

## XXXI

## THE LINGUAL LA IN THE NORTHERN BRAHMI SCRIPT

BY H. LÜDERS, PH.D.

IT is generally supposed that the lingual *la* is a very rare letter in the inscriptions north of the Narmadā before the time of the Guptas. From the Sānchi inscriptions Bühler<sup>1</sup> quotes one instance only: *Vālī-vahanikāyā* in B,<sup>2</sup> 344 (EI., ii, 378, No. 199): the *lī* is reproduced in Bühler's *Indische Palaeographie*, table ii, 41, xviii.<sup>3</sup> the form of the letter is practically the same as that appearing in the Allahabad Praśasti. The second instance is furnished by the word *Ālikāyām* in the inscription B, 43 (JBBRAS., xx, 269 f.), the find-place of which is unknown, but which must come from Northern India: there is no reproduction of this inscription. A third *la* is found in *kālavāḷasa* in the archaic Mathurā inscription B, 94 (EI., i, 396, No. 33). According to the reproduction of this inscription in the *Ep. Ind.*,<sup>4</sup> there seems to be a great difference between the Sānchi and the Mathurā signs. But this is actually not the case. Two beautiful impressions before me clearly show that the sign in the plate has been "corrected". In reality the long line slanting upwards, which in the reproduction forms the tail of the *la*, is not connected with it, but is the *i*-stroke of the *ti* of the mutilated word *prati[ṣṭhāpito]* in the next line. The whole difference of the two signs thus consists in the greater cursiveness of the Sānchi sign.

<sup>1</sup> EI., ii, 368.

<sup>2</sup> B refers to my "List of Brāhmi Inscriptions from the earliest times to about A.D. 400" in the *Ep. Ind.*, vol. x, appendix, where further references may be looked up.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 33, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> The sign given in Bühler's *Palaeographie*, table ii, 41, xx, has been taken from the reproduction in the *Ep. Ind.*

This certainly is a short list, but I think I can show that the apparent scarcity of the letter is due only to misreadings of the texts, and that on the contrary the *la* occurs in the Brāhmī inscriptions of Northern India just as frequently as in those of the western and southern parts of the country.

In the Jaina inscriptions from Mathurā we often find the name of a *gaṇa* which we are accustomed to read *Koṭṭiya*, since Bühler first established that reading. Doubts, however, will arise when we take, e.g., the word supposed to be *Koṭṭiyāto* in B, 28 (EI., i, 395, No. 28), and compare the form of the second letter with the ordinary form of the *ṭa* and the *ṭta* in the Mathurā inscriptions. Just as in the Aśoka alphabets, the *ṭa* generally consists of a semicircle open to the right; see the "archaic" inscriptions B, 94 (EI., i, 396, No. 33; *āyāgapato*); B, 95 (EI., i, 397, No. 35; *āyāgapatā*); B, 100 (EI., ii, 200, No. 5; *āyāgapato*); B, 103 (EI., ii, 200, No. 8; *āyāgapato*); B, 105 (EI., ii, 207, No. 30; *āyāgapato*); B, 107 (EI., ii, 207, No. 32; *āyāgapato*), and the Kuṣana inscriptions B, 16 (EI., ii, 201, No. 11; *Grahacetena*); B, 32 (EI., i, 384, No. 5; *kuṭūbiniya*<sup>1</sup>); B, 37 (EI., ii, 203, No. 16; *kuṭumbiniye*); B, 56 (EI., i, 386, No. 8; *kuṭumbiniye*). Sometimes, however, a vertical bar is added at the top of the character: this bar is quite distinct in B, 34 (EI., i, 385, No. 6; *kuṭubiniye*<sup>2</sup>); B, 121 (EI., i, 389, No. 14; *kuṭubiniye*<sup>2</sup>). If an *i*-stroke is added to the character, it is often hardly possible to say whether the first or the second form is used; see B, 38 (EI., viii, 181; °*kuṭiye*); B, 39 (EI., i, 385, No. 7; *Kumārabhaṭi*); B, 42 (EI., i, 387, No. 9; °*Cetiye*); B, 45 (EI., i, 396, No. 30; *kuṭibini*<sup>3</sup>): and there are some more cases where the character is not quite distinct, although probably

<sup>1</sup> Not *kuṃṭūbiniya*, as Bühler read.

