīra at Śatruñjaya, mentioned in all of the narrative sources, and indeed the town on the slopes of Śatruñjaya appears to have been named after him. The present-day name of Pālītānā appears to go back to as early as 818/819 CE, when Govindarāja, uncle of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperor Amoghavarṣa and the governor on his behalf of Kathiawad, issued a land-grant from Pālittāṅaka.⁷⁶ As Dhaky noted, Śatruñjaya had already become a site of pilgrimage by 779 CE, when Uddyotanasūri refers to it as such in his *Kuvalayamālā*. Kamalaprabha, the author of the *Puṇḍarīkacarita* (1315 CE), notes that one of his sources was a *Śatruñjayakalpa* of Pādalipta.⁷⁷ I suggest that it is the "second" Pālitta who is associated with the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of Mānyakheṭa. This may well be Kṛṣṇa I (756–774 CE). In any case, Pālitta's involvement with the king of Mānyakheṭa in the stories is so closely connected with his activities at Śatruñjaya, as we will see, that I do not think it is possible to separate the "Mānyakheṭa Pālitta" from the "Śatruñjaya Pālitta," as Dhaky does.

I will therefore refer to the author of the *Taraṅgavatī* as Pālitta I, to the adept associated with Śatruñjaya as Pālitta II, and to the author of the *Bud of Nirvāṇa* as Pālitta III. As noted below (p. 153), I believe the name Pādalipta is a Sanskrit back-formation that was invented for Pālitta II (and III), but never applied to Pālitta I in his own time. Indeed all of the oldest sources refer to him as Pālitta or Pālittaka, and not Pādalipta. This includes references in Jain canonical texts and the rubrics of *Astrology in a Basket*.

The structure of the story of Pālitta across its various versions gives us another way to think about the sources and layers of the narrative. The story can be roughly divided into sections that focus on a particular event. Most of these sections contain a Prakrit *gāthā* around which they are constructed. (This feature is hard to see in the *Pālittācāryakathānaka*, since it is written in Prakrit *gāthās* throughout, but it is there as well.) These *gāthās* quite obviously circulated independently of the surrounding narrative, and probably belong to an earlier practice in which memorized verses provided the context for improvised storytelling. I will call these "anchor verses." As we will see below, some of these verses are actually found in the layers of Prakrit commentary on Jain canonical texts, and some are collected in literary anthologies.

⁷⁶ Devali plates of Govindarāja, line 57; see Sircar (1963–1964).

⁷⁷ Chaudharī (1973: 182).

Here I will present an annotated synopsis of the story of Pālitta from the sources listed above.

§1. Birth and early life. The merchant Phulla and his wife, Pratimā, residents of Kosala, are unable to have a son. Pratimā propitiates Vairoṭyā, who tells her to drink the water used to wash the feet of the Jain monk Ārya Nāgahastin. She does so, but instead of asking the monk directly, she gets the water from his students and drinks it. The monk finds out, and assures her that she will have a son, but because she kept her distance, her son will be separated from her as well: he will have to be given to Ārya Nāgahastin after a period of eight years. The son Nāgendra is born to her, and given to Ārya Nāgahastin at the appointed time. NOTES: The Sanskrit versions add that Nāgendra was taught by Saṃgramasiṃha, allegedly Ārya Nāgahastin's brother, and given initiation by Maṇḍana. As noted above, these are teacher and teacher's teacher, respectively, of the Pālitta who wrote the *Bud of Nirvāna*. The presence of Tantric elements, such as the *vidyādevī* Vairoṭyā, suggests that this part of the story took shape in the post-Gupta period. There is no anchor verse.

