

## Appendix B:

### Notes on the Alleged Reading *vālaputra* on the Pikatan Funeral Stele

J E F F R E Y R . S U N D B E R G

In another venue (Sundberg 2009: 310, n. 45), I have written of my inability to confirm de Casparis' (1956: 312) published reading of the word *vālaputra* on the Indonesian National Museum's inscription D28, commonly known as 'Śivagrha', the AD 856 funereal stele of King Pikatan. Because his reading stands at the basis of a nexus de Casparis' claims about the history of the Ratu Boko plateau and his interpretation of an end to Buddhist Śailendra rule in Java, it is worth some energy to provide a minute analysis for those interested specialists who read Kawi.

My notes on my original observations on are no longer available to me, but I can offer an analysis *de novo* to refute de Casparis' reading thanks to an image of the pertinent section of the stone which was kindly furnished by Andrea Acri. The reading of the first six *akṣaras* of line 10 (marked by the red circle on the photograph) per de Casparis (1956: 312) is 'hī vā la pu tra //'. In order to register my comments and objections—which are by no means as skillful or nuanced as I would have wished because I have not practised reading the script in over a decade—to most of de Casparis' transliteration, I have imposed Roman letters on to the photograph and will take up the pertinent features of the stone in turn.

(A) The concentric arcs to the right of the 'A' must be the elements that de Casparis reports as a *ha*, a character which in Kawi assumes the serpentine form  $\text{𑊛}$ . The proper form is obviously lacking on the stone.

(B) De Casparis reads a long vowel *ī*. While it is not out of the question that the open semicircle does indeed represent a superscript *i* rather

than a subscripted *ga* from the line above (numerous examples of such an open form exist on the AD 792 inscription of Mañjuśrīgrha), there is no indication of a vowel-lengthening element. (For reference to how the *i*-vowel is lengthened in Mañjuśrīgrha, see the twenty-first *akṣara* of line 7).

(C) Below this letter must be the *akṣara* read by de Casparis as *vā*. The leftmost margins seemingly originate very close to the terminus of the concentric arcs described in B, and there is some rather clear structural element at the right which seemingly does signify the vowel-lengthening stroke. Unfortunately for the reading that de Casparis proposes, there is seemingly intact stone to the right of the leftmost curvature, and seemingly a solid chisel stroke at the margin of the lower left which seems to emphatically open up the primary character. The pronounced inflection point chiseled on the lower horizontal limb seems mirrored by one on the upper limb as well. (According to Andrea Acri [email dated 27 December 2015], the sequence of *akṣaras* represented here may be *bā*).

(D) The element of the *akṣara* to the lower left does indeed seem to be an element denoting a vowel-lengthening and is possibly to be comprehended by being interpreted in conjunction with the concentric arcs described in A.

(E) Above this letter lies the *akṣara* that de Casparis proposes to read as *la*, the Kawi form of which is the reflection (taken either vertically or horizontally) of the *ha*. To achieve his reading, de Casparis ignored several features of the stone, including a serif at the apex and the seemingly intentional occlusion of what should be the left



Fig. 1: The first characters on lines 9, 10, and 11 of the ‘Śivagr̥ha’ funereal stele of Rakai Pikatan. (Photo courtesy of Andrea Acri)

side of de Casparis’ *la*, forming an irregular circle reminiscent of some instances of *ca* or even a lumpy *va*.

(F) Below this character lies a vertically descending element which was capped by a serif and seemingly embellished with a medial horizontal chisel stroke, a lithographic technique used on, inter alia, the Mañjuśrīgṛha as an aid to clearly identify the *akṣara*. This line bends leftward as it descends, and is possibly conjoined with the oblong circle at a sharp angle which approaches 120° rather than the fluid spline dictated by the canonical form of the *la*. While more study of the junction of the *akṣara* on the stone is required, it is not out of the question that the *akṣara* lying directly under F is a *ra*.

(G) While this character is seriously disfigured, the serif that appears underneath the G as well as the upward-facing line to the left seems to convincingly mark this *akṣara* as a *pa*, and there are two serif-like engravings below which are candidates for a very short *u* marker.

(H) The *tra* to the upper left and the // strophe-closing marks to the upper right of the H are unobjectionable readings. On this, de Casparis is indisputably correct.

In short, I cannot endorse de Casparis’ assertion of a mention of a *vālaputra* on Pikatan’s funereal Śivagr̥ha inscription, much less accept it as a reference to a cross-straits Sumatran Śailendra king.