<sup>2</sup> More probable than *kuṭumbiniye*, as Bühler read.

<sup>3</sup> The lower part of the *ṭi* is mutilated.

the first form is used; see B, 36 (EL., ii, 202, No. 15; *kuṭumbiniye*); B, 38 (EL., viii, 181; *trepitakasya*); B, 70 (EL., i, 388, No. 12; *kaṭubiniye*<sup>1</sup>); B, 73 (EL., ii, 205, No. 22; [*ku*]tubanie). As regards the origin of the bar, which does not seem to have been noticed by Bühler, it appears that it was first employed only in ligatures with *ṇa*, *ṣa*, and *ṭa*, in order to avoid the fusion of the upper line of the subscript *ṭa* with the base-line of the superscript letters, and that later on it was considered an essential part of the character, and was therefore added to the letter also when it stands alone or as superscript letter of a ligature. Accordingly, in the ligature *ṭṭa* the bar of the subscript letter is always quite distinct, whereas the superscript *ṭa* is sometimes plain, as in B, 85 (EL., i, 390, No. 18; *śilapatto*), and sometimes furnished with the bar, as in B, 24 (EL., i, 382, No. 2; *Bhattisenasya*).<sup>2</sup>

Now if we look again at the second sign of the word read *Kottiyāto* by Bühler, it appears at once that it cannot possibly be *ṭṭa*. That sign has a distinct *serif* never found in a genuine *ṭa*. Moreover, there is no vertical bar in the middle of the sign, and its upper portion at least has not a semicircular shape. On the other hand, the sign is practically identical with the Sānchi form of the *ḷa*. The

<sup>1</sup> Not *kuṭubiniye*, as Bühler read.

<sup>2</sup> The *ṭṭa* of *Jayabhāṭṭasya* in B, 32 (EL., i, 384, No. 5) is quite indistinct and uncertain. There is only one inscription at Mathurā where the *ṭa* is supposed to have quite a different form. In B, 118 (EL., ii, 208, No. 33), which in several respects is an abnormal inscription, Bühler read in the first line *Vardhamānapaṭimā*, in the second line *kuṭibini*. Here the two letters supposed to be *ṭi* and *ṭī* do not show the semicircular form occurring in all other inscriptions, and both of them have a *serif* at the top. There can be little doubt that the second word really is *kuḍibini* or *kuḍivini*, the third letter being quite peculiar. It is true there occurs a less cursive form of *ḷa* in this inscription in *baḍima*<sup>2</sup>, but anybody familiar with the Mathurā records knows how often different forms of the same letter are found side by side in these inscriptions. The first word may be °*padima* or °*paḍima*, though on comparing the letter with the *di* in *Dināye* the former alternative would seem to be the more plausible one.

only difference lies in the appendix at the bottom, which in the Sānchi form seems to be a straight line, while here it is slightly curved. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the true reading is *Koḷiyāto*. And in turning to the other inscriptions that contain the name of this *gaṇa*, we find that the reading everywhere is *Koḷiya* or *Koḷeya*,<sup>1</sup> not *Koṭṭiya* as assumed by Bühler.