§2. The name Pālitta. When Nāgendra was returning from a round of collecting alms, his teacher asked him to describe what he received, and he spoke the following verse: “A mango from the girl with copper-colored eyes, a fig from the girl with flower-like teeth, fresh rice gruel from the young wife—that's what that shack has given me.”⁷⁸ On hearing this, his teacher exclaimed that his student was “inflamed (*ālitta-*)” by passion. On hearing this, Nāgendra said, with his teacher's guidance, he would eventually become “illuminated” (*pālitta-*). Soon, under this name, Pālitta would go out on behalf of the community in place of his now-infirm teacher Ārya Nāgahastin. NOTES: My interpretation of this story is quite different than the Sanskrit versions. They say that Nāgendra, after being called “inflamed” (*pradīpta-*) by his teacher, asked to be called “anointed on the feet” (*pādalipta-*) instead, and thereby gained the power of flight. But there is no reference to flight or feet in Bhadreśvara's version, and the *Kathānaka* has a lacuna at this point. And of course Nāgendra's request is a *non sequitur*. My interpretation is based on Ārya Nāgahastin's declaration to the community in the two Prakrit versions: “because he has been inflamed (*ālitta*) with the excellence of virtue (*guṇapagariseṇa*), he shall be called Pālitta from now on.” The idea is that Nāgendra, on hearing his teacher's remark, turned the negative “inflamed” into a positive “illuminated” by the addition of the verbal prefix *pra-*, which is commonly glossed as *pagariseṇa* (Sanskrit *prakarṣeṇa*). Note that the *Taramgalolā* refers to him as Pālitta and describes him as *guṇa-litta-*, “illuminated with virtue” (less likely is Bhayani's “anointed”).⁷⁹ The power of flight is properly associated only with Pālitta II. The Sanskrit form *Pādalipta* is probably based on a folk-etymology of the Prakrit form Pālitta, based on the power of flight that Pālitta II was thought to have possessed.

§3. With Muruṇḍa at Pāṭaliputra. Pālitta was then sent to Pāṭaliputra, which was then reigned by a king Muruṇḍa. There he gained a reputation for cleverness by solving various puzzles at the court: removing a cord from a wax encasing, finding the top and bottom of a symmetrical staff, and opening a box that had no visible apertures. He then sews up (something) in a gourd, and no-one can figure out how to open it. NOTES. The *Kathānaka* has a lacuna for this entire section. The story of the puzzles, given by Bhadreśvara and the Sanskrit versions, derives from the Āvaśyaka literature. Haribhadra gives almost exactly

⁷⁸ *aṃbaṃ taṃbacchīe apupphiyam puppha-damta-paṃtīe | nava-sāli-kaṃṇiyam navavahūe kuḍaṇa maha diṇṇaṃ* || (Bhadreśvara p. 86; Prabhācandra v. 38; ‘B’ v. 283; Rājaśekhara p. 24; the *Kathānaka* is missing this folio). The first three quarters of the verse have a type of repetition or *lāṭānuprāsa*.

⁷⁹ *Taramgalolā* 12: *tattovayassa* (see n. 70 above) *samaṇassa avahiyā avimaṇā aṇannamaṇā | pālittassa ya guṇalittayassa mai-sāhasaṃ suṇaha* ||.

the same story in his commentary on the *Āvaśyakasūtra*.⁸⁰ The Sanskrit versions go on to give two further situations, each with an anchor verse. In the first, Pālitta cures the king of a headache: “As Pālitta kept striking his knee with his forefinger, king Muruṇḍa’s headache gradually disappeared.”⁸¹ This verse is actually found in the Bhāṣya on the *Niśīthasūtra* of the Śvetāmbara Jain canon, which must have been composed prior to Jinadāsa’s Cūrṇi, completed in 676 CE.⁸² Prabhācandra says that the verse works like a mantra to cure headaches. The second situation involves Pālitta demonstrating to Muruṇḍa that his servants, even though they are not as well paid as the king’s, are more devoted and loyal. When the king’s servant is asked which way the Gaṅgā flows, he dismisses the question as obvious and pointless. When Pālitta’s servant is asked the same question, he makes a thorough investigation. Thus the anchor verse: “You should always put in the same kind of effort that the student did when his teacher asked him to find out which way the Gaṅgā flowed.”⁸³ This verse is also taken from an earlier source, namely Jinabhadra’s *Viśeṣāvaśyakaḥāṣya*, probably composed in the sixth century, but in Jinabhadra’s text there is no reference to Pālitta.⁸⁴ Clearly there was an old tradition that made Pālitta a contemporary of a king in Pāṭaliputra who held the title Muruṇḍa, which was used by the Śakas and Kuṣāṇas. The Śakas were ruling, at least in Mathurā and perhaps to the east, by the beginning of the first century. Kuṣāṇa presence in the Gangetic plain begins with the reign of Kaniṣka (ca. 126–150 CE). The last vestiges of the “Muruṇḍas” were conquered by Samudragupta (ca. 335–380), according to his Allahabad pillar inscription. This suggests that Pālitta lived sometime between the first and fourth centuries CE. In some versions of the *Siṃhāsanadvātriṃśikā*, Pālitta is mentioned as the teacher who converted a king Maruṇḍa, to whose lineage—the *vidyādharagaccha*—the teachers Skandilācārya, Vṛddhavādi, and Siddhasena would later belong.⁸⁵

§4. At Oṃkāra in Gujarat. Pālitta then goes to Oṃkāra in Gujarat. First he is sought out by a group of Jain mendicants who wish to venerate him. When they see him playing with some other children, they ask him the way to the Sūri’s residence. He sends them on a detour while he runs and takes his seat. When they recognize him, he gives them a sermon on the value of internal youth. Second, he is sought out by a group of non-Jain debaters, and he performs the same trick, but pretends to be asleep. The debaters try waking him up by making the sound of a rooster. He jokingly responds with the sound of a cat. A debate ensues, in the course of which they ask him: “Pālitta, tell us clearly: while you were roaming the whole orb of the earth, did you ever see, or hear of, a fire that is as cool as sandalwood?”⁸⁶ He responds: “Yes, I have heard that a person pure of heart carries a fire cool as sandal within him when he is tortured by a foul slander.”⁸⁷ The debate is called in

⁸⁰ Commentary on *gāthā* 944, key-word 9 (*gaṃṭhī*), in vol. 1, p. 285 (I have found this passage thanks to the indispensable index of Balbir 1993b).

⁸¹ *jaha jaha paesiṇiṃ jāṇyaṃmi pālittai bhamāḍei | taha taha se siraviyaṇā paṇassaī muraṇḍarāyassa ||* (Prabhācandra v. 59; ‘B’ v. 284; Rājasekhara p. 25).

⁸² The *gāthā* is number 4460, in the thirteenth *uddeśaka* (vol. 4, p. 423). On the date of Jinadāsa see Sen (1975: 8).

⁸³ *nivapucchiṇa bhaṇio guruṇā gaṃḡā kuomuhī vahai | sampāiyavaṃ sīso jaha taha savvattha kāyavvaṃ ||* (Prabhācandra v. 90; ‘B’ v. 285; Rājasekhara p. 26).

⁸⁴ The *gāthā* is number 929 (vol. 1, p. 174). The traditional dates of Jinabhadra are 489–593 CE.

⁸⁵ See Rosenfield (1967: 52–53). Lévi (1896: 180) had already noted Pālitta’s connection to a Gangetic king with the title of Muruṇḍa (Bailey 1979: 368 doubts the connection between *muruṇḍa* and Khotanese *rruṃda*—“king”). For the passage of the *Siṃhāsanadvātriṃśikā* see Weber (1878: 279). For the Allahabad pillar inscription see Fleet (1888: 1–17, line 23).

⁸⁶ *pālittaya kahasu phuḍaṃ sayalaṃ mahimaṃḍalaṃ bhamaṃteṇa | diṭṭho suo va kattha vi caṃḍaṇarasasiyalo aggī ||* (*Kathānaka* v. 107; Prabhācandra v. 109; ‘B’ v. 286; Rājasekhara, p. 26).