Almost the same form as in B, 28 appears in B, 32 (EI, i, 384, No. 5; *Koḷiyato*); B, 17 (EI, ii, 201, No. 12; *Koḷ[i]yā . .*); B, 29 (EI, i, 383, No. 4; *Koḷiyato*); B, 84 (EI, i, 389, No. 15; *Koḷiyāto*); B, 54 (EI, i, 391, No. 21; *Koḷiyāto*); B, 75 (EI, i, 392, No. 22; x, 117, No. 11; *Koḷiyāto*); EI, x, 110, No. 3 (*Koḷeyāto*); EI, x, 111, No. 4 (*Koḷiyāto*). Often the sign is stretched in a vertical direction; see B, 18 (EI, i, 381, No. 1; *Koḷiyāto*); B, 27 (EI, i, 382, No. 3; *Koḷi[yāto]*); B, 39 (EI, i, 385, No. 7; *Koḷiyato*); B, 77 (EI, ii, 205, No. 24; *K[o]ḷiyāto*); B, 121 (EI, i, 389, No. 14; *Koḷiyāto*); EI, x, 112, No. 5 (*Koḷiye*). The same form is found also in B, 122 (EI, ii, 209, No. 37; *Koḷiyato*), but the *i*-stroke is attached here to the middle of the letter, because there was no room for it at the top. In other cases the sign is stretched in a horizontal direction; see B, 47 (EI, ii, 204, No. 20; *Koḷiyāto*); B, 56 (EI, i, 386, No. 8; *Koḷiye*). In B, 53 (EI, ii, 203, No. 18; *K[o]ḷiyāto*) the *la* shows a very large hook at the bottom. Of B, 19 (*Arch. Surv. Rep.*, iii, 30, No. 2) and B, 22 (*ibid.*, iii, 31, No. 4) no reproductions have been published except the drawings by General Cunningham, which are quite misleading. I have two impressions of B, 19, which show that the name of the *gaṇa* is much damaged, but there is just enough visible to make it certain that here also it was *Koḷ[iyāto]*, the *la* being probably of the vertically stretched type. Of B, 22, which seems to be lost now, I have

<sup>1</sup> It is often very difficult to distinguish between the signs for medial *i* and *e* in these inscriptions, but in some cases the *e* seems to be certain.

a rubbing which distinctly reads *Koḷeyāto*, the sign for *la* resembling that of B, 56. The form *Koḷiya* or *Koḷeya* thus being established in all cases where it is possible to check the reading, it has, of course, to be restored also in those inscriptions of which no reproductions are available, as in the short fragment B, 124 (*Vienna Or. Journ.*, iii, 233, note 3; *Koḷiya*), or where the letter in question is entirely lost or quite indistinct, as in B, 20 (*Arch. Surv. Rep.*, iii, 31, No. 3; *Ko[ḷiyato]*); B, 25 (E.L., ii, 202, No. 13; [*Koḷi*]yāto); B, 36 (E.L., ii, 202, No. 15; [*Koḷi*]yāto<sup>1</sup>); B, 73 (E.L., ii, 205, No. 22; *Ko[ḷiyāto]*). The form *Koḷiya* is in perfect harmony with the traditional *Koḷiya* found in the *Sthavirāvalī* of the Kalpasūtra, *ḍa* and *la* being interchangeable letters. The later commentators give *Kauṭika* as the Sanskrit equivalent of the name, and this form has to be substituted everywhere for *Kauṭṭika* in my List of Brāhmī Inscriptions.

There is another name in the Mathurā inscriptions containing a *la* that has not been recognized hitherto. In B, 116 (E.L., i, 397, No. 34) Bühler read *Aya-Hāṭṭi[ye] kule*; in B, 16 (E.L., ii, 201, No. 11) *Arya-Hāṭṭakiyāto kulato*; and in B, 48 (E.L., i, 387, No. 11) *Āryya-Hāṭṭikiyāto kulato*. A look at the photolithographs will be sufficient to show that here again *ṭṭi* has been misread for *ḷi*, and *ṭṭa* and *ṭi* for *la*, the true readings being *Aya-Hāḷiye*, *Arya-Hāḷakiyāto*, and *Āryya-Hāḷakiyāto*.<sup>2</sup> Taking into account the phonetic laws of the later Prakrit, in this case also the form of the name of the *kula* perfectly agrees with *Hāḷijja*, the form used in the *Sthavirāvalī*, though it is hardly in favour of the assertion of the later commentators that *Hāḷijja* goes back to Skt. *Hāridraka*.