⁸⁷ *ayasābhiogasaṃdūmiyassa purisassa suddhahiyayassa | hoi vahantassa phuḍaṃ caṃḍaṇarasasiyalo aggī ||* (*Kathānaka* v. 109; Prabhācandra v. 111; ‘B’ v. 287; Rājasekhara p. 26).

favor of Pālitta and the debaters are converted. NOTES: The anchor verses are present in all versions except that of Bhadreśvara, who abbreviates the story of the debate. They are quoted in a literary anthology, the *Collection of Well-Turned Verses (Subhāsiyasamgaho)*, as well.⁸⁸ This is the only narrative associated with Oṃkāra. The connection with Gujarat inclines me to think that it was originally connected with Pālitta II.

§5. Acquiring the Prābhṛtas in Mānyakheṭa. Next, Pālitta goes to Mānyakheṭa, where he studies four esoteric texts called *prābhṛtas*. What follows are exemplary stories associated with each of these *prābhṛtas*. Since none of these stories relate directly to Pālitta, I only note that the *Yoniprābhṛta* is illustrated with the story of Rudradeva, the *Nimittaprābhṛta* with that of Devendra, and the *Vidyāprābhṛta* with that of Ārya Khapuṭa and Mahendra. No illustration is given for the *Siddhaprābhṛta*.⁸⁹

§6. Constrained in Mānyakheṭa. At this point, the sources begin to diverge. The Prakrit texts state that Pālitta, now a bona fide master after his study of the *prābhṛta* texts, is a very popular teacher in Mānyakheṭa. For the people who are not able to gain a direct audience with him he composes the *pālittī bhāsā*, which is to be known “from the tradition of teachers.” (I have not been able to make any sense out of the verse in the Kathānaka and Bhadreśvara’s story that describes this *bhāsā*).⁹⁰ In the meantime, the king of Mānyakheṭa wants to be in Pālitta’s company, as does the Jain community there, as do various Jain communities throughout India which are undergoing persecution: around Dhamkā, people are falling under the spell of the Buddhist adept Nāgārjuna, and at Bharukaccha, the Brahmans are giving them trouble. The Jain community at Mānyakheṭa will only allow Pālitta to leave to serve those communities if he can be back in time for lunch, so he applies a magical ointment to his feet and rushes to the aid of the community at Bharukaccha. There, he teaches them the “five great words” that they can use as mantras. He comes back to Mānyakheṭa in time for lunch, but his absence was noted by the king, who feels mistreated. Pālitta explains the constraints he was under. The king is sympathetic, and builds a temple for the Jain community in Mānyakheṭa. Pālitta is then free to go to Valabhī, and from there he makes a pilgrimage to Girinagara/Ujjayanta (Girnar) and Śatruñjaya. NOTES: The reference to Mānyakheṭa and Śatruñjaya, which came to prominence only in the latter half of the first millennium CE, as well as the references to tantric or quasi-tantric practices, such as magic formulas and an esoteric language (*pālittī bhāsā*), indicate that the story is about Pālitta II rather than Pālitta I. In the Sanskrit versions, but not in the two Prakrit versions, the king is identified with Kṛṣṇa, which was the name of three imperial Rāṣtrakūṭa kings.⁹¹ This section also introduces Pālitta II’s power of flight, as a result of which he was called Pādalipta in Sanskrit. Pālitta seems to have acquired this power from his study of the *prābhṛtas*, and not from his teacher Ārya Nāgahastin, as the Sanskrit sources indicate (see p. 153).

§7. Teaching Nāgārjuna at Dhamkā. After his pilgrimage, Pālitta is convinced to spend the evenings with Nāgārjuna at his residence in Dhamkapura. For some time, Pālitta uses his power of flight to go to Mathurā and Mānyakheṭa, always returning to Dhamkapura in the evening. By tasting the water from washing Pālitta’s feet, Nāgārjuna is able to determine the hundred and seven elements that constitute the mixture that Pālitta spreads on his feet in order to fly. But when he makes it himself, Nāgārjuna rockets into the air like a rooster and hurts himself. Pālitta asks what happened, and when Nāgārjuna tells him, Pālitta is

⁸⁸ Vv. 89–90. One interesting variant here is *suddhasīlassa* instead of *suddhahiyayassa*. Śuddhasīla was the name of a famous Prakrit poet whose works are lost.

⁸⁹ See Granoff (1988b) for Ārya Khapuṭa (or Khapaṭa).

⁹⁰ In the kathānaka (v. 233): *guravo lahavō ya sayā cakkāvittī akkhahaṃ ḍaṣṭrā | raiphaṃ lolyāḍaḍhaṇaṃ lavayābhāiyatāihim ||*. In Bhadreśvara (p. 93): *guravo lahuvo ya saṃṣā cakkavattī bhikṣahaṃ ḍakkāreṃ | kālo paḍaḍhaṇaṃ lavayā kāi ya tāihim ||*.

⁹¹ Later on, Bhadreśvara refers to a king named Kṛṣṇa (see § 9).

impressed enough to divulge the final secret of the mixture, namely that it requires rice-water. Around this point, the Prakrit versions break off (Kathānaka) or become incomprehensible (Bhadreśvara), but two Sanskrit versions (Prabhācandra and MS ‘B’) relate that Nāgārjuna then converted to Jainism under when Pālitta recites to him the following verse: “Upon the lotus of the earth, whose long stalk is the Lord of Serpents, whose many petals are the directions, and whose filaments are the mountains, the bee of death drinks the nectar of mankind.”⁹² In gratitude, Nāgārjuna founded a city named after his teacher near Śātruñjaya. Also at Śātruñjaya, Pālitta produced a four-verse *stotra* to Mahāvīra (see p. 152). At the beginning of the next section, Bhadreśvara notes that Pālitta still shines even after his death because of his connection with Sātavāhana (Sālivāhana in Prakrit), suggesting that in his source—i.e., the Kathānaka, which has a lacuna here, or something quite close to it—the previous section ended with Pālitta’s death, followed by Nāgārjuna’s. And indeed Prabhācandra notes at the end of his story that Pālitta and Nāgārjuna did die by *sallekhanā* on Śātruñjaya. NOTES: This section is clearly connected with the preceding section, by the references to Nāgārjuna and pilgrimage sites in Gujarat, as well as by the theme of Pālitta’s power of flight. I would guess that the Prakrit versions originally included the anchor verse. The Sanskrit versions (Prabhācandra and MS ‘B’) preface this section of the narrative with a story about Nāgārjuna’s early life. Both the Prakrit versions and these “expanded” Sanskrit versions differ considerably from the story of Nāgārjuna that is presented in other Sanskrit sources, including Rājaśekhara.⁹³ Possibly these two sections were taken or adapted from a work that described places of pilgrimage (*tīrthakalpa*): the device of Pālitta’s power of flight allows many places to be introduced into these sections (Mānyakheṭa, Bharukaccha, Mathurā, Valabhī, Ujjayanta, Śātruñjaya, Raivataka), and it highlights the construction of temples and shrines (principally at Mānyakheṭa and Śātruñjaya). In any case, with his death on Śātruñjaya, the story of Pālitta II appears to end.

§8. Helping Sātavāhana defeat Nahavāhana. Now the narrative shifts to the conflict between the king of Pratiṣṭhāna, Sātavāhana, and the king of Bharukaccha, Nahavāhana. Sātavāhana besieged Nahavāhana at Bharukaccha repeatedly, but was unable to defeat him, because Nahavāhana offered large sums of money (a lakh of drachmas, according to Bhadreśvara) for the heads or hands of Sātavāhana’s men. Eventually a minister of Sātavāhana named Sāmanta offers to help. He goes to Bharukaccha, having ostensibly been expelled from Sātavāhana’s kingdom, and takes up residence as a local temple as a holy man named Guggula (after the bdellium gum he carries with him). Nahavāhana, thinking that he is now an enemy of Sātavāhana because of the expulsion, lets him into his inner circle. After gaining Nahavāhana’s trust, Sāmanta/Guggula advises him to give all of his property away in religious benefaction. Nahavāhana does so, and can no longer pay the bounties on Sātavāhana’s men. Sātavāhana then successfully takes Bharukaccha and defeats Nahavāhana. NOTES. This story seems to have nothing to do with Pālitta, but rather introduces the character of Sātavāhana, who will become Pālitta’s chief patron. Prabhācandra, however, identifies the undercover agent as a student of Pālitta. The story is omitted entirely by MS ‘B’ and by Rājaśekhara. The king of Pratiṣṭhāna is consistently called Sātavāhana in Sanskrit and Sālivāhana in Prakrit. The king of Bharukaccha is called Nahavāhana by Bhadreśvara, Naravāhana by the Kathānaka, and Balamitra (the nephew of Kālakācārya) by Prabhācandra. In fact, this episode is based on the memory of a real conflict between the Sātavāhanas and the Kṣatrapa king Nahapāna. Gautamīputra Śrī Sātakarṇi defeated Nahapāna around 78 CE. This story is also found in the Avaśyaka literature, where Nahapāna is very accurately called Nahavāna.⁹⁴