<sup>1</sup> According to the photolithograph only the upper portion of *Koḷi* is preserved.

<sup>2</sup> The true value of the sign in B, 16 seems to have been recognized later by Bühler himself; in his *Indische Palaeographie*, table iii, 39, iii, he gave a *la* that is apparently the sign occurring in B, 16.

Two more instances of the occurrence of a *la* are found in the Mathurā inscriptions B, 29 (EI., i, 383, No. 4) and B, 53 (EI., ii, 203, No. 18). In B, 29 Bühler read [*Kho*]ttimi[tt]asya māṇikarasya [gī] . . . I read, from an impression, *Khaḷamittasya māṇikarasya dhītu*, “of the daughter of the jeweller Khaḷamitta (*Khaḍamitra*).” The *la* is here just as distinct as in the word *Koḷiyāto* in line 1. In B, 53 Bühler read *Śūrasya Śramaṇakaputrasya Goṭṭikasya lohikākarakasya*, “of the worker in metal, Goṭṭika, the Śūra, the son of Śramaṇaka.” In my “Epigraphical Notes” (*Ind. Ant.*, xxxiii, p. 104 f.) I have tried to show by a comparison with another inscription that Śūra is the real name and *goṭṭika* a qualifying epithet. I have then connected *goṭṭika* with Skt. *goṣṭhika*, “member of a Panch.” But in that I was wrong. The impression before me<sup>1</sup> leaves no doubt that the second letter of the word is the same as the second letter of *Koḷiyāto* in line 1. The reading *goḷikasya*, therefore, is certain, though I am at present unable to offer an explanation of the term.

In my opinion the *la* is clearly extant also in the word *Kaḷalasya* in the inscription of unknown origin edited by Mr. Banerji in EI., x, 110, No. 3. The distinct hook at the base-line of the second letter of that word makes it impossible to read *ḍa* as done by the editor.

The frequent occurrence of the *la* in the Mathurā inscriptions proves that the common opinion that this sign was borrowed from the southern alphabets can no longer be upheld. There is absolutely no reason why it should not have formed part of the Brāhmī alphabet from the very beginning. And this is fully confirmed by the Aśoka inscriptions. Bühler (*Ind. Pal.*, p. 37) has noticed that there is a modification of the *ḍa* in the representative of Skt. *dudī* or *dulī* in the fifth edict of the Delhi-Sivalik, Mathia, and Radhia inscriptions, and in the representative of Skt. *dvādaśa*, which elsewhere becomes

<sup>1</sup> The reproduction in the *Ep. Ind.* is inaccurate.

*duvāḍasa*, in the sixth edict of the Mathia and Radhia inscriptions. The sign is formed by the addition of a dot at the lower end of the vertical of the *ḍa*. Bühler thought it possible that it was meant for *ḷa*. What kept him from speaking with more confidence on this point was probably the belief that the *ḷa* was properly restricted to Southern India. Now, when this opinion has proved to be erroneous, we may safely assert, I think, that the sign really is *ḷa*. And there is nothing to prevent us from considering the sign of the Aśoka inscriptions the original form from which the cursive forms of the Mathurā inscriptions have been developed by changing the impracticable dot into a hook.