⁹² *dīharaphaṇiṃdanāle mahiharakesaradisābahudalille | oṃpiyāi kālabhamaro jaṇamayaramdam puhaipaiume ||* (Prabhācandra, *Śrīpādaliptasūricarita* v. 295; MS ‘B,’ *Śrīpādaliptasūricarita* v. 288).

⁹³ For a study of the different narratives about Nāgārjuna, see Granoff (1988a).

⁹⁴ See *gāthā* 1304, with Haribhadra’s commentary (vol. 2, p. 148). This story has been translated by Balbir

§9. *At the Sātavāhana court.* The story of Pālitta concludes with his residence at the court of the aforementioned king Sātavāhana. Sātavāhana has a number of court poets, who are mentioned in a verse that they allegedly composed together.⁹⁵ The courtesan Bhogavatī, however, says that Pālitta is a better poet than any of them: “The moon of these people, whose rays are their constant self-congratulation, cannot delight me so long as the sun of Pālitta Sūri, whose rays are his incomparable virtue, does not shine here.”⁹⁶ This remark incites jealousy in the other poets, and interest in the king. Pālitta is brought from the court of Kṛṣṇa in Mānyakheṭa to Pratiṣṭhāna, and the king celebrates with a great festival. The poet Bṛhaspati, however, insists on testing Pālitta. He had the king suggest someone with steady hands, named Hīra, to offer a congratulatory present to Pālitta: a plate that was completely filled with ghee. When Pālitta saw it, he understood that it meant that there was no space in the court for him. But he used his magic powers to stand a needle up in the middle of the plate and sent it back, the message being that there is always room for an exceptionally sharp scholar. The king was pleased, and admitted him to his court. There he composed the highly esteemed poem *Taraṅgavatī*. The poet Pañcāla, however, claimed that Pālitta had plagiarized from his own work. The accusation brought shame to Pālitta and the Jain community. Pālitta then faked his own death, and out of grief, Pañcāla himself said: “How is it possible that Yama’s head didn’t explode when he took Pālitta, from whose waterfall-mouth flowed the river that is the *Taraṅgavatī*?”⁹⁷ Pālitta then jumped up off the bier and claimed that Pañcāla’s words had brought him back to life. The king ordered Pañcāla to be banished, but Pālitta intervened. NOTES. The phrase *pañcālaḥ strīṣu mārḍavam*, from the verse allegedly composed at Sātavāhana’s court, is quoted by Haribhadra in his commentary on one of the *niryukti* verses of the Daśavaikālikasūtra.⁹⁸ It therefore seems that this story, although not known in the Āvaśyaka literature, was already current in the eighth century. There would seem to be a chronological problem if Pālitta is brought from the court of Kṛṣṇa in Mānyakheṭa (eighth century at the earliest) to the court of Sātavāhana in Pratiṣṭhāna (third century at the latest). But the remark about Kṛṣṇa could easily have been influenced by sections §§6–7.