Bühler's statements, however, have to be modified also in other respects. The *ḷa* is far more frequent in the Aśoka inscriptions than was assumed by him. In the Radhia inscription we have clearly the *ḷa* in *duḷi* (v, 3) and *duvāḷasa*<sup>o</sup> (vi, 14), as stated by Bühler. But it is just as distinct in *eḷake* (v, 11). It is therefore a priori very likely that this word was written in the same way also in v, 5, and I think I can recognize, if not a dot, at any rate a thickening of the lower end of the vertical of the sign, so that here also the reading *eḷakā* is the more probable one. Moreover, if Skt. *dvāḍasa* has become *duvāḷasa* in vi, we should expect to find the *ḷa* also in the representative of Skt. *pañcadaśa* in v, 8 and 10. In fact, the *ḷa* is quite distinct in *paṁṇaḷasaṁ* in v, 8, and I am almost sure that in v, 10 also we have to read *paṁṇaḷasaṁ*, the lower end of the sign again being thickened.<sup>1</sup>

The state of things is the same in the Mathia inscription. Here also the *ḷa* has distinctly a dot in *duvāḷasa*<sup>o</sup> in vi, 1, and in *paṁṇaḷasaṁ* in v, 11. In *duḷi* in v, 3, *eḷakā* in v, 6, and *paṁṇaḷasaṁ* in v, 9, the letter shows the

<sup>1</sup> In the *kha*, also we find often only a thickening of the end of the vertical instead of the dot, at any rate in the plate; see e.g. the second *nilakhitaviye*, v, 11; *paṭivekhāmi*, vi, 15, etc.

thickening, and only in v, 12 the photolithograph would be rather in favour of reading *eḍake*. But I think it quite possible that here also the true reading is *eḷake*, and I hope that Professor Hultsch will soon clear up this point with the help of impressions.

In the Delhi-Sivalik inscription we have distinctly *dalī* in v, 4, as recognized by Bühler, and even more distinctly *eḷakā* in v, 8. In v, 17 *eḷake* is more probable at any rate than *eḍake*. But the representative of Skt. °*daśa* seems to show *ḍa*: *paṁnaḍasaṁ* in v, 12; *paṁnaḍasaṁ* in v, 15; *duvāḍasa*° in vi, 1.

Only three of the test-words are found in the Delhi-Mirat inscription. In v, 11 the reading *eḷake* is absolutely certain, but in v, 5 we have *paṁnaḍasaṁ*, and in v, 9 probably *paṁnaḍasaṁ*. In the Allahabad inscription only *duḍī* is found in v, 21, probably with the *ḍa*, besides *paṁcaḍasaṁ*, which has preserved here the original dental. None of the words occur in the preserved portion of the Rāmpūrva inscription.

There may be some more instances of a *ḷa* in the Aśoka inscriptions, but the reproductions available are not sufficient to decide this point. In the Jaugada inscription ii, 6, e.g., Bühler read *Coḍā Paṁḍiyā*, but to judge from the plate there is a considerable difference in the shape of the two signs supposed to be *ḍa*, and I should not feel surprised if the first one on closer inspection should turn out to be *ḷa*.

The question of the *ḷa*, of course, is not merely a palæographical one. If the sign occurs in the pillar edicts of Aśoka and in the Mathurā inscriptions, we may safely conclude that the sound also existed in the Old-Ardhamāgadhī and in the Old-Prakrit dialect of Mathurā. This is in perfect harmony with certain facts in the language of the recently discovered Buddhist dramas.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Bruchstücke buddhistischer Dramen*, Preuss. Turfan-Expeditionen. Kleinere Sanskrit-Texte, Heft i.



Here we find *ḷa* in *dālīma*<sup>o</sup> and *lavalī*<sup>o</sup> (frag. 8), which are Old-Śauraseni, and in *(pa)vvatāḷim* (frag. 62), which probably belongs to the same dialect. Moreover, the *ḷa* is the regular representative of *ḍa* between vowels in Pali, and it thus appears that it formed part of the consonantal systems of most of the Old-Prakrit dialects. I think it can be shown that in Sanskrit, also, the *ḷa* was far more widely used than is commonly supposed, and that in several cases the neglect of the evidence furnished by the inscriptions has led to wrong etymologies. But a discussion of this question lies outside the scope of the present paper.