To summarize, the stories about Pālitta are constituted of several core elements. The first is his association with a king named Muraṅga in Pāṭaliputra, where he performs various clever tricks. This element is already present in the Āvaśyaka literature, and relates to Pālitta I. The second is his association with the Rāṣṭrakūṭa court at Mānyakheṭa, on the one hand, and the Jain pilgrimage center of Śatruñjaya in Gujarat, on the other. These elements pertain to Pālitta II, whom we can tentatively place at the court of Kṛṣṇa I (756–774 CE). The third is his association with the Sātavāhana court, where he composed the *Taraṅgavatī*. Depending on who exactly this Muraṅga king was, the time-frames of the first element and the third element overlap from the first to the third century CE. Since the chronology works out, and since I do not want to posit more Pālittas than are absolutely necessary, I suggest that Pālitta I migrated from the Muraṅga court to the Sātavāhana court, where he had a distinguished literary career. After these narratives had assumed their shape, there was yet a third Pālitta—this one more commonly known by his Sanskrit name, Pādalipta—who wrote the *Nirvānakalikā* in the late eleventh or early twelfth century. Various details about his life, including the works that he composed and his teachers, entered into the traditional narrative

(1993a: 60). The historical events are treated in Ollett (2015: 53ff.) and Bhandare (1999).

⁹⁵ *jīrṇe bhojanam ātreyaḥ kapilaḥ prāñināṃ dayā | bṛhaspatir aviśvāsaḥ pañcālaḥ strīṣu mārḍavam* ||. This is cited in Prakrit, although very fragmentarily, by Bhadreśvara (p. 96). Prabhācandra (v. 320) and MS ‘B’ (v. 289) give the verse in Sanskrit. The Kathānaka has a lacuna here.

⁹⁶ *sa-guṇa-kittaṇa-kiraṇo tāva ṇa jaṇimdu harisam ullasā | jā lalaḥ na pālittayasūri-ravī niruvama-guṇaṃsū* (ed. -*ambhū*) || (Bhadreśvara p. 97; the Kathānaka has a lacuna until just after this verse; none of the Sanskrit versions include this verse).

⁹⁷ *sisam kaha va na phuṭṭam jamassa pālittayam haraṃtassa | jassa muha-nijjharāo taraṅgavatī nā vūdhā* || (Kathānaka v. 323; Bhadreśvara p. 98; Prabhācandra, v. 341; MS ‘B’ v. 291; Rājaśekhara, p. 29).

⁹⁸ Commentary on *gāthā* 193 (p. 96 of Dīparatnasāgara’s edition).

of Pālitta, but did not change its overall shape.

Conclusion

Pālitta was one of the pioneers of Prakrit literature and of *kāvya* more generally. His *Taraṅgavatī* successfully merged a tradition of Jain storytelling with a refined and courtly aesthetic. I think it is likely enough that Pālitta was a Jain monk of the first or second century from the Kosala country who emigrated southwards and became one of the jewels of the Sātavāhana court. But whether or not he was physically present at Pratiṣṭhāna, there can be no doubt that he participated in the great experiment for which that court was famous: the creation of a new literary tradition in a language called Prakrit. It is one of the earliest works in Prakrit, and possibly helped to establish this language of Jain commentary, known principally from *niryuktis* ascribed to Bhadrabāhu, in the literary salons (*goṣṭhīs*) of the first- and second-century Deccan. It is one of the earliest literary texts whose author is known and not a legendary figure like Vālmīki or Vyāsa, inaugurating a new economy of textual production in which courts supported the work of individual poets. It is one of the earliest works that is instantly recognizable as *kāvya*, invested in the aesthetic and expressive possibilities of language. And it is one of the earliest Indian romances, providing inspiration directly to raconteurs like Uddyotana and Haribhadra (and possibly, as Bhayani argued, to Kautūhala) and indirectly to the likes of Bāṇa and Daṇḍin. Over the first few centuries after its composition, Pālitta's poetry continued to be read and praised, especially for Jain poets. Although it gradually from view, along with what must have been the vast majority of Prakrit literature, we are now in a position to appreciate its historical importance.

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